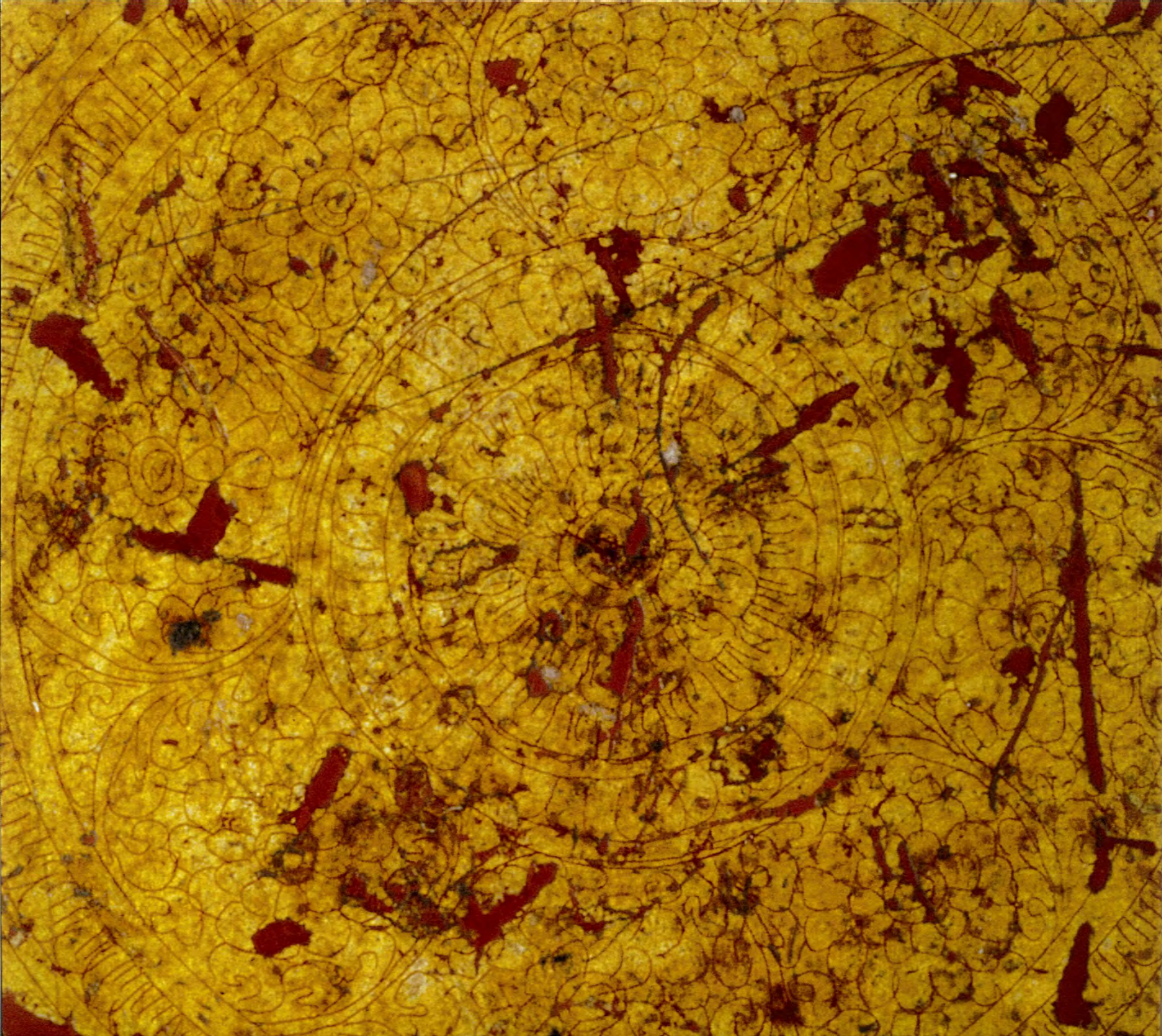


asian art KNAPTON RASTI





KNAPTON RASTI

introduction

Knapton Rasti Asian Art are pleased to offer a catalogue of Chinese works of art, the fourth in the company's history. This year's exhibition covers a broad area in terms of time and material, and has been selected from the same eclectic mixture of sources around the world.

Coincidentally we have two rare objects from the reign of the Yongle Emperor 1403-24, so perhaps the painting ^{No. 43} and the stembowl ^{No. 42} are a good starting point for the introduction. The founder of the Ming dynasty, who had reigned under the nianhao Hongwu, died in A.D. 1398. The Emperor's grandson succeeded to the throne, age 16, but his uncle, the Prince of Yan rebelled, leading to three years of civil war, which ended when the Prince seized and burned the Imperial Palace in Nanjing. The Prince then declared himself Emperor under the reign title Yongle. It seems unlikely that he would have run an Imperial atelier, particularly so soon after a damaging internal war. Thus, our painting was most probably painted behind the walls of a monastery. The Ming Emperors made much of their devout Buddhism, so it is not unlikely that the monastery would have benefited from Imperial patronage. The second piece is a tianbai stem bowl covered in a white monochrome glaze or "sweet white" as it was known. There are a number of published examples of anhua decorated Yongle stembowls, with or without marks. The undecorated ones are certainly harder to find, but they do exist as mentioned by Geng Baochang, *Ming Qing Ciqi Jianding*, Forbidden City Press, 1993, p.36. Evidence from excavation at Jingdezhen indicates that stembowls without decoration were produced, cf. *Imperial Porcelains of the Yongle and Xuande Periods excavated from the site of the Ming Imperial Factory at Jingdezhen*, Hong Kong, 1989, p.84. In an exhibition at the Shanghai Museum, entitled *Treasures from Snow Mountains* there are two stembowls with fitted cases. One is a Xuande blue and white example with a simple woven case, much like the one that envelopes the Chenghua stembowl, example ^{No. 41}, the other a white jade cup with a more elaborate gilt bronze casing inset with turquoise. They are both from the Tibet Museum and our rare example fits into this category of Chinese works of art made for the Tibetan religious hierarchy. Regina Krahl notes in an *Orientalis* article (December 1989) that the Yongle Emperor cultivated good relations with the principal Tibetan religious leaders, sending presents to Tibet and exchanging gifts on several occasions with the fifth hierarch Halima, who in 1407 held a religious service for Yongle's deceased parents in Nanjing.

Brushes, ink, paper and inkstone are the cornerstone of the scholars' studio. They have relied on these as their principal tools, whether writing or painting. The era spanning the beginning of the Kangxi era 1662 to the end of the Qianlong 1796, saw the quality and production of inkstones receive much attention, causing the stone for inkstones, and in particular the production of Duan stone, and refined clay, to undergo increasing development. No.17, the jade inkbox in the form of a pebble-shaped Duan stone, is a refined work of art, that like so much of the art from this period 1662-1722, alludes to previous eras of Chinese history. The thinness of the stone, the high polish, and the easy curves of the pebble form give the object a pleasingly aesthetic feel, and enforce our belief that this was an important object on a scholar's desk, as a utilitarian work of art and because of its shape, a reference to the importance of inkstones to the literati. As with previous catalogues, there are a number of jades, and we should mention the figure No.19 that belonged to an important Tianjin family and was made by Imperial command. It is an interesting product of the flow of ideas that had been coming north from India for a number of centuries. Although the deity represented is the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy, Guanyin, there are undercurrents of Hindu decoration and iconography from earlier periods. The headdress and body jewellery hint at the post-Chola Vijayanagar bronzes from South India which were executed in the 14th-15th centuries, with their lissome, yet ample, figures, sinuous jewellery and form-hugging folds. If we move back another century to the dry lacquer sculptures of the Song period in China, there was a Bodhisattva in the Victoria and Albert Museum's exhibition of 1970, entitled *The Mount Trust Collection of Chinese Art* (No. 69) which has a similar pose and is clad in the garb of an Indian prince. As with our jade figure, the natural pose and unemphatic, flowing lines contribute much to its air of intimate presence.

The catalogue contains a number of lacquer pieces, including a pair of early foliate dishes and several Ming objects. Early Song lacquer was mainly monochrome and took its shapes from contemporary gold and silver ware, that in its turn had developed directly out of Tang production. There was an increasing tendency during the Song period to decorate monochromes with gilding, which in most cases, as here, have rubbed away. The core of our dishes No.20 is a combination of the familiar coiled wood technique and interwoven cord. We are fortunate to have such a cross section of pieces from the late fifteenth century to the Wanli reign 1573-1619. One of the main types of official lacquers during the period either side of 1500 was carved polychrome ware, apparent also in the porcelain enamels of the time. No.22 is an example of the careful juxtaposition of the colours, raised above a ground, often seen in containers (the tiered boxes were probably for incense) of this period, and the rounding off of any hard edges left by the knife, leaving a well polished patina helped naturally by age, but initiated by the carvers skill. No.27 a later Ming box and cover (Watt, in *East Asian Lacquer, The Irving Collection, The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, p.102, suggests this type of box may have been made as gifts for lower orders of the nobility), shows a propensity for using space in the scene, with scholars scattered over a wide area of rocks and trees, the artist less prepared to accept the enclosed scenes of the small seal containers of a hundred years before, and perhaps acting as a precursor to the free flowing Transitional wares a few decades hence. Chinese lacquer offers an infinite variety of artistic techniques and styles, and this small group shows some of these possibilities.

The stone sculpture of the young boy standing ^{No.28} presented us with many questions. The simplicity and subtlety of the carving point immediately to the Song period, probably the eleventh century. The individualised features and the feel for the human body put this work of art in the style of ateliers influenced by the Tang but imposing their own cultural identity. The Dazu rock carvings are an example of this cross-fertilisation of ideas, both religious and secular. Lying between the cities of Chongqing and Chengdu, the grottos were begun in the eighth century and continued into the Southern Song period 1127-1279, when Sichuan province was particularly prosperous, with official records showing that between 1175-1223 the area had to supply a third of the grain for the military nationally, and it was of course the centre of a communications network that stretched west down the Silk Road, south through to Burma and India, and north to the central plain of China. Amongst the Dazu carvings are scenes of domestic and rural life, herdsman looking after buffalos, a drunken father and his son in an interior, that merge into the more formalised Daoist, Buddhist and Confucian imagery. Our boy fits into the more naturalistic settings, with his air of innocence and tranquillity, the lack of ostentation, any form of decoration to the clothing and the unaffected way his hair is cut, point to an origin similar to these scenes. The remains of a red pigment to the belt suggest the only attempt of the sculptor to take the eye of the viewer away from the gently turned head and well executed folds in his tunic. The sole hint of any form of indulgence is the appearance of the clasp on his belt, in the form of a cicada. This insect used to symbolise immortality and one made of jade ^{No.1} was laid in the mouth of the deceased. A connection to the afterlife is a possibility. Another more tenuous link is to one of the goddess Guanyin's acolytes. In his pre-eminent book on blanc-de-chine, Donnelly notes the two attendants that can sometimes be found with her, namely Shan-ts'ai (Golden Youth) and Lung-nu (Jade Maiden). It is the former that interests us. Sadly, the arms have gone from the sculpture, but we can surmise from the positions of the upper arms and the folds in the tunic, that he may have held the head of an object or plant, such as a lotus stem, in the right hand, which is higher, and its end in the left. In summary, we can see that just prior to the tenth century artists had started to use real people as models and under the Song, the link between religion and Buddhist images was even further broken, until it became fully secularised.

We would like to thank Alan Tabor for his photography, and Anthony Evans for his translation work, particularly the calligraphic tile ^{No.37}.

Christopher Knapton
Nader Rasti
November 2004

1 Prince's Place, Whitechapel St James's London SW1P 6DE
Telephone: 020 7607 3688 Fax: 020 7637 8833 Email: knaptonrasti@btconnect.com
Web: www.knaptonrasti.co.uk


ASIAN ART
IN LONDON

China: Han Dynasty (206 BC – AD 220)
Length: 2.3/4in (7cm)

1



A yellow and dark-brown jade pendant in the form of a cicada of flattened form, the eyes protruding, the details of the wings and underside well defined.

Amulets of this subject were placed in the mouth of the deceased presumably to insure immortality. The larva passes the first four years of its life underground, and then comes out in the form of a mobile pupa, slits down the back, and emerges as a perfect insect. This rising, as it were, from the grave, was noticed by the ancient Chinese, who saw in the cicada an emblem of immortality and resurrection.

see introduction

China: Tang Dynasty (618-906)
Length: 1.7/8in (4.8cm)

2



A russet-skinned jade model of a recumbent hare, its head resting on its forepaws and the long ears pricked back, the stone with amber and dark brown inclusions.

Reference: Plate 127, p. 95, Chinesische Jaden, Burkart-Bauer, Museum Rietberg, Zurich.
Plate 39, p.71, Chinese Jade Animals, Hong Kong Museum of Art, 1996.

In Chinese mythology the hare resides on the moon pounding the drugs which produce the elixir of immortality. It is also the fourth of the twelve zodiac animals.

China: Song Dynasty (960-1279)
Height: 2.1/8in (5.5cm)

3



A yellow jade model of a standing lohan dressed in long flowing robes, his head turned slightly to the left, and the arms folded beneath his robes, the stone of even tone with light russet inclusions.

Provenance: English Private Collection
Formerly in the Pitt-Rivers Museum,
Oxford

China: Song Dynasty (960-1279)
Length: 3.1/8in (8cm)

4



A black and grey jade model of a parrot, of flattened form, the tips of the wings resting on the tail feathers and the head pointing forward, the underside with the claws lightly carved against its chest.

China: Song to early Ming Dynasty (10th to 15th Century)
Length: 2.3/8in (6cm)

5



A white and russet jade model of a seated crane, its neck twisted back, the bird holding a lingzhi spray in its beak, the wings and tail feathers naturalistically rendered, the claws tucked beneath its body.

wood stand

China: Liao Dynasty (907-1125)
Height: 2.3/8in (6cm)

6



A white jade sword slide in the form of a kneeling Central Asian, the bearded tribute bearer holding an object raised to his right shoulder, the details of his robes well defined.

China: Tang/Song Dynasty (618-1279)
Height: 1.7/8in (4.8cm)

7



A pale celadon jade model of a seated Central Asian tribute bearer wearing pleated robes, the curled hair with a hair band, a Buddhist lion recumbent before him.

REFERENCE: Plate 42 A & B Oriental Ceramics Society 1960-62 Vol. 33

The cosmopolitan nature of Tang society is well known and is demonstrated by certain of the abundant tomb figures from this period. Dancers, actors and musicians from Central and Western Asia, slaves and boy servants from Bactria and Northwest India, dwarfs, Semitic merchants, Turkic and Persian characters and a type with a "cap of curls" and Graeco-Roman style draperies are all represented to give us a vivid picture of the varied ethnic types present in the Tang society.

In *Chinese Jades from Han to Ching*, Watt states that Iranians were known to have brought dogs as tribute to China in the eighth century.

China: Liao Dynasty (907-1125)
Height: 2.1/8in (5.5cm)

8



A white jade model of a seated monkey with bushy eyebrows and smiling expression, its body turned slightly to the left, with one hand placed on his head and the other on his leg.

China: Song/Yuan Dynasty (960-1368)
Length: 3.1/4in [8.3cm]

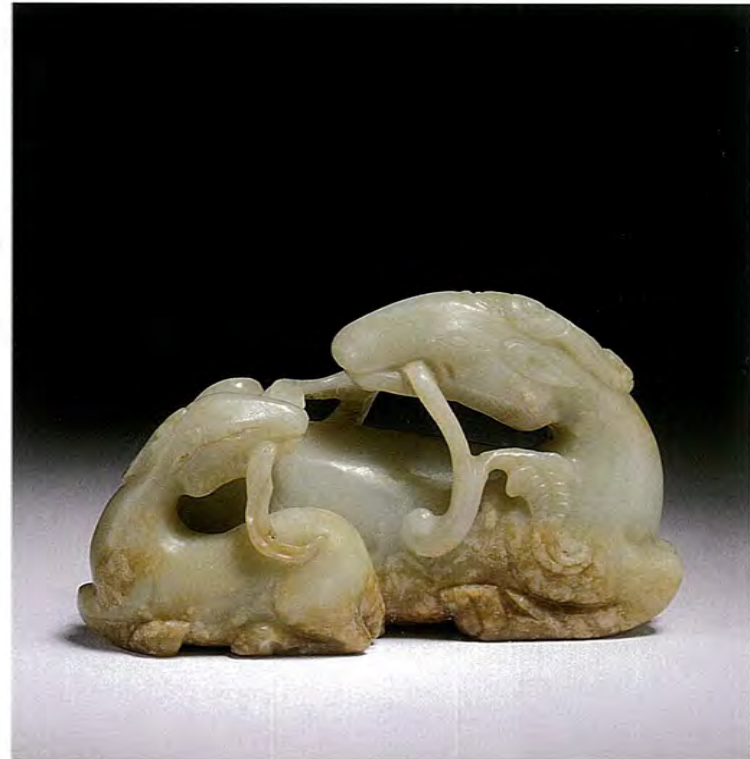
9



A mottled celadon deep brown jade model of a recumbent mythical beast, the caparisoned twin horned animal with pronounced angular face, the body carved with geometric designs, the saddle cloth with floral motifs above hanging pendants.

China: Yuan/early Ming Dynasty (14th/15th Century)
Length: 3.3/8in [8.5cm]

10



10. A pale celadon and russet jade deer group, the recumbent adult with its head turned back, holding a ruyi spray in its mouth, its young holding one branch in its mouth, both animals with a single horn, the underside of russet tone.

wood stand

China: Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)
Length: 2.3/4in (7cm)

11



A yellow and russet jade carving of a recumbent boy holding a stem of lotus flowers wrapped around his body, the stone well worked to enhance the details.

China: Ming Dynasty (16th/early 17th Century)
Length: 3.1/2in (8.9cm)

12



A white jade model of a qilong, its twisted and curled body striding forward, the head turned back with snarling expression, revealing its teeth and tongue, with bifurcated horn and tail, the details well defined and the stone of even tone

wood stand

PROVENANCE: Spink & Son
Bluett
W.W. Winkworth Collection

China: Ming Dynasty (16th/early 17th Century)
Length: 3.1/4in (8.3cm)

13



A celadon jade model of a standing elephant, its head turned to look behind and the tail flicked to one side, the rippled skin naturalistically defined, the stone with slight russet inclusions.

PROVENANCE: Private English Collection

REFERENCE: Plate 176, p.120, Chinesische Jaden,
Burkart-Baur, Museum Rietberg Zurich.

China: 17th Century
Height: 3.1/4in (8.3cm)

14



A white jade model of a standing tribute bearer, the bearded Central Asian with curled hair, wearing long robes tied with a cord at his waist, the stone of even colour.

REFERENCE: Plate 217 A & B, and p.75, Oriental Ceramics Society
1973-75, vol. 40 for a similar example.

China: Late Ming Dynasty (early 17th Century)
Length: 2.1/2in [6.4cm]

15



A white and russet jade ink palette of natural pebble form, the stone well polished and of good tone.

China: 18th Century
Height: 2.1/8in [5.5cm]

16



A white jade miniature brushpot of cylindrical form, carved in relief with flowering prunus branches, the base recessed, the stone with slight russet inclusions.

China: 18th Century
Length: 4.1/2in (11.5cm)

17



A rare pale celadon jade Duan-style inkstone carved in the form of a pebble, the inkstone of white tone with slight russet inclusions to the rim, the box of deep even celadon tone, thinly carved and highly polished, the cover with a two line inscription with traces of green lacquer, the base carved with a raised foot.

The inkstone with lacquered collection number 35.403.1.1 and label marked J-2

The inscription may be translated:

"Unworked jade from Jingshan,
In the shape of a Duan stone;
Carve it to use it,
from it graphs are born"

Jingshan was famous in the Warring States period for its reserves of jade. One of the most celebrated pieces of jade in Chinese history, the Heshibi, for which the King of Qin offered the King of Chu fifteen towns in exchange, was mined here. The inscription of the box alludes to the beauty of the jade inkstone to that of Heshibi, while its form recalls that of a Duan stone.

see introduction

China or Turkey: 15th/16th Century
Height: 18.1/2in (47cm)



18

A greyish-green jade candlestick, the bell shaped body with a recessed foot rising to a baluster shaped shaft, beneath a circular drip pan and cylindrical bamboo style stick, the stone with russet inclusions and natural fissures.

REFERENCE: Plate 345 and p. 105, *Oriental Ceramics Society 1973-75*, vol. 40, such Islamic shapes are found in porcelain and reflect the significant role of Muslim society in China. The possibility of a non Chinese, perhaps Turkish or even Persian origin for this candle stick is nevertheless possible.

Plate 29, p. 23, *First Under Heaven*, The Art of Asia, Hali, for an example of a brass oil lamp (chiraghdan) of similar form, made in the second half of the 15th Century.

China: Qianlong (1736-95)
Height: 6.1/2in (16.5cm)

19

A rare Imperial pale celadon jade figure of the Guanyin Bodhisattva, seated in the rajalilasana posture on a rockwork base, with the elbow posed on the raised left knee, and the head angled slightly to the side, the diaphanous clothing over the left shoulder and down over the crossed legs, the hair is pulled up into an elaborate chignon clasped with a diadem, a pendant hangs around the chest, complimented by arm and wrist bracelets, all encrusted with semi-precious stones, another pendant to the upper back.

Fitted zitan wood stand carved with further rockwork, and fitted silk-lined hongmu rectangular box and sliding cover with incised green and red lacquered Imperial inscription, which reads;

*ceng zai tianjin liao shi
qing yuzhi fan fo yi zun
lu shan*

Formerly in the Liao family of Tianjin
A foreign-style Buddha made to Imperial Command

REFERENCE: Plate 568, Chinese Sculpture, Siren, Vol.II, a grey limestone sculpture in similar pose, dated between 907-1127 AD.

Plate 69, The Mount Trust Collection of Chinese Art, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1970, a dry lacquer figure in similar posture, dated Song Dynasty, 13th Century.
Plate 90, page 124, Chinese Art, Goldschmidt and Moreau-Gobard, a white jade seated Bodhisattva, dated Qianlong (1736-95) with its origins in Tang sculpture and Indian art.

Plate 154, page 154, jades [Gems of Beijing Cultural Relics Series], Ninghua and Xincheng, a seated Buddhist figure.

see introduction





China: Song Dynasty (906-1178)
Diameter: 5.3/4in (14.6cm)

20



A pair of red lacquered seven lobed foliate dishes, each with slightly flared sides rising from a short cylindrical foot, the interior of the base a deep, dark brown, the interior with a recessed rim.

REFERENCE: Plate 16 (black) and 17 (red), inventory nos. P43 and P96.
For similar shape Plate 21, inventory no. P78 (eight lobed dish, Yuan dynasty; inventory no. P47 (twelve lobed tray),
Drache und Phoenix, Lackarbeiten Aus China, Sammlung
Familie Lee, Tokyo, published Köln, 1990.

see introduction

China: Ming Dynasty (late 15th/early 16th century)
Diameter: 4³/₄.in (12.1cm)

21



A cinnabar lacquer circular dish carved with two boys below a fruiting tree, one figure holding a leafy branch, the other a tasselled ruyi among rockwork and bamboo, within a border of prunus branches, on grounds of key fret and cell pattern, the exterior with flowering peonies.

PROVENANCE Monsieur et Madame Lahmani Collection, Paris.

China: Ming Dynasty (late 15th/early 16th Century)
Height: 5.1/2.in (14cm)
Width: 4.in (10.2cm)

22



A four-colour cinnabar lacquer square three-tiered box and cover, on a shaped foot, the top carved in deep relief with a boy riding on the back of a qilin before another standing figure carrying a long pole with hanging silk tassels, the figures on a riverbank among rockwork below willow branches and the moon, the ground carved with geometric designs, the sides of each tier with flowering peony branches, the interior dark brown.

see introduction

China: Ming Dynasty (late 15th/early 16th Century)
Height: 6.in (15.2cm)
Width: 6.3/8in (16.2cm)



23

A cinnabar lacquer quatrefoil four-tiered box and cover, the top carved in relief with a scholar seated at the window of a retreat, his attendant at the side of the building, a further figure of a fisherman on a boat playing a flute, all in a landscape of willow and pine issuing from rockwork above a lake, three birds in flight before the moon, the sides of each tier decorated with a narrow band of scrolling foliage, the foot rim with a pattern of demi-florettes, the interior black.

REFERENCE: Plate 27a, no. 47, Chinese Lacquer, The British Museum, for a similar design.

Goa: 17th/18th Century
Length: 5.3/4in (14.5cm)

24



An ivory model of a sleeping shepherd boy, probably a young John the Baptist, the figure resting on a bed of leaves, his head on his right arm, wearing an animal skin jacket and pants tied with a tassel, the overall details well defined.

China: Ming Dynasty (late 16th/early 17th Century)
Diameter: 2.3/8in (6.2cm)

China: Ming Dynasty (late 16th/early 17th Century)
Diameter: 2.1/4in (5.7cm)

25 26



A cinnabar lacquer wine cup, carved in relief to the exterior with fruiting, leafy lychee branches on a florette ground, between two bands of key fret and lappets, the interior and foot black.

A cinnabar lacquer wine cup, carved in relief to the exterior with fruiting, leafy lychee branches on a florette ground, the interior and foot silver-lined.

PROVENANCE: Monsieur et Madame Lahmani Collection, Paris

REFERENCE: A very similar cup from the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, USA is illustrated in *Hai-wai Yi-chen Chinese Art in Overseas Collections*; Lacquerware, published by the National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, 1987, p. 86, plate 83.

China: Wanli (1573-1619)
 Height: 4.1/2.in (11.5cm)
 Width: 10. 7/8.in (27.6cm)
 Depth: 7.1/4.in (18.5cm)

27



A cinnabar lacquer deep rectangular box and cover, carved with a group of conversing scholars and two attendants, one fanning a stove, the figures in a landscape of pierced rockwork, pine trees and bamboo below cloud scrolls, all on a diaper-pattern ground, the sides with peonies and magnolia branches issuing from further pierced rockwork, the interior black.

REFERENCE: Plates 122-1 & 122-2, p. 133, *A Journey Into China's Antiquity*, Vol. Four, Yuan – Qing Dynasty, National Museum of Chinese History for a similar shaped deep box with birds and flowers design.

see introduction

China: Song Dynasty (960-1279)
Height: 33.in (84cm)

28

A grey sandstone model of a standing boy, his head turned slightly to his left, with smiling expression, the hair falling naturalistically around his head, wearing a double tunic secured at the waist with a belt and cicada clasp, the right side of the garment joined with a tie, the folds well defined overall, with traces of red pigment on the belt.

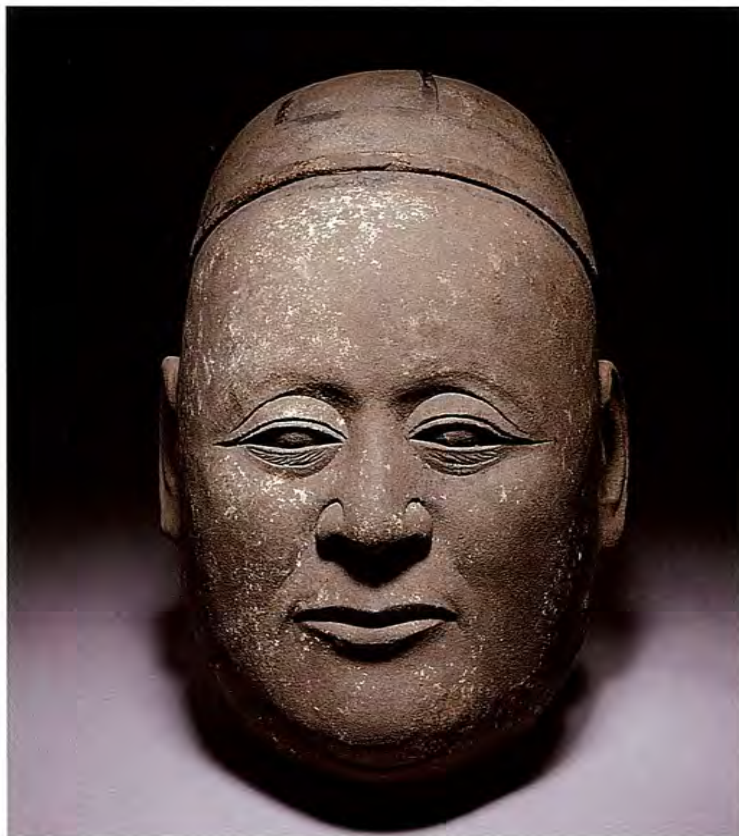
Mounted on a block base

see introduction



China: 18th Century
Length: 11.1/2in [29.2cm]

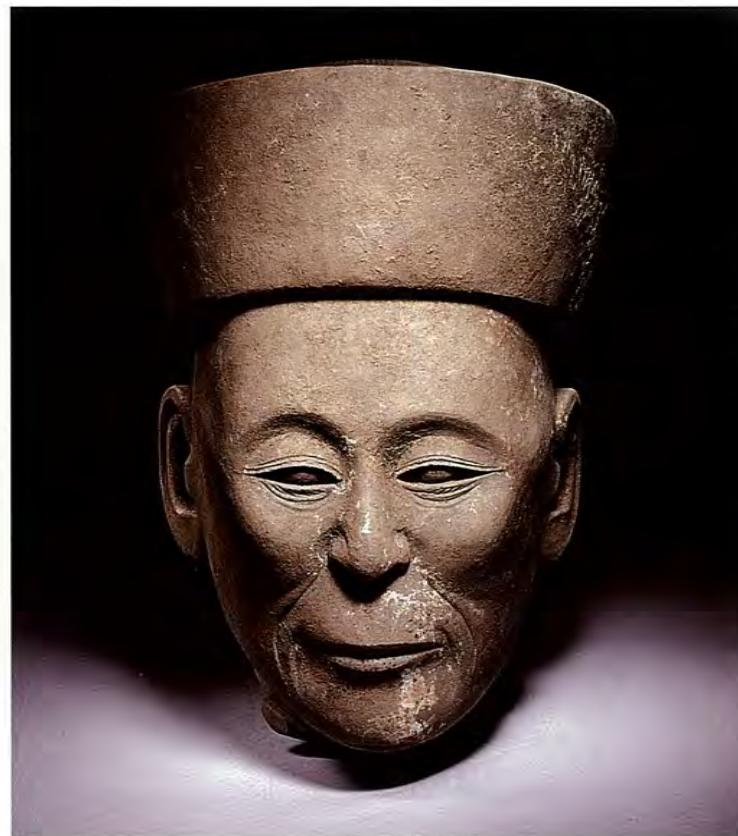
29



A red sandstone portrait head of an official wearing a circular cap with attached long simulated silk tassel covering the braided hair, the lifelike features naturalistically defined, the details of the cap and hair with traces of paint, lacquer and gilt.

China: Early 18th Century
Length: 12.1/4in [31cm]

30

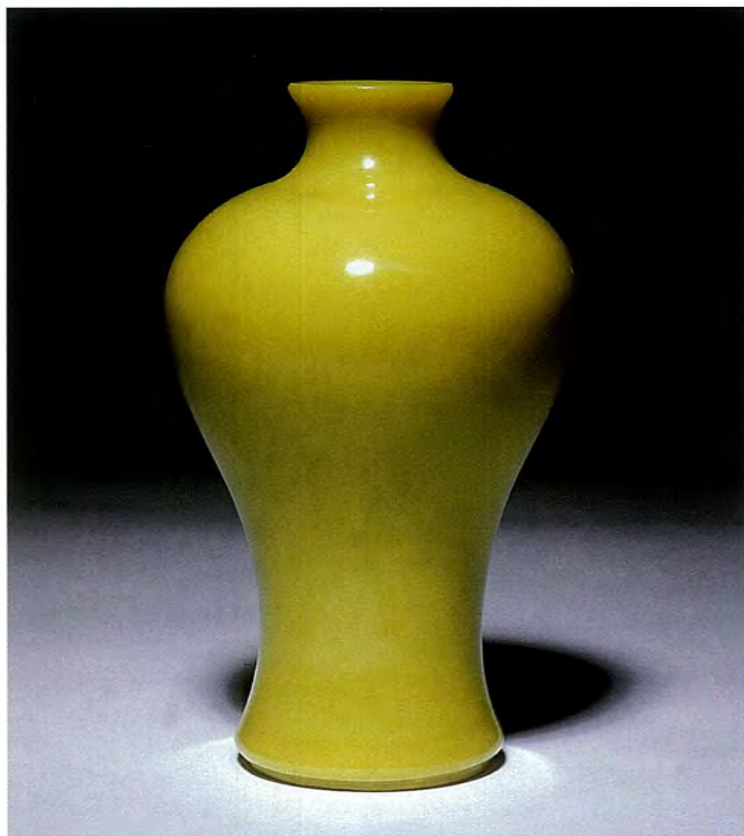


A red sandstone portrait head of an official wearing a hat, the hair braided at the back, the lifelike features naturalistically defined.

China: Qianlong seal mark and of the period (1736-95)
Length: 6.1/4in (15.9cm)

China: Incised Qianlong four-character mark
within a square and of the period (1736-95)
Height: 7.in (17.8cm)

31



A lemon-yellow glass meiping, the everted rim above a bulbous neck narrowing to a waisted foot.

32



A Peking blue glass mallet-shaped bottle vase, the cylindrical neck with everted rim rising from a beehive shaped body, the glass of clear tone.



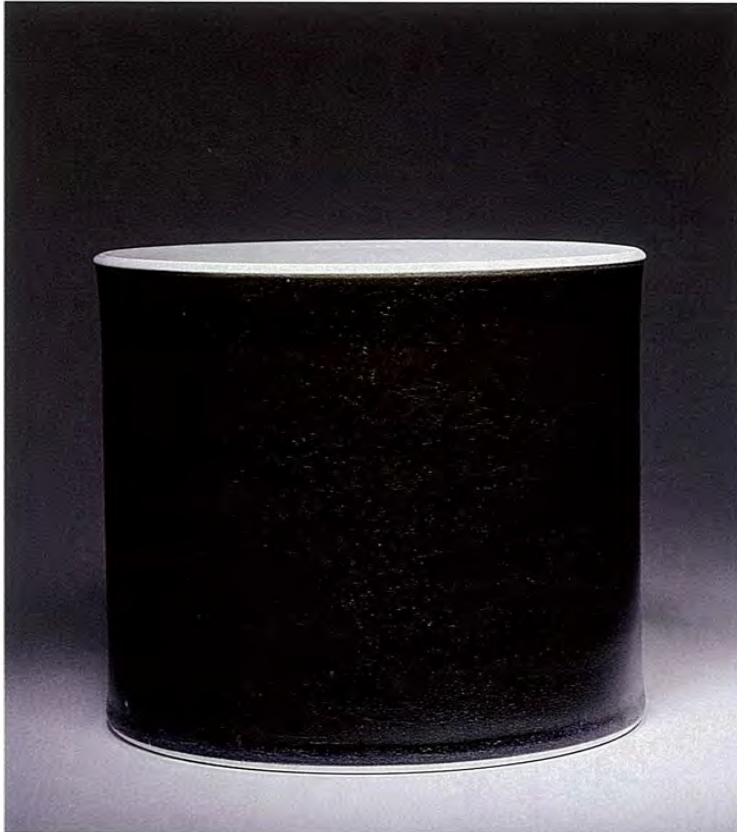
PROVENANCE: English Private Collection

REFERENCE: For a very similar blue glass vase of the same period see plate 42, p.158-9, *Elegance and Radiance, Grandeur in Qing Dynasty Glass*, The Andrew K.F. Lee Collection, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

For a similar turquoise glass vase of the Jiaqing period see number 43, p. 43, *The Robert H. Clague Collection, Chinese Glass of the Qing Dynasty 1644-1911*, Phoenix Art Museum, 1987.

China: Kangxi (1662-1722)
Height: 6.in (15.2cm)
Diameter: 6.7/8in (17.5cm)

33



A mirror black monochrome glazed cylindrical brushpot, the exterior painted with an even glaze, the interior white, the flat base with recessed centre.

China: Kangxi (1662-1722)
Height: 4 3/4.in (12.1cm)

34



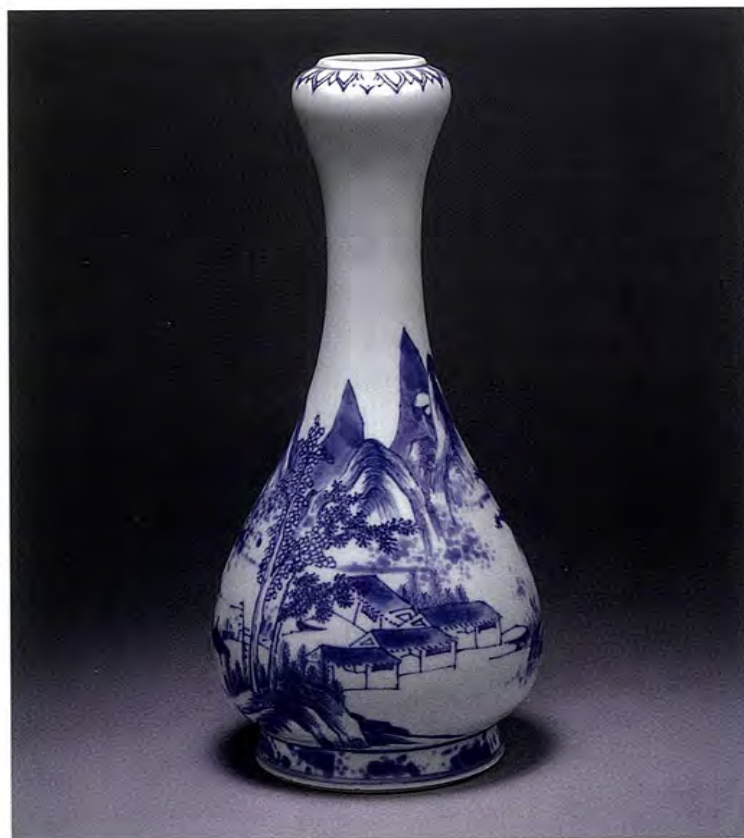
A pair of blanc-de-chine models of hawks perched on rocky bases, the heads turned slightly to one side, the details well defined.

REFERENCE: Plate 243, p. 93, Burghley House, Stamford, Lady Victoria Leatham
Plate 54, p. 103, Blanc De Chine, Divine Images in Porcelain, John Ayres, China Institute 2002, from the Kroger Collection, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, the State Art Museum of Florida [30.203].

China: Kangxi Xuande four character mark, (1662-1722)
Height: 8 1/2.in (21.5cm)

China: Early Kangxi (1662-1722)
Height: 8.1/2in (21.5cm)
Diameter: 13.1/2in (34.3cm)

35



35. An underglaze blue and white pear shaped vase with garlic neck painted in the Master of the Rocks style, with a cluster of buildings and a retreat beside a river, before various trees including pine and willow, the horizon dominated by numerous mountainous peaks, the neck with a lappet design.

36



An underglaze blue and white circular dish painted in The Master of the Rocks style, with three figures standing on a rocky outcrop and a lone fisherman in a boat below a tree strewn mountainous landscape incorporating retreats and flocks of birds, the reverse with bamboo sprays around an unglazed recessed foot.

REFERENCE: Plate 92, page 143, Seventeen Century Chinese Porcelain from The Butler Family Collection, Butler, Medley and Little.

China: Ming Dynasty (16th/17th Century)
 Dimensions: 9.3/4in (23.8cm) x 15.in (38.1cm)

37

An underglaze blue and white calligraphic tile of rectangular form, consisting of thirty-two lines of twenty gridded characters, the inscriptions part of a text relating to the subjects of local history, topography and astronomy, the rims and back unglazed.

Column 1 appears to read:

"...in the south. (When) the sun is situated in Shen (Orion), in the evening it is seen to the south, so (it) is the Quail's Tail...."

The second column appears to read:

"...the Great Dragon curls (or "curled") round...."

The third column appears to read:

"...inside...but still (?). (When) the sun is situated in Di (Libra), in the morning (it) is seen in the centre of the sky.
 (When) the sun is in Wei (Musca Borealis), in the evening..."

NB This may be describing the movement of a planet such as Venus.

The penultimate column appears to have some small-scale topographical descriptions relating to the location of a spring, or some object near the spring.

The left-most column refers to the splitting apart of the contiguous states of Lu, Wei, Song, Zheng and Zhou, an event which historically occurred in the first half of the first millennium BC.

The text ends with the word "Song", which in context is clearly a new sentence relating to the ancient State of Song.

see introduction



29

China: Xuande period (1426-35)
Dimensions: 9.in. (22.9cm) square

An underglaze blue and white square floor tile painted with a central flower head encircled by lappets, surrounded by three concentric circles containing overlapping ovals, within half-foliage scrolls and quarter sections of flowers to the corners

REFERENCE: for identical examples see plate 4:39, 4:40, p.139, Ming Ceramics in the British Museum, Jessica Harrison-Hall, 2001

Harrison-Hall writes "These square floor tiles, made from thick slabs of porcelain clay, are decorated on the upper surface only with stylized motifs painted beneath the glaze in blue cobalt:....."

Stylistically the tiles relate to Islamic motifs found on Chinese pilgrim flasks and *lianzi* (lotus-seed) bowls made in the Xuande era. The concentric pattern of overlapping ovals is repeated on a Xuande mark and period covered cloisonné box in the Pierre Uldry Collection. Part of a tile with the same design, but reversed with white decoration on a blue ground, was excavated at Jingdezhen at Dongyuan, Zhushan, in 1993. Other blue-and-white tiles unearthed there confirm that the present tiles were made at the imperial factory in the Xuande era.

It is possible that these unusual tiles belong to a group made to order for a Near Eastern customer. In his memoirs the Mughal emperor Babur (died 1525) refers to Timur's (1336-1405) grandson Ulugh Bef (1394-1449), who served as governor of the provisional Central Asian capital of Samarkand from 1409 and went on to rule the empire in the last two years of his life and who had a *chinikhaneh* (porcelain room) whose walls were faced with imported Chinese tiles. Local potters made blue-and-white tiles in poorer-quality materials in Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon and Syria during the first half of the fifteenth century.



China: Qianlong (1736-95)

Dimensions: 74.1/2.in (189.7cm) x 45.1/4.in (115cm) framed.

39

A large painting in colours on silk, depicting Immortals including the Ba Xian (Zhongli Quan, Lu Dongbin, Li Tieguai, Zhang Guolao, Han Xiangzi, Cao Guoqiu, Lan Caihe, He Xian'gu), The Three Stars (The Gods of Good Fortune, Emolument and Longevity, respectively Fuxing, Luxing and Shouxing or Shoulao, standing in a pine strewn mountainous landscape before a lake, each deity holds an attribute in supplication to Shoulao, flying above them on a crane, their faces realistically defined, the robes carefully detailed.

The signature reads: written by Pan Chengpei.

In paintings the Immortals often appear in their role of well-wishers, and portrayed, as here, in their care-free lives in the Kunlun mountains.



China: Early 17th Century
Dimensions: 52.5/8 in [133.7cm] x 47.in [119.5cm] framed and glazed.

40

A painting in colours on silk, depicting a tethered and seated male lion, the chain attached around his neck with a red silk tassel, the animal below a spreading pine tree from which is suspended flowering vines, and above bamboo sprays.

With two line inscription: song gou longshuang.song shi tu
zhen ji shen pin
song dong jushi ti

Picture of pines and lions by Gou Longshuang
Bearing the traces of divine inspiration
written by the pine cave hermit

Gou Longshuang was a painter active in the reign of Emperor Shenzong (A.D. 1068 -1085)

Song Dong Xiansheng " Master of the Pine Cave" was the alias of Zhao Hongwei, who was a Secretarial Censor (zhishu shi yushi - Junior 2nd Grade official) in the Yuan Dynasty. This is probably the intended reference in the signature.

Paintings with exotic animals were examples of work executed at the Ming court to record the presentation of foreign tribute, to which the Chinese emperors always accorded great importance. Such paintings, often of noble tribute horses selected for their beauty or strength of character for special notice by the emperor, were executed by painters officially attached to the court and given official ranks in the Imperial Guard, thereby allowing them access to work within the palace itself. The above example, a lion, is a much rarer example.

REFERENCE: A similar example formerly in the Essayan Collection which depicted a tethered lioness with two emissaries (a Persian and an Afghan) which was presented to the Chenghua emperor (1465-87) and dated 1483, all portrayed from life. No.152, plate 90, a Tang Dynasty album leaf on silk depicting a tribute bearer with an exotic animal, Chinese Cultural Art Treasures, National Palace Museum Illustrated Handbook, 1970.

see introduction

宋龍松真品
勾爽獅蹟

松潤居士題



China: 15th Century
Height: 4.in (12cm)

41

An underglaze blue and white stem bowl finely potted with deep rounded sides, flaring at the rim and supported on a slightly splayed foot, painted to the exterior with four gambolling mythical lions, within horizontal lines forming the borders, the foot painted with a continuous scrolling band above an unglazed rim, the interior with a further lion within a double ring roundel.

With original leather and basket weave carrying case.

see introduction



China: Yongle (1403-1425)

Stembowl diameter: 6.1/8in (15.5cm) height: 4.3/8in (11.1cm)

Box diameter: 8.1/4in (21cm) height: 6.1/2in (16.5cm)

42



A very rare white glazed tianbai stembowl with red and gold lacquered leather fitted box, the bowl finely potted with deep rounded sides flaring at the rim and supported on a slightly splayed hollow foot, a moulded horizontal line below the bowl, covered overall with an even milky-white transparent glaze; the box painted and incised in gold with bands of scrolling flower heads and foliage within borders of lotus petals and scrolls, on a red ground, the interior silk lined and cushioned.

PROVENANCE: Private American collection.

There are a number of published examples of anhua-decorated Yongle stem bowls, with or without marks. There appears to be no published examples of undecorated stem bowls of the Yongle period, although undecorated tianbai or 'sweet white' wares do exist, as mentioned by Geng Baochang, *Ming Qing Ciqi Jianding*, Forbidden City Press, 1993, p.36. Evidence from excavation at Jingdezhen indicates that stem bowls without decorations were produced, cf. *Imperial Porcelains of the Yongle and Xuande Periods Excavated from the Site of the Ming Imperial Factory at Jingdezhen*, Hong Kong, 1989, p.84, where a similar stem bowl bearing an anhua Yongle mark is illustrated, p.85, no.1.

REFERENCE: For similar examples of encased Ming stem bowls in blue and white and white jade see *Treasures from Snow Mountains* at the Shanghai Museum, 2001, no's 95 and 99. For a Yongle white glazed monk's cap ewer with lacquered leather case see Sotheby's Hong Kong, 31st October 1995, lot 357.

see introduction



China: Dated, Second Year of Yongle, (1404)
Signed: Brush of Jing Chi

Dimensions: 87in (221cm) x 52 3/4in (134cm)
mounted later on yellow silk brocade

43

A rare large Buddhist painting on silk in colours and gilt depicting Guanyin seated in lilasana, on a grass mat placed above flowering lotus among waves and rockwork, wearing flowing robes and celestial scarves picked out in gilt with chrysanthemum heads, the edges with scrolling foliage, the hair pulled up in an elaborate high chignon mounted with a jewel encrusted diadem inset with a seated figure of Amitabha Buddha, further long strands of the hair falling over the shoulders, the body adorned with an intricate necklace and pendants, arm and wrist bracelets, all before a double-halo and cloud scrolls, the top left corner with a figure of Guandi presenting a ceremonial sword, the right with bamboo and pine branches, the lower half with three devotees among further rockwork and clouds.

The Shanghai dictionary of artists' names and aliases records four monk painters of the Song and Yuan periods whose names began Jing "Tranquil", though not Jing Chi (Wade-Giles "Ching Ch'ih"). The name is likely to be its bearer's religious name. It seems unlikely that there was much of a personality cult surrounding the monk painters who created religious icons at this date, so the fact that the name is not in the dictionary comes as no surprise. The character Jing occurs in many secular individuals' personal alias names, but again Jing Chi is not recorded.

see introduction





selected bibliography

- National Museum of Chinese History, *A Journey into China's Antiquity, Volume Four*, BeiJing, 1997.
- The Hong Kong Museum of Art, *From BeiJing to Versailles Artistic Relations between China and France*, Hong Kong, 1997.
- Victoria and Albert Museum, *Chinese Art and Design*, London, 1991.
- The Grice Collection of Chinese Carved Ivories, Graves Art Gallery, Sheffield
- Lloyd Hyde, J.A. *Chinese Painted Enamels*, New York, 1970
- The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, *Selected Works*, San Francisco, 1994.
- Temple, Robert, *The Genius of China*, London, 1986.
- AFAA/le musée national du Palais, Taipei, *Tresors du Musée national du Palais*, Taipei, Paris, 1998.
- Assadullah Souren Melikian – Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from The Iranian World, 8-18th Centuries*, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1982
- Watson, William, *The Arts of China to AD 900*, Yale, 1995.
- Lee, Sherman, *China, 5000 Years, Innovation and Transformation in the Arts*, New York, 1998.
- The National Palace Museum, Taipei, *Auspicious Ju-I Sceptres of China*, Taipei, 1995.
- The Complete Collection of the Treasures of the Palace Museum, *Paintings by the Court Artists of The Qing Court*, Taipei, 1999
- Minnesota Museum of Art, *Jade as Sculpture*, Minnesota, 1975
- Whitfield, Roderick; Farrer, Anne, *Caves of the Thousand Buddhas*, New York, 1990.
- Eberhard, Wolfram, *A Dictionary of Chinese Symbols*, Taiwan, 1994.
- Clunas, Craig, *Art in China*, [Oxford History of Art], Oxford, 1997.
- The Oriental Ceramic Society, *The Animal in Chinese Art*, London 1968.
- Chapman, Jan, *The Art of Rhinoceros Horn Carving in China*, London 1999.
- Soame Jenyns, R.; Watson, William, *Chinese Art* (3 vols.), London, 1963.
- Schneeberger, Pierre-F.; *The Baur Collection*, Geneva, *Chinese Jades*, Geneva, Howard Hansford.S, *Chinese Jade Carving*, London, 1950
- Medley, Margaret, *The Westward Influence of The Chinese Arts, Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia No. 3*, London, 1972.
- Victoria and Albert Museum, *Chinese Jade throughout the Ages*, London, 1975.
- The Oriental Ceramics Society, *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramics Society*, *Weltbekannte Kulturstadt, Xi'an, BeiJing* 1996.
- Yu Zhuoyun, *Palaces of the Forbidden City*, New York, 1984.
- Rawson, Jessica, *Chinese Jade From the Neolithic to the Qing*, London, 1995.
- Keverne, Roger, *Jade*, London, 1991.
- Fang Jing Pei, *Treasures of the Chinese Scholar*, New York, 1997.
- National Palace Museum, Taiwan, *Great National Treasures of China*, Taipei, 1994.
- Burlington Fine Arts Club, *Illustrated Catalogue of Chinese Art*, London, 1915.
- Kleiner, Robert, *Chinese Jades from the Collection of Alan and Simone Hartman*, Hong Kong, 1996.
- Chu-Tsing Li; Watt, James C.Y., *The Chinese Scholar's Studio*, New York, 1987.
- Oriental Art, New Series XII, Autumn 1966*, pages 176-182.
- Tsang, G. and Moss, H. *Hong Kong OCS Exhibition of Arts from the Scholars Studio*, Hong Kong, 1986.

- Kleiner, Robert; Chinese Jades from the Collection of Alan and Simone Hartman, New York, 1996.
- Guangwen, Zhang, Jade Artifact Collection in the Palace Museum, Beijing, 1996.
- Watt, James C.Y., East Asian Lacquer, New York, 1991
- Spink & Son Ltd, The George de Menasce Collection, 1972
- Spink & Son Ltd, The Minor Arts of China, Vols 1-1V
- Exhibition of Chinese Art, Venezia, 1954
- The Burrell Collection, Glasgow, 1983
- Spink & Son Ltd, An Exhibition of Fine Jade, 1981
- Bluett & Sons, Oriental Art, 1988
- Jades from Tientsin, Hong Kong, 1990
- Watt, James, C.Y., Chinese Jades from the Collection of the Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, 1989
- Kelley, Clarence W., Stones of Virtue, Ohio, 1989
- Sydney L. Moss Ltd, Documentary Chinese Works of Art, In Scholars' Taste, 1983
- Pacific Asia Museum, Chinese Jade, The Image from Within, Pasadena, 198
- The Edition Committee of the Complete Works of Chinese Jade, Volume V, Hebei Province, 1993
- Fong, Wen C.; Watt James C.Y., Possessing the Past Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei, New York, 1996.
- .Little, Stephen, Taoism and the Arts of China, Chicago, 2000.
- Orientations, Chinese Jade, Selected Articles From Orientations 1983-1996, Hong Kong, 1997.
- Schneeberger, Pierre-F., The Baur Collection Chinese Jades And Other Hardstones, Geneve, 1976.
- Brinker, Helmut; Lutz, Albert, Chinese Cloisonne The Pierre Uldry Collection, Zurich, 1985..
- Cahill, James, The Compelling Image, Harvard College, 1982.
- Ghose, Rajeshwari, In the Footsteps of the Buddha, Hong Kong, 1998.
- Wang Qing Yu, Dazu Rock Carvings of China, Wanli Book Co. Chongqing Press, 1991
- The Mount Trust Collection of Chinese Art, Victoria and Albert Museum, London 1970 Cary Welch, Stuart, India Art and Culture 1300-1900, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985
- Ayers, John, Blanc de Chine, Divine Images in Porcelain, China Institute Gallery, New York, 2002
- Arizzoli-Clémente, Pierre, Kangxi, Empereur de Chine, Paris, 2004
- Flores, Jorge and Vassallo e Silva, Nuno, Goa and the Great Mughal, Lisbon, 2004
- Chin Hsiao-i, Monarchy and its Buddhist Way Tibetan-Buddhist Ritual Implements in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, 1999.
- Jacobsen, Robert D., Appreciating China, Gifts from Ruth and Bruce Dayton, Minneapolis, 2002
- Low-Beer, Fritz, The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Bulletin No. 22, 1950
- Carved Lacquer, Nezu Institute of Fine Arts, Japan, 1984
- Hung, Wu and Morgan, Brian, Chinese Jades from the Mu-Fei Collection, Bluetts, London, 1990
- Chiang, Fu-tsung, Masterpieces of Chinese Carved Lacquer Ware in the National Palace Museum, Taiwan, 1971
- Lee King Tsi, Hu Shih Chang, Drache Und Phoenix, Cologne, 1990
- Cheng, Te-k'un, An Introduction to Szechwan Archaeology, Chengdu, 1947
- Ung Vai Meng, Qing Legacies, The Sumptuous Art of Imperial Packaging, The Macau Museum of Art, Macau, 2000
- .José Luis de Sales Marques, The Golden Exile, Pictorial Expressions of the School of Western Missionaries, Macau, 2002
- Wilson, Ming, Chinese Jades, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 2004

Chronology

Xia dynasty	B.C. 2100-1600	
Shang dynasty	1600 - 1100	
Western Zhou	1100 - 771	
Eastern Zhou	770 - 256	
Warring States	475 - 221	
Qin dynasty	221 - 206	
Han dynasty	206 - A.D. 220	
Six dynasties	A.D. 220 - 581	
Sui dynasty	581 - 618	
Tang dynasty	618 - 906	
Five dynasties	907 - 960	
Liao dynasty	907 - 1125	
Northern Song	960 - 1127	
Southern Song	1128- 1279	
Jin dynasty	1115- 1234	
Yuan dynasty	1279- 1368	
Ming dynasty	1368- 1644	
Hongwu		1368-1398
Jianwen		1399-1402
Yongle		1403-1424
Hongxi		1425
Xuande		1426-1435
Zhengtong		1436-1449
Jingtai		1450-1456
Tianshun		1457-1464
Chenghua		1465-1487
Hongzhi		1488-1505
Zhengde		1506-1521
Jiajing		1522-1566
Longqing		1567-1572
Wanli		1573-1619
Taichang		1620-1620
Tianqi		1621-1627
Chongzhen		1628-1643
Qing dynasty		1644-1912
Shunzhi		1644-1662
Kangxi		1662-1722
Yongzheng		1723-1735
Qianlong		1736-1795
Jiaqing		1796-1820
Daoguang		1821-1850
Xianfeng		1851-1861
Tongzhi		1862-1874
Guangxu		1875-1908
Xuantong		1909-1911



