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Observations on the Antiquities Trade in China

A Case Study of Xiamen's Antique Arcade

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Introduction

Antiquarianism is a complex interweaving of nostalgia, traditionalism, modernism and artistic individualism, in which social and cultural anthropologists justifiably take an interest. However, anthropological studies on antiques may be quite different from studies of other material cultures, because, for example, antiques often move from locker to locker, their price is not readily revealed to a third party, and the transaction usually involves relationships that are complicated in nature. Likewise, the social value and trade prices of antiquities are always contestable. Moreover, there are also some sensitive issues concerning legal controls on their export. This can make the study of the antique business problematic and complicated, especially since the trading of antiques often takes place in secret locations that are usually difficult to investigate. The antiquities trade may also involve legal and ethical problems such as tomb robbing, plundering, and smuggling activities between rural and urban areas (De Varine 1983; Murphy 1995; Doar 1998). Nevertheless, the purpose of this paper is neither to explore how smuggling activities take place nor to investigate how tomb robbers trade with buyers. Instead, my main aim is to examine what the antiquities trade means to some petty merchants and to share some of my observations regarding the relations between the antiquities trade and changing lifestyles in South China.

Regarding the scope of the study, I want first to describe the relatively recent transformation of a village in Minzhong

area (central Fujian) that produced and exported wooden furniture and the changing values involved in such a newly emerging rural private business. Secondly, I want to focus on the specific case of an antique arcade in Xiamen in order to shed light on the changing meanings of the word "antique." Given the changes taking place in mainland China, which have been affected by its Open Door policy since 1978, it is important to understand how the definition of cultural relics (in Chinese, *wenwu*) has changed, especially from the idea of treasures belonging to the public to private treasures. I shall therefore also elaborate briefly on the definitions of antiques and cultural relics. Thirdly, I want to link the discussion to the question of how the antiquities trade reflects issues of urban development, particularly the adaptations made by migrants flowing from rural areas to coastal cities in China. By combining my observations on Xiamen's development with a study of the emergence of petty antique merchants resulting from the high-level policy change, a picture of people's changing lifestyles should emerge.

First Encounter with the Antiquities Trade

Before discussing the case in Xiamen, I would like to look at the way the development of the antiquities trade could be related to the lifestyles of people in today's China. My first encounter was in a village (here, let us call it "S-village") in Fujian province, in which the livelihoods of the local people were highly dependent on the antique furniture trade. I was first introduced to S-village by some friends working in a local museum in Fujian. They helped me by asking peddlers in the old goods market (similar to a flea market) and their colleagues in different museums to come up with the name of at least one village in which the major business was the antiquities trade. They came up with S-village, which was famous for its antique (mainly wooden) furniture business. The amount of research that I could conduct in two short stays (one day in the summer of 1998 and four days during the Lunar New Year in 1999) was limited. Despite this, my visit

to the village impressed upon me greatly the importance of studying the antiquities trade in China's post-reform era.

S-village is located in Minzhong area and is not far away from the commercial centre of the region. Apart from running all sorts of stores selling basic necessities such as groceries, clothes, stationery, and so on, a large number of villagers sold various kinds of old wooden furniture and ancient stone carvings. They also reproduced Ming-style classical furniture and repaired old wooden furniture. To my knowledge, their furniture trade did not reflect a particular tradition of craftsmanship in the village because it had only emerged as a popular business among villagers from the late 1980s. The more likely explanation for the rapid increase in the popularity of antique furniture is the straightforward issue of supply and demand. One element of this is probably the emergence of a free enterprise culture in China, making exporting easier than before. A second reason is the increase in the size of the Asian "new rich" (many of whom are ethnic Chinese) seeking out representative traditions for the construction of their cultural identities.[1] It is also worth noting that, alongside these trends, from the mid-1980s onwards a growing international demand for classical Chinese wooden furniture spawned the production of an accompanying art literature for connoisseurs, as shown by several important antique auctions focusing on Chinese furniture organized by major auction houses. This served to increase the pace of demand.

During my visit to S-village, I was very surprised to discover how confident the local people were about their business, claiming they had established *guanxi* in exporting any kind of furniture, including restricted items. Moreover, they seemed to be very open with each other — they knew what others in the village had and were willing to bring their own customers to look at competitors' commodities for comparison. This made me realize the complicity of the village, reflecting the changed values and rapid growth of a private business enterprise. Once a large proportion of villagers was involved, it would become much more difficult to determine what could be

deemed illegal or who should be held responsible, since this moral standard had been subsumed by the general structural change in the village.

What had happened in the village demonstrated not only the complexity of one particular type of business within a local context, but also provided a good model for understanding the social changes wrought by China's emerging rural enterprises. Beginning in 1978 with its Open Door policy, the Chinese government can be seen to have become less and less preoccupied with controlling the careers of individuals. At the same time, the emergence of the market economy has made individuals more eager to chase their dreams of riches.

The socio-economic changes taking place along the coastal areas include increased market competition, rural entrepreneurship, foreign investment, a quasi-capitalist economy and a rapid flow of information. In light of these changes, it is necessary to establish why one village, but not all others, should be so deeply involved in a specific kind of business that had not existed there before. In this case, apart from the revival of market competition and trading networks brought about by social reforms, the economic structure of villages along the coastal areas reflected the surge in private business enterprises. When I inquired at S-village why there were so many people doing the same kind of business in one village, I was told that when one person in the village succeeded in one type of business enterprise, many villagers would simply follow without hesitation. Some of them began by working for friends and relatives and ended up running their own business in the same field, a factor probably exaggerated by the fact that the only experience in business they had was collecting antique furniture from villages. That, in turn, might be a symptom of the way the Chinese economy's transformation into a market economy merely offered people hope (of being a "ten-thousand-dollar household") but did not provide any actual direction for them to follow. In addition, the phenomenon of imitating a success story is borne out by my observations of one particular village along the South China coast.

Regrettably, I failed to develop a deeper understanding of the value change beyond the complicity of the village, their lineage-oriented network and relations with other government departments.[2] I did not want to be drawn into an illegal underground network where antiquities were bought, sold, stolen, smuggled and disowned. In fact, my worry was intensified as villagers talked gravely about how they could export any type of antique, including items whose export was supposed to be restricted, such as furniture or wood carvings made from expensive hardwoods like *huanghuali*, *zitan*, and so on. Despite my interest in the social changes and economic development related to the antiquities trade, I decided not to continue the investigation in that village. Nevertheless, I gained valuable initial insights from the villagers into the way the antique business had been established.

The State's Definitions of Antique: *Guwan* and *wenwu*

It is not easy to give a comprehensive definition of "antique" since it varies between the state's perspective of them as relics or national heritage, the individual understanding of them as pieces of art, and as the opinion of some traders that they are ancestral remnants that could bring them wealth and opportunity. In order to have an overall view about antiques in China, it is necessary to establish how antiques are defined from different perspectives. First of all, in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, one of the definitions of "antique" is an ancient work of art and it is applied to old furniture, pictures, china and other articles. Practically speaking, it is frequently used for something more than one hundred years old. Theoretically speaking, an antique is something representing the past, recalling history and awakening nostalgia. In other words, definitions of what an antique is shed light on the construction of history, tradition and even specific social hierarchies such as royalty, as well as on national treasures, in their relevant socio-political contexts.[3]

Yet, culturally speaking, there is hardly any all-encompassing definition for antique, since it varies between countries and is mostly socio-politically defined. For example, in most Chinese societies, antiques range from ceramics (especially those made for the royal family and aristocracy), Burmese jade, metallic such as silver accessories, tea pots, seal stones and Ming-style wooden furniture made from hard (or red) wood, to vintage artefacts including Mao badges, old bank notes, and so on. Sometimes, it is difficult to establish why some goods are antique but others that might look very similar are not. As for the historic value and rarity of some special pieces, we might agree that the idea of uniqueness, as opposed to mass production, gives some of them a value higher than their artistic, historic or economic evaluation.

In Chinese, antiques are called *guwan*, meaning something old and appreciable. In particular, the word *wan* emphasizes something that is good to "play with." However, there are also some antiques that are displayed in galleries or exhibited in museums, and these are normally categorized as *wenwu*. *Wenwu* means something reflecting a certain cultural heritage in a broader sense. While we might presume that collecting antiques is essentially an individual hobby, collecting cultural relics also has something to do with the representation of an historic legacy, a cultural heritage, tradition, national heritage, and so on. Therefore, in many cases, antiques and cultural relics are not necessarily two entirely different categories because antiques can be cultural relics and, at the same time, cultural relics might be items that re-define the meaning of antique.

Perhaps the best way to define a *wenwu* is by its legal status and the relevant restrictions applied to its purchase and exportation. The earliest law relating to cultural property, the Preservation of Ancient Objects, was enacted in 1930, but it was not until the 1960s that more rigid regulations were applied to the protection of *wenwu*. According to the Provisional Regulations on the Protection of Cultural Property and Administration of the Cultural Heritage in 1961, all movable and immovable *wenwu* with historic, artistic or scientific value were declared to be the property of the state and their trade and export was forbidden. At the same time, there were some state-run antique shops called *wenwu shangdian* (cultural relics shop) which became the authorized centres for collecting *wenwu* from the *minjian* (meaning at the level of the public or common people, particularly in rural areas).

Wenwu shangdian sent their staff to rural areas looking for *wenwu*, but the regulations meant they could only sell some of them to customers. According to the regulations on export restrictions, the sale of *wenwu* made before 1795 (the 60th year of the reign of the Qianlong Emperor of the Qing Dynasty), or post-1795 *wenwu* with especially high values, was kept under strict control (China Market 1993). In addition, the commonest official definition of *wenwu*, written into the 1982 Cultural Relics Law, is as follows: "Cultural relics were to be protected by the state; in true revolutionary spirit, the People's Committees at all levels were charged with this responsibility. Unearthed relics were state property. There could be no export without authorization (Articles 1 and 14)" (Murphy 1995:82). Despite the official definition of *wenwu*, we might want to ask what the *wenwu* sold in the antique markets are and how antiques are being traded in China now.

The history of the antique business in Xiamen is a long one, with some local records showing that there were antique shops in the city as long ago as the official opening of its port to international trade in the Daoguang period (1821-1850) of the Qing Dynasty. However, no detailed records were found relating to the development of the antiquities trade. One retired antique salesman told me that there were some private antique shops in the 1950s, but he did not know exactly when they had first opened or when they closed down. He emphasized that Xiamen's antiquities trade developed much later than the Beijing antique market. He also added that, during the Cultural Revolution, although antique *guwan* shops did exist they were not commercially active at all. This was because antiques were considered to signify feudalism and superstition, and to be old-fashioned as well as traditional. Sometimes, these could be used to justify personal criticism.

That situation continued until the economic reforms of the early 1980s, when the *wenwu shangdian* were re-opened for new business. Nowadays, I was told by someone working in the *wenwu shangdian*, their most popular items are a type of gift set, an inexpensive antique piece with a silky gift box, provided as souvenirs for business visits. I was also told that the cyber trade would be another area they would probably want to investigate in the future.

Xiamen's Development and Antiquities Trade

Historically speaking, Xiamen's modernization was brought about by various foreign trading activities, education and medical development introduced by western missionaries, and via the establishment of a canning industry and sugar production from the mid-nineteenth century onwards (Lau and Lee 2000:33-34). In the 1930s, Xiamen experienced another significant industrial modernization through investment by overseas Chinese of Fujian origin, especially telephone companies, potable water companies and several infrastructural developments (Lau and Lee 2000:44). But from 1949 to 1978, China experienced a long period of unstable development due to isolation and internal ideological struggles, and Xiamen was no exception.

In the second edition of *The Spiral Road: Change in a Chinese Village through the Eyes of a Communist Party Leader*, Huang Shumin writes, after visiting Lin village again in 1996:

> A ring of new multi-storey houses modeled after European-style villas, with whitewashed walls, red ceramic tile roofs, yard fences, manicured grass and automobile garages, have mushroomed around the old village core. Most of these new houses also boast marble floors, large-screen television sets, karaoke sound systems, and sometimes air conditioning. Refrigerators are now household necessities, as are telephones. (Huang 1998:199)

Huang studied the social change and urban development of the Minnan area (southern Fujian) during the 1980s, and he was

amazed to find that all kinds of changes had taken place between the 1980s and the 1990s — just as he was surprised by the rapid alterations taking place in Xiamen, and the improvement in people's living standards demonstrated by the use of electronic products, especially the materialistic lifestyles made possible by infrastructural development in those cases.

Did the rapid growth in living standards merely occur in Xiamen, or in Fujian province as a whole, or did it take place in mainland China in general? When I told people that I was working on a research project focusing on tradition and social change in the Minnan area, many local people would immediately tell me that Minnan people were good at business and that it was part of their tradition and regional uniqueness. Despite its unquestionable geographical advantages in terms of easy transportation and the Open Policy for economic reform and social development of coastal cities, it might be important to clarify whether there was any local tradition contributing to the success of Xiamen's development. Howell (2000:125) comments that Xiamen, being one of the earliest special economic zones (SEZs) in coastal South China, had at least three factors contributing to its successful economic development — its privileged policy position, overseas Chinese links and local initiative.

A brief historical comparison of the development of three major cities in Fujian province can demonstrate that Xiamen's economic achievement in the Minnan area is a conspicuous one. As for the distinctions among these three regions in Fujian province, Chen (1998) points out that Minnan people settled and developed very differently from both Xinghua and Fuzhou people in the north. Not only do they not even understand each other's dialects, in addition their socio-historical development obviously differed from each other. As Chen (1998) mentions, Minnan people generally had a strong tradition of engaging in coastal trade as well as in other commercial activities, while Fuzhou people showed more concern for the state and politics. Xinghua people were more interested in promoting education (as there were relatively more official degree holders in the past

compared to other parts of Fujian) and working for the government in various areas.

There were several factors contributing to the enormous change in Xiamen. These included easy transportation, an overseas trade network, the flow of migrant labour from rural areas, and so on. Xiamen, being the major recipient of internal migration within Fujian province, demonstrated that urban areas were considered the places where migrants could most easily find higher-paid jobs or start new businesses. Whether that was true or not, I found that the focus of my investigation was the emergence of a community formed by internal migrants who originally came from surrounding rural areas. Therefore, with a focus on the new migrant community created along with the antique business, I want to elaborate on how different factors affected their ways of adaptation. I will also try to explore how people took advantage of the antique arcade in looking for a better standard of living in the post-reform era.

This research is based on my fieldwork in an antique arcade in Xiamen during the summers of 1999 and 2000, together with my direct interviews with people there who had been active in the antiquities trade for some years. Using the case of Xiamen, I aim to clarify the implications of the antique arcade, as a centralized trading place, from the perspective of some petty antique merchants belonging to the "floating population" — those merchants who migrated from rural regions into the city and did not have a stable residency status.

Bailuzhou Antique Arcade

In the summer of 1999, I first came to Xiamen looking for a suitable research topic and field site for the understanding of the social significance of the antiquities trade in contemporary China. After visiting several tourist destinations in Xiamen, I found that the antiquities trade was quite common and popular, ranging from the operations of simple street vendors to well-decorated elegant stores in the shopping arcades of starred hotels. However, I have to emphasize that the *guwan* I mention here actually range from genuinely unique and expensive antiques to replicas and handicrafts mostly sold to tourists as inexpensive souvenirs.

After meeting several people who knew about different aspects of Xiamen's antiquities trade, it was recommended that I visit two major regions in the city — Gugong (meaning Forbidden Palace) Road and Bailuzhou Antique Arcade. I was told that I would find many antique shops there, especially in the latter, which reputedly had more than one hundred stores in the arcade. I was also told that many shop owners were originally from different counties, especially from Zhangzhou. Only a small number of them were originally from Xiamen.

Many Xiamen people reminded me that antiques sold in Bailuzhou were not real and most of them were probably recently made handicrafts or even factory products. Again, I was told that most of the antiques were copies, or even copies of copies (reproduced from books in which copies are included); thus, there was no "real" antique anyway. I was not able to tell whether these were "real" antiques or not. However, I did find out that there was some recognition of the quality of antiques sold in those shops.

Apart from replicas and handicrafts offered as tourist souvenirs, some of the antiques I saw in Bailuzhou could be classified as *wenwu*, from either tombs or ruins, instead of antiques inherited from previous generations. Even though there were some exceptions, it would not be a large amount.[4] Regarding the local government's control over the antiquities trade, I was told that soon after the establishment of the antique arcade, government officials visited the shops and required a clear differentiation between the various antiques. They were officially divided into three categories as: (1) ordinary antiques which could be freely sold; (2) antiques for internal circulation only (these required labelling); and (3) antiques for display and appreciation only but not for sale (these also required labelling). As some were examined and labelled by government officials, I assumed that some of them were, by definition, genuine *wenwu*, although they might not necessarily be artistically distinguished pieces.

Looking at the antiquities trade in Xiamen as a popular new business among internal migrants in the last decade, I started thinking about why it had sprung up within such a short period of time. To my knowledge, most traders were neither inheriting the business from their family nor trained in related areas. Therefore, we might conclude that the antique business was simply something easy for those internal migrants to take up. I could not give any firm supporting data for this phenomenon, but I speculate that it could be related to the economic reforms of the late 1970s, when state enterprises were gradually replaced by private enterprises and a market economy was largely substituted for the planned economy.

As I observed from the antique furniture-oriented S-village, local people have been looking for some sort of "get rich" model, and success stories spread effectively among villagers speaking the same dialects and connected through village-oriented networks.

Xiamen was made a SEZ in 1980 and its consequent modernization and urbanization provided a new outlook and status as one of the most important coastal cities. I would consider Bailuzhou one of the most dramatic examples of urban development in Xiamen. Historically speaking, Bailuzhou is part of the Wandong area which used to signify coastal villages and fishing junks. Starting in the early 1980s, with the old district near the coast facing a shortage of land for further large-scale development, Wandong was reclaimed and later developed into a part of Xiamen's new city centre.

The eastern and western sides of the Bailuzhou were very different. On the west, there were public facilities including the city hall, an artificial lake, a square with a musical fountain and a memorial statue of Hong Kong's handover. On the east, there were entertainment areas consisting of discos, restaurants, nightclubs, a gigantic modern hotel, a children's playground and a shopping arcade (see also Lin 1999:214-15).

The shopping arcade was not originally planned as a home for the antiquities trade in the city. In the early 1990s, the shopping arcade was used as the fashion centre, selling

garments to local Xiamen people. However, an unexpectedly small number of customers came to shop there, so the idea of a fashion arcade was shelved. From July 1997, the arcade was re-opened and became an antique arcade managed by a private company called Bailuzhou Development Company. With new management, each tenant had to pay RMB1,250 per month for the rent, not including a RMB200-300 fee for water and electricity.

In the beginning, about 20 shops from Gugong Road moved into the new antique arcade. The other stores in the arcade were mostly run by some non-Xiamen people from other counties in Fujian. The majority were Zhangzhou people. I was told that this was mainly because one of the three organizers of the management firm was originally from Zhangzhou and that the so-called "Zhangzhou connection" would be seen as the major tie for their business network. When I asked them how they ended up selling antiques, I found their stories were quite similar. One informant told me that they were used to working for people collecting old things in rural areas. Another shop owner said that he received an "order or instruction" from people who were looking for certain types of old materials such as ceramics, sculptures, wooden furniture, and so on. Then, once they found these items, they would buy them and bring them back to their "clients" for rewards.

As time went on, some of them realized that they were handling something more valuable than they knew, and that gave them the idea of running their own business. In fact, they were able to run their own business largely by depending on friends from the same village. By making comparisons with S-village, which I described before, we might be able to draw generalizations about the emergence of the antique business — one of the private businesses established in the post-reform era — as an extension of village-oriented networks.

Bailuzhou played an interesting role in allowing many of the Zhangzhou petty (antique) merchants to use their collective strength to run a similar business independently. This might partly answer the question of why there were so many shops

coming together to the arcade so quickly, all of them concentrated in the antiquities trade. They competed with each other in the same market; but at the same time, they depended on each other's knowledge and access. As I observed, the traders visited each other and shared their experiences and opinions on the pricing and authenticity of various antiques.

Discussion

In July 2000, when I went for my second visit to Bailuzhou, I found that some changes had taken place in the arcade. Compared to my first visit, there were obviously more shops and restaurants. I also found a disco and several nightclubs along the opposite side of the arcade. In addition, a hotel was under construction. More importantly, what surprised me was that the arcade was no longer just a shopping area for customers, but also a new community created by the families of shop owners who had migrated to Xiamen and now lived in the room right above their stores.

Discussing the relations between internal migrants and the formation of a single business community in Beijing, Xiang (2000) mentions that apart from migrant workers there were other petty merchants from rural areas coming to earn their living in the cities. They did not only live close to each other doing the same kind of business but also built up their own "dialectic" communities in the new environment in their own ways (see also Xiang 1999; Zhang 2001; Zhuang 2002). In fact, the antiquities trade in Xiamen reflected the eclecticism employed by people when trying to gain a better life in the face of enormous social changes in which everything was becoming more unpredictable, but who still wanted to live in their new communities when they realized no more *wenwu* could be collected. They still wanted to live in the city and look for other opportunities instead of going back to the countryside where they thought there was no chance of making a better living.

Some young informants told me that they considered learning computer skills and joining direct sales schemes at the same time, since the antique business was neither stable nor long lasting. For those who were the sole breadwinners in their family, their spouses and children could come to live in the city and have more exposure to different kinds of businesses instead of continuing to do low-paid agricultural work in the country.

I found their lifestyles were highly improvised, eclectic and unpredictable, based on some sort of so-called "fuzzy logic" in their head that this was the route to earning more for a better future. They did not start their businesses with any long-term plan, partly because of the uncertainty over the kinds of antiques that they could obtain. For example, most of them told me that there was a genuine demand in the market for something really nice and unique. Yet, they also added that it was more difficult to obtain such quality goods to sell since there were ever more replicas around.

In *The Social Life of Things*, Appadurai (1986:5) mentions that: "Commodities, and things in general, are of independent interest to several kinds of anthropology. They constitute the first principles and the last resort of archeologists. They are the stuff of 'material culture,' which unites archeologists with several kinds of cultural anthropologists. As valuables, they are at the heart of economic anthropology and, not least, as the medium of gifting, they are at the heart of exchange theory and social anthropology generally." Here, we can also find different meanings of antique: it means "private business" for the S-village, "identity" for the state in social development, and finally "opportunities for improving living conditions" for the petty merchants who had migrated from nearby counties in Fujian.

I would summarize this by dividing antiques into the following four categories. The first is selected cultural items worthy of appreciation because of their historic and artistic value. The second is cultural items that help to construct national identity. The third is commodities with a high economic value and the fourth encompasses businesses that help people leave poverty and improve their living standards in post-reform China.

The social and political position of petty merchants has certainly changed since 1978. Two decades of sustained

"encouragement" by the Chinese government, combined with media influence and a change in values generated by China's modernization, have enabled private business to become an integral part of the country's economy. From this brief investigation of different social factors in the emergence of the antique business, I would point to at least three basic factors in the way the social network of internal migrants contributes to an understanding of people's adaptation to social change in China. By considering the newly emerged community largely involved in the antiquities trade in Xiamen, we are able to project a model for the understanding of many villages, towns and cities along coastal areas of South China impacted by economic reform. The lifestyles of individuals changed as a result of the economic shift that formed part of government policy from the early 1980s. These changes could again be detected in the flow of internal migrants moving into urban areas, their eclectic strategy in looking for better living conditions as well as higher-paid jobs in the city, and the emergence of newly created communities. They responded by linking up local networks and working together to reinforce their new opportunities while, at the same time, individuals are restlessly seeking out their own avenue of personal success. Finally, if this scenario explains Xiamen's antique arcade, it is probably no less common along the coast of South China.

Notes

1. The "new rich" refers to the generation of people who pursue the collection of Chinese arts, and have to a large extent been educated through the western media. They travel around the world; however, they have been uprooted from the local culture that their parents' generation had been familiar with. In other words, we might consider that their consciousness of their "roots" makes them potential customers for antiques in their search for a distinctive self as well as cultural identification.
2. For observations on complicity in anthropological research, see Geertz (1973) and Marcus (1997), and for the moral assumptions in Chinese villages, see Huang (2002).
3. Also see Watson's (1998) research on the National Palace Museum in which she investigates the shift of socio-political meanings of relics from being part of the imperial art collection to national treasures which everybody supposedly owns.
4. I witnessed a consultation requested by a few government officers to a retired professor, and the objects that were agreed to be *wenwu* came from a store in Bailuzhou.

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Observations on the Antiquities Trade in China

A Case Study of Xiamen's Antique Arcade

Abstract

In this paper, I describe the transformation of a village that produced and exported wooden furniture in Fujian and focus on the specific case of an antique arcade in Xiamen in order to shed light on the changing socio-cultural meanings of "antique." Given the changes taking place in mainland China, which have been brought about by its Open Door policy since 1978, it is important to understand how the definition of cultural relics has changed in different contexts. I will elaborate briefly on the definitions of antiques and cultural relics and seek to relate the discussion to how the antiquities trade reflects issues of social change in villages and urban development, especially adaptation by migrants flowing from rural areas to coastal cities in China.

中國古物買賣的觀察
廈門市古玩市場的個案研究

張展鴻

摘要

隨著中國的改革開放，古物政策和買賣亦出現了很大的轉變。本文作者考察了一條以生產和輸出木傢具爲主的福建村落和廈門市的古玩市場，希望能從兩者的轉變了解古物的社會文化意義，並透過不同的角度，探討與古物買賣相關的社會現象，如城鄉企業、沿海城市發展和省內移民等問題。