

## Chinese Furniture

Chinese furniture has developed and reached its peak during the Ming and Qing Dynasties: sophisticated craftsmanship, rigorous structure with great varieties. Also, the decorative techniques: inlay, embedment, carving, engraving and painting, have accomplished an exquisite standard; they complement the overall beauty of furniture, and serve as the icing on the cake.

1. The yellow rosewood painting desk with carving of waves and dragon pattern: This is an imperial single-board yellow rosewood painting desk with carving of waves and dragon pattern, this furniture is thoroughly well-polished and glittering; its four surfaces are carved with two dragons playing with pearls along with swastika pattern in between, which makes the piece simple yet elegant. This desk was finely crafted, carved extensively and creates a strong sense of three-dimensionality, which displays the master craftsman's excellent techniques.

2. The Tai-Shi chair in zitan wood with cloisonné (enamel) inlay: Amongst all Chinese furniture, “Tai-Shi (Grand Master) chair” is the only furniture that is named after the title of an imperial minister, which is very special. The Tai-Shi birthday chair in zitan wood with cloisonné (enamel) inlay with the pattern of ganoderma and symbols of prosperity, is an antique chair which serves as a birthday present in the Qing Palace, which is said to be the seat for Emperor Qianlong on his birthday, no other identical chair has ever been discovered up to these days, which is an exceptional rarity. The craftsmanship of this chair is very exquisite, and the material was treated with great precision and care. The cloisonné produced by a unique craft which was embedded onto this zitan wood chair, which further brandishes its beauty, as said by the phrase “Metal and timber transcend brightness”. Even amongst those furniture in the imperial court, the carving and techniques used on this zitan birthday chair can be described as out of this world! This is an extremely rare zitan Tai-Shi birthday chair.

3. The rosewood armchairs with mother-of-pearl inlay and carved with dragon and phoenix: The carving and embedding techniques are impeccable, the decoration on these armchairs are compact and glamorous, and a generous amount of money was spent for the quality of its material, the armchairs were crafted in pursuit of the impression of elegance, complexity, luxury and wealth. This set of Canton-crafted furniture in the late-Qing era was crafted in the design using “western flower”, “western grass” along with the traditional Chinese decorative patterns, which combines both Chinese and Western art, while retaining its individuality; this is indeed a set of rare treasures.

4. The gold painted zitan screen with embedded jade and carving of dragon and cloud: A large screen used in the imperial court of Qing dynasty, it symbolises majesty and power. This zitan screen was crafted with extraordinary technique, which is known for its grace and exquisiteness; the harmonious contrast between wood and jade contributed to the faultless combination of wood and jade; this is a screen of absolute excellence of a generation.

5. The rosewood canopy bed: The material of this bed is red rosewood, the thematic pattern on the front of this bed is the symmetrical mother-of-pearl (The Eight Immortals), which was a technique of carving and mother-of-pearl's embedding from Suzhou, the embedded colourful luminescent mother-of-pearl are delicate, the embedding technique was superb, the portraits of those characters were vivid and life-like; combined by the carved rosewood patterns, it concocts a delightful atmosphere of joyful celebrations, numerous offspring and limitless fortune; "The combination of embedment and carving" further emphasises its luxurious extravagancy and gracious elegance.

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