



Inheritance and Fusion: An Analysis of the Unique Artistic Styles of Chinese Furniture in Chinese Ancestral Homes in 19th Century and Early 20th Century Malaysia

Jiangli Li ^{1,2}, Rusmadiyah Anwar ^{3*}, Natrina Mariane P. Toyong ⁴

¹ Ph.D Candidate, Faculty of College of Creative Arts, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Malaysia

² Lecturer, Department of Art and Design, Shandong Vocational College of Culture and Art, Dezhou, China

³ Professor, Faculty of College of Creative Arts, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Malaysia

⁴ Senior Lecturer, Faculty of College of Creative Arts, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Malaysia

* **Corresponding Author:** rusma935@uitm.edu.my

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ABSTRACT

From the Ming Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty, the South China Sea migration of the Chinese opened up exchanges and collisions between China and Southeast Asian countries in politics, economy and arts. The Chinese furniture heritage in the Malaysian Chinese ancestral homes built in the late 19th century and early 20th century has received more attention, which is the humanistic connotation root of the commercial tendency of the ancestral house heritage. This paper focuses on three cases of ancestral homes that have successfully commercialized and preserved Chinese furniture. The study specifically examines the visual characteristics and statistical proportions of representative furniture in relation to two categories: rituals and daily life. This study examines the traits of inheritance and fusion found in the furniture of Malaysian Chinese ancestral homes during this time period. It also investigates the humanistic inclination towards these blended qualities from many viewpoints. In the context of the 10th anniversary of the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" initiative, the findings of this paper not only provide insights into the sustainable development of furniture heritage restoration in plenty of ancestral homes of Overseas Chinese but also provide a style reference for the future commercial design of furniture.

Keywords: Malaysia Chinese Ancestral Home; Chinese Style Furniture; Artistic Characteristics; Visual Analysis; Inheritance and Fusion.

INTRODUCTION

In the 15th century, China embarked on voyages to explore the waters surrounding the Malaysian island of Penang. During the Ming Dynasty, Zheng He, a Chinese navigator, led expeditions across the Straits of Malacca. However, it was not until the 18th century that the Chinese started to settle on Penang Island. Following the establishment of George Town by the British East India Company in 1786, there was a growing influx of Chinese immigrants to Penang (Yaakob & Md Nor, 2013). During the late 19th and 20th centuries, the British-controlled ports of Guangzhou, Xiamen, and Fuzhou had strong maritime connections with ports and coastal cities in Southeast Asia. As a result, an increasing number of Chinese individuals traveled to colonial ports in Southeast Asia by passing through the cities near these ports of entry (Goodman, 2011; Leng, 2019; Cai, 2023).

These Chinese immigrants, similar to migratory birds, move back and forth between two countries and are referred to as "Huaqiao" (Overseas Chinese) or "Huayi" (Ethnic Chinese) by the local Chinese population. The traditional concept of "honoring the ancestors" and "returning to one's roots" leads them to establish their own homes and even assume familial and societal responsibilities in both countries (Chen & Y. Li, 1998). In the 19th

century, specifically during the Qing Dynasty, the Maritime Silk Road opened up opportunities for trade. The "Guangzhou Thirteen Trading Company" played a significant role in this trade by utilizing imported timber that was processed by local workshops, both small and large. As a result, Cantonese furniture, which combined elements of Chinese and Western styles, was exported to Southeast Asian countries. Cheah W., a collector of traditional Chinese furniture, notes that Chinese furniture was commonly found in the ancestral homes of Chinese people living in the Straits Settlements of the Malay Peninsula (Cheah, 1994; Cai, 2001). The Chinese furniture found in the ancestral homes of Malaysia Chinese during the late 19th and early 20th centuries was either imported from regions like eastern Guangdong or southern Fujian, following maritime trade and port business, or locally crafted by Chinese artisans using locally preferred timber, based on demand. Irrespective of its source, the artistic style of the Straits Chinese furniture entity is undergoing a transformation.

The Qing Dynasty witnessed a remarkable advancement in the development of furniture, marking a pinnacle of excellence in Chinese furniture production. This period also witnessed the transition from classical furniture to modern furniture. Building upon centuries of material and spiritual symbolism, Chinese furniture in this era not only showcased its deep connection to Chinese culture but also demonstrated the enduring strength of traditional values (Tian, 2012). Despite significant temporal and spatial transformations, the visual attributes of Chinese furniture in the ancestral homes of Malaysia Chinese exhibit a strong commitment to traditional origins, as well as the boldness and adaptability of "eclecticism". These characteristics are infused with national pride and self-assurance, and reflect the distinctive lifestyles, emotional values, moral principles, religious convictions, and aesthetic ideals of Malaysian ancestral Chinese. (Cao, 2002; Chen, 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Origin of Chinese Furniture in Malaysian Chinese Ancestral Homes in the Late 19th Century and Early 20th Century

During the Qing dynasty from Kangxi to Qianlong, the Palace Manufacturing Office of the royal furniture design drawings and materials naturally influence the products on the private market, princes and nobles competing to imitate, the rulers from Guangdong and other places to recruit skilled artisans to enter the palace, by the Ministry of the Interior Manufacturing Office centralized supervision of the production of furniture, artisans returned home, the palace furniture techniques and styles are also gradually influenced by the folk, following the style of the palace furniture (Figure 1). At the same time, due to the constraints of the traditional Confucian patriarchal and hierarchical thinking, furniture, in terms of specifications, layout, and style, followed a strict regular (A. Li, 2005; D. Hu, 2006).

A large proportion of the Chinese furniture used in Malaysian Chinese ancestral homes in the late 19th and 20th centuries came from the Chinese export market when the Qing government was in decline. However, port trade experienced a boom, and according to historical texts, significant, more populous ports such as Singapore and Penang mentioned active stores that sourced high-quality furniture and porcelain from China (Ho, 2003); carpenters from Chinese carpenters, shuttling from port to port, production by immigrant artisans in Penang, Malacca and elsewhere, still following the customary Qing Dynasty Cantonese furniture techniques, and wealthy indigenous Chinese purchasing or customizing entire sets of furniture in advance for their newly married children, necessitating an eclectic mix of styles of Chinese furniture with a mixture of European features (Knapp, 2013).

Guangdong Provincial Museum collection of two late Qing Dynasty export furniture atlas, called "Guangdong Wuchang sour wood furniture" and "Guangdong Wanquan sour wood furniture" (Figure 1). The atlas reflects the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic of China exported countries (including Southeast Asia). Furniture is based on traditional Cantonese furniture, and in order to meet a variety of aesthetic needs, it boldly absorbed the Western art style, breaking the traditional form constraints. The atlas also provides the original historical basis for studying Chinese furniture in ancestral homes regarding size, ornamentation, and price. It provides an essential theoretical reference for generating visual comparative analyses.



Figure 1. a. Guangzhou Luxury House Furniture in the Late Qing Dynasty
 b. Atlas of Furniture for Export in the Late Qing Dynasty

Amidst the Qing Dynasty, Cantonese furniture transitioned from being mostly used by common people to being utilized in the royal court, due to the development of regional culture and expansion of commercial commerce. It observed the globe and became a model of traditional furniture that scholars cannot overlook in terms of inheritance and creativity. The artistic characteristics are succinctly represented (Figure 2): In terms of materials, Cantonese furniture predominantly used hardwood, particularly sourwood. In terms of furniture structure, new types of furniture emerged by incorporating the structural styles of Western furniture. In terms of technological processes, carvings and inlays were the most common. In terms of stylistic decorations, motifs and techniques that combined both Chinese and European styles were adopted.

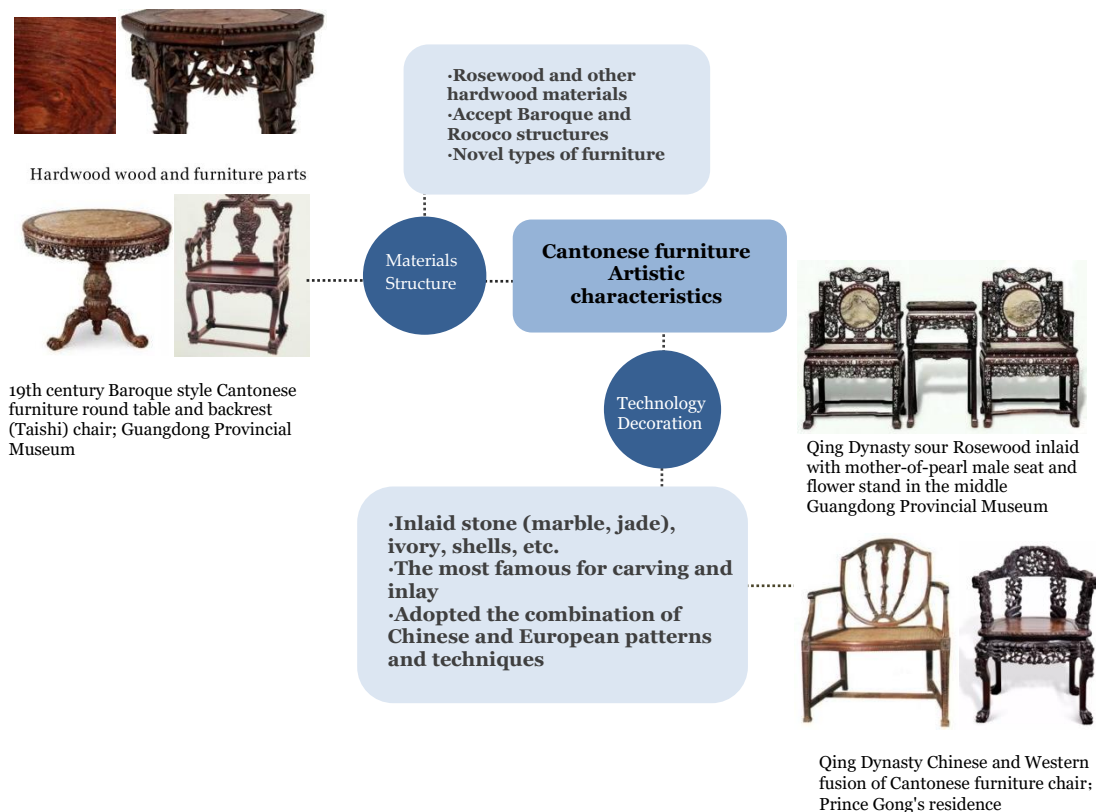


Figure 2. Summary of Artistic Characteristics of Cantonese Furniture in the Qing Dynasty

Chinese Furniture in Ancestral Home from the Perspective of Geography and Popularity

Since the Qing Dynasty, the Hakka people have been the predominant group of migrants, and Malaysia has emerged as one of the primary destinations for Hakka individuals to migrate across the border. A significant

number of individuals hailing from the provinces of Guangdong and Fujian migrated to Southeast Asia, particularly Malaysia, in order to escape dire poverty and domestic conflicts. These migrants brought with them the admirable traits of industriousness and resilience, which enabled them to undertake arduous tasks that the local population was unable to achieve. They have successfully undertaken the arduous tasks that the indigenous population was unable to accomplish, such as a tin mine in the vicinity of the Strait of Malacca (Sigel, 1976). Through their adaptive resilience and proficient business acumen, numerous Chinese immigrants were able to amass money and attain social standing within the colonial economy, aided by the cohesive support of their bloodline "clans" (D. Wu et al., 2021). The Chinese community in Malaysia has become the second-largest ethnic group, comprising approximately 25% of the total population. They primarily consist of immigrants and their offspring who relocated to the Malay Peninsula from Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, and Hainan throughout the 19th century (A. Zhang, 2024).

The Hakka people in Meizhou have adopted a new family motto: "Yi wan li qian xi, He luo cun wo gen" (Symbolizing the vast migration over billions of miles, the river has deposited my roots). Additionally, the Hakka people have a proverb that reflects their commitment to their ancestral heritage: "Ning ke mai zu tian, Bu wang zu zong yan" (I would rather sell my ancestors' fields, but not forget my ancestors' words). Regardless of their migration and the passage of time, the Hakka people have consistently preserved their family-oriented culture. By 1931, about 68% of the Chinese in Peninsular Malaya were Chinese-born and the Straits Chinese male elite carried out the Chinese cultural reform movement of Confucian revival and consciously adhered to Confucian moral philosophy, which also influenced traditional material life, such as the choice and preference for Chinese living spaces and furniture (Teoh, 2015).

Chinese Furniture in the Ancestral Home under the Background of Cultural Collision

19th-century Chinese Cantonese furniture combines Chinese and Western style features, incorporating materials such as stone (marble, jade), ivory, and shell inlays with motifs like passion flowers, shells, scopolamine leaves, curly grass patterns, tilted lotus petals (resembling Western architectural columns), gold cup and shield designs, and other Western carvings and decorations. These coexist with traditional auspicious motifs, resulting in intricate and ornate carvings and inlays throughout the furniture. Cabinet furniture often features tops similar to British counterparts with mountain wall cabinet tops, table furniture appears with entirely European folding tables and one-legged tables, and chair furniture has Victorian furniture-style legs and backrest structures (Y. Zhu, 2018).

According to British sociologist John Clammer, the indigenous Chinese can be characterized as having both Chinese ethnicity and being influenced by Malay and European cultures in terms of their material possessions. During the early 1800s, as the British colonies in Malacca, Penang, and the Straits of Singapore grew in power, the Chinese community in Malaysia had a thriving material culture. This led to an increased desire for a diverse and unique manner of living and decorating. Chinese individuals who have resided abroad for an extended period of time have reinforced the customary laws and regulations of their ancestral homes in order to promote the preservation of the national lineage. The interior furnishings of their homes allowed for a flexible and unrestricted selection to accommodate the diverse and traditional lifestyle. During this era, fashionable and substantial furniture, such as tables, sideboards, and closets in the English Victorian style, were brought to the port towns of Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. Chinese immigrant carpenters in Malaysia utilized easily accessible teak to create a fresh type of furniture for bedrooms and living rooms, which became known as Straits Chinese furniture (Ecke, 1986).

Related Discussion on the Artistic Characteristics of Chinese Furniture in Ancestral Homes

During the 19th century in Southeast Asia, Chinese immigrants with expertise in cabinet construction and craftsmanship frequently employed native teak wood as a substitute for nanmu. Teak wood was not only more cost-effective but also more readily obtainable. Most teak furniture commonly seen in Chinese ancestral homes serves practical purposes, including living room tables and chairs, as well as bedroom furniture, particularly cabinets and beds. These pieces were typically crafted by Chinese immigrant artisans or local carpenters, which Ong Poh Neo calls "brown and gold" Straits Chinese furniture. Influenced by the traditional Chinese preference for hardwoods such as mahogany, the furniture made from teak is often covered with reddish-brown lacquer and gold leaf, making it visually rich but making it impossible to see the texture of the wood. According to the needs of space and function, especially in the shape of the structure and carving patterns, the design style of this furniture tends to be eclectic (Ong, 1994).

These furniture pieces bore a resemblance to the prevailing English style that was in vogue across Europe at that time. The decorative elements displayed typical traditional Chinese symbolic animal and plant motifs, including dragons, phoenixes, unicorns, bats, and carp, as well as peonies, plum blossoms, orchids, and bamboo. Additionally, the images of the gods "Xi Wangmu" (Queen Mother of the West) and "Dong Wanggong" (King of

the East) were incorporated, symbolizing the concept of death as a representation of life. While the combination of stylistic furniture design may not be surprising, it is unique within a specific context (Ecke, 1986; Suryadinata, 2022). During the Qing Dynasty, immigrants in the Straits preferred Cantonese-style inlaid furniture and Minnan gold lacquer wood carving furniture. These furniture styles were a blend of traditional Chinese themes with eclectic structural details, carvings, and decorative motifs. They were well-suited to the diverse and blended customs of colonial life.

Sacrificial Chinese Furniture in the Main Hall Space of the Ancestral Home

The importance of family rituals was emphasized in the Southern Song Dynasty rationalist Zhu Xi's work "Jiapu" (family tree): "Shi zhi you suo" "Ji zhi zai ci" (Whether you are a commoner or an official, everyone can build a shrine to their ancestors), stating that every family should have ritual space for ancestor worship (Jūji Azuma, 2019).

The main hall, with ritual functions of the Chinese ancestral home, is the most essential space of a family. As it still follows the tradition of the southern region of China during the same period, carrying a family's adherence to its roots and bloodline through significant routine rituals, the furniture within the space is severe and programmed, reflecting more directly a family's wealth capacity, material taste, and even, to some extent, mirroring the Chinese dynastic government during the same period in the titles and desired social status (Pan & L. Cheng, 2019). A standard ritual hall housed a set of essential ceremonial furniture, including a long altar table as the center and focal point of the space, a middle-length altar table, and "Ba Xianzhuo" (square tables), which usually has three chairs surrounding "Ba Xianzhuo". This furniture group chooses dignified mahogany or nanmu, with dark-colored surfaces, black or brown, coated with gold lacquer, finely carved, gold lacquer wood carving furniture style, solemn and solemn. Shell-inlaid armchairs sometimes appeared in front of the altar table, and the "Ba Xianzhuo" became more flexible and was used for family gatherings for dinners and games, which often corresponded to a free-spirited family mixing many Western religious beliefs (A. Li, 2005; D. Hu, 2006).

METHODOLOGY

On July 7, 2008, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) added George Town, Penang, and Malacca to the World Heritage List (Kubota, Zakaria, Abe, & Toe, 2017; Phua & K. K. H. Tan, 2023). Even though the Straits Chinese ancestral house architecture has triggered the attention and preservation of both the government and the public, with numerous related propulsive programs and studies, these could not be included in the study due to the large number of heritage properties and their heterogeneous conditions, with many of the houses abandoned. Even for those that have undergone extensive renovation and commercial remodeling by the current ownership owners, most of the original interior furniture is no longer present. For this thesis, three cases of ancestral houses have been selected within the context of UNESCO's certified heritage of Chinese ancestral houses from the 19th to early 20th centuries in Penang and Malacca, Malaysia, namely the Blue mansion (Penang), Pinang Peranakan Mansion (Penang), and the Baba & Nyonya Heritage Museum (Malacca), the selection was based on factors such as the best architectural renovation of their ancestral houses, the current physical condition of the Chinese furniture heritage, and the accessibility of the stylistic analysis.

The three chosen instances of ancestral homes have all experienced alterations in ownership and economic advancement of their cultural legacy (Figure 3): The architects Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Loh acquired "The Blue Mansion" in 1990 and spent ten years restoring it. They transformed it into a heritage commercial hotel, furnishing it with 19th-century Chinese furniture donated by a friend; "Pinang Peranakan Mansion" was purchased by Peter Soon in 2000, and most of the surviving antique furniture is from his collection; "Baba & Nyonya Heritage Museum" was purchased by the Chan family in 1861, and the better-surviving furniture is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Chan Cheng Siew (Pourabedin, Mahony, & Pryce, 2022; Anuar, Tharazi, Faudzi, & Alwi, 2022; E. Tan & Teoh, 2019). The researchers utilized an EOS D SLR Canon 6D camera to initially gather image data of ancestral home furniture.




Name and locations	Date and condition of construction	Ownership and current situation	Interior Chinese traditional furniture	Chinese furniture source
Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion 14, Lebuh Leith, George Town, 10200 George Town, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia	.. Built in the late 19th century, circa 1896; .. Immigrant Chinese Cheong Fatt Tze (Zhang Bishi) ancestral home;	.. Purchased in 1990 by architect Laurence Loh and his wife; .. Ten years of restoration into a heritage commercial hotel;		.. Chinese furniture around 19th century furniture donated by friends; .. The furniture is well-preserved, and the traditional layout of the furniture is adjusted according to the business needs.
Pinang Peranakan Mansion 29, Church St, Georgetown, 10200 George Town, Penang, Malaysia	.. Built in the late 19th century, about 1894; .. Immigrant Chinese Chung Keng Kwee (Zhong Jinggui) ancestral home;	.. Purchased by Peranakan architect Peter Soon in 2000; .. Restoration as a museum of Peranakan heritage;		.. Most of the existing antique furniture was purchased from Peter Soon Collection; .. The furniture is well-preserved, and the furniture arrangement is very different from the traditional Chinese pattern;
Baba & Nyonya Heritage Museum 48-50, Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock, 75200 Melaka, Malaysia	.. Probably dated to about 1910s; .. Immigrant Chinese ancestral home;	.. Purchased by the Chan family in 1861; .. Restoration as a museum of Peranakan heritage;		.. The existing heritage furniture is owned by Chan Cheng Siew and his wife; .. Around the 19th century, traditional Chinese furniture is well-preserved, and the furniture arrangement basically follows the traditional Chinese pattern;

Figure 3. Three Ancestral Home Cases and Description of the Status of Chinese Furniture Heritage Inside

This study aims to examine the artistic features of the existing furniture found in Malaysian Chinese ancestral homes dating from the 19th to the early 20th century. Additionally, an attempt is made to elucidate the underlying patterns of spiritual beliefs and aesthetic pursuits behind these forms. This paper takes a different approach to categorizing Chinese furniture compared to traditional methods. Instead of focusing on the furniture itself and its functions, such as tables, chairs, beds, couches, and cabinets, it looks at it from a human perspective. The furniture is divided into two categories: sacrificial ritual furniture, and daily life furniture. This division is based on the varying levels of reliance that family members of ancestral homes have on indoor furniture, as well as the spiritual and physical connections between people and furniture. This paper selects 97 furniture pieces from three ancestral homes, categorizing them based on traditional functional and formal characteristics. These include 22 pieces of sacrificial ritual furniture and 75 pieces of daily life furniture (Figure 4).

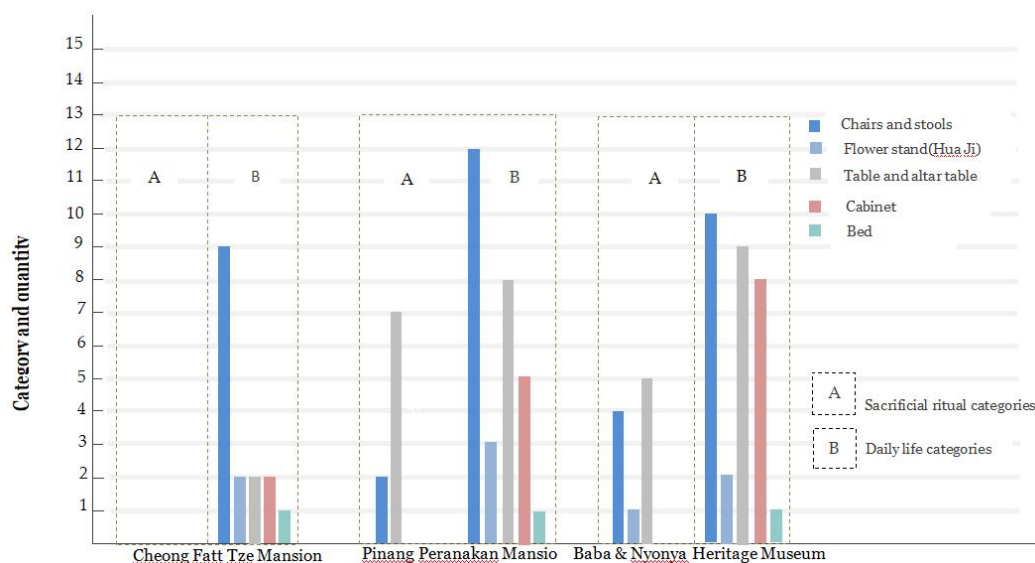


Figure 4. Statistical Chart of Sampled Furniture

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Characteristic Presentation of Visual Elements

After the middle of the 19th century, China and Southeast Asian country's maritime transportation became more smooth and convenient; Guangzhou's thirteen commercial trade coastline export furniture more mature, Malaysian immigrant Chinese and native Chinese preference and importance of Chinese furniture immersed in the atmosphere of the Qing period of the era of Canton style furniture characteristics. This paper outlines three aspects of visual elements characterization from 97 pieces of extracted case furniture, namely Material, Decoration, Structure, and engraving Painted patterns, and the basis of the extraction and analysis of the cases is established based on the existing literature on the characteristics of the Qing Dynasty furniture, Canton style furniture, and Straits Chinese furniture (Figure 5).

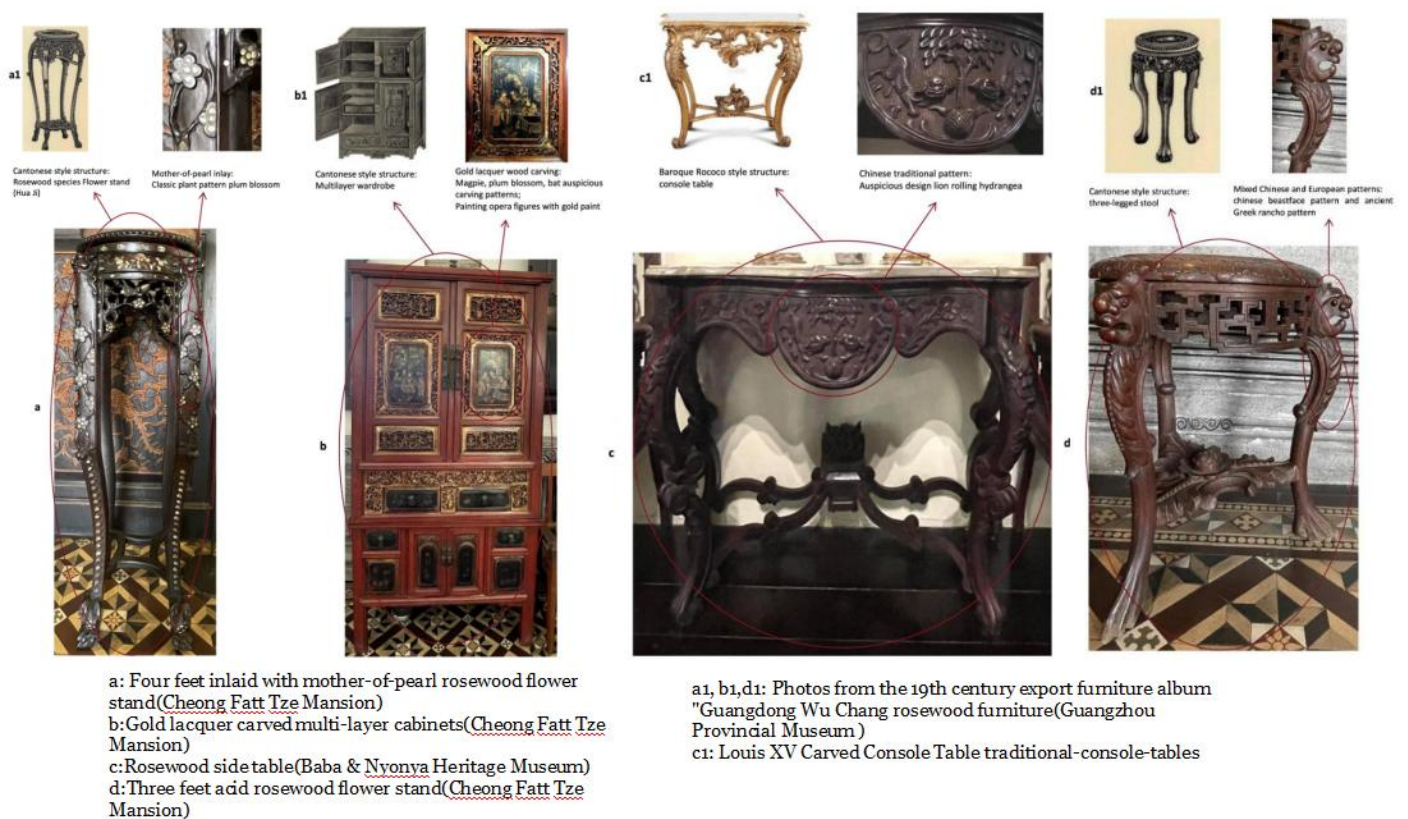


Figure 5. Visual Analysis of Hybrid Stylistic Features of Sampled Furniture

The Chinese furniture in the ancestral home is still mainly based on Chinese tradition in terms of structural form and decorative patterns; some Chinese furniture maintains a certain proportion of the traditional Chinese tone, but at the same time in the details of the structure and engraving and decorative patterns such as the European style compromise, more adapted to the diversity of colonial living customs, however, closer examination of the detail of the furniture is critical. It is evident that some of the furniture, from a distance, looks very similar to the Baroque and Rococo English structural styles popular in Europe at that time. However, upon closer inspection of the decorative details, they are typical of the traditional Chinese symbolic animal and plant motifs, such as dragons, phoenixes, unicorns, bats and carps, as well as peonies and blossoming plums, orchids and bamboo, etc., which are symbolic of wealth, good luck, longevity, and power and nobility (Figure 5).

The Chinese immigrants predominantly adhered to the Chinese belief systems of Taoism, Confucianism, and Chinese Buddhism, while also adopting Catholicism and Christianity and assimilating Malay culture and traditions. The unconventional blend of styles is not unexpected, but rather a deliberate aesthetic inclination rooted in a specific phenomenology (Suryad inata, 2022; Wee, 2011).

Visual Regularity in Hybrid Art Styles

On the basis of case extraction, according to the visual image analysis method, the branch features under the three visual elements of "Material", "Material", "Structure and engraving Painted patterns" are analyzed:

"Rosewood species" and "Teak species"; "Mother-of-pearl inlay" and "Gold lacquer wood carving"; "Cantonese style structure Chinese traditional pattern" and "Cantonese style structure mixed Chinese and European patterns" and "Baroque Rococo style structure mixed Chinese and European patterns", the percentage statistics of the number of artistic features are carried out. It consciously includes the proportion of sacrificial ritual furniture and daily life furniture (Figure 6), which, to a certain extent, helps to discover the visual regularities of the hybrid artistic styles of immigrant Chinese furniture within this historical phase.

	Trait	Category	Quantitative statistics	Proportion statistics
Material	Rosewood species	A	A	100%
		B	B	0%
	Teak species	A	A	100%
		B	B	0%
Decoration	Mother-of-pearl inlay	A	A	100%
		B	B	0%
	Gold lacquer wood carving	A	A	100%
		B	B	0%
Structure and engraving Painted patterns	Cantonese style structure Chinese traditional pattern	A	A	100%
		B	B	0%
	Cantonese style structure Mixed Chinese and European patterns	A	A	100%
		B	B	0%
Baroque Rococo style structure Mixed Chinese and European patterns	A	A	100%	
	B	B	0%	
Sacrificial ritual furniture category code : A				
Daily life furniture category code: B				

Figure 6. Percentage of the Number of Artistic Features Presented in the Category of Sampled Furniture

The existing Chinese furniture in the target homes selected for this study can roughly reflect that (Figure 6), on the one hand, the "Rosewood species" statistics in the sampled furniture category accounted for as much as 74% of the total. The material and craftsmanship used in these "customized furniture" from the Straits followed the traditional practice of following the preference and importance of the Qing rulers for the rosewood type of precious wood. Rosewood became the material of choice for Malaysian Chinese furniture at the time, as it was produced in Southeast Asian countries, which facilitated the processing of these woods (Poh-Seng, 1969); on the other hand, the statistics of "Mother-of-pearl inlay" in the category of sampled furniture accounted for 30%, while the statistics of "Gold lacquer wood carving" also accounted for 15%, which shows that the inlay of inlays of studs and stones in the Cantonese furniture of the Qing Dynasty and the gold lacquer wood carving in the furniture of Southern Fujian Province has become the common decorative styles of the existing furniture in the ancestral homes and that these are the most representative of the status and power of the Chinese people in foreign lands. Extrapolating from the visual style, it is evident that these are the most representative of status and power, which also caters to the deep-rooted feudalism of the Chinese in foreign lands, still chasing after the dignitaries and using the material appearance of life to prove the success of the identity of the demand for furniture features of luxury decorations will inevitably become a popular choice.

Figure 6 clearly demonstrates that: "Structure and engraving Painted patterns," the proportion of "Cantonese style structure" and "Chinese traditional pattern" is as high as 64%; a more significant number and proportion of "Daily life furniture category" is characterized by "Cantonese style structure" and "Mixed Chinese and European patterns," or even "Baroque Rococo style structure" and "Mixed Chinese and European patterns, especially for cabinet furniture. Research analysis and statistics also show that, unlike the Daily life furniture category, the ritual furniture category is more conservative and firm in the continuation of the Chinese tradition in the artistic characteristics of structure, material, and decoration, as well as in the spatial layout (Figure 6). Immigrant Chinese people highly respect the custom of ancestor worship, expressing gratitude and reverence for blood ancestors, as a way to pray for family peace, happiness, and wealth, and the ancestral home ritual space and furniture needs to shoulder the solemn inheritance significance (Holl, 2023).

Practical Implications and Research Limitations

Despite ongoing efforts to preserve the unique culture of Peranakan through site preservation, museum projects, and cultural promotion, this culture is gradually diminishing in Malaysia and Singapore. While traditional Chinese furniture still exists physically, the essence of Peranakan culture lies in its invisible elements such as language, cuisine, and customs. Traditional practices are losing their popularity (Imran, Abdullah, & Bustami, 2015). In recent years, China has attached great importance to the preservation and commercial development of "immovable" heritage, such as ancestral homes, ancestral halls, temples, and pagodas. Nevertheless, there are deficiencies in the progress of preserving "movable" cultural assets, namely regarding the

repair of fixed architectural embellishments and restorative presentation of movable history furniture. As an illustration, let's consider the Guangdong "Guanglu Di" Heritage Scenic Area project, namely the Malaysian Chinese Zhang Bishi Chinese Ancestral Home, compared to the Blue Mansion Hotel project in Penang. This inadequacy leads to a dearth of genuine cultural immersion during sightseeing excursions, wherein tourists are unable to completely partake in the distinctive and true living traditions of bygone eras (A. Lin, 2019).

Analyze the spatial art characteristics of Chinese furniture within the commercial development cases of Malaysian Chinese ancestral homes, in order to give reference for future heritage planning of numerous Chinese ancestral homes in China, on the basis of respecting the history, excavating the cultural theme, and taking VR virtual reality and other technological forms of language as the means of interpretation, to realize the reproduction of material and spiritual scenes inside the heritage, and to make the viewers achieve the experience of situational integration (C. Wang, 2020; A. Cheng, Ma, Pan, & Qian, 2023).

This study is centered around a Ph.D project titled "A Comparative Study of Traditional Chinese Furniture between Malaysia Huaqiao and Malaysia Chinese Ancestral Homes". It aims to offer valuable insights into the methods of cultural preservation and sustainable development of heritage projects related to Malaysian Chinese ancestral homes in both countries. This paper may be biased in its generalization and summary of furniture styles due to the geographical dispersion of many ancestral homes, the uneven conservation and development of furniture within these buildings, and the subjective selection of furniture in individual cases. Practical solutions to the pain points will be analyzed and discussed in an updated manner during the project "Financial Support from the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia under the FRGS Grant".

CONCLUSIONS

Objects exhibit a state of rest or uniform motion unless acted upon by external forces. This principle of inertia also applies to the realm of culture and the arts. In this context, there is no conflict between the collective forces that resist change due to external pressures and the aspiration for cultural change once a movement or transformation has already occurred (Zárate, Shaw, Marquez, & Biagas, 2012). The inheritance and fusion of the existing furniture in Malaysian Chinese ancestral homes is a reflection of the tenacity of the traditional lineage to adapt in the face of major changes.

As China's economy grows and consolidates ties at home and abroad, overseas Chinese hometowns put forward policy to "Yin qiao fu neng" (Attracting overseas Chinese empowers). In the course of China's rapid urbanization and large-scale urban and rural construction, overseas Chinese townships are faced with the modernization and transformation of their social and cultural life, and unprotected Overseas Chinese tangible cultural heritage is abundant in villages and towns scattered throughout the provinces of Guangdong, Fujian, and Hainan. Overseas Chinese can trace their traditional life customs and culture and honor their ancestors through their ancestral homes in their hometowns. The furniture heritage in their ancestral homes is undoubtedly an emotional bond. The findings of this paper not only provide insights into the sustainable development of the architectural and interior Furniture landscape of China's vast overseas Chinese ancestral homes heritage, but also provide references to a particular style of commercial design for future furniture.

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