The Global Lives of Qianlong's Battle Pictures in 18th Century China and Beyond

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Introduction

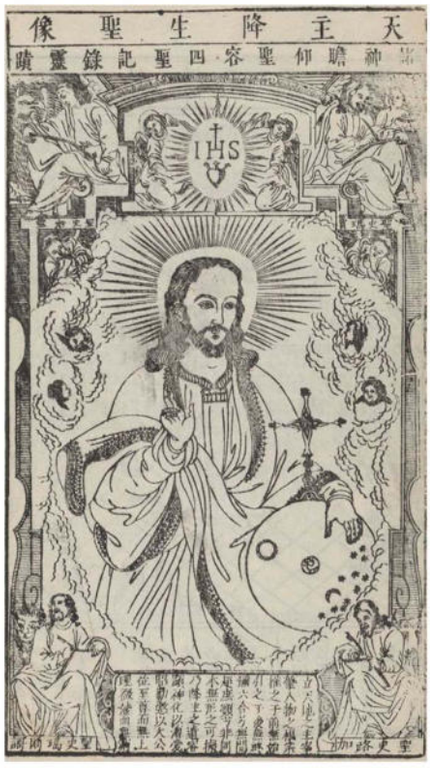
The rule of the Qianlong emperor (reigned 1736–1795) in the 18th century marked the apogee of High Qing China, characterised in part by this Manchu monarch's victory in the pacification of the north-western and south-western borderlands. He commissioned a series of battle scenes and portraits of meritorious generals across different media to glorify the victorious campaigns and Manchu military prowess. Copperplate engravings of battle scenes produced during the Qianlong reign are in nature material objects of transcultural significance. Circulated worldwide, they have continuously aroused scholarly attention in the fields of art history and Qing (1644–1911) studies. Existing studies of these war images have focused on two perspectives. First, based on the ground-breaking work of French Sinologist Paul Pelliot (1878–1945), scholars have continued to evaluate the role of *The East Turkestan Campaign* engravings (1765–1774) within the framework of Sino-French artistic exchange, as well as their technical and stylistic paradigm for all subsequent prints, in light of a large pool of specimens discovered in public and private collections worldwide.[1] Second, scholars such as Ya-chen Ma have traced the visual lineage of Qianlong's battle scene engravings back to the Ming (1368–1644) and the early Qing dynasty, revealing the way in which Manchu subjectivity was represented through the appropriation of European visual culture.[2]

This article intends to highlight three aspects: agents, technique or technology, and the circulation of material objects. The Qianlong emperor's ambitious agenda involved various agents across geographical boundaries within the Qing Empire and beyond. On the other hand, the proliferation of objects and images came hand in hand with the spread and evolution of techniques, motifs and styles. I will investigate the global trajectories of these battle pictures, as well as the agency of Jesuit missionaries and a Suzhou-based Manchu official to shed light on our understanding of the dissemination of visual images and technology from a transregional perspective. In addition to numerous copies of album painting and copperplate engravings, a curious suite of carved lacquer panels (1795), depicting Qianlong's Taiwan Campaign (hereafter "*The Taiwan Campaign* panels"), six of which belonged to the collection of the German Emperor Wilhelm II (Friedrich Wilhelm Viktor Albert, 1859–1941), awaits further study.[3] By delving into the circulation of these images in the Qing Empire and beyond, as well as their visual translation from etching to woodcut and lacquered wood, I attempt to reveal the multifaceted meaning of material objects shaped by various agents through cultural and technological exchange within shifting historical contexts.

1 *Virgen de la Antiqua* (*Virgin of Antiquity*), from the *Chengshi moyuan* (*Ink Garden of the Cheng Family*), compiled by Cheng Dayue, 1606, woodblock print, 31.7 x 18 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei, Pingtu011187. After He Chuanxin, ed., *New Visions at the Qing Court*, p. 23

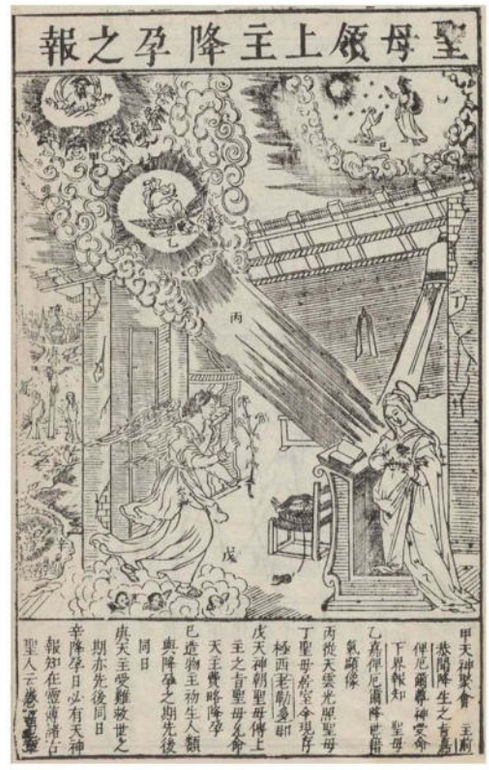
European Missionaries in China and Copperplate Engraving

How was the technique of copperplate printing, among other Western knowledge of image-making, introduced to, and transformed in, China from the 17th to the 18th century? Jesuit missionaries played a key role in the introduction of etchings—a legacy of European missions in Asia—in late imperial China, thus providing the foundation for Qianlong's commemorative images.



2 *Portrait of Jesus*, from the *Tianzhu jiangsheng chuxiang jingjie* (*Illustrated Explanations of the Incarnation and Life of the Lord of Heaven*), compiled by Giulio Aleni, 1637, woodblock print. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

3 *Annunciation*, from the *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines* (*Illustrations of the Gospel Stories*), compiled by Jerónimo Nadal, engraving after Bernardo Passeri, Antwerp: Martin Nuyts II, 1593. Artwork in the public domain



4 *Annunciation*, from the *Tianzhu jiangsheng chuxiang jingjie* (*Illustrated Explanations of the Incarnation and Life of the Lord of Heaven*), compiled by Giulio Aleni, 1637, woodblock print. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

After the arrival of the Italian missionary Matteo Ricci (Li Madou, 利瑪竇, 1552–1610) in China in 1582, the European objects and exotic commodities he brought were shared with the Chinese emperor and missionary subjects as gifts or tokens. For example, Ricci's gifts—including holy images, chiming clocks, maps and instruments—dedicated to the Wanli emperor (reigned 1573–1620) well reflected his strategy to expand the network of his mission in the imperial capital, Beijing. Painted and printed icons with unprecedented lifelikeness became a visual spectacle for Chinese audiences. Among them, four etchings were reproduced in the *Chengshi moyuan* (程氏墨苑, *Ink Garden of the Cheng Family*), a catalogue of ink-stick designs compiled by Cheng Dayue (程大約, 1549–1616?), an ink maker and merchant from Xin'an (present-day Huizhou) in Anhui province (**1**).[4] The translation of these holy images in woodcuts contributed little to the spread of Christian theology and faith, yet they served as a lens through which to look at the transmission and reception of Jesuit visual culture in late Ming China.

Ricci's successors made good use of such Jesuit visual pedagogy in their translation work by spreading Christian teachings through woodblock prints, a popular media that appealed to the local readership. *Song nianzhu guicheng* (誦念珠規程, *Method of Praying the Rosary*, circa 1619), a Chinese translation of the Rosary attributed to the Portuguese Jesuit João da Rocha (Luo Ruwang, 羅儒望, 1566–1623), contains fifteen illustrations derived from the Spanish Jesuit Jerónimo Nadal's (1508–1580) posthumous work *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines* (*Illustrations of the Gospel Stories*, 1593). Later, another Italian Jesuit named Guilio Aleni (Ai

[1] Paul Pelliot, "Les « Conquêtes de l'Empereur de la Chine»", *T'oung Pao*, Vol. 20, no. 3/4 (1921), pp. 183–274; Tanya Szrajber, "The Victories of the Emperor Qianlong", *Print Quarterly*, Vol. 23, no. 1 (March 2006), pp. 28–47; Laura Newby, "Copper Plates for the Qianlong Emperor: From Paris to Peking via Canton", *Journal of Early Modern History*, Vol. 16, no. 2 (2012), pp. 161–199; Niklas Leverenz, "From Painting to Print: The Battle of Qurman from 1760", *Orientations*, Vol. 41, no. 4 (May 2010), pp. 48–53; Niklas Leverenz, "Drawings, Proofs and Prints from the Qianlong Emperor's East Turkestan Copperplate Engravings", *Arts Asiatiques*, Vol. 68 (2013), pp. 39–60; Niklas Leverenz, "The Battle of Qurman: A Third Fragment of the 1760 Qianlong Imperial Painting", *Orientations*, Vol. 46, no. 4 (May 2015), pp. 76–80; Marcia Reed, "Imperial Impressions: The Qianlong Emperor's Print Suites", in *Qing Encounters: Artistic Exchanges between China and the West*, eds, Petra ten-Doesschate Chu and Ning Ding, Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute, 2015, pp. 124–139; and Shi-yee Liu, "Emperor Qianlong's East Turkestan Campaign Pictures: The Catalytic Role of the Documentation of Louis XIV's Conquests", *Arts of Asia*, Vol. 47, no. 2 (March–April 2017), pp. 82–97.

[2] Ya-chen Ma, "War and Empire: Images of Battle during the Qianlong Reign", in *Qing Encounters: Artistic Exchanges between China and the West*, pp. 158–172; Ya-chen Ma, *Kehua zhanxun: Qingchao diguo wugong de wenhua jian'gou* (*Commemorative Images of War: The Cultural Construction of the Qing Martial Prowess*), Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2016.

[3] In 2003, the special exhibition organised by Herbert Butz, then director of the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst (present-day Staatliche Museen zu Berlin) in Berlin, published a large quantity of artefacts, such as copper engravings and general portraits, originally from the Hall of Purple Splendour. See Herbert Butz, ed., *Bilder für die "Halle des Purpurglanzes": chinesische Offiziersporträts und Schlachtenkupfer der Ära Qianlong (1736–1795)*, Berlin: Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, 2003.

[4] On the text-image interplay and Ricci's commentaries in these four Christian prints, see Rui Oliveira Lopes, "Words for images and images for words: an iconological and scriptural study of the Christian prints in the *Chengshi moyuan*, 程氏墨苑", *Word & Image*, Vol. 33, no. 1 (2017), pp. 87–107.

Rulüe, 艾儒略, 1582–1649) compiled in 1637 an illustrated book, titled *Tianzhu jiangsheng chuxiang jingjie* (天主降生出像經解, *Illustrated Explanations of the Incarnation and Life of the Lord of Heaven*), also taking the European prints in Nadal's work as a reference.[5]

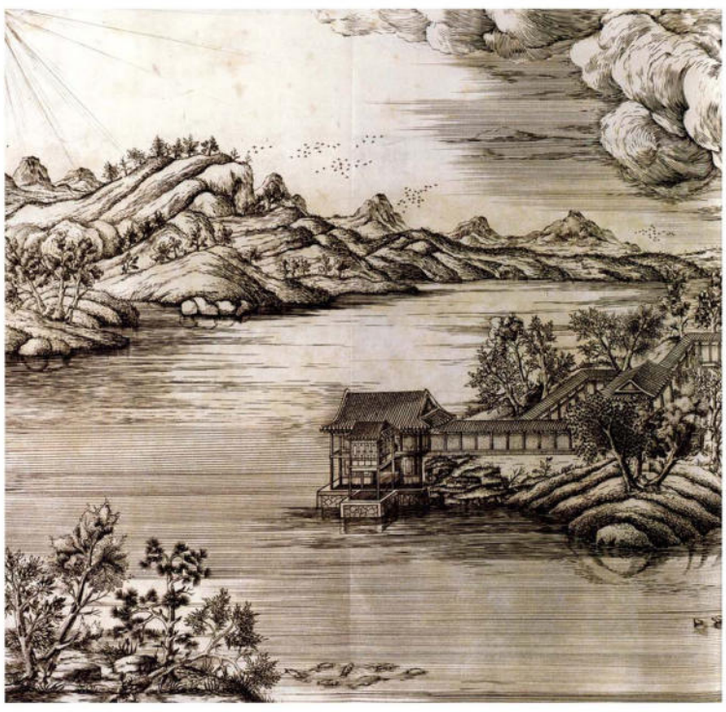
There are fifty-six illustrations and a map of Jerusalem throughout Aleni's book, which vividly introduces the story of Jesus (**2**). Published in Jinjiang (Quanzhou), Fujian province, it represented the work of painters and woodblock carvers based in that coastal city. Crafted by Chinese artisans, the woodcuts hardly changed Nadal's originals in terms of composition, although the former replaced the Latin text with Chinese characters (**3**). However, the differences of visual representation and underlying concept between woodblock carving and copperplate engraving are evident. The unified source of light emitted from the upper left in Nadal's originals, which guides the direction of shading on the ground, disappears in the woodblock illustrations. In the iconic scene of the *Annunciation*, the distinct contrast between the dark interior and the bright outdoor environment vanished in the woodcut (**4**). Also, judging from the deformed tiled roof, it can be assumed that the Chinese artisans clearly did not understand the visual theory of linear perspective adopted in Europe.

During the early Qing period, the Kangxi emperor's (reigned 1662–1722) curiosity and interest in Western knowledge led European missionaries, including Matteo Ripa (Ma Guoxian, 馬國賢, 1692–1745), sent by Propaganda Fide, to play a more influential role in the imperial court. Ripa served Kangxi by contributing to map-making and copperplate printing with his painting skills. His depiction of thirty-six views of the Summer Mountain Resort (Bishu shanzhuang, 避暑山莊), located in the river valley of Rehe (Chengde), was integral to the cultural construction of a multifaceted Qing identity combined with Manchu, Chinese and Western elements. The decades-long architectural project spanned from 1703 well into the Qianlong reign. In 1711, when the main construction initiated by Kangxi was almost complete, Kangxi sent Chinese court painters and Ripa to depict the selected thirty-six scenic sites, accompanied by his imperial poems in Chinese and Manchu, respectively, later mounted in album leaves.

Based on the design of the court painter Shen Yu (沈喻, 1649–after 1728) in the woodblock prints of 1712, Ripa's experiment in etching (combined with Chinese text) was completed a year later, in 1713 (**5**). Although scholars have pointed out that some scenes were executed by Ripa's Chinese students, the characteristic Western-style visuality distinguishes them from woodblock counterparts, given their treatment with meticulously incised ink lines.[6] Ripa and his apprentices added various hatchings to accentuate the light and to fill the voids in the sky and water in the Chinese woodcuts, thus creating a linear perspective and chiaroscuro-like effect.[7] By contrast, the woodcut landscapes in ink display of brushwork reminiscent of the *Jieziyuan huapu* (芥子園畫譜, *Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting*, 1679), showing signs of the bond between traditional Chinese painting and the printing industry (**6**). Whereas the etchings of Aleni and Ricci, reproduced in China, stopped at Christian iconography, Ripa's innovative experimentation incorporated Western visual culture into Chinese landscape painting.

Picturing Battle Scenes through Transcultural Exchange

Qianlong's conquest over Dzungaria and Altishahr in Xinjiang occupied the paramount position in his self-



5 *Morning Glow on the Western Ridge* (*Xiling chenxia*), from the *Illustrated Imperial Poetry on Thirty-six Views of the Summer Mountain Resort*, Matteo Ripa's engraving after Shen Yu, 1713, 28 x 45 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei, Gudian029529. After He Chuanxin, ed., *New Visions at the Qing Court*, p. 30

6 *Morning Glow on the Western Ridge* (*Xiling chenxia*), from the *Illustrated Imperial Poetry on Thirty-six Views of the Summer Mountain Resort*, woodblock print after Shen Yu, 1712, 26 x 42 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei, Guman000476. After He Chuanxin, ed., *New Visions at the Qing Court*, p. 31

7 *Receiving the Surrender of the Ili*, from *The East Turkestan Campaign*, engraving after Ignatius Sickltart, 1765–1774, poem dated 1755, 51 x 87 cm. Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund 1998.103.1. Artwork in the public domain

claimed "Ten Great Campaigns (*Shiquan wugong*, 十全武功)" and associated commemorative images.[8] While the making of *The East Turkestan Campaign* engravings was a labour-intensive and time-consuming project driven by the imperial agenda, it was the artistic collaboration between Jesuit painters and French artisans that materialised Qianlong's vision (7). Sixteen sketches prepared by four painters—Giuseppe Castiglione (Lang Shining, 郎世寧, 1688–1766), Ignatius Sickltart (Ai Qimeng, 艾啟蒙, 1708–1780), Jean-Denis Attiret (Wang Zhicheng, 王致誠, 1702–1768) and Joannes Damascenus Salusti (An Deyi, 安德義, ?–1781)—were sent to Canton (Guangzhou) for shipment to France for engraving. Over the next decade, artisans based in Paris completed the engraving and printing, and then sent the finished products back to Beijing.[9] The collaborative process in printmaking is also evident in the inscriptions on the lower edge of the Paris prints, which bear the names of four draughtsmen at the Qing court (lower left, 8), the project manager Charles-Nicolas Cochin (1715–1790) (lower middle), and engravers in charge (lower right). Completed in 1774, this international project between Beijing and Paris made Qianlong's kingship and visage known in Europe and comparable to Louis XV (1710–1774) of France.

8 Detail of *Receiving the Surrender of the Ili*, engraving after Ignatius Sickltart in 1765

[5]Rui Oliveira Lopes, "Jesuit Visual Culture and the *Song nianzhu guicheng*. The *Annunciation* as a Spiritual Meditation on the Redemptive Incarnation of Christ", *Art in Translation*, Vol. 12, no. 1 (2020), pp. 82–113.

[6]Mo Xiaoye, *Shiqi-shiba shiji chuanjiaoshi yu xihua dongjian* (*Missionaries and Eastern Transmission of Western Painting in the 17th and 18th Centuries*), Hangzhou: Zhongguo meishu xueyuan chubanshe, 2002, pp. 200–208; Richard E. Strassberg, "An Intercultural Artist: Matteo Ripa, His Engravings, and Their Transmission to the West", *Thirty-Six Views: The Kangxi Emperor's Mountain Estate in Poetry and Prints*, Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2016, pp. 41–70.

[7]Yue Zhuang, "Hatchings in the Void: Ritual and Order in Bishu Shanzhuang Shi and Views of Jehol", in *Qing Encounters: Artistic Exchanges between China and the West*, pp. 142–157.

[8]For a classic study of these ten military campaigns, see Chuang Chi-fa, *Qing Gaozong shiquan wugong yanjiu* (*A Study of Emperor Qianlong's Ten Great Campaigns*), Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1982.

[9]Ma, "War and Empire", pp. 158–172.

Recent scholarship has elaborated on the Sino-Western hybrid compared with their European counterparts. Special exhibitions of Qing imperial art also offer opportunities to examine those delicate hatchings in ink and to appreciate their exquisite craftsmanship.[10] For example, the horse soldier with a musket at the front line of *Attacking the Camp at Gädän-Ola* (格登鄂拉斫營圖) (**9**) portrays the meritorious Mongol general, Ayūsi (阿玉錫), based on his portrait—in which Ayūsi is shown holding a lance—done by Castiglione after the victory of the same battle in 1755 (**10**).

In terms of technical parameters and stylistic feature, *The East Turkestan Campaign* engravings served as a template for all the subsequent series, but the localisation of copperplate printmaking at the Qing court inevitably diluted the latter's Western influence. After Castiglione's death in 1766, this was particularly the case when the complete procedures of sketching, engraving, and printing were executed in Beijing, with no technical support or assistance from European artisans.

Take *The Taiwan Campaign* print suite as an example, which includes twelve battle and ritual scenes: (1) *Lifting the Siege at Zhuluo* (諸羅圍解) (**11**); (2) *Battle of Dapulin* (大埔林之戰); (3) *Conquest of Douliumen* (攻克斗六門); (4) *Conquest of Daliyi* (攻克大里杙); (5) *Battle of Jijipu* (集集埔之戰); (6) *Attack on Mount Xiaobantian* (攻勦小半天山); (7) *Capture of the Rebel Chief, Lin Shuangwen* (生擒逆首林爽文); (8) *Battle of Dawulong* (大武壠之戰); (9) *Battle of Fangliao* (枋寮之戰); (10) *Capture of Zhuang Datian* (生擒莊大田); (11) *Crossing the Ocean and Triumphant Return* (渡海凱旋); and (12) *Victory Banquet* (凱旋賜宴).

The Qianlong emperor's conquest of Taiwan lasted for nearly one and a half years, from 1786 to early 1788.[11] The imperial commission of commemorative images began the same year when the battles had almost ended. Twelve paintings mounted in album leaves, each bearing an imperial poem personally inscribed by the emperor, were done by eight ethnically Han Chinese painters in 1789, followed by the procedures of copperplate engraving and printing in the imperial workshops.[12] Court painters accommodated earlier works and traditional brushstrokes into their repertoire, which further diluted the European influence in the print suites. In particular, the diagonal arrangement of naval ships of the Qing army in the eleventh scene, *Crossing the Ocean and Triumphant Return* (**12**), recalls a silk painting depicting the first Qing conquest of Taiwan during the Kangxi reign (**13**). The visual similarity seems not to be a coincidence, in that Qianlong likely followed his grandfather's footsteps through displays of martial prowess in both action and image-making.

9 Detail of *Attacking the Camp at Gädän-Ola*, from *The East Turkestan Campaign*, engraving after Giuseppe Castiglione, 1765–1774, poem dated 1760, 51 x 87 cm. Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund 1998.103.2. Artwork in the public domain

In addition to album paintings and prints, a suite of twelve hanging panels exemplified the transmedia multiplication of battle pictures (**14**). Measuring 72 centimetres in height and 108 centimetres in width, the panels apply polychrome lacquer carving with sandalwood frames inlaid with semi-precious stones in the form of *hulu* gourds and vines. From top to bottom, the lacquer coatings varnished include red, yellow and dark green, representing (1) mountains, trees, buildings, figures; (2) diaper background; and (3) streams, ocean and sky respectively. As mentioned

10 *Ayūsi Sweeping Bandits with a Lance*, Giuseppe Castiglione, circa 1755, hand scroll, ink and colour on paper, 27.1 x 104.4 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei, Guhua1099N. Artwork in the public domain

11 *Lifting the Siege at Zhuluo*, from *The Taiwan Campaign*, 1789–1792, poem dated 1787, copperplate engraving, 51 x 88.5 cm. © The Trustees of the British Museum, purchased from Hines (1880,1211,0.49)

12 *Crossing the Ocean and Triumphant Return*, Yao Wenhan, ink and colour on paper, circa 1789, poem dated 1788, 55.6 x 91.1 cm. © The Palace Museum, Beijing, Gu6333-11/12. Artwork in the public domain

13 *Triumphant Return of the Taiwan Campaign*, unidentified artist, Kangxi period, colour on silk, 70 x 124 cm. Private collection. Artwork in the public domain

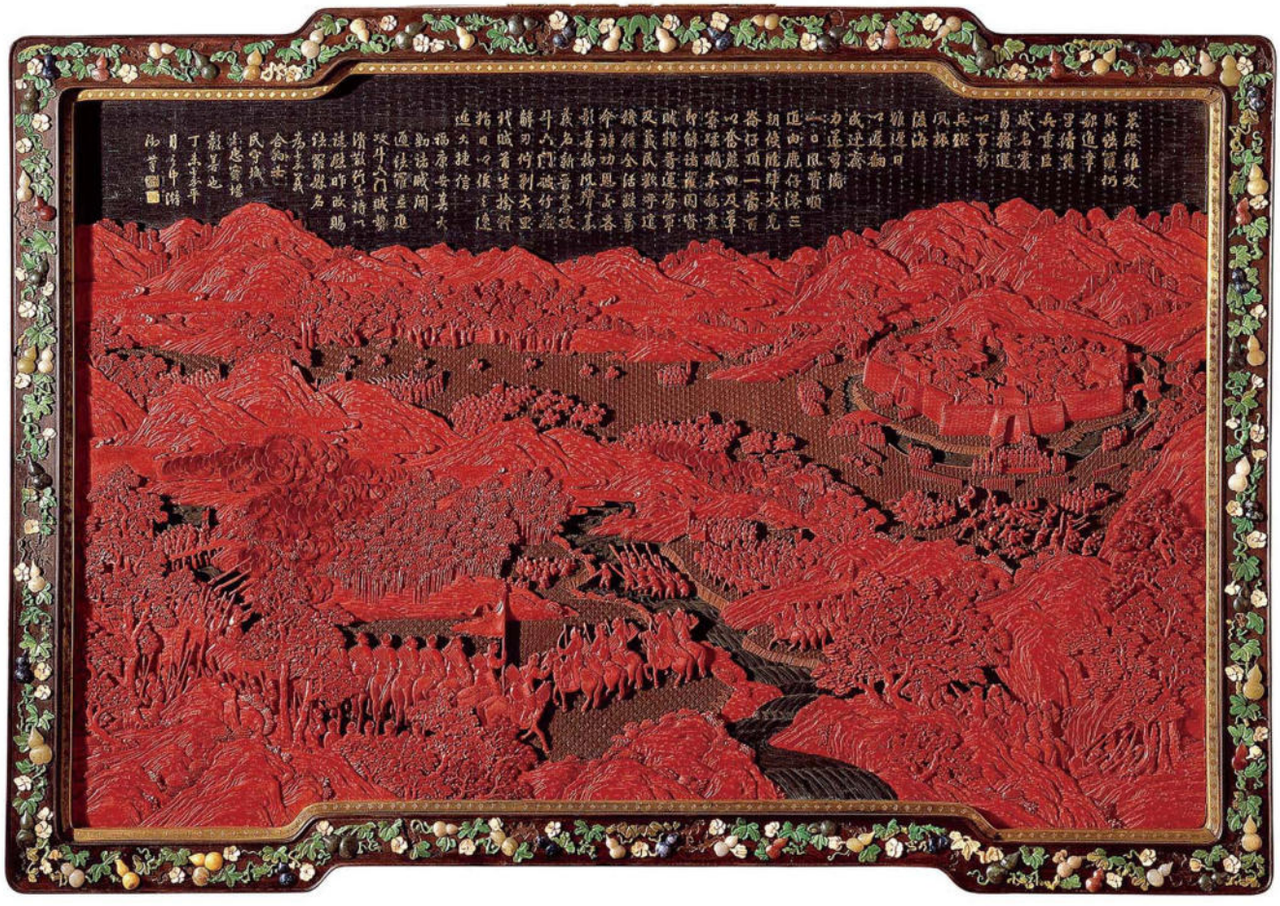
above, six of the eleven extant *The Taiwan Campaign* panels are housed in the Museum Huis Doorn, Netherlands (**15**).[13] They have drawn little attention due to the marginalised status of carved lacquer in Qing imperial art.

[10] For accompanying catalogues, see He Chuanxin, ed., *New Visions at the Qing Court: Giuseppe Castiglione and Western-Style Trends*, Taipei: National Palace Museum, 2007; He Chuanxin, ed., *Portrayals from a Brush Divine: A Special Exhibition on the Tricentennial of Giuseppe Castiglione's Arrival in China*, Taipei: National Palace Museum, 2015; Florian Knothe, ed., *Imagining Qianlong: Louis XV's Chinese Emperor Tapestries and Battle Scene Prints at the Imperial Court in Beijing*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2017.

[11] On battles in Qianlong's Taiwan Campaign, see Chuang Chi-fa, *Qing Gaozong shiquan wugong yanjiu*, pp. 183–267.

[12] On the production process of *The Taiwan Campaign* engravings, see Li T'ai-han, "Qing Qianlong nianjian Taiwan deshengtu zhizuo jingwei" (Illustrating the Battles in Taiwan during the Qianlong Reign), *The National Palace Museum Research Quarterly*, Vol. 25, no. 2 (2007), pp. 139–178.

[13] I viewed the six panels from Museum Huis Doorn during my field trip to Germany in 2017, as they had been temporarily transferred to the Museum für Asiatische Kunst (Asian Art Museum) in Berlin for repair and conservation.



14 Hanging panel of *Lifting the Siege at Zhuluo*, 1795, carved polychrome lacquer with sandalwood frame, 72 x 108 cm. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Asiatische Kunst (Accession no. 6535), photo by Jürgen Liepe

15 Hanging panel of *Capture of the Rebel Chief Lin Shuangwen*, 1795, carved polychrome lacquer with sandalwood frame, 72 x 108 cm. Museum Huis Doorn, Hu.D. 5974. Photo by Jürgen Liepe

16 Square box with dragons in seascape (*Xianglong baohe*), Qianlong mark and period, carved red lacquer on wood, height 6.5 cm, diameter 26.7 cm. © The Palace Museum, Beijing. After Li Jiufang, ed., *Qingdai qiqi*, pp. 16–17

17 Bodiless cinnabar lacquer dish in the form of chrysanthemum, Qianlong mark and period, poem dated 1774, height 3.8 cm, diameter 16.7 cm. © The Palace Museum, Beijing. After Hao-seng Chan, ed., *Red Masterpieces*, Vol. 1, cat. 106

Local Agency and Media Transfer in Suzhou

Drawing on textual sources from the *Qinggong Neiwufu Zaobanchu dang'an zonghui* (清宮內務府造辦處檔案總匯, *Compiled Archives of the Palace Board of Works under the Imperial Household Department*, hereafter abbreviated as *DAZH*), this section investigates the production, technique and media of *The Taiwan Campaign* panels, and traces the circulation of images between the central and the local.[14] Challenging the preconception that these panels were imperially commissioned products, I instead propose that they embodied the active agency of a Manchu official, as well as technological and material exchanges through the bureaucratic system between the court and Suzhou. The social life of copperplate engravings and this panel suite offers new insight into the role of high-ranking officials in Chinese material culture during the Qing dynasty.

After the completion of twelve pictures of the *The Taiwan Campaign* painted on paper by the tenth lunar month of 1789, the fifty-fourth year of the Qianlong reign, they were transferred from the Hall of Wish Fulfilling (Ruyiguan, 如意館) to the Imperial Household Workshop for copperplate engraving by the court artisans. All twelve copperplates were prepared successively from early 1790 to 1792. By the end of 1792, some 200 print suites were ready for distribution across the Qing Empire.[15] Following the template of *The East Turkestan Campaign* and *The Jinchuan Campaign* prints, *The Taiwan Campaign* engravings were sent to temporary and provincial palaces, as well as bureaucratic mansions for storage and display.[16] According to a list of tribute gifts in early 1795 from *DAZH*, this set of lacquer panels was among the personal tributes of Qifeng'er (奇豐額, 1745–

18 Detail of hanging panel of *Conquer of Daliyi*, 1795, carved polychrome lacquer with sandalwood frame, 72 x 108 cm. Museum Huis Doorn, Hu.D. 5969. Photo by Zhenpeng Zhan

[14] Most pivotal are records of the activities of various bureaus of the Palace Board of Works (Zaobanchu), the division of the Imperial Household Department (Neiwufu) responsible for the production of all material artefacts for the imperial court. Grouped under the heading, *Yangxindian Neiwufu Zaobanchu gezuo chengzuo huoji Qingdang*, these archives are kept in the First Historical Archives of China (Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan) in Beijing and they serve as primary sources of most significant scholarship used in establishing the timeline of developments of imperial artefacts made during the Qianlong reign. Archival records of the Yongzheng and Qianlong periods were compiled by the First Historical Archives of China and the Art Museum at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in *DAZH*.

[15] *DAZH*, Vol. 50, pp. 659–660.

[16] Ma, *Kehua zhanxun*, pp. 229–230.

1806, 1769 *jinshi*), the bannerman official and Governor of Jiangsu province.[17]

Qifeng'er assumed charge of the Suzhou Weaving Department (Suzhou zhizaoshu, 蘇州織造署) in the 1780s. His tribute gifts included several kinds of objects that represented Suzhou's skilled craftmanship (*Suzuo*, 蘇作), such as jade carving and lacquerware (**16**).[18] Like his predecessor, Sazai (薩載, ?–1786), another bannerman who supervised the Suzhou Weaving Department at least twice between the 1750s and the 1770s, Qifeng'er also commissioned different types of bodiless cinnabar lacquerware featuring chrysanthemum floral designs as a gift for the emperor (**17**).[19] The local resources available exerted a great impact on the choice of local tributes commissioned to meet Qianlong's preference and taste. It is likely that, after receiving the imperially bestowed engravings in early 1793, Qifeng'er commissioned artisans to produce the lacquer panels in Suzhou by appropriating the print suite as a template, and then sent them to the court in early 1795 as part of his gifts dedicated to Qianlong.[20]

After 1739, the manufacture and repair of lacquerware —mostly carved lacquer—were largely assigned to the Suzhou Weaving Department.[21] Established during the Ming dynasty, three weaving departments—at Suzhou and two other Jiangnan cities—were responsible for the production of various textiles, clothes and robes mainly for the imperial court, accompanied by commissioned orders for other artefacts. Judging from their material practices, imperial orders along with approved models or sketches were issued from Beijing; samples or products were then transported from Suzhou back to the court via the Grand Canal.[22]

The decision to establish a new production system within the Jiangnan-based workshops encouraged technological exchange and transmission of motifs between different media, such as hardwood, bamboo, ivory and lacquer carving. Artisans from various ateliers were frequently exposed to each other's work and, as a result, the designs show signs of mutual inspiration. In particular, the three-dimensionality of lacquer motifs in relief carving suggests the close collaboration of artisans skilled in working with a broad range of materials, including hardwood, bamboo, jade and ivory. The participation of ivory artisans in the making of carved lacquer in the early years of both the Yongzheng (reigned 1722–1735) and Qianlong periods indeed supports this possibility. The meticulously combed seascape pattern, surrounding dragons or fish on carved red lacquerware (**16**, **18**), for instance, was probably inspired by early Qing designs of ivory carving.[23] Shared visual features also suggest that imperial lacquerware with Qianlong marks and these lacquer panels were in the hands of the same group of artisans in Suzhou.

Afterlives in the Hall of Purple Splendour and Beyond

After *The Taiwan Campaign* panels were presented to the Qianlong emperor, according to official records in the *Zhongnanhai dang'an* (中南海檔案, *Archives of Zhongnanhai*, hereafter abbreviated as *ZNHD*), they were later transferred to the Hall of Purple Splendour (Ziguangge, 紫光閣) to the west of the Forbidden City.[24] Ma has revealed that these battle scene prints and portraits of meritorious generals were collectively displayed and/or stored in the Hall of Purple Splendour, a Ming dynasty architecture complex renovated twice during the Qianlong reign.[25] Stored together with different formats of battle scenes and portraits in the same built space, *The Taiwan Campaign* panels were incorporated into the imperial holdings as part of Qianlong's commemorative images.[26] Nevertheless, details of their manufacture, and their identity as personal gifts when entering the imperial court, have been forgotten and lost in history, pieced together only through scattered records.

During the Qianlong period, imperial banquets celebrating the victory of military campaigns and honouring the returning generals and soldiers were usually held at the Hall of Purple Splendour. The emperor occasionally ordered court painters, such as Giuseppe Castiglione, to depict these banquet scenes, which feature the iconic two-storey façade of the building. As two different pictures show—one depicting the imperial banquet in the Garden of Ten Thousand Trees (Wanshuyuan, 萬樹園) at the Mountain Resort in Rehe (**19**), while the other is at the Hall of Purple Splendour in the last scene of *The East Turkestan Campaign* engravings (**20**)—they share a nearly identical composition but with a reversal of left and right.[27] Despite the initial intent of documenting ritual events with their paintbrushes, duplicating visual elements based on a modular system was adopted by court painters as well.

Dispersed outside China in the early 20th century, the battle pictures and their afterlives make ideal material to explore the provenance and collecting history of Chinese

[17] *DAZH*, Vol. 55, p. 744.

[18] *DAZH*, Vol. 55, p. 744.

[19] *DAZH*, Vol. 38, p. 445, p. 703.

[20] In Qifeng'er's memorial, now in the First Historical Archives of China, he expresses his gratitude for imperial favour in early 1793, confirming that he—together with other provincial governors and generals—was bestowed with ink rubbings of imperial poems and *The Taiwan Campaign* print suites. See also Zhenpeng Zhan, "Diguo jixun yu difang gongpin: Qianlong chao 'Pingding Taiwan desheng tu' diaoqi guaping kao" (Imperial Imagery and Local Tributes: Research on Carved Lacquer Panels of the Taiwan Campaign during the Qianlong Reign), *Taida Journal of Art History*, no. 45 (2018), pp. 212–213.

[21] For imperial lacquerware with Qianlong marks, see Li Jiufang, ed., *Gugong bowuyuan cang wenwu zhenpin daxi: Qingdai qiqi* (The Complete Collection of Treasures of the Palace Museum: Lacquer Wares of the Qing Dynasty), Hong Kong: The Commercial Press (Hong Kong), Ltd, 2006; Hao-seng Chan, ed., *Red Masterpieces: Lacquerware from the Reign of Emperor Qianlong—Palace Museum*, Vol. 1, Macao: Macao Museum of Art, 2015.

[22] Zhenpeng Zhan, "Artisanal Luxury and Confucian Statecraft: The Afterlife of Ming Official Carved Lacquer at the Qianlong Court", *Late Imperial China*, Vol. 42, no. 1 (June 2021), p. 62.

[23] Zhan, "Diguo jixun yu difang gongpin", pp. 219–220; Zhan, "Artisanal Luxury and Confucian Statecraft", pp. 66–67.

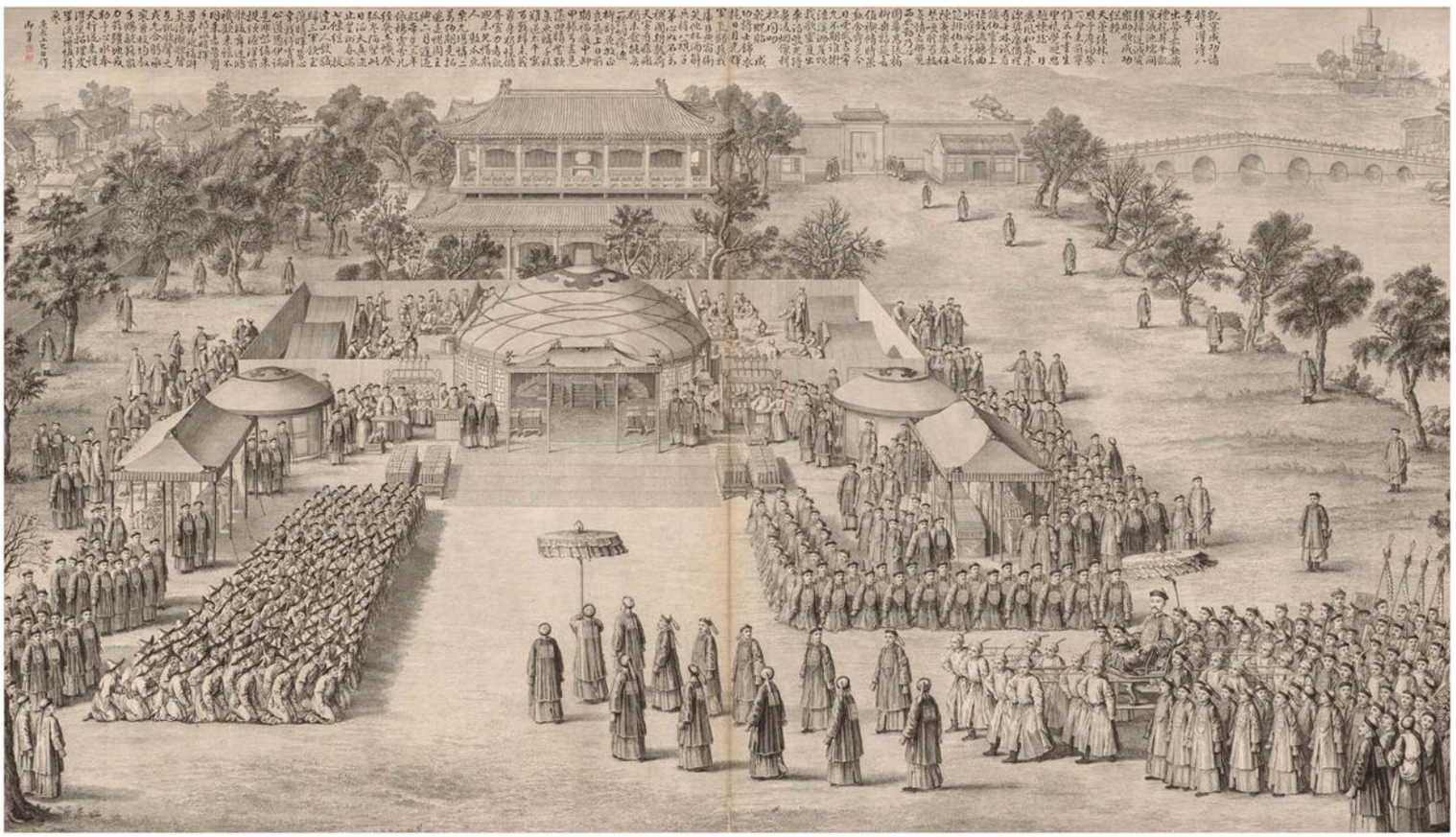
[24] *ZNHD*, Vol. 23, p. 27.

[25] Ma, *Kehua zhanxun*, pp. 231–232; *ZHND*, Vol. 23.

[26] Jason Steuber, "Qing Dynasty Emperors Kangxi and Qianlong: Rule through Replication in Architecture and the Arts", in *Original Intentions: Essays on Production, Reproduction, and Interpretation in the Arts of China*, eds, Nick Pearce and Jason Steuber, Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2012, pp. 167–171.

[27] For a comparative study of these two banquet paintings, see Zhan, "Diguo jixun yu difang gongpin", p. 221.

19 *Imperial Banquet in the Garden of Ten Thousand Trees*, Giuseppe Castiglione, Jean-Denis Attiret and others, 1755, hanging scroll, colour on silk, 221.2 x 419.6 cm. © The Palace Museum, Beijing, Gu6275. Artwork in the public domain



20 *Victory Banquet*, from *The East Turkestan Campaign*, 1765–1774, poem dated 1760, copperplate engraving, 51 x 87 cm. Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund 1998.103.16. Artwork in the public domain

antiquities in the West. To date, a large proportion of these images in various formats can be found in German public museums and private collections. Based on the inventories and archival records of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (National Museums in Berlin), Nie Chongzheng was among the first to connect the German occupation during the

21
Hall of Purple Splendour with the upper floor without exterior walls, circa 1900, photograph. Private collection. After Niklas Leverenz, "The Looting of the Winter Palace in Peking in 1900–1901", fig. 10

Boxer Rebellion with the looting of artefacts originally from the Hall of Purple Splendour.[28] Based on their convenient access to German collections, Niklas Leverenz and Ching-Ling Wang have listed a comprehensive pool of battle pictures and general portraits, which had originally been in the Hall of Purple Splendour.[29] In addition to the battle pictures found in Germany, six extant *The Taiwan Campaign* panels entered the German emperor's collection, also due to the political turmoil of the Boxer Rebellion circa 1900, and are now housed in Wilhelm II's former residence, House Doorn (situated in Utrecht province in the Netherlands), later transformed into Museum Huis Doorn in 1956.

After the outbreak of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, the Eight-Nation Alliance brought 20,000 troops to China to defeat the Imperial Army. Of these, the German troops, led by General Field Marshal Alfred von Waldersee (1832–1904), occupied the West Park (Xiyuan, 西苑) and Three Oceans (Sanhai, 三海), where the Hall of Purple Splendour was situated (**21**). Their occupation resulted in the plunder of battle pictures, which ended up in Europe, especially Germany. As Von Waldersee recalled in his diary: "At these auctions you could buy anything that China produced—porcelains, cloisonnés, bronzes, red-lacquer wares, fur, silks (mostly in bale), embroideries, clocks, real pearls, precious stones, and various ornaments. …"[30]

The hypocritical tone of Von Waldersee as an eyewitness, vividly describing the American, British and Russian troops plundering countless Chinese artefacts in Beijing, overlooked the German army's involvement in the looting.[31] One of the prime examples was the Ancient Observatory (Gu guanxiangtai, 古觀象台) in Beijing. The instruments the German army plundered from the observatory were shipped as war trophies to Potsdam where Emperor Wilhelm II placed them in gardens of his palaces. Following Germany's defeat in the First World War (1914–1918), the instruments were returned to China under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, arriving in Beijing in April 1921. In addition to the astronomical instruments, a huge silk painting fragment depicting the East Turkestan Campaign, still in the collection of the Museum für Völkerkunde (Museum of Ethnology) in Hamburg, was believed to have been looted during the Boxer Rebellion.[32] Many of those looted treasures were presented to Wilhelm II as booty, making their way into public museums, such as the Museum für Asiatische Kunst and Huis Doorn, while others entered private collections or auction houses.

The German defeat in the First World War marked a watershed for Wilhelm II. His military advisors suggested that he flee to the neutral Netherlands, where he lived in Doorn until his death in 1941. In 1920, around 30,000 objects were transported on fifty-nine train wagons from his royal palaces in Berlin and Potsdam to furnish the house.[33] His residence and the treasures in Huis Doorn were later turned into a national museum and art collection. Hence, the global lives of these battle pictures ironically witnessed the defeat of two of the (formerly) most powerful sovereigns across the Eurasian continent—the Manchu Qing emperor in the East and the last German emperor in the West.

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[30] Alfred Graf von Waldersee, "Die Eroberung und Plünderung Pekings im August 1900", in *Preußische Jahrbücher*, 1923, pp. 283–293; English translation, Count Alfred Waldersee, "Plundering Peking", in *The Living Age*, Vol. 317, no. 4118 (June 9th, 1923), pp. 563–569. Also see Niklas Leverenz, "The Looting of the Winter Palace in Peking in 1900–1901", *Journal for Art Market Studies*, Vol. 4, no. 2 (2020). DOI: https://doi.org/10.23690/jams.v4i2.122.

[31] See Leverenz, "The Looting of the Winter Palace in Peking in 1900–1901".

[32] Ching-Ling Wang, *Praying for Myriad Virtues: On Ding Guanpeng's The Buddha's Preaching in the Berlin Collection*, Dortmund: Verlag Kettler, 2017, pp. 125–126.

[33] For a brief introduction to the museum and its collection, see "House and Art Collection", Museum Huis Doorn, https://www.huisdoorn.nl/en/museum/museum-huis-doorn/house-and-art-collection/ (Accessed April 27th, 2022).

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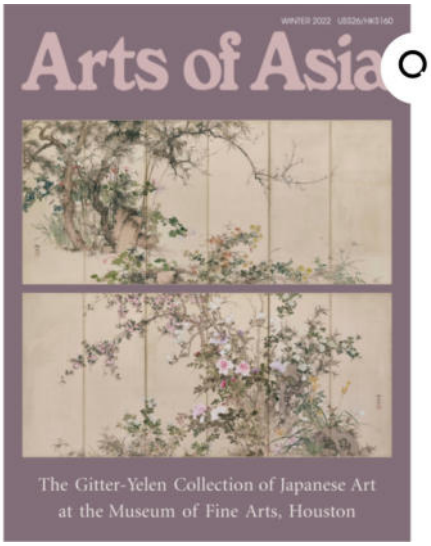

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