

**Chinese Imports**  
**Weekly Times Column**  
**By Warren Joel**

Australia has a rich and diverse history of immigration that has seen many different nationalities leave an impression on our culture. As each wave of immigrants arrived on our shores over the past 200 years they brought with them their heritage in the form of collectables. Not only in the form of language, culture and food, but also in the form of artefacts. These artefacts comprised a mix of functional domestic and industrial items and personal treasures.

During the Australian gold rush many thousands of Chinese immigrants arrived and their treasures are now highly collectable. They took the form of wonderful and exotic Chinese ceramics to the more mundane food pots and containers. As we are well aware the Chinese culture goes back many thousands of years allowing immigrants to bring ancient collectables from their civilisation. A good example of this would be the fine enamelled porcelains from the Ming period. These are highly sought after on the world market and command thousands of dollars when sold at auction. One may ask the question how many of these are still out there, and they are still turning up in private collections.

Another highly collectable area is the deities and religious figures from China. While a Christian may carry a cross the Chinese carry these figures. This could possibly explain how some highly valuable religious deities turned up in central New South Wales – the subject of an earlier column – and sold in excess of \$80,000.

A word to the wise: before you go charging off to auction with the vase with the Chinese calligraphy on the bottom beware there are many fakes and forgeries on the market. The evaluation of these items requires highly specialist expertise, often not found in this country. As a simple rule if the vase is marked “made in China” leave the flowers in it!

*Next week: Horse racing memorabilia*

**Free Valuation for Weekly Times readers.**

Byjoel will do a free valuation of your collectables via email. If you send a photo and description of your item to [hwtvaluations@byjoel.com.au](mailto:hwtvaluations@byjoel.com.au) I will access the item and respond.

**Warren Joel**

Warren is a third generation auctioneer and valuer specialising in Art, Antiques and Collectables, accredited by the Commonwealth in 2002 different areas of collectables.