

Loong 龍 Conservation Project

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Moving Loong 龍



Image: Members of the Bendigo Chinese Association in the process of moving Loong.

On Saturday 16 July, members of the Bendigo Chinese Association, Golden Dragon Museum and the University of Melbourne moved Loong 龍 into his final exhibition position, reversing his position to ensure his head faces the other dragons in the main gallery. Led by conservator Jude Schahinger, 22 people were needed to hold Loong 龍, and another nine to move his stands and direct movement.



The Loong 龍, Chinese Dragon Conservation project is supported by the Victorian Government through the Living



Image: Conservator Jude Schahinger directing the move.

Supporting the weight of the scales

Loong's 龍 has 1,375 handmade scales, each containing paper, dyed silk, ribbon, cotton thread and filling, paper decals, and mirrors with metal surrounds. The scales are of considerable weight and undulate and move when Loong 龍 is paraded. This movement is a key feature of his construction and when Loong is at rest, visible sagging between his supported bamboo hoops is visible. This sagging has caused the scales to curl, widespread surface abrasion, and has created tension in his under skirt and lining. To raise the scales and redistribute their weight more evenly, strips of archival board has been placed underneath the lining connecting the supporting bamboo hoop structure underneath.



Image (l to r): Before with scales sagging and after.



Image (l to r): Before with scales sagging, and after.



Image: Inside Loong 龍 archival board strips supporting the weight of the scales.



Image (l to r): Scale sagging before, and after inserting archival supports.

Scale conservation completed

On Saturday 16 July Loong 龍 was moved into his final, permanent exhibition position. This move resulted in minor damage to over 15 scales. During the following week, two conservators from the Grimwade team, Dr Holly Jones-Amin and Marica Mucic, examined every scale and stabilised areas that had rubbed or become damaged during the move.

They also prepared a small conservation kit for the Golden Dragon Museum to use on Loong 龍 in the future.



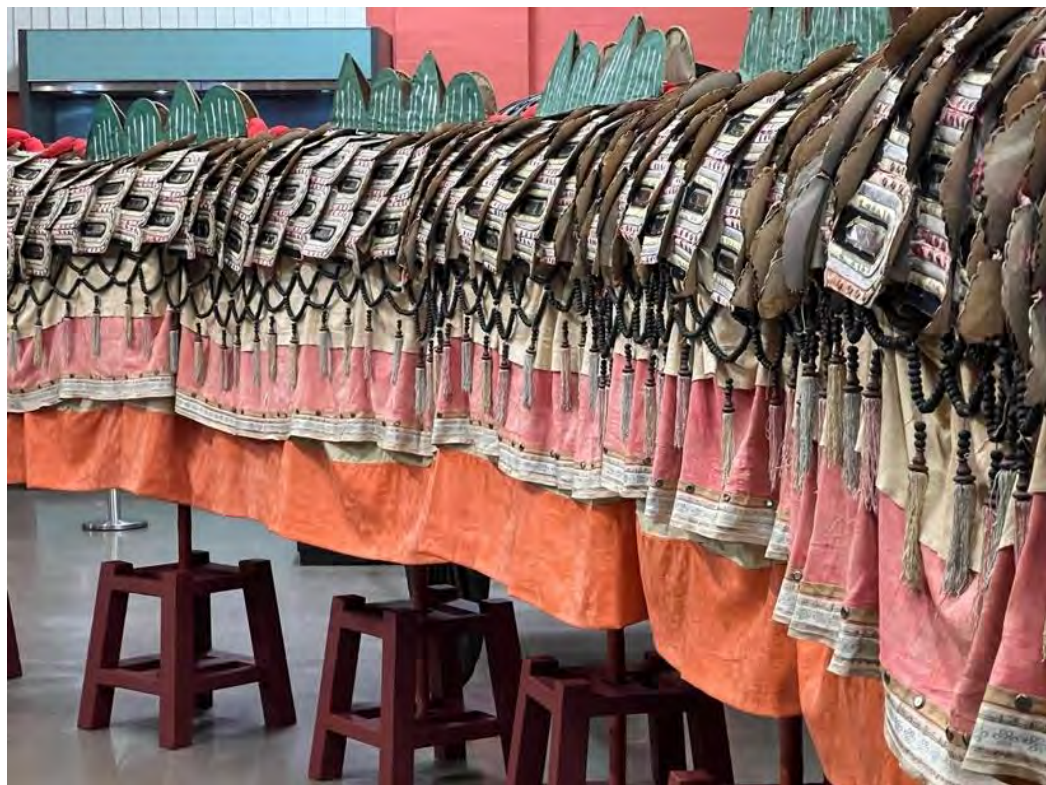
Image: The conservation kit prepared by the Grimwade team to be left in the Museum for staff and volunteers to use when making small repairs to Loong 龍.

Aligning the skirts and beads

Over time Loong's 龍 skirt has begun to sag in places, creating large holes along the length of his body. The skirt is secured to the inner bamboo armature by original ropes and ties. To fix the sag, the conservation team worked inside Loong's 龍 body to gently raise the rope and affix it with cotton ties to the bamboo hoops inside. The result was immediate in reducing tension and distributing the weight of the beads along his length.



Images (l to r): Before skirt and bead sag, and after.



Images (top to bottom): Before skirt and bead sag, and after the gaps were reduced and the beads weight supported.

Stitch repairs to Loong's 龍 skirt - details

The repairs to Loong's 龍 skirt have been delivered with fine couching stitch, which holds the original threads in place. Here are some detailed pictures of the work that has been completed.



Images (top to bottom): Detailed images of the stitch repairs to the same area of the skirt



Images (l to r): Detailed images of the same area of stitch repairs from two different angles. The stitching is so fine it is almost transparent.

Managing the environment – data loggers

Fluctuations in the Museum environment can accelerate the deterioration of materials, so keeping a close eye on the temperature, humidity and light levels is essential. To support the ongoing care of Loong 龍, the conservation project team have installed four Testo data loggers in the Loong Gallery to measure and record the environment. The data loggers connect to the Museum's wifi, and live information on what is happening in the gallery space can be accessed remotely.

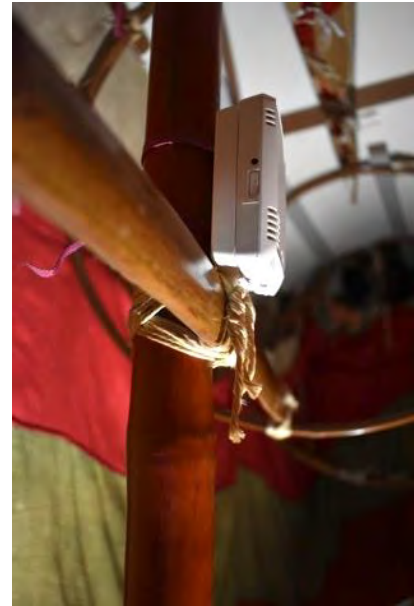


Image (l to r): Data loggers installed below and inside Loong's 龍 body.

Image gallery

Images of Bendigo Chinese Association members team moving Loong 龍 to his final permanent exhibition position in the Golden Dragon Museum at 9am 16 July 2022.





Get in touch

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