

“Gilded Glory: Chaozhou Woodcarving” exhibition to showcase customs and lifestyle of Chaoshan region

The exhibition "Gilded Glory: Chaozhou Woodcarving" will open tomorrow (November 8) at the Hong Kong Museum of History. With around 120 exhibits, the exhibition will reveal the practical uses and artistic qualities of Chaozhou woodcarving, while also giving the audience a taste of the customs and humanistic spirit of Chaoshan region.

An opening ceremony was held today (November 7). Speaking at the ceremony, the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services, Ms Michelle Li, said that the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao signed the Greater Pearl River Delta Cultural Exchange and Co-operation Development Plan 2014-2018 in 2014 to strengthen co-operation among the three places. The Hong Kong Museum of History and Guangdong Museum also launched an exhibition exchange programme this year, demonstrating the close relationship between cultural institutes of Guangdong and Hong Kong.

Ms Li expressed her gratitude for the support of the Department of Culture and Tourism of Guangdong Province, the Guangdong Museum and the Federation of Hong Kong Chiu Chow Community Organizations, and said she hopes to continue working with Mainland cultural institutes and community organisations to bring treasures of traditional Chinese art and culture to Hong Kong.

Highlight exhibits include a gilt wooden diamond-shaped food container featuring a pigmented lacquer painting of "Wine from Wang Maosheng"; a small gilt wooden shrine featuring a biwu dingshuai (awarding marshalship through a martial arts contest) motif; a gilt wooden divine sedan chair; painted queti brackets featuring "Tale of the lychee and mirror carved in relief"; a gilt wooden beam cushion featuring crab and plum blossoms in openwork; and a large gilt wooden lobster and crab cage in openwork provided by Mr Gu Liuxi, who inherited the national intangible cultural heritage of Chaozhou woodcarving.

Chaozhou woodcarving is known as "gilt wood", as lacquer and gold foil are often applied to give key parts or the entire work a magnificent gold finish. The ingenious openwork carving techniques, together with meaningful folk motifs and patterns, showcase the traditional lifestyle of the Chaoshan region. The exhibition will also illustrate customs and traditions of the Chaoshan community in Hong Kong through various woodcarving works, including the Yu Lan Festival of the Hong Kong Chiu Chow Community, Chaozhou opera, Chaozhou music, dietary habits, customs and religious rituals.

Chaozhou woodcarving is a traditional Chinese folk handcraft with a long and distinguished history, and was popular across the Chaoshan region. Chaozhou woodcarving, along with Dongyang woodcarving, Huangyang woodcarving and Longyan woodcarving, are known as the "Four Greatest Schools of

Woodcarving in China". In 2006, Chaozhou woodcarving was inscribed onto the first national list of intangible cultural heritage.

Other officiating guests included the Director of the Guangdong Museum, Dr Wei Jun; the Executive Vice Chairman of the Federation of Hong Kong Chiu Chow Community Organizations, Dr Ko Wing-man; and the Museum Director of the Hong Kong Museum of History, Ms Belinda Wong.

The exhibition, which will run until February 25 next year, is jointly presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Department of Culture and Tourism of Guangdong Province, and jointly organised by the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Guangdong Museum.

The Hong Kong Museum of History is located at 100 Chatham Road South, Tsim Sha Tsui. For details of the exhibition, please visit hk.history.museum/en_US/web/mh/exhibition/current.html, or call 2724 9042 for enquiries.