

asian art KNAPTON RASTI





Chinese jades

We are pleased to present our third catalogue since the inception of Knapton Rasti Asian Art in the year 2000. This time we have concentrated on jade, a material that both of us have always been drawn too, and a stone that seems to find us.

We are fortunate in being able to offer for sale carvings from three separate private collections that have arrived direct or by a more circuitous route. The first, and most prominent, is a group put together by Mr and Mrs Evans in the late nineteen fifties and early sixties, here in the United Kingdom. Laurence Evans came to prominence after the break up of MCA (the Music Corporation of America) in 1962, by the United States anti-trust law. He helped start London Artists which then took on the former's international stars, such as Sir John Mills, Sir Ralph Richardson, Sir John Gielgud, Sir Laurence Olivier and many more. Eventually they followed him into his own company ICM (International Creative Management). Using the London trade at the time, including Sydney L. Moss, William Clayton and Barling, Mr and Mrs Evans were able to buy several imposing pale celadon and white animal sculptures which have become increasingly difficult to find.

Numbers 35, 36 and 37 are three superb examples, for while the size is large, the skill of the carver has not diminished. The proportions are carefully planned, and there are no weak areas in these animals in the round. Interestingly, the collector has chosen mythical animals, the longma, the Buddhist lion and the phoenix. By the eighteenth century the artist, in all areas, had gradually chosen secular above religious subject matter, and the growing market for decorative styles meant the beasts increasingly depicted were horses, buffaloes and domestic animals. But here we have a throwback to the great imaginary fabulous beasts of the Southern Dynasties (265-589 AD) which lined the tomb avenues, the Northern Song animal sculptures on the Spirit path at the tombs of Gongxian, Henan province and later still the Ming Tombs at Xiaoling, Nanjing.

The second group (nos. 23,25,26,27and 33) was acquired in Beijing in the period 1932-4 by Sir Adrian Holman, then second secretary in the British Embassy. He subsequently served in embassies around the world, often in the Middle East. His widow, Lady Holman, has kindly allowed us to use this invaluable provenance. They are an eclectic mixture of Moghul style receptacles and white jades. The jar (no.27) is a rare shape in this material (see the Sedgwick jar in the British Museum, Ming Ceramics, plate 6:14, page 168/169) and we would point to the extraordinary doucai pieces made at Jingdezhen in the Chenghua period (1465-87 AD), with the tian mark on the base. The short neck, flattened shoulders and steep sides suggest these pieces as an inspiration for the jade masters of the Qianlong era (1735-96 AD) whose source material for forms was often in previous eras. An alternative template for this jar is a Tibetan Buddhist copper ritual vessel. The two other Moghul inspired bowls are in the more traditional form, of overlapping leaves and pierced floral openwork designs, and in this particular area of the market which is dominated by modern material, these items are the genuine article.

The third collection consists of two works of art, but in some ways they are the highlight of the catalogue. Both (nos.6 and 7) are carved from yellow jade, and both represent perennial Chinese forms, the wine cup and the phoenix. They were formerly in the estate of the late Kenneth Snowman, doyen of Wartskis, the Bond Street jewellers, and world authority on Faberge and gold boxes. The phoenix has many precedents in jade, not least a water dropper, dated to the Northern Wei (386-535 AD), which is illustrated by Desmond Gure, "Selected Examples from the Jade Exhibition at Stockholm, 1963; a Comparative Study", BMFEA, No. 36 (1964), plate 14. The Stockholm bird has the same crested head facing forwards, the carefully incised wings pulled up the sides and the tail feathers rolled into a stylish curling finish. The stone itself suggests a later date for our bird, while the carving is softer and slightly more suggestive of the naturalistic poses found in Song sculpture. It is worth noting the similarities to staff finials (often birds) which were revived in the Song period in imitation of Han jades. We have listed several references for the eared wine cup (no. 6) to show the different colours of stone and varying forms of this peculiarly Chinese vessel down through the dynasties.

Outside of these three collectors we should look north and south west of China, towards the trading routes to India and the deserts. The square jade carving of a recumbent camel (no. 8) its head twisted around its body, its beard intermingling with the tail is a real tour-de-force. The camel illustrated in Jessica Rawson's 'Chinese Jade' on page 369 is an obvious reference point. That one has been dated Song or later. We have put ours in the Ming period with its veins of russet suggesting the stone used in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The attention to detail is remarkable, one curl on the animal's mane incised in spirals, while the others remain concentric, and the undulations of the humps and muscles are subtly projected.

The final piece (no. 3) worthy of note is the pendant carved as a Hindustani merchant. The rise of the Mongols during the thirteenth century, saw artistic designs and intellectual property exchanged down the trade routes, and it was then that jade carving outside China really flourished, especially under Timurid rulers Amir Timur (1370-1405 AD) (Tamburlane) and Ulugh Beg (1447-49), with the former's tombstone carved from a large jade slab. The question posed is whether our merchant relates to this period or earlier Tang prototypes, when drilled pendants were found in tombs, alongside pottery figures with Western Asiatic features such as this one; a turbaned man is a rare find indeed.

Nader Rasti

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China

- 1 A mottled grey jade toggle of circular form, modelled as a coiled catfish, the details well defined.

Song Dynasty [960-1279]

Diameter: 1.in [2.5cm]

China

- 2 A mottled dark green and brown jade model of a recumbent hare, the head resting on its forepaws, the ears pressed back against the body.

Song Dynasty [960-1279]

Length: 2.1/4.in [5.7cm]



See Introduction

China

- 3 A mottled green and grey celadon jade pendant modelled as a standing Hindustani merchant, the moustachioed figure wearing a turban and long flowing robe, his hands gripping a staff held before him.

Tang/Liao Dynasty [618-1125]

Height: 1.7/8.in [4.8cm]

Reference: Bluett & Sons Ltd.; Dr Newton's Zoo, no. 15, page 16. This tribute bearer has similarities to our own carving in that one can compare both of them with sculpture and Tang pottery figures with the hands held high to the chest, the flowing clothes, and the protruding shoes.

Arts Council of Great Britain and The Oriental Ceramic Society; Chinese Jade throughout the ages, London, 1975, no. 212, page 74.



China

- 4 A brown mottled grey jade model of a hook beaked bird of prey, the head turned back with a bifurcated crest, the wings and vertical tail plumage carefully incised.

Yuan/Ming [618-1179]

Height: 2.in [5.2cm]

Provenance: Cunliffe Collection No.JN 28
Purchased from Bluett and Sons, 1955



China

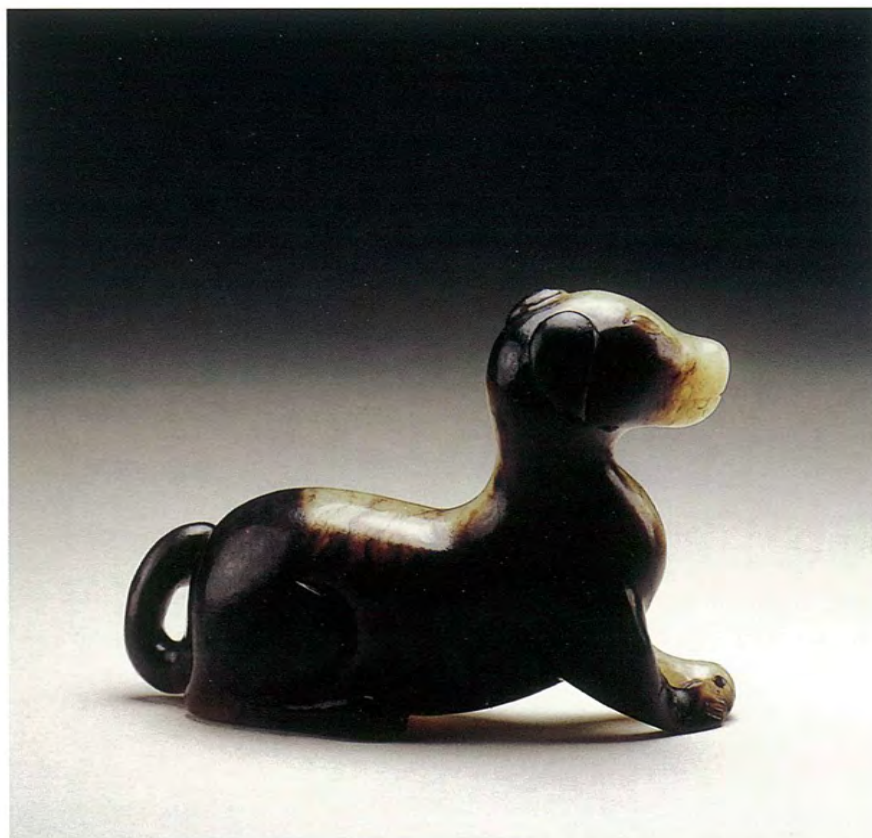
- 5 A yellow and black jade model of a recumbent hound with its head turned slightly to one side, the curled tail flicked up, the details of the ribs well defined and the stone well used.

Song to Ming Dynasty [960-1644]

Length: 2.1/2.in [6.4cm]

Provenance: Nagatani Inc., Chicago

Reference: The Arts Council of Great Britain and The Oriental Ceramic Society: Chinese Jade throughout the Ages, London, 1975, no. 204, page 72 and 73. Although dated to the Tang dynasty this example is strikingly similar to the above carving in its use of stone and the pose of the animal.





China

- 6 A yellow jade eared wine cup, the oval bowl with two flat handles projecting from below the rim, the gently curving sides issuing from a well carved foot rim, the translucent stone of even tone.

Song to Early Ming Dynasty [10th to 15th Century]

Length: 3.3/8.in [8.6cm]

Provenance: Formerly in the estate of Kenneth Snowman

Reference: The Complete Collection of Treasures of The Palace Museum; Jade ware (I), The Palace Museum, Beijing, 1995, see plate 219, page 263 for a Han example.

Spink & Son Ltd.; Chinese Jade, London 1998, no. 9, page 14 for a later seventeenth century example.

Kelley, Clarence W.; Stones of Virtue, Chinese Jades from Gerald Godfrey Collection, Dayton, Ohio, 1989, plate 16, page 29.

Li-tuan, Chang; The Refined Taste of the Emperor; Special Exhibition of Archaic and Pictorial Jades of the Ch'ing Court, National Palace Museum, Taiwan, 1997, nos. 31 and 32, pages 121 and 123, for two later eighteenth century examples.

These winged cups (yu pei) were found in all types of material during the Han dynasty (220 B.C.-220 A.D.) including lacquer, bronze, jade and pottery, having originally first appeared in the late Spring and Autumn period (5th century B.C.) when the vessels had rectangular handles.





China

- 7 A yellow jade model of a recumbent phoenix, its claws and tail feathers tucked beneath its body, the bird facing forward with its crested head and wings well defined, the stone with russet and grey inclusions.

Song to early Ming Dynasty, [10th to 15th Century]

Length: 2.7/8.in [7.3cm]

Provenance: Formerly in the estate of Kenneth Snowman

Reference: Knapton Rasti Asian Art, Chinese Works of Art, London, 2002, no. 80, page 51. This example from the Alfred and Ivy Clark Collection comes from the same group as the above phoenix. The heads are in different positions but the stone and the subtlety of the carving are similar.
Gyllensvard, Bo.; Chinese Art from the Collection of H. M. King Gustaf VI Adolf of Sweden, U.S.A., 1966, no. 75, page 61.

See Introduction

China

- 8 A pale celadon and russet veined jade carving of a recumbent Bactrian camel and badger, the head and neck of the larger animal twisted round the body, the bearded face and mane well incised, the undulations of the body finely represented.

Ming dynasty [1368-1644]

Length: 1.1/4.in [3.2cm]

Reference: The Urban Council, Hong Kong; Chinese Jade Animals, Hong Kong, 1996, nos. 88, 89, 108 and 118, pages 114, 132 and 138.

Bluett & Sons Ltd.; Dr Newton's Zoo, A Study of Post-Archaic small jade carvings, London, 1981, no. 18, page 17.

Rawson, Jessica; Chinese Jade from the Neolithic to the Qing, London, 1995, no. 26:12, pages 368 and 369.

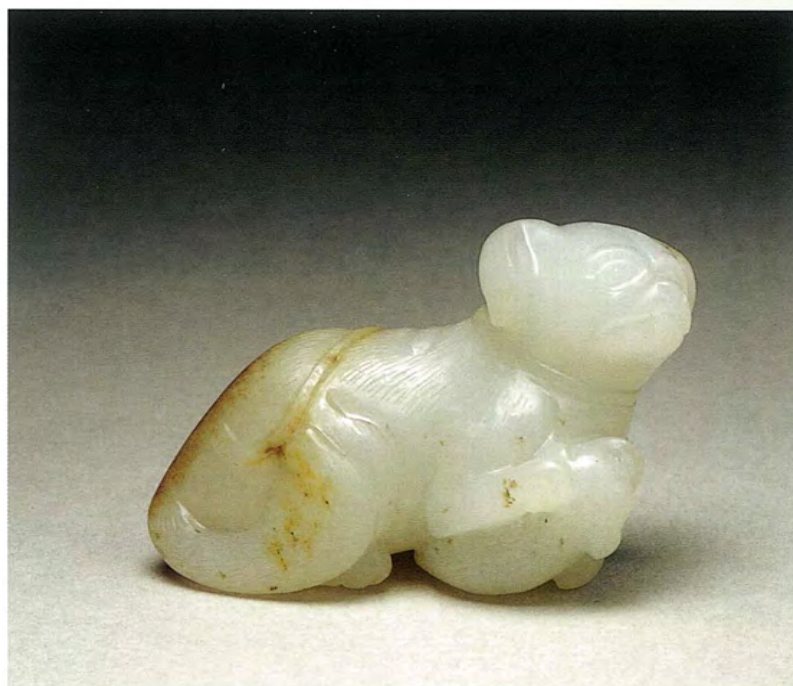


China

- 9 A white and russet jade group of a recumbent dog with a silk cord tied in a bow round its neck, the animal grasping the puppy in its forepaws, the russet skin used to good effect on the haunches and tail, the fur well delineated.

Ming dynasty [1368-1644]

Length: 1.3/4.in [4.5cm]





China

- 10 A mottled black, brown and pale grey jade model of a recumbent crane with its head turned back, the bird grasping a fruiting peach spray in its beak, the feathers well defined.

Ming Dynasty, [16th/17th Century]

Length: 2.5/8.in [6.7cm]



China

- 11 A white jade model of a recumbent lion with bifurcated tail, the head turned back with a leafy lotus spray grasped in its mouth, the stone with pale russet inclusions.

Ming Dynasty, [17th Century]

Length: 2.3/8.in [6cm]

China

- 12 A white jade model of a seated crane with its head turned back, holding a lotus spray in its beak, the stone with russet inclusions, the underside well defined.

Ming Dynasty, [16th/17th Century]

Length: 3.1/2.in [9cm]



China

- 13 A celadon and russet jade brushrest in the form of a mountain, carved in relief with a pine tree above a hut and bridge, the reverse lightly decorated with rocks.

Ming Dynasty, [16th/17th Century]

Width: 4.1/2.in [11.5cm]

Provenance: Private English Collection



China

- 14 A mottled celadon and russet jade bi-disc carved with a coiled guei dragon with bifurcated tail confronting a single-horned sinuous dragon, both animals grasping a lingzhi spray, the underside with raised nipples.

Yuan/early Ming Dynasty [13th to 15th Century]

Diameter: 3.1/4.in [8.3cm]

Provenance: Private English Collection





China

- 15 A mushroom and cream jade group depicting a monkey and its young with the legs entwined, the seated animals both grasping a peach spray, the adult resting its other hand on the head of its child.

Song to early Ming Dynasty [10th to 15th Century]

Height: 1.3/4.in [6.5cm]

Provenance: Private English Collection

The subject of a monkey and its young, zi sun wan dai, represents family continuity.





China

- 16 A celadon jade ovoid jar and cover with large S-shaped handles, carved to the body with scrolling designs interspersed with key-fret flanges, the cover lightly incised with C-scrolls, the stone of even colour.

17th Century

Height: 3.1/8.in [8cm]
wood stand.

Provenance: Mr & Mrs Laurence Evans Collection



China

- 17 An openwork white and russet skinned jade pendant carved with flowering lotus branches, the underside with flat open leaves.

Qianlong [1736-95]

Length: 2.1/8.in [5.3cm]

Provenance: Private English Collection

China

- 18 A celadon and russet jade model of a recumbent Mongolian pony, the head resting on its forelegs, the tail flicked over the left haunch, the mane and underside well defined.

Tang to Song Dynasty [618-1179]

Length: 2.3/4.in [7cm]





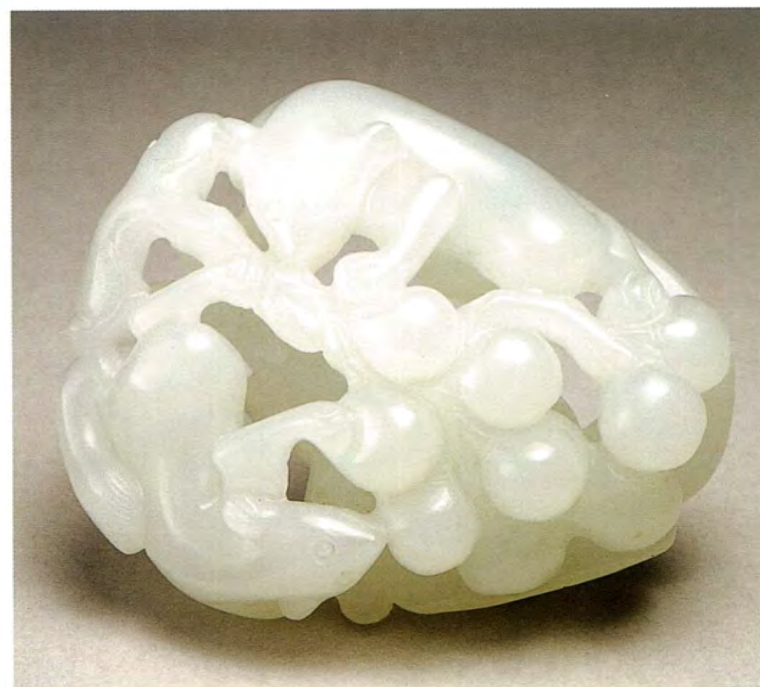
China

- 19 A white jade model of a boy astride a Mandarin duck, his left hand grasps the bird, the right holds a flowering lotus leaf.

Qianlong [1736-95]

Height: 2.in [5cm]

Provenance: Private English Collection



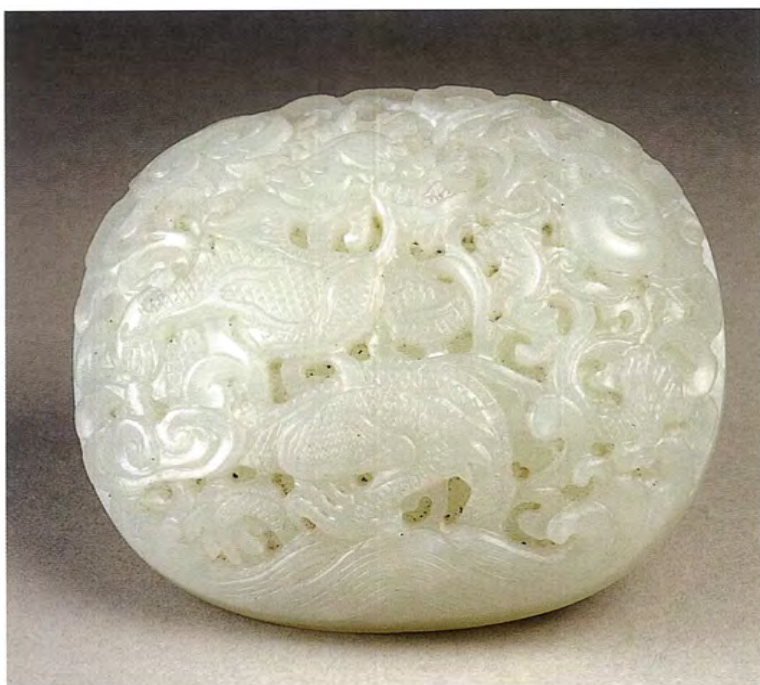
China

- 20 An openwork white jade pendant carved with two tree shrews grasping a fruiting vine, the underside with leafy tendrils.

Qianlong [1736-95]

Length: 2.1/8.in [5.3cm]

Provenance: Private English Collection



China

- 21 A white jade oval plaque deeply carved with a coiled dragon chasing a flaming pearl among clouds and lingzhi spray, the animal emerging from waves, the stone of an even colour.

Qianlong [1736-95]

Width: 2.1/8.in [5.4cm]

Provenance: Mr & Mrs Laurence Evans Collection



China

- 22 A pale celadon jade waterpot of circular form, carved in relief with two coiled guei dragons grasping the rim with their mouths, the stone of an even colour.

Qianlong [1736-95]

Width: 2.1/4.in [5.7cm]

Provenance: Private English Collection



China

- 23 A white jade circular box and domed cover simulating cinnabar lacquer, carved in low relief with flowering peonies issuing from leafy tendrils, the lower half with a band of daisies.

Kangxi [1662-1722]

Diameter: 2.1/4.in [5.7cm]

Provenance: Sir Adrian & Lady Holman Collection

Reference: Watt, James C.Y.; Chinese Jades from Han to Ch'ing, New York, 1980, no. 115, page 139 for a slightly earlier example, also imitating cinnabar lacquer.



China

- 24 A white jade circular box and domed cover carved in light relief with a central chrysanthemum head within stylised interlocking tendrils, the stone of an even colour.

Qianlong [1736-95]

Diameter: 2.in [5cm]

Reference: Watt, James C.Y.; Chinese Jades from Han to Ch'ing, New York, 1980, no. 114, page 138 for an earlier Ming example, signed Lu Tzo-kang, circa 1561.



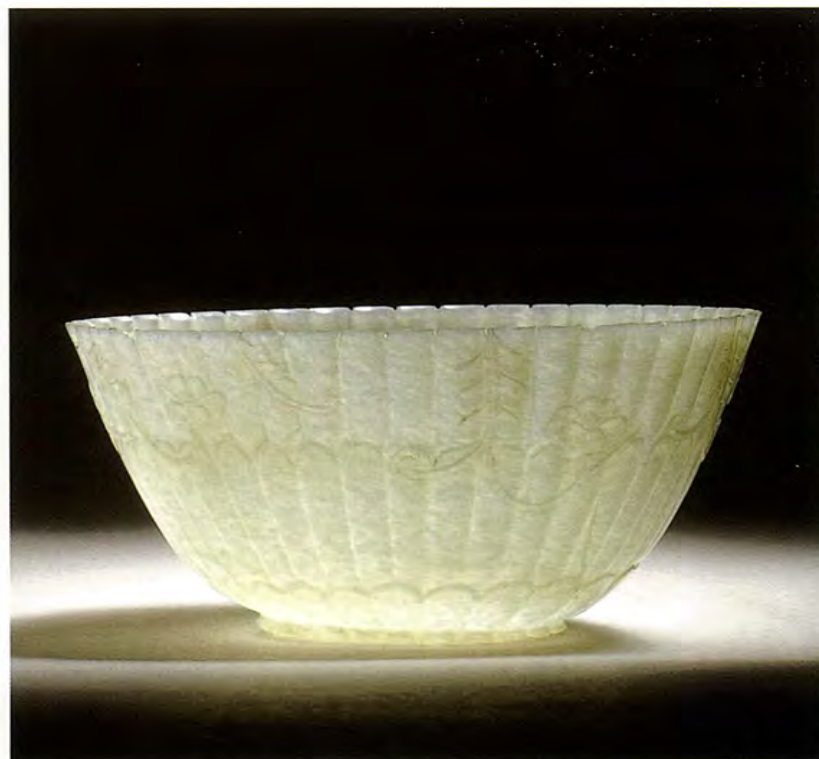
China

- 25 A Moghul style translucent white jade shallow oval dish, thinly carved to the centre with a double chrysanthemum head within an openwork border depicting further chrysanthemums and scrolling leafy tendrils, the stone of an even colour.

Qianlong [1736-95]

Width: 5.1/2.in [14cm]

Provenance: Sir Adrian & Lady Holman Collection



China

- 26 A Moghul style pale celadon jade bowl, thinly carved in the form of a chrysanthemum head, the petals in three overlapping panels, the base with a single flowerhead, the exterior decorated in low relief with further scrolling flowerheads and leafy tendrils.

Qianlong [1736-95]

Diameter: 3.3/8.in [8.6cm]

Provenance: Sir Adrian & Lady Holman Collection

See Introduction

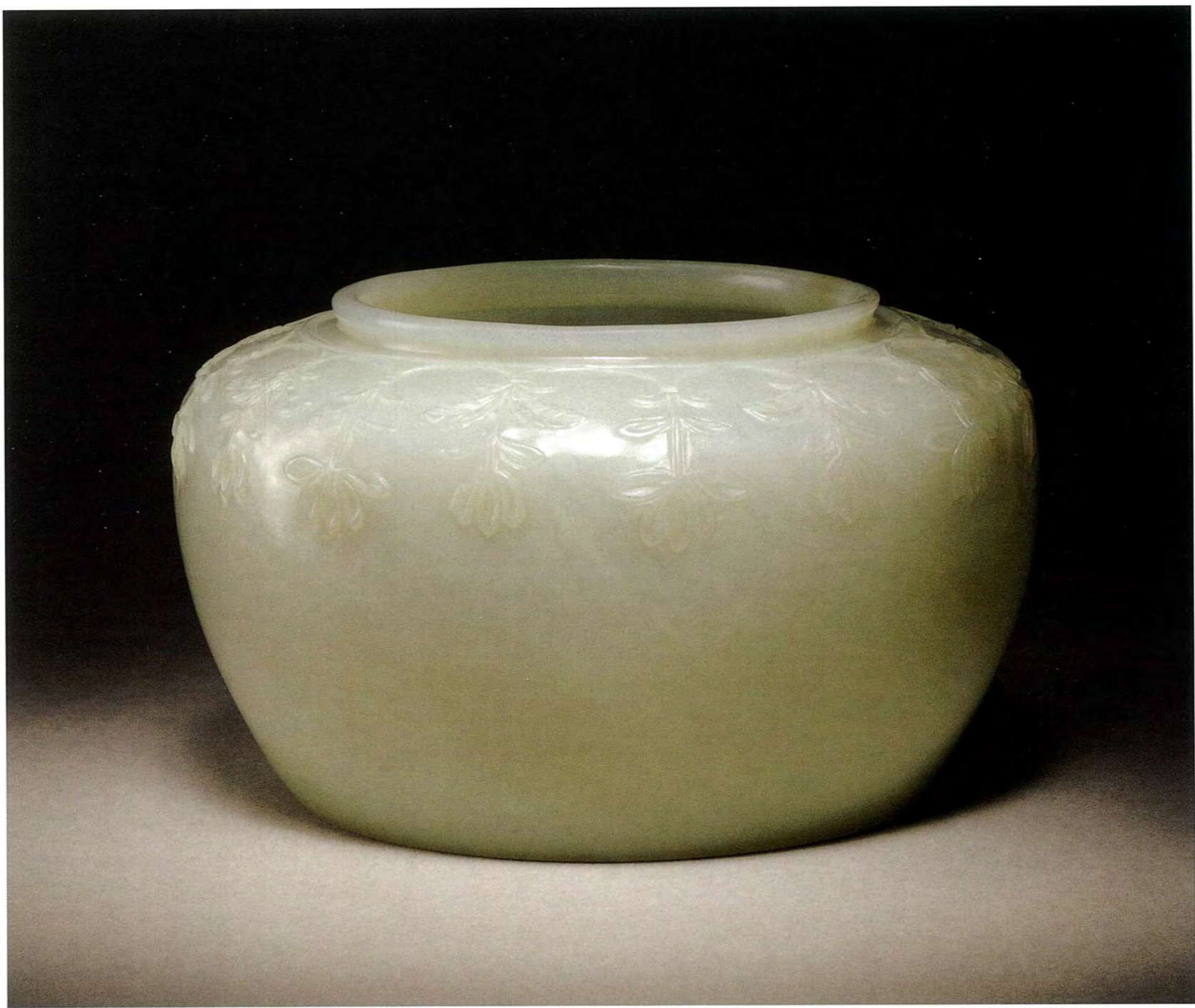
China

- 27 A Moghul style white jade jar of compressed globular form, the inward curving sides rising from a slightly concave base to a short slightly flaring neck, the flattened shoulder carved in relief with a continuous band of interlocking pendant flowerheads, the interior well hollowed, one side with creamy inclusions.

Qianlong [1736-95]

Width: 4.3/4.in [12.2cm]

Provenance: Sir Adrian & Lady Holman Collection



China

- 28 A spinach green jade bowl in the form of overlapping lotus-petals, the twin handles carved as double lotus heads and stalks, the underside as a lotus pod, the stone of an even colour and the details well defined.

Qianlong [1736-95]

Width: 8.1/4.in [21cm]





China

- 29 A spinach green jade mountain, carved in relief with three figures on pathways leading to a retreat hidden behind rocky outcrops and pine trees, the reverse with further trees and plants emerging from rockwork, the details well defined, the stone of an even colour.

Qianlong [1736-95]

Width: 7.5/8.in [19.4cm]

Original wood stand

carved with lingzhi and bamboo among rockwork.

Provenance: Dr. A.E. Butterworth Collection

Reference: Hartman, Joan, M; Three Dynasties of Jade, Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1971, no. 41.

Chinese Jade Throughout the Ages, Arts Council of Great Britain and The Oriental Ceramic Society, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1975, no. 452, page 136.



China

- 30 A black and pale grey jade boulder carved in deep relief with the Daoist Immortal, Li Tieguai, seated on a large tied sack among swirling clouds and foaming waves, his crutch at his side tied with a scroll, the reverse with a rocky outcrop.

Kangxi [1662-1722]

Height: 4.3/4.in [12cm]
wood stand.

Provenance: Collection S. Bulgari, Rome





China

- 31 A white jade carving of a recumbent phoenix with its tail feathers turned around its body, the head turned back, a fruiting peach spray in its beak, the details well defined, the stone of an even colour with a small russet inclusion.

Qianlong [1736-95]

Length: 5.in [12.7cm]

Provenance: Mr & Mrs Laurence Evans Collection

Reference: Spink & Son Ltd.; The Minor Arts of China IV, London, 1989, no. 166, page 120.



China

- 32 A large celadon and russet jade deer group, modelled as a recumbent stag holding an elaborate spray of lingzhi in its mouth above its young lying before him, the details of the vertebrae and underside well defined.

Kangxi [1662-1722]

Length: 6.3/8.in [16.3cm]

Provenance: Collection S. Bulgari, Rome







China

- 33 A white jade group of a recumbent ram and two kids, the adult animal with the youngest on its back, the other lying behind him, they are surrounded by cloud-scrolls surmounted by a yin-yang symbol, the underside well defined, the stone of even colour.

Qianlong [1736-95]

Length: 5.1/8.in [13cm]

Provenance: Sir Adrian & Lady Holman Collection

The rebus for three rams, san yang kai tai, signifies an auspicious start to the new year.

Reference: Jades from Tientsin Museum, Hong Kong, 2000, plate 216.

Spink & Son Ltd; A Selection of Oriental Works of Art, 1920s, no. 257, page 7.

Kleiner, Robert; Chinese Jades from the Collection of Alan and Simone Hartman, Hong Kong, 1996, no. 186, page 257 and no. 194, page 245.



China

- 34 A pale celadon jade model of a walking longma, with one foreleg raised, the twin-horned beast with its head turned to one side, vaporous clouds issuing from its mouth and supporting an encased set of the Books of Knowledge, its bushy tail flicked over its back, the details of the haunches well defined, the stone of an even colour.

Kangxi [1662-1722]

Length: 3.1/4.in [8.3cm]

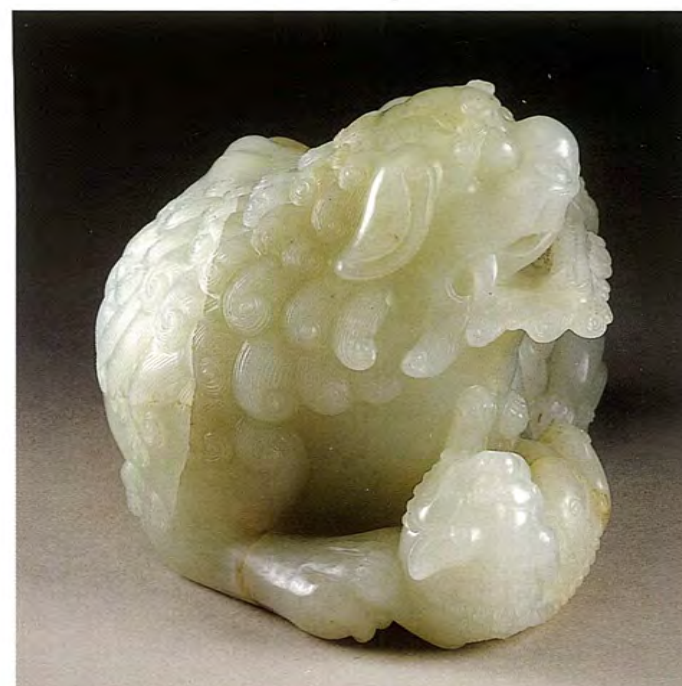
Provenance: Mr & Mrs Laurence Evans Collection

The longma is a mythical beast comprising the head and body of a dragon and the legs of a horse.

Reference: The Complete Collection of Treasures of The Palace Museum; Jadeaware (III), The Palace Museum, Beijing, 1995, see plate 94, page 114



see introduction



China

- 35 A large white jade group of a recumbent bearded Buddhist lion and two cubs, the adult with its mouth open and playing with its young, one below its head, the other clambering on its haunches, the whole profusely carved and detailed, the underside well defined, the stone of an even colour with slight russet inclusions.

Kangxi [1662-1722]

Length: 4.3/4.in [12.2cm]

Provenance: Mr & Mrs Laurence Evans Collection

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China

- 36 A large white jade Buddhist lion and cub group, the recumbent adult with hind paw raised to its mouth, its multi stranded bushy tail flicked around the body, a brocade ball between its forelegs, the cub leans over the larger animal's back while standing on a simulated silk ribbon, which both grasp in their mouths, the details of the vertebrae and underside boldly defined, the stone of an even colour with slight russet inclusions.

Qianlong [1736-95]

Length: 5.1/2.in [14cm]

Provenance: Mr & Mrs Laurence Evans Collection

Reference: Keverne, Roger; Jade, London, 1991, plate 90, page 163 for a similar example without cubs.

S. Marchant & Son; Post-Archaic Chinese Jades from Private Collections, plate 88, page 108.

Guangwen, Zhang and Shoushan, Zhang; Jade Artefact Collection in The Palace Museum, Hebei Province, 1996, plate 150, page 158.

Hartman, Joan, M., Chinese Jade Through the Centuries, New York, 1969, no. 67, page 40 [this example is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art].

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See Introduction



China

- 37 A large white jade twin horned model of a recumbent longma, the animal with its head turned back, biting at a fruiting peach spray on its spine, the bushy tail flicked over the right haunch, the body carved in light relief with cloud scrolls over the scales and prominent ribs, the two horns tied with a simulated silk ribbon over the finely delineated mane, the details boldly carved and well defined, the stone of an even colour.

Kangxi [1662-1722]

Length: 6.1/2.in [16.5cm]

original fitted wood stand carved with prunus and pine cones.

Provenance: Mr & Mrs Laurence Evans Collection

The longma is a mythical beast comprising the head and body of a dragon and the legs of a horse, the peaches on its back represent longevity and contentment.

Reference: Keverne, Roger; Jade, London, 1991, plate 67, page 154 for an example of a similar animal with its horns tied with simulated silk ribbons.
The International Exhibition of Chinese Art, London, 1935-6, catalogue no. 2864.
Spink & Son Ltd; Selection of Oriental Works of Art, 1927, page 21.

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VALUATIONS BY WILLIAM W. CLAYTON M. CLAYTON TELEPHONE: WHITEHALL 1112		Sept 10th 1956			
TO	One fine carved Pale-green Jade reclining figure of a Unicorn, on wood stand. Chien-lung period.	£ 200	0	0	
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		£ 340	0	0	
	paid on a/c 2200 (19/5/56)	200			
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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



