



Customs officers examine the cultural relics they seized from a Japanese man at Huanggang Port in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, on Tuesday.

JIAN XIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

# Alleged smuggler tried to remove Chinese relics

By HUANG YULI

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Shenzhen customs officials have caught a Japanese man allegedly trying to take 58 precious Chinese cultural relics out of the country.

The Huanggang Port customs, which is affiliated with Shenzhen customs, said on Tuesday that the items it seized from a Japanese passenger on June 23 were confirmed precious relics by the Guangdong Provincial Relics Identification Station, and that for 57 of the 58 items, it was illegal to take them out of China.

The relics include 55 books from 1869-1890 of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), including works by famous historian Qian Daxin, writer and historian Wang Shizhen and thinker and historian Gu Yanwu. There was also a gold-overlaid iron incense burner with hollowing patterns, and a copper boat-shape lamp with flower and bird patterns, both from the late 19th century, and a silver pot with loop handle from the early 20th century.

Customs officer Zeng Ying said that at about 10:30 am on June 23, a man passing through the passenger inspection hall intending to leave with two very

## GLANCE

### ITEMS RESTRICTED FROM LEAVING CHINA

#### Items that are forbidden from exit:

1. Weapons, imitation weapons, ammunition
2. Forged currency and securities
3. Printed works, films, photos, records, cassettes, video tapes and computer storage mediums that contain content that harms China's politics, economics, culture and social morality
4. Poisons
5. Drugs that can be addictive including opium, morphine, marijuana and heroin
6. Animals, plants and products that contain dangerous germs, pets or other harmful organisms
7. Food, drugs or other items that are harmful to human and animal health, that are from affected areas or that can spread diseases
8. Manuscripts, printed works, films, photos, records, cassettes, video tapes, computer

- storage mediums that contain content concerning China's secrets
9. Precious relics
10. Endangered and precious animals, plants (including specimens) and their seeds and reproducing materials

#### Items that are limited for exit: (with a quota or allowed only with permission of the government)

1. Precious metal including gold, silver and products made from them
2. Chinese currency
3. Foreign currency and securities
4. Transmitting-receiving radio sets, coding machines
5. Precious Chinese medicine
6. Regular relics
7. Other items that are limited for exit by customs authority

SOURCE: GENERAL ADMINISTRATION OF CUSTOMS

large suitcases caught her attention.

"The man was in his 50s, medium tall, and was dressed normally," she said. "When we asked him to put his cases on the X-ray machine, he said he didn't understand Chinese, so

we communicated in English, and we found he was a Japanese passenger as we checked his passport," she said.

The machine showed that the suitcases were holding many handicrafts and books. When customs officers opened the

bags, they found many exquisite handicrafts and old books wrapped by multiple layers of newspapers.

"We asked the man where he got them, and he said he bought them on the mainland. He said he bought them at a low price, but the pieces don't look like normal handicrafts because both their shape and craft are very delicate," Zeng said.

Customs officials seized the goods and sent them to the provincial relics identification station. A report from the station on Monday confirmed the items were relics.

The case has been transferred to the anti-smuggling department of Shenzhen customs for further investigation.

According to Huanggang customs, there are two categories of relics — one is banned from being taken out of the country, while the other is allowed to be taken out in certain circumstances.

Those who have relics in the latter category that they want to take out of the country for exhibition or trade must first go to the relics management department for identification, and obtain the relics exit permit and the seal wax as well as the relics' invoices. Those who intend to remove relics from China must declare them to customs.

# Govt cracks rare earth cases

By LI WENFANG

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A number of operations that were illegally storing and processing up to 1,000 tons of rare earth valued at several hundred million yuan was discovered last week.

The government of Lianping county, Heyuan, Guangdong province, said on Tuesday that it received a tip-off which led to the discovery of two warehouses and a factory in two villages in Zhongxin town illegally storing and processing rare earth.

Local police detained four people and are still looking for other suspects.

Xing Jianjiang, deputy director of the Department of Land and Resources of Guangdong Province, and his team supervised the crackdown at an illegal rare earth mining site in Potou town, Lianping county.

The Longchuan county government also busted nine outlets illegally mining, processing or trading rare earth in Heyuan city, and seized more than 100 tons of fully or partly processed rare earth products.

Forty-five suspects and one official alleged to have been shielding the criminal activities were taken into custody, the government said.

Cases of illegal rare earth mining were also discovered in the cities of Shaoguan and

Meizhou earlier this year.

Proven deposits of ion-absorbed type rare earth in Guangdong are among the largest in the country. The Guangdong provincial committee of the China Democratic League advised the government to strengthen the management of rare earth mining in its proposal to the annual full session of the provincial committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference last year.

Unlicensed mining is a serious problem in the province and has seriously harmed the environment, the proposal said.

Last year, villagers protested the environmental pollution caused by illegal mining of rare earth in Luhe county, Shanwei.

The province's top leaders gave instructions on investigating and handling illegal mining in the county.

The mines are spread across a wide area in Guangdong, which makes them difficult to monitor, said Xiao Fangming, director of the Guangzhou Research Institute of Non-ferrous Metals, adding illegal mining and smuggling produce high profits. The rare earth is also very easy to extract, Xiao said.

He suggested strengthening the supervision of the rare earth separating plants in the province, which have a combined capacity of about

15,000 tons a year.

The government has approved rare earth mining of 2,000 tons of oxides a year in Guangdong, but actual mining exceeded 40,000 tons due to illegal mining, Shen Shaomei, an official with the provincial department of land and resources, was quoted as saying by China Land and Resources News last year.

Shen said strong overseas demand was causing the illegal mining.

In February, the rare earth office of the provincial government required all localities to enhance the supervision of rare earth mining, and the Guangdong Rare Earth Industry Group was founded.

Rare earth metals are vital for manufacturing an array of high-tech products, including cell phones, wind turbines, electric car batteries and missiles.

China is the world's largest producer of rare earth, providing more than 90 percent of supplies with only 23 percent of global reserves, according to the country's first white paper on the rare earth industry released in June.

The government is strengthening the management of the industry to protect the environment and resources.

Shu Meng contributed to this story.

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Publication Date: 2012-03-01    Size: 87cm \*57cm

Price: Chinese Version: RMB520    English Version: RMB820

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# Billionaire Li detained in Xiamen

By SUN LI and HU MEIDONG

in Fuzhou

Li Baohua, chairwoman of a real estate investment group in Xiamen, Fujian province, has been detained by the local public security bureau on suspicion of obtaining funds illegally, the bureau told China Daily on Wednesday.

The 36-year-old billionaire is being investigated for allegedly disappearing with a vast sum after deceiving investors.

The bureau has received complaints from more than 10 creditors since July 2011 alleging that Li vanished after receiving a large amount of money, which she did not repay, said a bureau spokesman surnamed Ma.

Li's Mingda Group, which was established in 2008, initially specialized in the rental and management of luxury

properties. By the time Li was detained, the company was also involved in logistics, and in the restaurant and karaoke bar businesses.

The businesswoman disappeared after her chain of karaoke bars went bankrupt in June 2011, the police said.

As the case is still under investigation, the exact number of creditors, and the list of the company's assets and liabilities cannot be provided at this time, the police said, adding that an official announcement will be made next week.

According to the Xiamen-based Strait Herald newspaper, Li's lenders are mostly from cities across Fujian province, and many of them had a close relationship with her.

The report said Li allegedly engaged in fraudulent conduct since 2007. She was said to have used a conman, who pretended

to be an out-of-wedlock son of Hong Kong business tycoon Li Ka-shing, as a guarantor to get the investors' trust when asking for money.

Li's allegedly fabricated plans for real estate projects and oil-field development programs, for which she made false promises of high returns to entice investments.

In one of those real estate projects, an investor surnamed Wu, lost 8 million yuan (\$1.26 million), while another investor surnamed Yang lost 4 million yuan, according to the report.

In 1999, Li was imprisoned for two years for fraud in Guangdong province.

Several years after she was released, Li started a trading company and built her business empire, the report said.

According to China's criminal code, a person convicted of financial fraud can get the

death sentence if the amount involved is significant and if heavy losses were incurred by the State or by individuals.

However, there is public debate on whether the death penalty is suitable for non-violent financial crimes after Wu Ying, 31 — once one of China's richest women — was sentenced to death in 2009 by a local court in Jinhua, Zhejiang province, for illegally raising 770 million yuan.

In 2012, the Supreme People's Court did not confirm Wu's death sentence and sent the case back to the provincial court for re-sentencing, which eventually led to the court's pronouncement of the death penalty with a two-year reprieve.

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