

Virtual Museum

1. Yellow Jade Boar-Dragon Jue

Neolithic, Hongshan Culture (c. 3600–2000 BC)
Width: 10.4 cm Height: 14.1 cm
Weight: 872 g

Do you see this as a “boar-dragon” or a “bear-dragon”?

The lines cutting through the thickness of the curled piece shaped like a “C” are clear, smooth, and clean. The head, outlined by indented lines, has big, round, staring eyes, closed protruding lips, and prominent ears.

Zoomorphic jade objects are typical of the Hongshan culture, which is named after the site of the discovery that was made behind the Hongshan (the Red Mountain) of Chifeng City in Liaoning Province, China. This boar-dragon is the most exquisite and outstanding piece of its kind. It was used for worship by people of the Neolithic era praying for protection and safety.



This object is from the collection of the Tianjin Museum of Art.



THE CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR
CHINESE HERITAGE PRESERVATION
加拿大保護中國文物基金會

2. The Jade Suit of Princess Douwan

Western Han Dynasty
(206 bc- 25 ad)

The burial customs of aristocrats in ancient China reflected a strong desire for immortality and the extraordinary efforts that were made to pursue it.



Shaped to fit the body and made up of five parts - head, upper body, pants, gloves, and shoes - the jade suit of Princess Douwan was sewn together with 2,160 pieces of jade, using 700 grams of gold wire. Most of the jade pieces were square or rectangular in shape. To turn angles and cover special areas, pieces of jade of various geometric shapes were used. The making of this jade suit would have taken one hundred thousand (100,000) working days by today's standards.

The jade suit covered the whole body. At the top of the head, there is a ring-shaped jade, with a hole in the middle. It is believed that this was meant to be a passageway for the soul.

Princess Douwan, wife of Liu Sheng, brother of Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty, crossed her rank in having a burial suit of an emperor, using gold instead of silver wire.

Excavated from the No. 2 Tomb at Mancheng in Hebei Province in 1968, this jade suit unlocked the thousand-year-old mystery of how jade was used in humanity's pursuit of immortality.

This object is from the collection of the Hebei Museum.



THE CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR
CHINESE HERITAGE PRESERVATION
加拿大保護中國文物基金會

3. Jade Dragon with Gold Belt Hook

Western Han Dynasty
(206 bc - 25 ad)

In 1983, the tomb of Emperor Wen, the second king of Nanyue (r. 137-122 bc), was found in Guangzhou (Canton). Numerous important jade pieces were excavated, including this dragon-shaped plaque with gold belt hook. Also found was a jade shroud, similar to that of Princess Douwan, which had originally been held together by silk thread.



This object is from the collection of the Museum of the King of Nanyue's Tomb, Guangzhou.



THE CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR
CHINESE HERITAGE PRESERVATION
加拿大保護中國文物基金會

4. White Jade Sceptre (Ruyi) with Emperor Qian Long's Calligraphy

Qing Dynasty (1644–1911 ad)
Length: 40.5 cm Width: 9.7 cm Height: 4.6 cm
Weight: 583 g

This ruyi (literally meaning "as you wish"), carved from a single whole piece of white jade, was commissioned by Emperor Qian Long and made in the imperial jade workshops. It is a rarity to find such a piece of jade of this dimension and quality, let alone the intricate process in the making.



On the handle of the ruyi there are carved peony flowers and lingzhi plants, symbolizing prosperity and longevity. The upper part shows the sculptured pattern of a fish jumping from the sea, and the top shows a bat with wings stretched out. It has a streamlined curved shape.

On the back of the ruyi, etched in outlines of gold, is a poem written by Emperor Qian Long. A ruyi was often presented on special occasions like birthdays, signifying good wishes for the recipient.



THE CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR
CHINESE HERITAGE PRESERVATION
加拿大保護中國文物基金會

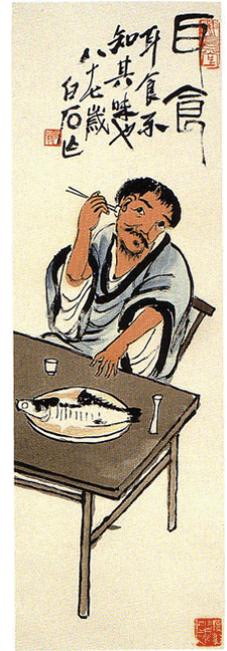
5. Tasting Food with the Ear

Western Han Dynasty
(206 bc - 25 ad)

From Xiangtan, Hunan Province. He was the Honorary Professor of the Central Art Institute, Chairman of the Institute of Chinese Painting, Beijing, and the Chairman of Federation of Chinese Artists. In his later years, he taught in the Beijing Art College. His painting strokes are free, bold and confident. As an artistic proposition, he advocated that "paintings should stand between 'look-like' and 'look-unlike'." His creative ideas opened up a new road for Chinese paintings. He was given an "International Peace Award" in 1955. After his death, he was elected as one of the world's ten "greatest cultural dignitaries."



THE CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR
CHINESE HERITAGE PRESERVATION
加拿大保護中國文物基金會



6. Zen(1970)

Lu Shoukun(1919 - 1975)

A native of Guangzhou, Guangdong, he studied painting from his father Lu Canming. He devoted himself in painting landscapes and flowers in the traditional style in his early years, and later turned to painting in an abstract style. He developed 'Zen Painting' by blending philosophical concepts of taoism and Buddhism with Chinese ink painting techniques in a distinctive manner, which created significant impact in the Hong Kong art circle. His works have been shown at home or abroad. He was granted the MBE honour by the British Government in 1971.



THE CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR
CHINESE HERITAGE PRESERVATION
加拿大保護中國文物基金會



7. Blackwood jade plaque stand carved with dragon and cloud design

Period : 18th Century

Size: Ht 15cm



Decorated with a rising and a descending dragons contending for a pearl amidst ruyi clouds, the stand is carved integrally from a single block of wood. It is used to display jade bi, which is a round disc with a hole in the centre. It is a ritual object representing heaven. Having been inserted into the groove of the arc-shaped flange on top of the stand, the jade bi is held upright and form a table screen en bloc.

The Chinese emperor calls himself the son of heaven. The ruyi clouds symbolize the granting of all wishes. The configuration of the bi and the stand form an auspicious assemblage that augurs the granting of all wishes from heaven.



THE CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR
CHINESE HERITAGE PRESERVATION
加拿大保護中國文物基金會

8. Zitan stand with rococo motifs

Period : Qing dynasty (18th Century)

Size: D 12 cm

The circular top is inset within a frame with foliate sections of double reeded side and a 'water-stopping' rim. The framework joins to a recessed waist with pierced panels of floral design. The waist descends onto a shaped apron and surmounts with finely carved openwork of acanthus-leaf scrolls flanked by floral sprays continuing onto the cabriole legs terminating in scroll-toed feet resting on a finely carved stretcher raised on squat ruyi-cloud pad feet.



The sophisticated decoration with acanthus-leaf motif shows distinctive characteristics of the rococo style. Probably this stand would have been used to display playthings in Yuanmingyuan, the summer palace built in 1740/47. It was one of the most magnificent complexes ever built in Imperial China. Unfortunately it was sacked and destroyed by arson during the Anglo-French Expedition to Beijing in 1860.



THE CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR
CHINESE HERITAGE PRESERVATION
加拿大保護中國文物基金會

9. Zitan stand for jade carving decorated with silver-threaded inlay

Period : 18th Century

Size: L 12 cm



The oblate stand has a deep flange and a sunken top with a central panel of openwork decoration. Both short ends of the stand show free-form decoration of ruyi clouds and waves carved in high



relief. Only the middle part of the stand on the longer side shows its geometric design. It has a silver-threaded inlay fretwork of continuous square spiral on the side of the flange, and a recessed waist. The apron is decorated with openwork carving of chi-dragons outlined by silver-threaded inlay on either side of squat cabriole leg. The leg is likewise decorated with an animal mask in silver thread. This stand demonstrates the superb craftsmanship of the imperial workshop.



THE CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR
CHINESE HERITAGE PRESERVATION
加拿大保護中國文物基金會

10. A large blackwood stand formed by a design resembling a twisting rope

Period : Qing dynasty (19th Century)

Size: D 20 cm



The skilled craftsman has demonstrated exceptionally technical virtuosity in carving this stand from a single block of blackwood. Viewing from above, an interesting interlocking geometric medallion appears. Its elevation reveals it to be a large round stand. The flaring top descends to a recessed waist, then a circular apron, five "pleated" cabriole legs and horizontal stretcher before becoming pleat-like feet. In short, it is a wooden artifact seemingly woven with a piece of rope. Error is unthinkable in such scrupulous carving nor is improvement possible. The open structure evokes a feeling of lightness and flow of space.



THE CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR
CHINESE HERITAGE PRESERVATION
加拿大保護中國文物基金會