



OI LING
FINE CHINESE ANTIQUES

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Arts & Crafts of China : Lacquer



Lacquer is a word that immediately evokes a mystical picture of the Orient and, within China, lacquerwork has become an artistic industry of national pride. From intricately carved snuff bottles to boxes, plates, trays and teapots, lacquerware remains an enduring symbol of China's ancient arts and crafts traditions.

The development of this distinctly Chinese style of decoration may be traced to the Neolithic site of Hemudu in Zhejiang Province (C. 5000 - 3000 B.C.). Chengdu (Sichuan Province) has enjoyed a long history of lacquer manufacturing and through the ages has produced thousands of pieces for the Imperial Palace, as well as the local elite, gaining a reputation as China's preeminent lacquer capital.

Reference: Arts & Crafts of China,
by Scott Minick & Jiao Ping

Gallery News

Kung Hei Fat Choy!

The new branding has been a great success with extremely positive feedback on the strong identity created with the Oi Ling name and logo. As we head into a new year, **Oi Ling Fine Chinese Antiques** continues to go from strength to strength at its two locations on Hollywood Road.

Our exhibition **AN ODE TO TAIZONG** at the tail end of last year was a big hit, with everything from the Opening Night party (see photos below) to the catalogue earning rave reviews. Look out for our Olympics-themed Horses Exhibition coming this summer!



In March, **Oi Ling** and Phil will once again head off to New York to exhibit at the International Asian Art Fair. Details of this Fair can be found on the back page of this newsletter, in the section 'Special Event'.

We look forward to seeing you soon at **Oi Ling Antiques**, and in the meantime we wish you a tremendous Year of The Rat.

Kung Hei Fat Choy!

Oi Ling Chan

Product Highlights

Terracotta



This pair of beautifully carved figures represents two imperial consorts of the highest grade. The main characteristics which set this pair apart from other Tang female figures are the details found in the treatment of the sleeves, the shoes, and the hair arrangement. In addition, the technique used in the coloring of the pair is much more advanced compared to other figures produced in the same period. The representation of the pair suggests a focus on the regal image of the imperial house. The hairdo is spectacular, the robe is delicate but rich in layers and colors. The make-up on the face is meticulous. All the details speak of a life of wealth and sumptuousness.

A pair of imperial consorts

Material : Red Pottery
Period : High Tang (approx. 700 A.D.)
Dimensions : 54 cm height



Stone



This carved slab projects a very strong image of strength and power. The composition of the engravings is very simple consisting of a lion head with the Buddhist's flame and a lotus done in high relief. The lion head shows great energy creating a great contrast to the soft image projected by the lotus petal. Buddhism was very strong in the Tang period and the religion integrated well with the local Taoist philosophy. As a result of this integration, very often deities and images from both religions can be seen together.

A limestone engraving featuring a lion holding a lotus

Material : Limestone
Period : Tang dynasty (618 - 907 A.D.)
Dimensions : (H) 60 cm x (W) 45 cm



Bronze



The production of bronze mirrors in China is believed to have a 4000-year history. In the latter part of Zhou period, the makers of bronze started experimenting with different types of inlay. The technology of incorporating different types of stones and metal inlay reached a peak in the Warring States period (475 - 221 BC). This inlaid bronze mirror has been preserved in great condition. All the pieces of inlaid turquoise stone are intact. The fine craftsmanship is testimony to the advanced skill achieved in the Warring States. The size of the mirror is also considered slightly larger than normal.

An inlaid bronze mirror

Material : Bronze
Period : Warring States (475 - 221 BC)
Dimensions : 15 cm diameter



Featured Product - Furniture

Painting Table

Painting tables are a genre considered highly collectable due to their association with the scholar class. Traditionally, the scholar class represents the elite of the Chinese society which stands for refinement and good taste. This is one of the reasons why the value of painting tables is so much higher than other forms of tables.



A painting table with recessed legs and inserted shoulder joints

Material : Tielimu

Period : Ming Dynasty (1368 -1644 AD), Hebei Province

Dimensions : (L) 176 cm x (W) 74 cm x (H) 85 cm



A painting table is a constant element in a scholar's study. This is the table on which he practices his calligraphy, writes his poems, and studies the classics. Chinese scholars are known for their exceptional sensitivity to aesthetics and elegant taste. The table a Chinese scholar used would be no exception - this table would be the epitome of his good taste - simple and elegant.

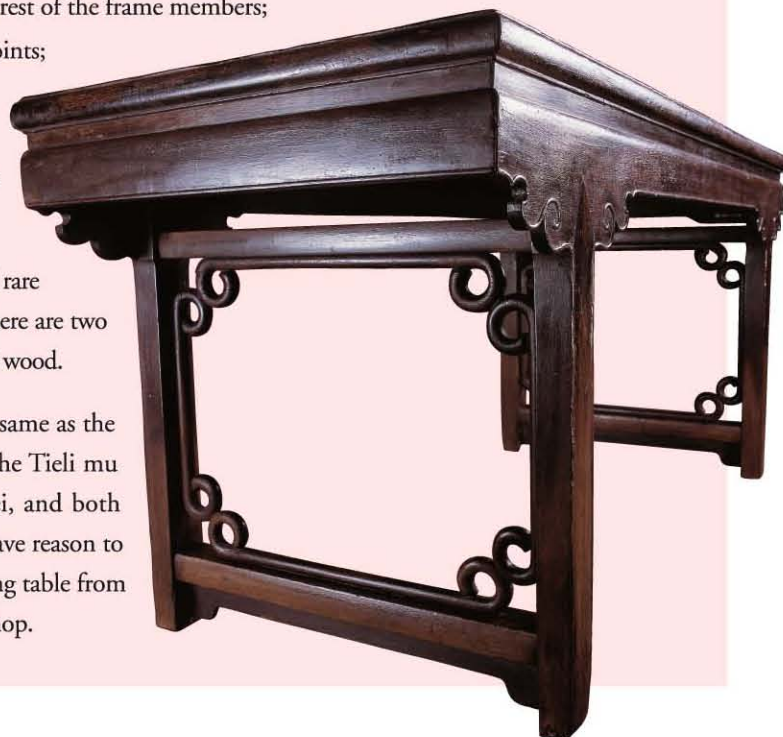
The painting table featured here is devoid of any kind of unnecessary decoration. The form takes its inspiration from a Buddhist pedestal. Buddhist icons are always presented on a pedestal. The idea of a pedestal is to project a sense of loftiness and sturdiness. The construction of this table also incorporates this idea and the result is a well-built table with simple elegance.

The construction of this table is similar to an example on page 174 of scholar Wang Shixiang's book entitled Classic Chinese Furniture. In both tables:

- The table tops serve as the final lock securing the position of the rest of the frame members;
- The legs are connected to the table top using inserted shoulder joints;
- Each component can be easily disassembled and assembled; and
- The form of both tables draws inspiration from the traditional box style construction but with recessed legs which are features of archaic beam-and-pillar construction.

A box construction painting table with recessed legs is considered rare as there are very few existing examples. In Wang Shixiang's book, there are two examples, one made of Zitan wood and the other made of Huanghuali wood.

The construction of this Tielimu painting table is exactly the same as the Zitan wood painting table in Wang Shixiang's collection except the Tielimu painting table is waisted - both tables are originally from Hebei, and both tables are dated to a similar period of manufacture. We therefore have reason to believe that this Tielimu painting table and the Zitan wood painting table from Wang Shixiang's collection are very probably from the same workshop.



Special Event

International Asian Art Fair in uptown New York

Oi Ling Antiques is delighted to announce that we will exhibit at the prestigious **International Asian Art Fair** in uptown New York, in March this year. The fair has moved to a fantastic new venue (at 583 Park Avenue) and we are excited to be exhibiting at what looks like a wonderful and charming building (a converted church, built in 1923). We look forward to seeing old friends and making new acquaintances. The opening night is the 14th March and the show ends on 19th March. For tickets contact events@oilingantiques.com.



International Asian Art Fair 2007

Ask the Expert

How do you date a piece of furniture?

- Dating a piece of furniture involves close examination of the following: the joinery, the craftsmanship, the decorative motifs, the lacquering technique, and the proportion. In addition, one has to analyze the patina and the condition of wear and tear.
- With reference to joinery, certain types of joinery were more popular in a certain period and were normally used in combination with certain types of wood.
- The decorative motifs also provide great evidence for dating. One good example is the "double happiness" motif. This motif is of a much latter period - later part of 19th century.
- Craftsmanship, proportion and lacquering technique vary from region to region. Generally, furniture from the southern tip of the Yangtze River has a much softer line with a different proportion from furniture made in the North i.e. Beijing or Shanxi.

Submit your questions to our expert c/o expert@oilingantiques.com. We will do our best to answer them in future issues of Gallery News.



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FINE CHINESE ANTIQUES

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GALLERY



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CHINA

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