

CHINESE ART FROM  
THE SCHOLAR'S STUDIO



J. J. LALLY & CO.  
ORIENTAL ART

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THE SCHOLAR'S STUDIO

*March 13 to April 11, 2015*

J. J. LALLY & CO.  
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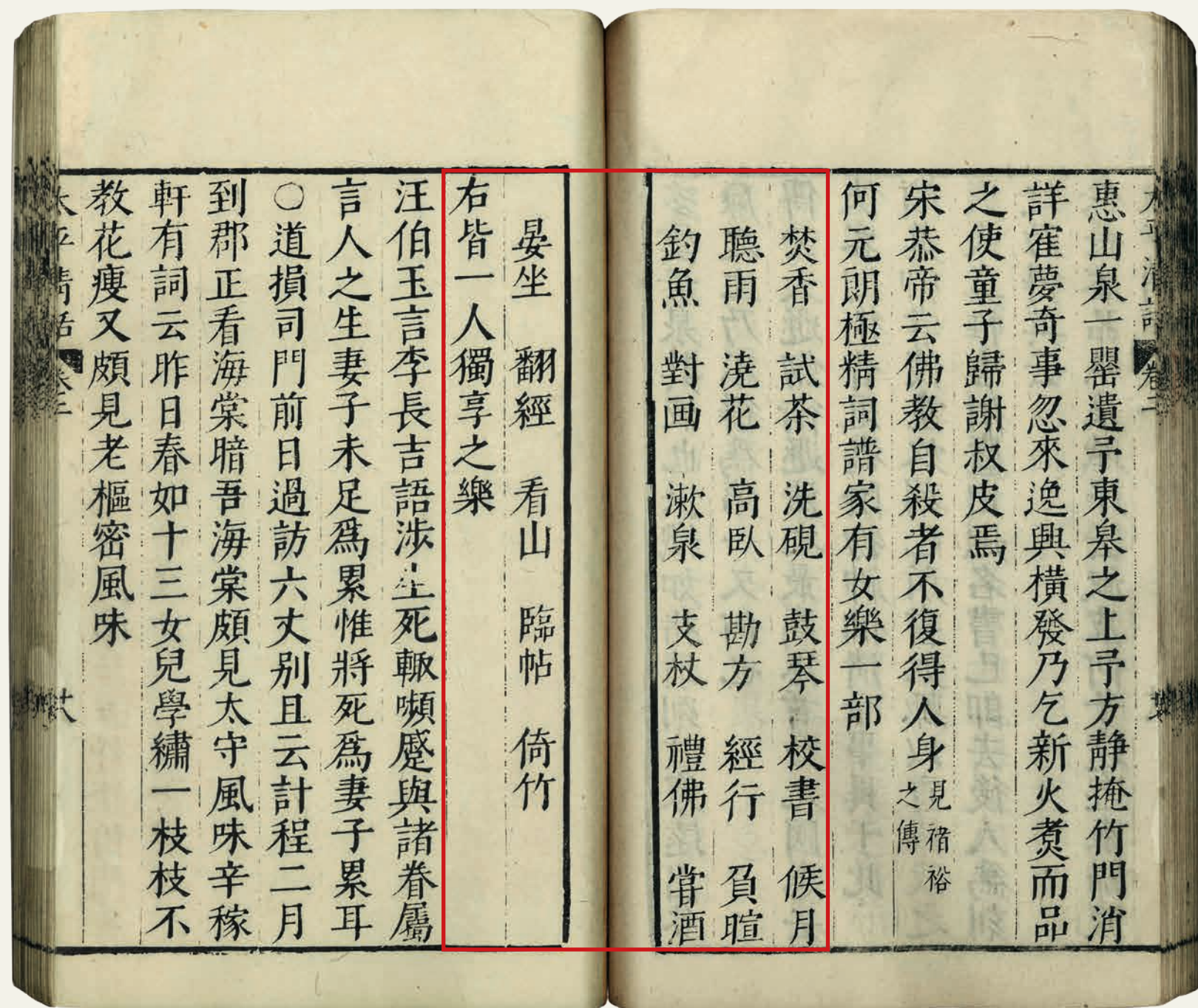
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Chen Jiru

*Pure Talk in an Era of  
Perfect Peace*

陳繼儒  
太平清話



Burning incense;  
tasting teas;  
washing out inkstones;  
playing the qin lute;  
collating books;  
observing the phases of the moon;  
listening to the rain;  
spraying flowers;  
resting in high reclusion;  
comparing prescriptions;  
going on excursions for the view;  
warming one's back in the sun;  
fishing;  
comparing paintings;  
washing out one's mouth with different stream waters;  
propping oneself with a hiking stick;  
reverencing Buddha in ceremonies;  
tasting wines;  
calmly sitting in meditation;  
translating sutras;  
gazing at mountains;  
copying calligraphy models;  
leaning against bamboo trees.

*All of the above are pleasures that can be enjoyed  
by a man in solitude.*

Chen Jiru (1558-1639), *Tai ping qing hua*, 2:17b-18a,  
Shangbaizhai edition, 34th Year of Wanli (1606),  
Courtesy of the Harvard-Yenching Library, Harvard University

Translation by Jonathan Chaves

CATALOGUE





1. A *BAIMU* DISPLAY SHELF

18th Century

of unusually tall and slender form with concave outer surfaces on the leading edges of all uprights and shelves, the side openings of the shelves framed by four 'horsebelly' aprons which form elegant 'kunmen'-shape openings.

26½ × 81⅞ × 11¾ inches (67.3 × 208 × 30 cm)

Provenance Private Collection, New York

Published MD Flacks Ltd., *Classical Chinese Furniture VIII*, New York, 2006, no. 10

十八世紀 柏木四層側面壺門圈口架格 67.3 x 208 x 30 厘米



2. AN EARLY BRONZE RHINOCEROS-FORM WATER DROPPER

Song-Ming Dynasty, 10th – 16th Century

the hollow body compactly modelled, with a circular aperture in the center of the rounded back, and pierced with a small hole through the mouth.

Length 5½ inches (13 cm)

Provenance Collection of R.H. Ellsworth, New York, no. B2190

宋 - 明 銅犀牛形水注 長 13 厘米





3. A MOTTLED GRAY SOAPSTONE RHINOCEROS

Tang Dynasty (618 – 907)

simply carved, the stolid beast with two horns shown recumbent with legs held close to its sides, the base polished flat for use as a weight.

Length 4¼ inches (10.8 cm)

The rhinoceros is a rare image in the arts of the Tang dynasty, but two-horned rhinoceros are recorded as surviving in the wild in the Lingnan region of Southern China during the Tang period.

A parcel-gilt silver box from the Hejiacun hoard incised with a rhinoceros in a medallion on the cover is illustrated in *Selected Treasures of the Shaanxi History Museum*, Xi'an, 2003, p. 106, pl. 102B and two parcel-gilt silver bowls, each decorated in repoussé with a rhinoceros, are illustrated by Gyllensvärd in *Chinese Gold, Silver and Porcelain: The Kempe Collection*, New York, 1971, p. 58, no. 59.

A Tang dynasty *sancai*-glazed pottery pillow with a similarly modelled recumbent rhinoceros forming the support, excavated in Yangzhou, Henan province is illustrated in *Wenwu Tiandi*, Beijing, 1989, No. 4, p. 47.

唐 滑石犀牛形紙鎮 長 10.8 厘米



4. A PUDDINGSTONE TIGER-FORM MAT WEIGHT

Han Dynasty (206 B.C. – A.D. 220)

the plump cat with simplified stocky body tightly coiled and head turned sharply back, carved from a block of conglomerate rock, highly polished to heighten the color.

Width 3 inches (7.7 cm)

Ancient weights of this type, used at the corners of sitting mats in the Han dynasty, later were used by literati as a paperweight on the desk or as a weight when viewing a long handscroll.

漢 礫石虎形席鎮 寬 7.7 厘米





5. A *HUANGHUALI* BOX WITH DRAWER

17th – 18th Century

made of carefully chosen and richly patinated timber, the hinged lid opening to reveal a storage tray, and with a drawer below, the brass mounts well integrated into the design.

9 $\frac{5}{8}$  × 5 $\frac{1}{8}$  × 5 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches (24.5 × 13 × 14.5 cm)

This unusual box incorporating a drawer is a rare and innovative variant of the standard form. Particularly ingenious is the extended lock hasp with protruding tab which stops the drawer below from opening when the hasp is closed and locked.

十七 – 十八世紀 黃花梨長方文具箱 24.5 × 13 × 14.5 厘米



6. AN IMPERIAL CHINESE SILVER 'TIGER' SEAL

Kangxi period, dated by inscription 1686

cast in raised Manchu and Mongolian script on the base with the inscription "Seal of *Sizi qi Zhasake*", with the same inscription also engraved on top of the platform at either side of the tiger; the front and back edges of the platform inscribed "Issued by the Imperial Ministry of Rites" in Manchu and Mongolian, and the left and right edges of the base inscribed in Manchu and Mongolian "Kangxi twenty-fifth year, fourth month", corresponding to A.D. 1686.

Height 4 inches (10 cm)

Base 4 × 4 inches (10 × 10 cm)

Provenance Japanese Private Collection, acquired near Kyoto from a small institution which had received it as a donation from a professor at a Japanese university

The Ming dynasty was conquered by the Manchus leading an alliance of tribal armies including Mongol clans incorporated into the Manchu banner system. After the conquest was accomplished, the Manchus established the Qing dynasty, took over the government and adopted Chinese bureaucratic systems to rule from the capital in Beijing. The Manchu emperor Kangxi consolidated the rule of the Qing dynasty over Inner Mongolia by granting the rank of *Zhasake* (prince) to the clan leader of each Mongol banner. The *Zhasake* was given ownership rights to all the land, resources and people in the banner territory and the title was hereditary within the clan. This Chinese silver seal was an essential symbol of the rank and power granted by the Kangxi emperor to the *Zhasake* of the *Sizi* (Four Sons) clan.

The *Sizi* (Four Sons) clan was founded by a grandson of one of Genghis Khan's three full brothers, Khabutu Khasar. The *Sizi* clan was first granted the title of *Zhasake* in 1636 and continued to rule the territory assigned to them in Inner Mongolia through thirteen generations, until 1949.

A very similar silver 'tiger' seal cast with the name *Yuyizhongqi Zhasake*, inscribed with the same Kangxi date and with the same declaration: "Issued by the Imperial Ministry of Rites" in Manchu and Mongolian, is illustrated in *Genghis Khan: The Ancient Nomadic Culture of the Northern China*, Beijing, 2004, pp. 336-337, and described as collected from the Palace of Beile at Yuyizhong Banner, Ordos City.

Another very similar silver 'tiger' seal is illustrated in the *Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Chinese Art*, London, Royal Academy of Arts, 1935-6, p. 265, no. 2953, described as "Used by Governors of Provinces during the Ch'ing Dynasty" and "Lent by the Government of the Soviet Union."

清 康熙二十五年 御製《四子旗札薩克》銀虎鈕印 高 10 厘米 印寬 10 x 10 厘米





7. A BRONZE SEAL WITH KNEELING HORSE KNOB

Zhao State, Sixteen Kingdoms Period, 4th Century

cast with four characters in intaglio which may be read as 親趙侯印 (*Qin Zhao hou yin*).

Height 1 $\frac{1}{8}$  inches (2.8 cm)

The character *hou* indicates a high noble rank, equivalent to a marquis or count or feudal prince. The characters *Qin Zhao* indicate that the person granted the seal was in fealty to the emperor of the Zhao, and *yin* means “seal”, hence *Qin Zhao hou yin* may be translated as “Seal of the Marquis of Zhao.”

Compare the cast bronze seal with the same inscription *Qin Zhao hou yin*, also with a horse-form knob, in the collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing, illustrated by Wang and Ye in *Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbeichao guan yin yanjiu* (Study of the Government Official Seals of the Qin, Han, Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties Periods), Hong Kong, 1990, p. 228, no. 53 and p. 237, no. 43, with description on p. 220, where the author states that the horse-form knob was in fashion during the Zhao state in the Sixteen Kingdoms Period.

Compare also the similarly cast bronze seals with different animal-form knobs bearing similar inscriptions referring to nobles of different rank in the Jin dynasty (265-420) which controlled most of Southern China at the time when the Zhao controlled part of Northern China, illustrated by Cheung, *A Catalogue of the Special Exhibition of Bronze Seals Throughout the Dynasties in the National Palace Museum*, Taipei, 1987, p. 308, nos. 225 and 226.



趙國 銅馬鈕《親趙侯印》官印 高 2.8 厘米



8. A BRONZE THREE-PIECE SEAL WITH CHIMERA KNOB

Han Dynasty (206 BC – AD 220)

with two small plain seals nested together and fitted into a recess at one side of the principal seal, beneath the chimera knob, the surface lightly encrusted with mottled green patination from burial.

Heights 1 $\frac{1}{6}$  inches (2.7 cm);  $\frac{7}{16}$  inch (1.1 cm);  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch (0.7 cm)

The principal seal shows the owner's given name “Yushi” followed by “his seal”; the second seal repeats the given name “Yushi”; the third seal shows “Yuanlang”, a courtesy name (*zi*), traditionally taken by literati at the age of 20 as the name to be used by other adults of his same generation on formal occasions, or in writing.

Compare a very similar bronze three-piece seal discovered in an Eastern Han tomb at Xi Taiping village, Linzhang county, Hebei province and now in the Linzhang Cultural Relics Institute, illustrated in *Zhongguo wenwu jinghua dacidian: jin yin yu shi juan* (Dictionary of Chinese Cultural Relics: Gold, Silver, Jade and Stone), Shanghai, 1996, p. 421, no. 041.

漢 銅獸鈕《虞詩》私印一套 高 2.7 厘米； 1.1 厘米； 0.7 厘米



元郎 Yuanlang



虞詩 Yushi



虞詩之印 Yushi zhi yin





9. A HUANGHUALI TABLETOP CHEST

17th – 18th Century

the framed three-board floating panel front opening to reveal an asymmetrical arrangement of small drawers with *baitong* (white brass) pulls within a grid of members embellished with concave leading edges, the outer frame with *baitong* corner mounts, squared side handles and lock.

15¼ × 14⅛ × 12½ inches (39 × 36 × 31.7 cm)

The multiple drawers in different sizes are designed to hold seals, inks, brushes and other scholarly paraphernalia associated with the high arts of painting and calligraphy.

十七 – 十八世紀 黃花梨案頭櫃 39 × 36 × 31.7 厘米



10. A *ZITAN* BRUSHPOT

18th Century

the wide mouth with generously rolled lip balanced by a full rounded border at the base, resting on three recessed tab supports, the timber with all-over rich dark patination.

Height 5 $\frac{1}{8}$  inches (13 cm)

Provenance Collection of Ronald W. Longsdorf, Hong Kong

Published MD Flacks Ltd., *Zitan*, New York, 2010, no. 17

十八世紀 紫檀筆筒 高 13 厘米





11. A *YING* SCHOLAR'S ROCK

18th Century

of twisting vertical form, rising to a dramatic craggy overhang suggesting the head of a dragon, on a Jiangnan style *hongmu* stand.

Height 7¾ inches (19.8 cm)

*Ying* rocks are named after Yingde in central Guangdong province, where the earliest examples were found and harvested in caves. The "dimpled" irregular texture and glossy surfaces of *Ying* rocks is attributed to the action of water and many *Ying* rocks are said to have been formed as stalactites.

In his seminal text on Chinese scholar's rocks, *Worlds Within Worlds*, Harvard University, Cambridge, 1997, p. 26, Mowry notes the high opinion accorded to *Ying* rocks by Ming artists and aesthetes, and mentions as one example: "...Wen Zhenheng (1585-1645) ranked them second among scholars' rocks, trailing only those of Lingbi." in his treatise *Zhangwu zhi* (On the things of the world).

十八世紀 英石供 高 19.8 厘米





12. A GLAZED WHITE PORCELAIN WATER VESSEL (*DAO GUAN HU*)

Liao Dynasty (916 – 1125)

hollow-moulded in the form of a seated figure of Zhongkui, the demon queller, with a court headdress on his head and a wide belt across his ample belly, accompanied by a subdued demon holding a wine cup and a wine bottle which is pierced through and connected to the hollow center of the figure to serve as the spout of the water vessel, the recessed base with a central aperture to allow for filling, covered all over with a clear glaze of very slightly greenish tint, the base left unglazed revealing the hard, dry porcellaneous body.

Height  $4\frac{5}{8}$  inches (11.7 cm)

Published J. J. Lally & Co., *Chinese Porcelain and Silver in the Song Dynasty*,  
New York, 2002, no. 7

This ingenious vessel, called a *dao guan hu* because it is filled through the base, is a water dropper for the scholar's table, to provide water for mixing ink.

According to legend, Zhongkui was a scholar from Zhongnan who came to the capital to seek the *jinshi* degree, but when corrupt officials falsified the results of his examination and he was denied the degree, he committed suicide by dashing his head against the steps of the imperial palace. When the emperor learned the truth and awarded him the posthumous rank of a court official of the green robe and gave him an honorable burial, Zhongkui vowed to protect the emperor and all his loyal subjects from demons.

In the eighth century the Tang emperor Xuanzong had a dream in which Zhongkui appeared and told the emperor of his promise to rid the world of demons. The emperor then commissioned a painting by the court artist Wu Daozi commemorating his dream, showing the demon queller at work. By the early Northern Song dynasty the artists at the Hanlin Academy had developed a custom of presenting Zhongkui paintings to the court on the last day of the year. Zhongkui is still associated with the Dragon Boat Festival and New Year's festivities in China, and he remains a popular image embodying the wish that the 'demons' of bad luck will be kept away during the new year.

遼 鍾馗捉鬼倒灌壺 高 11.7 厘米



13. AN EARLY SOAPSTONE CARVING OF A SAGE

Song Dynasty (960 – 1279)

the elderly man with sharp nose and pursed lips, standing erect with hands folded at his waist and concealed beneath the wide sleeves of his long robe cut with deep folds, the mottled olive-tan stone smoothly polished.

Height 6½ inches (16.5 cm)

Three carved soapstone standing figures excavated from the tomb of Chen Yuanji at Mount Jinji, Fuzhou city, dated by epitaph to A.D. 1208, now in the collection of Fujian Provincial Museum, are illustrated in the catalogue of the special exhibition organized by the National Palace Museum, Taipei, *Dynastic Renaissance, Art and Culture of the Southern Song: Antiquities*, Taipei, 2010, pp. 114-115, no. II-24-26.

宋 壽山石哲人像 高 16.5 厘米



14. A SOAPSTONE FIGURE OF BUDAI

Kangxi Period (1662 – 1722)

the fat-bellied *luohan* with a jolly expression on his face, shown relaxing against his sack, his loose robes carved from the olive-green part of the stone, his head and torso carved from yellowish-tan areas, with finely engraved details showing remains of gilding, on a separate white soapstone rockwork platform.

Height 3 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches (9.9 cm)

清 康熙時期 壽山石布袋和尚像 高 9.9 厘米



15. A SET OF TWO MINIATURE INCENSE BURNERS

Song – Ming Dynasty, 12th – 17th Century

the matching vessels following the archaic bronze *ding* ritual vessel form, each with raised 'bow string' bands encircling the rounded sides and elongated loop handles rising from the mouth rim, one cast in bronze showing a smooth dark patina, the other carved from olive green jade showing cloudy alteration of the stone from burial.

Height 2 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches (7 cm)

宋 – 明 小銅鼎、玉鼎一對 高 7 厘米





16. A *ZITAN* PICNIC BOX

18th Century

made entirely of carefully chosen *zitan* timber with a subtle swirling grain, in classic two-tier form with hump-backed carrying handle, beaded edges and fine well-patinated *huangtong* (yellow brass) mounts.

13¼ × 8⅞ × 7¼ inches (33.5 × 22.5 × 18.5 cm)

It is very rare to see a picnic box made of precious *zitan* timber inside and out.

十八世紀 紫檀雙層提盒 33.5 × 22.5 × 18.5 厘米



17. A CLOISSONNÉ ENAMEL MODEL OF A SCHOLAR'S ROCK  
18th Century

of rising knobbed form, the irregular surface enamelled in lapis-blue and turquoise-blue with gilded wires emphasizing the contour, and with green enamel along the edge of the flat base.

Height 3 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches (9.9 cm)

For a very similar rock, see the cloisonné enamel group with a standing crane in the collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing, illustrated in *Gugong bowuyuan cangpin daxi: falangqi bian 4, Qing qiansi falang* (Compendium of Collections in the Palace Museum: Enamels 4, Cloisonné in the Qing Dynasty), Beijing, 2011, p. 116, no. 68.

十八世紀 嵌絲琺瑯石形擺件 高 9.9 厘米



18. A BRIGHTLY FIGURED CARNELIAN AGATE WATERPOT  
Qing Dynasty (1644-1911)

of hollow egg shape with thick walls, resting on a small countersunk foot, the natural features and figuring of the stone enhanced by a high polish.

Length 3 inches (7.5 cm)

清 紅玉髓瑪瑙隨形水盂 長 7.5 厘米









19. A CLOISSONNÉ ENAMEL SCROLL-FORM STAND OR ARMREST

Kangxi/Yongzheng Period, Early 18th Century

cast in bronze and enamelled with a formal floral diaper pattern imitating silk brocade, the rows of yellow-centered blue florettes in cells interspersed with lozenge motifs, all outlined in gilded wires on a turquoise-blue ground, the underside, curled ends and border all richly gilded.

Length 15 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches (40.3 cm)

Provenance Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection

Compare the cloisonné enamel scroll-form stand from the Sedgwick collection illustrated in the catalogue of the Oriental Ceramic Society exhibition, *Arts of the Ming Dynasty*, London, 1957, no. 331, described as an armrest. The same example of this rare form is illustrated by Garner, *Chinese and Japanese Cloisonné Enamels*, London, 2nd ed., 1970, pl. 57, and by Brinker and Lutz, *Chinese Cloisonné: The Pierre Uldry Collection*, New York, 1989, no. 174.

A lacquer stand of very similar form, decorated with flowers on a similar formal diaper ground and bearing a Kangxi reign mark, is illustrated by Lee, *Oriental Lacquer Art*, Tokyo, 1972, p. 207, pl. 142, where the author states "...this type of work was very popular during K'ang Hsi's reign and was made at the imperial workshop under the supervision of Liu Yuan."

清 康熙－雍正時期 嵌絲琺瑯錦地卷書式几 長 40.3 厘米







Tai Xiangzhou | Calligraphy about Kui Xing (2014)

魁星又名魁星爺大夫子大魁星君為讀書士子之守護神魁星為北  
斗星的璇璣杓即是北斗七星的第一至第四顆星這四星為魁其餘  
三星為杓魁星的形狀完全是根據字形而來的一個鬼踢著一個門  
顧炎武日知錄裡說今人亦奉魁星不知始於何年以奎為文章之府  
故立廟祀之乃不能像奎而改奎為魁又不能象魁而之字形為鬼舉  
足而起其門不知奎為北方玄武七宿之一可知明代已很流行顧氏  
並說魁星實為奎星因為奎是文章之府古時候人們興建了不少魁  
星樓魁星閣之類的建築許多人對魁星的來路不甚瞭解但一提起  
五魁首則是人人皆聞這則喝酒划拳時常用的酒令就與魁星有關  
係五魁即五經魁五經魁首明代以五經即詩書易禮春秋取士每經  
所取第一名叫經魁魁為首意鄉試中每科前五名必須分別是某一  
經的經魁故稱五經魁簡稱五魁而這魁字則源於古人的奎星崇拜  
奎星為二十八宿之一是西方白虎七宿之首為主管文運之神所謂  
奎主文章說它屈曲相鈞似文字之書因魁與奎同音並有首意所以  
代替奎字出現了經魁五魁等名目古代中國狀元又稱魁甲解元又  
稱魁解魁星極受讀書人崇拜古人傳說侍奉魁星可以保佑書讀的  
好可高中狀元因此古代的讀書人大多以魁星為守護神有此人在  
考試時在座右貼上魁星像以求神明保佑文運亨通甲午祥洲書



20. A LARGE CAST IRON RELIEF PANEL OF KUI XING  
Ming Dynasty, 16th – 17th Century

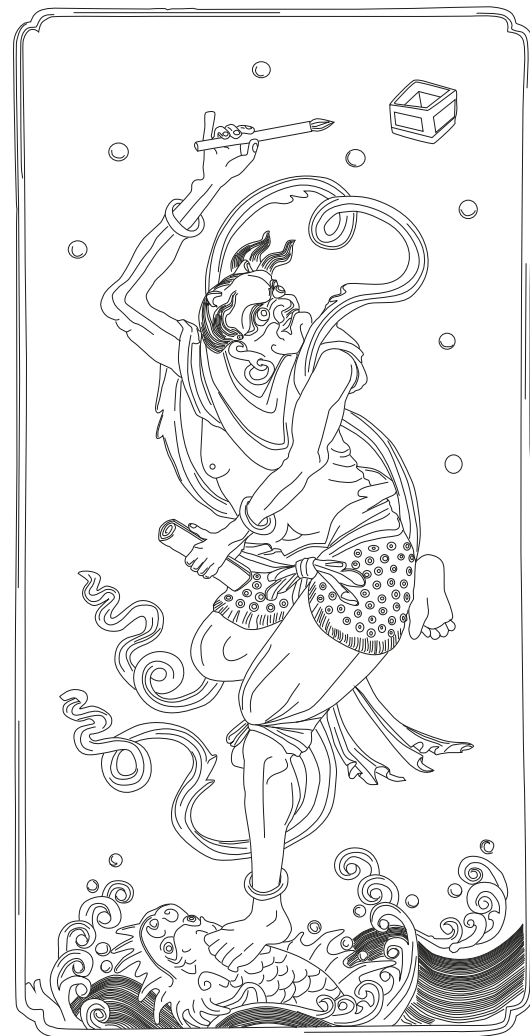
the demon star-god shown standing on a dragon-fish above frothing waves, holding a small scroll in his left hand and a writing brush in his right hand, gazing up at a bushel measure and surrounded by small bosses representing a constellation of stars, cast in varied relief within a raised border, *hongmu* frame.

45¼ × 26 inches (115 × 66 cm)

Provenance Collection of Arch. Ignazio Vok, Austria, acquired in Munich in 1974

The complex derivation of the iconography of Kui Xing is succinctly described by Gillman in *Chinese Ivories from the Shang to the Qing*, O.C.S., London, 1984, p. 100, as follows: "The image of Kui Xing is a collation drawn from several aspects of the Chinese experience, star-mysticism and astronomy, the twilight world of imps and demons, respect for the written character and the fondness for punning. The character *kui* is the name of an asterism in the Northern Dipper and is made up of the character for demon (*gui*) and for a dipper, or bushel measure (*dou*). The *gui* character has at its lower right an element which curves upwards: the Kui Xing image is therefore a pictorial pun of a demon with its right leg kicking upwards, a bushel measure in one hand. The *kui* asterism is twinned with Wen Chang, and is also seen as a literary man's stellar correspondence. The stellar god Kui Xing, despite having such a grotesque appearance, appeared beside Wen Chang in temples and was also worshipped for success in examinations. In his right hand he holds a writing brush, and he rides upon a dragon-carp, itself alluding to the myth that the carp who leap the Dragon Gate Falls in Henan Province are transformed into dragons, an allegory for successful civil service candidates."

明 鐵鑄魁星屏風 115 × 66 厘米





21. A SMALL MOUNTAIN-FORM *LINGBI* SCHOLAR'S ROCK

18th Century

evoking the image of a distant mountain range with rugged peaks overlapping in layers enclosing a central aperture resembling a mountain lake, the hard dark stone with glossy textured surface, on an old *zitan* stand.

Length 7 inches (17.5 cm)

In addition to its appeal as a miniature landscape, this *Lingbi* rock might also serve as a brushrest on the scholar's table.

十八世紀 靈璧石山子 長 17.5 厘米



22. A BAMBOO INCENSE STICK HOLDER

Qing Dynasty (1644-1911)

the bamboo branch constrained during growth to mature in the shape of a *shou* (longevity) character, the top with a recess to receive an incense stick, the flat-cut base raised on a fitted *hongmu* stand.

Height with base 9½ inches (24 cm)

Provenance Maria Kiang Chinese Art Ltd., Hong Kong

清 盤竹壽字香插 高 24 厘米



23. A GOLD- AND SILVER-INLAID ARCHAISTIC BRONZE TRIPOD CENSER

Ming Dynasty, 16th-17th Century

closely following the Shang dynasty ritual bronze *liding* prototype, the body divided into three rounded lobes each cast in varied relief with a *taotie* mask flanked by descending *kui* dragons and reserved on finely cast *leiwen* grounds, the columnar legs decorated with cicada blades, lavishly inlaid all over with gold and silver scrollwork and archaic style motifs highlighting the decoration, the rich dark reddish-brown patina giving strong contrast to the precious metal inlays, with an openwork hardwood cover with agate knop.

Height over handle 8¼ inches (21 cm)

Provenance French Private Collection, acquired in Paris between 1950 and 1970

Compare the very similar Ming dynasty gold- and silver-inlaid bronze tripod censer in the Saint Louis Art Museum, illustrated by Hu, *Later Chinese Bronzes: The Saint Louis Art Museum and Robert E. Kresko Collections*, Saint Louis, 2008, pp. 56-61, no. 9. Another similar tripod censer in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum is illustrated by Kerr, *Later Chinese Bronzes*, London, 1990, p. 53, no. 41.

Compare also the Ming dynasty bronze *liding* of closely related form and decoration, without gold and silver inlays, in the collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei, illustrated in the catalogue of the special exhibition, *Through the Prism of the Past: Antiquarian Trends in Chinese Art of the 16th to 18th Century*, Taipei, 2004, p. 96, no. II-09.

For examples of the 12th-11th century B.C. Shang bronze *liding* of this well-known form and design, see Bagley, *Shang Ritual Bronzes in the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, Cambridge, 1987, p. 486, no. 93, and pp. 487-489.

明 銅錯金銀仿古鬲鼎 高 21 厘米





24. A *HUANGHUALI* INCENSE BOX

17th -18th century

of circular form, the flat top and sides with beaded borders, the mouth rim of the box stepped in to support the flush-fitting cover, and the interior of the box with a slightly raised inward-angled lip.

Diameter 3 inches (7.8 cm)

The carefully crafted inward-angled rim on the interior of the box indicates that it was designed to prevent precious incense from spilling when the cover is removed.

十七-十八世紀 黃花梨圓香盒 徑 7.8 厘米



25. A *ZITAN* LOBED OCTAGONAL BOX

18th Century

the flat lid with cusped and stepped border, the bracket-lobed shallow sides with beaded rims, the fine-grained timber with lustrous patina.

Width 3 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches (8.5 cm)

十八世紀 紫檀葵式蓋盒 徑 8.5 厘米



26. A GOLD-SPLASHED BRONZE 'DRAGONS IN CLOUDS' CENSER

Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)

heavily cast with a pair of *chilong* winding in and out of stylized swirling clouds, with splashes of gilding on the dragons' backs, the dragons emerging and rising up to grasp the rim on opposite sides, the recessed base with a six character imperial reign mark in *kaishu* reading *Da Ming Xuande nianzhi* (Made in the Xuande period of the Great Ming dynasty).

Width over handles 5 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches (15 cm)

Provenance      Collection of Mary and George Bloch, Hong Kong  
                      Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection, Hong Kong  
                      Collection of Dr. and Mrs. Peter Plesch, London

A very similar incense burner, also cast with a Xuande imperial reign mark, is illustrated by Tsang and Moss in *Arts from the Scholar's Studio*, Hong Kong, 1986, p. 164, no. 139, where the authors discuss the close resemblance of the design to lacquer wares of the early fifteenth century and suggest that despite the unresolved questions surrounding the correct dating of more common types of Xuande-marked censers following archaic bronze or Song ceramic traditions, there seems no reason to question the authenticity of a Xuande (1426-1435) dating for this particular form and design.

明 《大明宣德年製》款 銅灑金螭龍耳爐 寬 15 厘米



27. A SOLID *HUANGHUALI* BRUSHPOT

17th – 18th Century

carved from a single piece of well figured *huanghuali*, with stepped and rounded border at the base and thick beaded rim, the plain polished sides showing the mellow tones and subtle grain of the timber.

Height 5 $\frac{1}{8}$  inches (13 cm)

It is rare to see a *huanghuali* brushpot made entirely from one solid piece of wood.

十七 – 十八世紀 整挖黃花梨筆筒 高 13 厘米

28. A PETAL-LOBED *ZITAN* BRUSHPOT

18th Century

with cylindrical interior and subtly undulating exterior divided into vertical petal-lobes, the dark purplish *zitan* timber with well-aged lustrous patina.

Height 5 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches (14.5 cm)

十八世紀 紫檀葵式筆筒 高 14.5 厘米





29. A BRONZE TORTOISE-FORM WATER DROPPER

Early Six Dynasties Period, 3rd-4th Century

the hollow-cast realistic model of a tortoise with short filling-tube in the center, the blunt snout pierced with a small aperture to allow water to be dropped onto the inkstone, the smooth dark surface patina showing traces of green encrustation from burial.

Length 4¼ inches (10.8 cm)

A very similar bronze tortoise-form water dropper, with an ear-cup held in the mouth of the tortoise, in the collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing, is illustrated in *Zhongguo wenfang sibao quanji* (Compendium of Chinese Scholar's Objects), Vol. IV, Beijing, 2008, p. 13, no. 18. The same water dropper is also illustrated in *The Complete Collection of Treasures of the Palace Museum: Bronze Articles for Daily Use*, Shanghai, 2007, p. 160, no. 138.

六朝初期 銅龜形硯滴 長 10.8 厘米



30. A GOLD- AND SILVER-INLAID ARCHAISTIC BRONZE WATERPOT

Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)

the compressed spherical vessel cast with stylized long-tailed birds in relief around the sides, the short neck with flared mouth in the shape of a bird's head with wide open beak, inlaid all over with gold and silver, the rich brown patina mottled with bright green in the style of archaic bronze.

Width 2⅜ inches (6 cm)

明 銅錯金銀仿古鳳紋水盂 寬 6 厘米



31. A PUDDINGSTONE BRUSHWASHER

Late Ming Dynasty, 17th Century

roughly resembling a lily pad with sides curled in to form a water well, the conglomerate rock left raw on the exterior and smoothly polished on the interior.

Length  $8\frac{5}{8}$  inches (22 cm)

晚明 礫石筆洗 長 22 厘米

32. A PUDDINGSTONE BRUSHREST

Song-Ming Dynasty, 10th-16th Century

in the shape of a miniature pillow with smoothly polished sides.

Length  $4\frac{3}{8}$  inches (11.2 cm)

宋-明 礫石筆枕 長 11.2 厘米

33. A PUDDINGSTONE BRUSH PALETTE (*BITIAN*)

18th Century

of solid rectangular form with highly polished surface revealing the bright mineral colors.

$7 \times 4\frac{3}{8}$  inches (18 × 11 cm)

Used to re-shape the brush or check the concentration of the ink in the course of painting or calligraphy, this *bitian* also would be a welcome ornament and an elegant reminder of the natural world, perfect for the escapist nature of the painting ritual.

十八世紀 礫石筆舔 18 × 11 厘米





34. A 'FISH IN WAVES' INKSTONE AND COVER

Song Dynasty (960-1279)

carved from smooth silvery-gray *she* stone, the rectangular inkstones with sloping ink wells and framed by interlocking raised borders, the close-fitting cover carved in shallow relief with a pair of carp amidst stylized rolling waves.

4<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 2<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches (11 × 6.7 cm)

Compare the inkstone of very similar form carved with floral motifs on the flat cover, discovered in 1964 in a Northern Song tomb at Ma Cheng, Hubei Province, illustrated in the excavation report published in *Kaogu* 1965, No. 1, pl. 5, fig. 10.

宋 歙石雙鯉水紋雙層硯 11 × 6.7 厘米



35. A 'BAOPING' PURPLE INKSTONE

Song Dynasty (960-1279)

of rectangular *chaoshou* form, the purple stone with silvery iridescent surface, the recessed grinding platform in the shape of a vase, with a deep oval inkwell above the mouth.

5½ × 3⅛ inches (14 × 8 cm)

A Song dynasty *chaoshou* inkstone made of the same purplish stone and carved with a closely related 'baoping' design is illustrated by Wu in *Jianshi guyan* (Connoisseurship of Ancient Inkstones), Fuzhou, 2002, p. 52.

Compare also the Song dynasty *chaoshou* type inkstone of *baoping* design discovered in 1990 in a Song dynasty tomb in Haikang county, Guangdong province and now in the collection of Haikang County Museum, illustrated in the catalogue of the special exhibition at the Art Gallery of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, *The Quintessential Purple Stone: Duan Inkstones Through the Ages*, Hong Kong, 1991, pp. 18-19, no. 6.

宋 寶瓶式抄手石硯 14 × 8 厘米





36. A LARGE 'LANDSCAPE' INKSTONE AND COVER

Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)

made of dark purplish *duan* stone, the interior base with a walled compound surrounded by terraced fields in a stylized landscape carved in varied relief, creating many recesses to contain water for the brush, the interior of the close-fitting flat cover with an indented square at the center to serve as a platform for grinding the ink.

Waterwell  $6\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$  inches (17.2  $\times$  17.2 cm)

Grinding platform 7  $\times$  7 inches (17.9  $\times$  17.9 cm)

明 端石山水樓閣方硯 墨池 17.2  $\times$  17.2 厘米 硯台 17.9  $\times$  17.9 厘米



37. A ROOTWOOD *RUYI* SCEPTER

18th Century

the natural root of gnarled and twisted form carefully pruned, carved and polished to create a *ruyi* scepter with a curling head in the form of a *lingzhi* fungus.

Length 13 inches (33 cm)

The *ruyi* scepter is a symbolic object of obscure ancient origin which enjoyed renewed popularity in the late Ming and Qing dynasties. The term *ruyi* means "as you wish", and by association also refers to the *lingzhi* fungus which was said to have the power to enhance longevity. Among the literati, *ruyi* scepters made of rustic materials symbolized the scholar's desire to retreat into nature, away from the distractions and politics of government bureaucracy.

十八世紀 樹根隨形如意 長 33 厘米





38. ZENG XIAOJUN (B.1954)

TANGLED ROOTS

Ink on paper, 2012

33½ × 49¼ inches (85 x 125 cm)

Signed: 小俊畫 (Painted by Xiaojun)

Seal: square, relief, 曾小俊書畫 (Zeng Xiaojun shu hua)

曾小俊 (1954年生)

盤根

2012 水墨紙本 85 x 125 厘米



39. A CARVED BOXWOOD ROOT-FORM LOW TABLE

18th Century

the irregular platform top raised on elaborately carved intertwining root-shaped supports, softly polished all over to highlight the buttery texture of the wood and create a fluid and balanced design.

Diameter 12 $\frac{5}{8}$  inches (32 cm)

Height 4 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches (11 cm)

Provenance Private Collection, Hong Kong

十八世紀 黃楊木盤根矮几 徑 32 厘米 高 11 厘米





40. A CARVED BLACK STONE BRUSHREST

Ming Dynasty, Late 15th-Early 16th Century

in the form of five angular stylized mountain peaks representing the Five Sacred Mountains of China above a crouching *qilin* within an aureole of flames on the flat front and a two-story pavilion amidst puffy clouds on the bowed reverse, all carved in openwork and stepped relief, with incised linear details, the stone of *lashi* type with glossy polished surface, showing remains of cinnabar red earth in the recesses.

Length 5 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches (13.7 cm)

A Ming dynasty black stone brushrest carved in the same style is illustrated in *Treasures from the Tokugawa Art Museum, No. 4: Scholar's Desk Materials from the Libraries of the Daimyo*, Nagoya, 1988, p. 63, no. 137.

明 黑蠟石五嶽筆山 長 13.7 厘米



41. A BRONZE WEIGHT SURMOUNTED BY A BUDDHIST LION AND CUB

Late Ming Dynasty, 17th Century

cast in the shape of a seal, the lion and cub with curly manes and bushy tails, on a heavy block with plain base.

Height 2 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches (7 cm)

晚明 鎏金銅子母獅紙鎮 高 7 厘米



42. A BRONZE DAOIST TEMPLE SEAL

Qianlong Period, dated by inscription 1742

the face of the seal cast with four 'nine fold script' characters which may be read as: 火帝金章, *Huodi jinzhang*, which may be translated as "Golden Seal of the Fire God", referring to the Daoist deity Huaguang Dadi 華光大帝 (God of Magnificent Light).

The inscriptions in *kaishu* on the top of the seal include the names of ten donors and a dedication beginning with the cyclical date Qianlong *renxu*, corresponding to A.D. 1742, which may be read as:

乾隆壬戌之秋 古廟修建工成告竣用等值事處造金章敬獻華光大帝寶殿永鎮康寧

which may be translated as:

"Qianlong *renxu* [year] autumn, at the completion of the renovation of the ancient temple, [we] commission this metal seal from the Office of Clerical Affairs and present it respectfully to the Hall of the God of Magnificent Light, asking [*Huo-di*] to forever guard peace and prosperity for all."

The inscriptions on the narrow sides of the seal may be read as:

風調雨順 (fair weather and rain in every season)

國泰民安 (peace and prosperity for the country and the people)

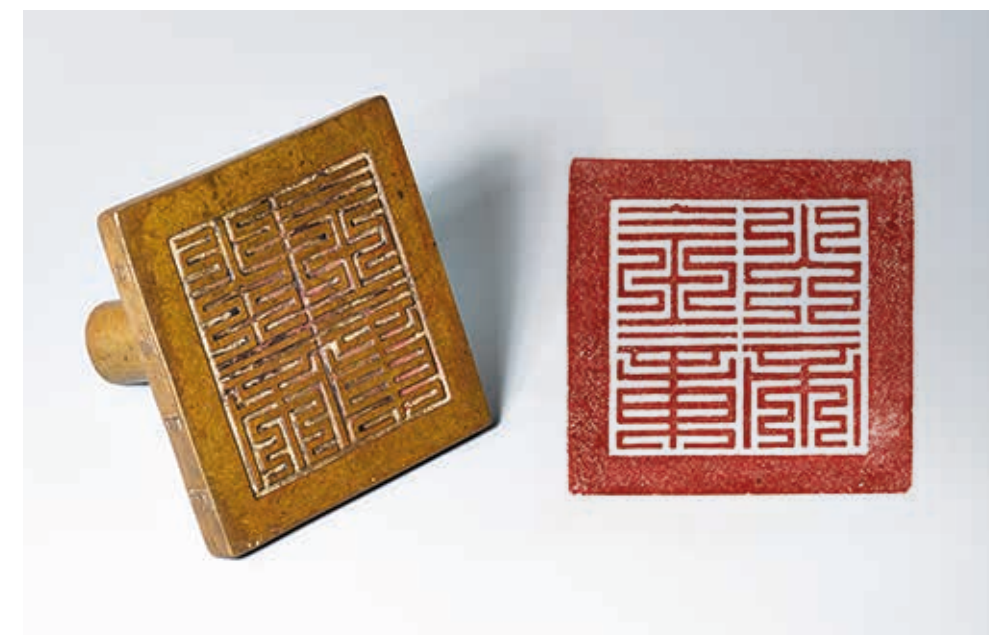
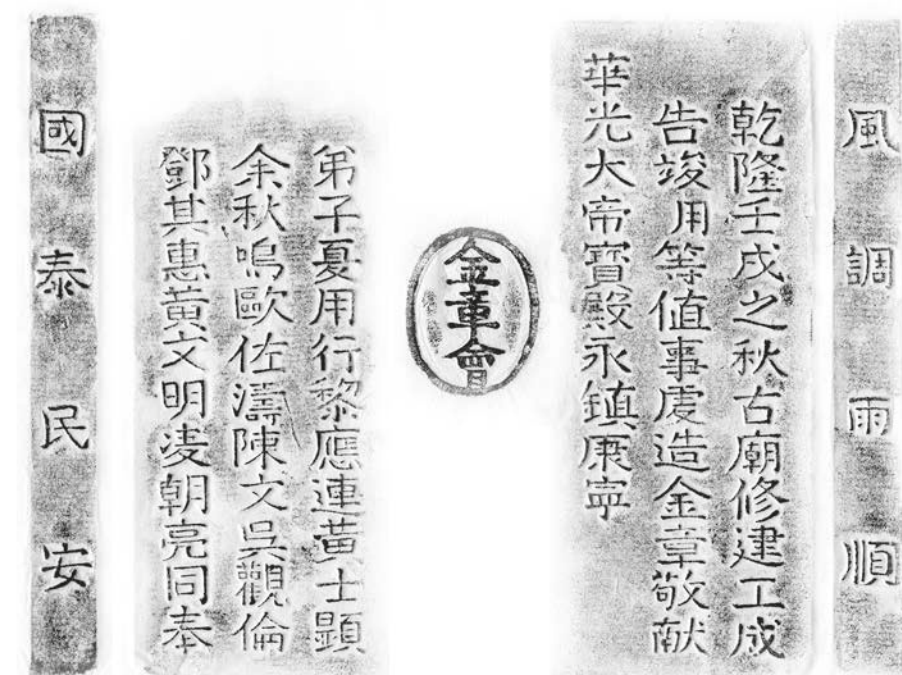
The inscription at the top of the handle may be read as:

金章會 (Metal Seal Association)

Height 4 inches (10.2 cm)

Base 4 × 4¼ inches (10.2 × 10.5 cm)

清 乾隆壬戌 《火帝金章》銅道觀印 高 10.2 厘米 印寬 10.2 × 10.5 厘米





43. A *HUANGHUALI* BURL SEAL BOX

18th Century

the finely crafted deep square box with cushion-shaped top, rounded corners and plain flat sides raised on shallow corner supports, showing dramatic natural burl markings and a rich reddish patina.

4 × 3 × 4 inches (10 × 8 × 10 cm)

Provenance Private Collection, Hong Kong

Published Flacks, *Custodians of the Scholar's Way*, London, 2014, p. 148

It is very rare to see a box made entirely of *huanghuali* burl. The shape and size of the box indicate it was made to serve as the case for a seal.

十八世紀 黃花梨瘿木印璽盒 10 × 8 × 10 厘米





44. A *ZITAN* LOW TABLE STAND

18th Century

the rectangular top with projecting sides over a recessed concave waist and rounded apron, joined to the rectilinear box stretcher by generously curved legs to create a bold and elegant form.

12¼ × 27⁄8 × 6⅞ inches (31 × 7.5 × 15.5 cm)

十八世紀 紫檀束腰矮几 31 × 7.5 × 15.5 厘米





45. A GOLD-SPLASHED BRONZE CENSER WITH 'HALBERD-BLADE' HANDLES

Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)

the heavily cast bombé sides rising to a rounded rim and resting on a ring foot, with projecting handles described by late Ming commentators as based on the shape of an ancient Chinese *ji* halberd, the surface with rich chocolate-brown patina embellished with large and small gold splashes on the exterior and on the recessed base.

Width over handles 7¼ inches (18.5 cm)

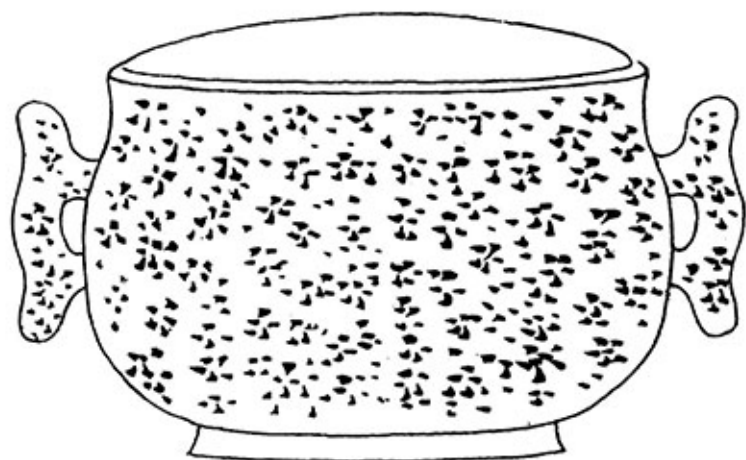
Provenance Blitz Antiek en Kunsthandel, Amsterdam, 2006  
Private Collection, Belgium

The shape of this censer is based on a Song dynasty ceramic prototype. Compare, for example, the Song dynasty Guan ware censer in the Cleveland Museum of Art, illustrated by Mino and Tsiang, *Ice and Green Clouds: Traditions of Chinese Celadon*, Indianapolis, 1986, pp.172-173, no. 68. See also a Southern Song Longquan celadon censer of similar form discovered in 1978 at Fenshantou cemetery in Shiquan village, Xia'ang county, Huzhou city, Zhejiang province and now in the collection of the Huzhou Museum, illustrated in *Qing, Ya: Nan Song ciqi jingping* (Pure and Elegant: Selected Southern Song Ceramics), Beijing, 2010, p. 47.

A gold-splashed bronze censer of very similar form is illustrated in a line drawing in *Xuande yiqi tupu* (Illustrated Catalogue of Ritual Vessels of the Xuande Period), text published circa 1600, *juan* 13, p. 2. The same line drawing is also illustrated for comparison to the small gold-splashed bronze censer of very similar form in the collection of the National Palace Museum, in *Through the Prism of the Past: Antiquarian Trends in Chinese Art of the 16th to 18th Century*, Taipei, 2004, p. 303, figs. 8 and 9.

The *Xuande yiqi tupu* is a major source of information on Ming dynasty bronze censers, but the reliability of the document has been questioned because, despite the fact that *Xuande yiqi tupu* is recorded as having been first published in the late Ming, the woodblock-printed illustrations apparently were not included until much later editions, possibly as late as the Guanxu period (1875-1908).

明 銅灑金戟耳爐 寬 18.5 厘米



After *Xuande yiqi tupu* (Illustrated Catalogue of Ritual Vessels of the Xuande Period), *juan* 13, p. 2





46. A HUAMU AND ZITAN TRAY

18th Century

of unusual geometric design, the panel of reddish *huamu* (burl) with vigorous natural markings and strong grain, framed by a raised border of dark *zitan* with stepped edges and projecting corners.

12 × 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 9<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches (30.7 × 3 × 24.5 cm)

十八世紀 樺木承盤 配紫檀框 30.7 × 3 × 24.5 厘米



47. A RECTANGULAR MIXED WOODS TRAY

18th Century

the central *nanmu* panel with dramatic 'flame' grain, framed by shallow thick *hongmu* sides inlaid with boxwood and *wumu* (ebony) detailing.

15 × 1 × 10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches (38.4 × 2.4 × 26.4 cm)

十八世紀 楠木承盤 配紅木框嵌黃楊木與烏木 38.4 × 2.4 × 26.4 厘米





48. A GREEN JUNYAO TRIPOD CENSER

Song Dynasty (960-1279)

of well potted globular form with short straight neck and wide everted rim, the rounded base raised on three bulbous feet, covered with an opaque olive green glaze with glossy surface, the glaze stopping short of the pointed toes of the feet and draining from the edge of the mouth rim revealing the stoneware body fired to tan brown.

Diameter 3 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches (8.6 cm)

Height 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches (6.2 cm)

Compare the very similar green Junyao censer discovered in 1990 in a Song dynasty tomb at Sanmenxia city, Henan province, now in the collection of Sanmenxia Museum, illustrated in *Zhongguo chutu ciqu quanji: Henan* (Complete Collection of Ceramic Art Unearthed in China: Henan), Vol. 12, Beijing, 2008, p. 156, no. 156, described as made in the Shenhou kiln in Yuzhou, Henan province.

Two small blue-glazed Junyao censers of this form in the Beijing Palace Museum collection are illustrated in *Jun ci ya ji: Gugong Bowuyuan zhencang ji chutu Junyao ciqu huicui* (Selection of Jun Ware: the Palace Museum's Collection and Archaeological Excavation), Beijing, 2013, pp. 87-90, nos. 27-28, attributed to the Northern Song-Jin period.

宋 綠鈞三足爐 徑 8.6 厘米 高 6.2 厘米



49. A GOLD-SPLASHED BRONZE 'ALMS BOWL' CENSER

17th Century

with steeply rounded sides curved in to a wide mouth with lipped rim and tapered to a flat foot, embellished with gold splashes all over the richly patinated coppery-brown exterior, with two characters in gilt on the slightly recessed base: 宝用 *bao yong*, which may be translated as "for treasured use."

Diameter 4½ inches (10.5 cm)

Provenance Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection

Published Tsang and Moss, *Arts from the Scholar's Studio*, Fung Ping Shan Museum, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 1986, pp. 238-239, no. 229

In the catalogue entry published for this censer in *Arts from the Scholar's Studio*, the authors propose that the alms bowl form was chosen because the association of this shape with mendicant Buddhist monks who care nothing for wealth and power and live in rustic simplicity, seeking enlightenment, was an idealized image with great appeal for the Chinese scholar. In the same caption the authors note that the inscription *bao yong* on the base of the censer echoes the inscriptions often seen on ancient Chinese bronzes, invoking the wish for the ritual vessel to be used and forever cherished by future generations.

十七世紀 《宝用》銘 銅灑金鉢式爐 徑 10.5 厘米





50. A LARGE *NANMU* TABLE STAND

18th Century

the well figured platform top of elongated octagonal form with beaded rim, raised on box-frame supports with boldly indented corners and thick beading around oblong openings all around the sides, the base elevated on very shallow small feet.

23<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 14<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches (60 × 8.5 × 37 cm)

The distinctive form of this rare and impressive stand draws inspiration from the style of preaching dais used by Buddhist teachers in antiquity.

十八世紀 楠木八方矮几 60 × 8.5 × 37 厘米





51. A *HUANGHUALI* SLOPING-STILE CABINET

17th – 18th Century

of small size and slender proportions with carefully chosen well figured panels on the doors and sides framed by tapering stiles, mounted in *huangtong* (yellow brass) with simple door pulls and lock plates.

25 × 39½ × 13 inches (63.5 × 100 × 33 cm)

This type of cabinet was used to hold scrolls, books, paper and other paraphernalia relevant to literati pursuits.

The use of plain flat surfaces and slender stiles lends this cabinet a bold austerity which was highly appreciated by Ming scholars.

十七 – 十八世紀 黃花梨圓角櫃 63.5 × 100 × 33 厘米





52. AN INSCRIBED *LINGBI* ROCK

17th – 18th Century

of rough arched form evoking a natural stone bridge or the entrance to a cave or grotto above water, the surface richly textured and with lustrous patina, inscribed with two characters: 拱壁, which may be read as “*gong bi*” and with an indecipherable seal, raised on a knobby Jiangnan style *hongmu* stand.

10½ × 4 × 6⅛ inches (26.5 × 10 × 15.5 cm)

*Lingbi* rocks, associated with Lingbi county in Anhui province, have been highly prized since the Song dynasty. According to Hugh T. Scogin, Jr., ‘A Note on Lingbi’, Mowry et. al. *Worlds Within Worlds*, Harvard University, Cambridge, 1997, p. 48, a local Anhui gazetteer, writing during the Song period, reported that the name 靈璧 (*Lingbi*) “Spirit Stone”, was officially assigned by decree in A.D. 1117, and that “... Lingbi stone is treasured by all under heaven; its sound is like bronze and its color like the jade of *bi* disks...”.

十七 – 十八世紀 《拱壁》銘 靈璧石擺件 26.5 × 10 × 15.5 厘米



53. AN ARCHAIC STYLE BRONZE COVERED VESSEL (*FANGYI*)

Late Ming-Early Qing Dynasty, 17th-18th Century

following a Shang dynasty ritual form, decorated with *taotie* masks dissolved into a 'thunder pattern' background between panels of *kui* dragons below the mouth and around the foot, with toothed flanges rising from the foot onto the matching roof-shaped cover surmounted by a block-shaped finial, the surface with smooth dark patina showing areas of cuprite green, especially on the interior, the recessed base cast with an inscription of twenty characters in thread relief seal script.

Height 7 inches (17.9 cm)

Provenance Private Collection, England

The inscription cast on the base may be read as: 紹興二年大寧廠臣蘇漢臣監督姜氏鑄至德壇用, which may be translated as: "In the second year of *Shaoxing* (1132), under the supervision of Officer Su Hancheng at the Da'ning workshop, Madame Jiang cast [this item] for the Zhide Altar."

A bronze incense burner in the collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei with the same inscription cast on the base is illustrated by Fong and Watt in the Metropolitan Museum exhibition catalogue *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei*, New York, 1996, p. 225, pl. 99, where authors describe this group of archaic style bronzes cast with the same inscription, *op. cit.* p. 228 as follows: "The most famous name in bronze casting in the Southern Song period is that of Chiang Niang-tzu (Madame Chiang). We know that the Chiang family workshop continued through the Yuan dynasty, as there are references to Chiang-style bronzes used as models in casting ritual vessels in the Hsuan-te reign (1426-35) in the early Ming period. Today there is no surviving work that can be reliably attributed to this family." A number of archaic style bronzes of different shapes and styles cast with the same inscription are recorded by Wang Shichen (1634-1711) in his book of miscellaneous notes, the *Chu-i Lu*, published in 1701.

Two yellow paper labels of unknown origin on the interior of the vessel follow the format of imperial inventory labels.

晚明 - 清初 《紹興二年》銘 銅仿古方彝 高 17.9 厘米





54. A ZITAN TREE TRUNK FORM CENSER

18th Century

well carved in the form of a segment of the trunk of an old tree and lined with pewter to protect the timber from the heat.

Diameter 4 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches (11 cm)

Height 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches (6.5 cm)

Provenance Private Collection, Asia

Published Flacks, *Custodians of the Scholar's Way*, London, 2014, p. 271

十八世紀 紫檀鑲錫蠟樹樁形香爐 徑 11 厘米 高 6.5 厘米



55. A *ZITAN* TALL BOX

18th Century

with deep hinged lid and squared projecting rims at the mouth, the well-matched *zitan* timber with lustrous dark patina enhanced by fine *huangtong* (yellow brass) mounts.

6¾ × 5⅛ × 4 inches (17 × 13 × 10 cm)

The unusually tall and narrow proportions of this box indicate that it was designed and made for a special purpose, perhaps as the case for a pair of seals.

十八世紀 紫檀小箱 17 × 13 × 10 厘米





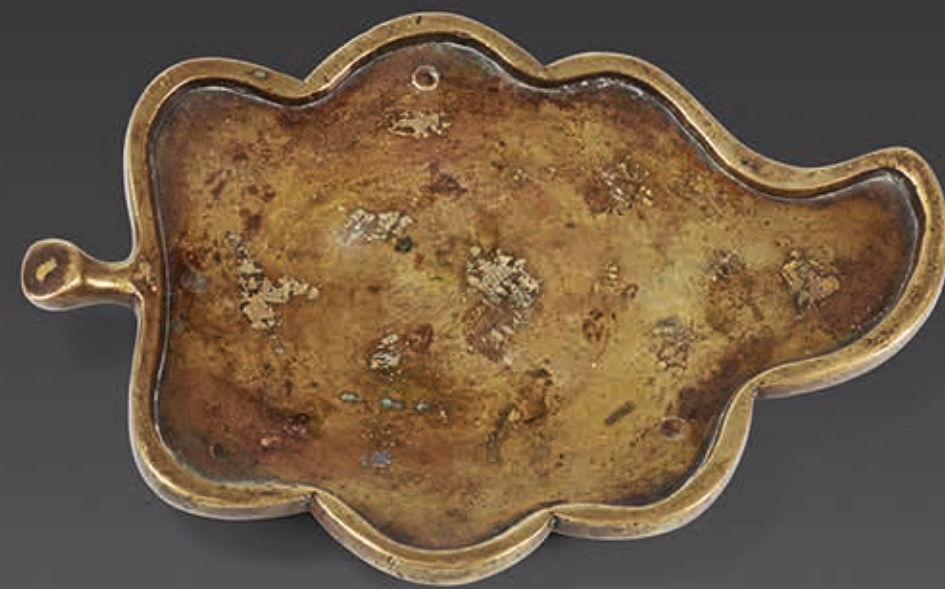
56. A GOLD-SPLASHED BRONZE INCENSE TRAY

18th Century

cast in the shape of an oak leaf with raised edges and stem-handle, the flat interior embellished with splashes of gold, resting on three seed-shaped supports.

Length 5 inches (12.5 cm)

十八世紀 銅灑金葉形香碟 長 12.5 厘米



57. A *ZITAN* INCENSE TOOL VASE

18th Century

of mallet shape with barrel-rounded sides, rimless foot and slender tapered neck rising to a rounded lip.

Height 4 inches (10.5 cm)

Provenance Private Collection, Asia

Published Flacks, *Custodians of the Scholar's Way*, London, 2014, p. 277

十八世紀 紫檀筋瓶 高 10.5 厘米



58. A *HUANGHUALI* LOTUS POD FORM INCENSE BOX

17th-18th Century

with steeply rounded thick ribbed sides, the cover realistically modelled with moveable seeds.

Diameter 2½ inches (6.4 cm)

The symbolism of the lotus flower and the tight-fitting cover make this box both suitable and practical for incense powder.

It is rare to see this form of box made of *huanghuali* rather than *zitan*.

十七-十八世紀 黃花梨蓮蓬形香盒 徑 6.4 厘米





59. A *HUANGHUALI* SMALL TRAVELLING CHEST

18th Century

with asymmetrically grained door panels imparting a sense of movement within the rigid rectangular frame braced by a square-cornered carrying handle, the austere linearity of the design enhanced by simple brass mounts, the interior fitted with five small drawers for seals and other scholarly accoutrements.

7 × 8 × 5 inches (17.8 × 20.5 × 12.5 cm)

十八世紀 黃花梨提箱 17.8 × 20.5 × 12.5 厘米



60. AN OVAL *HUANGHUALI* TRAY

17th–18th Century

for the scholar's desk, made of a solid piece of well-figured timber, the thick low sides with rolled-out lip over a concave moulding.

10¼ × ¾ × 6¼ inches (26 × 2 × 16 cm)

At some point in the history of this tray a long split in the timber was stabilized by a skilled carpenter using two flush wooden patches which now show an aged, matching patina.

十七–十八世紀 黃花梨橢圓形承盤 26 × 2 × 16 厘米





61. A *ZITAN* DOCUMENT BOX

18th Century

with hinged lid and *baitong* (white brass) mounts including bail handles, inset corner mounts and scrolled lock escutcheon, the timber well matched.

16 $\frac{1}{8}$  × 6 $\frac{7}{8}$  × 9 inches (41 × 17.5 × 22.8 cm)

Provenance Grace Wu Bruce, Hong Kong, 1987

Boxes of this shape and size would have been used to hold brushes, paper, books and other scholarly objects.

十八世紀 紫檀長箱 41 × 17.5 × 22.8 厘米



62. A BAMBOO-FORM YIXING TEAPOT AND COVER

Qing Dynasty, Late 19th-Early 20th Century

modelled as a nodule of bamboo, the short tapered spout and loop handle also modelled as bamboo and the well-fitted cover with bamboo-stalk loop finial sprouting small leaves, the purplish-brown clay with attractive dark patination; the seal inside the cover may be read as *Jing'an* (靜安); the seal on the base may be read as *Fan zhuang nong jia* (范莊農家).

Width 7 inches (17.8 cm)

Height 3 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches (8.6 cm)

Provenance Private Collection, New York

The seal inside the cover records the potter's name: *Jing'an*. The seal on the base indicates that the potter is a member of the Fan family.

A Yixing teapot of the same form bearing the same two impressed seal marks and dated to 1903 by a carved inscription around the waist is illustrated by Tam, *K.S. Lo Collection in the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware, Part 2*, Hong Kong, 1984, p. 96, no. 68.

清 《范靜安》宜興朱泥竹節式茶壺 寬 17.8 厘米 高 8.6 厘米





63. A JIANYAO 'HARE'S FUR'— GLAZED TEA BOWL

Song Dynasty (960-1279)

with a lustrous very dark brown-black glaze suffused with slightly iridescent silvery-brown 'hare's fur' streaks on the interior and exterior, the base unglazed, revealing the dark purplish clay.

Diameter 4¾ inches (12.1 cm)

Provenance Private Collection, New York

A similar Jianyao tea bowl is illustrated by Mowry, *Hare's Fur, Tortoiseshell, and Partridge Feathers: Chinese Brown- and Black-Glazed Ceramics, 400-1400*, Cambridge, 1996, pp. 218-219, no. 82 and the same bowl previously was illustrated by Dubosc, *Mostra d'Arte Cinese: Settimo Centenario di Marco Polo* (Exhibition of Chinese Art: The Seventh Centenary of Marco Polo), Venice, 1954, pp. 138-139, no. 495. Another Jianyao 'hare's fur'-glazed teabowl of this classic form, in the Percival David Foundation, London, is illustrated by Pierson, *Song Ceramics: Objects of Admiration*, London, 2003, pp. 44-45, no. 12.

Compare also the Jianyao 'hare's fur'-glazed teabowl with silver-mounted rim illustrated by Wu, *Earth Transformed: Chinese Ceramics in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, Boston, 2001, pp. 72-73, where the author states that this type of teabowl was favored by the emperor Huizong (r. 1101-1125), who was a great connoisseur of tea and wrote famous treatises on the subject.

宋 建窑兔毫紋盞 徑 12.1 厘米



64. A HEXAGONAL *ZITAN* BRUSHPOT

18th Century

of rare and complex form, made of six well-matched slightly concave separate panels joined to create 'butterfly' corners which extend slightly to create delicate feet at the base; the fluid shape well complemented by a rich dark patina.

Height 4 $\frac{5}{8}$  inches (11.7 cm)

Provenance Collection of Ronald W. Longsdorf, Hong Kong

Published MD Flacks Ltd., *Brushpots*, New York, 2009, no. 16

十八世紀 紫檀六菱筆筒 高 11.7 厘米





65. A POLISHED STONE CENSER

Early Tang Dynasty, 7th Century

of domed shape, the thick sides rounded up to a rimless circular aperture on top encircled by four clusters of three vertical slots high on the sloping shoulders, the stone attractively mottled in olive-brown and black, polished to a high gloss on the exterior.

Height 5 inches (12.7 cm)

Compare the Tang straw-glazed pottery incense burner of closely related form in the Avery Brundage Collection at the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, illustrated by He in *Chinese Ceramics: The New Standard Guide*, London, 1996, no. 127, where the author notes the aristocratic practice of fumigating clothing using this type of incense burner, perhaps inspired by earlier ritual practices. A Sui or early Tang straw-glazed pottery figure of a court lady holding a censer of this same form, also in the Brundage Collection, is illustrated by He, *ibid.*, no. 129. Compare also the Sui pottery tomb figure holding a censer of this form discovered near Shachang, Yubei, Anyang district, Hebei province, in the tomb of Zhang Sheng, dated to A.D. 595, illustrated by Tregear, *Arts of China: Neolithic Cultures to the T'ang Dynasty - Recent Discoveries*, Tokyo, 1968, fig. 352 (5).

初唐 滑石薰香 高 12.7 厘米



66. A HUANGHUALI AND MARBLE TABLE SCREEN

17th - 18th Century

the Dali marble panel cut and polished on both sides to show abstract scenes evoking flowing rivers in cloud-shrouded mountains, mounted within a plain wide *huanghuali* frame raised on bracket supports braced by curvilinear spandrels and a matching apron.

18¼ × 20¾ × 8¾ inches (46.3 × 51.3 × 22.2 cm)

Provenance Collection of Arch. Ignazio Vok, Austria

Published *Pure Form: Classical Chinese Furniture, Vok Collection*, Munich, 2004, no. 42

Exhibited Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Köln, *Pure Form*, 2004

Small table screens, sometimes referred to as inkscreens, were essential paraphernalia for the Chinese scholar's painting table, with the primary function of shielding the area used for ink preparation from drafts and sunlight. This type of table screen, with panels made from marble found in Dali, Yunnan province showing natural abstract landscapes also had a more esoteric function, serving as a source of inspiration, taking the scholar's mind away from mundane reality into the freer realm of art and creativity.

十七-十八世紀 黃花梨嵌大理石山水紋硯屏 46.3 × 51.3 × 22.2 厘米





67. A MALACHITE MOUNTAIN-FORM SCHOLAR'S ROCK

18th – 19th Century

of natural botryoidal form, flattened at the base and polished all over to resemble a mountain range of forested slopes around a steep weathered central peak, on fitted *hongmu* stand.

Width 7½ inches (19 cm)

Width with base 9⅛ inches (23.2 cm)

Malachite is among the types of desirable stones listed in the famous Song dynasty treatise, the *Yunlin shipu* (Stone Catalogue of Cloudy Forest) by Du Wan, published in the first half of the 12th century.

十八 – 十九世紀 孔雀石隨形山子 寬 23.2 厘米





68. ZHANG LING (ACTIVE 18TH CENTURY)  
ENJOYING ANTIQUITIES

Inscribed and dated 13th year of Qianlong (1749)

Signed and with three seals

Ink and color on silk

46<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 42<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches (119 × 108 cm)

The inscription may be read as:

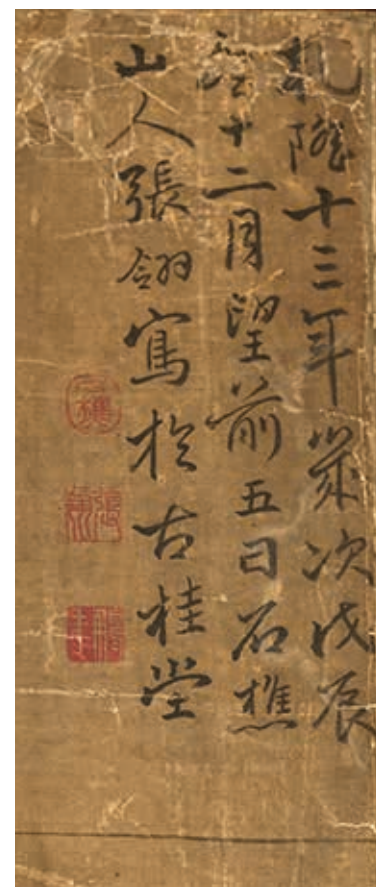
乾隆十三年 歲次戊辰 冬十二月望前五日 石樵山人張翎寫於古桂堂

which may be translated as:

“Thirteenth year of Qianlong reign, *wu chen* year [in the cycle] winter, twelfth lunar month, five days before the full moon [10th day of the month – corresponding to January 28, 1749], Shiqiao Shanren Zhang Ling painted in Gu Gui Tang.”

Seals: round, relief Shi Qiao (石樵)  
square, relief Zhang Ling (張翎)  
square, intaglio Peng Nian (鵬年)

張翎 乾隆十三年款 賞古圖 絹本設色 119 × 108 厘米





69. A *HUAMU* Box

18th Century

with gently rounded corners, the hinged cover with cushion-form top and the mouth rims with beaded edges, the burl of rich tone and well figured, with *baitong* (white brass) lock plate and hasp.

9¾ × 3½ × 6 inches (25 × 8.8 × 15 cm)

十八世紀 樺木長箱 25 × 8.8 × 15 厘米



70. A MOTTLED PALE CELADON JADE BRUSHPOT  
Qianlong - Jiaqing Period, Late 18th-Early 19th Century

deeply carved with a continuous scene of sages and immortals, several gathering *lingzhi* fungus near a small pavilion with peaked roof, two others standing near a waterfall viewing a handscroll, all in an idealized mountain landscape with gnarled pine and *wutong* trees growing amidst jagged rocky cliffs rising to drifting clouds beneath the thick rounded rim, the flattened base also carved as rockwork, of cloudy pale greenish white tone with tan mottling throughout.

Height 5¼ inches (13.4 cm)

Provenance Collection of Thomas Barlow Walker (1840-1928), Minneapolis

Published *Jades of the T.B. Walker Collection at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota*, n.d., pp. 63-64, cat. no. 65 [x.127]

乾隆 - 嘉慶時期 青玉雕山水人物筆筒 高 13.4 厘米





71. A HUANGHUALI TABLE WITH 'TAOTIE' SPANDRELS  
17th – Early 18th Century

the single-plank solid top with quarter-round flanges at the narrow ends, embellished with a wide beaded border on the upper edge and fine rounded beading on the lower edge above spandrels of highly unusual design, resembling an ancient bronze *taotie* mask motif, the straight legs resembling a sheathed sword, ending in block feet and joined by humpback stretchers.

62½ × 33⅝ × 13⅝ inches (158.8 × 85.4 × 34.6 cm)

Provenance Private Collection, Florida  
Eskenazi Ltd., London

This table is a superb example of a style and construction found only in furniture made in Fujian province. The unusual joinery, using dramatic wide spandrels without any apron, joined flush to the legs by sliding over a dovetail tenon at the top of each leg, is unique to furniture from Fujian, and the bold humpback stretchers are typical of the finest furniture from the Fujian region.

It is interesting to note that in most of the known examples of altar tables constructed without aprons the spandrels are placed at the extreme ends of the top, as seen in this example, not recessed as is more commonly seen on altar tables with aprons. Compare, for example, the *tieli* wood long altar table, also from Fujian, illustrated in Flacks, *Classical Chinese Furniture*, London, 2011, pp. 210-211.

Compare also the *longyan* wood table with spandrels and construction similar to the present example, illustrated by Ang in "Further Studies of Chinese Furniture in Various Woods: Longyan Wood Furniture", *Arts of Asia*, September-October 2004, p. 71, no. 19, where the author notes that "Several of such tables in *longyan* and other woods have appeared on the market showing that at one time they were quite popular in Fujian."

十七 – 十八世紀初 黃花梨翹頭案 158.8 × 85.4 × 34.6 厘米





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Cover: Cat. no. 66

Frontispiece: Cat. no. 39, 49, 57

Calligraphy opposite No. 20:

Tai Xiangzhou's *kaishu* calligraphy is a commentary on the titles, imagery and traditional practices associated with Kui Xing, the deity known as the Guardian of Scholars. Several ritual titles are quoted and the origin of his name *kui* (魁), pronounced the same as the ancient character for literature (奎), combined with his place in the night sky, associated with the Big Dipper and the North Star (璇璣), are cited as the basis for his image as a dancing humpbacked demon. Kui Xing's close connection with the annual imperial examinations, when the success or failure of every aspiring Chinese scholar's career was determined, is illustrated by the custom of referring to the Five Classics of Confucian Literature as the "Wu Kui" and naming an examination champion in each of the five categories as the "Kui". In the Ming period some scholars even brought small votive figures of Kui Xing to place on the desk during imperial exams.

Photography: Ornan Rotem, Oren Eckhaus

Line drawing of Cat. no. 20: Num Stibbe

Ink rubbings and seal impressions: Vanessa Quinn, I-Hsuan Chen

Printed in Hong Kong by Pressroom

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