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Joseph-Marie AMIOT

**PRAISE FOR
BROTHER
ATTIRET**

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The state of
Chinese
painting

In praise of Brother Attiret
The state of Chinese painting

from :

Extract from a letter dated 1 March 1769, from
Peking, praising Brother Attiret, &
a detailed account of the state of Chinese painting

by Joseph-Marie AMIOT (1718-1793)

Journal des Savants, June 1771, pages 406-420.

Put into text format by
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www.chineancienne.fr
February 2014

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p.406 *We think it will be a pleasure to read the following extract, by M. de Guignes, according to a letter recently written from Peking by Father Amiot. He has deleted only what concerns the duties of missionaries in relation to religion. It would be desirable if an extract of the Lettres Édifiantes could also be made. This collection contains an infinite number of interesting things for the sciences and the arts, but they are drowned in too many long details of the missions. As M. de Guignes has access from time to time to curious pieces from China, we will give them a place in our Journal. We begin with this eulogy of Brother Attiret: this piece will serve to give an idea of the state of Chinese painting. It describes the paintings sent to France by order of the Emperor Kien Long to be engraved in intaglio. It seems that Brother Attiret had a great deal to do with their composition.*

J. d. S.

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Brother Attiret, whose father was a painter, was born in Dôle. He learned the art of painting under his father, then under the auspices of the Marquis de Broissia, he went to Rome to study. On his return to France, he passed through Lyon, where he painted several portraits that made him famous, such as those of the Cardinal d'Auvergne, Archbishop of Vienne, the Archbishop of Lyon, the Provost of the Merchants, M. Berrichon, etc. When he arrived in Dôle, he continued to paint. He then entered the Society of Jesus. He was then just over 30 years old. During his novitiate, he painted the four pendants of the dome of the novitiate church in Avignon, as well as a number of other pieces esteemed by connoisseurs.

At the same time, Fathers Parennin and Chalier, missionaries in Peking, asked for a skilled painter to be sent to the French house, as the Italian Brother Castiglione had been sent to the Portuguese house. As a result, Brother Attiret was sent to China and left at the end of 1737.

When he arrived in Peking, he offered the Emperor a painting representing the Adoration of the Kings as a trial, and the Prince was so pleased with it that he had it honourably placed in the interior of his Palace. Brother Attiret, who until then had only history and portraits, was obliged to give himself over to all genres. The first subject he painted was of his own choice, to be sure, but the Emperor made him remove and add so many things that the result was sort of mixed work that was not of any one genre, ^{p.407} but of all. Moreover, the Emperor did not like oil paint because it was too shiny; the shadows when they were a little strong, him

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appeared to be stains. #Brother Attiret had to conform to the taste of this Prince, who preferred tempera.

- It is more graceful," he said, "and it strikes the eye pleasantly from whichever side you look at it: so once this painting is finished, the new painter must paint in the same way as all the others. As for portraits, he can do them in oil: let him be instructed.

It was with some difficulty that Brother Attiret was forced to let go of his European vivacity, which did not please the Chinese, and which, according to them, showed a background of indocility that needed to be suppressed.

To mortify cruelly, without appearing to intend to do so, and without giving the person being mortified the slightest pretext to complain legitimately, to mortify him in such a way that he cannot, as it were, honestly excuse himself from showing his gratitude, is an art that is mastered to the highest degree in Peking: it was not long before it was put to use with regard to Brother Attiret. He had expressed reluctance to paint with water, but a thousand opportunities were created for him to paint in this way, and he was forced to be grateful to those who provided him with this advance. He seemed to think it bad that the Chinese painters were ordered to instruct him, so instructions were lavished on him, and he had not only to receive them as benefits, but also to ask for them. When he was most occupied with some subject, some eunuchs would bring an order from the Emperor to paint some flowers on a fan straight away; often Brother Attiret, impatient and in a bad mood, would reply, *I can't hear you*: Brother Castiglione would moderate this vivacity.

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A few days after one of these orders came another, much more honourable in appearance, but infinitely mortifying. It was to go to one of the flats inside the Palace to touch up a Chinese painting which, it was said, was spoilt in many places.

He went there with Brother Castiglione, who was responsible for explaining to him what he had to do, and how he should do it; it was a question of putting new colours on the old ones, and thus renewing this old painting which filled the whole of the back of a flat. A simple table with a chair on top was all the scaffolding he was allowed. You can see how much he must have been hampered, either at the bottom of the painting or at the top; he would run the risk of falling if he lost his balance. He was also inconvenienced by eunuchs who, under the pretext of serving him, were there properly only to guard him, observe him, and ^{p.408} act as his master of ceremonies, pointing out to him at the right moment and out of place all the meticulous customs that are etiquette in the Palace.

Every day, at about seven o'clock in the morning, he had to be at the first gate of the inner enclosure, where he waited until the guards had given notice of his arrival to the eunuchs who presided over this quarter, in order to be ushered in by one of them. As soon as he had entered, the door was closed on him and he was led in silence across a vast courtyard, at the end of which he waited until other eunuchs had been notified. Finally, after passing through several gates, always with the same ceremony and the same slowness, he entered the place where he was to paint, where he stayed until about five o'clock in the evening, when he was dismissed with the same ceremony. The Emperor sent him

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But before they him, they were already cold and likely to disgust a foreigner whose stomach was not yet used to the food of the country: so he was usually content, especially in the early days, to eat some fruit with some rolls cooked in a bain-marie. He finished the painting of the Palace, then finished the one he had started, painted several others, applied himself to the costume of the Chinese, and to using their style in all its goodness, with such success that everyone wanted to have some of his work. He went to work in the homes of the great and the ministers on their days off.

#The work he did at the Palace was all the more arduous because it was accompanied by all the inconveniences and hardships that a sense of propriety can impose. A sort of isolated room, on the ground floor, like all Chinese flats, between the courtyard and the garden, exposed to all the discomforts of the different seasons, was the place intended for the painters' studio. There, having no fire in winter other than that of a small stove on which he put his buckets to prevent the colours from freezing, he suffered the most biting cold. In summer, he suffered no less from the exhaustion caused by excessive heat, in a place that the rays of a burning sun coming in from all sides made like a furnace. Besides, the other painters were in the same position as he was, so he had nothing to complain about.

As Brother Attiret could not do everything himself, he was content to sketch the subjects and paint the complexions himself, distributing the rest of work to the Chinese painters whose brushes he directed. He himself admitted that when it came to hairstyles, clothing, landscapes, animals & in general the

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The Chinese ^{p.409} directed him to learn the local costume much more quickly and much better than he could have done. Every day he learnt something new which he used from time to time, and he received useful instructions from these painters. He had just finished a painting at the Palais with which he was fairly satisfied. In the background was a landscape featuring, among other things, one of those trees which are very common in China, and which in painting always form a rather pretty perspective. The main figures were Chinese ladies and some of their attendants. The painters who were working in the same place came from time to time to have a look at his work, and retired without saying a word. Brother Attiret was surprised not to receive any compliments from them, as they were in the habit of praising him one for the smallest trifle. He urged them several times to tell him how they felt about it; finally the oldest spoke up and said:

— Your precious brush is undoubtedly much brighter and smoother than ours, but you are not as familiar as we are with the customs and things of our country; I will therefore take the liberty of sharing my fears with you, since you want to know what we think: your painting is too obviously at odds with costume for the Emperor to be able to enjoy it. Firstly, the leaves and branches of this tree are not arranged as they would be in nature; secondly, each leaf does not have the right number of main filaments. There should be so many, and you have sometimes added more, sometimes less, as chance dictated.

— I'm not a botanist," replied Brother Attiret immediately, "it's enough for me to represent these leaves roughly.

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I can flatter myself that the Emperor will not disapprove of this painting.

— I hope so," replied the Chinaman, "it won't take you long to find out, since it's been announced that this Prince is arriving.

The Emperor entered immediately and went to see Brother Attiret's work. The Prince asked if the women depicted in the painting were European women, and Brother Attiret replied that they were not.

— They hardly resemble Chinese women," replied the Emperor, "they need to be changed or touched up.

He glanced at the other paintings and withdrew.

Brother Attiret, who had wanted to paint Chinese women, was disconcerted. He turned to his Chinese painter and asked him to continue to give him advice.

— Very gladly," replied the latter, "but on condition that you regard what I tell you as nothing more than a gesture of friendship on my part. The comment I made to you earlier may seem a trifle to you, but ^{p.410} you won't think so, here is something more essential.

The main objects in your painting are women dressed in Chinese style. These women include mistresses and attendants. You thought you could distinguish one from the other by clothing, hairstyle, more or less majesty in attitude, & perhaps by many other small differences which we are not aware of, or which we do not understand; but you have forgotten the essential differences, those which

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are, so to speak, the state of people, & which make us say at first glance: here are mistresses, here attendants, here are ladies, here are people of service or work. Now these characteristic differences, as far as the figure is concerned, consist mainly in the hands. Don't think it's a bad idea for me to go into some detail about this. As you are a foreigner, it is very likely you will not see Chinese ladies for a long time, if ever.

The hands of a woman of quality or of any other woman who may have slaves or servants under her command are always a beautiful red, if not naturally, at least by artifice: her fingers, which are the same colour, must be thin, rounded and end in a point. In addition to this, they are always armed with long nails that are arched in their width, red on the part that covers the finger and pearl-coloured on the rest; their length is not the same for all. The nails of the thumb of the little finger considerably longer than those of all the others; this is why they are usually covered with an artificial gold or silver nail, to protect them from the unfortunate accidents to which they would be exposed without this precaution. It is a good thing that you are aware of all this, because a painter who, in a painting, depicts, for example, a Chinese lady working on some small handiwork, or having a few small children frolicking around her, would be making a mistake if, in giving this lady nails of the required length, he did not at the same time cover them with the case of which I have just spoken.

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just mentioned. Our ladies are careful not to expose one of their most beautiful ornaments at the wrong moment: they know what it costs in time and patience to achieve well-shaped nails a good inch long. They must not appear less far-sighted in painting than they are in reality; but that is almost nothing compared to ^{p.411} what remains for me to tell you.

The airs of heads that you have given to these so-called Chinese girls are totally lacking. These bright eyes, these ruddy cheeks, this bold physiognomy, these arms that reach almost to the elbows, this neck uncovered to the base of the throat, all this is customary among us, only when we paint women of mediocre virtue or young girls before the age of puberty.

Modesty, shyness and gentleness are the main external qualities that we generally demand of women; it is only by possessing them that they can please us. They know this very well and are so convinced of it that they use all their art to obtain at least an appearance of what nature has sometimes denied them in this respect. So not to give them an air of modesty, shyness and gentleness in painting is to fail to portray them naturally and with the decency they deserve, it is to sin against costume; and this fault is no less ridiculous in our eyes than would be the manner of a petty master in a magistrate.

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Do you want the Emperor to enjoy your painting," he added, "cover these women's collars up to their chins and their arms up to their wrists. A collar with long sleeves will get you out trouble for the present. Soften the colour of these faces, weaken their radiance with half-tones that barely show any red; because we have the maxim that a woman whose face is illuminated is prone to wine: whether this is true or not, it doesn't matter, we have always heard it said this way, we say it ourselves, and it seems that everyone is convinced of it as a constant truth. This is why those of our ladies whose complexion is a little colourful take as much care to disguise it as they would to hide a real deformity: they even take things so far that they prefer the colour of chalk to that of vermilion in the make-up they use.

Besides, these remarks only apply to Chinese women, and I have taken it upon myself to communicate them to you , only to inform you an essential point of our costume which you will perhaps never have the opportunity to find out for yourself. Moreover, the Emperor's order is clear: you must correct your picture, or allow it to be corrected for you. You will be a little more at ease when you have to paint women ^{p.412} of another nation, even Tartar women. For although the Tartars have been in China for a long time, and are now its masters, they have not yet fully adopted all Chinese customs.

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small. As for the other things that are fashionable among us, experience will gradually teach you to conform to them. It will always be a real pleasure for me to give you my little insight into I need to know, & that you cannot guess.

Brother Attiret, who had listened attentively to the Chinese painter, remained, as he confessed, petrified. The corrections demanded of him were only likely to spoil his painting, yet he obeyed, and his forced docility earned him the Emperor's approval and the friendship of the Palace painters. They no longer regarded him as anything other than a very skilful man, whose perfection they could contribute at the same time as improving themselves. Thanks to their good understanding, painting took on a new form at the Court in the Capital. The Prince's taste for this art first gave rise to that of the courtiers, which soon spread to the city. Two schools were formed, taught by the Castiglione brothers and Attiret. The latter painted several fine church pictures, a number of others for Christians, and more than two hundred portraits of people of different ages and nations.

It is certainly a very painful and hard thing to be obliged to paint in haste, against one's day, inconvenient places, sometimes obscure, often over-lit, in the midst a crowd of courtiers who always have something to say, either to the painter to distract him from his attention, or to the model to make him lose his composure, to be forced to paint quickly and for a long time, to paint without having either one's own colours or brushes prepared for it, for want of being forewarned. to paint in the critical circumstances of an unforeseen illness that robs the body of its strength and the mind of its vigour; to paint, lastly, when one is in the throes of a crisis.

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is the least in a position to do so. The Caribs and Hurons would not, it seems, dare to demand anything similar. It is nevertheless among this people, one of the most polite in the universe, that this is seen, and it is by the orders of a very great Prince, a wise and enlightened Prince, that it is often practised in this way.

The Emperor is full of kindness for foreigners who are admitted to his empire, especially for those who work in his service. He does not pretend to demand anything from them that is not reasonable, & he only demands as much as they are willing to oblige, but the Emperor is not informed of everything, & it is not possible to inform him. One must keep silent, either so as not to expose ^{p.413} the fortune of one of those approaching the Throne, or because of Court decorum, against which one never acts without the greatest disadvantages. Since the most upright intentions could be misinterpreted, one is careful not to show them; since the most legitimate excuses could be taken as pretexts, none are offered. To give an idea of the work involved and the speed with which it must be carried out, I shall relate a few anecdotes which you will not be unhappy to hear.

The most brilliant years of Kien-long's reign (from 1753 to 1760), years in which every month was marked by some victory or by the voluntary submission of some horde chief, and in which the limits of Chinese Tartar domination were extended to the extremities of little Bukharia, beyond the mountains of Badakhschan; these years, I say, will be no less admired by posterity for what history will tell them than for what painting will show them.

At first, Taouatsi was regarded as usurper of the Eleutheran throne, fought, defeated, taken prisoner and taken to Peking.

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he arrived at Court where, despite his disgraces, he was received with all the honours due to his rank, where, to soften the blow of losing the kingdom which had just been stripped from him, he was given the title of *Tsin-ouang*, i.e. *Prince of the First Order*, & where, however, under the specious pretext of ceremonial, he was kept in custody & held in an honourable prison.

Secondly, Amoursana, who had been supplied with troops to help him dethrone his rival Taouatsi, was himself declared a rebel for refusing to come to Court in order to receive the honours they wanted to bestow on him. he died of smallpox, abandoned by his most loyal subjects, to whom this terrible scourge of mankind appeared even more formidable than all the armies of the vast Empire of China.

, the great and the little Hotchom, who claimed to be the legitimate successors of Amoursana, after having collected all the debris of the defeated and fugitive troops, after having aroused the courage and rekindled the valour of a small number of Mohammedan Tartar hordes to try, with their help, to prevent the total ruin of a State that had been shaken to its foundations. and revived the valour of a small number of hordes of Mohammedan Tartars to try with their help to prevent the total ruin of a State shaken to its foundations, after having fought battles and sustained sieges, after having been beaten by large numbers, driven from Ouché, Ily, Irguen, and Casgar, and forced to ^{p.414} to take refuge with the Sultan of Badakschan, who, unwilling to surrender them or prevent the imperial troops from entering his city, allowed them to defend themselves alone and to die bravely with their arms in their hands.

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In fourth place, the corpse of the first of the Hotchoms insulted, his head cut off, brought in triumph to Peking and placed with pomp and ceremony on one of the inner doors of the Emperor's Palace, in the presence of His Majesty and the whole Court; there exposed to the eyes of everyone, it was much less a trophy for the victors than an object of terror for the vanquished: It informed all the Manchus, Mongus, Chinese and Mohammedan Tartars of the sad fate that awaited them, if they ever made useless efforts to try to revive a kingdom that had just been united with one of the provinces of the Empire, while waiting for someone to deign to erect it into a separate province.

Fifth: the triumphant entry of General Tchao-hoei, the main instrument of His Majesty's conquests. At a distance of about six leagues from the capital, in the middle of the main road through which the general was to pass, a pavilion had been erected in which an altar and a throne had been placed. It was there that the Emperor went before sunrise, to await in all the pomp of imperial majesty the one who had so well deserved Empire. The general, who was supposed to be unaware of what was , arrived and was astonished to find himself so close to His Majesty; he threw himself off his horse to go and prostrate himself at his master's feet; at the same time the Emperor came out of the pavilion, offered him his hand, prevented him from kneeling and invited him to enter the pavilion, in order to perform with him the respectful ceremonies *in honour of Heaven and in the presence of the spirits*. They both enter, prostrate themselves before the altar, and strike the earth with their foreheads, following the prescribed ritual. The Emperor rises alone, pours wine into three goblets arranged on the altar, offers them up, makes a libation, fills them again with his own hand, and presents them one after the other to the general, who drinks the liquor.

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After emptying the last cup, the general rose in his turn and, standing beside His Majesty, gave a short account of the most important events of the war, as if *to warn the ancestors that the present generation was trying to follow in their footsteps, and that it had not degenerated from their valour or their virtue*. After this ceremony another begins, that of the march when the Emperor himself leads his general to the nearest of his Palaces. The flags and standards of all colours and shapes, carried by men on horseback, dressed in long robes, ^{p.415} all the parade instruments which are etiquette for the great ceremonial, carried in the same way by men on horseback dressed in long robes, precede the march. They are ranged in line, in two parallel lines, and march gravely to the sound of the warlike instruments which are placed among them at equal distances; then come those who represent the different corps of the militia, and after them the great officers of the crown, each in the rank appropriate to him with the distinctive marks which are proper to him. Some officers of the guards complete this first division.

After an interval of about twenty paces, the Palace eunuchs begin the second: they are lined up in the same order as those who precede them & on horseback like them; for everyone is on horseback in this ceremony. Some of these eunuchs carry golden cassolettes in which they burn exquisite scents that perfume the air, while others hold in their hands vases of the same metal filled with tea and some refreshing liquors. They are followed by two choirs of musicians, eunuchs as them, who marry their voices

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melodious to the sound of instruments, & celebrate with hymns the triumph & the victors & the victories they have won.

The third division begins with some of the officers of the guards, who immediately precede the Emperor. The general, wearing his helmet and his armour, is at His Majesty's right side. The Prime Minister and some Empire dignitaries form the procession. The other part of the officers of the guards follows and closes the march.

The princes of all orders, the mandarins of the great courts of the Empire, the chiefs of the subaltern courts of the Capital, the learned men & the military above the fourth degree, the ambassadors of China's small tributary sovereigns whom chance, politics or their own affairs had brought to Peking, kneeling in a single line on one side of the main road, were the only witnesses to a triumph whose majestic simplicity marvellous order are beyond expression. As European missionaries are reputed to be in the service of the Court, they have the honour of being mingled with the mandarins in these kinds of ceremonies, where it is a question of showing zeal for the person of the Emperor or for the glory of the Empire. We were therefore among the spectators, and I say nothing here that I have not seen with my own eyes.

Such are, broadly speaking, the principal events recorded in the fastes with all the accuracy and prolixity of detail, and tabulated ^{p.416} in their various parts, at least in those which were thought most likely to enhance the glory of the conqueror or to flatter the self-esteem of the sovereign.

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Throughout the time this war lasted against the Eleuths and the other Tartars, their allies, as soon as the troops of the Empire had won a victory, taken a town or subdued a horde, the painters were immediately ordered to depict it. Those of the principal officers who had taken the greatest part in what had just happened were preferably chosen to appear in paintings, as they had done in reality. But how could one paint models who were not present, whom one had never seen, and of whom, consequently, one could not form a sufficient idea to represent them at least approximately? What would be considered morally impossible everywhere else, is not a problem here. Those who were to serve as models were absent, they were sometimes in places more than eight hundred leagues away from the Capital, whatever; they were summoned to the Court, and they went there with that celerity of which only the Tartars are capable. On the very day of their arrival, they were admitted to the Court. The Emperor questioned them about what he wanted to know, had their portraits drawn and immediately sent them back to the army to continue their service as before. All this was done with such haste that the arrival of these officers was often not known at Court until after they left. The painters had no more than an hour or two to put on canvas figures for which they would have needed at least two or three days.

I must not let it be forgotten that this is only done as a refinement of policy. Having the portraits drawn several of those who were involved in the various actions is the pretext; but the Emperor's real intention is to provide himself with the opportunity to find out for himself, from the mouths of more than one person, who was involved in the various actions.

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of a witness, if the reports of his generals did not deviate from the truth, or if his ministers did not impose on him. The mere fear of being discovered or of betraying oneself kept everyone in line with their duties, and the Emperor, who was fully informed, was able to give orders at the right time.

What was practised with regard to officers was done more or less equally with regard to some prisoners of note who had been taken in battle, and several chiefs of the horde who, without wishing to fight, had voluntarily submitted to the yoke. They were taken to Peking or to one of the imperial houses, and questioned, or rather made to talk about matters of war, ^(p.417)They were admitted to the ceremonial feast, and after having showered them with honour and loaded them with gifts, they were sent back to their own country to live there in their own way, but under the authority of the officers of the empire. This wise conduct, in which the Eleutherans generally received clear proof of the clemency or the liberality of the great Prince whose subjects they had become, was only contradicted in the case of those who stubbornly refused to submit, or who, after pretending to be submissive, took up arms again as soon as they believed they could do so with advantage. The terrible punishments they were made to suffer, after having been defeated, completed the task of keeping within the bounds of duty those who could not be kept there by kindness.

All these hastily made portraits were kept in reserve in a particular place, from where they were then taken when they were needed.

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The same painter often had to do three or four portraits a day. It often happened that the same painter had to do three or four portraits a day, and when I say a day, I mean only five or six hours, because the rest of the time was spent either in pure ceremony, or waiting, or moving from one place to another.

An extract from some of Brother Attiret's letters will confirm what I am saying. He had been called to Tartary by the Emperor to exercise his talent.

"When I arrived in Gehol, I stayed at the hotel of the Prime Minister, in whose care the Emperor had entrusted me. On the fourth of July 1754, i.e. two days after my arrival, this minister was in my flat and told me that I would probably have to paint the *Ta yen yen* (the great feast ceremony) which was to be held shortly. At eleven o'clock in the evening, I was ordered to go to the Palace before daybreak. Indeed, the next day I was taken to the garden where everything was being prepared. I was told that the Tartar regulos had arrived during the night, and that today the Emperor was giving them a feast with all kinds of splendour, and that His Majesty's intention was that I should draw a picture of it, and that it should be presented to him the same day. It was there that I recognised the need for what painters are sometimes reproached for having too much. My imagination in the mirror only represented the objects I had seen in a confusion and chaos where I could not unravel anything. Finally, spurred on by necessity, I seized the moment of the arrival ^{p.418} of the Emperor in the place of the *Ta*

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yen yen. There are about a hundred figures my composition. The Emperor approved my drawing, which was presented to him the same day. The next day at daybreak, I was again ordered to go to the Palace to paint those Mongous whom the Emperor had raised to the rank of princes of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th orders, and those whom he had made great of the Empire. I have already painted five of them; the order is that I paint at least two a day. We know that these Tartars are not very patient, and we are afraid of annoying them by keeping them too long in places from which they would probably already like to be far away... On the 20th of the fifth moon I fell ill, and was sent to the Emperor's doctors; on the 21st and 22nd I was obliged to go and paint two portraits, and three on the 23rd despite my illness. The place where I was painting was where the regulos and the grandees were to hear the comedy. They were therefore always on my shoulders, infinitely increasing my suffering by their caresses, their politeness and their questions. What drew them to these considerations was the honourable manner in which the Emperor treated me. Every day I was sent food from his table by a ceremonial mandarin.

On the 28th I was called to make a large drawing of the small *Ta yen yen*. As soon as I arrived, a eunuch brought me two pieces of silk from the Emperor. His Majesty himself arrived a few days later. She did me the honour of asking me if I had recovered from my illness; I had to reply that I had. She found that I was not well in the place where I was, and had me taken to the *Ta tien* or *the great hall*. A few

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Some time later the *hou cha kie* (name of the principal eunuch of the Presence) came with a sheet of that paper on which the Emperor is accustomed to paint, & ordered me on behalf of His Majesty to draw on the spot a Tartar on horseback, running after a tiger, with his bow drawn to kill it.

On the 29th the same eunuch came to give me the order to draw four *cheou-kuen*: a piece of silk as fine but tighter than *cha*. It about two feet wide and of indeterminate length. It is rolled up and held in the hand, which is what its name means. I went to the garden to choose the sites to be used as backgrounds. The Emperor approached me and asked about my health.

On the second of the sixth moon the Emperor came to see me and found that the drawings I had made of , either on horseback or in a chair, were too far back. He sat down ^{p.419} on the throne in the room where I work, and ordered me to draw him as he was. As it was very hot, he allowed me to take off my cap and sit down, as one is always on one knee when doing something in his presence.

On the morning of the third of the sixth moon, he showed me what he had painted on the drawing I had made for him, and had me correct something about attitude of the Tartar shooting an arrow. That evening he sent me the painting to finish it. He asked me if I had a *yeou-ti-tsé* or an imprinted canvas, or to put it better, Korean paper with a layer of oil. This paper is stronger and smoother than canvas. As I did not have any, I was asked

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A courier left to fetch some from *Joui-kouan* (the place where the painters work); the courier returned an hour later.

On the ninth I painted a large portrait of the Emperor and everyone was pleased with it. On the tenth I ordered to go to the garden to choose a site to my liking and to draw a picture of it, to serve as a background for a painting in which the Emperor would be depicted practising shooting an arrow. Then the Prince, of his own accord, made me a mandarin with a stipend, but despite all the minister's entreaties I persisted in refusing this honour.

#Brother Attiret has also composed several magnificent paintings which are kept in the Emperor's Palace, where in general no one is allowed to go and see them, unless a special commission takes you there. I had the opportunity to see some of them.

The first is a ceiling representing the temple of Glory, not that which is acquired by taking or overthrowing cities, but that which results from the various services rendered to mankind by providing it with the means to satisfy its needs, by providing for its safety or increasing its well-being, & by multiplying its pleasures.

The second is a painting about five feet high and three and a half feet wide. It depicts a lady who has just finished dressing. Four other paintings represent the four seasons.

Spring is announced by a landscape of flowering trees. Some women enjoy the beautiful sight of these trees already in full bloom, while others cut off a few branches.

In praise of Brother Attiret

The state of Chinese painting

In summer, we see a pond partly covered with water lilies, some of which are in bloom, others in bud, the rest still showing only the beautiful green of their leaves. In the middle of the pond is a small boat with a lady and two girls in it. The lady is seated, one of the attendants presents her with a water-lily flower, the other ^{p.420} pushes the basket with an oar in the Chinese manner, i.e. by pressing the oar firmly against the bottom of the pond.

The autumn depicts a mother seated next to a trellis, with several small children her. One of children is holding a bunch of grapes and putting a berry in his mouth. The mother gives a bunch to the second and shows another to the third.

Winter offers a flat furnished in the Chinese style. In the middle is a large basin containing coals. A young child is crouching beside the blaze, stirring the ashes with a small stick. The mother is sitting in an armchair at the back of the room, more occupied with her son, whom she sees bantering by the fire, than with the cup of tea she is drinking. A servant is standing in front of her, holding the small bandage on which she brought the tea. Her head is bent slightly over her shoulder, facing the child. Another little child in a fur-lined dress comes from a corner of the room to take some sweets that he sees on the bandage.

After all that we have just reported, we can see that the painters who work for the Emperor are not always free in the choice and arrangement of their subjects. They paint nothing that has not been vu & approuvé ce Prince, qui fait retrancher ou

In praise of Brother Attiret

The state of Chinese painting

This hindrance makes him a veritable slave. This hindrance makes him a true slave.

Brother Attiret, who suffered greatly during the time he was so busy, died on 8 December 1768, aged sixty-six years and a few months, having been born on 31 July 1702.

The Emperor gave 200 taels or ounces silver (1,500 pounds of our currency) to help pay for his funeral. The prince, his brother, sent his eldest son to find out on what day the ceremony would take place, and when the day came one of his principal eunuchs came to mourn him over the coffin and wanted to accompany him to the burial place. We asked him not to carry out his master's orders, and he confined himself to accompanying him on foot for some time.

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