

中国历代玉蝉鉴赏

Chinese Jade Cicada: A Historical Perspective

于庆文 著



地质出版社

中国历代玉蝉鉴赏

Chinese Jade Cicada: A Historical Perspective

于庆文 著

地质出版社

· 北 京 ·

内 容 提 要

根据数千年玉蝉的演变史,对玉蝉按不同时代进行排图说明,突出其考古学、岩石矿物学、玉质成因类型、雕琢工艺、纹饰、沁蚀风化及时代风格等综合特点和玉蝉文化内涵的实质,体现出不同时代玉蝉深受同时代艺术思潮和原始宗教、儒道释、民间文化观念的影响,从而可深入了解玉蝉文化特点及其在中国古代历史进程中的地位。

本书适合文博人员、文物考古者、地质考古人员、珠宝玉器鉴定师、古玉鉴定者、工艺美术雕刻师、玉器收藏爱好者等阅读参考。

本书所有内容未经本书相关权利人特别授权,任何人不得以任何形式转载、复制、改动或利用本书内容,否则依法追究法律责任。特此声明!

Copyright 2011 by Geological Publishing House

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, in any form or by any means, without permission in writing from the publisher.

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

中国历代玉蝉鉴赏 / 于庆文著. —北京:地质出版社, 2011.5

ISBN 978-7-116-07187-2

I. ①中… II. ①于… III. ①玉器—鉴赏—中国
IV. ① K876.84

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2011) 第 060958 号

ZHONGGUO LIDAI YUCHAN JIANSHANG

责任编辑: 吴宁魁

责任校对: 谭 英

出版发行: 地质出版社

社址邮编: 北京海淀区学院路 31 号, 100083

电 话: (010) 82324508 (邮购部); (010) 82324513 (编辑室)

网 址: <http://www.gph.com.cn>

电子邮箱: zbs@gph.com.cn

传 真: (010) 82310759

印 刷: 北京天成印务有限责任公司

开 本: 787mm × 1092mm 1/16

印 张: 21.25

字 数: 460 千字

印 数: 1—1200 册

版 次: 2011年5月北京第 1 版

印 次: 2011年5月北京第 1 次印刷

定 价: 268.00 元

书 号: ISBN 978-7-116-07187-2

(如对本书有建议或意见, 敬请致电本社; 如本书有印装问题, 本社负责调换)

作者简介

于庆文

1953年7月生于大连，研究员，理学博士。长期从事中国区域地质调查技术管理及技术方法应用研究。

基于专业特长收藏矿物、化石标本及玉器近30年，尤其偏好古玉收藏，并在交流及观摩学习中，结合考古学、文物学、岩石矿物学、玉质成因类型、雕琢工艺、纹饰、沁蚀风化及时代风格等综合特点对其进行断代鉴别。



羊
是
人
作者简介

Brief introduction about the author

Yu Qingwen, was born at the city of Dalian in July, 1953, research fellow, Ph.D., Long been involved in technical management and application study on regional geological survey of China.

Based on professional speciality, he has devoted himself to mineral, fossil and jade collection for about 30 years, with special interesting in ancient jade. Archeology, heritage, petrology and mineralogy, genetic types of jade, carved craft, emblazonry, trace of weathering and erosion characteristics, period style of jade has been comprehensively considered to identify the period of ancient jade.

序

我与于庆文先生相识于2004年春，当时他参加了在北京国子监举办的一个玉器鉴定培训班，而我则给这个班讲鉴定课。前不久他拿来了《中国历代玉蝉鉴赏》的书稿，请我为之写序。我翻看了书稿之后，既吃惊又感动。吃惊的是，我从未见过收藏千余枚古今玉蝉的收藏者，而收录于此书中的玉蝉多达580余枚，并按年代分类、排图成册，实属不易；感动的是，他收藏玉蝉的历史竟长达30余年，数十年持之以恒，聚沙成塔，集腋成裘，可敬可佩。

我想在此谈几点读后感，或许对古玉收藏界的同仁有所启示。

古玉的收藏要有主题，也就是说要有一个坚定的方向和具体的目标，因为中国玉器史有八千年之久，一般人的财力和精力都很有限，不可能面面俱到地收藏各个朝代的每一类玉器，应该根据收藏者的财力、精力、兴趣以及审美取向，有针对性地收藏。民间藏玉，既有按造型（如动物形、几何形等）、工艺（透雕、圆雕等），也有按时代（如商周、战国至汉代等）来收藏古玉。玉蝉的收藏即属于动物形造型的古玉收藏，代表了收藏者的兴趣所在。玉蝉的历史可谓源远流长，早在新石器时代晚期的红山文化和良渚文化中即已出现，它像我们常见的玉璧、玉璜一样，是玉器中最常见的造型题材之一，深受人们的喜爱和推崇，从古至今一直延续到现代。正如作者所言：玉蝉经过史前文化期以来数千年的继承演变，人们赋予它越来越多的社会人文内容和伦理观念，使其成为一种特殊的文化符号。玉蝉的演变史，不但体现了不同时代玉蝉的造型、玉石种类和琢玉工艺特点等，其功能更是反映出深受同时代艺术思潮和原始宗教、儒道释、民间文化观念的影响，而这对深入认识玉蝉文化特点及其在中国古代历史进程中的地位具有极其重要的意义。

要想成为玉器收藏家是要具备一定条件的，归纳起来有三点是必不可缺的：首先就是要有财力，这一点是不必避讳的。因为有钱才能买到玉器，才能随时上手观赏，才能逐渐建立起收藏，才能有成就感。虽然通过翻阅玉器图录和到博物馆隔着玻璃看展品也是可行的玉器研究途径，但总比不上上手观赏玉器。其次是要有闲，就是有闲功夫去鉴赏玉器。很多有钱人买了一大堆玉器，整天忙于生意、交际和应酬，根本没有时间去整理和欣赏，玉器知识几近于零，也建立不起来完整的收藏系列，这等于浪费了玉器资源。再者就是要有品位，这是由个人素质所决定的。很多人买了玉器后，只知道它的货币价值，不去做深入研究，完全忽视了玉文化的丰富内涵，处在一种低层次。而于庆文先生在多年的收藏、交流与鉴赏学习中，为综合分析探讨玉蝉的材质、造型、纹饰、断代等，查阅和参看了





中国历代玉蝉鉴赏

Chinese Jade Cicada: A Historical Perspective

国内外大量与出土、传世玉蝉相关的资料及图片，并在此基础上，对所收藏的千余枚玉蝉进行了系统整理，建立起一个完整的玉蝉收藏，显示出一个古玉收藏家的基本素质，也为玉器收藏界树立了榜样。

最后，我想强调一点，就是要注重古玉收藏的流传有序。海外很多中国古玉收藏是有传承历史的，如展览、拍卖、出版等等，不但能提高收藏品及收藏者的知名度，而且对于提升藏品的市场价值也是很有帮助的。通过这本图录，于庆文先生将自己玉蝉收藏公诸于世，应该算是这批藏品传承的一个良好开端。

吉方

2010年12月

Preface

I knew Mr. Yu Qingwen in the spring of 2004, when he was attending a jade training center in the site of former Directorate of Education in Beijing and I was a lecturer of this center.

Some days ago, Mr. Yu showed me the script of his *Chinese Jade Cicada: A Historical Perspective* and asked me for a preface. After reading this script, I was surprised and deeply moved: what surprised me are that I had never seen a jade connoisseur collecting over one thousand jade cicadas of the past and present, and that the jade cicadas collected in this book are more than 580 pieces and photographed and classified by dates, both of which are not easy at all; what moved me is that Mr. Yu has a long history of collecting jade cicadas for over 30 years, the relentless efforts during which fulfilled this splendid and admirable achievement.

I try to present some commentaries on this book and also on the jade collecting, which might be helpful for our colleagues in ancient jade collecting field.

An ancient jade collection needs to have a subject, which means a firm direction and concrete target. China has a long history of jade art of about 8000 years, while the financial resource and vigor of any person are rather limited, so a comprehensive collection of jades of all categories and all periods is impossible and meaningless for a private collector. Therefore, a collector ought to plan a subjective jade collective based on his or her financial power, energy can be used on the collection, artistic interests and aesthetic directions. The subjects of private jade collections are generally the shape (animal-shaped, geometric, etc.), technique (openwork, freestanding carving, etc.), or time (Shang, Zhou Dynasties, Warring-States Period, etc.) and so on. The jade cicada collection is a subjective collection by the shape (animal), which also represents the interests of the collector. Jade cicada has long history in China; from the sites of Hongshan and Liangzhu Cultures in the late Neolithic Age, jade cicadas have been discovered. Just like the jade *bi*-disc and *huang*-semicircular pendant, jade cicada is a popular motif in jade ornaments regarded and favored by the people from the remote ancient times to the present. As the author points out, through the long evolution since the prehistoric times, the jade cicada has been attributed many social, humanistic and ethical features and become a special cultural symbol. The evolution of jade cicadas reflected not only the types, materials and carving techniques in different periods, but also the influences of the artistic ideas, primitive religions as well as the Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, and folkloric cultures, all of which are significant for our understandings to the characteristics of jade cicada culture and its role in the ancient history of China.

Some conditions are necessary for becoming a jade collector; among them, the following three are the most important: first, the financial power, which is not avoidable. Money is needed to purchase the favorite jades, make them handy, construct the



中国历代玉蝉鉴赏

Chinese Jade Cicada: A Historical Perspective

collection and establish the sense of achievement. Reading jade catalogs and research works and observing the jade exhibitions in museums through the glass might also be feasible ways to research the jades, but they are far from good enough as observing and handling jades personally. Second, enough time, which is also important for observing and studying jades. Some rich collectors bought lots of jades, but they are engaged in the business and socials day in and day out without leisure time to classify and appreciate their preys, let alone to research the jades and establish meaningful collections. Their purchasing is actually the wasting of jade art resources. Third, the taste and quality, which are decided by the personal makings of the collector. Some collectors only pay attention to the commercial value of their preys instead of their profound cultural connotations; this is but a low-level collection rather than a connoisseurship. Different from that, Mr. Yu Qingwen consulted myriad materials published and exhibited at home and abroad during his seeking, collecting and appreciating the jade cicadas he obtained. On the knowledge foundation laid through this, Mr. Yu constructed a jade cicada collection with seamless chronological and typological sequences and complete textural records. This collection reflects the basic makings of a qualified antique jade collector and can be seen as a model of the jade collecting field.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that we must pay close attention to the provenances of the ancient jades. In the abroad, many Chinese ancient jade collections have clear circulation histories about the exhibitions, auctions, publications and so on related to the items of them. The provenances are helpful not only for increasing the popularities of the collections and their owners, but also for increasing the market values of the collections. Mr. Yu's publication of his jade cicada collection can be seen as a new starting point of the provenance of these jade cicadas.

Gu Fang

December, 2010

前言

在中国传统文化中，人们对“玉”有着极其神秘的崇拜，认为玉有祥瑞之征，能远祸近福、除慝辟邪。玉也因其温润细腻、色泽柔美的特性，成为人们尊崇膜拜神灵或信仰的载体。玉雕件由最初的带有浓厚巫术意义、传达图腾崇拜、承载沟通天地的使命逐渐演变为具有宗教意义，后被赋予人格化的道德说教，并最终增添了祈福、审美情趣等功能。其内涵丰富，具有独特的魅力。

将蝉的形象与玉相结合所雕琢的玉蝉是玉器中最常见造型题材之一，深受人们的喜爱和推崇。古人一直视蝉为神虫，最初产于树上的蝉卵落入土中后变为幼虫，幼虫在地下土中可活二至十数年以上，经多次蜕壳再生（蝉蜕），最终破土而出，羽化成蝉。在古人看来，蝉缓慢的地下生长、体能储存直至最终蜕变新生的过程，象征着复活与永生，符合人们追求永生及来世再生的愿望。而蜕变羽化，饮露而食，也被视为纯洁、清高、通灵的象征。此外，蝉又称“知了”，亦寓意知足常乐，并有先知先觉的含义。蝉的品行被达官贵人视为楷模，文人墨客们更是借咏蝉来抒发高洁的情怀。晋代陆云《寒蝉赋》称蝉有五德，即“夫头上有绥，则其文也；含气饮露，则其清也；黍稷不享，则其廉也；处不巢居，则其俭也；应候守常，则其信也”。唐代虞世南在《蝉》中写到：“垂绥饮清露，流响出疏桐。居高声自远，非是藉秋风”。这里的“垂绥”暗示显官身份，飞至高处鸣叫，比作它清高，直言不讳，体现出一种雍容不迫的风度气韵。

玉蝉经过史前文化期以来数千年的继承演变，人们赋予它越来越多的社会人文内容和伦理观念，使其成为一种特殊的文化符号。纵观玉蝉的演变史，不但体现了不同时代玉蝉的造型、玉石种类和琢玉工艺特点等，其功能更是反映出深受同时代艺术思潮和原始宗教、儒道释、民间文化观念的影响，而这对深入认识玉蝉文化特点及其在中国古代历史进程中的地位具有极其重要的意义。

根据玉蝉的功能，其主要分为三类：一是放入死者口中无穿孔的琰蝉；二是用绳穿悬挂在腰、颈间的佩蝉，佩蝉有孔，且多数头部有对钻的牛鼻穿孔；三是缝缀在帽子上的冠（瑱）蝉，冠（瑱）蝉在腹部有对穿孔；三类玉蝉造型千姿百态，刀工、雕法，沁色、纹饰、材质竞秀争妍。

文物考古资料表明，我国最早的玉蝉发现于内蒙古林西县白音长汗遗址，其属距今约 8000 ~ 6500 年的史前兴隆洼文化期。另在内蒙古巴林那斯台和辽宁朝阳牛河梁距今约 6500 ~ 5000 年的红山文化期，也有出土发现。但此类玉蝉均呈短柱状，琢有弦纹和穿孔，形态类似蚕形，故有考古专家认为其应称为“玉蚕”。真正趋于蝉形的玉蝉出自长江下游（浙江余杭反山）距今约 5200 ~ 4200 年前的





良渚文化时期，玉蝉呈椭圆半球形，以阴弧线勾勒出眼、颈、翼等。而在距今4600 ~ 4000年前长江中游湖北荆州地区石家河文化期出土的约40余枚玉蝉，所雕琢的形象非常逼真和精致，均为带羽翼的成蝉，蝉体一般为长方形板片状。从功能来看，史前文化期的玉蝉全为佩蝉，根据相伴出土的其他玉器综合分析，原始先民把所尊崇膜拜的神灵玉蝉等赋予了许多美好的愿望，使它具有极其浓厚的巫术意义和神秘的宗教色彩。人们通过拥有、佩带玉蝉而得以发挥它们的神力，期望玉蝉能时时保佑他们。同时在进行原始的图腾崇拜活动时，这些具有特殊象征意义的玉蝉，也被视为天、地、人、神交往的信物，成为巫觋与上天沟通的法器。

在信仰至上、盛行占卜和祭祀活动的商代，在人们的观念中，认为灵魂不死，佩带玉蝉象征“生命永存”，并具有“复生”的神力，故玉蝉与其他玉器仍是神灵的物质载体。玉蝉依旧以佩蝉为主，其造型既有对传统玉蝉艺术特点的承袭，又有自身的独创发展，阴、阳线刻、浅浮雕、圆雕等技术无不运用得自然娴熟。而且蝉形图案被进一步作为图腾符号琢于柄形器、琮的角边呈浮雕纹饰，蝉纹常以横排或纵列连续排出，寓意“蝉联”，预示着权力的逐代延递与力量的永久保持。

西周后期郁然兴起的礼乐制度和原始宗教用玉习俗的结合，使玉器由原始时期的神秘化、宗教化，进一步向等级化和宗法化发展。早期儒家思想渐入主流文化，将“德治”和“仁政”的社会理想和仁、义、礼乐等人格追求内容附加于玉器之上，注重了佩玉行为所代表的精神意义和实际功能。为显示身份、节制步履，故多穿着或佩戴组佩玉，其组佩玉中多有因料而赋形的小玉蝉。其形制、琢玉技法在继承殷商双勾阴线基础上，独创了一面坡斜刀粗阴线，线条刚劲有力，形象生动。该时期玉蝉基本全为佩蝉，造型变化多样，不但有圆雕、片板状，而且部分呈弯曲变异体等，充分体现了古人的想象力及审美情趣。

春秋战国时期，儒家礼玉理论形成，各路诸侯受当时儒家孔子论玉有十一德（仁、智、礼、义、乐、忠、信、天、地、德、道）的影响，把玉当做君子的化身，玉在该时期又被人格化、道德化，赋予了许多美德。每一士大夫佩戴的玉佩饰中，常有玉蝉出现。把蝉比作出淤泥而不染，进而比喻廉洁奉公，如《史记·屈原·贾生列传》：“饮而不食，蜕于浊秽，以浮游尘埃之外，不获世之滋垢”。另一方面，受儒家提倡孝道，主张“事死如生”思想的影响，不忍死者口中虚口。部分玉蝉作为口琰出现，其多不足一厘米长，且玉蝉造型多为头宽尾尖，普遍呈类三角形。常一枚或多枚与贝珠一起放入死者口中，称“饭玉”，遂有“饭口之礼”。《公羊传·文公五年》云：“含者何？口实也。”何休注：“孝子所以实亲口也，缘生以事死，不忍虚其口。”同时又受到道家老子、庄子神仙信仰影响，《道德真经集注·卷五》：“有道之士，其死也脱胎神化，如蝉蜕焉，身虽死而真身不亡”。古人认为，人有形之躯体虽然已经死去，但无形之灵魂精气却仍然存在。

玉（琰）蝉是神灵之物，可以达到预防秽气侵尸、真魂流散的目的，使死者灵魂不死、尸身不腐。

汉代时期厚葬成风，琰蝉大量出现，为历史上最鼎盛时期。该时期儒家极力倡导孝道，认为重丧厚葬是为了彰显孝行，教化人生。同时，道教盛行，受社会崇尚道教长生不死，羽化成仙思想影响，系深信玉蝉皆具有灵异的功能。流行以“七窍塞”、“九窍塞”组玉敛尸入葬习俗，用来阻止精气外泄（《抱朴子·内篇·对俗》即有：“金玉在九窍，则死人为之不朽”），玉蝉往往是该组器中最常用的口琰，即琰蝉。如：《淮南子·精神训》：“人借蝉蛻以成仙，为以是与宇宙并寿”。《酉阳杂俎·虫篇》：“蝉，未蛻时名复育，复育即再生”。认为蝉前世为蛹，不见天日。而今生羽化，吸琼露，饮罡风，扶摇直上，符合道家否极泰来的人生法则。人死仅是人生命的转换过程，意喻死者埋入泥土中，像土中的蝉蛹一样，精神不灭，只是养精蓄锐。当像蝉蛻一样破土而出时，灵魂即脱离污秽死了的躯体，超越死亡，重获新生，体现了生者对死者所寄托的一种美好愿望。该时期玉蝉形制基本定型，代表性的造型为所谓“汉八刀”，其雕刻简约大气、线条挺秀，造型粗犷质朴，具有较为典型的时代特征与艺术风格。琰蝉质地多为青玉或白玉，少为地方玉（石）或琉璃，分布范围极广。由于该时期受儒家礼玉制度衰落影响，故佩蝉较少，稀有冠（瑯）蝉出现。

魏晋南北朝时期由于政权更替频繁，政治割据，战乱动荡，社会的发展受到极大影响和限制。尤其薄葬之风兴起，导致丧葬用玉的大大减少，一度处于停滞、衰退的局面。另一方面因属道教创建和改造时期，道教的神仙思想和神仙方术得到重大发展，并初成体系，除了死后含玉蝉是为了“重生”，更多地侧重现实人生即身体的修炼和长生，认为玉为阳物之精，食玉可增寿成仙。如倡导神仙道教的葛洪所著的《抱朴子·内篇·卷十一仙药》中：“玉仙药，但难得耳”。玉经曰：“服金者寿如金，服玉者寿如玉也”，故在道教影响下，食玉得道成仙已达到相当地步，当时大量的玉被食用掉。加之南北朝时佛教传入中国，在这一时期部分玉又琢制成佛教题材玉器，因此该时期的玉蝉和其他玉器较少，玉蝉造型多为仿前朝样式，质地多为滑石或地方玉（石）。

隋唐时期，玉崇拜的神秘与玉德观念趋于淡漠，玉蝉罕有出现。玉的实用性、现实性明显增强，世俗化、生活化装饰用玉和实用玉器成为玉器中的主流。而礼仪、丧葬用玉不仅数量越来越少，而且玉石来源有限，出现较多的是以石代玉。

宋代，儒道释“三教合流”发展成熟，文人思古，仿古崇古盛行，加之市俗文化兴起，玉器的怡情审美、寓意等功能被充分体现出来。期间蝉在人的心目中地位越来越高，据蝉高居枝上，餐风饮露，与世无争，被视为纯洁清高、通灵的象征。并认为蝉冬藏春发与四时和谐，生老病死一褪了之，乃不死之虫，承载人们美好的愿望和诚挚的祝福。因而玉蝉又开始陆续出现，基本全是佩蝉，玉蝉特点为简练含蓄，其形制有部分为仿前朝玉蝉样式，且多具钉金沁。



辽金元代玉蝉少有出现，一般为地方玉或玛瑙、水晶和琥珀等质地。蝉纹样式多雕琢在马具饰件或冠、带饰上。玉蝉除表现出契丹、女真北国少数民族风格外，还有中原文化特色和南北宋时期艺术特点。

到了明清时期玉蝉大量出现，此阶段玉蝉造型十分丰富，民间民俗题材广泛，有写实也有抽象，有简洁也有繁缛，有精致也有粗泛。明清时期十分强调玉质与蝉造型的一体构成，有多种谐音图案，其寓意深远，如：一只玉蝉伏于玉叶之上，寓意：“一夜（叶）缠（蝉）绵，百年和好”、“一夜（叶）金缠（蝉）”、“金枝（知）玉叶”、“一鸣惊人，重筑大业（叶）”等等。缝缀在帽子上的玉冠蝉，其蕴涵崇尚廉洁之意。明清时期的玉蝉充分反映了我国民族特有的思想观念和民俗文化现象，尤以清代乾隆年间玉蝉的玉质、雕琢工艺及纹饰达到了登峰造极的境界。

现今处于国泰民安，盛世收藏时期，玉蝉的造型及材质空前的多样，除部分材质和雕工较好，用于装饰和祈福佩带外，也有相当部分以赢利为目的的赝品和臆造玉蝉。

本人自 20 世纪 70 年代末开始收藏玉器，在收藏、交流与鉴赏学习中，为综合分析探讨玉蝉的材质、造型、纹饰、断代等，查阅和参看了国内外大量与出土、传世玉蝉相关的资料及图片。并在此基础上，对所收藏的千余枚玉蝉进行了系统整理，筛选出较有代表性的 580 余枚，按年代分类、排图成册，供同好共赏、共鉴、共品。

2010 年 10 月

Foreword

In traditional cultures of China, jade was worshipped mysteriously as auspicious amulets which could usher fortune and exorcise evils. Also because of its fine and smooth texture and gentle and graceful tints, jade became the carriers of admiring and worshipping deities for the ancient people. From functioning as shamanist instruments, showing totem worshipping and communicating the heaven and the earth to being used as religious symbols and seen as moral and virtue models, the role of jades are always changing and being enriched, and at last they were added praying for good luck and being enjoyed aesthetically. The jades had rich connotations and unique charm.

The image of cicada is one of the most popular motifs in jade carvings, which have been favored deeply for thousands of years. In the ancient times, cicada was seen as a sacred insect: at first, the eggs laid on the tree fell into the earth and hatched into nymphs; the nymphs could live underground for two to more than ten years with many times of "rebirth (molting)" and finally broke the ground and emerged as adult cicadas. In the view of the ancient people, the long life cycle of the cicada's growing underground, preserving energy and molting symbolized the rebirth and eternal life, which matched the desires of the people to immortality and rejuvenation. Meanwhile, the cicadas abandon old bodies (actually shells) and live on the dew only, so they were regarded as the embodiments of innocence, loftiness and being aloof to secular affairs. Moreover, the cicada is called as "*Zhiliao* (lit. Having known)" with connotation of being not greedy and having foresight. These characteristics were seen as models by the noble people, and the literati usually expressed their feelings by praising cicadas. Lu Yun (262-303 CE), a writer in the Western Jin Dynasty, admired the cicada as having "five virtues", which were that "it has ribbons on the head, showing that it is gentle; it eats air and drinks dew, showing that it is pure and clear; it does not consume grains, showing that it is incorruptible; it does not build nests, showing that it is thrifty; it sings exactly by the season never missing, showing that it is reliable." Yu Shinan (558-638 CE), a poet in the Tang Dynasty, also wrote in his *Ode to Cicada*, "Lowering the ribbons to drink shiny dew are thee, Chirping loudly in the tall Chinese parasol tree; High above the ground thy sound carries far, But it is not because of the autumn breeze (垂缕饮清露，流响出疏桐。居高声自远，非是藉秋风。 Translated by Fred Meng)." The "ribbons" on the head (for tying official headgear to the hairs) hinted the status of high-ranked official; chirping in the tall tree hints its loftiness and the courage of speaking straightforwardly, showing a kind of elegant manner.

Through the succeeding and evolving for the thousands of years since the prehistoric age, the jade cicadas have been attributed more and more social and humanistic viewpoints and changed into a special cultural symbol. The overview of the evolution of jade cicadas not only reflects the features of shaping, material selecting and carving, but also the influences of the artistic thoughts of all of the times, the primitive religions



and Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, as well as folkloric cultures. All of these are significantly meaningful for us to understand the characteristics of the Jade Cicada Culture and its role in the history of ancient China.

By functions, the jade cicadas could be classified into three types: the first is the non-perforated "tongue amulet" cicada placed in the mouth of the dead; the second is the pendant cicada suspended on the neck or waist with ribbon or braid through the perforation which was usually drilled bilaterally on the head of the cicada; the third is the crown cicada stitched on the headgear through the hole drilled bilaterally on the belly. All of the cicadas of these three types were carved in diversified shapes with superb skills, elaborate details and carefully chosen materials.

According to the archaeological materials, the earliest jade cicadas discovered so far in China are from Baiyinchanghan Site in Linxi County, Inner Mongolia, which belonged to the Xinglongwa Culture in the prehistoric age (8000-6500 BP). In addition, from Narstai Site in Bairin Right Banner, Inner Mongolia and Niuhefang Site in Chaoyang City, both of which belonged to the Hongshan Culture (6500-5000 BP), jade cicadas were also unearthed. However, these jade cicadas were all in the shape of short cylinder with incised lines and perforations looking like silkworms, so some archaeologists suggested that they should be called "jade silkworms". The earliest jade cicadas with the realistic shapes are found in the lower reaches of Yangtze River, which was at Fanshan Site of Liangzhu Culture (5200-4200 BP) in Yuhang District, Hangzhou City, Zhejiang. The jade cicadas are carved in a semi-ellipsoidal shape and the eyes, neck and wings were shown with curved intaglio lines. Nevertheless, the over 40 jade cicadas unearthed from the site of Shijiahe Culture (about 4600-4000 BP) located in Jingzhou Prefecture in the middle reach of Yangtze River were all carved exquisitely and vividly; all of the cicadas were adult ones with wings, the whole bodies were in rectangular shape.

Seen from functions, the prehistoric jade cicadas were all pendant cicadas; together with the other jades accompanied, these jade cicadas reflected that the people in the primitive societies attributed many good wishes to them which were worshipped by the people as a magical insect. Therefore, the jade cicadas had strong sorcerous significance and mysterious religious flavor. By owning and wearing jade cicadas, the prehistoric people hope them to release their magic power and bless the wearers. Meanwhile, in the totem worshipping activities, the jade cicadas bearing special symbolic connotations were also used by the wizards as the instrument to communicate with the Heaven.

In the Shang Dynasty during which the divinations and sacrifices were flourishing, the people believed that the souls would never perish and the jade cicadas were the symbols of eternal life and rebirth and the material carriers of the supernatural beings as well as other jades. In this period, the jade cicadas were still mainly the pendant ones, the shapes of which were both succeeded from the previous ages and originally created and developed; the techniques of relief and intaglio line engravings, embossing and round carvings were all applied naturally and skillfully. Also in this time, as totem symbols, cicada images was engraved on the corners or sides of handle-shaped objects or Cong-prismatic tubes or other jade implements as linear repeat pattern, the connotation of which was "endless continuation" hinting the transfer of political powers



and military forces from generation to generation.

In the late Western Zhou Dynasty, the fully developed rite and etiquette systems were integrated with the jade wearing customs of the primitive religions, which made the jades changed from the mysterious and religious amulets to the symbols of hierarchies and patriarchal clan system. The early Confucianism gradually became the mainstream of the social culture, and many moralities and ideals such as "Dezhi德治 (ruling by virtue)" and "Renzheng仁政 (benevolence government)" and the good personalities such as *Ren*仁 (Humanity), *Yi*义 (Uprightness), *Li*礼 (Proper Behavior) and so on were attributed to the jades. The spiritual significance and social functions of wearing jades were more stressed. To show statuses and regularize the behaviors of the wearers, jade pendants of various types were usually made into compositions, most of which contained small jade cicadas carved according to the original shapes of the raw materials. As for the carving techniques, based on the contour tracing method with thin intaglio lines developed in the Shang Dynasty, a new method of outlining images with thick intaglio lines with one vertical wall and one sloping wall was applied, the lines carved by which looked sinewy and vigorous. The jade cicadas of this period discovered to date were all pendant cicadas, which were carved in diversified shapes and types, including round sculptures, contour sculptures and relief carvings, some of which were stylized and altered, showing the aesthetics and imagination of the ancient people.

In the Spring-and-Autumn and Warring-States Periods, the ritual jade theory of the Confucianism had formed, which announced that the jade has "Eleven Virtues" — *Ren*仁 (Humanity), *Zhi*智 (Wisdom), *Li*礼 (Proper Behavior), *Yi*义 (Uprightness), *Yue*乐 (Knowing Music, or Harmony), *Zhong*忠 (Loyal to the Monarch), *Xin*信 (Sincerity to the Common People), *Tian*天 (Heavenliness), *Di*地 (Earthliness), *De*德 (Morality) and *Dao*道 (Obeying the Natural Law). Influenced by this theory, the monarchs and aristocrats of all of the states regarded the jades as embodiments of "*Junzi*君子 (a man of complete virtue)"; the jades were personified and moralized, and many admirable characters were attributed to them. Among the jade ornament compositions worn by the high-ranked officials and aristocrats, jade cicadas were usually seen. The cicadas were regarded as the model of not being stained although born in dirty places and again as that of honesty and incorruptness like that described by Sima Qian in the *Biographies of Qu Yuan and Jia Yi* of his *Shiji* (The Records of the Grand Historian) that "fed only by liquids but not by grains, molted from the unclean matters but keeping clean; meandering outside the dusty world and rejecting the pollution of the secular surroundings." At the same time, also influenced by the Confucian thoughts of *Xiao*孝 (filial obedience) and "serving the dead just as they were alive", the people could not bear to let the dead be buried with the mouth empty (which meant the dead would go hungry in the afterworld). A new type of jade cicada — the "tongue amulet" — emerged, most cases of which were shorter than 1 cm and made in triangular shape with a wide head and sharp tail. Usually, one or more of this kind of jade cicadas were put in the mouth of the dead together with cowries and beads, which were called "*fanyu*饭玉 (lit. Meal Jade)" or "*hanyu*琰玉 (lit. Jade held in the Mouth)", and the ceremony of putting these things into the mouth of the dead was called "the ceremony of feeding the mouth." The commentary of Mr. Gongyang to the *Fifth Year of Duke Wen* (of the Lu State) of the Spring and Autumn Annals said, "What



does the 'han' mean? To fill the mouth." Mr. He Xiu glossed that "the filial children used these jades to fill their (died) parents' mouths, because they served them as they were still alive, so they could not bear to let their parents be buried with empty mouth." Meanwhile, under the influences of the Taoist immortal worshipping described in the commentary of *Laozi (Daode Jing)* as "the people living according to the natural rules, when they die, just as the cicadas molt, discard their human bodies and change into immortals; their human bodies perished but their true bodies never die." In the view of the ancient people, the physical body of the human beings could die and decay, but the invisible spirit and soul would exist for good. The jade cicada is a magic instrument which could prevent the evil and filthy air from harassing the dead and the true soul of the dead from dispersing and then protect both the body and soul of the dead.

In the Han Dynasty, because the elaborate funerals were more and more popular, the "tongue amulet" cicadas appeared in large amount, and this period was the climax of the making of this type of jade cicadas. Also in this period, the Confucianism was strongly promoting the *Xiao* virtue, and seeing the elaborate funerals and precious grave goods were the representatives of *Xiao*. At the same time, the Taoism was also flourishing. The people influenced by the Taoist thoughts of eternal life and emerging into immortals all believed that the jade cicadas had supernatural functions. The funeral customs of using the "seven-hole (the eyes, ears, nostrils and mouth) plugs" or "nine-hole (the seven-hole plus the penis or vagina and anus)" to process the body of the dead was the reflection of this belief. It is mentioned in the Chapter *Duisu* 对俗 (Rejoinders to Popular Conceptions) of the *Neipian* 内篇 (the Inner Chapters) of *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (The Master Who Embraces Simplicity) that "if gold or jade is inserted into the nine holes, the corpse will never decay". The one plugged in the mouth, which is the jade cicada, was the most popular component of the "nine-hole plugs." It is also mentioned in the Chapter *Jingshen Xun* 精神训 (Seminal Breath and Spirit) of *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (The Master of Huainan) that "Like the cicada and snake he can throw off his mortal coil and wander in the great Empyrean. With light or airy step and with the greatest ease he swiftly enters the sable Heaven". And in the Chapter of *Insects* of *Youyang Zazu* 酉阳杂俎 (Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang) that "the cicada is named *Fuyu* 复育 (born again) before molting, the meaning of which is reincarnation." All of these literatures recalled us that the ancient people thought that the cicadas sucked muddy underground water without seeing the sky and the sun before they molt; once they emerged, they drank the honeydews, breathed the clean gust, flew straight upward and stayed in the high air, all of which matched the Taoist rules of human life — "Extreme Adversity Marks the Beginning of Fortune". The death was just a transformation of life: when the corpse was buried, the spirit and soul did not die but were just recreating the vigor and energy like the cicada pupas; when they broke the ground and sprouted out, they molted from the decayed corpse and got rebirth. Therefore, the jade cicada is the embodiment of the desires of the living people to the dead ones. In this period, the shapes of the jade cicadas were basically stylized, the representative one of which is the so-called "Han Ba-dao (the Eight-strokes of the Han Style)", the carving of which was plain but graceful, the lines were smooth and strong, the shaping was simple and unadorned and the zeitgeist and artistic styles were distinctive. Most of the tongue-amulet jade cicadas



were made of green jade or white jade, with few of local materials or glass, and they were distributed widely within present-day China. Because of the declining of the Confucian ritual jade system, the pendant jade cicadas and crown jade cicadas were rare in this period.

During the Three-Kingdoms through the Southern and Northern Dynasties Periods, because of the frequent replacement of the governments, the separation of the nation and the chaotic warfare, the social development was terribly harmed. Moreover, because the custom of frugal funeral was more and more popular, the jades used for burial were sharply reduced and no new types and styles were developed. Also in this period, the Taoism was in a transforming stage, in which the immortal-cultivation theories and the *fangshu* 方术 (mystical and magical crafts) for pursuing immortality were significantly developed and formed complete systems. Except for holding jade cicada in the mouth for "rebirth" after death, more attention was paid to the self-cultivation and health-preservation when alive. One theory announced that jade was the essence of this world and eating jade can help to guarantee longevity and ascend to immortal. This is also mentioned by Ge Hong in the Chapter *Xianyao* 仙药 (Medicine of Immortality) of the *Neipian* of his work *Baopuzi* (The Master Who Embraces Simplicity) by saying "jade is an elixir but difficult to obtain." It is also mentioned in *Yujing* 玉经 (Classics of Jade) that "he who takes gold as immortal medicine will live as long as gold and he who takes jade as immortal medicine will live as long as jade." Influenced by this theory, eating jade for ascending immortal became a popular practice and large amount of jade was smashed and eaten. Furthermore, because of the flourishing of the Buddhism, large amount of jade was used for Buddhist themes. Therefore, jade cicadas and other jades of similar usages made in this period were much fewer, and the shapes were usually made after that of the previous period, the materials of which were mostly talc or stone.

In the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the mysteriousness of jade worship and the conception of jade as the symbol of virtues were vanishing because of which jade cicadas were seldom made and seen. The practical and realistic functions of jades were obviously emphasized and strengthened and the jade wares with these kinds of features became the mainstream of jade craftsmanship. The quantity and quality of the ritual and funeral jades were quickly reduced and the materials were usually replaced by stones.

In the Song Dynasty, the Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism were integrated, the literati started the custom of emulating the ancient lifestyles and the folkloric culture prospered; under these situations, jades' sedating, appreciating and metaphorical functions were fully developed and utilized. The cicada was regarded higher and higher in the mind of the people: first, the cicadas are perching highly on the branches, breathing the wind and drinking dews without competing for any interests with the secular beings, which is the symbol of purity, loftiness and intelligence; second, the cicadas hiding for hibernation in the winter and emerging in the spring, live harmoniously with the seasons and out of the illness and aging by discarding the old bodies (shells) and enjoy the eternal life, which carries the good aspirations and sincere wishes. For these reasons, jade cicadas reappeared and most of them were pendant cicadas; they are usually made in plain and modest style or after the shapes of the previous periods and bearing rusts of metal nails.