



**616. Jade Vase**

China, Qianlong period (1736-1795)  
H: 28.8 cm

An elegant jade vase, with a flattened baluster shape, carved on both sides in low relief with prunus blossom trees amongst rocks. The oblong cover, with a stepped finial, also has small prunus branches. There are two archaic handles with pendant rings on either side of the waisted neck. The front and back of the vase have taotie masks with rings carved in relief. It stands on a low foot with an engraved key-fret border. The jade is a pale green with lighter dappling and russet inclusions – which are used cleverly to enhance to composition.

In China, the Prunus mume or plum blossom (meihua) is associated with winter and is the flower of the month January. The welcoming sight of these flowering trees in late winter, signalling spring, has made this tree a very popular plant in China and is often depicted on works of art. Together with the bamboo and the pine tree, it forms the Three friends of Winter – which is an often featured motif in Chinese art.

Frank Schwab (1891-1961), was a successful London stockbroker who married American heiress Mildred Thompson. They were enthusiastic collectors of art from around the world, including jade carvings. They acquired their jades in the early to mid-20th century, their collection the epitome of classic English taste. Residing in London's Mayfair neighbourhood, they lived close to many distinguished art dealers and galleries. They purchased from dealers such as John Sparks who, along with Bluett's and Spink & Son, were among the longest established and most respected Asian dealers in the world.

**Provenance:**

Lord Hollenden Collection, UK  
With John Sparks Ltd., London  
Thompson Schwab Collection, UK (label JDDT-TS No.33)