Bronzes from Afar
Ch'ien-lung's "Hsi-ch'ing Hsü-chien Chia-pien Fu-lu"

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Abstract: Ch'ien-lung's three bronze catalogues, *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien* 西清古鑑, *Ning-shou chien-ku* 寧壽鑑古, and *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien* 西清續鑑, documenting a total of 4,115 bronzes, were the most comprehensive reference books on Chinese bronzes until the twentieth century. These three bronze catalogues should be comprehended as one curatorial project lasting for forty-four years, covering roughly three-fourths of Ch'ien-lung's reign. Through this project, the emperor documented his ownership of the oldest creations of Chinese civilization and declared his respect for that long history.

While Ch'ien-lung fully consolidated power and his authority became unchallengeable, cataloguing bronzes turned into one of his ways of mapping the great Manchu empire: he included thirty-eight bronzes from afar in "Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien chia-pien fu-lu 西清續鑑甲編附錄." Ch'ien-lung thus employed these bronze catalogues to position himself as a sage king who extended the historical depth even as he expanded the geographic scope of his empire. By means of close reading of Ch'ien-lung's bronze catalogues, especially "Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien chia-pien fu-lu," this paper investigates the emperor's cultural performances—his presentation of bronzes as magical talismans from the utopian past, symbols of dynastic legitimacy, and mementoes of the glorious Manchu Empire.

Keywords: Ch'ien-lung, *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien*, *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien*, "Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien chia-pien fu-lu", bronze

During the Ch'ien-lung 乾隆 emperor's remarkable sixty-year-long reign (1735-1795), the Manchu empire grew to its greatest extent, expanding its dominion from China over central Asia. The emperor's achievements on collecting and preserving

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artifacts are as impressive as his success in ruling over the empire. Being an exceptionally enthusiastic collector who determined to accumulate as many different collections as possible, Ch'ien-lung was willing to exercise his absolute power to acquire the most precious and rare works of art, either local or imported. In addition to objects from the past and the present, Ch'ien-lung also collected culture and nature, territory and authority, and human subjects.

Ancient bronzes supposedly dating from the Shang 商 (ca. 1600-1045 BC), Chou 周 (ca. 1045-256 BC), Han 漢 (206 BC-AD 220), and T'ang 唐 (618-907) dynasties prove particularly well suited to the study of the emperor's "rule through collections." As early as the Shang, bronzes were conceptualized as ritual objects; they symbolized political legitimacy and sovereignty. As a token of cultural identity, social status, taste, and merit, a three-thousand-year-old bronze was and remains emblematic of political power even in twenty-first-century China.

In the 1749 edict calling on scholars to draw up his first bronze catalogue *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien* 西清古鑑 (The ancient mirror of Western Clarity), the emperor presented himself as a collector who just happened to be able to accumulate an especially large number of ancient bronzes. *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien* also opens with this edict, the only text in which Ch'ien-lung clearly expressed opinions on his bronze collections:

> On the seventh day of the eleventh month, in the fourteenth year of the reign of the Ch'ien-lung emperor [1749], we have respectfully received his majesty's superior command: Among the rare ancient ritual objects handed down through generations, only bronze vessels such as the *tsun, i, ting*, and *nai* will last forever through the ages. Their solid nature and heavy bodies remain unchanged by drought and damp, unharmed by rust. Their mysterious glories reveal the greatness and atmosphere of the three dynasties [that is, the Hsia, Shang, and Chou]. Therefore, many antiquarians are anxious to acquire ancient bronzes. *Hsüan-he po-ku t'u-lu* circulated widely among art world and then came Lü ta-lin's *k'ao-ku t'u*. Besides these two catalogues, very few records about ancient bronzes have survived. The techniques to compile catalogues do exist, but the difficulty of gathering a large number of ancient bronzes remains. Small collections are not worth recording. The royal discipline of our dynasty prevents us from indulging in entertainments and frivolities. But it is perfectly acceptable for the people to take part in the lively realms of connoisseurship and art appreciation and, after all, many bronzes are displayed in the imperial palaces. In spite of the pressures of my duties, I have found

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the time to examine and grade these bronzes, discovering that many of these ancient bronzes have never been documented in previous catalogues. Since the discovery and disappearance of these ancient treasures are events of some moment, if we fail to honor them by writing them up in books as soon as possible, how can future investigators get information? I hereby designate the three ministers Liang Shih-cheng, Chiang P'u, and Wang Yu-tun, leading Han-lin scholars of the inner court, to compile *The Ancient Mirror of Western Clarity*, following the schema of *Hsüan-he po-ku t'u-lu* by providing detailed depictions of form and unabridged transcriptions of inscriptions. If, while one is bringing the reserve of merit [accumulated from] one's engagement with the arts to bear on lofty thoughts drawn from reflections on antiquity, this is worthy of the name of peace and grace. Respect this.

乾隆十四年十一月初七日奉上諭: 邃古法物流傳有自者, 惟尊彝鼎鼐歷世恒遠, 良以質堅而體厚, 不為燥濕所移, 剝蝕所損, 淵然之光穆乎, 可見三代以上規模氣象. 故嗜古之士, 亟有取焉. 宣和博古一圖播在藝苑, 繼之者有呂氏考古圖, 而此外記載寂寥. 豈非力能致之, 而弗能聚, 所見隘而無足紀歟. 我朝家法不事玩好, 民間鑑賞既弗之禁, 而殿廷陳列與夫內府儲藏者未嘗不富. 朕於幾務晏閒間加題品夷, 考舊圖多所未載, 因思古器顯晦有時, 及今不為之表章載之, 簡牘考索者其奚取徵焉. 命尚書梁詩正蔣溥汪由敦, 率同內廷翰林, 仿博古圖遺式, 精繪形模, 備摹款式, 為西清古鑑一編, 以游藝之餘功, 寄鑑古之遠思, 亦足稱昇平雅尚云. 特諭."[1]

In this edict, Ch'ien-lung humbly explained that he had simply "brought the reserve of merit [accumulated from] the engagement with art to bear on lofty thoughts drawn from reflections on antiquity" (以游藝之餘功寄鑑古之遠思). The term *chien-ku* 鑑古, which literally means "using the past as a mirror" and has an extended meaning of "drawing lessons from the past," provided the emperor with excellent motivation to collect as many ancient bronzes as he could.

Ch'ien-lung called bronzes *fa-wu* 法物 in this edict, literally meaning "model object" or "ritual object," a term used in state rites with resonance for dynastic legitimation. *Fa-wu* such as ritual vessels, imperial seals, ceremonial dress, musical and astronomical instruments, carriages, and banners, helped people to visualize

1. Ch'ing Kao-tsung 清高宗, "Shang yü 上諭," in *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien*西清古鑑, 1751, reprint ed., *Ying-yin Wen-yüan Ke Ssu-k'u ch'uan-shu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: Taiwan shang wu yin shu kuan, 1983), p. 1b.

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sovereignty and jurisdiction. *Fa-wu* objects symbolized imperial majesty: he who possessed them possessed the heavenly mandate. Conceptualizing ancient bronzes as *fa-wu* explained why and how Ch'ien-lung used ancient bronzes to rationalize the Manchu ruling over China.

With the rise of a new dynasty, old *fa-wu* systems had to be overturned and new ones set up in their stead. How a new regime handled old *fa-wu* revealed its relation to past dynasties. Some emperors might call for wholesale destruction, while others might collect these objects into treasuries. In 591, Emperor Wen of Sui dynasty (隋文帝) declared that all the booty he had collected while conquering the Ch'en 陳 kingdom turned into demons and had to be destroyed.[2] Citing the same reason, in 1158 the Jurchen emperor of the Chin 金 ordered the destruction of all the old ritual objects captured from the Sung 宋 and the Liao 遼.[3]

In most cases, however, the old *fa-wu* of previous dynasties became collections preserved by new rulers as proof of their claims to sovereignty. After the Manchu conquest of the Ming, the Department of Imperial Household (內務府) and the Court of Imperial Sacrifices (太常寺) in the Forbidden City served as repositories for countless Ming *fa-wu*. Ch'ien-lung once demanded that the Court of Imperial Sacrifices inventoried the Ming ritual objects in storage, selecting five items of old jade to be displayed in the Ch'ien-ch'ing Kung 乾清宮.[4] By collecting and displaying the Ming *fa-wu*, or any antiquated *fa-wu* from previous dynasties, Ch'ien-lung in a way put the collective memory of the past under control.

Catalogues, especially printed ones, dramatically expanded the spatial and temporal audience for a collection. Far more people than those permitted to visit imperial galleries would acknowledge Ch'ien-lung's possession of precious objects as they leafed through his catalogues. The Ch'ing imperial library had collected many bronze catalogues compiled by previous emperors or individual collectors. From these predecessors, Ch'ien-lung quickly realized that a book in which each object was precisely described would be the ultimate fusion of his claims to ownership and his fascination with quantification and display.

Ch'ien-lung ordered the editorial board of *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien* to closely imitate

2. *Sui shu* 隋書, reprint ed., *Ying-yin Wen-yüan Ke Ssu-k'u ch'uan-shu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: Taiwan shang wu yin shu kuan, 1983), *chuan* 2, p. 9.
3. *Jih-hsia chiu-wen k'ao* 日下舊聞考 (Pei-ching : Pei-ching ku chi, 1983), *chuan* 69, p. 1163.
4. Ch'ing Kao-tsung 清高宗, "Chin kui sho 搢圭說," in *Yü-chih wen-chi* 御製文集, reprint ed., *Ying-yin Wen-yüan Ke Ssu-k'u ch'uan-shu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: Taiwan shang wu yin shu kuan, 1983), 3 *chi, chuan* 3, p. 12b.

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the style and format of Sung emperor Hui-tsung's (宋徽宗) *Hsüan-he po-ku t'u-lu* 宣和博古圖錄 (Hsüan-he period illustrated guide to antiquity): every entry must contain a well-drawn illustration of the bronze, along with rubbings and transcriptions of any inscriptions. In compliance with Ch'ien-lung's edict, the editors of *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien* faithfully imitated the typological scheme of *Hsüan-he po-ku t'u-lu*, dividing bronzes first according to type and then sub-dividing them according to period. Since Hui-tsung, the great collector who pioneered imperial collecting, lost everything he had ever collected during the invasion of Jurchen army in 1126, Ch'ien-lung must do better.[5] Claiming that he was obliged to protect imperial collections because nobody else could collect as many treasures as he did, Ch'ien-lung resorted to every conceivable means to enlarge and preserve his collections.

Ch'ien-lung's three bronze catalogues, *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien*, Ning-shou chien-ku 寧壽鑑古 (The Ning-shou Palace mirror of antiquity), and *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien* 西清續鑑 (The supplement to "The ancient mirror of Western Clarity"), documenting a total of 4,115 bronzes, were the most comprehensive reference books on Chinese bronzes until the twentieth century. These three bronze catalogues should be comprehended as one curatorial project lasting for forty-four years, covering roughly three-fourths of Ch'ien-lung's reign. Through this project, the emperor documented his ownership of the oldest creations of Chinese civilization and declared his respect for that long history. As he said in the 1749 edict, "The mysterious glories [of ancient bronzes] reveal the greatness and atmosphere of the [Hsia, the Shang, and the Chou] three dynasties (淵然之光穆乎可見三代以上規模氣象)."

While Ch'ien-lung fully consolidated power and his authority became unchallengeable, cataloguing bronzes turned into one of his ways of mapping the great Manchu Empire: he included thirty-eight bronzes from the frontiers in his final catalogue, *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien*. Ch'ien-lung thus employed these bronze catalogues to position himself as a sage king who extended the historical depth even as he expanded the geographic scope of his empire. By means of close reading of Ch'ien-lung's bronze catalogues, this paper investigates the emperor's cultural performances—his presentation of bronzes as magical talismans from the utopian past, symbols of dynastic legitimacy, and mementoes of the glorious Manchu Empire.

5. Patricia B. Ebrey has made useful points about the relationship between Hui-tsung's and Ch'ien-lung's bronze cataloguing practices, see Patricia B. Ebrey, *Accumulating Culture: The Collections of Emperor Huizong* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), pp. 341-352.

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Collecting a Utopian Past

Thousands of ancient bronzes found their ways into the Ch'ing Department of Imperial Household (內務府), but not all of them ended up being catalogued.[6] Many either lay forgotten in storage rooms, or were melted down and sold as scrap. The frequent mentioning of such cases in the *Yang-hsin-tien tsao-pan-ch'u ke-tso ch'eng-tso huo-chi ch'ing tang* 養心殿造辦處各作成做活計清檔 (Records of manual labor of the Imperial Factory of the Yang-hsin Hall, henceforth "huo-chi tang") makes me wonder whether the unclassified bronzes may have outnumbered the 4,115 objects that Ch'ien-lung considered as collectables.[7] Still, 4,115 is certainly a large number compared with the 840 bronzes listed in *Hsüan-he po-ku t'u-lu*. It was said that Hui-tsung collected about six thousand ancient bronzes in twenty-five years. Had Ch'ien-lung pursued his collections at the same rate, he could have obtained 14,400 bronzes in sixty years, indicating that more than ten thousand bronzes were unqualified for cataloguing according to the emperor's criteria.[8]

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6. Ch'ien-lung's collections grew out of the Ming imperial collections, private property confiscated by the Ch'ing government, and gifts from officials and foreign diplomats. For a general survey of confiscated art collections during the Ch'ien-lung era, see Wei Mei-yueh 魏美月, "Ch'ien-lung huang ti te chia chih kuan yü ju kung te ju kuan wen wu 乾隆皇帝的價值觀與入宮的入官文物," *Ku-kung wen-wu yüeh-k'an* 故宮文物月刊, 16 (5), pp. 118-133. On the regulations of gift giving in the Ch'ien-lung court, see Tung Chien-chung 董建中, "Ch'ing Ch'ien-lung ch'ao wang kung ta ch'en kuan yüan chin kung wen t'i ch'u t'an 清乾隆朝王公大臣官員進貢問題初探," *Ch'ing shih yen chiu* 清史研究, 1996 (1), pp. 40-50, 66. The chaos of war during the dynastic transition made it very hard to assess the volume of treasures seized from the Ming imperial collections, but the Forbidden City did store a great number of works of art during the Ming dynasty, including ancient bronzes. See Chu Chia-chin 朱家溍, "Ming ch'ing kung tien nei pu ch'en she kai shuo 明清宮殿內部陳設概說," *Chin ch'eng ying shan chi* 禁城營繕紀 (Pei-ching: Tzu chin ch'eng ch'u pan she 紫禁城出版社, 1992), pp. 318-322. However, how many bronzes existed in the imperial palaces when Ch'ien-lung came to power is not so clear. It is possible that many of objects in *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien* 西清古鑑 came from imperial collections that antedated Ch'ing-lung's reign. The bronzes documented in *Ning-shou chien-ku* 寧壽鑑古 and *Hsi-ch'ing Hsü-chien* 西清續鑑 were mostly accumulated over Ch'ien-lung's reign.
7. The original *huo-chi tang* archives are in the Number One Historical Archives (第一歷史檔案館), Pei-ching . In this project, I mainly rely on the copies in the National Palace Museum, Taipei.
8. Compared with what private collectors managed to amass at the same time, Ch'ien-lung piled up an astonishing number of bronzes. Few Ch'ing collectors ever owned as many as one hundred ancient bronzes. For example, Juan Yüan 阮元 (1764-1849) only possessed seventy-four bronzes according to his *Chi ku chai ts'ang ch'i mu* 積古齋藏器目 (Taipei: I-wen yin shu kuan, 1966). Ch'en Chieh-ch'i 陳介祺 (1813-1884), reputedly the dynasty's greatest private collector, only managed to acquire around 380 bronzes. See Ch'en Chieh-ch'i, *Fu chai ts'ang ch'i mu* 簠齋藏器目, in *Ts'ung shu chi*

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With more than four thousand entries, Ch'ien-lung's three catalogues could only have been accomplished by imperial support. The editorial board of *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien* (1749-1751) included Liang Shih-cheng 梁詩正 (1697-1763), Yü Min-chung 于敏中 (1714-1778), Chiang P'u 蔣溥 (1708-1761), Wang Yu-tun 汪由敦 (1692-1758), Chi Huang 嵇璜 (1711-1794), Ch'iu Yüeh-hsiu 裘曰修 (1712-1773), Chin Te-ying 金德瑛 (1701-1762), Kuan-pao 觀保 (d. 1776), Tung Pang-ta 董邦達 (1696-1796), Wang Chi-hua 王際華 (d. 1776), and Ch'ien Wei-ch'eng 錢維城 (1720-1772). Most of these men, including the two most prominent, Liang Shih-cheng and Yü Min-chung, were involved in other imperial cataloguing projects, such as the painting catalogues, *Mi-tien chu-lin* 秘殿珠林 (Beaded grove of the Secret Hall) and *Shih-ch'ü pao-chi* 石渠寶笈 (Precious book box of the Stone Drain). While none was considered a serious epigraphic specialist in ancient bronzes, some were amateurs who knew something of antiquarianism, or *Chin-shih hsüeh* 金石學. For example, it was said Chin Te-ying collected rubbings of stone steles.[9] Others were acquainted with well-known chin-shih hsüeh scholars. Liang Shih-cheng was a good friend of Wang Ch'ang 王昶 (1725-1806), the author of *Chin-shih ts'ui-pien* 金石萃編 (Complete collections of metals and stones).[10]

Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien was printed in 1755 by the Wu-ying tien 武英殿 imperial printing house. There is no record of how many copies were made or where they went, but presumably many were bestowed upon court officials.[11] Of Ch'ien-lung's three bronze catalogues, only *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien* was originally printed; the others were

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ch'eng ch'u pien 叢書集成初編, vol. 1550 (Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu kuan, 1936). Ch'ien-lung snatched up most bronzes that appeared on the market; once an object entered the imperial treasury, very few people ever saw it again. Private collectors could only exchange again and again the rubbings of very few bronzes they had managed to obtain; some simply gave up collecting bronzes and moved on to other kinds of objects that the emperor disdained, such as stone stele or sculptural relief. Given this chilling effect on the circulation of information, it is fair to say that Ch'ien-lung hindered the development of bronze studies in the eighteenth century. His main concern in producing catalogues was not to promote bronze studies. He cared more about ownership and what it made possible.

9. *Kuo ch'ao ch'i hsien lei cheng* 國朝耆獻類征, in *Ch'ing tai chuan chi ts'ung k'an* 清代傳記叢刊 (Taipei: Ming wen, 1985), *ch'u pien* 初編, vol. 144, *chuan* 81, pp. 733-734.
10. *Kuo ch'ao ch'i hsien lei cheng* 國朝耆獻類征, vol. 138, *chuan* 23, pp. 689-704.
11. As far as I know, nine copies of the Wu-ying tien imperial printing house edition (武英殿刊本) of *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien* still survive today. Two are in the Palace Museum, Taipei, one in Peking University, one in the Chinese Academy of Science (中國科學院), one in Shanghai Library (上海圖書館), one in Liao-ning Library (遼寧省圖書館), one in the Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University (京都大學人文科學研究所), and the last two in the National Archives of Japan (公文書館).

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only in manuscript form. Even with the exceptional edition included in *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* 四庫全書, available only in seven libraries in the entire Ch'ing empire, *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien*, however, did not circulate beyond the court and members of the imperial family at that time.[12] It was not until 1888 that private publishers printed new editions and this catalogue began to circulate widely.[13]

In addition to the printed version, Ch'ien-lung commissioned a hand-painted version: perhaps he amused himself with this single copy.[14] Today, only one out of forty volumes of this painted version exists in the Institute of Archaeology in Pei-ching. Its contents correspond to the thirty-second *chuan* 卷 of printed *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien*. According to the *huo-chi tang*, this painted version was called "Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien ts'eh-yeh" 西清古鑑冊頁, and was finished in 1758, three years after the printed version. This painted version presents bronzes quite faithfully, depicting colors, shapes, and even shadows with great detail.

The Ancient Mirror

Why did Ch'ien-lung initiate the *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien* project? We know that some time during 1748, while rummaging through his many collections, the sight of a bronze mirror that was never mentioned in previous literature strongly affected the emperor (fig. 1).[15] Ch'ien-lung attributed it to the Yellow Emperor (黃帝), the legendary founder of Chinese civilization, and composed "Ku t'ung chien ke" 古銅鑑歌, "The Song of the Ancient Bronze Mirror," which was also transcribed onto *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien* as follows:

12. At the conclusion of imperially sanctioned publishing projects, tradition required that at least one copy be presented to Ch'ien-lung (呈覽本), ten to thirty copies be sent to various imperial palaces for display (陳設本), two hundred copies be presented to imperial family members or high officials (賞賜本), and three hundred copies be sold to the public (通行本). See Chu Sai-hung 朱賽虹, "Ts'ung chuang huang k'an pan pen: I Ch'ing tai huang chia shu chi wei tien hsing 從裝潢看版本—以清代皇家書籍為典型," *Ku kung po wu yüan yüan k'an* 故宮博物院院刊, 88 (2), pp. 70-77. I doubt that copies of this work were sold to the public: before two commercial publishers reprinted the Wu-ying tien version in 1888, no one seemed to have quoted from Ch'ien-lung's bronze catalogues.
13. According to Liu Yü 劉雨, there were five printed editions and two manuscript editions. See Liu Yü, *Ch'ien-lung ssu chien tsung li piao* 乾隆四鑑縱理表 (Pei-ching: Chung hua, 1989), pp. 5-6.
14. For the discussion of the painted *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien*, see Liu Yü, "Pa küao ku yen chiu so ts'ang ts'ai hui pen Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien 跋考古研究所藏彩繪本西清古鑑," *Ku wen tsu yen chiu* 古文字研究, 16, pp. 239-253; Wang Kuang-yao 王光堯, "Ch'ien-lung ts'u Pan kui乾隆瓷班簋," *Ku kung po wu yüan yüan k'an*, 86 (4), pp. 57-63.
15. Unfortunately, this mirror seems not to have survived today, or it is held in an unknown private collection.

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The Yellow Emperor cast this divine object from liquid bronze. Its virtue corresponds to Heaven and Earth, brightening the sun and the moon.
軒轅液金作神物, 德合乾坤明日月.
Nourished by the energy of yin and yang, it cannot be destroyed even after eighteen thousand years.
陰陽精氣此蘊鬱, 萬八千春豈湮沒.
Troops in Heaven protect it from demons. With a polished splendid-green-colored round circle in the center, the entire mirror is as beautiful as celestial space with shining stars and bright moon.
丁甲護持魑魅祓, 中圓光外綠雲蔚, 如星重輪麗天闕.
Even the four spirits and five mountains cannot compete with its splendor. Its vigor seizes the power of ordinary mirrors of the Han and T'ang dynasties.
四靈五嶽卒難核. 漢唐俗製氣早奪.
Its auspiciousness might save Ch'ü Yüan from injustice and suffering, because it illuminates the good among the treacherous, piercing their hearts and bones.
其祥應不讓屈軼, 以燭賢奸洞心骨.[16]

As was his practice with jades, ceramics, and other treasures about which he enthused, Ch'ien-lung had his poem inscribed directly onto the lower part of this mirror's reflective, polished side, as well as the designs of his two seals—"te ch'ung fu" 德充符 and "hui hsin pu yüan" 會心不遠, meaning "the sign of virtue complete" and "the way of enlightenment is not far." One year later, in 1749, Ch'ien-lung issued the edict in which he called for a catalogue to be named in honor of this bronze mirror.[17] Thomas Lawton has commented, "Ch'ien-lung never had inscriptions added to the surfaces of the ritual bronzes in the imperial collection, even though it was technically possible to do so." [18] I do not know whether this mirror meets Lawton's definition of a ritual object, but his general point is not wrong: the inscription on this mirror is extraordinary.

Even today, such a plain mirror is not easy to date. While Ch'ien-lung's identification was spurious, the simplicity of the mirror convinced Ch'ien-lung of its venerability. If it had belonged to the Yellow Emperor, it would have been Ch'ien-

16. *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien*, *chuan* 39, p. 3.
17. The Yellow Emperor's mirror did not win pride of place when *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien* was finally drawn up; the thirty-ninth chapter, the last but one, describes it.
18. Thomas Lawton, "An Imperial Legacy Revisited: Bronze Vessels from the Qing Palace Collection," *Asian Art*, 1 (1), p. 53.

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lung's oldest bronze, and older than any of Hui-tsung's collections.

What did those scholarly editors of *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien* have to say about this mirror? "The Yellow Emperor did once cast twelve mirrors on the Wang-wu Mountain [. . .] This mottled, unusual mirror looks so old that it could not have been cast after the Han or T'ang dynasty, but [we] cannot date it. We name it 'the ancient mirror' to place it ahead of all mirrors." (軒轅氏於王屋山鑄鏡十二...此器斑駁古異, 非漢唐以下所能彷彿, 亦不能名其時代, 命之曰古鑑, 以冠於諸鑑之首).[19] Those editors, though they could not date this mirror, thus confirmed it was an antique relic and kept alive the possibility that the Yellow Emperor had cast it. Perhaps this was simply another way of saying that the mirror was older than any reference they might apply.

Why would Ch'ien-lung name the catalogue after a plain mirror without decoration and ancient inscription? Why not after a cauldron or a bell, something with a long and interesting inscription? Was this a gesture of humility? After all, compared with Hui-tsung's "po-ku" 博古, which means "to possess a wide knowledge of ancient things," "ku-chien" 古鑑, or "a mirror for reflecting the past," is a humble expression. Ch'ien-lung forbore any claim to knowledge of antiquities; instead, he hoped that his collections could provide ancient models. He was young, and his bronze collections did not rival Hui-tsung's six thousand items at that time. However, this ancient mirror ascribed to Yellow Emperor could be older than any of Hui-tsung's collections, and made Ch'ien-lung the most significant emperor-collector in imperial China.

The most celebrated and mysterious bronzes in Chinese history were the nine cauldrons (九鼎) supposedly cast by Yü 禹, the mythical sage king who founded the Hsia 夏 kingdom, allegedly China′s first dynasty. The Yellow Emperor was said to have ruled five hundred years before Yü. Ch'ien-lung may have believed that the objects that the Yellow Emperor supposedly left behind differed from later bronzes in type as well as style: among their manufactures were this mirror, and bronze money.

Thus, in the winter of 1750, while the scholars of the Nan Shu-fang 南書房 were busy compiling *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien*, Ch'ien-lung decided to tack on another project: he ordered Liang Shih-cheng to begin working on *Ch'ien-lu* 錢錄, the catalogue of ancient bronze coins. Both catalogues were complete by the summer of 1751. They were printed jointly, *Ch'ien-lu* as a supplement to *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien*, to form one big catalogue.

Without *Ch'ien-lu's* 567 bronze coins dating from remote antiquity down to the

19. *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien, chuan* 39, p. 4.

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Ming, we cannot fully appreciate Ch'ien-lung's bronze enterprise. Among his coins were some attributed to Fu-hsi 伏羲, Shen-nung 神農, the Yellow Emperor (黃帝), Shao-hao 少昊, Kao-yang 高陽, Yao 堯, and Shun 舜, all of whom were mythical rulers from the dawn of Chinese civilization. The first entry, a coin associated with Fu-hsi, was identified as the very first coin (貨幣之始), even older than the ancient mirror attributed to the Yellow Emperor.[20] By laying claim to a series of relics that corresponded to the entire ancient history of the Chinese world, Ch'ien-lung declared all known time for himself.

Ning-shou Chien-ku

Of Ch'ien-lung's three bronze catalogues, *Ning-shou chien-ku*, which describes 701 items, is the most problematic. It lacks both preface and postscript, and virtually nothing is known about who edited it or when. We do know that P'eng Yüan-jui 彭元瑞, the editor-in-chief of *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien*, was involved.[21] Of all three bronze catalogues, *Ning-shou chien-ku* must have been compiled after the end of the Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien project in 1755 but before the start of *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien* in 1781 because the editors of *Ning-shou chien-ku* once cited *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien* but never referred to *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien*. Judging from the title, the compilation of Ning-shou chien-ku probably began around 1770 to 1776 during the renovation of the Ning-shou Kung 寧壽宮, the palace in the Forbidden City originally planned as Ch'ien-lung's residence for his retirement.[22] According to Shen Ch'u 沈初 (1735-1799), a Han-lin 翰林 scholar who served at the Nan Shu-fang 南書房 more than thirty years during Ch'ien-lung's reign, the 701 bronzes documented in Ning-shou chien-ku were selected from the bronzes that Ch'ien-lung acquired after the completion of Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien; all were displayed in the Ning-shou Kung.[23]

While no color version of *Ning-shou chien-ku* exists today, it is quite possible

20. *Ch'ien lu* 錢錄, 1751, reprint ed., *Ying-yin Wen-yüan Ke Ssu-k'u ch'uan-shu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: Taiwan shang wu yin shu kuan, 1983), *chuan* 1, p.1.
21. Liu Yü has inferred from this detail that the editorial board of *Ning-shou chien-ku* might have been the same as that of *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien*. See Liu Yü, *Ch'ien-lung ssu chien tsung li piao*, pp. 4-5.
22. Liu Yü, *Ch'ien-lung ssu chien tsung li piao*, pp. 2-3.
23. Shen Ch'u 沈初, *Hsi-ch'ing pi chi* 西清筆記, 1795, reprint ed., *Ts'ung shu chi ch'eng ch'u pien* 叢書集成初編, vol. 2966 (Taipei: Taiwan shang wu yin shu kuan, 1967), *chuan* 1, p. 6.

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that the first version of this catalogue was a hand-painted version.[24] A transcribed version did not exist until 1793 when Ch'ien-lung commissioned the staffs of Mao-ch'in tien 懋勤殿 to transcribe *Ning-shou chien-ku* as well as *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien*.[25] Quite possibly the final title of *Ning-shou chien-ku* was not given to the catalogue until this transcribed version was nearing completion.[26] To some extent, the very title *Ning-shou chien-ku* (The Ning-shou Palace mirror of antiquity) shows that the emperor's imminent retirement from the public stage was an occasion for examining bronzes in his private space. He was trying to bridge the gap between ancient sage-hood and his collectorship.

His-ch'ing Hsü-chien

After the *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien* and *Ning-shou chien-ku* projects had been completed, Ch'ien-lung's bronze collection kept growing. In 1781, Ch'ien-lung called for another catalogue; *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien* was finished in 1793.[27] According to the huo-chi tang, there was a bit of a rush: the transcription of *Ning-shou chien-ku* and *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien*, totaling 7,048 pages, had to be completed within two years before Ch'ien-lung's abdication in 1795. The painters employed in Ju-i kuan 如意館 could not handle all of the work themselves and had to hire additional staff.[28] All these efforts belonged to the celebration surrounding the conclusion of Ch'ien-lung's six decades in power.

Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien, *chia pien* 西清續鑑甲編, the first volume of *Hsi-ch'ing*

24. According to the *huo-chi tang*, there are at least nine records within the years from 1769 to 1770 mentioning the project of making "Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien ceye 西清古鑑冊頁," in total thirty-two volumes. Judging from the date, this set of "Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien ceye" would not have been the painted version of *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien* mentioned above, but of *Ning-shou chien-ku.* It is very possible that the first edition of Ning-shou chien-ku was this color version. See "Ch'ien-lung san-shih-wu nien Ju-i kuan 乾隆三十五年如意館" in *Yang-hsin-tien tsao-pan-ch'u ke-tso ch'eng-tso huo-chi ch'ing tang* 養心殿造辦處各作成做活計清檔 (Chung-kuo Ti-i Li-shih Tang-an Kuan 中國第一歷史檔案館).
25. "Ch'ien-lung wu-shih-pa nien liu-yüeh Ju-i kuan 乾隆五十八年六月如意館" in *Yang-hsin-tien tsao-pan-ch'u ke-tso ch'eng-tso huo-chi ch'ing tang* 養心殿造辦處各作成做活計清檔.
26. In Shen Chu's notes, this catalogue was originally called *Ning-shou ku-chien* 寧壽古鑑, rather than *Ning-shou chien-ku* 寧壽鑑古. See Shen Chu, *Hsi-ch'ing pi chi* 西清筆記, *chuan* 1, p.6.
27. I mainly use the 1911 reprint edition of *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien* and "Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien chia-pien fu-lu" published by Shang wu yin shu kuan 商務印書館.
28. "Ch'ien-lung wu-shih-pa nien liu-yüeh Ju-i kuan 乾隆五十八年九月如意館" in *Yang-hsin-tien tsao-pan-ch'u ke-tso ch'eng-tso huo-chi ch'ing tang* 養心殿造辦處各作成做活計清檔.

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hsü-chien, listed 975 bronzes stored in the Forbidden City; the 900 bronzes in the second volume, *i pien* 乙編, were originally in Pei-ching until 1782 when, probably right after the cataloguing project was concluded, they were sent to Sheng-ching 盛京, today's Shen-yang 瀋陽, the old capital of Ch'ing empire before it took over Ming China.[29]

Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien is unique among Ch'ien-lung's three bronze catalogues because the last thirty-eight objects were gathered from Ch'ing frontiers. Most of them were not typical Chinese bronzes and were cast quite recently. Small as it was, this section expanded the scope of Ch'ien-lung's entire bronze collections from the central cultural zone to the peripheral areas, as well as stretching from the legendary ancient era of Fu-hsi 伏羲 to the eighteenth century. Ch'ien-lung, who took special interest in these frontier bronzes, wrote commentaries for sixteen of them. The emperor must have considered these objects very important because he clearly spent some time examining and thinking about them before writing commentaries. The editorial board seconded this emphasis, devoting special attention to these frontier bronzes in the catalogue's postscript.

If *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien* was created to proclaim Ch'ien-lung a great collector, then *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien* was the monument that would wrap up his long rule. Its long postscript, dated 1793, was in reality the concluding remarks on all three bronze catalogues. According to this postscript, *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien* would supplement our knowledge about ancient history and rituals, provide models so that bells to be played in Ch'ing state rites might more closely resemble those played by the ancients, celebrate several magnificent events in the life of the emperor, and commemorate his ten military campaigns.[30]

The postscript of *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien* written in 1751 mentioned none of Ch'ien-lung's achievements or contributions, but forty-one years later, the emperor sounded triumphant by calling himself "the old man of ten victories" (十全老人) and his officials shamelessly showered him with praise. In 1794, P'eng Yüan-jui 彭元瑞, one of the main cataloguers of *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien*, edited *Yü-chih shih wen shih ch'uan*

29. Chiang Hsiang-shun 姜相順, "Ch'ien-lung ti tung hsun yeh tsu ling ch'i chien Sheng-ching huang kung te tseng chien chi hsüan kua chen ts'ang 乾隆帝東巡謁祖陵期間盛京皇宮的增建及懸掛珍藏," *Chung-yang min tsu hsüeh yüan hsüeh pao* 中央民族學院學報, 1992 (4), p. 42.

30. "Ba 跋," *Hsi-ch'ing Hsü-chien* 西清續鑑 (1795, reprint ed., Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu kuan, 1911), pp. 388-389. For the detailed account of the Ch'ing bells mentioned in this postscript, see Yu Hui-chun, "Qianlong's Divine Treasures: The Bells in the Rhyming-the-Old Hall," *Asia Major*, 22 (2), pp. 121-144.

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chi 御製詩文十全集 (Collection of the poetry and prose written by the emperor on the ten campaigns), an anthology of Ch'ien-lung's essays and poems about the ten principal military campaigns launched during his reign. P'eng presented this anthology to Ch'ien-lung as a gift. It is the most comprehensive record of Ch'ien-lung's thoughts on the ten campaigns and is of great value to anyone who wants some context for the frontier bronzes documented in *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien*. One can only wonder whether P'eng played a role in the inclusion of these frontier bronzes in this catalogue he compiled.

A comparison of the contents of *Hsi-ch'ing ku-chien* and *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien* shows a shift in Ch'ien-lung's emperorship from a focus on administration and culture to an emphasis on warfare and statecraft. In a separate essay entitled "Shih-ch'uan chi 十全記" (A record of the ten victories), Ch'ien-lung said that after all of its enemies had submitted to the Ch'ing empire, he realized that in addition to promote culture and education, the government ought also to maintain a standing army to protect the homeland.[31] He also came to see that bronzes had more than one function: they could point the way to an ideal past, of course, but they could also remind anyone who saw them of those who had submitted to the great Ch'ing. The more, the better.

"Hsi-ch'ing Hsü-chien Chia-pien Fu-lu"

"Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien chia-pien fu-lu" 西清續鑑甲編附錄 (Appendix to the first volume of "A supplement to 'The mirror of Western Clarity'"), a small catalogue, physically part of *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien*, recorded the thirty-eight metal objects collected from the border areas of the Ch'ing empire—modern Mongolia, Inner Asia, Tibet, and Vietnam—over the course of Ch'ien-lung's reign. These objects were the fruits of what we might call Ch'ing imperialism: war trophies from Inner Asia, tributes from allies, or relics unearthed after the Ch'ing colonized and created Hsin-chiang 新疆. Some were displayed in the Tsu-kuang Ke 紫光閣 (Pavilion of purple light), a Ch'ing military museum. Alongside large paintings and engravings that narrated Ch'ien-lung's principal campaigns and many portraits of meritorious officials, these tokens from afar commemorated Ch'ien-lung's "ten victorious campaigns," certified Ch'ing sovereignty over Hsin-chiang, and represented the vision of the great Ch'ing empire under Ch'ien-lung's rule.

The "Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien chia-pien fu-lu" (henceforth '*fu-lu*') presents thirty-eight objects in thirty-one entries. These objects can be classified into five groups by

31. Ch'ing Kao-tsung, "Shih ch'uan chi 十全記," *Yü-chih wen-chi* 御製文集, 3 *chi*, *chuan* 8, p. 12a.

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function: four containers, nine weapons, two musical instruments, fourteen seals, and nine coins. As in the main body of *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien*, every entry in the fu-lu has an illustration and a detailed description including a date, dimensions, origins, and significant features. For antique collectors in eighteenth-century China, the thirty-eight objects might have been considered attractive foreign goods, but they were definitely not in the mainstream of antique collection. To Ch'ien-lung, they kindled his imagination of foreign lands, a multicultural and multiethnic world that extended well beyond the Manchu and the Han.

As an independent unit placed at the end of the first volume of *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien*, this modest appendix was definitely insignificant. The main body of *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien* comprised forty *chuan* 卷 and described 1,837 bronzes from the Shang to the T'ang dynasties. The thirty-eight objects in the *fu-lu* were too different and too new to fit into this catalogue. Some of them were actually manufactured in the Ch'ien-lung era; others were not even made of bronze. Readers might have easily ignored these peculiar objects in the last part of *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien*. There was no question of impressing others with the handwritten *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien* because this bronze catalogue was not meant to be circulated, but was instead imbued with a "public" purpose.

One of Ch'ien-lung's principal achievements was the conquest of neighboring territories, which the *fu-lu* clearly demonstrated by explaining the ways he obtained these objects. The *fu-lu* should not be regarded as just a catalogue of antiques: its language clearly was borrowed from an imperialist discourse and the very objects selected embodied Ch'ien-lung's vision to make the Ch'ing empire as grand as the thirteenth-century Mongolian empire. The emperor commissioned a sequence of complex commemorations of his *shih-ch'uan wu-kung* 十全武功 (ten victorious campaigns), including multilingual steles placed all over the country,[32] enormous paintings of battle scenes and meritorious officials hanging in the Tsu-kuang Ke,[33] paintings of imperial banquets given to foreign visitors,[34] and cartographic

32. Joanna Waley-Cohen, "Commemorating War in Eighteenth-Century China," *Modern Asian Studies*, 30 (4), pp. 869-899.

33. On the portraits, see Ka Bo Tsang, "Portraits of Meritorious Officials: Eight Examples from the First Set Commissioned by the Qianlong Emperor," *Arts Asiatiques: Annales du muse national des arts asiatiques---Guimet et du Musée Cernuschi*, 47, pp. 69-88. On the war illustrations manufactured in France, see Nieh Ch'ung-cheng 聶崇正, "Ch'ien-lung p'ing ting Chun-pu Hui-pu chan t'u he Ch'ing-tai te t'ung pan hua 乾隆平定準部回部戰圖和清代的銅版畫," *Wen wu* 文物, 1980 (4), pp. 61-64.

34. On the painting *Imperial Banquet in the Park of Ten Thousand Trees* (萬樹園賜宴圖), see Lucia Tripodes, "Painting and Diplomacy at the Qianlong Court: A Commemorative Picture by Wang Zhicheng (Jean-Denis Attiret)," *Res*, 35 (1999), pp. 185-200.

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projects.[35] The objects in the *fu-lu* can add one more chapter to our understanding of this grand dissemination of imperial propaganda.

The editorial board of *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien* included Wang Chieh 王杰 (1725-1805), Tung Kao 董誥 (1740-1818), P'eng Yüan-jui 彭元瑞 (1733-1803), Chin Shih-sung 金士松 (1730-1800), Yü-pao 玉保 (1759-1798), Hu-t'u-li 瑚圖禮 (d. 1814), and Na-yen-ch'eng 那彥成 (1764-1833). Though no extant record described the organizational hierarchy, Wang Chieh and Tung Kao might have been the main editors of the fu-lu because both achieved distinction in the wars in Taiwan and Gurkha (Nepal). Still, only one object in the *fu-lu* is associated with the Gurkha campaign and none was associated with the Taiwan war.[36] P'eng Yüan-jui, who knew a great deal about Ch'ien-lung's military campaigns, was also qualified to be the chief editor of the *fu-lu*. In any case, the *fu-lu* was completed sometime between Ch'ien-lung 57 (1792) and Ch'ien-lung 58 (1793), right before the whole *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien* project was finished. We know this because the last two objects in the *fu-lu* that Ch'ien-lung obtained were the drum and cymbal from Annam (Vietnam), acquired in 1792.

Editing the *fu-lu* probably did not take long and may not have been initiated by Ch'ien-lung. With such a small percentage of his frontier booty appearing in the *fu-lu*, it was likely that as the seven editors neared the end of the *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien* project they decided to please their patron by quickly producing the small *fu-lu*. Why? In Ch'ien-lung 57 (1792), Ch'ien-lung announced his plan to abdicate in the sixtieth year of his rule (1795), many officials sought ways to show their loyalty.

A distinguishing feature of the *fu-lu* is that sixteen of the entries open with a commentary by Ch'ien-lung. These commentaries, either in verse or in prose, were composed between Ch'ien-lung 20 (1755) and Ch'ien-lung 53 (1788), well before the creation of the catalogue. This was extraordinarily unusual. Of all the 4,115 ancient bronzes catalogued, only seventeen entries open with Ch'ien-lung's commentaries. Sixteen are in the *fu-lu*. The other one is the ancient mirror mentioned above that gave the first catalogue its name. These sixteen carefully transcribed commentaries explain

35. James A. Millward, "Coming onto the Map: Western Regions Geography and Cartographic Nomenclature in the Making of Chinese Empire in Xinjiang," *Late Imperial China,* 20 (2), pp. 61-98.

36. No items from the Taiwan War were recorded in the *fu-lu* probably because Ch'ing troops did not capture any metalwork suitable to be included into the *fu-lu*. However, two seals made of wood and stone originally belonging to Lin Shuang-wen 林爽文 and Chuang Ta-t'ien 莊大田, the leaders of the resistance to the Ch'ing, were housed in the Tsu-kuang Ke. See Chung-kuo Ti-i Li-shih Tang-an Kuan中國第一歷史檔案館, "Tsu kuang Ke Wu-ch'eng Tien ta tang i pu 紫光閣武成殿大檔一部," *Ch'ing-tai Chung-nan-hai tang an* 清代中南海檔案, vol. 23 (Pei-ching : Hsi yüan, 2004), p. 43.

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how the collector Ch'ien-lung interpreted these objects in his own words. He must have examined these objects before he wrote the commentaries. Some commentaries are full of detailed information about these bronzes, such as their physical condition, decorations, inscriptions, and how they ended up in the Ch'ing imperial collection. The editors of the *fu-lu* did not bother to add much to these commentaries. In a sense, Ch'ien-lung was the main contributor to the *fu-lu*; his commentaries functioned as strong declarations of authorship.

Objects Related to the Zunghar Wars

The Zunghar wars took place intermittently between Ch'ien-lung 20 (1755) and Ch'ien-lung 23 (1758). Victory gave the Ch'ing empire its first opportunity to set up colonies in Zungharia.[37] Zunghar was the most powerful Mongolian kingdom in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. To dominate all the Mongolian kingdoms, the Ch'ing decided to first take on the Zunghars. Before Ch'ien-lung launched his large campaign, low-level conflicts had routinely broken out for over a century. For this victory in 1758, Ch'ien-lung proudly claimed he had accomplished what he called his ancestors' incomplete enterprise (述我祖宗未竟之志事).[38]

37. On the course of Zunghar wars, see Chuang Chi-fa 莊吉發, *Ch'ing Kao-tsung shih ch'uan wu kung yen chiu* 清高宗十全武功研究 (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1982), pp. 9-64; Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 209-255.
38. Ch'ing Kao-tsung, "K'ai-huo lun 開惑論," in *Jih-hsia chiu-wen k'ao* 日下舊聞考, *chuan* 25, pp. 346-350.

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Table 1. Objects related to the Zunghar wars

Item[39]	Date made	Source	Date collected	Ch'ien-lung's commentary	Where displayed
Iron seal of Zunghar (準噶爾鐵章)	17th century	Trophy	1755	Prose	?
Bronze seal of Hai-nu (海努銅印)	1726	?	1760?	Prose with poem	?
Yüan great seal for issuing imperial decrees (元制誥之寶)	Yuan dynasty	Gift[40]	1766	Prose	?
Yüan official seal of T'ai-wei from the Hsüan-kuang era (元宣光年太尉印)	Yuan dynasty	Unearthed	1771 (spring)	Prose with poem	?
Torghut sword inlaid with seven jewels (土爾扈特七寶刀)	?	Tribute	1771 (fall)	Poem	Tsu-kuang Ke
New currency commemorating the pacification of I-li (平定伊犁新鑄錢)	1775	Cast by Ch'ing mint in I-li	1775	None	?

1. Iron Seal of Zunghar (準噶爾鐵章)

The iron seal illustrated in fig. 2 was a war trophy from I-li 伊犁, taken during the first Zunghar war in the summer of Ch'ien-lung 20 (1755). The text of the seal read: "E-erh-te-ni-cho-li-k'e-t'u hung-t'ai-chi chih chang" 厄爾德尼卓里克圖洪台吉之章. According to Ch'ien-lung's commentary written in the same year when the seal was taken, "E-erh-te-ni-cho-li-k'e-t'u" was a transliteration of a Sanskrit phrase meaning "the celebrated king with majestic sovereignty" (寶權大慶王).[41] This seal had belonged

39. All the item names and dates in these tables are based on the *fu-lu*. Some of them might originally be Ch'ien-lung's attributions.
40. It is not always possible to distinguish a tribute from a gift. Here, I use the word "tribute" for the Chinese word "*Kung* 貢" in the text, and "gift" for "*Kung-chin* 恭進."
41. I mainly consult the studies by Ka Bo Tsang (1992) and Perdue (2005) for the transliteration of Mongol and other non-Chinese names. For those names that I have not been able to give accurate transliteration in this stage, their Romanized forms are based on *pinyin* system and put into quotation marks.

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to the Zunghar royal family and was originally a gift from the sixth Dalai Lama (1683-1706) to Tsewang Rabdan (策妄阿拉布坦, 1697-1727), the sixteenth khan of Zunghar. He had ascended to the throne thanks to the intercession of the K'ang-hsi emperor, who helped defeat Galdan (葛爾丹), Tsewang Rabdan's uncle.[42] Beholden or not, the khan had not ended the raids across the border into the Ch'ing territory.

In 1731, the Yung-cheng emperor sent Yüeh Chung-ch'i 岳鍾琪 (1686-1754) to attack Galdan Tseren (葛爾丹策凌), the new khan at this time and the son of Tsewang Rabdan. When the Ch'ing troops proved incapable of defeating the Zunghars, Yung-cheng settled for a negotiated truce.[43] Then, in 1755, taking the advantage of internal disorder in the Zunghar kingdom, Ch'ien-lung took the offensive and finally seized I-li, the enemy's capital. After that time, the Ch'ing gradually set up settlements in northern Hsin-chiang, as the "new territory" was called.

In the commentary he wrote about this iron seal, Ch'ien-lung carefully described its dimensions and decorations. He also expressed surprise at the discovery that the rulers of Zunghar "barbarians" (鏃鍋君長) possessed such a *fa-wu* heirloom (世守法物). Claiming not only the seal but the power associated with it, Ch'ien-lung revoked Tsewang Rabdan's title of "the celebrated king with majestic sovereignty."

2. Bronze Seal of Hai-nu (海努銅印)

This bronze seal (fig. 3) was found by General A-kui 阿桂 at a Buddhist temple in "Hai-nu-k'e" 海努克 near I-li, probably in Ch'ien-lung 25 (1760) after the Ch'ing conquered the Zunghars and set up colonies in I-li. The seal text read "seal of jasaq, governor of the Rear Banner of the Eleuths" (管轄厄魯特後旗札薩克印) in Manchu. Emperor Yung-cheng originally issued this seal in 1726 as the official seal of *jasaq* chieftain of the Rear Banner of the Eleuths. However, one year later, "Mao-hai" 毛海, the *jasaq* at that time, betrayed the Ch'ing and pledged allegiance to its main enemy, Galdan Tseren (葛爾丹策凌). Therefore, in Ch'ien-lung's commentary, he proudly declared that this seal had finally returned to the sacred capital (神京) of the Ch'ing empire because one as savage as "Mao-hai" was unqualified to keep it.

42. On Kangxi's defeat of Galdan, see Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia*, pp. 134-161.
43. Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia*, pp. 240-255.

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3. Yüan Great Seal for Issuing Imperial Decrees (元制誥之寶)

A banner soldier from Ordos (鄂爾多斯) unearthed this impressive bronze seal (fig. 4), which weighed 220 *liang* (around 8 kg). The seal text read "chih kao chih pao" 制誥之寶 (treasure of imperial decree) in Chinese, with a few words in Sanskrit of unknown meaning. The handle of the seal, decorated with dragons in low relief, was engraved with a Sanskrit text that read, "With the blessings of three treasures, auspiciousness is arriving" (陳三寶呵護吉祥臻). Ch'ien-lung had consulted Rolpay Dorje for help in translating this text.

According to the commentary Ch'ien-lung made in 1766, right around when he would have obtained this seal, this seal was a symbol of imperial sovereignty used by Mongolian emperors of the Yüan dynasty for issuing decrees. The yellow sect of Lamaism dominated religious life during the Yüan dynasty in both the "foreign territories" and the "central plain" (震外域平中原), and the famous Tibetan lama Bashpa (八思巴), who served as imperial preceptor, had preached Buddhist teachings to those who dwelt in both places (內外諸臣). Based on the location where this seal was found and the contents of its inscriptions, Ch'ien-lung believed this to be an imperial seal of the Yüan dynasty left behind by the last emperor, Shun-ti 順帝 (r. 1333-1367) when he fled to Mongolia in 1367. To conclude his commentary, Ch'ien-lung proudly noted his appreciation towards those subjects in Ordos who had respectfully presented him with this great seal.

Ch'ien-lung appeared to have been especially fond of this seal that he examined often. In his last year on the throne (1795), he wrote an additional commentary, explaining that when he had Rolpay Dorje translate the Sanskrit seal text of unknown meaning thirty years ago, the lama was only able to decode the characters; their meaning had eluded him.[44] Dissatisfied, Ch'ien-lung sent a rubbing of the mysterious passage to Tibet, where other religious scholars could inspect it. (It is not clear when this happened.) Finally, the puzzle was solved. In the report from a Ch'ing resident minister in Tibet, Ch'ien-lung was informed that the Sanskrit text had nothing to do with the Chinese text "chih kao chih pao," but was a Sanskrit spell.

A great seal of the Yüan dynasty was much more than an antique. This seal reminded Ch'ien-lung that the fierce Mongol cavalry would always be a serious threat

44. Ch'ing Kao-tsung, "Tsai-t'i Yüan chih kao chih pao 再題元制誥之寶," in *Yü-chih shih chi* 御製詩集, reprint ed., *Ying-yin Wen-yüan Ke Ssu-k'u ch'uan-shu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: Taiwan shang wu yin shu kuan, 1983), 5 *chi, chuan* 98, p. 6.

45. Li Feng-min 李鳳民, "Yüan ch'uan kuo hsi chih mi 元傳國喜之謎," *Shen-yang shih fan hsüeh yüan hsüeh pao* 瀋陽師範學院學報, 1994 (1), pp. 52-59.

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to the Ch'ing empire. It also confirmed the glorious history of northern nomadic peoples and the dynastic legitimacy of the Liao 遼, the Chin 金, and the Yüan 元, the three predecessors to the Ch'ing. This bronze seal may further have reminded Ch'ien-lung of another legendary "chih kao chih pao" jade seal, one which had contributed to the establishment of the multiethnic Ch'ing empire.

It was said that the "chih kao chih pao" jade seal was initially made by the First Emperor of the Ch'in (秦始皇帝) as the "seal of transmitting the State" (傳國璽). Since then, all founders of new dynasties tried their best to acquire it as a symbol of political legitimacy.[45] When Chinggis Khan came to power, according to the Mongol chronicles of the seventeenth century, this jade seal "issued from a rock, or he was born with it in his hand, or it was given to him by the dragon king."[46] It then became a Mongolian symbol of sovereignty and whoever obtained it was destined to subjugate all the Mongolian kingdoms.[47]

According to the Ch'ing official history, in 1635, Hung T'ai-chi obtained Chinggis Khan's "chih kao chih pao" jade seal after conquering Ligdan Khan (林丹汗) of Chahar. Hung T'ai-chi soon exhibited this seal to other princes and banner leaders to show them that he had received the mandate of Heaven.[48] Barely a year slipped past before Hung T'ai-chi, with the support of family members and many Mongolian leaders, he changed the name of his country from Hou Chin 後金 (Latter Chin) to Ta Ch'ing 大清 (Great Ch'ing), declared himself emperor, and changed the era-name from T'ien-ts'ung 天聰 (Heaven's sagaciousness) to Ch'ung-te 崇德 (lofty virtue).

Obtaining a precious *fa-wu*, or ritual object, from previous dynasties was easily interpreted as "shou ming chih fu" 受命之符 (token of receiving heavenly mandate) for winning Heaven's endorsement to seize power. The vital force embedded in ritual objects was going to irrigate the new rising sovereignty. Assisted by the mysterious power of a jade seal that he kept in his palace, Hung T'ai-chi officially established the emperorship of the Ch'ing dynasty. Although Hung T'ai-chi's jade seal might be a fabricated story, it did play a very important role in early Ch'ing history, especially in

46. Johan Elverskog, *Our Great Qing: The Mongols, Buddhism and the State in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 2006), p. 31.
47. Qimudedaoerji and Ba Genna, eds., *Ch'ing-ch'ao T'ai-tsu T'ai-tsung Shih-tsu ch'ao shih lu Meng-ku shih shih liao ch'ao* 清朝太祖太宗世祖朝實錄蒙古史史料抄 (Hu-he-hao-t'e: Nei-meng-ku ta hsüeh, 2001), pp. 338-339.
48. Qimudedaoerji and Ba Genna, eds., *Ch'ing-ch'ao T'ai-tsu T'ai-tsung Shih-tsu ch'ao shih lu Meng-ku shih shih liao ch'ao,* pp. 344-346.

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the Manchu-Mongol relation.[49] The latter had identified the new Manchu state as the "Jade Great State," a term directly referring to Chinggis Khan's "chih kao chih pao" jade seal.[50]

Ch'ien-lung knew this story very well. In the essay regarding the preservation of Ch'ing imperial seals "Kuo-ch'ao ch'uan-pao chi" 國朝傳寶記 (The transmitted treasures of our dynasty, 1733), Ch'ien-lung stated directly that Hung T'ai-chi's imperial project succeeded because of his respectable virtue to win the "shou ming chih fu 受命之符."[51] This argument was simply a repetition of the famous adage that appeared in *Tso chuan* 左傳, ascribed to Confucius, that sovereignty depended on a king's virtue, not on his possession of treasures (在德不在寶). Therefore, when he obtained this bronze "chih kao chih pao" from Ordos in 1766, Ch'ien-lung was delighted but had to act humble. At the end of the commentary written in that year, he simply spoke of learning lessons from the demise of earlier dynasties (殷鑑在夏周在殷) and said nothing about the seal's auspiciousness. In other words, Ch'ien-lung treated this seal as a precious relic attesting to history, rather than proof of Heaven's mandate as Hung T'ai-chi had one century earlier. Unlike Hung T'ai-chi, Ch'ien-lung never used this bronze "chih kao chih pao" seal in any practical way. He simply kept the seal, and possibly housed it inside the Forbidden City.

Ch'ien-lung's reaction to this new "chih kao chih pao" seal seemed rational and cautious. He did not exaggerate its magical power but simply spoke of a ruler's virtue. One obvious explanation of his behavior is that had he related this new seal to Heaven's mandate, Ch'ien-lung would then have violated the foundation of Ch'ing imperial rhetoric, which was built upon Hung T'ai-chi's "chih kao chih pao" jade seal. However, in his commentary, Ch'ien-lung still regarded this bronze seal as *chung-ch'i* 重器 (vital object). After all, the empire had never enjoyed greater glory before, Ch'ien-lung hardly needed another "chih kao chih pao" seal to confirm Heaven's mandate, but he could collect more "vital objects" to maintain the imperial glory and to justify his frequent engagements in military aggression.

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49. Qimudedaoerji and Ba Genna, eds., *Ch'ing-ch'ao T'ai-tsu T'ai-tsung Shih-tsu ch'ao shih lu Meng-ku shih shih liao ch'ao*, pp. 370-372. It is said that this jade *chih kao chih pao* seal used to be stored in the Feng-huang Lou 鳳凰樓 (Pavilion of phoenix) in Sheng-ching 盛京. See Li Feng-min, "Yüan ch'uan kuo hsi chih mi."
50. Johan Elverskog, *Our Great Qing: The Mongols, Buddhism and the State in Late Imperial China*, p. 30.
51. Ch'ing Kao-tsung, "Kuo-ch'ao ch'uan pao chi 國朝傳寶記," in *Yü-chih wen-chi* 御製文集, *chu chi* 初集, *chuan* 4, pp. 7-10.

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4. Yüan Official Seal of T'ai-wei from the Hsüan-kuang Era (元宣光年太尉印)

This seal (fig. 5) was excavated at a new Ch'ing military colony in northern Hsin-chiang. It is now still housed in the Palace Museum, Pei-ching.[52] The seal text in Mongol read "seal of T'ai-wei" (太尉之印). On the sides of the seal were two more inscriptions in Chinese; one read "seal of T'ai-wei" and the other "made by the Ministry of Rites of the Secretariat in the eleventh month of the first year of Hsüan-kuang" (宣光元年十一月中書禮部造). According to Ch'ien-lung's commentary written in 1771, no official Chinese dynastic history (正史) gave this term Hsüan-kuang as the name of an era. Some research needed to be done on this unfamiliar era-name. Fortunately, Ch'ien-lung's scholars consulted *The History of Koryo* (高麗史) in which the Korean historian Chung In-chi 鄭麟趾 (1396-1478) mentioned that in 1377 a diplomatic corps visiting Koryo from the Northern Yüan (北元) used the era-name of Hsüan-kuang on its credential.[53] This so-called Northern Yüan was the vestige of the Yüan dynasty after its fall in 1368. The Mongolian royal family, at war with Ming China, maintained the dynasty in the North. In other words, the Ming coexisted with the Northern Yüan for several decades.

Ch'ien-lung commented that this seal revealed the unknown history of Northern Yüan. While the rulers of the Ming chased Mongolians from their territory, they never conquered the Northern Yüan (北元國未亡). Although Ch'ien-lung was not explicit, it was obvious that for him the unknown history of the Northern Yüan was the missing link between the Yüan and the Ch'ing, creating an uninterrupted series of northern dynasties from the Liao to Ch'ien-lung's day. At the end of his commentary, Ch'ien-lung returned to the subject of the Northern Yüan coexisting with the Ming. He questioned the Southerner's prejudiced view against the Mongolian, and uneasily doubted who was able to clarify the truth (南人率左袒, 正論誰折衷). He believed that this seal was the key to unlock the historical justice.

5. Torghut Sword Inlaid with Seven Jewels (土爾扈特七寶刀)

This curved sword inlaid with jewels and silver (fig. 6) was one of the tributary gifts presented by the Torghut khan Ubashi 渥巴錫, who led the whole Torghut tribe out of Russia and submitted to the Ch'ing in Ch'ien-lung 36 (1771). According to

52. Luo Fu-i 羅福頤, "Pei Yüan kuan yin k'ao 北元官印考," *Ku kung po wu yüan yüan k'an* 故宮博物院院刊, 66 (1), pp. 34-38.
53. "Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien chia-pien fu-lu 西清續鑑甲編附錄," *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien* 西清續鑑, p. 15b.

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Ch'ien-lung, this submission was by the Torghut people's free will: he felt that this act confirmed his role as a sage king, a king who, in the classic Confucian mode, could attract men from afar.[54]

The Torghut was one of the Mongolian tribes originally living in Zungharia. To avoid tribal conflicts, the Torghuts moved to southern Russia in the early eighteenth century. The first time the Torghut khan paid tribute to the Ch'ing was in Ch'ien-lung 21 (1756), but the bond between Ch'ing and the Torghuts was very weak at that time. Fifteen years later, after the Ch'ing had finally conquered the Eleuths and colonized the whole Zungharia, the entire Torghut tribe finally "returned" to the Ch'ing. Ch'ien-lung was so excited that he wrote at least two essays to commemorate the return of the Torghut tribe. They were translated into four languages and engraved on a stele in Je-he. Ch'ien-lung also held an imperial banquet at Wan-shu Yüan 萬樹園 (Garden of ten thousand trees) in Pi-shu Shan-chuang 避暑山莊 (Summer Palace), to welcome the Torghut khan and his tribesmen.[55] Ch'ien-lung probably received this sword during the banquet and then housed it in the Tsu-kuang Ke.[56]

6. New Currency Commemorating the Pacification of I-li (平定伊犁新鑄錢)

The new Yili mint issued this coin in 1775. The text on one side of coin read "Ch'ien-lung t'ung pao" 乾隆通寶 (circulating treasure of Ch'ien-lung) in Chinese; the other side read "treasure of I-li" in Manchu. The coin was issued "in response to the severe shortage of currency for small transactions that accompanied the growth of Yili's commercial economy," according to James A. Millward.[57] This new currency was more than a response to economic growth; it was also an important symbol of Ch'ien-lung's conquest of I-li.

The six objects I have described above at some length, all related to the Zunghar wars, were markers along Ch'ien-lung's road to conquest. So potent were these items that obtaining the iron seal of Zunghar (1755) and the bronze seal of Hai-nu (1760) gave Ch'ien-lung claim to establish complete control over the area. The great Yüan

54. On the return of the Torghuts, see James A. Millward , "Qing Inner Asian Empire and the Return of the Torghuts," in *New Qing Imperial History: The Making of Inner Asian Empire at Qing Chengde* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), pp. 90-105.
55. Ch'ing Kao-tsung, "Tuer-hu-t'e ch'uan pu kui shun chi 土爾扈特全部歸順記," and "Yu-hsü Tuer-hu-t'e pu chung chi 優恤土爾扈特部眾記," in *Yü chih wen chi* 御製文集, 2 *chi, chuan* 11, pp. 6-9.
56. Chung-kuo Ti-i Li-shih Tang-an Kuan, "Tsu-kuang Ke Wu-ch'eng Tien ta tang i pu," p. 56.
57. James A. Millward, *Beyond the Pass: Economy, Ethnicity, and Empire in Qing Central Asia, 1759-1864* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 65.

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seal, used for issuing imperial decrees (1766), and the official Yüan seal of T'ai-wei in the Hsüan-kuang era (1771), proved (or so Ch'ien-lung thought) that Zungharia was once part of the grand Mongolian empire. Seizing these two seals implied that Ch'ien-lung had made the Manchu empire a successor to the Mongolian empire. The Torghut sword inlaid with seven jewels (1771) indicated that Ch'ing ruled over northern Hsin-chiang was welcomed by those who had fled from the conflicts among the Zunghars. The coin commemorating the pacification of I-li (1775) was a token of Ch'ien-lung's sovereignty and a symbol of his successful colonization and economic control.

Objects Collected During the Hui-pu War

In the twenty-third year of his reign (1758), following a recent victory in Zunghar wars, Ch'ien-lung attacked the Muslim peoples of Eastern Turkistan. By 1759, the entire area of both the north and south of the T'ien-shan 天山 range—later called Hsin-chiang—was under the Ch'ing's direct control.[58] In addition to the vast territory Ch'ien-lung acquired, he also gained fine metalwork. The *fu-lu* recorded some of them.

Table 2. Objects related to the Hui-pu war

Item	Date made	Source	Date collected	Ch'ien-lung's commentary	Where displayed
Islamic metalwork of the T'ang dynasty (唐時回銅器)	T'ang Dynasty (618-907)	Old collection in the Pi-shu Shan-chuang	1759[59]	Poem	Pi-shu Shan-chuang, Je-he
Islamic *p'o-lu-ch'ou* bucket (回銅嚩嚕篘器)	Yüan Dynasty	Trophy	1760	Poem	?
Ax from Badakhshan (拔達克山斧)	?	Tribute	1761	Poem	?
Sword and ax from Bolor (博洛爾劍斧)	?	Tribute	1763	Poem	Tsu-kuang Ke

58. James A. Millward, "Coming onto the Map: Western Regions Geography and Cartographic Nomenclature in the Making of Chinese Empire in Xinjiang," pp. 61-98.
59. Ch'ien-lung rediscovered this Islamic bronze and wrote a poem of appreciation in 1759.

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Dagger from Andijan (安集延匕首)	?	Tribute	1763	Poem	?
Dagger from Bolor (博洛爾匕首一)	?	Tribute	1764	Poem	?
Two daggers from Bolor (博洛爾匕首二)	?	Tribute	1769	Poem	?
Drum-shaped *tsun* vessel (唐鼓腔尊)	T'ang dynasty (618-907)	Unearthed	1777	Poem inscribed	Ch'ien-ch'ing Kung
Hui-ke jar decorated with four magpies (唐回紇四喜壺)	T'ang dynasty (618-907)	?	1781	Poem inscribed	?
Pul coin of Hui-pu (回部普爾錢)	Early 18th century	?	?	?	Tsu-kuang Ke
New coins commemorating the pacification of Hui-pu (平定回部新鑄錢)	1760-1788	Cast by Ch'ing mint in Hui-pu	1788	Poem	?

1. Islamic Metalwork of the T'ang Dynasty (唐時回銅器)

This Islamic footed bowl (fig. 7) originated from an old collection housed in the Pi-shu Shan-chuang in Je-he 熱河. It is not clear which Ch'ing emperor first obtained it, but Ch'ien-lung noticed this object and wrote a long commentary about it in the fall of 1759, the year when Ch'ing troops conquered the Muslim peoples of Eastern Turkistan. There was no mention of what attribute of the bowl attracted Ch'ien-lung's attention. Yet, as Ch'ing forces poured into Hui-pu 回部 (that is, the "Muslim region"), more and more Islamic objects, either as tributes or as trophies, entered the Ch'ing imperial collection. These foreign artifacts, mainly jade and metalwork, inspired several commentaries from the emperor; it seems likely that Ch'ien-lung dug through his old collections to compare the new arrivals with others.

So closely does this bowl resemble a *tou* 豆, a standard type of ancient Chinese

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vessel, that when he first saw it, Ch'ien-lung mistook it for a Chinese bronze.[60] Then he noticed that its inscription seemed to be in the Arabic alphabet (回字) and its decorations differed from those of Chinese bronzes. He asked a Muslim from Ha-mi 哈密 to translate the inscription into Chinese, but the translator could only recognize two characters. Ch'ien-lung concluded that the bowl had to be quite ancient if it baffled an expert. Without any other evidence, Ch'ien-lung dated this bronze to the T'ang dynasty (618-907). This made it the oldest object in the *fu-lu*, hence the first entry.

Ch'ien-lung regarded his rediscovery of this bowl as an auspicious omen. In his commentary, he boldly declared that many more Islamic treasures were coming to the Ch'ing domain because General Chao-hui 兆惠 (1708-1764) had just successfully conquered two cities in Hui-pu. Ch'ien-lung also tried to differentiate between various ethnic groups in Hui-pu and to sketch the history of each group. His conclusions might be erroneous, but his efforts to study the Muslim peoples and their objects suggest an early form of what would serve as important political tools.

This bowl appears to have remained at the Pi-shu Shan-chuang until the end of the Ch'ing dynasty, and now is at the National Palace Museum, Taipei (fig. 8).[61] It probably came from Persia, where this type of footed bowl was usually called a "jām," meaning "wine bowl." The inscriptions appear to be repetitive, al-'aa, probably indicating a series of nouns like happiness and good-will.[62] A similar bowl, part of the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, has been dated to the thirteenth century (fig. 9).[63]

2. Islamic *P'o-lu-ch'ou* Bucket (回銅嚩嚕篤器)

This *p'o-lu-ch'ou* bucket (fig. 10) was one of the trophies presented to Ch'ien-lung by General Chao-hui at the *hsien-fu* 獻俘 ceremony held in the first month of Ch'ien-lung 25 (1760) in Pei-ching , soon after the Ch'ing conquered Hui-pu. After the

60. A similar Islamic bronze was mistakenly recorded in the second volume of *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien*, under the title "Han yün wen tou 漢雲文豆" (A *tou* of the Han dynasty decorated with cloud pattern). See *Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien, i pien* 乙編, *chuan* 13, p. 9.
61. Chang Lin-sheng 張臨生, "Ku-kung po wu yüan shou ts'ang te I-ssu-lan t'ung ch'i 故宮博物院收藏的伊斯蘭銅器," *Ku-kung wen wu yüeh k'an* 故宮文物月刊, 9 (6), pp. 4-15.
62. I would like to thank Prof. Sheila Blair of Boston College and Prof. Rachel Ward of The Royal Asiatic Society for translating the inscriptions on all the Persian objects in this article and providing precious references about Islamic metalwork.
63. A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World: 8-18 centuries* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1982), pp. 162-164.

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ceremony, Ch'ien-lung wrote a long commentary on this object. He called it a *p'o-lu-ch'ou* 嚩嚕篛, a term that seems to be a transliteration of a foreign word.

In his remarks, Ch'ien-lung first gave a clear description of this object, and then presented its history. A translation a Muslim provided of the inscription on the outside of the bucket indicated that it had been made during the Yüan dynasty for the khan "Mei-li T'e-muer" (眉哩特木爾) of "I-leng" 伊楞 by a master artisan called "K'a-ma-erh" (喀馬爾) living in "Sha-lai-tsu" 沙賴子. Only these Chinese transliterations in Ch'ien-lung's commentaries remain, since the vessel bearing the Farsi inscription has apparently been lost. Ch'ien-lung stated that a more detailed history of Hui-pu could be written after the Ch'ing had fully subdued it and brought the Muslim peoples and their heirlooms to the Central Kingdom, where their fragmented and disconnected records could be pieced together (其人乃至, 昔日舊物留遺皆得入中國, 而詳其原委). In his conclusion, Ch'ien-lung remarked that obtaining objects from afar was not something about which he wished to boast, but he urged later generations to not fear confronting the difficulties involved in pacifying the frontiers (不敢衿方物之遠益, 無忌綏輯之艱). In *Huang-yü hsi-yü t'u-chih* 皇輿西域圖志 (Imperial illustrated gazetteer of western regions, 1782), this *p'o-lu-ch'ou* bucket was singled out as a representative Zunghar container for food and drink.[64]

Today we know that this is a typical Islamic metal bucket, probably Persian because the inscription mentions the "sultan of the Arabs and Persians." This kind of bucket is usually called a *satl* in Arabic and a *tās-e hammām* in Persian; both mean, literally, bath-house bucket.[65] The bucket usually functioned as a container of liquid soap in bathhouses.[66] An analogous object belongs to the Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg (fig. 11).[67] It was dated 1333 and made for the Grand-Vizier of the Injū Sultan of Fars by the artisan Muhammad Shāh al-Shīrāzī.[68] A center of metalwork in the province of Fars in western Iran produced this masterpiece. Fars is also the location of the city of Shiraz, possibly the "Shalaizi" mentioned by Ch'ien-lung's translator.

64. *Huang-yü Hsi-yü t'u-chih* 皇輿西域圖志, 1782, reprint ed., *Ying-yin Wen-yüan Ke Ssu-k'u ch'uan-shu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書, vol. 500 (Taipei: Taiwan shang wu yin shu kuan, 1983), *chuan* 42, pp. 14-15.
65. For the origin of this term, see A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World: 8-18 centuries*, pp. 397-398.
66. Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, *Islamic Arts* (London: Phaidom, 1997), pp. 261-263.
67. Arthur Upham Pope ed., *A Survey of Persian Art* (Ashya: SOPA Associates, 1938-1939), vol. 6, pl. 1363b.
68. A.S. Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World:8-18 centuries*, p. 148.

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Apparently a fourteenth-century Persian bucket was moved from Shiraz to Inner Asia before making its way to Ch'ien-lung's imperial collection.

3. Ax from Badakhshan (拔達克山斧)

Sultan Shah (素爾坦沙), the khan of Badakhshan, presented this ax as a tributary gift to Ch'ien-lung in the twenty-sixth year of his reign (1761) (fig. 12). Close to the end of the Hui-pu war, in Ch'ien-lung 24 (1759), Sultan Shah killed the Khoja Jihān (霍集占) and his brother Burhān ad-Dīn (布羅尼特), the leaders of the resistance to the Ch'ing, and presented their decapitated heads to the Ch'ing general Fu-te 富德.

In Ch'ien-lung's commentary about this ax, he claimed that after Ch'ing troops established control over Hui-pu, Sultan Shah was in no great hurry to acknowledge the Ch'ing sovereignty. Ch'ien-lung had been obliged to apply some pressure to this recalcitrant subject through his ambassadors. Only then did the emperor start to receive the tribute he deserved, including this ax, which he viewed as a symbol of loyalty and meaningful proof of his triumph in Hui-pu.

4. Sword and Ax from Bolor (博洛爾劍斧)

"Sha-hu-sha-mo-t'e" 沙胡沙默特, the local chieftain *(beg)* of Bolor 博洛爾, presented the sword and the ax in fig. 13 to Ch'ien-lung, probably as new-year gifts in Ch'ien-lung 28 (1763).[69] After the Ch'ing conquest of Hui-bu in 1759, the emperor held a number of imperial new-year banquets in the Tsu-kuang Ke to which he invited the diplomatic corps from the Ch'ing's allies. Exchanging gifts was one of the routines at such events. These two weapons were then housed in the Tsu-kuang Ke.[70]

5. Dagger from Andijan (安集延匕首)

After conquering Hui-pu, Ch'ien-lung obtained more and more objects from Inner Asia. This dagger (fig. 14) was a gift to Ch'ien-lung presented in the twenty-eighth year of his reign (1763) from Andijan (安集延). Impressed by the crescent shape, crystal handle, and gold-inlaid sheath, Ch'ien-lung wrote a poem that same year to praise its flamboyant style. The Ch'ing imperial workshops also made some daggers

69. Because Ch'ien-lung's commentary was dated early in the first month of 1763.
70. Chung-kuo Ti-i Li-shih Tang-an Kuan, "Tsu-kuang Ke Wu-ch'eng Tien ta tang i pu," p. 57.

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in imitation of this foreign style, no doubt because of Ch'ien-lung's interest.[71]

6. Daggers from Bolor (博洛爾匕首)

Ch'ien-lung received the three daggers in fig. 15 as tributary gifts from "Sha-hu-sha-mo-t'e" 沙胡沙默特 of Bolor, respectively in the twenty-ninth (1764) and thirty-fourth (1769) years of his reign. According to Ch'ien-lung's commentary, when the Ch'ing governor in Yarkand managed to prevent the conflict between Bolor and Badakhshan, the Bolor leader presented Ch'ien-lung with these daggers to express gratitude.

7. Drum-Shaped *Tsun* Vessel (唐鼓腔尊)

The bronze vessel in fig. 16 was excavated by Ch'ing soldiers on an agricultural colony in Urumqi around Ch'ien-lung 41 (1776). Several other bronzes and ceramics were discovered at the same time, including a ceramic bowl made in the Yüan dynasty. Ch'ien-lung wrote a very long commentary on this bowl, which he considered to be *chün* ware (均窯), the blue or purple ware of Northern Sung.[72] As part of his commentary, he employed the tools of evidential research to investigate Urumqi's political status from the Han to the Yüan, trying to understand how the bowl had ended up there.[73] Among other conclusions, he reckoned that this area must have been quite wealthy during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (耕屯相望廬井阜而倉廩實).

As to this tsun vessel, Ch'ien-lung dated it to the T'ang (618-907) because until then Urumqi had lacked, he thought, the resources to make such a fine object. Awarded the rank of "finest quality antique" (古上等), this vessel was displayed at the Ch'ien-ch'ing Kung 乾清宮 inside the Forbidden City.[74] Ch'ien-lung called it a *ku-ch'iang*

71. Chumei Ho and Bennet Bronson, eds., *Splendors of China's Forbidden City: The Glorious Reign of Emperor Qianlong* (London: Merrell, 2004), p. 111.
72. Ch'ing Kao-tsung, "T'i Chun-yao wan 題均窯碗," in *Yü chih shih chi* 御製詩集, 4 *chi, chuan* 34, p. 8-9.
73. On Ch'ing scholars' use of evidential research (考證) to historicize geography, see James A. Millward, "Coming onto the Map: 'Western Regions' Geography and Cartographic Nomenclature in the Making of Chinese Empire in Xinjiang," *Late Imperial China*, 20 (2), pp. 61-98; Benjamin A. Elman, *On Their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2005), pp. 195-199.
74. "Ch'ien-lung ssu-shih-i nien shih-yüeh hsia-piao-tso 乾隆四十一年十月匣裱作," in *Yang-hsin Tien tsao pan ch'u ke tso ch'eng tso huo chi ch'ing tang* 養心殿造辦處各作成做活計清檔.

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tsun 鼓腔尊, a tsun in the shape of drum shell, after a similar object recorded in *Tsun sheng pa chien* 遵生八箋 (Eight discourses on the art of living), a famous guide to connoisseurship by Kao Lien 高濂 (fl. 1573).[75]

We now know that this type of Persian cooking vessels, called hāvan, had been in use as mortar since the thirteenth century.[76] Their styles ranged from the simple to the flamboyant (fig. 17). This modest piece recorded in the *fu-lu* may have been used by an ordinary family in Urumqi during the Mongolian Yüan dynasty.

According to the description in the *fu-lu*, a poem that Ch'ien-lung had written in 1777 was engraved onto this *tsun* mortar. As we have seen, Ch'ien-lung was a collector who left a range of marks on the things he collected. Though he liked to leave his words on hard materials, such as jades and ceramics, he seemed hesitant to mar the surfaces of ancient bronzes. Usually Ch'ien-lung engraved his commentaries about bronzes on the surfaces of the boxes or stands that supported them, or he transcribed them into an album. However, here he took the unusual step of having his poem (sixty-five characters) and the designs of two seals carved onto the bottom ring of *tsun* mortar, probably soon after he composed the poem in 1777. In this poem, Ch'ien-lung first described how he acquired this *tsun* and then pointed out that it looked very different from typical ancient Chinese bronzes (範銅形異子孫卣). At the end of his poem he declared that while he took suggestions from others in expanding his territory, his real plan was to pacify and unify all the peoples (闢地開疆聽彼議, 安民和眾盡吾謀).

8. Hui-ke Jar Decorated with Four Magpies (唐回紇四喜壺)

We know little about how this newly-unearthed jar in fig. 18 entered the emperor's collection. Possibly he received it around the forty-sixth year of his reign (1781), the year when he wrote a long poem about it. As with the *tsun* mortar discussed above, Ch'ien-lung had this poem of ninety-one characters engraved onto it, but this time on the inner surface of the lid.

Once again, in his commentary, Ch'ien-lung assigned this object of uncertain age to the T'ang dynasty; he believed it had been made by the Muslim Hui-ke 回紇

75. Ch'ien-lung's original commentary about this bronze contained an introduction and a poem, but the introduction was not transcribed into the *fulu*. For the complete commentary, see Ch'ing Kao-tsung, "T'ang ku ch'iang tsun 唐鼓腔尊," in *Yü-chih shih chi* 御製詩集, 4 *chi, chuan* 38, p. 10.
76. On *hāvan*, see A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World:8-18 centuries*, p. 389.

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people. He also expressed that the T'ang needed the help of the Hui-ke to control the western regions (中國兵威或弗足, 借彼之力因成功). This expression might reflect his expectations toward the Muslim peoples in Hsin-chiang, as well as his affirmation that the Ch'ing empire outshined the T'ang empire.

This Huige jar and the above *tsun* were the only two bronzes in the *fu-lu* that bore Ch'ien-lung's poems on their surfaces. It is hard to explain why he singled out these two bronzes in this fashion. Why did bronzes excavated from Urumqi receive such a special treatment? Did Ch'ien-lung inscribe the objects he most highly valued, or, quite the opposite, did he honor those he deemed second rate? Considering the significance of the ancient mirror after which Ch'ien-lung entitled his first bronze catalogue, I think that he must also have highly valued the two bronzes from afar by inscribing poems onto them.

Among Ch'ien-lung's antique collections, many bronzes already bore long inscriptions composed by the first owners who had them cast to commemorate personal achievements for a ritual context, especially for worshipping their ancestors. These inscriptions, usually found in the interior of a bronze ritual vessel, were not supposed to be read by the living. Together with food and drink, these eulogistic texts were presented to the inhabitants of the beyond.

Ch'ien-lung was fully aware of the difference between being a collector of bronzes and being a patron who commissioned bronze casting. If he wanted to eulogize his achievements through bronzes, he usually did so by casting new ones and inscribing his own words onto them.[77]

The authority to excavate and the right to own what one unearthed were, and still are, proofs of sovereignty. Neither trophies nor tributes, the *tsun* mortar and the Hui-ke jar were the only two bronze vessels in the *fu-lu* that had been recently unearthed in the western regions, ten years after the wars that established Ch'ing control. This was a period when the emperor was busy setting up monuments, settlements, and colonies, levying taxes, and making maps. In other words, if not for the Ch'ing's triumphant imperialism, these two vessels would not have been unearthed and then entered into the imperial collection. By engraving his own words onto the unearthed relics, Ch'ien-lung left permanent marks of ownership. This emperor not only controlled the lands of the new territory, he also laid claim to what lay underground.

77. Such as the replicas of Chou bells cast in 1759 for the performance of state rites. See Yu Hui-chun, "Qianlong's Divine Treasures: The Bells in the Rhyming-the-Old Hall," pp. 121-144.

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9. Pul Coin of Hui-pu (回部普爾錢)

The pul was an old economic unit in Hsin-chiang.[78] This coin bore texts in Uyghur and Mongolian languages. On the one side was the word "Yarkand," the name of the city where the coin was minted; on the other side was "Galdan Tseren" (葛爾丹策凌), the name of the last khan of the Zunghar kingdom. The editors of the *fulu* did not identify when the coin appeared or where it came from. Ch'ien-lung probably obtained it after the Ch'ing controlled Hsin-chiang; it may have been housed in the Tsu-kuang Ke.[79]

10. New Coins Commemorating the Pacification of Hui-pu (平定回部新鑄錢)

These five coins (fig. 19) were the official Ch'ing currency of Hui-pu issued after 1760 by mints in Aksu (阿克蘇), Ush (烏什), Kashgar (喀什葛爾), Yarkand (葉爾羌), and He-t'ien (和闐). On one side, every coin bore the same text: "Ch'ien-lung t'ung-pao" 乾隆通寶 (circulating treasure of Ch'ien-lung) in Chinese; on the other side were the names of the cities where the coins were minted written in both the Manchu and Uyghur languages (回文).

In Ch'ien-lung 25 (1760), right after the Ch'ing army conquered Hui-pu, the Ch'ing government set up its first mint in this area, in Yarkand, and issued the first Ch'ing currency that would replace the *pul*. Thereafter, more mints were continually set up in various cities.[80] Ch'ien-lung probably received these five new coins in the fifty-third year of his reign (1788), the year when he wrote his commentary on them. These coins came from afar, he stated, and were going to be stored in the center (呈樣各看來自外, 聚銖並以弃於中).

While these objects I have just itemized represented the Muslim landscape of metalworking before the arrival of Ch'ing forces, it was jade, rather than metalwork, that seized Ch'ien-lung's attention after the defeat of Hui-pu.[81] He collected more than

78. For the illustration of this *pul* coin, see "Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien chia-pien fu-lu 西清續鑑甲編附錄," p. 39.
79. Chung-kuo Ti-i Li-shih Tang-an Kuan, "Tsu-kuang Ke Wu-ch'eng Tien ta tang i pu," p. 9.
80. James A. Millward, *Beyond the Pass: Economy, Ethnicity, and Empire in Qing Central Asia, 1759-1864*, pp. 64-65.
81. On Ch'ien-lung's collection of Mughal-style jades, see Teng Shu-p'ing 鄧淑蘋, *Ku-kung so ts'ang Hen-tu-ssu-t'an yü ch'i t'e chan t'u lu* 故宮所藏痕都斯坦玉器特展圖錄 (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1983). Ch'ien-lung wrote at least fifty-two poems about Mughal-style jades. See Shih Kuang-ming 石光明, ed., *Ch'ien-lung yü chih wen wu chien shang shih* 乾隆御製文物鑑賞詩(Pei-ching : Shu mu wen hsien, 1993), pp. 638-648.

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250 Mughal jades, which he called "Hen-tu-ssu-t'an" 痕都斯坦 jades. In a commentary written in the fortieth year of his reign (1775) about a jade plate, he declared that even the famous jade workers of Su-chou 蘇州 might not be as skillful as Islamic artisans (喀嗎匠能逞彼巧, 專諸人或遜其精).[82] As a collector who enjoyed novel objects, Ch'ien-lung benefited a lot from the Hui-pu war because it opened up and stabilized trade and cultural communication between the Manchu and the Muslim world.

Objects Related to the Chin-ch'uan Wars

Ch'ien-lung waged two wars against the Hsi Ch'iang 西羌 peoples who lived in the region of the Chin River (金川) in western Si-chuan—the first conflict lasted from the twelfth (1747) to the fourteenth (1749) year of his reign, and the second from the thirty-sixth (1771) to the forty-first (1776). The latter was the longest and the most grueling war the emperor ever undertook. To Ch'ien-lung's surprise, this small group of poor Ch'iang tribesmen proved much tougher than he had anticipated (朕思蕞爾窮番, 何足當我王師).[83] For the first Chin-ch'uan war, at least eighty thousand soldiers were mobilized, while expenses exceeded ten million *liang* of silver. For the second war, one hundred thousand soldiers were mobilized with costs soaring past seventy million *liang*.[84] According to the report submitted by the Manchu general A-kui in Ch'ien-lung 37 (1772), the Ch'iangs sent no more than fifteen thousand soldiers to resist the vast Manchu army in the second Chin-ch'uan war.[85]

More than one hundred trophies captured during these years were eventually stored in the Tsu-kuang Ke, seven of which were recorded in the *fu-lu*. For Ch'ien-lung, the trophies from Chin-ch'uan seemed to be less interesting than those from Hsin-chiang: he only bothered to write something about one Chin-ch'uan sword.

82. Ch'ing Kao-tsung, "Yung Hen-tu-ssu-tan lü yü p'an 詠痕都斯坦綠玉盤," *Yü-chih shih chi* 御製詩集, 4 *chi, chuan* 28, pp. 8-9.
83. *P'ing-ting Chin-ch'uan fang lüe* 平定金川方略, reprint ed., *Ying-yin Wen-yüan Ke Ssu-k'u ch'uan-shu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: Taiwan shang wu yin shu kuan, 1983), *chuan* 22, p. 3.
84. Chuang Chi-fa, *Ch'ing Kao-tsung shih ch'uan wu kung yen chiu*, pp. 172-173.
85. Chuang Chi-fa, *Ch'ing Kao-tsung shih ch'uan wu kung yen chiu*, p. 175.

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Table 3. Objects related to the Chin-ch'uan wars

Item	Date made	Origin	Date collected	Ch'ien-lung's commentary	Where displayed
Ming official seal of the pacification commissioner of Yang-t'ang (明楊塘安撫司印)	1406	Trophy	1773	?	Tsu-kuang Ke
Ming official seal of the pacification commissioner of Pieh-ssu-chai (明別思寨安撫司印)	1435	Trophy	1773	?	Tsu-kuang Ke
Ming official seal of the chief officer of Yen-chou (明嚴州長官司印)	1378	Trophy	1773	?	Tsu-kuang Ke
Foreign sword from Chin-ch'uan (金川蕃劍)	?	Trophy	1776	Poem	Tsu-kuang Ke
Ming official seal of the pacification office of Tung-pu-han-hu (明董卜韓胡宣慰史司印)	1414	Trophy	1776	?	Tsu-kuang Ke
Ming official seal of the chief of military colony in Hung-jen Yün-chou (明宏仁允州長官阡照司印)	Ming dynasty (1368-1643)	Trophy	1776	?	Tsu-kuang Ke
Ming official seal of the battalion of Tsang-pu-lang (明藏卜浪千戶所印)	1457	Trophy	1776	?	Tsu-kuang Ke

1. Foreign Sword from Chin-ch'uan (金川蕃劍)

The sword in fig. 20 was a trophy brought back from Chin-ch'uan and presented to Ch'ien-lung in the forty-first year of his reign (1776), after A-kui's return. It was displayed in the Tsu-kuang Ke together with other trophies captured there. In the poem Ch'ien-lung wrote that same year, he mentioned that the militant Hsi Ch'iang peoples generally walked about with this kind of sword hung at their waists (西羌尚武相爭鬬, 盈尺利器常繫腰).

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2. Official Seals of the Ming Dynasty from Chin-ch'uan

Because Ch'ing officials in Chin-ch'uan decided that Ming objects, in addition to indigenous products, might be of interest to their sovereign, they returned with the following six official seals: Ming official seal of the Pacification Office of Tung-pu-han-hu (明董卜韓胡宣慰司印), Ming official seal of the Pacification Commissioner of Yang t'ang (明楊塘安撫司印), Ming official seal of the Pacification Commissioner of Pieh-ssu-chai (明別思寨安撫司印), Ming official seal of the Chief Officer of Yen-chou (明嚴州長官司印), Ming official seal of the Chief of Military Colony in Hung-jen Yün-chou (明宏仁允州阡照長官印), and Ming official seal of Battalion of Tsang-pu-lang (明藏卜浪千戶所印). These seals were part of the aboriginal *t'u-ssu* 土司 system, developed by the Ming to organize and control native peoples under a local headman. Ch'ien-lung did not write any commentaries on these seals, which might imply that he did not cherish these objects that much. The Tsu-kuang Ke 紫光閣 housed all these seals.

Other Objects in the *Fu-lu*

1. Drum and Cymbal from Annam

According to the fulu, this set of percussion instruments in fig. 21 was a tribute from Nguyên Quang Binh, the king of Annam (present Vietnam) enthroned in Ch'ien-lung 57 (1792). These instruments were not Annam products. Annam army captured them from the "State of Ten Thousand Elephants" (萬象國), present-day Vientiane in Laos.

Since Ch'ien-lung 50 (1785), a civil war had raged in Annam. Nguyên Quang Binh succeeded in overthrowing the previous king, Le Duy Chi, and seized the throne. Le and the members of royal family had fled to the Ch'ing, requesting military support. At first, Ch'ien-lung had complied, sending troops that helped defeat Nguyên's forces and restored Le Duy Chi to the throne in Ch'ien-lung 53 (1788). However, when Le proved incapable of maintaining control, and again, fled to China, Ch'ien-lung was not prepared to back the loser once more. With more than five thousand Ch'ing soldiers dying in the earlier conflict, Ch'ien-lung was happy to accept Nguyên's proposal to open peace negotiations. In Ch'ien-lung 54 (1789), after Nguyên Quang Binh had routed out Le Duy Chi completely and unified Annam, the Ch'ing government accepted Nguyên as the new king, with the understanding that he would pay tribute every two years, send a diplomatic mission to Pei-ching for an audience with the emperor every

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four years, and receive the emperor's presents in return.[86] Ch'ien-lung had the drum and the cymbal housed in the Tsu-kuang Ke in 1792.[87]

2. New Silver Coins of Tibet

These three new silver coins were made in the Ch'ing mint in Tibet established in Ch'ien-lung 57 (1792); they are the only objects in the *fulu* related to the war against the Gurkhas.[88] One side of the coins read *Ch'ien-lung pao-tsang* 乾隆寶藏, or Tibetan treasure of Ch'ien-lung, in Chinese, while the reverse said the same thing in Tibetan. Before the Ch'ing defeated the Gurkhas, the main currency in Tibet was Gurkha silver coins (廓爾喀銀錢), but when long simmering tensions and low-level conflicts over trade boiled over in Ch'ien-lung 56 (1791), the Gurkhas invaded Tibet. Ch'ien-lung sent troops to defend Tibet and in the following year the Gurkhas officially surrendered and agreed to send tribute to the Ch'ing.[89]

Collecting the Glorious Present

Overall, the objects in the *fu-lu* represented Ch'ien-lung's efforts to build up what we would call a multiethnic collection. Through such efforts, Ch'ien-lung defined himself as the mighty sovereign of an empire with dominion over many different ethnic groups.

These thirty-eight objects can be categorized into four categories, each one playing a specific role in Ch'ien-lung's colonial discourse. The first category is the four bronze containers from Muslim areas. By collecting these objects, Ch'ien-lung also collected the past of those previous owners by bringing their cultural heritages to the center of the Ch'ing empire. In his commentaries, Ch'ien-lung traced these objects' fragmented history, showing that the past emperors who had ruled over great empires such as the T'ang and the Yüan had long labored to control the Muslim peoples that Ch'ien-lung had finally conquered. He also declared that the Muslim peoples from afar, together with their cultural heritages, came to his empire because of Heaven's blessing; his duty was to remind later generations the difficulty of preserving the great Manchu empire.

86. On the course of Annam war, see Chuang Chi-fa, *Ch'ing Kao-tsung shih ch'uan wu kung yen chiu*, pp. 331-389.
87. Chung-kuo Ti-i Li-shih Tang-an Kuan, "Tsu kuang Ke Wu-ch'eng Tien ta tang i pu," p. 40.
88. For the illustration, see "Hsi-ch'ing hsü-chien chia-pien fu-lu 西清續鑑甲編附錄," p. 40.
89. Chuang Chi-fa, *Ch'ing Kao-tsung shih ch'uan wu kung yen chiu*, pp. 417-476.

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The second category of the weapons and percussion instruments suggests the military strength of foreign states. By collecting them, Ch'ien-lung declared that he had disarmed his former enemies and transformed the tools of violence into symbols of peace, reshaping his own image from military autocrat to cultured man of peace.

The third category consists of official seals through which past dynasties had symbolized their control over these newly conquered lands. These seals gave Ch'ien-lung the legitimacy to dominate the frontiers himself. By collecting them, he was able to defend himself against the criticism of wantonly engaging in military aggression, casting military affairs as the logical reclamation of lost territories.

The last category is the coins issued by indigenous political entities and by the Ch'ing. These coins attested to Ch'ing institutions functioning in the newly conquered areas. By abolishing old local currencies and issuing "Ch'ien-lung t'ung pao," the emperor placed the broad empire under one united monetary system. When the editors decided to include these contemporary "Ch'ien-lung t'ung pao," the message was that the *fu-lu* was not a catalogue of Ch'ien-lung's ancient bronzes: it was a record of Ch'ien-lung's colonial ambition.

Ch'ien-lung collected bronzes from different cultures, just as he collected subjects from different ethnic groups. The *fu-lu*, possibly created as a gift for the Ch'ien-lung emperor, embodied Ch'ien-lung's vision of the grand Ch'ing empire, a Man-ch′u-centered empire encompassing many different groups. Working from the superior position of an emperor-collector, he interpreted the cultural heritages of his heterogeneous subjects within the frame of Manchu imperialism. Both the *fu-lu* and Tsu-kuang Ke could be regarded as "political theaters," in which Ch'ien-lung chose his objects from afar as actors to perform the ongoing formation of Ch'ing empire. During the performance, Ch'ien-lung kept adding commentaries as captions to highlight several select episodes for his audiences.

Ch'ien-lung's practices of collecting belonged to a set of political dramas to strengthen his power. His expanding collections functioned as a model of the empire over which he reigned. The creation and maintenance of the Ch'ing imperial collection were an ongoing dialogue between Ch'ien-lung the collector and his collected. He not only adopted existent political discourses—such as Heaven's mandate and auspiciousness—to contextualize ancient relics, but also kept adding new objects to the body of imperial collection, as well as new meanings, narratives, and representations to them. Other collectors at Ch'ien-lung's time, no matter how rich their collections, were themselves collectable. Secular or sacred institutions, including the state bureaucracy and monastic orders, gathered and sorted them. At the top of the collecting pyramid sat Ch'ien-lung, the supreme collector, the only one in the empire who could not be

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collected. Even in his religious practices, he reserved for himself a special position immune to the whims of collector-deities: as the reincarnation of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, Ch'ien-lung freed from being appropriated by some gods.[90]

This Manchu ruler considered all subjugated peoples as others, not "us." The thousands of ancient Chinese bronzes he collected did not convince Ch'ien-lung to give up Manchu language and skip the fall hunt. He hired specialists to study these bronzes, to catalogue them, to display them, to classify them according to artistic quality, to translate inscriptions, and to correct the mistakes in previous written records. After all of these works had been done, he came with his ink-stone and brush to dash off a poem, inserting a bowl or a cauldron into his narrative of legitimacy.

Ch'ien-lung's imperialistic attitude toward ancient Chinese bronzes and those from afar was quite consistent as well. He treated both much the same: they would embody civil and military virtues as imperial propaganda. Because of the very few objects in the *fu-lu*, Ch'ien-lung made his entire bronze collections a complete lineage of bronze history, from the earliest mirror ascribed to the Yellow Emperor to coins recently minted by the Ch'ing. He did not value Chinese bronzes higher than those from afar. To Ch'ien-lung, all his bronze collections functioned as emblems of incorporation to constitute the Great Ch'ing. The more he obtained, the better he controlled his subjects and their histories.

To a certain degree, however, Ch'ien-lung seemed to be more attached to his limited bronzes from afar than his thousands of Chinese bronzes; he composed more poems of praise and inscribed more poems onto these particular bronzes. After all, the ways to obtain these very few bronzes had been painstakingly established by Manchu soldiers. Most importantly, Ch'ien-lung was able to closely recontextualize those thirty-eight bronzes into the present age of Ch'ing empire under his sixty-year emperorship. He used them to cast his own history. Unlike ancient Chinese bronzes that merely evoked the longing for a never-experienced legendary golden age, these bronzes from afar brought Ch'ien-lung a solid recognition that he was creating and experiencing the history of Ch'ing dynasty, an age, in Ch'ien-lung's mind, more glorious than any other dynasties in history.

（責任編輯：陳卉秀）

90. On Ch'ien-lung emperor's religious practices, see David M. Farquhar, "Emperor as Bodhisattva in the Governance of the Qing Empire," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 38 (1), pp. 5-34; Patricia Berger, *Empire of Emptiness: Buddhist Art and Political Authority in Qing China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 2003).

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