

Arts of Asia Lecture Series Fall 2018
Desert Encounters: Arts, Cultures and Kingdoms of the Silk Roads
Sponsored by The Society for Asian Art

The Jade Road in the Qing Dynasty

Patricia Berger, UC Berkeley
October 26, 2018

Jade (Chinese: yù 玉): A portmanteau term that includes, among other stones, **nephrite**, a silicate of calcium and magnesium (from, among other places, the three “Jade Rivers”—White, Black, and Green—near Khotan/Hetian, Xinjiang), and **jadeite**, a silicate of sodium and aluminum (primarily from Myanmar), also called *feicui* 翡翠 (kingfisher feathers).

Nephrite mining and carving during the Qianlong reign (1736-95)

Organization of the Khotan jade trade under the Qing Qianlong emperor—from tribute to “local product” (*fangwu* 方物)

Li Dou 李斗 on jade mining in Khotan: “White jade was originally found in the rivers in Khotan. There are three rivers in Khotan, the black, white, and green jade rivers, which produce jadestones that correspond to the name of the rivers. The best jade can be found in a place called Shiziwang, located west of the ancient Jade Gate. The *Huanyou jiwén* 宦遊紀聞 and *Hetian xingcheng ji* 和田行程記 contain detailed records on this. [Khotan] is now included in the registry and map [of the empire], and its jade has become a **local product** (*jinru ban tu, qi yu suiwei fangwu* 今入版圖，其玉遂為方物). The merchants use raw bullock skins to pack and tie [the jade], human laborers and draught animals such as horses and mules deliver it to the inner region (*neidi* 內地), and trade it by weight. Suzhou jade carvers use abrasive sand and diamonds to make mythological and Buddhist figures, humans, animals, pots, plates and basins, including all styles from the *Bogutu* 博古圖. [The carvers] inlay the fragment pieces in standing screens, hanging screens, and table screens. (Together) these are called jade work.” ---*Yangzhou huafang lu* 揚州畫舫錄 (Record of the Painted Boats of Yangzhou, 1795), based on a translation by Youlian Wu).

Categories of Qing jades: sculptures, archaicizing jades, ancient jades and “ancient jades” with imperial inscriptions (AAMSF examples)

“Hindustan” jades (also Mughal, Islamic, Turkish)—real and copied (AAMSF examples); described by Qianlong as “devilishly worked” (*guigong* 鬼工).

Jade coffin of Timur, Samarkand, 1426; Nephrite cup sent by Ming Zhengtong emperor to Timurid Ulugh Beg in 1445 (British Museum); Shah Jahan’s wine cup, 1657 (Victoria & Albert Museum)

Muslim jade carvers summoned to Beijing in 1762

Jade objects produced in Xinjiang emulated as early as 1764 (cf. large platter for serving horse milk that was duplicated at the court)

Jade plates carved with Qianlong’s essay on the geography of Hindustan

Jade longevity mountains (*shoushan* 壽山)—painting in stone

Dali marble “paintings”; table-top jade mountains in the Asian Art Museum’s collection

Jade Mountain (based on) the Picture “Spring Dawn at the Vermilion Platform” (Dantai chunxiao tu yushan 丹台春曉圖玉山). H: 105 cm, W: 150 cm, 1500 kg. Completed in 1780.

Cf. paintings by Wang Meng 王蒙, Yuan dynasty (National Palace Museum, Taiwan); Lu Ying 陸應, Yuan dynasty (National Palace Museum, Taiwan); and Wang Yuanqi 王原祁 (after Wang Meng), Qing dynasty, 1707 (Palace Museum, Beijing).

Jade Mountain (based on) the Picture “Great Yu Controlling the Waters” (Da Yu zhi shui tu yushan 大禹治水圖玉山), 1781-87, inscribed with a poem of the Qianlong emperor (Palace Museum, Ningshou Palace, Beijing). H: 224, W: 96 cm, 5000 kg. Boulder found at Mount Mileta 密勒塔山 near Khotan.

Stories of ancient attempts to explore and control the Yellow River by Yao 堯, Shun 舜, Gun 鯀, and Yu the Great 大禹 (see Yu’s “portrait by Ma Lin 馬麟, Southern Song, National Palace Museum, Taiwan)

Anonymous, Ming dynasty, *Expelling the Demons from the Mountains (Soushen tu 搜神圖)*, handscroll, ink and colors on paper (Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive)

Anonymous, Song dynasty, *Da Yu zhi shui tu* (Palace Museum, Beijing)

Xie Sui 謝遂, Qing dynasty, *Da Yu zhi shui tu*, painting and *kesi* (silk tapestry) versions (National Palace Museum, Taiwan)

The Black Jade Basin of Khubilai Khan, Yuan dynasty, saussurite (Nanhai, Beijing) (Qianlong era copy in Metropolitan Museum)

Fuhai 福海 jade basin, 1780 (Palace Museum, Beijing)

The Xinjiang Wars (1755-59) and Qianlong’s efforts at flood control

Xu Yang 徐揚, The Southern Tours handscrolls (*Qianlong nanxun tu 乾隆南巡圖*)

Scroll 4: The Confluence of the Huang and Huai Rivers (*Huang Huai jiaoliu 黃淮交流*) (Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY)

Three Gorges Dam: Baiheliang 白鶴梁 (White Crane Ridge) Underwater Museum, protecting ancient stone carvings of fish and inscriptions related to water control, Tang dynasty. Fuling, Chongqing Municipality.

Suggested Readings:

- Terese Tse Bartholomew, Michael Knight, et al., *Later Chinese Jades: Ming Dynasty to Early Twentieth Century* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 2007)
- Jessica Rawson, *Chinese Jade from the Neolithic to the Qing* (Chicago: Art Media Resources, Ltd., 1995)
- Charles Q. Mason, *Spinach Green and Mutton-fat White: Chinese Jades of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911)*, (Gainesville, FL: Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, 2006)
- Gugong suozang Hendusitan yuqi tulu 古宮所藏痕都斯坦玉器特展圖錄* (Catalogue of a Special Exhibition of Hindustan Jade in the National Palace Museum (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1983) (bilingual Chinese-English text)
- Michael Chang, “Fathoming Qianlong: Imperial Activism, the Southern Tours, and the Politics of Water Control, 1736-65), *Late Imperial China* 24.2 (December 2003): 51-108.
- Mark Edward Lewis, *The Flood Myths of Early China* (Albany, NY: State University of New York/SUNY, 2006)
- Philip Ball, *The Water Kingdom: A Secret History of China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016)