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Chinese Influence on European Art, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries

In China, as in Europe and in other cultures, the visual arts are ranked hierarchically depending upon their function, materials, themes, and most importantly the social position of those who practise them.

In traditional China the literary arts cultivated by the politically powerful literary elite occupied the highest ranks of the hierarchy. At the summit stood calligraphy, closely followed by painting; indeed, over the centuries the status of painting rose as officials and scholars became its practitioners. Other arts that had traditionally been regarded as crafts also gained prestige as they came to the attention of the literati during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). Among these were seal carving, book illustration, print-making, and garden design. By contrast, sculpture and the applied arts—ceramics, bronzes, lacquer and furniture—never attained a comparable status. Nor was architecture ever considered a literary art; it remained within the sphere of civil engineering and public works.

In Europe, on the other hand, architecture, the "mother of the arts," had from antiquity occupied the most prestigious position, followed by sculpture and painting, and finally the applied and decorative arts.

It is the thesis of this paper that the influence of the Chinese arts on the arts of Europe was dependent upon their position in their respective hierarchies: the higher the status of an art in China, the less influence it exerted in Europe; and the higher the status of an art in Europe, the less receptive was it to Chinese influence.

The literary arts that the Chinese themselves deemed most prestigious were hardly made known to Westerners. Instead the Chinese exported porcelain, lacquerware, furniture, and wallpaper, products which ranked low in their own value system.

The Chinese influence on European architecture remained quite limited, extending only to areas of relatively minor importance, such as garden architecture. It would have been unthinkable for European architects to construct important buildings, such as town halls or churches, in the style of Chinese palaces or temples. Sculpture was receptive to Chinese influence only if the resulting product was to be used in a decorative context. The same is true of decorative painting applied to walls, furniture and ceramics; Chinese influence is found here, but not in prestigious easel painting. Most receptive to Chinese influence were the so-called minor arts of Europe.

In the following sections four areas will be discussed: porcelain, engravings, painting, and architecture.

Porcelain

Ceramics reached Europe from China in the late Middle Ages. They were greatly treasured and were often provided with precious mountings. A Lung-ch'üan bowl now in Kassel was brought from the Near East in 1434 and was given its gothic mounting before 1453.[1] In later centuries, porcelain was by far the most popular Chinese export to Europe. When the contents of the *Geldermalsen* were recovered from the sea bottom in 1985, it turned out that this one ship, sailing from Canton to Amsterdam in 1752, had 150,000 pieces of porcelain in its hold.[2] The Dutch East India Company fleet in the eighteenth century comprised more than 200 ships,[3] and although not all of them carried porcelain, and those that did not always as much as the *Geldermalsen*, the number of pieces of porcelain exported to Europe can be counted in the tens of millions.

This trade had an enormous impact and changed the course of ceramic history. Traditional stoneware fell out of favor in Europe and the technically superior and aesthetically more versatile Chinese products were both greatly admired and copied. Low-fired ceramics decorated in blue on a white ground were produced at Delft and other centers and traded widely, and, once Johann Gottfried Büttger "re-invented" porcelain in 1709, high-temperature kilns were set up at Meissen and elsewhere. Even today, decoration and shape of porcelain tradeware can still be traced back to Chinese prototypes.[4] Blue and white can be called the most successful ceramic type in world history.

The vast quantity of seventeenth-century Chinese porcelain in Europe explains why no other type of Chinese art has been collected more widely

or researched more intensively in the West. The twentieth-century literature on Chinese ceramics fills a small library. As we survey this literature a phenomenon of particular methodological importance becomes apparent: Chinese export porcelain was made specifically with the European market in mind. Chinese artisans adapted their products to what they conceived of as European taste, and often produced specific designs for their customers. Sometimes they even imitated European ceramic wares which were copies of Chinese models in the first place. When the Chinese tried to recover the market share that they had lost to the Japanese in Arita during the turmoil of the late Ming and early Ch'ing (1644–1911), they deliberately incorporated Japanese stylistic elements that had become fashionable in Europe.

Two examples from the Mottahedeh Collection illustrate these interchanges. Figure 1 (left) shows a lemon basket and stand, made in China around 1775, and (right) the Meissen prototype of around 1740.[5] The Meissen artisans had nearly mastered the Chinese technique of porcelain manufacture, and their Chinese counterparts took readily to modelling small nude figures in a European manner. The two goblets in Figure 2 are Chinese products from the early eighteenth century. They are copies of a European goblet type, yet the decoration displays Japanese elements and taste: the chrysanthemum roundels, the chevron border, the gilt lines over the leaves in underglaze blue, and the overall boldness and freshness of the design. Japanese style porcelain produced by Chinese artisans is called Chinese imari.[6]

Another example of a stylistic amalgam are the tiles in the kitchen of the Amalienburg at Nymphenburg castle, built by the Bavarian elector Karl Albrecht between 1734 and 1739 (Fig. 3). Chinese influence is immediately evident in the blue and white color scheme of the two main panels (not shown in the detail) depicting Chinese figures in a Chinese garden landscape. However, as Ulrika Kiby has demonstrated, elements from various other artistic traditions are also discernible here.[7] The biblical scenes depicted on the round blue and white tiles are direct borrowings from the northern Renaissance vocabulary, as are the twisted columns on the sides of the two panels. The large flower vases are motifs often encountered in Dutch painting, and the fireplace framed with glazed tiles is characteristic of Dutch interior decoration. It is remarkable that this Dutch practice harks back to Islamic rather than Chinese art: ceramic tile wall panels displaying immense flower vases, and fireplaces framed with tiles were common in Istanbul in the seventeenth century.[8]

The three examples cited above demonstrate the stylistic diversity in porcelain manufacture. The various stylistic sources and the constant cultural intercourse between China and the West make "influence" seem too simple a term to describe this complex phenomenon. These exchanges and the self-consciousness they engendered anticipate the more sophisticated interaction between East and West that took place in the arts during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Engravings

After porcelain the medium of engravings opened European eyes to things Chinese. Yet in contrast to the precious ceramic ware manufactured in far off Ching-te Chen, which reached Europe only after a long and hazardous journey, engravings were both designed and produced by Europeans, who saw China through their own eyes. In spite of this limited perspective, or because of it, these engravings exercised a profound influence on European art.

Most of the prints appeared in records of travels and embassies, and in general accounts of China. As early as the sixteenth century, descriptions of China, such as that by Jan Huygen van Linschoten (1595–1596), contained illustrations. However, these prints were limited in number and based on unreliable information. A significant advance came only in the 1660s, when three sumptuously illustrated works were published by Neuhof, Kircher, and Dapper.[9]

Johann Neuhof (1618–1672) accompanied the Dutch embassy that reached Peking in 1656,[10] and in 1665 he published in Leyden his *L'ambassade de la Compagnie orientale des Provinces Unies vers l'empereur de la Chine* ... , which immediately became a bestseller. Within a few years several new editions and translations into Dutch, German, English, and Latin followed. Some of them contained more than 150 illustrations.

The Jesuit polyhistor Athanasius Kircher (1601–1680) never set foot in the Far East himself, but worked in Rome where he had access to the archives of the Jesuit mission and numerous opportunities to meet missionaries on their way to or from China. His *China Mounmentis, qua Sacris qua Porfanis ... Illustrata* ... contains illustrations that are obviously based on heterogeneous prototypes. Whereas Nieuhof's drawings convey personal observations and render foreign appearances and strange manners quite

convincingly, Kircher often fails to grasp "otherness" in architectural detail or clothing; indeed he often uses figure types borrowed from the repertoire of the Western pictorial tradition.

The third work, *Gedenkweerdig Bedryf* ... , published by Olfert Dapper (?–1690) in Amsterdam in 1670, is based on observations made during another Dutch embassy[11] which reached Peking in 1667. Dapper followed Neuhof in his choice of subject matter and in the overall arrangement of his illustrations. Although he apparently tried to surpass him—some of his illustrations are quite elaborate and betray high artistic ambition—he lacks Neuhof's sober observation.

The pictorial information contained in these three works exercised a tremendous influence on the European conception of China for about a century and a half. The illustrations themselves and the designs drawn from them were used widely in architecture, gardens, interiors, stage decoration, and for wallpaper, furniture, ceramics and lacquerware. Neuhof's prints and those of his two contemporaries ceded their position as the primary source of visual information on China only after William Alexander (1767–1816) published the watercolours that he had made while accompanying the embassy of Lord Macartney to the Ch'ien-lung emperor's court in 1792–1794.[12]

Figures 4 and 6 show two illustrations of the imperial palace in Peking. Because the palace still stands today, we can assess the faithfulness and the limitations of these prints (Figs. 5 and 7). The overall view of the palace compound (Fig. 4) is found in Neuhof's book. Nieuhof had visited the palace in person with a Dutch embassy on 2 October 1656, and he correctly understood the principle of rectangularity, the importance of the great north-south axis, and the effect of the large spaces between the buildings. He idealized the groundplan, however, by adding rectangular projections in the east, west and north. And by exaggerating the symmetry of the layout, Neuhof reveals the influence of the Renaissance concept of the utopian city.

Figure 6 shows Dapper's famous rendering of the scene before the Meridian Gate (Wu-men), where the Dutch embassy under Pieter van Hoorn waited for the imperial audience in the early hours of 25 June 1667. The U-shaped groundplan is rendered accurately, yet the imposing proportions of the gate (37.95 meters high, the tallest structure in the entire palace compound) have been scaled down, significantly reducing the impact of this overwhelming and enormously self-assured building (Fig. 7) (note the relative size of the figures, doorways and walls). By drawing rows of

rounded arcades following each other in quick succession atop the walls, Dapper not only substitutes a motif from Western classical architecture for the leisurely spaced wooden pillars, but also betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of the statics of East Asian skeleton structures. His roofs with their incorrectly rendered bracketing systems and stilted proportions show, moreover, that he was probably more familiar with architecture in South China than with the buildings in Peking.

The most famous example of East-West interaction in the realm of prints is the set of engravings that the Ch'ien-lung emperor ordered from Paris. It is well known that after the colonial wars of the 1750s that secured for China the large western territories known today as Hsin-chiang, Ch'ien-lung had a series of sixteen large battle scenes painted for the Hall of Purple Radiance (Tzu-kuang ko) in the imperial palace compound. Court artists, among them Giuseppe Castiglione, Dionysius Attiret, Ignatius Sichelbarth, and Jean Damascenus worked on them, and smaller versions of these compositions were sent to Europe to be engraved and printed.[13]

In his accompanying edict, Ch'ien-lung emphasized that he wanted to employ the best artists in Europe to carry out the task, that the work should be done quickly, and that the money should be paid immediately. One hundred copies were to be printed and all of them, including the copper plates, were to be returned to China.[14] In spite of this, Louis XVI, a number of aristocrats in his court and several Sinophiles procured extra copies of the celebrated series before the plates were shipped back to China in 1775. Ten years later the Paris engraver Helman published an album with reduced versions of the battle scenes, thus satisfying the demand of a most curious public.

Beginning in the 1770s, further campaigns were launched in Szuchuan, Taiwan, Vietnam, Tibet, Yunnan and Hunan, and the emperor ordered similar copper engravings to be made of the dynasty's victories. When producing these prints, however, the Chinese received no more outside help. The Jesuits had left the court, yet not without having trained craftsmen on whom fell the task of producing the new plates and prints.

Recently, thirty-four copper plates were "rediscovered" in the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin, among them some made in Paris by French engravers and others done later in Peking. A comparison allows us to assess the success and failure of this early joint venture in the printing business.

Figure 8 shows a detail of the engraving representing the battle at Oroi-jalutu of 1756. The design is by Castiglione, engraved by J. P. le Bas

in Paris in 1770. The faces, hands, bodies and dress of the figures are painstakingly modeled with innumerable short curving strokes and dots of various shapes, suggesting volume under the surface and space between the bodies. These works represent the finest engraving in Europe at the time.

Figure 9 shows a detail from the assault on the fortress of the Shih-lung Miao tribe in Hunan. The illustration was designed and engraved in the workshop of the imperial household (Tsao-pan ch'u) and inscribed by Ch'ien-lung in 1796. The strokes are longer and tend to be straight rather than curved. Often parallel layers of strokes cross, dots are used rarely, and only scant modeling of the faces is attempted. Compared with the French print, the Chinese-drawn figures appear stiff and flat. This schematisation of strokes and formed elements is well known in traditional Chinese decorative design and was used in the decoration of porcelain and lacquerware as well as in woodblock printing. The Chinese sense of artistic form had caught up with the foreign artistic medium.

Technically, however, the Chinese plates are perfect and can hardly be distinguished from their French models. The back sides display a peculiar uneven surface, reminiscent of peeled bark. Especially impressive is the engraving of the inscriptions, with their characters in broad strokes within which traces of "flying white" were emulated. Different are only the most recent plates, produced in the palace around 1830. They were each made in two sections joined by an alloy which leaves no trace on the print. Those plates are very thin and the design was hammered into the copper so that the lines become visible on the back. The imperial copper plates had, alas, no immediate sucessors in nineteenth-century China.

Painting

In painting we encounter a situation quite different from that of porcelain and prints. In China as in Europe, painting was considered a most prestigious art, near to the top of the hierarchy. Chinese influence on European painting, therefore, came relatively late, remained superficial, and was limited in scope. There are two reasons for this. First, almost no information about Chinese painting reached Europe; and second, Europeans seem to have been reluctant to allow their painting to be influenced significantly by an exotic culture; painting was too essential and too dignified an art.

Samples of Chinese painting reached Europe first and foremost in the form of painted decor on porcelain. This medium was severely limited in

terms of subject matter, style, and artistic quality and could give only a crude and derivative impression of the true achievements of Chinese painting. In Western prints Chinese paintings played a very insignificant role; one rare exception is a rendering of a palace woman by Athanasius Kircher.[15]

Chinese paintings on paper and silk reached Europe only in extremely limited numbers, and most of these were the products of professional artists rather than the works of literati that come to mind when we think of Ming and Ch'ing painting today. In the period that concerns us here, Chinese literati likely deemed it neither necessary nor appropriate to reveal to the untutored eyes of barbarians the tangible essence of their aesthetic culture.

The foreign embassies and traders, for their part, did not seek out paintings (or calligraphy) in China, and, when a professional artist, such as William Alexander (1767–1816), accompanied an embassy, he established no contact with his Chinese counterparts nor did he attempt to acquire an understanding of their work. No trace of Chinese style is discernible in Alexander's works. They "are in the finest tradition of English topographical water colour, detailed and yet delicate."[16]

Among the missionary painters working at the imperial court, very few ever returned to Europe: one exception is Matteo Ripa (1682–1776) who left China after K'ang-hsi's death in 1722. Thus there was little opportunity for these artists to disseminate whatever knowledge of Chinese painting they may have acquired. Yet what opportunities did they have to see works by famous masters of the past, and were they able to understand what they saw? During the years Castiglione spent at the imperial palace, Ch'ien-lung assembled the most comprehensive collection of paintings in Chinese history. One wonders whether Castiglione and his European colleagues were aware of this enormous feat.

The biased information about Chinese painting that reached Europe, and the failure on the part of Europeans to judge Chinese painting according to its own standards, gave rise to a general contempt for this art. Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) wrote: "Ils ne savent pas peindre à l'huile ni mettre des ombres. Toutes leurs peintures sont mortes et sans aucune vie,"[17]a sentiment which was echoed again and again during the next two centuries. An anonymous author writing in 1755 sums up a commonly shared attitude: "False lights, false shadows, false perspective and proportions, gay colors without the graduation of tints, that mutual variety of enlightened and

darkened objects ... in short every incoherent combination of forms of nature ... are the essentials of Chinese painting."[18]

Given this negative perception of Chinese painting, it is not surprising that its impact on the great painters of Europe remained superficial and limited; superficial in the sense that it impinged on subject matter, but never penetrated into the realm of style. For example, Chinese porcelain frequently appears in seventeenth-century Dutch still life paintings, curious yet valuable evidence of Dutch trade with the Far East and a testimony to the taste and wealth of Dutch collectors. Yet Dutch still life painting remained completely untouched by Chinese painting style.

The Chinese impact on European painting was limited in the sense that it reached only certain levels. Just as there is a hierarchy among the arts, there are also hierarchies within each particular art. In the case of post-Renaissance European painting, easel painting occupied the highest position, followed by wall painting and tapestry design, and then the sort of decorative painting employed on furniture and porcelain. Within this spectrum Chinese elements occur mainly at the lower levels, whereas in the upper levels one can identify many "lost opportunities".[19]

In the great altarpiece in the Antwerp Jesuit church (1616–1617) Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) depicts a miracle of the eminent Asian missionary St. Francis Xavier, a theme that would have given him a chance to show Chinese figures in a Chinese setting. Yet except for some oriental robes and head gear, the scene retains a European character, in large measure because of its architectural frame. The same applies to a painting done in 1641 by Nicolas Poussin (1593/1594–1665), depicting Xavier resurrecting a Japanese girl. Only in the background do some Orientals appear, recognizable by their bald heads.

Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669), the greatest painter in the Netherlands during the period that saw the greatest expansion of Dutch trade with the Far East, had a particular fondness for oriental customs. He painted Turks and Persians and copied Indian miniatures, but never painted anything Chinese.

It is also worth mentioning that, as Börsch-Supan has noted, European painters rarely attempted physiognomic studies of Chinese faces similar to their studies of people from the Near East and of Negros,[20] because there was an established tradition of depicting the latter in biblical scenes. Chinese, however, were rarely seen in Europe. The absence of studies of Chinese physiognomy explains the puppet-like quality of most Chinese

faces depicted in Europe and, on a deeper level, the inner distance that Europeans continued to feel towards Chinese.

The situation changed somewhat in eighteenth century Rococo painting, wherein Chinese motifs became ubiquitous. The stylistic assimilation of Chinese painting, however, still remained remote, as we can see in an engraving after a lost wall painting by one of the greatest artists of the period, Antoine Watteau (1684–1721) (Fig. 10).[21] In his ironical and playful rendering of a Chinese goddess for the castle La Muette, a European viewer could detect various Chinese elements: the garden rock serving as the goddess' throne, the duster and parasol she was holding, the typical beard of the man kneeling on the left (but not his nose!), the shape as well as the decor and the silken quality of the garments, and an overall floating grace in the composition and airiness of the ornamental design. A Chinese painter of the period, however, would undoubtedly have been quite surprised to learn that this engraving was done in the Chinese style. To him almost everything would have appeared European: the composition, the anatomy, the faces of the figures, the shading, the geometry of the ornaments and the technique, be it of the engraving or the original wall painting. Watteau, for his part, obviously was not trying to create a Chinese painting. With a masterful use of stylistic ambiguity, he revealed that his age was fraught with more uncertainty than the pompous court art of Louis XIV wished to admit.

In the eighteenth century the range of Chinese subjects that attracted European attention gradually widened and came to include didactic subjects, such as the professions, and historical figures. The subject of the "the plowing Emperor" is one example. In early spring every year the Chinese emperor ceremonially plowed a furrow at the Altar of Agriculture,[22]a ritual which stirred great interest in Europe. Voltaire is quoted as having said: "What are our European monarchs going to do when they hear about such examples? Admire and blush, yet above all: copy."[23] And copy they did. Louis XV is known to have personally opened the plowing season in 1756, and an engraving done around 1770 shows his son, the future Louis XVI, ceremonially plowing.[24]

The plowing performed on 19 August 1769, by Emperor Joseph II of Austria near Brünn became especially well known. An etching by Johann Baptist Bergmüller shows the emperor holding the plow (Fig. 11).[25] After the event the peasants of the village treated the plow like a relic, and it is still preserved today.

The Chinese emperor's ceremonial plowing first became known in Europe through the medium of prints, but there is also an oil painting by the Berlin artist Bernhard Rode (1725–1797) showing the plowing emperor in his yellow robe surrounded by courtiers and servants (Fig. 12).[26] The parasol, the palm tree and the distant pagoda create the Chinese setting. With unusually strong colors and an overall airiness, Rode, moreover, attempts to introduce elements of a Chinese style as he knew them. This painting and its companion piece showing the Chinese empress plucking mulberry leaves, are rare cases of easel paintings representing serious Chinese themes without irony and in a faintly recognizable Chinese style.

Architecture

The situation in the field of architecture is similar to that of painting. Serious interest in Chinese architecture arose comparatively late in Europe, and for a long time Chinese architectural forms and principles were not well understood. Europeans were also quite selective in their emulation of Chinese architectural types and their choice of which buildings they adorned or constructed in the Chinese manner.

The reasons are again twofold, a lack of knowledge on the one hand and the prestigious position that architecture occupied in the European hierarchy of the arts on the other. Information about Chinese architecture was scarce, not only because architectural monuments could not be shipped to the West like ceramics, but because many of them were not readily accessible to Western visitors. The prestigious position of architecture in Europe, reflected in the often solemn and sacred character of public and religious buildings did not accord well with the easy, playful, even frivolous air associated with Chinese art and fashion, especially in the eighteenth century.

Surveying the history of Chinese architecture in Europe, one first meets with Marco Polo's famous description of the palace in the city of Kanbaluc (Peking), "the most extensive that has ever yet been known,"[27] whose beautiful chambers were "so admirably disposed that it seems impossible to suggest any improvement to the system of their arrangement".[28] Other early accounts of China echo this admiration for her architecture as in the widely read *Historia ... del gran Reyno de la China* published in Rome in 1585 by the Spanish Augustinian Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza, who wrote: "In this

kingdom in al places there be men excellent in architecture" who built "mightie buildings and verie curious".[29]

Yet in spite of these early reports, knowledge about Chinese architecture remained scarce. The first person to provide usable information was again Neuhof in his *Embassy* of 1665. He did not share the favorable assessment of the earlier writers, but rather bemoaned how readily Chinese buildings fell into decay; yet his volume contains comparatively detailed engravings of various Chinese structures, among them the two architectural types that were later built often in Europe, the garden pavilion and the pagoda.

One of Neuhof's most famous illustrations shows the ninestoreyed "Porcelain Pagoda" in Nanking. With its bells hanging from the tips of its elegantly curved eaves and its Cintamani jewel on top, which according to Neuhof's description looked like a pineapple, this tower became "the Chinese building best known in Europe".[30]

Figure 13 shows one of the many adaptations of Neuhof's design. It is found in the influential *Entwurff der Geschichte einer historischen Architectur*, published by the eminent Austrian architect Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1656–1723) in 1721, which contains eight other views of Chinese architectural structures: the imperial palace at Peking, four great bridges, a triumphal archway, a pavilion and a garden rock.[31]

In his text Nieuhof spreads the myth that the pagoda was actually made of porcelain. His account, published in French in 1665, inspired the first European building in a Chinese manner, the Trianon de Porcelaine, commissioned by Louis XIV and erected in Versailles in 1670 (Fig. 14).

The Trianon consisted of three buildings on three sides of a courtyard at the center of a French garden. Neither its ground plan nor its elevation were remotely Chinese. The shape of its roof and of the vases and statues on its edges were indeed European. Yet its most spectacular feature, the blue and white faience tiles on the roof, were Chinese. Only seventeen years after it was built the Trianon was demolished. The beautiful tiles in Chinese style apparently could not withstand the harsh climate of Western Europe.[32]

Nearly half a century passed before other attempts of architecture "á la Chinoise" were made in Europe. After 1717 the Saxonian elector and Polish King August the Strong (r. 1694–1733) converted his "Dutch Palace" in Dresden into an oriental one, mainly by substituting Chinese caryatids for Baroque pilasters.[33] As in the case of the Trianon, with its Chinese interior

decoration and Chinese furniture, the exterior dressing of August's palace also reflected its interior, which housed choice pieces from the porcelain kiln which the king had established at Meissen. Another palace of August the Strong, the "Indian Pleasure Palace" at Pillnitz (1720–1732) built by M. D. Pöppelmann sports strongly curved roof lines executed in a Chinese manner.

During the first decades of the eighteenth century several European monarchs erected small palaces or royal pleasure houses in Chinese style. The Amalienburg in Munich commissioned by Max Emmanuel in 1716 has already been mentioned. It was built by the French-trained architect Josef Effner. This was followed in Lunéville (Le Tréfle built by Emmanuel Héré in 1738 for the Polish King Stanislaus Lescynski), in Potsdam (the Chinese Tea House built by Johann Gottfried Büring in 1759 for Frederick the Great), and in Drottningholm (the Chinese Pavilion built from 1763 to 1769 by Karl Frederick Adelrantz for Queen Louisa Ulrika of Sweden, a sister of Frederick the Great).

During the second half of the century, architecture in the Chinese style was practiced in structures less ambitious than the royal pleasure houses, namely in garden pavilions. Such pavilions were first seen in Britain in the late 1730s and together with the English garden they spread rapidly to the continent. Probably the earliest surviving Chinese garden house is at Harristown, Eire, dating from 1738. It is a simple wooden structure with painted walls, latticed windows and a wide overhanging roof in the typical East Asian hip-and-gable style (which the Japanese call *irimoya*).[34] Light buildings like this one perish easily, of course, and few survive today. Illustrations of some of them, however, still exist. Figure 15 shows a sketch done around 1761 of a pavilion in Wrest Park, Bedfordshire.[35]

A new chapter in the history of Chinese architecture in Europe was opened by Sir William Chambers (1723–1796). Chambers taught himself architecture, visited Canton, and in 1757 was the first European to publish professional and accurate drawings of Chinese buildings and building elements in his *Designs of Chinese Buildings*. A cross-section, for example, of a Chinese house clarifies its statics, and another plate gives details of the typical bracket system under the eaves. Figure 16 shows his drawing of a pagoda.

In his commentary, Chambers cleverly pointed out some basic similarities between Western and Chinese construction, arguing that Chinese architecture was a respectable art and could be fitted into the European concept of proportion. He conceded, nevertheless, that Chinese buildings were best

suited for less important functions and for gardens.[36] Consequently pagodas and pavilions figure prominently in his drawings.

As a result of the great interest stimulated by his *Designs*, Chambers was commissioned to redesign Kew Gardens and provide them with buildings in Chinese style. He erected a pavilion (not unlike the one in Wrest Park, Fig. 15), and, in 1761/1762, a pagoda, a spectacular landmark, 160 feet high (Fig. 17).[37] It was the first pagoda in Europe of such dimensions and was known on the continent as one of the most famous English buildings. It still stands. Unfortunately, however, the crouching winged dragons on the tips of the roofs "covered with a kind of thin glass of various colours, which produces a most dazling reflection"[38] have been lost.

It should be noted that the pagoda published by Chambers in his *Designs* (Fig. 16) looks quite different from the one he actually built (Fig. 17). In his drawing the pagoda had only seven stories, rapidly tapering towards the top, each with wide apertures and a simple railing, giving the structure a slim, almost airy shape. In the pagoda he built, Chambers, rather than using his own design, returned once again to the Nanking porcelain pagoda that Neuhof had made famous in Europe (Fig. 13). Chambers borrowed Neuhof's overall proportions: ten stories that gradually diminish in size towards the top, and the dazzling reflective surface, which as Neuhof had recounted, was produced by using colored porcelain tiles.[39]

Chamber's Kew Gardens pagoda and his drawing inspired many followers on the continent, such as in Sanssouci (1770) and Chanteloup (1775–1778). A later specimen built in Philadelphia in 1823 is the closest realization of Chamber's drawing.[40]

By the end of the eighteenth century the Chinese influence in architecture, as in many other fields, had begun to wane. The French Revolution resurrected a more severe architectural canon, and visionary designers like Claude Nicolas Ledoux (1736–1806) and Etienne-Louis Boullée forged a new style using pure geometric forms. Orientalism in architecture became associated with the solemn monumentality of Egyptian temples; Napoleon had an obelisk erected on the Place de la Concorde. In France certainly, the days of delicate garden pavilions were over.

It was more than a century before a new quantum leap was made in the understanding of Eastern architecture. This time, in the early twentieth century, it was the Japanese architectural tradition that fascinated modern builders like Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959), Bruno Taut (1880–1938) and Walter Gropius (1883–1969). Among other things they recognized in

Far Eastern wooden buildings the post and beam skeleton structure that they could now translate into reinforced concrete and steel. This development, among other things, opened Westerners' eyes to the qualities of the mighty architectural tradition in China.

As a final illustration of the basic thesis of this paper let us take a brief look at calligraphy. Every member of the educated Chinese elite spent long hours when they were young learning calligraphy, and quite a few continued to practice it every day of their lives. Although the main thrust of the Jesuits' missionary effort was directed at this elite, nowhere in their copious writings is there any indication that they appreciated the aesthetic dimension of calligraphy and the pivotal role that it played in Chinese culture. Even Matteo Ricci, who had a more profound understanding of China than most of his contemporaries was interested in Chinese writing merely from a linguistic and philological point of view.

When after almost two centuries of serious European involvement in China, the Jesuit father Jean Baptiste du Halde published his widely acclaimed description of the Chinese empire in 1735, he included portraits of the Chinese convert Paul Hsü Kuang-ch'i and his granddaughter (Fig. 18), shown with two crosses inscribed with their names and the first article of the confession of faith in Chinese characters. The poor calligraphy would have made any educated Chinese who saw it feel that despite several centuries of cultural exchange between China and Europe, there was still much room for improvement.

NOTES

1. See the illustration in *Europa und die Kaiser von China. Eine Ausstellung der Berliner Festspiele* [Exhibition catalog] (Frankfurt: Insel, 1985; hereafter: *Europa*), pl. 21.
2. C.J.A. Jörg, *The Geldermalsen, History and Porcelain* (Groningen: Kemper, 1982), 57.
3. Ibid., 10.
4. Cf. figures 1–5, 124 and the perceptive analyses by Jessica Rawson in her *Chinese Ornament, The Lotus and the Dragon* (London: The British Museum, 1984).
5. Discussed in David Howard and John Ayers, *China for the West, Chinese Porcelain and Other Decorative Arts for Export Illustrated from the Mottahedeh Collection*, 2 vols. (London and New York: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1978; catalog 583).
6. Ibid., Nr. 119.
7. Ulrika Kiby, "Die Exotismen des Kurfürsten Max Emmanuel in Nymphenburg,"

unpublished doctoral dissertation. Heidelberg University, 1985.

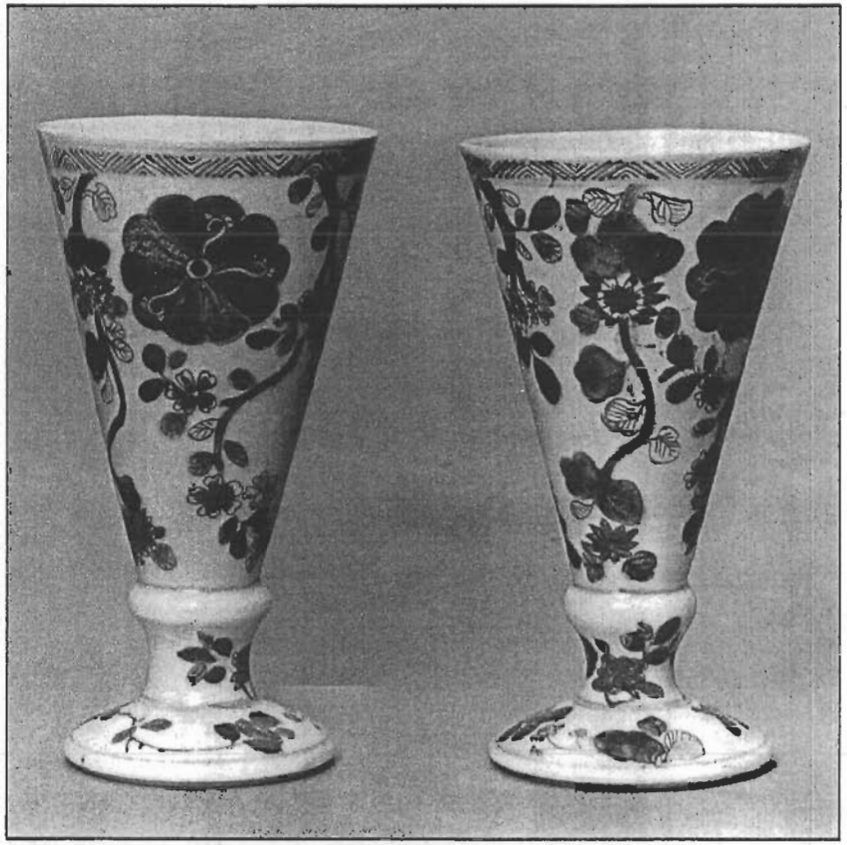
8. Kiby, op. cit., mentions among other examples the Sünnet odasi of 1707 in the Topkapi Serail, and the fireplace in the valide of Sultan Mehmet IV, New Mosque, from the middle of the seventeenth century.
9. Precise information on these books is provided by Hartmut Walravens, *China illustrata, Das europäische Chinaverständnis im Spiegel des 16. bis 18. Jahrhunderts*; *Ausstellungskataloge der Herzog August Bibliothek* 55 [Exhibition catalog] (Weinheim: Acta Humaniora, VCH, 1987).
10. For this embassy see John E. Wills, Jr., *Embassies and Illusions, Dutch and Portugese Envoys to K'ang-hsi, 1666–1687*; Harvard East Asian Monographs 113 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 42 f. Neuhof's personal diary of the embassy includes his drawings on which the printed illustrations are based. It has been published by Leonard Blussé and R. Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis 1655–1657* (Middelburg: Stichting VOC publicaties, 1987).
11. Wills, op. cit., 38–81.
12. Commented on by Susan Legouix-Sloman in *Europa*, 173–86.
13. These engravings have often been discussed, most recently by Walravens (cf. above, Note 9), 36–56 (with comprehensive bibliography).
14. A French translation of Emperor Ch'ien-lung's edict by Paul Pelliot appears in *T'oung Pao*, Vol. 20 (1921), 84–85.
15. The lower half of a painted scroll is dangling over the edge of a table to inform the viewer that the scroll can be rolled up, like three other scrolls on the table. Color illustration from the 1667 Amsterdam edition in *Europa*, pl. 121.
16. Patrick Conner, *Oriental Architecture in the West* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), 104.
17. Quoted by Helmut Börsch-Supan in *China und Europa, Chinaverständnis und Chinamode im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* [Exhibition Catalog] (Berlin: Verwaltung der Staatlichen Schlösser und Gärten, 1973; hereafter: *China*), 75, n. 6.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., 61f.
20. Ibid., 63f.
21. Ibid., 282, n. 2.
22. The ritual is illustrated in a court painting of the Yung-cheng period now in the Musée Guimet in Paris. Clad in a yellow robe and surrounded by courtiers, Emperor Yung-cheng walks before the plough that is drawn by a brown ox. Color reproduction in *Europa*, pl. 128.
23. Quoted by Christoph Müller-Hofstede in *Europa*, 302.
24. Ibid., fig. 62.
25. Discussed by Müller-Hofstede in op. cit., 303f.
26. Analyzed by Börsch-Supan in *China*, 198. Color reproduction in *Europa*, pl. 129.
27. Quoted by Connor, op. cit., 9.
28. Ibid., 9–10.

29. Ibid., 15.
30. Ibid., 17.
31. Fischer von Erlach, *Entwurff einer Historischen Architectur*, second edition, 1725 (Reprint: Ridgewood, N.J.: Gregg, 1964).
32. Connor, fig. 8, 20f.
33. Oliver Impey, *Chinoiserie, The Impact of Oriental Styles on Western Art and Decoration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 147.
34. Connor, op. cit., fig. 18.
35. Ibid., fig. 38.
36. William Chambers, *Designs of Chinese Buildings* ... (London, 1757; reprint: Gregg, 1969), 2–3.
37. The drawing which records the original appearance of the pagoda is reproduced here after John Harris, *Sir William Chambers, Knight of the Polar Star* (London: A. Zwemmer, 1970), pl. 32.
38. Chambers quoted by Connor, op. cit., 82.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid., fig. 133.

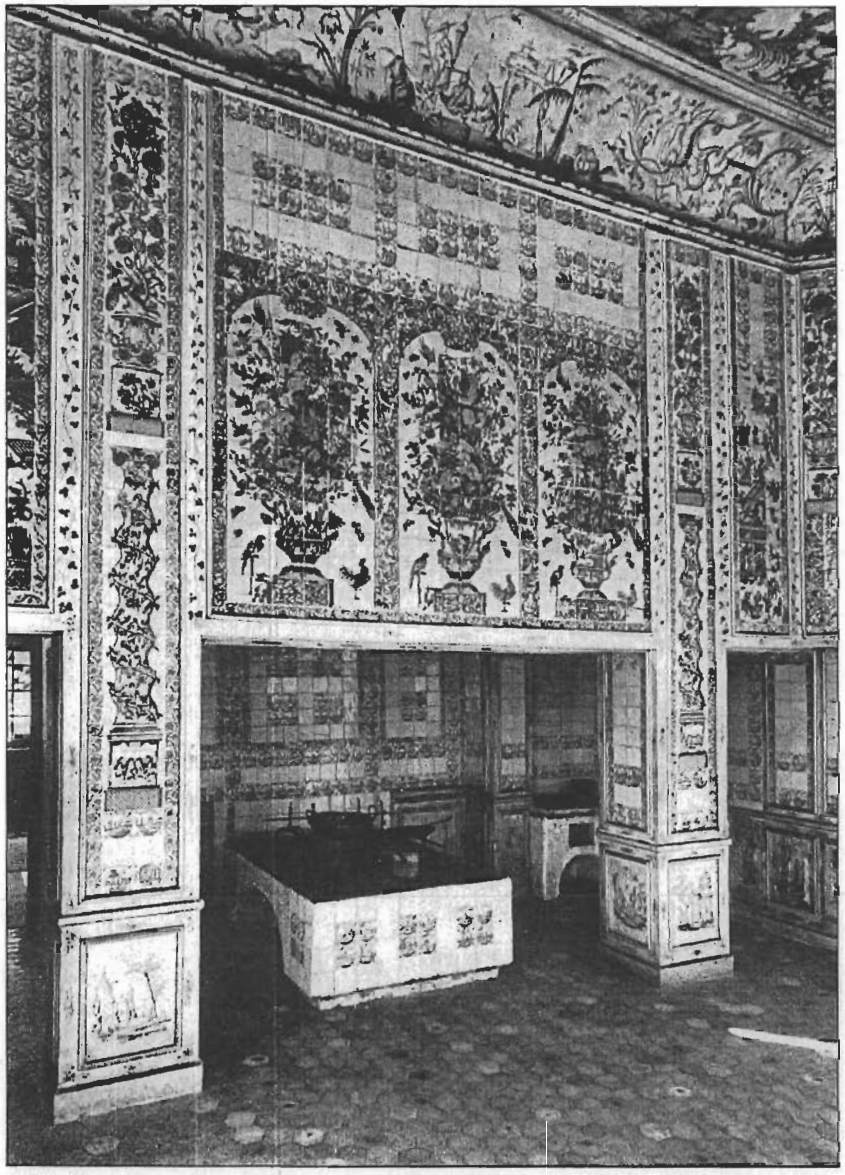
GLOSSARY

Ching-te Chen 景德鎮
irimoya 入母屋
Lung-ch'üan 龍泉
Tsao-pan ch'u 造辦處
Tzu-kuang ko 紫光閣
Wu-men 午門

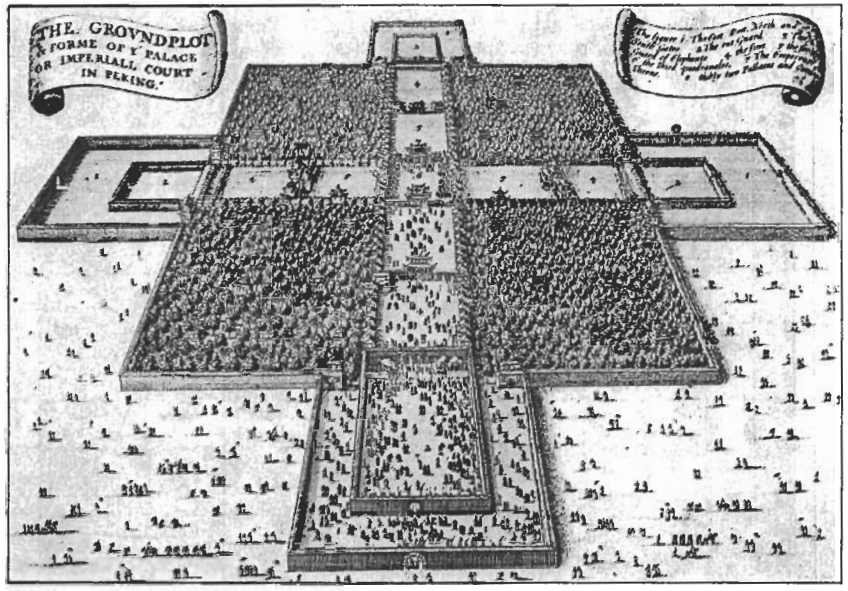
1. Chinese lemon basket and stand. Chinese porcelain and Meissen prototype, c. 1775 (resp. c. 1740). Mottahedeh collection.



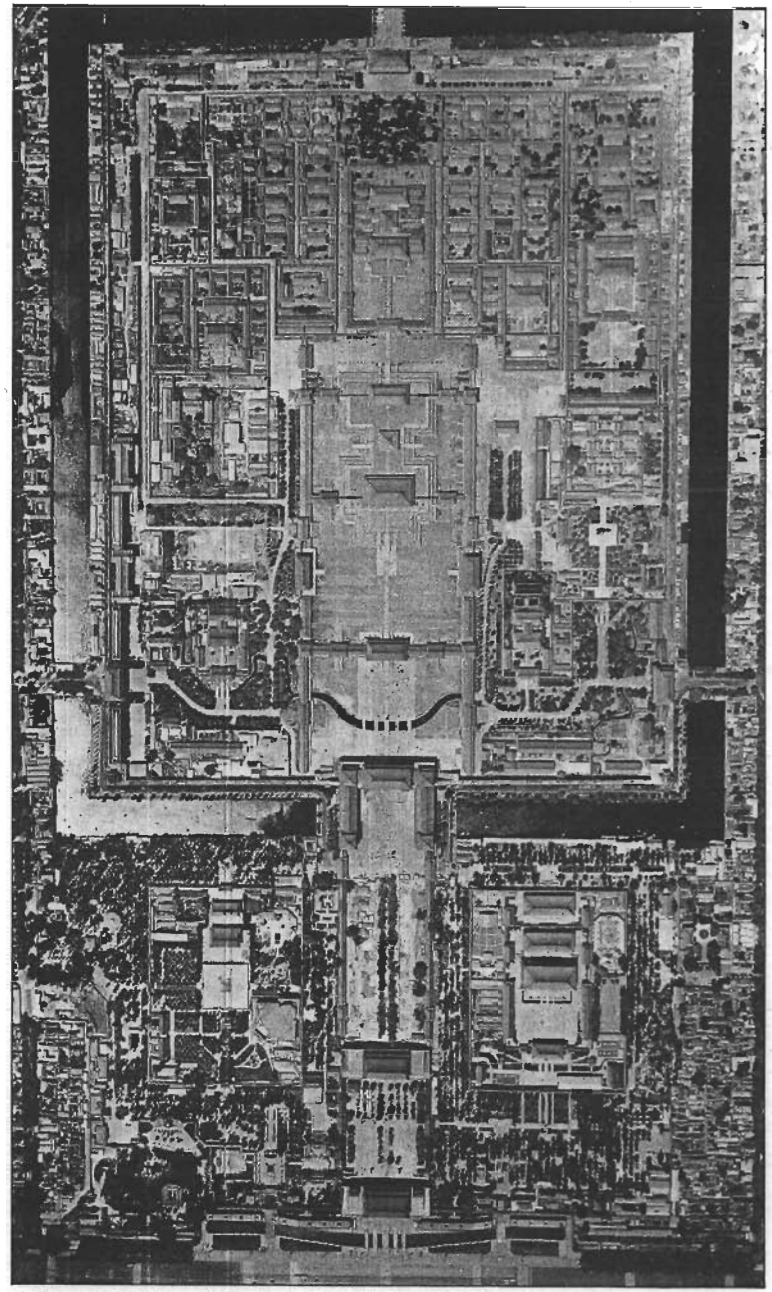
2. Pair of goblets. Porcelain, c. 1705–1720. Mottahedeh collection.



3. Kitchen decoration. Ceramic tiles, 1734–1739. Amalienburg, Munich.



4. View of the Imperial Palace in Peking. Engraving after Neuhof, *Het Gezantschap* ..., 1665.



5. Imperial Palace in Peking. Aerial photograph.

6. View of the Meridian Gate. Engraving in Dapper, *Gedenkweerdig* ..., 1670.

7. Meridian Gate. Modern photograph.

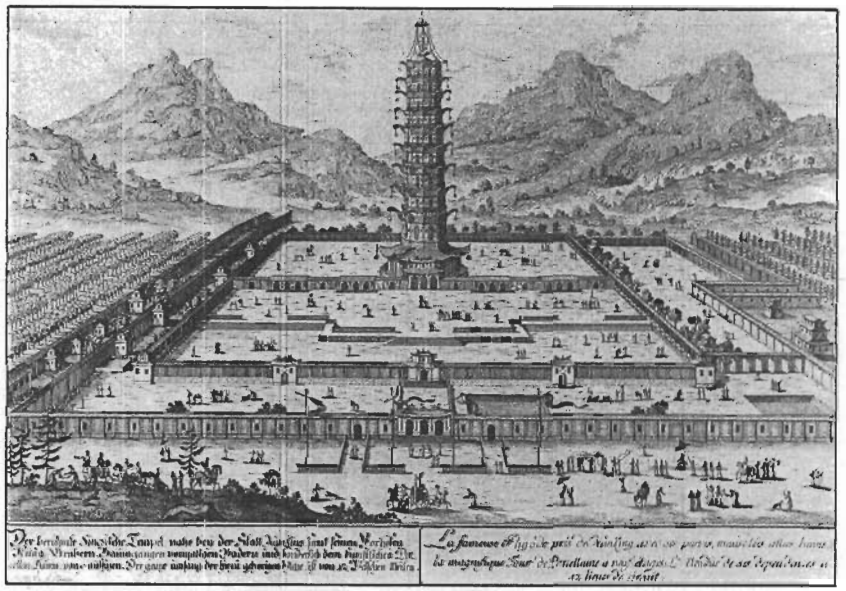
8. Battle at Oroi-jalatu. Detail of engraving by J. P. le Bas, 1770. Staatliche Museen Berlin (West), Museum für Völkerkunde.

9. Assault on a Miao fortress in Hunan. Detail of engraving, Imperial workshops, Peking, 1796. Staatliche Museen Berlin (West), Museum für Völkerkunde.

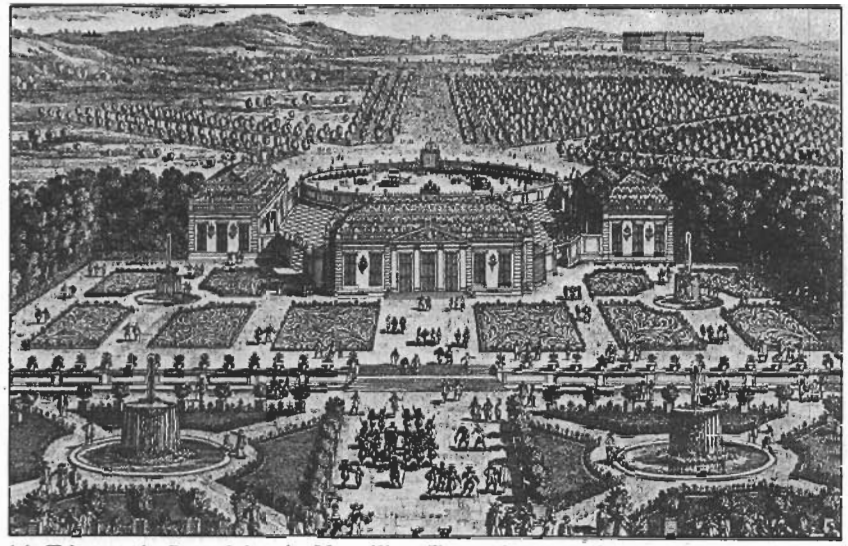
10. Chinese godess. Engraving after Antoine Watteau (1624–1721), c. 1731. Staatliche Museen Berlin (West), Kupferstichkabinett.

11. Emperor Joseph II leads the plough. Engraving by Johann Baptist Bergmüller, after 1769. Wien, Albertina.

12. The Chinese Emperor leads the plough. Oil painting by Bernhard Rode (1725–1797), c. 1770. Staatliche Museen, Berlin (West), Gemäldegalerie.

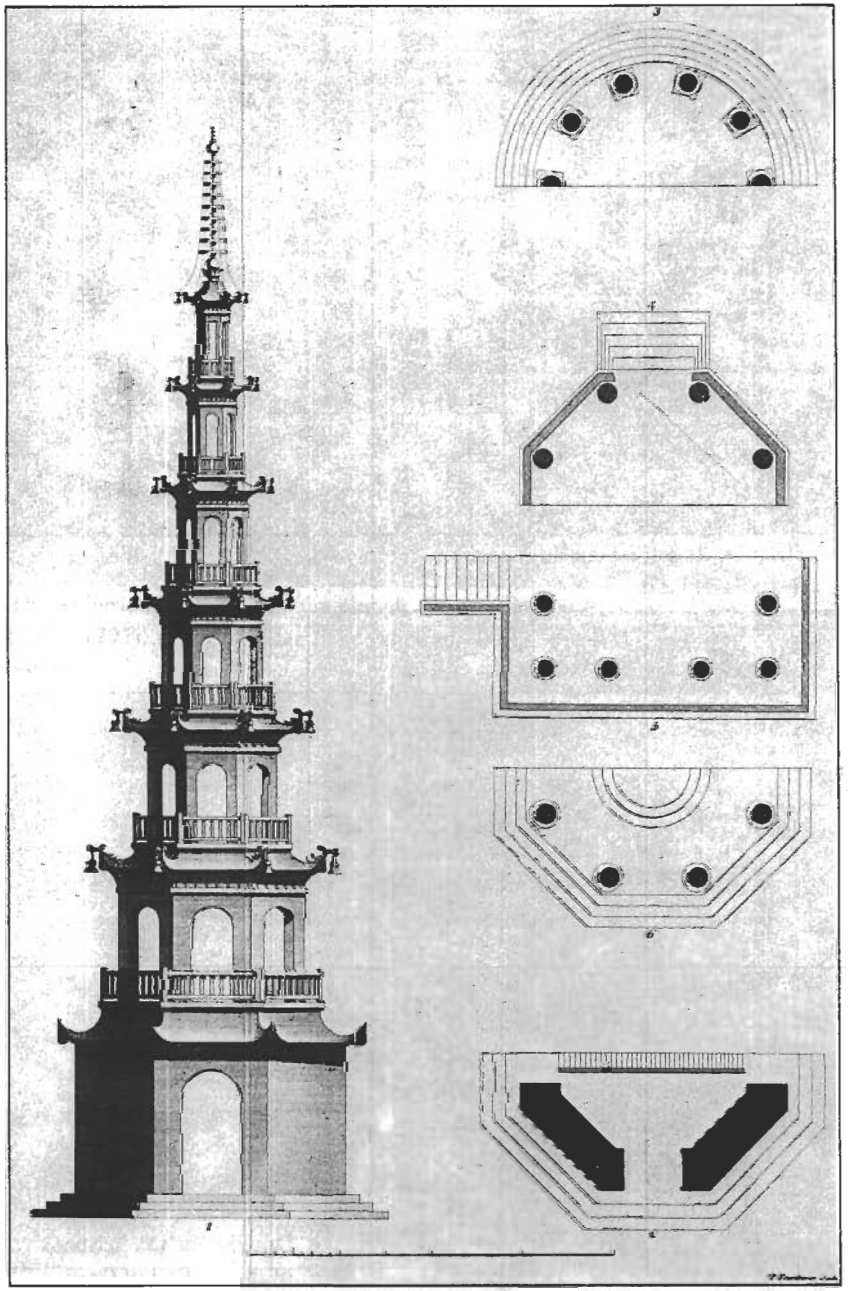


13. Porcelain pagoda at Nan-ching. Engraving in Fischer von Erlach, *Entwurff* ..., 1721.

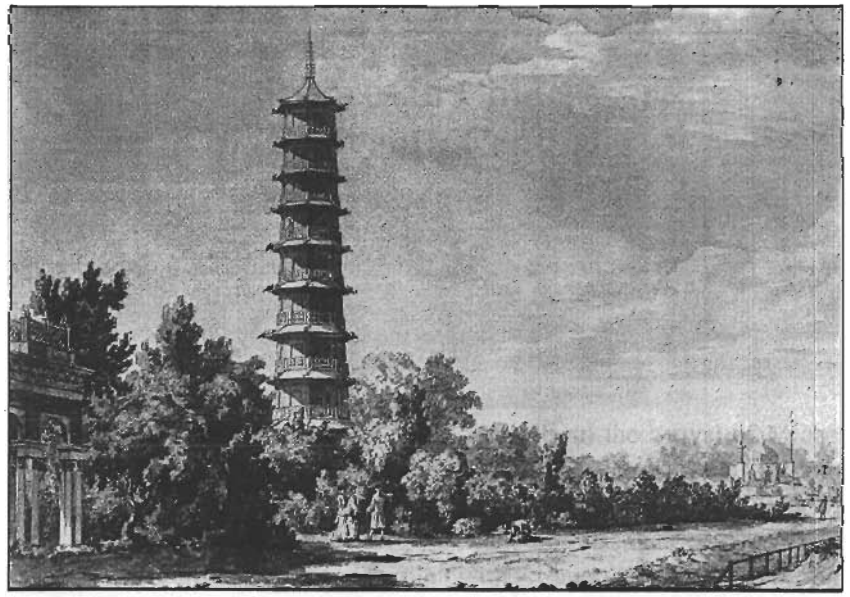


14. Trianon de Porcelaine in Versailles. Engraving, c. 1675. Bibliothéque Nationale, Paris.

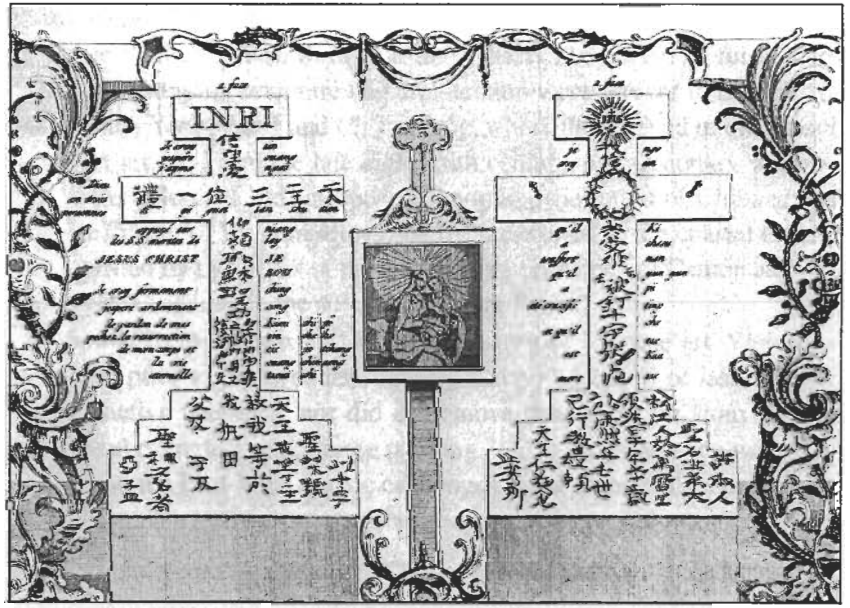
15. The Chinese pavilion at Wrest Park, Bedfordshire. Drawing in a sketchbook of the 1st Earl of Grey, c. 1761. Private collection.



16. Pagoda. Drawing in William Chambers, *Designs* ..., 1757.



17. Pagoda in Kew Gardens. Drawing in William Chambers, *Plans ... of Kew*, 1763.



18. Hsü Kuang-ch'i and his granddaughter. Detail of engraving in Du Halde, *Description* ..., 1735.

12 MAYCHING KAO

European Influences in Chinese Art, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries

During a period of over two hundred years, from the arrival of Michele Ruggieri in Canton in 1580 to the demise of the Jesuit artist Louis de Poirot in 1814 at the Ch'ing court, the introduction of Western art into China was closely related to the activities of the Catholic missionaries. During this period, Western art flowed into China without interruption, in the form of devotional paintings in oil, Bibles, engravings and illustrated books, which the missionaries used in the propagation of their faith. The churches they built were also richly decorated with illusionistic paintings which the Chinese flocked to see. In the Ch'ing dynasty (1644–1911), missionaries skilled in painting, sculpture and architecture were present in the courts of K'ang-hsi, Yung-cheng and Ch'ien-lung, where they served in the capacity of court artists. From the late eighteenth century, as missionary work was no longer tolerated and European economic penetration of China stepped up, the impact of Western art shifted from the court to the coastal cities, as exemplified by the works of the enterprising craftsmen of Canton and other trade ports engaged in the so-called "China Trade."

Viewed in the context of the entire history of Chinese art, Western art in China prior to the twentieth century had no "deep[er] or lasting effects on the native painters," nor did it "remove them very far from the main high-road of traditional Chinese painting."[1] One historian even went so far as to describe East-West artistic exchanges in the eighteenth century as "an exchange in superficialities," elaborating his point as follows:

> European monarchs constructed Chinese pagodas and pavilions; Chinese rulers built European mansions. European painters imagined fabulous creatures or simply quaint ones and called them Chinese; Chinese artisans, working from

> European models and designs sent out in the porcelain trade, rendered Europeans fabulous and funny. If few on either side understood the other, a lot of people profited from the trade in China ware, silks, and tea, and a lot of others derived harmless pleasure from the fanciful borrowings.[2]

In recent years scholars in China and the West have demonstrated an increasing interest in the subject. They delved into palace records and Jesuit archives, bringing to light new materials and unknown works of art that can aid us in better defining the nature and scope of these artistic interchanges. This paper proposes to survey the major developments of Western art in China between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, acknowledging at the same time the contributions of such eminent scholars as Michael Sullivan, James Cahill, Yang Po-ta and Nieh Ch'ung-cheng, as well as the pioneers whose studies still form the basis of our understanding of the subject.[3]

The Late Ming Period

The beginning of Western art in China is invariably credited to Matteo Ricci (1552–1610),[4] the priest of formidable learning who not only established a firm foundation for the Catholic mission in China, but also raised the interest of the Chinese intellectuals in European culture, and at the same time introduced China to the West. At his audience with the Wan-li Emperor in 1600, Ricci submitted the following memorial:

> Your Majesty, I herewith humbly present before your Royal Presence one portrait of our Heavenly Lord, two portraits of our Holy Mother, one copy of the Bible, one cross inlaid with pearls, two clocks, one copy of the World Atlas, and one clavichord.[5]

And yet, two years before Matteo Ricci arrived in China, Michele Ruggieri had already landed in Canton in 1580. He subsequently built the Church of Immaculate Conception in Chao-ch'ing in 1583, and placed a painting of the Madonna surrounded by flowers in the Church. This he had brought from the West for worship.[6] In the same year, Ruggieri submitted requests for illustrated books about the life and miracles of Christ as well as episodes from the Old Testament. He further asked for books which described the Catholic nations so that the Chinese would not mistake the missionaries as mere traders from Malacca.[7]

Whether it be 1580 or 1582, from the very beginning the Jesuit missionaries recognized the tremendous potential of pictorial images as a means of

propagating their faith. Devotional paintings, Bibles, illustrated books and engravings proved to be so popular that the missionaries repeatedly sent requests to the Jesuit headquarters in Europe for more supplies.[8] Nicolas Trigault (1577–1628) was sent back to Europe in 1614 on a mission to collect pictures and books for China.[9] Professor Sullivan has conducted extensive research into this aspect of Western art in China based on Jesuit records,[10] even identifying Ricci's gifts to the Wan-li Emperor listed above, which included a copy of A. Ortelius' *Teatrum Orbis Terrarum* (Plantin, 1579).[11] Foremost in the minds of the missionaries was of course the practical function of these pictures, and they chose works that would effectively convey the mysteries of the Lord, such as the eight-volume Bible of Arias Montanus, *Biblia Regia*, and Father Nadal's superb collection of illustrations of the life of Christ, *Evangelical Historial Imagines*, both published by Plantin's studio in Antwerp. Their choice of subject matter was not confined to religion, as the Jesuits were not indifferent to the secondary effect that these pictures would have, opening the eyes of the Chinese to a world of splendour created by people no less if not more intelligent than themselves. In this respect the Jesuits played their role well and impressed the Chinese by presenting themselves not as humble men of God but as learned ambassadors of Western science and technical knowledge. To support their claims, they chose pictorial materials that encompassed a wide range of subjects, including portraits, landscapes, architectural drawings and maps of countries and cities.

Apart from the devotional paintings brought to China by the Jesuits and the painted decoration in the Catholic churches, which regrettably have not survived the ravages of time,[12] the major source through which the Chinese came into contact with Western pictorial representation is decidedly engravings and illustrated books. By 1623 the number of foreign books in China amounted to seven thousand volumes.[13] These books were never considered great works of art; in fact, many were copies or imitations of more famous works by seminarians in Japan, the Philippines or even South America. No Jesuits in China in the late Ming period were known to be able to paint, though they employed painters in the Western manner to decorate their churches and to draw illustrations for Jesuit publications. Four of these painters have been identified so far: Ni I-ch'eng, Yu Wen-hui, Hsü Pi-teng and Ch'iu Liang-lin,[14] all of whom were involved in the production of Li Yin-shih's atlas, *Liang-i hsüan-lan t'u*, around 1606.[15] Ni I-ch'eng (Jacopo Niva) was born in Japan of Chinese and Japanese parents; he was the most

skilful of the four, having studied Western painting with Giovanni Niccolo in one of the painting academies he established at Shiki and Arima.[16] He joined Ricci in 1602 in Peking and spent the rest of his life painting devotional pictures for Jesuit churches in China. Yu, Hsü and Ch'iu were natives of Macao[17] where the Portuguese had established trade and missionary bases since the early sixteenth century. Little is known about Hsü and Ch'iu, while Yu could have studied with Ni I-ch'eng, as his portrait of Matteo Ricci executed upon his death in 1610 was later sent to Rome.[18]

The Jesuits carried out an extensive translation programme which by the end of the Ch'ien-lung period (1735–1795) had produced 437 titles.[19] Most of course deal with the teachings of Christ, yet some two-fifths are in the humanities and sciences. Many of these books were published with illustrations copied from European works by Chinese wood-engravers. These illustrated books included devotional books such as *Sung nien-chu kuei-ch'eng* (Method of Reciting the Rosary) in 1619 and *T'ien-chu chiang-sheng yen-hsing chi-lüeh* (Life of the Saviour) in 1635, as well as works on such diverse themes as atlases, the seven wonders of the world, mechanical contrivances, zoology and anatomy.[20]

Some of the designs eventually found their way into Chinese publications. The examples often cited as evidence of scholarly and artistic interest in these novel pictures are the four prints of biblical themes in *Ch'eng-shih mo-yüan* (1606). Of these four, the "Destruction of Sodom," "Christ and St. Peter" and "Christ and the Disciples on the Road to Emmaus" have been identified as adaptations from engravings produced by Plantin's Press in Antwerp,[21] while the fourth, "Madonna and Child," was copied from an engraving produced in Niccolo's academy at Arima in Japan, which in turn was based on another engraving made of a painting in Seville.[22]

These four Western pictures were given by Matteo Ricci to Ch'eng Ta-yüeh in 1605. It is unusual for them to be included in *Ch'eng-shih mo-yüan*, a collection of designs and motifs for ink cakes, one of the "four treasures of the scholar's studio," for their subject matter and mode of representation differ so greatly from the rest of book. Moreover, these four leaves follow page 35, Vol. VII without page numbers, and apparently were added after the book was printed. A goodwill message from Ricci appears in Vol. III, separately paginated for the same reason.[23] The woodcut, redrawn by Ting Yün-p'eng (1547–after 1628) and engraved by Huang Lin (1565–?), is a fairly faithful copy of the original both in terms of

composition and the figures. It attempts to capture the three-dimensional volume of the castle and the trees by shading; the bridge is appropriately foreshortened to indicate recession (Plate 1). However, the figures are mainly drawn with lines, quite similar to the Chinese technique of *pai-miao*; the fluent lines depicting the clouds in the sky also betray a Chinese sensitivity.

Not all Chinese publications with Western illustrations are in favour of the new religion or alien art form. Yang Kuang-hsien, a well-known anti-Christian figure of the seventeenth century, included three designs copied from an album of forty-eight pictures presented by Joannes Adam Schall von Bell to the Ch'ung-chen Emperor (r. 1628–1644) in 1640, which is now lost. Entitled *Pu-te-i*, the book gives the pictures with their respective annotations, including "The Triumphal Entry," "Jesus Nailed to the Cross" and "The Crucifixion." The intention of the writer was far from artistic, as he wrote in the accompanying explanation:

> This will show all the world that Jesus was not an orderly and law-abiding person, but a subversive rebel leader, who was convicted and executed.[24]

Understandably these pictures cannot be compared to the four leaves in *Ch'eng-shih mo-yüan* in terms of quality of execution. Here the composition is much simpler and the motifs reduced to crude lines. Even the facial features and the weapons have lost their Western features.[25]

We have seen that a considerable number of Western paintings in various forms had been brought into or produced in late Ming China. The quality of these examples varies greatly, depending on their sources. Though there were no works by great masters, the engravings and illustrated books sent from Europe were generally fine examples of an art form which had flourished in the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Western pictures were displayed in churches, circulated among converts and friends of the missionaries and sometimes given as gifts as well as being reproduced in books. It is logical to conclude that many Chinese were exposed to these Western pictures, particularly in Nanking and Peking. How did they react to the colourful paintings and elaborately engraved prints? What elements of Western art impressed them the most?

Western pictures fascinated the Chinese. It was reported that when Hsü Kuang-ch'i, the most prominent Christian convert of the late Ming, saw a portrait of the Madonna, "his spirit seemed suddenly to soar to the supernatural and was unconsciously converted."[26] But more Chinese were

instructions to the painters in the branch Academy. Other documents recorded Wang Yu-hsüeh, Yü Shih-lieh and others doing perspective drawings, called "*hsien-fa hua*" in Chinese sources.[65]

Having defined the position of the missionary-artists at the Ch'ing court, we may begin examining the nature of the Western influence in this period. This will be discussed under the broad categories of oil painting, sinicized Western painting, illusionistic painting and Sino-European painting.

Oil Painting

It is natural to assume that the missionary-artists were well trained in oil painting techniques, the prevalent medium in Europe since the sixteenth century. They continued to use this medium at the Ch'ing court in their teaching and painting, as previously documented. Strangely, though, very few of their works in oils survive to this day. The only extant work by Castiglione is a large oil painting on paper depicting lions and cubs, now in the Palace Museum in Peking.[66] Signed by Castilglione in Chinese characters and tagged with a piece of paper inscribed *Pao-yüeh lou*, the painting was probably used to decorate the building of that name which was built in 1758. It could therefore be a work from his late years.[67]

The missionary-artists' realistic skills were best utilized in portrait painting and it is known that in this field they were in high demand. Ch'ien-lung sat for Castiglione, Sichelbarth and Panzi, as did members of the royal family and court officials. From these sittings emerged portraits or details of depictions of courtly events. A well-researched example is provided by the *Ceremonial Banquet in the Wan-shu Yüan* which depicts an event conducted by Ch'ien-lung in Jehol in honour of Amursane, chief of the Kalmucks, who he had just forced into submission.[68] Attiret was summoned to Jehol to sketch the portraits of the dignitaries present but wore himself out after fifty days of intensive labour. The project, including the long narrative scroll, was completed with the assistance of Castiglione and Sichelbarth. Eight of Attiret's oil sketches of the Mongol princes (Plate 8), now in a European collection,[69] confirm Attiret's skill as a portraitist. By comparison the seven portrait sketches of meritorious officials executed by Panzi between 1771 and 1776 in preparation for the *Conquest of Chin-ch'uan* series appear hesitant and weak.[70]

Among the oil paintings displayed in the unprecedented exhibition of

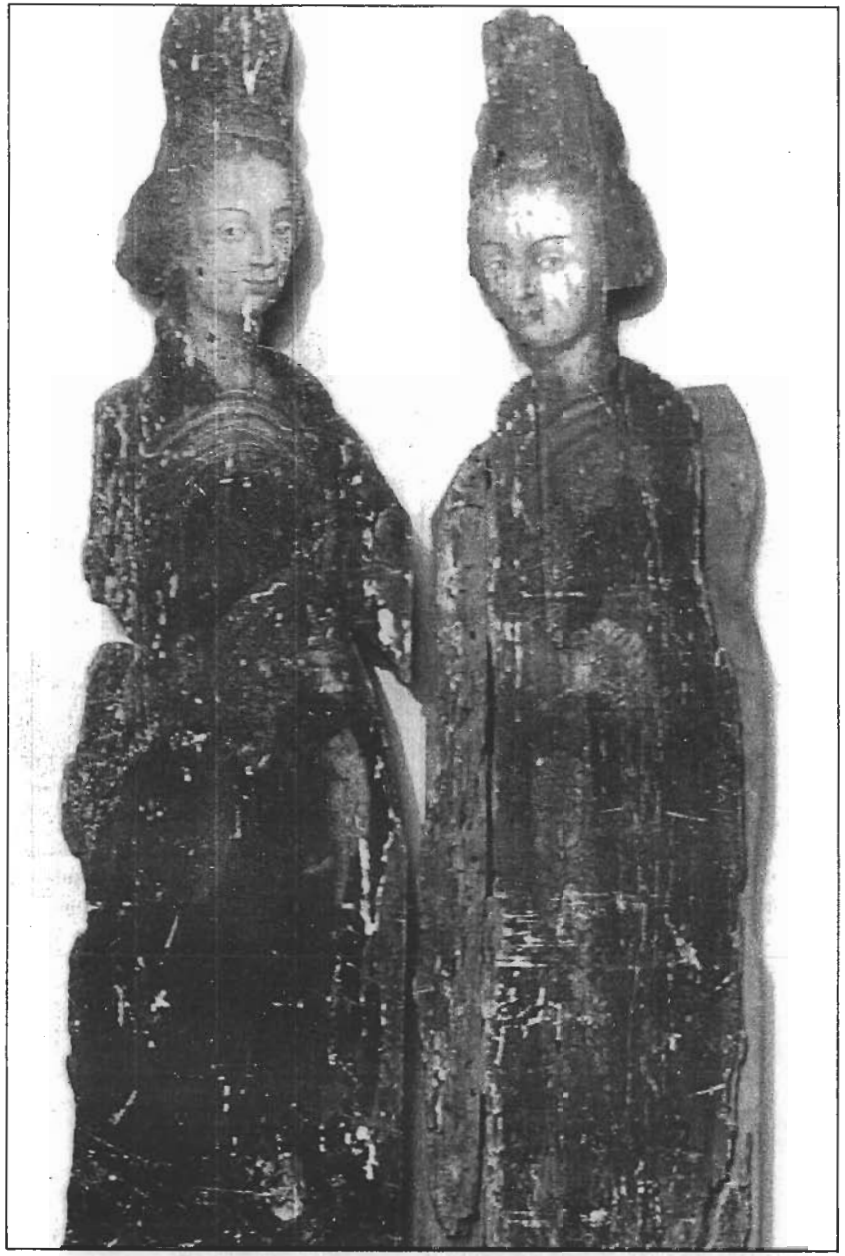
works from the Ch'ing Imperial Painting Academy held in 1985 to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the Palace Museum in Peking, were a large portrait in oil of the K'ang-hsi Emperor, and another of the royal concubine Hui-hsien showing the lady in a formal frontal pose (Plate 9).[71] Though undated and unsigned, the latter painting demonstrates the touch of a hand proficient in the vocabulary of the oil medium and the Western mode of representation, suggesting an attribution to Castiglione. Both the head and the robe are rendered as plastic forms. Yet the tonal gradation is so subtle and the attention to detail so meticulous, that we can sense a certain modification of Baroque style to suit Chinese imperial taste.

Also on display in this exhibition was a rare eight-panelled screen of seven ladies painted in oils (Plate 10).[72] Unsigned and yet datable by the calligraphy of the K'ang-hsi Emperor on the back of the screen to the late K'ang-hsi period, the screen could possibly be the earliest oil painting by a Chinese artist. It shows a tentative attempt to use the oil medium to create three-dimensional forms, and the figures are stiff and awkward. The rules of linear perspective were followed to create an illusion of space, but close scrutiny reveals discrepancies in the reflections on the pond and the placement of the vanishing point (Plate 11). These are errors easily committed by a novice in the art of perspective. Who was the painter? Was it Chiao Ping-chen or his student Leng Mei, or any of the court painters who might have worked with Buglio, Verbiest, Ripa or Castiglione?

Paintings in oil make up a very small fraction of the Palace Museum collection of over 1,000 works from the Imperial Academy. Perhaps Chinese artists studied this genre mainly to assimilate its characteristics into the native tradition, for the synthesis of the two remains the dominant style in Ch'ing dynasty court painting. Outside of the court and in the southern port of Canton, a flourishing maritime trade was established, and oil painting was practised there along with other imported techniques and processes such as enamelling. Cantonese paintings are generally studied in the context of the "China Trade,"[73] yet some found their way into the Ch'ing court as tribute. One example is a pair of hanging panels of oil paintings on glass featuring European figures in a landscape setting.[74] Their connection with Western painting at the court remains to be studied.

Sinicized Western Painting

As previously shown, the principal product of the missionary-artists in



7. Anonymous: *Two Ladies*. Oil on wood. Fifteenth century (?). Hsin-hui Museum, Kwangtung province.

8. Jean Denis Attiret: *Portrait of Dawači*. Oil on paper. 1755. Museum fur Volkerkunde, Ostasienabt, Berlin.

Institute of Chinese Studies
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Monograph Series (12)

CHINA AND EUROPE

Images and Influences in Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries

EDITED BY

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The Chinese University Press

ISBN 962-201-465-8

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
SHATIN, N.T., HONG KONG

Illustration on the jacket:
Ceremonial Banquet in the Wan-shu yüan (section).
Courtesy of the Palace Museum, Beijing.

Printed in Hong Kong by Nam Fung Printing Co., Ltd.

Contents

Acknowledgements

The essays collected here are selected papers presented in the International Symposium: China and Europe, 16th–18th Centuries, organized by Office of International Studies Programmes, The Chinese University of Hong Kong in March, 1987. A total of twenty-six papers were presented, some of which in Chinese. Those English papers that have been revised for publication are included here.

Thanks are due for all of the colleagues in the Office, especially Dr. Yu-fai Law, without whose painstaking organizing effort, the conference could never have taken place. Mr. Don Cohn helped to edit the papers. Since most authors are not English-speaking and the papers involve a total of ten languages, the difficulty in editorial work was enormous. Mr. Cohn has done a most commendable job. Miss Jennifer Mak, also of the Office, helped with the printing works, while Mr. Yiu-tso Dang typed most of the manuscripts.

Goethe Institute, American Council of Learned Societies, French Consulate, British Council and Cathay Pacific paid for the travel expenses of some of the participants. The supports are heartily appreciated.

Thanks are also due for Professors D. E. Mungello, Theodore Nicholas Foss and Jonathan D. Spence for giving valuable suggestions on editorial and publication matters.

The publication cost is paid by Institute of Chinese Studies of the Chinese University. Dr. Fong-cheng Chen, Director of the Institute, has given personal blessing as well as financial support for which the editor wishes to register a word of thanks.

Finally, the essay by Theodore Nicholas Foss and Donald F. Lach, "Images of Asia and Asians in European Fiction, 1500–1800," is also

published in Robin W. Winks and James Rush, eds., *Asia in Western Fiction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990). Also, the essay by Orun Kihyup Kim, "Western Studies and Confucian Responses in Eighteenth-Century Korea" was first published in *Journal of the Korean History of Science Society*, Vol. 9, no. 1 (1987). The version included in this book has been revised.

1 Thomas H. C. Lee

Christianity and Chinese Intellectuals: From the Chinese Point of View

The arrival of Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) in Chao-ch'ing in 1583 marked the beginning of a new phase of Christianity in China. This phase lasted for about two centuries, during which Christianity, propagated by the Jesuits, appealed to Chinese intellectuals in a way that is interesting and instructive enough to deserve careful scrutiny. In this paper, I will take up the paradoxical relationship between Chinese intellectual tradition and Christianity and observe how it demonstrates the "cosmological cleavage"[1] that had separated the two worlds, as well as seek an explanation for why the intellectual exchange between Christianity and the Confucian tradition in late Ming and early Manchu China failed to outlast the Catholic presence.

The Errors of Rome

It is often argued that the failure resulted from Rome's inability to appreciate the strategy adopted by the Jesuits since the time of Ricci. In addition, the inevitable conflict between China as a great empire and the Papacy as a religious power created a situation in which the two had to condemn each other, and that despite numerous efforts, especially by the Jesuits, to convince the Papacy that the Confucian rites were not sacrilegious, the claim by the Papacy that it knew better than the Jesuits the true nature of Chinese "religion" inevitably led to the wholesale condemnation of Catholicism by the Chinese. The interpretation above has been perpetuated mostly by the Jesuits, who only succeeded in having the Church nullify their ban on Chinese ancestor worship in the twentieth century.[2]

The same has also been argued by Chinese scholars, notably the late Fang Hao, who lamented the Church's hostility to the Jesuit position of