CHRISTIE’S HONG KONG PRESENTS
THE LINYUSHANREN COLLECTION

Hong Kong / Tokyo – On 2 December 2015, selected items from the most comprehensive private collection of Song ceramics ever to appear at auction will be offered for sale at Christie’s Hong Kong. Carefully assembled over three decades by a distinguished Japanese collector, The Linyushanren Collection is comprised of exquisite examples created during the Song dynasty (960-1279), encompassing some of the most important kiln sites active across China at the time.

The highlight of the 36-lot sale is a very rare Ge foliate dish dating from the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279). It was shown in the seminal 1952 exhibition dedicated to Chinese ceramics by the Los Angeles Museum, and was once owned by the famous collector Stephen Junkunc, III (Estimate on Request; illustrated above). Particularly admired by all the greatest connoisseurs, the deliberately cracked Ge glaze is highly sought-after for its rarity and reminiscence of the fissures in jade, possibly the most prized of all natural materials.

The Qianlong Emperor (1711-1799) cherished Ge wares and has been portrayed in multiple paintings being surrounded by similar items from his antique ceramic collection.

The Japanese consignor of the present collection considers Chinese ceramics produced during the Song dynasty unequalled in terms of their elegance, colour and refinement in the history of ceramics from all cultures. This collection is a fine representation of the Japanese aesthetics and appreciation towards classic Chinese Song ceramics.

Pola Antebi, International Director, Chinese Works of Art, Christie’s: “For centuries, Song ceramics have been widely admired by international connoisseurs for their refinement and timeless elegance. The demand for the finest Chinese works of art has particularly increased in recent years, with experienced collectors looking for exceptional pieces with impeccable provenance. All these rare elements characterise the group...”
of Song ceramics from the Linyinshanren Collection to be offered at auction at Christie’s Hong Kong in December, which is possibly the most important and comprehensive private collection of Song Ceramics to come on the market in decades”.

Jonathan Stone, Chairman, Asian Art, Christie’s, added: “Assembled with a disciplined and discerning eye, the Linyinshanren Collection stands as a testament to a passionate collector. Following a successful series of exhibitions organised by Christie’s in Hong Kong, New York and London in 2012 to 2013, we are now honoured to offer at auction a substantial selection of exquisite items coming from this collection. It will be a celebration of the Song Dynasty aesthetics, whose intrinsic values epitomise simplicity, restraint, and subtlety”.

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COLLECTION**

**A LARGE CARVED DING ‘DAYLILY’ BASIN**
Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127)

Estimate:
HK$5,000,000-7,000,000
US$650,000-900,000
¥80,000,000-110,000,000

Renowned for their thin, even, ivory-toned glaze, Northern Song Ding wares were much treasured by wealthy patrons of the day.

The interior of this rare basin is freely carved with daylily blossoms, while its rim is bound in metal.

Ding porcelain is the only white ware among the ‘Five Classic Wares of the Song Dynasty’, and is noted for its refinement of body, luminance of glaze as well as fluidity of carving, qualities which can all be found on this basin.

**A RARE BARBED RIM JUN ‘NARCISSUS’ BOWL**
Yuan-Early Ming Dynasty, 14th/15th Century

Estimate:
HK$5,000,000-7,000,000
US$650,000-900,000
¥80,000,000-110,000,000

Produced according to some of the most innovative and sophisticated formulae, Jun wares made in Henan province are one of the ‘Five Classic Wares of the Song Dynasty’, and range from milky blue, pale lavender, sky blue to striking violet-red. Of particular rarity is a specific group of Jun pieces including flower pots and stands and washers, stamped with Chinese numerals ranging from one to ten.

This bowl bears the inscription si, ‘four’. It has been suggested that these numerals relate to the size of the vessels—ten representing the smallest size, and one the largest. A significant variety of these numbered flower vessels are found in the Imperial palace collections, many of which have been featured in court paintings from the later Qing dynasty.

**A CARVED YAOZHOU PETAL-RIM JAR**
Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127)

Estimate:
HK$600,000-800,000
US$80,000-110,000
¥9,500,000-12,500,000

Wares produced in the Yaozhou kilns in Shaanxi province are valued as some of the best celadon wares made in Northern China.

The bright, glossy, olive-green glaze of ceramics produced at the Yaozhou kilns is often combined with crisply carved decoration.

As the viscous glaze pools in the depressions of the carvings, an almost dichromatic effect is produced, which greatly enhances the overall design, as can be seen on this jar.
TEA CULTURE & SONG CERAMICS

During the Song dynasty, tea culture became prevalent among the upper classes and the literati circles as well as the Chan Buddhist sect in China (a tea drinking scene from the period is illustrated right). Around the same time, Japanese Buddhist monks who travelled to China on religious pilgrimage introduced this tradition to Japan.

The fashion of tea-drinking quickly took hold among the Japanese elites and with it the appreciation for tea-ware, which eventually led to the development of an elaborate system of cha-no-yu, or tea ceremony still rigorously practiced in contemporary Japan.

Tea bowls made in China and especially the brown and black wares produced in the Jian and Jizhou kilns from the Southern Song dynasty, became and still are revered by Japanese connoisseurs.

A SUPERB JIZHOU BROWN-GLAZED LEAF-DECORATED TEA BOWL
Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279)

Estimate:
HK$800,000-1,200,000
US$110,000-150,000
¥13,000,000-19,000,000

Epitomising the genius of the Song potters, the tea bowl was created during the Southern Song Dynasty, by applying a real leaf under the glaze which then left a pale shadow of itself when it was burned out during firing. Much admired by Japanese tea-drinkers past and present, this extremely fine piece of pottery is yet another testament to the excellent craftsmanship of the Song Dynasty.

Read more information on the tea culture of Song Dynasty below.

A CLASSIC LONGQUAN CELADON DISH
Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279)

Estimate:
HK$900,000-1,200,000
US$120,000-150,000
¥15,000,000-19,000,000

Characterised by thick, trans-lucent, bluish-green glazes, classic Longquan celadons made in Zhejiang province, proved to be extremely popular not only in China, but also in overseas markets and in Japan especially. This strong interest has been confirmed by the large number of Longquan ceramics recovered from the Sinan shipwreck bound for Japan in around 1323, as well as by the large quantity of Longquan pieces kept in Japanese public and private collections today.

Sprig-moulded motifs applied to the body under the glaze are some of the most popular decorations that can be found on Longquan wares, such as the ‘twin fish’ featured on this dish.

A RARE JIZHOU MEIPING
Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279)

Estimate:
HK$1,000,000-1,500,000
US$130,000-200,000
¥16,000,000-24,000,000

The decoration on this elegant vase is akin to the carved decorations found on lacquers of the same period.

The golden opalescent quality of the design contrasts very effectively with the dense, dark brown glaze beneath. This was an interesting technique used at the Jizhou kilns to paint pale designs on top of the unfired glaze. When the piece was fired, and the glaze flowed slightly, the designs were rendered in softer focus, providing a pleasant richness of surface decoration.
KILN SITES DURING THE SONG DYNASTY

The Song dynasty is regarded as a flourishing period for ceramic production in China, with a myriad of kiln sites producing wares of various colours, forms and types spanning from Northern to Southern China.

The exceptional ceramics produced by the Song kilns are comprised of the ‘Five Classic Wares of the Song Dynasty’, including Ding, Ru, Jun, Guan and Ge, as well as other prominent wares such as Jian, Jizhou, Yaozhou, Longquan and qingbai. Often of monochrome tones, the classic Song wares are to be appreciated on the basis of the beauty of their forms and glazes.

PRESS CONTACT: Anita Handayani | +852 2978 6719 | anhandayani@christies.com

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*Estimates do not include buyer’s premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer’s premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer’s or seller’s credits.

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