

JADE OF THE TRADE

Sales tools for
retail jewelry staff



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<https://www.masonkay.com>

WHAT IS JADE?

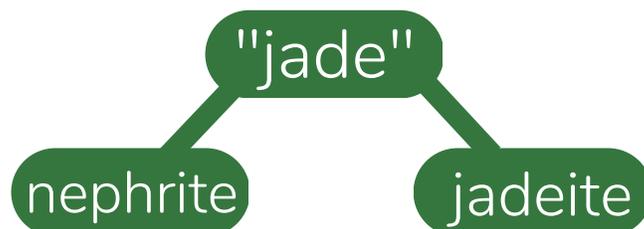


Jade is two gemstones...

...but it's actually even more complicated than that. Jade is often called the "inscrutable gem," an enigma that can perplex gemologists still today. Its vocabulary is convoluted, and its geology extremely complex.

This is one of many reasons why jade intimidates the retail jewelry professional. Along with its treatments and simulants, many jewelers are reasonably concerned with misidentifying jade and disappointing customers.

However, the retail jeweler should feel the opposite! If equipped with accurate information, the trade should feel empowered to speak confidently about one of the most tantalizing, durable and valuable gemstones in the world. All it takes is a little education.



The Two Jades

Nephrite Jade and Jadeite Jade are both accurately called “jade” in the United States.

Due to a lack of available transliteration and the inevitable cultural mismatch, overseas sellers may refer to any beautiful stone as a “jade.”

While misleading and confusing to the customer, this terminology seems to be acceptable in a historical context and is not always intentionally deceptive when used by the non-English speaker.

But words have to have meaning. And so we must define jade according to the standards of the Hong Kong Jade and Stone Laboratories, the Gemological Institute of America, and, in this eBook, the English language.

Nephrite Jade, the more abundant and historically significant of the two jades, is a combination of the interlocking crystals actinolite and tremolite.

Some modern-day scholars consider the term “actinolite” defunct, characterizing nephrite jade as tremolite with the occasional presence of “ferro-actinolite.” This is a grand geological conversation largely irrelevant to the customer, except in cases where weaker minerals (ferro-actinolite with parallel oriented fiber) is being sold as “jade.”

Nephrite jade is the toughest gemstone in the world. It maintains a deep cultural significance in China, though it does not compare to the Chinese consumer’s affinity for jadeite. Nephrite in China is sometimes called “soft jade,” whereas jadeite jade in China is called “hard jade.”

Further reading

- J.M. Hobbs. "The Jade Enigma" Gems & Gemology. 1982
 - Hawthorne, Oberti, Harlow, Maresch, Martin, Schumacher, and Welch. "IMA Report: Nomenclature of the amphibole supergroup" American Mineralogist, Volume 97 Pages 2031-2048. 2012
-

Jadeite Jade is more rare than nephrite and will typically fetch higher prices when comparing fine quality in both materials. Jadeite jade can be called “jadeite,” but there is some confusion surrounding the term. Jadeite jade is an aggregate material, whereas jadeite is a single crystal gemstone. However, single-crystal jadeite specimens are almost never found outside of the jadeite jade aggregate.

To add to the confusion of the name Jadeite Jade, the term is most accurately associated with the Chinese word “fei cui” or “fei ts’ui.” Because jade value and terminology is largely determined by the Chinese market, we defer to the Hong Kong Jade and Stone Laboratory for a proper definition of Fei Cui, which we call “Jadeite Jade.”

"The expression “fei cui” or “翡翠”, when used in the course of any trade or business to describe an article, means the article is a granular to fibrous polycrystalline aggregate which is composed solely or principally of any of the following or any combination of the following: (a) jadeite; (b) omphacite; (c) kosmochlor."

-Hong Kong Jade & Stone
Laboratory Limited

This is largely irrelevant to the customer, except for on the off chance that they ask you about “omphacite jade.” In case this particular matter comes up, it’s important to know that omphacite jade can have the same color and properties as jade that is principally jadeite. An individual jade stone's color, toughness and even hardness depends on the conditions in which the jade formed.

Further reading

- Shane F. McClure. "The Jadeite/Omphacite Nomenclature Question" *Gems & Gemology*. 2012
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With this being said, jadeite jade (fei cui) is the 2nd toughest (hardest to break) gemstone to nephrite jade.

Jadeite jade is the jade when, in its highest quality of color, translucence and texture, may be called “imperial.”

Jadeite jade has only been found in 16 deposits worldwide, 3 of which are commercially mined in any notable significance producing any notable quality: Two in Myanmar/Burma and one in Guatemala. With that being said, Russian jadeite as well as Kazakhstan jadeite may be seen (albeit very rarely) on the US market.

To put it in perspective, there are probably around 50 diamond mines in the world.

The jadeite jade typically seen in an American jewelry store likely came from one of two mechanized jade mines in the entire world -- both of which are in Burma.

The customer is probably not interested in the technical details of jade, however, they may have heard **myths** about jade that need to be corrected – for instance that jade is brittle, that it will change color, or that it is always cold. (See Chapter IV - Jade Inquiries)

When a customer asks you “what is jade?,” the appropriate answer might look something like this:

- Jade is a highly revered gemstone with an 8,000 year history across multiple continents.
 - Jade is remarkably tough, with some jadeite stones being 24x harder to break than a diamond.
 - Jade comes in a variety of colors including green, lavender, blue, red/orange, yellow, ice (translucent colorless, looks like moonstone), black, white and grey.
-

Jadeite vs. Nephrite

SIMPLIFIED

The technical details of jadeite and nephrite do not matter as much to the customer, but it's very important that you, the seller, are able to identify and distinguish the two materials from each other.

The best way to do this is with proper gemological training combined with the use of a refractometer.

However, jadeite and nephrite can also be distinguished visually. Please note that visual characteristics are not a conclusive testing method for jade.



A customer may believe that nephrite or jadeite individually is the "real jade" when in fact both are considered "jade."



nephrite jade



jadeite jade

Nephrite and Jadeite Identification

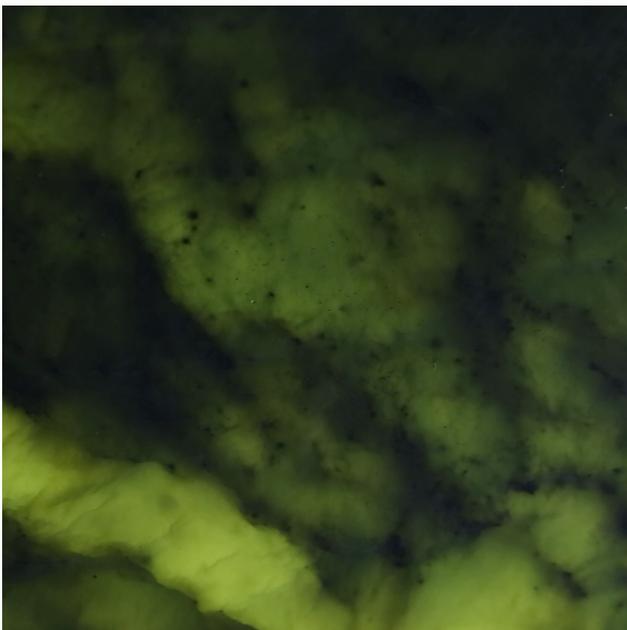
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NEPHRITE

Nephrite may have small black inclusions. They usually consist of iron, chromium or graphite.

Green nephrite tends to be an earthy dark green, though not always – as some apple green jade is in fact nephrite.

Nephrite has a greasy luster, which will be very apparent if you have seen nephrite in person before. While nephrite's luster is somewhat greasy, jadeite's luster is actually glassier than nephrite's. The greasy luster of nephrite is a great way to distinguish nephrite from simulants such as serpentine and quartz.



JADEITE

Jadeite does not typically have black inclusions, though sometimes high concentrations of chromium can appear black. This appearance is still usually unlike nephrite. Jadeite's green hues range drastically from light mint green to rich apple to dark spinach green.

Jadeite has a glassy luster that may distinguish it from nephrite, but likens it to its common simulant dyed green quartz. In lower quality pieces of jadeite, small crystal faces can be seen if lit from above (particularly in sunlight) under magnification. These crystal faces may look like sugar or salt sprinkled atop the stone.

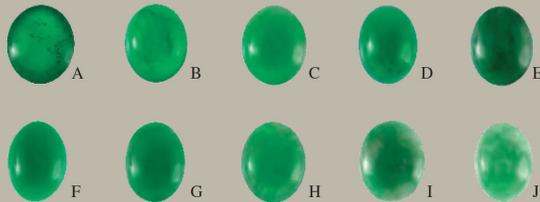
If the specimen is fractured, nephrite and jadeite will appear very different.

Nephrite is fibrous and features layers of crystals in varying directions, therefore it fractures in thin sheets. Jadeite is granular. Its fracture pattern may be confused with quartz. However, if the specimen you're examining has conchoidal fracture – then it is definitely not jadeite or nephrite.

Colors of Jade

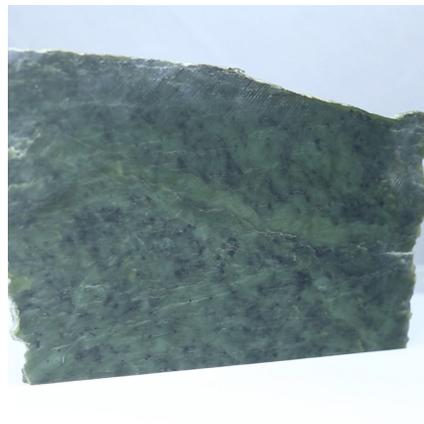


Translucence



Texture

Rough Nephrite



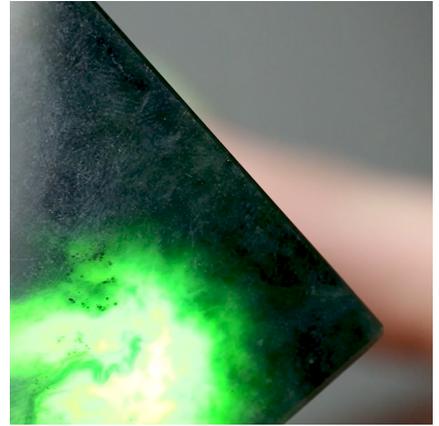
Rough Jadeite Jade



Rough Jade Simulants



Polished Nephrite



Polished Natural Jadeite Jade



B Jade and B + C Jade



TREATED VS NATURAL



While nephrite jade can be treated, those details must be left to the authority of a different author.

In the case of jadeite, knowing whether your jadeite is natural or treated is of the utmost importance. When speaking of jade's toughness, stability, rarity, and value – these characteristics only refer to natural, untreated jade.

In the jade jewelry trade, we use these treatment codes (not to be confused with the quality or locale of nephrite jades) to distinguish natural from treated jadeite:

- 'A Jade' is natural, untreated jadeite jade. This color is authentic and the only modification to the stone, other than cutting/carving, may be a thin coating of beeswax to protect the jade.
 - 'B Jade' is jade that has been acid-bleached and then impregnated with polymer, wax or resin. 'B Jade' has about 5-10% the value of its natural jade counterpart, is extremely brittle, and is often sold at an inflated price pretending to be "natural." many customers have been burned by the unscrupulous sale of 'B Jade.'
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While 'B Jade' will still register as "jadeite" on a refractometer, further testing must occur to find evidence of the polymer. Microscopy will not detect it, but it can be detected with an FTIR or Raman spectroscopy.

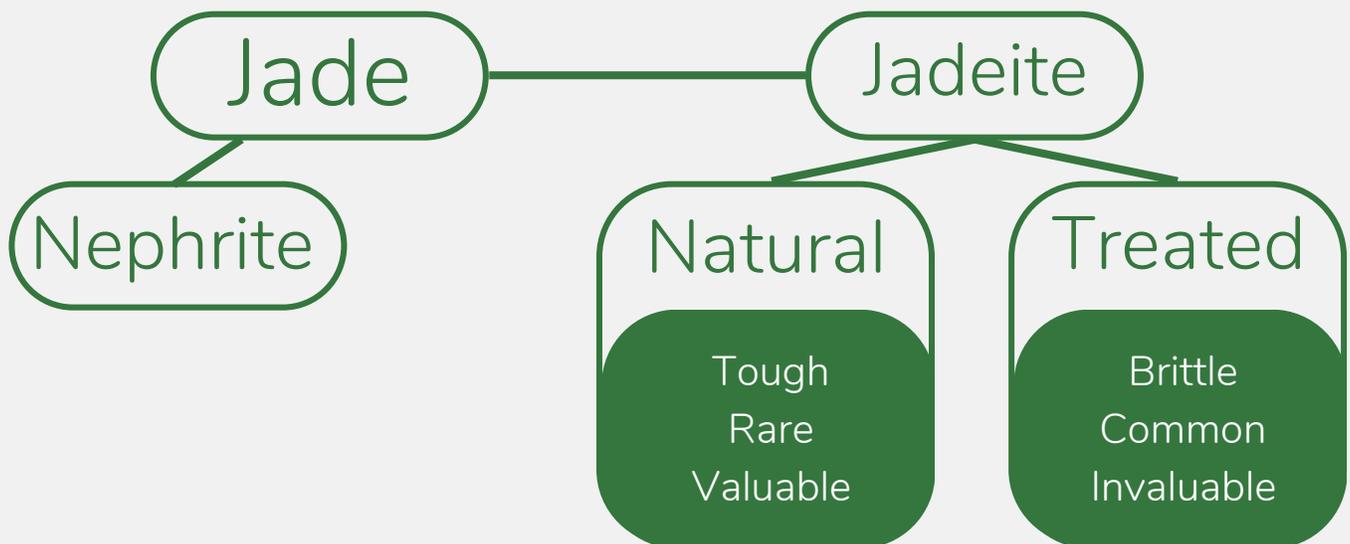
- 'C Jade' is jade that has been dyed. By nature of being dyed, 'C Jade' has little to no value.



- 'B + C Jade' is jade that has been acid-bleached, impregnated with polymer, wax or resin, and then dyed. This is the most common jade treatment on the market and results in a brittle, unstable jade of little to no value.

Other jade treatments may include doublets and triplets, which can be detected by your staff gemologist. (See Lotus Gemology's "Jade: A Gemologist's Guide")

How to explain jade treatment to your customer



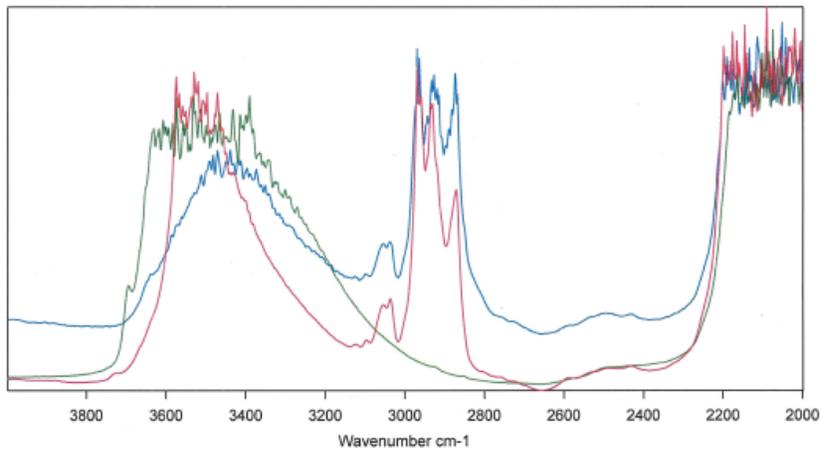
Where to Have Your Jade Tested



MASON - KAY
JADE LABORATORY

Jadeite Authenticity Report

Sample Filename	190102-1191
File Title	~18.10 x 25.30 x 8.00mm green jade oval cabochon in yellow metal ring (11.91grams)
Date	January 2, 2019



190102-1191 : ~18.10 x 25.30 x 8.00mm green jade oval cabochon in yellow metal ring (11.91grams)

Known A Jade Sample : Type "A" known natural jadeite jade sample

Known B Jade Sample : Type "B" known impregnated jadeite jade sample

NOTE: The presence of impregnation produces a particular spike pattern in the hydrocarbon region of the spectrum - approximately 2800 to 3100 wavenumbers. Natural jadeite will have no such spike. Spiking outside this region is of no significance.

Instruments used: Refractometer, Standard Spectrometer, Infrared Spectrometer

Conclusion: Impregnated & Dyed Jadeite Jade - 'B + C' Jade



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Mason-Kay has offers jade testing and valuing services to the trade and the public.

Visit <https://masonkay.com/jadeite-services-and-fees> to learn more.

Customer Inquiries

Thanks to the internet, there is more misinformation about jade floating around than there is accuracy. Jade sellers have heard these questions a thousand times, so we're including our most common customer inquiries and how to answer them:

Will my jade break easily?

- As with all jewelry, please try not to drop your jade on a tile floor or throw it against a brick wall. However, the myth that jade breaks easily comes from the prevalence of 'B' and 'B + C Jade' on the market. Nephrite and jadeite are two of the toughest gemstones on the planet and are perfect for everyday wear. With that being said, they need to be handled with as much care as any other diamond or gold jewelry.

Can I sleep in my jade?

- You certainly won't hurt the jade if you sleep in it, but we don't recommend sleeping in any jewelry due to the potential negative effects on the metal prongs, gallery and shank.

Can I swim in my jade?

- Please don't. Again, chlorine won't hurt the jade, but it's murder on your gold. Treat your jade jewelry with the same respect you would show any gold or diamond jewelry.
-

Will my jade change color?

- This one is tricky. While it is commonly believed that jade will change color to reflect the mood or health of the wearer, it must be stated that the color of natural jadeite jade is stable. However, as an aggregate material, some jade can be porous. And just as it absorbs a beeswax coating after being polished, it can absorb other oils from your skin and chemicals you come in contact with. It is possible that the polish of your jade can make it seem like it's changed color. Abrasion and the natural wearing-off of your beeswax coating can also affect the appearance. However, the jade itself will not experience a true color change. With that being said, some treated jades don't have stable color. Therefore, if your jade is not natural, untreated 'A Jade,' there is certainly a chance it could change color.

How do I know if my jade is natural?

- While jadeite can be distinguished from other gemstones using a refractometer, determining whether or not it's natural requires advanced gemological testing. Reputable labs can determine if your jade's color is natural, or you can send it in to Mason-Kay Jade for quick, inexpensive testing and even valuing.



The Jade Sales Pitch



Jade customers are the BEST customers. A jade customer is looking for something meaningful, one-of-a-kind and long-lasting. The allure of jade speaks to men and women alike, and is a great option to have for couples and self-shoppers due to its romantic, rare and personal nature

Here are some bullet points to help you sell jade confidently and accurately to your customers:

Jade loves LOVE! Touching your jade only enhances the stone using the oils from your skin. Perfect for holding, jade is often called a “worry stone” to soothe anxiety. It’s great to rub and fidget with, which along with its calming color has a relaxing effect on the nervous system.

Jade was originally used for tools, weapons, utensils and more! That's how tough the material is. Jade's durability and strength is appealing to men as well as strong, independent women. The fact that it was used to make axes and hammers shows that it's certainly tough enough to be worn everyday in jewelry. Jade has been a symbol of strength for millenia – Be a part of that proud tradition.

Jade is rare. Treated jades and jade simulants can be found everywhere, but natural jade is truly a rare geological occurrence. In fact, due to its rarity, most jade pieces are essentially one-of-a-kind, especially carvings which are almost always crafted by hand. If the material was desirable enough for Emperor Qianlong to march a 100,000 man army in search of it – it's certainly good enough for a customer's engagement ring, everyday bangle, or future heirloom carving.



Jade has a history unlike any other gemstone. People say diamonds are forever, but some of the oldest jewelry ever found in one piece were bangles carved from jade in China during the Shang dynasty. Not only has China revered jade for thousands of years, but seven different Mesoamerican civilizations did too – including the Maya and Aztecs! Jade is known to have been an integral part of New Zealand Maori, Swiss Lake Dweller, Pre-Columbian and Ancient Chinese cultures.

Thank you!

While this may not answer every question you have about jade, it's hopefully a strong start to help you speak with your customers. Please visit these additional resources to learn more about the incredible story of jade.

<https://www.masonkay.com>

<https://www.masonkayshowroom.com>

<https://www.youtube.com/@Jewelsoft>
heTrade



Do You Need More Help?

Feel free to call the Mason-Kay Jade home office in Colorado.

You can always speak with an owner!

303-393-7575

kris@masonkay.com

Or schedule a Zoom staff training session with Jordan

jordan@jottblog.com