

# Sell With a Story: Jade Gemstones



Years ago while living in Toronto, my husband and I took long walks often passing an antique store that carried Chinese art. One evening, we were stopped in our tracks by a jade sculpture of Kuan Yin, a Buddhist deity, in the store's window. I had studied Buddhist sculpture and painting and seen it in museums, yet this unexpected encounter took my breath away and has stayed with me. She was exquisitely carved in pink jade so pale and translucent, she appeared a wisp of the imagination I felt the full power of this magical stone.

## Jade Mystique

China has spent millennia exploring the mysteries of Jade's beauty. Chinese culture has a spiritual connection to jade gemstones that stretches back thousands of years. Until recently, the Chinese valued fine jade more highly than diamonds. And many still do. Why? To them, jade gemstones symbolized status, spirituality, purity, and health. It also served as a bridge between earth and heaven referred to as the "Stone of Heaven."



**Hutton Mdivani Necklace**

## **2 for 1**

There are two types of jade gemstones: jadeite and nephrite. They are different minerals. The more common nephrite comes in characteristic olive to dark green, as well as black and white. Jadeite is much rarer. And the highest quality of jadeite, Imperial Jade, comes from only one remote location in Myanmar. Named by an 18th-century Chinese emperor, Imperial Jade is a gorgeous emerald green. Some years ago a strand of Imperial Jade 16 mm beads sold for \$10M. Jadeite, usually referred to by this name, also comes in white, pale apple green, pink, lavender, and other rare colors.

## **9,000 Years Ago**

The Neolithic Chinese discovered Nephrite Jade 9,000 years ago. It came in many colors including many shades of green, but white “mutton-fat” white was the most highly prized. They used it for weapons, utensils, and sculpture. Over the course

of history, their work grew increasingly detailed and delicate. Intricately sculpted pendants and decorative hair sticks emerged as well as bracelets and beads.



**Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) Plaque**

***Notes of Distinction: How can you tell nephrite from jadeite? Assuming you don't have a microscope handy, try this***

*technique. When struck, nephrite emits a musical tone while jadeite does not.*

## **Back in Mesoamerica**

Though their discovery of jadeite does not extend back 9,000 years, Mayan (2000 BCE-1697 CE) and Aztec (1428-1521 CE) cultures also prized jadeite fashioning it into beads. Guatemala, which was part of the Maya Empire, has jadeite sources in the Montagua River Valley. Costa Rica has sources as well. These cultures treasured jadeite as medicinal and for jewelry.

## **“Piedra de ijada”**

The name “jade” comes to us from the conquistadors who saw the Aztecs and Mayans hold the stone against their side or flank to treat aches and pains. “Ijada” means “loin” as Jadeite was thought to be highly effective against kidney and loin pain.

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# A Dream Stone and Much More

In China, Jade gemstones have a long association with encouraging and understanding dreams. It also grants unique access to the spiritual world, “a bridge between earth and heaven.” Yet jade’s powers extend further. It is believed to–

- Balance nerves and sooth cardiac rhythms for an overall sense of calm.
- Recharge your energy and guard against illness.
- Temper shock and fear in the very young and the very old.
- Heal feelings of guilt and a sense of defeatism.
- Reduce the impulse to give in to the opinions of others.
- Support those in the healing professions: nurses, doctors, vets, chiropractors and more.
- Protect against deception, authoritative abuse, bullying, and intimidation.
- Encourage wisdom, insight, and creativity.

Can you think of anything else you would need for a good life? Neither can I.

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