

PATRICK JEFFERSON



- Item** AN INSCRIBED CURVED IVORY COURT TABLET, *HU* 宋象牙朝板
- Date** Dated 1806, *Jiaqing*; but of *Ming* form, thus conceivably of earlier date.
- Provenance** Jean-Claude Ciancimino, acquired 1960 from a private collection; thence by descent.
- Dimensions** Length 19" (49.5cm) Width 3 1/8" (7.8cm)
- Description** *An ivory court tablet of long, curved rectangular form tapering to a broader lower end; the smoothly carved surface revealing the fine grain and vertical lines of the ivory, lightly polished with a delicate sheen; small slither deficient; inscribed: 'The disciple of xxx [place, erased] xxx mao [name, erased] signed respectfully. To offer a Hu in front of the shrine of Three Deities [Sanguandadi, who are in charge of Sky, Earth and Water]. Offered [Hu] on an auspicious day of the 5th month in the Bingyin year of the Jiaqing reign [corresponding to AD 1806, the 11th year of the Jiaqing].'* (Deciphered by Yuan Sheng at Eskenazi Ltd.).
- Hu* tablets, also known as shouban were in use as early as the *Tang* dynasty (618-906); during the *Ming* dynasty officials from the first to the fifth rank used ivory tablets on which to write notes during an audience with the Emperor. *Hu* tablets were restricted to the imperial grounds, since they were handed out to the officials by designated doorkeepers upon entry into the palace and later collected for safekeeping. By the time of the *Qing* dynasty they were collected as desirable antiquarian curiosities.
- It is entirely possible that the *Hu* is much earlier in date than the inscription recording its presentation to a temple deity, as similar *Ming* dynasty ivory *hu* are in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, the Sir Victor Sassoon Chinese Ivories Trust, and the Kwan collection.
- Price** £4,250

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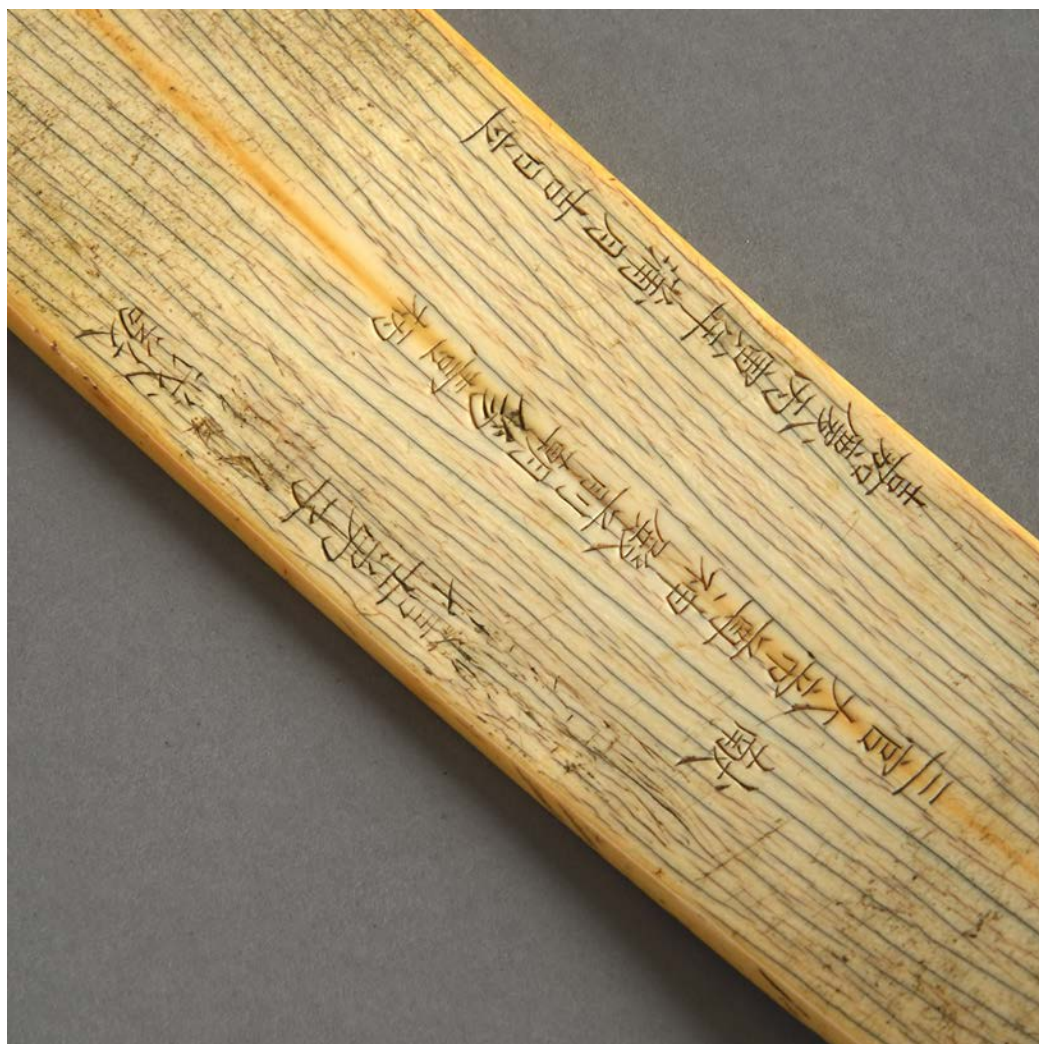


Fig. 1



Fig.2



Fig.3