



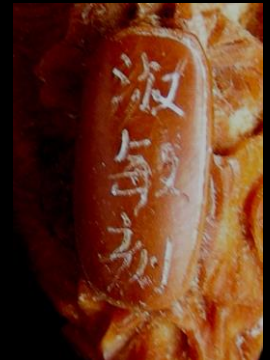
Identifying / Comparing Artists



Zhou Yi Qing



Shu Min carve



Identifying / Comparing Artists
Same Motive: Eighteen Luohan with tiger / dragon



CHN798 44 mm



CHN060G 39 mm



CHN799 45 mm

A



CHN060E 40 mm



Baby back-pack – Kaili, Guizhou Province

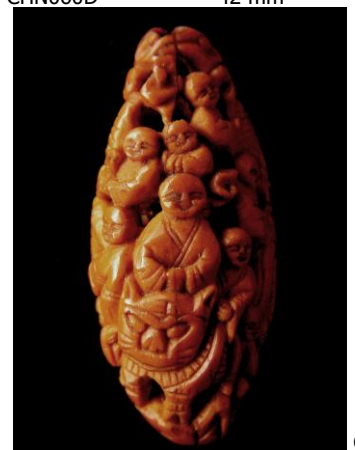


CHN060D 42 mm

B



CHN067A1 30 mm



CHN067A3 35 mm

C

All the carvings share the same popular design of the eighteen Luohan with the tiger and dragon. Yet each one shows a different interpretation of the same motif. In principle, at row A the outer examples could be from the same artist. The differences here might be interpreted as different customer's requirements. The same is for the pictures of row C.

Identifying / Comparing Artists
Same Motive: Zodiac / ox



CHN750



CHN694 32 mm



CHN625A02 37 mm



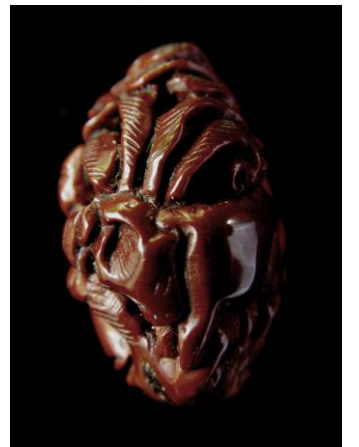
CHN546 35 mm



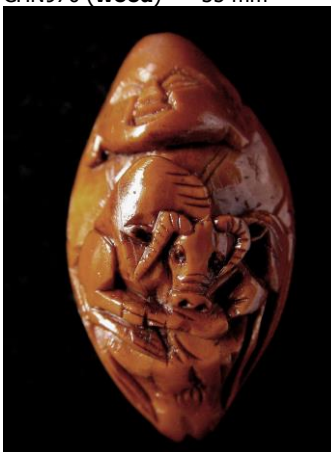
CHN970 (wood) 35 mm



Minority woman (Hwangping-Miao) – Kaili, Guizhou Province



CHN739.02 25 mm



CHN169 34 mm



CHN619.02

In general, the zodiac animals are a very common design and normally shown together with a Luohan. It is said that each animal of this twelve-year cycle has very specific, mainly positive characteristics and therefore, are given as a present to a newly born child. It is very difficult to imagine that the above shown oxen, which are very different in quality and style, should be from the same artist. In a country where copying a successful motif / design is very common, no artist would have the idea to vary his successful saleable design. Nevertheless a good carver is able to change if necessary. So there is no logical reason why the above olives can't be from the same artist.

Identifying / Comparing Artists
Same Motive: Carved faces



CHN944 40 mm



CHN005 35 mm



CHN935 39 mm



CHN931 38 mm

B



CHN740.08



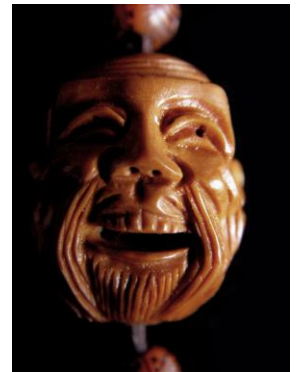
With the barber or Do it yourself (Hongkong)



CHN740.07



CHN740.16



CHN740.15

C



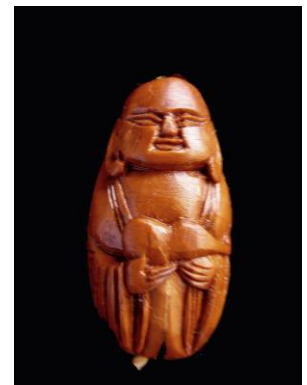
CHN043C.05



CHN043C.02



CHN043C.04



CHN043C.01

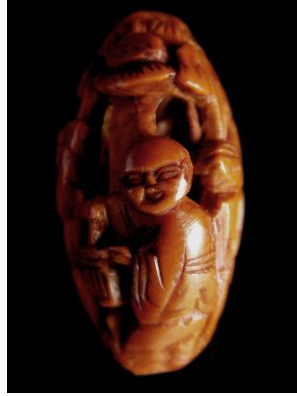
A

As already shown the artists are able to copy a design with unbelievable precision. Therefore it would be more than surprising that, when carving faces, suddenly the artist would use different techniques / details. We can therefore, infer that the carvings of group A are from just one artist, the same is for group B and C respectively. But here again, a good carver would be able to change.

Identifying / Comparing Artists
Same Motive: Carved faces



CHN021 30 mm



CHN098 34 mm



CHN096.01 35 mm



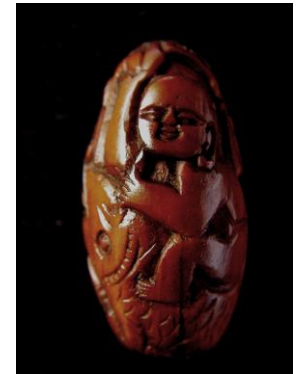
CHN096.01 35 mm



CHN136A05b 29 mm



CHN136A05a



CHN307 28 mm



CHN136A06 32 mm



Village at Yellow Mountains, Anhui Province

The above page shows only very few olives of the same quality and technique with the same or very similar face. Therefore, this page and the following ones will show 10-12 olives of the same quality and technique and very similar style, which in our opinion were from the same artist. At least by comparing the faces and the style / quality of the carvings, one can group the different artists.

Identifying / Comparing Artists
Same Motive: Carved faces



CHN074 40 mm



CHN397.03 43 mm



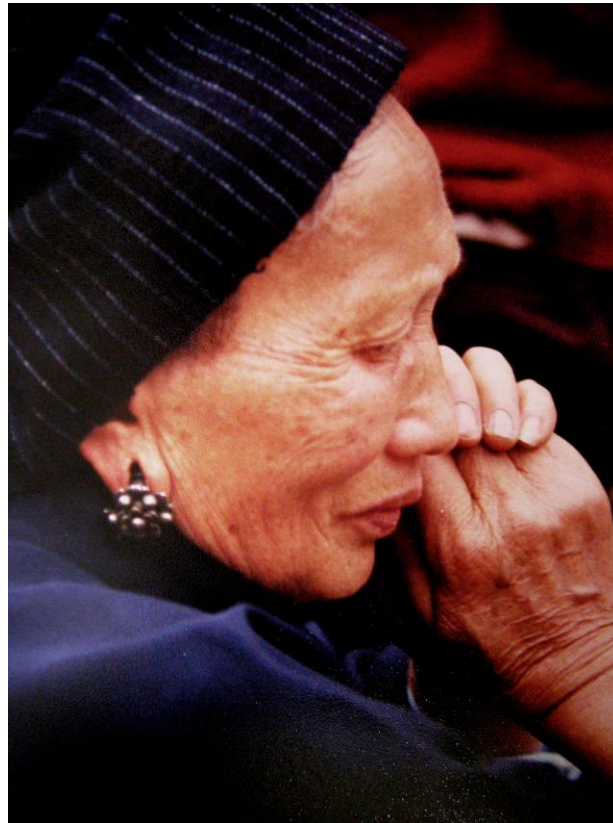
CHN077 40 mm



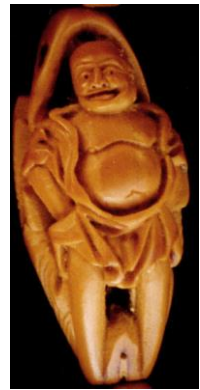
CHN918 37 mm



CHN370.11



Market at Kaili – Guizhou Province



CHN370.04



CHN370.02



CHN370.18



CHN370.06a



CHN925 38 mm

CHN002 38 mm



CHN370.09a

Quality and style of the carvings of this plate look very similar and therefore might be from the same artist (but must not).

Identifying / Comparing Artists
Same Motive: Carved faces



Part of rosary CHN043C

33 mm



CHN170 33 mm



Market at Hohot – Inner Mongolia



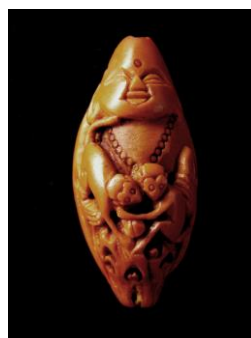
CHN164 30 mm



CHN061A8 39 mm



CHN061A5 38 mm



CHN162 30 mm



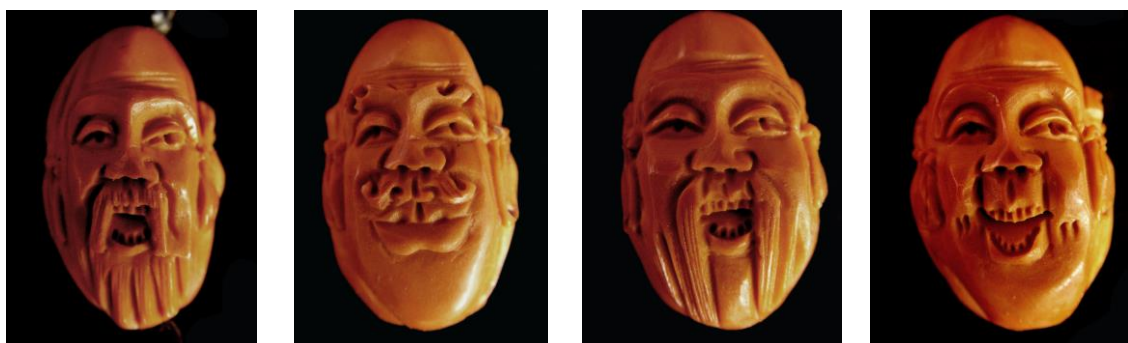
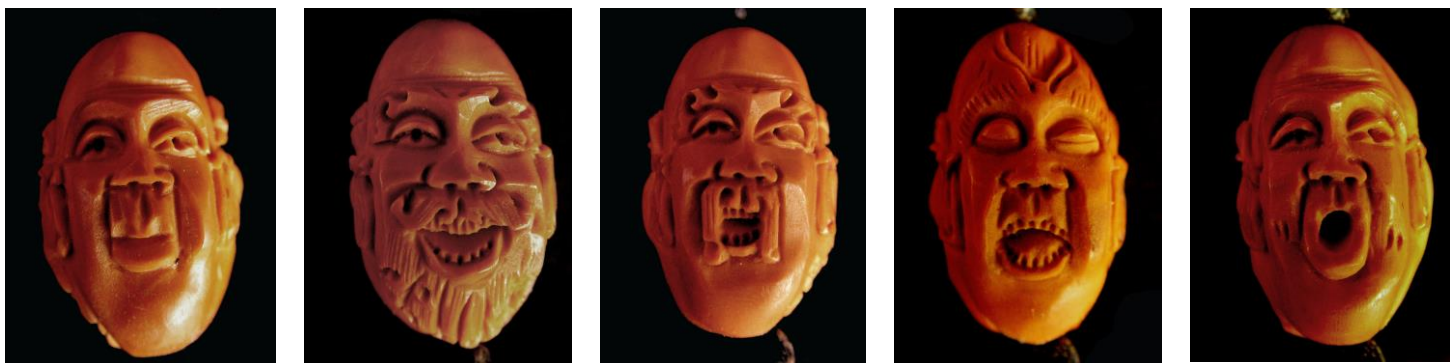
CHN163 32 mm

Though the motifs are different the quality and faces look very similar and therefore might be from the same artist, but from a different one, compared to the previous pages.

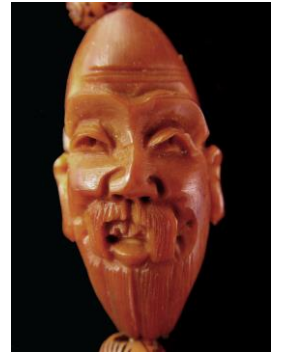
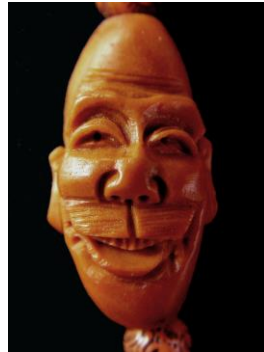
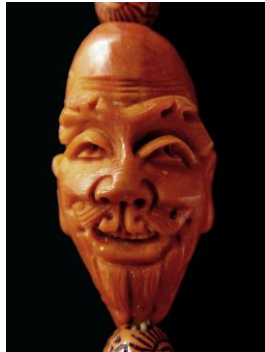
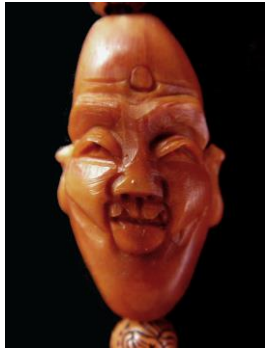
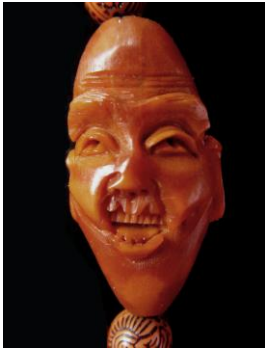
Identifying / Comparing Artists
Same Motive: Carved faces



Eighteen Luohan (three faces per olive) CHN832 28 mm

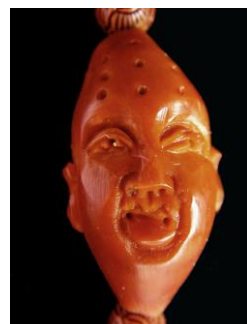
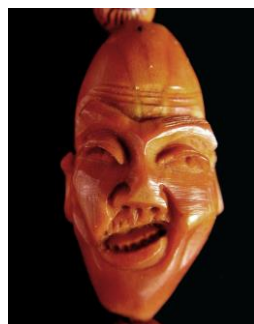
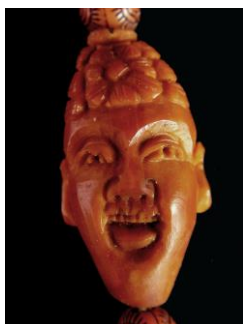
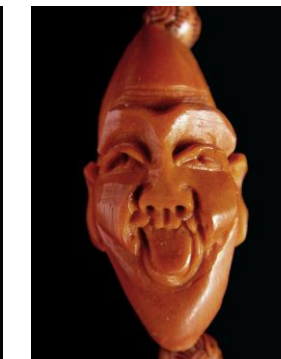
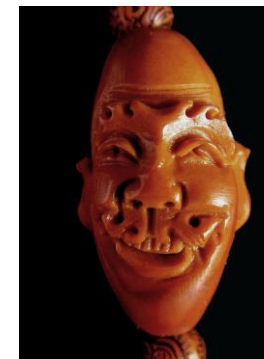
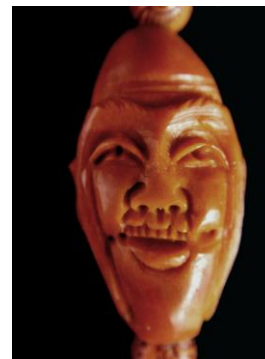
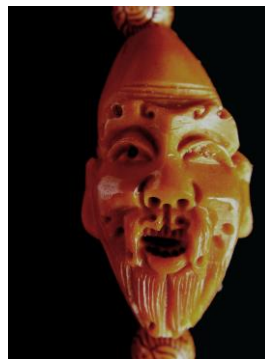
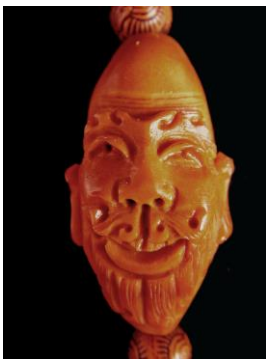
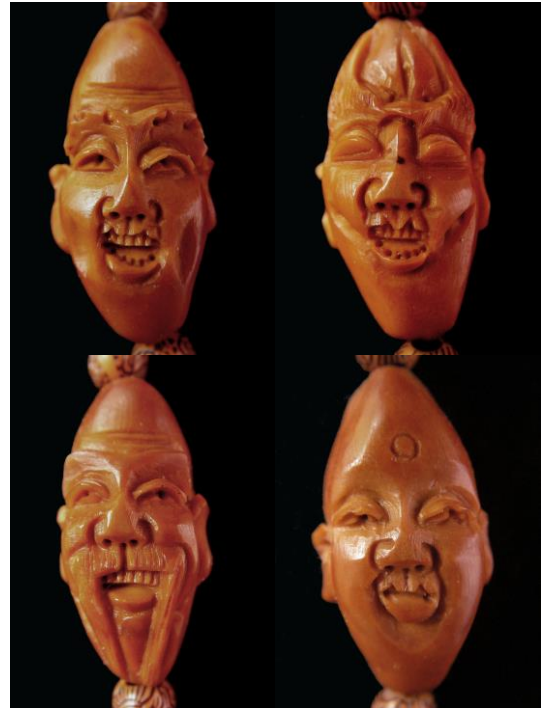


Identifying / Comparing Artists
Same Motive: Carved faces

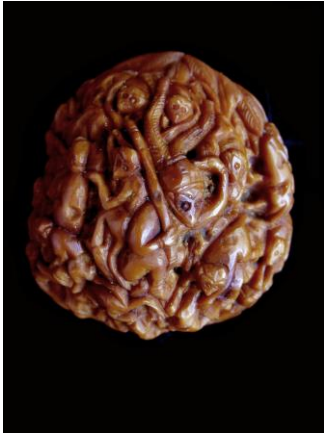


Eighteen Luohan (single face per olive) CHN835

31 mm



Identifying / Comparing Artists
Same Motive: Monkey God



CHN843 **A** 39 mm



CHN698.04 **E** 40 mm



CHN698.02 **C** 40 mm



Market at Hohot, Inner Mongolia



CHN698.04 **B** 40 mm



CHN698A **D** 42 mm

The first impression is that all four outer walnuts look the same, that is, they could be from the same artist. However the details show otherwise. The part of the walnuts with the monkeys **(E)** look more or less identical, but the side with Sun Mukong shows differences:

- A:** View from the side, the stick over the shoulder
- B:** Front view, no stick but peaches in his hand
- C:** Front view, stick on shoulder heights
- D:** Front view, holding stick over his shoulder

It is difficult to judge whether these differences had been done on purpose by the same artist. What is definite is that these examples are from a different artist than the ones in the following page.

Identifying / Comparing Artists
Same Motive: Deities



Type A CHN572.01 40 mm



Type B CHN572 44 mm



Type A



Type B



Type A



Market at Lijiang, Yunnan Province



Type A



Type B



Type B

Not only the details of the above carving, but also the style, the quality and specially the expression of the faces are for us unmistakable signs that both of the olives are carved by the same hand, but here again easily could be copied by another carver.

As a summary one can say that carvers, whether they work with seeds, wood, bamboo or ivory, normally use designs out of the passed centuries because they represent certain meanings. Because of that the variations within a design is very limited. Identification of a certain artist therefore is nearly impossible. Once again one should keep in mind that artists, **to honor their master**, copy a piece of him including possibly his signature / seal (which in general does not exist).

So why not just admiring the skills of these artists instead of asking for the age of one of these pieces and always having an age / value relation in one's mind.

Different Artists / Different Styles: Walnuts



CHN395 **18 Luohan** 45 mm



CHN387 **8 Immortals** 47 mm



CHN393 **100 Faces** 42 mm



CHN054 **18 Luohan** 41 mm



Vol I/4.42



CHN339 **Fairies** 37 mm

Isn't it amazing seeing such a variety of styles and techniques combined by the skills of these artists?



CHN373 **18 Luohan** 53 mm



CHN798 **18 Luohan, tiger/dragon** 44 mm



CHN397.03 **9 Luohan (of 18)** 43 mm

Internet : New Design / New Artists known to us (since 2008)

Internet - 26.5.17
new design / artist



02b



02a



01d



01e



01f



01b new design / artist



olive01a new design / artist



05a



03a new design / artist



03 new design / artist

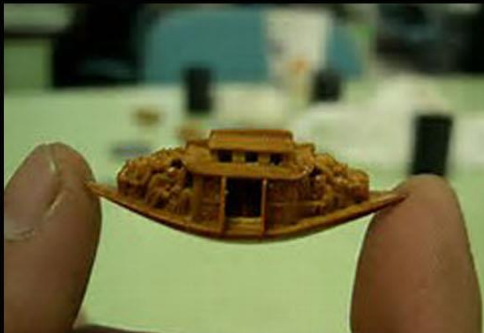
Internet - 26.5.17
new design / artist



new design / artist
new design / artist



new design / artist



Han Zhiao / Dalian



new design / artist



new design / artist



new design / artist

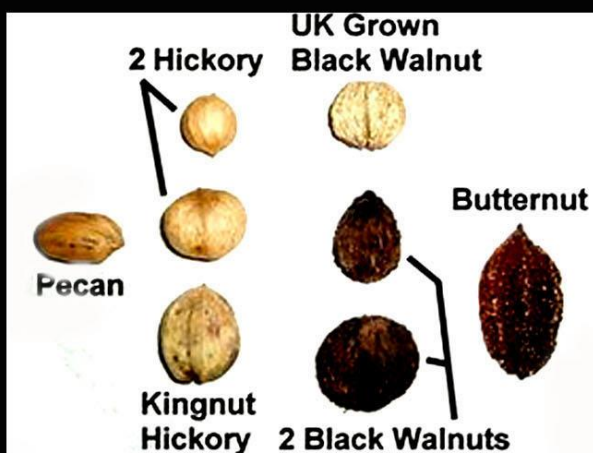
Internet - 26.5.17
new design / artist



new design / artist



(new design / artist ?)



new design / artist

Sotheby's



Minority earring (Miao)



1 Yuan banknote

YAHOO! SINGAPORE



Minority earring (Miao)

Prices / Pricing



CHN375



Market at Beijing



CHN376

VISA



eBay COM SG

Prices / Pricing

The following examples are based on "Japanese" Netsuke and should illustrate the difficulty of any pricing or prices for carved seeds.



There are a lot of similarities between these two types of fine art (better would be the German expression "Kleinkunst" for which no English expression exists), like:

- Till approximately 60 years ago, there was nothing published about Netsuke and till shortly nothing exists about seed carvings.
- They originally were objects of daily use, not defined as any type of art
- The instruments for carving are the same as for ivory and seeds
- Famous Chinese carvers (see seed boats) started with carving ivory
- Both type of carvers were paid very low (only by time per piece)
- In the past they were not allowed to sign their work (with a "seal"). This was only allowed for paintings, calligraphy and others accepted officially as art. Besides, only "officials" were allowed to use a seal.

As the following examples will show, other artists copied designs that had been successful. This was not done to cheat potential buyers but with netsuke it was to honor the initial artist (which is an extremely different behavior compared to Westerners). Even the famous carvers were working for dealers and were paid by them even without having sold pieces of their work, there was a certain dependency. So if they were asked by their "dealer" to repeat a certain design they will not have any misgivings to do so.

Therefore it is not surprising to find the same or very similar design as netsuke (or carved olive, etc.). Here some examples for netsuke:



MPNA_01



MTHC_01



CHNI006



15



MPNA_01



MPNA_02



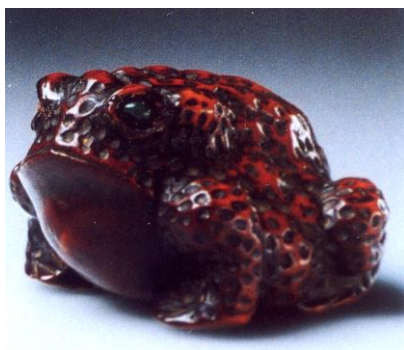
NFU_01



16

Prices should not be shown or discussed here as whether they are realistic for a netsuke or a carved olive or walnut. Netsuke from a famous carver out of a well known collection might be up to above 10'000 US\$ at an auction today. The specialists say netsuke had been extremely cheap before there had been any books or other information about it.

Prices / Pricing



8



9



10

Toad / Wood or ivory (**)



11



12



13

Sparrow / Ivory (**)

No.	Collection / Source	Artist	Material	Country	
	Horses				
1	Trumpf / D	Garaku	Boxwood	Japan	Trumpf_R01
2	Masterpieces of Netsuke Art	unsigned	Ivory	Japan	MPNA_01
3	MT Hindson Collection	unsigned	Ivory	Japan	MTHC_01
4	Author's collection	Zuo An	Ivory	China	CHNI006_a
5	Masterpieces of Netsuke Art	Masamori	Ivory	Japan	MPNA_01
6	Masterpieces of Netsuke Art	unsigned	Stag antler	Japan	MPNA_02
7	Netsuke, Familiar / Unfamiliar	Tsunemasa		Japan	NFU_01
15	Internet / USA	Not known			
16	Internet / USA	1867-1912		Japan	
	Toad				
8		Risui		Japan	
9		Shigetada		Japan	
10		Tadakazu		Japan	
	Sparrow				
11	Trumpf / D	Masanao	Ivory	Japan	
12		unsigned		Japan	
13		unsigned		Japan	

If a piece is unsigned its age and its carver are uncertain. A signed piece does not mean it is not a copy, whether from the original artist, from the same school or just simply from an admirer.

Therefore, which of the above examples are expensive or worth their money? (He who does not know the examples will not be able to guess!)

Nevertheless here some prices of today: At an auction of Christie's (London Nov.97) e.g. 40 netsuke had been offered between US\$ 980 –1270 a piece (page 130 – 134), or four other netsuke for 5100 – 7200 US\$ (lot 558 –561), all out of ivory.

A recent Chinese source (issued 2006) is mentioning prices from auctions at Shanghai (between 1'038 and 44'000 RMB) or Tianjin (Hebei Province, close to Beijing, between 4'400 and 48,400 RMB) (7.50 RMB ≈ 1 US \$).

In the booklet "Enjoying Wood, Bamboo and Ivory Carvings" (ISBN 7-5356-2322-0) on page 128 a rosary with 108 beads is shown. The estimated value is given as 1.2 Mio RMB, which is approximately 1500 US\$ per bead.

Prices

Examples from Internet (Beijing) (**)

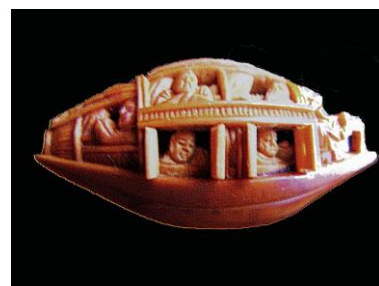


AC1.3 = 1280/1500 US \$



GX171 – 115 US \$

GX172 – 115 US \$



OB_H29 Artist: **Chen Su Yung**



GX174 – 145 US \$



Shop on a market at Beijing



GX156 – 200 US \$



GX165 – 800 US \$



GX143 – Smiling Buddha
left / right 270 / 135 US \$
Same carving, different "finish"
("surface shine")



GX166 – 800 US \$

The style of the shown examples on this page seem to be typical for the Suzhou area, where carvers / dealers are very proud of the shiny surface of the carved olives. The price difference (see bottom, center picture – GX143) is quite remarkable. This again reminds us on the definition of "patina", where it is said "to be an appealing shine on the surface, which an article gets by age or frequent using."

Prices

Examples from Internet (Beijing) ()**
 (Price changes within a year)



AC1.7 Sculpture
 183 / 214 US \$ (Apr/Jun 08)



AC3.8 Pixiu, mythical animal
 220 / 257 US \$ (Aug07/Jun08)



AC4.5 Eighteen Arhat
 1390/1629 US \$



AC3.9 Smiling Maitreya
 55 / 66 US \$ (Aug07/Jun08)



GX111b Artist: Zhongying Xu
 8780 / 10291 US \$
 (Feb/Jun08)



Shop on a market at Beijing



GX002a – 350 US \$



GX005 = 1600 US \$ (9+2)



GX080 – 1050 US\$ Eighteen Arhats
 (18+2)



GX001 510 US \$

Prices

Examples (different sources)



RH_AA01 Price: 100 US \$
Roy Hu's Asian Art Taipei (**)



SOTH01 Sotheby's, London 1998 – 3200 GB £
Photo: Courtesy Sotheby's, London



ASY01 Price: on request



HAWK01 65 GB £



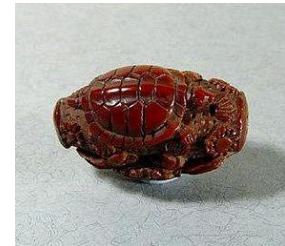
Entrance Oriental Hotel, Singapore



HAWK02 55 GB £



HAWK03 45 GB £



HAWK04 85 GB £



GX032 50 US \$



GX006 350 US \$

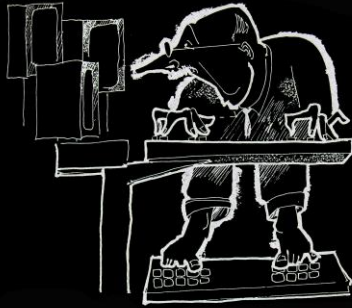


GX163 800 US \$



GX032 50 US \$

It is pointless to discuss the validity of the shown prices. We do not claim that they are representative. As in the case of netsuke, as long there is no information, prices will remain 'reasonable'. But this situation may change soon because of the inflation rate at China (specially at Beijing) and the coming Olympics with a lot of tourists looking for souvenirs.



Internet



Information Source, Literature,
Personal Communications

院物博宮故立國
NATIONAL PALACE MUSEUM
WAI-SHUANG-HSI. SHIH-LIN
TAIPEI, TAIWAN
REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Sotheby's

THE BRITISH MUSEUM
Department of Oriental Antiquities



Information Source

1. Personal Communication

1.01	Dr.Farron (retired) University, Botanical Institute Basel - Switzerland	1.11	Jessica Harrison-Hall, Assistant Keeper British Museum, London - United Kingdom
1.02	old man at market of Chengdou / Sichuan - China	1.12	Ming Wilson , Deputy Curator V&A Museum, Far Eastern Departement London - United Kingdom
1.03	Naxi musician, Lijiang / Yunan - China	1.13	Graham Hutt British Museum Library, London - United Kingdom
1.04	Chi Jo-hsin, Associate Curator Departement of Antiquities National Palace Museum, Taipei - Taiwan Service@NPM.Gov.TW	1.14	Chang Kuang-yuan, Curator Departement of Antiquities National Palace Museum, Taipei – Taiwan Service@NPM.Gov.TW Lien@NPM.Gov.TW
1.05	Henry Howard-Sneyd, Director Head of: Chinese Works of Art Dep. Sotherby's London – United Kingdom	1.15	Jeff Pan China Daily, Beijing (newspaper) China cultural section Panjf@Chinadaily.com.cn
1.06	Joe-Hynn Yang Chinese Departement Sotherby's London - United Kingdom	1.16	Terese Tse Bartholomew Curator of Asian Art Museum San Francisco – USA
1.07	Naomi Rumball, Assistant Curator Julia Steele, Collection Manager Royal Botanical Garden Kew , Economic Botanical Collection London - United Kingdom	1.17	Rietberg-Museum Zürich - Switzerland
1.08	Cherry Cheung, Senior Press Officer Hong Kong University, Hongkong CACheung@HKUCC.HKU.HK	1.18	Dirk Allgaier Arnoldsche Art Publisher Stuttgart - Germany
1.09	Tina Yee-wan Pang Hong Kong University Museum and Art Gallery, Hongkong Museum@HKUSUA.HKU.HK TywPang@HKUCC.HKU.HK	1.19	Patrizia Jirka-Schmitz Asian Art Köln - Germany (Hans Martin Schmitz, Kunsthaendler)
1.10	Christie's London - United Kingdom		Patricia Bjaaland Welch Singapore

2.Catalogues

2.01	Snuff Bottle Exhibition Hong Kong University Museum and Art Gallery, 29 March to 6 May 1995 Hong Kong – China - English / Chinese -	2.03	Sotherby's auction London 17.6.98 lot 661 - netsuke of 2 walnuts (tiger/dragon, fighting) - English -
2.02	Sotherby's auction Hong Kong 30.3./1.4.96 lot 571 - 3 peach-stone (=olives) beads - English -	2.04	Sotherby's auction London 18.11.98 lot 902 - A miniature nut carving (boat on stand) - English -

3. Books

3.01	Wolfram Eberhard A Dictionary of Chinese Symbols ©1986 Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. ISBN 0-415-00228-1 - English -	3.12	Edward Th.CH.Werner Myths & Legends of China ISBN 9971-947-55-2 - English -
3.02	C.A.S.Williams Chinese Symbolism and Art Motifs Charles E.Tuttle Company, Inc. of Rutland, Vermont & Tokyo, Japan ISBN 0-8048-1586-0 - English -	3.13	Terese Tse Bartholomew Hidden Meanings in Chinese Art ISBN 0-939117-36-3 - English -
3.03	Masterpieces of Snuff Bottles in the Palace Museum ISBN 7-80047-194-2 / J.87 - Chinese / English -	3.14	Explaining Auspicious Chinese Paintings ISBN 7-80622-159 - Chinese -
3.04	One Thousand Snuff Bottles (Hong-Kong University) ISBN unknown - Chinese / English - See magazine	3.15	China's Great Collection of Pictures with Explanations of Implied Auspicious Meanings ISBN 7-80503-377-3 - Chinese - see reference to photos
3.05	China's Precious Snuff Bottles ISBN 962-04-1028-9 - Chinese -	3.16	Great National Treasures of China Masterworks in the National Palace Museum ISBN 957-562-086-0 -Chinese / English-
3.06	Shou Shan Precious Stone Crafts ISBN 957-8629-28-1 - Chinese -	3.17	Bamboo, Wood, Ivory and Rhinoceros Horn Carvings The Complete Collection of Treasures of the Palace Museum ISBN 7-5323-6315-5 - Chinese (English) -
3.07	Complete Compendium of Chinese Handicrafts ISBN 7-5010-0148-0 / J.64 - Chinese -	3.18	Yun Du Peach Wood Carving The Chinese Folk Art Pithy Volume ISBN 7-5318-0725-4 - Chinese -
3.08	Treasures out of Wood, Bamboo, Ivory and (rhino) Horn ISBN 957-99391-0-1 - Chinese -	3.19	Patrizia Jirka –Schmitz Netsuke / The Trumpf Collection Arnoldsche Art Publisher ISBN 3-925369-88-0 - German / English -
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