

No. 11

**A very fine carved Soapstone Dragon and Phoenix Box and Cover
marked *Shang Jun (Zhou Bin)***

Qing Dynasty, Kangxi period (1622-1722)

The cover finely carved with an inter-locking leaf border the slightly reset top with seven *ruyi* heads on the side, crowned by a *qilong* dragon grasping his own tail in high relief on an x diaper. The inside with incised borders and a four-clawed dragon highlighted in light red. The box similarly decorated as the cover but with a centre *qilong* dragon in circled by three others on the same background and two characters *shang jun*. The inside medallion with a pair of facing phoenixes. The stone of a rich dark red colour.

Zhou Bin (Shang Jun) was a native of Zhangzhou province, in Fujian. He was a renowned carver of seal knobs and one of a small group of carvers who represent the zenith of the Chinese tradition of sculpture arising out of the influence of the scholar class. He is considered to be one of the finest of the sculptors working in soft soapstone range of materials. There is some doubt as to the exact dates of Zhou Bin but Chinese sources traditionally list him as Kangxi period. Zhou Bin's work are characterized by extraordinary technical skills combined with great sculptural power.

See also an article on Zhou Bin in *Shoushanshi Zhi* (Records on Shoushan Stone) by Fang Zonggui.

H 1 1/2 in D 3 in

清康熙 壽山石琢龍鳳紋印盒



