



The East Corner Company, Inc
Chinese Antiques and Fine Arts

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DEMYSTIFYING THE AUCTION HOUSE EXPERIENCE #2

Bidding strategies



A Blue and White Ovoid Jar
Kangxi period (1662-1722), 8" H
(Christie's New York, September 2003)

1. Mentally setting a "desirable price range" for each object that interests you: starting from the published Estimates, the price ranges expected at auction in the opinion of the auction houses' specialists. You will also need to consider your personal view about the object and your personal budget constraints. The desirable price range is a combination of what you are willing to pay and what you can afford.
2. Remaining calm during the auction and sticking to your pre-set "desirable price range": raising your bidding paddle confidently, you should not be intimidated by other bidders, nor should you be enticed to go beyond your price range, because in many circumstances, you may have overpaid for a given object. Willing to walk away from the prior lot may position you better to win the next item.
3. Devoting a small portion of your budget to some items that you may have ignored in the preview. Trends emerge during the auction that may change your view about certain objects. For example, interesting objects with high estimates may lack multiple bidders and may sell for prices lower than the estimates.

This 3-step strategy has been executed by **East Corner** on many occasions. Although all three steps are related, we find setting up the "desirable price range" is the most crucial. You may want to bid on an object for expanding a collection, or for reselling it later to make profit. Regardless of your purpose, you need to exercise judgment based on an item's auction history, rarity, objective value and market value instead of simply relying on auction houses' Estimates. **East Corner** can provide valuable and objective insight in all areas of price discovery.

A Longquan Celadon Ribbed Meiping and Cover
Song dynasty, 11th - 12th century, 9 3/8" H
(Christie's New York, October 2001)



PIECE OF THE MONTH



An extremely rare bronze Hu vase with a garlic-style head, tapered long neck, and globular body resting on a slightly flared foot rim, Eastern Han dynasty, 25 AD - 220 AD, excavated piece, previously in the collection of Marc Ricards, Los Angeles
Size: 15.25" H

Small Waisted Kang Table (for brick-built, heated bed in Northern China), classical style, with fine beading lines around the edges, the aprons, legs and feet decorated with finely carved archaic scroll-cloud motifs, all covered with reddish dark lacquer, 19th century, Qing dynasty
Size: 24.5" W x 16.5" D x 12.5" H



Cong, excavated ritual jade object, Shang dynasty, 16th - 11th century BC
Size: 1 3/8" H, 2 3/16" Diam.

CLASSICAL CHINESE FURNITURE MAKING – WOODS #4



Jumu - Ju wood furniture can be found in towns and villages all over China. Ju wood is known in north China as southern elm. It is harder than most woods although it is not exactly a hardwood. It plays an important role in Ming and early Qing furniture. Some pieces were made identical to huanghuali wood pieces in form, style and craftsmanship. It is evident therefore that cabinetmakers and true connoisseurs of Chinese furniture greatly valued them, believing that their aesthetic and historical merits should not be downgraded simply because they were made from somewhat inferior wood.

The scientific name of the ju genus is *Zelkova*. The species found in Jiangsu and Zhejiang Provinces is a large-leaf elm. Its wood is hard and dense, with a beautiful color and grain suggesting mountains piled upon mountains, called pagoda pattern by Suzhou cabinetmakers.



Seated chest, Zuoxiang
With two side-open doors, and one shelf inside the storage, the base carved with floriated patterns, early 19th/20th century
Size: 33.25" W x 19.5" D x 37" H
An excellent sample of *Jumu*-made furniture

SIGNIFICANCE OF CHINESE TRADITIONAL AUSPICIOUS PATTERNS #4

Dragon

According to ancient myths, the image of the first ancestor of Chinese, Fu Xi and Nu Wuo, is snake body - the original form of dragon. The birth of Yu, an ancestor of the Xia nationality, had relations with the yellow dragon. (In ancient legend, Yu was born by his father Gun. When Gun died, his body didn't decay. When his body was cut open, a yellow dragon came out.) Therefore, since totem times, the dragon has been worshipped as a god of origin by ancient Chinese.



Rising & Descending Dragon

The image of a dragon sums up the features of various kinds of animals: the antlers of a deer, the head of a cow, the body of a snake, the scales of a fish and the claws of an eagle. It has a beard beside its mouth and a pearl under the jaw. It can be small or big, dark or bright. It can cause rain and subdue demons and ghosts. So, it was used by royal families and emperors who called themselves "real dragon - the son of Heaven" to gain people's worship. Even today, Chinese folks still regard the dragon as a sacred, auspicious thing. The dragon, as a symbol of bravery, power and nobility, will remain in Chinese traditional consciousness.

Dragon patterns can be divided into many kinds according to their different designs: the moving dragon seems to be walking, the dragon in the clouds, the rolling dragon curls its body into a ball shape, the front dragon with the head facing forward, the sitting dragon with its head facing aside, the rising dragon with its head above its tail, the descending dragon with its tail above its head. Dragons with scales are called Jiao dragons, dragons with wings are called Ying dragons, dragons with horns are called Qiu dragons, dragons without antlers are called Chi dragons, dragons that have not yet risen to the Heaven are called Pan dragons, dragons good at living in water are called Qing dragons, dragons fond of fire are called Huo dragons.



Guazi Dragon

The Guazi dragon is a simplified dragon pattern. The continuous Guazi dragons mean endless happiness. With the attendant plant, it forms another pattern named "Trailing plant and guazi dragon".

(Please also read our published article ***How the Dragon Image Evolved*** from our website "Resources / Research" section.)

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