



The brilliance of Chinese arms and armor artistry mirrors the enduring, adaptive spirit of Chinese civilization. — Courtesy of Han Tianheng Art Museum

Arms and armor artistry chronicles weaponry evolution across the world

Staff Reporters

Great news for enthusiasts of medieval arms and armor: An exhibition showcasing the artistry of arms and armor from the 14th century is on display at Han Tianheng Art Museum in Jiading District until June 15.

The exhibition features specimens of Chinese weapons from the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties to the early modern period, as well as swords, armor and weaponry from Japan, Malaysia, India, Turkey, Iran, Sri Lanka, and the Caucasus regions.

Over 200 artifacts showcase a broad panorama of arms and armor artistry, highlighting the craftsmanship, ingenuity, and cultural interactions of the pre-gunpowder era. The Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) eras saw the pinnacle of Chinese weaponry and armor artistry.

The Qi Family Saber from the Ming Dynasty is the highlight of the exhibition's first section. These blades, forged using pattern-welding and inlay techniques, show not just General Qi Jiguang's military advancements in the fight against Japanese pirates, but also China's ability to absorb and refine foreign influences.

The display of early firearms represents a significant step in China's move from cold weapons to gunpowder, highlighting the country's combined triumphs in technology and art.

The second section acknowledges that arms and armor craftsmanship is a shared human heritage that benefits from cross-cultural exchange.

Lacquer work on Japanese Edo-period swords, for example, demonstrates the

balance of strength and elegance. While the Malayan Kris, with its meteoric iron forging and wavy blade designs, conjures the allure of Southeast Asia's jungles.

These foreign treasures, on display alongside Chinese armaments, serve as historical testaments to both conflict and cultural fusion, expressing the belief that each culture has its beauty, and together would create a greater splendor.

The final segment symbolizes China's strength and confidence through weapons and armor artistry.

Since the 14th century, Chinese weaponry have combined the finest of previous dynasties, preserving the robust spirit of the Han (206 BC-AD 220) and Tang (AD 618-907) dynasties while incorporating foreign ideas. From Ming-era adaptations of Japanese swords to Qing-dynasty ceremonial sabers, Chinese weaponry evolved with a primary principle of honoring tradition while innovating on its own.

Today, these objects elicit not only admiration for their technical mastery, but also contemplation on the evolution of civilization that underpins them.

The rise of a great power is determined not only by military might, but also by cultural endurance. The excellence of Chinese armaments artwork reflects China's enduring, adaptable character — its commitment to defend peace, as well as its tradition of workmanship and artistic pursuit.

If you go

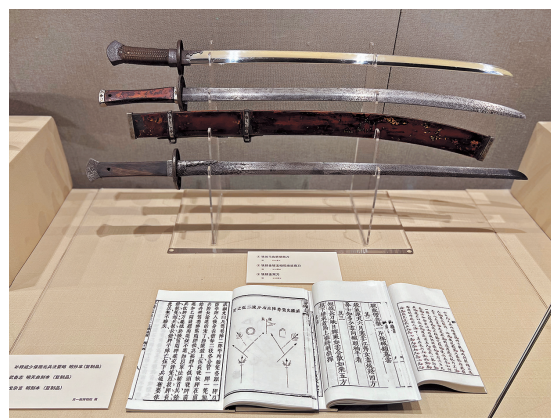
Date: Through June 15 (closed on Mondays), 9am-5pm

Venue: Han Tianheng Art Museum

Address: 70 Bole Rd
嘉定区博乐路70号



Above: Armor worn by Tibetan horsemen



Left: The Qi Family Saber from the Ming Dynasty is the highlight of the exhibition's first section.