

Ancient Chinese Ritual Bronze Vessels

Hong Kong / International Antiques Fair / May $25^{\rm th}$ – $27^{\rm th}$, 2014



Cover: Ritual bronze food vessel *li* Photographes: Vincent Girier-Dufournier Graphic design: René Bouchara Printer: Orientation

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Ancient Chinese Ritual Bronze Vessels

International Antiques Fair / Hong Kong October 25th—27th, 2014 Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Hall 5G Booth D2 — 1 Expo Drive, Wanchai, Hong Kong





Foreword

For my third exhibition in Hong Kong, I am presenting a number of exceptional ritual bronze vessels from major international private collections, such as those of C.T. Loo, Chester Dale and Dolly Carter, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery and Rikunosuke Ogawa. Most of the objects are already well known, having been recorded in important European and Japanese publications, and some have also been included in major Chinese art exhibitions held in such renowned institutions as the Art Museum at Princeton University, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, etc.

Three objects included in this exhibition deserve special note:

- The exceptional bronze vessel *bu* from the Anyang period of the Shang dynasty (13th -11th centuries Bc.) coming from the Chester Dale and Dolly Carter Collection. (Cat. no. 2),
- The rare bronze vessel *fangyi* from the Anyang period of the Shang dynasty (13th -11th centuries BC.) previously in the Albright-Knox Art Gallery (Buffalo). (Cat. no. 3),
- The superb late Shang or early Western Zhou (11th century Bc.) bronze bell *nao*, published by major Japanese scholars including Mizuno S. and Umehara S. (Cat. no. 4),

I hope this, my latest exhibition of Ancient Chinese Bronzes, will contribute to the ever-growing interest in Chinese Art.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have helped me in the various stages in the production of this exhibition and this catalogue. I should especially like to thank Ms. Raphaele de Sigalony, my assistant, for her invaluable help, Mr. René Bouchara for producing this catalogue and for organizing the presentation of the objects, as well as designing and setting up my booth in the Hong Kong International Art and Antiques Fair and Mr. Ed O'Neill for translating the manuscript into English. I should also like to express my gratitude to Mr. Vincent Girier Dufournier for devoting several days to the photographing of the objects.

Christian Deydier

Chronology

Xia Dynasty 夏

■ Erlitou Čulture 二里頭文化 19th – 16th centuries BC.

Shang Dynasty 商

- Erligang Period 二里岡 16th 14th centuries BC.
- Yinxu Period 殷墟 14th 11th centuries BC.

Zhou Dynasty 周

- Western Zhou Dynasty 西周 11th 8th centuries BC.
- Eastern Zhou Dynasty 東周
 - Spring and Autumn Period 春秋 8th 5th centuries BC.
 Warring States Period 戰國 5th 3rd centuries BC.

Western Han Dynasty 西漢 206 BC. - 9 AD.

1. Ritual bronze food vessel ding

Shang dynasty, Yinxu period, circa 13th - 11th centuries BC.

商代殷墟時期獸面紋青銅鼎

Height: 22.7cm, Width: 18.4cm

An archaic bronze food vessel *ding* supported on three columnar legs. The round bowl-shaped body is decorated with three large *taotie* masks cast in high relief. Each mask is formed of a pair of confronting large-eyed *kui* dragons shown in profile meeting at a central vertical flange and is separated from its neighbor on each of its sides by yet another vertical flange. The horns of each *taotie* are cast in the shape of curled *kui* dragons shown in profile. On each side of the separating vertical flange a smaller *kui* dragon shown in profile is cast in high relief in a vertical position. The narrow rim of the vessel is topped with two upright semi-circular handles.

The vessel has an olive green patina.

Inscription:

- An inscription consisting of an elaborate bordered clan mark and two characters cast inside the wall of the vessel's bowl reads: "Ya X (clan insignia) Father Ding" 《亞X父丁》.







- C.T. Loo, 盧芹齋 Paris New York.
- Christie's Paris, November 26th 2002, lot no. 196.
- Private Collection.

Exhibited:

- Christie's Paris, November 26th 2002, catalogue no. 196.

Published:

- Christie's Paris, November 26th 2002, catalogue no. 196.

The inscription seems to be the one published in:

- Chen Mengjia, *Yin Zhou Qingtongqi Fenlei Tulu*, (A Corpus of Chinese Bronzes in American Collections), Tokyo 1977, R 146c. 陳夢家《殷周青銅器分類圖錄》東京1977年版 R.146c.
- Yan Yiping, *Jinwen Zongji*, Taipei 1983, Vol. 1, p. 207, no. 0570, 嚴一萍《金文總集》臺北 1983年版, 第 1 冊,第 207 頁 0570 號.
- Wu Zhenfeng, *Shang Zhou Qingtongqi Mingwen Ji Tuxiang Jicheng*, Shanghai 2012, vol. 2, p. 387, no. 01152, 吳鎮烽《商周青銅器銘文暨圖像集成》 上海2012 年版, 第2冊, 第 384頁 01152號.

Notes:

- Similar inscriptions appear on bronze 10 vessels: two you, a he, a zun, a gu, a jue, a jiao, a jia and two liding, and are published in Hayashi M., In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi), Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I, p. 19 - 20 no. 26, 林巳奈夫《殷周時代青銅器の研究: 殷周青銅器綜覧 (一)》東京 1984年版,第 19 - 20 頁26 號.

2. Ritual bronze vessel bu

Shang dynasty, Yinxu period, circa 13th - 11th centuries BC.

商代殷墟時期獸面紋青銅瓿

Height: 18.4 cm, Diameter: 31.1 cm

An attractive and unusual ritual bronze vessel *bu* supported by a high ring foot and cast in the shape of a compressed jar with a wide bulging lower section that gradually narrows and slopes inwards as it rises towards its rimmed neck.

The vessel's sloping shoulder is decorated with a frieze of six *kui* dragons shown in profile, with protruding round eyes, and all on a *leiwen* background.

The wide rounded lower part of the vessel's body is entirely covered with lozenge and triangular motifs, each of which is bordered with bands of rectangular-shaped *leiwen* and centred by a bulbous eye-like protrusion.

The foot of the vessel is decorated with a single frieze of bordered square, fingerprint-like spirals.

The exact function of this type of vessel is controversial, with many scholars believing it was used to hold fermented beverages and others saying it was used to hold various sauces, and still others claiming it was used to hold water.

The vessel has a fine green patina.





- Chester Dale and Dolly Carter Collection, U.S.A.
- Sotheby's New York, November 2nd, 1979, catalogue lot no. 215.
- Private Collection, U.K.

Exhibited:

- The Art Museum, Princeton University, U.S.A.
- Sotheby's New York, November 2nd, 1979, catalogue lot no. 215.

Published:

- Erdlberg E. von, *Chinese Bronzes from the Collection of Chester Dale and Dolly Carter*, Ascona 1978, p. 128 129, no. 74.
- Sotheby's New York, November 2nd, 1979, catalogue lot no. 215.

Similar examples:

- A similar *bu* vessel is illustrated in Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu* (*In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi*), *Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - plates p. 311 no. 19, 林巳奈夫《殷周時代青銅器の研究: 殷周青銅器綵覧(一)圖版》東京 1984年版,第 311 頁19 號.

3. Ritual bronze vessel fangyi

Shang dynasty, Yinxu period, circa 13th - 11th centuries BC.

商代殷墟時期獸面紋青銅方彝

Height: 20.3 cm

A ritual bronze vessel *fangyi* used to hold fermented beverages. The vessel's long rectangular body is supported by a high foot with arched openings and each of its sides is cast with two large friezes of decoration, a narrower upper frieze decorated with two birds with long tails in high relief separated by a vertical flange and a longer lower frieze, covering two thirds of the vessel's body and decorated with a large *taotie* mask in high relief, with protruding round eyes, triangular ears, and large horns, separated down its centre by a vertical flange.

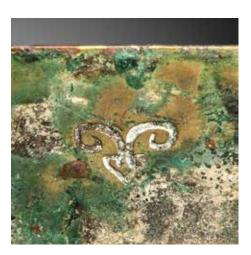
The vessel's foot is decorated on each of its sides with a frieze of two confronting *kui* dragons in high relief, shown in profile, and separated by a vertical flange and an arched opening.

The vessel's large, sloping, roof-like cover is topped by a small, similarly shaped knob decorated on each of its sides with *taotie* masks. Each side of the cover's sloping surface is cast with a large *taotie* mask composed of two confronting *kui* dragons in high relief, facing each other over a vertical flange.

The vessel has a fine reddish patina with areas of green.

Inscription:

- A single pictograph in the form of an elaborately-horned animal's head, probably a clan mark, is cast inside the vessel.







- Arthur B. Michael Collection, Newton Center, MA (bequest of 1942).
- Albright-Knox Art Gallery Collection, Buffalo, New York, U.S.A., no. 1942:16.280.
- Sotheby's New York, March 20, 2007, lot 505.
- Private Collection.

Exhibited:

- Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, U.S.A.
- Albany Institute of History and Art, Albany, U.S.A.: travelling exhibition 1976 1977: Far Eastern Art in Upstate New York, catalogue no. 5.
- The Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, U.S.A.: travelling exhibition 1976 1977: Far Eastern Art in Upstate New York, catalogue no. 5.
- Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, U.S.A.: travelling exhibition 1976 1977: Far Eastern Art in Upstate New York, catalogue no. 5.
- Memorial Art Gallery, Rochester, U.S.A.: travelling exhibition 1976 1977: Far Eastern Art in Upstate New York, catalogue no. 5.
- Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, U.S.A.: travelling exhibition 1976 1977: Far Eastern Art in Upstate New York, catalogue no. 5.
- Sotheby's New York, March 20, 2007, catalogue no. 505.

Published:

- Young M.W., Far Eastern Art in Upstate New York, New York 1976, no. 5.
- Nash S.A., Kline K., Kotik Ch., Wood E., *Albright-Knox Art Gallery: Painting and Sculpture from Antiquity to 1942*, Buffalo 1979, p. 98
- Sotheby's New York, March 20, 2007, catalogue no. 505.

Similar examples:

- A similar fangyi vessel is illustrated in Hayashi M., In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi), Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - plates p. 251 no. 18, 林巳奈夫《殷周時代青銅器の研究: 殷周青銅器綵覧 (一) 圖版》東京 1984年版, 第 251 頁18 號.

4. Ritual bronze bell nao

Late Shang dynasty - Early Western Zhou dynasty, 11th century BC.

商代晚期 - 西周早期雷紋青銅鐃

Height: 46.4 cm

An extremely fine and rare archaic ritual bronze bell *nao*. The bell's elliptically shaped body is supported by a long, thick, cylindrical handle which serves as the bell's base, since *nao* bells are always placed with their openings facing skywards.

The lower section of each of the bell's sides is divided down its centre into two sections by a vertical panel decorated with spirals, flanked on each side by six horizontal friezes of spirals, with the top frieze of each pair embellished with bosses in high relief, cast in the form of outwardly coiling dragons alternating with hooked scroll motifs.

The upper part of each of the bell's sides is decorated in its centre with a protruding horizontal plaque-like section in low relief, decorated with an elaborate stylized *taotie* mask formed of spirals and hooked scrolls, and flanked on both of its sides and below with yet more spiral and hooked scroll motifs.

The bell's cylindrical handle-like base with its protruding globular upper section is elaborately cast with similar scroll and spiral motifs.

The bronze bell has a pleasant green patina.

Inscription:

- An elaborate clan insignia in the form of a four-part pictograph is cast on the flat surface of the vessel's shank and consists, from left to right, of a man holding a halberd in his right hand standing above a long vessel-like motif and a stylized chariot-like motif above a galloping horse.







意储支那古銅精華 四











- Rikunosuke Ogawa Collection, Kyoto, Japan, prior to 1935, 1935前日本東京小川睦之輔氏舊藏.
- Private Collection, Japan.
- Christie's New York, March 21st 22nd 2013, lot no. 1224.

Exhibited:

Christie's New York, March 21st – 22nd 2013, catalogue no. 1224.

Published:

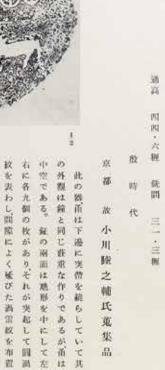
- Mizuno S., *In Shu Seidoki to Gyoku (Bronzes and Jades from the Yin and Zhou Dynasties*), Tokyo 1959, p.113, 水野清一《殷周青銅器と玉》 東京 1959年版, 第 113 頁.
- Umehara S., Nihon Shucho Shina Kodo Seika, Selected Relics of Ancient Chinese Bronzes from Collections in Japan, Vol. 4, Osaka, Yamanaka & Co., 1959, plate 285,梅原末治《日本蒐儲支那古銅精華》第4冊,日本山中商會,大阪 1959年版, 285號.
- Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi)*, *Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I, p. 63, and Vol. I-plates, p. 381 no. 13, 林巳奈夫《殷周時代青銅器の研究: 殷周青銅器綜覧 (一) 圖版》東京 1984年版, 第 381 頁13 號.
- Christie's New York, March 21st 22nd 2013, catalogue no. 1224.

Similar pieces:

- A bell with very similar decoration excavated in Changxing, Zhejiang province and now conserved in the Zhejiang Provincial Museum is illustrated in Hayashi M., In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi), Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I plates p. 380 no. 1, 林巳奈夫《殷周時代青銅器の研究: 殷周青銅器綜覧 (一) 圖版》東京 1984年版,第 380 頁1 號, and in Rawson J., Western Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections, Volume II, Washington D.C. and Cambridge 1990, p. 730, fig. 123-5.
- Another similar bell from the Shumei Family, now in the Miho Museum, is illustrated in Arnold D., & others, *Ancient Art from The Shumei Family Collection*, New York 1996, and p. 96 97 no. 38.

Notes:

- Large *nao* are also called *zheng*.
- This type of bell, generally found alone, was used during sacrifices to the natural elements, such as the wind, the rain, the stars, etc. as well as to mountains and rivers.



氏 嵬 华

CCLXXXV BRONZE BELL 'CHÉNG' WITH DRAGON AND SPIRAL ORNAMENT

して、中央の聴形と共に鮮鋭な錦上りを示す。

この館の舞に社珍らしく雨のもとを挟ん

知 の 魚 那 路

候他は敵を執つた人物の立像と、失筒に舟形 で、それぞれに象形を印し、一方は車側と動物

とを表わす。

同種の経は近年新たな出土例

股代に遡る中での苦しいものと一とせられる。

古い出土品であつて最見地を詳にしないが、 を加えたが、この器はもと関介制の珍蔵した

Total Height 44.6 cm.

Yin Dynasty

Late C. Ogawa Collection, Kyoto







Early Western Zhou dynasty, late 11th - early 10th centuries BC.

西周早期青銅鬲

Height: 37.7cm, Width: 36 cm

An archaic bronze food vessel *li* supported on three hollow legs rising into three clustered bulbous swells. Each swell is decorated with a large *taotie* mask cast in low relief, with protruding round eyes, triangular ears, and C-shaped horns, all on a *leiwen* background. Each *taotie* mask is flanked on its sides by a long vertically positioned *kui* dragon cast in profile with its head looking downward on a *leiwen* background.

Two upright U-shaped handles are set on the upper part of the vessel's body which is topped by an everted rim.

The vessel has a green and reddish patina.

Inscription:

- A partially corroded multiple-character inscription cast inside the wall of the vessel reads: "XX made (this. May) grandsons (and) sons eternally treasure (and) use it" 《XXX 作孫子其永寶用》.







- Reputed to have come from C.T. Loo, 盧芹齋 Paris, France.
- Private Collection.

Similar examples:

- A similar li, but with the handles set on its rim, now in the Avery Brundage Collection, is published by Lefebvre d'Argencé R.Y., Bronze Vessels of Ancient China in The Avery Brundage Collection, San Francisco 1977, p. 72, no. B60 B1081
- Another *li*, previously in the Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, is illustrated by Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi), Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I plates p. 64 no. 42, 林 巳奈夫《殷周時代青銅器の研究: 殷周青銅器綵覧 (一) 圖版》東京 1984年版,第64 頁42 號.

Notes:

- Large *li* vessels like this one are extremely rare.
- The upright U-shaped handles set on the sides of the vessel's body are typical of bronzes produced during the early Western Zhou dynasty.

6. Pair of ritual bronze wine vessels hu

Late Western Zhou dynasty, Early Spring and Autumn period, 9th – 8th centuries BC.

西周晚期 - 春秋早期青銅壺 (一對)

Qin culture. 秦文化 Height: 34.7 cm

A pair of archaic bronze wine vessels *hu* of rectangular shape. Each has a double-tiered rectangular cover and is supported on a rectangular flaring pedestal foot. The body of each vessel is decorated with interlaced serpentine scrolls in high relief and its neck is flanked by two elaborate loop handles issuing from horned dragons' heads spouting stylized phoenixes with cascading plumes on each side of their heads. A large flat ring hangs from the bottom of each of the vessel's loop handles, touching the vessel's bulbous lower body. The cover is cast with dragon scroll motifs.

The two vessels have a green patina with areas of blue and red patina.









- Zen Gallery, Belgium, 1994.
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Exhibited:

- The Frank Arts Collection, Hong Kong/ Art Asian Fair/ October $2^{nd} - 7^{th}$, 2011, catalogue no. 16, p. 50 – 53.

Published:

- Deydier Ch., *The Frank Arts Collection*, Hong Kong/ Art Asian Fair/ October $2^{nd} - 7^{th}$, 2011, catalogue no. 16, p. 50 – 53.

Similar examples:

- Similar *hu* vessels, with more elaborate decors, excavated in 1998 from tomb 98LDM2 in Yuandingshan, are illustrated in *Qin Xi Chui Ling Qu*, Beijing, Wenwu press, 2004, p 78 - 85 plates 18 – 21, 《秦西垂陵區 》文物出版社, 北京 2004年版, 第 78 - 85頁, 圖18-21.

7. Ritual bronze bird-headed wine vessel hu

Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States period, 4th century BC.

東周戰國時期鷹首青銅壺

Height: 37.8 cm

A rare archaic bronze ritual wine vessel *hu* cast with its cover in the form of a bird's head. The vessel's plain pear-shaped body, with just a simple protruding, undecorated rounded band around its waist and a small circular handle at its back, is supported by a low round foot.

Both sides of the bottom of the vessel's neck have an arm-like attachment rising from them and passing through wide rings on the vessel's cover to join at the cover's back in a handle that can be manipulated to open the top of the bird's beak and the rest of the vessel's lid.

The cover is cast in the shape of the stylized head of a bird of prey, with large eyes and a sharp downwardly curved moveable beak.

The vessel has a pleasant bluish and dark green patina on its body, and a light green patina on its handle and cover.





- Private Collection.
- Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

Exhibited:

- Archaic Bronze Vessels from Private Collections, Hong Kong/ Art Asian Fair/ October 4th – 7th, 2012, catalogue no. 17, p. 60 – 33.

Published:

- Deydier Ch., Archaic Bronze Vessels from Private Collections, Hong Kong/ Art Asian Fair/ October 4th – 7th, 2012, catalogue no. 17, p. 60 – 33.

Similar example:

- A very similar bronze bird-headed *hu* now in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, is illustrated by Hayashi M., *Shunju Sengoku Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran San) Studies of Bronzes from the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods, Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes, Vol. III, Tokyo 1989, p. 146 no. 2, 林巳奈夫《春秋戰國時代青銅器の研究: 殷周青銅器綜覧(三)》東京 1989年版,第 146 頁2 號.*

Notes:

- Bronze bird-headed vessels *hu* are extremely rare. Hayashi M. records only four examples of this type.
- The bodies of some of these are encircled by plain concave bands.

Previous Exhibitions

December	1985	Chinese Gold, Silver and Gilt Bronze up to the Tang Dynasty, London
June	1986	Ancient Chinese Bronze Vessels, Gilt Bronzes and Early Ceramics, London
December	1987	Opening Exhibition, London
June	1989	Archaic Chinese Bronzes from Shang to Zhou Dynasties, London
June	1990	Imperial Gold from Ancient China, London
June	1991	Imperial Gold from Ancient China, Part II, Grosvenor House, London
June	1991	The Art of the Warring States and Han Periods, London
September	1992	XVI ^e Biennale des Antiquaires, Paris
December	1992	An Exceptional Horse from the Han Dynasty, London
November	1994	L'Or des Qin, XVII ^e Biennale des Antiquaires, Paris
December	1995	Le Banquet des Dieux, Ritual Bronzes of Ancient China, London
January	1996	Le Banquet des Dieux, Bronzes Rituels de la Chine Ancienne, Paris
September	1996	XVIII ^e Biennale des Antiquaires, Paris
February	1997	Arts de la Chine et de l'Himalaya, XIV ^e s. av. JC.—XV ^e s. ap. JC., Paris
January	1998	L'immortalité de l'Âme chez les Han, Paris
March	1998	Timeless China, New York
October	1998	L'Art et la Matière, Paris
October	1999	Caravanes sur la Route de la Soie, Paris
September	2000	XX ^e Biennnale des Antiquaires, Paris
October	2000	Twentieth Anniversary, Paris-London
October	2001	Rituels pour l'Éternité, Paris-London
September	2002	XXI ^e Biennale des Antiquaires, Paris
September	2004	L'or des Qidan, XXII ^e Biennale des Antiquaires, Paris
September	2006	XXIII ^e Biennale des Antiquaires, Paris
April-May	2007	L'Inde Sensuelle : Terres Cuites de l'époque Gupta, IV ^e —VI ^e siècles, Paris
February	2008	Exposition Inaugurale, Paris
September	2008	XXIV ^e Biennale des Antiquaires, Paris
March-April	2009	Treasures from Ancient China—I, New York-Paris
FebMarch	2010	Treasures from Ancient China—II, New York-Paris
September	2010	XXV ^e Biennale des Antiquaires, Paris
March-April	2011	Treasures from Ancient China—III, New York-Paris
September	2011	Extraordinary Animals from Ancient China, Paris
October	2011	The Frank Arts Collection, Fine Art Asia Fair, Hong Kong
March	2012	Treasures from Ancient China, The Gerbe Collection—IV, New York
September	2012	XXVI ^e Biennale des Antiquaires, Paris
October	2012	Archaic Bronze Vessels from Private Collections, Fine Art Asia Fair, Hong Kong
October	2013	Ancient Chinese Ritual Bronze Vessels, Fine Art Asia Fair, Hong Kong



