

Moonstone

Moonstone is part of the group of minerals known as feldspar to which labradorite, amazonite and sunstone also belong. It comes in a wide variety of colours including white but this variety is more commonly known as rainbow moonstone or white labradorite. There are many qualities and stones can be opaque to almost translucent.

Moonstone has a pearl lustre so when moved around in the light, it has an optical effect which is similar to that of mother of pearl. Rainbow moonstone on the other hand has an opalescent lustre and is highly iridescent, it is frequently mistaken for opal. The finer qualities of rainbow moonstone display a vivid blue flash as it interacts with light. This optical effect is known as schiller or labradorescence after the gemstone labradorite which is particularly renowned for this effect.

Rainbow moonstone was popular with the Romans who believed it was formed out of moonlight, they were known to have used it for jewellery dating back as far as 100 AD. In India, moonstone is still considered to be a sacred gemstone. In Europe during the Middle Ages it was believed that if you gazed into a moonstone, you would fall into a deep sleep that would tell the future. Moonstone was also used extensively during the early part of the 20th century in art nouveau jewellery.

It was once believed that moonstone could awaken tender passions if placed beneath the tongues of lovers at full moon and that holding a moonstone in the mouth would refresh one's memory.

The finest specimens of moonstone come from Myanmar (formerly Burma) and Sri Lanka but deposits can also be found in Brazil, Europe, India, Madagascar, Mexico, Tanzania and the U.S.A.

Moonstone is believed to be a protective gemstone for travellers and is a talisman of good fortune. It stimulates confidence and composure and allows one to understand that there is no situation so difficult that it cannot be countered with diplomacy. Moonstone is believed to align the vertebrae and act as a digestive aid as well as bringing good fortune, enhancing passion and balance the yin and yang. Its healing properties are said to promote digestion, calm emotions, stimulate the properties of rejuvenation and alleviate many degenerative conditions with respect to skin, hair eyes and the fleshy organs for the body.

Moonstone is one of the birthstones for the month of June, it is also the gemstone for the 13th year of marriage.

Moonstone is graded 6 to 6.5 on Mohs scale of mineral hardness.

The following links offer further reading on moonstone

<http://www.gemologyonline.com/moonstone.html>

<http://www.gemstone.org/gem-by-gem/english/moonstone.html>

<http://www.gemstoneeducation.com/Moonstone.htm>

