

## **"Antiques" offered directly from China – or indirectly via online selling services**

**Beware!** Please do not believe it is possible to buy genuine “antiques” online directly from Chinese sellers, i.e. those sold from China. They are all fakes. The rules for the sale/export of cultural relics/antiques from China are now stricter than even a few years ago. According to reports there are even fakes in some Chinese museums. The originals were replaced by fakes and the genuine ones sold by employees.

China is now really clamping down on illegal antique trade. Currently only items less than 50 years old can be legally exported. There may be a few exceptions, but generally said, China does only allow heritage items out that are of little importance. This means low quality or common wares that are still plenty. Punishments can be severe for those trying ... so almost all worth collecting and being sold currently or having come out of China in recent years are either fakes, new, or in a condition or of a quality that makes collecting them not worthwhile.

Most valuable, collectible antiques that are in private ownership in China are now required to be registered. If one is found without registration, it may be confiscated. Grave robbery to find artifacts was common in the past. Now, anyone caught trying to get find genuine, valuable items this way can get the ultimate punishment.

At the same time the quality of fakes is at its best now, so that even top experts often are not quite sure if an item is authentic or not. China’s government does virtually nothing to stop rampant faking.

To appease the authorities some fakers are now using a new trick; they attach clay to the bottom of fired ceramics and add their seal or mark on it. *But this is made easily removable. Thus, once such an item is outside of the country...*

### **Regarding trading antiques within China the general rules now appear to be:**

- Excavated items cannot be traded at all (this includes items from archaeological excavations as well as from graves). Such items are considered possession of the state.  
*Many older items, e.g. Yuan/Song dynasties and earlier are virtually unknown as inherited or handed down items. They are assumed to be excavated items, which are prohibited.*
- Any later items handed down or inherited from ancestors, etc. may be traded. Some restrictions may apply and rules can differ according to the province.