

Oblong folio, original decorated silk covered boards with ties. A beautiful set of twelve watercolours, brightly hued, each lined with blue silk ribbon along the edges of the image, this mounted on slightly larger Chinese paper leaves.

A FINE ALBUM OF CHINESE WATERCOLOURS DEPICTING THE PRODUCTION OF TEA AND THE TEA TRADE

Chinese Watercolours

Author
[?YOUQUA]

Publication date
[c.1840]

Publisher

Publication place
China

Physical description
Oblong folio, original decorated silk covered boards with ties. A beautiful set of twelve watercolours, brightly hued, each lined with blue silk ribbon along the edges of the image, this mounted on slightly larger Chinese paper leaves.

Dimensions

Notes
These beautifully vivid images depict stages in the Chinese production process for tea, from preparing the ground for planting to weighing tea chests for export. Although they may resemble

enamel paintings, they are actually watercolours on pith paper. Pith is not manufactured, but derived by cutting the inner spongy tissue of a small tree, Tetrapanax papyriferum, which is indigenous to southern China and Taiwan. Most pith paper watercolours, like these examples, are unsigned, though the majority are known to have been produced in Canton where the workshops of Youqua, Tingqua and Sunqua existed. Individual images were often pasted into 19th century scrap albums, but it was common to buy the images in sets of 11 or 12, bound into albums with silk brocade covers. The pith paper was supplied held in place on a backing sheet and usually surrounded by a silk or paper ribbon.
This set is particularly large and attractive as often studies of the tea industry were in a smaller format to enable the buyer to carry or ship abroad easily.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 10837

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