

# 十二月花神杯 The Month Cups

## 展 堂 一 鱗

A Glimpse of TSUI's Collection

清康熙御製的「十二月花神杯」，亦稱「十二月令花卉杯」，由景德鎮官窑所燒製，整套十二件，為酒器，胎薄玲瓏，釉面潔白，形如仰鐘。杯外壁繪有代表各月份的月令花木，畫工細緻，並賦有五言或七言的詠讚詩句相輝映。每杯一花一詩，落「賞」字篆印；杯底以青花勾畫雙圈，內書「大清康熙年製」兩行六字楷書款。當中

又有五彩及青花兩種版本，構成詩畫一體的官窑藝術精品。

古人以詩畫詠花，定農曆二月十二日為百花生日，稱為「花朝」；又按花季，挑選月令花，以及一位與此花關係密切的歷史人物作為花神。「花朝」於唐朝時已經出現，於清康熙年間也流行極盛。

中華大地幅員遼闊，南北氣候各異，花卉品種豐富且生長月份不盡相同，因此流傳的月令花種類及順序亦因地而異。是次展出的兩套「十二月花神杯」的順序為：正月梅花、二月杏花、三月桃花、四月牡丹、五月石榴花、六月荷花、七月月季、八月桂花、九月菊花、十月蘭花、十一月水仙和十二月蠟梅。

康熙年間編校《全唐詩》，及編撰《廣群芳譜》。前者共收集二千餘人四萬八千餘首唐詩，成為史無前例的唐詩全集；後者記錄花卉品種與形態，並附有與之相關的歷史傳記、題跋和詩詞等文學作品，為這類詩畫合一的花卉瓷品提供了豐富的題材。在這套十二月花神杯中，其中十首詩就是出自《全唐詩》。

完整成套的十二月花神杯十分難得，藏家往往花數年至十數年的時間搜集才可湊成完整一套。現時北京故宮博物院及大英博物館（戴維德基金借出）各存有一套，而香港茶具文物館也藏有一套由羅桂祥博士捐贈的五彩十二月花神杯。



杯底年款  
Reign mark on the base



一月 梅花  
First month:  
Prunus



三月 桃花  
Third month:  
Peach blossom



五月 石榴花  
Fifth month:  
Pomegranate blossom



七月 月季  
Seventh month:  
Chinese Rose



九月 菊花  
Ninth month:  
Chrysanthemum



十一月 水仙  
Eleventh month:  
Narcissus



二月 杏花  
Second month:  
Apricot blossom



四月 牡丹  
Fourth month:  
Tree peony



六月 荷花  
Sixth month:  
Lotus



八月 桂花  
Eighth month:  
Osmanthus



十月 蘭花  
Tenth month:  
Cymbidium



十二月 蠟梅  
Twelfth month:  
Wintersweet

The month cups were produced by the imperial kiln in Jingdezhen in the Kangxi period, Qing dynasty. A complete set consists of twelve cups of eggshell porcelain, each painted with the flower or plant of the month and on the reverse written with a poem, followed by a *shang* character written as though it is a seal. The six-character mark of Kangxi encircled in double circle is written on the base of each cup. There are sets decorated with *wucai* enamels, and sets which are painted entirely with underglaze blue only. Being a combination of painting, poetry and calligraphy on

porcelain, they are among the finest production of the imperial kiln.

Ancient Chinese poets and painters praised flowers with their works. The twelfth day of the second month on the lunar calendar is celebrated as the Birthday of the Flowers. Each month of the year is associated with a Flower of the Month. A historical figure who was closely related to the flower was hailed as the Flower Deity. The Birthday of the Flowers was celebrated since the Tang dynasty. It was also very popular in the first half of the Qing dynasty.

Since China covers a broad range of climatic conditions, there exist various versions of the Flowers and Deities of the Months. The order of these two sets of month Cups is First month: prunus, Second month: apricot blossom, Third month: peach blossom, Fourth month: tree peony, Fifth month: pomegranate blossom, Sixth month: lotus, Seventh month: Chinese rose, Eighth month: osmanthus, Ninth month: chrysanthemum, Tenth month: cymbidium, Eleventh month: narcissus, Twelfth month: wintersweet.

There was close association between the month cups and literary studies of the Kangxi period. A monumental volume *Quan Tang shi* (The Complete Tang Poems) was compiled during the Kangxi period, an anthology of 48,000 poems composed by over 2,000 poets in the Tang dynasty. At the same time, the *Guang Qun Fang Pu* (Texts on the Flowers) was being edited, recording the type and features of flowers each with its associated historical episodes and legends, and literary works on each flower. These are rich source material for works on the flowers. In these two

sets of month cups, ten out of twelve poems are drawn from *Quan Tang shi*.

Complete sets of month cups are rare. Collectors spent years of searching to acquire all twelve cups. Complete sets in public collections can be found in the Palace Museum, Beijing, and in the Percival David Foundation, being displayed in the British Museum. In Hong Kong a complete set donated by Dr Kwee-seong Lo is displayed in the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware.

五彩十二月花神杯  
Set of Twelve Month Cups in *wucai* enamels  
清 康熙 (1662-1722)  
Qing dynasty, Kangxi period (1662-1722)

展覽日期：21.05.2016開始  
康樂及文化事務署主辦  
香港文化博物館籌劃  
Exhibition Date: Starts from 21.05.2016  
Presented by Leisure and Cultural Services Department  
Organised by Hong Kong Heritage Museum

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## 織繡

紡織品常用於室內裝飾，同時有保溫、擋風及防塵的功用，如椅套、桌子圍邊、床上掛帳、及整幅畫帳。織繡作品上的紋飾多為吉祥紋樣，如是次展出的「緋絲花鳥圖」以玉蘭、海棠和牡丹三種花卉寓意「玉堂富貴」。至於「刺繡百壽圖」則是賀壽的禮物，作品中一百個壽字的紋樣也可見於清代瓷器和其他工藝品。「緋絲八仙賀壽圖」細緻描繪了民間傳說，八位得道的仙人到瑤池為西王母祝壽的情境。西王母賜吃蟠桃，眾仙添壽，表達了對長壽的祈願。

## 百寶嵌木盒

百寶嵌，指在同一件器物上鑲嵌多種經過加工的珍貴材料，使之構成山水、花鳥、翎翎走獸及人物故事等的完整圖案。中國鑲嵌工藝遲至商代已經出現，而百寶嵌則是明末清初的新興工藝。

百寶嵌主要以金、銀、寶石、珍珠、珊瑚、碧玉、翡翠、水晶、瑪瑙、碑磬、青金、綠松、螺鈿、象牙、蜜蠟、沉香等為原料，根據各材質的特性、顏色雕刻成不同物象，再依據不同的構圖及題材鑲嵌於木或漆器之上。百寶嵌製品大者如屏風、桌椅、書架，小則有茶具、硯匣、筆筒。

是次展出的百寶嵌木盒，以花鳥及草蟲為題，形制簡單，以幾何及葉形為主，鑲嵌技術精細。以當中的蓮藕紋木盒為例，橢圓形，盒蓋嵌有藕、蓮蓬、茨菰、黃菊、芙蓉及蘭花，寓意「一品清廉」。盒色如蒸栗，以白玉、碧玉、紅瑪瑙等為原料，紋飾簡潔明快，猶如浮雕於盒面之上，精美富麗。



蓮藕花果紋百寶嵌木盒  
Wooden box with semi-precious stone inlay of lotus root, flowers and fruit design  
清代 (1644-1911)  
Qing dynasty (1644-1911)

## 玉器

中國玉文化歷史源遠流長，早於新石器時代已有出土發現，其造型、紋飾及內涵均與神靈和禮儀有著不可分割的關係；發展至春秋，孔子提出「君子比德於玉」，以玉表現人對品德的追求，亦同時用於展示權威和地位；後至隋唐明清，對玉的追求已從「首德次符」（「符」意為玉質與紋飾）的觀念，漸漸變為與日常生活息息相關的器物，紋飾亦多為與生活相關的主題，如花鳥草蟲、神仙道佛，或帶祝福寓意的圖案。

古代的中國人認為玉石有靈性的特質，並作為祭祀之用。《周禮·春官·大宗伯》記載「以玉作六器，以禮天地四方：以蒼璜禮天，以黃琮禮地，以青圭禮東方，以赤璋禮南方，以白琥禮西方，以玄璜禮北方」。玉器常被雕琢成具特定意



青玉鸚鵡盒一對  
Pair of carved green jade quail-shaped boxes  
清中期  
Mid Qing dynasty

義的形態，其中玉璧在周代已是祭祀儀式中用來奉獻給上天的祭禮器。玉器同是古時身份地位和權力的象徵，為有特殊地位人士的飾品。《禮記·玉藻》曰：「古之君子必佩玉，君子無故，玉不離身。」玉，又指成組的玉佩，又稱「節步」、「禁步」、「步搖」等，意即君子步行既不能快，又不可慢。快者會令佩的聲音雜亂無章，慢者則無聲，只有款款而行者，才能表現出謙謙君子、光明坦蕩的品行。古人配玉以時刻提醒自己，品行舉止，常懷高尚美德。因此，玉器深受當時的權貴或是文人雅士喜愛，常見於佩戴、隨葬、社交中的饋贈品或信物。

漢代因開通西域後玉料供應增加，治玉技術發展迅速，比先秦時期片雕玉器，圓雕玉器開始普及。此時的圓雕種類豐富，有人物、動物、容器等等，其中尤以圓雕動物最具代表性，而包含吉祥意思的玉雕更是盛行於明清兩代。

玉石除了被雕琢成隨身佩戴的飾物以外，更被製成各種日用器皿，兼具賞玩和實用功能。始自宋代，中國文化和藝術興起尚古之風，至明清兩代

雙鳳紋玉蓋瓶  
Jade vase and cover with twin phoenix design  
清雍正 (1723-1735)  
Yongzheng period, Qing dynasty (1723-1735)



蝶形玉飾  
Jade ornament in butterfly shape  
清代 (1644-1911)  
Qing dynasty (1644-1911)

更盛。此時期很多玉器在型制和紋飾上都是模仿商周的青銅器皿，這類仿古玉器有一種典雅的韻味。除卻仿古的風格，玉雕器皿也常以自然景物為藍本。玉器文房用具，例如筆筒、筆洗、水丞等，就常見以像真手法把用具雕琢成樹椿、枝條和花果等造型。

## 金髮飾

明代是中國黃金鑄造的鼎盛時期，金飾品的種類豐富，出土數量多，且造工精緻。是次展出的髮飾主要分為金簪及金啄針兩類，按花卉及龍鳳紋飾兩個主題分組展示。

古代婦女將頭髮挽成髻髮後，以簪拴繫，以免髻髮鬆散墜落。簪，原為「笄」，早於新石器時代已有出現，製作時將一端磨尖，而另一頭則為簪首。簪的製造發展至明代

在樣式上有更多變化，簪首製作成不同形狀和裝飾不同圖案，大大小小的簪有了細緻的分別，各有其名。而啄針又稱「挑針」、「撇杖」，屬小簪子的一種，簪腳為尖錐式，常以成對點綴於髮髻的兩邊，配以各類簪飾，成組使用。



花卉四葉金髮簪  
Gold hairpin in flower shape  
明代 (1368-1644)  
Ming dynasty (1368-1644)



## Textiles

Textiles are used frequently for the domestic interiors, as chair covers, altar frontals, bed draperies, and hangings for decorative purposes. The motifs nearly always carry good wishes. The *kesi* panel with bird and peonies, magnolia and crabapple refers to the wish for wealth. The embroidered panel with a hundred *shou* characters would have made a good birthday gift. The *kesi* panel with the Eight Immortals has a similar wish for longevity, depicting the legend of the Eight Immortals attending the birthday banquet of the Queen Mother of the West. During the feast, the Queen Mother treated her guests with peaches which add thousands years of immortality.

## Inlaid Boxes

The patterns on these boxes are formed by inlay of semi-precious stones and material of various colours, assembled to form pictures. Literally known as “hundred precious inlay”, it was a new type of inlaying which became popular in the late Ming to early Qing dynasty, apart from those which appeared since Shang and Zhou dynasties.

Material utilized include gold, silver, precious stones, pearl, coral, nephrite, jadeite, rock crystal, agate, glass, lapis lazuli, turquoise, mother-of-pearl, ivory, amber, agarwood. Making use of their texture and colour, these are cut into desired shapes and put together like mosaics to form patterns on wood or lacquer objects. Large items include screens, tables, chairs and bookshelves. Small items include tea ware, ink stone containers and brush pots.

The boxes are on display either in geometric shape or leaf shape. Subjects include flowers, birds and insects. The cover of the oval box, for example, is decorated with lotus root, lotus seed pod, arrowhead, chrysanthemum, hibiscus and cymbidium, forming a rebus “honesty and integrity in office”. The visual impact is very attractive because the colours of the nephrite, spinach green jade, and red agate stand out both visually and physically against the dark background.

## Jade

The use of jade had a long history in Chinese culture. Jade objects from the Neolithic period have been unearthed and their shapes, decorations and meanings were found to be closely connected with gods and rituals. In the Spring and Autumn period Confucius stated, “The gentleman’s character is to be like that of jade”, in the pursuit of virtue and adornment of people of authority and special status. Beginning from the Sui and Tang dynasties, there was a gradual move towards naturalistic styles and subjects of daily life, such as flowers and birds, immortals and religious deities, and auspicious motifs.



螭龍紋仿古玉匱  
Jade yi vessel with archaic dragons design  
十八至十九世紀  
18th-19th century

The ancient Chinese thought that jade has a supernatural quality. It was used for ritual purposes since pre-history. In the book *Zhou li* (The Rites of Zhou) it was written “... the six ritual jades used to serve heaven, earth and the four points of the compass: Heaven is venerated by the dark blue *bi* (disc), Earth by the brown *cong* (tube), East by the dark green *gui* (tablet), South by the red *zhang* (blade), West by the white *hu* (tiger) and North by the black *huang* (arc).”

Jade was also a status symbol in the ancient times. The *Li ji* (Book of Rites) stated that gentlemen always wear jade as an expression of their virtues. In the Spring and Autumn period and Warring States period, prescribed sets of jade pendants were worn by the elite and gentlemen. These sets of jade were known as *jiebu*, *jinbu* and *buyao*, all referring to the control of pace, which gentlemen should exercise, to produce sounds suitable to his virtues. Therefore, jade



白玉童子  
Jade figure of a boy  
清代 (1644-1911)  
Qing dynasty (1644-1911)

was worn by the elite and the literati, as ornaments, for burials, social interaction or personal keepsake of gift items.

From the Han dynasty onwards, carvings in the round became more common due to a stable supply of jade from the west through the opening up of the Silk Road. Compared to the sliced jade material in pre-Qin eras, jade carving in the round depended on adequate materials of raw jade and required much higher level of techniques and craftsmanship. Subjects expanded to include animals, figures and vessels but animals in the round became the most significant at the time. Many motifs take on auspicious meanings. They became very popular especially in the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Jade was fashioned into vessels to perform both aesthetic and functional purposes. Archaism was a



水仙花形玉飾  
Jade ornament in shape of narcissus  
清代 (1644-1911)  
Qing dynasty (1644-1911)

花卉萬字紋玉飾  
Jade ornament with flowers and wan characters  
清代 (1644-1911)  
Qing dynasty (1644-1911)



strong cultural element since the Song dynasty, and it became more influential in the Ming and Qing dynasties. Archaic features are found on jade vessels both in shapes and motifs. Archaic shapes are largely modelled on bronze vessels which were made in the Shang and Zhou dynasties.

Apart from the archaic style, many jade vessels are carved in the naturalistic style to imitate forms in nature. Scholar’s implements such as brush pots, water containers, brush washers and brush rests are represented as tree trunks, branches, fruit and flowers.

## Gold Hair Ornaments

Techniques of goldsmithing reached a height in the Ming dynasty, with increasing types of gold items, increase in archaeological finds, and high level of craftsmanship. Exhibits in this display are gold hairpins with flower motif and with dragon and phoenixes.

Ancient Chinese women wore their hair in buns and used hairpins to hold the buns in position. The earliest form of hairpin, named *ji*, appeared in the Neolithic period, with one end of the pin polished to a point for fixing the hair. The hairpin evolved into various shapes through history, being made in various materials and bearing different motifs. In the Ming dynasty, there were small size hairpins named *zhuozhen* (pecking pin), with sharp pointed tips, for attaching to two sides of the *diji* hair net, and often forming a set of hair accessories.



龍紋金簪  
Gold hairpin with dragon motif  
明代 (1368-1644)  
Ming dynasty (1368-1644)