



BEN JANSSENS ORIENTAL ART
2008



BEN JANSSENS ORIENTAL ART

TEL: +44 (0) 20 7976 1888

FAX: +44 (0) 20 7976 2588

email: info@benjanssens.com

www.benjanssens.com

www.benjanssens.com



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JADE NOTCHED DISC *BI*

China, Neolithic period, probably
Longshan culture, c. 3000 – c. 1900 BC

Diameter: 4 1/2 inches, 11.5 cm

Thickness: 1/4 inch, 0.7 cm

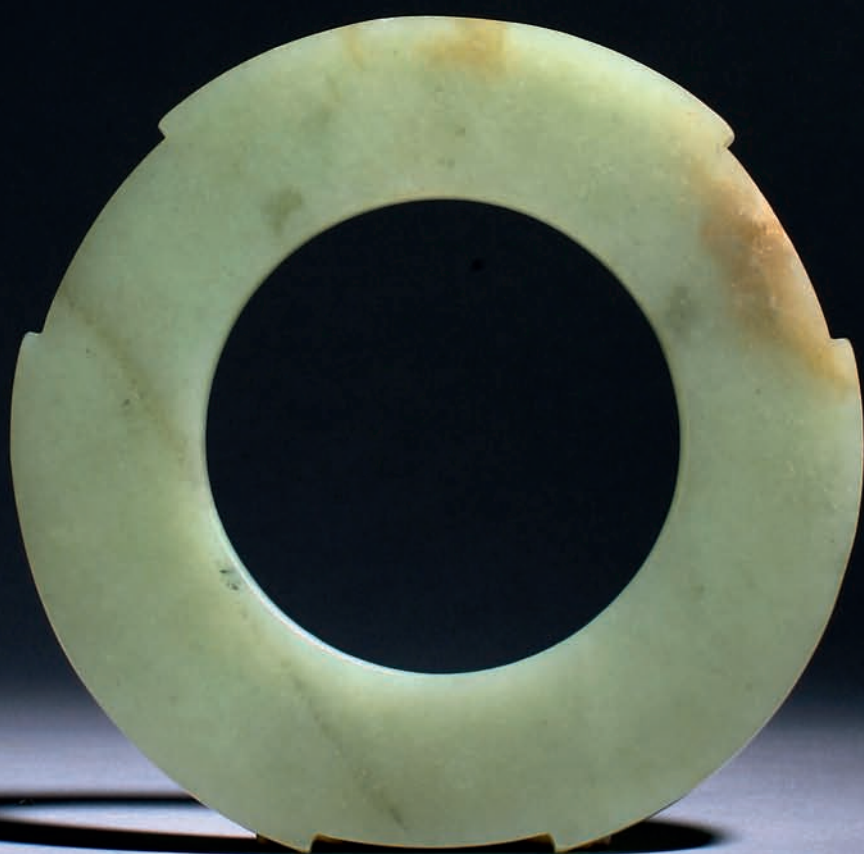
A plain jade *bi* disc, the inner edge of its circular centre smoothly rounded. Cut into the outer edge are three square slots. The green stone, which retains its translucency, has some brown and white markings and is smoothly polished.

● The earliest *bi* discs appeared in rudimentary form in burial sites along the east coast of China during the late Neolithic period.¹ The Longshan culture was a late Neolithic culture, centered on the central and lower Yellow River and is named after Longshan of eastern Jinan in Shandong Province. The present disc is unusual on account of the three apertures cut into the outer rim, which give the disc the appearance of having notched sides. Notched jade discs are found in the Neolithic period, as well as in the subsequent Shang dynasty. The purpose of the notched rim, like jade discs generally, appears to have been purely decorative.² A comparable notched jade disc was included in the exhibition *Jades from China* at the Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, England in 1994. The practice of cutting notches into jade discs continued in later periods, which can be seen in a small jade *huan* with similarly decorated rim, dated to the Warring States period (475 – 221 BC), in the Avery Brundage collection at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.³

1 Watson, W. *The Arts of China to AD 900*, Pelican History of Art, Yale University Press, 1995, p. 52

2 Forsyth, A. and McElney, B., *Jades from China*, The Museum of East Asian Art, Bath 1994, no. 61, p. 150

3 Li, He et al: *Jades Chinois, pierres d'immortalité*, Musée Cernuschi, Paris, 1997, no. 43, p. 88





PAINTED POTTERY STORAGE JAR

China, Neolithic period, Majiayao culture
Banshan type, mid-3rd millennium BC

Height: 15 1/2 inches, 39.3 cm

A pottery storage jar with rounded body and sloping shoulder, the sides tapering down sharply towards the flat base. The tall neck has a waisted centre and flares outwards towards the everted rim. Two ring handles are applied to the body, just below the waist. The top half of the jar is painted in black and red pigments with reserved bands of cowrie shell pattern below a row of dots. The shoulder is painted with an abstract design composed of clusters of horizontal stripes above wavy lines. The inside of the neck has a reserved pattern of triangles. The exterior of the jar is burnished.

- Pottery coil-built jars with boldly painted designs that start from the middle upwards in brownish-black and deep red pigments are typical of wares made in the Neolithic settlements of Gansu or Qinghai province around the middle of the 3rd millennium BC. Although the shape of the jar is conventional when compared with other pottery vessels from the Banshan phase of the Majiayao culture, the decorative elements of cowrie shells and horizontal stripes would appear unusual. A conical bowl with a similar reserved pattern of cowrie shells is in the Meiyintang collection.¹

¹ Krah, R. *Chinese Ceramics from the Meiyintang Collection*, Volume One, London 1994, no. 5, p. 20





HARDSTONE DISC-AXE

China, late Neolithic period to early
Shang dynasty, c. 2000 – c. 1500 BC

Length: 5 ³/₄ inches, 13.6 cm

Width: 4 ¹/₂ inches, 11.4 cm

A hardstone axe of tapered rectangular form. The rounded top section is drilled with a large circular aperture, which has a bevelled edge on one side only. To either side are pronounced, well-defined notches. The axe's bottom edge is also rounded and has a sharp edge. The stone is of white tone with areas of darker markings, and is smoothly polished.

● The exact purpose of hardstone axes such as the present example is not clear; although the axe looks strong and useable, the “chicken-bone” jade-like material is brittle and it is therefore likely that it was made for ceremonial or burial purposes and not actually intended for practical use.¹ The central aperture is beautifully finished; according to Rawson: *‘Holes in many axes are perfect circles, suggesting that the hole was made with a drill, perhaps of bamboo, in which hard grit was embedded.’*² A similar ‘disc-axe’ is in the collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei.³ Two further examples, both dated to the Shang dynasty, are in the British Museum, London⁴ and in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.⁵

1 Lawton, T. et al *Asian Art in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery – The Inaugural Gift*. Washington 1987, p. 77

2 Rawson, J. *Chinese Jade – From the Neolithic to the Qing*, London 1995, p. 21

3 *A Catalogue of the National Palace Museum's Special Exhibition of Circular Jade*, Taipei, 1995, no. 22, p. 58

4 Rawson, J. *op. cit.*, fig.3, p. 178

5 Ayers, J. and Rawson, J. *Chinese Jade throughout the Ages*. Oriental Ceramic Society, London, 1975, no. 5, p. 214





JADE KNIFE-SHAPED CEREMONIAL BLADE

China, early Shang dynasty
16th – 15th century BC

Length: 18 ¹/₄ inches, 46.3 cm

A jade blade of long knife-form, tapering towards a pointed end, both sides of which have a sharpened edge. The rectangular, integral handle has rounded edges and is drilled with a single hole in the bottom corner. The stone is of a reddish-brown colour and has an even, soft polish all-over.

● The exact purpose of jade blades such as the present example is not clear; although the blade has sharp edges, it is unlikely to have been used as a weapon; according to Wilson: *"Jade, though a hard material, is brittle, so a knife with a jade blade would not have been used to chop wood or for combat."*¹ It is likely that the blade represents a kind of ceremonial sceptre, although such examples dating from the Neolithic period are more often seen in the form of

reaping knives or blades with an asymmetrically curved end.² The knife shape of this jade blade is unusual and perhaps more akin to the smaller *ge* blades that generally date from the Shang dynasty (c. 1600 – c. 1050 BC) or Western Zhou period (c. 1050 – 771 BC). A similar large sword-like blade, excavated in 1974 and dated to the 16th – 15th century BC is in the Hubei Provincial Museum.³



1 Wilson, M. *Chinese Jades*, Victoria & Albert Museum Far Eastern Series, V&A Publications, London 2004, p. 19.

2 Rawson, J. *Chinese Jade – From the Neolithic to the Qing*, London 1995, pp. 184-191

3 *New Archaeological Discoveries in China*, Beijing 2005, no. 14, pp. 36-7





JADE CEREMONIAL BLADE, *GE*

China, late Neolithic period, Erlitou phase
or early Shang dynasty, c. 1500 BC

Length: 10 1/2 inches, 26.6 cm

A jade ceremonial blade in the form of a halberd (*ge*), with sharply pointed end, a squared-off tang and bevelled edges to top and bottom. A single hole, drilled from both sides, is situated near the tang. The dark green stone largely retains its translucency and has lighter-coloured veins. The faint imprint of fabric on some areas of the blade is evidence that it has lain wrapped in a cloth for a long period. The stone has an even, soft polish all-over.

● Prior to the Shang dynasty, jade implements took their shape mainly from stone examples, but the shape of this ceremonial blade takes that of a bronze halberd of a type first made around this time.¹ A jade blade from the very last stage of the Neolithic period, the Erlitou phase (c. 2000 - c. 1600 BC) which has closely similar features to the present *ge*, such as a sharp point, bevelled edges, a single hole drilled from both sides and a plain tang, is illustrated by Rawson.²

¹ *New Archaeological Discoveries in China*, Beijing 2005, no. 64, p. 105

² Rawson, J. *Chinese Jade – From the Neolithic to the Qing*, London 1995, fig. 2, p. 192





**BRONZE
CEREMONIAL LIBATION
VESSEL, *JUE***

China, Shang dynasty, Anyang phase
12th - 11th century BC

Height: 8 ¹/₄ inches, 21 cm
Diameter at mouth: 6 ⁵/₈ inches, 16.8 cm

A bronze libation vessel of *jue* form, the deep U-shaped body supported on three pointed, slightly splayed legs. Opposite the long curved spout, the rim rises into a pointed flange. At the base of the spout are two semi-circular posts, capped by a pointed finial. A C-shaped handle is attached to one side and is embellished with a finely detailed *taotie* mask with prominent horns and ears. A single, broad band of intaglio ornament encircles the vessel. It consists of a complex pattern incorporating bold *taotie* masks with bulging eyes, which are in turn composed of addorsed crested birds. The finials are decorated with a swirling ornament. A single-character dedicatory pictogram is cast underneath the handle of the vessel. The vessel's mellow green patina has areas of malachite encrustation.

● The *jue* tripod libation cup, used in rituals to serve wine, was often paired with the *gu* beaker. The *jue* and *gu* are among the oldest forms in the repertory of archaic bronze vessels. Although it is generally assumed that the *jue* tripod derives its shape from early pottery, there are those who believe that its shape was inspired by an ox horn, to which two legs had been added to support it.¹ A comparable, slightly smaller *jue* is in the collection of the Musée Guimet in Paris.² Other, more simplified examples are in the Arthur M. Sackler collection³, and in the Museum of East Asian Art in Bath, England.⁴

1 Watson, W. *Ancient Chinese Bronzes*, Faber and Faber, 1962, p. 40

2 Girard-Geslan, M. *Bronzes Archaiques de Chine*, Musée National des Arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris, 1995, pp. 60-1

3 Bagley, R.W. *Shang Ritual Bronzes in the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, Cambridge, Mass. 1987, no. 22, pp. 202-3

4 McElney, B. *Inaugural Exhibition, Volume 2 – Chinese Metalwares and Decorative Arts*, The Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, England, 1993, no. 227, p. 28





JADE CEREMONIAL BLADE, GE

China, Shang dynasty, Anyang phase
13th – 11th century BC

Length: 8 1/4 inches, 21 cm

A jade ceremonial blade in the form of a halberd (*ge*), with pointed end, a squared-off tang and bevelled edges to top and bottom, which extend to the point. A single raised rib runs down the length of the blade on either side. A hole, drilled from both sides, is situated near the tang. The dark green stone has largely calcified into a cream colour, but retains some of its original translucency on part of the tang. A small deposit of malachite encrustation is visible on the tang. The stone has an even, soft polish all-over.

● The fact that the stone retains its translucency and original colour on the part of the tang where there is also a deposit of malachite encrustation indicates that this small jade blade once had a bronze handle, now lost. An example of such a bronze and jade *ge* is in the collection of the Seattle Art Museum.¹ According to Watt, this blade with its central ridge is “...an early instance of the use of jade in imitation of a bronze artefact.”²

¹ Watt, J.C.Y. *Chinese Jades from the Collection of the Seattle Art Museum*, Seattle Art Museum, 1989, no. 5, p. 32

² Watt, J.C.Y. *op. cit.* p. 32





MOSS-AGATE RING, YÜAN

China, late Warring States period to
Western Han dynasty, 3rd – 2nd century BC

Diameter: 3 ½ inches, 8.8 cm

A circular moss-agate ring, the outside rim ending in a pointed edge, whilst the inner edge is composed of four faceted planes. The stone is translucent in some parts and its colour ranges from an opaque blue-green to amber tones with white striated inclusions. The surface of the material is smoothly polished.

● According to the author Yang Mei-Li, Chinese sources refer to rings with large holes as *yüan*.¹ These rings were most probably used as pendants, or formed part of a larger pectoral set of rings for burial. Although early agate is not often discussed in literature, several authors incorporate agate objects in writings on jade; a slightly larger, but otherwise closely similar ring - described as a bracelet – was included in the exhibition *Jades from China* at the Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, England in 1994.²

1 Mei-Li, Y., *The Development of Archaic Circular Jades*, in *A catalogue of the National Palace Museum's Special Exhibition of Circular Jade*, Taipei, 1995, p.13

2 Forsyth, A. and McElney, B., *Jades from China*, The Museum of East Asian Art, Bath 1994, no. 123, p. 230





BRONZE MIRROR OF 'TLV' TYPE

China, Xin dynasty, 9 – 23

Diameter: 6 1/2 inches, 16.5 cm

A bronze mirror of TLV type, the centre with a round knob through which a cord can be threaded. Arranged around this knob, which is centred on a quatrefoil ornament within a square, are the Spirits of the Four Directions – dragon, tiger, bird and turtle – each with their companions: the blue dragon, galloping deer, feathered immortal and upstanding toad, all executed in low-relief and in minute detail. Incorporated in this band are three elements of decoration that resemble the letters *T*, *L* and *V*, and four pairs of small pointed bosses. Within the central square is a band of archaic characters, which together form an inscription, and 12 pointed bosses. Arranged around the main scene are a lengthy inscription and a band of diagonal hatching. On the rim are bands of saw tooth pattern and flowing clouds. The front and back of the mirror are partly covered in an attractive patina, incorporating small areas of ruby and malachite corrosion.

● “TLV” mirrors are called thus because of the appearance of symbols resembling the letters T, L and V, which form part of their decorative scheme. This fine example with its crisply cast decoration featuring the Spirits of the Four Directions and their companions shows Han bronze casting at its pinnacle. The high silver content of the material has ensured that the reflective qualities of the mirror remain intact. The twelve-character inscription incorporated in the central square most probably refers to the twelve animals of the zodiac.¹ The present mirror can be dated to the short-lived Xin dynasty; it is practically identical to an example in the Shanghai Museum, which is dated AD 15.² Although the Xin dynasty had only one Emperor, Wang Mang, it is still referred to as a ‘dynasty’ in Chinese history. Similar mirrors are in the Graham³ and Carter collections.⁴ Another similar example is in the collection of the National Palace Museum in Taipei.⁵

1 Chou, Ju-hsi, *Circles of Reflection, The Carter Collection of Chinese Bronze Mirrors*, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 2000, p. 46

2 Chou, Ju-hsi *op. cit.* p. 44

3 Nakano, T. *Bronze Mirrors from Ancient China, The Donald H. Graham Jr. Collection*, Hong Kong 1994, cat. no. 41 (M42), pp. 140-1

4 Chou, *op. cit.* no. 29, p. 46

5 *Catalogue of Special Exhibition of Bronze Mirrors in the National Palace Museum*, Taipei, Taiwan, plate 34





**JADE DISC, *BI*
WITH 'RICE-GRAIN'
PATTERN**

China, late Warring States period to
early Western Han dynasty
3rd to 2nd century BC

Diameter: 7 ¹/₈ inches, 18.1 cm

Thickness: ¹/₄ inch, 0.7 cm

A jade disc with a neatly cut round aperture in the centre. A single line is engraved around both the inner and the outer edge of the disc. The surface of the jade is worked on both sides with a pattern of raised faceted bosses of hexagonal outline, each of which is centred on a grid of diagonally crossed lines. The grey-green coloured stone retains a high degree of translucency and has areas of black and white veining. The stone is smoothly polished on both sides.

● A circular jade disc is known as *bi* in Chinese art. Both origin and purpose of the circular *bi* disc in early Chinese art remain obscure. Certain is that the form was popular from early times and that numerous discs have been found in burials, often placed at the feet of the deceased or directly underneath the deceased's body. The obvious mystical and magical connotations of this practice are not particularly surprising if one considers the special importance the Chinese have always attached to the hard stone. The *bi* disc is said to be symbolic of Heaven, whereas its counterpart, the *cong* tube, represents Earth.⁴ *Bi* discs were usually intended for gifts, offerings, rites and sacrifices, especially during the Spring and Autumn period (770 – 475 BC).¹ The pattern of raised dots on a grid, commonly known as 'rice-grain pattern' first appeared in the 6th century BC, and gradually aligned symmetrically, as is evident on the present disc.² Watson illustrates a similar *bi* disc from the collection of the British Museum.³ Other examples are in the Hotung collection⁴ and in the collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei.⁵

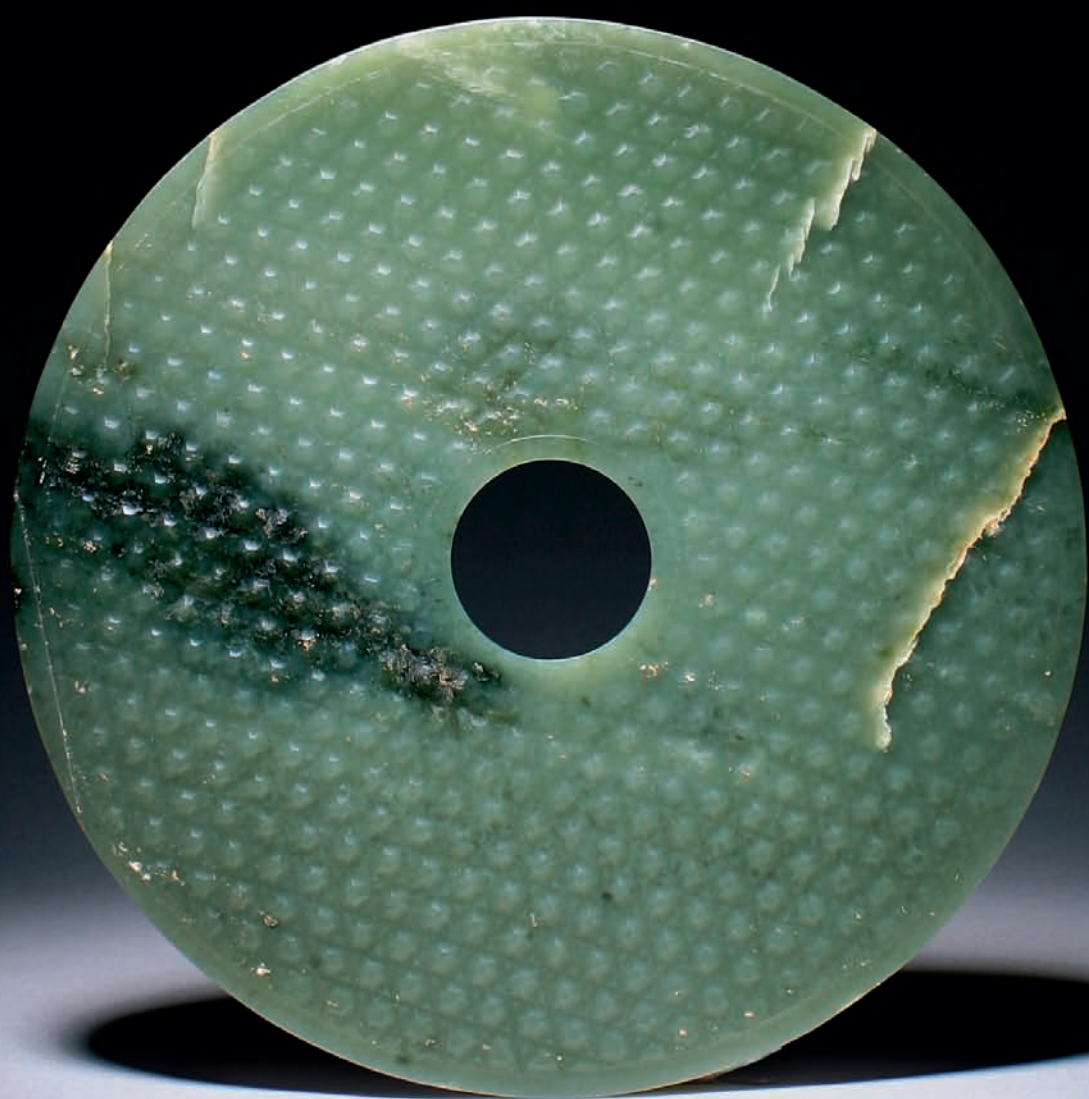
1 Rawson, J. *Chinese Jade – From the Neolithic to the Qing*, London 1995, p. 247

2 Rawson, J. *op. cit.* p. 252

3 Watson, W. *The Arts of China to AD 900*, Yale University Press, 1995 no. 111, p. 59

4 Rawson, J. *op. cit.* p. 252, no. 15:1

5 *A Catalogue of the National Palace Museum's Special Exhibition of Circular Jade*, Taipei, 1995, nos 68, 75, 76 pp. 113, 120-3





BRONZE FLASK

China, early Western Han dynasty
3rd to 2nd century BC

Height: 13 ³/₄ inches, 35 cm
Width: 9 ¹/₂ inches, 24 cm

A bronze flask cast in the form of an upright fish, the flattened body incised overall with a scale pattern. The spreading foot, which forms the tail of the fish, is incised with oblique lines. The fish's head forms the mouth

of the flask, with the gills and large round eyes clearly indicated.

A small *taotie* mask suspending a plain ring is applied to either side of the shoulder. The metal is covered in an attractive green patina.



● During the Han dynasty, as the use of animals in sculpture came to the fore, bronze vessels were frequently made in the form of bears, rams or even more exotic animals, such as rhinoceros and elephants. Animals such as horses were also sculpted purely as representations of themselves. Birds or bird vessels also occur, but it is rare for a fish to be used as a decorative element or in a representational manner, as it is in this exotic looking flask. A close parallel is a similar flask in the Shanghai Museum.¹ A slightly more stylised flask with plainer handles and larger rings was unearthed in 1950 at Waertugou, Jungar Qi, Ih Ju Meng in Mongolia.² It is said that the fish was a popular motif during the Han dynasty, as it symbolises a successful harvest season.

¹ Beurdeley, M. *L'Amateur Chinois, des Han au XXe siècle*, Office du Livre, Fribourg, 1966, cat. no. 18, p. 217

² Chugoku Naimoko – Hoppo Ki *Mongolia*, Japan, 1983, no. 40, pp. 43 and 155





PAIR OF POTTERY OWL CONTAINERS

China, Western Han dynasty
206 BC – 8 AD

Height: 5 ³/₄ inches, 14.2 cm

A pair of pottery containers, each in the form of an owl with removable head. The birds are seated with their wings folded; the details of claws and feathers are carefully rendered. The heads have pointed, curved beaks, small ears and bulging eyes. The red pottery is covered in brown and green lead glazes, which are applied with precision. The green colour has mostly become silvery iridescent.

● Pottery images of animals, both natural and mythical, made strictly for burial purposes, became popular during the Han dynasty. The concept of a pottery container in the form of an owl, however, pre-dates the Han dynasty; a slightly more primitive grey pottery owl jar and cover dated to the Zhou dynasty, 1st millennium BC is in the Meiyintang collection.¹ This pair of pottery owl containers is unusual in its highly naturalistic rendering of the birds. A closely related owl container excavated in Jiyuan, Henan province in 1969, is now in the collection of the Henan Provincial Museum.² A pair of grey pottery owl containers with removable heads from the collection of H.M. King Gustaf Adolf VI of Sweden was included in an exhibition of his collection at the British Museum in 1972.³ A glazed example with fixed head is also in the Meiyintang collection.⁴

1 Krah, R. *Chinese Ceramics from the Meiyintang Collection*, Vol. Three (1) Paradox Writing, London, 2006, no. 1094, p. 83

2 *Zhongguo wenwu jinghua dachuan*---Taozi juan, 1993, no. 290, p. 81

3 Gyllensvärd, B. *Chinese Art from the collection of H.M. King Gustaf Adolf VI of Sweden*, British Museum, 1972, no. 98, pp. 38 and 74

4 Krah, R. *op. cit.* no. 1159, p. 152





TWO POTTERY HORSES WITH RIDERS

China, Western Han dynasty, 206 BC – 8 AD

Height: 24 inches, 61 cm

Length: 21 inches, 53.5 cm

Width: 9 inches, 22.8 cm

Two pottery horses with riders, each horse standing foursquare with powerfully modelled head and strongly arched neck, ears pricked and mouth half open, showing the teeth. The removable riders sit bold upright on a saddled cloth, the arms held forward as if holding reins. Their well-detailed faces have a placid expression. Both riders are dressed in a double-layered three-quarter-length coat and trousers. They wear pointed boots and tightly fitting headdresses. The horses have detachable tails, the ends of which are neatly tied. The grey pottery horses retain their original brick-red pigments virtually in their entirety. The riders are painted in white pigments with red and black details.

● Pottery models of horses were first placed in tombs in substantial numbers in the Qin dynasty (221 - 207 BC). During the Han dynasty the practice became more widespread, particularly as a result of the Han people's ongoing struggle against the Xiongnu, a tribe of formidable horsemen originally based in the Ordos region of present-day Inner Mongolia.¹ Ceramic models of horses and soldiers were placed in trenches in the tombs of imperial family members and other persons of high status, ready to defend the deceased.² Although the riders are sitting on saddles, they have no stirrups, which explains why they appear to be gripping the horse's shoulders tightly; this would have been necessary to maintain a secure seat.³ Similar horses with riders were included in the exhibition *The Quest for Eternity* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1987.⁴

1 Harrist Jr., R. E. *Power and Virtue, the Horse in Chinese Art*, China Institute in America, China Institute Gallery, New York 1997, p. 54

2 Harrist Jr., R. E. *op. cit.* p. 54

3 Cooke, B. et al. *Imperial China, The Art of the Horse in Chinese History* Lexington, Kentucky, 2000, p. 138

4 Dien, A. et al *The Quest for Eternity – Chinese Ceramic Sculptures from the People's Republic of China*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1987, fig 15, p. 105









POTTERY BASIN WITH PAINTED DECORATION

China, Han dynasty, 206 BC – 220 AD

Diameter: 15 inches, 38 cm

Height: 3 ³/₄ inches, 9.5 cm

A grey pottery basin, the shallow bowl rising gently from a circular foot ring and with a second tier sharply angled upwards to a broad, flat rim. The bowl is painted in white and red pigments; the central reserve has a decoration of stylised fish-like creatures, surrounded by a band of cloud-scroll pattern (*yun wen*). The well of the basin is painted with a band of vertical zigzag pattern in alternating white and red pigments, and the flat rim is painted with a band of fish-scale pattern.

● Whilst the shape of this basin is obviously based on a metal prototype, the decoration is perhaps more akin to that seen on contemporary lacquer objects.¹ The cloud-scroll motifs on painted pottery of this period reflect the Taoist philosophical mood of the time, where the pursuit of immortality and the continuation of the soul in heavenly dimensions played an important role. It is clear that in ancient China, and especially during the Han reign, a poetic and even religious affiliation was made between the natural elements and the unseen worlds. Immortality was a daily occupation and needed to be addressed accordingly. The cloud-scroll decoration is connected with this belief-system. A large grey pottery basin painted with a decoration of fish and scrollwork in red, black and white was among the sumptuous furnishings of the late 2nd century BC tomb of Princess Dou Wan at Mancheng in Hebei province, excavated in 1968.²

¹ A silvered and gilded bronze basin of the same shape and also decorated with cloud scrolls from the collection of the Musée de Saint Denis is on loan to the Musée Guimet in Paris, see: Delacour, C. *De bronze, d'or et d'argent, Arts somptuaires de la Chine*, Musée Guimet, Paris, 2001, pp. 83-5

² Royal Academy and the Great Britain/China Committee: *The Genius of China. An Exhibition of Archaeological Finds of the People's Republic of China*, Times Newspapers, 1973. no. 154, pp. 103-4





PAINTED POTTERY HORSE

China, Western Han dynasty, 206 BC – 8AD

Length: 12 inches, 30.5 cm

Height: 10 inches, 25.4 cm

A painted pottery model of a horse, the well-modelled body has four slots in the base where separate legs can be inserted, as well as slots for the ears and the tail. The grey pottery is covered in a layer of white slip, which is brightly painted with a fully detailed harness and swirling patterns in mauve pigments on the body and neck, and with a black mane and eyes. A trefoil emblem in red pigment is painted on the rear haunches.

● The slots in the horse's body are intended for inserting legs, ears and a tail, possibly in wood. The colour scheme on this horse is unusually detailed and remarkably well preserved. It compares to the painted decoration seen on two horses with detachable riders in the collection of Julius Eberhardt in Vienna.¹

¹ Krah, R. *Sammlung Julius Eberhardt, Frühe chinesische Kunst/Early Chinese Art*, Vienna, 1999, no. 104, pp. 176-7





LARGE JADE DISC, BI

China, late Eastern Zhou or early
Western Han dynasty, 3rd - 2nd century BC

Diameter: 7 ¹/₈ inches, 18.1 cm

Thickness: ¹/₄ inch, 0.7 cm

A large jade disc with a neatly cut round aperture in the centre. The surface of the jade is worked on both sides with an inner band of raised faceted bosses of hexagonal outline, each of which is centred on a grid of diagonally crossed lines. The edge of the disc is engraved with a wide band of strapwork, consisting of archaic dragons, their heads and limbs interlinked. A narrow band of diagonal hatching separates the two main registers of decoration. The dark green coloured stone retains a high degree of translucency and has areas of black and white veining. The stone is smoothly polished on both sides.

● Precise dating of discs like the present example is complex: although examples have been found in Han dynasty tombs such as that of the King of Nan Yue¹, who was buried in 122 BC at a site in modern Guangzhou, earlier tombs such as the late Eastern Zhou tombs at Qufu in Shandong province have also yielded such discs.² The engraved decoration is most probably based on designs first seen on carved jade pendants and ornaments of the early Eastern Zhou period, which in turn possibly derive from ornament on early gold pieces.³ An almost identical disc is in the Avery Brundage collection at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.⁴ Another similar example is in the Hotung collection at the British Museum.⁵ The dark green coloured jade most commonly used for discs of this type probably come from Khotan. Three discs with a similar design but of a different colour are in the collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei.⁶

1 Cheung, Y.L. *Jades from the Tomb of the King of Nanyue*, The Museum of the Western Han Tomb of the Nanyue King, Guangzhou + the Art Gallery, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1991, no. 120

2 Rawson, J. *Jade and Gold: Some Sources of ancient Chinese Jade Design*, in: *Chinese Jade, Selected articles from Orientations 1983 – 1996*, p. 156

3 Rawson, J. *op. cit.* p. 155

4 Li, He et al: *Jades Chinois, pierres d'immortalité*, Musée Cernuschi, Paris, 1997, no. 59, p. 107

5 Rawson, J. *Chinese Jade – From the Neolithic to the Qing*, London 1995, no. 15:4, pp. 253-6

6 *A Catalogue of the National Palace Museum's Special Exhibition of Circular Jade*, Taipei, 1995, nos 91-93 pp. 142-5





TWO POTTERY HORSES WITH RIDERS

China, Western Han dynasty, 206 BC – 8 AD

Length: 10 inches, 25.4 cm

Height: 12 inches, 30.5 cm

Two painted pottery horses with separate riders. The well-modelled horses have four slots in the base where separate legs can be inserted, as well as slots for the ears and the tail. The back has a small hole for fixing the rider. The horses are brightly painted with fully detailed harnesses, lozenge patterns on the bodies and a black mane. The riders wear double robes with black belts; on one rider the outer robe has a lozenge pattern in green and red pigments and he wears white boots, on the other rider the robe has a scale-pattern in purple on a black ground and he wears purple boots. Their heads are fitted with tight black caps, which are held by a red strap. Their facial features are painted in great detail.



● The slots in the horse's bodies are intended for inserting legs, ears and a tail, possibly in wood. Small holes on the side of each horse's torso, just above the slots for the legs, would have enabled pegs to be inserted to keep the limbs in place. The colour scheme on the horses and particularly on the riders' coats is unusually detailed and remarkably well preserved. Two closely comparable horses with detachable riders and similar colour schemes are in the collection of Julius Eberhardt in Vienna.¹ A comparable horse with rider, the horse with detachable head, is in the Barlow collection at Sussex University.²

1 Krah, R. *Sammlung Julius Eberhardt, Frühe chinesische Kunst/Early Chinese Art*, Vienna, 1999, no. 104, pp. 176-7

2 Sullivan, M. *Chinese Ceramics, Bronzes and Jades in the Collection of Sir Alan and Lady Barlow*, Faber and Faber, London 1963, pl. 1a, p. 18





PAINTED POTTERY VASE, *HU*

China, Western Han dynasty, 206 BC – 8AD

Height: 11 ⁵/₈ inches, 28.8 cm

A grey pottery vase, the shape copying a bronze prototype of *Hu* form. The rounded body is supported on a high, tapered foot, has a waisted neck and a rim that flares outwards. The vase is painted in bright pink and cream pigments with bands of formal cloud-scroll pattern (*yun wen*), separated by broad lines. The neck is encircled by three pendant triangles.

● Han potters relied principally on bronze prototypes, as may be seen in this vase. Low-fired earthenware is not practical for everyday use as it is not watertight and it is therefore clear that this object had a strictly symbolic function. The painted designs closely resemble those found on contemporary lacquer objects, in particular the brightly coloured lacquer wares recovered from a number of Han dynasty tombs at Mawangdui, near Changsha in Henan province, which include a covered *Hu* vessel.¹ The motifs reflect the Daoist philosophical mood of the time, where the idea of immortality and the continuation of the soul in heavenly dimensions played an important role. An almost identical painted pottery vase from the CAR collection was included in the exhibition *Chinese Ceramics, Masterworks from Private Collections* at the Museum für ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne in 1988.²

¹ Teng, Rensheng, *Lacquer Ware of the Chu Kingdom*, The Woods Publishing Company, Hong Kong, 1992, pl. 77, p. 71

² Wiesner, U. *Chinesische Keramik – Meisterwerke aus Privatsammlungen*, Museum für ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne, 1988, no. 1, pp. 24-5





**LIMESTONE
PANEL WITH
PAIRED BUDDHAS**

China, Northern Wei dynasty, 386 – 543

Length: 10 1/2 inches, 26.7 cm

Height: 9 inches, 22.8 cm

A limestone panel, the front carved with three rows of three bracket-topped niches, each containing paired Buddhas. Each Buddha is seated with his legs folded and is dressed in flowing robes. The hair is drawn up in a chignon.

● This panel with its unusual decoration of paired Buddhas almost certainly originally formed part of a larger sculpture or stele. A four-sided stone stele dated 501 AD from the collection of the Museum of the Forest of Steles, was included in the recent exhibition *China, Dawn of a Golden Age, 200 – 750 AD* at the Metropolitan Museum, New York.¹ It is carved on one side with similar paired Buddhas, framing the central scene. Howard notes that: "*This type of stele was popular in Shaanxi and also in neighbouring Southern Shanxi toward the end of the fifth and early sixth centuries.*"² An interesting stylistic parallel can be seen in a stele depicting Laozi and the Jade Emperor in the National Museum of China, Beijing.³ The pairing of the two figures and their attire is closely related to the appearance of the Buddhas on the present panel.³

1 Watt, J.C.Y. *China, Dawn of a Golden Age, 200 – 750 AD*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2004, no. 78 pp. 170-1

2 Watt, J.C.Y. *op. cit.* p. 170

3 Howard, A.F. et al *Chinese Sculpture*, Yale University and Foreign Language Press, 2006, no. 3.61, p. 257.





POTTERY CANDLESTICK, *ZHUTAI*

China, Tang dynasty, 618 - 906

Height: 17 inches, 43.2 cm

A pottery candlestick made in three parts. The first section comprises a tall stem, ribbed in imitation of bamboo and supported on a flaring foot with lipped rim. Just above the base is a large dish-shaped drip pan with flared rim. The second section is formed by a smaller, similarly shaped drip pan, which slots into the top of the stem and in turn supports a flared element, which has a ring with clay balls around it. The third section is a simple ribbed cylinder, which rests on top of the second section. The pottery is unglazed, and retains some of the original layer of grey slip and orange pigments.

● Candlesticks formed part of tomb furnishings from the Han dynasty onwards, but were first made in this distinctive form during the Tang dynasty. The shape is also seen in metal.¹ Intriguingly, the metal examples are also made in several sections. Ceramic candlesticks of this type mostly have a monochrome glaze, as can be seen on a cream-glazed example in the Musée Cernuschi in Paris.² A ceramic candlestick with a *sancai* glaze, dated by Watson to the first half of the 8th century, is in the collection of the University of Durham, England.³ A brown-glazed pottery example is in the Meiyintang collection.⁴



1 *Special Exhibition: Tin-Bronze of China*, October 10 – November 23, 1999, Kuboso Memorial Museum of Art, Izumi, Japan, no. 123

2 Béguin, G. et al: *Art Chinois, Musée Cernuschi acquisitions 1993-2004*, Paris, 2005, no. 54, p. 110

3 Watson, W. *Tang and Liao Ceramics* Thames and Hudson, London 1984, fig. 17, p. 40

4 Krah, R. *Chinese Ceramics from the Meiyintang Collection*, Vol. Three (1) Paradou Writing, London, 2006, no. 1313, p. 288-9





POTTERY LADY STANDING AT A WELL

China, Sui to early Tang dynasty
late 6th – early 7th century

Height: 7 inches, 17.8 cm
Length: 6 1/2 inches, 16.5 cm

A pottery group of a lady standing at a well. She is dressed in a long robe with a scarf draped around the shoulders and lifts her hands as if pulling a bucket up from the well. Her hair is done up into an elaborate coiffure and her face has an amused expression. The wellhead is constructed from four slanted slabs of clay, surmounted by a T-shaped frame, which accommodates the pulley. One corner of the well has a C-shaped strut on which a bucket can be placed. Both the lady and the well are covered in a straw-coloured glaze. The base and inside of the well are unglazed.

● This depiction of an every-day domestic scene is typical of burial ceramics from the Sui (581 – 618) and early Tang dynasty (618 – 906). Another such example is a pottery figure of a girl holding a winnowing basket in the Barlow collection at Sussex University.¹ Precise dating of this interesting and well-executed group is difficult; the technique of using a two-part mould and the style of the lady's dress, as well as the use of straw-coloured glaze are typical features of pottery figures made during the relatively short-lived Sui dynasty (581 – 618), but both technique and style continued into the early Tang dynasty. Two straw-glazed figures of very similarly coiffed and dressed ladies, dated to the late Sui or early Tang dynasty, are in the collection of Anthony M. Solomon.²

¹ Sullivan, M. *Chinese Ceramics, Bronzes and Jades in the Collection of Sir Alan and Lady Barlow*, Faber and Faber, London 1963, pl. 6B, p. 22

² Bower, V.L. and Mowry, R.D. (ed.) *From Court to Caravan, Chinese Tomb Sculptures from the Collection of Anthony M. Solomon*, Harvard University Art Museums, New Haven and London, 2002, no. 29, p. 106





GILTBRONZE MODEL OF A SILKWORM

China, Tang dynasty, 618 - 906

Length: 2 ⁵/₈ inches, 6.7 cm

A giltbronze model of a silkworm, its segmented body realistically modelled with rounded head, tail horn and eight pairs of suction pads underneath. The bronze is covered in a thick layer of gilding, which has partially oxidised and acquired a green and red patina in places.

● Sericulture, the production of raw silk by raising silkworms, has been practised for at least 5000 years in China. The silkworm is the larva or caterpillar of *Bombyx mori*, the domesticated silkmoth. The silkworm feeds on mulberry leaves and spins its cocoon, which is then boiled to make it easier to unravel the fine silk thread. Models of silkworms in semi-precious stones such as jade are known from the Western Zhou dynasty (c. 1050 – c. 900 BC) indicating that throughout the ages this producer of silk was regarded with respect.¹ No other models of silkworms in giltbronze appear to be published.

¹ Vainker, S. *Chinese Silk – A Cultural History*, The British Museum Press, 2004, fig. 11, p. 20





POTTERY MARBLED DISH

China, Tang dynasty, 7th or 8th century

Diameter: 4 ³/₈ inches, 11 cm

A small pottery circular dish with a flat base, slightly convex interior and a flat everted rim. The dish is made of marbled clay, producing a design of mixed dark and light irregular swirling stripes. It is covered in a transparent glaze that is very thin in places and coloured a yellowish tone in some areas.

● The method of producing a 'marbled' effect on a pottery vessel by kneading together clays of white and brown (or more colours) is known in China as *jiao tai* (mixed body) or *jiao ni* (mixed clay). In the case of this small dish, the mixed clay was used to form the entire body of the vessel before it was coated in a layer of transparent glaze. Different names, such as 'wood grain pattern', 'pheasant's wing pattern' or 'feather pattern' are given to the resulting effect, depending on how the clays are mixed. The technique was developed in the Tang dynasty, when marbled wares were produced particularly in kilns in Gongxian, Henan province, but petered out by the end of the Song dynasty (960 – 1279).¹ Two marbled pottery dishes of similar form and size are in the Meiyintang collection.²

1 Wang Qingzheng *A Dictionary of Chinese Ceramics*, Singapore 2002, pp. 212-3

2 Krah, R. *Chinese Ceramics from the Meiyintang Collection*, Vol. Three (1) Paradox Writing, London, 2006, no. 1240, p. 230





WHITE STONEWARE BOWL

China, Tang dynasty, 8th or 9th century

Diameter: 5 ³/₄ inches, 14.6 cm

Height: 1 ³/₄ inches, 4.5 cm

A white stoneware shallow bowl, the thickly potted, gently rounded sides rising from a neatly cut, disc-like foot and terminating in a turned-over rim. The interior and exterior of the bowl are covered in a transparent glaze, leaving just the foot unglazed, exposing the fine white clay underneath.

● The broad, flat foot on this type of bowl is sometimes referred to as *bi*-shaped, as it resembles the jade ring of that name. This sophisticated, pure white stoneware bowl was possibly made at the highly regarded *Xing* kiln, located in Neiqiu, in the northern province of Hebei, the products of which, according to Watson, seem "...to have been favoured for wine".¹ A closely related bowl in the Baur collection in Geneva is described as *Xing* ware by Ayers, who notes that "*Very similar bowls were made at both the Xingyao and Dingyao kilns*".² Other similar examples are in the Yuegutang collection in Berlin³ and in the Kempe collection.⁴



¹ Watson, W. *Tang and Liao Ceramics*,
Thames and Hudson, 1984, page 36

² Ayers, J. *Chinese Ceramics in the Baur Collection*,
Vol. I, Geneva, 1999, no. 5[A9], p. 41

³ Krah, R. *Yuegutang – A Collection of Chinese Ceramics in Berlin*,
Berlin 2000, no. 91, p. 114

⁴ Gyllensvärd, B. *Chinese Ceramics in the Carl Kempe Collection*,
Stockholm 1964 no. 331, p.111





MINIATURE *SANCAI* POTTERY FIGURE

China, Tang dynasty, 618 - 906

Height: 4 1/4 inches, 10.8 cm

A miniature pottery figure of a man standing on a square base, his heavily muscled torso slightly forward inclined. He rests his left hand on the sash he wears around his waist, whilst his right hand is tucked around his back. The head is finely detailed with the mouth opened, showing the teeth. He has an upturned nose, bulging eyes, a pointed beard and wears a tightly fitting headdress. The figure is completely covered in a green glaze with amber and cream splashes, leaving only the head unglazed, which has some traces of red and black pigments remaining.

- It seems likely that this unusual, animated figure of non-Chinese ethnicity depicts either a groom or a travelling acrobat or 'strong man', who appears to be listening or reacting intently to a crowd. His facial features are almost grotesque, even lion-like, underlining his outlandish and exotic appearance.





WHITE AND BROWN STONEWARE BOWL

China, Tang dynasty, 8th century

Diameter: 5 ³/₄ inches, 14.6 cm

Height: 3 ³/₄ inches, 9.5 cm

A white stoneware bowl, the thickly potted, deeply rounded sides rising from a neatly cut, tapered ring foot and terminating in a rounded rim. The exterior of the bowl is covered in a dark-brown, almost black glaze, which is neatly wiped away at the top and ends in an even line at the foot. The interior of the bowl has a transparent glaze. The top rim is unglazed, as is the base, which shows the fine white clay of the body.

● The unusual combination of dark brown and transparent glazes over an almost pure white stoneware body make this bowl a striking example of Tang pottery; perhaps a precursor to the undecorated ceramics seen in subsequent dynasties. An alms-type bowl with the same glaze and exposed rim is in the Meiyintang collection.¹ Describing the latter bowl, Krahl refers to a similar piece that was discovered in the foundations of the Qingshansi pagoda in Lintong county near Xian, together with a reliquary installed in AD 741.² A bowl of shallower form with the same glaze combination is in the collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing.³

1 Krahl, R. *Chinese Ceramics from the Meiyintang Collection*, Vol. I, London, 1994, no. 221, p. 134-5

2 Krahl, R. *op. cit.* p. 134

3 *Zhongguo taoci quanji* (The Complete Works of Chinese Ceramics), Volume V : Sui, Tang, 1999 – 2000, no. 197, pp. 175 and 277





POTTERY GOOSE RHYTON

China, Tang dynasty, 8th century

Length: 4 ³/₄ inches, 12 cm

A pottery drinking vessel modelled in the form of a goose, the head with long neck turned back and holding a large, petalled flower in its beak. The bird's wings are well defined with precisely detailed feathers. The exterior of the vessel is covered in a *sancai* glaze of amber, cream and green tones. The finely grained, pink earthenware is visible both on the inside and on the base of the vessel.

● The shape of vessels such as this charming cup in the form of a goose is thought to have been inspired by Sassanian metal ware. Its exact purpose is not clear; a similar vessel from the collection of the Saint Louis Art Museum is referred to by Watson both as a lamp and as a drinking vessel.¹ The recent excavation of a number of Tang tombs at Zhitian in Gongyi County, Henan province yielded a similar bird-shaped vessel.² A closely comparable goose rhyton from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum in New York was included in the 1969 exhibition *Foreigners in Ancient Chinese Art* at the China Institute in New York.³

1 Watson, W. *Tang and Liao Ceramics*, London 1984, no. 134, p. 154

2 Zhengzhou Municipal Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology (ed.) *Gongyi Zhitian Jin Tang Muzan* (Tombs of the Jin and Tang Dynasties at Zhitian, Gongyi), Beijing 2003, plate 24, 2.

3 Schloss, E. *Foreigners in Ancient Chinese Art*, China House Gallery, The China Institute in America, New York 1969, no. 64





POTTERY FLASK WITH APPLIED DECORATION

China, Liao dynasty, 10th century

Height: 9 1/2 inches, 24 cm

A pottery flask, the body of flattened ovoid shape, supported on a tapered foot and with cup-shaped mouth. Both the front and the back of the flask are decorated with composite applied reliefs, forming a floral pattern. The shoulder of the flask has two squared lug handles, which correspond to two apertures in the foot. Imitation straps with rows of studs are applied to the sides. The flask is covered in a rich amber glaze, which pools to a darker colour in the crevasses.

● Ceramics from the Liao period often derive their form from materials such as metal, glass and sometimes - as is the case here - from leather. The nomadic nature of the Liao implied that their artifacts often bore witness to their peripatetic lifestyle. The lugs and corresponding holes in the base of this unusually finely detailed flask can accommodate a rope or string by which the bottle can be tied to a horse or camel, or even to a person's back. A related white-glazed bottle with a similar system of straps and handles from the collection of the Research Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology of Inner Mongolia was exhibited at the Asia Society in New York.¹ In his discussion of this piece, Hsueh-man Shen remarks that: *"The loops and raised ribs on the body are [...] signature elements of tenth-century ceramics."*³ A comparable green and amber glazed flask with a similar system of lug handles is in the Anthony de Rothschild Collection of Chinese ceramics at Ascott House, England.² A taller amber-glazed flask with lug handles, described as 'Tang dynasty' but now presumed to date from the Liao period, was unearthed in 1960 at Tu Cheng Zi, He Linger County, Ulanqab Meng in Mongolia.⁴



1 Shen, Hsueh-man (ed.) *Gilded Splendor, Treasures of China's Liao Empire (907 – 1125)*, New York 2006, no. 105, pp. 336-7

2 Shen, Hsueh-man (ed.) *op. cit.* p. 336

3 Krahl, R. *The Anthony de Rothschild Collection of Chinese Ceramics*, the Eranda Foundation, 1996, Volume I, no. 26, pp. 48-9

4 Chugoku Naimoko – Hoppo Ki *Mongolia*, Japan 1983, no. 65, pp. 66 and 157





POTTERY DISH WITH *SANCAI* GLAZE

China, Liao dynasty
11th or early 12th century

Diameter: 5 ¹/₈ inches, 13 cm

A shallow pottery dish with a flat base and upturned rim, which is divided into eight lobes. The interior of the dish is moulded with a central stylized flower head, which has two rows of eight petals. Arranged around the rim are four naturalistically depicted lotus flowers, alternating with four peonies. The decoration is applied on a ground of wave pattern. The dish is covered in a pale-green glaze on which the flowers are reserved in amber glaze. The base is unglazed, showing the buff-coloured pottery. The inside has three tiny spur marks.

● Delicate, polychrome glazed pottery dishes in round, oblong or square form with impressed floral designs were evidently popular with the nomadic Liao people. A dish of the same form and design but with a slightly different colour scheme, now in the Liaoning Provincial Museum is said to come from the Ganwa kilns in Inner Mongolia.¹ Two similar dishes are in the Meiyintang collection² and a further example with green flowers on a cream and amber ground is in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.³

1 *Zhongguo taoci quanji*, Volume IX: Liao, Western Xia and Jin, 1999 – 2000, no. 105

2 Krah, R. *Chinese Ceramics from the Meiyintang Collection*, Vol. Three (1) Paradox Writing, London, 2006, no. 1330, p. 309

3 Li, He *Chinese Ceramics, The New Standard Guide*, The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Thames and Hudson, London 1996, no. 213, p. 147 and 186





AMBER-GLAZED POTTERY BOWL

China, Liao dynasty, 907 - 1125

Diameter: 7 ³/₄ inches, 19.6 cm

Height: 3 ³/₄ inches, 9.5 cm

A pottery bowl with deeply rounded sides rising from a high, straight foot and terminating in a rolled rim. The bowl is entirely undecorated and covered in a glaze of deep amber colour, except for the inside of the base, which has a thin cover of white glaze with green spots, leaving the footrim unglazed and revealing the finely grained buff pottery. Three small spur marks are visible in the interior of the bowl.

● This confidently potted bowl relies on nothing other than its striking glaze for effect. The spur marks on the inside indicate that the piece was probably fired upside-down on three conical stilts; the slight pooling of the glaze at the rim would support this theory. The bright green spots on the inside of the base are curious; they are probably a firing accident rather than a deliberate attempt at decoration. A Liao pottery basin with similar amber glaze is in the collection of Umberto Draghi.¹



¹ Noppe, C. et al *Art Chinois, Néolithique Dynastie Song, Collection Umberto Draghi*, Musée Royal de Mariemont, Brussels, 1990, no. 67, p. 158





**LONGQUAN
STONEWARE BOWL
WITH LOTUS PETALS**

China, Southern Song dynasty, 13th century

Diameter: 4 ⁷/₈ inches, 12.4 cm

Height: 2 ¹/₄ inches, 5.7 cm

A stoneware bowl supported on a short foot, the rounded sides carved on the outside with a broad band of overlapping, upright lotus leaves. The bowl is entirely covered in a bluish-green glaze, except for the foot rim, which shows the fine grey body of the stoneware and characteristic red firing marks. The base is convex.

● The distinctive bluish-green colour of the glaze that characterises the wares produced at the Longquan kilns in southern Zhejiang province is primarily attributable to the smoky firing technique employed there, which converted the small amount of iron present in the glaze into ferrous oxide.¹ Bowls of this type appear to have been popular from the Southern Song period onwards, and continued to be made well into the Yuan dynasty.² The relatively small size of this bowl is unusual; a larger example is in the Baur collection.³ Other examples are in the Barron collection³ and in the Indianapolis Museum of Art.⁴

1 Gompertz, G.St.G.M. *Chinese Celadon Wares*, Faber and Faber, London 1958 & 1980, p. 164

2 Ayers, J. *Chinese Ceramics in the Baur Collection*, Vol. I, Geneva, 1999, no. 40 [A101], pp. 82-3

3 Rotondo-McCord, L.: *Heaven and Earth Seen Within – Song Ceramics from the Robert Barron Collection*, New Orleans Museum of Art, 2000, no. 54, pp.138-9

4 Mino, Y. and Tsiang, K.R. *Ice and Green Clouds, Traditions of Chinese Celadon*, Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1986, no. 76, pp. 188-9





TWO PORCELAIN QINGBAI BRUSH WASHERS

China, Song dynasty, 960 – 1279

Diameter: 6 1/4 inches, 15.9 cm

Two porcelain brush washers, each of shallow bowl shape with an upturned foliate rim, which is divided into eight sections by vertical ribs. The slightly convex centre of the interior is carved with a large lotus flower and leaf. Both brush washers are completely covered in a transparent glaze of pale blue hue, which pools to a slightly darker tone just below the unglazed rim, indicating that they were fired upside-down. The rims are unglazed, showing the fine-grained white porcelain body.

● Shallow bowls with flat bases and sharply upturned, lobed rims are usually described as brushwashers. The form of these very finely potted dishes can perhaps be considered a precursor to porcelains of the same shape dating from the Xuande period of the Ming dynasty (1426 – 1432), such as an example decorated in underglaze blue in the National Palace Museum, Taipei.¹ Zhao and Liu illustrate a comparable, slightly smaller *qingbai* porcelain dish, which they identify as Hutian ware.² According to the authors, the best *qingbai* wares of the Song dynasty are considered those that came from the Hutian kiln near Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province.

1 Lino, P.S. *Catalogue of the Special Exhibition of Selected Hsüan-te Imperial Porcelains of the Ming Dynasty*, National Palace Museum, Taipei, 1998, plate 182, pp. 420-1

2 Zhao Ziqiang (ed.) *Chai Yao Yu Hutian Yao* (Chai Kiln & Hutian Kiln). Nanning, 2004, p. 85





**QINGBAI PORCELAIN
COVERED JARLET**

China, Northern Song dynasty, 960 – 1127

Height: 3 ³/₄ inches, 9.5 cm

A thinly potted *qingbai* porcelain jar of deeply rounded bowl form with a sharply angled shoulder and a straight rim. The high domed cover has a flanged rim and a stalk-like finial. The jar is covered inside and out in a transparent glaze of pale blue hue. The cover is glazed on the outside only. The interior of the cover and the slightly recessed base are unglazed and show the fine-grained white porcelain body.

● The porcelain body of this small jar is thinly potted, rendering the material translucent when a strong light is shone through it. Zhao and Liu illustrate an almost identical covered jar, which they identify as being ware from the Hutian kiln near Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province.¹

¹ Zhao Ziqiang (ed.) *Chai Yao Yu Hutian Yao* (Chai Kiln & Hutian Kiln). Nanning, 2004, p. 68





GLASS HAIRPIN

China, Southern Song dynasty
1127 – 1279

Length: 6 1/2 inches, 16.5 cm

A double-tined glass hairpin, the two ends of the iridescent white shaft tapering gently towards sharp points. The otherwise plain surface shows heavy degradation of the material and surface grit adhering.

● This glass hairpin can be considered an extraordinary survivor; the fragile, brittle material ensures that not many examples are in existence today. It was no doubt made as an object of personal adornment; the use of glass for such pieces would certainly have been considered a novelty at this time. The double-tined shape of this hairpin follows that of contemporary examples in precious metals like silver and gold, which are known from as early as the Tang dynasty (618 – 906) ; a plain gold example dating from that period is in the Shaanxi history Museum.¹ A number of Song dynasty gold examples are in the Mengdiexuan collection.² Three glass hairpins similar to the present example are in the collection of Simon Kwan.³

1 Shen, Qinyan (ed.) *Gold and Silver, Selected Treasures of Shaanxi History Museum*, Xian, 2003, no. 112, p. 110

2 White, J. and Bunker, E.C. *Adornment for Eternity, Status and Rank in Chinese Ornament*, Denver Art Museum, 1994, nos. 95 and 96, pp. 183-4

3 Kwan, S. *Early Chinese Glass*, Art Museum, The Chinese University of Hong Kong 2001, nos. 170-172, pp. 358-9





**QINGBAI
PORCELAIN BOWL
WITH PHOENIXES**

China, Southern Song dynasty, 1127 - 1279

Diameter: 4 1/4 inches, 10.8 cm

Height: 1 3/4 inches, 4.5 cm

A very thinly potted *qingbai* porcelain bowl, the deeply rounded sides rising from a tiny foot and terminating in a straight rim. The interior is impress-moulded with a design of two phoenixes in flight, separated by floral sprays, all below a border of key-frets. The bowl is covered inside and out in a transparent glaze of pale blue hue, leaving just the rim unglazed. A few traces of metal band that once protected the porcelain remain on the rim.

● The impressed design of two phoenixes in flight is not uncommon on *qingbai* porcelain, but it is usually seen on larger, shallow bowls, such as an example in the collection of the National Palace Museum in Taiwan¹. The fact that the base is completely covered in glaze indicates that the bowl was fired upside-down. A bowl of similar size and shape, which was also fired upside-down is in the Avery Brundage collection at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.²



1 Pierson, S. (ed.) *Qingbai Ware: Chinese Porcelain of the Song and Yuan Dynasties*, Percival David Collection of Chinese Art, London, 2002, no. 18, pp. 58-9

2 Pierson, S. (ed.) *op. cit.* no. 10, pp 44-5





SET OF FIVE LACQUER DISHES

China, Song dynasty, 960 – 1279

Diameter: 6 inches, 15.2 cm

A set of five plain lacquer dishes, each of circular form with a flared rim, which is divided into six sections by vertical ribs. Each dish is supported on a straight ring foot. The surfaces are plain, showing only age-cracks. The rims are bound in dark metal, probably copper. The lacquer is a dark vermillion red colour. Each dish has Japanese collector's seal marks in red lacquer to the base.

● The simple, plain form of these dishes is typical of Song period lacquer. It is extremely unusual to find a set of five identical dishes; examples are rarely found in such an excellent state of preservation. The parallel between ceramics and lacquer of the Song dynasty is clearly visible here; dishes of this form exist in many types of ceramics of the period, such as *Qingbai*, *ding*, *jun*, *yaozhou* and many others. As is often the case with their ceramic counterparts, the dishes are fitted with metal rims to prevent chipping of the edges. A comparable red lacquer dish from the Lee family collection was exhibited in the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst in Cologne in 1990.¹ A five-lobed dish dated to the Northern Song dynasty (960 – 1127) was included in a recent exhibition of Song and Yuan lacquer wares at the Nezu Institute of Fine Arts in Tokyo.²



¹ Lee, K.T and Hu, S.C. *Dragon and Phoenix, Chinese Lacquer Ware, the Lee Family Collection*, Tokyo, Cologne 1990, no. 15, pp. 60-1

² Nezu Institute of Fine Arts: *The Colors and Forms of Song and Yuan China*, Nezu Institute of Fine Arts, Tokyo, 2004, no. 17, p. 206





YAOZHOU STONEWARE
BOWL WITH
LOTUS-PETAL DESIGN

China, Northern Song dynasty, 960 - 1126

Diameter: 5 1/4 inches, 13.3 cm

Height: 3 inches, 7.6 cm

A stoneware deep bowl supported on a short, straight foot, the thinly potted, rounded sides terminating in a slightly everted rim. The exterior of the bowl is carved with three tiers of overlapping, sharply pointed lotus leaves. The bowl is completely covered in a translucent olive-green glaze, which pools to a slightly darker tint in the recesses. The base and footrim are covered in a thinner glaze, which is burnt to a pale brown tone.

● The kilns that produced the striking and sophisticated *yaozhou* wares were mostly situated around Huangbao and Chenlu in present-day Tongguan county, Shaanxi province in northern China. The subtle design of lotus petals on the exterior of this bowl was carefully carved into the clay before firing; a time-consuming technique, different from the moulding generally seen on *longquan* lotus bowls. A *yaozhou* bowl with a similar lotus-petal design is in the Qing Court collection at the Palace Museum in Beijing.¹ Another example from the Seligman bequest is in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.²

¹ Palace Museum, *Beijing Complete Collection of Treasures of the Palace Museum* Vol. 32, Hong Kong, 1996, no. 111, p. 125

² Kerr, R. *Song Dynasty Ceramics*, Victoria and Albert Museum Far Eastern Series, London, 2004, nos. 58 and 58a (left), p. 61





QINGBAI PORCELAIN GROOVED EWER

China, Yuan dynasty, 1279 – 1368

Height: 7 inches, 17.8 cm

A porcelain ewer of *meiping* form, with a small mouth rising from a sloping shoulder. A short, curved spout, a loop handle and two small rings have been applied to the upper part of the body, which is decorated from the lightly recessed base to the neck with concentric grooves. The ewer is covered in a transparent glaze of pale blue tone, which darkens in the crevasses of the body. The inside of the neck is also glazed. The base is unglazed and shows the fine-grained white porcelain body.

● The grooves on the body of this ewer represent an unusual feature in *qingbai* porcelain. This feature, as well as the sturdy potting, indicate a date slightly later than the Song dynasty. No other ewers with this type of decoration appear to be published. A somewhat larger *longquan* vase in the Baur collection in Geneva has a remarkably similar grooved body.¹

¹ Ayers, J. *Chinese Ceramics in the Baur Collection*, Vol. I, Geneva, 1999, no. 39 [A106], pp. 82-3





**STONEWARE
CONICAL BOWL WITH
RUSSET GLAZE**

China, Song dynasty, 960 – 1279

Diameter: 5 inches, 12.7 cm

Height: 1 ⁵/₈ inches, 4.1 cm

A stoneware bowl of conical form, the thinly potted straight sides rising at a sharp angle from the low, neatly cut foot. The bowl is covered in an evenly applied, thick glaze of russet tone, which has a green-coloured undercoat that is most apparent at the rim and on the exterior. The base is unglazed and shows the fine-grained, buff-coloured stoneware.

● Delicately potted, easy to handle stoneware conical bowls were made for drinking tea. During the Song dynasty, the red tea commonly consumed in earlier periods was gradually supplanted by a foaming white tea. As a result, dark-coloured glazes became more popular, because this white tea looked more appealing against a dark background.¹ Attributing russet glazed wares to a specific kiln is always complicated, as they were produced in several ceramic centres. Whilst the accomplished potting, unadorned form and metallic sheen of the glaze are reminiscent of russet glazed *ding* wares, such as a covered bowl in the Qing Court collection at the Palace Museum in Beijing², it is more likely that this sophisticated bowl is a product of the *Cizhou* kilns in Northern Henan province. A similar bowl, described as *Cizhou* ware, is in the Barron collection.³

1 Rotondo-McCord, L. *Heaven and Earth Seen Within – Song Ceramics from the Robert Barron Collection*, New Orleans Museum of Art, 2000, p. 82

2 Palace Museum, Beijing *Complete Collection of Treasures of the Palace Museum* Vol. 32, Hong Kong, 1996, no. 85, p. 94

3 Rotondo-McCord, L. *op. cit.* no. 26, pp. 82-3





POTTERY HEAD OF A BABY

China, Song dynasty, 960-1279

Height: 5 1/4 inches, 13.5 cm

A pottery model of a baby's head with naturalistic features. The baby's eyes are open and its face shows little expression. There are holes leading to the hollow cavity from the ears and nostrils and it has rounded cheeks. There are traces of pigment around the head, suggesting that it was at one time decorated with paint. The edges at the base of the neck are jagged.

● The use of a baby form is often seen in ceramic pillows dated to the Song period, an example of which can be found in the Asian Art Museum San Francisco.¹ The size of this pottery head however is arguably too large to have once formed part of a ceramic pillow. It is more likely that it was once attached to a body, thereby forming a complete figure, either standing or seated.

¹ Tregar, M. *Song Ceramics*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1982, no. 41, p. 59





**SET OF FIVE
MINIATURE PORCELAIN
QINGBAI DISHES**

China, Song dynasty, 960 – 1279

Diameter: 3 inches, 7.8 cm

A set of *qingbai* miniature porcelain dishes of chrysanthemum shape with thinly potted bodies, the upturned rim divided into petalled lobes. All five dishes are covered in a transparent glaze of pale blue hue, which pools to a slightly darker tone in the crevasses. Only the rims are unglazed, showing the fine-grained white porcelain body.

● *Qingbai* porcelain dishes of this small size are unusual and a set of five is rare. As is usual in *qingbai* ceramics, the shape owes a legacy to metalwork, in particular to silver, in which more or less identical parallels can be found. Precise dating of this type of thinly potted dish is difficult, as it would appear to have been made over a lengthy period, including both Northern and Southern Song dynasties: a set of - seemingly more heavily potted - dishes of smaller size (diameter: 4.4 cm) was excavated from a tomb datable to 1118 AD in Nanfeng County¹, and a slightly larger (diameter: 9.1 cm) dish with foliate rim was excavated from a tomb datable to 1211 AD in Wuyuan County.² Zhao and Liu illustrate a set of four miniature dishes of chrysanthemum shape, which they identify as having been produced at the Hutian kiln.³

¹ Peng, S. (ed.) *Dated Qingbai Wares of the Song and Yuan dynasties* Hong Kong 1998, no. 30, p. 53

² Peng, S. (ed.) *op. cit.* no. 75, p. 73

³ Zhao Ziqiang (ed.) *Chai Yao Yu Hutian Yao* (Chai Kiln & Hutian Kiln). Guangzhou, 2004, p. 693





**JUN STONEWARE
BOWL WITH
PURPLE SPLASH**

China, Northern Song dynasty
12th or 13th century

Diameter: 3 1/2 inches, 8.9 cm
Height: 1 7/8 inches, 4.7 cm

A stoneware bowl of hemi-spherical form supported on a short, neatly cut foot that tapers upwards, the sides gently rounded and curving inwards at the rim. The bowl is covered in a lavender-blue glaze, which thins at the lip to a typical mushroom colour and stops just short of the foot. A single, broad copper-red splash is visible on the interior. The fine, cream-coloured clay is exposed on the base.

● *Jun* ware is considered to be one of the 'five famous wares of the Song dynasty', which also include *Ru*, *Ge*, *Guan* and *Ding* ceramics, all of which are believed to have been used at the Imperial Court.¹ *Jun* wares were produced at a number of kilns in central Henan province, but particularly at those near Linru and Yuxian.² Harmonious proportions and a thick, opalescent glaze of a striking blue tone typify fine quality *jun* wares made during the Song dynasty. *Jun* wares are most often monochrome, but occasionally the glaze was enhanced by painting abstract patterns in copper-red pigments, as is the case with this bowl, which features a single, short brushstroke from the rim. A *jun* ware bowl of similar proportions from the Eumorfopoulos collection with a glaze that shows more purple than lavender is in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.³ A larger example without purple splashes is in the collection of Simon Kwan.⁴

1 Krah, R. *Chinese Ceramics from the Meiyintang Collection*, Volume One, Azimuth Editions, London 1994, p. 198

2 Rotondo-McCord, L. and Mowry, R. *Heaven and Earth Seen Within – Song Ceramics from the Robert Barron Collection*, New Orleans Museum of Art, 2000, p. 18

3 Kerr, R. *Song Dynasty Ceramics*, Victoria and Albert Museum Far Eastern Series, London 2004, no. 26 (middle), p. 34

4 Ho, Kam-chuen (ed.) *Song Ceramics from the Kwan Collection*, Hong Kong 1994, no. 38, pp. 112-3





**DING-TYPE
STONEWARE JAR
AND COVER**

China, Northern Song dynasty
10th or 11th century

Height (including cover): 5 1/4 inches, 13.3 cm

A stoneware jar of globular form, the body supported on a low, straight foot and divided into five lobes by vertical indentations. The jar's shoulder is almost flat and terminates in a short neck. The small round cover has a broad, flat rim with a central domed section and a sharply pointed, conical finial. The white porcelain body is covered inside and out in a transparent glaze that has a greenish tinge in places. The base, rim and underside of the cover are unglazed and show the fine-grained white stoneware.

● The simple yet sophisticated, unadorned form of this carefully potted jar with its almost pure white stoneware body and transparent glaze is strongly reminiscent of the wares produced at the *ding* kilns in Hebei province. A stoneware ewer with similar lobed body from the collection of Kai-Yin Lo, catalogued as *ding* ware, was included in the exhibition *Bright as Silver, White as Snow* at the Denver Art Museum in 1998.¹ Another *ding* ware ewer dated to the Northern Song dynasty is in the collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei; it also has a lobed body.² A *ding* ware jar in the Baur Collection, Geneva, has a similarly shaped body and low foot.³

1 Lo, Kai-Yin (ed.) *Bright as Silver, White as Snow, Chinese White Ceramics from Late Tang to Yuan Dynasty*, Denver Art Museum, 1998, pl. 14, pp. 112-3

2 Hsieh, Ming-Liang *Catalogue of the Special Exhibition of Ting Ware White Porcelain*, National Palace Museum, Taiwan, 1987, no. 11.

3 Ayers, J. *Chinese Ceramics in the Baur Collection*, Vol. I, Geneva, 1999, no. 7 [A15], p. 48





**YAOZHOU
PERSIMMON GLAZED
STONEWARE BOWL**

China, Northern Song dynasty, 960 - 1127

Diameter: 4 1/2 inches, 11.4 cm

Height: 1 3/4 inches, 4.5 cm

A thinly potted stoneware bowl of conical form, supported on a low foot, the deeply rounded sides flaring sharply outwards at the rim. The bowl is covered in several layers of persimmon-coloured glaze that stop short of the neatly cut foot in an uneven line and have a somewhat metallic sheen. Only the base is unglazed and reveals the buff stoneware.

● *Yaozhou* ware more often than not is associated with a celadon glaze; vessels with a persimmon-coloured glaze are much more rare. Describing a number of persimmon-glazed stonewares in the Meiyintang collection, KrahI notes that stoneware vessels with a grey or buff body and persimmon glaze: “.. have been discovered at the *Yaozhou kiln sites in Shaanxi province and are also known from related kilns in Henan. Bowls and dishes are often lobed, reminiscent of lacquer ware, and may have been made in imitation of persimmon-coloured lacquer.*”¹ A comparable bowl, described by Avril as ‘possibly *Yaozhou* ware’ is in the Schatzman collection.²



1 KrahI, R. *Chinese Ceramics from the Meiyintang Collection*, Volume One, Azimuth Editions, London, 1994, p. 242

2 Avril, E. *Dark Jewels – Chinese Black and Brown Ceramics from the Schatzman Collection*, Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2002, no. 6, p. 33





**QINGBAI PORCELAIN
WATER DROPPER OF
FRUIT SHAPE**

China, Song dynasty, 960-1279

Height: 2 inches, 5.1 cm

A *qingbai* porcelain water dropper in the form of a sugar apple fruit. Its bulbous body is comprised of round bumps, which culminate in a globular neck and a round cut hole. It is glazed in a fine translucent pale bluish colour. The underside is foliated in the form of a flower and is unglazed.

**QINGBAI PORCELAIN
WATER POT
WITH INCISED
WAVE PATTERN**

China, Song dynasty, 960-1279

Height: 2 ⁵/₈ inches, 6.7 cm

A *qingbai* porcelain water pot of compressed globular shape. It has a straight foot rim, which is unglazed and its body is incised with an abstract wave pattern creating a star design. It is glazed in a fine translucent pale bluish colour. The neck is short.

**QINGBAI PORCELAIN
WATER DROPPER**

China, Song dynasty, 960-1279

Height: 2 ¹/₈ inches, 5.4 cm

A *qingbai* porcelain water dropper with a lobed, rounded body. It has a short spout and a semi-circular handle. Varied abstract patterns are moulded in three sections at the top. It is glazed in a fine translucent pale bluish colour. The base reveals the unglazed material.

● These wares were made for use on the scholar's table to either add drops of water to freshly ground ink or to dip a brush into. They are fine examples of the Song literati's preferred taste for simple forms with incised or moulded decoration.¹ Zhao and Liu illustrate a very similar ewer shaped water dropper with a loose lid, which they identify as being ware from the Hutian kiln near Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province.²

1 Pierson, S. eds., *Qingbai Ware: Chinese Porcelain of the Song and Yuan Dynasties*, Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, London, 2002, p. 15

5 Zhao Ziqiang (ed.): *Chai Yao Yu Hutian Yao* (Chai Kiln & Hutian Kiln). Nanning, 2004, p. 150





SILVER FOLIATE DISH

China, Northern Song dynasty, 960 – 1127

Diameter: 4 ⁵/₈ inches, 11.7 cm

A small silver deep dish with flat base, the rounded sides divided into six rounded lobes by sharp ridges, the upturned rim terminating in a rolled edge. The dish is entirely devoid of ornament.

● The plainness of silver dishes such as this example appealed to the Song literati, who preferred objects without ornament. Dishes of this form are also found in ceramic and lacquer, with the metal being generally accepted as the prototype emulated by other materials.¹ A pair of silver dishes of slightly different six-petal flower shape is in the Muwentang collection.² A larger silver ten-lobed dish unearthed from the Pengzhou hoard of gold and silver is now in the Pengzhou Municipal Museum.³ Zhao and Liu illustrate two similarly shaped porcelain dishes with a *qingbai* glaze, which they identify as having been produced at the Hutian kiln, near Jingdezhen.⁴

1 Kwan, S. *Chinese Silver*, the Muwentang Collection Series Vol. 02, Hong Kong 2004, p. 154

2 Kwan, S. *op. cit.* no. 69, pp. 154-5

3 National Museum of China: *Song yun: sichuan yao cang wenwu jicui*. (The Charm of Song: Cultural Artefacts from Hoards in Sichuan), Beijing, 2006, pp. 186-7

4 Zhao Ziqiang and Liu Xinxin *Chai Kiln & Hutian Kiln*, 2004, p. 132





STONEWARE BOWL OF *DING*-TYPE

China, early Northern Song dynasty
11th century

Diameter: 6 1/2 inches, 16.5 cm

Height: 1 3/4 inches, 4.4 cm

A ding-type stoneware bowl with rounded sides rising from a neatly potted straight foot, ending in a lipped rim. A single ring is cut in the interior of the bowl, just before its gently sloping sides flatten out towards the base. The underside has a small brown spur mark. A delicate ribbing texture can be seen around the bowl's exterior, caused by the throwing technique used to create the bowl. The bowl is entirely covered with a transparent ivory glaze, apart from the edge of the rim, which shows the very fine white stoneware.

● Connoisseurs have grouped *ding* wares among the five famous ceramics from the Song dynasty.¹ The high level of craftsmanship and materials used in creating such wares can be appreciated at first glance from their delicate form. Furthermore, when held, the finely thrown stoneware body and silky smooth glaze are apparent. The unglazed rim of this bowl can be explained via the firing process, which required bowls such as this to be fired upside down in order to prevent warping, making it necessary to wipe the glaze from the rim.² Other *ding* type wares sometimes have a copper band around the unglazed rim. Whilst this bowl is almost devoid of ornament, other wares from the same period were decorated with carved or incised designs. An example with both of these features can be found in the Victoria & Albert Museum.³ A bowl with a very similar overall form is in the Kwan Collection.⁴ The Meiyintang Collection holds a *ding* type ware with a comparable interior ring design.⁵



1 Krahl, R. *Chinese Ceramics from the Meiyintang Collection Volume One*, Azimuth Editions, London, 1994, p. 198

2 Krahl, R. *op cit*, p. 198

3 Kerr, R. *Song Dynasty Ceramics*, V&A Publications, London, 2004, no. 37, p. 44

4 Kwan, S. eds. *Song Ceramics from the Kwan Collection*, Urban Council, Hong Kong, 1994, no. 12, p. 60

5 Krahl, R. *Chinese Ceramics from the Meiyintang Collection Volume Three (II)*, Paradou Writing, London, 2006, no. 1425, p. 426





TWO QINGBAI PORCELAIN WATER DROPPERS

China, Southern Song dynasty, 1127 – 1279

Height: 1 1/2 inches, 3.8 cm

Two miniature water droppers in the form of naturalistically modelled frogs, the amphibians depicted seated with their mouths slightly open and with bulging eyes. The scaly skin of the frogs is rendered with tiny grains of clay embedded in the glaze. A small hole in the middle of the back allows the water droppers to be filled and the flow of drops to be controlled. The frogs are covered in a transparent glaze of pale blue hue, which pools to a darker tone in the creases. The base is unglazed and shows the fine-grained white porcelain body with characteristic black firing marks.

● These amusing frog water droppers were for adding drops of water to freshly-ground ink used for painting or calligraphy, and as such can be considered accoutrements for a scholar's desk. Their form appears to have no published equivalent, but a larger *qingbai* water pot in the form of a three-legged toad, also for use as a scholar's utensil, was found in a hoard located in the town of Suining in Sichuan Province.¹

¹ National Museum of China *Song Yun: Sichuan Yao Cang Wenwu Jicu (The Charm of the Song: Cultural Artefacts from Hoards in Sichuan)*, Beijing, 2006, pp. 80-1





WOODEN SEATED FIGURE OF GUANYIN

China, Song or Jin dynasty
11th to 13th century

Height: 43 inches, 109.2 cm
Width: 42 1/2 inches, 108 cm

A wooden figure of the bodhisattva Guanyin, depicted seated in a relaxed position with the left knee laid flat and tucked in towards the body, and the right arm extending from the shoulder and resting on the bent right knee. The figure is dressed in a loosely draped shawl or *dhoti*, which is wrapped in part around its torso and covers its lower body, the folds of the cloth just exposing the feet. A flowing scarf is draped over the shoulders and across the right arm, forming further folds within the drapery and leaving portions of the arms bare. An ornate beaded and jewelled necklace hangs from the Guanyin's neck, with a large pendant suspended from the centre. The hair is piled high on top of the head, and is held together by a richly ornamented tiara with a tall element at the centre concealing part of the chignon. Thick strands of the Bodhisattva's hair rest on the figure's broad shoulders and finer threads curl around its large lobed ears. The Guanyin has a broad face, which is delicately carved to reveal a serene expression. A large hole in the centre of the forehead indicates the third eye of spiritual vision.

PROVENANCE:

C.T. Loo, Paris 1957

The collection of Earl and Irene Morse, New York

EXHIBITED:

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1 July – 5 September 1982

PUBLISHED:

Thorp, R.L. and Bower, V. (eds.) *Spirit and Ritual: The Morse Collection of Ancient Chinese Art*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1982, no. 58, p. 90

Munsterberg, H. *The Arts of China*, Tokyo 1972, no. 72





● This imposing figure of the *bodhisattva* Guanyin is an important example of medieval Chinese Buddhist sculpture, of which a relatively small number of examples in more or less well-preserved condition remain today.¹ The Guanyin sits in the *maharajalila-asana* stance, known otherwise as ‘the relaxation of the great king’ or the position of ‘royal ease’.² It is thought that this figure represents Avalokiteshvara, whose story is recounted in the *Gandhavyuha* chapter of the *Avatamsaka Sutra* - the Guanyin is thought to have been found on Mount Potalaka by a young pilgrim named Sudhana, while pondering over the reflection of the moon upon the water.³ For this reason such figures are sometimes referred to as the ‘Water-Moon’ Guanyin. By the Song dynasty, the figure of Guanyin had become the most popular among Buddhist subjects. A small figure of Amitabha would most probably have ornamented the centre of the tiara, and a jewel was in the centre of the figure’s forehead. A closely related Guanyin from the Avery Brundage collection is in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.⁴ Another very similar figure is in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.⁵ A stylistically similar sculpture of Guanyin in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London is depicted seated on an elaborate rockwork base.⁶

1 Thorp, R.L. and Bower, V. (eds.) *Spirit and Ritual: The Morse Collection of Ancient Chinese Art*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1982, p. 85

2 Lunsingh Scheurleer, P. (ed.) *Asiatic Art in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1985, p. 56

3 Lunsingh Scheurleer, P. (ed.) *op cit.*, p. 56

4 Lefebvre d’Argencé, R.-Y. *Chinese, Korean and Japanese Sculpture in the Avery Brundage Collection*, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 1974, no. 143, pp. 272-3

5 Lorne, A., Rösch, P. and Lunsingh Scheurleer, P. *The Chinese Wooden Sculpture of Guanyin. New technical and art historical insights*, in: *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum*, no.3, 2002, pp. 364-389

6 Ayers, J. *Oriental Art in the Victoria & Albert Museum*, London, 1983, p. 21







TWO BLACK POTTERY JARS WITH TURTLES

China, Yuan dynasty, 1279 - 1368

Height: 9 ³/₄ inches, 24.5 cm



Two black pottery jars of square form. Both jars have lids, which are decorated with moulded turtles on the top. The jars have a low and slightly splayed octagonal foot. The exterior of the jars has no other decorative features. While the jar's form is square, the hole leading to the interior of the jar is cut out in a circle. The interior of both lids is inscribed with Chinese characters reading "*Ji Ji Lao Ren*."

● The use of animals to decorate the exterior of funerary ceramics during the Yuan period is not unusual. A porcelain funerary jar of a different form in the Jiangxi Provincial Museum collection, dated to 1338, has various animal forms applied to its body, including that of a tortoise.² The unusual aspects of these jars are their minimalist form and their monochrome black matt colour. The inscription on the inside of each of the lids reads *Ji Ji Lao Ren*, indicating that the jar belonged to the elder (*Lao Ren*) named *Ji Ji*. The moulded turtles on each of the lids are a symbol of immutability and steadfastness, perhaps a wish for the afterlife, and the fact that they often adorn stone grave pillars supports the notion that they were used as funerary jars.²

1 Shifan, P. eds. *Dated Qingbai Wares of the Song and Yuan Dynasties*, Ching Leng Foundation, Hong Kong, 1998, no. 98, p.84

2 Eberhard, W. *A Dictionary of Chinese Symbols*, Routledge, London, 1986, p. 295





**TWO BLACK
POTTERY JARS WITH
TURTLE FORMS**

China, Yuan dynasty, 1279 - 1368

Height: 9 1/2 inches, 24 cm

Two black pottery jars of cylindrical form. Both jars have lids, which are decorated with moulded turtles on the top. The jars have a low and slightly splayed octagonal foot. The exterior of the jars has no other decorative features. While the jar's form is cylindrical, the hole leading to the interior of the jar is cut out in a square. The interior of both lids is inscribed with Chinese characters reading "*Ji Ji Lao Ren.*"





PORCELAIN BOX IN THE FORM OF A PUMPKIN

China, Yuan to Ming dynasty
13th - 14th century

Diameter: 5 inches, 12.7 cm

Height: 2 1/2 inches, 6.5 cm

A porcelain box moulded in the form of a pumpkin with a lobed body and cover, which is topped by a twisted, stalk-shaped finial. Both the exterior of the container and the lid are covered in an off-white slip and transparent glaze. A free-hand floral design of varied brush strokes using an underglaze iron brown pigment decorates one half of the cover and continues just under the rim of the container. The finial is also painted in brown. The rim of the container and that of the lid are both unglazed revealing the white porcelain, while the interiors are also glazed brown. The interior of the container forms two compartments, which are separated by an S-shaped divider, creating a *yin-yang* form. The container has a flat base with a neatly pared foot rim, which is unglazed, revealing the stoneware. The centre of the base is slightly recessed and glazed.

● The decorative design of this box and its pumpkin form are reminiscent of both *Cizhou* and *Qingbai* wares dating from the Song period (960-1279), suggesting that these design elements continued into the Yuan and Ming dynasties.¹ The combination of the two results in a rather unique object that has been carefully potted. Furthermore, the *yin-yang* shaped interior of the box is an unusual feature, representing a symbol of two opposites, female and male, or in relation to Chinese cosmology, a symbol of shade and sun.²



1 For examples of Chizhou wares see Mino, Y. *Freedom of Clay and Brush through Seven Centuries in Northern China: Tz'u-chou Type Wares, 960-1600 AD*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1980. For an example of a pumpkin shaped Qingbai ware, see:

Li, H. *Chinese Ceramics: The New Standard Guide*, The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Thames and Hudson, London, 1996, no. 289, p. 161 and 194

2 Eberhard, W. *A Dictionary of Chinese Symbols*, Routledge, London, 1986, pp. 321-323

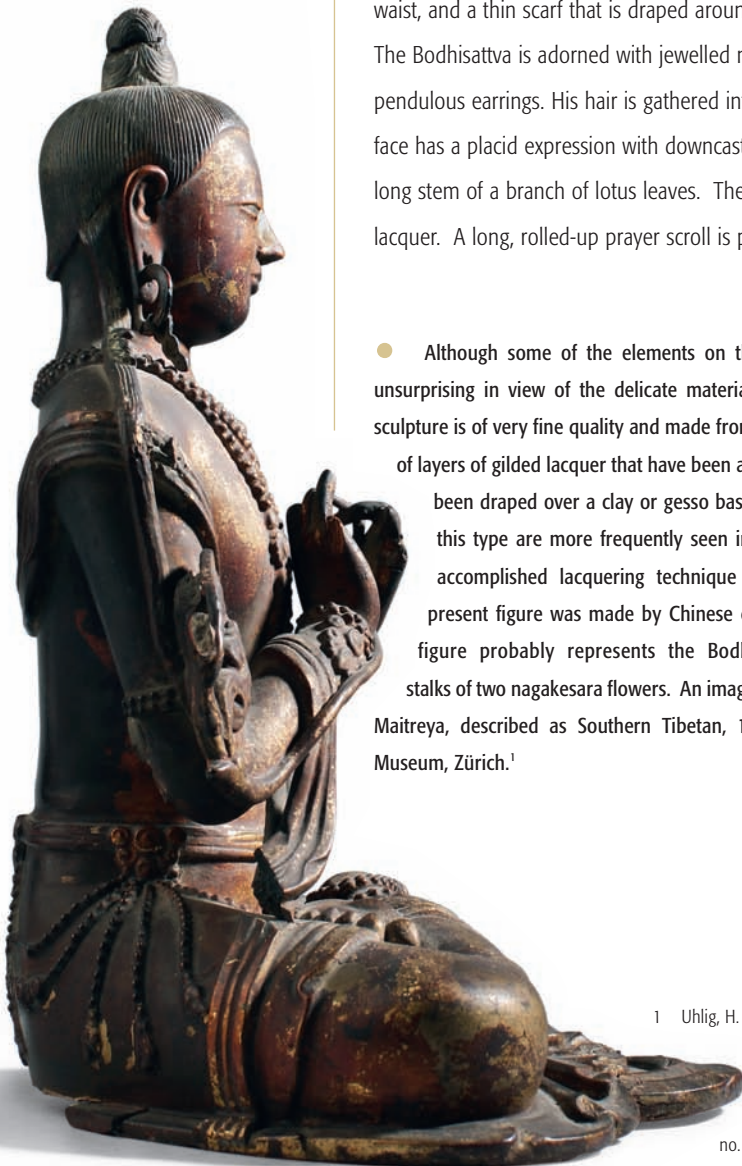




**LACQUERED CLAY
BUDDHIST FIGURE OF
THE BODHISATTVA
MAITREYA**

Tibeto-Chinese, 17th century

Height: 11 inches, 29 cm



A lacquered clay figure of the Bodhisattva Maitreya, seated with his legs folded and the soles of his feet turned up. He wears a flowing loincloth, tied at the waist, and a thin scarf that is draped around the shoulders and his forearms. The Bodhisattva is adorned with jewelled necklaces, armlets, bracelets and long pendulous earrings. His hair is gathered into an elaborate double finial. His face has a placid expression with downcast eyes. In his hands he holds the long stem of a branch of lotus leaves. The figure is covered in layers of gilt lacquer. A long, rolled-up prayer scroll is preserved with the figure.

● Although some of the elements on this figure are missing, which is unsurprising in view of the delicate material used for its construction, this sculpture is of very fine quality and made from an unusual material: it consists of layers of gilded lacquer that have been applied to cloth, which in turn has been draped over a clay or gesso base. Images of Buddhist figures of this type are more frequently seen in wood or metal. In view of the accomplished lacquering technique used, it seems likely that the present figure was made by Chinese craftsmen. Iconographically, the figure probably represents the Bodhisattva Maitreya, holding the stalks of two nagakesara flowers. An image in giltbronze of the Bodhisattva Maitreya, described as Southern Tibetan, 16th century, is in the Rietberg Museum, Zürich.¹

¹ Uhlig, H. *On the Path to Enlightenment*,
The Berti Aschmann Foundation
of Tibetan Art at the Museum
Rietberg, Zürich, 1995,
no. 40, pp. 84-5





**SET OF FIVE
PORCELAIN
WUCAI DISHES**

China, Ming dynasty, Tianqi period
1621 - 1627

Diameter: 5⁷/₈ inches, 15 cm

Height: 1¹/₈ inches, 2.9 cm

A set of five porcelain shallow dishes with a petal form rim and a short foot rim that is slightly inverted. The dishes are painted in a polychrome overglaze-enamel palette known as *wucaí*, meaning five colours. The exterior of each dish is undecorated, while the interiors are painted, all of them depicting a landscape scene with two figures in the foreground. The thin rims are painted in brown. The underside of each dish is glazed and has a mark painted in underglaze blue.

● These dishes mark an interesting period in the history of Chinese ceramic art. They not only denote the beginning of greater artistic freedom amongst artists in the early 17th century, but they also signify the beginnings of the increasing use of narrative themes in literature for social and political purposes.¹ The depiction of the Confucian scholar and the young boy set against a backdrop of hills and rock gardens was a popular theme painted on ceramics at the time, which came to be known as the Transitional Period (1620-83).² It is likely that these dishes were made for the Japanese market, since they make up a set of five. Furthermore, Japan's prospering climate during this period meant that a more wealthy and cultured clientele was available for ceramicists to exploit and sell their works of art to. The charm of these wares can be appreciated by the fact that they have remained a set; while they depict the same overall scene, each of them is slightly different in detail against the other. A dish with a similar form and palette is in the collection of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco.³

1 Little, S "Narrative Themes and Woodblock Prints in the Decoration of Seventeenth-Century Chinese Porcelains," *Seventeenth-Century Chinese Porcelain from the Butler Family Collection*, Art Services International, Virginia, 1990, p. 21

2 Little, S *Chinese Ceramics of the Transitional Period: 1620-1683*, Dartmouth, New York, 1984, pp. 1-28

3 Li, H *Chinese Ceramics- The New Standard Guide*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1996, no. 473





MOTHER-OF-PEARL INLAID LACQUER CABINET

China, Ming dynasty, 1368-1644

Width: 10 ⁵/₈ inches, 27 cm

Height: 9 ¹/₂ inches, 24 cm

Depth: 5 ¹/₈ inches, 13 cm

A rectangular mother-of-pearl inlaid lacquer cabinet with a removable front panel and with four drawers. The top depicts a scene of a scholar on a horse, accompanied by two attendants, one of whom carries a large fan and the other a wrapped *qin*. The front panel shows two men sitting at a table, playing a game of *weiqi*. A young boy peers around a column. The enamelled brass lock at the top of the panel has a floral motif. Below it is a small ring pull. The interior of the cabinet is fitted with four drawers of identical size. Each of the drawers depicts a different scene of three figures set amidst a landscaped rock garden with plants and flowers, and has a small bluebell shaped pull. The left side of the cabinet is inlaid with a design of two geese and bamboo plants, flanked by two intricately carved inlaid bone panels with a geometric design. The right hand side of the cabinet depicts two birds in a slightly different landscape setting to that of the left. The back and underside of the cabinet are both plain. A hinged brass loop handle is attached to the top of the cabinet.

● Chinese inlaid lacquer wares are known to have ancient origins. In addition to shell, lacquers were often inlaid with bronze and bone.¹ The shell inlay technique continued into the Song dynasty (960 – 1279), although examples are not plentiful, since the Chinese government at the time banned the production of lacquer wares inlaid with such a luxurious material.² The sensitive nature of shell and the difficulty in preserving

it means that there are few early extant examples, making this charming cabinet a rare survivor. Its quality can be seen in the detail of the inlaid mother-of-pearl decoration with its iridescent shades of colour and the stories that are depicted. A cabinet of similar form, dated between the 16th and 17th centuries, is in the Museum für Kunsthandwerk, in Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany.³



¹ Kuwayama, G. *Far Eastern Lacquer*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, 1982, p.28

² Hiroki, N. *The Colors and Forms of Song and Yuan China Featuring Lacquerwares, Ceramics and Metalwares*, Nezu Institute of Fine Arts, Tokyo, 2004, p. 204

³ Gabbert, G. *Ostasiatische Lackkunst*, Museum für Kunsthandwerk, Germany, 1978, no. 59, pp. 76-78





SQUARE PORCELAIN FLASK

China, Ming dynasty, Wanli period 1573-1619

Height: 10 ¹/₄ inches, 26 cm

Width: 3 ³/₄ inches, 9.7 cm

A porcelain jar with a square body and domed shoulders leading up to a narrow cylindrical ribbed neck. The jar is painted in underglaze blue. The main body of the jar is decorated with framed panels on each side. Two of the panels on the main body of the jar are decorated with a landscape scene of flying birds and insects amongst lotus ponds and *lingzhi* motifs. The other panels are decorated with flowering plants, one depicting chrysanthemums and a bamboo stalk, the other flowering peonies with a butterfly. The decorative band around the shoulders of the jar consists of four flowers attached to the branches of a peony tree. The flask's neck is undecorated apart from a double blue line around the rim of its mouth. The bottom of the flask also has two lines painted in underglaze blue. The base of the flask is unglazed.

● The combination of a European form with an entirely Chinese decorative design is an intriguing aspect of this flask. Its form is derived from Dutch glass gin bottles and Chinese craftsmen were most likely inspired to create such forms after the Dutch became involved in exporting Chinese porcelains to Europe, in the early part of the Wanli period.¹ The square form of flasks such as this, which would have normally contained alcohol, originally played a functional role, allowing them to be easily stored on ships during long voyages at sea.² The decorative motifs of the *lingzhi*, the lotus plants and the crane, which are all symbols of longevity, suggest that the flask was made to express a wish for long life. Little illustrates a practically identical flask, which he dates to the Tianqi period (1621-27).³ In a more recent publication, Harrison-Hall dates a flask in the British Museum of similar form but with a different design to 1600-20.⁴

1 Little, S. *Chinese Ceramics of the Transitional Period: 1620-1683*, Dartmouth Printing Company, New York, 1983, p.1

2 Harrison Hall, J. *Catalogue of late Yuan and Ming Ceramics in the British Museum*, British Museum Press, London, 2001, p. 281

3 Little, S. *op cit*, no. 5, p. 42.

4 Harrison Hall, J. *op cit*, no. II:12, p. 281





TIXI LACQUER BOX

China, Ming dynasty, early 15th century

Diameter: 2 ³/₄ inches 7 cm

Height: 1 ¹/₄ inches, 3 cm

A lacquer box and cover of circular form with flat top and base. A sphere is carved out of the centre of the lid, which is surrounded by four identically carved *ruyi* shapes. Four 'pommel' scrolls extend from these *ruyi* shapes and continue over the edge of the cover towards the rim of the lid. The bottom section is also carved and decorated with a more simplified pommel scroll design. The alternating layers of red and black lacquer are revealed from the diagonal carving of the design. The surface of the box is highly polished. Both the interior and the base are black.

● The familiar design feature of 'pommel' scrolls, so called due to their resemblance to the shape of the ring-pommel on early Chinese swords, was a popular design motif used on carved lacquer from the Song dynasty onwards.¹ This decorative motif retained its appeal into the Ming dynasty, as this box bears witness to. This form of design is generically referred to as *tixi* or 'marbled' lacquer.² The grooves are deliberately cut at an angle, revealing the different coloured layers of lacquer used to build up the surface. The simple yet elegant abstract geometric design of this box has been carefully planned and executed. A very similar box carved in red lacquer, dated to the late Yuan to early Ming period, is in the Irving collection.³

1 Watt, J.C.Y. and Ford, B. *East Asian Lacquer, The Florence and Herbert Irving Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, p. 48

2 Krah R. and Morgan, B. eds. *From Innovation to Conformity: Chinese Lacquer from the 13th to 16th centuries*, Bluett & Sons, 1989, p. 11

3 Watt, J.C.Y. and Ford, B. *op cit.*, no. 11, p. 56





CLOISONNÉ ENAMEL BOWL

China, Ming dynasty
second half of the 16th century

Diameter: 7 ⁷/₈ inches, 19.9 cm

Height: 3 ³/₄ inches, 8.3 cm

A cloisonné enamel bowl with rounded sides, supported on a slightly inward tapering low foot. Both exterior and interior of the bowl are decorated with coloured enamels on copper against a turquoise background. The main body of the exterior has two rows of scrolling lotus flowers. A band of formal stylised lotus panels decorates the band above the foot rim. The outer rim of the bowl is decorated with a thin floral band. The same decoration is repeated in the interior of the bowl. The base of the interior is decorated with a central roundel, which has a double *vajra* motif. A single lotus decorates the base of the bowl.

● By the 16th century, craftsmen in China were fully exploiting the cloisonné technique to create vibrantly coloured and patterned enamel wares such as this.¹ The scrolling lotus design, a Buddhist symbol of purity, is typical of 16th century cloisonné enamel design. The inclusion of the *vajra* motif however, is an unusual feature. The design of the *vajra*, a Buddhist ritual sceptre, consists of two thunderbolts crossing one another.² The use of this motif and the important role that Buddhist patrons played at the time, suggests that the bowl was possibly made for the Tibetan market.³ A closely related example with a similar *vajra* design at the base of its interior is in the Pierre Uldry Collection; this is also dated to the second half of the 16th century.⁴



1 Brown, C. *Chinese Cloisonné: The Clague Collection*, Phoenix Art Museum, 1980, p.8

2 Qingzheng, W. *A Dictionary of Chinese Ceramics* Sun Tree Publishing, Shanghai, 2002, p. 245

3 Brinker, H. and Lutz, A. *Chinese Cloisonné, the Pierre Uldry Collection* Asia Society Galleries, New York, 1989, p. 52

4 Brinker, H. and Lutz, A. *op. cit.* no. 88





**LACQUER DISH
CARVED IN *TIXI*
TECHNIQUE**

China, Ming Dynasty, early 15th century

Diameter: 5 ³/₈ inches, 13.5 cm

Height: ³/₄ inches, 2 cm

A small lacquer dish with upturned sides supported on a low foot and with recessed base. The interior is carved with two tiers of 'pommel' scrolls; eight in the outer ring and four to the centre, all arranged around a quatrefoil ornament. The outside rim is carved with a continuous scrolling design. The grooves are cut at a diagonal angle, showing the alternating layers of red and black lacquer. The interior and exterior rim of the dish are highly polished. The recessed base is plain.

● The striking abstract geometric design of bold trefoils seen on this small dish is generically referred to as *tixi* or 'marbled' lacquer. The grooves are deliberately cut at an angle, revealing the different coloured layers of lacquer used to build up the surface. The motif is also known as 'pommel scroll', because it resembles the shape of the ring-pommel on early Chinese swords.¹ The term *guri*, which is often used to denote the same motif, was coined in Japan. *Tixi* lacquer is known from the Southern Song dynasty (1127 – 1279) onwards, and became very popular during the Yuan dynasty (1279 – 1368). A comparable, larger tray with three registers of pommel scrolls in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art is given a 15th century date by Kuwayama.² The top of a three-tiered covered box from the Mike Healy collection has very similar pommel scrolls.³ White dates this box also to the early Ming dynasty, 15th century.

1 Watt, J.C.Y. and Ford, B. *East Asian Lacquer, The Florence and Herbert Irving Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, p. 27

2 Kuwayama, G. *Far Eastern Lacquer*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1982, no. 19, p. 76

3 White, J.M. *Masterpieces of Chinese Lacquer from the Mike Healy Collection*, Honolulu Academy of Arts, no. 11, pp. 44-5





**PORCELAIN JAR
WITH SQUIRRELS
AND GOURD VINES**

China, Ming dynasty
Wanli period, 1573-1619

Height: 5 ⁷/₈ inches, 15 cm

A porcelain jar with a lobed body that swells from a short cylindrical neck and tapers inwards towards a flat base. The jar is painted in underglaze blue with a squirrel and gourd vine motif. The decorative band around the bottom of the jar includes three horizontal lines and a formal lotus leaf design. The band of decoration around the shoulder of the jar also comprises a lotus leaf pattern with pointed leaves. A key fret design is painted around the neck of the jar, which extends up towards the lobed rim. The inside and base of the jar are both glazed and undecorated.

● China experienced an increase in the manufacture and distribution of blue and white ceramics in particular, both internally and externally, during the Wanli period.¹ This jar is an interesting example of one of the types of wares that were made around 1600. A very similar jar can be found in the collection of the British Museum.² It is worth noting that wares similar to this jar retained their appeal after the Wanli period and were desirable for foreign markets. This is supported by the fact that a smaller related example dated to 1643 was recovered from the Hatcher shipwreck, discovered off the South China Sea in 1983.³

1 Harrison Hall, J. *Catalogue of late Yuan and Ming Ceramics in the British Museum*, British Museum Press, London, 2001, p. 275

2 Harrison Hall, *op cit*, no. II:38, p. 292

3 Harrison Hall, *op cit*, p. 360





LACQUER TRAY CARVED IN *TIXI* TECHNIQUE

China, early Ming dynasty, circa 1400

Length: 14 ⁵/₈ inches by 5 ¹/₈ inches, 37 cm by 13 cm

Height: 1 ¹/₄ inches, 3 cm

A rectangular lacquer tray supported on a low foot with upturned sides and prominently indented corners. The interior is carved with four rows of 'pommel' scrolls, seven along each row, and two at both short ends. A series of fifteen dots is carved along the central axis of the tray, defining a line of symmetry. The design of the pommels along the top and lower rows has been elaborated with additional scrolls, under alternating pommels. The tray is black and layers of red are visible in the carved grooves. The interior and exterior are highly polished. A design of scrolls and waves is carved around the outside rim and the base is plain.

● Lacquer has been used in China since Neolithic times, and it is perhaps its durable components coupled with its aesthetic properties that make it appealing to this day. The design elements of this object are similar to abstract designs found on carved lacquer pieces dating to the Song (1127 – 1279) and Yuan (1279 – 1368) dynasties.¹ The motif carved out on the tray is known as 'pommel scroll', since it resembles the shape of the ring-pommel on early Chinese swords.² In Chinese texts, this type of decoration is generally referred to as *tixi*, meaning "marbled lacquer." The term *guri* denotes the same motif in Japan. Other lacquer objects dating to the Ming period with similar designs includes boxes of varying shapes and sizes found in the Mike Healy Collection and in the Irving Collection.³ A comparable rectangular lacquer tray with related decorative features is in the Tokugawa Art Museum in Japan.⁴ Another example, dated to 13th to 14th century, is in the Shoto Museum of Art.⁵



1 Krahl R. and Morgan, B. eds. *From Innovation to Conformity: Chinese Lacquer from the 13th to 16th centuries*, Bluett & Sons, 1989, p. 11

2 Watt, J.C.Y. and Ford, B. *East Asian Lacquer, The Florence and Herbert Irving Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1991, p. 27

3 See White, J. M. eds. *Masterpieces of Chinese Lacquer from the Mike Healy Collection*, University of Washington Press, 2005, pp. 44-48 and Watt, J.C.Y. and Ford, B. *East Asian Lacquer, The Florence and Herbert Irving Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1991, pp. 57-59

4 Yoshikawa, S. *Carved Lacquer, The Tokugawa Art Museum and the Nezu Institute of Fine Arts*, Japan, 1984, no. 15, p. iv

5 Nishioka, Y. *Chinese Lacquerware in the Shoto Museum of Art*, Japan, 1991, no. 23, p. 31





STONE HEAD OF WESTERN OR CENTRAL ASIATIC

China, Ming dynasty, 17th century

Height: 8 ¹/₄ inches, 21 cm

A stone head of a Western or Central Asiatic man. His features have been carved into the stone and include a curly beard and moustache, frown lines, frowning eyebrows and creases at the corners of his large eyes. A large nose, defined cheeks and square chin accentuate his heavy bone structure. He wears a ribbed hat with an upturned rim, which is topped with a pom-pom and stops above his large lobed ears. The colour of the stone is grey and traces of pigment can be seen on the surface.

● This unusual stone head was once part of a complete figure and the traces of pigment suggest that it was painted at some point. The prominent facial features, beard and the hat indicate that the figure represents a Western or Central Asiatic. It is possible that objects such as this appealed to European markets once trading routes between Asia and Europe opened up from the 16th century onwards. A grey stoneware standing figure, dated to the late 18th or early 19th century in the Mottahedeh Collection, provides an example of a figure with similar facial features.¹

¹ Howard, D. and Ayers, J. *China for the West: Chinese Porcelain and other Decorative Arts for Export illustrated from the Mottahedeh Collection*, London, 1978, no. 656, p. 625





JADE PERFUMER WITH CLOISONNÉ ENAMEL PAGODA

China, Qianlong period, 1736 - 1795

Overall height pagoda: 22 inches, 56 cm

Height jade cylinder: 10 1/2 inches, 26.7 cm

Diameter jade cylinder: 1 1/2 inches, 3.8 cm



A jade perfumer of tubular form, pierced and carved in intricate detail with two ferocious five-clawed dragons contesting a flaming pearl, their scaly bodies interwoven with clusters of scrolling clouds. A band of incised key-fret pattern defines the top and bottom of the cylinder. The stone is of dark-green 'spinach' tone. The perfumer is mounted in an elaborate gilt-copper and cloisonné enamel pagoda-type stand, composed of a hexagonal stepped, galleried base, from which six spindly gilt and enamelled columns rise to support a two-tiered roof with sweeping eaves and bells suspended from bird's heads on the lower tier. The stand is decorated in cloisonné enamel with a variety of patterns, including formal lotus panels, prunus on "cracked ice" and *ruyi*-shaped lappets.

● This extraordinary object is a perfect example of the luxury furnishings with which the emperor Qianlong surrounded himself in his palaces in the Forbidden City in Beijing. The emperor, a competent historian who loved intricately carved objects in jade, lacquer and ivory, is known to have been fond of dark green jade from Khotan; many pieces, such as brush pots, table screens and miniature mountains bear poetic inscriptions composed by him. The five-clawed dragons that adorn the beautifully carved jade cylinder have imperial connotations and the sumptuous setting of the contemporary cloisonné enamel pagoda-type stand emphasizes the importance of the jade.

PROVENANCE:

By repute: from the collection of Maria Callas

LITERATURE:

Illustrated in: Beurdeley, M. *L'Amateur Chinois, des Han au XXe siècle*, Office du Livre, Fribourg, 1966, cat. No. 66, p. 229





**LACQUER WRITING
BOX DECORATED IN
TIANQI TECHNIQUE**

China, 18th century

Length: 9 1/2 inches, 24 cm

Height: 2 inches, 5 cm

A lacquered writing box of rectangular form. The two long sides of the cover are cut out in the middle, towards the lower part of the panel, revealing the sides of the box underneath. The bottom section of the box is supported on four bracket feet and contains a removable tray, as well as a long drawer. Both the box and its cover are decorated in the *tianqi* technique in colours on an orange ground. The flat top of the cover has a peony plant motif with other flowering plants among *lingzhi* and rocks, all on a ground of abstract key fret pattern. The long sides of the cover are decorated with a formal lotus scroll that also features on the shorter ends, here with the addition of a frontal dragon with a sinuous body. The inside of the cover is black. The box contains a small *ruyi* shaped metal water pot with silver-inlaid designs, as well as a rectangular ink-grinding stone. The outside of the box has the same decorative design as the outer panels of the cover. The base of the box is black and has a four-character sealmark, possibly a hallmark, in red lacquer.

● This unusual box was made for a scholar's writing table. The *tianqi* or filled-in lacquer technique used to create the polychrome decorative designs is achieved by inlaying lacquer with lacquer of another colour. There are two principal methods that can be carried out in order to achieve this. The first requires carving the hardened lacquer and inlaying sections of other colours, while the second technique involves applying thick lacquer again and again in a particular area in order to build up a design, then filling the ground with a different coloured lacquer and finally polishing the surface to expose the polychrome design.¹ The craftsman who created this box would have most likely worked from a preliminary drawing in order to create such an elegant and skilfully crafted piece. A number of lacquer pieces decorated using the *tianqi* technique are in the collection of Mike Healy.²

1 Wyatt, J. and Brennan Ford, B. *East Asian Lacquer The Florence and Herbert Irving Collection*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1991, p. 34

2 White, J.M. *Masterpieces of Chinese Lacquer from the Mike Healy Collection*, Honolulu Academy of Arts, 2005, no. 30 and 31, pp. 82-85





**SILVER FILIGREE
ROSEWATER
SPRINKLER**

China, 18th century

Height: 11 ³/₄ inches, 29.7 cm

A silver filigree rosewater sprinkler with a silver gilt base leading up towards a cushion shape section. A globular body and a long neck that extends from a smaller cushion shape part and tapers towards the mouth, follow this. The base of the sprinkler is decorated with a leaf design, while the body is overlaid with a lace-like openwork of silver filigree composed of three kinds of patterns with flowers, leaves and small insects and bats attached. The neck extends from the smaller cushion shaped section and has a lotus leaf design around its bulb-like end. A design comprising flowers and leaves ornaments the neck of the sprinkler as it spirals up towards its mouth, which is decorated with an open flower motif. All parts of the sprinkler can be unscrewed.

● The original form for rosewater sprinklers such as this is derived from Persian flasks from the 13th and 14th centuries.¹ It was not until the 17th century that the technique of filigree was used in China.² The fact that there are few surviving examples of 18th century Chinese silver filigree objects makes this a rare piece.³ It was perhaps the delicate nature of these objects and their associated western styles that made them appealing for export to Europe where they were used as functional or decorative objects for ladies' dressing tables.⁴ The collection of Catherine the Great at the Hermitage in St. Petersburg comprises the most extensive group of Chinese objects in silver and filigree published to date.⁵ Other examples can be found in the collection of Lord Clive Plassey (1725 – 1774), better known as “Clive of India”, at Powis Castle, who is thought to have acquired numerous Chinese objects while serving in India.⁶

1 Norman, G. et al., *Treasures of Catherine the Great*, Hermitage Development Trust, London, 2000, p. 217.

2 Menshikova, M. “Chinese Export Silver, Filigree, 18th-19th Century” in: *Chinese Export Silver: The Chan Collection*, Singapore, 2005, p. 14

3 Menshikova, M., *op cit.* p. 16

4 Menshikova, M., *op cit.* p. 14

5 Norman, G. et al., *op cit.* pp. 202 - 250

6 Archer, M. et al., *Treasures from India, the Clive Collection at Powis Castle*, Herbert Press, London, 1987, nos. 187-191, pp.127-8





CARVED LACQUER BOX

China, Qing dynasty, Qianlong period
1736 - 1795

Length: 5 1/2 inches, 14.6 cm
Height: 2 1/8 inches, 5.4 cm

A cinnabar lacquer box and cover of elongated hexafoil form, the flat top carved with a scene showing two scholars dressed in loosely tied robes who have gathered on a balustraded terrace in front of a pavilion. Standing behind them is a boy attendant who carries a wrapped parcel. Behind the attendant stands a crane. The scholars are watching a second boy who throws his arms up at a crane flying overhead. Beyond the promontory on which they stand is an expanse of water, indicated by wave diapers. On the other side of the water are distant hills. The scene is framed by key-fret pattern. The straight sides of both box and cover are carved with a pattern of hexagonal diapers. The interior and base of both boxes is lacquered black.

● The tranquil, leisurely scene of scholars in front of their pavilion in which a brush-filled pot stands on a table, is typical of 18th century Chinese carved lacquer. The cranes can be considered auspicious; they signify a wish for longevity; an appropriate sentiment considering that the box was most likely made to be presented to someone as a gift.





PAINTED ENAMEL VASE, *GU*

China, Qing dynasty, Qianlong period
1736 - 1795

Height: 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches, 13.3 cm

A polychrome enamel *Gu* shaped vase of square section. The base is flat and forms a flared stem that leads up towards a bulbous middle section. A sloping ridge divides this area with the stem and the flaring neck of the vase, which follows. Protruding flanges ornament the edges of the vase along all three sections. The middle section of the vase is painted with four shaped cartouches, each depicting a European-style village with buildings and a bridge in a romantic landscape setting with mountains and trees. The neck and stem are decorated with a design of stylised prunus flowers on a 'cracked-ice' ground and with bands of stiff leaves. The interior is painted in a pale monochrome blue and the base is white.

● This small, delicately painted *gu* vase represents an interesting combination of form and design. The *gu* shape is inspired by archaic Chinese bronze ritual vessels, which originated in the Shang dynasty (c.1500 – 1028 BC), an example of which can be found in the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst in Cologne.¹ The inclusion of Chinese designs, such as the prunus, 'cracked-ice' ground and plantain leaves, coupled with European landscape scenes makes this vase unusual. Jesuit missionaries who arrived in China from France are thought to have been involved with the production of painted enamels in the early part of the 18th century, which helps to explain the blend of decoration. In the Chinese vocabulary of decorative devices, the occurrence of flowers on a 'cracked-ice' ground signifies the beginning of Spring, and therefore the beginning of new life. The Qianlong period witnessed an increase in the production of painted enamels for both internal and external markets. A small painted enamel *gu* vase of very similar form, also decorated with European-style landscape panels, is in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.²

¹ Schlombs, A. *Meisterwerke aus China, Korea und Japan: Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst Köln*, Prestel, München, 1995, p.25

² Gillingham, M. *Chinese Painted Enamels: An exhibition held in the department of Eastern Art*, Ashmolean Museum. Oxford, 1978, no. 78 (left), p.66





RUYI-FORM HARDWOOD INLAID BOX

China, Qing dynasty, 18th century

Length: 5 1/2 inches, 14.2 cm

Height: 2 1/2 inches, 6.5 cm

A *ruyi*-form box made from hardwood. Both the box and its cover are inlaid all the way round with fine silver wire. The lower rim of the lid and upper rim of the box have a key fret design band, while the areas on either side of the rims are decorated with a delicate design of archaic *tatoie* masks. The flat top of the lid is formed by a raised flat panel, which is inlaid with pieces of wood, soapstone, chalcedony, crystal, wood and shell to form a design in relief of flowers, *lingzhi* and a small butterfly.

● The design technique of inlaying fine threads of silver onto a surface material derives from the Song period (976-1279), when bronzes were often decorated in this manner.¹ The decorative work applied to this box is reminiscent of the Ming dynasty metal smith Shisou, who specialised in making inlaid bronzes.² An interesting aspect of this box is perhaps the combination of delicate inlaid silver design, coupled with the more defined relief pattern on top of the lid. In addition to its *ruyi* shape, aspects of the decoration on the lid of the box suggest that it was perhaps presented as a gift and wish for long life. For instance the *foshou* hanging from the end of the branch, otherwise known as Buddha's Hand Citron, is associated with blessings for longevity and the *lingzhi* is known as the fungus of immortality.³

1 Fahr-Becker, G. eds. *The Art of East Asia*, Könemann, Cologne, 1999, p. 202

2 Ribeiro, S. *Arts from the Scholar's Studio*, Communication Art & Design Printing, Hong Kong, 1986, p. 78

3 Tse Bartholomew, T. *Hidden Meanings in Chinese Art*, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, pp. 30, 31, 187





MARbled LACQUER BRUSHPOT

China, 18th century

Height: 5 1/2 inches, 14 cm

A lozenge-shaped wood brushpot, standing on four shallow bracket feet. The sides and top rim are covered in a layer of flat marbled lacquer in orange, black and yellow. The interior and base are lacquered plain black. The base is inscribed with a spurious six-character mark of Kangxi in red lacquer.

● The flat marble technique is infrequently used. To produce a marbled surface, a pattern was built in a raised moulded lacquer composition, to which successive layers of different colours were applied. The surface was then ground down, exposing the original built-up pattern, and producing an effect that is sometimes referred to as 'rhinoceros skin' pattern.² A chair decorated with this type of lacquer is in the collection of the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art in Kansas City.² A similarly decorated circular box is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.³ A small lobed lacquer cup decorated in this technique, signed by the famous Yangzhou lacquerer Lu Yingzhi, is in the collection of the Museum of East Asian Art in Bath, England.⁴

1 Garner, Sir H. *Chinese Lacquer*, Faber and Faber, London, 1979, p. 120

2 Garner, Sir H. *op. cit.* no. 59, p. 121

3 Garner, Sir H. *op. cit.* no. 58, p. 119

4 McElney, B. *Inaugural Exhibition, Volume 2 – Chinese Metalwares and Decorative Arts*, The Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, England, 1993, no. 325, p. 140





NEGORO LACQUER SERVING TRAY

Japan, Momoyama period, 16th century

Diameter: 13 ⁵/₈ inches, 34.7 cm

Height: 2 ¹/₂ inches, 6.4 cm

A *Negoro* lacquer serving tray of circular form with a slightly splayed foot. The sides of the tray have a ridged well and terminate in a flat everted rim. The interior has a red surface, while the rim and the back of the tray is lacquered in brown.

● The name *Negoro* comes from the Buddhist temple Negoro-ji in Kishu, where lacquer ware was apparently made in this style prior to the temple's destruction by fire in the 16th century. *Negoro* trays with a foot similar to the one on this tray were often used to carry several cups of tea, while larger round trays were traditionally used for offering communal meals in temples.¹ The Momoyama period (1568 – 1615) marks an important moment in the history of Japanese lacquerwares. It was during this period that the Japanese witnessed an increase in the production of simply designed lacquers for everyday use that were affordable for a wider portion of society, including the wealthy *chonin* or townsmen.² The fact that this elegant almost minimalist form of lacquerware continued to be produced into the Edo period (1615 – 1868) is testament to its classical appeal. An earlier example of a tray with a similar form dating to the first half of the 15th century is in the Irving Collection.³

1 Wyatt, J. and Brennan Ford, B. *East Asian Lacquer The Florence and Herbert Irving Collection*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1991, p. 184

2 Phoebe Philips Editions, *An International History and Collectors Guide*, The Crowood Press, Marlborough, 1984, p. 88

3 Wyatt, J. and Brennan Ford, B. *op cit.* p. 184





GILT WOOD FIGURE OF AMIDA NYORAI

Japan, Edo period, 17th or 18th century

Height: 16 1/2 inches, 42 cm

A gilt wood figure of Amida Nyorai in *hanka shii* (half-cross-legged meditation), sitting on a separate imitation rockwork base. His body is mostly covered in an elaborately draped robe, which falls open at the chest. His right hand is raised whilst his left hand rests on his knee, palm upwards. Together the hand gestures indicate the *sega* *semuiin*, the mudra of fearlessness and charity. The face has a serene expression and symmetrical features. The hooded eyelids almost cover the inset painted eyes and have arched eyebrows. The long pendulous earlobes are pierced. A foiled crystal inserted into the forehead between the eyebrows indicates the third eye of spiritual vision. The head, which is covered in tightly coiffed curls, is crowned by a prominent cranial protuberance, and is inset with another crystal to the front. The figure is covered in a thin layer of gilding, which is rubbed down to the black ground in places.

● Images of Amida Nyorai (the Buddha Amitabha), lord of the Western Paradise, are known in Japan from as early as the seventh century. Until the eleventh century the deity was most frequently portrayed in a gesture of teaching and was worshipped primarily in memorial rituals for the deceased. However, in the last two centuries of the Heian period, worshippers started to concentrate more on the Teachings Essential for Rebirth written by the Tendai monk Genshin (942-1017). The teachings describe the horrors of Buddhist hell and the glories of the Western Paradise that can be attained through *nembutsu*, Meditation on Amida or the recitation of the deity's name. Despite the apparent absence of formal variations in the images themselves, during the latter part of the Heian period, important changes did occur in the nature of the rituals held in front of the lord of the Western Paradise. By the twelfth century, Image Halls dedicated to Amida were the ritual centres of most complexes. The function of memorial services was expanded so they benefited not only the dead, but also the living. Even rituals with no historical connection to the deity, such as the important services at the start of the New Year, were held there. Of particular significance were the novel ritual practices that were held to guarantee one's rebirth in Amida's Western Paradise. Stylistically, this serene wood figure of the Buddha carries on the tradition of Japanese wood sculpture from earlier eras, such as the Kamakura and Muromachi periods, typical features of which are simple, folded clothing and a serene expression. The use of crystal to denote the third eye of spiritual vision and the cranial bump are also seen in earlier sculptures.³





**NEGORO
LACQUER CHEST**

Japan, Edo period, 18th century

Length: 15 ¹/₈ inches, 38.5 cm

Width: 11 ⁷/₈ inches, 30 cm

Height: 7 ¹/₂ inches, 19 cm

A small *Negoro* lacquer chest of rectangular form, supported on an integral pedestal stand, which has ten bat-shaped openings. The hinged lid is fitted with black metal mounts and an elaborate lock plate with four heart-shaped openings, and a drop-lock in the form of a butterfly. The chest is covered in layers of vermillion lacquer, with the black base layer beginning to show through in places.

- This chest was made for use at a temple, and probably held Sutra's or prayer sheets.





BRONZE VASE

Japan, Showa period, 1930's

Height: 10 1/2 inches, 26.7 cm

A large bronze vase of globular form, the rounded sides decorated with grooves of varying depths and widths. The upper half of the vase is plain, has a sharply angled shoulder and a lipped neck. The brown-coloured bronze has an attractive patina with areas of moss green. The slightly recessed base is engraved with the maker's signature: Yasumi Nakajima (1905-1986).

● A number of bronze vases in similar Art Déco style were included in the exhibition *Modernism and Craftsmen, the 1920's to the 1930's* at the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo in 1983.¹

¹ Hasebe, M. et al *Modernism and Craftsmen, the 1920's to the 1930's*, the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, 1983





NEGORO LACQUER BOX

Japan, Edo period, 17th to 18th century

Diameter: 5 1/2 inches, 14 cm

Height: 3 1/4 inches, 8.3 cm

A circular box with domed cover, which has a flat top. The rounded box is supported on slightly splayed foot. The box is covered in red lacquer both inside and out. Fine black lines are visible defining the various segments of the box and cover's form.

NEGORO LACQUER SERVING TRAY

Japan, Edo period, 17th to 18th century

Diameter: 17 inches, 43.1 cm

Height: 1 5/8 inches, 4.2 cm

A serving tray of circular form with stepped rim ending in a broad, flat edge. The base is slightly recessed. The tray is covered in layers of vermilion lacquer, with the black base layer beginning to show through in places. The back of the tray is lacquered brown.

NEGORO LACQUER YUTO

Japan, Edo period, 17th to 18th century

Height: 11 3/4 inches, 29.8 cm

A spouted water pot of cylindrical form with a flat base. A hinged, thin curved handle is attached to the body by three-lobed ornaments. The body of the vessel and the top of the lid are made of cypress wood, while the lower and upper rim and the edges of the lid are red lacquer and the spout and handle are dark brown lacquer. The button-shaped red lacquer finial is centred on a chrysanthemum motif.

● The *Negoro* lacquer technique was developed in Japan during the Kamakura period (1188–1333) in response to Chinese lacquer ware, which was again available in Japan following renewed contact with China in the mid-12th century. The term *Negoro* has come to mean lacquer ware made with red colouration over black. The red colouration wears away irregularly with use to reveal the black beneath, creating a more aged appearance in some examples. These simply designed yet elegant objects are testament to the fact that by the early 17th century the Japanese had an increasing aesthetic appreciation for pure forms that maintained their utilitarian purpose.





**PAIR OF
COPPER TEMPLE
CANDLESTICKS**

Japan, Meiji or Taisho period
1868 – 1926

Height: 21 inches, 53.3 cm

A pair of copper candlesticks, each consisting of a hemispherical base cast in the form of a stylised chrysanthemum flower, surmounted by a tall cylindrical stem, which in turn supports a chrysanthemum-shaped drip pan, mounted with a spike and a bracket for holding the candle. The candlesticks are made from a reddish copper. The original wood box is signed by the maker: Gorosa.

- Tall candlesticks such as these were used in Buddhist temples in Japan, where they were placed on the altar in pairs or in sets of four.





**LACQUERED
WOOD ARMOUR BOX
KARABITSU**

Japan, Edo period, 19th century

Length: 47 1/4 inches, 120 cm

Depth: 33 inches, 84 cm

Height: 33 1/2 inches, 85 cm

A large rectangular lacquered wood box, supported on six legs with splayed ends, which raise the box a considerable distance from the floor. The sides and top are carved with a bold pattern of flowers, lacquered in red, orange, ochre and green tones on a black background. The box has elaborate gilt-copper protective mounts on the corners, sides and the tips of the legs. These mounts are finely engraved with floral patterns, as are the ring handles that are mounted on foliate escutcheons on the long sides of the box. The interior and base of the box are covered in plain black lacquer. The box is fitted with a Chinese gilt copper lock of slightly later date.

● A *karabitsu* or armour box was used to store a Samurai's armour, which – when taken out – would have been displayed on top of the box. The bold, striking pattern of peony flowers in vivid colours is reminiscent of a Chinese carved lacquer technique that was much admired and imitated in Japan, and involves carving patterns through coloured layers of lacquer. A small incense container from the Eusei Bunko in Tokyo displays a very similar pattern of peonies.¹

¹ Shimizu, Y. (ed.) *Japan, the Shaping of Daimyo Culture, 1185 – 1868*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1988, no. 284, pp. 355-7









BRONZE VASE

Japan, Taisho or Showa period
1920's or 1930's

Height: 23 1/4 inches, 59 cm

A small bronze vase, the slender pear-shaped body supported on a low foot and with long neck that flares outwards slightly at the rim. The vase has an even brown patina with a single purple patch on the widest part of the body. The slightly recessed base is engraved with the signature of the maker: Zoroku-zo (made by the studio Zoroku). With the original kiri wood tomobako box, signed Heian Zoroku-zo.





BRONZE MODEL OF A DEER

Japan, Showa period, 1930

Length: 11 ⁵/₈ inches, 29.5 cm

Height: 8 ¹/₈ inches, 20.6 cm

A bronze figure of a recumbent deer, its right leg extended in front of its body, the left legs tucked neatly next to its side. The head with short antlers is turned sharply. Fine lines are incised around the deer's ears, antlers, hooves, neck and parts of its face, which provide areas of contrast and texture against the otherwise matt bronze surface. The base is engraved with the maker's signature: Sanka Kitahara.

- This elegant Art Déco bronze sculpture was made for a crafts exhibition in Tokyo in 1930.

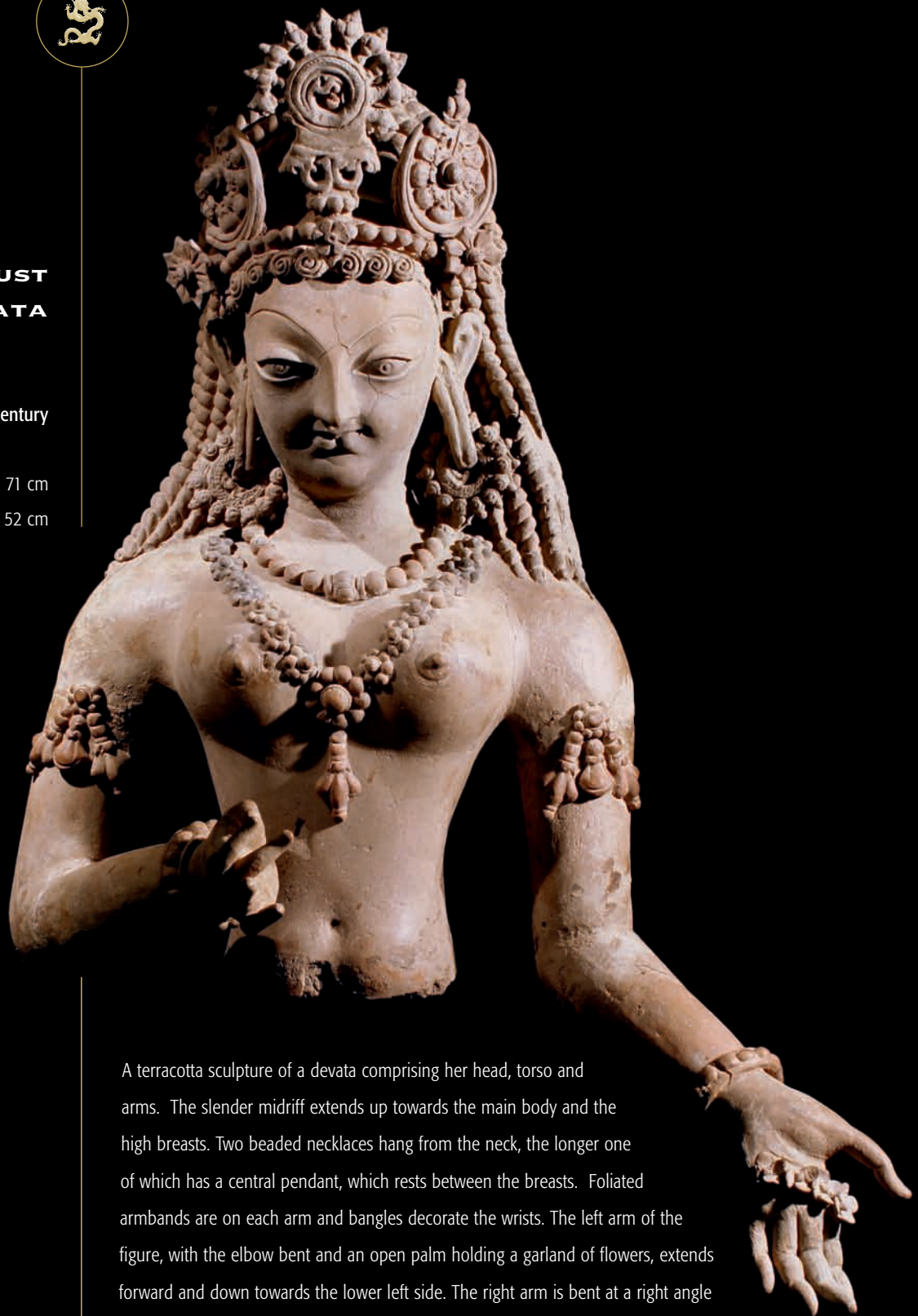




TERRACOTTA BUST OF A DEVATA

India, Kashmir, 7th – 8th century

Height: 28 inches, 71 cm
Width: 20 1/2 inches, 52 cm



A terracotta sculpture of a devata comprising her head, torso and arms. The slender midriff extends up towards the main body and the high breasts. Two beaded necklaces hang from the neck, the longer one of which has a central pendant, which rests between the breasts. Foliated armbands are on each arm and bangles decorate the wrists. The left arm of the figure, with the elbow bent and an open palm holding a garland of flowers, extends forward and down towards the lower left side. The right arm is bent at a right angle and is held closer to the body with the fingers held in an offering pose. The slender neck leads up towards the goddess' face which has large bulging almond shaped eyes, slender eyebrows and nose, with small pouting lips that are recessed at the corners from her slight smile. Medallion shaped earrings with a defined foliated edge hang from her ears, almost touching the shorter necklace around her neck. A row of curls frame her face, while the remainder of her hair, part piled high on top her head, hangs in thick locks behind her back and shoulders. An elaborately ornamented

tiara crowns the top of the head. It is composed of a beaded strap that supports a tall central medallion, which is flanked by a floral motif on either side with two smaller flower decorations underneath.

● A devata is a lesser deity or spirit, generally thought of as female, often associated with nature and thought to have specific attributes and powers. Buddhist art of northwest-Afghanistan and the Central Asian Greco-Roman tradition entered its final phase during the seventh and eighth centuries, before the coming of Islam. This impressive, beautifully detailed celestial Buddhist attendant was possibly part of a monumental Buddhist altar. The rendering of its elaborate hairdo and the ornamentation are comparable to the nearly life-size clay images from Fondukistan, an important Buddhist centre in the Ghorband valley of the Hindu Kush. A number of these sculptures are now in the Musée Guimet, Paris.¹ This magnificent sculpture stylistically reflects the post-Gupta mannerism in Indian art, but here it is more refined. The face has a beautiful expression of serenity and grace: it is finely sculpted with the typically Kashmiri features of wide face, straight and pointed nose, small, fleshy bow-shaped mouth, and large almond shaped eyes with arching eyebrows spanning the full width of the forehead.² The affinity with Kashmiri sculpture links this piece with the earliest Himalayan Buddhist art of the period. The position and finesse of the delicately modelled fingers holding small garlands of lotus flower offerings are comparable to the hands of some of the figures found in Fondukistan. Another comparable sculpture is published by Rowland.³

1 Béguin, G., *L'Inde et le Monde Indianisé au Musée national des Arts Asiatiques – Guimet*, Paris, 1992, p. 108, and Snellgrove, D., *The Image of the Buddha*, Paris/Tokyo, 1978, pp. 191-8

2 Pal, P., *The Arts of Kashmir*, New York, 2007, no. 53 and 56, p. 68, and no. 95, p. 92

3 Rowland, B., *Ancient Art from Afghanistan, Treasures from the Kabul Museum*, New York, 1966, no. 11A, p. 116





TERRACOTTA HEAD OF A WESTERN MAN

Gandhara, 4th – 5th century

Height: 8 1/4 inches, 21 cm

A terracotta head of a youthful man with Western features. The hair is stylised and is parted in the centre, the thick strands flowing backwards, away from the face. The face features almond shaped eyes that are framed by arched brows, a slender nose and full lips. The ears are carefully modelled.

● The ancient region of Gandhara was for centuries an incredibly wealthy area owing to its position on the Silk Road trade routes linking China, South India, and the Mediterranean. The art from this region is a compelling fusion of foreign styles that give visual form to Buddhist religious ideals. More Buddhist sculpture and architecture has been found in Greater Gandhara than in any other region in South Asia. Alexander the Great, the Macedonian king, conquered the regions of Gandhara, Bactria and Swat in 327 BC. These areas came under the control of his generals after his death in 323 BC and were considered part of the Hellenistic world.

The art made at this time is overwhelmingly Hellenistic in character, and it is likely that Greco-Roman artisans worked alongside local craftsmen, catering for a local audience.¹ The present portrait is stylistically Roman in spirit, and was possibly made by one of the craftsmen who came from the West. The head appears to portray a western man, possibly a portrait of one of the Hellenistic officials. Some resemblance can be seen in a portrait of Alexander the Great now in the Archeological Museum in Istanbul.² The naturalistic treatment of the facial expression and hair suggest a youthful person, details that are not seen in depictions of the Buddha or bodhisattva.



1 Behrendt, K.A., *The Art of Gandhara in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, 2007, p. 7

2 Tucker, J., *The Silk Road, Art and History*, London, 2003, no. 4, p. 23





SCHIST STUPA WITH GOLD RELIQUARY

Gandhara region, 3rd – 4th century

Height of schist stupa: 7 inches, 17.5 cm

Height of gold stupa: 1 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches, 4 cm

A schist *stupa* made in three parts: a base, a dome, and a *yasti* with umbrellas. The circular base has wheel-turned mouldings at the top and bottom and is hollow, providing a space in which relics can be placed. The central part and dome are decorated with similar mouldings and a band of small squares that runs along the middle of the dome. The miniature gold *stupa*, which was made to be placed inside the schist *stupa*, is made in two parts and is hollow to house additional relics.

● Upon his death, the historical Buddha was cremated and his ashes were divided and placed into eight reliquaries, which in turn were buried at the centre of eight large, solid, hemispheric mounds known as *stupas*. For the early Buddhists, the *stupa* became a symbol both of the Buddha and of his *parinirvana* (extinction) and therefore the most important focus of worship.¹ In the third century BC, after his conversion to Buddhism, the emperor *Ashoka* (of the north Indian *Mauryan* dynasty) had the original *stupas* opened and the remains enshrined in eighty-four thousand *stupas*, thereby making the Buddha's presence accessible to the people of his realm. Some Gandharan reliquaries were designed as miniature *stupas*. The form of the *stupa* can be conceived as a three-dimensional diagram of the cosmos: the base being associated with the profane world, the dome being the pure realm of the relic, and the stacked 'umbrellas' on top relating to the heavens above. The *yasti*, the pole supporting the umbrellas, can be understood as the cosmic axis connecting these planets of existence and relating the Buddha - and therefore his relics - to the centre of the cosmos. Many Gandhara reliquaries contain a variety of objects, including glass beads, pieces of crystal, gold foil with *repoussé* designs such as flowers, and coins. Such small *stupas* were used by Buddhists either as reliquaries or votive offerings. Comparable *stupas* can be found in the Metropolitan Museum in New York² and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.³

1 Lerner, M. and Kossak, S., *The Lotus Transcendent, Indian and South East Asian Art from the Samuel Eilenberg Collection*, New York 1, p. 74

2 Behrendt, K.A., *The Art of Gandhara in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, 2007, no. 23, p. 25

3 Pal, P., *Indian Sculpture, a Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection*, Los Angeles, no. S39, p. 162





HEAD OF A YAKSHA

Gandhara, probably Hadda
4th – 5th century

Height: 6 1/8 inches, 15.5 cm

Stucco head of a *Yaksha* in a light terracotta colour. The figure has bulging eyes, a frowning forehead and a slightly snarling mouth that displays its teeth. The hair, comprising of thick wavy curls, is centrally parted and pulled back away from the face. The back left of the figure's head is flat, where it was originally wall mounted.

● This head is probably a representation of a *Yaksha*, a male nature spirit associated with wealth and protection of the dead. According to Rowland, he was also one of the minor divinities present at the death of the Buddha.¹ This head may also be compared with that of a demon, in the Royal Ontario Museum, which is described as one of *Mara's* demons who were trying to harass or disturb the Buddha-to-be while he was meditating and seeking enlightenment.² The Gandharan region was part of the Kushan Empire and covered a large part of modern-day northwest India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Sculpture from Gandhara is a cosmopolitan hybrid, combining Greco-Roman, Indian, Persian and central Indian styles with almost exclusively Buddhist iconography. Towards the end of the first century a distinctive and highly recognisable style had been developed. Comparable Gandharan heads can be found in the British Museum London³, and in a private collection.⁴

1 Rowland, B., *Ancient Art from Afghanistan, Treasures from the Kabul Museum*, New York, 1966, no. 80, p. 106

2 Jongewaard, D., *Buddhist Art of Pakistan and Afghanistan, The Royal Ontario Museum Collection of Gandhara Sculpture*, Toronto, 2003, no. 41, p. 119

3 Zwalf, W. *A Catalogue of Gandharan Sculpture in the British Museum*, Vol.1, London, 1996, no. 623, p. 336

4 Wenzel, M., *Echoes of Alexander the Great: Silk Route Portraits from Gandhara, a private collection*; London, 2000, no 35, p. 104





SCHIST PANEL WITH STUPAS

Gandhara region, 3rd – 4th century

Height: 21 ⁵/₈ inches, 55.5 cm

Width: 11 ⁵/₈ inches, 29.5 cm

A grey schist panel of irregular trapezoidal form, carved with rows of *stupas*. The front is divided into four vertical sections. The two left-hand columns contain six *stupas* each. A post-like divider, which is carved with a geometric design, separates the central section, which has five rows of paired *stupas*, framed between pilasters. The right-hand section contains five *stupas*. All *stupas* are identified by their signatory ribbed conical top and domed body. The carved details on the domes are all slightly different. The far right edge of the panel is decorated with a wave-like geometric pattern.

● During the period between the first and third centuries Buddhist sites in Gandhara were slowly developing a more definable architectural style. Tall columnar *stupas* had begun to replace the earlier massive round constructions. In addition, U-shaped halls similar to north Indian prototypes were constructed to house much smaller *stupas*. Typically an antechamber would lead through a set of doors to a rear cell containing the actual main *stupa*. It was during this period that the majority of Gandharan sculpture was produced. Pious Gandharans commissioned carved panels to embellish *stupas* and the buildings surrounding them. The majority of these carvings illustrate the life of the Buddha. The present relief may once have been part of a doorway leading towards the actual *stupa*. The *stupa* is one of the most important Buddhist symbols and although often depicted, no other examples of such repeating *stupas* without any figures appear to be recorded. Comparable reliefs containing a single *stupa* can be found in the Metropolitan Museum, New York,¹ and the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin.²

1 Behrendt, K.A., *The Art of Gandhara, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, 2007, no. 14, p. 33

2 Yaldiz, M., *Magische Götterwelten, Werke aus dem Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin*, 2000, no. 52, pp. 34-5





STUCCO HEAD OF THE BUDDHA

Gandhara, probably Hadda
4th – 5th century

Height: 6 1/4 inches, 16 cm

A stucco head of the Buddha; his wavy locks are piled up on top of his head to form a rounded chignon. His face is framed by a widow-peaked hairline just above the forehead. The large almond shaped eyes, nose and mouth are carefully carved, forming a rounded face with serene expression. The large pierced lobed ears extend to just above the Buddha's shoulder, part of which is intact on the right side. Traces of pigment can be seen all around the head, which has a light terracotta colour.



● This fine idealised head of the Buddha is characterised by a powerful, serene gaze. He seems withdrawn, as if in contemplation, and has a faintly enigmatic smile. The rounded topknot, or *usnisha*, is typically associated with the Buddha.¹ The general style is strongly influenced by Hellenistic sculpture. This head of the Buddha demonstrates the concern of the later Gandharan artists with the naturalistic modelling of features in realistic detail. The sculpture of Hadda is known for its use of materials such as stucco and lime plaster, and comprises only a relatively small number of carvings in schist and soft limestone. Because of the freshness and vivacity of their modelling, stucco sculptures appear more moving and spiritualised than the somewhat stiffer and dryer manner of Gandhara stone sculpture. The technique of stucco was an invention of the late Hellenistic period in Alexandria, where gypsum was first used as a cheaper substitute for marble. As trade relations with the Roman West intensified in the early first century, the technique spread from there to Iran and India. Heads of statues were constructed on a rough core of lime plaster mixed with straw and small stones, which was then covered with an outer layer of finer stucco for the modelling of the features and hair. Often pigments were used to decorate and accentuate the sculptures. Comparable examples attributable to the Hadda region can be found in the British Museum², the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston³, the Musée Guimet in Paris⁴ and in a private collection.⁵

1 Kurita, Isao, *Gandharan Art II, The World of the Buddha*, Tokyo, 2003, p. 312

2 Zwalf, W. *A Catalogue of Gandharan Sculpture in the British Museum*, Vol.1, London, 1996, no. 571, p. 323

3 Rowland, B., *Gandhara Sculpture from Pakistan Museums*, New York 1960, no. 11, p. 36

4 Jarrige, J. F., *Afghanistan, une histoire millénaire*, Paris 2002, no. 103, p. 143

5 Wenzel, M., *Echoes of Alexander the Great: Silk Route Portraits from Gandhara, a private collection*; London, 2000, no.1, p. 24









PORTABLE CABINET

Western India, Gujarat or Sindh
early 17th century

Height: 8 ⁵/₈ inches, 22 cm

Width: 13 ³/₈ inches, 34 cm

Depth: 9 ⁵/₈ inches, 24.5 cm

A portable rosewood cabinet inlaid with ivory. A hinged panel at the front opens to reveal a fitted interior with a central lockable drawer, flanked by two smaller drawers and surmounted by a long drawer across the width of the cabinet. The central and long top-drawers have both been divided in such a way that they look like drawers of the same dimension as the smaller individual ones, giving the illusion that there are nine small drawers altogether. Each drawer has a brass bell-shaped pull. The central drawer has two handles and a crude opening for a key, it also contains a hidden compartment. The long top drawer has a handle on each panel. The cabinet has a brass lock on the hinged flap, brass hinges and brass carrying handles on both short sides. The exterior of the cabinet is inlaid in ivory with a repeated abstract design with a central panel of inlaid ivory diamond shapes with smaller diamonds between, and an outer band of stylised flowers. The drawer fronts have an inlaid rectangular ivory panel incised with a similar stylised flower. Each panel is framed by a double band inlaid in ivory.

PROVENANCE:

The Doorn Collection Cairo, Egypt, formed in the late 19th and early 20th century

● This portable fall front cabinet is of European form, but decorated in Indian style with an abstract design that was probably influenced by Persia. Although this type of cabinet is often described as 'German', due to the luxury examples made at Augsburg and Nuremberg, its origin seems to have been Spain from which another descriptive term '*scrutore*' derives. Before 1600 examples were made both in Japan¹ and India after models supplied by the Portuguese.² Cabinets of this type were designed for holding personal effects and were used by European merchants and traders living and travelling in Asia.³ A painting dated 1650 in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin shows a similar cabinet used to store jewellery.⁴ Cabinets of this type were traded both locally and to Europe. A comparable example is in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.⁵

1 Jackson, A. and Jaffer, A., *Encounters, The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500 – 1800*, London, 2004, plate 19.2, p. 253

2 Harle, J.C. and Topsfield, A., *Indian Art in the Ashmolean Museum*, Oxford, 1987, p. 88

3 Jaffer, A. *Luxury Goods from India; The Art of the Indian Cabinet-Maker*, London, 2002, p. 18

4 Jaffer, A. *op cit*, p. 18

5 Harle, J.C. and Topsfield, A., *op cit*, no. 99, pp. 88-89



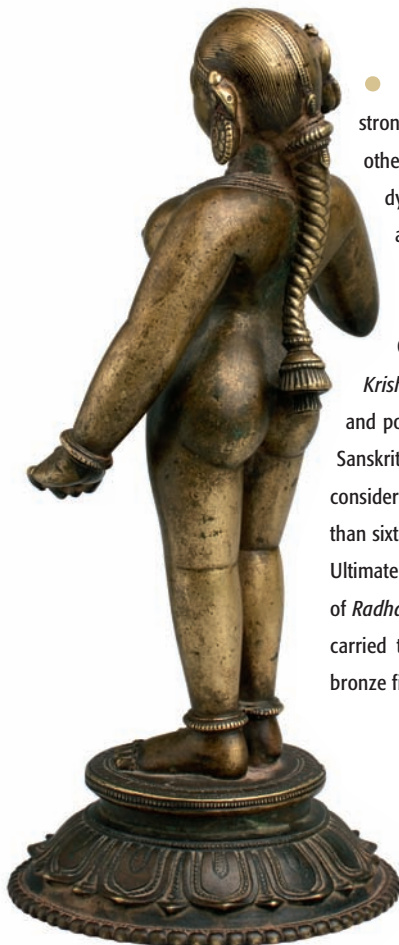


BRONZE FIGURE OF RADHA

Eastern India, Orissa, 16th century

Height: 8 1/2 inches, 21 cm

A bronze figure of *Radha*, standing on a round pedestal base, which in turn is supported by an upturned lotus. Her right arm is raised, with the hand turned palm upwards in *katakamukha*. Her left arm dangles alongside the body with the hand raised and palm turned downwards. The left leg is positioned slightly forward, giving a curve to her right hip and causing her waist to sway somewhat to the left. Her head is tilted backwards and her facial features include large almond-shaped eyes, a straight nose and full lips, as well as a dimple in her chin. She wears large disc-shaped earrings and her hair is held together by a chain with a pendant in the centre. *Radha* is naked but for her jewellery; both wrists are ornamented with a single bracelet, anklets are worn on both ankles. She wears rings on each finger and the neck is adorned with several necklaces, one of which falls between her full breasts, where a flower shaped pendant rests. A magnificent heavy braid of hair hangs down the entire length of her back.



● Bronze sculpture from Orissa is stylistically unique, characterised by strong abstraction on the one hand and by rather plump features on the other. The style is reminiscent of folkloristic imagery.¹ The Eastern Ganga dynasty ruled Orissa from 980 and was contemporary with the late Pala and Chola dynasties. The Ganga survived the Muslim incursions, unlike the Pala and Chola, and continued to rule until the 16th century. As a result, sculpture in stone and bronze continued to be produced in Orissa.² *Radha* was the true love of *Krishna*. The love between *Krishna* and *Radha* is celebrated extensively in literature, the most famous and popular drama being the *Gita Govinda* ('Song of the Cowherd') by the Sanskrit poet Jayadeva, which was written *circa* 1100. *Krishna* had a considerable number of other lovers - according to the sage Naranda more than sixteen thousand - which aroused *Radha's* jealousy on several occasions. Ultimately however, she remained the God's favourite. This finely cast figure of *Radha* with her full arms and legs displays a sensuous movement, which is carried through to the breasts and the shoulders. A comparable Orissan bronze figure of *Radha* is in a private collection in Belgium.³

1 Alphen, J. van, *Cast for Eternity, Bronze Masterpieces from India and the Himalayas in Belgian and Dutch Collections*, Antwerp, 2005, pp. 94 and 96

2 Harle, J.C. and Topsfield, A., *Indian Art in the Ashmolean Museum*, Oxford, 1987, p. 43

3 Alphen, J. van, *op cit*, no. 26, p. 96





IVORY INLAID BOX

India, Hoshiarpur, c. 1880

Width: 13 1/4 inches, 33.5 cm

Depth: 10 inches, 25.5 cm

A rectangular box made of *shisham* wood. The exterior of the box is inlaid with dense, stylised floral patterns, contained within formal geometric borders. The edge of the lid and the base of the box are inlaid with a chevron moulding secured with wooden pegs. The interior of the hinged lid contains a mirror framed by an ivory-inlaid geometric border. The interior of the box is fitted with a removable tray, divided into eight compartments of equal size. A narrow compartment lined in cushioned dark blue velvet runs across the top part of this tray. Underneath the tray is a single large compartment.

● Shisham (*Dalbergia sissoo*), is a deciduous tree, native to India, Pakistan and Nepal. It is also called Sissoo, Sisu and Indian Rosewood. The East India Company annexed the Punjab in 1849, but it was not until 1870 that writers first recorded that western style furniture was being made there using local decorative techniques. The province was renowned for its woodcarving and the inlaying of ivory (*dant ka kam*) and brass into wood.¹ Originally, the technique was used mainly in the decoration of doors and columns. The craftsmen producing the finest inlay were concentrated in the Hoshiarpur district. The character of the designs used for inlay at Hoshiarpur is Islamic; it is characterized by geometric motifs and geometrically positioned foliage; figures played little or no role in ornament.

Two comparable boxes are in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.²



¹ Jaffer, A. *Furniture from British India and*

Ceylon, A Catalogue of the Collections

in the Victoria and Albert Museum and The Peabody

Essex Museum, London/Salem, 2001, p. 285

² Jaffer, A. *op cit*, no. 113, p. 291





WHITE MARBLE JALI SCREEN

India, probably Agra, 18th century

Height: 48 inches, 122 cm

Width: 24 inches, 61 cm

Depth: 2 inches, 5.5 cm

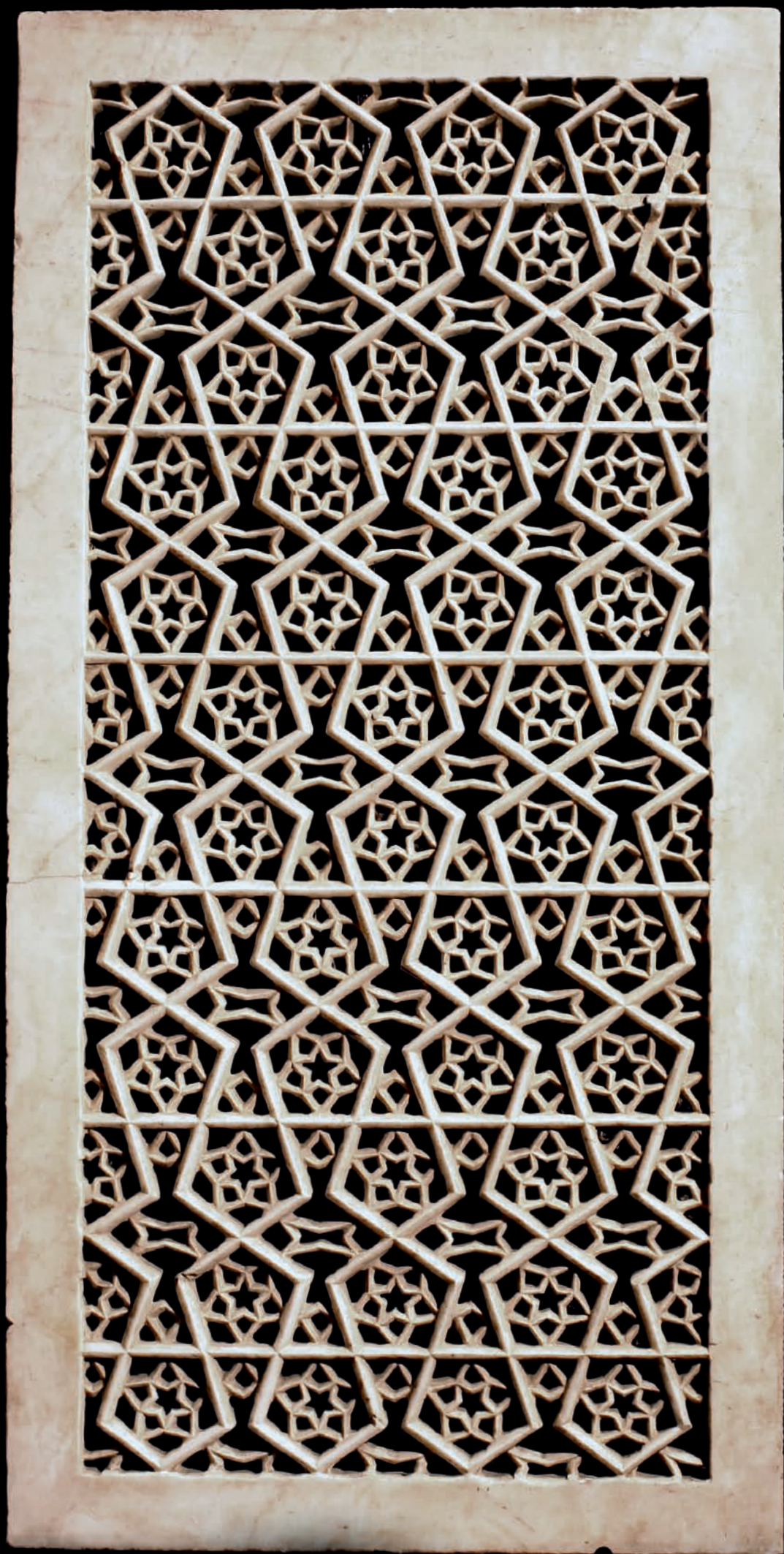
A pierced white marble stone screen (*jali*). The geometric composition consists of powerful zigzagging diagonals. The recessed inner lattice is composed of a mixture of five-pointed stars that in turn have a star shaped centre, as well as smaller polygons and lozenges. A plain border frames the panel.

● The Mughal style is continually underpinned by a strict geometric structure in accordance with the arts of the wider Islamic world, including those of Central Asia and Persia, which had the most direct impact on India. A sense of mathematics is always present, even in more seemingly fluid compositions of arabesques or naturalistic assemblages of flowers and plants. The faith in geometry is a governing principle with Mughal builders and is most obvious in architecture. *Jalis* were created in a great variety of shapes, sizes and patterns. The powerfully simple and masterly cut geometric style was favoured by Akbar and is most visible at Fatehpur-Sikri.¹ White marble assumes quite a different role to that of red sandstone in Mughal style, since it symbolises purity, goodness and spirituality, according to the orthodox Islamic tradition. Akbar chose white marble for his father's tomb in Delhi as well as for the mausoleum of Shaykh Salim Chishti at Fatehpur Sikri, while Shah Jahan chose it for the Taj Mahal. Comparable geometric *jalis* can be found in The Metropolitan Museum, New York², and are present in the jails of Itimad-ad Daula's tomb in Agra.³

1 Welch, S.C. *India, Art and Culture 1300-1900*, New York, 1985, p. 191

2 Welch, S.C. *op cit*, no. 120, pp. 191-2, no. 120

3 Michell, G. *The Majesty of Mughal Decoration, Art and Architecture of Islamic India*, London, 2007, pp. 81-85





WHITE MARBLE CHINI KANA PANEL

India, 18th century

Height: 24 1/4 inches, 61.5 cm

Width: 30 inches, 76 cm

A rectangular white marble panel carved with a *chini kana* design, divided into thirteen compartments of different shapes and sizes. The compartments contain the cusped and recessed silhouettes of various food and water vessels, including long-necked flasks and covered cups.

● The unusual design of this white marble panel is known as *chini kana*, a term meaning 'China room'. It is based on the niches in the walls of such a *chini kana*, where collections of Chinese porcelain flasks, vases, bottles and works of art were displayed.¹ Long necked flasks (*surahis*) and flower vases (*guldans*) play a significant role in Islamic culture, particularly in Iran and India. Together with the *aftaba* (water vase with handle and spout) they became significant motifs in the visual and written arts of Persia and India. They often feature prominently in Mughal paintings and architecture, where entire palace walls are decorated with designs of long-necked flasks and shorter vases, sometimes painted in an indigenous fresco technique, sometimes inlaid with semi-precious stones, or carved in low relief such as in the Gate Pavilion of the *Suraj Bhan ka Bagh* at Sikandra, which dates from the first quarter of the 17th century.² Zebrowski points out that such motifs may have originally had a connection with the 'waters of fertility' and hence with good fortune and abundance. However it is likely that by the 17th century they were appreciated more for their elegant form.³

1 Koch, E. *Mughal Architecture: An Outline of its History and Development (1526-1858)*, 1991, no. 100, p. 89 and p. 138

2 Koch, E. *op cit*, no. 100

3 Zebrowski, M., *Gold, Silver and Bronze from Mughal India*, London, 1997, p. 185







MARBLE WATERSLIDE, *CHADAR*

India, Mughal, 17th - 18th century

Height: 48 inches, 122.5 cm

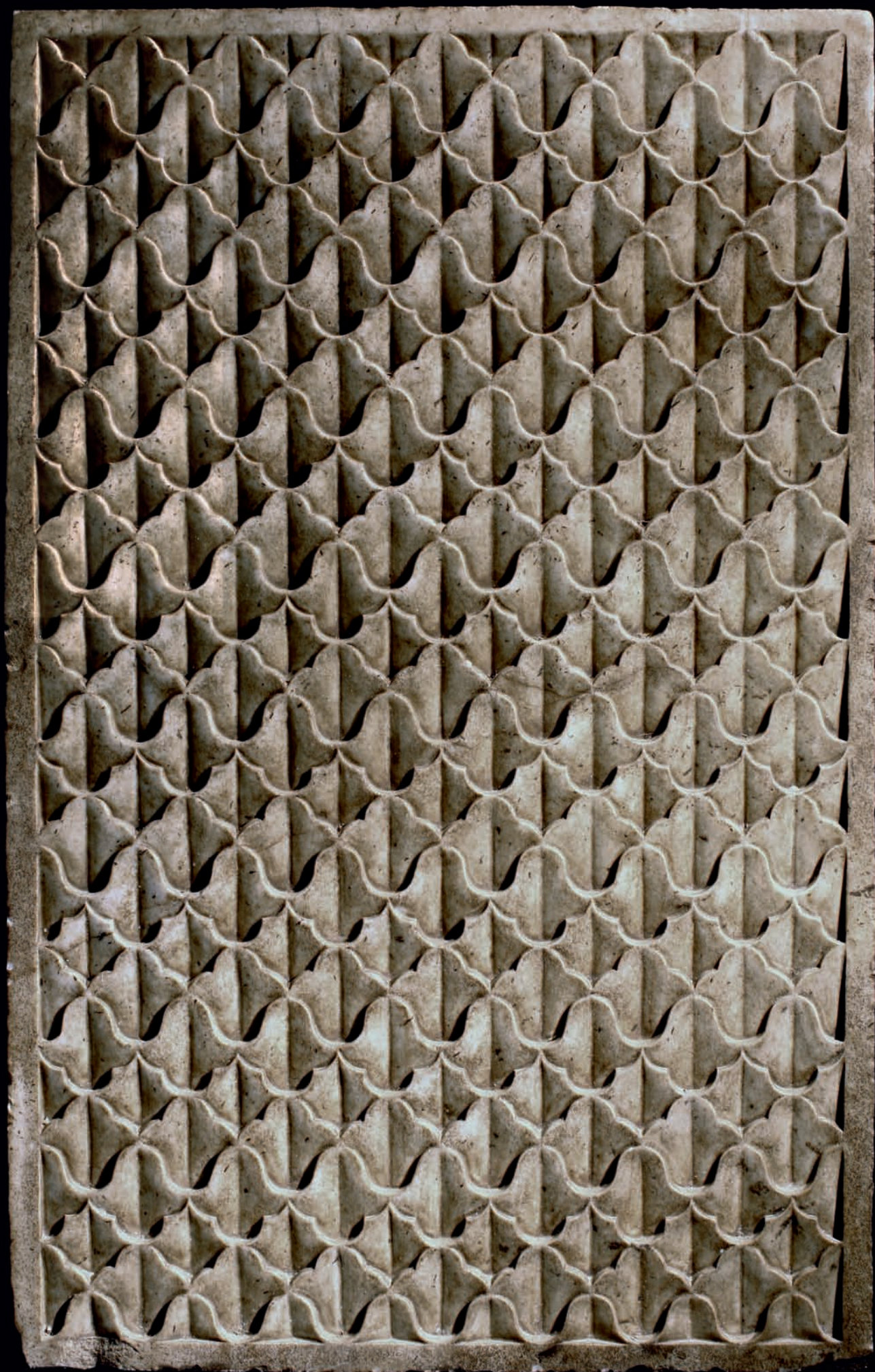
Width: 30 1/2 inches, 77.5 cm

Depth: 2 inches, 5 cm

A rectangular white marble waterslide (*chadar*), carved with a design of overlapping trefoils and scales in a horizontal register. A plain border frames the pattern.

● With the expansion of the Arab Empire in Northern India the Mughal garden was developed. The exceptional qualities of these gardens arose because they were developed where water was plentiful and Mughal designers were able to make use of it in a way that would, no doubt, appear profligate to the Arabs who inhabited less generous climates. At *Shalamar Baghin* in Kashmir, complex and sophisticated gardens made use of the ample water flowing from the Himalayas, utilizing pools, streams and waterfalls. The Mughals were so sophisticated in their use of water and light that they invented a form of waterfall called the *chadar*, which was set and built in such a manner so as to maximize the play of sunlight on the water and give an effect directed at a specific area for viewing. This waterslide may be compared to that of a similar design in the north east corner of the *Shah Bagh* at the Red Fort in Delhi, built by Shah Jahan in the first half of the 17th century, where water would ripple over the patterned surface and cascade down into a shell-shaped pool. It then made its way southwards towards the Hammams and palaces.¹

¹ Nicholson, L., *The Red Fort, Delhi*, London, 1989, pp 40 - 41





IVORY ROSEWATER SPRINKLER

South India or Sri Lanka, 19th century

Height: 8 1/4 inches, 21 cm

An ivory rosewater sprinkler, the globular lower body supported on a flared base and surmounted by a baluster-shaped neck that terminates in a funnel-shaped finial with foliated edge. The neck unscrews to allow the sprinkler's reservoir to be filled. The sprinkler is decorated with delicately incised and polychrome lacquered designs of flowering poppy plants, dense geometric bands, and flowering plant motifs.

● Ivory has been in demand since ancient times. The smooth, satin white material was used extensively for jewellery, furnishings, such as caskets and boxes, beds, chairs, thrones and palanquins. Doors, pillars and even entire pavilions in ancient palaces were frequently made of ivory. According to the *Ramayana* walls and pillars were inlaid with ivory. In Sri Lanka the *Mahavasama* informs us that King Parakrama (1164-1197) created a park railed 'with pillars decorated with rows of images made of ivory'.¹ The sprinkler is similar in style to the ivory vermillion container in this catalogue, (p. 192-3) and like it, might have been made in India², but it can also be compared to similar objects manufactured in the same period in Sri Lanka.³

1 Pal, P., *Elephants and Ivories in South Asia*, Los Angeles 1981, p. 72-3

2 Skelton, R., *The Indian Heritage, Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule*, London 1982, no 536, p. 157, and Folsach, K. von, *Sultan, Shah and Great Mughal, The History of the Islamic World*, Copenhagen 1996, no. 353, pp. 366-7

3 Pal, P., *Asian Art at the Norton Simon Museum, Art from Sri Lanka & Southeast Asia*, New Haven and London, 2004, no. 55, p. 66





IVORY VERMILION CONTAINER

South India or Sri Lanka, 19th century

Height: 5 1/4 inches, 13.5 cm

An ivory vermillion container, *sindoor daan*. The circular horn stand is surmounted by a stem, which comprises a mechanism in the lower half, which when slid upwards, opens the eight petals at the top to reveal a spherical ivory container with a foliated lid and a bulbous finial. The container is engraved with geometric patterns, which are highlighted in red paint.

● The *tilaka* or *bindi* is a vermillion mark applied to the forehead, above the eyebrows at the place of memory and intellect (*Buddhi*). This mark has religious significance and is a visible sign of a person belonging to the Hindu religion. It protects and prevents energy loss, and focuses the intellect on a righteous path. It is also worn by women to indicate their married status. In an important ritual in Hindu wedding ceremonies, the groom fills the parting on the bride's hair with sindoor or vermillion. The colour red denotes energy. The lotus is the symbol of purity as its flowers grow on long stalks, which are rooted in the mud. It is also symbolic of detachment as drops of water easily slide off its petals. This *sindoor daan* was probably made for the dressing table of a married lady, or possibly placed on a private shrine for use. It is similar in style to the ivory rose water sprinkler in this catalogue (p.190-1), which might have been made in India¹, but can also be compared with similar pieces manufactured in the same period in Sri Lanka.²



1 Skelton, R., *The Indian Heritage, Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule*, London 1982, no 536, p.157, and Folsach, K. von, *Sultan, Shah and Great Mughal, The History of the Islamic World*, Copenhagen, 1996, no. 353, pp. 366-7

2 Pal, P., *Asian Art at the Norton Simon Museum, Art from Sri Lanka & Southeast Asia*, New Haven and London, 2004, no. 55, p 66





BRASS CANDLESTICK

Ottoman Turkey, 16th - 17th century

Height: 18 1/2 inches, 47 cm

Diameter: 13 3/4 inches, 35 cm

A spun brass candlestick made in two sections. The top section is of cylindrical form and leads to a baluster pillar, with a turban-shaped section connecting it to a wide flattened foot with upturned rim.

● Metal objects were among the most important items made for daily use among the middle classes of the Muslim society. Most Islamic metal objects that have survived are made of alloys of different base metals. Brass consists for the most part of copper and zinc and this yellow alloy is easy to hammer and roll. Metalwork was held in considerable esteem in Islamic culture since it was the basic material that was used for a great variety of purposes, both for the mosques and for the private home.¹ Given that lighting up the dark is a constant requirement, candlesticks and oil lamps were produced in great numbers. It is surprising to note how relatively few of these objects have survived. The main reasons for this are that Muslims are not buried with their precious possessions, and that many of the metals would have been melted down over time, partly because of a change in fashion or because they were turned into coinage. One of Islam's contributions to the visual arts was an inclination toward abstraction. This elegantly, well proportioned brass candlestick has a small abstract turban shaped decoration where the base meets the pillar and shows small indentations caused by intensive use. Ottoman candlesticks were of particular influence to those made in India around the 17th century and this is stylistically evident in this candlestick.²

1 Folsach, K. von, *Art from the World of Islam in the David Collection*, Copenhagen, 2001, pp. 283-4

2 Zebrowski, M., *Gold, Silver and Bronze from Mughal India*, London, 1997, p. 185



BEN JANSSENS



ORIENTAL ART



WWW
BENJANSSENS
COM

91C JERMYN STREET
LONDON SW1Y 6JB

TEL 020 7976 1888
FAX 020 7976 2588
INFO @ BENJANSSENS.COM

DESIGN
PETER KEENAN

PHOTOGRAPHY
ALAN TABOR

TEXT
BEN JANSSENS
JOOST VAN DEN BERGH
MARYAM KHOSROVANI

PRINTING
BAS PRINTERS





BEN JANSSENS ORIENTAL ART

91C JERMYN STREET LONDON SW1Y 6JB

TEL: +44 (0) 20 7976 1888 FAX: +44 (0) 20 7976 2588

email: info@benjanssens.com www.benjanssens.com