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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 1314 (of 33)

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[View Zoom/Large Image](#)**LOT 1314**

PROPERTY OF A EUROPEAN GENTLEMAN
**AN EXTREMELY RARE AND IMPORTANT IMPERIAL COURT
 PAINTING OF THE BANNERMAN YISAMU (ISAMU)
 ATTRIBUTED TO AI QIMENG (IGNAZ SICHELBAUT)
 (1708-1780) AND JIN TINGBIAO (FL. 1757-1767)
 QING DYNASTY, QIANLONG PERIOD, DATED TO THE
 GENGCHEN YEAR (CORRESPONDING TO 1760)**

12,000,000—15,000,000 HKD

Lot Sold. Hammer Price with Buyer's Premium: 12,647,500 HKD

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MEASUREMENTS**measurements note**

painting: 153.5 by 95cm., 60 3/8 by 37 3/8 in.

ALTERNATE VIEWS:

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DESCRIPTION

THIS IS A PREMIUM LOT. CLIENTS WHO WISH TO BID ON PREMIUM LOTS ARE REQUESTED TO COMPLETE THE PREMIUM LOT PRE-REGISTRATION 3 WORKING DAYS PRIOR TO THE SALE.

hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, portraying the First Class officer of the Imperial Guard, with a distinguished war-weathered face and soulful eyes having witnessed the ravages of the battlefield, donning a fur-lined hat marked by a clear blue glass bead and a peacock feather with a single-eyed plume, *dan yan hua ling*, dressed in fine chain mail over a bright blue surcoat, with thickly padded silk riding chaps with a woven Y diaper pattern tied around the waist covering the legs, shod with a pair of black silk boots with white soles, his left hand grasping a buffalo horn archer's bow encased in a tooled leather bow casing, the quiver filled with arrows some with two types of fletching, and a ceremonial sword with an embellished gilt hilt and a shagreen sheath, his right thumb - the bow-drawing thumb - protected by a white jade thumb ring, eulogized with several lines of text written at the top on the right side in Chinese in *kaishu* (standard script) and in Manchu on the left, with one seal of the Qianlong Emperor, *Qian Long Yu Lan Zhi Bao*

PROVENANCE

Removed from the Ziguangge, (Hall of Purple Splendour) Zhongnanhai, Beijing, 1900.
 Purchased in Beijing after the Boxer Rebellion, 1902 by a member of the German military.
 Thence by descent to the current owner, Heidelberg, Germany.

CATALOGUE NOTE

Manchu inscription:

*Uju jergi hiya. Guyung baturu Isam.
 dara cooha udu isinaha bicibe.*

*dade hūlhai fetehe ulan de hanggabufi tuwaz ahabi.
dame jihe coohai dorgici.
dame bireme tucifi mejige isibu seme kaicahabi:
ede guyung baturu.
ekseme sasa genefi cooha be hacihiyaha.
ehe hūlhai faidan de dosinara de.
etuhun ihasi i gese fafursaha:*

*Abkai wehiyehe sanyan muduri aniya niyengniyeri.
amban Lio tung hiyūn. amban Lio luwen. Amban loi min jung
hese be dahame gingguleme maktacun araha.*

English translation:

First class officer of the Imperial Guard, the Steadfast and Brave Hero Yisamu.
Although the auxiliary troops came,
The rebels had designed moats for mutual observation.
Who shouted high on his steed
And brought the message safe and sound?
Only the Hero Advanced and took command.
He squashed the troops of the rebels,
Like a rhinoceros parting the waves.

The spring of the *gengchen* year of the Qianlong era [1760] the official Liu Tongxun, official Liu Lun, and official Yu Minzhong respectfully wrote this eulogy on imperial command.
Text recorded in (*Qingding*) *Huangyu Xiyu tuzhi*

Seal: *Qianlong yulan zhibao*

Title slip: *Pingding Xiyu Zhiguangge ci wushi gongchen xiangzan ershiba: toudeng shiwei guyong ba-tu-lu Yi-sa-mu*

Pacifying the Western regions: Number 28 in the second series of portraits with eulogies of fifty meritorious officials in the Hall of Purple Radiance. First Class officer of the Imperial Guard, Steadfast and Brave Hero Yisamu

Yisamu and the other officers portrayed in this series of Bannermen paintings had distinguished themselves in the campaigns in the Yili valley and in Eastern Turkestan (Xinjiang 1755-59). The battles ended with the Chinese forces taking control of the area which was later renamed Xinjiang (lit. new territory). During the siege at the Kara River near Yarkand in the tenth month of 1758, Yisamu and four other officers escaped unnoticed by the enemy and reported the news of the siege to the commander at Aksu. Along the way to Aksu, they were attacked by Muslim rebels who chased them, but eventually the rebels retreated.

The eulogies of the second series of portraits were composed and written by three eminent officials, Liu Tongxun, Liu Lun, and Yu Minzhong.

Other paintings from this series have been sold through auctions, including the portrait of Hu Er Cha Ba of the first rank, sold in our New York rooms, 3rd June 1986, lot 90; the portrait of the General Fu Heng, sold in our New York rooms, 23rd-25th April 1987, lot 56; portrait of Wu Fu Brigadier General of the Gansu region, sold in our New York rooms, 2nd December 1992, lot 68; and a portrait of Tanibu of the second rank, also sold in our New York rooms, 1st June 1993, lot 53, and offered again in this sale, lot 1315. Another painting of Uksiltu was sold in New York in 1996. A set of ten paintings from a handscroll of fifty paintings of bannermen by Jin Tingbiao, also commissioned by the Qianlong emperor in 1760, was sold in our New York rooms 31st March - 1st April 2005, lot 280 and a single one from this series of Ayusi, was also sold in our New York rooms, 21st September 2006, lot 9.

The Newly Discovered 'Bannerman Portrait Painting of Yisamu from the Ziguang Pavilion'
Nie Chongzheng
Researcher
Palace Museum, Beijing

The Ziguang Pavilion is located on the west bank of Zhong Hai of the West Garden in Beijing. It was built during the reign of Wu Zong of the Ming dynasty. In the Qing period, during Kangxi's reign, the review of the troops took place in front of the pavilion. In the 20th year of Qianlong's reign (equivalent to 1755 A.D.) the Qing army pacified the Zhunbu of the Western territories of Xi Yu and returned victoriously to Beijing. To glorify this military campaign and the Qing army's victory, the Emperor composed eulogies for fifty meritorious banner officers and ordered the drafting of fifty more to be written by high-ranking officials who were particularly favoured by the Emperor. This set an example for the troops returning to the headquarters after having conquered Yi Li.

During Qianlong's reign in total 280 compositions of bannermen portrait paintings were made which were hung in the Ziguang Pavilion. Following Qianlong's example, later emperors continued adding new portraits to the collection in the Ziguang Pavilion.

Hundreds of the bannermen portrait paintings held in the Ziguang Pavilion have been lost and the collection is not complete. There are only two paintings remaining in Chinese museums. Both scrolls can be found in the collection of the Tianjin Museum. They are the 'Bannerman Portrait of the Officer San Zhi, Kelabatuluayuxi' who pacified Xi Yu, and the 'Bannerman Portrait of General Feng An' who was the Deputy Commander of Chengdu and led the troops to pacify Da Jinchuan and Xiao Jinchuan. Examples of portraits can also be found in private collections overseas. For example, the Bannerman portrait of Pu Heng, who was awarded the first merit because of his pacification of Xi Yu, is now in the collection of Huang Huiying (Dora Wong) in New York, USA.

When and how the portraits from the Ziguang Pavilion were lost no one knows. It is the opinion of this author that they were possibly taken around the 26th year of Guang Xu's reign (equivalent to 1900 A.D.)

when Beijing was occupied by the Eight Nations' Allied Forces. At that time, foreign troops were stationed at Zhong Nan Hai, where the Ziguang Pavilion is located. The area was busy with traffic and the palace with its gardens was open to the public and was subsequently looted. It is no wonder that the paintings were lost.

At present, the majority of the remaining bannermen portrait paintings from the Ziguang Pavilion can be found abroad, some are kept in museums, art galleries, and some in the hands of private collectors. However the total number of portraits known to have survived is probably not more than thirty. In recent years about ten paintings have emerged, including one and a half (half because the painting is not complete) (lot 1316).

This portrait is mounted on silk with inscriptions in both Manchu and Chinese languages. The Chinese text is on the right hand side while the Manchu text is written on the left hand side. The Chinese text can be translated as follows:

First class officer of the Imperial Guard, the Steadfast and Brave Hero Yisamu.
Although the auxiliary troops came,
The rebels had designed moats for mutual observation.
Who shouted high on his steed
And brought the message safe and sound?

Only the Hero
Advanced and took command.
He squashed the troops of the rebels,
Like a rhinoceros parting the waves.

The spring of the *gengchen* year of the Qianlong era [1760] the official Liu Tongxun, official Liu Lun, and official Yu Minzhong respectfully wrote this eulogy on imperial command.
Text recorded in (*Qingding*) *Huangyu Xiyu tuzhi*

The present portrait painting depicts a warrior wearing a long blue surcoat with a fine chain mail, on his waist he is carrying a sword, on his shoulder he is carrying a bag of bow and a sack of arrows. His face is delicately painted, with shadows of light and dark, revealing the influence of Western style painting. However, the folds of his clothes are painted in strips reflecting the influence of traditional Chinese painting techniques.

In the *geng chen* year of the Qianlong reign (equivalent to 1760 A.D.) Yisamu was one of the officials who participated in pacifying the Xi Yu. This portrait painting was made to commemorate his achievements. The praise on the painting was written by the high ranking officials Liu Tongxun, Liu Lun and Yu Minzhong. Although Yisamu's name is not recorded, it is most probable that he was one of the fifty bannermen who received a merit in 1755.

In my search for information on this bannerman portrait painting I have looked at archival records and found the following:

'On the fourteenth day of the tenth month of the 28th year of Qianlong's reign, a report made by Lang Zhong De Kui and others is recorded. It states that a decree by the Emperor was forwarded by Palace Official Hu Shijie. The decree notes that portraits of fifty meritorious bannermen are to be painted by Jin Tingbiao, while Ai Qimeng is to paint on white silk. The facial features and details of the clothes are to be painted in the *falang* (famille-rose) palette.

"On the nineteenth day of the fifth month of the 29th year of Qianlong's reign, a report made by Jin Hui and Bai Yongjie is recorded. It states that a decree by the Emperor was forwarded by the Palace Official Hu Shijie on the 10th day. This decree notes that the Fifty Bannermen Portraits have been approved and sent to the Scroll Making Department'.

Ai Qimeng (Ignaz Sichelbart), mentioned in the records, was a Jesuit missionary from Bohemia (present Czech Republic). He was born in 1708 and joined the Catholic Church in 1736. He came to China in 1745 and started working in the Palace Workshop the same year. He died in 1780 in Beijing. Ai Qimeng was skilled in painting figures and animals in the Western style painting technique.

The Chinese painter Jin Tingbiao mentioned in the records, is also called Shi Kui. He was born in Wu Cheng (in present Zhejiang Province). He was born into a painter's family and was especially skilled at painting figures, landscape, flowers and birds. In 1757, during Qianlong's second southern inspection tour, Jin Tingbiao presented his painting to the Emperor and was praised for it. In the sixth month of the same year he joined the Palace Workshop. Jin died in Beijing on the fourth day of the fourth month of the 3rd year of Qianlong's reign (equivalent to 1767 A.D.).

Now that we know that this set of bannermen portrait paintings is the work of Ai Qimeng and Jin Tingbiao, we can analyze the present portrait painting of the Bannerman Yisamu. The facial features are painted with the application of rich colors to emphasize his feelings. Importance is placed on depicting him in a naturalistic fashion by using the technique of shadowing. These are characteristics of Western style painting. Yisamu's body and clothes are outlined in ink and painted with a smooth color. This is typical of Chinese style painting. Through this analysis we can be certain that the facial features of Yisamu were painted by Ai Qimeng, while the rest is the work of Jin Tingbiao. The harmonious and satisfactory cooperation between Chinese and foreign artists are reflected in these portrait paintings made in the Imperial Palace Workshop during the Qianlong period.

