

GEM NEWS

DIAMONDS

Largest California diamond found. The largest diamond ever reported from the state of California was recovered by Mr. Ed Clark, a consulting geologist in northern California, on January 4 of this year. The alluvial diamond was observed in pan washings while Mr. Clark was demonstrating the art of gold panning to a friend in Trinity County. The diamond now belongs to Mr. Rudolph W. Kopf, of Grass Valley, California, who brought the stone to GIA's Santa Monica headquarters for examination.

The diamond, although not of gem quality, is impressive both because of its size (14.33 ct, 16.25 × 12.64 × 10.60 mm) and the variety of growth-dissolution features shown on the somewhat rounded surfaces. It has the appearance of a knotted grayish green semi-translucent mass of "bort," with an almost greasy adamantine luster (figure 1). The stone fluoresced a weak brownish yellow to long-wave ultraviolet radiation and a very weak reddish brown to short-wave U.V.

A diamond of this size, which apparently had not



Figure 1. This 14.33-ct rough diamond was found by Mr. Ed Clark in Trinity County, California. Photo by Scott Briggs.

Figure 2. This 1.06-ct alexandrite chrysoberyl from a new locality in Minas Gerais, Brazil, exhibits colors in incandescent (left) and fluorescent (right) illumination that are comparable to those typically seen in the color change of alexandrites from the classic locality in Russia. Courtesy of Simon Watt, Watt Gems, Los Angeles, CA. Photos © Tino Hammid.





Figure 3. The four marble Chinese tiles shown here were originally selected by Chinese artisans for the natural patterns and coloration they displayed. Tiles courtesy of Alan Winston Smith; photo © Tino Hammid.

been transported far from its source, suggests that the area where it was recovered may have economic potential. Further exploration of the region with the hope of finding additional large diamonds, perhaps of gem quality, is a distinct possibility.

COLORED STONES

Brazilian alexandrites. Alexandrite chrysoberyls "with a fabulous color change" have been found in Minas Gerais, Brazil, as reported to Pat Gray, GIA's collection curator, by Mr. John Ramsey, of Ramsey Gem Imports, San Diego, California. Faceted stones as large as 12 ct have been produced. Most of the stones have the color change typical of Brazilian alexandrites—purple to green—but some have an unusual purple to blue change. The mining area is located between Itabira and Venda Nova in the state of Minas Gerais. Mr. Ramsey states that the extent of this alluvial find is not yet known.

Two faceted alexandrites from this locality were subsequently brought to GIA by Simon Watt, of Watt Gems, Los Angeles. Both stones exhibited a color change comparable to that of Russian alexandrite (figure 2).

Large ekanite found. Mr. James D. Smith, a gemologist from Riverton, Illinois, reports that a large uncut

ekinite has been recovered from the alluvial gem deposits in Sri Lanka. Mr. D. F. Jayakody, a gemologist in Ja Ela, Sri Lanka, is presently in possession of the rough 320-ct stone. Although no description of this particular ekanite was provided, all such stones previously found in Sri Lanka are metamict and range in color from green through brown, with large stones tending to be blackish in appearance. The largest rough ekanite reported to date had a stated weight of 351 ct.

Chinese marble tiles. An unusual collection of Chinese picture tiles was recently loaned to us for study by Mr. Alan Winston Smith, a graduate gemologist from Dallas, Texas. At first these unique natural art tiles were thought to be made of nephrite jade, but subsequent nondestructive gemological testing on two randomly selected samples proved them to be marble. Mr. Smith's rectangular to almost square marble tiles average approximately 14 × 10 cm (figure 3). Dr. George E. Bushong, of the Meadows School of Fine Arts at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, advised Mr. Smith that the marble pictures came from Yunnan Province. They were used historically, and are still used today, to decorate gardens, furniture, and walls. The writing is a "mental trigger" rather than a title or message. The tiles

are selected for their natural color and patterns; the result is a series of natural abstract-art pictograms in marble.

"Conch pearl" substitute. What at first appeared to be a "conch pearl," with a flattened football shape, was loaned for examination to Dr. Emmanuel Fritsch in GIA's Research Department by Mr. William Larson of Pala International in Fallbrook, California. The pinkish orange "salmon" colored piece (figure 4), which measures approximately $21 \times 14 \times 11$ mm, was originally part of the Kunz collection, housed at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, and was found prior to 1906. A microscopic examination revealed the distinctive radial structure of coral and none of the features associated with true conch concretions. This substitution of coral for "conch pearl" makes this the first "conch pearl" imitation that GIA has ever encountered.



Figure 4. This "conch pearl" ($21 \times 14 \times 11$ mm) proved to be coral. Courtesy of Pala International. Photo by Scott Briggs.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jewelry of the Walters Collection and the Zucker Family Collection is featured in an exhibit titled "Objects of Adornment" that will be on display at the Walters Art Gallery May 21–October 11, 1987. Both collections specialize in historical jewelry and represent the importance of jewelry as a major art form. For more information, contact the Walters Art Gallery, 600 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21201.

The Fashion Institute of Technology presents a symposium on "The Great French Jewelers," to be held Saturday, October 17, 1987, in New York. The program, a series of lectures on the fabulous jewels created by the jewelers of the Place Vendôme, features Alain Boucheron, of Boucheron; Alain Perrin, president of Cartier, International; Jean-Baptiste Chaumet, of Chaumet; and Philippe Arpels, of Van Cleef & Arpels. Other speakers include Ralph Esmerian, collector; Marie-Noel de Gary, conservator of the Musée des Arts Decoratifs; Hans Nadelhoffer, author and president of Christie's, Geneva; and Veronique Ma'Arop, of Van Cleef & Arpels. For information, contact Jean Appleton, Jewelry Design Resource (212) 760-7254.

A proposed classification for gemstone cuts. A tentative outline for a proposed system for the classification of gemstone cuts has been developed by Donald E. Udey and John Sampson White of the National Museum of Natural History (Smithsonian) in Washington, D.C.

After studying the problem of classifying gemstone cuts, they have concluded that the primary grouping for a gemstone cut should be based on the "geometry of the dominant form (or shape) as seen when the gem is viewed normal to the table." The authors realize that although this works well when dealing with common shapes such as triangles, rectangles, squares, and circles, there are still many gemstone cuts, such as free-forms or even simple emerald cuts, that cannot be readily categorized in this simple way. As an example, how much truncation of corners of a simple square step cut or a triangular step cut should be allowed before it is referred to as an octagon or a hexagon?

Now that they have prepared their tentative outline to address this problem, the authors of this "Classification of Gemstone Cuts: A First Attempt" invite any interested individuals or groups to par-

ticipate in the further refinement of their gemstone-cut classification system by contacting them at the Smithsonian.

Kenya Gemstone Dealers Association is formed. The government-licensed gem dealers in Kenya have formed the Kenya Gemstone Dealers Association ("Kengem") to promote the gemstone industry in Kenya and increase Kenyan gemstone exports internationally. Through the media, Kengem will keep local and overseas gem dealers, and associations in different countries, informed of any changes or amendments in government regulations that have an effect on the Kenyan gem trade. Kengem has also discussed with the commissioner of Mines and Geology a number of issues concerning the processing of export documents by various government departments. As a result of these discussions, modified procedures are being introduced to guarantee smooth and expeditious export of Kenyan gem materials.

For further information on Kengem, please contact: Dr. N. R. Barot, Secretary, Kenya Gemstone Dealers Association, P.O. Box 47928, Nairobi, Kenya.