

Basic Detail Report



Inkstone

Date

19th century

Primary Maker

Artist Unknown

Medium

duan stone

Description

This particular stone is made from the most revered of ink stone material – duan stone. This stone was quarried near Shaoxing and was particularly sought after for its surface texture, which was believed to lend a distinctive quality to the ink. It depicts a shallow pool with aquatic creatures, including the crab, fish, and turtle. The Chinese word for crab (xie) is a homophone of the word (xie), designating those who passed the metropolitan examinations, which was the first step toward official rank. The Chinese word for fish (yu) is a homophone of the word (yu), which means surplus or excess as it relates to wealth. The combination of these three animals probably forms the rebus: “May you successfully pass the metropolitan examinations, gain office, fortune and enjoy a long life.” It is likely that this ink stone was presented as a gift from a close friend.

Dimensions

Overall: 7/8 x 8 1/4 x 5 3/4 in. (2.2 x 21 x 14.6 cm)