



THE ORIENTAL CERAMIC SOCIETY OF HONG KONG LIMITED

IP YEE MEMORIAL LECTURE 2010 “THE ART OF BAMBOO CARVING” BY CHI JO-HSIN

Date: Wednesday, 21 April 2010
Venue: The Hong Kong Club
Jackson Road, Central, Hong Kong
Time: 18:30 Drinks; 19:00 Presentation; 20:15 Dinner
Cost: Lecture HK\$100 for non-members
Dinner HK\$450 (members); HK\$500 (guests)

The status of the artisan class rose with social and economic progress. During mid-Ming, under the reigns of Zhengde (1501-1521) and Jiajing (1522-1565), different schools of carving arts emerged and established themselves in Wuzhong (Soochow or Suzhou, Jiangsu Province) and its vicinities. Into late-Ming, Jinling (Nanking or Nanjing) and Jiading, both in the Province of Jiangsu, were two key regions with bamboo carving activities. By the time of Qing, Jinling had slowly lost its edge, while Jiading continued on with the heritage of the Three Zhu's (Zhu He, Zhu Ying, Zhu Zhizheng) for generation after generation. Bamboo carving became the local specialty and staple craft of Jiading.

Around late-Ming and early-Qing, Jiading carvers of bamboo started to combine high and low relieves to give varieties and contrasts. The skills grew more and more sophisticated over the time. The levels of different depths in protrusion increased from initially only a simple one or two to “deep and shallow altogether five or six different grades”, by the time of early Kangxi reign of Qing. Jiading in the early-Qing period was the leading, though not the only region for best bamboo carvings. Outside Jiading, there were individuals devoted to the art yet somehow their contributions stayed personal, neither forming a common local practice nor spreading beyond. Late-Qing continued with the development begun in mid-Qing of applying the antique style of bronze inscriptions to the bamboo carving art. Aside from emulating epigraphic inscriptions, themes based on pictorial representation were still being done, but again mostly in negative carving, and the carvers had to reply on the painters to design and sketch the image in ink on the carving surface first.

In addition to carving on bamboo, artisans of Fujian Province during the reign of Qianlong was well known for their unique bamboo-yellow technique, namely, using bamboo's inner skin for ornamentation of wares or other objects. Some of their works were honored as local presents to the emperor when he was on inspection tours of the Jiangnan region (South of the Yangtze River) and won his royal approval. By the late time of Qianlong reign, bamboo-yellow items had been included among the state gifts for diplomatic purposes; the technique itself had also spread from its place of origin in Shanghang, Fujian, to Shaoyang, Hunan, then in a roundabout way arriving west at Jiangan, Sichuan, then finally Jiading, Jiangsu to the east. The bamboo-yellow could be applied on everyday objects, as decorative veneers, or as a medium for the carvers to replicate the literati's art works, so it appealed to the tastes of either the commoners or the refined class.

Chi Jo-hsin: Ms Chi Jo-hsin is the Chief Curator in the Department of Registration and Conservation, and former Chief Curator in the Department of Antiquities, at the Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan. Last September she was elected Senior J.S. Lee Memorial Fellow by the Bei Shan Tang Foundation to do a five month attachment at the Palace Museum, Beijing, where she is now. Ms. Chi holds M.A. and B.A. degrees in history from the Taiwan National University and she has published extensively on the subject of Chinese bamboo carving, in leading venues such as *Oriental Art* and *The National Palace Museum Research Quarterly*.

Reply Slip

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- Please reserve ___ seat(s) for OCS member(s) to attend Chi Jo Hsin's lecture on 21 April 2010.
- Please reserve ___ seat(s) at HK\$100 for non-members to attend Chi Jo Hsin's lecture.
- Please reserve ___ seat(s) for members at HK\$450 each and ___ seat(s) for guests at HK\$500 each for dinner.
N.B. Due to The Hong Kong Club's regulations, any dinner reserved will be charged irrespective of attendance unless at least 48 hours' notice of cancellation is given.

Name: _____ Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Prof./Dr. Member: Yes/No
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*The event will be cancelled or postponed to a later date if Typhoon Signal no.8 or above is hoisted or if Black Rainstorm Warning is in force **one hour** before the event.*