

KENNETH STARR

Curator, Asiatic Archaeology and Ethnology

# Collecting with a Purpose



*Detail from collar area of chartreuse green man's jacket of brocaded velvet*

*Inset: Sleeve-border from woman's gown with auspicious symbols in petit-point on gauze*

*Photographs by John Bayalis and Homer V. Holdren*

VIEWED IN TERMS of the manner in which they were obtained, materials in museum collections fall into one of two categories. One is represented by materials collected with an intellectual context in mind; the other, of materials collected without such a context.

Specimens acquired by museum expedition normally either fit into some specific research program or augment or supplement existing collections. Those acquired by purchase, even though only one or a few pieces may be involved, also normally are obtained with one of these two ends in view. Objects acquired by gift, however, having been collected by individuals, each with his own criteria—if any—for collecting, are much more rarely endowed with an intellectual context. Such materials often are acquired either as discrete objects or as one of a small group of objects, appreciated as being individually curious or esthetically pleasing. Although such gifts may be welcome additions to the collections, there is the need to fit them into some overall scientific or esthetic pattern. If documentation comes with these isolated pieces, or if their types are well known, this often can be done. Frequently, however, there are no associated data, and the type may be an uncommon one, so that these isolated pieces become of extremely limited scientific value.



*Toy tiger*

Thus it is that the large and representative group of Chinese folk materials collected by Miss C. F. Bieber and recently acquired by the Museum is quite remarkable, for it was assembled with great purposiveness. The collection consists of more than 1500 pieces, largely characteristic of middle- and upper-class Chinese life, especially as it existed in the Peking area during the latter part of the Ch'ing, or Manchu, Dynasty (1644–1911). The materials are divisible into three groups, as follows:



## GENERAL COLLECTION

This group, the largest and the most varied of the three, includes more than 1000 Chinese folk-art and utilitarian objects ranging quite widely in type. They were assembled by Miss Bieber with two purposes in mind, first, to preserve some of the abundant and diverse folk materials that characterized Chinese life during the last years of imperial China and, two, to show the many different substances used to make them, the techniques involved in their manufacture and, finally, the great richness of the symbolism in their decorative motifs. One may break down this General Collection as follows:

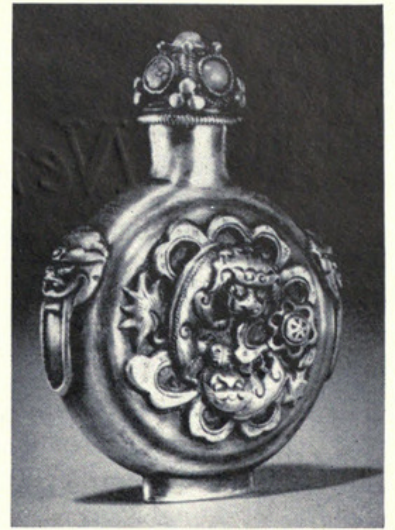
**Textiles:** These are further subdivided into costumes, costume accessories, and a miscellaneous group of materials.

The costumes range from elegant men's robes, including one of dark blue brocaded silk with ermine "horse's hoof" cuffs and fully lined with new-born lamb's wool, through a variety of fine women's and children's robes, gowns, coats and jackets. All are in excellent condition and manifest a very wide range of materials, techniques and colors, and decorative motifs. There also are examples of such diverse elements of apparel as hats, head-bands, ear-muffs, collars, sleeve- and ankle-bands, and shoes.

The costume accessories used in old China and assembled by Miss Bieber are especially rich and varied. Included are such characteristic pieces as belt pockets and purses for carrying small personal objects; cases for calling cards, fans, pipes, spectacles, archers' thumb rings, needles and combs; and portable knife-chopstick sets and strike-a-light kits. These objects now are rare not only in Europe and the United States, but also in China itself.

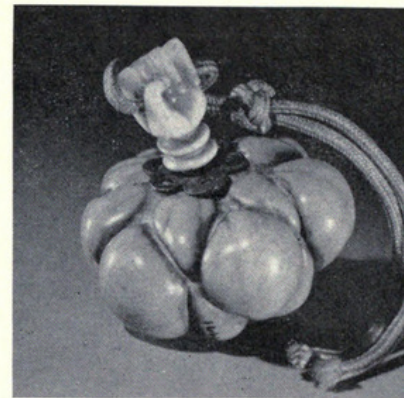
The miscellaneous textiles encompass a variety of utilitarian materials, especially household objects. The latter include bed covers and hangings, chair covers, a pair of fine and very rare elbow-pillows, mirror covers and various curtains and hangings. Also among these miscellaneous textiles are a charming group of stuffed toys and an excellent collection of old sutra covers of many materials, techniques and motifs, used to cover Buddhist religious books.

*Silver snuff-bottle with Lion Dog motif, top inset with turquoise and coral*



1

2



3



*1-Bracelet of bamboo with silver fittings*

*2-Toggle: Gourd fitted with carved bone hand*

*3-Compass in carved wooden case*

*Paper cut-out of Lion Dog, used as pattern for embroidered pillow-end*



**Other substances:** The General Collection comprises also an immense range of minor-art and utilitarian objects made of ceramics and glass, ivory and bone, leather, metal, paper, rocks and minerals (including jade), and wood, lacquer and basketry. The paper objects are particularly rich in number and variety. Among these is a delightful group

*(Continued on page 7)*



## Expeditions

Dr. Paul S. Martin, Chief Curator of Anthropology, departed April 30 for Arizona to continue his long-term project of archaeological excavation and study in the Southwest, which has brought to light the history of vanished Indian tribes that formerly inhabited that section of the United States. He is being assisted this year by James Hill and John Fritz, graduate students at the University of Chicago, and six other college students.

Site of this year's "dig" again is Vernon, Arizona, where Dr. Martin is excavating the remains of at least 100 rooms and a plaza, representing the last location occupied by Indians who abandoned the region about A.D. 1300-1400. It is expected that the archaeological work will continue through September.

More than four hundred pounds of botanical specimens, representing some 13,000 plant specimens—the fruits of four months of botanical collecting in Central America by Dr. Louis O. Williams, Curator of Central American Botany—arrived at the Museum last month.

And there are more plants to come!

Although Dr. Williams is now back at the Museum, plants will continue to arrive for two more years, for the Museum's work in Central America is being continued by Sr. Antonio Molina R., botanist of the Escuela Agrícola Panamericana in Honduras, and by Sr. Alfonso Jiménez M., head of the biological section of the Museo Nacional de Costa Rica at San José. Their collecting will concentrate on Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica and is supported by a National Science Foundation grant awarded Dr. Williams for continuation of the Museum's long-term studies of the flora of Central America.

Not only plants, but also honors, were gathered by Dr. Williams during his recent study trip. For his outstanding botanical work in Central America Dr. Williams was named "Investigador Bo-

tanico" of the Museo Nacional de Costa Rica.

## Staff Notes

Mrs. Christine S. Danziger has been appointed Anthropology Conservator, a new staff position carrying responsibility for the preservation and restoration of anthropological specimens, especially those made of metal.

Of serious concern to all museums is the chemical decomposition of valuable bronze, iron, and silver objects in their research collections. Over a period of many years, or centuries, the chemical composition of some metals becomes unstable, due to the presence of salts they absorbed from the soil during their long burial in the earth. Through exposure to air and moisture, chemical processes are activated and corrosion begins. Mrs. Danziger will devote her efforts to arresting these processes by scientific methods, and to saving objects already partially damaged.

To this task, Mrs. Danziger brings an extensive background in chemistry. For seven years before coming to the Museum her work as a laboratory technician at the University of Chicago was directed toward basic research in organic chemistry.

One of Mrs. Danziger's first responsibilities at the Museum will be to design a laboratory which will be equipped with the specialized apparatus needed for her work of conserving the Museum's collections.

Mrs. Helen A. MacMinn, Associate Editor of Miscellaneous Publications, retired on April 30, 1963. Mrs. MacMinn joined the staff in 1945 as Assistant, Scientific Publications, and in 1947 became Associate Editor of Miscellaneous Publications.

She contributed substantially to the publication program of the Museum, particularly in the design and editing of popular publications. In 1959, "A King's Day: A Day in the Life of an African King," one of the books de-

signed by Mrs. MacMinn, received a certificate of award from the Chicago Book Clinic in its 8th Annual Exhibition for high standards of design, printing, binding, publishing intention, and reader appeal.

Her contribution to the Museum in terms of loyal and effective service cannot be measured, and all of her many friends on the staff wish her happiness in the years ahead.

Dr. John B. Rinaldo, Associate Curator of Archaeology, resigned last month to accept a position with the Amerind Foundation in Dagoon, Arizona. In joining the staff of the Foundation, which promotes and supports archaeological research on the American Indian, Dr. Rinaldo will continue his major archaeological interest in the Indians of the Southwest.

## Chicago Natural History Museum

Founded by Marshall Field, 1893  
Roosevelt Road and Lake Shore Drive, Chicago 5  
Telephone: WAbash 2-9410

### THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

|                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Lester Armour       | Hughston M. McBain  |
| Wm. McCormick Blair | J. Roscoe Miller    |
| Bowen Blair         | William H. Mitchell |
| Walter J. Cummings  | John T. Pirie, Jr.  |
| Joseph N. Field     | John Shedd Reed     |
| Marshall Field, Jr. | John G. Searle      |
| Stanley Field       | John M. Simpson     |
| Clifford C. Gregg   | Edward Byron Smith  |
| Samuel Insull, Jr.  | Solomon A. Smith    |
| Henry P. Isham      | Louis Ware          |
| William V. Kahler   | J. Howard Wood      |

### OFFICERS

|   |
|---|
| Stanley Field, Chairman of the Board                |
| Clifford C. Gregg, President                        |
| Hughston M. McBain, First Vice-President            |
| Joseph N. Field, Second Vice-President              |
| Bowen Blair, Third Vice-President                   |
| Solomon A. Smith, Treasurer and Assistant Secretary |
| E. Leland Webber, Secretary                         |

### THE BULLETIN

#### EDITOR

E. Leland Webber, Director of the Museum

#### CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Paul S. Martin, Chief Curator of Anthropology  
John R. Millar, Chief Curator of Botany  
Rainer Zangerl, Chief Curator of Geology  
Austin L. Rand, Chief Curator of Zoology

#### MANAGING EDITOR

Paula R. Nelson, Public Relations Counsel

#### ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Marilyn Jindrich, Associate in Public Relations

Members are requested to inform the Museum promptly of changes of address.



Dr. Rinaldo, whose association with Chicago Natural History Museum dates back to 1938, first came to this institution as a volunteer after participating in a Museum expedition to Colorado, led by Dr. Paul S. Martin. He very shortly was named an Associate in Southwestern Archaeology, and from that appointment moved on to Assistant Curator and, finally, Associate Curator of Archaeology. He has accompanied Dr. Martin on archaeological expeditions to the Southwest every year since 1946.

Dr. Rupert L. Wenzel, Curator of Insects, has been appointed a Visiting Professor in the Department of Biology at Northwestern University for the summer of 1963. He will teach general entomology, as well as research courses for students working toward advanced degrees.

At Purdue University on May 7 Dr. Wenzel will be the principal speaker at the annual banquet of the Department of Entomology. He was also a participant in the North Central branch meetings of the Entomological Society of America held recently at Purdue, where he represented the Museum with Henry S. Dybas, Associate Curator of Insects. Dr. Wenzel opened the symposium, "Insects as Indicators of Palaeoecology," with a talk on "The Biogeography of the Holarctic Region."

### In Memoriam

Mr. Elmer S. Riggs, former Museum Curator of Paleontology and a member of the scientific staff from 1898 until his retirement in 1942, died March 25 in Lawrence, Kansas, at the age of 94.

Except for a year as Museum Assistant at the University of Kansas, from which he was graduated, Mr. Riggs spent his entire working career at Chicago Natural History Museum, coming here shortly after the completion of postgraduate studies at Princeton University. He conducted twelve Museum expeditions in the western United States, two in Canada, and two in Argentina and Bolivia—spending a full four years

in South America.

Mr. Riggs and the men who worked under his supervision on these expeditions were responsible for collecting a major portion of the Museum's paleontological material. During the course of his work, the noted paleontologist discovered numerous genera and species previously unknown, and his publications upon these are notable in the literature of his science.

### On Exhibit

"Space Geology," the Museum's newest exhibit, prepared specially for the observance of Chicago and Midwest Space Month (April 9 to May 9) will remain on display in Stanley Field Hall throughout the summer months, so that our many summer visitors may have an opportunity to enjoy it.

The theory that life may exist on Mars is illustrated in a new botany exhibit added recently to the above group of special displays for Chicago and Midwest Space Month. It is located on the second floor (east wing) between Halls 25 and 26, and will also remain on display into the summer months.

The exhibit shows what happens to mosses when subjected over a two-months' period to Martian environmental conditions. What those environmental conditions may be is also demonstrated in the display: namely, an atmosphere with little oxygen, but high in carbon dioxide and nitrogen—and no water vapor; temperature extremes approximating those that occur on the earth's deserts, but much lower—varying from far below zero to a little above freezing.

The exhibit was prepared by the Museum's Department of Botany under the direction of Dr. Patricio Ponce de Leon, Assistant Curator of Cryptogamic Botany. Recent experiments conducted by the Armour Research Foundation provided background information for the display.

Prize-winning cut gems, distinctive jewelry of polished stone, and polished



*This painting is by a young student in the Junior School of the Art Institute of Chicago. With other works by these imaginative youngsters, it will be shown in the Museum through May. The art is inspired by Museum exhibits and includes fabric designs, paper transparencies and cut-out masks, as well as paintings.*

stone slabs of unusual beauty will be displayed in the Museum June 8 through July 7 in the 13th Annual Amateur Handcrafted Gem and Jewelry Competitive Exhibition. Sponsored by the Chicago Lapidary Club, the exhibit features approximately 100 displays—all prize-winners in a city-wide competition—which demonstrate how common earth materials, in the hands of a craftsman, can be transformed into objects of remarkable beauty.

Longer Museum hours of 9 A.M. to 6 P.M. every day of the week became effective on May 1.





In the New Zealand bush, Barbara Solem collects a large carnivorous land snail, "*Paryphanta*"

ALAN SOLEM

Curator, Lower Invertebrates

## Pacific Snail Trail

The conclusion of the report, begun in last month's BULLETIN, of Dr. Solem's recent round-the-world study trip, on which he was accompanied by his wife, Barbara. Part I covered his work in Hawaii, Tahiti, Fiji, and New Caledonia.

FROM French cooking and the casually unorganized life of New Caledonia to New Zealand, with its boiled brussel sprouts and minutely organized welfare state, is only a few hundred miles in distance but a fantastic difference in living. At first, New Zealand seems like a cleaner, tidier section of the Middle West, but the closed stores on Saturday and detailed regulations for commercial enterprises such as restaurants, were surprising to us.

Both Auckland and Wellington had magnificent collections of New Zealand snails. After a quick look at these it was obvious that, while a few groups were closely related to the Polynesian-Micronesian species, most were obviously distinct.

The by now familiar routine of measuring, counting, map-making, and typing continued, greatly aided by the night-owl habits of the Auckland Curator.

Special permission was received for us to work late hours in Wellington. Week-ends saw us collecting in various parts of the North Island, seeking the carnivorous *Paryphanta* snail, and learning that fallen palm fronds make excellent toboggans for sliding down hillsides. Usually the patches of native forest were surrounded by belts of gorse, a prickly shrub introduced from England to form hedge rows, but now a great pest. In our three week-ends of collecting we managed to get specimens of about two thirds of the New Zealand genera for dissection and, moreover, gained a real appreciation of New Zealand friendliness and hospitality.

Most of the next month was spent working at the Australian Museum in Sydney. A quick trip to Melbourne, Adelaide, Hobart and Launceston enabled us to cover other important collections. It was in Australia that our

field trips were enlivened by our only real adventurous mishap. A land leech attached itself to my eyeball and had to be pulled off with collecting tweezers.

By this time we needed a change from the routine of microscope and typewriter, and it was with a sense of relief that we shipped them on to Germany before leaving for Malaya. We had now begun to grasp the broad pattern of endodontid relationships, had accumulated material for dissection from all important areas of the Pacific, and were deeply involved in a side study of the various origins of apertural teeth in the endodontids. As a by-product of our main study we have the basic outline for a reclassification of the Australian endodontids, a subject we had no idea would arise during our visits.

In Malaya we squeezed a collecting trip between brief visits to museums in Singapore and Calcutta. I was inter-



ested in gaining familiarity with the fauna of the limestone hills of Central Malaya. Minute mollusks living on these hills under conditions that isolate the species from each other show the same variations that are found in certain snails of Arizona and Mexico. This was a chance to take a quick look at the area so that we could effectively plan an extensive field trip there in a few years.

A. J. Berry, a zoologist at the University of Malaya, has been working on the life histories of the Malayan snails and was able to accompany us to several localities. On one hill Barbara gained honors by becoming the first person to collect live specimens of a rare genus of carnivorous snails, while the two malacologists, out of their greater knowledge of snail psychology, were overlooking its habitat niche. Evenings we could watch the fabulous patterns of Chinese, Malayan and Indian life in the villages and appreciate the tremendous efforts being made to form a unified nation from these radically diverse cultural elements.

At last, late in May, we started on our final phase of the study trip—a search for endodontid snails in the museums of Western Europe. The endodontids are very small, less than  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch in size, and many had been described before good microscopes were available. From the original measurements and descriptions it was impossible for us to be sure exactly which species earlier workers had before them. Before we could finish our study, we had to locate some of the original material used by each author, compare it against more recently collected shells, and—using the vastly improved microscope available today—redescribe the shells. Extensive search of the literature before we left Chicago and numerous inquiries to museum curators had suggested that endodontids of immediate importance to our study were scattered in twenty-three cities in western Europe.

Chicago Natural History Museum has been accumulating mollusks only since 1938; many European museums have collections dating back more than 200 years. We not only had to know that a certain species might be in a particular museum, but we had to find it after we

arrived. Fires—both from natural disasters and wars—changes in buildings, the inevitable disarray caused by neglect when no scientist is actively taking care of a collection—all contribute to making it difficult to locate a particular species in a collection—to say nothing of the effects of dust accumulating for 100 years or so!

A major logistic problem was to time our visits to avoid local holidays and vacation schedules, a venture in which we succeeded everywhere except in Sweden. By chance, the malacologist at Göteborg came to Chicago after I had already left on the study trip, and was then on vacation when I visited Göteborg. Despite all difficulties and the destruction of several collections during World Wars I and II, we managed to locate over 90 per cent of the material we had hoped to find, and now have detailed descriptions of nearly all the known species of endodontids from the Pacific Islands.

Filled with wonderful memories of our travels, and laden with manuscript, notes, and some specimens, we returned to an office stuffed with a year's accumulation of mail, box after box of loaned material and field collections we had shipped ahead, plus all the assorted problems we had hastily stuffed into drawers just before leaving. No miracle had happened, they were still waiting to be described or discarded, and the letters still required answers. Little by little this work progresses and soon I can turn to the endodontids again. In time, the growing stack of manuscript will be ready for publication and eventually, when asked, "What did you do during the year of traveling?" I can bring out a stack of technical publications and reply, "This!"

At the same time: "If I had some more material from Tonga and Samoa, maybe we could clear up this problem . . . I'm not satisfied with the relationship of these Australian species. . . Why do the Fijian species have such strong apertural dentition . . ." and a thousand other questions occur, all needing more field work, additional specimens, more study, another trip. Such is the path of research—with always another question to ask, another problem to investigate, and long hours of

routine labor ahead. Yet the thrill of seeing a possible solution, the satisfaction of a completed job, the unforgettable sights and experiences along the way, lead you on, and on, and on.

## COLLECTING WITH A PURPOSE

(Continued from page 3)

of knife and scissor cut-outs representing culturally meaningful subjects. These were used either as embroidery patterns or as decorative pieces for windows or lanterns. There also are very rare stencils for preparing resist-dyed textiles, paper charms, and decorative appliques. Finally, there is an extensive group of shadow-puppet figures, some of leather, but many of paper.

**Jewelry:** Another subgroup consists of jewelry and includes rings and bracelets, beads and buttons, hair ornaments, amulets, pendants, and rare rosaries with beads made of fragrant incense paste covered with gilt or with tiny bits of brilliant blue kingfisher feathers.

**Non-Chinese materials:** Finally, the General Collection also contains a small but select group of folk materials from Asian areas other than China. Represented are Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Central Asia and Tibet, Indo-China, Borneo, India and Persia.

As was noted above, Miss Bieber assembled this General Collection under the guiding principle of showing the immense range of materials, techniques, and decorative motifs, especially symbolic ones, represented in Chinese folk arts. With this goal in mind Miss Bieber also systematically garnered a valuable body of associated data relating to virtually every piece in her collection. These data include such information as when and where the piece was obtained, and often from whom, and information about the substance and techniques involved in the manufacture of the object, the symbolism represented in its motifs and, finally, its use. Frequently these facts are supplemented by photographs showing the techniques by which a given piece was made and/or the use to which

(Continued on next page)



(Continued from preceding page)

it was put. Thus, it may be seen that the systematic manner in which Miss Bieber assembled her collection makes it especially valuable and useful for scholarly and museum needs.

### TOGGLE COLLECTION

Toggles, akin to Japanese *netsuke* and ancestral to them, are beautifully fashioned small objects traditionally used by the Chinese as decorative counterweights for the various costume and personal accessories worn suspended from the belt. Generally two to three inches in greatest dimension, but with their size dependent upon their shape and weight, toggles were fashioned from a wide variety of materials in a great diversity of form and with an endless range of decoration, this last almost always drawing its inspiration from the marvelously rich body of Chinese folklore. The Bieber collection of toggles,<sup>1</sup> examples of which were featured on the cover of the *Bulletin* for December, 1962, is unmatched in quality, size and variety, and now is on display in its entirety in the new Chinese gallery currently being installed on the west balcony overlooking Stanley Field Hall.

### LION DOG COLLECTION

The Lion Dog Collection, again unique as a collection, was formed by Miss

her ten years of residence in Peking, as well as in more recent years in Santa Fe, Miss Bieber maintained an active interest in the intelligent and plucky *shih-tzu kou*, keeping a number of them herself.

Historically and culturally the *shih-tzu kou* is even more intriguing. As a real animal the lion never occurred in China, and the ideas that the Chinese had of the lion came either from hearsay and legend or from occasional contact with specimens sent to the Chinese court as tribute or as gift. The ultimate source of Chinese ideas about the lion seems to have been in the Middle East, especially Persia, where the lion was a symbol of both divine and secular power. These ideas seem then to have moved from the Middle East into India, presumably with the movement of Persian cultural elements into that country in early times, and then from India into Tibet. From these countries ideas about the lion spread into China and other areas eastward, as Korea and Japan. Somewhere along the line of diffusion of these ideas through time and space the lion became identified with the little lion-like dog which in Tibet as well as in China and other Asian countries came to be associated, first, with Buddhism, as had been also the lion, and, second, with popular religion and folklore. In each context the Lion Dog became a symbol of courage and, by extension, protection, and

Those intrigued by the Lion Dog will be pleased to know that Miss Bieber will give an illustrated talk on the Lion Dog, its history in fact and fancy, and its part in Chinese life and lore. The talk, for which there will be no charge, is scheduled for the second floor meeting room of the Museum on Thursday, May 16, at 3:30 in the afternoon.

Bieber to show the great diversity of manner in which a single Chinese folk motif, of which there are almost an endless number, may find expression. The Lion Dog is a fascinating zoological, historical and cultural phenomenon and is one with which Miss Bieber is particularly well acquainted. Zoologically, the Lion Dog, or *shih-tzu kou*, is to be differentiated from both the Lhasa apso, indigenous to Tibet and recognized as one of the oldest breeds of dogs, and the Pekinese, a quite new breed. During

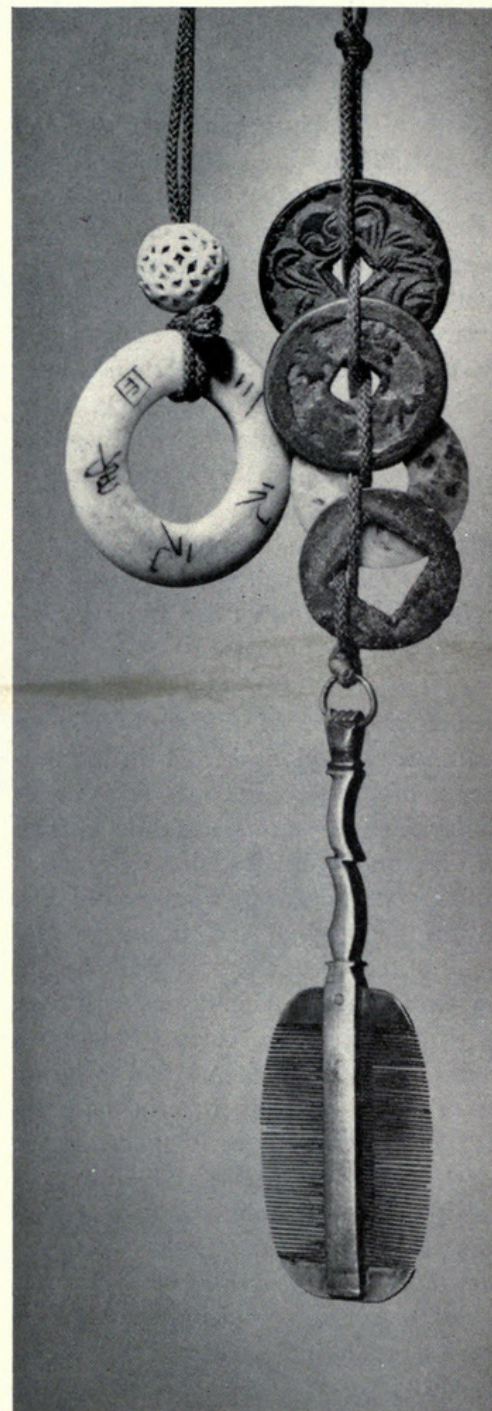
it is in terms of these qualities that the Lion Dog motif appears on an infinite variety of objects.

THE Museum's collection of utilitarian and minor-art materials from the Ch'ing period long has been recognized as one of the largest and most comprehensive in the world. The addition of the Bieber Collection, which came to the Museum largely through the great generosity of Miss Bieber, assures this fact.

Cover: Tiger-collar for child's costume—inset, detail from pillow end, petit-point on gauze

(Cover designed by Theodore Halkin)

Below: Brass beard comb and associated lucky pieces



<sup>1</sup>These 230 toggles have been described and illustrated in a recently published book written by Dr. Schuyler Cammann, of the University of Pennsylvania, entitled *Substance and Symbol in Chinese Toggles—Chinese Belt Toggles from the C. F. Bieber Collection*. Published by the University of Pennsylvania Press (1962) the book is obtainable in the Museum Book Shop for \$15.00.





Starr, M. Kenneth. 1963. "Collecting With a Purpose." *Bulletin* 34(5), 2–8.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/25412>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/374544>

**Holding Institution**

University Library, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign

**Sponsored by**

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

**Copyright & Reuse**

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the Chicago Field Museum.

For information contact [dcc@library.uiuc.edu](mailto:dcc@library.uiuc.edu).

Rights Holder: Field Museum of Natural History

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.