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A MAGNIFICENT LARGE IMPERIAL COURT PORTRAIT OF HA GUOXING,
FORMER COUNSELLOR-MINISTER AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF XI'AN



ENLARGE & ZOOM

Sale Information

Sale 2622

Important Chinese Ceramics And

Works Of Art

3 December 2008

Hong Kong

Price Realized (Set Currency)

HK\$4,820,000

(\$624,722)

Price includes buyer's premium

Estimate

HK\$4,500,000 - HK\$6,500,000

(\$583,428 - \$842,729)

Lot Description

A MAGNIFICENT LARGE IMPERIAL COURT PORTRAIT OF HA GUOXING, FORMER COUNSELLOR-MINISTER AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF XI'AN

QIANLONG CYCLICAL *BINGSHEN* YEAR, CORRESPONDING TO 1776 AND OF THE PERIOD

The painting is executed in ink and colour on silk, depicting the military official, Ha Guoxing, who is portrayed standing proudly with one hand on a bow held close to his shagreen encased sabre, both partially hidden behind the figure, the arm raised under his long pointed beard, the oval face naturalistically rendered with high cheek bones and a long nose, the pursed thin lips provide a serious, majestic expression, wearing a fur-trimmed official's hat surmounted by a coral bead and trailing a single-eyed peacock feather, the waist fastened with a quiver fitted with eleven long arrows, the portrait has a dedication above the yellow silk, written in Chinese and followed by *Qianlong Bingchen chun Yuti*, 'The Imperial writing of Emperor Qianlong, in the Spring of the Bingchen year', below an oval imperial seal, *Qianlong Yulan Zhibao*, 'By Imperial inspection of Emperor Qianlong', ending with a long Manchu inscription
73 1/4 x 37 1/4 in. (186 x 94.5 cm.)

清乾隆 御製平定兩金川紫光閣五十功臣像贊十六
原參贊大臣西安提督哈國興
設色絹本 立軸

Saleroom Notice

Please note that the estimate of this lot should read:

HK\$4,500,000-6,500,000

Pre-Lot Text

BARONESS IRENE VON OERTZEN

The late Baroness Irene von Oertzen (1908-2007) and her husband Baron Klaus-Detlof von Oertzen (1894 - 1991), were passionate collectors of Chinese art, who together amassed a remarkable collection, particularly in regards to Chinese jade carvings. The Baroness not only could speak and write fluent Chinese, she also had a profound understanding of Chinese culture, having lived and worked in China for seven years. The Baron is descended from one of the oldest families of North Germany and was a world-renowned industrialist involved in the motor industry for most of his long life. The couple settled in South Africa after the Second World War, and he is sometimes referred to as the "Father of Volkswagen of South Africa".

In 1932 Baron von Oertzen, who had been in charge of sales at the motor manufacturer Wanderer, became sales director and chairman of the board of directors of Auto Union - the amalgamation of Wanderer and three other German manufacturers, namely Audi, DKW and Horch, under the pressures of the depressed German economy. The new company's four-ringed emblem, which von Oertzen suggested, can still be seen in the modern Audi logo.

To bring fame to the new company, von Oertzen, in collaboration with Dr. Ferdinand Porsche and one of Germany's most successful racing drivers, Hans Stuck, began work on a government-sponsored racing programme, in direct competition with rival Mercedes-Benz. By 1934 the racing cars produced by Auto Union broke five world speed records and made Auto Union a world renowned car manufacturer. Despite the success the von Oertzens were not comfortable with the prevailing political ideology at the time, and grew uneasy in pre-war Germany. In November 1935 the Baron and Baroness went to Paris to open the Motor Show for Auto Union and, without returning to Germany, departed for South

Africa. From 1936 he initiated the export of the DKW saloon car to South Africa and Australia and in 1937 he arranged for the Auto Union Grand Prix racing cars to be brought out to South Africa for promotional purposes. The car competed in races both in Cape Town and East London.

The Baron and Baroness travelled in 1938 via India to Australia, where they stayed for two years, setting up a factory to manufacture the DKW saloon. Before the outbreak of war the car was selling at the rate of 2000 a year in Australia and New Zealand. As the war clouds gathered business was declining, and the couple arrived in Batavia (modern day Jakarta) of the Dutch East Indies. In May 1940 Hitler invaded Holland, and the Baron and Baroness were interned separately in prison camps by the Dutch authorities. He was later transferred to India as the Japanese approached Singapore, while she was transferred to China. The Baroness managed to get a job working for the Canadian Consulate General in China, and during her years in China she began her studies in Chinese culture and language. It was during this period that her passion for Chinese art developed. The Baroness had a special fondness for jade carvings, and the von Oertzen collection includes a distinguished group of jade pieces from as ancient as the Neolithic times to the early 20th century which are to be offered at Christie's London on 4th November 2008.

The Baroness, through her contacts in the consulate, managed to transfer her husband to China, and was finally reunited with him after six years of separation. Just as the Baron established himself in Shanghai as a second-hand car dealer, the civil war broke out between the Communists and the Nationalists and the couple found themselves once again embroiled in war. They eventually had to leave and returned to South Africa in 1948. In 1951 Volkswagen in Germany appointed Baron von Oertzen as their representative in South Africa. He was instrumental in the early stages of negotiations to bring Volkswagen to South Africa, and was present at the historic signing in 1951 of the agreement between SAMAD and Volkswagenwerk to assemble Volkswagens in Uitenhage. When Volkswagenwerk took over a controlling interest in SAMAD in 1956, he became the chairman of the company, which eventually changed its name to Volkswagen of South Africa.

The Baroness in her later years divided her time between Johannesburg and Switzerland. She was a guest of honour at the opening of the AutoPavilion in 2004, where a Jagdwagen Kombi, the second Kombi ever to arrive in South Africa, and which used to belong to Baron von Oertzen, was displayed.

A PORTRAIT OF HA GUOXING, FORMER COUNSELLOR-MINISTER AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF XI'AN NIE CHONGZHENG - RESEARCH FELLOW, PALACE MUSEUM, BEIJING

In recent years, several portraits belonging to the group collectively known as the meritorious servitor paintings of *Ziguang Ge* (Hall of Purple Glory) have appeared at auction, and Christie's will present another this autumn, namely the *Portrait of Ha Guoxing, Former Counsellor-Minister and Commander-in-Chief of Xi'an*.

This is a hanging scroll of ink and colour on silk, measuring 185.5 X 94.5 cm. Inscribed on the "poetry hall", i.e. a piece of silk mounted above the painting, is a eulogy, "The *Hui* [ethnic minority] living on the Central Plains are renowned for their gallantry, and the Ha clan is a major Hui group displaying considerable military prowess. When conquering *Zanla* (the Lesser Jinchuan). [Ha Guoxing] played a key part in seizing several strategic points. Unfortunately, Ha died of illness before the military campaign concluded successfully. Dated spring, *Bingshen* year of the Qianlong era." The same inscription also appears in Manchu script, and affixed between the Chinese and Manchu inscriptions is an oval seal carved in relief with Qianlong *yulan zhi bao* (Imperial Treasure of Qianlong). The legend on the outer scroll bears an inscription that reads, "The sixteenth of the fifty imperial portraits of the meritorious servitors involved in the conquest of the Lesser and Greater Jinchuan, depicting Ha Guoxing, late counsellor-minister and commander-in-chief of Xi'an." The painting itself is inscribed with "*Qianlong bingshen chun yuti* (Inscribed in spring, *Bingshen* year by Emperor Qianlong", with *Bingshen* referring to the forty-first year of the Qianlong era (1776). The *Ziguang Ge* list of meritorious servitors includes a hundred military officials who helped conquer the Greater and Lesser Jinchuan, and they can be subdivided into two groups of fifty. Bearing an inscription by the Qianlong Emperor and ranked the sixteenth on the list, the current portrait clearly belongs to the first group. The portrait features a standing military official wearing a single-eyed peacock feather streamer, with a broad sword, a bow bag and an arrow pouch hanging from his waist. The character, *Yuan*, is mentioned in the inscriptions on the "poetry hall" and the inscription on the outer side of the scroll, suggest that this particular meritorious servitor had already died by the time of the portrait. Emperor Qianlong's eulogy also mentions that "Ha died of illness before the military campaign concluded successfully." So it seems that the portrait was done without Ha's sitting for it, and the representation was based solely on others' recollections of Ha's appearance.

Both *Yucuo zazhi* (vol. 1) by Zhao Shenzhen and *Qing Shigao* (Draft History of Qing) note that Ha Guoxing was ranked sixteenth on the list, which is in perfect accord with the inscription of the current painting. While *Yucuo zazhi* only mentions the name "Ha Guoxing", *Qing Shigao* describes Ha as a "Counsellor-Minister and Commander-in-Chief", but neither mentions that Ha had passed away by the time of the painting.

While the authorship of the servitor paintings celebrating the conquest of the Greater and Lesser Jinchuan remains unclear as all portraits of this group are unsigned, the Records of the Imperial Household do offer some clues. According to an entry dated to the forty-fourth year of the Qianlong era, "On the fifteenth day of the twelfth month, counsellors Side and Wude came and ordered Eunuch Eleli to tell Shu Wen: Instruct artist Lu Can to return to the South upon completing the servitor paintings. On the seventeenth day, Shu Wen, who is in charge of the affairs of the Board of Works at the *Yangxin dian* (Hall of Mental Cultivation), told painter Lu Can to return to the South upon finishing the servitor paintings. But with the move of the imperial family to the *Qixiang Gong* (Palace of Blessings) scheduled for the first month of next year, all painters will be required to move to *Yuanming Yuan*. Your humble servant will therefore let Lu Can stay at the Imperial workshops and send someone over to look after him. Lu and his family staying in Beijing will be told to return to the South within three days after completing the servitor paintings. Eunuch Eleli has been told to announce the arrangements. Instruction received and understood. End of the Imperial command."

The servitor paintings mentioned in the Imperial records clearly refer to those marking the conquest of the Greater and Lesser Jinchuan, and Lu Can seems to have been one of the painters involved in the project. On Lu Can as a painter, Qian Yong notes in *Luyuan huaxue*, "Lu Can, courtesy name (zi) Xingsan and native of Changzhou, was skilled at figure and flower paintings and an established portraiture artist in his time. He was summoned by an Imperial order to do a portrait for the Emperor in the *Gengzi* year of the Qianlong era, which corresponds to the forty-fifth year of the Qianlong era (1780). Yiu Boxuan, one of Lu's pupils, was also one of the finest portrait artists in central Wu." In *Guochao huazhi* (vol. 13) published in the Qing dynasty, Feng Jinbo quoted *Huayou lu* as saying, "Lu Can, courtesy name Xingsan and native of Loudong, was one of the most accomplished pupils of Zhang Binru from Hudu. By an Imperial command, he was commissioned to do a portrait of the Emperor during the forty-fifth year of the Qianlong era and was generously rewarded as a result. He was summoned again to serve in court the following year, this time to do a portrait of the Eleventh Panchen Erdeni (Gyantsen Norpo) from the Western Regions visiting the Qing court. Lu's flower paintings could rival those by Nantian [the sobriquet of Yun Shouping], but were unfortunately marred by excessive verisimilitude. Moxiang[Feng Jinbo]'s note: "Xingsan was also skillful at depicting bamboo and was on familiar terms with Zhang Binru, even though Xingsan never formally acknowledged Zhang as his mentor." Lu Can is also mentioned in *Liumei huajia luezh* by the Qing scholar Wang Li, "Lu Can, courtesy name Xingsan, was skilled at painting bamboo and flowers and was a disciple of Yun Zhengshu [Yun Shouping] from Piling [now known as Changzhou, Jiangsu province]." From these quotes, we can safely assume that Lu was a portrait artist of considerable repute, whose paintings of bamboo, rocks and flowers were also quite accomplished.

Judging by the inscriptions on the current portrait and the records quoted above, it seems clear that Qianlong composed and inscribed the eulogy in the forty-first year of his reign (1776), while the portrait itself was painted by artists such as Lu Can during the forty-fourth and forty-fifth years of the Qianlong era (1779-80).

(Translated from the Chinese text)

PROPERTY OF THE LATE BARONESS IRENE VON OERTZEN
SOLD BY THE ORDER OF THE EXECUTORS

Provenance

Baron Klaus-Detlof von Oertzen

Lot Notes

The present portrait belongs to a group of two hundred and eighty paintings commissioned by Emperor Qianlong in honouring his generals and military commanders whose distinguished military skills contributed to the success of frontier campaigns that took place during the Qianlong reign. According to research by Nie Chongzheng of the Palace Museum, a decree noted that portraits of fifty meritorious bannermen were to be painted by Jin Tingbiao (d. 1767), and Ai Qimeng (Ignaz Sichelbart) (1708-1780) was ordered to render the faces. Mr Nie's research had divided these portraits into three groups. The first set is comprised of one hundred portraits of those who helped to quell border problems in Xiyu (part of Central Asia region which was subsequently re-named Xinjiang). Fifty of these were personally inscribed with praises written by the Emperor and the remainder were written by his ministers. The second group of a hundred portraits, to which the present painting belongs, were of those who suppressed the *Daxiao Jinchuan*, the two Jinchuan regions (located Northwest of Sichuan). The third group is composed of fifty portraits of military officials who ended the Taiwan uprising and the remaining thirty were of those who stopped the Guo'er rebellion.

This group of meritorious servitors' portraits was originally placed in the Ziguang Pavilion, located on the west bank of Zhonghai of the West Garden in Beijing. The Ziguang Pavilion was originally built during the reign of the Ming dynasty Emperor Zhengde (1506-1521) and by the Qing dynasty, Emperor Kangxi (1622-1722) had set a precedence by reviewing troops on the grounds of the pavilion. It is not certain when these portraits were removed from the Ziguang Pavilion but Mr Nie Chongzheng is of the opinion that they were taken around the 26th year of the Guangxu reign (1900) when Beijing was occupied by Allied Forces of the Eight Nations. It is highly probable that the entire collection was lost during this period. It is interesting to note that no examples of this type of paintings are in the collections of the Beijing Palace Museum or the National Palace Museum, Taipei; and only two are in the Tianjin Museum collection. These are portraits of 'The Officer Ayuxi' who pacified Xiyu; and 'General Shujing'an', who was the Deputy Commander of Chengdu and led troops to pacify Daxiao Jinchuan.

Examples found in institutions include two in the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto; one of which is a portrait of the Military Governor Namjar, an Imperial Bodyguard of the 3rd rank, illustrated in *Homage to Heaven Homage to Earth*, Toronto, 1992, no. 138. There are three paintings in the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin; and one in the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne. A painting in the Metropolitan Museum collection, New York, depicting the First Rank Bodyguard, Huerchaba, is illustrated in *La Cite Interdite*, Paris, 1996, p. 26, fig. 22. In addition, a total of seven servitor paintings that have been sold at auction, as listed below:

1. Portrait of Huer Chaba, Imperial Bodyguard of the 1st rank, sold at Sotheby's New York, 3 June 1986, lot 90.
2. Portrait of Fu Heng, Grand Secretary of the first rank (the younger brother of Qianlong's consort, Empress Xiao Xian), sold at Sotheby's New York, 23-25 April 1987, lot 56.
3. Portrait of Keshiki Batu Luwuke Shi'er, Imperial Bodyguard of the 3rd rank, sold at Christie's New York, 27 March 1996, lot 101.
4. Portrait of Wufu, Brigadier General of Gansu region, sold at Sotheby's New York, 2 December 1992, lot 68, and again

at Christie's Hong Kong, 26 April 1999, lot 532.

5. Portrait of Moer Gen Batulu Daketana, Imperial Bodyguard of the 1st rank, sold at Christie's Hong Kong, 27 April 1997, lot 98, and sold again at Christie's Hong Kong, 29 April 2001, lot 580.

6. Portrait of Tanibu, Imperial Bodyguard of the 2nd rank, sold at Sotheby's New York, 1 June 1993, lot 53, and sold again at Sotheby's Hong Kong, 9 October 2007, lot 1315.

7. Portrait of Yisamu, Imperial Bodyguard of the 1st rank, sold at Sotheby's Hong Kong, 9 October 2007, lot 1314.

There is an additional reduced portrait showing the only head and upper body of a bannerman who has been identified as Dalhan, Imperial bodyguard of the 2nd rank, that was sold at Sotheby's Hong Kong, 9 October 2007, lot 1316.

The present military hero, Haguoxing, took part in the campaigns of the two Jinchuan Regions. The battles took place between 1771-1776, and by the time this painting was commissioned in 1776, Haguoxing had already passed away. The Jinchuan battle scenes are depicted in an album of 16 leaves, illustrated in *Paintings by the Court Artists of the Qing Court*, The Complete Collection of Treasures of the Palace Museum, Hong Kong, 1996, pp. 259-267, no. 69.

Department Information

Chinese Ceramics & Works of Art

Keywords

18th Century

Paintings

silk

China

Chinese Dynastic

figures