

兩依藏
紫檀

柯愷思著

LIANG YI COLLECTION
ZITAN
by Curtis Evarts

此家 紫檀

LIANG YI COLLECTION
ZITAN

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Zitan

The Noble Hardwood of Exotic, Abstruse Origins

The mystique of *zitan* has captivated the Chinese for centuries. With origins from faraway foreign lands, it has historically been associated with the exotic. With quintessential qualities of deep-red pigmentation, a surface that polishes to a rich, shimmering luster (fig. 1), perfumed fragrance, and massive weight, it reflects virtuous characteristics associated with those of nobility and rank. But with obscure botanical anomalies, *zitan* remains full of intrigue for the discerning connoisseur. Having briefly touched upon the subject in a short essay published in 1991¹, the objects of *zitan* in the Liang Yi Collection provide an opportunity to revisit the subject. The following work, including historical facts and recent research of Chinese authorities, as well as personal observations and speculations, is presented here as a fresh attempt to synthesize and organize the myriad of incidental information surrounding the subject.

Sources

Various early compendiums on geography and pharmaceuticals note that *zitan* was imported from abroad. The 3rd century CE *Gujin zhu* cited sources in the historic regions known today as Vietnam and Cambodia, and the Tang dynasty (618 CE-907 CE) pharmacologist Su Gong recorded that *zitan* was imported from the ancient kingdom of Panpan on the Malay Peninsula.² Exotic goods such as *zitan* were highly popular amongst the Tang aristocracy during a period when the Chinese empire reached far and wide, and when trade flourished freely across foreign borders. References from this period suggests that *zitan* was primarily used for small luxury items such as game boards, *weiqi* counters, scroll ends, boxes, and musical instruments. Similar Chinese-style objects made with *zitan*, which are found in the Japanese

Imperial collections, survive in testimony of the dominant Tang culture.³ The relatively small size of these objects suggests that early *zitan* was sourced as relatively small-sized timber.

Few records or artifacts of *zitan* are attributable to the following four hundred years. In Zhao Rugua's extensive compendium on foreign sea trade throughout southern Asia during the Song period, a discussion of sandalwood (*tanxiang*) from regions around Java and Timor briefly notes a reddish brown variety termed *zitan* of comparable fragrance⁴—the reference implying use for incense rather than articles. *Zitan* is noticeably absent in Zhao Xigu's Song treatise on connoisseurship *Dongtian qinglu*, wherein it is lacquer and ebony that are cited as materials of choice. However, *zitan* reappears in a later work on connoisseurship, *Gegu yaolun*, which was published in the early Ming period. Cited amongst a listing of a precious woods, the otherwise minimal description lists domestic sources coming from the provincial regions of Hainan, Guangxi and Hunan; however, the further comments which were added to the revised edition of 1462 "most suitable use for manufacture of hairpins", infer a rather diminutively sized timber.⁵

Such limited use stands in sharp contrast to the notion that a hoard of *zitan* was stored away at the capital for Imperial use following the grand naval expeditions of Zheng He during the Yongle period (1403-1424).⁶ While not out of the realm of possibility in light of the vast amounts of tribute returning with fleets that voyaged as far as the coast of Africa, actual documentation of *zitan* tribute from these expeditions has yet to be discovered.⁷ Following the Yongle reign, isolationist policies were established and remained in effect for over a century until 1567, when maritime

紫檀

来历奥秘的异国名贵硬木



Fig. 1. Detail of relief carving from zitan cabinets (vol. 2, pl. 35).

图1 紫檀方角柜的浮雕细部（册二，图版35）。

许多世纪以来，紫檀的神秘魅力一直使中国人著迷不已。由于紫檀起源于遥远的异国，历来在人们心中一直蕴结著浓厚的珍奇情怀。它色泽深紫红（译者：紫色在中国具有庄严高贵的阶层表徵），磨光后表面晶莹华丽（图1），再加上味道清香与份量极沈等出众的特性，在反映并衬托出达官贵人的权势和身份。而紫檀在植物学上难解的许多变异，也激起精明的鉴赏家的好奇和兴趣。关于紫檀家具的主题，笔者曾在一九九一年发表的短篇论文¹中略为涉及，如今两依藏的紫檀收藏品提供大众再度探究的机会。笔者在此扼要罗列历代的考据以及近代中国专家的研究，并佐以个人的观察及推敲，期能将围绕于紫檀的各种形形色色的资料与论述治于一炉，提出建构性的观点。

来源

中国许多早期的地方志和药物志都提到紫檀是由国外进口的。写于西元三世纪的《古今注》曾提到紫檀产于今天的越南、寮国一带；据唐代（西元618-907年）药学家苏恭《唐本草》的记录，紫檀由马来

半岛的古国盘盘进口²。盛唐时，中国版图辽阔，与边界的贸易频繁，因此紫檀之类的异国珍奇在王宫、贵族之间颇为盛行。当时的文献参考指出紫檀主要用于制作棋盘、围棋子、轴头套、小盒及乐器等小件奢侈品。在日本正仓院收藏品中，我们发现了类似中华风格的紫檀器物，为盛行的唐代文化做了很好的见证³。而这些小件器物的尺寸也表述了早期的紫檀来源属小管径的木料。

唐后的四百馀年，紫檀器物或有关的记录却乏善可陈。赵汝适在其概述宋代与东南亚邻国之间的沿海贸易的著作《诸蕃志》中，扼要记载来自打纲（今爪哇）和底勿地区的檀香能夺众香，而色紫者谓之紫檀⁴——该参考意指焚香用的原料而非做成器物的原料。在赵希鹄所撰的宋人鉴赏守则《洞天清录集》中，却不见任何紫檀踪影，倒是指出髹漆和乌木为理想材料的选择。然而，在稍晚的鉴赏著作《格古要论》，早明刊本，紫檀再次出现，同时名列其中的尚有其他名贵木材；不过着墨有限，仅提及海南、广西和湖南为境内的来源。该书1462年新增版加入注释「……作冠子（译者：发夹）最妙」，

trade restrictions were relaxed. The negligible amount of early Ming *zitan* objects and/or literary references until the late 16th century suggest that it remained an extremely rare and exotic material.

This phenomenon is further apparent in the absence of *zitan* objects confiscated from the properties of the deposed prime minister, Yan Song and son, Yan Shifan. In 1562, thousands of luxury items with itemized descriptions were included in a detailed inventory of their holdings—jewelry, clothing, zithers, paintings, jades, bronzes, porcelains, stationery items and miscellaneous furnishings. A sampling of scholar's objects and small furnishings wherein one might expect to discover an object of *zitan* includes a 'brushpot of ivory-inlaid palmwood' (*ya xiang zongmu bitong*)⁸; 'mirror stands of ivory-inlaid *huali*' (*ya xiang hualimu jingjia*)⁹; 'paper weights of jade-inlaid *huali*' (*yu xiang hualimu zhengzhi*)¹⁰, and; 'ebony rulers' (*wumu jiechi*).¹¹ The absence of *zitan* in such a richly detailed context, and one which also survives as an inventory of luxury items available to one of boundless influence, power and wealth, not only suggests rarity, but poses the question of its fundamental availability.

The relaxation of trade restrictions during the Longqing reign (1567-1573) once again permitted the importation of foreign goods. Merchants from different parts of the world immediately responded with the shipment of precious goods to China's coastal cities for trade.¹² Within a matter of a few decades, *zitan* reemerges as a commonly cited precious hardwood. A customs document dated 1567 reveals the importation of *zitan* through portals in Zhejiang province and its relative value at 2.5 times that of *huali* and 5 times that of *tieli*.¹³ Over the next few decades writers from the surrounding region also began noting the marked appearance of fine hardwood furnishings made from *huali* and *zitan*.¹⁴

Curiously, the subject of *zitan* as a material for full-sized furniture rarely surfaces in late Ming literature.¹⁵ Rather, it is again small objects—dressing cases, book boxes, inkstone cases, brushpots, brushpot

bases, trays, and censer lids—that receive frequent mention throughout the writings of Gao Lian¹⁶, Tu Long¹⁷, and Wen Zhenheng.¹⁸ Liu Ruoyu, who served as a court eunuch during the Wanli period (1573-1620), also recorded small scale productions originating from Imperial Workshops, including *zitan* double-six game boards, chess pieces, dominoes, and combs.¹⁹ The double-six board (fig. 2) in the Liang Yi Collection may well originate from this period, after which time the game gradually fell into obscurity.

Even as late as the late 17th century, it was *small* objects of *zitan* that Cantonese craftsman were producing from resources on Hainan Island which, according to Qu Dajun (1630-1697), were broadly distributed throughout China.²⁰ Thus, the esteem and rarity of a full-sized piece of *zitan* furniture is revealed when, near the end of his life, Wang Shizhen (1634-1711) recorded the extravagant sum of 120 ounces silver offered in Beijing for an inlaid-*zitan* chair.²¹

At some yet undetermined point, perhaps as tribute during final decades of the Ming period or following the Manchu overthrow, the Imperial Palace appears to have accumulated a cache of *zitan* timber. Being of sufficient dimension to produce full-sized furniture, this material must have also originated from newly discovered resources with large growth trees. Such a scenario would coincide with a significant group of *zitan* furniture that display a discernable 'late-Ming' characteristics in form and decoration. These pieces also typically exhibit an uninhibited use of high quality, uniformly figured timber in their construction, with little sense of frugality or restraint associated with a precious material of limited resources. Examples include the *kang* table (fig. 3) and large cabinets (fig. 4), which could well have been associated with the Imperial Palace during the final years of the Ming period when court eunuchs were said to have "vied with one another in the elegance of their furniture."²²

While 16th and 17th century references to *zitan* furniture are slim, material from the 18th century is



Fig. 2. Double-six board, zitan, late Ming period (vol. 3, pl. 69).

图2 紫檀双陆棋盘，晚明（册三，图版69）。

推论当时的紫檀木料管径颇小⁵。

如此用料局限的现象，却与明永乐年间三宝太监郑和下西洋（西元1403-1424年）之后，京城存有大批紫檀以供王室使用的传说，有著极大的出入。尽管当时带回大量贡品的舰队有远至遥远的非洲，带回紫檀的可能性不是没有，可是确切的文献纪录仍然有待发掘与考据⁶。永乐之后，中国采取闭关政策，直到一世纪后的1567年才解除海禁。从明朝初期到十六世纪晚期，紫檀器物及（或）相关文献的数量都微不足道，可见紫檀仍然是稀有的舶来品。

1562年，遭罢免的宰相严嵩及严世蕃父子被抄家，数以千计的豪华家产及说明细目被编列成册，包括琳琅满目的珠宝、华衣、筝、翠玉、绘画、青铜器、瓷器、文房器物及杂件摆设等，但是独缺紫檀物品。在文房用品及小件摆设类别的取样调查中，人们多半预期会发掘到紫檀制品，然而却只见「牙厢棕木笔筒」⁸、「牙厢花梨木镜架」⁹、「玉厢花梨木镇纸」¹⁰，以及「乌木界尺」¹¹等，独缺紫檀。一位权重一时的高官，其琳琅满目的家产中却不见紫檀，不仅意味它的稀有性，甚至让人质疑其根本上的可获性。

明隆庆年间（西元1567-1573年）海禁解除，外国货物再度得以叩关进口。世界各地的商人立即群起响应，一船又一船的珍奇货物运往中国的沿海城市求售¹²。在短短几十年中，紫檀再度成为许多文献提及的珍贵硬木。从一份1567年的海关文件可看出：紫檀从浙江省的海港进口的价值约为花梨的二点五倍，以及铁力木的五倍¹³。

其后数十年间，邻近区域的作家也开始记录外观纹理出众夺目的上等硬木器物之取材于花梨和紫檀的主题¹⁴。即便如此，晚明的文献¹⁵却极少提及紫檀制的大件家具。反之还是小件！在高濂¹⁶、屠隆¹⁷及文震亨¹⁸等人的著作中，最常提及的仍是小件器

物，例如官皮箱、书匣、墨匣、笔筒、笔筒底座、盛盘及香炉盖等。万历年间（西元1573-1620年）的太监刘若愚也曾记载宫廷作坊制作的小件紫檀器物，包括紫檀双陆棋盘、棋子、骨牌和木梳等¹⁹。两依藏的双陆棋盘（图2）极可能出自这段时期，之后这种棋玩便逐渐没落。

即便再晚至十七世纪后期，还是紫檀小件。根据屈大均（西元1630-1697年）记载，当时销售分布中土最广的为广东匠师以海南岛紫檀所制的小件器物²⁰。一直持续到再发现一件尊贵罕见的大型紫檀家具时，已时逢王士祯晚年岁月（西元1634-1711年）；他在著作中说道：在北京有人欲以一百二十金的重金出价求购一件紫檀嵌百宝的坐椅²¹。

在明朝最后数十年或满洲人入主中原后的一段期间内，确切时间不详，皇宫显然累积贮藏了可能得自于贡品的大量紫檀木料。而且从这批木料足以制作大件家具的事实来看，其来源必定出自新发现的大乔木产地。这番推敲与为数不小都具有显著「晚明」风格的形制和装饰的紫檀家具实例，在时间上和尺寸上有着相呼应的巧合性。这些家具展现共同的特点：不惜耗用上等木料，并裁选纹理一致的木材打造，毫无一丝俭约心态或节制资源有限的珍贵木料。其中实例包括高束腰炕桌（图3）及三弯腿方角柜（图4），由品像及造工看来，极可能与明朝亡国之前的京城宫廷有关联，据说当时宫里的「内臣更奢侈争胜」²²。

尽管十六、七世纪有关紫檀家具的文献少之又少，但是十八世纪之后的记载却极为可观。宫廷作



Fig. 3. Kang table, zitan, 17th century (vol. 2, pl. 18).

图3 紫檀炕桌，十七世纪（册二，图版18）。

abundant. The Imperial workshops were revitalized by the early Qing emperors, and included furniture-making workshops that were largely staffed by highly skilled craftsman recruited from Guangzhou and Suzhou. Imperial archive records from the Yongzheng (1723-1735) and Qianlong periods reveal that *zitan*, *huali*, *nanmu*, and decorative lacquer were commonly used to produce chairs, tables, cabinets, screens, and other miscellaneous furnishings for the Court Palaces.

These were primarily produced in Imperial workshops under the supervision of Imperial eunuchs; however, in many cases they also were commissioned or purchased from specialized shops in the private sector, or acquired as tribute.²³ Prince Yi, one of the Yongzheng emperor's brothers, supervised the Imperial inventories of *zitan* with a cautious eye towards frugality and avoidance of waste. In one instance, having been informed of its proposed selection for the construction of a screen for a throne chair, reprimanded, "It is not necessary to use *zitan*—make it with lacquer!"²⁴

As a prized, and perhaps even novel material, *zitan* was sometimes used to reproduce favorite designs from existing pieces of furniture in the palace, a practice that was recorded in several instances. During the 3rd year of the Yongzheng reign (1725), a new table of *zitan* was ordered to be made according to the size of an existing red lacquer table and according to the style of another black lacquer table. Chairs of *zitan* were also reproduced after an old, red-painted lamphanger chair.²⁵ (Herein also lies one of the difficulties of dating Chinese furniture—the age-old tradition of copies and reproductions, a practice that is deeply ingrained upon the Chinese essence.)

In 1726, a pair of *zitan* incense stands were duplicated from an example that Prince Yi had brought into the Palace.²⁶ On another occasion in 1727, the court eunuch Cheng Guoyong arranged for a standing screen of *zitan* with a glass panel to be brought to the Palace; the palace workshop immediately produced a duplicate with inventoried *zitan*, but of reduced proportions due to the slightly smaller glass panel on hand.²⁷ Thus, fine *zitan* furnishings were also being



Fig. 4. Cabinet, one of a pair, zitan, 17th century (vol. 2, pl. 34).

图4 紫檀方角柜成对，十七世纪（册二，图版34）。



Fig. 5. Guangdong-style zitan square table (vol. 2, pl. 28).

图5 广式紫檀方桌（册二，图版28）。



Fig. 6. Suzhou-style zitan square table (vol. 2, pl. 29).

图6 苏式紫檀方桌（册二，图版29）。



Fig. 7. Detail of relief carving from zitan table
(vol. 2, pl. 25).

图7 紫檀桌的浮雕局部（册二，图版25）。

produced independent of the Palace with material that was not necessarily strictly under its control. These and other similar instances also further suggest that so-called 'palace-style' furnishings were not devoid of outside influences, but was rather a synthesis of ranging styles deemed suitable for the refined environs of the Court and tastes of the ruling family.

That being said, many new designs were also created in the early Qing palace workshops, which were at times inspired by the Emperor himself or by their supervising attendants. Workshop records frequently note the development of prototype models. Such was the case for a small book cabinet, which after approval in 1725, was ordered to be constructed with *zitan* frame members and ivory spandrels.²⁸ This process ensured that limited supplies were not squandered.

Archives from the first six years of the Yongzheng reign record the use of *zitan* for thirty-some tables of various size and style that were either produced by the Imperial workshops or acquired through tribute. The descriptive entries further indicate that many were made with *zitan* panels in combination with other woods or with *zitan* frame members combined with *nanmu* panels. The latter combination is evident in an 18th century side table in the Liang Yi Collection (pl. 27); and the pair of *zitan* cabinets (pl. 35) also employ *nanmu* and *huanghuali* as secondary materials. The phenomenon of combined woods, which has generally been considered a fashion of the early Qing period, may well have originated from resourceful management of rare material. Regardless, the harmonious combination of *zitan* and *nanmu* burl has also survived as a classical pairing.

Palace records reveal a much greater quantity of *zitan* furnishings produced or acquired during the

Qianlong period.²⁹ New furniture was required for the ongoing palace renovations as well as the new constructions at the Yuanmingyuan and elsewhere. During this time an independent unit of Guangzhou craftsmen was also established to satisfy the appetite for fashionable 'Guangzhou-style' furniture—a solemn style which tends to be thick in proportion and with elaborate decoration that sometimes is mixed with Western-style elements (fig. 5) (cf. pls. 1, 7, 14). Such style is often contrasted to the 'Suzhou-style', which tends towards classical refinement and elegant decoration (fig. 6) (cf. pls. 2, 25, 26).

The Qianlong emperor was directly involved with the Imperial furniture-making workshops, as he was with the jade workshops and others. Under his influence, a refined style of jade carving, inspired from archaic motifs, was highly popularized—a style that was also transmitted to works in *zitan* produced during this period. Jade-like relief carving is evident in the *chi* dragons on the pair of cabinets (fig. 1), the rich pattern of clouds bats of the side table (fig. 7), and the raised concave beading on the *kang* table (fig. 8). Such exquisite handling has given rise to the term '*zitan gong* (workmanship)', a superlative which generally reflects excellence in craftsmanship matched to the potential of dense *zitan* for fine detailing and smooth, lustrous polishing.

Many furnishings for the Palace were acquired as tribute or gifts from regional officials. During the year 1771 alone, over ninety objects of *zitan* were received, including throne chairs, screens, tables, cabinets, and other miscellaneous objects. For example, the Salt Administrator from the Liang Huai region provided of a complete set of *zitan* and speckled bamboo furnishings, including a three-panel screen, throne, daybed, imperial desk, a pair of incense stands, a pair of *kang* tables, a pair of lute tables, four pairs of drum stools, and a pair of ceremonial fans. That similar contributions of *zitan* furnishings came from a wide range of regions, including Guangzhou, Fuzhou, Suzhou, Ningbo, and



Fig. 8. Detail of relief carving from zitan kang table (vol. 2, pl. 22).

图8 紫檀炕桌的浮雕细部（册二，图版22）。

坊在清初几位皇帝的大力振兴下，一片朝气蓬勃，其中家具有坊就延揽了大批广州和苏州的能工巧匠。雍正（西元1723-1735年）和乾隆两代的宫廷档案记录透露了大内工坊一般惯用紫檀、花梨、楠木及雕漆来制作宫廷用的桌椅、橱柜、屏风以及其他陈设。

宫廷用的家具主要出自宫内太监所监管的大内工坊，有时亦向民间专门作坊委制或购买²³。雍正皇帝的兄弟怡亲王监督大内的紫檀存量，力求节省不浪费。有一次他获报工匠拟以紫檀制作屏风宝座，不禁训斥说：「不必用紫檀木，做漆的！」²⁴

根据档案中的几件纪实记载，我们看到了清王室有时会以珍奇高贵的紫檀来仿制宫内广受喜爱的家具的一项惯例。雍正六年（西元1728年）曾根据当时一张朱漆桌的规格以及另一张黑漆桌的造型订制了一张紫檀条桌，也曾以紫檀仿制一张旧有的朱漆灯挂椅²⁵。（顺带一提，中国悠久的复制及仿真的传统，也是深植中国人本质的习性，正是家具不易断代的困难之一。）

1726年，大内匠师根据怡亲王带入宫内的一只香几样板，仿制出一对紫檀香几²⁶。1727年，太监程国用安排²⁷一张紫檀嵌玻璃插屏自民间送入宫内，大内匠师立刻以紫檀做了维妙维肖的仿制品，只是一时手边的玻璃尺寸略小，整体尺寸因此稍作调整²⁷。由此看来，上等紫檀陈设也在民间生产，不再单向依赖未必有严密管控紫檀原料的宫廷了。这些例子以及其他实例也进一步显示所谓的「宫廷风格」陈设并非完全排除外来的影响，而是集各种风格之大成，以契合精致讲究的宫廷环境及王室品味为准绳。

话虽如此，清代初期也曾在皇帝本人的灵感或要臣的启发影响之下，设计出一些别出心裁的造型。工坊的记录经常记载有关开发设计原样的批奏细节。例如一件小书柜在1725年批准之后才下令以

紫檀做边框构件，象牙做牙子²⁸。透过该批奏细节的程序来确保有限的紫檀木料不会受到挥霍。

大内工坊的档案曾记录，雍正朝的最初六年中，工坊自制或得自进贡约莫三十馀件尺寸及风格各异的紫檀桌案。细目记录进一步指出其中许多的桌案都以紫檀作桌面主料，其他木材副料做剩馀部件，或者以紫檀边框搭配楠木面心板。后者的组合在两依藏一件十八世纪的紫檀楠木直腿条桌（图版27）上可资见证。一对紫檀方角柜（图版34）也用楠木及黄花梨为副料。这种结合数种木料冶于一炉的风气已普遍被视为早清时期的一种流风，出发点可能是为了善用珍贵的紫檀木料。料想不到的是，紫檀与楠木瘿的搭配相得益彰，已成为传世的配对经典。

宫廷记录显示乾隆期间曾制造或采购大量的紫檀家具陈设²⁹。新家具的需求随著宫廷不断装修以及圆明园或其他行宫的新造建筑而激增。当时，由于大内木作工坊的广州工匠技艺高超，又独立单设一广式木作坊以满足嗜好广式风格者的新潮口味。广式家具趋于风格庄严，形体厚重，比例粗放，雕刻繁复常融入西方装饰元素（图5）（参考图版1, 7, 14）。与之相对的普通木作工坊则趋向苏式风格，经典精致，装饰秀气典雅（图6）（参考图版2, 25, 26）。

乾隆皇帝不仅涉及大内的玉作等工坊，也直接参与大内的家具工坊。在他的影响下，以古玉为主题的精致玉雕盛极一时。流风所及，也影响了当时的紫檀器物，例如在一对方角柜（图1）上精美绝伦的螭龙浮雕，一张条桌（图7）上富丽堂皇的蝙蝠祥云浮雕，以及一张炕桌（图8）铲地浮雕打窟面的拐子龙等都是仿玉雕做工的产物。这种精美的雕琢产生了「紫檀工」一词，用来形容卓越的技艺配上紫檀致密的潜在特性，最能展现精致无比的雕刻细部以及打磨后平滑光亮的最佳效果。

许多宫廷的家具陈设都是来自地方官吏的进贡或赠礼。单是西元1771这一年，宫廷就收到紫檀器用包括宝座、屏风、桌案、橱柜以及其他杂器不下九十多件。例如两淮盐政提供整套紫檀间斑竹的家具贡品就包含三扇屏风座、宝座、榻、御用大案、香几成对、炕几成对、琴桌成对、绣墩四对以及鸾扇成对。



Fig. 9. Freshly cut zitan timber
with pithy center.

图9 新砍下的有髓木料。

Hangzhou, points to its relatively broad distribution throughout the affluent regions of the empire.

Thus, a good deal of *zitan* furniture produced was not only for the Palace, but also for those of sufficient means. An inscription on a pair of *zitan* cabinets records an expense exceeding 300 ounces of silver paid out by a Cantonese gentleman in the year 1747; as Tian noted, such lavish expenditure would have far exceeded the expense of an architectural structure to house them.³⁰ Sumptuous *zitan* furniture was also described in the 18th century novel *Hongloumeng*, which documents the semi-fictional daily life of an extended family bestowed with Imperial favor. One of the main halls of the family estate was set out with a "large *zitan* table carved with *chi* dragons" that was of sufficient dimension to place "a huge bronze *ding* nearly three feet in height with a smaller antique gilt bronze vessel and crystal bowl on either side."³¹ In consideration of the preponderance of small-timber *zitan*, that which was acquired for such large cabinets and massive side tables must have been exceeding rare.

The ongoing demand for *zitan* furnishings during the Qianlong period gradually depleted Imperial reserves. This situation was further compounded as court fashion was emulated within the broader realms of society, which resulted in increased private competition for premium materials. However, sources for *zitan* were elsewhere available. During the Jiaqing period (1796-1820), two hundred variously sized *zitan* objects with decorative inlays were commissioned from Yangzhou workshops for renovations to the Yuanmingyuan.³² Thus, the depletion of *zitan* in the Imperial warehouses does not necessarily reflect a general shortage of material, but rather more reliance from outside sources.

With demand running high, entrepreneurs were also actively seeking new supplies. The Spanish Jesuit priest Juan Jose Delgado, who having been posted to the Philippines in 1711 for forty-some years, noted the predilection of the Chinese sea traders for a local hardwood known as *tindalo*.

"...in China, they say *tindalo* sells for its weight in

silver and
is valued as such;
they make from it many
curious desks, chairs and stools.
They also know how to preserve in the wood
a blood red color, washing it frequently in salt water.
In time, if care is not taken, it changes to a dark
color, but is very lustrous; it can be polished to such
a degree that one's face can be seen in it...."³³

Although the grain and texture of *tindalo* more closely resemble *tieli* wood, the characteristics described by Delgado are also associated with *zitan* which, when freshly cut, reveals a deep-red color that is intensely concentrated (fig. 9) which, within a few months due to exposure to light, shifts toward darker and darker tonalities.

The Chinese had been frequenting Manila since the removal of trade restrictions in 1567, trading porcelain and silk for much needed silver, which the Spanish were shipping from Central and South America. The virgin tropical forests in the Philippines and elsewhere throughout the southeastern archipelago also provided a rich resource of precious hardwoods suited to the demand in China. Delgado as well as those others who followed throughout the 18th and 19th centuries as forestry administrators in the Philippines noted the purchasing patterns of the 'Chinese mestizos'. Late in the 19th century, Domigo Vidal recorded :

..... the Chinese never buy wood by invoice and attach little importance to names. Their methods of buying are very crude, the principal factors of importance to them are, that the wood does not float, and that it is of a dark color, when as a matter of fact, many of the Filipino woods of the first class, when well-seasoned, float. Their methods of buying is by inspection, cutting the wood with an ax and examining it. The woods which they prefer are the Molave, Narra, Bansalaguan (highly prized), Yacal, Dungon, Supa, Tindalo, Betis, Mangachapuy, Camagon, Acle and Ipi.³⁴

而类似的紫檀家具贡品也来自更多的地区，包括广州、福州、苏州、宁波和杭州；如此辽阔的地理分布也点出了清帝国富庶地区的穴脉所在。

就这样，为数可观的紫檀家具应运而生，不但以宫廷为对像，也进入优渥的富人家里。据记载，1747年一位广东仕绅以三百多两银子买下一对紫檀橱柜。田家青指出，这笔钜额开销甚至远超过陈设这对橱柜的房屋本身的价格³⁰！十八世纪的巨作《红楼梦》刻画一个受到皇室宠幸的大家族的悲欢离合，书中也提到豪华的紫檀家具。例如大观园的一间正厅设有「大紫檀雕螭案」一张，上头摆设「三尺来高青绿古铜鼎，……，一边是金雌彝，一边是玻璃蛊。」³¹若考虑当时是以小管径紫檀为主要来源，那么那些能用来制作大型橱柜及翘头案的紫檀大料必然特别稀珍，少之又少。

一般认为乾隆年间宫内家具使用紫檀日多，逐渐耗尽了皇室的木源。而且王室的品味逐渐流入贵族阶层，更造成民间互相争夺珍贵的木料。然而宫内的紫檀枯竭匮乏，却不代表其他地方就没有紫檀。嘉庆年间（西元1796-1820年）为了翻修圆明园³²，曾委托扬州民间工坊制作两百件尺寸不一的紫檀镶嵌器物。因此，宫廷紫檀存货耗尽的徵兆未必一定反映外界也缺料，倒是更依赖外界的资源了。

随著需求增加，企业资本家也着手积极开辟新木源。西班牙耶稣会牧师迪加度（Juan Jose Delgado）自1711年就驻派菲律宾，传教四十馀年，他记载了来自中国的海洋贸易商偏爱当地一种状似紫檀的硬木，亦称为tindalo。

「……在中国，他们都说tindalo和银子一样是按重量来交易的，而且价格足以媲美银子。他们以它制成稀珍的桌案和椅凳，也知道要以盐水经常浸洗以保存木头的血红色泽。假以时日，若不保养，颜色会转深，但光泽更好。可以磨光表面，打磨程度够，就光可鉴人，照见自己的脸庞……³³」

尽管Tindalo的纹理与质地更像铁力木，迪加度所描写的特性却也牵连著紫檀的特性，特别是在新鲜木材刚锯开的时候，紫檀会呈现凝炼的深红色泽（图9），不过曝光数月之后，颜色会变得愈来愈

深沈。

1567年海禁解除之后，中国人即常前往马尼拉，以瓷器和丝绸换取当地西班牙人自中南美洲带回的白银。菲律宾及东南亚列岛的热带处女林也盛产珍贵的硬木，能迎合中国内地的需求。迪加度以及十八、九世纪在菲律宾担任林务官的后继者，都曾记载「混血中国商人」的购买模式。十九世纪晚期，维代（Domigo Vidal）有如下的记录：

……中国木材商人从来不按发票明细购买木材，也不大依靠名称来采购。他们购买的方法非常原始，最主要是看几个重要的基本因素：不漂浮，颜色深，事实上许多菲律宾上等木材，在经过一定岁月的自然乾燥后，也会漂浮。他们就用斧头破开木材，凭肉眼仔细检查。他们喜欢的木材是Molave、Narra、Bansalaguin（极受好评）、Yacal、Dungon、Supa、Tindalo、Betis、Mangachapuy、Camagon、Acle 及 Ipil³⁴。

这里记载的经验法则极可能反映了长久以来木材商人的传统采购模式，也意味着在最上等的木料来源耗尽之后，商人们就会选择那些同样具有类似采购特性的其他木材了。这也是为什么植物学家很难明确辨认紫檀，而鉴赏家们却对它们的特性分类争议不下的部分原因了。

值此之故，十九世纪及二十世纪初年的紫檀家具看似一个大杂烩，源头多样，而且层次参差不齐。尽管十九世纪的夹头平头案及香几（图版25及33）的做工和材料仍然相当讲究，可是紫檀与红木之间的细微差别界限却因为有些时候彼此的木质特性互为参杂，而更难辨识。例如图版6的有束腰马蹄方凳，其紫檀用料就同时显现金星紫檀的特征及深色红木的纹理特质。也许基于这种似是而非的局面，启发了刻款辨识的点子，图版17的紫檀嵌瘿木摇椅就郑重其事地刻下：「自办正式紫檀木」的字样（图10）。只是这件选品的紫檀用料，在色泽匀称及纹理一致性上，都无法和早期紫檀作品的水平相比。除了木材品质略逊，做工（晚清制品）也比「紫檀工」逊色不少，后者为早期制品的独特标记。这类质量标准上的让步常可见证于铲地不匀称的浮雕装饰或圆润粗细不一的线脚。

The empirical methods noted here likely reflect longstanding, traditional patterns. As premium sources became depleted, selections were compromised with alternate materials of similar characteristics. This is in part why botanists have great difficulty with the identification of *zitan*, and why connoisseurs struggle at odds to categorize and differentiate its qualities.

Thus, *zitan* furniture from the 19th century and in the early 20th century appears as a mixed lot, reflecting diverse sources and uneven standards. While quality workmanship and materials are reflected in the 19th century altar side table and incense stands (cat. 25, 33), the fine line between *zitan* and *hongmu* at times becomes difficult to distinguish as one material blends into the other. Such are the stools illustrated as catalogue item 6, whose material reflects characteristics of gold flecked *zitan* as well as dark *hongmu*. Perhaps it was this murky situation that inspired the discerning inscription, "Directly imported real *zitan*....." on the rocking chairs illustrated in plate 17 (fig. 10). Nevertheless, even the quality of this material does not match that of earlier pieces in terms of uniformity of color and consistency of grain patterns. Material aside, works from the late Qing period generally fall short of the superior 'zitan workmanship' that distinguishes earlier works. Such compromised standards are often visible in the uneven ground of relief carved decoration and/or beading of inconsistent uniformity.

In circumstances of popular demand and limited supply, *zitan* furniture from the late 18th and 19th centuries was also commonly fabricated from deficient timber requiring laminated construction or the use of patched, piece-work components. Most *zitan* is harvested as a small, twisted, and crooked timber with a pithy, hollow core, from whence the common saying '100% *zitan*, 90% hollow' (*shi tan jiu kong*) arises (fig. 9). While suitable for the manufacture of small objects, the use of dwarfed timber for larger pieces required that individual components first be built up through various processes of laminating, splicing, and patching. Such are several of the

pieces catalogued herein, including a table screen constructed with thin veneers of *zitan* laminated to a *hongmu* core (fig. 11). Figure 12 also shows a detail of an old *zitan*-wrapped frame—the perfected workmanship disguising a fabrication that few would be able to detect. The use of patched material is also evident in the side table (vol. 2, pl. 32) and chairs (vol. 2, pl. 9, 14), which also date from the mid- to late Qing periods.

This summary of historical literary references tallies more or less with the surviving body of *zitan* objects. Given the hardness, durability, and esteem of *zitan*, there is no reason to doubt the survival of a few small objects such as game boards, etc, from the Tang dynasty; more realistically, however, there could be a significant percentage of material that dates from the late Ming period and onward. On the other hand, with the exception of the small group attributed to the 17th century, there are presently no pieces of full-sized *zitan* furniture that can be securely dated to the Ming period. The 18th century can be considered the 'golden age' for *zitan* furniture; the material was highly valued, and thus demanded the highest standards of workmanship. The great body of extant *zitan* furniture dates from the 18th century into the late 19th and 20th centuries, when it becomes blurred with the late Qing traditions of *hongmu* furniture.

It has long been accepted as traditional knowledge amongst Hong Kong furniture dealers that sets of *zitan* furniture were produced for wealthy Cantonese families during the early part of the 20th century. While the 'rarity to the point of extinction' myth has been perpetuated, new sources of *zitan* continued to be discovered, and *zitan* timber is still readily available and is widely used in the reproduction furniture business as well as by those with less scrupulous intentions who sell fakes throughout Southeast Asia and elsewhere. Throughout the late 90's, the Nantong timber merchant Gu Yongqi regularly advertised *zitan* logs in the Chinese antiquities magazine *Shoucangjia* (Collectors). One grade was available in small logs ranging 16-20 cm in diameter, and



Fig. 10. Detail of inscription from rocking chairs (vol. 2, pl. 17).

图10 紫檀摇椅刻铭细部（册二，图版17）。

十八及十九世纪时，由于紫檀供不应求，因此使用有瑕疵的紫檀木料制作家具颇为寻常，从而衍生了匠心独运的补救技法，诸如使用胶合拼接法，或小木料填料法，以及分解一件部件成为数个构件单位来制作。紫檀料大多来自盘根错节、扭旋弯曲、髓心中空的小管径原木，故有「十檀九空」的说法（图9）。尽管这类木材造成小器绰绰有余，但是要制作大器，则需事先制作个别部件，通过使用上述所说的各种加工处理法，方能完成。本图录有几件家具即是这一类的代表，例如镜子座屏（图11）的足墩部件即以红木为内心，再贴紫檀木皮作外皮。图12，同样地，展示了裹贴老紫檀木皮后的边框构件的细部，天衣无缝的伪装工夫，令人难以辨认真伪虚实啊。图版32的条桌和图版9、14的椅子也明显地使用填料法补救，而鉴定年份也落在清中晚期。

以上这些历史文献考据与存世的紫檀器物彼此大致吻合。就紫檀的硬度、耐久性及尊贵程度而言，我们没有理由怀疑像棋盘之类的几件小器物确实由唐代流传至今，但就现实而言，绝大部分只可能是晚明以降的成品。然而话说回来，除了少数判定为十七世纪的家具之外，目前没有一件大件的紫檀家具可确实保证成于明代。十八世纪可说是紫檀家具的黄金时期，价值非凡的木料造就了最上乘的工艺。现存紫檀家具断代在十八世纪以降，到十九世纪晚期及二十世纪期间，为紫檀家具之大宗，在

晚清流行当道的红木家具传统中，龙蛇混杂，掺杂不清，变的暧昧难辨。

尽管紫檀「几近绝种」的迷思一直没有断过，可是新的紫檀来源也不断被发现，紫檀家具的制造更是持续延伸到二十一世纪而不衰。香港的家具商都知道，二十世纪初期广东的有钱人家仍然~~印~~制成了套的紫檀家具。现今新紫檀木来源仍然充足，而且广被仿制家具业运用。别有居心的商人也利用新料生产仿冒品，然后在东南亚和其它地方销售以谋暴利。九零年代后期江苏南通的木材商人顾永琦常在中文古董杂志《收藏家》上广告宣传销售大量紫檀原木。其中直径16-20公分、长120-160公分的小块原木等级，价格为一公吨35000人民币。较高级的木料则是直径20-26公分，长120-240公分的大块原木，价格为一公吨45000人民币。如今因应国内广大的需求，中国木材商人跑遍全球收购相类似紫檀的木料，原木价格已大幅调涨。两依藏的雕龙画轴筒（图13）就是由一块异常大的原木，最大直径有41公分宽所制作的；原木大料固然特别罕见，而这样硕大体积的近代之作明显地阐明了木料来源的状况。

一九九九年开幕的北京紫檀博物馆，推出以新紫檀复制的明清家具为馆藏特色。田家青主持的工坊以~~新~~紫檀精心制作一批具签名款的明式古典家具，逸趣的是其中一批已经在北京成功地拍卖³⁵。西方家具设计师也把脑筋动到这种古老高贵的木材，例如英国的橱柜制造商林立（David Linley）就以紫檀及巴西黑檀做了一个精美绝伦的珠宝盒（图14），为两依藏最新的收藏之一。

鉴赏与植物学研究

在紫檀的辨识与评鉴方面，可说是众说纷纭，百家争鸣。鉴赏家与植物学家的说法互异，各有独特的术语和不同的关注。鉴赏家的焦点主要在于“后天现象”，亦即成品磨光后的视觉效果，其次才是密度、表面硬度、耐久性、香气等天生现象。他们对于树种原产地及显微镜下的年代断定并无多大兴趣，触感和视觉审美才是鉴赏家的重点。感受并浸染在其中的内在特质美及外在的稀珍美，比起按实验室的分析而冠上「珍贵木材」的标签名声，更能经常引发优雅崇高人性的经验。因此，「金星」、



Fig. 11. Detail of laminated material from table screen (vol. 2, pl. 41).

图11 镜子座屏贴紫檀木皮细部（册二，图版41）。

120-160 cm in length; price: 35,000 RMB/ton. A higher grade is available in slightly large logs ranging 20-26 cm in diameter, and 120-240 cm in length; price: 45,000 RMB/ton. Timber prices have since increased markedly, as Chinese merchants search the around the globe for *zitan*-like material to meet the popular demand. An exceptionally large timber measuring 41 cm in diameter at its widest point was used to produce the dragon-carved scroll pot in the Liangyi Collection (fig. 13); while exceedingly rare, the sheer size of this recent work clearly illuminates the situation.

In 1999, the Zitan Museum opened in Beijing, featuring reproductions of Ming and Qing furniture crafted in new *zitan*. More inspired is the signature series of superbly crafted furniture inspired from classical Ming designs employing new *zitan* produced by the workshop of Tian Jiaqing, of which a group was successfully sold at auction in Beijing. Western furniture designers are also finding ways to employ this ancient, noble timber—an exquisitely crafted jewelry case made with *zitan* and Brazilian rosewood by the English cabinet-maker David Linley (fig. 14) also belongs to the Liang Yi Collection.

Connoisseurship and Botanical Studies

With regard to the identification and appraisal of *zitan*, divergent opinions arise from different viewpoints. Studies based in connoisseurship and those in botany employ different languages, each communicating with terminologies that address distinct concerns. Connoisseurship studies are primarily focused upon the 'after-the-fact' visual appearance of the polished surface,



Fig. 12. Detail of zitan wrapped frame, mid-Qing period. Courtesy of Hu Desheng.

图12 紫檀贴皮边框的细部，清中期。胡德生提供。

and secondarily with density, surface hardness, durability, fragrance, etc. These studies show little interest in the tree of origin nor any in attributes associated with its microscopic cellular world. Relative to the tactile and visual aesthetic of the connoisseur, such a prioritization is appropriate—for that which is imbued with intrinsic and rarified beauty will consistently produce a more exalted experience than that which earns a label of 'precious material' from laboratory analysis. Thus, the terms 'golden star' (*jinxing*)-, 'chicken blood' (*jixue*)-, and '*huali*'-*zitan* reflect the attempts of connoisseurs to distinguish between the varied qualities found within the generic *zitan* family. It can also be noted that the lack of such qualifying distinctions in any historical resources demonstrates an unprecedented level of connoisseurship that now exists around the subject.

On the other hand, viewed through the scope of botanical analysis, the visual appearance of a finished timber is only one of its many identifiable characteristics, and one that is influenced by many extenuating and often, unpredictable factors. For instance, because the composition of timber follows a layered pattern of concentric growth, a single timber will exhibit significant grain pattern variations due to the orientation of its surface to these growth rings. For example, it is in the tangentially orientated surface where so-called 'cow hair' open-pore grain pattern is found (fig. 16). In the radially oriented surface from the same timber, these same, foreshortened pores appear like short, whisker shavings, and an oscillating striped or ribbon grain pattern appears due to the manner in which light reflects from the interlocked grain. Trees of the same species also have differences in



Fig. 13 Dragon-carved scroll pot. New zitan, ca. 1960. 40 x 35 x 51 cm H. Pair of weiqi bowls. New zitan, ca. 1960. 11.5 cm diameter x 7.5 cm H. Liang Yi Collection.

图13 雕龙画轴筒。新紫檀，约1990-1997年制。长40公分，宽35公分，高51公分。围棋体成对。新紫檀，约1990-1997年制。径11.5公分，高7.5公分。两依藏。

「鸡血」及「花梨纹紫檀」等名词，反映出鉴赏家试图在广义的紫檀家族中进一步细分辨别变化多端的木种。此外，由于过去的历史文献并没有提及像现今如此这般的区分法，显示关注此议题的当今鉴赏力达到史无前例的水平。

另一方面，从植物学分析的角度来看，加工后的木表外观只是众多可辨认的特性之一，其外观变化常受到许多隐而不见和屡屡不可预料的天然因素所影响。例如木材的结构是依同心圆的年轮方式成长，因此端视对应年轮之切面角度的选择，每块木料会产生相当不同的纹理变化。举例来说，木块若采玄切面切割，会看到导管（译者：木工称：鬃眼）在表面形成所谓的「牛毛」纹理（图16）。同样的木块，若采取横切面取料，同样的鬃眼则会变装呈现

刮胡后的短胡砸纹，致密地夹杂在交错的带状纹中。同种的树木也有不同的密度、色泽、质地、纹理，而且视所受环境因素影响的多寡，决定「金星」纹理的孕涵量。这些多端的变异性也可能都来自于树木的性别、土壤条件、曝光度、磁场导向、海拔高度等因素的影响。反过来说，有时候两种不同的树种也有可能产生相似的外观。

陈嵘在1959年出版的《中国树木分类学》中，提到两种不同的紫檀木，一是生长在印度、菲律宾、马来半岛和广东省的蔷薇木 (*pterocarpus indicus*)，另一种是原产于印度及锡兰、亦生长于广东及海南岛的檀香紫檀 (*pterocarpus santalinus*)³⁶。前文提及的南通木材商人顾永琦曾进一步阐述这两种紫檀木的异同。依照顾氏的资料，蔷薇木

density, color, texture, grain patterns, and may be more or less subject to the phenomenon that produces the sparkling *jinxing* effect. These variations can all result from tree gender, soil conditions, exposure, magnetic field orientation, altitude, etc. Two distinct species may also produce material of similar appearance.

In Chen Rong's *Classification of Chinese Woods* (pub. 1959), two varieties of *zitan* are noted, including *pterocarpus indicus* (*qiangwei mu*), which grows in India, the Philippines, the Malay Peninsula, and Guangdong, and *pterocarpus santalinus*, with origins in India and Ceylon, and also grows in Guangdong and on Hainan Island.³⁶ These two varieties were recently substantiated and further elaborated upon by Gu Yongqi, the Nantong timber dealer mentioned above. Accordingly, *pterocarpus indicus* is native to southern China and its bordering regions; it is a broadleaf deciduous tree that mostly grows as a small shrub with crooked branches, it has a hollow pithy center, and its red pigmentation is not water soluble (fig. 9). *Pterocarpus santalinus* is native to the islands of the Indian Ocean; it is an evergreen broadleaf tree that grows with a straight trunk, generally has a solid center, and its red pigmentation is water soluble. While these two botanical types have distinct characteristics, Gu notes that a material of similar quality is yielded from both species.³⁷

More recent analysis on the subject has appeared by Zhou Mou³⁸, a timber and botanical specialist who has researched Chinese hardwood furniture-making timber for several years. Zhou has analyzed old references and records, reviewed botanical approaches, examined the material of both antique and new furniture, and traveled throughout the Indochina region to visit local forestry specialists and investigate timber samples. After weighing connoisseurship and botanical viewpoints, he concludes that the only identifiable source for 'true *zitan*' (*pterocarpus santalinus*) is the mountainous coastal regions west and southwestern India, wherein the highest concentrations are still found in the state of Mysore.

True *zitan*, also known today as 'small leaf *zitan*'

(Lat. *pterocarpus santalinus*) (Ch. *tanxiang zitan*), differs botanically from its step-brother, 'large leaf *zitan*' (Lat. *dalbergia luovelii*) (Ch. *lushi heihuangtan*, *hei suanzhi*), which is more widely distributed throughout Indochina including regions of Africa and Madagascar, and which is more widely available in the present timber market. Both are heavy with pigmentation, which will leave reddish marks when rubbed on a light surface, and which are soluble in alcohol. While generally similar in appearance and weight, there are also discernable subtle differences which are further noted below.

Zhou's efforts to penetrate the murky realm of *zitan* and to identify a true *zitan* species is a significant step, which moreover, points toward a traditional source in India that has likely been drawn upon for centuries. Such are the results and fine distinctions possible with modern botanical science. On the other hand, the age-old practice of timber merchants using less-than-precise intuitive methods to appraise the dark, heavy woods from distant tropical lands does not alter the fact that a wider latitude of material has for centuries been accepted and labeled '*zitan*'.

For the connoisseur, the general inadequacy of the botanical species classification system is demonstrated by its inability to target and distinguish between the subtle differences of woods like *hongmu* and *zitan*. From a botanical point of view, these woods remain indistinguishable members of related rosewood families, which has led some venturesome Chinese scholars to begin using the term *hongmu* as a broad category inclusive of *zitan* as well as *huanghuali*³⁹. However, the association of these precious materials with inferior *hongmu* is unthinkable to connoisseurship methodology. While the refined qualities of *zitan* remain incognizant to modern science, developed visual sensitivities tempered with some basic botanical knowledge can aid in critical appraisal and supplement the casual, romantic appreciation with a deeper level of understanding. Accordingly, characteristics of *zitan* commonly cited by connoisseurs are elaborated upon below.



Fig. 14. Jewelry case. New zitan. 48 x 33 x 20 cm H. David Linley, cabinetmaker 1999. Liang Yi Collection.

图14 珠宝盒，新紫檀，长48公分，宽33公分，高20公分，橱柜制造家David Linley，1999年。两依藏。

(*pterocarpus indicus*)，中文名为印度紫檀，原产于中国南方周边国家。这种阔叶的落叶树，多长成盘根错节的小型灌木，心多中空并具有非水溶性的红色素（图9）。檀香紫檀（*pterocarpus santalinus*）则产于印度洋岛屿，是阔叶长青树，树干笔直，空洞较少并具有水溶性的红色素。尽管这两种树木的特性各异，顾氏却指出两者质量相去无几³⁷。

有关该主题之最新近的研究发表是来自一位木材、植物学专家——周默³⁸。周氏研究多年中国硬木家具的材质，不仅分析早期的旧文献和资料，考察植物学家的研究，检视新、旧家具的用材，还遍访中南半岛当地的林业专家，实地调查研究木材取样。在两厢权衡鉴赏家和植物学家的观点后，周氏总结正牌紫檀（*pterocarpus santalinus*）唯一明确可辨的产地在印度南部、西南部山区，比较集中的地区为迈索尔邦（Mysore state）。

正牌紫檀也是今天人们所知的“小叶紫檀”（拉丁语：*pterocarpus santalinus*）（汉语：檀香紫檀），与其植物学系统上的连襟兄弟“大叶紫檀”（拉丁语：*dalbergia luvelii*）（汉语：卢氏黑黄檀，黑酸枝）相异，后者主要产地遍及中南半岛地区和马达加斯加岛屿，而且在当今的木材市场有充足的货源。两者都有丰富的紫檀色素，当擦划在任何浅色的表面上，就立刻留下红色痕迹；当然也有溶于酒精的特

性。虽然外观和重量大致相去不多，一些幽微的差异点仍然可资辨识，稍后会加以说明。

周氏深入混沌的紫檀领域，为辨识正牌紫檀木种所做出的努力，可谓踏出意义重大的一步。他不仅指出传统的产地在印度，事实上很可能就是数世纪以来一直取用的紫檀源头。在现代植物学的辅助之下，周氏的研究结果和精细的差异辨别见地更加深了可信度。另一方面，木材商惯以较不精准的老法子，凭经验直觉鉴定又黑、又重的遥远热带木材的长久习惯，还是难改数世纪以来人们已习惯接受在“紫檀”称号下宽松选择木材品种之事实。

对于鉴赏家而言，植物学分类系统无法明确区分红木及紫檀之间的细微特性差异，因此略嫌不足。从西方植物学的角度看来，这两者都属于相关的蔷薇（rosewood）科，彼此大同小异。尽管某些较大胆的中国学者已开始采用广义的「红木」一词来泛指紫檀及黄花梨等珍贵树种³⁹，但是鉴赏家却无法想像以品质略逊一筹的红木之名来指称这些珍贵的木材。尽管先进的科学对微妙的特质差异之辨识未曾着墨，但是透过训练有素的敏锐肉眼，加上一些基本植物学常识，还是能持平进行准确鉴赏的；有了深一步的了解当能弥补随性、浪漫式鉴赏的不足。以下就会逐一介绍鉴赏家最常指出的紫檀特质。

Categories 类别

- Small-leaf zitan (Lat. *pterocarpus santalinus*) (Ch. tanxiang zitan) is also known as 'true zitan'. It is sourced from the mountainous coastal regions east and southeastern India. It is generally found as relatively small diameter material (20-30 cm dia) with a pithy, hollow center. When worked, the timber yields a light floral fragrance. The grain pattern is compact, and the surface ages to deep reddish-purple to purplish-black tonalities.

「小叶」紫檀（拉丁语：*pterocarpus santalinus*）（汉语：檀香紫檀）也称为“正牌紫檀”。产地在印度南部以及西南部山区，比较集中的地区为迈索尔邦（Mysore state）。一般多为中空具有髓心的小管径（直径20-30公分）原木。新切料会散发一股淡淡的花香味。木质纹理致密，表面色泽随著时间由深紫红变成紫黑色。

- Large-leaf zitan (Lat. *dalbergia luovelii*) (Ch. lushi heihuangtan, hei suanzhi) is more widely distributed throughout Indochina including regions of Africa and Madagascar. The timber is of larger, usable size than 'small-leaf zitan', and without a hollow center; grain pattern larger than small-leaf zitan. When worked, the timber yields a slight sour fragrance. The grain pattern is larger than 'small-leaf zitan', and ages toward purplish-black to ebony-golden brown tonalities.

「大叶」紫檀（拉丁语：*dalbergia luovelii*）（汉语：卢氏黑黄檀，黑酸枝），产地遍及中南半岛地区和马达加斯加岛屿。木材较粗大，而且为实心木，所以可使用的面积比小叶紫檀多。纹理也相对粗大。新切料有微微酸香味。表面色泽随著时间由黑紫色变成乌黑泛金黄的色调。

- 'Golden star' (jinxing) zitan (fig. 15), also called 'golden thread' (jinsi), is considered to be a marker of the finest quality zitan. The term describes the fine thread-like strands of golden-yellow to vermilion-red color that appear embedded within the surface. According to a recent study by Gu Yongqi, these flecks of material are a residual silicate that crystallized from the original tree sap and settled into the open grain pores.⁴⁰ After the surface has been polished with wax, the translucence of this substance is highlighted and produces a sparkling effect. This characteristic also appears randomly in 'small-leaf' and 'large-leaf' zitan.

「金星」紫檀（图15）为「金丝」，是顶级紫檀品种



Fig. 15. 'Golden star' zitan. Detail from scrollpot (vol. 3, pl. 26).

图15「金星」紫檀，轴筒细部（册三，图版26）。

的标志。「金星」一词用来形容木料表面彷彿像嵌入细丝一般的纹理，颜色由金黄色到朱红色不等。根据顾永琦近年的研究，这是因为管孔内充满亮晶晶的矽化物所致⁴⁰。等到木质表面打磨上蜡后，这种半透明的物质就更趋明显，因此紫黑表面越发透亮。这种特性偶尔也会出现在小叶和大叶紫檀品种上。

• 'Cow hair' (niumao) (fig. 16) describes the pattern of elongated open pores with fine pointed ends that appear like strands of cow hair. This characteristic is primarily evident in the tangential surface, such as in the surface of a brushpot (cf. vol. 3, pl. 5) or alternately, a flat surface that has a more or less tangential orientation to the growth rings. Conversely, these same pores appear as short, whisker-like markings in the radial surface. In some types of material, the grain pores appear as curling S-shapes. Because of the interlocked grain structure, these open pores will also exhibit a 'herring-bone' pattern, which has also been described as 'crab-claw markings' in traditional historical references. This characteristic also appears in both 'small-leaf' and 'large-leaf' zitan.

「牛毛」（图16）是形容修长的管孔，两端尖细，状如一丝丝的牛毛。这种特质主要见于玄切面取向的板材，例如在笔筒的圆弧形表面上（另见册三，图版5），或是在平直的器表表面上也会产生，只要取材角度或多或少对应年轮的玄切面皆可。反之，同样的管孔在横剖面会变成短胡砸状的纹理。在某些



Fig. 16. 'Cow hair' zitan. Detail from chest (vol. 3, pl. 72).
图16「牛毛」紫檀，紫檀箱细部（册三，图版72）。

紫檀木料中，纹理会呈卷曲的S形。有些管孔结构交错，就会出现「人字形」图案，在历代文献中又被称为「蟹爪纹」。这种特性也会出现在小叶和大叶紫檀品种上。

- 'Satin' (duanmian) zitan (fig. 17) describes the lustrous quality of shimmering satin. Like satin, velvet, or the hologram embossed upon a credit card, a shimmering effect is produced when the surface is viewed from shifted positions. This effect results from the play of light reflecting from multi-faceted structure of the interlocked grain. In the radial surface



Fig. 17. 'Satin' zitan. Detail from stool (vol. 2, pl. 5).
图17「缎面」紫檀，紫檀方凳细部（册二，图版5）。

orientation, this effect appears as a shimmering striped or ribbon pattern. This characteristic also appears in both 'small-leaf' and 'large-leaf' zitan.

「缎面」紫檀（图17）木表闪耀的光泽如缎面般，就像绸缎、丝绒或信用卡（防伪作用）的折射标示图案一样，表面一经翻动即会呈现闪耀的效果。这是由于集数种不同管孔组织叠层交错杂置，在光影的变化下，多面像的交错纹理交替出现。若在横剖面上，则会出现闪烁的条状或带状纹理。这种特性也会出现在小叶和大叶紫檀品种上。

- 'Rooster blood' (jixue) zitan (fig. 18), sometimes called 'ox blood' (niuxue), bears deeply pigmented striations of dark and red-colored stripes. Because the material is usually found with relatively straight grain, it can be easily confused with hongmu.

「鸡血」紫檀（图18）有时候亦称为「牛血」，具有深色或红色的条纹。由于这种木料纹理很笔直，通常容易与红木混淆。



Fig. 18. 'Chicken blood' zitan. Detail from balance stand (vol. 3, pl. 95).
图18「鸡血」紫檀，紫檀天平架细部（册三，图版95）。

- 'Burl-like (douban) zitan' (fig. 19) loosely describes various mottled, wavy, or curly figures, the causes of which are generally unknown. In some cases they appear result from internal stresses that cause the cellular growth to develop a rippled, or washboard-like structure. When cut and polished to a flat plane, curly wave-like stripes appear across the grain that shimmer with reflected light. The intensity of this characteristic



Fig. 19. Wavy-grain zitan. Detail from box with sliding cover (vol. 3, pl. 64).

图19 水波纹紫檀，紫檀匣细部（册三，图版64）。

varies from that only visible under strong light, to a more distinct 'tiger-striped' (*huban*) figure. An example of the latter is strongly pronounced in the side panels of the small box illustrated in volume 3, plate 52. In the literal sense of timber produced from actual burl growth, that of *zitan* is rarely encountered.

「豆瓣」紫檀（图19）泛称各种斑驳、波浪状或卷曲的图案，至于成因尚不清楚。有些例子似乎因为内部的张力而使细胞发展出涟漪或状似洗衣板纹的结构。木材经切割及磨平后，会出现波浪似的条纹，透过光照而熠熠生辉。由于该特性的强弱程度不一，有些只能透过强光显示，有些却显而易见例如「虎斑」纹理。册三图版64的紫檀匣侧板就有较为突出的虎斑纹理。按常理，紫檀瘿木的例子微乎其微。

• *Huali zitan* (fig. 20) describes a material that, as Ma Weidu notes, "barely qualifies as a member of the generic *zitan* family, only to 'filling in to make up the numbers'."⁴¹ The material is dark and dense, and has an open pore structure that is relatively large and coarse. The polished surface has a grayish-black tonality and appears dull when compared to bright luster of superior types. The style of furniture with which it is commonly associated suggests a use that emerges during the late Qing and Republican periods (1912-1949). Such material is represented in the single stool and pair of chairs illustrated in plates 4 and 13.

花梨纹紫檀（图20），诚如马未都所言，是形容「属于紫檀家族中滥竽充数者⁴¹。」这种木材色深而分量沈，管孔相当粗大。磨光后的表面呈灰黑色，与优



Fig. 20. Huali zitan. Detail from chairs (vol. 2, pl. 13).

图20 花梨纹紫檀，扶手椅细部（册二，图版13）。

良木料的鲜艳光泽相比，显得较为黯沈。这一类花梨纹紫檀家具以晚清至国民政府（1912-1949）撤台前较多。图版4的方凳及图版13的一对扶手椅可作为代表。

• *Chawu* describes an inferior ebony with brown-toned figuring, which according to Zhang Dexiang, may also be confused with *zitan*, but can be distinguished by its very fine pore structure.⁴² Qu Dajun noted Hainan as a source for this timber along with characteristics of 'strength without the brittleness [of a true ebony]', and 'sinking in water'.⁴³ Such material may also relate to *Camagon* (*maoshi mu*) which, according to early 20th century customs documentation, was also imported from the Philippines. It is further characterized as ebony-like, 'brownish-black to black in color with reddish-brown steaks, very fine-grained, extremely hard, dense and durable, and rarely attacked by insects. Used by the Chinese for carvings, pipe-stems, fine quality furniture, chopsticks, and various ornaments'.⁴⁴

「茶乌」是形容带有棕色条纹、品质略逊一筹的乌木。张德祥认为它容易与紫檀混淆，但是仍然可由其极细的管孔结构辨识⁴²。屈大均指出这种木料产于海南岛，而且「坚而不脆」，「置水中即沈。」⁴³茶乌亦与毛柿木（camagon）有关，根据二十世纪初期的海关文件，也是由菲律宾进口。文件中更进一步指出它有类似乌木的特质，「颜色呈棕黑至黑色，有红棕色条纹，纹理非常细致，质地坚硬，密度大，耐久，极少受蛀虫侵扰。中国人用来制作雕刻品、鸦片烟管、上等家具、筷子及各种饰品。⁴⁴」

Notes

- 1 Evarts, Curtis. "A Pair of Zitan Southern Official's Hat Armchairs." *Journal of the Classical Chinese Furniture Society*, 1:4 (Autumn 1991), 4-9.
- 2 Schafer, Edward H., "Rosewood, Dragon's Blood, and Lac." *Journal of the Classical Chinese Furniture Society* 1:4 (Autumn 1991), p. 65.
- 3 Shoso-in Office. *Treasures of the Shoso-in: North Section*, pls. 1, 5, 7. *South Section*, pls. 129, 131.
- 4 Friedrich and Rockhill, W. W. *Chua Ju-Kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the twelfth and thirteenth Centuries, entitled Chu-fan-chi*. Amsterdam, Oriental Press, 1966, p. 208.
- 5 David, Sir Percival. *Chinese Connoisseurship, The Ko Ku Yao Lun, The Essential Criteria of Antiquities*, p. 153.
- 6 Tsai C. Y. *Zitan: The Most Noble Hardwood*, p. 9. Also see, Gu Yongqi. "Zitanmu de banzhi yu dingming" (The identification and terminology of zitan), p. 40.
- 7 In private communication with Tian Jiaqing, who has himself searched through the Imperial Archives in Beijing.
- 8 *Tian shui bing shan* (A Record of the Waters of Heaven Melting the Iceberg), in *Biji xiaoshou daguan*, Vol. 6:6, p. 3646.
- 9 Ibid., p. 3643.
- 10 Ibid., pp. 3643, 3646.
- 11 Ibid., p. 3642.
- 12 Wang Shixiang, CCF, vol. 1, p. 16.
- 13 Ibid., vol. 1, p. 148.
- 14 Wang Shixing. *Guang zhi yi* (preface dated 1597). While commenting upon the preeminence of Suzhou craftsman, Wang Shixing also alludes to their fine productions of minimalistic-styled furniture made from *huali* and *zitan*.
- 15 Wen Zhenheng mentions the use of *zitan* for a platform bed (*ta*), p. 226 (*juan* 6, 1); Gao Lian refers to a small *zitan* incense stand with decorative inlay, *juan* 15:55b-56a.
- 16 Gao Lian. *Zunsheng bajian* (Eight Discourses on the Art of Living)(ca 1591), *juan* 15.52ab.
- 17 Tu Long. *Qi ju ji fu qian*. (Notes on Utensils and Clothing for Daily Life) (pub. 1606), pp. 201, 205.
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- 20 Qu Dajun. *Guangdong xinhua* (New Remarks on Guangdong), Hainan wenmu (Figured woods from Hainan), *juan* 25, p. 655.
- 21 Wang Shizhen noted that he had recently heard of such an offer in *Fen Gan Yu Hua*, published in 1709. Trans. in Wang Shixiang, *Connoisseurship of Chinese Furniture*, vol. 1, p. 145.
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(紫檀) 备注

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