

兩依藏第一把交椅

The First Folding Chair in the Liang Yi Collection

俗語常言的「坐第一把交椅」，事實上喻意首領。當中提到的交椅是達官貴人旅行時的專用座椅，在古代是身份象徵。在意大利藝術家兼耶穌會傳教士郎世寧(1688-1766年)繪畫的作品中，乾隆(1711-1799年)就曾坐在交椅上接受哈薩克斯坦使節進貢的駿馬。據佳士得中國瓷器及藝術品部資深國際專家暨主管安偉達(Marco Almeida)統計，檢閱公私所藏，目前所知存世的黃花梨圈背交椅只有30多例。交椅由歷史久遠、設計簡單，推測於漢代(公元前202年-公元220年)由傳入的摺凳「胡床」改良而成，據說可以追溯至古埃及第十八王朝(公元前十六世紀至公元前十三世紀)。兩依藏將透過這篇文章與大家探古尋源，介紹交椅的歷史，並分享最新購置的第一把交椅。

“To sit in the first folding chair”(*di yi ba jiaoyi*) is a common saying in Chinese, meaning to occupy a position of leadership and power. It might seem odd to modern ears to equate something as transient as a folding chair with a position of power, but in ancient times, it was a status symbol as it was mainly used by dignitaries during their travels. In *Kazaks offering horses in tribute to Emperor Qianlong (1757)* by Italian artist and Jesuit missionary Giuseppe Castiglione (1688-1768), the painting depicts the Emperor Qianlong (1711-1799) sitting on a folding chair as he received horse tributes from the Kazakhstani envoys. According Marco Almeida, senior director at Christie's Chinese department, fewer than 30 examples of *huanghuali* horseshoe-back folding chairs survive today, counting both those in public and private collections.. The evolution of the folding chair in China can be traced to the earlier imported folding stool known as ‘*huchuang*’ during the Han dynasty (202BC-220AD)

which in turn can be traced back to the 18th dynasty of the New Kingdom era in ancient Egypt (16th-13th century BC). In this essay, we will look at the origins and history of the genre of folding chair, and deconstruct the stylistic development of the first folding chair in the Liang Yi permanent collection.



哈薩克貢馬圖，郎世寧(1688-1766年)畫作，巴黎吉美國立亞洲藝術博物館藏
Kazaks offering horses in tribute to the Emperor Qianlong by Giuseppe Castiglione (1688-1768), in the collection of the Guimet National Museum of Asian Arts, Paris.

交椅歷史

History of the Folding Chair

在中國，高坐文化(而不是坐在地板或地毯上)約在公元2世紀被引入，但大約過了700年才成為常態。現傳交椅於宋元時期發展，並由歷史久遠、設計簡單的摺凳「胡床」改良而成。據王世襄《明式家具研究》指出，交椅，或稱交杌、馬扎，是一種腿足相交的杌欂，即是古代所謂的胡床。《后漢書·五行誌》曰：「靈帝好胡服、胡帳、胡床、胡座、胡飯，京都貴戚皆競為之」，說明在漢靈帝時期（168-189年）就出現了胡床。由于其易于摺疊，在攜帶、存放上較為方便，故在千百年來廣泛被人使用。

In China, the idea of sitting on raised furniture (rather than on the floor or floor mats) was introduced in the 2nd century AD, but it took roughly 700 years for it to become the norm. The folding chair, in particular, evolved during the Song and Yuan dynasty (960-1368) from the earlier folding stool, known as ‘*huchuang*’, that was imported to China during the Han Dynasty (202BC-220AD). Compiled by Fan Ye in the 5th century, *Book of the Later Han – Treatise on the Five Elements* records that the “Ling

Emperor favours *hufu*, *huzhang*, *huchuang*, *huzuo* and *hufan*, which the nobles of the capital city all covet”, which clearly shows that *huchuang* appeared as early as the reign of Ling Emperor (r. 168-189AD). According to Wang Shixiang’s publication *Connoisseurship of Chinese Furniture* (1990), the folding stool; ‘horse gate’ (*mazza*); cross-legged stool; and *huchuang* were all different types of folding chairs

探本溯源，交椅的制造和使用據說可追溯到古埃及時期。此說法並非空穴來風，據考古發現，古埃及第 18 王朝的圖坦卡蒙王（統治期為公元前 1332 年—公元前 1323 年）的墓中出土了一把結構復雜、裝飾奢華的交椅，其形制與流傳下來的中式直背交椅頗為相似。

Looking back at the origins of folding chair, the earliest evidence of the use and manufacture of folding chairs can be traced back to ancient Egypt. According to archaeological findings, a folding chair with a complex structure and luxurious decorations was unearthed at the tomb of King Tutankhamun (1332-1323BC), dating to the 18th dynasty of the New Kingdom period in ancient Egypt. The shape of this folding chair shares similarities with the Chinese counterpart that appears later.



圖坦卡蒙王墓出土的交椅

The ceremonial chair excavated at the tomb of King Tutankhamun (housed at the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in Cairo, Egypt).



黃花梨團龍紋交椅

Huanghuali folding chair with *tuanlong* (round dragon) pattern

原塔里安利·得·馬基奧女侯爵（1894-1986 年）伉儷藏

Formerly in the collection of Marchese Taliani de Marchio (1894-1986) and his wife

若將上例對比傳統中式直背交椅，會發現兩者外觀頗為接近，但其靠背結構還是有誤差。兩者結構最大不同可見于靠背支撐點：圖坦卡蒙王墓出土的交椅靠背多出兩腳支撐落地。古埃及在公元前 13 世紀已出現類似直背交椅的樣式，中式交椅則約在宋元時期（960-1368 年）發展出直背結構，那麼是否可以斷言中式直背交椅能追溯至古埃及？我們很難去摸索其中流傳的細節，也並未發現任何直接證據，或許只是在演進與改造中出現了驚人的巧合，又或許是工匠在中國與外國交流時參考了這種樣式細節，真相如何暫未有一個定論。

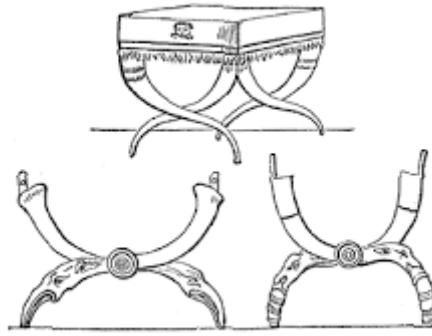
Comparing the above example with a traditional Chinese straight-back chair, the appearances of the two are similar but there are differences in the structure of the

backrest. The biggest difference between the two can be seen in the support points of the backrest: the Egyptian folding chair has a backrest with two additional supporting legs. Even though there are visual similarities between the two, there is as of yet no evidence of direct linkage. Perhaps it was simply a surprising coincidence in the parallel evolution and transformation of chair design.



閻立本(約 600-673 年)繪的《北齊校書圖》中描繪儒生樊遜坐在胡床上校驗書籍的情形
An illustration of Confucian student Fan Xun sitting on a *huchuang* analysing books from *Northern Qi Scholars Collating Classic Texts* attributed to Yan Liben (c. 600–673)





古羅馬摺疊椅

The curule seat, an ancient Roman folding chair

不過，翻查中式交椅的原形「胡床」，就會發現無論其整體外觀、形制與古羅馬的摺疊椅也頗為相似。這是否表示胡床可追溯至古羅馬的摺疊椅？事實上，現今學界擁有著共同的認知：交椅是由異域傳入的胡床（即西方所說的摺疊坐具）改制而成的。而且，據《交椅的演變：歐亞座椅樣式的研探》一文中由希臘石刻畫中的摺疊坐具，到犍陀羅佛教藝術中的摺疊桌等史實推論：摺疊坐具的傳承脈絡應是從希臘化羅馬時代（約公元前四世紀至公元一世紀），到印度的犍陀羅時代（公元一至五世紀），而后從印度隨佛教傳入中國。至于為何胡床腿足位置非採用曲線設計，也在摺疊椅上下以四條橫棍連結座面與足底？這很有可能是中西文化交流中本土化的演進創造。

Another type of chair that appears similar to *huchuang* is the curule seat from ancient Rome. Whether it was from ancient Egypt or ancient Rome, current academia has widely accepted and agreed that *huchuang* was imported into ancient China, rather than of indigenous Chinese design. The article *Wandlungen Des Faltstuhls: Bemerkungen zur Geschichte der Euraischen Stuhlform* (Development of the Folding Chair: Observations on Euroasian Chair Forms) by Gustav Ecke makes historical deductions - based on the folding chairs on Greek stone carvings and the folding tables in Gandhara Buddhist art - that the folding chair in general first originated from

the Hellenistic-Roman era (approximately 4th century BC – 1st century AD); then adapted in India during the Gandhara era (1st-5th century AD); and further imported from India to China by way of Buddhism, alongside meditation stools. In early Chinese literature from the Eastern Han dynasty (25-220), *huchuang* were also known as the “barbarian stool”. As for the reason why *huchuang* is designed with straight legs with stretchers connecting the seat surface and the feet, it could be simply be a sinicisation of the design.

交椅演進

Evolution of the Folding Chair

上文提到交椅由歷史久遠、設計簡單，推測於漢代由傳入的摺凳「胡床」改良而成，最簡單的只用八根直材構成，杌面穿繩索或皮革條帶。直至宋元時期（960-1368年）胡床改良並演變出靠背結構。一式上部如同圈椅，多稱為「圈背交椅」或「圓背交椅」；另一式只設靠背，上部如燈掛椅或一統碑式，多稱為「直背交椅」。

As mentioned, the Chinese folding chair has a long history and simple design, most likely an evolved and improved version of the folding stool (*huchuang*) imported into China during the Han dynasty. The simplest folding chair is constructed with eight straight elements, with weaved ropes and leather straps to form the seat. It was not until the Song and Yuan dynasty (960-1368) that the structure included a backrest - round, also known as horseshoe-back; and straight-back. The straight-back was first developed during the late 11th to 12th century, whereas round-back chairs developed later in the 12th century.



黃花梨麒麟紋圈背交椅，106.6×73.7×62.2 公分

Huanghuali round-back folding chair with qilin pattern, 106.6 x 73.7 x 62.2 cm

上例為出自明末清初的黃花梨麒麟紋圈背交椅，在佳士德 2021 年 5 月拍賣會上連佣以港幣 6,597 萬易手，刷新交椅的世界拍賣紀錄。據指，此圈背交椅上次拍賣是 2002 年，當時在紐約佳士得以 24.8 萬美元（港幣 193 萬）易手。事隔 19 年，大幅升值近 34 倍，升值潛力驚人。

Perhaps one of the most famous examples of a horseshoe-back folding chair is the one above, sold at Christie's Hong Kong auction in May 2021. The hammer price for this example from the late Ming and early Qing dynasty reached HK\$65.97 million, setting the world auction record for the type. According to reports, the same chair was realised for US\$248 thousand (HK\$1.93 million) at Christie's auction in New York in 2002. In less than two decades therefore, the price of the chair had appreciated by nearly 34 times.

此交椅為圈背交椅，椅圈三接，用料頗足，形體壯碩而走勢蜿蜒，至末端外翻

為卷珠式，氣勢開張，這是交椅中常採用的一種經典造型。其靠背板乍看為三攢式，其實為一塊厚板雕刻而成，因側腳收分，上方收窄，餘留部分斫挖為一體的窄長角牙，兼備結構和功能之用。靠背板被雕刻為混面攢框式，橫豎棖相交的榫卯線也均以陰線刻畫，幾可亂真。

This folding chair is in the horseshoe-back style with a curved back formed through three joined pieces constructed with a generous use of *huanghuali*. The structure of the chair is strong with a U-shaped crestrail that terminates in outswept hooks, evoking a grand feeling - a classic style in folding chairs. At first glance, the back splat looks like it is made from three separate pieces, however, it is actually carved from a single piece of wood. The back splat gradually widens from the centre to the shoe at the base, joining the long and narrow stretcher, for both structural and function purposes. The back splat is carved in three registers, each with different patterns.



元至明初 剔黑飛鳥穿花紋交椅，13 至 14 世紀，雕漆和藤椅，96.5 x 66.4 x 43.2 公分，大都會藝術博物館館藏

Folding Chair with Two Birds Among Flowers

China, 13th–14th century

Carved lacquer on wood, rattan seat

96.5cm x 66.4cm x 43.2cm

Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1969 (69.217)

另一著名交椅例子是由雕漆木製成，現藏於紐約大都會藝術博物館。此雕漆交椅制於 13 至 14 世紀中國，為四出頭官帽椅，與一般圈背椅不同。交椅上裝飾了精緻雕刻的幾何圖案背景，配上一對在花叢中的壽帶鳥。

Another prominent folding chair example is housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, which is made from carved and lacquered wood and dates to the 13th to 14th century. It has a yokeback with protruding crest rails, as opposed to the round-back chair, and is decorated with a meticulously carved geometric background and a pair of paradise flycatchers among flowers.

在中國最貴重的交椅之一要數如今藏於北京故宮博物館中的鹿角交椅，可溯源至在承德的皇家避暑山莊。這把交椅以 20 塊鹿角製成一個簡潔的明式交椅。

In Chinese collections, one of the most precious folding chairs is made of deer antler, housed in the Palace Museum in Beijing. Originally in the Emperor's summertime mountain villa in Chengde, the chair is constructed from over 20 deer antlers and an ivory panel in a simple and plain Ming style.



Deer Antler Folding Chair

China, Qing dynasty (1644–1911)

92cm x 70.5cm

Collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing

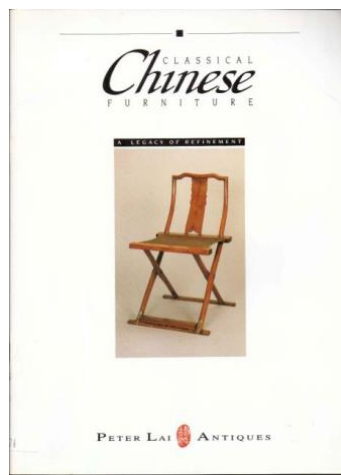
兩依藏館藏黃花梨直背交椅

The *Huanghuali* Straight-Back Folding Chair in the Liang Yi Collection

在 2021 年，兩依藏博物館收藏了第一把交椅於永久收藏系列中。值得一提的是，兩依藏館藏的這張黃花梨交椅曾是「香港頂尖家具商」黎氏古玩的舊藏。這張交椅也在黎氏於 1992 年出版的圖錄《Classical Chinese Furniture: A Legacy of Refinement》中作為圖錄的封面家具亮相。黎氏古玩是上世紀八十年代業界著名的古董行，其經營過手的明清家具，是拍賣會上可信度的保證。黎氏家族歷經兩代的家族古玩生意，以良好口碑、獨到家具鑒賞眼光、過手精品之多而遠近聞名。

In 2021, Liang Yi Museum added its very first *huanghuali* folding chair to its

permanent collection. It was once part of the Lai Family Collection and featured on the cover of the 1992 catalogue *Classical Chinese Furniture: A Legacy of Refinement* published by Peter Lai Antiques. The classical Chinese furniture pieces sold through Peter Lai are guaranteed credibility at auctions. The Lai family has been in the antique business for two generations, known for their unique appreciation and perspective of furniture, and the many high-quality and masterpieces that had passed through their hands.



《Classical Chinese Furniture: A Legacy of Refinement》

Classical Chinese Furniture: A Legacy of Refinement by Peter Lai Antiques, October 1992.

兩依藏館藏的黃花梨交椅則屬直背交椅，整體以黃花梨製成，上下以四條橫枱連結座面與足底。座面打孔以絲繩結軟屨，腳踏出榫與底枱、前腿相接。前腿斜上伸展過座面成後椅背杆。四條腿交叉支撐，靠近交叉點部位略作方材並穿鐵栓做軸。

It is a straight-back variety constructed with four horizontal stretchers to connect the seat and the feet. The top stretchers are perforated and connected with silk ropes to create the seat, and the footrest is formed by connecting the front legs with the bottom post. The front legs extend upward diagonally and rise to form the stiles. The four legs

are crossed, with the area near the intersection slightly squared and iron bolts are used as the axle at the point of intersection.



黃花梨交椅

十七世紀

黃花梨

89.5 x 52.5 x 56.5 公分

兩依藏博物館藏

Huanghuali Folding Chair

17th Century

Huanghuali

89.5 x 52.5 x 56.5 cm



其背板上下出榫，分別嵌入座面橫枱與搭腦，沿板邊緣鏤掛牙。板上則採素面設計，木紋典雅華美，整體風格樸實無華，呈現濃厚明式家具風格。類似的傳世例子有上文提及的原意大利塔里安利家族（Taliani family）藏的「四張成堂」黃花梨團龍紋交椅。

The back splat is connected by tenons on the top and the bottom, respectively joined to the stretcher of the seat surface and the top rail, and the edge of the splat has hanging spandrels. The back splat has a plain design that highlights the elegant and beautiful wood grain. Metal mounts are only used at the feet to connect the slabs with the legs. Overall, the style is simple and unpretentious, a typical characteristic of Ming-style furniture. A similar surviving example is a set of four *huanghuali* folding chairs with a *tuanlong* pattern that was formerly in the collection of the Italian Taliani family.



「四張成堂」黃花梨團龍紋交椅

A set of four *huanghuali* folding chairs with *tuanlong* pattern

原塔里安利·得·馬基奧女侯爵（1894-1986 年）伉儷藏

Formerly in the collection of Marchese Taliani de Marchio (1894-1986) and his wife

2017 年倫敦邦瀚斯秋拍連佣約 HK\$5,420 萬成交

Auctioned at the 2017 London Bonhams Autumn Auction for approximately HK\$54.2 million,
including commission.



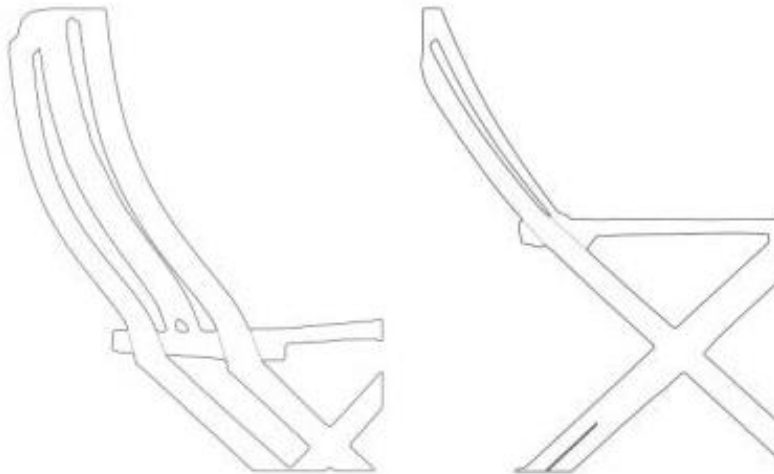
兩依藏黃花梨交椅

Huanghuali folding chair in the Liang Yi Collection.



「四張成堂」黃花梨團龍紋交椅

A set of four *huanghuali* folding chairs with *tuanlong* pattern



交椅對比圖

Folding chair comparison

左為兩依藏黃花梨交椅前腿樣式

On the left, depicting the front leg structure of the *huanghuali* folding chair in the Liang Yi Collection.

右為傳世交椅常見前腿樣式

On the right, depicting the common front leg structure among surviving folding chairs.

眼利的讀者或許發現，兩者細節及做工上仍有些分別，例如黃花梨團龍紋交椅背板與搭腦的連接處用金屬片包鑲。不過，兩張交椅在做工上最大的分別在於前腿與座面橫枱相交的位置。雖然兩張交椅兩根前腿均是一木制成，但兩依藏館藏交椅的兩根前腿並非僅是整根一氣呵成斜上，而是在穿過座面橫枱前先勾一彎，再伸展過座面成後椅背杆。事實上，此動作在造工上對木匠技藝要求極高，木匠不但要考慮到前腿是否穩固，也要考慮到造型上、位置上是否與座面橫枱兼容。若兩根前腿彎的位置太高、太低，當用家坐上交椅、挨著椅背杆時均會有折斷的風險。由於工匠將整根黃花梨切割成上述形狀時將消耗大量木材，故這種做法非常罕見，黃花梨制的更是舉世無雙，就連兩依藏創始人馮耀輝先生也直言：「我從未見過這種做法的交椅。」

Discerning readers may note the obvious difference in the detail and workmanship between the Liang Yi example and the Taliani example, such as the metal furnishings on the back splat of the Taliani example in contrast to the Liang Yi example, which is made entirely from wood. The biggest difference between the two examples is, actually where the front legs intersect with the seat stretcher. Although the front legs of both folding chairs are made from a single piece of wood, the front legs of the Liang Yi chair do not simply incline upwards through the seat stretcher to form the stiles, but bend and curve before crossing the seat stretcher. This type of workmanship requires the carpenter to possess absolute mastery over his craft as he must not only consider whether the front legs are stable, but also whether the shape and position is compatible with the seat stretcher. If the position of the two front legs are too high or

too low, there is a risk that the chair will break when the user sits on it while resting against the back of the chair. In terms of material use, there is inevitably a lot of waste involved, making this type of chair very rare. The chair is unparalleled in the world of classical Chinese furniture and in fact, Peter Fung, founder of Liang Yi Museum, states quite simply, "I have never seen this level of craftsmanship on a folding chair before, in all my years of collecting Chinese furniture."