

Quality of Carvings: Example Olives



Luohan CHN003 37 mm
enlarged



CHN004 32 mm



CHN001



38 mm CHN001



CHN003 / 008 enlarged



Part of: Autumn River Bank by Tang Kai (152x76)



Luohan CHN008 37 mm



CHN006 36 mm



CHN011 33 mm



CHN011 enlarged

Quality of Carvings: Example Olives



Kuan Yin

CHN319



36 mm



GCP_Plate18



CHN319 / 318 enlarged



Guan Yin

CHN318



38 mm



Quality of Carving: or ... Just a different style?



CHN397.01 42 mm



CHN397.01 enlarged



CHN882 enlarged



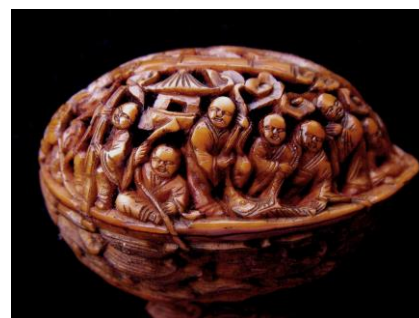
CHN882 42 mm



CHN399 42 mm



GCP_Plate79



CHN877 56 mm



CHN054 41 mm



CHN371.01 43 mm



CHN399 enlarged



CHN054 enlarged



CHN877 enlarged



CHN371.01 enlarged

Quality of Carving: or ... Just a different style ?



CHN213
28 mm

26 mm

CHN211



CHN210

27 mm



Sails on the River by Liu Jia Sern (152 x 76)

GCP_Plate78



CHN256

30 mm



CHN254

33 mm

CHN259

30 mm

Quality of Carving: Comparison by Detail



CHN850 **Tiger** 45 mm



CHN850 Enlarged



CHN799 Enlarged



CHN799 **Tiger** 45 mm



Two Dragon with the Pearl - Old House at Kaifeng, Henan Province



CHN850 **Dragon** 45 mm



CHN850 enlarged



CHN799 enlarged



CHN799 **Dragon** 45 mm

These two walnuts demonstrate the difference in quality of the same design "Luohan with tiger and dragon". The walnut on the left hand side illustrates differences in quality. One even cannot call it a different style and the holes just should stimulate a delicate carving.

Quality of Carving: Quality versus Difficulty

Comparable size



CHN626 40 mm

Original size:



16 mm



12 mm



18 mm



CHN756.01 40 mm



Qilin and Phoenix – Old House at Kaifeng, Henan Province

Enlarged:



CHN569.01 – 16 mm



CHN829 – 12 mm



CHN367 – 18 mm

One can truly compare olives (or similar sized seeds) with walnuts only when they are enlarged. The above example shows single beads of three different rosaries and two walnuts. The walnut at the right top (CHN799) has the more beautiful carving, while the bead at the bottom right (CHN367) is more delicately carved. A bit too high pressure on the chisel and it will break through the shell leaving an obvious hole that does not belong to the design. Then the total invested time results in a worthless bead. This type of seeds has an extremely thin shell; therefore one has to handle it with special care.

Quality of Carving: A different style from Suzhou / Jiangsu Province



Spider / Face CHN402 35 mm

Spider on a thread: Good Luck is descending from Heaven



CHN421 21 mm



Fish (yu) – Symbol for wealth



Prosperity / Luck 23 mm
CHN415



Frog on lotus leaf 33 mm
CHN422



Fish 32 mm
CHN401



Lotus flower 33 mm
CHN422



CHN404 41 mm



Three Friends of Winter

Pine tree and bamboo stay green even in winter, the plum blossom flowers at the end of winter



Animals / Bird



Dragon



Deities / 18 Luohan



Phoenix



Animals / Frog

Design Groups



Deities / Chai Shen



Deities / Shou



Unknown



Others / Children playing



Plants / Flowers



Boats, doors to open



Perfume bottles

Animals



Fish CHN620 31 mm



Tortoise CHN350 36 mm



Frog CHN278 31 mm



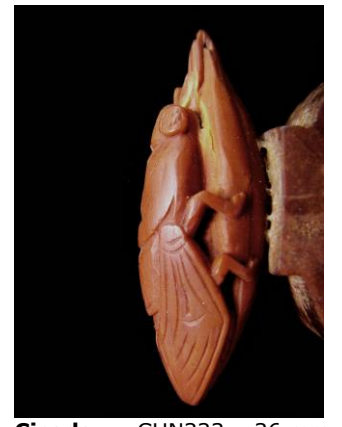
Qilin CHN100 34 mm



Crane CHN280 37 mm



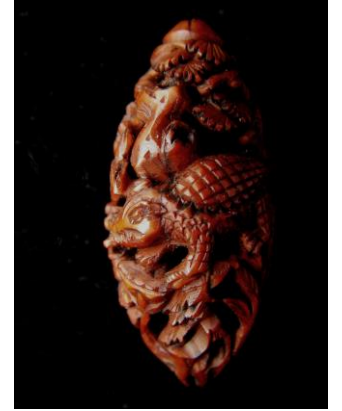
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Cicada CHN333 36 mm



Dragon CHN106 38 mm



Crocodile CHN246 38 mm



Monkey CHN885 39 mm



Magpie CHN727 35 mm



Horses HN983c 31 mm



Elephant CHN725 35 mm

Animals



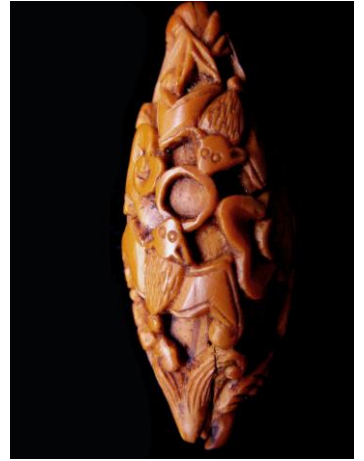
Fish CHN639 33 mm



Dragon CHN049A4 32 mm



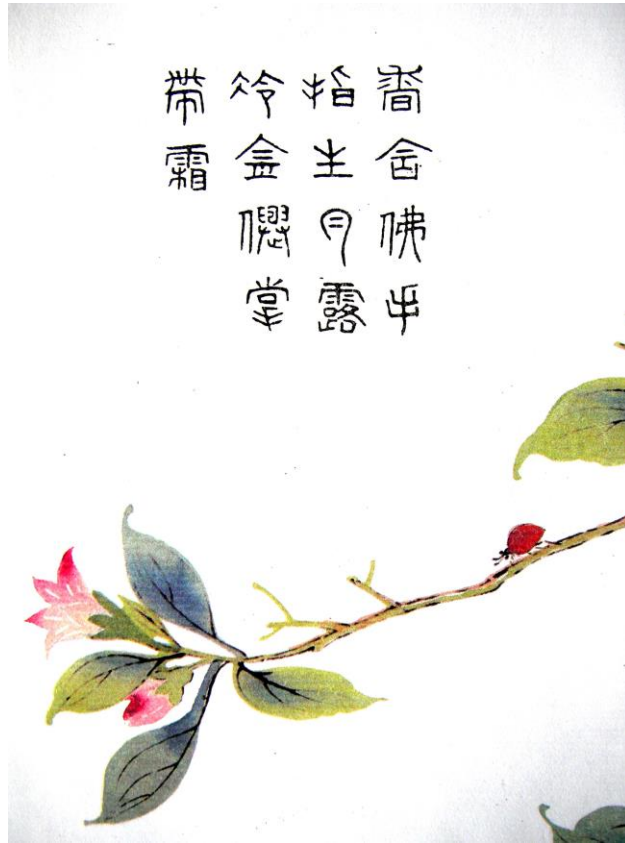
Deer CHN549 34 mm



Bat CHN049A1 37 mm



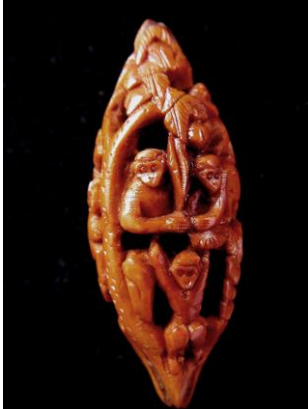
Tiger CHN066A8 29 mm



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Tiger CHN049A3 39 mm



Monkey CHN010.01



Crocodile CHN414 39 mm



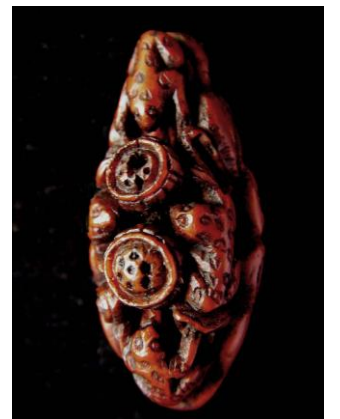
Phoenix CHN096.01 35 mm



Phoenix CHN308.01 32 mm



Unicorn CHN933 39 mm



Frogs/Lotus CHN686 38 mm

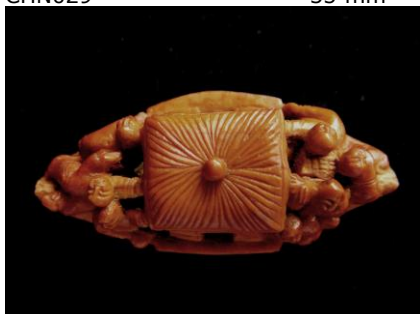
Boats: Side and top view



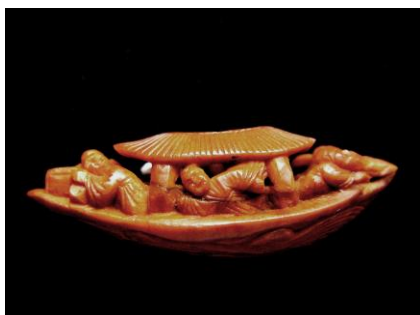
CHN574.02 32 mm



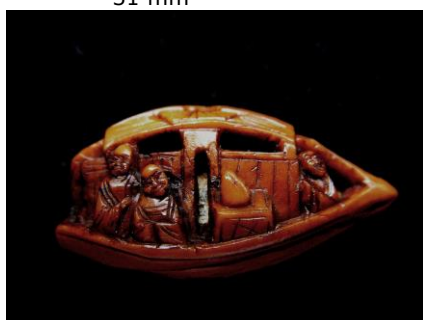
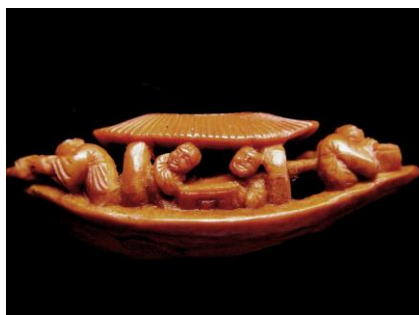
CHN029 35 mm



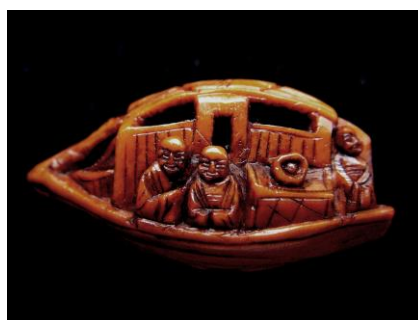
Ferry – Anhui Province



CHN574.01 31 mm



CHN383

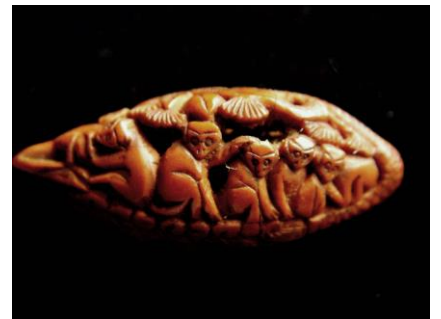
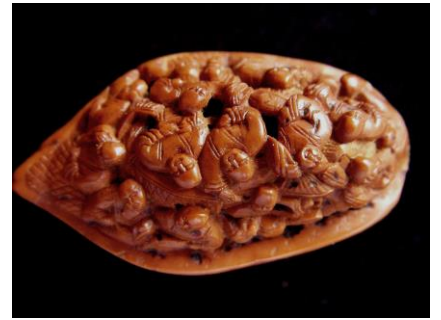


27 mm

Boats: Side and top view



CHN139A1 walnut 52 mm



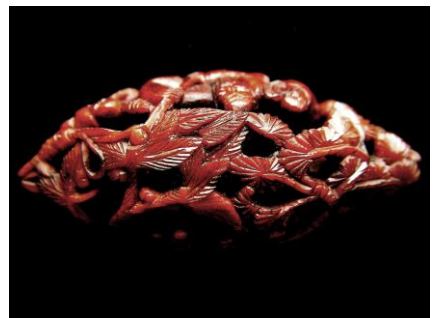
CHN122A2 olive 38 mm



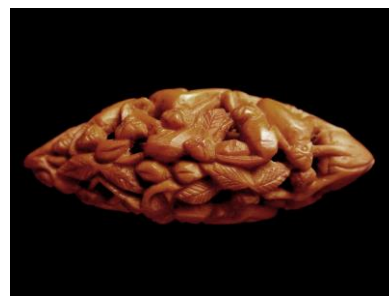
Ferries – Yellow Mountains / Anhui Province



CHN338 olive 37 mm



CHN511 olive 39 mm



Boats: Side view



CHN414 39 mm



CHN457 36 mm



CHN545 38 mm



CHN463 36 mm



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CHN225 35 mm



CHN465 35 mm



CHN468 35 mm



CHN547 36 mm

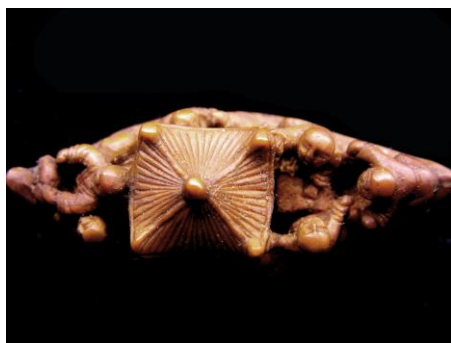


CHN780 39 mm



CHN469 37 mm

Boats : Top view



CHN545

38 mm



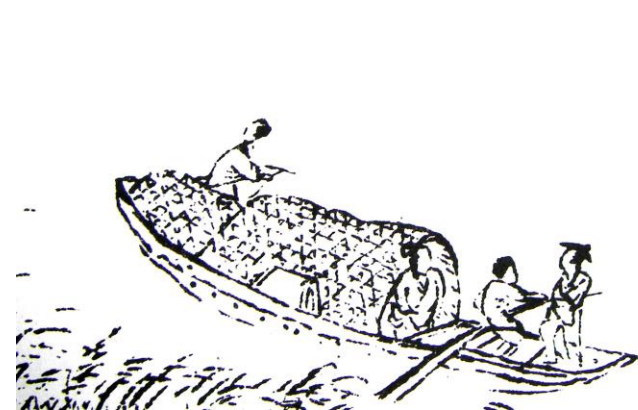
CHN457

36 mm



CHN414

39 mm



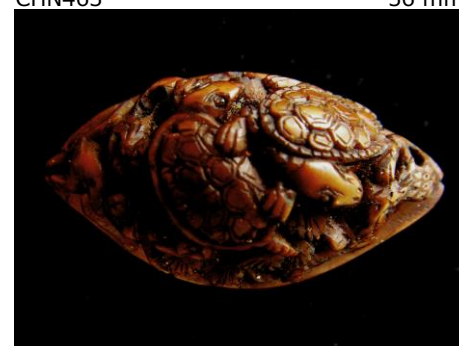
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欵乃
中使
人見
之如
聞
宜於
月下
及葭
菱
櫓船



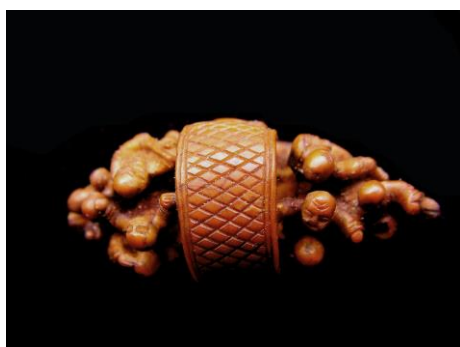
CHN463

36 mm



CHN225

35 mm



CHN547

36 mm



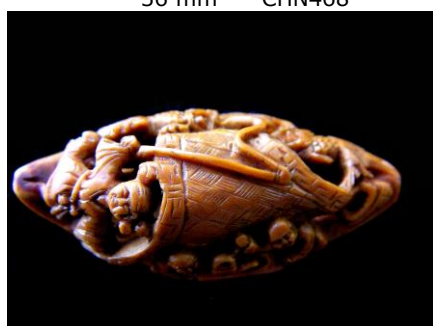
CHN468

35 mm



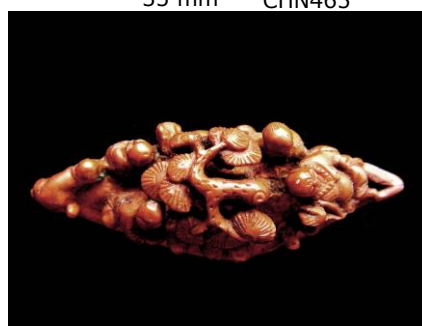
CHN465

35 mm



CHN469

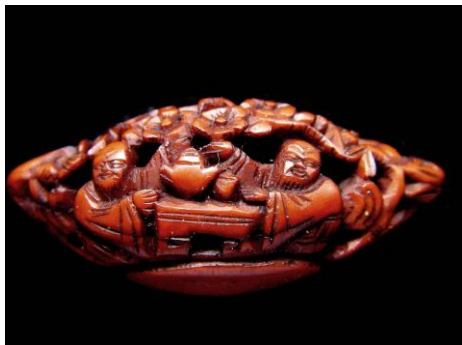
37 mm



CHN780

39 mm

Boats: Side and top view



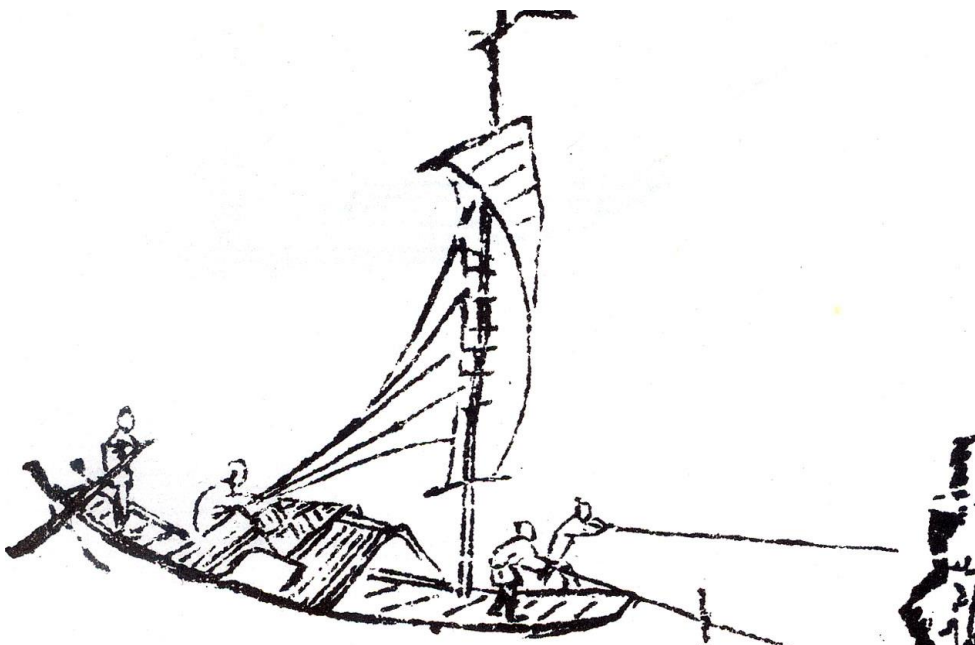
CHN285

36 mm



CHN017A1

44 mm

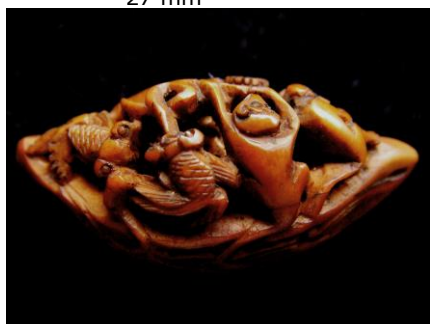


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CHN287

27 mm



CHN381

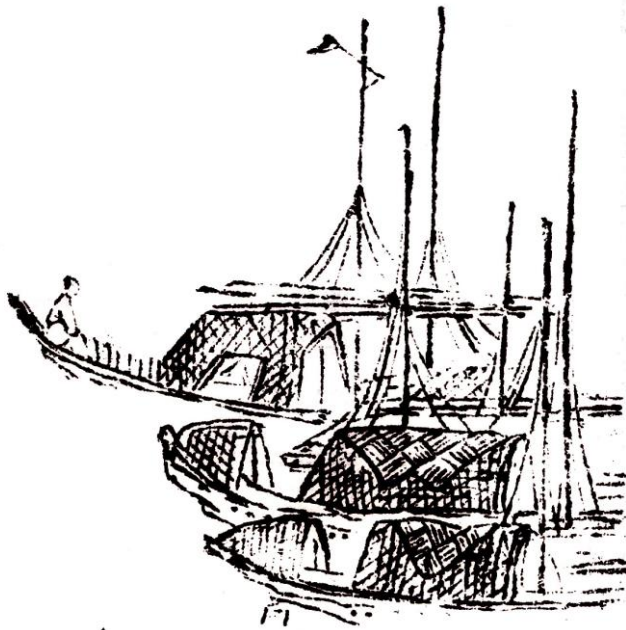
36 mm



Boats: Variations of a Dragon Boat



Fisher men CHN123A1E 38 mm



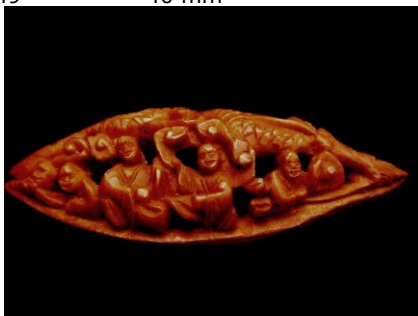
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Erotic scene boat CHN878 39 mm



Fisher men CHN149 40 mm



Fisher men CHN471 41 mm

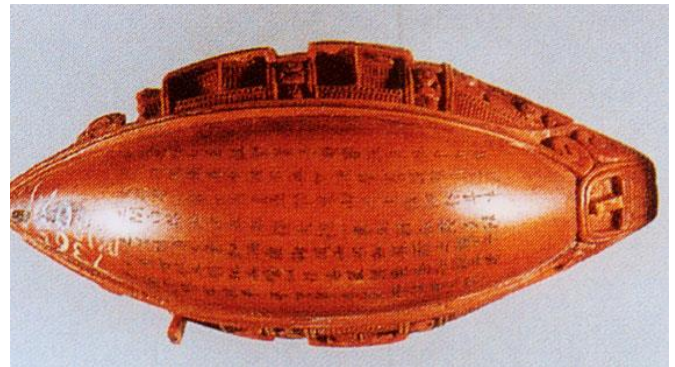


Boats: The 'Famous' Ones

(Quotation from Internet) "Zengcheng is the place where black olive and white olive grow in large quantity. Carving on tiny olive kernels has a history of more than 300 years. Xintang of Zengcheng is the birthplace of this art form, which is famous for its wide variety and exquisite craftsmanship. During the Qing Dynasty, Zengcheng Olive Carving was designated as the tribute to the imperial court.

Artist: Zhen Gusheng (1736 - 1795)

- 1. Zengcheng Museum:** The most famous craftsman in history (boats) is Zhen (Zhan?) Gusheng in Zengcheng whose masterpiece is a boat-shaped olive core with 537 Chinese characters being carved on the bottom. The priceless treasure is now being kept at Zengcheng Museum." (No picture available)



- 2. Magazine: "Collectors" (no.34):** Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang City / Liaoning Province - China. This boat has less characters on the bottom than the one at Zengcheng museum / Guangdong province. The Artist is also Zhen Gusheng. Compare the similarity of the upper part of the boat and especially the number of characters on the bottom. Both boats (this and next page) should be from the same artist.



Part of: Sails on the River by Liu Jia Serb (152 x 76)

GCP_Plate78

Boats: The 'Famous' Ones

Unfortunately we could not get a picture of that boat at Zengcheng museum, but as it is carved by the same artist as the example (see No. 2) from "Collectors" magazine and from Sotheby's auction at London 1998, I am convinced it is very similar. The only difference in these boats might be the poem with different number of Chinese characters on the bottom.



Sotheby's / Auction London. On bottom: Poem with 300 Chinese characters. **Artist: Zhen Gusheng** Time: 1736-1795 (Photos with the kind allowance of Sotheby's / London)

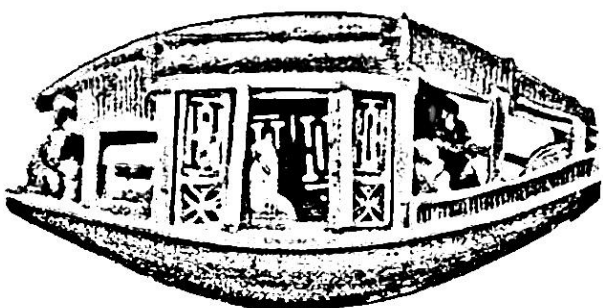
3. Sotheby's / Auction London

This boat from Sotheby's auction quite obviously has numerous Chinese characters on the bottom but from the photo it is not possible to define whether it has 537 characters like the one in the Zengcheng museum.



GCP_Plate122

4. Artist: Ch'en Chu-chang



National Palace Museum – Taipei, Taiwan
(Drawing from a photo)

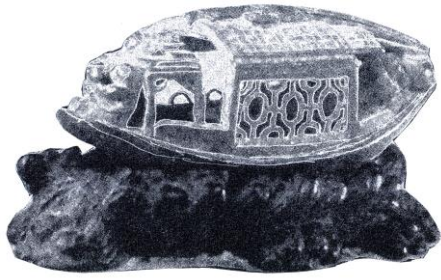
Qing Dynasty, Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1795)
Height: 16 mm, Length: 34 mm

"A tiny boat carved from an olive stone is fully equipped with a covered deck and moveable windows carved in open work. The interior has chairs, dishes on a table and eight figures representing the characters from Su Tung-po's "Ode on the Red Cliff". On the underside carved in minute characters is the entire ode, the date and the artist's name."

Details: see following page – Current artists.

Boats: The 'Famous' Ones

5. Artist: Unknown



Beijing Palace Museum (Middle Qing Dynasty)
BEIJ03
(Drawing from a photo) 34 mm



Only 38 characters on bottom of boat



Boat from Suzhou
CHS011 40 mm

This example from 'Beijing Palace Museum' is definitely not from the before-mentioned artists. Its characteristics are: no windows to open and only a short poem on the bottom. Nevertheless the principle design is again very similar:

- people sitting in front of the boat, followed by
- a small cabin, then
- the main room of the boat, the window (not to open) with a very similar design
- back part of the boat with people on it

6 Current artists:

While there is no writing on the bottom of both boats below, it is very easy to determine who has copied whom. The difference in quality partly is remarkable.

While one of the following examples, bought at Singapore, is nearly a bad example for a copy of a famous boat, it is difficult to understand why the other artist did not show the poem on the bottom of the boat. The rest of the design including the man sitting inside the boat (been seen when opening the window) is very close to the famous one at Taipei museum (incl. quality of carving).



Part of: **Sunset over mountain by Pao Hua** GCP_Plate31



CHN317C (pin to show size) 36 mm



left side



right side



CHN317 36 mm



Singapore purchase SIN013



CHN317.02 44 mm

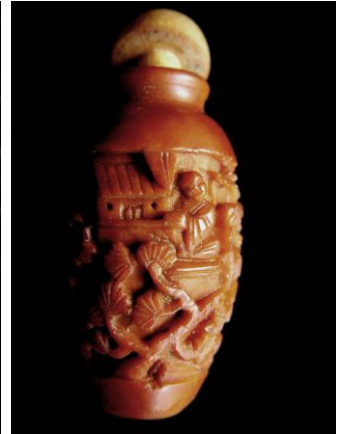
'Perfume Bottles'



CHN273 37 mm



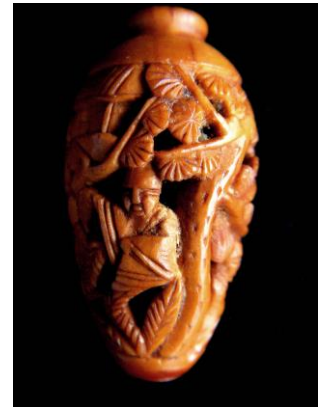
CHN274 32 mm



CHN108 30 mm



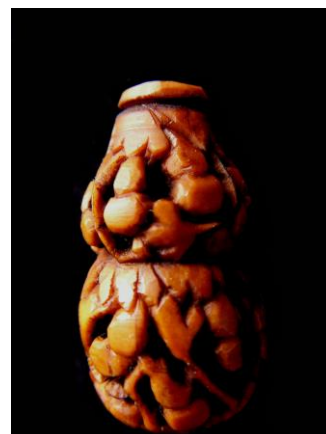
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CHN107 30 mm



CHN111 33 mm



CHN024 28 mm

