From Shen's Special Collection...

An Introduction for the Small Chinese Wooden Wares and Pleasurable Objects -Written by April Shen

Old objects are usually hand-made, which makes them unique. Hand-made objects go a long way in human history, even from the pre-historical era. Given China's thousands years of history and dynasties, many small objects, including small wooden wares, can be seen plentifully How do we appreciate the aesthetics and the cultural significance behind each of these objects made? What is the connection? Aside from

How do we appreciate the aesthetics and the cultural significance beannd each of these objects made. What is the connection? Aside fron human's need for the practical objects to use for the sake of the convenience, desire for the pleasurable senses, along with other purposes in religion, worship, and social status, had long been developed for both the utilitarian wares as well as objects of art. Such desire to make things beautiful is an important factor to human evolution. Handmade objects and works of art through history can reflect this progression. The aesthetics behind objects made and presented by these objects helped to shape human culture and enduring life value.

To appreciate a piece of Chinese art, one must not only look at the surface design and craftsmanship that delight our eyes and touch, but also understand the cultural depth and the environment that allowed the aesthetics applied to the particular object. In one simple step, aside from educating oneself with broader knowledge, is to have plenty imagination for the object, to have a love affair with the object of

Shown is a Han Dynasty bronze bracelet with two dragons on two ends. One dragon has an open mouth biting a ball inside. This bracelet has a unique detail of a scorpion at the center bottom of the bracelet. Such symbol was used in tribal or ancient ceremony and had its unique religious and worship meaning.

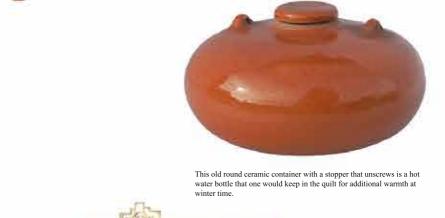






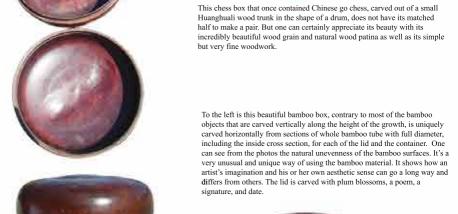


To the left are two other types of pillows. One is a pigskin wrapped pillow case; the other is a bench form of a sleeping pillow with a drawer for important personal belongings. It was believed that elevating your neck slightly when sleeping promotes blood circulation to the whole body which in term promotes better sleep.









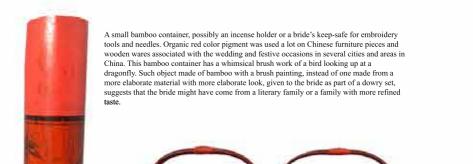




This very long and foldable hand scroll of a Chinese landscape Ints very long and rotatable hand sector of a 1 finnese tandscape brush painting shows a signature of the name of a 17th century artist Wu Hong, but is dated at the Guangxi period (1874-1908). The scroll is fitted on two sides with exotic hardwood covers for easy carrying and travelling. Obviously the owner of this hand scroll had a hard time to part with this painting and would like to carry it around with him. The wood covers are good protection for the carell and made it came for chains carrying and would like to for the scroll and made it easy for storing as well.

This simple and foldable stand for displaying important document has a good design and is made of the Tze-Tan

hardwood



A pair of early 20th century bamboo-woven hand-warming baskets fitted with clay pot inside for burning coals and keeping warm at winter time. This is also part of a dowry gift from the bride's family to

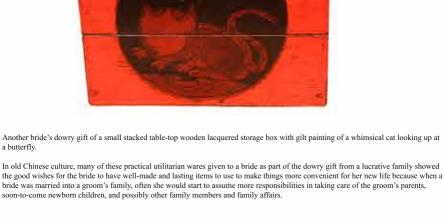
the newly-wed couple.

Shown is an old painted wooden storage box. "Vase with Flowers" is an auspicious symbol often used in Chinese art to bless a home because the pronunciation of the vase is the same as that of peace or harmony in Chinese language.

The written calligraphy on the box can be interpreted as: If an object is of a fine taste, why does it need to be big? This phrase originally came from the famous calligrapher Zheng Ban-Chiao as "If the room is elegant, it will not need to be big (室雅何须大. 花香不在多)" It implies if the owner of the room has good taste or high standard in morale, the small room will be elegant and beautiful as well. Here, "room" is substituted with "object" in the written calligraphy. In Chinese literary culture, elegance and high standard in morale are both highly praised.

This small porcelain display plaque is written with a famous Chinese poem and was meant to be displayed. It was made as a gift for someone's enjoyment. The poem

"Deep into the spring sleep, I did not wake up at dawn. When awake, one hears birds chirping everywhere. After a loud and stormy night, who knows how many petals howe fallen?"



a butterfly.

This whimsical mini structure made of the famous I-Hsing purple clay is a play house for the crickets with entrances on two sides for the crickets to crawl through. Cricket-fighting was a popular past-time activity for the Pekingese. The open lid is carved with two crabs and one spider in the middle

