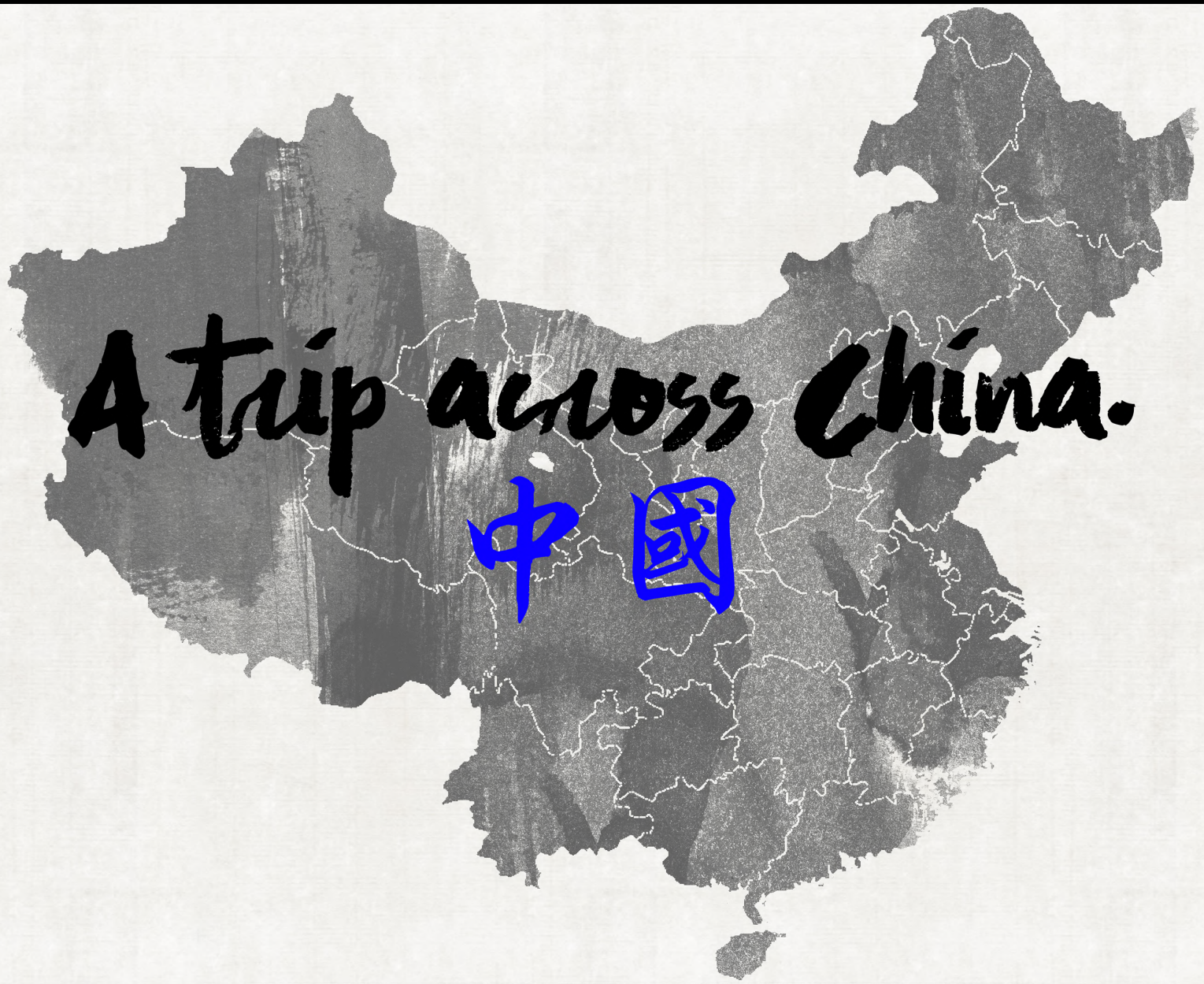

A trip across China.
中國

summary.


kunlun mountains
⑩
Beijing ①
shandong province ②
Luoyang ③
Jingdezhen ④
Yangzhou
⑤
Yixing ⑥
shunan zhuhai
⑨
Guangzhou
⑧
Hong Kong ⑦

Beijing

北京市



POST CARD

片信明政郵

A glass snuff bottle of flattened rectangular form painted inside with a continuous montainous landscape scene with two figures boating on a river; the reverse with an eagle perched in the branches of a tree looking down at a bear below with a river below. Inscribed in draft script "Painted by Chen Zhongsan in the autumn of 1916".

China, 1916

Ht: 6 cm

Provenance: Private Collection, Paris

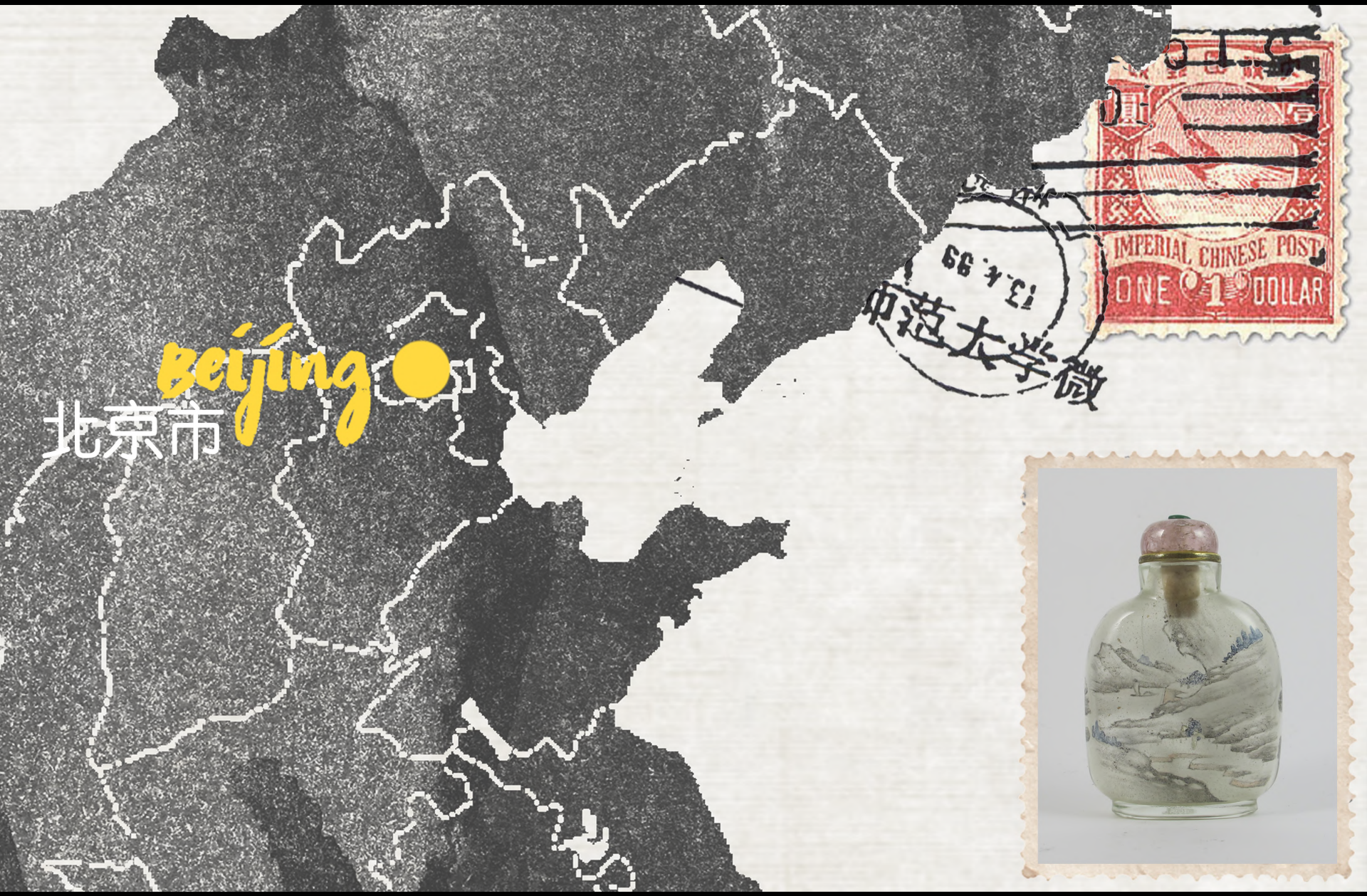
***

Chen Zhongsan is a late-comer in the Beijing School whose dated bottles span a little over a decade between 1907 and 1919. He painted almost exclusively in glass and if he borrowed subjects from other artists he always maintained his own distinctive style.



Beijing

北京市



POST CARD

片信明政郵

A glass snuff bottle of flattened rectangular form, painted inside with figure seated on a riverscape watching mountains on one side; the reverse with a figure holding a qin in a riverscape, a boat on a river.

Signed Yan Yutian

H: 6 cm

Provenance:
French private Collection

***

Yan Yutian's hometown was Beijing, and his creative period is believed to have begun in 1894 and ended in 1919.
Yan Yutian's work has been continually under-rated presumably because he turned out a group of mediocre examples. However, he was good enough to have graduated from being a student of Zhou Leyuan and at his best could produce fine works with a highly individual and eccentric style. He traditionally uses a palette of brown, grey and orange, strengthening the dream-like quality of his portrayal of scholars at leisure.




Beijing
北京市
IMPERIAL CHINESE POST
ONE 1 DOLLAR
師范大学微

POST CARD

片信明政郵

A rare early cloisonné enamel snuff bottle, of rounded form with a circular panel on one side enclosing a red and yellow peony on a pink ground, the reverse with a matching panel enclosing a chrysanthemum, reserved on a turquoise "cracked-ice" ground scattered with sprigs, a band of yellow florettes around the neck.

China, 1770-1820

H: 5 cm

Provenance:
The Heriot Collection
Robert Kleiner
Ault Collection

Published:
R. Kleiner " The Collection of John Ault", n° 52

***

Cloisonné was first developed in the Near East, then spread to the Byzantine Empire and from there along the Silk Road. But Chinese craftsmen certainly made it their own. By the period of Emperor Xuande, this ware came to be greatly prized at court. During the 'Jingtai' period of the Ming Dynasty, the emperor improved the color process, and created the bright blue that appealed to the Oriental aesthetic sense. Blue cloisonne became known as 'Jingtai Blue'.

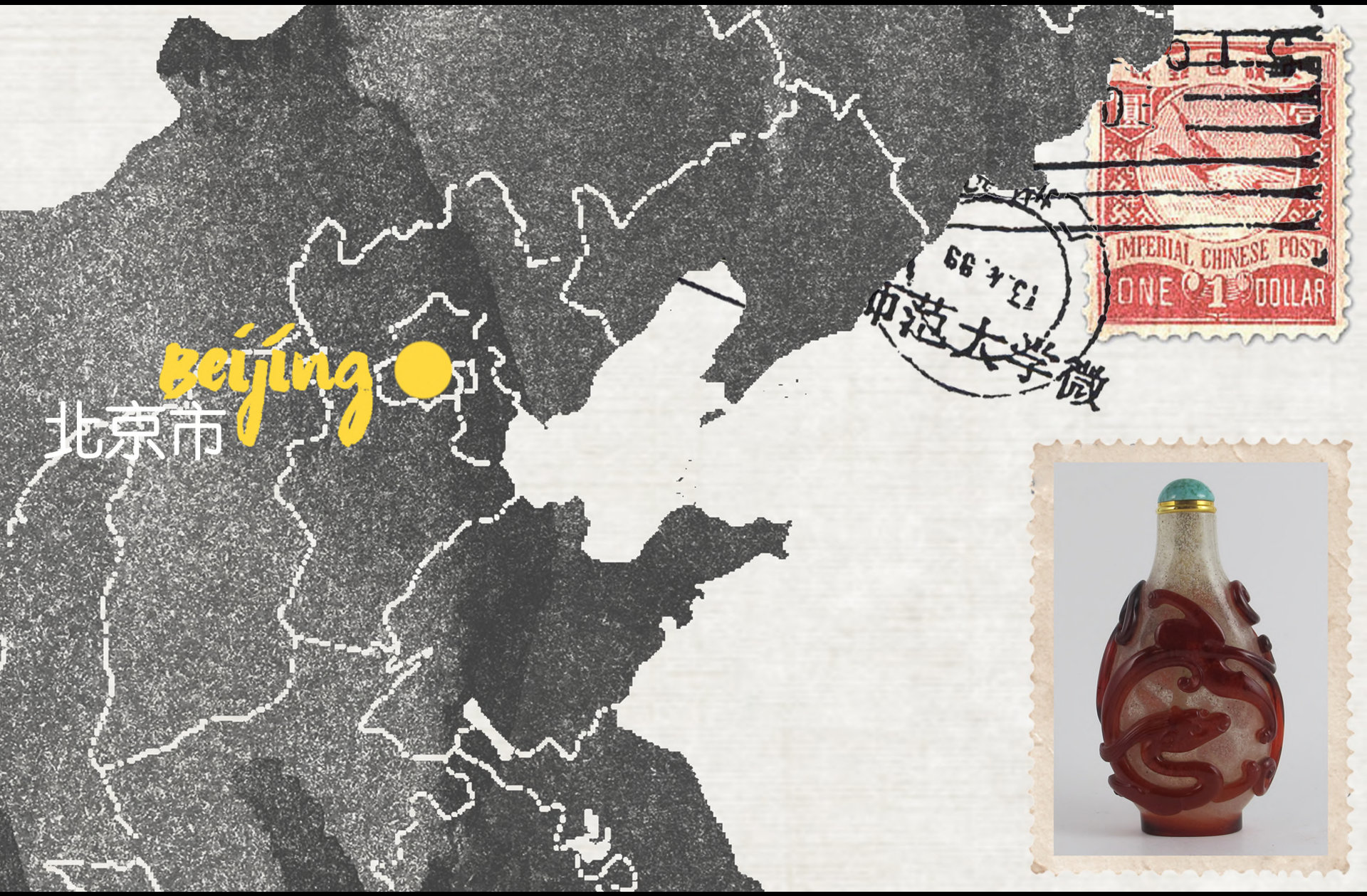
During the reigns of Emperors Kangxi and Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty, cloisonne improved and reached its artistic summit in Beijing imperial workshop.










Beijing
北京市
IMPERIAL CHINESE POST
ONE 1 DOLLAR

POST CARD
郵政明信片



A translucent glass snuff bottle, the red overlay carved each side with an animated bifid chi dragon, the base also carved from the overlay.

China, Beijing, Qianlong Period, 1736-1795

H : 7,2 cm

***

The reign of Qianlong (1736-1795) is a prolific and high quality period during which glass snuff bottles were produced in Beijing for the Imperial collections or for presentation on specific occasions such as birthdays or the new year. The shape and designs of bottles were obtained by blowing in the air, by using a mould, or by sculpting the glass directly. The Qianlong reign was a celebration of the art of sculpted glass. Similarity in work and style between these snuff bottles and models of bottles in nephrite or agate confirms the idea that they were made by craftmen from the Imperial Palace.





Beijing

北京市



POST CARD
片信明政郵



An agate snuff bottle of flattened rectangular form with rounded shoulders and a carved oval footrim; the light blond stone with darker brown markings carved and polished to depict the silhouette of a duck holding a lotus flower in its beak.
A duck diving in water is suggested by a brown inclusion on the low side of the bottle.

China, 1750-1860

H: 5,8 cm

Provenance:
Collection Mica Salabert
Hotel des Ventes de Drouot - 1994
Collection du Commandeur

***

Peking duck is an imperial dish from Beijing that has been prepared since the Southern and Northern Dynasties. The meat is characterized by its thin, crisp skin, with authentic versions of the dish serving mostly the skin and little meat, sliced in front of the diners by the cook.
Enjoy !







shandong province

山東





POST CARD
片信明政郵



A glass snuff bottle of flattened rectangular form, painted inside on each side with a riverscape, house on stilts, pavilion, mountains, rocks and trees.
An inscription, which reads: "pavilion in the mountain by the river".

Signed Chen Dongshun, with his seal.

H: 6,8 cm

***

Chen Dongshun was born in 1943 in Boshan of Shandong province.
The two masters of the Shandong early modern period, Zhang Wentang and Xue Jingwan, passed on their skills to the next generation of the Lu School in the 1960s and in particular to Chen Dongshun.



Luoyang
洛陽



POST CARD

片信明政郵

A glass snuff bottle in a flattened rectangular shape with rounded shoulders, painted in the inside with a poem written by Cheng Hao (1032-1085) a neo-Confucian philosopher from Luoyang, which reads:

清溪留过碧山头
"A clear stream flows at the top of the jade" colored mountain
空水澄鲜一色秋
"Pure water becomes tinged with the colors of autumn"
隔断红尘三十里
"Our world's frontier makes 30 Li"
白云红叶两悠悠
"Both white clouds and red leaves are peaceful."

The reverse with moon and bamboo and inscribed in draft script
"Painted at Beijing in an Autumn month of the year bingshen imitating Bada*"
Signed Xianggu with two token seals of the artist.

Gui Xianggu, Beijing , 1896

An early example of Gui Xianggu inside-painted work.

*Bada Shanren born Zhu Da is a famous monk-painter (1626-1705)






luoyang
洛陽
中華民國
THIRTY CENTS
政郵民人國中
4.48
付已資郵

POST CARD
片信明政郵



A "soft paste" porcelain snuff bottle of baluster shape painted in blue and white with a scene of the "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove". Covered in a creamy crakled glaze.

China, 1800-1850

H: 6 cm

Provenance:
French Collection

***

The Seven Sages of the Bamboo Groove are a group of scholars and artists who lived during the Three Kingdoms period. Influenced by Daoism, they lived an eccentric lifestyle, and are believed to have engaged in «Qingtan»: witty and hedonistic metaphysical conversations, which they organized, according to legend, in a bamboo grove. It is believed that they used to meet in Shanyang (present-day Henan province), near Luoyang.








Jingdezhen
景德鎮
CHINESE IMPERIAL POST
THREE CENTS
3
中國人民郵政

POST CARD
片信明政郵

Porcelain snuff bottle molded in relief as a butterfly with out-stretched wings and symmetric markings picked out in enamels and gilt, the wing edges with green feathery details.

China, 1800-1850

H: 4,3 cm

Provenance :
Old Belgian Collection

Sim:
Ernest Grandidier Bequest, Guimet Museum, Paris.
G. Bloch Collection, Treasury 6, n° 1234
This type of bottles is very rare
(see: The Blair Bequest, M. Hughes - p.216, n° 295)

***

The town Jingdezhen in southern China is one of the biggest porcelain centers in the world. The clay for the porcelain was sourced from nearby Mount Gaoling, one of the few areas which provided pure kaolin, an essential ingredient of porcelain.
Jingdezhen may have produced pottery as early as the sixth century CE and is still active today.




Jingdezhen
景德鎮
CHINESE IMPERIAL POST
THREE CENTS
3
中國人民郵政

POST CARD
片信明政郵



A very fine "famille rose" enamelled porcelain snuff bottle of rounded form, moulded with a continuous erotic subject showing four couples in the interior of a house entirely or partially naked. A band of continuous leiwen around the neck and a stylized border around the foot.
Apocryphal Qianlong mark.

China, 1830-1880

H : 5,2 cm

Provenance :
Collection du Commandeur - Paris
Galerie Bertrand de Lavergne

Sim:
Collection George Bloch N°1398 - Vol. 6 Part. 3

***

The town Jingdezhen in southern China is one of the biggest porcelain centers in the world. The clay for the porcelain was sourced from nearby Mount Gaoling, one of the few areas which provided pure kaolin, an essential ingredient of porcelain.
Jingdezhen may have produced pottery as early as the sixth century CE and is still active today.



揚州

yangzhou





POST CARD

片信明政郵



A light blue overlay glass snuff bottle on a clear ground of flattened rectangular form, carved in very low relief with orchid sprays on each of the faces, a small butterfly on one side. The seal "daji" (Good Luck) on the other.

China, Yangzhou, 1800-1850

H: 5,9 cm

Provenance:
French Collection

Sim:
The Blair Bequest - M. Hughes -
p. 125 n° 145 (in white and yellow)

***

Glass snuff bottles said to be of the "Yangzhou School" stand apart easily from all creations of the 19th century. Created in one single workshop, they follow a specific basic model: a generally opaque layer of glass covered with a second simple monochrome layer or else with numerous juxtaposed stains of color. Carved in a very slightly embossed style, the design often draws on a pictorial style originating in Yangzhou, a typical reflection of a Mandarin aesthetic, and carries seals and inscriptions.



揚州

yangzhou







POST CARD
片信明政郵



A black lacquer snuff bottle on a wood (bamboo) ground of flattened tapering mallet shap incised on one side with a cursive script inscription which reads:
"At dusk does the quarter moon rise; slender shadows of exquisite distinction spread on the ground.
I look for the fairest plum twig right and left: is this the one ? Is this the one?
How will I grab it when I move my lantern here and there ?"
The reverse incised with prunus and bamboo.
The base with the regular script mark Yinhongtang saying:
"Made by/at the Wild geese footprints Hall"

China, Yangzhou,
probably by Lu Kuisheng, 1800-1850

H: 4,8 cm

Provenance :
The Eric Young Collection
Alexander Brody Collection
Collection du Commandeur - Paris








yixing
宜興
中国邮政
京A(637)

POST CARD

片信明政郵



A brown stoneware snuff bottle of ovoid form with a flat lip and a concave foot.

China, Yixing, 1780-1880

H: 5,6 cm

***

Yixing clay is a type of clay from the region near the city of Yixing in Jiangsu Province, used in Chinese pottery since the Song dynasty (960-1279). The best known wares made from Yixing clay are teaware, scholars object and snuff bottles. They are typically left unglazed.



香港

Hong Kong



POST CARD
片信明政郵

A blond agate snuff bottle of flattened rectangular form with rounded shoulders, carved on front using a honey tone vein with a cockerel perched on a rock beside two coxcombs. The reverse plain. The bottle is supported on a foot rim of oval section with rounded edges. Very well hollowed.

China, Official School, 1780-1850

H. 6,2 cm

The rooster is a subject suitable for officials. The crowing rooster implies the wish to have rank and honour, together with the coxcomb's wish to rise continuously in the ranks.

***

A former British colony, Hong Kong is one of the most important commercial centers in the world. Its rich history makes it an ideal meeting point between East and West, and the art market is no exception. As such, many snuff bottles found themselves transiting through Hong Kong collections and auction houses.









Guangzhou

廣州



POST CARD
片信明政郵



A Canton enamel snuff bottle of slender form, the blue ground painted with two scaly dragons, writhing among clouds.
A blue stylized flower painted on the base.

China, Canton, 1723-1750

H : 7,5 cm

Provenance :
Collection du Commandeur
Robert Kleiner, Londres - 2000
Collection Giorgo Irneri

This type of dark blue colour ground was typical of the Yongzheng period , the shape as well.

***

Chinese painted enamelware was born from techniques developed in Limoges, France, then introduced into China during the 17th century. During the 18th century, enamel manufactures blossomed in Canton (current Guangzhou), mainly for export purposes.





Guangzhou

廣州





POST CARD
片信明政郵

A nice small dark inkstone snuff bottle carved with a dragon and a phoenix confronting a pearl of light brown colour; the reverse with archaic dragons. The side carved with mask ring handles.

China, 1780-1850

H. 5,2 cm

Provenance:
The Heriot Collection
Robert Hall, 2004

***

Duan stone is a kind of volcanic tuff which is extremely smooth after polishing. Inkstone made in Duanxi Lake area in Guangdong is very effective in ink rubbing. Scholars like its unique markings caused by imbedded rock materials, like the light brown « pearl » found on this snuff bottle.



shunan zhuhai

蜀南竹海



POST CARD
片信明政郵



A glass overlay snuff bottle of rounded spade shape, the single layer of green overlay forming a continuous scene of bamboo and stylised rock all on a pink glass with spots. This is a distinctive group of glass snuff bottles by its technique of applying molten glass on the surface and trailing it to form the design.
This example is a very nice one by the color and quality of the technique.

China, second part of the 19th century

H: 5,4 cm

***

Shunan Zhuhai (Shunan Bamboo Sea) is the oldest and largest bamboo forest in China. Covering 120 square kilometers, this gorgeous natural and cultural landscape was featured in the famous movie Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon.






山东青岛
11.8.94
中国
中国
kunlun mountains
崑崙山

POST CARD

片信明政郵



A nephrite snuff bottle carved from a pebble with its naturals reddish-brown skin. Fits perfectly in the hand.

China , 1760-1850

H. 6,8 m

Provenance:
Private American Collection, CA

***

The main source for nephrite in China was the Kunlun Mountains which form the boundary between Chinese Turkestan and Tibet. It was traditionally found in river beds. This snuff bottle is a very nice example of pebble nephrite.





kunlun mountains

崑崙山

POST CARD
片信明政郵

A blue and white porcelain snuff bottle of well-potted ovoid shape, painted in underglaze-blue of good tone with « The Eight Horses of Mu Wang » in a landscape, a ruyi-head band on the shoulder and a flowering stylized band on the neck and base. The base inscribed with a four-character mark of Qianlong

China, 19th century

H: 5,3 cm

Provenance :
« Collection du Commandeur » - France
Hong-Kong, 1995

***

The name «Mu Wang» refers to King Mu of Zhou (976-922 BC), who dreamt to become an immortal. He traveled on eight horses to the mythical Mount Kunlun, where the Chinese goddess known as Xi Wang Mu, « Queen Mother of the West», resides. She was said to feed the deities with peaches of immortality, which are a recurrent pattern in Chinese iconography.







Prices.

1. Beijing

Inside-painted by Chen Zhongsan : 3800 $
Inside-painted by Yan Yutian : 1800 $
Cloisonné enamel : 5800 $
Chi dragon red overlay : 2800 $
Agate with a duck : 5000 $

2. Shandong province

Inside-painted by Chen Dongshun: 1500 $

3. Luoyang

Inside-painted by Gui Xianggu : 2000 $
Baluster blue and white softpaste porcelain : 1600 $

4. Jingdezhen

Erotic famille rose enamel: 5000 $
Porcelain butterfly : 3500 $

5. Yangzhou

Blue Yangzhou glass : 2200 $
Black lacquer : 12000 $

6. Yixing

Yixing clay : 1600 $

7. Hong kong

Blond agate with a rooster : 3000 $

8. Guangzhou

Blue Canton enamel : 6500 $
Dark inkstone : 3500 $

9. Shunan zhuhai

Pink and green glass overlay : 1800 $

10. Kunlun mountains

Nephrite pebble : 12500 $
Ovoid blue and white porcelain : 3500 $

THANKS

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK :

The readers

for traveling along with us!

&

Hannah Assouly - For designing this newsletter

AND Frantz Flay - For his helpful advices

Warm regards,

Laurence Souksi