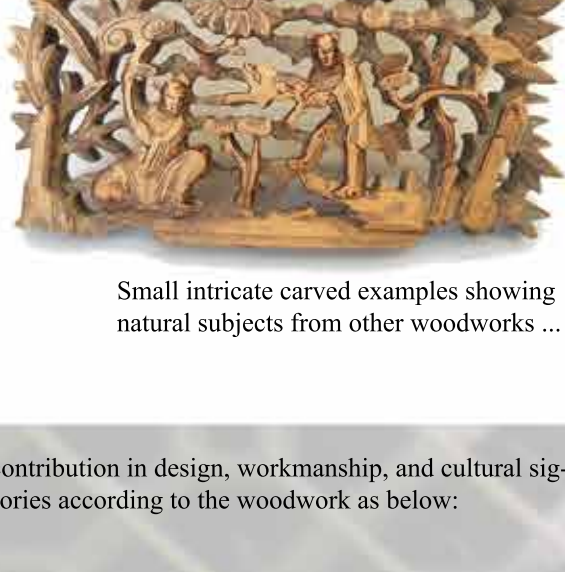


From Shen's Special Collection...



Small intricate carved examples showing natural subjects from other woodworks ...

About Chinese latticework

-Written by April Shen

Chinese woodwork offers incomparable and valuable contribution in design, workmanship, and cultural significance to the art. It can be chronicled into four categories according to the woodwork as below:

1. Chinese wood carving
2. Chinese latticework found on old Chinese screen doors and windows
3. The joinery, design, and construction of Chinese furniture and wood objects, particularly those from the Ming period and of the style
4. The design of the space and the structure of Chinese architecture

Of all the above, the second and the third most reflect the taste and the aesthetic standard of the traditional Chinese art paralleled to or with a link to the highly praised scholarly taste in other Chinese art such as painting, calligraphy, etc.

Chinese latticework, the considered more "decorative" part of the Chinese architecture even though some served as very important element in building a Chinese home with specific purposes for the building, or even carvings in some rarer cases, because of its smaller scale and readily available contact, allowed for the possibility for any like-minded individual to directly participate in the use and the design of the smaller scale work.

The most beautiful and intricate Chinese latticework with the most exceptional designs, many came from the "Jiang-Zhe" area with the nearby cities such as Suzhou, Ningbo, etc. This area has long been the favorite location of the summer palaces for many emperors and dynasties and has been known for the gathering of the intellectual elites because of its beautiful geographic scenery, weather condition, and the abundance of the natural resources. This is the home of the classical Ming Chinese furniture which is known for its elegant and timeless structure and design partially participated and in large favored by the scholarly intellectuals as well as artists alike during the period.

*Mr. Wang Shi Xiang (王世襄), China and world's authority on classical Ming Chinese furniture, has pointed out this in one of the later books he has written and published "明式傢俱研究"-translated as "the research of Ming style furniture", that Suzhou is the source for the production of the Ming classical furniture.

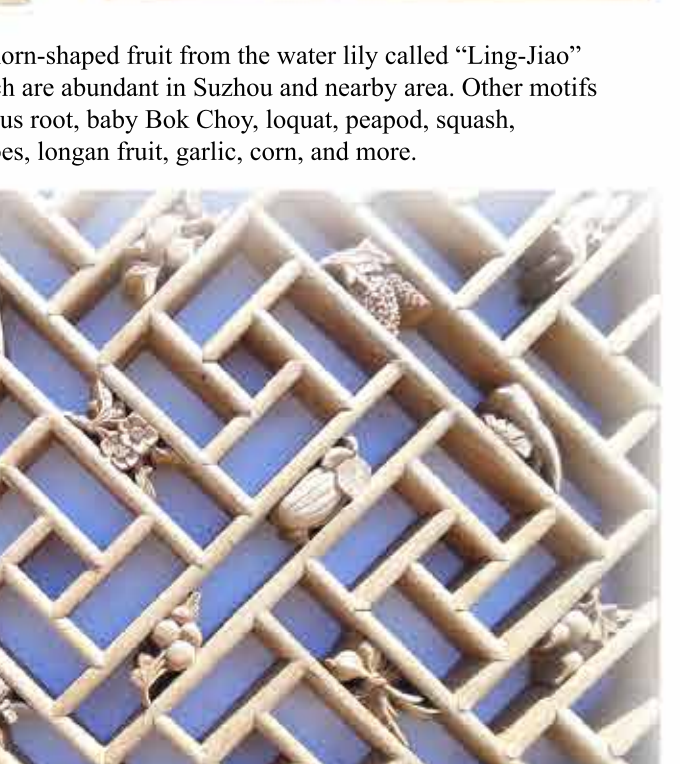


This particular character or trend in Chinese art associated with the literary individual has contributed unsurpassed aesthetic standard to the Chinese art in general. It is only natural a living structure and part of its more decorative elements carried this same tradition and flavor of this special trend in Chinese art at the time if one examines the style, the technique, and the aesthetic standard and principal used behind some of the designs and works of the Chinese woodwork and latticework created and used for the homes in this area during this period.

Hence, it's not surprising that the best of the best and the most demanded woodworkers came from all over China and stationed in this area to create some of the most amazing Chinese woodwork, including Chinese lattice woodwork. This is apparent from the still vast amount of excellent lattice woodwork can be found and seen in this area and nearby...

(If you would like to receive more information in the future regarding Chinese woodwork or Chinese latticework through written article or lecture by April Shen, please send an E-mail to customerservice@shensgallery.com)

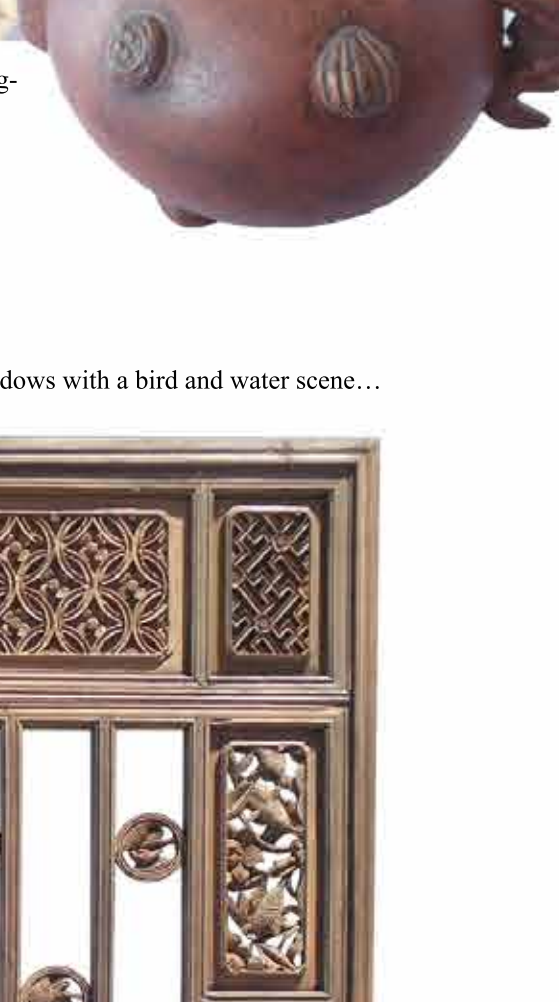
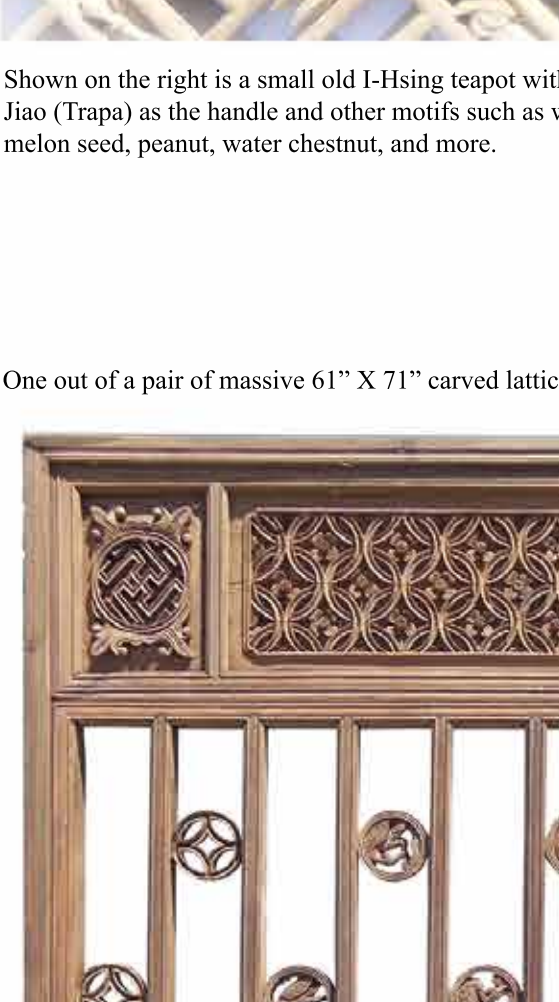
In the following examples, we see the very fine lattice work from the Jiang-Zhe or Jjiang-Nan area with the water element...



Shown above is an old Bai wood footstool with a rare water wave design possibly from this area as well...

*In his book "江南明式门窗格子"-translated as "Jiang-Nan Latticework of Doors and Windows", Mr. He Xiao Dao (何晓道) has included his collection of old windows that contain this water wave design.

Below shown are two out of a set of four large size rectangular windows, each is filled with over 20 different kinds of intricately carved fruit and vegetable motifs in between the simple diagonal shaped lattice design with the latticework connected by each smaller wood doles.

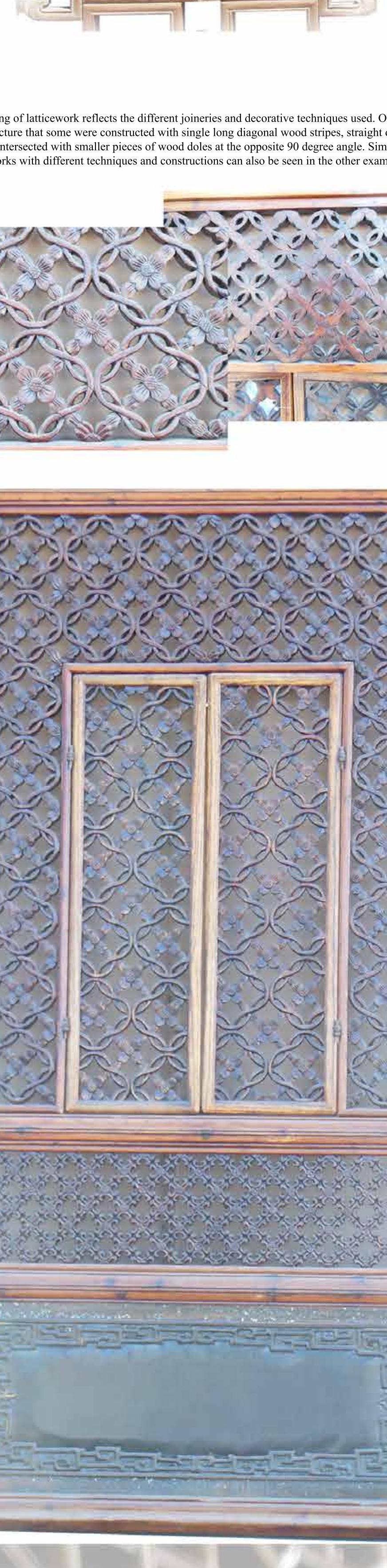
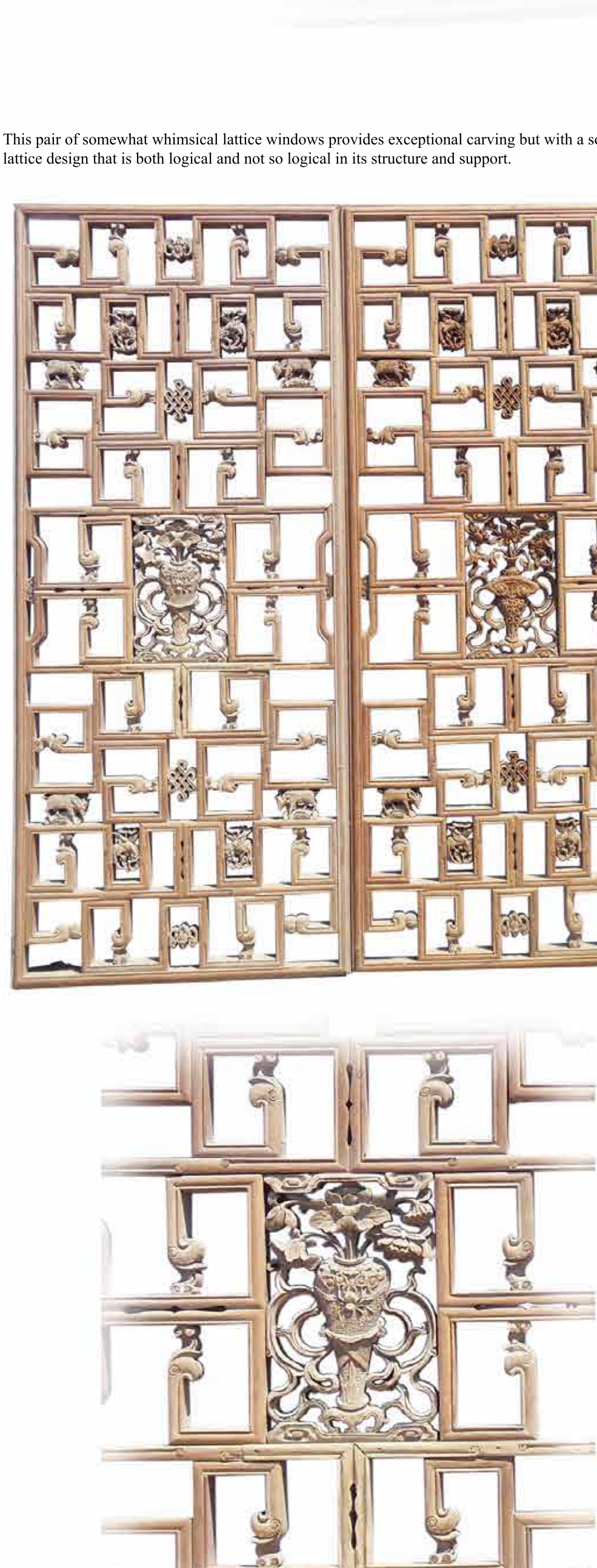


Out of these vegetable and fruit motifs, one is a horn-shaped fruit from the water lily called "Ling-Jiao" (Trapa) in Mandarin. It grows in lily ponds which are abundant in Suzhou and nearby area. Other motifs include bamboo shoots, bitter melon, peanuts, lotus root, baby Bok Choy, loquat, peapod, squash, Buddha's hand fruit, small pepper, eggplant, grapes, longan fruit, garlic, corn, and more.

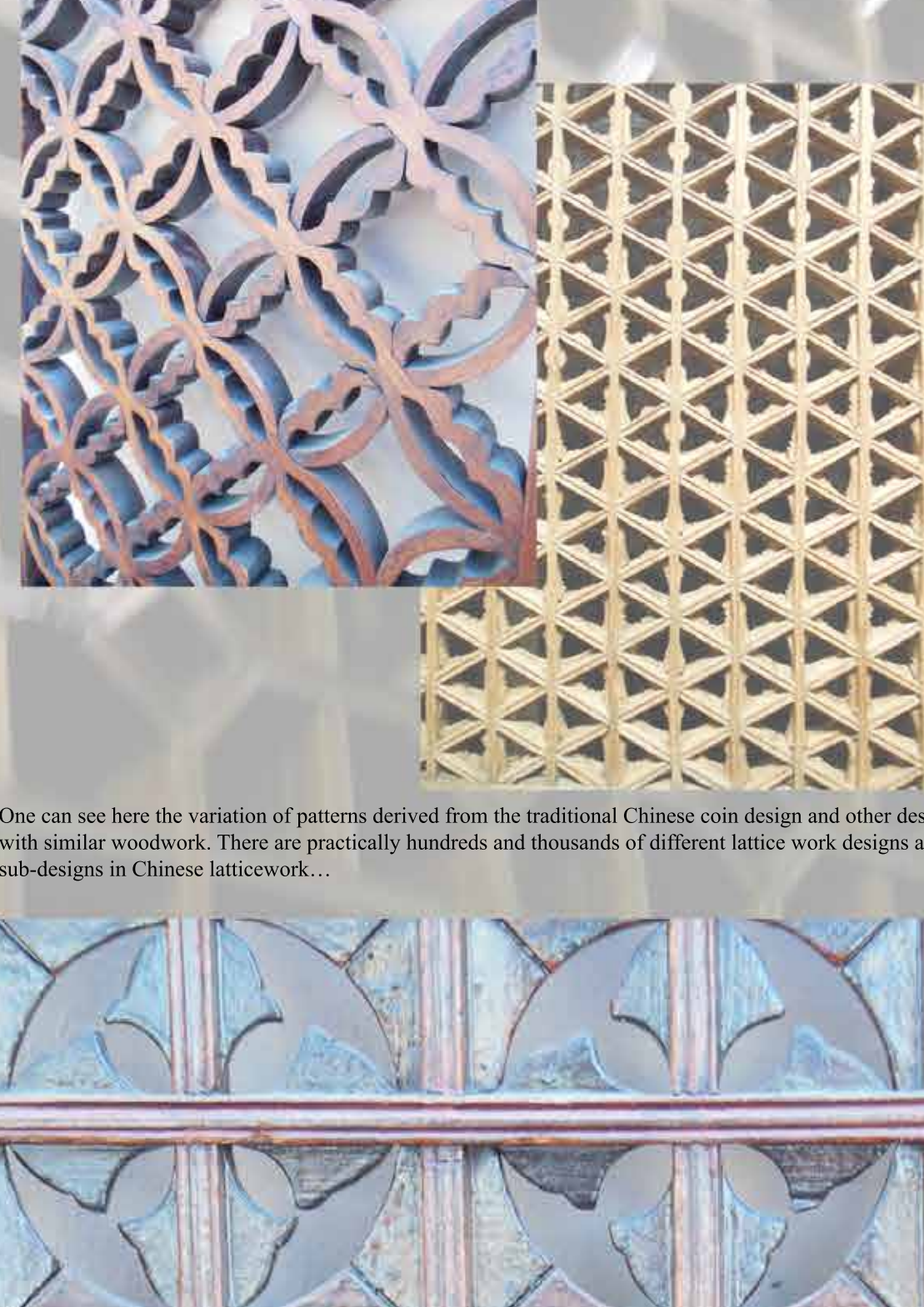


Shown on the right is a small old I-Hsing teapot with Ling-Jiao motifs as the handle and other motifs such as water-melon seed, peanut, water chestnut, and more.

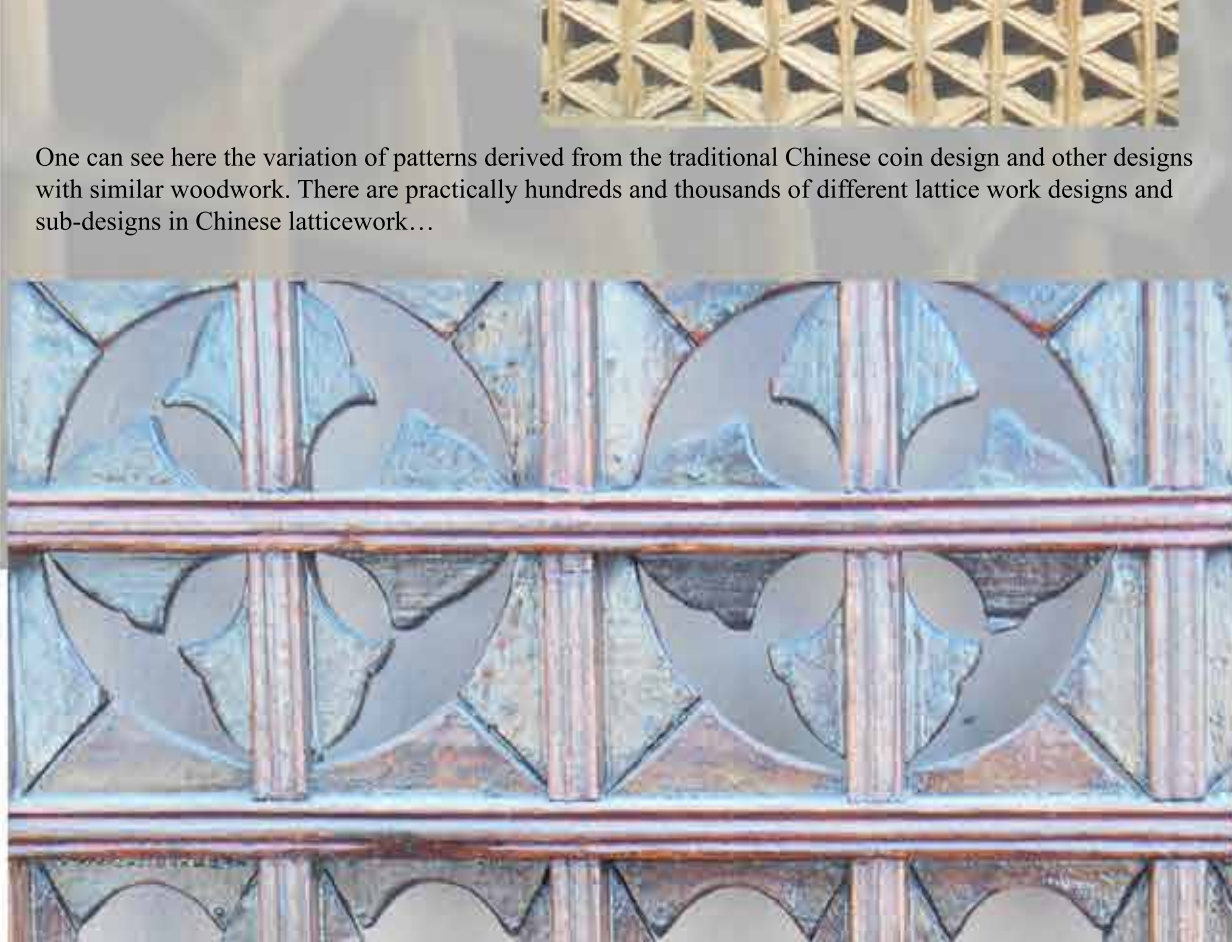
One out of a pair of massive 61" X 71" carved lattice windows with a bird and water scene...



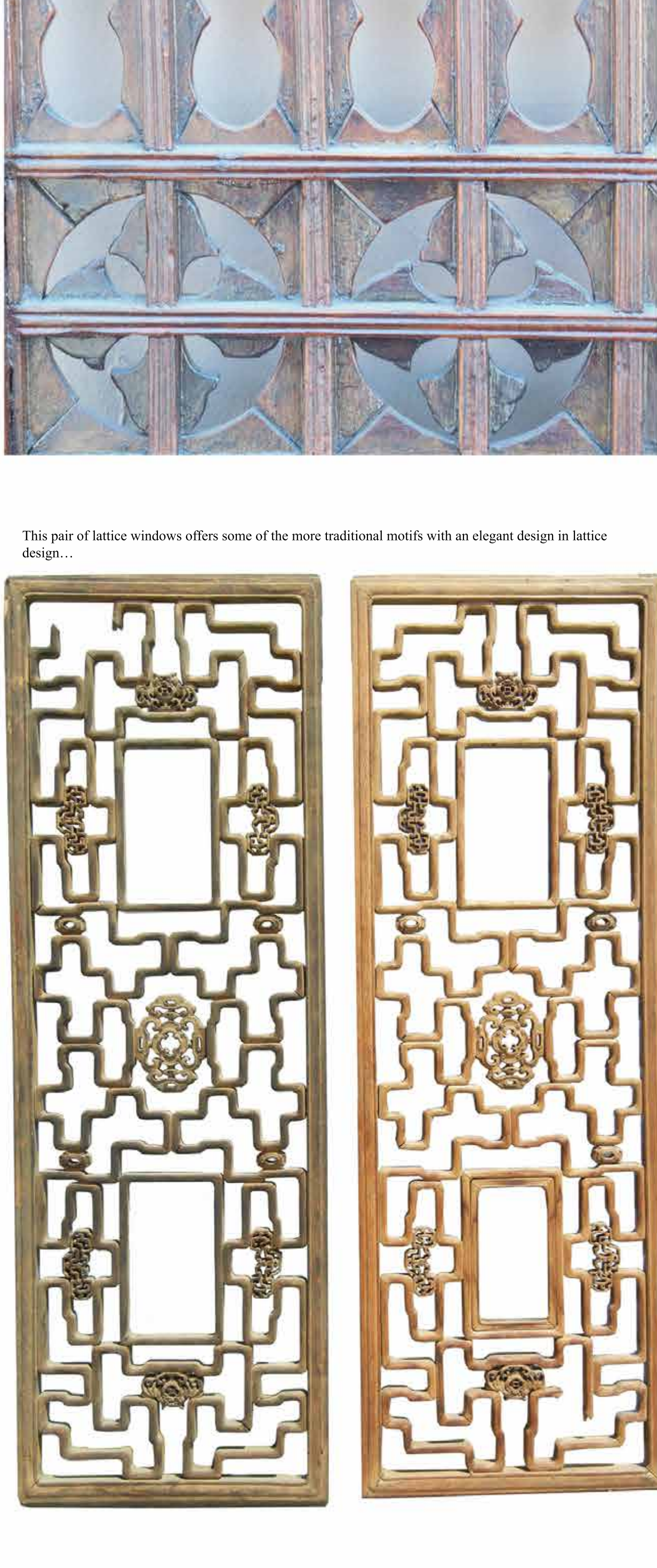
This pair of somewhat whimsical lattice windows provides exceptional carving but with a somewhat of a lattice design that is both logical and not so logical in its structure and support.



This group of latticework reflects the different joineries and decorative techniques used. One can see from this picture that some were constructed with single long diagonal wood stripes, straight or carved in shape, and intersected with smaller pieces of wood doles at the opposite 90 degree angle. Similar but different woodworks with different techniques and constructions can also be seen in the other examples provided here.



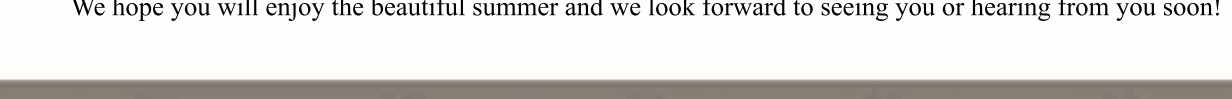
One can see here the variation of patterns derived from the traditional Chinese coin design and other designs with similar woodwork. There are practically hundreds and thousands of different lattice work designs and sub-designs in Chinese latticework...



This pair of lattice windows offers some of the more traditional motifs with an elegant design in lattice design...



Although there were some works that were patterned out ahead of time, the latticework of "ice-ray" or "cracked ice" pattern is known for being assembled free-hand. This takes great skill and experience in composing the work as you go...



We hope you will enjoy the beautiful summer and we look forward to seeing you or hearing from you soon!