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## CHINESE ENAMELS

The art of using colored enamels as a surface decoration on metal appears to have been practised in China as early as the fourteenth century of the Christian era, having been introduced into the north of China by Byzantine enamellers, and into the south somewhat later by the Arabs. Dr. Bushell, in his *Chinese Art*, states that "The most common 'mark' of Ming Cloisonné is that of the Ching T'ai period (A. D. 1450-1456)," and he further informs us that among the earliest marks that have been noticed is that of the last emperor of the line, Chih Cheng, of the Yuan dynasty, who reigned from 1341-1367. Marked pieces, however, are exceedingly rare and the age of Chinese enamels can usually be approximated only by the peculiarities of their coloring, decorative treatment, and the shapes of the articles themselves.

Chinese enamels may be divided into three classes: I. Cloisonné; II. Champlevé; III. Painted. The Museum possesses a fine collection of Chinese cloisonnés and some good examples of champlevé work, but in this article we shall attempt only to obtain a glimpse of the interesting enamels belonging to the third of these groups.

Painted enamels are produced by covering the surface of the metal with a thin, opaque white or tinted ground, without the employment of cloisons, or separating wire partitions, and then painting the designs in the enamel colors with a brush. The metal foundations on which the painted enamels of the Chinese are placed are usually quite thin and light in weight. Canton has been the principal center for the production of these enamels since the K'ang-hsi period (1662-1722), during which reign the Limoges style of enamel painting was probably first introduced into China.

The collections of Canton enamels in the Museum consist of a representative series in the Bloomfield Moore room and the noted collection formed by the late Dr. M. W. Dickeson, purchased from his estate with the income of the Joseph E. Temple trust. The two groups, which have been installed in two large cases in close proximity, contain plaques, plates, large temple censers, small incense-burners, wine pots, sweetmeat trays, vases, cups and saucers, tea-caddies, pricket candlesticks, pencil rests, jewel trays, tea-pots and numerous other objects intended for useful or ornamental purposes.

The first impression one receives on viewing these brilliantly tinted enamels is that they represent an endless variety of styles in decorative treatment, without regard to plan or purpose. A closer inspection, however, will reveal the fact that many of these pieces have been painted in close imitation of the characteristic styles of porcelain decoration which prevailed in China under the different emperors, particularly through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the collection we find examples of the *famille verte* of the K'ang-hsi period (1662-1722), with designs in copper green and dull red; specimens of the *famille rose* style, of the Ch'ien-lung reign (1736-1795), such as rose back plates with chrysanthemum designs in pink; numerous pieces simulating the cloisonné enameling, copied from that variety of Chinese enameled porcelain made for the Siamese and southern markets; objects for the Persian trade, such as rose-water sprinklers and wine ewers, also copied from the Chinese



LARGE TEMPLE CENSER  
Canton Enamel



LARGE BOWL  
Canton Enamel



LARGE PLAQUE  
Canton Enamel  
Dragons Amid Clouds



WINE POTS  
Canton Enamel



CUP AND SAUCER  
Canton Enamel  
Painted for the European Market

originals in porcelain, and some interesting examples painted with European designs from colored prints which were sent to China to be copied on the porcelains of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The earliest piece of Canton enamel in the collections is a large bowl of the K'ang-hsi reign, with a plain powder blue ground. The Ch'ien-lung period is represented by numerous fine examples, including a graceful tea-pot with deep rose ground, and a bowl with pink ground decorated with dragons in green and brown (see small cut). Many other pieces, such as are usually attributed in museum collections to the period from 1736 to 1820, are of later date, extending into the middle of the nineteenth century, such as that numerous class of objects decorated with floral designs in polychrome on dark blue. These collections will be more fully treated in a handbook on the Museum enamels, which is now in course of preparation. E. A. B.



### EDUCATIONAL PLAYING CARDS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

A humble though truly interesting addition to the collections has been made recently in the shape of a pack of educational cards printed in the latter part of the eighteenth century. It consists of a full pack of which no better description can be given than that presented by the author himself in the "Preface" card introducing the pack:

"While Guthrie's and other grammars instruct those only who have opportunity for study; this compendium is calculated to give those who have not much time to read (and particularly young persons at school) a general acquaintance with the bigness, boundaries, population, capitals, latitudinal and longitudinal distances from London, islands, rivers, lakes, mountains, climates, productions, agriculture, manufactures, trades, government, religion, customs, learning and curiosities of every Kingdom or State in the world, in an easy suatory manner; as it describes Asia under Spades, Africa under Clubs, Europe under Hearts, America under Diamonds; arranged thus, each quarter is described on the first page of its suit, and each K. page contains the Kingdoms, and the number pages their descriptions; the reader will observe that Tartary on the K. of spades has the figure '2' annexed, which refers to the 2 of spades; England, Scotland and Ireland have 2, 3, 4, their description begins on the 2 and ends on the 4, etc. The islands are on the Q. and J. of each suit."

A quaint note follows:

"Should the scientific discover any inaccuracies, their candour will ascribe them to some pardonable cause; and that of the public will graciously accept the labours of the Author as an evidence of his good will toward mankind." Some curious assertions on the part of the author show the state of knowledge of his day, and how little of the Western Hemisphere had been seriously explored. For instance, while describing the American Continent, he remarks: "In general it is not mountainous. Yet the Andes are so lofty that they almost scorn to be mentioned with any in the world." Again, in enumerating the