

**A Record of the Establishment of a New Art Form: The Unique  
Collection of “Painted Enamels” at the Qing Court**

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*A Unique Collection of “Painted Enamels” at the Qing Court*

In the past, studies of Qing dynasty enameled wares have mainly focused on one of two subjects: the technological and stylistic development of different materials (including porcelain, enamels, and glass), or the taste of Qing emperors.<sup>1</sup> This paper will take a different approach, exploring the significance of a unique collection of “painted enamels” at the Qing court. I will attempt to show that this collection reflects more than simply an imperial fascination with painted enamels, as argued in previous studies,<sup>2</sup> but rather an ambitious attempt of establishing a new art form of Qing dynasty by Emperors Kangxi, Yongzhen and Qianlong to surpass the achievements of European painted enamels and Ming overglaze-enamel porcelains. I will reexamine this collection in the light of recently published imperial workshop archives, as well as original Qing court inventories, European missionary documents, and studies on

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<sup>1</sup> For examples see the catalogue of “Special Exhibition of Ch’ing Dynasty Enamelled Porcelains of the Imperial Ateliers” (Tsai Ho-pi, 1992), the studies on painted enamels and glass vessels by Chang Lin-sheng (Chang Lin-sheng, 1983, pp.25-38 and 1991), and the catalogue of “Enamel Ware in the Ming and Qing Dynasties” by Chen Hsia-sheng (Chen Hsia-sheng, 1999); the studies by Zhang Rong and E. B. Curtis on Qing glassworks (Zhang Rong, 2003, pp.72-80; E. B. Curtis, 1993, pp.91-101 and 2003, pp.62-71). Hugh Moss, on the other hand, investigates Qing dynasty enameled wares of copper or copper alloys, glasses and porcelains made by the imperial commands (See also Hugh Moss, 1976). A special exhibition of “Painted Enamels of the Qing Dynasty” was held in the National Palace Museum, Taipei in 1984(Taipei, 1984), showed part of this group of enameled ware and provided important reference. After twenty years, it is time to reexamine this collection with the recent studies and publication of important archives and inventories of Qing imperial workshops.

<sup>2</sup> For instances see Chang Lin-sheng, 1983; Loehr, 1962-63; Garner, 1967-69; Hung Moss, 1976.

imperial glass and enamel workshops.

### *The Discovery of a Precious Collection*

In 1925, the curatorial committee cataloging the contents of the Forbidden City recorded the discovery of a group of enameled vessels (Fig.1). According to their memoirs, they found the majority of these enameled wares packed individually in labeled, custom-made cedarwood boxes (Fig.2).<sup>3</sup> These boxes were stored in the north storeroom of the *Duanning* Palace 端凝殿 (Fig.3), at the East Wing of the *Qianqing* Palace in the Forbidden City.

Registration numbers confirm this storage location. The original registration numbers assigned by the curatorial staff begin with the “*lie*” 列 character, denoting objects placed in the *Duanning* Palace, and are followed by the “*Qian zhi wen* 千字文” classification, which records the location of objects registered during the foundation of the National Palace Museum.<sup>4</sup> For example, those begin with *Tian* 天 are originally placed in the *Qianqing* Palace and those begin with *lu* 呂 are originally placed in the Yangxin Palace 養心殿, the emperor’s studio. While this entire group of enameled wares was moved to Taiwan in 1950 following the relocation of the

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<sup>3</sup> It is usually either a box for one piece or one or several pairs of pieces placed in one box. According to the archives of imperial workshops, from the third year of Qianlong onwards, cedarwood boxes were ordered to be produced for enameled ware manufactured in the imperial *falang* workshop (for examples, see Qianlong *Zaobanchu* archives, Box. No.76, p.369).

<sup>4</sup> Taipei, 1995, pp.25-27 and pp.63-66. From the Sui and Tang dynasty onward, *Qian zhi wen* by Zhou Xingsi 周興嗣 of the Southern Dynasties, was very popular as a quick path for learning Chinese characters. The pieces with registration numbers begin with a *lie* character were originally stored in the *Duanning* Palace 端凝殿 and *Zhaoren* Palace 昭仁殿, next to *Qianqing* Palace.

National Palace Museum, scholars at the Palace Museum Beijing have recently made public three near-identical Qing court inventories (*Chenshe dang* 陳設檔 - dated 1835, 1875 and 1902) confirming their original location.<sup>5</sup>

These painted enamel wares were deliberately assembled and displayed or stored in the *Qianqing* 乾清 Palace during the later Qing period.<sup>6</sup> The location of this enameled ware collection is significant because it was in the *Qianqing* Palace that the Qing emperors received officials and formal guests. Moreover, in the collection of the National Palace Museum, contents that begin with the *lie* character include prized Hindustan jades,<sup>7</sup> documents on the annexation of Xinjiang (the New Territories), and *Sunghua* ink-stones 松花石硯 made of *Sunghua* stone, a new material from the Manchu homeland.<sup>8</sup> Like the painted enamels, these objects are characterized by a relation to western lands and/or artistic innovation of the Qing dynasty. The storage of the painted enamels in such a central location, their inclusion in successive inventories, and their storage in custom-made boxes all shows that they were highly valued and carefully preserved in the later Qing period.

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<sup>5</sup> See Zhu Jiajin, 1982, p.74, Wang Jianhua, 2001, pp.20-22. Liao Pao-show from the National Palace Museum also had the access to read these inventories and mentions some alternations (Liao Pao-show, 2002, p.89). These three inventories are almost identical except a few alternations. According to Zhu, in the inventory dated 1835 (the fifteenth year of Daoguang) there are yellow tags attached to some 67 pieces that emperors had given to Mongol khans, Tibetan *Dalai*, *Penchan Lamas*, and other tribal kings. The author hopes to have the opportunity to read these original inventories in person in the near future.

<sup>6</sup> On the title page of an original inventory, dated 1902 (the 28<sup>th</sup> of Guangxu 光緒), it reads: “*Mingdian xianshe jin yin tong yixing ci boli falang dang*” 《明殿現設金銀銅宜興瓷玻璃瑱瑯檔》 (quoted from Wang Jianhua, 2001, pp.20-22), may be translated into “The inventory of gold, silver, copper/or copper alloys, Yixing, porcelain, glass and enamel presently placing at the *Ming* Palace (Zheng da guang ming Palace 正大光明殿)”.

<sup>7</sup> Teng, Shu-ping, p.26; Taipei, 1983.

<sup>8</sup> Chi, Jo-hsin, 1993, p.19; Taipei, 1993.

The bulk of this collection consists of “*hua falang* 畫琺瑯” or “painted enamels” from the Qing imperial workshops.<sup>9</sup> The term “painted enamel” (as supposed to the shorter term, “enamel”, which refers to enameled copper or copper alloys) was used at the Qing court to indicate that these enameled wares were made of metal, glass, Yixing wares, and porcelain. In contrast to the daily utensils, produced in thousands, supplied for daily use at the imperial court, this group of enamelled wares was produced within the imperial workshops as single pieces or pairs at a time.<sup>10</sup> The collection includes examples of *falang cai* porcelain (famous for its fine body and elegant overglaze-enamel decoration, often including a poem and seals – see Fig.4). It also includes unique Yixing tea wares with overglaze-enamel decorations from the Kangxi reign (Fig.5);<sup>11</sup> enameled glass snuff bottles from the Yongzhen reign (Fig.6), and Qianlong enameled porcelain boxes with Western motifs (Fig.7). This group of “painted enamel” artworks is thus outstanding among the handicraft production of the Qing court.

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<sup>9</sup> It includes more than 400 pieces of enameled porcelains and some 200 enameled copper or copper-alloy pieces. Among the latter group, there are *champlevé* and *cloisonné*, but in a small quantity (Taipei, 1995, p.75).

<sup>10</sup> See Zhu Jiajin, 1982, p.74. Liao Pao-show, 2002, p.16. Also see *Guochao gongshi*, which mentions that although these enameled wares were mainly in the form of dishes and plates, it was unlikely that they were meant for daily use as many of them are made of fine and thin bodies. In addition, from the record on imperial household, the porcelains supplied for daily use in the Qing court are mainly yellow glazed porcelain, yellow glazed porcelain with green dragon decoration, green glazed porcelain with purple dragon, and blue glazed porcelain with yellow dragon (see the records in the *Guochao gongshi* 國朝宮史). The patterns employed on these wares are mainly floral patterns or landscapes and figures (during the Qianlong period), and only a few pieces are found decorated with dragon and phoenix (for instance see Taipei, 1984, pl.88).

<sup>11</sup> According to the studies by Lai Pao-show, only 21 Yixing tea wares with overglaze-enamel decoration and Kangxi reign marks in the world, and they are all housed in the National Palace Museum, Taipei (Liao Pao-show, 2002, p.16).

*Artistic Experimentation and the Establishment of a New Art Form*

The use of the term “painted enamel” by the Qing imperial court indicates the birth of a new art form using techniques introduced from Europe. Qing painted enamels adopted Western decorative techniques, enamel colour palette, and decorative styles, all of which, however, were employed on several different materials other than metal.

European painted enamels were introduced to China by European merchants and missionaries beginning in the early Qing period.<sup>12</sup> Missionary letters show that Emperors Kangxi and Yongzhen were fascinated by these wares, and not only asked for more “painted enamel” pieces to be sent to the Qing court, but also that enamellers be sent to the imperial workshops.<sup>13</sup>

It is now believed that Chinese painted enamels were first successfully produced in the imperial workshops of Kangxi’s reign.<sup>14</sup> In the 32<sup>nd</sup> year of Kangxi

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<sup>12</sup> The lifting of restrictions at ports during the 23<sup>rd</sup> year of the Kangxi reign brought in large quantities of goods from Europe.

<sup>13</sup> Loehr has listed many of these references from the letters of missionaries in China (Loehr, 1962-63, pp. 55-59). See also Curtis’s studies on glass-making at the Qing court, mentioning many letters written on this issue by the missionary, including the well-known letter written by French missionary Jean de Fontaney, S. J. (1643-1710) in 1696 urging that artisans for making glass works and enamel be sent to the court (Curtis, 2003, p.63). Fontaney was the superior of the first group sent to China by Louis XIV. As early as one month after his arrival in China (1687) he requested paintings on enamels and enameled objects to be presented to mandarins (Loehr, 1962-63, p.52). In another article Curtis refers to similarly urgent requests from the emperor Kangxi. For instance, when the Franciscan Miguel Fernandez was introduced at court in 1716, he was asked whether he knew how to make enamels. Virtually the same thing occurred with Moyriac de Mailla (Curtis, 1993, p.97).

<sup>14</sup> In the past, painted enamels were either not included in discussions of Kangxi-era arts or listed as examples of Kangxi reign marks with some reservations as to the actual period of their production noted in catalog entries. See *Chinese Art Treasures* (1960), p.186 and 187; Garner, 1967-69, pp.1-16. Hung Moss and Soame Jenys list some pieces with Kangxi reign mark and period in their catalogues (Moss, 1976; Jenys, 1965). However, in some later publications, scholars continue to question whether these Kangxi period pieces were actually produced during the Kangxi reign (see Medley, 1974, p.249;

(1693), the emperor enlarged the scale of imperial ateliers and set up fourteen workshops, including at least one *falang* workshop. In 1696 a glass factory was also built.<sup>15</sup> According to missionary records, this glass factory was put under the direction of a German missionary named Kilian Stumpf (1655-1720). Stumpf not only taught Chinese craftsmen how to produce glass vessels but also how to prepare enamel colours,<sup>16</sup> aiding the production of painted enamels at the imperial workshops. Records from the 44<sup>th</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> years of Kangxi (1705, 1706) note that the emperor distributed enameled glass vessels as gifts, suggesting that the workshops were quite successful in making enameled glasses.<sup>17</sup>

Examples of Kangxi enameled glasswork can be seen in the National Palace Museum's collection. A long-neck glass vase with enamel painting has no reign mark, but given its stylistic similarity to other Kangxi painted enamels and the accompanying wooden box bearing the Kangxi reign mark, we can regard it as Kangxi period piece.<sup>18</sup> Alternately, a snuff bottle made of copper with the "Kangxi *yuzhi*" mark in enamels might be a close example of the enameled glass snuff bottle Emperor Kangxi gave to Maillard de Tournon, the Papal legate in 1705 (Fig.8).<sup>19</sup>

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Rose Kerr, 1986, p.110).

<sup>15</sup> See *Qinding Daqing huidian shili* 欽定大清會典事例 (Collected Statutes and Precedents of the Qing Dynasty), vol.1173. (see also Cheng Hsia-sheng, 1999, p.26; Chang Lin-sheng, 1992, p.8; Curtis, 2003)

<sup>16</sup> In 1711 Ripa remarked that Joao Mourao credited Kilian Stumpf with teaching the two arts of making glass and enamel colors (Curtis, 1993, p.96).

<sup>17</sup> See Curtis, 2003, pp.63-64.

<sup>18</sup> The thank goes to my colleague, Tsai Mei-fen, from the Department National Palace Museum for providing these references.

<sup>19</sup> See Curtis, 1993, p.95.

The Beijing imperial workshops launched a whole new production system for painted enamels. Even white porcelains fired at Jingdezhen and earthenwares from Yixing were sent to the Palace for enameling.<sup>20</sup> This production system firmly established the new art form and allowed it to develop during the reigns of Kangxi (1662-1722), Yongzhen (1723-1735), Qianlong (1736-1795). Production ceased during the later Qianlong era.<sup>21</sup> Thus we have a unique type of enameled Yixing tea wares during the Kangxi reign (see Fig. 5) and elegant and fine *falang cai* porcelains during the Yongzhen reign (see Fig.4), mentioned above, and pieces that combine different decorative techniques during the Qianlong reign (Fig. 9).

The decision to establish the new production system within the Beijing imperial workshop encouraged the exchange and transformation of designs between different media. Artisans from various workshops were frequently exposed to each other's works and as a result, the designs show definitive signs of mutual inspiration. For instance, similar designs with slight changes in colour or pattern were employed

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<sup>20</sup> In some cases, white porcelain pieces of earlier periods were also enameled at the Palace (Zhu Jiajin, 1982, p.74; Tsai, Ho-pi, 1992, p.1, Plate 1). In addition, Zhu Jiajin suggests that the enamels were applied among other places at the imperial workshop in the Forbidden City, *Yuanming Yuan* 圓明園, and at the Household of *Yiqin wang* 怡親王 (Zhu Jiajin, 1982, p.73).

<sup>21</sup> The production of "painted enamels" ceased later on as the enamel workshop declined and was finally closed in late Qianlong period (Chen Hsia-sheng, 1999). Although we are not sure about when exactly the manufacture of painted enamels at the imperial workshops stopped, documents suggest that as early as the beginning of the Qinglong period there was already a shortage of good painters and enamellers. Thereafter Jingdezhen gradually took over the production of enameled porcelain. Nevertheless, due to a number of obstacles the imperial workshop at Jingdezhen also began to decline beginning in the 33<sup>rd</sup> year of Qianlong era (1768) (Tsai Ho-pi, 1992, pp.9-10). By the 54<sup>th</sup> year of Qianlong, records show that no work was carried out in the *falang* workshop and that the craftsmen belonging to this workshop had been dispatched to other workshops (Yang Boda, 1981, p.20).

on different materials (Fig.10, 11).<sup>22</sup> The participation of court painters in the *falang* workshop also resulted in particularly refined paintings,<sup>23</sup> reminiscent of court paintings, on these enameled wares (Fig. 12), and probably influenced the design of works made in the imperial painting workshops. The landscape on this fan, for example, is probably derived from blue-and-white porcelain or overglaze blue enamels on white porcelain (Fig.13).<sup>24</sup> Another piece with flower paintings on black ground is likely derived from a popular “painted enamel” decorative scheme (Fig. 14). The parallel as well as interlocking paths of development in styles or designs were borne of the artisans from different expertise being gathered together under the roof of the same workshop.

Ripa,<sup>25</sup> a secular priest from de Propaganda Fide working as a painter at the court of the Kangxi emperor, reported in 1716 on the production of enamelware at the Qing court: “His Majesty having become fascinated by our European enamel and by the new method of enamel painting, tried by every possible means to introduce the latter into his imperial workshops which he had set up for this purpose within the

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<sup>22</sup> See the archive of imperial workshop, on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the eighth month of the fourth year of Yong zhen.

<sup>23</sup> For example, the painter of flowers and birds, He Jinkun 賀金昆 (Zhu Jiajin, 1982, p.68). In Chinese documents, Castiglione was ordered by Emperor Yongzheng to paint enamels on gold cups. (Zhu Jiajin, 1982, p.69) In 1723, German Jesuit, Ignatius Kogler, President of the Bureau of Astronomy, of 1723, to Tamburini, the General of the Jesuits, in which he reports that the ruler “had decided to test the hand and the brush of Lam xe nim [Castiglione]. From that day, our most dear Castiglione has been daily occupied in the palace....., first in enamel painting, then in the usual technique, whether in oil or watercolour.” Castiglione received even more gifts from Yongzheng than he had from Kangxi (Loehr, 1962-63, p.58). Castiglione and Ripa were ordered to paint on enamels (see footnote.24). Another Chinese record about Castiglione’s painting on enamels can be found in *Zhu Jiajin* 1982, p.69.

<sup>24</sup> Thanks to my colleague at the Department of Painting, Chen Yunru, for providing this information.

<sup>25</sup> See Curtis, 1993, p.95, fn.35. Ripa arrived in China in 1710.



Palace, with the result that with the colours used there to paint porcelain and with several large pieces of enamel which he had had brought from Europe, it became possible to do something.”<sup>26</sup>

Imperial workshop archives also record the existence of porcelain painters within the imperial workshops in Beijing,<sup>27</sup> suggesting that they too influenced enamel painting styles. A direct connection between Jingdezhen porcelain decoration and the early development of painted enamels at the Qing court can be seen in this painted enamel box with the Kangxi reign mark (Fig. 15), which uses a style derived from contemporary porcelains.

During this developmental period, artisans in the imperial workshops experimented with imported European enamel colours as well as those prepared in a missionary-supervised glass factory.<sup>28</sup> Looking at the painted enamels of the National Palace Museum collection, we find that the enamel on several pieces is rough and relatively thick, suggesting that they were produced during this experimental stage.

For example, an enameled copper box bearing Kangxi’s mark (Fig. 16) is decorated

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<sup>26</sup> In the same letter, Ripa mentions that he and Castiglione (arrived in Macao in 1715) were ordered to paint in enamels, “yet each of us, considering the intolerable slavery that we would have to suffer by having to stay from morning to evening in a workshop filled with such a crowd of corrupt persons within the Palace, we excused ourselves by saying that we have never learnt that art. Notwithstanding that, forced by the command, we obeyed, and went on the 31<sup>st</sup> of the month. As neither of us had learned this art, and making up our minds that we would never want to know it, we painted so badly, that the Emperor on seeing what we had done, said, “Enough of that!” Thus we found ourselves freed from a galley-slave condition.” (Loehr, 1962-63, p.55)

<sup>27</sup> See the archives of imperial workshops, the ninth month of the third year of Yongzheng (quoted Zhu Jiajin, 1982, p.68) It is likely that porcelain painters from Jiangxi had been working before that date.

<sup>28</sup> In 1715-1716, Ripa sent a letter to Rome for a “treatise on miniatures with the secrets for making colours” (Curtis, 1993, p.97).

with thickly outlined floral patterns reminiscent of the metal outlining of cloisonné. A pair of enameled porcelain vases bearing Kangxi's mark also has thick outlines and enamels as well as an uneven glaze that seems in danger of flowing over the outlines. The style of these enamels, which set elaborate flower designs against an opaque colour ground has been compared to that of earlier examples of cloisonné (Fig.17).<sup>29</sup>

The imperial workshop eventually mastered the new art, aided by craftsmen from Guangdong<sup>30</sup> and the French Jesuit missionary Jean Baptist Gravereau, an enameller who almost certainly supervised the production of many painted enamels during the latter part of the Kangxi period. However, primary sources suggest that Chinese artisans at the Qing court were active even before Gravereau's arrival in China. A palace memorial dated 1719 (the 58th year of Kangxi) mentions that Jean Baptist Gravereau (Chen Zhongxin 陳忠信) had arrived in Canton and would be sent to Beijing.<sup>31</sup> A similar record can be found in the Jesuit archives, reporting Gravereau's arrival in China and his observation that the Chinese were producing enamels.<sup>32</sup>

With the above evidence, one can suggest that Qing painted enamels were inspired by European counterparts at the Qing court (Fig.18, 19) made with help from

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<sup>29</sup> See Hugh Moss, 1976, pp.22-23.

<sup>30</sup> A palace memorial dated September 28, 1716 (the 55<sup>th</sup> year of Kangxi) notes that the governor of Guangdong had sent "Canton enamellers, the enamel colours prepared by them (including pink colour made of colloidal gold), the Western enameled objects and enamel colours" to the Qing court. Quoted from Chang Lin-sheng, 1983, p.27. See also Curtis, 1993, p.98.

<sup>31</sup> See Chang Lin-sheng, *ibid*, pp.28-29. Jean Baptist Gravereau left China in 1722 and only stayed in China for a very short time. Also see Curtis, 1993, p.98 which states that De Mailla's letter to Paris also "tells about Gravereau's arrival at court, the work being done in enamels, and the Kangxi emperor's esteem for this art".

<sup>32</sup> See Loehr, 1962-63, p.56.

Jean Baptist Gravereau, and decorated with enamel colours from a missionary-directed glass factory. Even Castiglione was said to have painted on enamels and provided designs for enamel paintings,<sup>33</sup> while his student Lin Chaokai 林朝楷 was active during Yongzhen's reign as an enamel painter.<sup>34</sup> Strangely, the influence of Western decorative styles on Kangxi-era painted enamels was minimal.<sup>35</sup> In their analysis of the enameled colours produced at 18<sup>th</sup> century Jingdezhen, Kingery and Vandiver remark that "European practice was not simply copied, but served as a starting point for Chinese experimentation and development of these colours for use in porcelain decoration".<sup>36</sup> The same is true of painted enamel designs applied in the Beijing imperial workshops.

The realistic style of the painting on this enamel bottle (Fig. 19), for instance, draws on Western techniques of shadowing, but employs a typically Chinese peony flower motif. Similarly, a bowl with pink decoration (Fig.20) derives its design from contemporary painting and uses Western elements, such as the leaves between the roundel panels, within a Chinese stylistic context. It could be argued that the Western

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<sup>33</sup>See footnote 19 concerning Kangxi's order that Castiglione and Ripa paint on enamels. In 1720, Nicollo Tomacelli arrived in Beijing, and although he knew nothing about enamel painting, he was ordered on the insistence of Emperor Kangxi to take over Gravereau's position (Curtis, 2003, p.65 and fn.34). The regular clerks minor. P. Perroni, procurator of the propaganda in Canton, reported in 1722 that Tomacelli "was quite well pleasing the emperor, who had set him to painting on enamel, and although he know nothing if that profession, yet with the help of Castiglione, who is said to prepare the designs for him, is held in esteem" (quoted from Loehr, 1962-63, p.57 and fn. 36)

<sup>34</sup> See Zhu Jiajin, p.69

<sup>35</sup> Loehr suggests that enameled objects brought from Europe were used as models by the Chinese staff of the imperial workshops, who were thus not entirely dependent on their European colleagues for designs (Loehr, 1962-63, p.56). But he does not suggest any possible reasons for the absence of a Western style.

<sup>36</sup> W. D. Kingery and P. B. Vandiver, 1985, p.379.

influences behind “painted enamels” produced at the imperial workshops were deliberately masked using Chinese decorative styles.

In any case, Kangxi was obsessed with ensuring that Chinese craftsmen master the European “techniques” needed for making painted enamels.<sup>37</sup> As Curtis notes, “Yangxin Palace was the place where the Kangxi emperor worked early in the morning and later in the evening. It was his custom to have brought there, every two days, the glass and enamel wares made by his order, he proudly compared his glassware with European examples”.<sup>38</sup> A palace memorial dated 1716 further testifies to Kangxi’s heavy involvement in establishing this new art form and his wish to compete with Western examples.<sup>39</sup>

Emperor Yongzheng perpetuated his father’s interest in painted enamels. A letter from the German Jesuit Ignatius Kogler to Francis Xavier Hallauer in Munich (dated 1726) shows that missions were pressured to send enamellers to the imperial court: “A capable and expert of enamels is most of all desired, because this art is greatly esteemed in this imperial court and on which the emperor especially looks with favour”.<sup>40</sup> In addition, a memorial dated 1724 by an official, *Nien Genyao* 年羹堯 records his acceptance of a gift of “painted enamels” from the Yongzheng emperor

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<sup>37</sup> Curtis, 2003, p.64.

<sup>38</sup> Curtis, 1993, p.97, fn.52, 53.

<sup>39</sup> The memorial was made by Guangdong governor, Chen Yuanlong, in the 55<sup>th</sup> year of Kangxi(1716). Quoted from Liu Ching-min, 1989, p.29.

<sup>40</sup> Loher, 1962-63, p.58, fn.42.

and notes the emperor's wish that painted enamels might surpass the achievements of Ming dynasty overglaze coloured wares.<sup>41</sup>

By the Yongzheng period, new enameling pigments primarily supplied by Europe had expanded the enamel colour palette, enabling artisans to experiment with a wider range of designs. Again, Western stylistic influences on Yongzheng "painted enamels" were minimal with some exceptions. This wooden-handled kettle, for example, is clearly derived from the Western form (Fig. 21). During the Yongzhen reign imperial artisans developed a unique and elegant style, long praised by scholars,<sup>42</sup> in which paintings, poetic inscriptions, and seals were applied to porcelain using overglaze enamels (see Fig. 4).

Emperor Qianlong, on the other hand, continued the existing painted enamel tradition while also launching his own innovations. These included the elaborate combination of various decorative techniques as well as the adoption of motifs from Western landscape and figure paintings (see Fig. 7, 9). The squared box mentioned above offers an example of this use of Western motifs in a Chinese context. Here we see Western motifs were employed in a Chinese context. The image of a mother

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<sup>41</sup> Tsai, Ho-pi, 1992, p.3. The polychrome porcelain known as *wu cai* (five-coloured) was developed in the Ming dynasty. The decoration was generally in underglaze blue and enamels of green, red, yellow and aubergine. These enamels were applied in a second firing on to the glazed white surface. This type of polychrome porcelain continued to be made in the early Qing period. However, many innovations made during the Qing dynasty give very different qualities from those of typical Ming polychromes. Scientific analysis also shows this development of polychromes (from *famille rose* to *famille verte*) at Jingdezhen (W. D. Kingery and P. B. Vandiver, 1985).

<sup>42</sup> For examples see Tsai Ho-pi, 1992; S. David, 1973; Rose Kerr, 1986 and Michel Beurdeley and Guy Raindre, 1987.

instructing her children, popular during the Qianlong reign, may have been derived from contemporary Western images of mother and son as suggested by scholars.<sup>43</sup>

This use of Western motifs is quite remarkable and reflects Qianlong's interest in the West. At the same time the emperor's confident use of Western motifs was almost certainly bolstered by the complete mastery of this European art by Qing imperial craftsmen.<sup>44</sup>

### *Conclusion*

This unique collection of Qing painted enamels bears witness to an important cultural exchange between 18<sup>th</sup> century China and the West, one that resulted in the establishment and evolution of a new art form. More importantly, it reflects the ambitious attempts of Emperors Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong to surpass the achievements of European painted enamels and Ming dynasty overglaze-enamel porcelains. Through early experimentation to complete mastery, these three emperors poured extensive resources into painted enamel production, carefully collecting the results. In addition, their careful preservation by later Qing emperors suggests that they were highly valued as symbols of Qing artistic achievement, even as obstacles forced a halt to painted enamel production. This collection, then, offers valuable

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<sup>43</sup> *Qianlong huadi de wenhua daye* (Taipei, National Palace Museum, 2002), p.180, pl.V-16.

<sup>44</sup> The fact that no requests for European enamellers have been found in Qianlong era court records may also show the confidence of Qianlong in this well-established art form by that time.

insight into the artistic ambitions of the Qing emperors and their interactions with the West, and it also serves as an important record of artistic innovation during the peak of the Qing dynasty.

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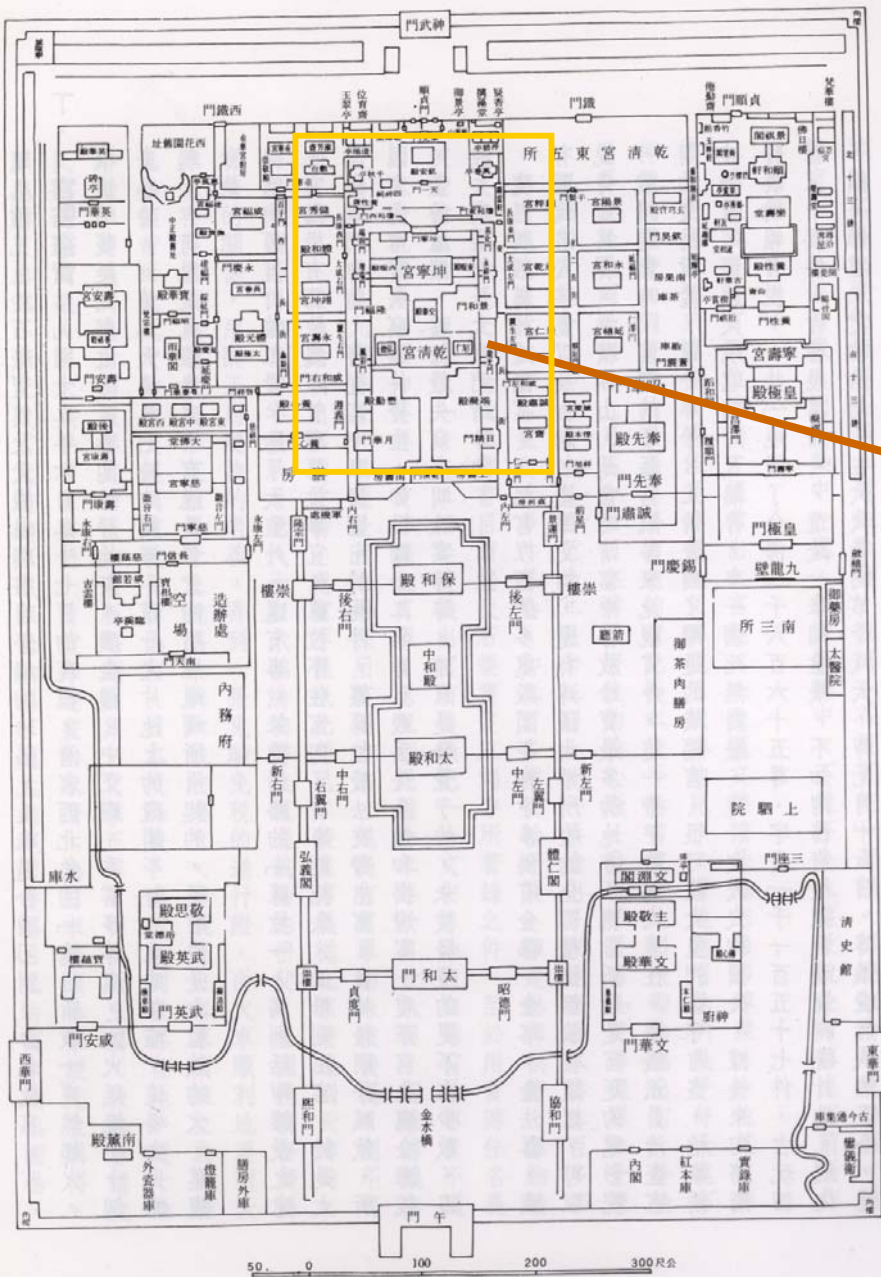
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**Fig.1** Qianqing Palace in the Forbidden City



**Fig.2 A pair of enamelled wares in wooden box**



*Fig.3 Duanning Palace端凝殿, at the East Wing of the Qianqing Palace in the Forbidden City*

Fig.4 Enamelled bowl on porcelain body  
Yongzheng reign mark and period (1723-1735)  
H: 7cm ; MD: 15 cm





Fig.5 Enamelled tea bowl with floral design on Yixing ware body  
Kangxi reign mark and period (1662-1722)  
H(incl.lid): 8.4cm; MD: 11cm

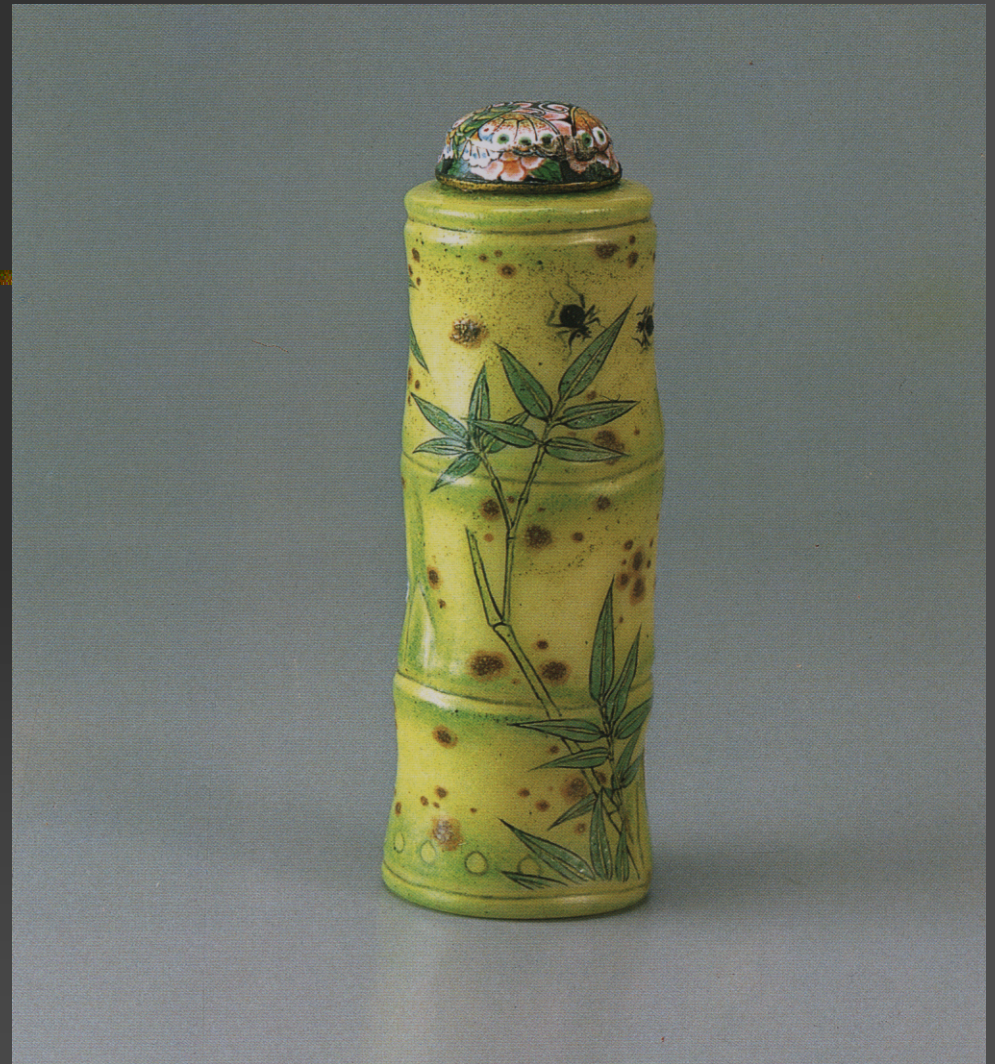


Fig.6 Enamelled snuff bottle with bamboo design on glass body  
Yongzheng reign mark and period(1723-1735)  
O.H.: 6.3 cm



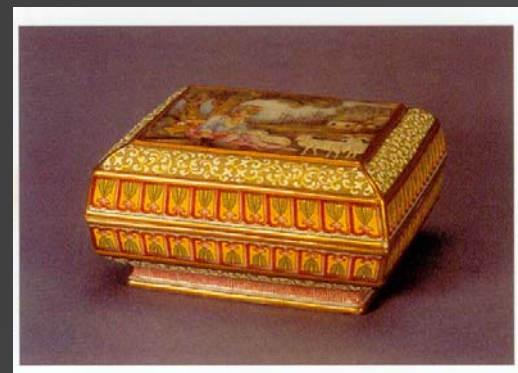


Fig.7 Enamel square box with western figures on porcelain body Qianlong mark and period(1736-1795)



Fig.8 Enamelled snuff bottle with butterflies design on copper body.

Kangxi reign and period (1662-1722)

O. H.: 3.7 cm



Fig.9 Champlevé jar with enamel painting  
Qianlong mark and period(1736-1795)  
H: 13.1cm; D:8.8cm



Fig.10 Enamelled dish with floral design on early Ming porcelain body and copper body

Kangxi mark and period (1662-1722)



Fig.11 Enamel snuff bottles with bamboo designs on glass body and metal body

Yongzheng mark and period (1723-1735)



Fig.12 Enamel with landscape painting on porcelain body  
Yongzheng reign mark and period (1723-1735)  
H: 7.6 cm ; MD: 16.1 cm



Fig.13 Fan Painting 18<sup>th</sup> century



Fig.14 Fan painting 18<sup>th</sup> century





Fig.15 Enamelled box with floral design on copper body  
Kangxi mark and period (1662-1722)

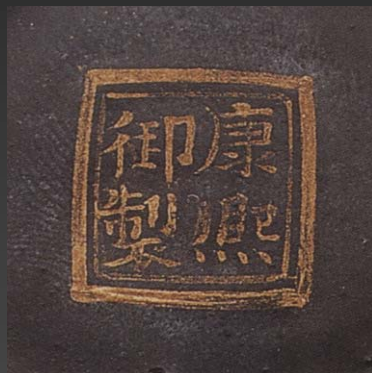


Fig.16 Enamelled box with floral design on copper body  
Kangxi mark and period (1662-1722)

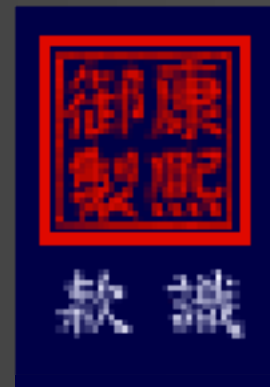


Fig.17 Cloisonné box

Kangxi mark and period (1662-1722)



**Fig.18 European painted enamels**  
**European enamelled toilette box**  
**French enmales 18<sup>th</sup> century**





Fig.19 Enamelled vases with floral design on copper body  
Kangxi mark and period (1662-1722)



Fig.20 Enamelled bowl with floral design on porcelain body  
Kangxi mark and period (1662-1722)



Fig.21 Enamelled tea pot with floral design on metal body Yongzheng reign mark and period(1723-1735)