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ANCIENT CHINESE REDWOOD FURNITURE: EVOLUTION AND MODERN INTERPRETATIONS

Yang Kang, Синковец Д.П.

Научный руководитель: к.т.н. Садовская А.В.

Белорусский национальный технический университет

Redwood furniture began in 1405, through the Ming, Qing, late Qing three stages; when Zheng He brought the Chinese silk and porcelain, brought back is the main mahogany, because the mahogany weight, just for ballast (Fig. 1).



Figure 1 – Zheng He's voyages to the Western Seas

In the Song dynasty, Yuan and early Ming, China's furniture is elm, pine, beech, nanmu and other medium hardness of raw materials, since Zheng he brought back mahogany such as yellow pear, chicken wings and iron wood, some skilled craftsman with these wood hard, fine, good texture mahogany, made more solid, more beautiful, more practical furniture, furniture manufacturing in Ming

and Qing dynasties thus unprecedented prosperity, and therefore the birth of Red-wood furniture.



Figure 2 – The appearance of the mahogany furniture



Figure 3 – Ming Dynasty mahogany official hat chair tea table a set
(details show)

Features of the mahogany furniture:

The shape is simple, lively, fresh, pay attention to the beautiful and smooth lines;

Clever mortise and tenon structure and processing technology;

Fully shows the natural color and texture beauty of hardwood;
The material is hard, and the processing difficulty is high;
The color is darker, reflecting the style of ancient color;

- Wood is heavier and is of good quality;
- With its own fragrance, especially rosewood;
- High strength, wear resistance, good durability;

Raw materials used before the emergence of mahogany furniture:

- elm – north common tree species, cost-effective (Fig. 4);



Figure 4 – Elm

- pine – with a good hardness and stability (Fig. 5);



Figure 5 – Pine

- beech – the texture is delicate (Fig. 6);

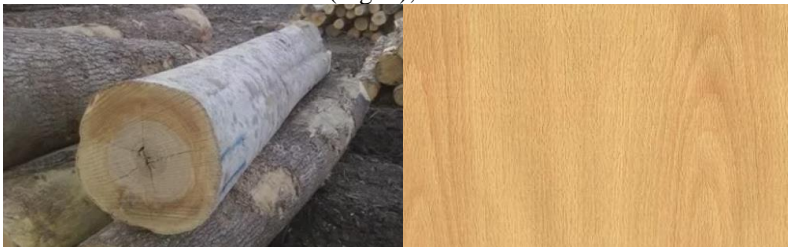


Figure 6 – Beech

– nanmu – corrosion resistance, no deformation, quietly elegant and delicate texture (Fig. 7).



Figure 7 – Nanmu

In the Song, Yuan and early Ming dynasties, Chinese furniture used elm, pine, beech, nanmu and other raw materials of medium hardness (Fig. 8).



Figure 8 – Example diagram of pine furniture

Materials used in mahogany furniture:

– Yellow flower pear wood: color, with exquisite texture, not quiet, not noisy, just right, texture or hidden or present, vivid and changeable, this kind of mahogany is produced in Hainan, China (Fig. 9).

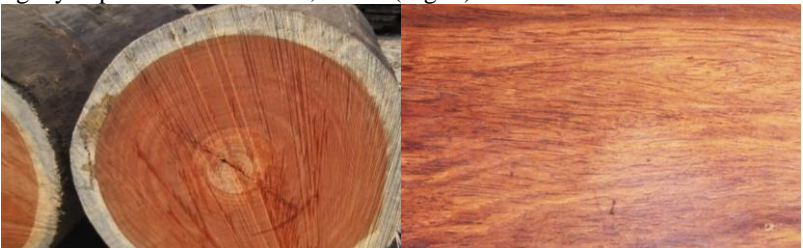


Figure 9 – Yellow flower pear wood

– Chicken wing wood (Jichimu): the texture is hard and fine, no brown eye lines, feel very smooth, beautiful texture, rich in changes, Guangdong and Yunnan have introduced the cultivation (Fig. 10).



Figure 10 – Chicken wing wood

– Iron wood knife: fine wood structure, slightly inclined texture, obvious core material and edge material, extremely heavy material, friction resistance, hard nature, strong strength, insect and ant resistant, corrosion resistance; produced in Guangxi region (Fig. 11).



Figure 11 – Iron wood knife

These pictures clearly see the development of mahogany furniture, more and more and more shape and decoration, although not as practical as the original Ming Dynasty furniture, but the artistic value and collection value is higher; but also reflects the spirit of times and cultural connotation:

– The Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644) (Fig. 12).



Figure 12 – Ming Dynasty mahogany chair

– First and middle period of the Qing Dynasty (1616 – 1940) (Fig. 13).



Figure 13 – First and middle period of the Qing Dynasty mahogany chair

– The Late Qing Dynasty (1840 – 1912) (Fig. 14).



Figure 14 – The Late Qing Dynasty mahogany chair.



Figure 15 – Features of modern mahogany furniture

Features of modern mahogany furniture (Fig. 15):

- Beautiful shape: solemn and elegant, simple or elegant shape, suitable for different people's aesthetic;
- Rigorous structure, fine workmanship: the use of mortise and tenon structure, the practice of clever coincidence, firm and durable, craftsmen a knife a saw, pay attention to the harmony of the overall art;
- Reasonable function: modern mahogany furniture is more in line with the principle of ergonomics, increased comfort;
- Maintain and increase value: mahogany resources are limited, the growth cycle of mahogany is long, some can reach hundreds of years, therefore, the mahogany furniture with rare for expensive will have more and more unique charm.