Case 5-Asia-China-Hongshan-Cicada Larva Amulet-Jade-4700-2920 BCE

  

**Case no.: 5**

**Accession Number:**

This example of a Cicada Larva Amulet (note hole for suspension) emulates the larval stage of the cicada as it first enters its hibernation stage underground. H 5.4 cm, W 5.4 cm, T 2.4 cm. Atlantica Collection.

**Formal Label:** Asia-China-Hongshan-Cicada Larva Amulet-Jade-4700-2920 BCE

**Display Description:**

This example of a Cicada Larva Amulet symbolizes the life cycle of the cicada which begins as a nymph that having hatched from an egg on a tree branch, falls to the earth as a larva, burrows in the ground, and attaches to rootlets where it is sustained by the root's nourishment for as many as seventeen years when it is mysteriously called into the light of day, climbs the trunk of the tree, its skin splits open, and its wings unfurl as a mature cicada.



Cicada Larvae after https://www.flickr.com/photos/marielosp/139126776

The resurrection metaphor can be applied to either that of the dead being resurrected into new life or in the case of the philosopher emerging from the darkness of the enclosed study being resurrected into the world of light. As De Groot (1892, Pt. 2: 16) remarks "the Chinese regard death as a separation of the vital spirit from the body, and they cling to the belief that the spirit keeps hovering about the body, even after the latter has been deposited in its final resting place." The present figurine according to this interpretation would signify the hovering spirit of the deceased prior to its final emergence as a cicada. Three phases of the emergence of the resurrected spirit represented in Chinese jades from the anthropomorphic, to the quasi anthropomorphic to the true cicada are in the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago (Harman 1974)**:**

**References:**

Hartman, Joan M. 1974. “[An Interesting Han Jade in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art](https://www-jstor-org.libproxy.mit.edu:9443/stable/3249710),”

[*Artibus Asiae*,](http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.mit.edu/action/showPublication?journalCode=artibusasiae)  Vol. 36, No. 1/2, pp. 55-64

De Groot, J.J.M. 1892-1910. *The Religious System of China*. Leyden, E.J. Brill, 1892-1910. 6 vols.

LC Classification: GN776.3.H58

Date or Time Horizon: 4700-2920 BCE

Geographical Area: western Liaoning province

Map:



GPS coordinates: [41°15′N 119°24′E](https://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Lingyuan&params=41_15_N_119_24_E_region:CN-21_type:city)

**Cultural Affiliation:** Hongshan

**Medium:** jade

**Dimensions:** H 5.4 cm, W 5.4 cm, T 2.4 cm

**Weight:**

**Condition: original**

**Provenance:** collected near San Guan Dian Zi Cun, Lingyuan City, Liaoning Province in 1979

**Discussion:**

**References:**

Anderson, E. N., JR. I988. *The food of China.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Blench, Roger. 2004. “Human migrations in continental East Asia and Taiwan: genetic, linguistic and archaeological evidence. Université de Genève” [DRAFT CIRCULATED FOR COMMENT]

Chang K. C. I977. *Food in Chinese culture*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

1986. 4th edition. *The archaeology of ancient China*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

1989. "Ancient China and its anthropological significance." In *Archaeological thought in America*. Edited by C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, pp. I 55-66. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Childs-Johnson, Elizabeth. 1991. “Jades of the Hongshan culture: the dragon and fertility cult worship,” Arts asiatiques, **46**: 82–95.

Cohen, M. N., and G. J. Armelagos.1. *Paleopathology at the origins of agriculture*. Orlando: Academic Press.

Freid, M. H. I967. *The evolution of political society*. New York: Random House.

Freidman, J., and M. J. Rowlands. I978. "Notes towards an epigenetic model of 'civilization,"' in *The evolution of social system*. Edited by J. Friedman and M. Rowlands, pp. 20I-76. London: Duckworth.

Gao, G. I978. “Dawenkou culture its nature and chronology” (in Chinese), *Kuangmingribao*, April 27.

Guo, Da-Shun 1995. “Hongshan and related cultures.” In: *The archaeology of Northeast China: beyond the Great Wall.* Nelson, Sarah M. ed. 21-64. London and New York: Routledge.

Jin, G. and Liu, D. 2002. “Mid-Holocene climate change in North China, and the effect on cultural development,” *Chinese Science Bulletin*, *47*(5), pp.408-413.

Jing Y, Flad R. 2002. “Pig domestication in ancient China,” *Antiquity* 76: 724–732.

Jing Y, Jianlin H, Blench R. 2008. “Livestock in ancient China: an archaeo-zoological perspective.” In: Sanchez-Mazas A, Blench RM, Ross M, eds. Human Migrations in Continental East Asia and Taiwan. Genetic, Linguistic and Archaeological Evidence. Routledge; Abingdon: New York.

Johnson, A. W., and T. Earle I987. *The evolution of human society: From foraging group to agrarian state*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Kaogu. I979. “Summary of the debate on the nature of Dawenkou society and related questions (in Chinese),” *Kaogu*, no. I, pp. 33-36.

Larson G, Dobney K, Albarella U, Fang M, Matisoo-Smith E, Robins J et al. 2005. “Worldwide phylogeography of wild boar reveals multiple centers of pig domestication,” *Science* 307: 1618–1621.

Larson G, Liu R, Zhao X, Yuan J, Fuller D, Barton L et al. 2010. « Patterns of East Asian pig domestication, migration, and turnover revealed by modern and ancient DNA,” *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 107: 7686–7691.

Lee, Y. I96I. “Mortuary practices of Wa people and the research on burial practices in prehistoric China (in Chinese),” *Kaogu*, no. 7, pp. 37I-74.

Rappaport, R. 1967. *Pigs for the ancestors*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Sahlins, M. A. I970. "Poor man, rich man, big-man, chief: Political types in Melanesia and Polynesia," in *Cultures of the Pacific*. Edited by T. G. Harding and B. J. Wallace, pp. 203-I5. New York: Free Press. . I972. Stone Age economics. New York: Aldine.

Sanders, W. T., and D. Webster. I978. "Unilinealism, multilinealism, and the evolution of complex societies," in *Social archaeology: Beyond subsistence and dating*. Edited by C. Redman, M. Berman, E. Curtis, W. Langhorne, N. Veraggi, and J. Wanser, pp. 249-302. New York: Academic Press.

Saxe, A. I970. *Social dimensions of mortuary practices*. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms.

Service. 1962. *Primitive social organization*. New York: Random House.

I975. *Origins of the state and civilization*. New York: Norton.

Shandong Provincial Mseum. *I978. :Remarks on Dawenkou culture (in Chinese),” Wenwu,* no. 4, pp. 58-66.

Tang, L. I977. Origins of earliest culture in China as seen from the writing on pottery (in Chinese). *Kuangmingribao*, July I4.

I978. “A discussion of the nature of the Dawenkou culture and the writing on pottery (in Chinese),” *Kuangmingribao,* February 23.

Taylor, D. I975. “Some locational aspects of middle-range hierarchical societies.” Ph.D. diss., City University of New York.

ong C. I974. “The origins of private ownership and social stratification in Chinese archaeology,” *Kaogu,* no. 4, pp. 2I3-2I.

Wang, R. I98I. “The religious significance of interring pig carcasses in the Chinese Neolithic (in Chinese),” *Wenw*u, no. 2, pp. 79-85.

Wei, J. I976. ?Discussion of origins of hierarchical societies in ancient China: An analysis of archaeological data in prehistoric societies (in Chinese),” *Wenwu*, no. 8, pp. I-5.

Wu, j. i982. “The chronology of Shandong archaeology and related questions (in Chinese),” *Wenwu*, no. IO, pp. 44-56.

Wright, H. I984. "Prestate political formations," in *On the evolution of complex societies*. Edited by T. Earle, pp. 47-77. Malibu: Undena.

Zhang, Z. I979. “The breeding of domesticated pigs and its development seen from the excavated artifacts in our country (in Chinese),” *Wenwu*, no. I, pp. 82-92.

Zhong, L. I976. “Origins of private ownership in prehistoric Jiangsoo province (in Chinese),” *Kaog*u, no. 3, pp. I65-67.

Yang X, Scuderi LA, Wang X, Scuderi LJ, Zhang D5, Li H, Forman S, Xu Q, Wang R8 Huang W, Yang S. 2015. “Groundwater sapping as the cause of irreversible desertification of Hunshandake Sandy