



Smithsonian  
*Museum Conservation Institute*

## **Within the Emperor's Garden: The Ten Thousand Springs Pavilion**

**Traditional Chinese Crafts Highlighted in Smithsonian Exhibit**



A distinctive exhibit featuring the Ten Thousand Springs Pavilion (*Wan Chun Ting*) from the Beijing Forbidden City will open April 18, 2007 in the Smithsonian International Gallery and run through June 3, 2007. The structure is a 1 to 5 model of the celebrated and intricate classic Chinese pavilion that stands within the Forbidden City in the heart of Beijing. Visitors can come and observe the assembly of the model starting on April 18, 2007. It is also the first time that text panels at the Smithsonian Institution will be bilingual in Chinese and English.



The model of the pavilion was gifted to the Smithsonian by Dr. Chan Laiwa and the China Red Sandalwood Museum in Beijing. Dr. Chan founded the museum to preserve and perpetuate the ancient Chinese art of red sandalwood carving.

Made by Chinese artisans using traditional Chinese carving and fine furniture techniques, the model captures the beauty of the original pavilion, and is an outstanding example of traditional Chinese carving. Artisans at the China Red Sandalwood Museum constructed this model of red sandalwood, treasured for its dark glossy color and musty floral fragrance. No nails are used; the entire structure is put together with mortise-and-tenon joinery. Currently, nearly 60 percent of red sandalwood carvers are women. Red sandalwood was highly prized in imperial China, and was used to create intricately carved furniture and decorative objects. Because of the demand for this wood, the tree nearly disappeared in China – along with the art of carving it.



The Ten Thousand Springs Pavilion is one of the 20 or so structures that are part of the private pleasure grounds for two dynasties of Chinese emperors. The Imperial Garden of the Forbidden City was a retreat for the emperor and his family allowing quiet contemplation of nature and communion with the spiritual world.



Honoring the season of spring, the Ten Thousand Springs design embodies a vision of a perfect world. The square base symbolizes earth, while the round top represents heaven. The roof ornamentation, symbolizing protection and imperial power, features dragons and phoenixes.



The exhibition was organized by the Smithsonian's Museum Conservation Institute and the Smithsonian International Gallery, with assistance of the China Red Sandalwood Museum and the Savannah College of Art and Design. Special thanks to the Embassy of the People's Republic of China, Washington, DC; the Smithsonian Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery; the Palace Museum, Beijing; the Metropolitan Museum of Art; and the Smithsonian Horticulture Services. The Smithsonian's Office of Exhibits Central designed and edited the exhibit.

### **Information Contacts:**

#### General Information:

Ann N'Gadi, Technical Information Specialist, MCI  
(301) 238-1224; e-mail [NgadiA@si.edu](mailto:NgadiA@si.edu)  
Web site: <http://www.si.edu/mci/>

#### Press Information:

Carolyn Martin, Smithsonian Institution Office of Public Affairs  
(202) 633-5197; e-mail [martincl@si.edu](mailto:martincl@si.edu)  
Linda St. Thomas, Smithsonian Institution Office of Public Affairs  
(202) 633-5188; e-mail [StthomasL@si.edu](mailto:StthomasL@si.edu)  
Web site: <http://newsdesk.si.edu/>

#### Public Information:

Visitor Information and Associates' Reception Center  
(202) 357-2987; e-mail [info@si.edu](mailto:info@si.edu)  
Web site: <http://www.si.edu/visit/InfoCenter/viarc.htm>