

STONE LANTERN

SNUFF BOTTLES

The fashion of taking snuff was first introduced sometime during the 16th century to the Chinese by the Portuguese who brought it to the port of Macao. Among the Manchus it was frowned upon at first as a messy habit. Perhaps this was before the snuff bottle, as such, with its tight cork and tiny spoon for the removal of the powder, had been fully developed. At the beginning it is known that various containers were used, medicine and perfume bottles. Some of the snuff bottles today are recognizable miniature porcelain vases. The lip of the vase presents a rounded surface instead of the flat one of the real snuff bottle. The bottle top could never have fitted as closely.

It is probably because the Oriental had no pocket and the containers had to be carried in his sleeve that the Oriental used bottles while the European used boxes.

The snuff taking seems to have been done daintily. Each snuff bottle was equipped with a tight stopper, a tiny spoon of ivory or silver or tortoise shell attached. The spoon sometimes shaped as a tiny hand, was used to transfer a bit of snuff to the thumb-nail and from there was sniffed up by the aristocratic nose.

In the homes larger bottles, table bottles as they are called, were in evidence for the use of guests, as our cigarette containers are today. Small snuff saucers were distributed to guests also for the use of their snuff. These were made of as many materials as the bottles themselves and many people now collect them. An ivory scoop and funnel were used for getting the snuff into the bottle. The shaft of the scoop was used for tamping the snuff down.

It has ever been an Oriental trait to make of an object of use a thing of beauty. The use of the snuff bottle coincided with the time when great art development was taking place under the patronage of the three Manchu monarchs. It is little wonder that there should have been lavished upon the snuff bottle all the upsurge of the art activity taking place through out the realm.

Some of the materials found in the Chinese snuff bottles are:
Enamel-in three forms, painted, cloisonne', champleve'.

Ivory-carved and painted.

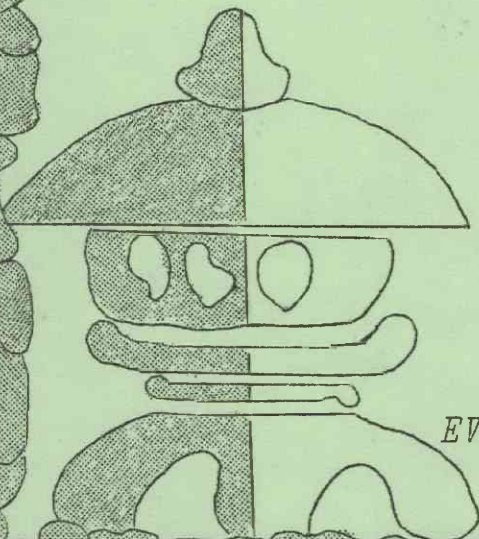
Jade-carved, uncarved, embellished, and in every color.

Metals-gold, silver, pewter, brass, bronze, iron.

Pottery-carved, painted, enameled.

Porcelain-monochrome, carved decoration, applied decoration, pierced, underglaze decoration, enamel overglaze, incised, lacquered.

Also: Coral, lacquer, dried tangerine skin, nut, slate, tortoise shell, hornbill ivory, calcite, mother-of-pearl.



ORIENTAL ANTIQUES
and
CONTEMPORARY GIFTS

DAILY: 10:00 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.
EVENING: 7:30 P.M. to 10:00 P.M.
SUNDAY: 1:00 P.M. to 5:30 P.M.

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