

PATHWAY TO STARDOM
CHAPTER 3: Jade Horse : Family Heirloom

By the time I sent my daughter Christine and my son from the comfort zone of their Hong Kong existence to a strange and exotic foreign milieu that was Paris, before they left their family home for exile in faraway Paris, France, their grandfather honoured a Chinese tradition that dates from the very creation of the Middle Kingdom. He gave his only grandson – that's my son – a jade pendant. In this case a jade pendant in the form of a horse, a paramount creature in Chinese mythology. Chinese tradition dictates that every person leaving home be given a piece of jade, not only as a keepsake – and a cure for colic – but as a lifeline in time of crisis. Should he or she fall on hard times, the piece of jade could be sold, though such a last resort is considered shameful.



Green jade carved tiger pendant



Green jade carved horse pendant



Green jade carved dragon pendant



Green Jade Rabbit pendant

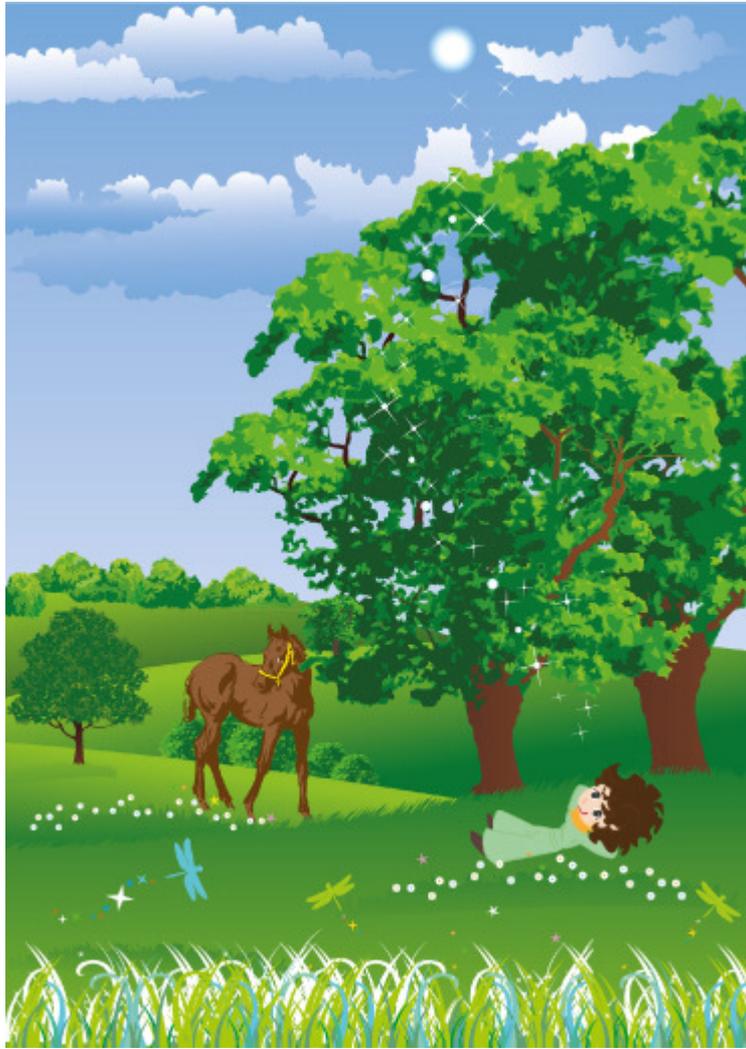
Christopher's jade horse is actually a family heirloom. He was a clear, translucent green horse, in whose crystalline depths its owner's hopes and dreams may be discerned. He was to become my son's companion, his comforter during those difficult, displaced early days in Paris, where his French was minimal and integration into a foreign culture really painful. The fact that all his

belongings – toys, tennis racquets, piano – had been shipped from Hong Kong only increased that sense of exile. In his homesickness he usually found solace in his jade horse.



Jade horse pendant heirloom

But sometimes his 'ling' horse dreams had given way to other, perhaps more conventional boyhood pastimes. But, despite all the distractions of our electronic age, never many nights passed without the 'ling' horse – my son's 'ling' horse – galloping into his comatose world, lying down beside him in some sunlit meadow, or in the shade of a tall, leafy tree, filling his sub-conscious with fantasies.



Little Prince in the meadow with Sea The Stars baby