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Yazhi - Elegantly Made

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“Elegantly Made”, the title of this catalogue, translates the culturally rich and aesthetically sophisticated binomial expression *yazhi* 雅製 into English. The relationship between *ya* and *zhi* may be simple and easy to understand, but connotations of the individual characters *ya* and *zhi* extend to wide spectrums of extended meaning and their combination in *yazhi* adds up to a sum much greater than their parts. The term “elegantly made” may, in fact, serve as a point of reference that leads to a remarkably wide and deep exploration of culturally-based aesthetic principles that span genre, medium, time, and social context.

Let us first look at the respective etymologies of *ya* and *zhi*. Since the etymology and range of meanings for *zhi* is considerably less complicated, we analyze it first. According to the earliest Chinese dictionary, the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (Explanations of Simple and Compound Characters) of Xu Shen 許慎 (ca. 55–ca.149), the original meaning of *zhi* 製 is “cut cloth” (*cai* 裁). It is a composite ideogram consisting of three simple pictograms *dao* 刀 “knife”, *wei* 未 tree with many branches” (top left variant graph opposite 丩 to the right), and *yi* 衣 “cloth” below. From the original meaning “cut cloth”, *zhi* developed over time into “cut” anything in general, which, extended further, came to mean “process”, “fabricate”, and “make”—everything from practical objects of everyday life to literary works and works of art. As a gerund/noun *zhi* may be rendered “making” or (something) “made”—in the arts and literature “composition” or “work”.

According to the *Shuowen*, *ya* 雅 is “a bird native to the region of Chu” (*Chu niao* 楚鳥); it consists of two graphs, *ya* 牙, a simple pictogram of a lower tooth (*muchi* 牡齒), here used, devoid of meaning, as a phonetic in combination with the significant *zhui* 隹, a simple pictogram serving as “the general term for short-tailed birds”. However, the character *ya* 雅 was soon used as a phonetic loan (*jiajie* 假借) to represent ideas and concepts that have nothing to do with either birds or teeth. Depending on context, these include (1) “Correct”, equivalent to *zheng* 正, as in the *Lunyu* 論語 (Analects) of Confucius, chapter 7: “I transmit but [do not initiate]” (*Shuer* 述而): 子所雅言，詩、書、執禮，皆雅言也。“Occasions when the Master used correct pronunciation included recitation of the *Odes* and the *Documents*, as well as for the performance of rites. For all these he used correct [i.e. non-dialect] pronunciation (*yayan*)”. Given the context, it is likely that “correct” here also connotes “learned” and “refined”—as befitting the utterances of a scholarly gentleman. (2) *Ya* appears in the titles of two sub-genres of the *Odes* (Book of Songs), the oldest existing collection of Chinese poetry, 305 works (11th –7th centuries B.C.E.), the *Daya* 大雅 (Greater Elegentiae) and *Xiaoya* 小雅 (Lesser Elegentiae), eulogies and celebratory pieces for performance at court rituals and imperial banquets—all with obvious aristocratic associations. (3) *Ya* meaning “elegant” or “graceful” describes personal character and appearance, as, for example, in the biography of the great *fu* 賦 (rhapsody) poet Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (ca. 179–117 B.C.E.), *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Grand Historian), chapter 117, of Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145 – ca. 86 B.C.E.):

是時卓王孫有女文君新寡，好音，故相如繆與令相重，而以琴心挑之。從車騎，雍容閒雅甚都。及飲卓氏，弄琴，文君竊從戶窺之，心悅而好之，恐不得當也。既罷，相如乃使人重賜文君侍者通殷勤。文君夜亡奔相如，相如乃與馳歸成都。

At the time, Wenjun, the daughter of Zhuo Wangsun was recently widowed, and because she loved music, Xiangru, trading on his high reputation with the local prefect to cloak his scheme, proposed to use his zither to win her heart. Arriving with an entourage of horsemen, debonair and poised, carefree and elegant (*ya*), and very much with the aplomb of a capital dandy, he arrived at the Zhuo residence to attend a drinks banquet. When he began to play the zither, Wenjun, surreptitiously observing him through a doorway, was so delighted with him that she fell in love—but feared that it could not turn out well. However, when the party came to an end, Xiangru sent a messenger to convey to Wenjun’s servant that he cared for her most devotedly. That very night Wenjun eloped with Xiangru, who then raced back with her on horseback to Chengdu.

Although “elegant” (*ya*) was used to characterize and describe similar dashing, romantic figures from the Han, Three Kingdoms, and Six Dynasties eras, it was also used during the same time (4) to describe the making of elegant things. For example, in the *Yufu zhi* 輿服志 (Treatise on Carriages and Clothing), chapter 25, in the *Jinshu* 晉書 (History of the Jin era

[266–420]), ed. Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (579–648), a passage accounts for how accoutrements of royal life developed from remote antiquity to the then present, a passage that significantly contains the term “elegantly made” *yazhi*:

前史以為聖人見鳥獸容貌，草木英華，始創衣冠，而玄黃殊采；見秋蓬孤轉，杓鱗旁建，乃作輿輪，而方圓異則。遇物成象，觸類興端，周因於殷，其來已舊。成王之會，壇垂陰羽，五方之盛，有八十物者焉。宗馬鳥旌，奚往不格，殷公、曹叔，此焉低首。周禮，巾車氏建大赤以朝，大白以戎。雅製弘多，式遵遺範，賓入異憲，師行殊則，是以有嚴有翼，用光其武，鉤膺儻革，乃暢其文。

“Earlier histories observed that when the sages saw how birds and animals looked, how luxuriant was the beauty of shrubs and trees, they then began to have clothes and headgear fashioned in black and yellow and other colours. And when in autumn they saw tumbleweeds desolately rolling about and the Big Dipper Handle and Heaven’s Bodkin arrayed side by side, they had carriage wheels made according to the different standards of compass and square. Encountering things, they formed images of them, their minds alert to shared similarities. The Zhou followed the Yin-Shang dynasty in such things, so the source of all this is very old indeed. At the great assembly of King Cheng [1042/35–1006 B.C.E.] his dais was draped with pheasant feathers, and, throughout the assembly, were eighty different decorative objects, including

models of horses and bird banners that extended in every direction... According to ritual practices during the Zhou, the master of royal chariots had large red flags erected on them when used for attendance at court and large white flags erected on them when going to war. Things elegantly made (*yazhi*), produced in great number, in form faithfully followed models handed down from earlier times. Decorations for royal guests were subject to different regulations and those for commanders on the march had different standards. As such, though some expressed the utmost solemnity while others were less serious, they all served to ennoble the deeds of those for whom they were made. Even the hooked breast plates of their horses and metal ornamented reins displayed such distinctive ornamental designs.”

“Elegantly made” is thus associated with the flora and fauna of the natural world as seen throughout the seasons of the year, whose imagined likenesses in decorative motifs constitute the core of such art. Another essential feature is tradition: faithful following of earlier models should govern artistic practice. “Elegance” is also associated with aristocratic culture, where the arts dignify and ennoble the activities of life.

Tradition and adherence to models also figures importantly in “Forms and Original Nature” (*Tixing* 體性), chapter 27, in the *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 (Dragon Carvings on the Literary Mind) of Liu Xie 劉協

(ca. 465–ca. 521), where focus is on the relationship between tradition and the individual talent:

夫才有天資，學慎始習，斫梓染絲，功在初化，器成彩定，難可翻移。故童子雕琢，必先雅製，沿根討葉，思轉自圓，八體雖殊，會通合數，得其環中，則輻湊相成。故宜摹體以定習，因性以練才，文之司南，用此道也。

Although talent is a matter of natural endowment, when it comes to learning one should take care at the start of practice, since, as in carving catalpa or dyeing silk, success lies with how one starts to transform them, for once a vessel is finished or color fixed, they can only be changed with difficulty. Therefore, when a youngster takes up carving, he must make elegant making (*yazhi*) his first concern, for only by proceeding from this tap root may he go on to master the foliage, where his thought should wax full on its own. Although the eight forms of literary art differ, comprehensive study of them all as a single entity brings one to their exact center, where they mutually converge like the spokes of a wheel. Therefore, it is best that emulation of forms serves to define practice and compliance with one’s original nature serves to cultivate talent. Such a compass to literary art provides us this path.

Excellence in the arts and literature is thus attained by first emulating correct/elegant (*ya*) models, a process that with sustained practice and time leads

to the creation of original elegant (*ya*) works of one’s own.

(5) However, we should not overlook the simple fact that the term *ya* “elegance” played a much wider role in traditional Chinese culture, for it always stood in great contrast to judgements that something or someone was *su* 俗 “coarse”, “commonplace”, or “vulgar”. An early example where *ya*, perhaps more in the sense of “noble” than “elegant”, stands in opposition to *su* is found in a passage in “Four Things To Avoid” (*Sihui* 四諱), chapter 68, in Wang Chong 王充 (ca. 27–ca. 100) *Lunheng* 論衡 (Discourses Weighed in the Balance), a work devoted in large part to exposing and refuting popular superstitions. The passage accounts that when a lowly concubine of Tian Ying, prime minister of Qi, gave birth to a son during the fifth month, he ordered her to have it killed because, being born at the height of yang *qi*, he would grow taller than a door, signifying that he was inauspicious and would bring harm on his parents. However, the mother named the child Wen and hid him. When he grew up, she presented him to his father. Outraged, Tian Ying asked why she had not had him killed in infancy. The son Wen then argued that one’s fate could have nothing to do with the height of a door but was endowed by Heaven—which persuaded Tian Ying to reject the superstition and acknowledge Wen as his son. He then entrusted Wen with the management of his household and the entertainment of guests, which led to Wen’s excellent reputation among all the feudal rulers. The passage ends with:

夫田嬰、俗父，而田文、雅子也。嬰信忌不實義，文信命不辟諱，雅俗異材，舉措殊操。故嬰名聞而不明，文聲馳而不滅。

Whereas Tian Ying was a vulgar (*su*) father, Tian Wen was an elegant/noble (*ya*) son. Ying believed in taboos and not in what was really so, but Wen trusted in fate and would not avoid taboos. Elegant (*ya*) and vulgar (*su*), they so differed in talent and ability that their actions differed accordingly. Therefore, while Ying’s name is obscure and unknown, Wen’s reputation spread quickly and will not perish.

Su thus implies a wide range of negative meaning: lack of talent and ability, deficiency in intelligence and experience, limitation to the commonplace and vulgar, victimized by misinformation and misled by prejudice. As its opposite, *ya* suggests instead great talent and ability, superior intelligence and informed and perceptive experience, transcendence of the commonplace and vulgar, to be rightly informed and free of prejudice. An axiom of traditional Chinese aesthetics, readily apparent throughout the ages (despite more than a few exceptions!), is the strong belief in the close correspondence between the man and his works. Simply stated, it is only the “good” man who may produce “good” works; the “bad” man may not produce “good” works. The *ya* vs. *su* divide thus creates an aesthetic polarity in which personal character criticism easily spills over into art and literary criticism; in other words, to know his works, study the man, to know the man, study his works. Along the way, “elegance” (*ya*)

inevitably acquired a strong moral dimension, with all its implications: the arts and literature should be morally and spiritually uplifting, the “beautiful” and the “good” converge in successful works, “elegance” is the manifestation of virtue, and so on.

“Elegantly made” (*yazhi*) or, depending on context, “elegant creation”, “elegant composition” or “elegant work”, is thus a loaded term rich in both aesthetically critical and moral value judgement. Therefore, for example, when the Tang poet Chen Zi’ang 陳子昂 (661–702) wrote to his friend, Dongfang Qiu 東方虯, an eminent high official during the reign of Empress Wu, and said he so esteemed Dongfang’s compositions that he “had to sigh in admiration at such elegant works” (*gantān yazhi* 感歎雅製), it is likely that something far more than praise for good writing was involved. A few lines earlier Chen agrees with the view that Dongfang’s reputation is justly equal to that of Zhang Hua 張華 (232–300) and He Shao 何劭 (236–302), both men of great achievement and integrity, who were also esteemed for their poetry and prose—thus anticipating his evaluation of “elegance” that follows (*Quan Tangshi* 全唐詩 [Complete Verse of the Tang], *juan* [fascicle] 83). And when Su Shi 蘇軾 (Su Dongpo 蘇東坡) (1037–1101) wrote to his friend Li Dalin 李大臨 to thank him for “all the kind gifts received of your elegant compositions written in such marvelous calligraphy” 寵惠皆奇筆雅製, we may assume that the same kind of expanded aesthetic-moral judgement was at work, for Su knew Li also as a man of great integrity (*Dongpo quanji* 東坡全集, *juan* [fascicle] 79). It is likely that even

as early as the Tang dynasty, and certainly by the Song, that “elegantly made” (*yazhi*) was a concept largely identified with literati character, culture, taste, and creativity—including all the trappings of literati existence. *Yazhi* eventually became so commonplace that, for example, it appears in the title of Pu Songling’s 蒲松齡 (1640–1715) *Shuzhai yazhi* 書齋雅製 “Elegantly Made for the Scholar’s Studio”, a collection of sixty-five brief entries preserved in the *Pu Songling quanji* 蒲松齡全集 (Complete Works of Pu Songling) (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 1998). Pu is, of course, among other things the famous author of the *Liaozhai zhiyi* 聊齋志異 (Recordings of the Strange by Liaozhai), first translated by Herbert Giles as *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* (1880). These entries all concern advice for how to make and care for objects for the scholar’s studio: paper, ink, preservation of calligraphy and paintings (cleaning, remounting, display, etc.), incense, fumigation of books and papers, how to make rubbings from inscriptions on metal and stone, and so on. The implication throughout all these observations and directions is that the true literati possesses and cares for things elegantly made, all of which represent attributes of his own “elegant” character, personality, and behavior.

The term *yazhi* appears hundreds of times throughout the ages in works that discuss and evaluate works of painting and calligraphy, from individual poems to extensive catalogues and treatises, but since space does not allow even a brief survey here, from among many two examples must suffice: (1) From

the *Haogu tang shumū* 好古堂書目 (Catalogue of the Loves Antiquity Hall Collection) of Yao Jiheng 姚際恆 (1647–?): 程孟陽、文彥可、陳白室三人共作歲寒三友圖十幀。每幀松、竹、梅各圖其一，識以印文，皆競出新意，亦文士之雅製也。“Cheng Mengyang, Wen Yanke, Cheng Baishi, these three men together painted ‘The Three Friends [pine, bamboo, prunus] in the Cold of the Year, Ten Scenes’, in which each picture all three are depicted and on each are impressed their seals. Vying with one another to render new artistic conceptions, these are all indeed elegant works by literati.” (2) Li Yucai 李玉棻 (active 1865–1897), *Oubo luoshi shuhua guomu kao* 甌鉢羅室書畫過目考 (Examination of Paintings and Calligraphy that I Have Seen from the Pottery Bowls Collection Studio), *juan* (fascicle) 2: 潘蓮航光祿藏有墨筆山水殘冊二葉，文人雅制，俗手弗能擬也。“The collection of Pan Guanglu, personal name Lianhang, contains two leaves of an incomplete album of ink wash landscapes, elegant compositions by some literatus, which a vulgar hand could not have done.”

The Qianlong emperor often employed the term “elegantly made” (*yazhi*) in his writings on objects in the imperial collection. The emperor, ultimate arbiter of literati taste during his long reign, composed hundreds of poems and prose pieces on objects in the collection, some inherited from earlier times and some newly made. Such objects include practically all kinds of objects for the libraries and studios within the palace as well as for palace living quarters in general, as the titles of compositions reveal; for example: “Rhapsody on Five Coloured

Silk” 五絲賦 (*Yuzhi Leshan tang quanji* 御製樂善堂全集 [Complete Works From the Delight In the Good Hall, By His Majesty], *juan* [fascicle] 13; “Song for a Hanging Vase” 咏掛瓶 (*Yuzhi shiji* 御製詩集 [His Majesty’s Poetry Collection], Second Collection 二集, *juan* [fascicle] 3); “Song for a Bamboo Wickerwork Warmer” 詠竹籬 (*Yuzhi shiji* 御製詩集 [His Majesty’s Poetry Collection], Second Collection 二集, *juan* [fascicle] 38); “Bamboo Wickerwork Warmer Mountain Retreat” 竹籬山房 (*Yuzhi shiji* 御製詩集 [His Majesty’s Poetry Collection], Second Collection 二集, *juan* [fascicle] 43); “A Long Zither” 箏 (*Yuzhi shiji* 御製詩集 [His Majesty’s Poetry Collection], Second Collection 二集, *juan* [fascicle] 58); “On a Carved Lacquer Tray Depicting Paired Equestrians on a Spring Jaunt” 題聯騎春遊雕漆盤 (*Yuzhi shiji* 御製詩集 [His Majesty’s Poetry Collection], Fourth Collection 四集, *juan* [fascicle] 68); “Bamboo Tea Hamper” 茶籬 (*Yuzhi shiji* 御製詩集 [His Majesty’s Poetry Collection], Fourth Collection 四集, *juan* [fascicle] 74).

At least as early as the time of the Qianlong emperor in the eighteenth century it is likely that *yazhi* had become a debased term, perhaps something like “awesome” in current English jargon—and simply meant “very good”. However, despite such use during the late pre-modern and modern eras, *yazhi* still stands for something truly great in the history of Chinese culture, for, as we have seen, it addresses the quintessential excellence of artistic production and personal expression. To be the steward of something “elegantly made” is thus both a grand privilege and a joyful duty.

CATALOGUE

莖
蘭
心
味

山不在高有仙則名水不在深有龍則靈斯是陋室惟吾德馨苔痕上階綠艸色入簾青談笑有鴻儒往來無白丁可以調素琴閱金經無絲竹之亂耳無案牘之勞形南陽諸葛廬西蜀子雲亭孔子云何陋之有

陋室銘

竹居主人



1. A BRONZE 'GOLDEN MIST' INCENSE BURNER AND STAND

Qing Dynasty, 18th Century

heavily cast with compressed rounded sides resting on three short tapered feet, the wide mouth with slightly flared lip surmounted by a pair of upright arch handles, with a recessed rectangular cartouche cast with a six-character Xuande reign mark in *kaishu* on the underside, the matching original bronze stand in the form of a stylized mallow flower with three half-round sockets to receive the feet of the censer, the polished surface of the censer and stand with a rich reddish-brown patina suffused with very fine gilt speckling.

Width 7¼ inches (18.5 cm)

Overall height 5 15/16 inches (15 cm)

Weight of censer 1976g / base 1279g

Provenance Hong Kong Trade, October 1981
Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection
The Franz Collection, Hong Kong, no. 1274

The very fine gilt speckling throughout the reddish-brown patina on this censer is traditionally referred to as 'golden rain' or 'golden mist.'

Compare the Xuande marked gold-splashed incense burner and stand of very similar form illustrated by Hu, *Later Chinese Bronzes: The Saint Louis Art Museum and Robert E. Kresko Collections*, Saint Louis, 2008, pp. 137-141, no. 28, and on the dust cover.

Compare also the Xuande marked gold-splashed incense burner and stand of this form illustrated by Tsang and Moss, *Arts from the Scholar's Studio*, Fung Ping Shan Museum, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 1986, pp. 150-151, no. 123, where the authors provide a lengthy discussion of the history of this type of bronze incense burner.

清十八世紀 灑金銅沖耳乳足連座爐 寬 18.5 厘米 通高 15 厘米
「大明宣德年製」款
爐重 1976g / 座重 1279g

來源 香港商行，1981年十月
水松石山房藏
香港 The Franz Collection，典藏編號 1274



2. A SMALL CIRCULAR CINNABAR LACQUER BOX AND COVER

Early Ming Dynasty, 15th Century

of cushion shape, the domed cover decorated with a profusion of orchids in lush layered relief, with finely detailed loose-petaled blooms overlapping long blade-shaped leaves, all brilliantly carved through the crimson red cinnabar lacquer above a yellow ochre ground, the same dense pattern repeated on the shallow sides of the box, resting on a rounded rimless ring foot, the interiors and the recessed base lacquered black.

Diameter $2\frac{5}{8}$ inches (6.8 cm)

Provenance Japanese Private Collection

Christie's Hong Kong, *Important Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*,

1 June 2011, lot 3835

Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection

Compare the circular cinnabar lacquer box carved with very similar orchid decoration in the collection of the Nezu Institute of Fine Arts, Tokyo, shown in a traveling exhibition organized by the Nezu and the Tokugawa Art Museum and illustrated in the catalogue, *Chōshitsu: urushi no rerifu* (Carved Lacquer), Tokyo, 1984, p. 141, no. 200.

Compare also the larger circular cinnabar lacquer box carved with a similar arrangement of orchids and plum blossoms, in the collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing, illustrated in *Gugong bowuyuan cang wenwu zhenpin daxi* (The Complete Collection of Treasures of the Palace Museum) *Lacquer Wares of the Yuan and Ming Dynasties*, Hong Kong, 2006, p. 70, no. 48, described as Yongle period (1402-1424).

明十五世紀 剔紅蘭紋小圓盒 徑 6.8 厘米

來源 日本私人收藏

香港佳士得 2011 年 6 月 1 日，拍品第 3835 號

水松石山房藏



3. A MOTHER-OF-PEARL INLAID ZITAN BRUSH POT

Qing Dynasty, 18th – 19th Century

of cylindrical form with thick straight sides rising to a very gently rounded rim, inlaid in mother-of-pearl with two poetic inscriptions in running script followed by the signature Shi'an and a blank seal.

Height 4⁷/₈ inches (12.4 cm)

Diameter 4⁵/₈ inches (11.7 cm)

Provenance China Guardian, Beijing, *Porcelain, Furniture and Works of Art*,
3 November 2002, lot 1501
Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection

Published *Zhongguo jade yishupin touzi tudian: zaxiang* (China Guardian Illustrated Catalogue
of Art Investment: Miscellaneous), [Hebei], 2005, p. 156 top

The first three inscribed lines are taken from a short prose composition, the 韭花帖 (*Jiu hua tie*, Chive Blossoms Couplet) by Yang Ningshi (楊凝式, 873-954), an important calligrapher of the Five Dynasties period:

當一葉報秋之初 When a single leaf first announces autumn's here
乃韭花逞味之始 That's when chive blossoms begin to flaunt their flavor.
凝式 *Ningshi*

Followed by five lines excerpted from another calligraphic model, a five-syllable poem also by Yang Ningshi, 神仙起居法帖 (*Shenxian qiju fatie*, Method of Daily Life that Leads to Immortality):

行之不厭煩 Never grow tired by frequency of practice
晝夜無窮數 through days and nights without number.
歲久積功成 For only after long years of accumulated success
漸入神仙路 does one gradually enter the path of immortality.

Followed by the name 石菴 Shi'an, which is a *hao* of Liu Yong (劉壘, 1719-1804).

Both inscriptions refer to the art of calligraphy, observing that only after much time and effort – when one reaches the autumn of life – can one's art attain immortal excellence, characterized by rich flavor, as the Chinese flowering chive plant becomes powerfully aromatic only in the autumn.

Liu Yong was a high official and a calligrapher renowned for his interpretations of Jin, Tang, and Song calligraphic styles. Although both inscriptions on the present example are excerpts from poems by Yang Ningshi, only the first is based on Yang's hand; the second is Liu Yong's own style.

An example of Liu Yong's calligraphy modelled after Yang Ningshi's *Jiu hua tie* (Chive Blossoms Couplet), quoting the same couplets followed by the name Ningshi as shown on the present brush pot, in the collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei, is illustrated by Wang, '*Liu Yong shuxue tanlue* (Brief Discussion on the Studies of Liu Yong's Calligraphy),' *NPM Monthly of Chinese Art*, Taipei, 2002, No. 5 (Issue 230), p. 71.

清十八 – 十九世紀 紫檀螺鈿楊凝式詩文筆筒 高 12.4 厘米 徑 11.7 厘米
「石庵」款

來源 北京中國嘉德 2002 年 11 月 3 日，拍品第 1501 號
水松石山房藏

出版 中國嘉德藝術投資圖典：雜項，2005 年，第 156 頁上



4. A 'DUCKS AND LOTUS' SHE INKSTONE AND COVER

Song Dynasty (960-1279)

of rectangular *sizhi yang* form, carved from smooth dark gray *she* stone, the grinding surface sloping abruptly down to form an angled water well at one end, with a squared and inset lip all around the rim to receive the close-fitted flat cover carved in shallow relief with a pair of Mandarin ducks swimming between large stylized lily pads in a tranquil pond.

Length 4¼ inches (10.9 cm)

A two-tier *she* inkstone of very similar form carved on the flat cover with a similar scene of a pair of Mandarin ducks in a lotus pond was exhibited at the National Museum of History in Taipei and illustrated in the exhibition catalogue titled *Hanhai cangzhen: Zhonghua wenwu xuehui 30 zhounian ji'nian zhan* (Treasures of the Chinese Culture and Fine Arts Association: The 30th Anniversary Exhibition), Taipei, 2009, p. 146.

Compare the covered inkstone of similar form carved in shallow relief with stylized flowers and foliage on the flat cover, excavated from a Northern Song tomb at Macheng, Hubei, illustrated in *Kaogu*, 1965, No. 1, pl. 5, fig. 10.

宋 歙石鴛鴦戲荷四直蓋硯 長 10.9 厘米



5. A GREEN JADE BUDDHIST 'PURE WATER BOWL'

Qianlong Period (1736-1795)

following a Tibetan Buddhist ritual form, with shallow rounded sides carved on the exterior with the Lantsa character *aum* repeated six times, each character deeply recessed and filled in with gilding, the translucent leaf-green nephrite of even tone throughout.

Diameter 4 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches (10.5 cm)

Provenance Christie's London, *Fine Chinese Ceramics, Paintings, and Works of Art*,
15 June 1998, lot 270
Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection

This type of bowl, called a *jing shui wan* or 'pure water bowl', was used in Tibet during the Butter Lamp Festival when yak butter lamps are lit and pure water bowls are placed in temples and shrines to commemorate the death of Tsongkhapa, the great philosopher and teacher around whom the Gelug School of Tibetan Buddhism was formed in the 15th century.

"*Aum*" is used as the first character in many Buddhist mantras including the popular mantra of Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion "*Aum mani padme hum.*"

The Qianlong emperor, an ardent devotee of Tibetan Buddhism, erected several Tibetan Buddhist temples in Beijing and commissioned large quantities of implements and vessels for ritual use and as gifts to visiting Tibetan lamas.

清乾隆 碧玉描金蘭札文淨水碗 徑 10.5 厘米

來源 倫敦佳士得 1998 年 6 月 15 日，拍品第 270 號
水松石山房藏



6. A RUSSET-FLECKED WHITE JADE 'FOUR ARTS' PENDANT

Qianlong Period (1736-1795)

well carved in openwork and varied relief depicting the 'four arts of a scholar-gentleman' (*wenren ziyi* 文人四藝) including a zither wrapped in silk (*qin* 琴), a chess board with two chess containers (*qi* 棋), bundles of books (*shu* 書), and ribbon-tied painting scrolls (*hua* 畫), the translucent white stone flecked with reddish-brown natural markings.

Height 1¾ inches (4.4 cm)

Provenance From the Collection of the former President of the San Francisco Bridge Company, Barrett G. Hindes (1897-1964) of Ross, California, donated to the de Young Museum of Fine Arts in 1969 and deaccessioned by the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco in 2009
Christie's New York, *Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art: Including Jades from the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco*, 18-19 March 2009, lot 423

The importance of the 'four arts' in the life of the Chinese literati is succinctly described by Jacobsen in *Appreciating China: Gifts from Ruth and Bruce Dayton*, Minneapolis, 2002, p. 315, as follows:

"Chief among traditional literati pursuits were the 'four arts' of painting, calligraphy, chess, and playing the *ch'in*. Accomplishment in these art forms went beyond the requisites of social grace and focused on achieving a mastery of oneself. The control of brush and ink, based on years of practice and experience, allowed scholars to give visual expression to subtle thoughts and feelings. Similarly, knowledge of classical literature combined with the study of historic calligraphy greatly influenced personal writing styles. Mastery of the complex strategies required in chess developed an agile mind while underscoring the importance of the intellectual process. The attainment of even moderate skill in playing the seven-stringed *ch'in* instilled sensitivity, patience, and discipline and was seen as a symbol of enlightenment."

清乾隆 褐斑白玉「四藝」墜飾 高 4.4 厘米

來源 加州 Ross 鎮，舊金山橋樑公司總裁 Barrett G. Hindes 舊藏，1969 年捐贈舊金山笛洋美術館，2009 年由舊金山藝術博物館退藏
紐約佳士得 2009 年 3 月 18-19 日，拍品第 423 號



7. AN INLAID ZITAN 'PRUNUS' BOX AND COVER

By Sun Kehong (1533-1611)

of rectangular cushion shape with rounded corners, the cover decorated with blossoming branches of prunus with gnarled bark carved from wood and bone stained dark brown bearing numerous white blossoms and tight buds of mother-of-pearl and coral, all finely carved in relief, framed by three poems written in seal script inlaid in silver wire and signed by the artist with a two character seal inlaid at one side: 克弘 (Kehong), the squared rim of the cover inlaid in silver wire with undulating wave scroll repeated on the squared rim of the box, fitted with an inner tray inlaid on the rim with *wan* characters in running fretwork.

The three poems on the cover may be transcribed as follows:

挺挺蒼枝冒雪開	Stiff and stubborn gray branches brave the snow and bloom,
江南北糧是華魁	From South of the Yangzi to Mongolian Beiliang it's the premier blossom of all.
而問有意憐幽獨	But ask, are we inclined to pity such hidden solitude?
持遺陽枯致早梅	The deadlike branches hold remnants of <i>yang</i> , thus to them early prunus blossoms arrive.

老幹含春意	Thoughts of spring inhere in the old trunk
疏枝吐玉花	For its sparse branches spew forth jade blossoms.

玉質含消瘦	Jade-like substance inherently fragile,
冰姿帶雪眉	Icy demeanor, eyebrows flecked with snow,
華妝香獨暗	Made-up faces suffuse a lonely seclusion with scent.
月色皖霜寒	Color of the moon, they glow beautifully in frosty cold.

Seal of the artist, lower-right: Kehong 克弘

Length 10 inches (25.3 cm)

Width 6 inches (15.2 cm)

Height 4 1/8 inches (10.3 cm)

Provenance Christie's London, *Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*, 8 November 2011, lot 235
Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection

Sun Kehong (孫克弘 1533-1611), *zi* Yunzhi (允執), *hao* Xueju (雪居), was a native of Songjiang (part of present-day Shanghai) and the son of the Minister of Rites, Sun Cheng'en (孫承恩 1481-1561). During his lifetime Sun Kehong was highly regarded as a painter, calligrapher, and book collector. His skill as a maker of wood scholar's articles particularly renowned for his wire-inlaid calligraphy is recorded by Wu Lüzhèn (吳履震, active circa 1650) in *五茸志逸隨筆* *Wurong shiyi suibi* (Notes Gleaned from the Record of Marvels of Wurong): 孫雪居以紫檀仿古製 刻三雅杯銀絲填嵌漢篆字 which may be translated as "Sun Xueju used *zitan* to emulate ancient craftwork and once carved a 'Three Elegances Cup' with silver wire inlaid Han *zhuan* characters."



Compare the *zitan* square brush pot in the collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing, inlaid with very similar blossoming prunus branches and silver-wire seal script calligraphy with text matching one of the poems inscribed on the present box, followed by the artist's signature *Xueju* 雪居 (Owner of Snow Dwelling), illustrated in *Zhongguo meishu fenlei quanji: Zhongguo zhu, mu, ya, jiao qi quanji* (Compendium of Chinese Art: Chinese Carving of Bamboo, Wood, Ivory, and Horn), Vol. 3, Beijing, 2009, p. 223, no. 180, with a very brief biography of Sun Kehong.

Compare also the *zitan* covered cup and the *zitan* hexagonal cup in the Palace Museum, Beijing, both with very similar silver-wire inlaid calligraphy, key-fret borders and signed with Sun Kehong's various names, illustrated in *Gugong diaoke zhencui* (The Palace Museum Collection of Elite Carvings), Beijing, 2002, pp. 98-99, nos. 63 and 64, described as late Ming dynasty.

明 孫克弘製 紫檀銀絲詩文百寶嵌梅紋蓋盒 長 25.3 厘米 寬 15.2 厘米 高 10.3 厘米
「克弘」款

來源 倫敦佳士得 2011 年 11 月 8 日，拍品第 235 號
水松石山房藏



8. A CARVED REFINED CLAY INKSTONE (*CHENGNI YAN*)

Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368)

the shallow oblong block of *chengni* (澄泥) refined stoneware moulded and carved with a wide circular 'sun' grinding platform below a deep crescent-shape 'moon' water well all enclosed by raised line borders and flanked by a vigorously carved dragon and swirling clouds at the top and a fish swimming amidst water weeds below, the carved sections polished to a deeper purplish tone above the pale yellowish-brown ground.

Length 8⁵/₈ inches (22 cm)

Chengni inkstones (澄泥硯) are a special category of ceramic inkstones made from highly refined clay produced by a complex and laborious process of filtering and kneading silted clay until the particles are as fine as possible before pressing, moulding, carving, drying and firing.

A detailed description of the method of production of *chengni* inkstones published in the Song dynasty by Su Yijian (958-996), in the third fascicle of *Wenfang sipu* (Notes on the Four Treasures of the Scholar's Studio) is quoted by Kwan, *Chinese Inkstones*, Hong Kong, 2005, p. 9 (in Chinese) and p. 41 (translated into English).

A very similar *chengni* inkstone dated by inscription to 1359 in a private collection in Shanghai, is illustrated by Luo, *Zhongguo chengni guyan jianshang* (Connoisseurship of Ancient Chinese Chengni Inkstones), Shanghai, 2005, pp. 90-91, no. 41.

Compare also the white stone inkstone with the same 'sun and moon' grinding surface and water well surrounded by carved bamboo and grapes in a private collection in Beijing, illustrated by Cai and Hu (eds.), *Zhongguo ming yan jianshang* (Connoisseurship of Famous Chinese Inkstones), Ji'nan, 1992, pp. 59-60, no. 42, described as Yuan dynasty.

元 日月澄泥硯 長 22 厘米



9. A CARVED BOXWOOD BRUSH POT

By Tang Zu (active *circa* 1700)

Qing Dynasty, Late 17th – Early 18th Century

in the form of an old prunus tree trunk aesthetically imagined with weathered and worn undulating bark showing rotted and insect-eaten areas but still sprouting buds and blossoms on branches carved in high relief on three sides, and with a pair of plump magpies perched on the principle branch, the plain hollow interior echoing the irregular shape of the exterior, the boxwood (*huangyangmu*) of rich honey color with a dark-stained *hongmu* platform stand fitted onto the open base, inscribed low on one side above the base with the artist's signature: 又綦 *Youqi* and two seals: 湯 *Tang* and 組 *Zu*.

Height 5½ inches (14 cm)

Provenance David Newman, London, 1983
Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection
The Franz Collection, Hong Kong, no. 1683

Exhibited Fung Ping Shan Museum, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 1986-1987

Published Tsang and Moss, *Arts from the Scholar's Studio*, Hong Kong, 1986, pp. 98-99,
no. 59 and dust jacket front cover

Tang Zu (湯組, active *circa* 1700), *zi* 又綦 *Youqi*, was a scholar, painter and calligrapher from Taiping, Anhui province. He is recorded in the 1915 compendium by Li, *Zhongguo yishujia zhenglue* (Short Biographies of Chinese Artists) as "good at carving old wood roots into figures, birds and animals," noting that "once in the hand they are difficult to put down." The same information is repeated by Yu in *Zhongguo meishujia renming cidian* (Dictionary of Chinese Artist Names), Shanghai, 1981, with the source cited as by Hong in the 1815 publication *Ningguo fu zhi* (Gazette of the Ningguo *fu*), while the *Zhongguo lidai shuhua zhuanke jia zi hao suoyin* (Index of the *zi* and *hao* Chinese Painter, Calligrapher, and Seal Carver through the Dynasties), Taipei, 1980, adds that he worked during the Kangxi period (1662-1722).

The pair of magpies on a blossoming plum branch at one side of the trunk are emblematic of Spring and, as rebus, brings to mind the auspicious wish: "May you have happiness before your eyes" (喜上眉梢, *xi shang mei shao*).

The superb quality of the carving combined with the signature and seals of an early Qing dynasty scholar-artist make this a masterpiece and a great rarity. Tang Zu is recorded as a master carver of boxwood seals and other objects for the scholar's table. No other brush pot bearing his signature is recorded.

清十七 – 十八世紀初 湯組製 黃楊木鏤雕「喜上眉梢」筆筒
高 14 厘米
「又綦」款
「湯」「祖」印

來源 倫敦 David Newman 藏，1983
水松石山房藏
香港 The Franz Collection，典藏編號 1683

展覽 香港大學馮平山博物館，1986 - 1987

出版 Tsang 及 Moss 〈文玩萃珍〉，香港大學馮平山博物館，
1986 年，98-99 頁，第 59 號及封面





10. A LAC BURGAUTÉ CIRCULAR BOX AND COVER

17th – 18th Century

of shallow form, inlaid with multicolored thin segments of abalone shell, gold foil and silver foil, decorated on the cover with a scene of a scholar at leisure in his garden terrace, gazing at a flourishing lotus pond, reclining on a mat with his elbow resting on a book, attended by a servant with a fan and a boy boiling water for tea, inscribed using inlaid shell in running script with a quotation from a poem by Zhou Dunyi, followed by a square seal inlaid in shell incised with the name 扶九 Fujiu, all encircled by a narrow band of running fretwork inlaid in gold, the edge of the cover inlaid in shell with a dentil border above a band of floral diaper on the straight sides, repeated on the sides of the box, and with a different diaper band on the underside of the box, the interior of the cover inlaid with a tied chrysanthemum bouquet and the interior of the box inlaid with a group of articles for the scholar's desk, the underside of the box with an inlaid square cartouche enclosing four characters in seal script: 方扶九作 (Made by Fang Fujiu).

Diameter 3 ¹⁵/₁₆ inches (10 cm)

Provenance Grace Wu Bruce, Hong Kong
Sydney L. Moss Ltd., London, January 1987
Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection

The scene of a scholar beside a lotus pond in a garden setting was a popular subject in paintings and in decoration of ceramics, lacquer and other works of art throughout the Ming and Qing dynasties. The imagery embodies the cultivated lifestyle of the literati. The verses quoted on this box are taken from a famous poem on the same theme by Zhou Dunyi (周敦頤, 1017-1093) entitled 愛蓮說 (*Ai lian shuo*, On the Love of Lotus). Zhou uses lotus, chrysanthemum and peony flowers to describe different types of men and presents the lotus as the "gentleman among flowers," exemplary of the character of the ideal scholar-gentleman. The verses may be read as: 中通外直 不蔓不枝, which may be translated as: "hollow at the center and straight outside; no vines and no branches" (open-minded and upright; not overreaching and not diverging).

Compare the *lac burgauté* circular box and cover of similar shallow form decorated with figures in a landscape on the cover, with an inlaid shell cartouche on the base with two inlaid characters: *yun zhong*, in the collection of the Shanghai Museum, illustrated in *Qian wen wan hua: Zhongguo lidai qiqi yishu* (In a Myriad of Forms: the Ancient Chinese Lacquers), Shanghai, 2018, pp. 196-197, no. 131, described as early Qing dynasty, 17th – 18th century.

十七 – 十八世紀 黑漆螺鈿「愛蓮說」圓盒 徑 10 厘米
「中通外直不蔓不枝」題 「扶九」印
「方扶九作」款

來源 香港嘉木堂
倫敦 Sydney L. Moss Ltd. · 1987 年 1 月
水松石山房藏



11. A SOFT-PASTE WHITE PORCELAIN LOTUS-FORM PALETTE (*BITIAN*)
Qianlong Period (1736-1795)

in the form of a lotus lily-pad and two lotus blossoms tied with a ribbon, finely detailed on both sides, the white porcelain covered with a clear glaze, with a carved black wood stand.

Length 3³/₈ inches (8.5 cm)

Provenance Tonying & Company, Inc., New York
Evelyn Annenberg Hall (1913-2006), New York, acquired from the above in 1956
Christie's New York, *Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*, 29 March 2006, lot 143

Used by Chinese painters and calligraphers to shape the tip of the brush and control the concentration of the ink, the *bitian* also served as an elegant ornament for the scholar's desk.

清乾隆 白瓷荷花筆舔 寬 8.5 厘米

來源 紐約通運公司
紐約 Evelyn Annenberg Hall (1913-2006) 舊藏，於 1956 年購自通運公司
紐約佳士得 2006 年 3 月 29 日，拍品第 143 號



12. A LARGE JADE PEACH-FORM BOX AND COVER

17th – 18th Century

boldly carved in the shape of a single massive peach divided into two hollowed halves embellished all over in high relief with leafy branches which extend in thick parallel loops at one end to form a hinge joined by a large loose ring, and with a pair of bats amidst the foliage and two small peaches near the hinge, the jade of even pale green tone enlivened by touches of bright russet coloration widely scattered over the surface.

Length 10 inches (25.4 cm)

Provenance Spink & Son Ltd., London, 1957
Collection of Dr. Peter H. Plesch (1918-2013), no. Hh26L
Christie's London, *Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*, 3 November 2009, lot 167
J.J. Lally & Co., New York
The Franz Collection, Hong Kong, no. 1530

Exhibited *Works of Art from the Plesch Collections*, Manchester City Art Gallery, 1964
Chinese Jade Throughout the Ages, Oriental Ceramic Society, Victoria & Albert Museum, 1975

Published Rawson and Ayers, *Chinese Jade Throughout the Ages*, Oriental Ceramic Society, London, 1975, p. 109, no. 358
FranzArt: Jade, Hong Kong, 2010, no. 1530, pp. 262-263 and p. 316, no. 1530

A similar jade peach box and cover of smaller size carved from a single jade boulder and connected by interlocking branches, in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, is illustrated by Wilson, *Chinese Jades*, London, 2004, pp. 56-57, no. 58.

Compare also the smaller jade box and cover in the form of a bitter melon, carved from a single jade boulder and connected by a loose ring, illustrated in *The Arts of the Ch'ing Dynasty*, Oriental Ceramic Society, London, 1964, pl. 127, no. 393.

十七 – 十八世紀 褐斑青玉福壽大盒 長 25.4 厘米

來源 倫敦 Spink & Son Ltd., 1957 年
Dr. Peter H. Plesch (1918-2013) 舊藏，典藏編號 Hh26L
倫敦佳士得 2009 年 11 月 3 日，拍品第 167 號
紐約藍理捷中國文物
香港 The Franz Collection，典藏編號 1530

展覽 1964 年英國 Manchester City Art Gallery，
展題 *Works of Art from the Plesch Collections*
1975 年倫敦東方陶瓷學會主辦，維多利亞與
亞伯特博物館展出，展題 *Chinese Jade Throughout the Ages*

出版 Rawson 及 Ayers, *Chinese Jade Throughout the Ages*，倫敦東方陶瓷學會
1975 年，第 109 頁，358 號
FranzArt: Jade，香港 2010 年，262-263 頁，
1530 號及 316 頁，1530 號



13. A PAIR OF INSCRIBED PEWTER TEA CADDIES

By Shen Cunzhou (active 17th Century)

the twin caddies perfectly matched, making a bracket-lobed form of quatrefoil section when placed together side-by-side, raised on shallow leaf-shaped feet at the margins of the flat bases and capped by close-fitting inset lids of matching form, bearing long inscriptions carved on the flat inner faces and on the bases.

One caddy with the title in seal script: 心曠神怡 (Mind Free and Sprit Happy), a phrase from the essay 岳陽樓記 (Recollections of Yueyang Tower) by the poet Fan Zhongyan (989-1052), followed by an excerpt in regular script from the essay 獨樂園記 (Reminiscences of the Garden for Solitary Enjoyment) by the eminent scholar and high official Sima Guang (1019-1086), with a one-line inscription using Sima Guang's posthumous title "Duke of the State of Wen": 溫公獨樂園 (Duke Wen's Garden of Solitary Enjoyment) followed by the signature 沈存周製 (made by Shen Cunzhou) and two seals of the artist: 存 *Cun* and 周 *Zhou*;



incised on the base of the same caddy is a poem entitled 春日行近山 (Spring Day Outing to Nearby Mountains) by Huang Chushi (1288-1362), followed by one seal of the artist's *hao*: 竹居 (Bamboo Retreat);

the other caddy inscribed with the title in seal script: 芝蘭之味 (Flavor of Iris and Orchid), followed by the text of 陋室銘 (An Inscription for my Humble Cottage) by Liu Yuxi (772-842), identified as such after the text and followed by the signature of the artist 竹居主人 (Master of the Bamboo Retreat) and one seal of the artist's *hao*: 竹居 (Bamboo Retreat), the base of the caddy with a couplet taken from the poem 綠蔭亭 (Green Shade Pavilion) by Wang Qi (active 997-1022), incised in clerical script.



Height 3½ inches (9 cm)



Provenance Unidentified Tokyo dealer (possibly Mayuyama or Kochukyo), 1961
Private Collection
Christies, New York, *Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*, 19 September 2006, lot 118
Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection

Shen Cunzhou (沈存周, active 17th century), *zi* Luyong (鸞雛), *hao* Zhuju (竹居), was a native of Jiaxing, a major city on the Grand Canal near Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. He was a recognized artist in pewter as well as a poet and a versatile calligrapher. His refined pewter objects for the scholar's studio, wine vessels and tea wares were especially renowned for their innovative design, elegant form, and inclusion of poetic inscriptions, classic texts, signatures and seals incised in a variety of calligraphic styles which rivaled works by respected calligraphers and seal carvers of his time.

Three inscribed pewter vessels by Shen Cunzhou included in the exhibition organized by the Museum and Art Gallery of the University of Hong Kong, also shown at the China Institute Gallery, China Institute of America, New York, are published in the catalogue by Soong, *Tea, Wine and Poetry: Qing Dynasty Literati and Their Drinking Vessels*, Hong Kong, 2006, pp. 46-51: no. 4, Melon Shape Water Dropper, dated 1656; no. 5, Lotus Shape Wine Ewer, dated 1657; and no. 6, Wine Ewer with Overhead Handle, dated 1661.

十七世紀 沈存周製 錫詩文茶罐一對 高9厘米
「心曠神怡」「獨樂園」詩文 「沈存周製」款 「存」「周」印
「芝蘭之味」「陋室銘」詩文 「竹居主人」款 「竹居」印
底銘「春日行近山」「綠蔭亭」詩文 「竹居」印

來源 東京商行(蘭山龍泉堂或壺中居), 1961
私人收藏
紐約佳士得 2006年9月19日, 拍品第118號
水松石山房藏



14. A SILVER-INLAID BRONZE FIGURE OF WEN CHANG

Attributed to Shisou (active *circa* 1600)

Ming Dynasty, 16th – 17th Century

the god of literature depicted as a civil official of the first rank, wearing the headdress and wide belt with 'jade' plaques of Ming court regalia over long-sleeved robes embellished in silver wire with cranes and cloud motifs, seated on rockwork with his left elbow resting on a small rocky plateau.

Height 10¹/₁₆ inches (25.6 cm)

Provenance Bluett & Sons Ltd., *circa* 1969-1971
Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection

Shisou is one of the most famous names in Chinese metalwork. His work is widely renowned for the skillful use of silver and gold wire inlays in bronze sculptures and objects for the scholar's studio, but very little is known about the man. He is recorded by Yu in *Zhongguo meishujia renming cidian* (Dictionary of Chinese Artist Names) as a retired monk and metalsmith active in the late Ming period, but his proper name, place of birth and date of birth are unknown. The strong similarity of imagery, pose and style of the present figure with late Ming white porcelain figures of Wen Chang made at the Dehua kilns in Fujian province suggests that Shisou may have worked in Fujian, but he also may have been active in any of several artistic centers in the Jiangnan region.

Wen Chang was worshipped by the Chinese literati seeking success in the civil service examinations which was the key to power, status and security in imperial China. The cranes on Wen Chang's court robes were emblematic of the highest rank of Ming dynasty civil official – the ultimate prize sought by the literati.

A similarly modelled Dehua white porcelain figure of Wen Chang dressed in Ming court regalia and seated on rockwork is illustrated by Krahl, *Chinese Ceramics from the Meiyintang Collection*, Volume Two, London, 1994, pp. 302-303, no. 1004.

Compare also the Cizhou-type stoneware figure of Wen Chang in the British Museum from the Eumorfopoulos Collection, inscribed with the cyclical date Wanli *dingyou* (corresponding to 1597), illustrated by Harrison-Hall, *Ming Ceramics in the British Museum*, London, 2001, p. 444, no. 14:17.

明十六 – 十七世紀 (傳) 石叟 銅鑲銀文昌像 高 25.6 厘米

來源 倫敦 Bluett & Sons Ltd. , 大約 1969-1971 年
水松石山房藏



15. A GOLD AND SILVER INLAID BRONZE MYTHICAL BEAST
PAPERWEIGHT

Late Ming – Early Qing Dynasty, 17th Century

heavily cast, the exotic feline guardian beast seated on its haunches with head held up and turned sharply back in an alert attitude with eyes fixed in a steady gaze under curly brows, finely inlaid in gold and silver with flame motifs on the flanks, hair markings on the chest, backbone and bushy tail, the top of the head inlaid with *ruyi* motifs, the base polished flat.

Length 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches (6 cm)

Height 2 inches (5.1 cm)

Provenance From the Collection of Robert Hall, London, before 1975
Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection

Exhibited Fung Ping Shan Museum, Hong Kong, 1986

Published Tsang and Moss, *Arts from the Scholar's Studio*, Hong Kong, pp. 236-237, 1986, no. 225

This finely inlaid paperweight is an echo of the small bronze weights in the form of exotic animals and mythical beasts made during the Warring States period and throughout the Han dynasty to hold down the corners of floor mats used as seating. The high quality of these small sculptures and the use of precious metals conveyed the sophistication and social status of their owners. In the Song and later dynasties Chinese scholars valued the ancient weights as works of art and used them as scroll weights or paperweights. In response to the popularity of the rare ancient weights, Ming dynasty artisans created similar weights for use in the scholar's studio.

明末清初十七世紀 銅鑄金銀瑞獸鎮紙 長 6 厘米 高 5.1 厘米

來源 倫敦 Robert Hall 舊藏，1975 年以前
水松石山房藏

展覽 香港大學馮平山博物館，1986

出版 Tsang 及 Moss 〈文玩萃珍〉，香港大學馮平山博物館，1986 年，236-237 頁，225 號



16. A PARCEL-GILT BRONZE INCENSE BURNER

Mark and Period of Hongwu (1368-1398)

of quadrilobed form heavily cast in high relief with boys in long-sleeved robes standing on stylized clouds accompanied by flying cranes in barrel-rounded oval panels framed by foliate scroll surrounds also in high relief below a narrow beaded collar and a running band of cloud motifs under the thick everted rim of the wide circular mouth decorated on the outer edge with archaic style *leiwen* and flanked by a pair of smiling boys standing on the shoulder and holding onto the lip to serve as handles, all raised on four short legs each emerging from the jaws of a horned lion head, the decoration all fire-gilt and raised above a smooth background of rich dark brown color showing scattered remains of cold-painted gilding, the gently rounded base cast with a six character reign mark of Hongwu in a reserved rectangle.

Width across handles 8³/₈ inches (21.2 cm)

Height 6 inches (15.3 cm)

Weight 2869g

Provenance Sydney L. Moss Ltd., London, 1976
Collection of Dr. Peter H. Plesch (1918-2013)
Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection

Published Watson, 'Categories of Post-Yuan Decorative Bronzes,' *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, 1981-1982, Vol. 46, p. 25 (not illustrated)

No other Hongwu marked gilt-bronze censer of this rare design is known, but one other unmarked bronze censer of very similar quadrilobed form raised on four lion mask-and-paw supports and decorated in high relief with boys flanking indecipherable Tibetan characters or Daoist glyphs within foliate scroll frames was sold at Christie's Hong Kong, 2 November 1999, lot 781, attributed to the Yuan dynasty.

A carved jade group of two boys flanking a *cong* shape vessel is published by Watt, *Chinese Jades from Han to Ch'ing*, New York, 1980, p. 163, no. 136, attributed to Yuan - Ming (13th - 15th centuries A.D.).

Compare the carved jade bowl with a pair of female angels standing on clouds and holding on to the rim to serve as handles in the Palace Museum, Beijing, illustrated by Yang (ed.), *Zhongguo yuqi quanji* (Compendium of Chinese Jades), Vol. 5, *Sui, Tang to Ming Dynasties*, Shijiazhuang, 1993, p. 120, no. 181, attributed to Yuan dynasty. Another carved jade bowl very similar to the example in the Palace Museum, Beijing is in the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art, illustrated by Lee and Ho, *Chinese Art Under the Mongols: The Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368)*, Cleveland, 1968, no. 298, attributed to Yuan dynasty.

明洪武 灑金銅仙童四足爐 寬 21.2 厘米 高 15.3 厘米
「大明洪武年製」款
爐重 2869g

來源 倫敦 Sydney L. Moss Ltd. , 1976 年
Dr. Peter H. Plesch (1918-2013) 舊藏
水松石山房藏

出版 Watson, 'Categories of Post-Yuan Decorative Bronzes'
倫敦〈東方陶瓷學會年刊〉1981-1982, 46 期, 第 25 頁 (無圖)



17. A PAIR OF FRAMED DALI MARBLE 'STONE PAINTINGS'

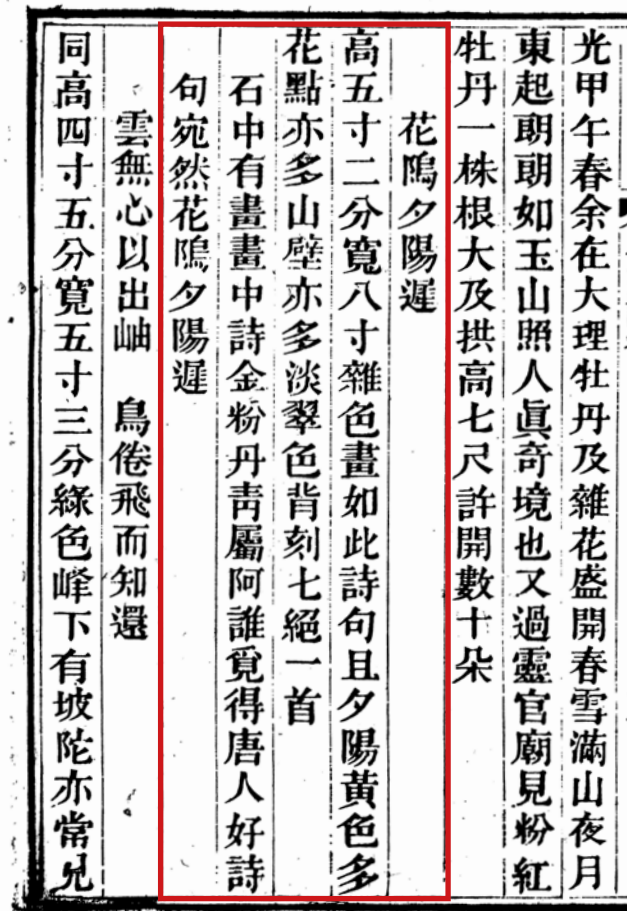
By Ruan Yuan (1764-1849)

the two panels, one horizontal and one vertical, with natural markings in the stone evoking scenes of mountain peaks in rising mist and clouds, mounted for hanging in matching antique wood frames.

The horizontal panel inscribed in running script:

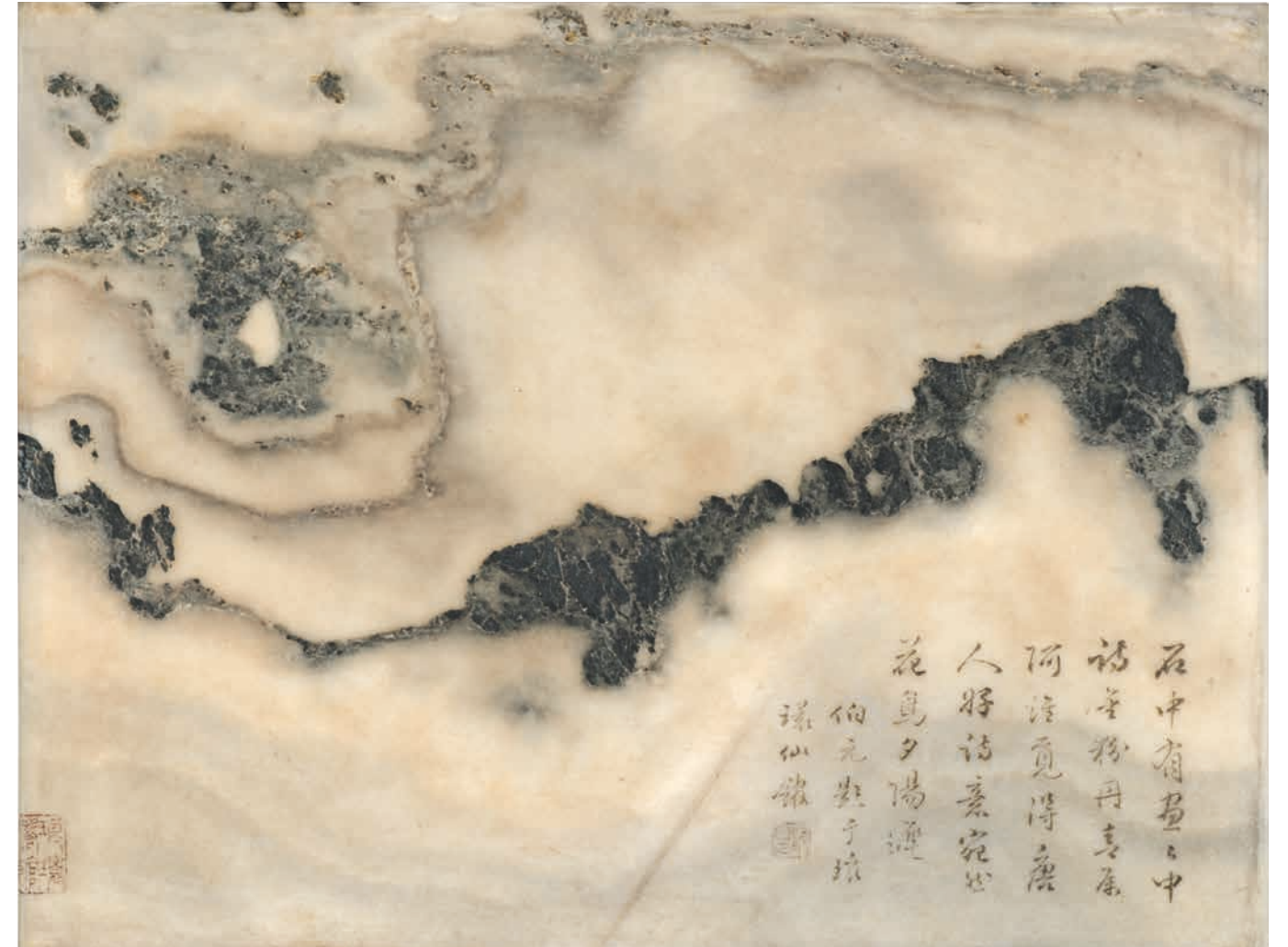
石中有畫畫中詩 A picture in the stone and a poem in the picture,
 金粉丹青屬阿誰 But who could paint with such gold pigment, reds and greens!
 覓得唐人好詩意 I found in it an excellent line by a Tang poet,
 宛然花鳥夕陽遲 How vivid, "on a floral isle evening sunlight lingers."

Signed Boyuan, a *zi* of Ruan Yuan: 伯元題於琅環仙館 (Boyuan composed at the Langhuan Hall of Immortals), followed by one seal of the artist: 阮氏石 (Stone of Mr. Ruan), with a second seal in the lower left corner: 琅環僊館 (Jade Garland Immortals Hall), Ruan Yuan's studio name.



Ruan Yuan, *Shi hua ji*: 5 juan, Guangdong, Xue hai tang, 3rd year of Guangxu (1877); juan 4, p. 12b, Harvard Yenching Library

阮元 石畫記五卷，廣東學海堂，光緒三年：第四卷，頁十二 哈佛燕京圖書館





石中藏景
 秘年歸州
 何日登得
 人好話
 幾處夕陽
 伯元
 瑞山



雲山夾峭石
 地山深
 猶遠
 雲深
 人不知
 仙蹤
 石中藏景
 秘年歸州
 何日登得
 人好話
 幾處夕陽
 伯元
 瑞山

The vertical panel inscribed with a title in seal script:

山意向秋多 (Mountain Mood Tends Much Toward Autumn), followed by a comment in running script: 元好問句偶屬郭河陽寫法於憶園 (a verse by Yuan Haowen matched with the painting style of Guo Heyang at the Garden for Recollection), beside a poem by 馬戴 Ma Dai (d. 869) at the upper-left, followed by a comment: 書唐人詩於憶園窗下 (a verse by a Tang poet transcribed beneath the window at the Garden for Recollection), with a long poem by 貢師泰 Gong Shitai (1298-1362) at the lower right, followed by a comment: 元人貢師泰句 (a verse by the Yuan poet Gong Shitai) and two seals: 石 and 生 (together: Begotten in stone), with two artist's seals at the bottom-left: 石癖 (Stone Mania) and 阮氏伯元珍藏 (treasured by Mr. Ruan Boyuan).

Horizontal panel 9¾ x 12¼ inches (24 x 31 cm)
Vertical panel 13¾ x 12¼ inches (35 x 31 cm)
Each overall 23⅞ x 18 inches (58.7 x 45.7 cm)

Provenance Poon Family Collection, acquired at Whampoa, Guangdong, circa 1890-1920 and thence by descent within the family
Christie's New York, *Fine Chinese Ceramics & Works of Art including Property from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, 14-15 September 2009, lot 248

Ruan Yuan (阮元, 1764-1849), zi Boyuan (伯元), hao Yuntai (芸臺), was a respected scholar, high official and connoisseur-collector from Yizheng, near Yangzhou, Jiangsu province. He obtained the *Jinshi* degree in 1789 and was appointed to the Hanlin Academy in the following year. He had a long official career, rising to the rank of Grand Secretary, and he was a prolific scholar, writing on a wide range of topics, including both ancient and contemporary arts.

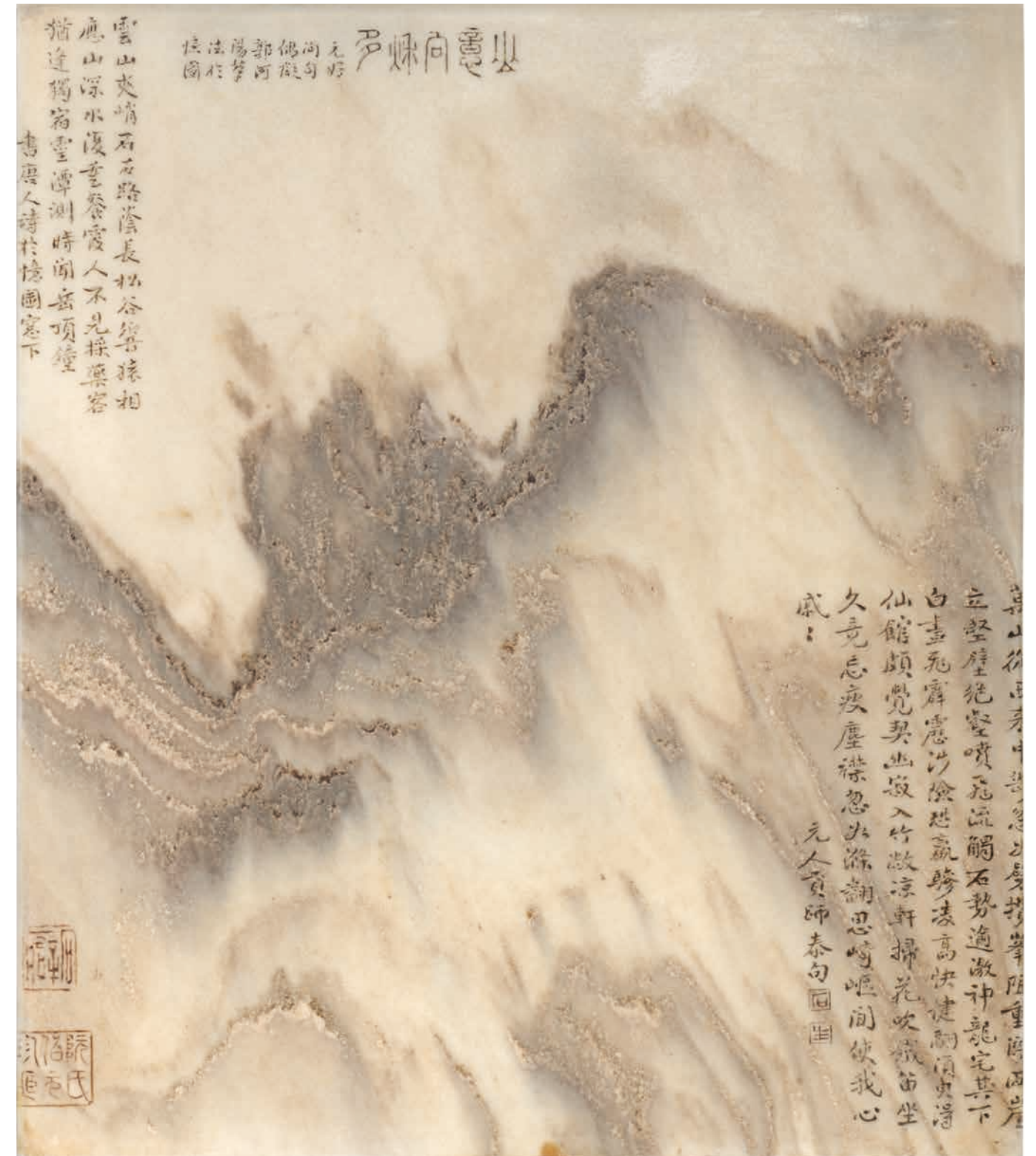
Ruan Yuan had a special interest in the art of cutting, polishing and framing marble selected for its dramatic natural markings, particularly marble from Dali, Yunnan province, to create semi-abstract imagery on panels which he called 石畫 *shihua* (stone paintings). Ruan Yuan wrote a treatise on marble panels of this type entitled 石畫記 *Shihua ji* (Commentary of Stone Paintings), recording a number of stone panels he had inscribed, noting their texts and sizes. The horizontal panel shown here is the first example which can be directly associated with Ruan Yuan's published record. It is thought likely the rest of his collection was lost when his estate in Yangzhou was destroyed during the Taiping rebellion shortly after his death.

A similar Dali marble 'stone painting' inscribed and signed by Ruan Yuan is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, illustrated by Hart (ed.) in the catalogue of the special exhibition, *Museum of Stones: Ancient and Contemporary Art at the Noguchi Museum*, New York, 2016, p. 113, no. 55.

Compare also the Dali marble panel mounted as a table screen inscribed and signed by Ruan Yuan, in the collection of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, illustrated by Jacobsen and Grindley, *Classical Chinese Furniture*, Minneapolis, 1999, pp. 210-211, no. 79.

清 阮元製 詩文石畫一對 帶框 58.7 x 45.7 厘米
橫幅 「花鳥夕陽遲」詩文 「阮氏石」「琅環僊館」印 24 x 31 厘米
豎幅 「山意向秋多」詩文 「石」「生」「石癖」「阮氏伯元珍藏」印 35 x 31 厘米

來源 潘家舊藏，1890-1920 年代購自廣東黃埔，後傳潘家後人
紐約佳士得 2009 年 9 月 15 日，拍品第 248 號



18. AN IMPERIAL GREEN JADE 'DRAGONS' WINE CUP

Mark and Period of Yongzheng (1722-1735)

finely carved with a mirror pair of long-horned *chilong* dragons climbing over and around the two squared loop handles, grasping the rim with their heads held high to confront each other from opposite sides, their serpentine bodies carved in openwork with fluted manes curling down behind and hindquarters extended out to the sides, ending in tightly twisted forked tails, the plain polished walls of the cup thinly carved and resting on a narrow ring foot, the jade of translucent leaf-green color, with dark mottling throughout, the recessed base incised with the reign mark *Yongzheng nian zhi* in seal characters.

Width 5 inches (12.7 cm)

Provenance From an old English Collection

Bonhams London, *Fine Chinese Art*, 13 May 2010, lot 96

Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection

Jade carvings inscribed with the Yongzheng imperial reign mark are extremely rare. It is very likely that the early jade and porcelain dragon-handle cups were the inspiration for the design of the present cup, an idea supported by the use of the archaic style seal characters in the Yongzheng mark at the base.

Compare the plain white jade cup with two handles inscribed with the same archaic style four character Yongzheng reign mark in seal script, from the Qing Court Collection, now in the Palace Museum, Beijing, illustrated in *Gugong bowuyuan cang wenwu zhenpin quanji* (The Complete Collection of Treasures of the Palace Museum), *Jadeware* (III), Hong Kong, 1995, p. 248, no. 203, described as one of very few jade vessels inscribed with the imperial Yongzheng reign mark known to exist.

Compare also the jade cup with similarly carved openwork dragon handles, from the Qing Court Collection and illustrated in the same series, *op. cit.*, *Jadeware* (II), pp. 247-248, no. 191, described as a Ming dynasty work of high artistic achievement. Another Ming dynasty jade cup of octagonal form, carved with two dragons climbing over and around the two squared loop handles, is illustrated with a jade saucer in *Gugong bowuyuan cangpin daxi: yuqi bian* (Compendium of Collections in the Palace Museum: Jade), Vol. 7, *Ming Dynasty*, Beijing, 2011, pp. 234-235, no. 221.

An earlier jade cup with *chilong* dragon handles in the Musée Guimet, Paris, was included in the Oriental Ceramic Society exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and illustrated by Rawson and Ayers in the catalogue, *Chinese Jade Throughout the Ages*, London, 1975, p. 100, no. 326, attributed to the Yuan/Ming dynasty, 13th-16th century, where the authors note "Such cups with two dragon handles make their appearance in Ying-ch'ing porcelain of late Sung or Yuan ... and remain popular throughout the Ming period."

Yingqing glazed porcelain cups of this type from the Kempe Collection, the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, the Honolulu Academy of Arts, and the Barlow Collection, University of Sussex are illustrated by Wirgin in 'Sung Ceramic Designs,' *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, No. 42, Stockholm, 1970, pls. 28f-i.

清雍正 御製碧玉雙螭龍耳杯 寬 12.7 厘米
「雍正年製」款

來源 英國私人舊藏
倫敦邦翰斯 2010 年 5 月 13 日，拍品第 96 號
水松石山房藏



19. AN IMPERIAL REALGAR-IMITATION GLASS TRIPOD CENSER

Mark and Period of Qianlong (1736-1795)

of shallow circular form, following a bronze prototype, carved from bright orange glass suffused with more intense reddish areas, imitating the 'magic' mineral realgar, the highly polished rounded sides rising to a wide mouth with slightly flared rim surmounted by a pair of upright loop handles and resting on three short tapered feet, incised at the center of the base with a four character mark of Qianlong within a square frame, together with a wood stand carved as a mallow flower.

Diameter 4¼ inches (10.5 cm)

Provenance From the Collection of Nathan Benz, California
Christie's New York, *Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*, 30 March 2005, lot 193
J. J. Lally & Co., New York
Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection

Realgar (雄黃, *xiong huang*) is a naturally occurring sulphide of arsenic which, although highly toxic, has a long history of use by Daoist alchemists in China as an ingredient in elixirs of immortality. Several Chinese emperors, beginning with Qin Shi Huang (d. 210 B.C.) and including Yongzheng (r. 1722-1735) are recorded in Chinese history as having died from taking elixirs containing realgar and other 'magic' ingredients in pursuit of longevity.

Recent research indicates that realgar-imitation glass may be one of the earliest types of glass made in the Beijing palace glassworks for the exclusive use of the imperial court from the early years of the 18th century.

A Qianlong period realgar-imitation glass censer from the collection of Professor and Mrs. Peter H. Plesch is illustrated by Curtis, 'Glass from China for the Land above the Clouds,' *Journal of Glass Studies*, Vol. 46, New York, 2004, p. 152, fig. 6 and the same censer is illustrated again by Curtis, *Glass Exchange between Europe and China, 1550-1800: Diplomatic, Mercantile and Technological Interactions*, Farnham, England, 2009, p. 76, fig. 6.3.

Realgar-imitation Qianlong period glass vessels in a variety of different shapes are recorded in museum and private collections, including a mallet shape vase published by Zhang (ed.), *Guang ning qiu shui: Qing gong Zaobanchu boli qi* (Luster of Autumn Water: Glass of the Qing Imperial Workshop), Beijing, 2005, p. 156, no. 25; and a hexafoil pouch shape vase from the Sloane Collection exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts and published by Rawski and Rawson (eds.), *China: The Three Emperors, 1662-1795*, London, 2005, p. 304, no. 234.

Compare also the Qianlong mark and period yellow glass censer of very similar form published in the catalogue of the thirty-fifth anniversary exhibition of the Min Chiu Society, *In Pursuit of Antiquities*, Hong Kong, 1995, p. 237, no. 207.

清乾隆 御製仿雄黃料沖耳乳足爐 徑 10.5 厘米
「乾隆年製」雙方框款

來源 加州 Nathan Benz 藏
紐約佳士得 2005 年 3 月 30 日，拍品第 193 號
紐約藍理捷中國文物
水松石山房藏



20. AN IMPERIAL TURQUOISE-BLUE GLASS 'TIANQIU PING' VASE

Mark and Period of Qianlong (1736-1795)

with thick walls, the globular body raised on a slightly splayed ring foot and surmounted by a tall cylindrical neck, the opaque bright turquoise-blue glass smoothly polished all over, the four character reign mark of Qianlong within a square wheel-cut on the recessed base.

Height 8⁵/₈ inches (22 cm)

Glass vases in this distinctive shape were produced in the Qing imperial workshops in various colors in both transparent and opaque glass. Several examples in different colors, all inscribed with imperial reign marks, in the collection of Andrew K. F. Lee are illustrated in the catalogue of the exhibition of the Lee Collection, *Elegance and Radiance: Grandeur in Qing Glass*, The Art Museum, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 2000, pp. 98-110, nos. 8-14.

A very similar opaque turquoise-blue glass vase of this shape from the collection of Robert H. Clague is illustrated by Brown and Rabiner, *Chinese Glass of the Qing Dynasty, 1644-1911*, Phoenix, 1987, pp. 36-37, no. 35, where the authors cite a similar opaque turquoise glass vase with a Yongzheng reign mark in the British Museum illustrated by Harden, *Masterpieces of Glass: a Selection*, London, 1968, fig. 169.

清乾隆 御製天藍料天球瓶 高 22 厘米
「乾隆年製」粗方框款



21. A BLACK AND WHITE JADE TWIN CICADAS PENDANT

Qianlong Period (1736-1795)

superbly carved from a single piece of jade, using the opaque black areas of the jade for two cicadas shown in high relief on opposite sides of a pea pod using the translucent white areas of the jade, all realistically rendered and finely detailed, with openwork leafy tendrils at one end making a natural loop for suspension.

Length 3 inches (7.6 cm)

Provenance From the Collection of Victor Rienaeker (b. 1887), London
From the Collection of Desmond Gure (1906-1970), London
From the Collection of Dr. Arthur M. Sackler (1913-1987), New York
Christie's New York, *Fine Chinese Ceramics & Works of Art including Property from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, 14-15 September 2009, lot 115

Exhibited *Chinese Jade*, Oriental Ceramic Society, London, 1948
The Arts of the Ch'ing Dynasty, Oriental Ceramic Society, London, 1964

Published Davis, *Chinese Jade*, Welwyn, Herts: privately published, 1935, pl. 18
'Chinese Jades,' *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, 1947-1948, London, 1948, no. 219 (not illustrated)
The Arts of the Ch'ing Dynasty, Oriental Ceramic Society, London, 1964, pl. 130, no. 405

清乾隆 墨玉巧色雙蟬 長 7.6 厘米

來源 倫敦 Victor Rienaeker (b. 1887) 舊藏
倫敦 Desmond Gure (1906-1970) 舊藏
紐約亞瑟 M. 賽克勒 (1913-1987) 舊藏
紐約佳士得 2009 年 9 月 14-15 日，拍品第 115 號

展覽 1948 倫敦東方陶瓷學會，展題 *Chinese Jade*
1964 倫敦東方陶瓷學會，展題 *The Arts of the Ch'ing Dynasty*

出版 Davis, *Chinese Jade*, Welwyn, Herts: 私人出版，1935，圖 18
Chinese Jade，倫敦東方陶瓷學會 1948，圖 219
The Arts of the Ch'ing Dynasty，倫敦 1964，圖 130，405 號



(Two Views)

22. A THREE-COLOR JADE TWIN FISH PENDANT

Qianlong Period (1736-1795)

well carved using the natural color of the stone to show a white goldfish and a black goldfish swimming in tandem amidst lotus and water weeds, with a lotus pod carved from the bright russet skin of the stone at one side, with finely incised details throughout.

Length 2¾ inches (7 cm)

Provenance American Private Collection
Christie's New York, *Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*,
13 September 2012, lot 1036

The style of carving, careful exploitation of the natural color of the original pebble (*qiaose* 巧色 technique) and very fine details throughout all are indicative of the Suzhou school.

The auspicious wish for peace and prosperity embodied in this carving is expressed in the rebus 金玉同和 (gold and jade together in harmony).

清乾隆 褐斑墨玉巧色「金玉同和」玉飾 長 7 厘米

來源 美國私人收藏
紐約佳士得 2012 年 9 月 13 日，拍品第 1036 號



(Two Views)

23. AN IMPERIAL HUNTING KNIFE AND SCABBARD

Qianlong Period (1736-1795)

made for ceremonial use at the Manchu court, the well-honed slender steel blade with incised and gilt three-clawed dragons near the hilt on both sides, the white jade handle polished to a high gloss and decorated at both ends with bands of faceted square ruby-red glass inlays, the top of the handle inlaid with an eight-petal florette, the close-fitted gold scabbard formed as openwork floral scroll engraved with fine details throughout, decorated to match with ruby-red glass collars at either end and an eight-petal florette at the base, further embellished near the open end with a small florette inlaid with clear glass petals around a ruby-red glass center, the open end with ropetwist rim and a protruding dragon-head tab fitted with a loop for suspension.

Length overall 12½ inches (31.4 cm)

Knife 10¹¹/₁₆ inches (27.2 cm)

Scabbard 8⁷/₈ inches (22.5 cm)

Provenance Sotheby's Hong Kong, *Fine Chinese Ceramics & Works of Art*, 8 April 2010, lot 1812
Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection

Compare the Qianlong imperial knife with jade handle and gold scabbard decorated with turquoise, coral and lazurite inlays in the Palace Museum, Beijing, illustrated by Ho and Bronson, *Splendors of China's Forbidden City: The Glorious Reign of Emperor Qianlong*, The Field Museum, Chicago, 2004, p. 201, no. 248, with the author's comment: "The use of personal knives at meals was a mark of Manchu identity. When eating sacrificial pork, not only men but also women were expected to cut up their own meat." A similar knife and scabbard suspended from an imperial court belt is illustrated in the same catalogue, *op. cit.*, p. 59, fig. 52 and another is shown in a detail image from an official portrait of the Qianlong emperor in full regalia, *op. cit.*, p. 59, fig. 53.

Ceremonial court belts of the Qing dynasty emperor with all suspended accessories including similar knives in fitted scabbards in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, are illustrated in *Qing dai fushi zhanlan tulu* (Catalogue of the Exhibition of Ch'ing Dynasty Costume Accessories), Taipei, 1986, pp. 114-115, nos. 32 and 33.

清乾隆 御製白玉柄金鞘掛刀
總長 31.4 厘米
刀 27.2 厘米
鞘 22.5 厘米

來源 香港蘇富比 2010 年 4 月 8 日，
拍品第 1812 號
水松石山房藏



24. AN IMPERIAL BOXWOOD CARVING OF MANJUSHRI SEATED ON A LION
Qianlong Period, dated by inscription to 1761

the Bodhisattva of Transcendent Wisdom manifested as an *arhat*, shown holding a rosary, seated in a contemplative attitude on a lotus-form cushion resting on the back of a large guardian lion with finely detailed long mane and bushy tail, draped with a fringed saddle blanket carved with formal lotus blooms and foliage, standing placidly with head turned towards a bearded foreign attendant with curly hair grasping the lion's collar hung with three bells, the group assembled on an integral platform base of swirling clouds, the underside with a narrow border of clouds framing a lengthy testimony by the Qianlong Emperor praising Manjushri incised in clerical script filled with blue pigment, signed: 乾隆辛巳御贊 (Encomium by Qianlong in the *Xinsi* year), corresponding to 1761, followed by one red-filled seal of the emperor: 古香 (Ancient Fragrance), the tan-brown wood with darker patination in the recesses, highlighting the details, fitted zitan stand.

Height 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches (10 cm)

Provenance Sotheby Parke Bernet, New York, *Fine Chinese Jades and Works of Art*,
28 February, 1980, lot 42
From the collection of Timothy Lewis (1937-2004), Melplash Court, Dorset
Duke's Fine Art Auctions, Dorset, *Melplash Court Sale*, 23 September 2010, lot 1206
Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection

The inscription on the underside of the base was written by the Qianlong Emperor specifically for this sculpture. The text is recorded in the 御製文初集 *Yuzhiwen chuji* (Initial Collection of Imperial Literary Works), 1763, *juan* 30:13a, under the title 木刻文殊像贊 *Muke Wenshu xiang zan* (Encomium for a Carved Wooden Image of Manjushri). It reads:

是法王子 即法王身 非一非二 何疏何親
如是現象 據獅子背 不見一法 千古無對
五臺示迹 國清留踪成所作
智妙應無窮 扶寸非小 丈六非大
住世度人云何不可

and may be translated as:

This is the Prince of the Dharma, that is, the body of the Dharma King, which is never just one [has manifold phenomenological manifestations] nor yet can it be two [is only one in essence], so there is no question as to whether this is a distant or close likeness. In such a phenomenological manifestation as this apprehended as perched on a lion's back we do not see a true manifestation, for throughout ancient and modern times never has a true equivalent ever been made. However, this particular one was made after a manifestation that appeared at Mount Wutai and one that took form and was handed down at the Guoqing Temple. What the marvel of cognition can make of such manifestations is infinite in scope. Though only four fingers wide, it is not too small, and for a transformation body the height of a hand's span, it is not too tall, so how can people who live just in this world reckon that it is not done well!



25. A SHE INKSTONE IN THE FORM OF A HAN TILE-END

18th – 19th Century

of thick cylindrical section, carved from black *she* stone flecked with pale greenish natural markings, decorated on one side in the style of pottery tiles on the eaves of Han dynasty imperial palaces with four large seal script characters within fan shape reserves radiating from a central boss, all in relief filling a recessed medallion within a wide raised rim, the reverse with a slightly concave grinding surface and adjacent crescent shape water well recessed with a wide raised rim, the narrow vertical sides incised with two inscriptions in *kaishu*, the heavy, dense stone smoothly polished all over.

Diameter $5\frac{7}{8}$ inches (14.9 cm)

Provenance A Japanese private collection, 2006
Brian Harkins, London, January 2007
Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection

The four large seal script characters may be read as: 七葉永祥 (*qi ye yong xiang*, Eternal Good Fortune for Seven Generations). The *kaishu* inscriptions on the sides may be read as: 鑑古齋仿製 (*Jiangu zhai fangzhi*, made in emulation [of a Han eaves-tile] at the Studio of Appreciation of Antiquity) and 穎川春暉館文寶 (*Yingchuan Chunhui guan wenbao*, Cultural Treasure of Springtime Sun Hall in Yingchuan).

Jiangu zhai, the manufactory of the Wang Jinsheng family (汪近聖, active early 18th century) in Huizhou, Anhui province where ink and instones were produced, is known to have made ink for the imperial palace during the Qing dynasty. *She* stone is a variety of slate found in She county, Anhui province. It is a favorite material for inkstones and has been in use since the Tang dynasty.

A very similar *she* inkstone with the same two *kaishu* inscriptions on the narrow sides but decorated with four different large seal characters is illustrated in the catalogue of an exhibition at the National History Museum in Taipei, *Shuang qing cang yan* (The Fine Chinese Inkstone: Collection of Steven Hung and Lindy Chern), Taipei, 2001, pp. 264-265.

Two Han pottery eaves-tiles cut and polished for use as inkstones formerly in the Fujita Museum in Osaka are published in *Important Chinese Art from the Fujita Museum*, Christie's New York, 15 March 2017, lot 519. Two other Han pottery eaves-tile inkstones are illustrated by Wei and Yang (eds.), *Zhongguo yantai tulu* (Illustrated Catalogue of Chinese Inkstones), Ürümqi, 2002, pp. 112 and 140.

十八 – 十九世紀 歙石仿漢「七葉永祥」瓦當硯 徑 14.9 厘米
「鑑古齋仿製」「穎川春暉館文寶」款

來源 日本私人收藏，2006
倫敦 Brian Harkins 藏，2007 年一月
水松石山房藏



26. AN IMPERIAL MOULDED GOURD BOWL

Kangxi shangwan mark and of the period (1662-1722)

the natural gourd grown into a mould with four *shou* character medallions flanked by dragon-scrolls and separated by pairs of phoenix-head scroll motifs, all in relief on the exterior of the rounded sides, the skin of warm honey brown color, the interior lacquered black, the rounded foot of irregular outline encircling the imperial mark moulded on the recessed base: *Kangxi shangwan* (For the amusement of Kangxi emperor).

Diameter 4½ inches (11.4 cm)

Provenance Sotheby's Hong Kong, *Fine Chinese Works of Art, Furniture, Jade Carvings, Jadeite Jewellery and China Trade Paintings*, 30-31 October 1991, lot 341
Collection of Mary and George Bloch
Sotheby's Hong Kong, *Scholarly Works of Art from the Mary and George Bloch Collection*, 23 October 2005, lot 128
Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection

The simple folk craft of moulded gourds was transformed into an imperial art form by the Kangxi emperor who instituted the cultivation and moulding of gourds within the precincts of the Palace late in the 17th century.

Compare the moulded gourd bowl with everted rim similarly decorated with four *shou* character medallions flanked by dragon-scrolls, with *Kangxi shangwan* mark on the base, illustrated by Wang, *Shuo hulu* (The Charms of the Gourd), Hong Kong, 1993, p. 73, fig. 5.

Compare also the moulded gourd bowl, unmarked but attributed to the Qianlong period, from the collection of Sir John Addis, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, illustrated by Clunas, *Chinese Carving*, Singapore, 1996, p. 67, fig. 82.

清康熙 御製壽字紋匏碗 徑 11.4 厘米
「康熙賞玩」單圈款

來源 香港蘇富比 1991 年 10 月 30-31 日，拍品第 341 號
瑪麗與莊智博舊藏
香港蘇富比 2005 年 10 月 23 日，拍品第 128 號
水松石山房藏



27. AN IMPERIAL MOULDED GOURD JAR AND COVER

Qianlong shangwan mark and of the period (1736-1795)

the jar of slightly compressed spherical form decorated in relief with a continuous frieze of foliate scroll bearing Indian lotus blossoms and pointed leaves on looping tendrils above a narrow band of overlapping lotus petals rising from the edge of the rounded ring foot, the wide mouth with a flat inner flange and rounded lip made of boxwood, closely fitted to the domed cover decorated with petal lappets radiating from the nipple-shaped knob made of natural gourd stem, the surface of even, warm, reddish-brown color, the interior of the jar and cover coated with black lacquer, the recessed base moulded with the imperial mark: *Qianlong shangwan* (For the amusement of Qianlong emperor).

Diameter 4¾ inches (12.2 cm)

Provenance Collection of He Yutang, *Dongsi Yantong hutong*, Beijing, late 1950's
Collection of Wang Shixiang (1914-2009), Beijing
China Guardian, Beijing, *Treasures of the Twin-Pine Studio: Works of Art Collected by Wang Shixiang and Yuan Quanyou*, 26 November 2003, lot 1232
Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection

Published Wang, *Shuo hulu*, (The Charms of the Gourd), Hong Kong, 1993, p. 207, pl. 26
Wang, 'Tan pao qi (Moulded Gourds),' *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* (Palace Museum Journal), Beijing, 1979, No. 1, pl. 7-right (Translated into English by Clunas, *The Oriental Ceramic Society Chinese Translation Series*, Number Ten, London, 1981, p. 23, fig. 6)
Zhongguo jade yishupin touzi tudian: zaxiang (China Guardian Illustrated Catalogue of Art Investment: Miscellaneous), Hebei, 2005, p. 124 center

Wang Shixiang noted in *The Charms of the Gourd* that the skin of the jar is much thicker than that of the cover and they may belong to two different gourd species.

Compare the moulded gourd vase decorated with the same foliate scroll and overlapping lotus petals rising from the ring foot, inscribed at the neck with an imperial poem by the Qianlong Emperor, in the collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing, illustrated by Wang in *The Charms of the Gourd*, *op. cit.*, p. 204, no. 23. The present example may have used the same mould as the Palace Museum vase mentioned above, and was retro-fitted into a jar with cover.

清乾隆 御製纏蓮紋匏蓋罐 徑 12.2 厘米
「乾隆賞玩」雙圈款

來源 1950年代末購自北京東四烟筒胡同何玉堂處
王世襄 (1914-2009) 舊藏
北京中國嘉德 2003 年 11 月 26 日，拍品第 1232 號
水松石山房藏

出版 王世襄〈說葫蘆〉，香港 1993，第 207 頁，圖 26
王世襄〈談匏器〉故宮博物院院刊，北京 1979，第一期，
圖 7 右 (柯律格英譯刊於倫敦東方陶瓷學會翻譯系列，1981，
第 23 頁，圖 6)
中國嘉德藝術投資圖典：雜項，2005 年，第 124 頁中



28. A LACQUERED BOXWOOD RUYI SCEPTER

Qing Dynasty, 18th – 19th Century

carved with a long curving shaft rising to twin longevity fungus (*lingzhi*) heads and with a small *lingzhi* head on an arched stem near the middle and a very small *lingzhi* stem at the end to serve as the loop for a cord or tassel, covered all over with dark purplish-brown lacquer polished to a high gloss.

Length 16 inches (40.7 cm)

Provenance Kagedo Gallery, Orcas, Washington
Ian and Susan Wilson Collection
Christie's New York, *The Ian and Susan Wilson Collection of Scholar's Objects*,
17 March 2016, lot 1132

Published Little, *Spirit Stones of China: the Ian and Susan Wilson Collection of Chinese Stones, Paintings, and Related Scholars' Objects*, Chicago, 1999, no. 49

Several Qing dynasty *ruyi* scepters in various materials from the Palace Museum, Beijing are illustrated by Rawski and Rawson (eds.) in *China: The Three Emperors, 1662-1795*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2005, pp. 366-369, nos. 273-282, with captions and further information on pp. 465-466 including a summary history of the *ruyi* scepter in China by Krahl:

"*Ruyi* means 'as-you-wish' and a *ruyi* scepter is a talisman presented to bestow good fortune. Its shape and symbolism developed over a long period of time and its auspicious association appears to be connected with Buddhism. Following Indian iconography, in China early Buddhist deities were often depicted holding simple back-scratchers, ... By the Tang period (618-907), these functional items, which often terminated in a small cupped hand, had become ornamental and auspicious. Scepters of the characteristic *ruyi* shape ... are among the effects of the Japanese Emperor Shōmu (reg. 724-49, died 756) preserved in the Shōsō-in at the Tōdai-ji in Japan. ... A silver scepter of AD 872, donated to a Buddha bone relic in the Famen Temple near Xi'an in Shaanxi province, is already called a '*ruyi*' in its inscription.

With the temporary decline of Buddhism in the latter half of the Tang, the *ruyi* scepter's popularity spread and its shape changed. Being adopted by Daoists, it turned into a longevity fungus (*lingzhi*), and any shape was suitable for its use as a secular good luck charm. The Yongzheng Emperor revived its auspicious tradition by commissioning examples in various materials and he made the scepter imperial. ... When the Qianlong Emperor officially called upon courtiers to present *ruyi* scepters upon imperial birthdays and New Year celebrations, their number and opulence increased, and since their only function now was to serve as auspicious objects, free rein was left to the artisans' imaginations."

Compare the similar lacquered boxwood *ruyi* scepter of smaller size in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, included in various thematic exhibitions from 2004-2011, accession number 1984.382.

清十八 – 十九世紀 黃楊木鑲雕褐漆如意 長 40.7 厘米

來源 華盛頓州 Orcas · Kagedo Gallery
Ian and Susan Wilson 舊藏
紐約佳士得 2016 年 3 月 17 日 · 拍品第 1132 號

出版 利特爾 〈怪石〉 芝加哥 1999, 49 號



29. A JADE CARVING OF A PAIR OF MAGPIES

Qianlong Period (1736-1795)

the two plump birds compactly carved side by side with wings folded and tails together, holding sprigs of blossoming plum in their beaks, the branches entwined and pierced at the underside to form a natural loop for suspension, fully detailed all over, the silvery-white jade with bright russet markings well used in the carving.

Length 2¾ inches (7 cm)

Provenance Bluett & Sons Ltd., London, 1963

From the Collection of Roger Pilkington (1928-1969), Lancashire, England

Sotheby's Hong Kong, *The Pilkington Collection of Chinese Art*, 6 April 2016, lot 58

In Chinese tradition, the magpie (喜鵲, *xique*) is a bird of happiness (喜, *xi*), a messenger bringing good news, while the blossoming plum (梅, *mei*) signifies the arrival of Spring. Together they represent a blissful joy shown through one's eyes (喜上眉梢, *xi shang mei shao*). A pair of magpies with prunus also represents fidelity and marital harmony, wishing the couple a lifetime of happiness together.

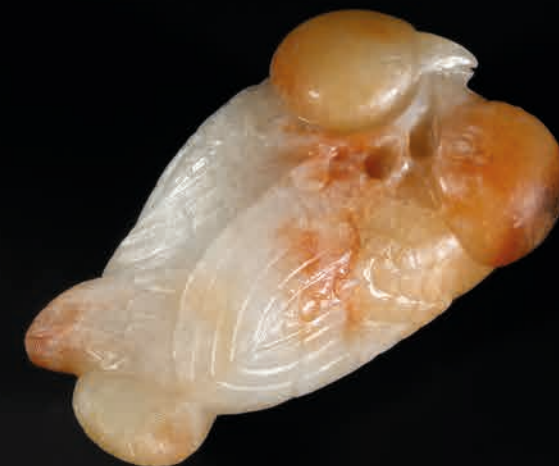
A very similar jade carving of a pair of magpies in the Palace Museum, Beijing, from the Qing Court Collection, is illustrated in *Gugong bowuyuan cang wenwu zhenpin quanji* (The Complete Collection of Treasures of the Palace Museum), Vol. 42, *Jadeware (III)*, Hong Kong, 1995, p. 102, no. 82.

清乾隆 褐斑白玉「喜上眉梢」雙鵲 長 7 厘米

來源 倫敦 Bluett & Sons Ltd. · 1963

英國蘭開夏郡 Roger Pilkington (1928-1969) 舊藏

香港蘇富比 2016 年 4 月 6 日 · 拍品第 58 號



30. A LARGE BRONZE GOOSE-FORM INCENSE BURNER

Early Ming Dynasty, 14th - 15th Century

elaborately modelled in two sections, the domed upper half of the goose forming the cover, cast in relief with dense plumage all finely detailed and symmetrically arranged, the wings folded back with tips rising in twin points towards the rounded tail, a pair of small crescent-shape apertures on the narrow shoulders to allow for aeration, the long slender neck extended with head held high and beak open to allow the fragrant smoke to escape, embellished with curled feathers along both sides of the neck and a small *ruyi*-head motif on the forehead, the lower half closely fitted to complete the body of the goose and form a generous firebox for burning incense on the interior, cast on the exterior with clusters of curled feathers on either side above the short legs and webbed feet attached by thick tenons to the original matching bronze in the form of a stylized lotus pod surrounded by a wide border of rounded lotus petal motifs, the rich dark brown patina shading to green and with natural verdigris widely scattered.

Height 14½ inches (37 cm)

Length 18¾ inches (48 cm)

Provenance Private Collection, California
Bonhams New York, *Chinese Art from the Scholar's Studio*,
16 September 2013, lot 8103
J. J. Lally & Co., New York
Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection

This censer is the largest of its kind yet recorded and the only example known which is complete with its original matching base.

A much less elaborately cast bronze censer in the form of a goose with outstretched neck in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum is illustrated by Kerr, *Later Chinese Bronzes*, London, 1990, p. 82, fig. 62, attributed to the Song dynasty, with the comment that similar censers have been excavated from Song tombs, supported by a footnote reference of a smaller bronze censer in the form of a duck excavated in Jishui, Jiangxi province, from the tomb of Zhang Xuanyi (d. 1237), published in *Wenwu*, 1987, No. 2, pp. 66-67 in a line drawing showing the bird's body divided into two sections in a box and cover model similar to the present example. Kerr also mentions, *op. cit.*, p. 80, the fact that Chinese bronze censers in animal forms were exported to Japan during the Yuan and Ming and cites as an example a Chinese duck-form censer on a rectangular plinth imported to Japan during the Ming dynasty and now in the Tokugawa Museum of Art, published in the catalogue, *The Shogun Age Exhibition*, Tokyo, 1983, p. 107, no. 75.

A large gilt bronze goose-form incense burner very similar in form and design to the present example, but lacking the original base, was sold at Christie's New York 29 March 2006, lot 320 and the same goose-form censer was sold again at Poly Auction in Hong Kong 4 December 2014, lot 5632.

Compare also the smaller gilt-bronze incense burner in the form of a duck from the Speelman Collection inscribed with a credible Xuande reign mark (1425-1435) sold at Sotheby's Hong Kong 4 April 2014, lot 85.

明初十四 - 十五世紀 銅雁形蓮座香薰 高 37 厘米 長 48 厘米

來源 加州私人收藏
紐約邦瀚斯 2013 年 9 月 16 日，拍品第 8103 號
紐約藍理捷中國文物
水松石山房藏





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