

14th

Day of the Intercalary  
Second lunar month

April 4, 2023

Hello  
Spring



March 5: Budding willows by the moat

March 10: Magnolia buds peeking out in the garden

March 15: A pair of mandarin ducks on the Jinshui River

April 4: Petals of pear blossoms drifting like snowflakes amid spring breeze before the Palace of Longevity and Health (Shoukang gong)

... ..

Hello, Spring!

—From Xiaoya's Nature Observation Journal

Just the Perfect Time and Cheerful Moment for Spring Outings

# Hello, Spring

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# With Lovely Spring in the Courtyard -- Chuiwan and Touhu

## Touhu (Pitch-Pot)

Touhu (Pitch-Pot) is an ancient game where players throw arrows into a wine pot, popular during aristocratic banquets in the past. Originating in the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BCE), it was both a game and a ritual. Later, special arrows and pots were crafted. By the Song Dynasty (960-1279), its gameplay became more refined as its ritual functionality weakened.



Qing Dynasty (1616-1911) / Yu Lan (1742-1809) / *Album of Court Ladies' Leisure*



Copper Touhu Pot



Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) / Part of the scroll painting *Leisurely Activities of Emperor Xuande* (r. 1425-1435)

## Chuiwan (Ball-Hitting)

Chuiwan, involving hitting a ball into a hole with a wooden or bamboo club, thrived during the Song, Liao, Jin, and Yuan dynasties (960-1368).



It's like modern-day golf.



Historical records trace swings back to northern tribes. Swinging gracefully back and forth like a celestial fairy delighted young girls, with their laughter resounding within the courtyards of the Forbidden City.

# Through the Drizzle of Apricot Blossoms Swinging



**1** Swing Rings of the Hall of Embodied Harmony (Tihedian) in the Palace of Earthly Honor (Yikun Gong)

— Allegedly used by the last empress, Wanrong (1906-1946).



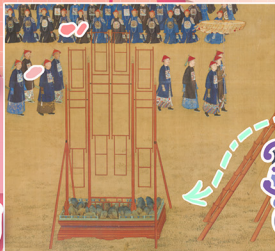
Qing Dynasty A Swing

Qing Dynasty/ One Page of Illustrations to the Poems of Yao Xie (1805-1864) by Ren Xiong (1823-1857)



**2** Double swing fun

— Like a seesaw in mid-air!



**3** Decorated swing for banquets with a mountain-shaped base

A captivating performance of "Fairy Beyond the Mountain" is about to unfold.

Qing Dynasty Scroll painting Banquet at the Garden of Ten Thousand Trees



# Amid the Gentle Spring Breeze – Kite Flying

Once used for measuring distances and sending messages, ancient kites with silk string made whistling sounds when flown, earning the name "wind zither" (*fengzheng*). Eventually, kite flying became a popular pastime, with some believing it could help children relieve inner heat as they watched the kites flying in the air with their mouths open.

## Palace Kites: Catfish or Dragon?



Catfish Kite

A mascot of annual surplus

Vs



Majestic Dragon Kite

13 meters in length and 2.7 meters in width



# Along the Spring Mountains and Streams — Floating Wine Cups on a Winding Stream



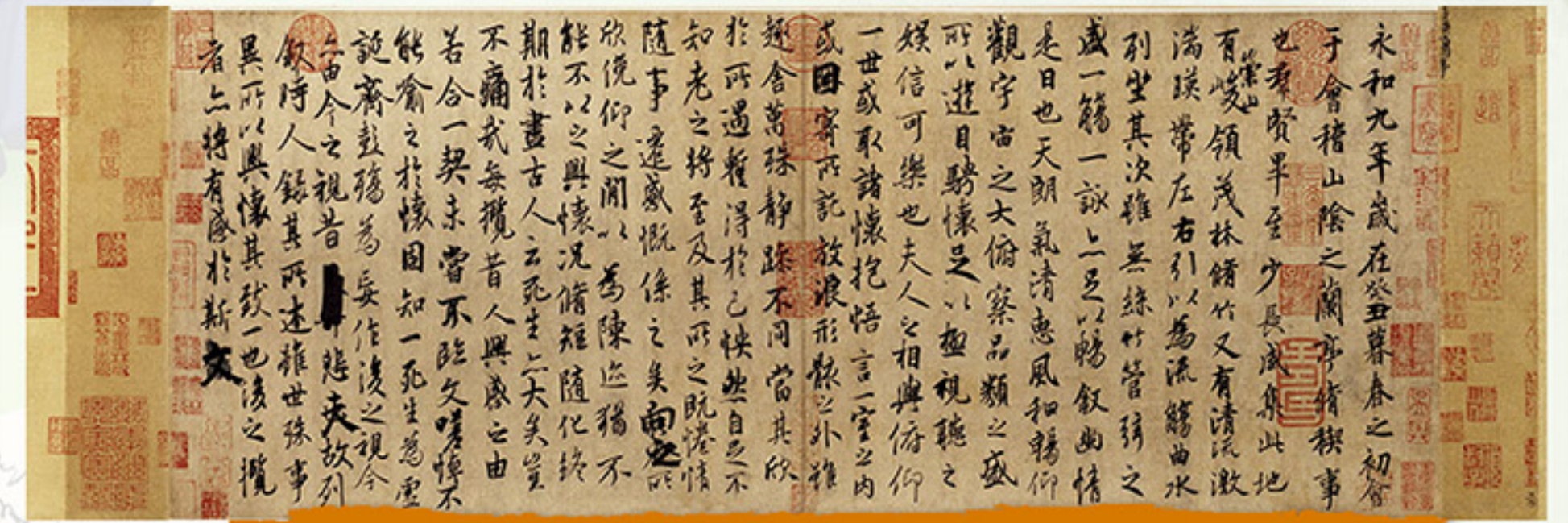
## Floating Wine Cups on a Winding Stream

During the Six Dynasties period (220 – 589), the literati would celebrate the Shangsi Festival (also known as the Double Third Festival) with feasts by waters, where they invented a popular game known as *Qushui liushang* (Floating Wine Cups on a Winding Stream). A wine cup, filled to the brim, would be set adrift in the stream. When the cup spun around or stopped in front of someone, the person had to compose a poem on the spot; failure meant drinking wine as a forfeit.



## No. 1 Calligraphic Work in Running Script in the World — *Lantingji xu*

On the third day of the third month in the ninth year of the Yonghe era (353 CE), the renowned calligrapher Wang Xizhi (303–361) gathered with friends for a gathering, at which they played *Qushui liushang*. In a moment of creative exuberance, he wrote in one flowing burst a preface to all the 37 poems they composed at the gathering—*Lantingji xu*, later revered as the pinnacle of the calligraphy in running script.



Tang Dynasty (618–907) / Part of the copy of *Lantingji xu* by Feng Chengsu (617–672) (Tang Dynasty)



Scan to learn more about *Lantingji xu*

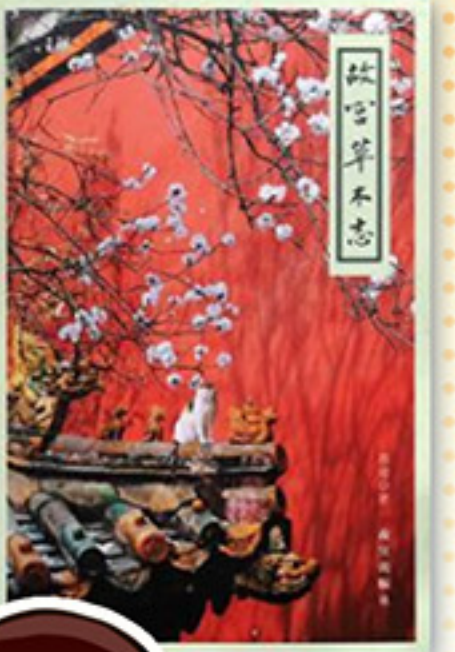
# Amid Blooming Wildflowers Herb Dueling

## Gameplay Tips for Martial-Style Herb Dueling

- 1 Pick a sturdy "old root" and roll it firmly in your hand.
- 2 Adjust your posture and apply force skillfully.



Explore this book about the plants and trees in the Palace Museum to learn more about botanical stories. You will definitely win the Herb Dueling this year!



**Two Styles of Herb Dueling:**  
"Martial" Style: Players hook and pull leaf stalks, also called "root pulling."  
"Literary" Style: Players compete by naming flowers or matching their symbolic meanings.

Plants have feelings—avoid picking them carelessly.

"I have the Guanyin Willow—I have the Arhat Pine.  
I have the Gentleman's Bamboo—I have the Beauty's Canna.  
I have the Starry Verdure—I have the Moonlit Rose.  
I have the Peony from *The Peony Pavilion*—I have the Loquat (*pipa*) from *Tale of the Pipa*."  
—Descriptions of Herb Dueling in *Dream of the Red Chamber*

**Gameplay Tips for  
Literary-Style Herb Dueling:**  
Read more books!



Qing Dynasty / Scroll painting *Children at Play* by Jin Tingbiao (?-1767)

# On the Green Field: Cuju



"Spring has arrived, lush grass 'neath setting rays; On a green field, cuju with proud youths plays."

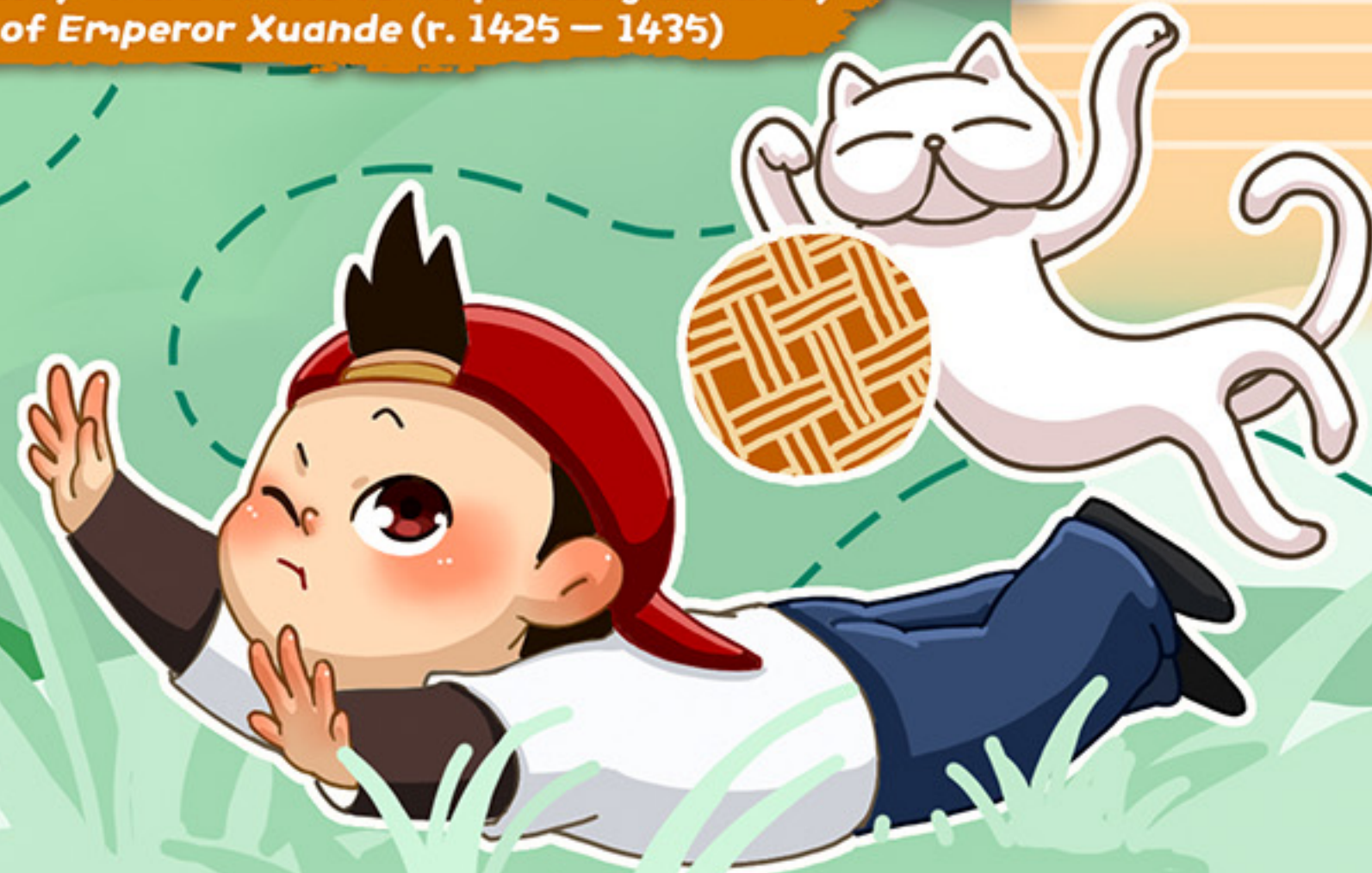
Cuju was an ancient Chinese ball game akin to modern football! The game had two main playstyles: one involved a goal where teammates passed the ball and the captain aimed to shoot to score; the other was *baida*, played without a goal, similar to modern hacky sack, where players competed based on the complexity and difficulty of the kicking techniques.



Ming Dynasty Part of the scroll painting *Leisurely Activities of Emperor Xuande* (r. 1425 – 1435)



The *cuju* match watched by Emperor Xuande as illustrated in the painting is the *baida* style: Both teams take their positions, showcasing an air of calm confidence while performing dazzling tricks to impress the emperor with their newly mastered moves.



# Into Fields and Villages — Farming and Sericulture

As spring breathes life back into the land, it marks the perfect time for sowing seeds and planting flowers, trees, and crops. Join in to experience the toil of farming and the wonder of nature's growth. During the Qing Dynasty, the imperial court held grand ceremonies in spring to honor the God of Agriculture and Goddess of Silkworms, as a way to encourage people around the country to engage in farming and sericulture.

## Farming

During the sacrificial ceremonies for the God of Agriculture, the emperor would personally plough the field, guiding the plough through the field with three forward pushes and three returns.



## Picking Mulberry Leaves

The day after offering sacrifices to the Goddess of Silkworms, imperial consorts and palace maids would participate in mulberry leaf harvesting. These leaves were delivered to the silkworm chambers to feed the delicate larvae, whose finest cocoons would later be presented to the empress.



Auspicious Robe Worn by the Qing Empress during the Ceremony of Worshipping the Goddess of Silkworms



Scan to learn about more imperial "farming" stories



故宫博物院  
THE PALACE MUSEUM



Of course, the  
greatest joy for  
springtime lies in exploring the  
blossoms in the Palace Museum.



Xiaoxuan and Xiaoya  
explore the  
Palace Museum