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## The World of Qianlong

**Sale:** HK0201 | **Location:** Hong Kong  
**Auction Dates:** Session 1: Sun, 27 Apr 03 3:00 PM

[Print Page](#)

LOT 35 (of 37)

Jump to: 

Go

[PREVIOUS LOT](#) | [BROWSE CATALOGUE](#) | [NEXT LOT](#)

### LOT 35

#### ANOTHER PROPERTY

#### A SET OF TWELVE COPPER-PLATE ENGRAVINGS QING DYNASTY, QIANLONG PERIOD

150,000—200,000 HKD

**Lot Sold.** Hammer Price with Buyer's Premium: 360,000 HKD

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[▶ KEY TO LOT SYMBOLS](#)



#### MEASUREMENTS

51 by 87cm, 21¼in. by 34¼in., condition report available

#### DESCRIPTION

each of rectangular form with a central fold, printed with detailed scenes depicting the Qianlong Emperor's military campaign against Formosa in 1787-88, eight of cavalry and infantry engaged in combat against rebels in mountainous landscapes, three depicting the Imperial fleet, and one of the official reception of the victorious army and its commander, all with a panel enclosing an inscription, two additional white folding pages flecked with gold paint, and three pink folding pages (two joined) flecked with gold paint and stamped with a six character seal mark (two wood boards)

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**PROVENANCE** Collection of James, 8th Earl of Elgin and 12th Earl of Kincardine, High Commissioner and Plenipotentiary to China, 1857-1859 and 1859-1860 This set of twelve copper-plate engravings commemorates Emperor Qianlong's military campaign in Formosa in 1787 and 1788. The set depicts the victory of Qianlong's troops against local rebels in eleven battle scenes and also shows the imperial reception of the victorious army and its commander, the military officer Fukang'an (died 1796), a Manchu of the Bordered Yellow Banner. The inscriptions represent poems composed and written by the Qianlong Emperor. They are dated 1787, 1788 and 1789, respectively, and were added to the copper-plate engravings from wood blocks. This series of prints was published in 1789/90. The scenes were designed by Jia Quan and Li Ming, Chinese court artists working in the Jesuit tradition. The campaign to quell the uprising in Formosa took Fukang'an several months of severe fighting. As a reward for his success he was raised to Duke Jiayong, a dukedom of the first class. In memory of his bravery in this and other campaigns three portraits of him were displayed in the Ziguangge, a hall commemorating military exploits on the western shore of the Central Lake (Zhonghai) in Beijing (see Arthur W. Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, Washington, 1943, pp.254f. and p.74). In the early 1760s Emperor Qianlong had commissioned Giuseppe Castiglione and three other missionaries at the court to design a first series of drawings commemorating his military victories. These drawings were then sent to France to be engraved in copper and the finished copper plates reached Beijing in several shipments between 1772 and 1775. Qianlong was so pleased with this set that he later desired similar commemorative prints to be made of his other military campaigns. By the time of the Formosa campaign, however, all four of the Jesuit painters who had worked on the first series, had died. Chinese court painters trained by the Jesuits were therefore entrusted with the task. They closely followed the first series in style. Three engravings from the same series as the present one are in the Musée Guimet, Paris, illustrated in Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, *Gravures des conquêtes de l'Empereur de Chine K'ien-long au Musée Guimet*, Paris, 1969, pp.44-46; one of them was also included in the exhibition *From Beijing to Versailles: Artistic Relations between China and France*, Hong Kong Museum of Arts, Hong Kong, 1997, cat.no.93.