

Chinese Opera Coloring Sheets

Chinese operas are very long and feature complex narratives with a large number of characters. Keeping track of who is who is a challenge even for the most dedicated fan. Most popular print depictions of Chinese opera fall into one of two categories: either showing the actors in full stage costume as they would have appeared on a stage set with minimal props or in an imagined landscape or architectural setting. As the popularity of the theater grew beginning in the early 1800s, production of theatrical prints also surged.

Have fun coloring in these sheets based on Chinese opera prints in the Asian Art Museum's collection. As you color, think: Who are the heroes in this scene? Who are the villains? How can you tell? If you're interested, look up the two opera titles provided on these sheets, "Eight Sledgehammers" and "The Water Margin," to learn more about the stories depicted. What other scenes can you imagine after learning about the plotlines?











