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Yuan Ming Yuan The Garden of Absolute Clarity and Imperial Peking, The Last Days

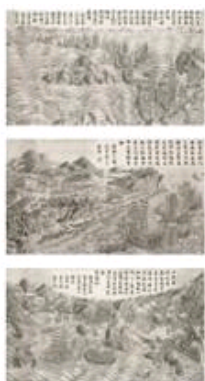
Sale: HK0260 | **Location:** Hong Kong
Auction Dates: Session 1: Tue, 09 Oct 07 10:30 AM

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LOT 1313 (of 33)

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[View Zoom/Large Image](#)**LOT 1313**
**A SET OF TWELVE COPPER-PLATE ENGRAVINGS
 QING DYNASTY, QIANLONG PERIOD**

400,000—600,000 HKD

Lot Sold. Hammer Price with Buyer's Premium: 907,500 HKD

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MEASUREMENTS**measurements note**

each 51 by 87.5cm., 20 by 34 1/2 in.

DESCRIPTION

mounted as a handscroll

each print of rectangular form, printed with detailed scenes depicting the Qianlong Emperor's successful 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, each with a panel enclosing an inscription

ALTERNATE VIEWS:

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CATALOGUE NOTE

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 and his troops several months of severe fighting. As a reward for his success, he was promoted to Duke Jiayong, a dukedom of the first class. In honor of his bravery for this campaign, as well as his earlier campaigns, three portraits of him were displayed in the Ziguangge, Hall of the Purple Splendour, a hall commemorating military exploits, located 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 Guiseppe 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.

An identical set from the collection of Lord Elgin, Plenipotentiary to China, 1857-1859 and 1859-1860, was sold in these rooms 27th April 2003, lot 35. Another three engravings from this Formosa series 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. The Ethnological Museum, Staatliche Museen in Berlin, also has a complete copperprint set from this series as well as an entire set of the copper plates for this series.

This conquest series has also been reproduced on silk and on lacquer panels. The Museum of East Asian Art, Staatliche Museen in Berlin owns one of the lacquer panels from this series. Two other ones are in the Kasteel Huis Doorn in the Netherlands. And an ink on silk set of this series is held in the Hamburg Museum, although only eleven paintings were produced. The lacquer panels and a copper print and plate are illustrated in Herbert Butz, et al. *Bilder für die Halle des Purpurglanzes*, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin, 2003, cat.nos. 25-29.