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Oriental Art

PORTRAIT OF YEN HSIANG-SHIH Military Governor of Kansu

A hanging scroll in ink and colours on silk, with superscription on yellow paper.
No. 7 of the One Hundred Meritorious Servitors.

From the Imperial Palace workshops, inscribed and dated:

"In the spring of the *keng-ch'en* year of the Ch'ien-lung period (1760) your subjects Liu T'ung-hsün (1700-1773), Liu Lun (1711-1773) and Yü Min-chung (1714-1780) respectfully offer these words of praise, following the imperial order."

With one large oval relief seal of the Ch'ien-lung emperor "Ch'ien-lung yü-chien chih-pao". The series was installed in the rededicated Tz'u-kuang ko (pavilion) in the Forbidden City in 1760.

It has been suggested that the faces of this set of portraits were painted by Giuseppe Castiglione (Lang Shih-ning, 1688/9-1766), the famous Jesuit painter at the courts of the K'ang-hsi, Yung-cheng and Ch'ien-lung emperors, but there is to date no proof of this possibility. Castiglione spent much of the time between 1747 and 1759 helping the Ch'ien-lung emperor to realise his plans to build the Yüan-ming Yüan, but in 1760 he did collaborate in the same Tz'u-kuang ko project commemorating the Ili and Turkestan victories.

The painting measures 73½ inches by 37¾ inches.

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51 Brook Street London W1Y 1AU

Telephone: 01-629 4670. 01-493 7374. Cables: Eselem London W1.

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Cover: Leaf from an album of flower paintings
By Giuseppe Castiglione (1688-1766), Italian
Height 32.5 cm, width 28.5 cm
The Palace Museum, Beijing

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