

A GOLDEN AGE  
*of* CHINA  
QIANLONG EMPEROR, 1736–1795

Artwork labels

# Manchu Emperor

## Giuseppe CASTIGLIONE

Italian 1688–1766, worked in China 1714–66

Qianlong Emperor in ceremonial armour on horseback

清人画弘历戎装骑马像轴

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1739

coloured inks on silk

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu8761

The twenty-nine-year-old Qianlong Emperor is here portrayed in full glory, dressed in his ceremonial military garb of bright yellow satin embroidered with golden thread, riding his horse in procession to the grand review of troops in 1739. This monumental portrait attributed to Giuseppe Castiglione (Chinese name Lang Shining), an Italian Jesuit working in the imperial court of the Qianlong Emperor, is in the European tradition of equestrian portraits of monarchs and nobles. While the work's realism and sumptuous colours resemble a European oil painting, it is executed in ink and colour on silk in the Chinese tradition.

# Giuseppe CASTIGLIONE

Italian 1688–1766, worked in China 1714–66

Qianlong Emperor attending Imperial hunting game

郎世宁画弘历哨鹿图轴

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1741

coloured inks on silk

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu5364

The young Qianlong Emperor, aged thirty, is shown with his hunting party, returning from the first deer hunt of autumn 1741. Qianlong and his entourage of officials, princes and nobles are making their way through the mountains near Mulan, north of Chengde, in present-day Hebei Province. The Emperor rides majestically on a white horse, and looks at the viewer as if posing for the painting.

# CHINESE

## Armchair and footrest

鹿角椅

incised and gilt poem by Qianlong Emperor dated 1772

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

Huanghuali wood, Zitan wood, deer horn, wood

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu207860, Gu208935

From the enthronement of the First Qing Emperor onwards, it was customary to produce deer antler chairs, occasionally with engravings warning against forgetting the archery tradition of Manchuria. Later, deer antler chairs became a symbol of respect for the Manchurian ancestors' archery skills. On the red sandalwood backboard of this chair, the Qianlong Emperor has written a poem about his responsibilities, dated 1772, the thirty-seventh year of his reign.

# CHINESE

## Qianlong Emperor hunting deer

清人画弘历威弧获鹿图像轴

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
coloured inks on paper

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu9205

This painting by imperial court artists is a fine example of the new European style of realistic documentary painting that emerged during the Qianlong period. It depicts a scene of deer hunting, on horseback at full gallop, with a young woman (possibly the Qianlong Emperor's Uighur Muslim consort Rong Fei) standing in her stirrups to hand an arrow to the Emperor while he shoots at a deer. Clearly intended for viewers who were experienced hunters, the painting shows the Emperor has achieved a fatal shot to the heart of the stag, placing his arrow just behind its front leg.

# CHINESE

## Qianlong Emperor's saddle and cushion

木镶铜镀金螭双龙马鞍

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period

1736–95 (saddle), Shunzhi period

1644–61 (cushion)

wood, gilt-copper, satin

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu171546, Gu212430

The frame of Emperor Qianlong's saddle is copper, and the gilt is gold intricately carved with dragon designs. It is covered with bright yellow satin embroidered with clouds and dragons. The saddlecloth is also made of bright yellow satin embroidered with clouds and dragons and symbols of auspicious treasures. The border of the cloth is trimmed with black velvet.

# CHINESE

## Quiver and bow case

金银丝花纹缎囊鞬

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
velveteen, gold and silver thread, satin

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu222011

These containers were worn by the Qianlong Emperor when he participated in the grand review of troops. The bow case is made of a fine satin material woven with silver thread and lined with velvet, and its sides are fastened together and reinforced with strips of green leather. The container is embossed with iron plaques gilded with gold.

The quiver is made of leather and is covered with the same satin material woven with silver thread. Attached to the quiver is a belt lined with deep blue satin, covered with bright yellow satin and inset with golden plaques and precious stones.

# CHINESE

## Bow

木牛角漆弓

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

wood, sinew, horn

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Xin48693

This bow was used by the Qianlong Emperor in battle and in hunting. Made from the wood of the mulberry tree, the bow is lacquered red. The back is decorated with swastika 卐 designs that have been inset with the bark of peach trees in the colours red and black. The swastika, originally a Buddhist symbol, means 10,000 (*wan* 萬) to the Chinese, and also conveys auspicious wishes.

# CHINESE

## Arrows

铁簇白挡索伦长鈚箭

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

wood, iron, feathers

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu171010-1-5/15

Made from the wood of a willow tree, these sharp arrows were deadly weapons used to kill the enemy in warfare, and at one time were used by the Qianlong Emperor to shoot tigers.



# CHINESE

## Sword and sheath

铁柄鲨鱼皮鞘云剑

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
iron, shark skin on wood

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu170428

This sword is made of iron and held in a wooden sheath covered with shark's skin. The blade is inlaid on the front with the Qianlong four-character reign mark 乾隆年製 in silver, and on the reverse with *di zi yihao* 地字一号 (no. 1 of the Earth category) and *chu yun* 出雲 (emerge from cloud).

# CHINESE

## Sword and sheath

玉雕鱼鳞金桃皮鞘腰刀

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1795  
steel, jade, wood, Peachwood

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu170398

This sword is made of steel and its hilt is made from jade. The wooden sheath is covered with the bark of a peach tree, a material thought to ward off evil spirits. The blade has the inscriptions *tian zi shibahao* 天字十八号 (no. 18 of the Heaven category), *shuang ming* 霜明 (frost bright), and the Qianlong four-character reign mark 乾隆年製. The sword is named *shuang ming dao* 霜明刀 (frost bright sword) and was made in 1794, the fifty-eighth year of the Qianlong Emperor's reign.

# CHINESE

## Sabre and sheath

镶玻璃柄绿皮鞘腰刀

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

iron, wood, glass

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu171086

This sword used by the Emperor is made of iron and its handle is inlaid with glass. The scabbard is made of shark skin inlaid with dragon patterns constructed from rubies and silver-gilded beads.

# CHINESE

## Sabre and sheath

铁嵌绿松石柄金桃皮鞘腰刀

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

iron, wood, Peachwood

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu170451

An inscription on the blade of this sword declares that it is reserved exclusively for the Emperor. While the sword is made of iron, the scabbard is made from the golden bark of the peach tree and inlaid with turquoise and gilt-iron decorations. The blade has the inscriptions *tian zi liuhao* 天字六号 (no. 6 of the Heaven category) and *yue ren* 月刃 (moon sword).

# CHINESE

## Dagger and sheath

玉雕花嵌料石柄皮鞘匕首

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

steel, jade, leather

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu170627

This steel dagger has a Mughal-style jade handle inlaid with precious stones, and a leather sheath (or scabbard) with gilt-iron fittings.

# CHINESE

## Deer whistle

楠木雕龙纹鹿哨

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

Nanmu wood, ox horn

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu170883

This whistle made of wood has dragon patterns and ox horn at the edges of its mouth. The instrument is lacquered with a decorative design and was used in autumn deer hunting. At dawn an attendant warrior would don a hat in the shape of the head of a male deer and blow this horn, emitting deer mating sounds to entice female deer out of the forest. The deer would be captured alive by other attendants, or shot by the Emperor himself.

# Son of Heaven

## CHINESE

### Emperor's ceremonial court robe

明黄色缎绣彩云金龙纹男夹朝袍

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

silk satin

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu42311

The Emperor dressed in this bright yellow ceremonial court robe (*chaofu*) when presiding over grand ceremonies. This bright yellow was reserved for the Emperor's exclusive use. The court robe is distinguished by a full, pleated skirt providing comfort (trousers were worn under the skirt); its sleeves are tight-fitting and taper into flared cuffs resembling the hoofs of a horse – a reminder of the Manchus' equestrian background. Decorating the robe are traditional Chinese symbols: forty-three golden dragons dance amidst auspicious clouds in the cosmic sky accompanied by symbols of imperial power, sovereignty and good fortune.

## CHINESE

### Sacrificial dou vessel with Qianlong reign mark

乾隆款白釉盖豆

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
porcelain (moon white glaze)

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu186418

## CHINESE

### Sacrificial fu vessel with Qianlong reign mark

乾隆款白釉凸螭纹簠

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
porcelain (moon white glaze)

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu186476

## CHINESE

### Sacrificial xing vessel with Qianlong reign mark

乾隆款白釉凸锦纹甬

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
porcelain (moon white glaze)

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu186520

# CHINESE

## Sacrificial xu vessel with Qianlong reign mark

乾隆款白釉凸螭纹盃

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
porcelain (moon white glaze)

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu186501

This group of porcelain ritual vessels was used at the Altar to the Moon, west of Beijing. Their surface decoration features stylised patterns of waves, clouds, interlocking keys, thunder, dragons, waterweed and honeycombs. The bluish-white glaze on the porcelain vessels is known in Chinese as *yuebai* 月白, literally 'moon-white'. The altars in the other cardinal directions – the Altar to Heaven (south), the Altar to Earth (north) and the Altar to the Sun (east) – used ritual vessels of similar form coated in blue, yellow and red glazes respectively.



# CHINESE

## Emperor's ceremonial court robe

明黄色缎绣彩云金龙纹男夹朝袍

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

silk satin

The Palace Museum, Beijing

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The Emperor dressed in this bright yellow ceremonial court robe (*chaofu*) when presiding over grand ceremonies. This bright yellow was reserved for the Emperor's exclusive use. The court robe is distinguished by a full, pleated skirt providing comfort (trousers were worn under the skirt); its sleeves are tight-fitting and taper into flared cuffs resembling the hoofs of a horse – a reminder of the Manchus' equestrian background. Decorating the robe are traditional Chinese symbols: forty-three golden dragons dance amidst auspicious clouds in the cosmic sky accompanied by symbols of imperial power, sovereignty and good fortune.

# Giuseppe CASTIGLIONE

Italian 1688–1766, worked in China 1714–66

Portrait of Qianlong Emperor in ceremonial court robe

清人画弘历朝服像轴

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736

coloured inks on silk

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu6464

This formal portrait was painted for the young Emperor's inauguration in 1736, when he was twenty-five years old. He is portrayed as the Son of Heaven, a mediator between Heaven and Earth, seated in a golden dragon throne and dressed in full ceremonial robe and accessories. The ceremonial robe is of bright imperial yellow, a colour reserved for the Emperor, and decorated with dragons, symbols of the Emperor. The painting shows the European influence of portraiture and realism, as well as illusionism in the linear perspective of the carpet. Its subject, symbolism and the medium of ink and colour on silk, however, are traditionally Chinese.

# CHINESE

## Empress Xiao Yichun in ceremonial court robe

清人画孝仪纯皇后朝服像轴

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
coloured inks on silk

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu6523

Empress Xiao Yichun is shown in a full ceremonial outfit, including ceremonial robe, vest and accessories. The Empress was Chinese of the Han Banner by birth (Chinese who joined the Manchu before their conquest of China in 1644), and married the Qianlong Emperor in 1745. She was first a noble lady (*guiren* 貴人) and later promoted to the rank of Imperial Noble Consort Ling (*Linghuangguifei* 令皇貴妃), second only to the empress. She died in 1775, aged forty-seven, and was granted the posthumous title of Empress Xiao Yichun when her son ascended the throne as Jiaqing Emperor in 1796.

# CHINESE

## Empress's ceremonial court robe

明黄色缎绣彩云金龙纹女夹朝袍

Qing dynasty, Yongzheng period 1722–35  
satin

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu49298

Like the Emperor, imperial women wore specially designated clothes on formal occasions. This empress's yellow silk robe is embroidered with golden dragons amidst auspicious clouds, but does not bear the twelve imperial emblems as mandated by revised regulations of 1766. Auspicious symbols of the precious objects coral, rhinoceros horns, peaches, coins and ingots are shown being tossed among waves rising from the hem of the dress. A profusion of accessories was layered over the full-length, yellow court robe: a court vest, court hat and three ceremonial strings of beads and earrings.

# CHINESE

## Ruyi (As you wish) sceptre

青玉浮雕龙凤灵芝式如意

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

jade, silk thread

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu89024

The *ruyi* sceptre is a symbol of good luck. *Ruyi* 如意 means 'as you wish', or 'may your wishes come true'. The head of this sceptre resembles the *lingzhi* 灵芝 or 'longevity fungus'. This *ruyi* sceptre of translucent jade is intricately carved with the designs of a dragon and phoenix.

# CHINESE

## Ruyi (As you wish) sceptre

黄玉灵芝式如意

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

jade, silk thread

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu92630

The *ruyi* sceptre is a symbol of good luck. *Ruyi* 如意 means 'as you wish', or 'may your wishes come true'. The head of this sceptre resembles the *lingzhi* 灵芝 or 'longevity fungus'. As auspicious symbols of good luck, *ruyi* sceptres were displayed in the imperial palace and highly valued by the Emperor and his consorts, who often carried them. It is believed *ruyi* sceptres originally functioned as backscratchers.

# CHINESE

## Court beads

伽南香朝珠

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

fragrant wood (*Jiananxiang*), pearl, coral, precious stones

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu71863

Court necklaces were worn with court robes by the Emperor, empresses, prince and officials above the fifth rank at ceremonies and festivals. The longest of the four pendant strings here hangs down the back, while two shorter strings fall on the left side of the chest, and a single string falls on the right. Men wore one string of beads, and women wore three. The Empress wore a string of Manchurian freshwater pearls on her neck and two strings of coral beads, each hung diagonally from one shoulder to the opposite underarm area.

# CHINESE

## Ceremonial necklace

松石朝珠

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

turquoise, tourmaline

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu71687

Court necklaces were worn with court robes by the Emperor, empresses, prince and officials above the fifth rank at ceremonies and festivals. The longest of the four pendant strings hangs down the back, while two shorter strings fall on the left side of the chest and a single string falls on the right. The Emperor was required to wear different necklaces when making different sacrifices: red coral for the sun, lapis lazuli for Heaven, amber for Earth and turquoise for the moon.



# CHINESE

## Crown stand

乾隆款粉彩塑夔凤式冠架

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
porcelain (famille rose glaze)

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu152689

This hatstand, with its odd and daring combinations of sumptuous colours and lifelike creatures, is both eccentric and magnificent. Three sets of dragons with octopus suckers on their backs are biting a lotus stand that seems to have a set of teeth at the top. The work is an artistic and technical masterpiece with a playful sense of humour; it is also a dynamic piece of three-dimensional sculpture. This style of stand, intended to support crowns or imperial hats, was popular in the reigns of the Kangxi (1662–1722), Yongzheng (1722–35) and Qianlong (1736–95) emperors.

# CHINESE

## Winter court crown

绒缨料石顶皇帝冬朝冠

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

sable, freshwater pearls, gilt-bronze, gold, silk floss

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu59739

The Qing emperors regarded hats as a vital component of their ceremonial regalia. The brim of this emperor's winter court hat, worn for important ceremonies, is made of black sable fur, and strands of glossy red-floss silk form its crown. From this rises a tall golden finial. Three large pearls are aligned to form the apex of the hat, with smaller pearls and dragons around them. As the Emperor performed solemn rites, the red silk strands would have ruffled in the air and the golden finial would have caught the light.

# CHINESE

## Empress's ceremonial court headdress

点翠嵌珠皇后朝冠

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

gold, pearls, sable, silk floss, kingfisher feathers, precious stones

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu60084

The Empress's headdress was worn on formal occasions, along with the ceremonial court robe and accessories. Its brim is made of black sable fur and strands of red silk floss form the hat's crown. This court headdress, also called a phoenix (symbol of femininity) headdress, is adorned with three tiers of gilt phoenix alternating with freshwater pearls. The lowest tier is decorated with seven phoenix inlaid with pearls and blue kingfisher feathers, and a pheasant at the back. Extending from the tail of the pheasant is a pendant of three strings of pearls.

## CHINESE

### Sacrificial xu vessel with Qianlong reign mark

乾隆款白釉凸螭纹盃

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
porcelain (moon white glaze)

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu186501

## CHINESE

### Sacrificial xing vessel with Qianlong reign mark

乾隆款白釉凸锦纹觶

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
porcelain (moon white glaze)

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu186520

## CHINESE

### Sacrificial fu vessel with Qianlong reign mark

乾隆款白釉凸螭纹簠

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
porcelain (moon white glaze)

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu186476

# CHINESE

**Imperial seal of the Treasure of the Supersovereign (a title assumed by an emperor [Qianlong] who has abdicated in favour of his son)**

青玉交龙纽 “太上皇帝之宝”

Qing dynasty 1795–99

jade, silk thread

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu166712

The imperial seal was the chief status symbol of the Emperor. As with previous rulers, the Qing emperors regarded this seal as evidence of their having received the mandate to rule from Heaven. The text of the seal is 太上皇帝之宝 (Treasure of the Supersovereign), a title assumed by an emperor who abdicated. This seal was used by Qianlong Emperor from 1795 when he abdicated in favour of his fifteenth son, who ruled as Jiaqing Emperor from 1796 to 1820. After ruling for sixty years, Qianlong stepped down so as not to outshine his grandfather's sixty-one-year reign.

# CHINESE

## Imperial seal of the of Treasure of the Son of Heaven

金交龙纽 “天子之宝”

early Qing dynasty, late 17th century  
gold, coloured inks on ivory, silk thread

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu167061

This seal from the early Qing period is made of solid gold, and its Manchu script reads: ‘Treasure of the Son of Heaven’. The ivory medallion attached to the golden dragon handle repeats the text in Chinese (天子之宝). No imperial document was complete or fully sanctioned without the imprint of the state seal, the final and literal stamp of imperial authority. Holding the dragon handle, the Emperor would press the seal onto a red paste (a mixture of cinnabar or red mercuric sulphide and oil) and then transfer the text to paper or silk.

# CHINESE

## Case containing seal box

木朱漆铜包角套匣

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

lacquered wood, copper

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu231312

A gilt copper seal box is contained within this red lacquer chest supported by a wooden stand. Within the gilt copper box is the imperial seal and the gilt copper seal paste container. The way in which the imperial seals were stored indicates their great importance.

# CHINESE

## Sacrificial dou vessel with Qianlong reign mark

乾隆款白釉盖豆

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
porcelain (moon white glaze)

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu186418

This group of porcelain ritual vessels was used at the Altar to the Moon, west of Beijing. Their surface decoration features stylised patterns of waves, clouds, interlocking keys, thunder, dragons, waterweed and honeycombs. The bluish-white glaze on the porcelain vessels is known in Chinese as *yuebai* 月白, literally 'moon-white'. The altars in the other cardinal directions – the Altar to Heaven (south), the Altar to Earth (north) and the Altar to the Sun (east) – used ritual vessels of similar form coated in blue, yellow and red glazes respectively.



# Son of Heaven

## CHINESE

### Emperor's semi-formal woven robe

明黄色缂丝彩云蝠金龙纹男棉龙袍

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

silk satin

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu42518

This semi-formal robe is adorned with emblems of imperial authority and symbols of good fortune. Nine dragons whirl through a celestial realm of clouds, and in the cosmic sky bats, symbols of happiness, are depicted flying amidst clouds and Chinese characters meaning 'a long life'.

Rising from the cosmic sea are mountains, auspicious and precious jewels, coral, musical stones, rhinoceros horns, scrolls, ingots, circular and rectangular gold ornaments and *ruyi* (good-luck) sceptres adorned with the character 卐, meaning 'ten thousand' (*wan* 萬).

# **DING Guanpeng**

Chinese active 1726–61

# **Giuseppe CASTIGLIONE**

Italian 1688–1766, worked in China 1714–66

Qianlong Emperor celebrating on New Year's morning

丁观鹏郎世宁合画弘历岁朝行乐图

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

coloured inks on silk

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu6124

Ding Guanpeng, Giuseppe Castiglione and other court artists painted this work depicting the Qianlong Emperor and some children lighting firecrackers on New Year's morning. It shows the influence of the Western perspective painting technique.

# CHINESE

## Envoys from vassal states and foreign countries presenting tribute to the Emperor

清人万国来朝图轴

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
coloured inks on silk

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu6271

The Forbidden City is here presented in bird's-eye view and linear perspective, showing the influence of Western painting techniques. Buildings are reduced or enlarged in scale according to their importance. The tribute bearers are portrayed outside the Forbidden City. This magnificent painting shows the political strength of the Qing dynasty and the opulence of the imperial court.

# Giuseppe CASTIGLIONE (attributed to)

Italian 1688–1766, worked in China 1714–66

CHINESE (court artists)

## Imperial Banquet in the Garden of Ten Thousand Trees

清人画万树园赐宴图

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1755

coloured inks on silk

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu6275

Influenced by Western illusionism and realism, this painting is a visual record of a banquet given by the Qianlong Emperor in 1754 to welcome leaders of the Torgut Mongols, who entered China seeking imperial protection. The event was held in the Wanshu (Ten Thousand Trees) Garden at the imperial summer retreat, at present-day Chengde in Hebei Province. Accompanied by an entourage of high officials, the Emperor is depicted prominently, crowned by a parasol, dressed in blue, seated cross-legged and carried on a sedan chair by eunuchs dressed in red. Kneeling to greet the Emperor are Manchu princes, officials and Mongols.

# CHINESE

## Birthday celebration of Qianlong Emperor's mother in the Palace of Compassion and Tranquility

清人画牖欢筵景图册—慈宁宴禧

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

coloured inks on silk

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu9198–6/8

The Qianlong Emperor's mother (1692–1777) came from Niohuru, one of the eight famous Manchu families. In 1704, aged eleven, she entered the house of Prince Yong who later became the Yongzheng Emperor (reign 1722–35). During the Yongzheng Emperor's first year on the throne, Qianlong's mother was promoted to the third rank of imperial consort, and later to the second rank. When her only son, Prince Hongli, ascended the throne as the Qianlong Emperor in 1736 she was immediately proclaimed the Empress Dowager Chongqing. Emperor Qianlong, a respectful and caring son, frequently invited his mother to accompany him on outings.

# CHINESE

## Empress's semi-formal woven robe

明黄色缂丝八团彩云蝠金龙纹女夹龙袍

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

silk

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu43047

This informal yellow robe was worn by the Empress on less formal occasions, such as banquets and festivities. It is adorned with dragons contained within medallions. Long and vibrant stripes of wave patterns in iridescent colours rise from the hem of the dress, culminating in bubbling clouds. Rising from the cosmic sea are mountain-peaks (symbolising immortality) and auspicious and precious objects, including jewels, coral, musical stones, rhinoceros horns, scrolls, ingots, circular and rectangular gold ornaments and *ruyi* sceptres.

# CHINESE

## Emperor's semi-formal embroidered robe

明黄色缎绣彩云福寿金龙纹男棉龙袍

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

silk satin

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu41983

While the Emperor wore formal robes on ceremonial occasions, this semi-formal robe was worn on less formal occasions, such as banquets and festivities. It is decorated with emblems of imperial authority and symbols of good fortune arranged according to Chinese cosmological principles: the sun, the moon, a constellation, mountains, a dragon, a pheasant, a pair of cups, waterweed, grain, fire, an axe and bats. Also called the 'dragon robe', it is adorned with nine dragons twirling and dancing in a celestial realm of clouds. This spectacular robe, which belonged to Emperor Qianlong, glows with iridescent colours and shimmers with light.

# CHINESE

## Hairpin carved in the Buddhist symbol of endless knot (longevity)

翠镂空盘肠纹簪

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

jadeite

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu9973

# CHINESE

## Hairpin carved in the Buddhist symbol of endless knot (longevity)

翠镂空盘肠纹簪

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

jadeite

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu9974

This pair of hairpins is carved in the shape of a double knot, or endless knot; one of the Eight Buddhist Emblems representing the everlasting love of Buddha, and a symbol of long life. In addition to holding the hair in place, these traditionally designed hairpins have blunt ends that could be used for cleaning the inside of the ear.



# CHINESE

## Hairpin carved in the cursive calligraphy of character *Shou* (longevity)

白玉寿字簪

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

jade

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu103813

This translucent jade hairpin is carved in the cursive calligraphic style of the character *shou* 寿 ('long life') from a single jade stone in a rhythmic, flowing movement. In Chinese, this type of hairpin is referred to as 一筆壽字簪 ('*Shou* character in one brushstroke hairpin').

# CHINESE

## Hairpin with bat (good fortune) and butterfly (longevity) design

珊瑚蝶翡翠蝠蝶纹花簪

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

copper, coral, jadeite, pearl

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu71372

This beautiful hairpin is made of coral, jade and pearls. One butterfly wing curls upward while the other curls downward. As the court lady wearing these hairpins walked on her platform shoes, the butterflies with quivering antennae would appear animated. The butterfly is an auspicious symbol associated with joy and weddings. Its name, *hudie* 蝴蝶, is a pun on 'age seventy to eighty' (*die* 耋), and is therefore a symbol of longevity. The hairpins are also evocative of bats. The Chinese name for 'bat' (*fu* 蝠) has the same sound as the word for 'blessings' (*fu* 福).

# CHINESE

## Hairpin with a butterfly

珊瑚蝶翡翠华簪

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

copper, coral, jadeite, gemstone, pearl, kingfisher feather

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu71371

This hairpin is decorated with a butterfly. The butterfly is an auspicious symbol associated with joy and weddings. Its name, *hudie* 蝴蝶, is a pun on 'age seventy to eighty' (*die* 耋) and is therefore a symbol of longevity.

# CHINESE

## Head ornament

点翠菊花纹头花

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

kingfisher feathers

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu71105-2/98

This hair ornament is decorated with chrysanthemums, a flower of autumn and symbol of retirement. Beautiful kingfisher feathers are pasted onto the metal framework. Kingfisher feathers have a natural lustre that never fades and are highly valued as decorations for ornaments. This technique of using feathers of birds in ornaments has a long tradition in China.

**LENG Mei**

Chinese 1670–1742

**Page from an album of ten paintings on  
Poems of Ten Palaces**

冷枚画十宫词意册

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

coloured inks on silk

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu5186-5/10

# CHINESE

## Head ornament

镀金点翠镶珠石凤钿

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

gilt-metal thread, kingfisher feathers, pearls, corals, jadeite, ruby

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu59708

Under the Qing system, empresses, the empress dowagers and imperial concubines all wore this type of headdress decorated with kingfisher feathers. Within the headdress is a thick paperboard to keep it upright. In the centre are two gold filigree phoenixes inlaid with jewels and pearls, and below them are three gold-plated silver phoenixes from whose mouths hang tassels of pearls, coral, turquoise, lapis lazuli, rubies and sapphires. Another set of similar tassels hangs from the back of the headdress.

# LENG Mei

Chinese 1670–1742

## Page from an album of ten paintings on Poems of Ten Palaces

冷枚画十宫词意册

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

coloured inks on silk

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu5186-10/10

Leng Mei was an artist from the north-eastern province of Shandong who brought elements of the northern tradition of figure painting to the imperial court. These are two leaves from an album depicting the stories of virtuous empresses, court and noble ladies throughout the ages. On the left-hand pages are poems composed by Prince Hongli in 1735 before he ascended the throne as Qianlong Emperor. The poems are inscribed in semi-cursive style of calligraphy by the scholar Liang Shizheng (1697–1763).

# CHINESE

## Nail protector

银镀金珠石累丝指甲套

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

silver-gilt, pearl, precious stones

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu225578

# CHINESE

## Nail protector

银镀金珠石累丝指甲套

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

silver-gilt, pearl, precious stones

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu225579

Long nail protectors were worn by ladies of the imperial court. This pair is made of fine gilt silver wires formed into symbols of happiness and a long life – bats (*fu* 蝠) and the longevity character *shou* 壽. The word for ‘bat’ is a pun on ‘good fortune’ (*fu* 福). These protectors are also adorned with kingfisher feathers, pearls and precious stones.

# CHINESE

## Bracelet

伽南香嵌金长圆寿字纹十八子手串

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

fragrant wood (*Jiananxiang*), beads, gold

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu71814–1/10

The beads of this bracelet are made of fragrant wood inlaid with tiny golden beads that form the circular and rectangular design of the 'longevity' character *shou* 壽. Viewed under magnification, these tiny beads unfold into intricate flowers. The bracelet also has a pendant inlaid with designs of bats and paired fish, which convey wishes for good fortune and abundance. The Chinese word for bat (*fu* 蝠) is a pun on 'good fortune' (*fu* 福), and the word for fish (*yu* 魚) is a pun on 'abundance' (*yu* 餘).



# CHINESE

## Bracelet

金镶四龙戏珠镯

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

gold, pearls

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu11970-1/2

# CHINESE

## Bracelet

金镶四龙戏珠镯

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

gold, pearls

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu11970-2/2

These bracelets are made of pure gold and weigh 196 grams each. They are decorated with gold filigree depicting dragons playing with pearls amidst auspicious clouds. The four dragons on each bracelet face one another in pairs, and their eyes are inlaid with pearls. These gold bracelets expressed the wealth and opulence of both their wearer and the imperial court.

# JIN Tingbiao

Chinese active c. 1750–68

## Giuseppe CASTIGLIONE (attributed to)

Italian 1688–1766, worked in China 1714–66

The Qianlong Emperor enjoying the pleasures of life 金廷标  
画弘历宫中行乐图轴

poem inscribed by Qianlong Emperor in the spring of 1763

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

coloured inks on silk

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu5278

Emperor Qianlong is shown gazing from a pavilion at three imperial women who, with their attendants, make up a procession that emerges from the upper right and continues across the bridge at centre. The women are all dressed in Han Chinese costumes. In the lower left corner a stag turns its head and tosses its antlers while looking at a doe from the rear with, possibly, an erotic undertone. The Emperor spent ten months each year with the Empress, his favourite consorts and eunuch attendants in the Yuanming Yuan (Old Summer Palace), enjoying all the pleasures available to him.

# CHINESE

## **Qianlong Emperor's consort with Prince Yong Yan (future Emperor Jiaqing, reigned 1796–1820)**

清人画弘历妃及颞琰孩提时像轴

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
coloured inks on silk

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu6539

A two-storey interior is depicted like a theatre stage receding into space, showing the influence of Western art in its techniques of perspective, illusionism and realism. Looking out from the window is a half-concealed court lady, extending her hand behind a little boy portrayed in frontal view and at the centre of the window. The boy is Prince Yong Yan (1760–1820), the fifteenth of seventeen sons of the Qianlong Emperor, and the fifth Qing emperor to rule China (from 1796 to 1820). Both figures are dressed in Han Chinese costumes.

# CHINESE

## Shoes with flowerpot-shaped sole

雪灰色緞綉竹蝶紋花盆底女鞋

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

satin, other materials

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu61359

These court lady's shoes are decorated with butterflies at the toes and bordered with a black band of green beads. Bamboo and butterflies are embroidered on the pink satin. Similar to modern high-heeled shoes, these high-platform 'flowerpot' shoes would have enhanced the graceful movements of Manchu court ladies. The Manchus disapproved of the crippling Chinese practice of foot binding, in which girls' feet, from the age of five, were bound tightly with cloth and gradually bent until the arch was broken and toes were turned under, deforming the feet and limiting their growth to half their normal size.

# JIN Tingbiao

Chinese active c. 1750–68

## Chinese beauty putting flowers in her hair

金廷标簪花图轴

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
coloured inks on silk

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu5272

The court artist Jin Tingbiao, a southerner from Zhejiang, here combines the *meiren* 美人 (beautiful women) genre of southern China with European illusionism. A beautiful woman dressed in Han Chinese costume is depicted looking in the mirror to put flowers in her hair, and a maid is arranging books and scrolls. The painting is as big as a doorway and the figures and objects it depicts are life-sized. The window in the painting seems to open onto a real bamboo garden, and the painting creates the illusion of a real room.

# CHINESE

## Portrait of Imperial Honorable Consort Huixian

清人画慧贤贵妃半身像屏

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
coloured inks on paper

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu9206

According to custom, the Qianlong Emperor's consorts, who numbered around forty, were differentiated into eight ranks headed by the Empress. The next rank was Imperial Honoured Consort (*huangguifei* 皇贵妃), a status the subject of this portrait achieved posthumously, in the year of her death, 1745. This portrait was painted using oil pigments on heavy paper and then framed for the casual enjoyment of the Emperor. Oil painting was introduced to China by Jesuit priests in the late Ming dynasty (1368–44) and by the time of the Qing (1644 –1911) had taken hold as an exotic art form.

# Imperial Art

## CHINESE

### Visiting friend with a qin (zither)

御制题携琴访友图山子

poem inscribed by Qianlong Emperor in 1747

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

jade, wood

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu96168

This miniature mountain with pine trees and steps leading to a pavilion at the top are carved from a single piece of jade. Underneath the bridge is a waterfall and stream. An older gentleman holding a cane is followed by a young attendant holding a *qin* (zither) on his way to visit a friend in the pavilion. On the back of the jade landscape a poem written by Qianlong Emperor in 1747 titled 'Imperial poem on visiting friend with a *qin*' is engraved in gilt characters.

# CHINESE

## Snuff bottle in gourd shape (longevity) with bat design (good fortune) and Qianlong reign mark

乾隆款白色玻璃胎画珐琅福禄万代纹葫芦  
式鼻烟壶

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
glass

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu107622

This gourd-shaped snuff bottle is made of glass and painted in enamel with designs of flowers, gourds and bats. The gourd has the auspicious meaning of longevity, and bat, pronounced 'fu 蝠', is a pun on 'fu 福' meaning good fortune. The bottle has a Qianlong four-character reign mark.



# CHINESE

## Snuff bottle with European figures and Qianlong reign mark

乾隆款画珐琅西洋仕女婴戏图鼻烟壶及其附件

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
copper, enamel

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu116566

The snuff bottle is decorated with European figures: one side shows a child and a lady holding a parrot, and on the other a lady lovingly holds her child. The style of the enamel painting is also European.

# CHINESE

## Snuff bottle with peach design (longevity) and Qianlong reign mark

乾隆款黄色玻璃胎画珐琅桃实纹鼻烟壶

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

enamel, glass

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu107617

This snuff bottle is painted in enamel on glass, with a richly coloured yellow background, green leaves and luscious red peaches, symbol of long life. It has a Qianlong four-character reign mark.

# CHINESE

## Snuff bottle with chrysanthemum and quail design (living in harmony) and Qianlong reign mark

乾隆款粉彩菊花鶴鶉圖鼻烟壺

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
porcelain, gold

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu152782

This snuff bottle is painted with a pair of quails, chrysanthemums and an eccentric rock. The quail is a fierce little bird, sometimes used in competition and gambling. However, because its name, *Anchun* 鶴鶉, includes the character *an* 鶴, it is a pun on 'an' in *ping'an* 平安, meaning 'peace'. The chrysanthemum, *juhua* 菊花, is a pun on *ju* 居, meaning 'to dwell'. Thus, quails and chrysanthemums express the wish to live in harmony.

# CHINESE

## Snuff bottle with Qianlong reign mark

乾隆款画珐琅孔雀开屏图鼻烟壶

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

gold, enamel

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu116467

This peacock tail-shaped snuff bottle is painted in enamel on copper, and has a Qianlong four-character reign mark. Its magnificent colour and design is evocative of peacock feathers. The bottle has an ivory spoon to dish out the snuff. Many snuff bottles were produced in the imperial kiln in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province, during the reign of Qianlong because the Emperor liked to use snuff.

# CHINESE

## Snuff bottle with design of magpie (bird of joy) among bamboo (longevity) and Qianlong reign mark

乾隆款白色地套蓝色玻璃开光竹鹊纹鼻烟壺

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
glass, enamel, gold

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu107618

This snuff bottle is made of white and blue glass and has a Qianlong four-character reign mark. The circular panel is decorated with a pair of magpies amidst bamboo. The magpie – known as the ‘bird of joy’ or ‘bird of happiness’ – is popular in Chinese art and wedding decorations. Its name, *xique* 喜鹊, is a pun on ‘joy’ or ‘happiness’ (*xi* 喜). According to ancient beliefs, magpies are birds of prophecy.

# CHINESE

## Brush washer with Qianlong reign mark

乾隆款白玉双螭纹椭圆洗

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

jade

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu96241

This basin carved in jade was used to wash brushes. It is decorated with dragons and has a Qianlong reign mark.

# CHINESE

## Cup and plate with dragon and seal character Wanshou (boundless longevity) 金鑿花嵌珠杯盤

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

gold, pearls, coral, precious stones

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu12130

The outside of this cup is decorated with two dragons swimming amidst lotus flowers. The ears of the cup are carved with four Chinese seal characters with fretwork: *wanshou* 万寿 (long life) and *wujiang* 无疆 (boundless), meaning 'boundless longevity'. This cup would have been used at the Emperor's birthday celebrations. It is made of pure gold and weighs 1238 grams.

# CHINESE

## Sundial

铜镀金日晷

Qing dynasty, Kangxi period 1622–1722  
gilt-bronze

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu141967

Sundials were known in China from at least the second century BC, when the great historian Sima Qian wrote of one in connection with a gathering of astronomers who met to determine various matters relating to the calendar. The Qing emperors' interest in astronomy was further stimulated by European Jesuit missionaries, who were active in the imperial court of the Kangxi Emperor (reigned 1662–1722).



# CHINESE

## Ewer in gourd shape (longevity) with dragon design

金鑿花云龙纹葫芦式执壶

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

gold

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu12132

This wine ewer is made of gold and inlaid with pearls, rubies, coral and other precious stones. It is in the shape of a gourd, symbol of longevity. The dragons among auspicious clouds in relief are imperial symbols of the Emperor or the Son of Heaven. The Emperor used gold tableware at formal banquets, as gold signified political stability. This pure gold ewer weighs 1224 grams.

# CHINESE

## Incense burner

掐丝珐琅勾莲纹熏炉

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

cloisonné enamel, copper

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu117283

This cloisonné enamel incense burner is probably one of a pair. It is opulently decorated and adorned with auspicious emblems, such as the bat (symbol of good fortune) and the lotus (flower of summer and purity). Its tripod shape is based on ancient bronze vessels. Probably placed in a throne room or one of the many halls of the Forbidden City, it would have produced an auspicious sandalwood perfume. This incense burner was made in Guangdong Province, southern China.

# CHINESE

## Vase with Qianlong reign mark

乾隆款画珐琅百花地开光山水图兽环瓶

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

gilt-bronze, enamel, gold

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu116624

This ornate vase may at first glance seem more Western than Chinese. While the enamel panels on both sides depict pastoral European landscapes in pastel colours, and the surrounding gilt-bronze scrollwork reflects the height of French Rococo taste, the vase's animal-mask ring handles, inspired by archaic bronzes, are purely Chinese. The piece comes from the famous enamelling workshops of Guangzhou (Canton), Guangdong Province. Whereas in Europe the Rococo style was deemed Chinoiserie – since it played on Chinese imagery, depicting figures and exotic birds, pagodas and pavilions – in China it looked exotic.

# CHINESE

## Lidded box with European figures and Qianlong reign mark

乾隆款画珐琅开光山水人物图瓜棱式盒

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

enamel, copper

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu116818

This magnificent lidded box is influenced by the opulence of European art. Its decoration, painted in enamels with gilding, is sumptuous. Ladies and children are depicted in a European style of painting in the panels, which open like windows in the middle horizontal band. The other bands, depicting flowers of the seasons – plum blossoms (winter), peony (spring), lotus (summer) and chrysanthemum (autumn) – and scenery are Chinese in sentiment. Pieces such as this would have been made by European artists in collaboration with Chinese court artists in the imperial workshop.

# ENGLISH

## Clock with a figure striking the bell

铜镀金乐箱上亭式人打乐钟

18th century

gilt-bronze

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu182771

Qing emperors were very fond of European clocks, especially English clocks manufactured by Timothy Williamson (active 1769–1788), which came into the imperial collection through Guangzhou (Canton), Guangdong Province. This clock is in the exotic style of Chinoiserie, which was based more on the European imagination of the Orient than on actual Chinese aesthetics. A figure striking a bell under a Chinese pavilion in the Chinoiserie style must have provided immense fascination and entertainment for the Emperor.

# FRENCH

## Locomotive-shaped barometer

火车头形风雨表

19th century

iron, gilt-iron, marble

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu183513

This barometer has the inscriptions 'J. Ullmann', and 'Made in France'.

# Giuseppe CASTIGLIONE

Italian 1688–1766, worked in China 1714–66

Pine, hawk, and lingzhi fungus

郎世宁嵩献英芝图轴

Qing dynasty, Yongzheng period 1724

coloured inks on silk

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu5357

Dating from 1724, the second year of the Yongzheng Emperor's reign, this painting was commissioned to mark the Emperor's birthday. In China, the rare white hawk is considered an auspicious sign sent from Heaven to signal the sovereign's virtue and confirm his right to rule. The pine tree is a symbol of wisdom and longevity. Growing at the foot of a pine tree and sprouting from its trunk, the *lingzhi*, known as the fungus of immortality, is a symbol of longevity. Although the painting's symbolism is Chinese, its execution is Western in terms of its spatial depth, lighting and volume.

# Imperial Religion

## CHINESE

### Yamantaka, fierce manifestation of Manjushri, Bodhisattva of Wisdom

紫铜雅曼达嘎

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

copper

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu198144

This magnificent figure portrays Yamantaka, a fierce manifestation of Manjushri, Bodhisattva of Wisdom and the destroyer of the God of Death. In this manifestation, Yamantaka is depicted with nine heads – a highly expressive bull face in the middle, and a peaceful Manjushri at the top. Revered as the Protector of the Tibetan Gelugpa (Yellow Hat) sect and of Lhasa, Yamantaka enjoyed a special position in a palace where the Qianlong Emperor identified himself with Manjushri.



# DING Guanpeng

Chinese active 1726–61

## Qianlong Emperor playing the role of Vimalakirti

丁观鹏画弘历不二图像轴

inscribed with poem and 2 seals by Qianlong Emperor in 1753 and with 5 seals of the Qianlong Emperor

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

coloured inks on paper

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu4795

The Qianlong Emperor is portrayed as Vimalakirti sitting on a couch. Vimalakirti is the central figure in the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, a Mahayana Buddhist sutra which teaches the meaning of non-dualism and presents Vimalakirti as the ideal Mahayana Buddhist *upasaka* (lay practitioner), as well as a contemporary and wealthy patron of the historical Gautama Buddha (sixth – fifth century BC). Vimalakirti is generally considered to be an historic rather than mythic figure, and is not commonly venerated on altars or in tantric rituals. In this landscape, Vimalakirti is engaged in discourse with Manjushri, Bodhisattva of Wisdom.

# CHINESE

## Buddhist statue of Guanyin, Bodhisattva of Compassion with Qianlong reign mark

金帶背光座嵌珠寶佛

inscribed in Chinese, Manchu, Mongolian and Tibetan  
when commissioned by Qianlong Emperor in 1748

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

gold, coral, sapphire, ruby

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu11759

This seated statue represents four-armed Guanyin, a Buddhist deity popular among Han Chinese as well as Tibetans. On the back of the statue are inscriptions in Chinese, Manchu, Mongolian and Tibetan, and ‘大清乾隆年製’ (‘Made in the Qianlong reign of the Great Qing’) is inscribed on the front of the lotus throne. Guanyin 觀音 (one who hears sounds) or Guanshiyin 觀世音 (one who hears the sounds or prayers of the world) are Chinese names for the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, Lord of Compassionate Glances. A bodhisattva is a being who has attained enlightenment but delays his own salvation or nirvana (the ending of the cycle of rebirth) in order to help others attain theirs.

# CHINESE

## Qianlong Emperor portrayed as an incarnation of Manjushri, Bodddhisattva of Wisdom (in Puning Temple, Hebei Province)

清人画普宁寺弘历佛装像轴

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
coloured inks on fabric

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu6485

This portrayal of the Qianlong Emperor as an incarnation of Manjushri, Bodddhisattva of Wisdom, is based upon the religious paintings (*tangkas*) of Tibet. He wears the monastic robes and hat of the Tibetan Gelugpa (Yellow Hat order), and the lotuses above his shoulders bear a sword and the *Prajnaparamita* (*Perfection of Wisdom*) *Sutra*, attributes of Manjushri. His right hand is raised in the gesture of religious discussion (*vitarka mudra*) and his left hand holds a wheel, symbol of the Universal Monarch. Above him are buddhas and bodhisattvas, headed by the historical Buddha Sakyamuni. The image of Rolpay Dorge, the Emperor's guru, appears in a circle above the Emperor.

# CHINESE

## Tibetan-style ewer for barley beer and fermented mare's milk with Qianlong reign mark

乾隆款仿木纹釉多穆壶

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
porcelain (imitating wood)

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu152677

This *Duomuhu* 多穆壶 (ewer) with dragon handle and phoenix spout simulates a wooden flagon with gilt bronze hoops used by Mongolians and Tibetans to drink barley beer and fermented mares' milk. That this one is made of porcelain imitating wood reflects Qianlong Emperor's fondness for material mimicry. The vessel has a Qianlong-period reign mark.

# CHINESE

## Kapala bowl

嘎不拉碗

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

bone

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu185717

Kapala skull cups, which serve as emblems of terrifying deities, are one of the principal ritual implements of Tibetan Buddhism. They are made from the skulls of donors, who were persons of special rank, wisdom or holiness. Only after meeting the approval of the lamas (teachers) could a deceased person's skull be made into an offering vessel for presentation to the divine beings. The interior of the cup is plated with a hammered sheet of silver, and its edge is fitted with a silver-gilt rim. The cover, also fashioned of gilt silver, has a crossed *vajra* (thunderbolt) symbol on top.

# CHINESE

## Tibetan Buddhist ritual dagger (*Dorje phurba*)

铁镀金佛首三棱形独股降魔杵

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

gilt-iron

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu185421

This Tibetan Buddhist ritual dagger is called *dorje phurba* and is used against evil spirits. The upper part has three faces of the deity Mahakhala, and the bottom part is the three-sided blade. Mahakala, a wrathful deity, is considered to be the fierce and powerful emanation of Avalokiteshvara, Bodhisattva of Compassion. This tutelary deity is one of the Dharmapalas in Vajrayana Buddhism who defend the Dharma (Law of Buddhism) from corruption and degeneration, and from hostile forces.

# CHINESE

## Stupa containing Buddhist relics

金佛塔

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

gold, pearls, precious stones

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu11402

This golden pagoda represents a stupa, a kind of burial mound that originated in India and was subsequently developed by Indian Buddhists to contain relics.

When Sakyamuni, the historical Buddha (sixth century BC), was cremated, his bodily remains were divided and enshrined in stupas.

# CHINESE

## Alms bowl incised with Buddhist Heart Sutra in Chinese

碧玉“般若波罗蜜多心经”钵

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

jade, gold

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu103516

A *patra* (Sanskrit) is a bowl used by a Buddhist monk or nun as a receptacle for food at mealtimes, or for alms received during begging. This alms bowl is cut from a large piece of dark green jade. The exterior of the bowl is incised with the Buddhist *Heart Sutra* (*Prajnaparamita Hridaya* in Sanskrit) in standard Chinese script and filled with gold. The *Heart Sutra* articulates the meaning of emptiness, and of the seven known Chinese translations the most popular by far is that by the Tang dynasty monk Xuanzang (602–664), which is the version transcribed on this bowl.



# The Chinese Scholar

## CHINESE

### Lotus seed-shaped water container with Qianlong reign mark

乾隆款炉钧釉莲子式水丞

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
porcelain, wooden base

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu153727

This lotus bud-shaped porcelain water container stored water to mix with grindings of the ink stick, on the ink stone, to produce black ink. On its base are carved four seal characters of the Qianlong reign mark:

乾隆年制 ('Made in the reign of Qianlong'). It is decorated with *lujun* glaze, which was first produced in the Yongzheng period (1723–35) in imitation of the blue glaze of Jun ware of the Song dynasty (960–1279). The porcelain body is fired at a high temperature and then covered with glaze and fired twice at a lower temperature. The best pieces are the ones with red dots amidst flowing blue glaze.

# CHINESE

## Writing brush and brush holder decorated with lotus scroll and Chinese character shou (longevity)

黑漆描金寿字纹管缠枝莲纹斗紫毫提笔

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

rabbit hair, lacquered wood, gold

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu132690

This large writing brush is made of purple rabbit's hair. The brush holder is decorated with the Chinese character *shou*, meaning long life, in gold on black lacquer. The section near the brush is decorated with lotus scroll in gold. The lotus is a flower of summer and symbolises purity.

# CHINESE

## Brush holder carved with hunting scene

竹雕狩猎图笔筒

early Qing dynasty 17th century  
bamboo, Sandalwood

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu121185

This bamboo brush holder is carved with a dramatic scene of two groups of hunters on horseback dressed in the costumes of minority tribes. The hunting scene may have been based on a woodblock print illustration. The rocks are depicted with the axe-cut texture strokes. The brush holder is representative of carved bamboo objects of the period.

# CHINESE

## Scholar's table

紫檀木书卷式雕花画案

Qing dynasty 1644–1911  
Sandalwood

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Xin78246-1/5

This sandalwood table is a scholar's table on which the four treasures of the scholar's study – ink stone, ink stick and paper – were placed.

# Qianlong Emperor

Chinese 1711–99

## CHINESE (court artists)

### Qianlong Emperor appraising:

### One or two?

清人画弘历是一是二图挂屏

screen painting painted and signed by Qianlong Emperor in the summer of 1780 and with two seals of the Qianlong Emperor, also inscribed with poem by Qianlong Emperor  
Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95  
coloured inks on silk

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu6492

There are four versions of this portrait of the Emperor in the imperial collection of the Palace Museum in Beijing. It is a copy of a Song (960–1279) painting now in the Palace Museum in Taipei. The Qianlong Emperor has substituted an image of himself dressed as a Chinese scholar in place of the collector in the earlier painting. The Emperor sits on a couch, and there is another image of him in a hanging scroll on the screen. The ink painting of plum blossoms on the screen was painted by the Emperor when he was seventy years old.

# Giuseppe CASTIGLIONE

Italian 1688–1766, worked in China 1714–66

## Spring's peaceful message depicting Prince Hongli (future Qianlong Emperor) and his father Yongzheng Emperor

郎世宁画弘历平安春信图像轴

inscribed by Qianlong Emperor in 1782 and with 5 seals of the Qianlong Emperor

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period c. 1736

coloured inks on silk

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu5361

The young Prince Hongli (future Qianlong Emperor), at right, respectfully receives a sprig of flowering apricot from his father, the Yongzheng Emperor, at left. They are both dressed as Chinese scholars. Spring, symbolised by the flowering sprig, evokes in this context the start of a new reign (Qianlong's reign) and is synonymous with transmission and succession. The nostalgic and reflective inscription by the Qianlong Emperor reads: 'In portraiture Shining [Castiglione] is masterful, he painted me during my younger days; the white-headed one who enters the room today, does not recognise who this is. Inscribed towards the end of spring in the year 1782 [seventy-one years old]'.

# CHINESE

## Prince Hongli (future Qianlong Emperor) practising calligraphy on a banana leaf

清人画弘历圆形古装行乐图轴

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period c. 1730

coloured inks on silk

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu6481

Young Prince Hongli, the future Qianlong Emperor, sits at a table in his study practising calligraphy on a banana leaf. The prince began learning calligraphy and poetry at age six, and became the most educated and cultivated Qing emperor. He wears the ancient costume of a Chinese scholar, decorated with a colourful design of a blossoming tree and pair of phoenixes. To one side a lotus pond is visible, and a large screen with the red sun rising out of a turbulent sea shields the Prince's back. The banana leaf is one of the fourteen treasures of the scholar and an emblem of self-cultivation.

# ZHANG Zongcang

Chinese 1686–1756

## Qianlong Emperor with qin (zither)

张宗苍画弘历抚琴图轴

signed by the artist and inscribed with poem by Qianlong Emperor in 1753 and with 6 seals of the Qianlong Emperor Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

ink on paper

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu5495

This landscape was painted by court artist Zhang Zongcang in 1753, when the Qianlong Emperor was forty-two years old. It celebrates the Chinese scholar's ideal of finding quietude in nature. The Emperor is depicted sitting beside a *qin* (zither) in his country retreat in a mountain landscape, while his boy attendant brews tea.

# CHINESE

## Qianlong Emperor admiring lotus while playing qin (zither)

清人画弘历观荷抚琴图轴

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1753  
coloured inks on silk

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu6476

The Qianlong Emperor is playing the role of a traditional Chinese scholar. Dressed in the attire of a scholar, he is enjoying nature while playing the *qin* (zither) in a pavilion above a lotus pond. Under the guise of a Chinese landscape and Chinese brush and colour on silk, the painting shows underlying techniques of European realism and illusionism in the portrait of the Emperor; the three-dimensional architectural structure of the pavilion; and linear perspective and reflection of lotus in the pond – styles introduced by the Italian Jesuit court artist Giuseppe Castiglione (1688–1766).



# Qianlong Emperor

Chinese 1711–99

## Poem about East Mountain Brush-rest peak, calligraphy

弘历咏东山笔架峰贴落

signed by Qianlong Emperor in the autumn of 1768 and with 2 seals of the Qianlong Emperor

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1768

ink on paper

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu252548

This poem by the Qianlong Emperor is about both a brush rest bearing the name *Dongshan* (East Mountain) and the 'Brush-rest peak' of East Mountain, so-called because it resembles a brush rest. The poem, in the semi-cursive style of Chinese calligraphy, was written in 1768 when the Emperor was fifty-eight years old.

# Qianlong Emperor

Chinese 1711–99

## XIANG Shengmo (after)

Chinese 1597–1658

## Giuseppe CASTIGLIONE

Italian 1688–1766, worked in China 1714–66

Qianlong Emperor reading in a snowy landscape

弘历雪景园林郎世宁画人物图轴

inscribed with poem by Qianlong Emperor in 1763 and  
with 2 seals of the Qianlong Emperor

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

coloured inks on paper

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu237286

In this self-portrait the Emperor is reading a book while seated on a heated *keng* 炕 bed inside his study in the mountains. While the sky is painted with a dark ink wash, the blank surface of the white paper represents snow. An inscription by the Qianlong Emperor notes that the scene was copied from an original by Ming-dynasty scholar-painter Xiang Shengmo. The Emperor confesses that, because of his lack of confidence in painting figures, Giuseppe Castiglione painted the figure for him, substituting the original in Xiang Shengmo's painting with a portrait of Qianlong himself. However, Qianlong has captured Xiang Shengmo's style of landscape painting, proving himself to be an excellent painter.

# Qianlong Emperor

Chinese 1711–99

## Mountain villa of Peaceful Lodging in Mount Pan, Hebei Province, built in 1745

弘历画盘山图轴

34 inscriptions by Qianlong Emperor 1745–1795 and 69 seals of the Qianlong Emperor

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

ink on paper

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu237306

The Qianlong Emperor painted this work after the Mountain villa of Peaceful Lodging in Mount Pan was built in 1745, and inscribed it with a poem each time he visited the villa every two or three years. The work includes a total of thirty-four poems dated between 1745 and 1795. One of these, written in 1745 when the Emperor was thirty-four years old, reads:

*It was painted in early April, and completed in early July. My poor handwriting does not match this delicate, good-quality Yusu paper, but if I have a chance to come back here again, I will write a poem on this picture.*

# CHINESE

## Inkstone for grinding ink

御铭端石鱼龙砚

poem inscribed by Qianlong Emperor in 1778

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

duan stone

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu133959

This imperial ink stone with cover was used by the Qianlong Emperor. The slightly concave area at its centre is where the ink stick was ground with water into ink. The surrounding area is decorated with fish and dragons amidst auspicious clouds. Fish are auspicious because the Chinese word for fish, *yu*, is a pun on *yu*, meaning plenty. The ink slab, so-called '*duanyan* 端砚' is a high-quality example made in Duanxi 端溪, Guangdong Province. The wooden cover is inscribed with a poem by the Qianlong Emperor dated the summer of the year *wuxu* (1778).

# CHINESE

## Red ink cake with gilt inscription 1737 and Qianlong reign mark

乾隆款各式朱御墨—凤佩墨

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1737  
ink

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu129723-17/26

A red ink cake, like a black ink cake, was ground on an ink stone together with a little water to produce a thick, densely coloured liquid suitable for brush writing. The red colour comes from natural cinnabar, a mercury sulphide. This imperial red ink cake is decorated with a phoenix on both surfaces, and on the side has the gilt inscription, in regular script of Chinese characters, 乾隆丁巳年制 ('Made in the *dingsi* year [1737] of the reign of Qianlong'). It is one of a set of twenty-six ink cakes.

# Qianlong Emperor

Chinese 1711–99

# NI Zan (after)

Chinese 1301–74

## The Lion Forest Garden

弘历仿倪瓚狮子林卷

inscribed with title and poems by Qianlong Emperor 1772,  
1773, 1775

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

ink on paper

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu237016

The Lion Grove Garden, one of the best-known gardens in Suzhou, was built in 1342 by a local Buddhist abbot named Tianru, who designed the garden with Ni Zan, a scholar-recluse famous for his lofty and untrammelled landscape paintings. The garden is named after its eccentric rocks, shown here, that resemble lions.

The Qianlong Emperor painted four copies of *The Lion Forest Grove Garden* attributed to Ni Zan. He also commissioned two replicas of the garden in his late years: one, in 1771, for the Summer Palace on the outskirts of Beijing; the other, four years later, for the Summer Palace in Rehe.

**TANG Yin**

Chinese 1470–1524

**Scenery of Tongshan**

唐寅桐山图卷

Ming dynasty 1368–1644

ink on paper

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Xin146603

# NI Zan (attributed to)

Chinese 1301–74

## The Lion Forest Garden

倪瓚狮子林图卷

inscribed by the artist in 1373 and with 6 inscriptions by Qianlong Emperor, 10 seals of the Qianlong Emperor and seals of famous collectors

Ming dynasty 1368–1644

ink on paper

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Xin146662

The Qianlong Emperor was an admirer of Ni Zan's art. As indicated by his inscriptions on this scroll, it was not until the Emperor's second tour of inspection to the south, in 1757, that he learnt the Lion Grove Garden depicted was in Suzhou – when immediately he paid the garden a special visit. Excited by his discovery, the Emperor ordered the scroll to be sent as quickly as possible from Beijing so that he might compare it with the real garden. After that he visited the Lion Grove Garden on each of his tours to the south, often taking the scroll with him.



# CHINESE

## Paper weight

青玉雕螭云纹长条镇纸

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

jade, wooden base

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu89250

This white jade paper weight is decorated and carved with dragons in the midst of auspicious clouds. It is one of the treasures of the scholar's study.

# CHINESE

## Writing brush, brush holder and cap decorated with carved and filled-in floral design

木管填彩漆花卉纹兼毫笔

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

rabbit and goat hair, lacquered wood

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu132743

This writing brush is made of a variety of animals' fur, and its wooden handle is carved and filled-in with floral designs.

# CHINESE

## Writing brush and cap

青玉帶帽筆管

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

jade

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu103088

The handle and cap of this exquisite imperial writing brush is made of white jade.

# CHINESE

## Brush rest in the shape of a garden rock with Qianlong reign mark

青玉山石形筆架

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

jade, wooden base

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu96393

This jade brush rest is carved in the shape of a garden rock. It has the Qianlong reign mark 乾隆年制 ('Made in the reign of Qianlong') on its base. It is also one of the treasures of the scholar's study.

# CHINESE

## Narcissus pot in imitation of official *ru* ware

乾隆款仿官釉水仙盆

incised poem by Qianlong Emperor dated 1772 and the seal of the Qianlong Emperor

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

porcelain

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu153271

This basin was made to imitate the most celebrated ceramic ware of China, *ru* ware from Henan Province, the official ware of the Northern Song court (960–1127). The basin's shape, pale blue-green glaze and decorative crackle all copy the Song original so closely that the piece could be called an ancient fake. The base is engraved with a poem by the Qianlong Emperor, in which he describes the basin as 'official' (*guan*) ware and as a bowl for cat food. He also mentions the spur marks (unglazed spots characteristic of *ru*, which was fired standing on small stilts) on the base.

# CHINESE

## Brush holder carved with figures in landscape and auspicious symbols

青玉雕人物图笔筒

Qing dynasty 1644–1911

jade, wooden base

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu96445

The outside of this translucent white jade brush holder is carved with rocks, a pavilion, waterfall and streams, wisteria, pines, cranes and deer. Standing under the pines are two older gentlemen with a young boy. Each holds a symbol of longevity: one older man holds a chrysanthemum; the other, leaning on a cane, holds a *lingzhi* fungus; and the young boy holds a peach. On the base of the holder are carved the 'three friends of winter', pine, bamboo and plum blossoms, admired for their endurance in cold weather and therefore symbols of longevity.

# Qianlong Emperor

Chinese 1711–99

## West Lake

弘历画西湖图卷

inscribed with poem and title by Qianlong Emperor in the summer of 1784 and with 18 seals of the Qianlong Emperor

Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–95

ink on paper

The Palace Museum, Beijing

Gu237057

The West Lake in Hangzhou is famous for its natural beauty and rich cultural history, and has been a favourite subject of painters since the late twelfth century. The Qianlong Emperor frequented the West Lake, where he stayed in the Magnolia Lodge imperial villa at the foot of the south side of the Hill of Solitude. The poem inscribed on this painting indicates the Emperor had painted the West Lake on previous visits; praises its beauty; and records that he painted the work in the summer of 1784. This ink painting is executed in the expressive style of Chinese scholar-amateur artists.