

*For Immediate Release*

*February 18, 2003*

Contact: *Benedetta Roux*

*212.636.2680*

[broux@christies.com](mailto:broux@christies.com)

**IMPORTANT TORSO OF A BODHISATTVA REIGNS OVER  
CHRISTIE'S SALE OF CHINESE ART IN NEW YORK**

*Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*

*March 26, 2003*

*New York – On Wednesday March 26, Christie's sale of Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art includes examples from all periods in Chinese history. The sale boasts a group of early bronze pieces, headed by a rare figural lamp base from the Warring States Period (475-221 BC), passes through several dynasties, presenting magnificent Tang, Song and Ming objects and leads straight into the 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

*A Tianlongshan large gray limestone torso of a Bodhisattva (estimate: \$400,000-600,000) highlights the sale. The figure is superbly carved, showing a sensuous muscularity that is enhanced by the crisp folds of a gracefully draped scarf. A diaphanous dhoti is worn rolled at the hips and beaded chains, necklaces and armbands adorn the figure. The refined posture of the bodhisattva and its tranquil beauty convey both dignity and serenity. This sculpture was exhibited in the pivotal 1935-36 'International Exhibition of Chinese Art' held at the Royal Academy in London.*

*Another highlight is the large gray painted pottery figure of Kasyapa (estimate: \$250,000-350,000). Kasyapa, the 'Aged Luohan', has assumed the Nirvana pose in which he is totally liberated from the burdens of existence, finding himself in a state of non-being, in a transcendental paradise. His head is resting on an oblong pillow with tassel-tied ends, showing faint traces of turquoise and gold pigment. The saintly man's face is beautifully modeled with prominent features and long, trailing eyebrows and the hollowness of his cheek is dimly accentuated by the pillow on which it rests. Patchwork priest robes fall in crisp pleats over his body and Kasyapa's bare feet are visible. The rectangular platform that serves as his resting-place has cut out side panels surrounded by scrolling*

*foliage penciled in black on a white ground and the whole composition is lightly painted in white, red and black.*

*Highly attractive Tang sancai pottery figures are also featured in the sale. The most impressive of these is undoubtedly a massive figure of a caparisoned horse (estimate: \$300,000–400,000) whose sheer dimensions grant this statue a quasi-royal appearance. The horse is shown standing foursquare with the head slightly turned and the mouth open. Tail and forelock are bound and the mane is cut to leave three ruffs (sanhua) that allude to imperial ownership. The green glazed breast strap is hung with ‘apricot leaf’ ornaments unusually molded with galloping equestrian figures. Bridle, stirrups and saddle are all glazed in a pale amber, green and straw colors which form a powerful contrast with the rich dark amber glaze of the body.*

*A second sancai Tang pottery figure with exquisite presence is the seated lady-in-waiting (estimate: \$80,000–120,000). She carries herself with dignity, is very fashionably dressed and has an endearing expression on her face. Her posture is rare – one leg is tucked up beside the opposite knee – and indicates a date at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century or the very start of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, when a more splendid and elegant style was still in vogue.*

*The ceramics section features a Kangxi blue and white brush-pot, from the collection of Robert Chang (estimate: \$50,000–60,000). A continuous frieze of figures decorates the side and is rendered in deep, rich tones of underglaze blue. From the Song dynasty dates a large Guanyao mallow-form bowl, formerly in the collection of Lord Cunliffe (estimate: \$70,000–90,000). The dark body is covered overall in a thick opaque glaze of a grayish blue-green tone that has a satiny quality. The bowl is of unusually large size.*

*Extremely rare is the bronze lamp base from the Warring States period (475–221 BC) rendered as a figure with outstretched arms (estimate: \$200,000–300,000). Well cast and in court dress, this charming gentleman holds two tubular sockets in his outstretched hands, which would have held wicks or candle holders. The figure’s gentle smile is accentuated by the high tin content of the bronze used to cast the head, which lends a silvery appearance. This lamp base would have been an expensive luxury good exclusively for the use by the most aristocratic classes of the time.*

*Fine groups of paintings, textiles, jades and snuff bottles will also have their place in the sale. Among the paintings, an enchanting portrait of a young lady awaiting her lover is among the highlights (estimate: \$15,000–20,000). This hanging scroll painted during the Qing dynasty reflects the Song infatuation with the plum blossom in painting and literature and the resulting ‘plum blossom ~ plum beauty’ connection.*

*Auction: Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*

*March 26 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.*

*Viewing: Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center*

*March 21 - 25*

*More information about Christie's sale of Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art can be found on [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com). All lots from the sale can be viewed online along with full catalogue descriptions on Lotfinder®, which also allows clients to leave absentee bids. [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com) provides information on more than 80 sale categories, buying and selling at auction, complete auction results, and Christie's international auction calendar.*

*###*

*Images available on request*

*Visit Christie's Web site at [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)*