



RONALD CHENG

‘My Chinese chop, the seal I use for my collections, reads, ‘Once in the Chao Household’. That means that these things are in my possession for a short time only’.

港龍航空前任總經理，創辦人之子曹其鏞，是目前香港的領頭藏家之一。他慷慨捐贈了多件珍藏多年的雕漆及書畫給中國的博物館。

你對收藏的看法為何？

我從來都不承認自己是個藏家，我只是個衝動的買家。但我現在會遵循兩項原則：我只買我喜歡而且能夠負擔的物件。除了漆器之外，我也收藏一些瓷器，我有一件中國皇子贈與日本天皇的青瓷。

你是否曾出售你的收藏？

我從不賣，我只捐贈。我捐了160件中國漆器給浙江省博物館，他們為我設立一個專門的展示館。我的藏品都是經過世代流傳，最後才到我的手中。

經過這麼多年，這些物件能夠集結在我家，這一定是命運或緣分。我用於收藏品的印章上刻「曾在曹家」，表示這些物品都曾短暫屬於我。這表達了我對於我得到的所有東西的態度。

Former managing director of Dragonair, the Hong Kong airline founded by his father, Ronald Chao is one of the leading collectors in Hong Kong. He has made generous gifts of his collections of Chinese carved lacquerware and paintings to museums in China.

What is your approach to collecting?

I never want to admit that I am a collector; I am just an impulsive buyer. But I follow two basic principles: I only buy what I like and I only buy what I can afford. From the beginning, I have adhered to these principles. In addition to lacquer, I also collect some ceramics. I have a celadon that a Chinese prince gave as a gift to the Japanese emperor.

Do you ever sell pieces from your collection?

I never sell. I only donate. I donated 160 pieces of Chinese lacquer to the Zhejiang Provincial Museum; they are setting up a special pavilion for me. I think that all the pieces that pass through my hands have come to me after many generations.

這幾年來拍賣市場有什麼樣的演變呢？

幾年前，有些中國書畫家很樂意贈送他們的作品。1984年，我和一些朋友贊助了畫家范曾第一次在中國境外舉辦的展覽。畫展辦在我們公司的九龍辦公室，我邀請了所有朋友來參加。當時，我們每幅畫定價一千港幣，而一位朋友買了幾幅以示友好。前兩週他在中國的拍賣行以六十萬人民幣出售了其中一幅。這就是市場的演變。

你也買玉嗎？

十年前，我買了一只很美的翡翠手鐲給我太太。一次意外之下手鐲斷成兩半，中國人很迷信，我們認為玉可以保護她。後來我找了珠寶商將手鐲修復，但我太太不願意再戴了。

聽起來你似乎很迷信？

不是，但中國有個說法：「四十歲以前相信命運是傻子，但六十歲以後不信命運才是傻子。」意思是說，如果年輕而不敢冒險必定失敗，而年老時帶著遺憾回顧人生，也同樣愚蠢。

龔丹訪談

對頁

清乾隆 御製平定臺灣紫光閣二十功臣像贊繪軍恭
頌喀爾春巴魯圖萬延
HK\$4,820,000, 2009年10月8日

OPPOSITE

AN EXTREMELY RARE AND IMPORTANT COURT
PAINTING OF THE BANNERMAN KE ER CHUN
BATULU WAN TING
Qing Dynasty, Qianlong Period, dated to
The Wushen Year (Corresponding to 1788)
HK\$4,820,000, 8 October 2009

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It is destiny, or *yuanfen*, that so many things should be gathered in my household after so many years. My Chinese chop, the seal I use for my collections, reads, 'Once in the Chao Household'. That means that these things are in my possession for a short time only. This expresses how I feel towards all the things I acquire.

How has the auction market changed over the years?

A few years ago, Chinese painters were happy to give away their paintings. In 1984, some friends and I sponsored the first exhibition of the painter Fan Zeng outside of China in our company's Kowloon office and invited all my friends. At that time, we priced each painting at HK\$1,000. A friend of mine bought a few as an act of friendship to Fan. Two weeks ago, he sold one of them at an auction in China for RMB600,000. That is how the market has changed.

Do you also buy jade?

I bought a beautiful jade bangle for my wife about ten years ago. By accident, though, it broke cleanly in half. Chinese are superstitious. We thought the jade would protect her. Later, I had a jeweller repair the bangle, but my wife refused to wear it.

It sounds like you are superstitious.

No, but in Chinese we have the saying, "If you believe in destiny before the age of 40, you are a fool. And if you do not believe in destiny after 60, you are a fool". What that means is, if you are young and do not take risks, you will be a failure. When you are old and look back on your life with regrets, that is also foolish.

INTERVIEW BY DON J. COHN

