

# *Analyze the Influence of Chinese Taoist Philosophy on Ming-Style Furniture*

**Kehan Lu**

*School Of Humanities, Xidian University, Xi'an, Shanxi 710100, China*

**Keywords:** Taoism, Philosophical design, Ming-style furniture

**Abstract:** Ming-style furniture, has a long history of development, is one of the most outstanding and prominent among the old-fashioned furniture in China. With the continuous evolution of people's living habits, cultural content, and philosophical concepts, it has formed a unique style of furniture under the basic elements of home furnishings. Chinese Taoist philosophy is rich in multiple concepts such as morality, life, aesthetics, and nature. And Ming-style furniture has absorbed more or less the content of Chinese Taoist philosophy in the development process. This paper combines the current development of Ming-style furniture, explores the influence of Chinese philosophy on Ming-style furniture, and discusses the deep connotation of Ming-style furniture.

## **1. Introduction**

Chinese Taoist philosophy values nature and advocates the idea of harmony between man and nature. In Chinese Taoist philosophy, there is no unified standard and no fixed model. It emphasizes on the idea of letting the flow go and developing according to the law of development of people and things. Therefore, Chinese Taoism is more natural and simple, and is full of meaning. In the furniture industry, the inner spirit, outer design, and beauty of furniture need to conform to beauty and morality, and have certain practical value, cultural value, and aesthetic value.

## **2. The Concept and History of Ming-Style Furniture**

Ming-style furniture has a history of about thousand years since its development, and its culture has a long history. With the elimination of the times, cultural penetration, and changes in demand, Ming-style furniture has gradually evolved from simple and short with single couch to a multi-form and simple style. But the style characteristics of Ming-style furniture has always been simple and generous, elegant and subtle, and natural and empty. Its design pays more attention to highlighting the essence of furniture, creating comfortable furniture that coexists with beauty and life. In a colorful world, Ming-style furniture is unique, and it stands out.

## **3. The Influence of Chinese Taoist Philosophy on Ming-Style Furniture**

### **3.1 The Influence of Simplicity in Chinese Taoist Philosophy on Ming-Style Furniture**

In modern design concepts, simplicity is the mainstream design style and occupies an important

position in the mainstream of social development. In Taoism, there are the concepts of “indifference is limitless and beauty follows”, “simplicity is simple”, and “less is more, more is confused” in Tao Te Ching. Therefore, simplicity is a part of Taoist philosophy in China. The advocacy of simplicity in Chinese Taoist philosophy is fully reflected in the decoration and modeling design of Ming-style furniture. The decoration of Ming-style furniture is divided into three types. One is to use the essential content of the furniture to modify, which makes the period more simple. The second is to play a decorative role to support and to make full use of the necessary components of the furniture for decoration, and the last one is to uphold the effect of a small amount of decoration. Therefore, the decoration of Ming-style furniture has the influence of simplicity in Chinese Taoist philosophy. In terms of styling design, Ming-style furniture is more inclined to simple line design style. The line-type design style makes Ming-style furniture more fluent and generous. At the same time, most Ming-style furniture is uncomplicated in form. And the furniture is relaxed and comfortable and implicit. The graceful image demonstrates the simplicity of Chinese Taoist philosophy. Therefore, the simplicity of the decoration and design of Ming-style furniture is a major feature, and it is also a soothing position in the material world and skyrocketing information.

### **3.2 The Application of Natural Concept in Chinese Taoist Philosophy into Ming-Style Furniture**

Chinese Taoist philosophy stresses the idea of “harmony between man and nature”, which reveals the factor of nature, advocates the pursuit of harmony between man and nature, and all things in nature are connected. Laozi said that “Tao is the respect and virtue is the nobleness of virtue. It is natural for human beings”. Chuang Tzu believes that “Tao” is in the universe, advocating obedience to the natural rules of heaven and abandoning “miscellaneous”, “false”, so when we abandon “miscellaneous” and “false”, we can reflect the more real and natural essence, which is similar to “seeing the essence through the phenomenon”. Ming-style furniture has continuously evolved and developed in the long history, and Chinese Taoist philosophy and cultural concepts have also affected all fields in the long history. Under the influence of Chinese Taoist philosophy and cultural concepts, Ming-style furniture has always adhered to the concept of nature, even if it continues to be evolved, it still retains the nature. The most significant natural concept in Chinese Taoist philosophy is applied to the selection of furniture materials. The material of ancient Ming-style furniture has preferred natural wood to shorten the distance between man and nature. In the process of material selection, we should pay attention to the hardness of wood texture and the natural degree of texture. In the past, people tended to choose the materials with better natural conditions, such as *Dalbergia odorifera*, sandalwood and *Phoebe*. According to the present situation, most of the Ming-style furniture with long retention time is made of this kind of material. Therefore, under the natural and beautiful conditions, the material selection of Ming-style furniture is also practical. In addition, Ming-style furniture in the material processing, usually as far as possible to retain the natural state of the material, some will pursue the beauty of natural material itself. For example, in the process of processing, smooth treatment will be used to show the wood texture, and highlight the wood texture and wood structure. Through reasonable carving, the beautiful texture of wood can be highlighted, and the natural sense of wood can be fully showed to improve the texture of furniture. In the carving of Ming-style furniture, most of them are based on natural materials, such as flowers, wood, birds and so on. They take the furniture as the carrier, blend in natural elements, show the charm and beauty of nature, and draw the distance between people's life and nature. Ming-style furniture in the design and modeling process also pays attention to ergonomics, design aesthetic feeling, quality, comfortable furniture, so that people can be more in line with the furniture in the process of use, and the interior of the furniture can be enhanced.

### 3.3 The Penetration of Yin Yang Concept in Chinese Taoist Philosophy into Ming-Style Furniture

Chinese Taoist philosophy mentions that “the combination of Yin and Yang is Tao”. It holds that all things in the world are the combination of Yin and Yang, and that Yin and Yang are the source of human beings. People and things have attributes of Yin and Yang. In the process of the development of Taoism, Yin and Yang theory has gradually emerged, which has deeply affected the development of Chinese traditional aesthetics and penetrated into our lives. The concept of Yin and Yang in Chinese Taoist philosophy permeates the Ming-style furniture, and it is reflected in the furniture design. In the design process of Ming-style furniture, there are dynamic and static, changed and united, square and round, virtual and real, thick and clumsy, and gentle, each of which permeates the contrast between Yin and Yang. In the process of coordinating the concept of Yin and Yang, Ming-style furniture gradually contrasts and produces various kinds of excellent furniture design with certain implication and aesthetic feeling. On the other hand, the concept of Yin and Yang in Chinese Taoist philosophy gives Ming-style furniture more materials and inspiration, which makes Ming-style furniture more possible in design and modeling. In the current Ming-style furniture, there is a common furniture design with the concept of contrast between Yin and Yang, such as the pattern of virtual and real in contrast hollowing out, dual matching, which has both practical and moral meaning.

### 4. Conclusion

By carefully exploring the inner culture and spirit of Ming-style furniture, we can find that the intangible Chinese Taoist philosophy is permeated in the tangible furniture, and deeply depict the Taoist philosophy of simplicity, the nature of the unity of man and nature, the concept of Yin and Yang contrast and dialectics in the selection, modeling, design and decoration of Ming-style furniture, forming a Ming-style furniture culture with unique style and inheritance. In addition, understanding Chinese Taoist philosophical culture through Ming-style furniture, it also reflects the culture of harmony between man and nature, and the interdependence of all things, Taoism and law.

### References

- [1] Su Yan. *Formal Expression of Ritual Culture in Ming-style Furniture [J]. Journal of Suzhou University of Science and Technology (Social Science Edition)*, 2020, 37(06): 95-100.
- [2] Liu Jingbin. *A Brief Talk on the Rhythm Beauty of Ming-Style Furniture [J]. Agricultural Staff*, 2020(23): 157.
- [3] Pan Zhichang. *Looking at the Beauty of Ming-style Furniture from Aesthetics: A Reading Note on the Study of Chinese Aesthetics [J]. Three Gorges Forum (Three Gorges Literature-Theory Edition)*, 2020(05): 111-116.
- [4] Li Huihui. *Research on the Influence of Ming-style Furniture in Modern Chinese Design [J]. Western Leather*, 2020, 42(06): 6.
- [5] Wang Min. *On Chinese Traditional Simple Ideas: Taking Ming-style Furniture as an Example [J]. Artwork Jian*, 2019(29): 15-16.
- [6] Pan Cixiang, Liang Qingzhong. *Research on the Origin and Development of Carved Patterns in Ming-style Furniture [J]. Light Textile Industry and Technology*, 2019, 48(08): 26-27.