



Lacquers

Sơn mài

Nobody challenges that the technique of lacquer is introduced to Vietnam by Chinese craftsmen. But the date of introduction continues to sustain debates and always remains the object of discussions. For some archaeologists, the use of lacquer adornment dated back to the first Chinese invasion (discovery of lacquerwares in the tombs of 3rd - 4th centuries of our era). For others, this technique was introduced by Trần Tường Công, ambassador to the court of China. He was assigned by king Lê Nhân Tông (1443-1460) to find a craft able to provide new resources for peasants. He was introduced to the secrets of lacquer in Chinese workshops in the province of Hunan.

Lacquer is in fact the milky juice obtained from an incision of the lacquer tree. Thanks to the solidification in open air and the resistance to acid and scratches, the resinous gum constitutes an ideal protection for wood and bamboo. One uses this resin to make lacquerwares. They offer a great diversity: folding screens, chests, trays, vases, chessboard etc....

Lacquerwork requires lots of preparation and care

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