This ring was a favorite of First Lady Michelle Obama, who wore it in 2011 when President Obama hosted a banquet for Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip. The ring caught the attention of many notable guests that evening (Adducci, 2011).

**TRADITIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP**

China has a long history of using gold and silver in jewelry design, and gold still dominates the domestic jewelry market. Imperial artisans were once able to spend considerable time on a piece of jewelry commissioned by the emperor. Today very few can afford to practice time-consuming traditional craftsmanship. Yet the rise of mainland China’s luxury market is changing this by encouraging the adoption of classic techniques.

One of these is filigree inlay art (figure 7). This combines two crafting skills: The first is filigree, the use of gold or silver threads of different weights. The second is inlay work, which involves setting stones and carving or filing precious metals around them. The artist responsible for the revival of this technique is Master Jingyi Bai (figure 8).

Master Bai’s interest in both painting and pattern serves as the basis for her design life. As an art school student of precious metals, she gained some knowledge and skills, but she felt they were not enough to make her a successful master goldsmith and designer. Over the next 40 years, she perfected her technique in a filigree inlay art factory, where she was trained by older-generation master goldsmiths. In 2008, filigree inlay art was designated the Intangible Cultural Heritage of China, and Master Bai was named the official Representative Inheritor. Master Bai’s participation in promoting filigree inlay art accelerated in 2009, after she began designing for well-known Chinese jade jewelry brand, Zhaoyi. These two events took her career to new heights.

**In Brief**

- After years of stagnation, Chinese jewelry design has undergone a renaissance, combining innovative techniques with culturally relevant motifs.
- Individual designers are able to develop unique pieces based on exposure to both Western methods and traditional Chinese craftsmanship.
- The growth of the Chinese jewelry market has led to a greater presence in the international industry, particularly in the luxury market.