

WORKS OF CHINESE STONE-CUTTING ART AT FERSMAN MINERALOGICAL MUSEUM OF RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

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This article is the first publication about Chinese stone-cutting art in a collection of Fersman Mineralogical Museum of Russian Academy of Sciences.

32 figures, 33 references.

Keywords: Fersman Mineralogical Museum, works of stone-cutting art, Chinese art, collection of ornamental and precious stones.

The collection of Fersman Mineralogical Museum of Russian Academy of Sciences began to form as a part of cabinet of curiosities, which was founded by Peter the Great in 1714. Inter alia the Mineral cabinet was created. Then, in 1836, it was reorganized into an independent Mineralogical Museum as a part of Russian Academy of Sciences. Though in the first catalogue of the collection, compiled by M.V. Lomonosov and published in 1745, there were descriptions of several small plaquettes of Florentine mosaic (Novgorodova, 2011), collecting of stone products was not included in the objectives of the Museum and their appearance in the collection (right up to the twentieth century) had an incidental character. Even in the catalogues of the 19th century mentioned only a few stone carving items and they were all Chinese, for example in Ivan Wagner's (Wagner, 1806) and Konstantin Grewingk's (Grewingk, 1846) catalogues.

In the Mineralogical Museum the current collection of the collection of ornamental and precious stones was first formed only in the 1920s, during the period of rapid nationalization of the property of the Royal family and the nobility. A huge amount of seized material was donated to various museums.

By this time among the Museum's collections, there existed several thematic sets of exhibits. It was possible to create a collection of chiselled stones, including artistically done ones. The direction of the Museum appealed to various organizations of Leningrad (the Museum moved to Moscow later in 1934) with the request to transfer the material to the new Fund. Many departments responded to the request and as a result during several years there was created a new Fund — it was

a collection of ornamental and gem stones. Chinese stone-carving works received from different organizations and from a few individuals appeared in the collection, the time of the production of which in the inventory lists is marked as "new".

In following years, up to 1980 — 1986s, Chinese masters' works almost didn't come to the Museum. Only with the beginning of the Perestroika an opportunity of purchasing of some things and getting them through the exchange appeared. All these items are from the late 20th — early 21st century.

Unfortunately, the collection of Chinese stone carving art still almost does not attract attention of the researchers. The exception is the article written by D.D. Novgorodova. It has published two jade disks, donated to the Museum by chief curator of the Museum V.I. Kryzhanovsky in 1923 and jade "disk 3", received in 1949 from the State Historical Museum and which is not a disk, but the image of the animal is most likely as a dragon curled up in the ring (Novgorodova, 2004). The attribution of these works D.D. Novgorodova conducted on a broad historical and cultural background. We do not object to the proposed D.D. Novgorodova dates: ranging from the Ming dynasty (1368 — 1644 years.) until the early twentieth century for a single disk within the 19th — beginning of 20th century to another and within the second half of 17th — beginning of 20th century for the image of a coiled into a ring of the dragon. This cautious, relatively late dating is reasonable.

China is predominantly a mountainous country, except for the lower reaches of large rivers carrying their waters to the Pacific Ocean and the great plain between the Huang He and the Yangtze River. It applies not

only to the southern and North-Eastern China, but to included in China vast regions of Inner Mongolia, Qinghai, Tibet and East Turkestan (present-day Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous region). It is a vast territory with numerous deposits of various minerals. China can be called a country of stone and stone-cutting art, traditions which comprise the millennia.

The collection of the Mineralogical Museum is not an accurate reflection of the mineral resources of China. In general, this is a collection of products that were accidentally included into the Museum. They were not the main object of gathering, keeping and analysis. At the same time, the "Chinese character" of the collection as a whole meets if not the variety of produced in China ornamental stones, but preferences and tastes of Chinese stone-cutters.

About half of stored in the Museum works of Chinese stone-cutters are jade. Nephrite is one of the favorite in China stones. Its hardness can be called average (5.5 on the Mohs scale). But jade is so thick and viscous that in ancient times it was already a great material for various works.

The second place in popularity in the Chinese collection of the Museum is agalmatolite, well-known ornamental stone. Agalmatolite is a solid variety of the mineral pyrophyllite. Its name is composed of the Greek words "agalma" (a sculpture, a statue) and "lithos" (a stone) and other names of this mineral (a soapstone, a waxstone, steatite, pagodite) they say of its softness or of those beautiful products, which can be carved out of it (Korenyako, Chistyakova, 2012). The hardness of agalmatolite (1 – 3 on the Mohs scale) allows carving it with an ordinary knife and the combination of density and viscosity gives the stone plastic qualities, highly valued in stone-cutting art.

A significant number of Chinese works were carved out of quartz and its varieties like rock crystal, amethyst, chalcedony, carnelian, agate, moss agate.

There are only few instances of using fluorite and turquoise.

Malachite is also little known in Chinese stone-carving art. This mineral has bright green colour and low hardness (3.5 – 4 on the Mohs scale), it's highly valued as a striking ornamental stone in the form of a patterned kidney-shaped units.

The use of fluorite and malachite in Chinese stone-carving art has began relatively recently. In the Mineralogical Museum there

is just one work of fluorite (FMM #PDK 7874) and three Chinese works of malachite. This is the reason for the late arrival of such works in the Museum (malachite – 1982, fluorite – 1998).

These are the basic data on minerals, used for the production of the caught in the Museum of Chinese carved items.

The attribution of Chinese stone-carving works is very difficult. It is connected with the rich artistic heritage of the vast country, whose artistic production is divided into elite and provincial, "folk".

Speaking about the works of the collection we should definitely mention that there are not only the Chinese ("Han") elite works which was connected with the old centers of Chinese crafts, but provincial products, too. So, we must consider China as a huge multi-ethnic country. Part of this state are vast territories inhabited until recent decades, not Chinese and other peoples, who had sustained centuries-old artistic traditions. This is the extreme West of China, East Turkestan, modern Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous region. The main population of East Turkistan Uighur, a Turkic-speaking Muslim people, has long been famous for carpet weaving, art metal work, embroidery. One of the areas Uighur traditional art stone carving has not been studied yet. Touch this area to some extent allow the materials of the Mineralogical Museum of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

When receiving things in the Museum quite often mineral (in this case jade) was determined and commented addition "the Murghab river, China". The use of the hydronym "Murgab in somewhat mysterious, because there is no such river in China (Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous region). Murghab is one of the main sources of the Amu Darya, the current in Gorno-Badakhshan (Tajikistan). On the Murghab River, there are deposits of jade. River valley is separated by only several tens of kilometers (including the crossing of the ridge Sarykol) from Tashkurgan – one of the artisan and trading cities of Xinjiang. Jade was supposed to go to the East across the border of the Russian Empire and Sarykol mountains. Why the source jade could not become its field in China is primarily famous since the Middle Ages jade mines Kunlun part located here in Xinjiang?

Museum documentation does not give answers to these questions. Perhaps codified the definition of "R. Murghab, China" although not quite clear, but indicates a peripheral

(Western China, East Turkestan, Xinjiang, Uighur) the area of production of jade carvings, different from the Han Chinese forms. This, at least, ten items received in the 1920s. Among them are two simple and identical in the shape of a cup, like the Central Asian cups (FMM #PDK-1583, FMM #PDK-1640). Green jade carved small hexagonal "tray" and decorated on the edge of the ellipsoidal cavities — "spoons" (FMM #PDK-1661). As "Persian" in the documents identified carved from gray "the Murghab" jade deep dish (FMM #PDK-2314). Both the internal and external surfaces it is all decorated belts of "spoons". Such decoration matches with wavy edge of the bowl. In General, the style of these products is not Chinese, but rather pointing to the morphological features of the Islamic pottery of Central Asia and the Middle East.

With this group of things we can bring together six jade beads (Fig. 1). They are large, rounded and brown (with the exception of one cut from a lighter, greenish jade). The pattern is made in the technique of inlaying with gold wire. The main part of the pattern is the triple duplicate picture plant sprigs of flowers, leaves, buds, spiral curls. These images are limited to the paired bands of zigzag lines or circuits closed diamonds. In General, the pattern, with all its technological complexity, angular, geometrized and "dry", with a noticeable number of small failures and "texture" and this makes it unambiguous attribution as Chinese ornament. We have no reason to believe these six jade beads Eastern Turkestan products. But in any case within the huge Chinese cultural space such products are the essence of "products second-rate, peripheral, provincial."

Now let us refer to the images of the animals and plants that are characteristic of Chinese art and even to some extent, are emblems of the Chinese artistic traditions.

First place in the list of such images, undoubtedly, is the dragon.

Experts on the history of Chinese culture long incline to the opinion that the image of

the dragon began to emerge in the Neolithic—the late Stone Age, 8th—3rd millennia BC. Me-an stone carvings and images on clay — they are quite guessed animals with long bodies and tails, with a ferocious predator head. In these images we can see the deformed artistic imagination reptiles or amphibians, animals and fantastic animals, which combined features of reality and fiction.

The study of the origin of the image of the dragon in the East Asia and neighboring regions clearly shows that this image took shape in China and very early. In the Neolithic, we see the start of his features, in the Bronze Age in the 2nd millennia BC. it is quite obvious. China is almost indisputable homeland of the dragon image. Of course, the image of the dragon is well known and in neighboring regions (Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Tibet, Vietnam). But that all countries for which China were if not the "mother civilization", in a sense, a cultural metropolis. It is significant that India, with all the complexity of religious beliefs and a high level of art, cannot claim the role of "mother of dragons". Close to the dragon, is also fantastic and "hybrid" image of crocodile-like water monster Makara — in India it has a different origin.

The iconography of the image of the dragon "Lung" quite clearly emerged in China in the era of the first historically attested States Shang-Yin (17th—11th centuries BC). In the era of Zhou (11th—3rd centuries BC) dragon has purchased the kind that practically did not change in the coming era of Chinese history. Mandatory signs images of Chinese dragons: monstrous head with bulging eyes, a wide toothy mouth, moustache, beard and horns, long covered with scales torso and tail, four powerful claws.

The dragon was one of the main places in ancient mythology, religious views, picture of the world. The semantics of the dragon image is varied. He was considered a symbol of the bright male power "Yang", the Supreme power and the Emperor himself, the element of

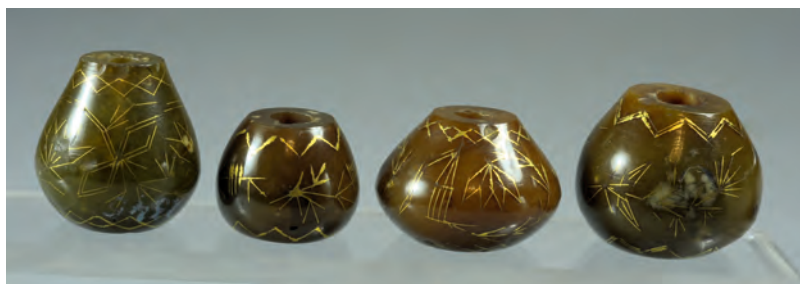


Fig. 1. Beads. Nephritis. Inlaid with gold. From 2.7×2.65 cm to 1.8×2.9 cm. 19th—early 20th centuries. Received from the Department of nonmetallic minerals KEPS (Commission for the Study of Productive Forces) in 1925. FMM #PDK-2345.



Fig. 2. Two-part buckle with dragon. Nephrite. 7.3×5.45×2.75 cm. 19th – early 20th centuries. Purchased from Y.S. Edelstein in 1912. FMM #PDK-814.

Fig. 3. Vase with lid. Rock crystal. Support – wood. Size of the "assembly" (with cover and stand) 24.2×10.55×8.7 cm. 19th – early 20th centuries. Received from the Hermitage in 1926. FMM #PDK-1669.

Fig. 4. Part of the buckle. Nephrite. 9.1×1.8×2.5 cm. The first half of the 20th century. Purchased from B.A. Fedorovich in 1950. FMM #PDK-4911.

fire, Lord of thunder, lightning and rain (Bir, 2011; Terent'ev-Katanskiy, 2004; Fisser, 2008; Shmotikova, 2012).

In the Mineralogical Museum a few things, decorated with dragon images or an image of a dragon. This is primarily a flat image of a coiled into a ring of the dragon "disk 3", published D.D. Novgorodova (Novgorodova, 2004). In the artistic sense, this work is mindless. Decorative developing stonecutter gave so important that it even makes recognition in carved stone dragon image. Essentially, recognizable only horned head, very vaguely depicted paws and tail. You can say that they disappeared in a mass of curls and spiral elements (FMM #PDK-4662).

The plate of light grey (white) jade (FMM #PDK-6935) is also inexpressive. The plate is a delicate image of two dragons in the "heraldic" (symmetric) compositions. Quite discern only the head. All items dragon bodies efface under "pressure" excessive decoration.

More successful is a different product from light gray jade (Fig. 2) received in the Museum collection in 1912, is a two-part belt buckle. Each part of it represents the dragon: a sculpture or bas-relief head with round eyes, horns, mane and flat, enriched with decorative elements, "broken" at right angles to the body. Geometric and decorative character hampers the determination of the dragon image, but after a brief examination of the buckle this task is successfully solved.

The most spectacular in the "dragon" part of the collection of the Museum is a vase with lid, carved from colorless rock crystal (Fig. 3). This is a pretty big subject, the walls of which are covered with large, energetic bas-relief and high relief carvings, combined with cut-lines: vegetative shoots, the abundance of spiral and double-spiral curls. Three deformed and stylized high relief image of dragons stretched vertically. Probably the same animal, but curled up in the ring, depicts the

round sculpture on the cover of the vessel. All images are different heads, ridges and paws. But they are so deformed by styling and overloaded "plant" items, that to call them dragons can only conditionally.

Around the same time (1926), the Museum received a bottle carved from agate (FMM #PDK-1603). It is decorated with bas-relief carvings and with plane-thread. On the shoulders — a simple conditional ornament. The main surface of the body is covered with carvings with a predominance of smooth curves. This is a figure of two opposing dragons. The abundance of large and small spiral curls, turning into drawn from these scrolls branching shoots hard conceals the dragon figure.

The museum has two objects with images of dragons which are made from Kunlun light gray and slightly greenish jade. One of them — part of a belt buckles with a sculptural head and figure of a dragon (see Fig. 4). The other — the head pin is differing with the fine openwork carving. Here depicts a dragon surrounded by lace elements (FMM #PDK-4910).

Given that the Chinese collection of the Mineralogical Museum is small, it is clearly traced one very important feature: with all the clarity of the dragon's image, the attempts to implement in art differ. Peripheral or provincial level of art, the individual features of artistic skill could lead to deviations from the canons and greatly complicate the definition in the dim form of a dragon image. A similar situation apparently exists in the embodiment of a zoomorphic image — comically grotesque lion "Shijia" or "Shifo."

The origin of the fantastic image of "Shijia" is very rarely considered in the special literature (Korenyako, 1998).

It is well known that the area of the lion as a zoological species never locked in historical times the territory of China. Lions for Chinese people have always been rare exotic animals, which were delivered from time to time from the west to the imperial court, since 1st — 2nd centuries AD (Schaefer, 1981, p. 120 — 124; Muensterberg, 1910, S. 103). This huge distance between the visual canon and natural conformation of the animal prototype could be explained by this statement.

In the era of the Qing Dynasty (1644 — 1911) in the architectural decoration, sculpture, painting and arts and crafts of China dominated the iconic canon of the lion "Shijia".

"Shijia" — short-legged creature with the body as it is swollen, with disproportionately

large head and with the common shortened and compressed proportions. "Shijia" cannot be confused with any other animals primarily in the face, mane and tail. His snout — it's grinning pug's face with wide open jaws, bulged eyes, bushy eyebrows and sharply distinguished elements of facial muscles. Mane treated stressed decorative — it consists of a number of regularly spaced curls, each of which is typically a spiral, coiled into a tight cone or pineal bulge. The tail has no stem — almost behind the base of it is dissolved in a more or less lush plumes.

Qing "Shijia" in terms of zoological morphology — not lions at all, although the word itself means "lion", these images have other "lions" names like "Korean Lion", "Lion Fo", ie "Lion of Buddha" (Williams 1941, p. 254).

Morphologically "Shijia" has little in common with the individuals of the cat family and is fully consistent with small dogs of Chinese rock "Pekingese" and "chin".

Analysis of works of Chinese art from the Han Dynasty (3rd century BC — 3rd century AD), says that the first images of lions appeared in China in the 2nd AD. They are dry, laconic, schematized embodiment of real beast. In 3rd — 6th centuries, along with realistic images of the long-tailed animals, other images appear. They differ more grotesque and decorative, with thick tails in the form of sheet, festoon, blades or large curl (Lee, 1968, p. 142, 143, ill. 167; *Asiatische Kunst...*, 1977, S. 18, Abb. 58; Fong, 1991). The coexistence of these two styles of lions images even sharper denoted in the art of the Tang Dynasty (618 — 907.), The second style is developing in the direction of the canon "Shijia" (Lessing, 1936, S. 5, 14, Abb. 2; Jenins, Watson, 1980, p. 34, 89, ill. 17, 53; *Miroir des arts de la Chine*, 1984, p. 315, ill. 174).

Chinese lions' images of the Yuan Dynasty (1260 — 1368) are carried out in full accordance with the canon of "Shijia", i.e. they mark the complete victory of the grotesque ornamental style (Muensterberg, 1912, S. 262, 263, Abb. 219; *Asiatische Kunst...*, 1977, S. 41, Abb. 202). Approximately the same situation is for the era of the Ming Dynasty (1368 — 1644). However, in contrast to the Qing time, in the art of which the canon "Shijia" monopoly dominates, among Ming images of lions can be seen not only grotesque ornamental "Shijia", but also realistic images or images with realistic details, for example with a long thin tail and not the tail-plume (Muensterberg, 1912, S. 72, 146, 147, Abb. 112, 246, 250; Boerschmann, 1914, S. 48 — 54, Bilder 24, 25; Boersch-

mann, 1925, plates 24, 63–65, 81; Muensterberg 1910, S. 317, Abb. 292; Jenins, Watson, 1980, p. 96–98, ill 62, 63).

We can say that the formation of the canon "shijia" completed in China long before the Qing era (obviously, in the end 1st millennium – the first half of the 2nd millennium) that the genesis of this canon was not a simple process.

In the collection of the Mineralogical Museum there are eight products which are the pictures of the fantastic feline predator or they bear his image.

One of the earliest sculptures (in the inventory book – link to the catalog of Grewingk, 1846) – a small (2.7×2.5×1.5 cm) agalmatolite sculpture (FMM #PDK-819). Animal lying on the stand is vaguely interpreted. Many of its features do not coincide with the canon "Shijia": small ears, narrow and long tail with a brush, cutting mane, tail and sides with a simple parallel grooves. Considering the statuette, you do not come to a conclusion, that is, you cannot stop at any of the possible definitions (lion, tiger, "shijia" or a hybrid "tiger-lion").

In 1920s the Museum received a bottle which was carved from smoky, pinkish-purple agate with orange-red spots. Relief images are made of opaque dark (from brown to black) layer (FMM #PDK-1515). On one side of the flattened side bottle – stylized pine branch, on the other – a composition composed of an adult "Shijia" and "Shijia" child which is supplemented with spherical image of emblems and a long ribbon.

At the same time the museum has received a signet from different shades of red agalmatolite (see Fig. 5). Sculptures of adult animal and clung to him a baby can be roughly defined as "Shijia". It is hampered by careless simplified thread and some of the details (small ears, no relief mane with clearly recognizable neck and back because of narrow parallel grooves, "non-canonical" form of the tail). Figures of animals placed on a high and prismatic pedestal, all side and bottom faces of which are filled with Chinese characters.

More specifically discern "Shijia" in a small sculpture of a light gray jade (Fig. 6). But he has also "non-canonical" long and divided into two parts tail, on which sits a bird held by the beast.

One of the images "Shijia" made of turquoise (see Fig. 7). Green ("old") turquoise color varies in intensity and broken by dark gray, almost black spots. As eyes there are two small diamonds with the cut "rose". Most



Fig. 5. Signet with a lion and the young lion "Shijia". Agalmatolite. 7.7×3.6×3.6 cm. 19th – early 20th centuries. Received from the State Museum Fund in 1926. FMM #PDK-1587.

of the features of the product are characteristic for the canonical image "Shijia". However, the top of the legs are completely covered with regular rounded protuberances which resemble large scales or horny scutes, and such cutting is not typical for the Chinese canonical image "Shiji" (but there are examples to refute (see: Mongol ardyn gar urlag)).

At the beginning of the 1980s in the Mineralogical Museum came on exchange the two images "Shijia" carved from African (Congo), malachite (see Figs. 8, 9). Sculptures, obviously made by one master; similar in shape and in ornamentation and with wooden supports for them. The modeling of animals coincides with the visual canon "shijia". One adult lion fell down, holding in his mouth a long ribbon and stepped right with the front paw on the ball. Right at his side fell a child "Shijia". Another picture more succinctly, is not accompanied by any ball or baby figure, but the similarities in the details is very big.

In 1998, the museum acquired two-figure sculptural composition of polychrome fluoroite from South China's Hunan Province



Fig. 6. Lion "Shijia" with bird. Nephrite. 2.25×3.85×3.45 cm. 19th – early 20th centuries. Came from the Department of nonmetallic minerals KEPS in 1925. FMM #PDK-2315.



Fig. 7. Lion "Shijia". Turquoise, diamonds. 2.4×5×2.9 cm. 19th – early 20th centuries. Came from the State Museum Fund in 1927. FMM #PDK-1612.

(FMM PDK #7874). Transparent and translucent stone is bicolored. Between the colors here is a clear boundary, so that the higher animal has a light green color and the color of the lower animal is a combination of light green and light purple hues. Lower animal, judging by the horns, by three-toed paws and by trying to treat the rows of scales – dragon sitting and turning his head back. The second animal, perched on the "dragon", is very difficult to learn. Perhaps this is some sort of feline beast or fantastic creature. The exact definition of animals which were carved from fluorite is impossible, especially if you consider the same techniques of interpretation: both of animals are the same, ending with two swirls of their tails and large plant stems with swirls or leaf-like shapes at the ends are hanging from their maws. Generally, animalistic ima-

ges and their parts are modeled succinctly and rough, which inevitably leads to an uncertain, conjectural definitions. Maybe these features are peculiar to the late and "provincial" Chinese Stone Carving Crafts products.

Pictures of other animals are rare. One of the earliest is fixed in the catalog of Grewingk (№ 351) – a small sculpture of taupe agalmatolite (see Fig. 10). It depicts schematically interpret figure of sitting tailless monkeys, not devoid of comic features like round eyes and grotesquely stretched down jaws. Emblematic role of monkey is well known and fixed in the Far Eastern culture very often. Let us recall that the monkey – one of the zoomorphic emblems of the twelve calendar cycle.

In the 1920s the museum received a cat sculpture, carved from "Murghab" light gray

Fig. 8. Lion and cub "Shijia". Malachite (Africa, the Congo). Support – wood; thread, toning, inlaid metal. Size assembly (on the stand) 7.8×10.2×5.3 cm. Late 20th century. Came from Cisneros Sh. (Miner Res. Co) in 1982. FMM #PDK-6938.

Fig. 9. Lion "Shijia". Malachite (Africa, the Congo). Support – wood; thread, toning, inlaid metal. Size assembly (on the stand) 5.3×7.7×4.15 cm. Late 20th century. Came from Cisneros Sh. (Miner Res. Co) in 1982. FMM #PDK-6939.



jade. Its shape is concise and rounded. The cat is lying, it's head is turned to the right and bending the tail on the right side; rounded and very catlike body and all the details — eyes, ears and even a mustache (see Fig. 11).

Much later, in the early 1980s, the museum acquired the jade sculpture of dog — clearly domestic, if judged by the collar with two ball-shaped pendants (FMM #PDK-6936).

Other images of mammals are not full sculptures. They are the small sculptural or relief parts of larger objects; in fact it's a zoomorphic decoration, although expressive.

Basically, these things were got in Mineralogical Museum in the 1920s except received vase in 1990 (FMM #PDK-7823). This vase of "Murghab" bright greenish-gray jade has a neck with two handles in the form of stylized heads of wild beasts or dragons. In the museum documents the vase was attributed presumably to the 18th century, but hardly worth sticking this dating of the object that is different by a perfectly preserved. Vase, apparently is a good reproduction of the Chinese artistic traditions, but it is unlikely was made before the 20th century.

Small bottle (FMM #PDK-1535) was made of a two-layer agate. Pink stone with grayish spots became the stuff for the image gourd. From white opaque layer was carved two figures which were located on a pumpkin. It's a four-legged animal like a tiger and the leaves on the stems.

Images of bats are very popular in the Chinese cultural tradition. They are placed on an agate composition of two peach fruits (FMM #PDK-1552) on a vase of carnelian



Fig. 10. Monkey. Agalmatolite. $3.4 \times 1.9 \times 2.2$ cm. 18th — first half 19th centuries (?). FMM #PDK-818.

(see Fig. 12) on the belt buckle of the light-gray "Murghab" jade (see Fig. 13) on the vial of yellowish-gray chalcedony (see Fig. 14), where the bat — a very small element of landscape and emblematic composition.

In addition to mammals, images of birds are worth noting. From transparent almost

Fig. 11. Image of a cat. Nephrite. $3.6 \times 5.7 \times 3.35$ cm. Came from the Department of nonmetallic minerals KEPS in 1925. FMM #PDK-2317.

Fig. 12. Vase in the form of two pieces of tree trunks. Carnelian. $8.9 \times 11.3 \times 5.7$ cm. Beginning of the 20th century. Assigned to the State Museum Fund in 1926. FMM #PDK-1600.





Fig. 13. Part of the belt buckle with images of bats. Nephrite. 6.1×4.05×1.75 cm. 19th – early 20th centuries. Received from the V.I. Kryzhanovsky in 1923. FMM #PDK-2319.



Fig. 14. Small bottle. Chalcedony. 6.3×5.9×1.85 cm. 19th – early 20th centuries. Transferred from the Hermitage in 1926. FMM #PDK-1508.

colorless quartz was cut a bottle (FMM #PDK-1511). Its surface layer was used for flat-relief carving: stylized image "rocks" and "water", a large blooming lotus and far schematic figures of heron (or crane).

Of the same transparent slightly yellowish quartz was cut a vessel ("the vase") in a shape of waterfowl, which has turned its head back with an extending from the beak beard, spectacular decorative trim with mortise lines of plane and sculptural carvings. All the bird's body is covered with curls, single and double spirals and circles (see Fig. 15).

It is much easier was done a little amethyst sculpture of waterfowl with chick (see Fig. 16). Cutting was made by carvings and devoid of decorative effects. Mortice straight lines and parallel minor cuts only schematically transmit the plumage or coloring of both birds.

Image of a bird which was carved in the Hong Kong from round agate almonds is dated from the end of the 20th century (Fig. 17). External polished surface is gray and yellow and with dark brown spots the inner part of it is composed of light-blue and blue-white layers of agate. Of the last was carved high relief (or round-sculpture) image of a prey bird with a powerful beak and clawed feet. Raising its wings, the bird is sitting on a branch of a tree and below it there are distinct curves and swirls which reflect an attempt to portray the wave water – in the stylized form and which is often found in the Far East traditional art. This is an example of modern lapidary crafts, which tends to remain in the mainstream of Chinese art traditions. Small cuts only schematically transmit the plumage or coloring of both birds.

A unique thing in the collection of the Mineralogical Museum can be considered

Fig. 15. The vessel in the form of waterfowl. Rock crystal. 7.05×12.45×6.85 cm. 19th – early 20th centuries. Came from the Hermitage in 1926. FMM #PDK-1657.

Fig. 16. Waterfowl with nestling. Amethyst. 3.65×6.4×4.2 cm. 19th – early 20th centuries. Received from the Hermitage in 1926. FMM #PDK-1654.





Fig. 17. Eagle. Chalcedony. 9.1×9.1×3.85 cm. Late 20th century. Obtained on the exchange in 2000. FMM #PDK-7943.



Fig. 18. Mantis on leaves. Agalmatolite. 14.4×9.9 cm. Late 20th century. Purchased in Tucson (USA) in 1998. FMM #PDK-7876.

the image of a leaf which was received in the 1920s. It is carved from rock crystal (FMM #PDK-1553). On the convex side of it there is a greenish stain. Master used it for small high-relief figures of frogs, it is shown schematically.

Insects are also widely reflected in the Chinese stone-cutting art. This refers primarily to the butterflies; it's very popular in traditional culture. Images of butterflies or decorated with insects objects committed to the museum in the 1920s. This is a pair of identical plate suspension from light-gray and greenish "Murghab" jade. It is made in the art of plane and openwork carving (FMM #PDK 2318). Images are simulated and geometrized.

Small, with a big mustache, more stylized not easy defined shapes of butterflies are arranged on a jade things: the suspension in the form of two elongated fruits (FMM #PDK 2344) and details of the handle (FMM #PDK-2392). In the thread on the details of the handle is quite apparent a characteristic of Chinese handicrafts — its paradoxicality. The decor was made with a confident and energetic thread and zoomorphic image itself — unintelligible, "confusing", disintegrated before the disappearance of a coherent and easy-to-guess image.

Much later modern work was acquired by the Museum in the late 1990s (Fig. 18). It is made of two-color agalmatolite. Large leaves are cut from light, pinkish-yellow stone. A pair of insects located on the leaves which are made of light yellow "amber" agalmatolite. The interpretation of them is so naturalistic that they can be easily determined. These common mantises, in any case, are members of the class of mantis.

Perhaps equally numerous in Chinese stone-cutting art images of different plants and their parts. Among the exhibits fruit are primarily can be called.

Explicit creative success — masterfully carved from translucent light, bluish-green chalcedony group of three large fruit — "palmate lemon", ordinary lemon (this definition is most likely) and pomegranate (see Fig. 19). Fruits merge with each other, entwined leaves and stems and flowers are complemented with a small pomegranate. Large fruit are hollow and open at the top, so the composition is defined as a "vase".

"Palmate lemon" with typical finger-like sprout is at least an exotic fruit, in its complex form. Mineralogical Museum has another image of it — a small yellowish agate pendant (FMM #PDK-1510).

Form of pomegranate fruit is a completely ordinary ball. Pomegranate is recognized under "disclosure" of the fetus. There is depicted a wide gap or slit of the rind with a grid filling, juicy pomegranate grains are designated in such a way. In addition to said composition, in the museum there is an image of the pomegranate fruit from "Murghab" light gray, yellow jade (FMM #PDK-1662).

There are quite a lot of images of peach fruits. Their Chinese canon is simple and easily recognizable: a round fruit with a pointed end in the form of narrow curved grooves. Of grayish-red agate was carved a couple of peaches, which was completed with images of stems, leaves, small peach, bats and flowers (FMM #PDK-1522). Amethyst bottle has a shape of single peach fruit (see Fig. 20). These things were received in 1920s. At the beginning of the 1980s the vessel in the form of a pair of peaches with a stem and leaves was



Fig. 19. The vessel in the form of fruits palmate lemon, lemon and pomegranate. Quartz. 10.9×15.15×7.4 cm. 19th – early 20th centuries. Came from the Hermitage in 1926. FMM #PDK-1502.



Fig. 20. Small bottle in the form of peach fruit. Amethyst. 5.0×5.4×3.0 cm. 19th – early 20th centuries. From the State Museum Fund in 1927. FMM #PDK-1618.

acquired. It is made of light gray, greenish jade (FMM #PDK-6937).

"Murghab" jade was a material for rectangular with rounded corners low box which was received in the 1920s. Vegetable decor fills the upper surface of the lid and the upper inner surface of the box itself. It is made by cut-lines, tinted gold pigment. The main ornamental space is filled with images of "bushes" with fruit peaches; these "bushes" grow from the symbolic "rock" among rising bubble waves.

The images of gourd from agate (Fig. 21) and a jade pair of rounded oblong fruits concern to new things of the 1920s. They merge with each other and complemented with a peony flower or rose and butterfly (FMM

#PDK 2344). Of purple amethyst is made an image of two serried oblong fruits.

Its outlines were duplicated by a band or a tape with small frequent cuts (FMM #PDK-1658).

One of the earliest works of stone carving art in the Mineralogical Museum (Grewingk, 1846), can be considered a vase from reddish agalmatolite with whitish, dark gray and black spots (see Fig. 22). The vase has a widened upwardly irregular shape and cross-section in the form of a segment of a circle. Rear flat surface just polished out and the "front" occupied with a high-relief and sculptural threads – black vines, light-gray leaves and red grapes. Polychrome points out that the thread was enhanced with toning.



Fig. 21. Small bottle as a gourd. Agate. 6.6×5.1×2.7 cm. 19th – early 20th centuries. From the Hermitage in 1926. FMM #PDK-1535.

Fig. 22. A vase with decoration of grapes. Agalmatolite. 11.3×9.9×4.3 cm. 18th – first half 19th centuries. Source of unknown. Recorded in 1950. FMM #PDK-4727.



Fig. 23. Flower. Chalcedony (Brazil). 2.4×9.0×7.7 cm. End of 20th – beginning of 21st century. Present from D.I. Belakovskiy. FMM #PDK-8103.

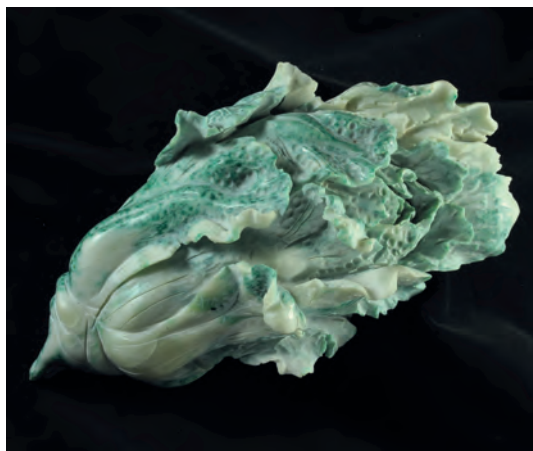


Fig. 24. Crisp-head lettuce. Agalmatolite. 22.2×13.9×8.3 cm. Late 20th century. Purchased in Tucson (USA) in 1998. FMM #PDK-7875.

In the 1920s a box made of greenish "Murghab" jade (FMM #PDK-1660) was transferred from the Hermitage to the Mineralogical Museum. The box has four internal cells and the general shape of flower's rosette with four petals. This form is completed at the lid with carved images of the flower with four petals and four long curly leaves. The core of the flower is round ruby cabochon. Its weight is 0.15 carats in gold caste.

A much later time includes the image of the flower, arrived in 2011 (see Fig. 23). Flower with large petals is carved from a bluish chalcedony. The master used the stone excellent. He cut its cavity and opened the "center of the flower" – a flat plot of fine-grained quartz. Due to this peculiar reception, we can admire the spectacular modern stone-cutting work.

The museum's collection presented a few images of leaves. The things of the 1920s include the previously mentioned list of rock crystal with a small sitting frog (FMM #PDK-1553) and carved from light, purple-milk-yellow agate lotus leaf (FMM #PDK-1651).

Example of modern carving agalmatolite of Hunan Province is the image of crisp-head lettuce. Stone carving in light gray with large pockmarked green areas is diverse but the general interpretation is extremely naturalistic (see Fig. 24). This makes the thing in pairs for described image of two mantises on a leaf (see Fig. 18).

Incarnations of plant motifs can be considered as stone container – "vases" in which basis conditional image "pieces of trunks" or "stump" – so old, decayed or corroded by

wood borers that they have become hollow, turned into a container. The collection of the Mineralogical Museum has such containers, singles and doubles. The main forms are complemented by spikes, excrescences, flowers, mushrooms, spiral curls. Material for vases served as a bright red carnelian (see Fig. 25), red with white, pink and yellow spots agate (FMM #PDK-1600), a light transparent amethyst (FMM #PDK-1656).

Fig. 25. A vase in the form of the trunk of a peach tree. Carnelian. 12.5×8.5×5.7 cm. 19th – early 20th centuries. Transferred from the Hermitage in 1926. FMM #PDK-1531.





Fig. 26. Table decoration two-part. Agalmatolite. 23.8×36.6×8.1 cm. 19th – early 20th centuries. From State Museum Fund 1926. FMM #PDK-1586.



Fig. 27. Paired vessels depicting monkeys and squirrels, eating grapes. Agalmatolite. 12×24×5.4 cm. Present from Martin Bohaty in 1988. FMM #PDK-7612.

Bamboos are often found in the works of Chinese art. In the collection of the Mineralogical Museum you can see the image of bamboo on the already described bottle which was made of rock crystal with white layer and hollow handle, carved from dark green jade (FMM #PDK-2313). Both products came to the Museum in 1920.

In a flat bottle of the same arrival time, made of yellowish-gray chalcedony with areas of milky color (FMM #PDK-1508), one side covered with Chinese characters. On the other was placed landscape and emblematic composition which was consist of images rocks, waves of water, bamboo, mushrooms, bat, "endless knot" and two or three obscure items.

An example of pure landscape composition is received in the 1930s agalmatolite

table decoration (see Fig. 26). It is a large two-part thing. Lower part is a stand. It has the shape of a squat container or column base and decorated by two notches filled with openwork decoration "skew the grid." The upper part – complex sculptural image of mountain forest uninhabited landscape. In the center on a hill with a step-rise two-storey building is towering, apparently secluded temple. It is surrounded by cliffs and thick forest of pine, bamboo, willow.

The lower part of table decoration is carved from dark brown, almost black agalmatolite. Stone of the upper "landscape" half is light red with light yellow spots, but on the front side clearly localize spots of different colors from light green to black. Obviously, the decoration of carved stone was finished by coloring.

Landscape filled with animals, we see in other major agalmatolite product which was donated to the museum in 1988, by a citizen of Czechoslovakia Martin Bohaty (Fig. 27). The base of composition is two flattened, vertically arranged containers of vertical proportions. Below them and to the left — "rock", roughly interpreted "terra firma." Actually landscape areas are irregular in shape with frequent round curved places. Apparently, in such a way the stonecutter depicted vines with bunches. Active participants in the composition — three tailless monkey and two squirrels with bushy tails — they regale with juicy berries. Color of the stone is warm, terracotta-red with black and greenish-yellow spots.

Object identified as "cover" (see Fig. 28) refer to the things of the 1920s. Oval and convex, it is exquisitely carved out of the "white" (light gray) jade. In the flat and shallow relief felt certain monotony and lack of expressiveness. It can be assumed that the master was guided by traditional Chinese painting and drawing and this has affected on the style of stone-cutting work. Depicted composition is interesting and not typical for stone carving. The middle part is occupied by figures of elderly men: three of them are sitting around a game board. The fourth stands at a distance, leaning on a long staff, the fifth is on the right bottom. The rocks and boiling water are showed below. It is at the top and on the sides — stylized pine. In fact, the composition embodies the story, very popular in the classical Chinese culture: voluntary leaving of sages and scientists and thinkers of the world of dust, their staying in the gardens, groves, wooded mountains of the charming nature.



Fig. 28. Oval lid. Nephrite. 2.1x12.15x11 cm. 19th – early 20th centuries. Came from the Department of nonmetallic minerals KEPS in 1925. FMM #PDK-2367.

In the Chinese collection of the Mineralogical Museum there is a number of anthropomorphic sculptures — expressive images of people or gods in human form.

One of the earliest (18th — first half 19th centuries) anthropomorphous sculptures is agalmatolite small figure of a man sitting cross-legged on a bit of a cushion (Fig. 29). Bearded face, a large nose and round eyes, a turban or a wrapper on his head — these signs probably indicate that depicts not Chinese, but "Westerner" and probably a Muslim.

Another sculpture is image of a seated man with long beard and mustache which is carved from yellowish green agalmatolite. He is wearing a large coat (see Fig. 30). In his left hand men swatter "inshua" behind the back is the sword "jian". These attributes clearly indicate that Liuy Dong Bin was depicted there. He was one of the "Eight Immortals" ("ba xian"), Taoist deities which were once humans, but



Fig. 29. Seated man in a turban. Agalmatolite. 5.45x2.45x3.3 cm. 17th – the first half of the 21st century. From old collections. FMM #PDK-531.



Fig. 30. Chinese Taoistic deity Liuy Dong Bin. Agalmatolite. 10.7x10.5x3.8 cm. 18th – first half 19th centuries (?). From old collections. FMM #PDK-532.



Fig. 31. Chinese Taoistic deity Liu Hai. Agalmatolite. 39.0×15.0×7.5 cm. 19th – early 20th centuries. Received from the Military Medical Academy in 1931. FMM #PDK-4188.



Fig. 32. Chinese deities. Agalmatolite. 22.7×24.5×6.6 cm. 18th – first half 19th centuries (?). From old collections. FMM #PDK-4726.

because of their feats they achieved immortality and turned into spirits (Vasil'ev, 1970, p. 283 – 287; Riftin, 1980₁, 1980₂; Sidihmenov, 1987, p. 174, 175; Sychev, Sychev, 1975, p. 65, 112, fig. XIX). At first a group of gods "ba xian" led Lee Tae-quay, but then this role passed to Liuy Dong Bin. He was born at the end of 8th century AD and was canonized in 1111. Judging by the literary biography, the Liuy Dong Bin possessed supernatural powers: in adolescence, for example, he could memorize 10,000 characters per day. His life – is a series of exploits directed on taming the evil demons and help disadvantaged simple people. From here – most popularity of the Taoist deity in Taoism and folk religion, his prominent role in the traditional pantheon.

In 1931 the Mineralogical Museum was transferred from the Military Medical Academy an agalmatolite sculpture, designated in the inventory records as "image lying Buddha" "Chinese work" (see Fig. 31). In fact, this work of art has nothing to do with Buddhism. It depicts a smiling cheerful fat man standing on the left leg (right arm is raised and strongly bent at the knee). From the top of the head to the left arm is a bunch of eleven yellow coins on red cord and completes with a brush. Depicts not the Buddha and do not Buddhist deity, but Liu Hai – god of coins in the retinue of the Chinese god of wealth Tsai Shen. It is believed that Liu Hai was a real historical figure of 8th–9th centuries and Liuy Dong Bin guided him on the path of Taoist teachings. Liu Hai, or Liu Har – a popular Chinese deity. Liu Hai necessarily accompanied by a toad, which is absent in the sculpture of the Mineralogical Museum. However,

the article has a big loss – chips; because of the damage it could lose this zoomorphic details (Riftin, 1980₂, 1982₂).

Apparently, large and complex sculpture consisting of five anthropomorphic figures on a stand came to the museum relatively early (Grewingk, 1846) and can be dated within the 18th – first half 19th centuries. The material of a long narrow and with a through hole of the coasters is of agalmatolite dark brown color. The main color of agalmatolite figures – yellow-gray, but colored spots talk about coloring of the stone (see Fig. 32). The central figure depicts an elderly man in a complex tiara-like headdress, holding in his right hand a magic wand "Ruyi" head in the form of "ganoderma" – the "mushroom of immortality". This is probably the god of happiness Fu-hsing, or Fu-sheng. Lower on the right and left of the figure stand figures which are smaller with a comely adolescent faces. The right figure is a middle-aged man holding a baby in his arms – maybe god Lu-hsing (Riftin, 1882₁, 1982₄). The most expressive and recognizable is the left image – a god of longevity Shou-hsing with a staff in his right hand and a "peach of immortality" in the left (Vasil'ev, 1970; Riftin, 1982₁, 1982₃, 1982₅).

In the Mineralogical Museum is stored also other carved stone anthropomorphic images, which are not published in this article primarily because of these difficult attribution of works of art created in the country with the rule of polytheistic religions: there are only in the Taoist pantheon thousands of deities.

Work on the collection of Chinese art of stone-cutting has just begun and it is difficult to say what discoveries are waiting for us along the way.

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