

CHINESE LOGGIA

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This airy space creates a visual link between the interior courtyard and the gardens outside, evoking the galleries that provided cool, shaded spaces for garden viewing in Italian Renaissance villas. In Isabella Gardner's day, ivy was trained to grow up the trellis work that surrounds each pillar, and beds of groundcover ran along each side. The loggia was created during the 1914–1915 renovation of the museum's east side, when Gardner replaced her original two-story music room (see Spanish Cloister card for picture) with three galleries on the first floor and the spacious Tapestry Room on the second floor.

The loggia takes its name from the remarkable Chinese Buddhist temple stele (commemorative marker) at one end of the gallery. A devout Anglican herself, Gardner also explored other spiritual practices; this gallery—with a Christian Virgin and Child at one end and an image of the Buddha at the other—offers one expression of her ecumenical views.



Votive Stele
Chinese, 543
Limestone

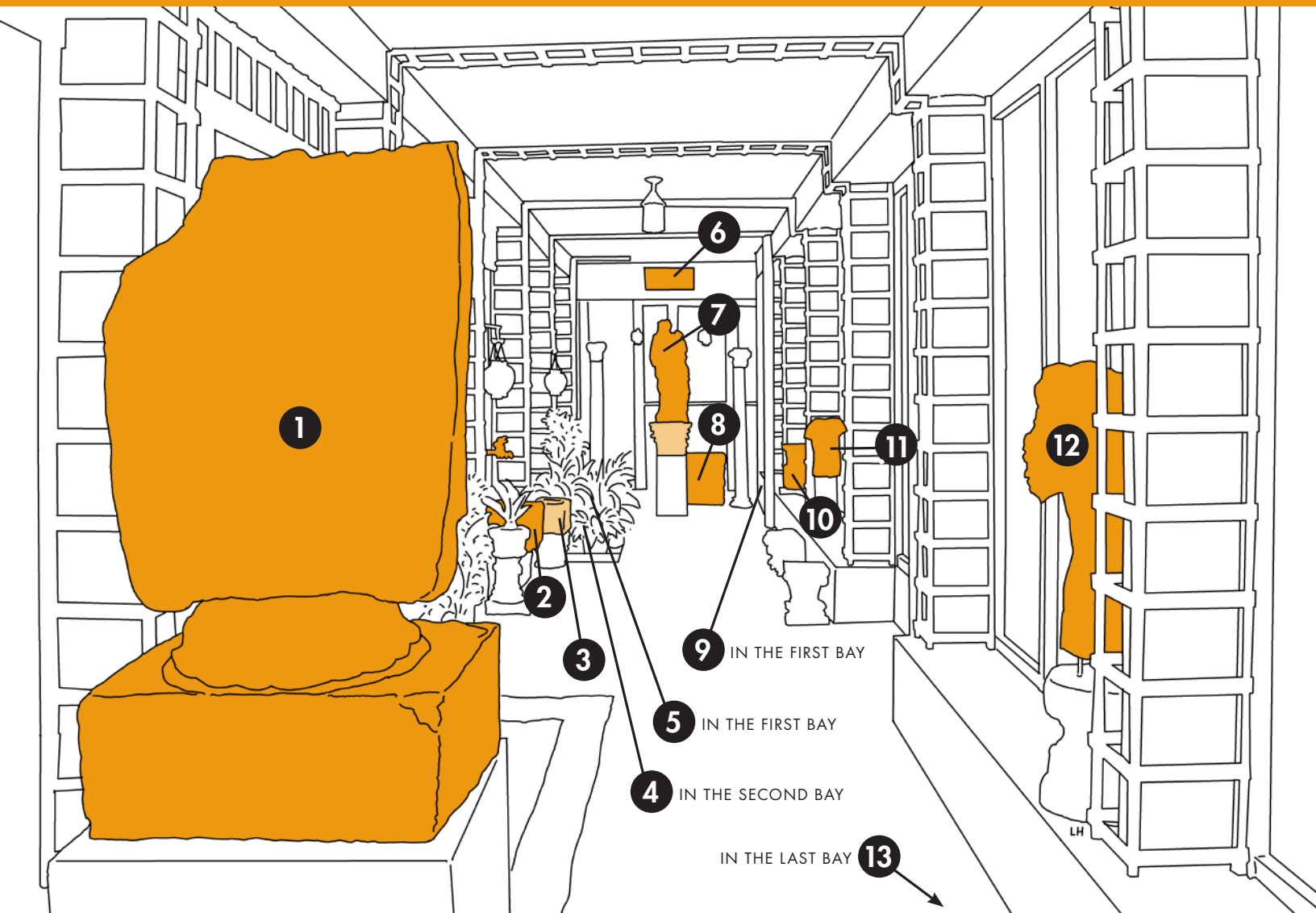


This elegant stele (commemorative marker) shows a range of Buddhist deities for veneration. On the front, the Buddha stands in the middle flanked by disciples with shaven heads and two richly dressed bodhisattvas. Bodhisattvas are enlightened Buddhist beings who have achieved Nirvana (the release from human suffering and union with the divine) but delay entering it in order to help others on their spiritual journey. Notice how the artist uses scale to show the relative importance of the figures: the Buddha is largest, then the bodhisattvas, and finally the human disciples.

The inscription below tells us that a “disciple of Buddha” named Luo Zikuan and seventy other people commissioned this sculpture to inspire others to follow the Buddha's path.

Gardner's interest in Asian cultures was sparked by a trip to Japan, China, Cambodia, Indonesia, and India during 1883–84; beginning in 1904 her friendship with the Japanese art critic Okakura Kakuzo (1862–1913) expanded her interest in East Asia. (Look for a photograph and other Okakura mementoes in one of the Blue Room cases.) Purchased in 1914, the stele was one of Gardner's last additions to her collection.

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1. **Votive Stele.** Chinese, 543. Limestone
2. **Water Basin.** Italian, 15th century with later additions. Sandstone with 19th-century bronze faucets
3. **Cinerary Urn (container for ashes).** Roman, late 1st century. Marble
4. **Grave Altar** with names of the deceased couple inscribed in Latin. Roman, 1st–2nd century. Marble
5. **Cinerary Urn (container for ashes).** Roman, early 2nd century. Marble
6. **Relief Tablet.** German, 16th or 17th century. Stone
7. **Virgin and Child.** French, 14th century. Limestone with paint traces

Underneath the Virgin and Child:

Capital of a Corinthian pilaster.
Roman, 3rd century. Marble

8. **Sarcophagus Fragment.** Roman, 3rd century. Marble
9. **Cinerary Urn (container for ashes) with Griffin Heads.** Roman, late 1st century. Marble
10. **Torso of a God carrying fruits (Silvanus, Roman god of the countryside, or Youthful Male Season).** Roman, 2nd–3rd century. Marble
11. **Torso of Dionysos or Apollo.** Roman, 1st century BC–1st century AD. Marble
12. **Torso of Dionysos.** Roman, 2nd century. Marble
13. **Torso of a Man.** Roman, first half of the 1st century, based on a Greek bronze of about 440 BC. Marble

Number 13 is outside the drawing, in the last bay on the right.