

Jade
(Nephrite)

39.31

Chinese

12th-11th
Shang dynasty, late, ~~11th-12th~~ Century B.C.

An-yang

Implement:

Handle (one corner chipped) of slightly translucent, dark, gray-green nephrite; the tang pierced for attachment.

.178 long (7")

Neg.No.
5856B2
5901AA

1. Bought through C. T. Loo & Co., New York, from Chang Nai-chi. For price, see Freer Gallery of Art Purchase List after 1920.
2. (J.E.Lodge, 1939) See Folder Sheet 39.6.
3. Several pieces resembling this one more or less in form have been published by, e.g., Pelliot (Jades Archaïques de Chine, Pl. XII) and Salmony (Carved Jade of Ancient China, pls. IX, 1 and XX, 1), who, oddly enough, attributes a Shang date to the dagger handle shown in his Plate IX, and an "early Western Chou" date to the handle of similar type shown in his Plate XX.
4. (T.Lawton, 1978) Cf. Loehr, Ancient Chinese Jades, nos. 112, 113 and 114.

5. (Julia Murray, 1981) Hayashi Minao reproduces a similar piece (~~although with more surface decoration~~), which he calls a ta-kuei 大圭, and which he describes as a handle to be used together with a type of cup called tsan 琖 in libation ceremonies.

See Hayashi Minao, "The Classification and Uses of Shang and Western Chou Ritual Bronze Vessels," Tōhōgaku no. 53 (March 1981), p. 14, fig. 7; and text pp. 13 - 15.

(Hayashi does acknowledge the difficulty of explaining why so many jade "handles" but no corresponding cups have been found-- a circumstance that casts doubt on the theory.)