



LIZZADRO MUSEUM OF LAPIDARY ART

NEWSLETTER & CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SPRING 2016



Return Service Requested

Museum Hours

Tuesday to Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Closed Mondays.
Closed Easter Sunday.

Admission

\$5.00 Adults, \$4.00 Senior Citizens
\$3.00 Students & Teenagers
\$2.00 Children 7 to 12 yrs.
Free for children under 7 yrs.
Friday is a Free day.
Members of the Lizzadro Museum and active members of the Armed Forces are admitted free of charge on any day the Museum is open to the public.

Group Tours

Tours can be arranged for groups with special interests or needs. Reservations are necessary for guided tours.



The Museum has facilities to provide access for physically disabled visitors.

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lizzadromuseum.org

Volunteer forms are available.



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Symbolism in Qing Dynasty Chinese Jade

By Dorothy Asher

The Museum is embarking on a fresh look at the Chinese jades on permanent display. First time visitors to the Museum are amazed at our large collection of Chinese carvings. Visitors often ask, how old are these pieces? What is their significance? The answers to both questions are in this exhibit.

We can safely say that most of the carvings in the collection date to the Qing Dynasty, 1644 to 1912. This was the zenith of carving in China. Emperor Qinglong, who reigned from 1736 to 1795, is considered one of the greatest patrons of Chinese art. Under his reign, large quantities of jade were imported from Turkestan, Siberia and Burma (Rawson). Workshops serving the Emperor cut large, intricate pieces and repurposed older pieces of jade. This continued through the early 20th century. By the mid 19th century the carving workshops were creating less for the Emperor and more for the wealthy Chinese (Knight, et.al.).

During the Ming & Qing Dynasties jade carvings became symbolic with well wishes. Auspicious motifs included plants and animals found in China, along with mythological beasts, religious symbols and deities. Common themes represented in jade included: long life, happy marriage, many children, good health, wealth and honor (Bartholomew). Over 4,000 characters in the Chinese language represent sounds, words, and phrases. Pictorial puns are common. For example, a character's sound may have many meanings, like the English words "son" and "sun." In Chinese, "fu" is the same sound for "bat" 蝠, "blessings" 福, and "riches" 富.



The Ornamental Covered Vase, Jadeite, Chinese Qing Dynasty is a symbolic wedding gift.

Therefore the bat motif is a common rebus for blessings, happiness and good fortune.

3 methods are used to interpret symbolism. For example: The wish for longevity (*shòu*) can be expressed as:

1. Characters, 寿 (*shòu* simplified), 壽 (traditional) or 壽 medallion.
2. Associated symbols, such as peaches or pine tree & crane.
3. Pictorial pun (rebus), the ribbon-tailed bird (*shòudàiniǎo*).

The symbolism on a carving can usually be reduced to an auspicious phrase or phrases. For example, looking at the symbolism on the Ornamental Covered Vase, we can deduce it was a wedding gift. On one side, we see a crane among pine trees holding a ruyi in its beak, "May you, like the crane and pine, enjoy similar longevity." (松鶴同春 *sōnghè tóngchūn*). On the other side, two phoenix birds are among peony tree blossoms, "May you have harmonious marriage," (雙鳳合鳴 *shuāngfèng hé míng*) "with great blessings and prosperity." (鳳戲牡丹 *fèngxì mǔdān*).

The Chinese are fond of puns and rebuses and many phrases are still used today. However, the symbolism of the Qing Dynasty is distinct. Symbolism continues to evolve as (political) eras change. The jade carvings can certainly be appreciated as purely decorative art. We are adding a new dimension to the way we interpret these jades. We hope you will visit and take a new look.

Special Thanks to: Yi Hua Chou, Chinese Language Teacher, York Community High School, Elmhurst, Illinois.

References

- Bartholomew, Terese Tse, Hidden Meanings in Chinese Art, 2006.
Knight, Michael, et al., Later Chinese Jades Ming Dynasty to Early Twentieth Century From The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 2007.
Rawson, Jessica, Chinese Jade From Neolithic To The Qing, 1995.

The Curious Case of the Crying Calcite

By Sara Kurth

Over the holiday season, Museum staff noticed something alarming. The Angel Wing calcite was crying! Well, it wasn't really crying, but it filled the case with water that leaked out behind the wall. There was no water on the outside walls and the water was relegated to just the single case. The mineral specimen was moved so the water could be cleaned and the cause of the water could be investigated. It turns out that there are some very interesting properties associated with the mineral.

Angel Wing calcite is a relatively new name for this variety of calcite. In fact, it is only within the New Age scene that the name is used. Calcite is a calcium carbonate (CaCO_3) mineral found in sedimentary limestone rock. The mineral calcite comes in many colors and crystal structures. Several polymorphs, or minerals with the same chemical composition but different crystal shapes exist, including aragonite and vaterite. Calcite is the most stable form of CaCO_3 – aragonite will change into calcite under extreme temperatures greater than 380°F.

Among some of the interesting attributes of calcite is its ability to double refract. This property allows objects viewed through the crystal to appear doubled. Using the transparent form of calcite, Iceland spar, the double refraction property has been utilized for optical purposes, including early use by Vikings for navigation purposes. In fact, ancient sea creatures called trilobites had calcite optic lenses, useful for seeing predators in murky waters (Schwab, 2002). Calcite will readily dissolve when exposed to acid. It is this reason that marble, metamorphosed limestone, will breakdown over time when exposed to the elements.

This does not explain why our Angel Wing calcite was crying. Calcite is hygroscopic, which means that it is able to absorb water from the environment (Rougvie, 2016). Much like salt can become clumpy in humid summer months, calcite can, over time, absorb water, which will eventually destroy the crystal structure.



The “Angel Wing” Calcite is from Chihuahua, Mexico. This 24” specimen was acquired by the Museum in 1973.

For unknown reasons, on December 21st, our Angel Wing calcite spontaneously released all the absorbed water on a single day. Perhaps there was a significant change in humidity in the Museum, or the temperature fluctuations in December caused a significant change in the environment. Whatever the reason, it is now clear that humidity control for the specimen is necessary. To alleviate the humidity, a moisture absorbent material has been placed in the case, much like placing rice into your salt container. The Angel Wing calcite was returned to its case on permanent display.

References

Rougvie, J.R., January 6, 2016, personal communication, Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin.
Schwab, I.R., 2002, *British Journal of Ophthalmology*, v. 86(4).

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for Grads, weddings, Mom's & Dad's Day!
Visit the Museum Shop on-line at:
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS APRIL THROUGH JUNE 2016

SPECIAL EXHIBIT

"Symbolism in Chinese Jade"

Continuing through Fall, 2016



The Museum's permanent collection of jade carvings is filled with auspicious Chinese symbolism. This exhibit focuses on a selection of carvings from the Qing Dynasty and translates the hidden meanings in their visual motifs.

APRIL 30 & MAY 1 "Art in the Park"

A juried show of Fine Art, Craft and Design, over 100 artists from around the Midwest will be showing and selling their creations in Wilder Park. At the Lizzadro Museum, members of the West Suburban Lapidary Club will be demonstrating forms of lapidary art.

Free Admission to the Museum.

Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

& Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.



APRIL 23

"Crystal Bowls Sound Healing"

Marian McNair, MATC, MFA will demonstrate the healing power of crystal bowl vibration. Doctors have recognized sound therapy as a beneficial factor in overall wellness and relaxation. Learn the science behind sound therapy, followed by a demonstration. Participants are encouraged to wear comfortable clothing and bring yoga mats for the demonstration.

Lecture/Demonstration

Ages 16 yrs. to Adult

2 p.m. – 90 minutes

Admission: \$10.00 per person,

Museum Members \$5.00

Reservations Recommended (630) 833-1616

"Rock & Mineral Identification"

Geologist Sara Kurth presents an introduction to rocks and minerals. Learn to identify minerals through basic hands-on identification including observation skills and hardness tests, great for teachers and rockhounds. This program qualifies for Boy & Girl Scout merit badges. Scout groups require adult supervision. Teachers can earn Professional Development credit for this class. For more information regarding P.D. credit contact the Museum Educator at educator@lizzadromuseum.org.

75 minutes – Ages 8 yrs. to Adult

Saturday Classes: April 9 at 1:30 p.m.,

May 14 & June 11 at 10:30 a.m.

Fee: \$5.00 per person,

Museum Members \$3.00

Reservations Required: (630) 833-1616



MAY 15

"20th Annual Museum Day in Elmhurst"

Celebrate the BIGGEST Museum Day ever! Jump on board the trolley as it rolls through town to celebrate Elmhurst Museum Day at three local museums and the cultural campus Wilder Park. Ride the trolley to each location for free admission, activities, refreshments, and more. At the Lizzadro Museum, explore the museum's fascinating collection and create your own rock critter to take home.

Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. All Ages Welcome.

Admission is Free at all 3 Museums!



Summer is a great time to visit the museums in Kane and DuPage Counties.

Designed for ages 4 to 12, each site has an activity for children to complete.

The Summer Passport program begins on May 1st and ends on Labor Day.



LIZZADRO MUSEUM OF LAPIDARY ART

220 Cottage Hill Ave. Elmhurst, IL 60126

630/833-1616

We would like to hear from you.

Please direct questions or comments to: info@lizzadromuseum.org



JUNE 4

"Stone Hunt"

This hands-on activity allows children and adults to search for gems and minerals among more common rocks. Learn the difference between rocks and minerals and how to distinguish between them. Each rock or mineral found is identified and can be taken home.

Activity – Ages 5 yrs. to Adult

45 minutes – 2 p.m.

\$5.00 per person,

Museum Members Free

Reservations Recommended



JUNE 18

"Fossil Collecting Field Trip"

Travel by motor coach to Mulford Quarry in Rockford, Illinois. Collect Ordovician Period marine fossils in dolomitic limestone. Collectable fossils include: brachiopods, cephalopods, corals, crinoids, gastropods, and more.

Field Trip – Ages 8 yrs. to Adult

Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Fee: \$45.00 per person

Museum Members \$40.00

Reservations Required: (630) 833-1616

