

January 23rd

Memory Verse:

God is light

and in him is no darkness at all. 1 John 1:5b

Something to draw



Today marks the start of the Ming dynasty in China with the birth of Emperor Taizu or Zhu Yuanzhang the founding emperor of the Ming dynasty in 1328. The Ming dynasty ruled China from 1368 to 1644. Previously China had been ruled by the Mongols who had conquered China about 100 years earlier. Many Chinese did not like the Mongols and considered them the enemy. The Mongols were overthrown and ousted from China by a peasant uprising led by Zhu Yuanzhang.

During the Ming dynasty China expanded its trade with other parts of the world, including Africa (see the lessons for 5th September) India and the Persian Gulf. China's famous Ming porcelain dates from this period.¹

The Great Wall of China dates from the Ming Dynasty during which time it was completely rebuilt. The great wide walls are still standing today, you can see them in the picture below. During the Ming Dynasty the Grand Canal was also rebuilt, contributing to trade. The Forbidden City or Imperial Palace was also built at Beijing, consisting of about a thousand buildings covering a huge site. No one was allowed to enter the forbidden city without the emperor's permission.



To make your own Ming design in blue and white. First cut out an outline vase or bowl shape. Fold

¹ For information about the Ming tombs still to be seen in China see the lesson for 4th September.

a piece of stiff white paper in half to do this and draw one half of the shape. Then you can cut it out and open it up to give a symmetrical shape. Now look for some Chinese designs.² You may have some in your own home! Patterns such as the humble Willow Pattern were made in imitation of Chinese designs. Draw your pattern carefully in pencil. When you are satisfied you can colour it in with dark and light blue using wax crayons, pencils or even felt pens.

A story to read

Charles Kingsley (1819-1875) died on **23rd January**. Kingsley was a Church of England parson, enthusiastic promoter of evolution,³ keen social reformer and author of one of the best loved children's classics *The Water Babies*.⁴ This book follows the imaginary adventures of a chimney-sweep, Tom, who is rescued from his predicament and from himself through a series of fantasy adventures. Here is how it begins:

ONCE upon a time there was a little chimney-sweep, and his name was Tom. That is a short name, and you have heard it before, so you will not have much trouble in remembering it. He lived in a great town in the North country, where there were plenty of chimneys to sweep, and plenty of money for Tom to earn and his master to spend. He could not read nor write, and did not care to do either; and he never washed himself, for there was no water up the court where he lived. He had never been taught to say his prayers. He never had heard of God, or of Christ, except in words which you never have heard, and which it would have been well if he had never heard. He cried half his time, and laughed the other half. He cried when he had to climb the dark flues, rubbing his poor knees and elbows raw; and when the soot got into his eyes, which it did every day in the week; and when his master beat him, which he did every day in the week; and when he had not enough to eat, which happened every day in the week likewise. And he laughed the other half of the day, when he was tossing halfpennies with the other boys, or playing leap-frog over the posts, or bowling stones at the horses' legs as they trotted by, which last was excellent fun, when there was a wall at hand behind which to hide. As for chimney-sweeping, and being hungry, and being beaten, he took all that for the way of the world, like the rain and snow and thunder, and stood manfully with his back to it till it was over, as his old donkey did to a hail-storm; and then shook his ears and was as jolly as ever; and thought of the fine times coming, when he would be a man, and a master sweep, and sit in the public-house with a quart of beer and a long pipe, and play cards for silver money, and wear velveteens and ankle-jacks,⁵ and keep a white bull-dog with one grey ear, and carry her puppies in his pocket, just like a man. And he would have apprentices, one, two, three, if he could. How he would bully them, and knock them about, just as his master did to him; and make them carry home the soot sacks, while he rode before them on his donkey, with a pipe in his mouth and a flower in his button-hole, like a king at the head of his army. Yes, there were good times coming; and, when his master let him have a pull at the leavings of his beer, Tom was the jolliest boy in the whole town.



It was not until the year of Charles Kingsley's death that an act making master sweeps register with the police finally made it possible to enforce the Climbing Boys Acts of 1788 and 1834 which forbade the use of boys to climb chimneys. An excellent modern book based on the life of a boy sweep is Matthew Wainwright's *Out of the Smoke*, published by Wakeman.⁶ This story helps you understand the rôle of reformers such as Lord Shaftesbury in helping the climbing boys.

2 For example here: For examples see <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/china/introduction-ming-blue-and-white-porcelain>

3 See the lessons for April 18th and 19th.

4 You can read the whole book here: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Water_Babies

5 A kind of boot worn by tradesmen.

6 You can buy it here: <https://tabernaclebookshop.org/products/out-of-the-smoke>