

81A 81B 金馬青龍

Golden Horse and Green Dragon

The following twelve designs are from Yangliuqing, the woodblock-printing centre southeast of Beijing (see #1). Larger and more colourful than *zhima* – and made to a far higher technical standard – they were prints for display in the home over the New Year festival, packed full of symbols for good fortune and prosperity. They often came in complementary pairs, one each for the left and right sides of a door.

Here, children are bringing wealth to the household – the younger ones offer trays of gold and precious

gems, while the elder children carry money trees blossoming with ingots and cash. Rising up out of the left-hand tray is a green money dragon, its body formed from a string of coins; while on the right is a golden treasure horse.

The wallpaper-like backdrops, featuring a repeating good-luck motif, were a signature design of Yangliuqing's studios. The cloud patterns here echo *lingzhi* fungus, a rebus for longevity.



82A 82B 麒麟送子
Qilin Bringing Children

This is a well-known folk-art motif, wishing for intelligent sons who will grow up to enjoy great success.

Beneath a four-character idiom proclaiming the arrival of happiness and wealth, children are riding mythical qilin, a scaly blend of deer and dragon whose appearance heralded the birth of an especially wise and benevolent figure – one is said to have announced the birth of Confucius. The child on the left carries a branch of red coral and a gold ingot, signifying riches (the coral also echoes the red hat finial or “button” worn by top-ranking officials); the boy on the right holds a dragon pearl and *ruyi* wand, representing wishes for wisdom and a long life.



83A 83B 加官進祿

Official Promotion and Increased Salary

Carrying *hu* tablets and wearing the robes and headgear of high-ranking courtiers, each figure offers an object on a tray. The deer in the left-hand panel is a pun on the similar-sounding word for an official's salary; the right-hand figure proffers a hat, a rebus for stepping up in rank; while the upside-down red bats echo a phrase meaning "may great good fortune arrive". Literally then, this print hopes for promotion to wealth and high government position – or, more generally, that the household should enjoy great success over the coming year.

