

# Rhino Horn Art And Ancient Chinese Cultural Society

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## **Abstract**

This academic article aims to analyze the society and culture of ancient Chinese through the art of ancient Chinese carved rhinoceros horns using the concept of Social History of Art and Art History.

The results of the analysis revealed that the primary characteristics of ancient Chinese society were those in which rare resources were acquired to show the potential of power and economy, especially in the elite. While the art patterns appearing on the rhinoceros horn reflected social characteristics the beliefs of the elite are the main. The pattern has changed according to the era but is based on the beliefs of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism rotation and patterns that are blended with external art caused by trade on the Silk Road and the development of relationships with foreign countries.

**Keywords:** Art; Carved Rhinoceros Horn; Ancient Chinese Society

## **Introduction**

The Artwork refers to the concept of doing in two words, "work" and "art" (short for art). The three criteria for determining whether something is a work of art are (1) an object or event made by an artist; (2) an object or event intended to be a work of art by its creator; and (3) an expert who is recognized as a work of art Art reveals its values Other values in the study of art forms mean the structure or arrangement of works of art. It will reveal the values of creators and society. At the time when art was created in ancient times, the creation of things could affirm that art represented basic human activities. (Martin & Jacobus, 2014: 16-18)

Academics divide the art that exists in the world into two categories: fine arts and applied arts. Art is an essential part of human beings as a creative process of thought and action. It can provide insights into people's cognitive systems in shaping the concept of elements in everyday life (Quemin, 2017:94).in the field of art anthropology Art is viewed as a cultural

phenomenon of society, that is, art is connected to society in a cultural way (Morphy and Perkins, 2006) focus on the study of art that reflects the story in society in all aspects such as economy, politics, culture, education, etc. (Hauser, 1982)

Rhino horn is a valuable, rare material and falls into the category of applied arts invention of art made of rhinoceros horn is a traditional art. Most of the rhinoceros horns are inherited to this day. It was built during the Ming and Qing dynasties of China, with the seventeenth century from the end of the late Ming dynasty to the beginning of the Qing dynasty being the most prosperous era for rhino horn carving. Most of the products were replaced by hooks, belts and hair clips of the past. It is a cup and bowl for holding drinks in the Ming Dynasty (Yue, 2022) before the Qin and Han dynasties, China still had rhinos inhabit both the central and southern plains of the country. Rhino horn shortages occur even in palaces. According to data, there were fewer rhinos during the Song Dynasty, but rhinos are still found in southern

Hunan Province and completely disappeared during the Yuan Dynasty. (Rookmaaker, 2006)

In the last decade, the carved rhinoceros horn available in the art and antiques market has become an attractive alternative for investors looking to “store” value to prevent inflation. There are different types of rhinoceros horns being auctioned, including crockery and other shaped containers. Ornaments are pendants, earrings and other adornments, sculptures of human dolls and other carvings. Other category items include knife handles, pen holders, staff, staff, stamps, etc. According to a Forbes China (2013) survey, 56.1% of the wealthy class (group of people with annual income Household income USD 18,150–825,000 Approximately 10 million) They are interested in collectibles such as calligraphy and antique paintings, luxury goods and contemporary art Rhino horn is presented in Chinese media as a great investment opportunity with a value (price) tied to the rarity of the raw material. Rhino horn trading in China was found to be trading for investment and hoarding (75%), for artistic value (40%) and for medical value only (29%). (Gao, Stoner, Lee & Clark, 2016)

While all over the world focusing on conservation of rhinos due to a large number of decreasing populations. Thus affecting the ecosystem September 22 of every year is designated as World Rhino Day, and conservationists have a strong belief that Rhino horn is mainly used in the production of medicines in Asian countries, China and Vietnam (Hübschle, 2016; Vu, Nielsen & Jacobsen, 2022; Dang Vu & Nielsen, 2021) which is an activity that has been carried out from the past to the present. This academic article is aimed at describing the characteristics, society and culture of ancient China through the art that appears on the carved rhino horn, for information to understand the real and possibly root causes of the problems that have caused the decline in the rhino population in the past to be applied to correct various values of society in the present.

### **Social History of Art**

Tolstoy said that art, in a narrow sense, is to convey feelings that we know are important. The art is not just enjoyment, consolation, or entertainment but the art is good at turning human feelings into consciousness. Which consists of the consciousness of one person conveying to others by some external signal (the artwork) of feelings and experiences they have and others experience them. (Tolstoy, 1995: 265, 276-278) Traditional art forms around the world most express the spiritual dimension of the cosmology of culture, the individual spiritual experience, religious arts and spiritual aspects revealed through a culturally significant filter. Although traditional art is highly abstract but can describe the experience through the real senses. According to the ethnographer's idea, most of the world's societies produce art and the tradition of art is an expression of the cosmology of a particular society. All forms of art come from the way the human brain works in response to the dynamics of the world, therefore has international properties vague representations and intent are completely inaccessible without the cultural context in which the art is embedded. (Laughlin, 2004)

Social history of art begins with the premise that art has no independence, inseparable from its association with social factors such as morality, rule by law, trade and technology, as well as politics and philosophy. Therefore, social change is always accompanied by artistic change. The study of social history of art is an attempt to find out what special factors influence, whether direct or indirect. Analysis of the social history of each artwork occurred after World War II, covering at least 5 levels: the general meaning and function of art in society. The general pattern of interaction between the producer and the recipient (buyer), the motivation behind the production of a particular piece of art either on the manufacturer's side or on the buyer's side, it is the function of art in society and the relationship

between the artist and that society in ancient Greece art is also an important tool, playing a pedagogical role in the education of people's ethics. The social implications of art were first seen in Vasari's *Vite* in 1550 then there are many theories about the relationship between art and society taking place within the framework of the enlightened and social philosophies of the 17th and 18th centuries. It began in the mid-19th century and art history and sociology were established as academic disciplines. The most productive work in terms of the meaning of art history came from Swiss scholar Jacob Burckhardt, he showed the close relationship between art production and the legal and economic structure of society. There is also the work of German sociologists Georg Simmel and Max Weber who influenced art history throughout the 20th century, highlighting the importance of economic and religious factors in shaping culture continued in the late 20th century, modern social history try to directly demonstrate the impact especially of political or racist ideology towards individual works of art has evolved, for example in the history of feminist art. (Oxford Art Online, 2022)

### **Social History of Art**

Art history originated in the 18th century, the concept and institutionalization of that period still embedded in the fundamental principles of the discipline. Art history involves exploring the creation and meaning of objects, including valuing aesthetics of that artwork. (Pooke & Newall, 2008: 19-20) Thai scholars Thamrungruang viewed, the history of art it is a study of art in the past according to various aspects to know the story of the art work and is a reflection of the story of the human being who created these works of art. (Thamrungruang, 2008: 3) The study approach was divided into 5 approaches: (1) focusing on history, (2) emphasizing history, society and culture, (3) emphasizing on forms of art, (4) emphasizing

beliefs and meaning, and (5) emphasizing aesthetics and aesthetics, artist. (Thamrungruang, 2008: 14)

Harris (2006), the field of art history it consists of a concept set, objective principle and study methods including arguments claiming values based on general knowledge and guidelines at the beginning of the discipline emphasis on the study of the origin of works of art, political motivation criticism and social movements (Who produces what, when, how, why?) including the study of artistic symbols, works, social history of art, analyze the socio-cultural situation in which works of art are created and consumed, feminism is the state of women in the development of the arts, artistic institutions, culture and society as a whole, psychology and psychoanalysis of art and artists, study the theory of physiology how the art is expressed through the meaning of symbolic and communication systems. (Harris, 2006: 23-24)

After the mid-1980s, art history it relates to methods, theoretical approaches, and objectives of the study it includes (1) Marxist theory, history, politics and society, (2) feminist critiques of patriarchy and the status of women within historical and contemporary societies, and (3) psychoanalysis of the show, mage and role in gender identity and identity formation in society (4) Conceptualism and structuralism methods of symbolic and semantic analysis. (Harris, 2006: 6-7)

In summary, studying art based on the concepts of Social History of Art and Art History will lead to a better understanding of society as a whole because of art is a reflection of nature beliefs and culture in society through artists who create works, the change in art is evident in the change in society. Therefore, the study of art in each period can reflect the society of that time as well.

### **Chinese artistic form: A Case Study of Carved Rhino Horn Cup**

Characteristics of motifs used in general Chinese art, Phasawan (2015) studied and divided them into six categories: (1) geometric motifs (2) animal motifs (3) thush, birds and insect motifs (4). auspicious patterns, (5) personal patterns, (6) objects and utensils patterns, while Pandamrong (2010) can be divided into only 3 categories are symbolic motifs from nature such as clouds, watermarks, bamboo trees, flowers, fruits, and animals, including imaginary animals; later, Chinese characters and the last form is auspicious symbolic motifs derived from Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism.

Casal (1940: 214-215) studied artistic forms on the Rhino Horn Cup. The division is only to determine the category, not set the time period or arrange the age of the motifs, divided into 5 categories, including the first form, the oldest shape, some of which are shaped on a bronze machine consisting of a stencil it's a cup with a handle sticking out, in this style of carving, the raw materials were cut off as little as possible only as necessary to adjust the shape to match the object such as Lotus flowers and leaves, animal figures were chosen in the early carvings of the rhinoceros horn which is an ancient concept Including the large leaf shape, the thick and convex part of the rhinoceros horn is made into buds or tree sprouts bloom of flowers. Form 2, various flower patterns were made especially during Emperor Qianlong's reign (1736-1795) with emphasis on complexity and the most extravagant carving of a rhinoceros horn because a lot of raw material is wasted. The lotus flowers and leaves of the cup in this 2nd form are full of detail and have different stems, including plants in the water alternating with various insects and birds. Form 3, this is a rather simple or stiff motifs it is the carving of a few trees. There are some bushes, one or two pavilions, the moon in the sky. But lately, the cups in this form have also turned into complexity by adding details in the background work is the nature of the simulation of small objects it's similar to minimizing objects

small, this is comparable to engraving small plastic materials with today's laser machines. The handle of the cup is popularly carved into the shape of 2 large pine trees. Form 4 is more refined than group 1 and 2 (animal and flower motifs), but there is no work in the style of group 3 (trees, gardens). This form is often found carved into the motifs of animals, including dragons, which may have one or more climb over the bronze base of the cup or carved into the shape of a dragon on the handle of the cup other animals are rare, but may be found, such as rabbits, deer, squirrels, in the right environment. The animal carving of the cup in this 4th form must be an animal that symbolizes of good. The last are due to the belief in rhino horn cups that can prevent poison from entering the body has become a belief of immortality Rhino horn cup is therefore a symbol of the cup of longevity. The shape of the cup therefore evolved into a carving according to Taoist beliefs it is a carving of natural landscapes, mountains, rivers, in addition to being a subject of various beliefs related to the afterlife and immortality.

### **Analysis of society and ancient Chinese culture from the art of carving rhino horn**

Development of the Carved Rhino Horn Cup Rhino horn cups were initially used to pour wine as an offering to ancestors at celebrations or important ceremonies, later on the belief that cups made of rhino horn neutralize the poison because the rhino's metabolic system extracts only the beneficial elements of the herb and is stored in the blood it is also believed that the horns belonging to the male rhinoceros have special properties based on the principle of rarity. Rhino horn cups are therefore used in beverages to prevent ingesting toxins from entering the body. (Singer, 1991: 102) According to the development of the first carved rhinoceros horn cup it's just a container used for drinking alcohol but later neglected the reason for its practical use. The rhinoceros's horn cup has become a noticeable

ornamental object and the intricate carvings of its shape are unbalanced making it impossible to set up a base was made to hold the cup or, in some cases, a side-laying style. Casal (1940: 215) viewed all the carved rhinoceros horn cups were made by the craftsmen's association in Canton during the Han Dynasty (151-221 B.C.), which China is known to be the center of rhino horn imports and China is the only country to use rhinoceros horn to make jewelry, pendants, shields, seals, goblet and cups for drinking. In the 16th century, Chinese rhinoceros horn was first imported into Europe which is an ornate carving, where the carving is based on wood carving and ivory carving. In 17th century period it was a fully developed. Carved rhinoceros horn began to flourish in the mid-15th century and evolved over the next 100 years, until the 17th century, in 1850 carved rhino horn has abruptly stopped due to a shortage of raw materials or a shortage of rhino horn. Thus, the value of the rhinoceros horn came back again. This is because the rarity and scarcity once again increase the value of the rhinoceros horn. (Singer, 1991: 212-213)

Han dynasty, Rhino horn cup carved, abstract motifs that are auspicious, leaves, various animal figures. For reasons of association with the purity of the rhino horn, the leaves, trees, and animal images are symbols of Confucian and Taoist, corresponding to form 1, according to a study by Casal (1940). Various prosperity originated from the Zhou dynasty despite the constant atmosphere of war but it was an era where there was prosperity in education. There is an intellectual conflict between different thinkers trying to find a solution to the chaos of society. The important school of education that emerged today was the Yu Jiao Sect, led by Confucius, the Taoist Sect is led by Lao Zhi, for example, the stability of politics, military and trade economy expanding to the outside of the kingdom along the silk Road with Chang An a center of trade (Sunpongsri, 2016: 36-40), contacts with the West and Central Asia. It's not just an exchange

of goods but there is also the adoption of culture into the kingdom, Buddhism, Food, dress, curtains, tables and chairs are widespread and popular among the nobility and popularly used animals to make a ware shape. Horses are the inspiration of craftsmen who create creative art and poetry. There was widespread equestrian art during the Han Dynasty. (Watt, et al, 2004: 6)

Tang Dynasty, a rhinoceros horn cup carved in this era, has a shape and motifs similar to the Han Dynasty. There are carvings related to Buddhist art in addition, there are carvings in the form of flowers, leaves, auspicious patterns instead of animals or animals that symbolize auspiciousness. Including motifs that reflect more ways of life such as flowers, bamboo trees, huts, palaces, the life in royal court, life of the common people, for example, corresponds to the 4 form according to the study of Casal (1940). This era was the most prosperous period in history, both in the military, the arts, trade with foreigners, especially the Arabs, a religious center and different nationalities, but coexist in Chang An, Buddhism has the highest prosperity while Taoism and Confucius it has been restored and is very prosperous due to their ties with and in keeping with the traditional Chinese customs, various works of art and literature are also shown in the line of superstition, superstition, spirituality. (Sunpongsri, 2016, p.155) The artwork related to Buddhism, various Buddhist histories are influenced by India and the middle East but it can be combined with the national character of China very well (Reid, 2021, pp. 113-116; Watt, 2004, p 39-40) including music, medicine, and astronomy. The propagation of Buddhism into China has resulted in greater demand for Buddhist-related products in the Chinese trading market especially commodities from India that must be used in Buddhist rituals including various sacred objects such as pearls and corals. (Saraya, 2011, pages 490-491)

Song dynasty (North, South) Rhino horn cup carved in this era was influenced by Zen and

Taoism, displaying small details that seemed worthless but as complex as human life, such as bamboo plants, flower of persimmon, by conveying nature as a great truth and compare human beings to just a tiny fraction of the vast universe, conveying concept that everything is one of nature. Whether landscapes, rivers, mountains, birds, animals match the 5 form according to Casal (1940) studies, art in the Song Dynasty is recognized as having reached its peak with continuous development from the Tang dynasty it is an art that approaches nature or is realism has been copied or recreated whether it is paintings, bronze work, jade work, pottery, various works of art in this era can be conclude it has been influenced by the Zen sect. They refused to respect objects, images, scriptures and rituals. (Sunpongsri, 2016, pp. 189-225) The Song Dynasty was the golden age of Chinese trade which is inherited from the previous period, especially the trade in wares and pottery (Saraya, 2011, pp. 637-638) thus causing the development of shipbuilding to trade with foreign countries by sea The Song dynasty therefore built a highly advanced irrigation system. The Song Dynasty shipbuilding industry flourished. A navy was set up and a naval ship was formed during the emperor Hui Zhong, there is full preservation of the arts and also established the institute of Painting, defining new styles and methods that have influenced the Chinese painting industry for hundreds of years. (Sunpongsri, 2016, pp. 175-199) The garden is a symbol of high culture in China it represents a way of life, an environment suitable for learning or an environment of successful people who has complete wealth with knowledge and wealth it is also a symbol of solitude. Artworks related to garden paintings inherited from the Song (North) dynasty are considered works of art that have been passed down to the later. (Harrist, 1996)

Yuan Dynasty, in this era, there was no clear art style as it was a copy of the artwork of the previous especially of the Song dynasty,

corresponding to 3 form according to Casal (1940) studies, the pattern is relatively plain or stiff it is the carving of a few trees. There are some bushes, one or two pavilions, similar to those in the Song Dynasty, but without the development of this style. The Yuan Dynasty was a Mongolian tribe during the Yuan Dynasty rule China has a vast territory because the Mongolian are good at fighting. At the same time, international trade it was very prosperous. China had extensive ties with Persia, Russia and other Western nations, including England and France. There is a sense of unity and solidarity. The Ministry of Religion was established but the downside of the royal family is the policy of excessive racial discrimination and there are conflicts between different tribes. (Reid, 2021, p. 12; Sunpongsri, 2016, pp. 241-243) The Yuan dynasty did not attach great importance to art but the favor of the royal court or ruler is a work of art related to horses only. The naturalist art of Zen ideology during the Song Dynasty has disappeared. Artworks is associated with a mystical imagination or an expression of harsh gestures and lifeless but often decorated to look extravagant and the revival of bamboo painting has gained wide popularity among socially isolated artist because it is a symbol of humility, the unbreakable spirit (Sunpongsri, 2016, pp. 226-270) conveys the spirit of the Chinese ruled by the Mongolian and was trampled into the lower classes of Chinese society. The artwork is not seriously supported by the royal court as in the Song Dynasty even the porcelain. There is a deterioration in both the quality of the glaze and the refinement in production. However, porcelain stoneware was initiated during the Yuan Dynasty and has evolved to become famous today.

Ming dynasty, a rhinoceros horn cup carved in this era copying from the Tang, Song and Yuan dynasties, with more details in carving, such as carving a imaginary animal of the Tang dynasty, a dragon when copying the Ming dynasty, details were added: dragon scales,

eyelashes, and nails were more detailed and a longer, more slender body. This corresponds to form 4, according to a study by Casal (1940), during the Ming Dynasty, China specialized in seafaring, economic and cultural exchanges with Southeast Asia and Africa are expanding. During the mid-Ming dynasty, there was a rapid development of handicrafts and industries both a weaving and a large steel mill. Thus, a capitalist regime emerged in the late Ming dynasty clearly. During the Ming dynasty China bans private maritime trade in Southeast Asia especially the export of ceramics except in the case of royal trade only. (Saraya, 2011, p. 636) Countries in Southeast Asia regularly pay tribute to China (Reid, 2021, pp. 12-17) it contains medicinal ingredients, spices, ivory, rhino horn, etc.

The Ming dynasty, since the reign of Emperor Yongle, has prospered and stabilized, especially in the arrangement of merchant ships and wide seas, shipbuilding and navigation reached its peak in this age. The canals were dredged to allow large ships to sail and have more contact with the outside world, especially the Westerners. The weaving industry has made great progress. The population is growing rapidly to become the most populous nation in the world. Throughout the Ming dynasty's rule, traditions that belonged to authentic China were restored, and beliefs and religions were revived in Confucianism that was heavily suppressed during the Yuan Dynasty by being used as the principle of governing the country. In addition, many traditional royal traditions were brought back to use, such as worshipping gods, heavens and earth. The art has been restored and actively patronizing, the arts it was traced back to the Yuan, Song and Tang dynasties, but towards the end of the dynasty there was a return to the arts of the past, especially in the field of painting. Different painting do not create new works. It's just a reproduction of a famous painter's past but the applied arts such as porcelain has been developed with exquisite and sophisticated

craftsmanship since the Song dynasty. The production of high-class porcelain, produced for use in the royal court and sent as expensive products abroad. The Ming dynasty was also regarded as a prosperous period for porcelain. (Sunpongsri, 2016: 273–274, 288-289, 326)

Qing dynasty, a rhinoceros horn cup carved in this era, there are beautiful, intricate, ornate patterns, such as the image of the 8 Masters of Taoism. Bodhisattva, pictures of peony flowers, prunes, chrysanthemums, lotus flowers, historical stories, legends, fairy tales, etc., which are traditional motifs but adds luxury and elegance, corresponds to 2 form, according to a study by Casal (1940), the Qing Dynasty descended from Manchu which has the ability to adapt to the traditions, language, culture of the Chinese people to be flexible to adapt to their own does not pursue a harsh policy like the Mongolian. The country is peaceful with a period of peace for more than a century, unity and wide territories. Tibet and Yunnan were able to unite into power, trade with foreign countries. There are ships from many countries bringing products to sell and bringing Chinese products back to their own country for sale. Chinese cotton is sold in Europe and America, and high-quality silk is still widely popular, and there are also lacquerware and porcelain. In terms of art, Emperor Kangxi established an art institute similar to that of the Song Dynasty to actively promote art. Most scholars and artists take a conservative view, the royal court it provides good support. Art works, especially paintings, are therefore popular for painting landscapes in the style of painters in the Song Dynasty. The Qing dynasty's painters had the idea that the art of the past was already valuable and beautiful, that everything was perfect, accurate and ideological. Therefore, not interested in creating new works, while the priests in Christianity the Spaniards and Portuguese brought their expertise in science and the arts to spread among the Chinese aristocracy or ruling class and was accepted. In the reign of Emperor

Qianlong he was very interested in the jade and porcelain of the Song Dynasty and he have a relationship with Westerners, thus making it tasteful to bring art in the Rocco form which originated from the French royal court looks elegant and elaborate to spread among the Chinese both in the royal court, the nobility and the common people until quickly accepted among the Chinese. The era that prospered during the Qing Dynasty was the Kangxi, Yongle and Qianlong Emperor, After that the Qing dynasty began to decline due to enemies outside the dynasty and undermining the dynasty's power each internal rebellion caused invaluable damage and mass casualties as individualism began to emerge due to the prevailing democracy of Western nations, the Qing dynasty later collapsed. (Sunpongsri, 2016, pp. 333–367)

From considering the forms and motifs that appear on the carved rhinoceros horn cup, it was found that all reflect the values and beliefs the concept of authority or a group of leaders especially the Chinese royal court in each era it also reflects the society of the sage group which is considered the elite group in ancient Chinese society as well. As most of the carvings depict imaginary creatures such as dragons, landscapes and gardens. The dragon is a Taoist mythical creature, the king of beasts, a Chinese artist's imaginary beast with a large serpent's body with four legs, a head like a lion mixed with a cow and a horse, has sharp claws, has deer-like horns, can fly in the air, is a god, represents the power and show strength leadership of the emperor. (Sunpongsri, 2016, pp. 228) As for the scenery and garden motifs, it is an atmosphere of enjoyment in the life of the aristocracy and the atmosphere of the sage's pursuit of knowledge in ancient Chinese society, idols according to Buddhist beliefs it reflects the beliefs of leaders in each era as well. The beliefs and religions that have always been with ancient Chinese society, namely Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, especially Taoism, have the ultimate goal. It is

eternal life. This concept of immortality influenced the Yuan dynasty. Ming and Qing very much (Jing, 1996). Judging from the reproductions of art from the earlier periods of the three dynasties, the Yuan Dynasty, the Ming Dynasty, and the Qing Dynasty the most popular imitation is the dragon lion and lotus. (Mei-fen, 1996) The carved rhinoceros horn cup reflecting the values, beliefs and society of the nobility (leaderships) can be clearly explained during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Power and wealth can drive artistic creativity especially during the era of Emperor Qianlong he was the fifth emperor of the Qing dynasty, who has a great passion for art, he is a poetic genius be a ruler a wise man who ruled during a period of peace in China. The creation of the rhinoceros horn carvings of that period was therefore as exquisite as the leader's liking but whenever the emperor had any faith or religion, that religion and cult would be encouraged and more prosperous, in some periods there was also a suppression of religions or cults that the emperor did not believe, such as the severe suppression of Buddhism during the Tang Dynasty of Emperor Wuzhong, the suppression of Confucianism in the Yuan Dynasty, etc., many of the artworks were destroyed. However, the rhinoceros horn cup may have been a reflection of the aristocratic society from the beginning, unable to reflect on the general public in society due to raw material reasons because the rhinoceros horn is a rare commodity and historically used as a tribute between the kingdoms, the one who possesses it is only one who possesses power and wealth, consistent with opinions the concept of Morphy & Perkins (2006), art is a symbol of the capital of the ruling class which uses money to create value into art only class or authority, similarly Yue (2022) description of the possession of art or the carved rhinoceros horn cup during the Song Dynasty, the rhinoceros skin shield was a valuable item only for the nobility elite group only in possession continuing through the early



Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, the rhinoceros horn cup was recognized as the most valuable item and will be used in the family of the wealthy while at present Rhino horn values are still embedded in Chinese society. Considered collecting rhino horns as an asset that represents wealth because its rarity, it results in a high price. The possessor is therefore an agency, the museums were held only by the wealthy individuals.

Next, the motifs reflect the wealth and greatness of the former Chinese empire from the combination of motifs and art forms from outside the realm which is caused by trade and the development of good relations between them since the Tang Dynasty onwards various cultures were disseminated and adopted from trade along the Silk Road.

### Conclusion

The carved rhinoceros horn was able to describe ancient Chinese society through the motifs that appeared on the cups. It was found that the patterns reflected the social status of the upper class in ancient Chinese society both in terms of beliefs and status in each era and shows the succession of beliefs of ancient Chinese society with cults and main religions of the Chinese kingdom for a long time, namely Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism and has been restored, it can return to its former glory. It also shows the greatness of the Chinese empire in the past. The art motifs that appear on the Rhino horn cups are blended with the arts of other countries by the time China had a trade relationship or establishing alliances with other countries.

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