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Splendors Of China's Forbidden City: The Glorious Reign Of Emperor Qianlong



Synopsis

Offering an unprecedented insight into one of the most glittering courts in history, this sumptuous book brings together some China's priceless national treasures, housed in Beijing's royal palace complex, the Forbidden City, and collected by Emperor Qianlong during his sixty-year reign from 1736 to 1795.

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Customer Reviews

Chuimei Ho is an independent scholar specializing in Chinese decorative arts and Adjunct Curator of Chinese Archaeology and Art at The Field Museum, Chicago. Bennet Bronson is Curator of Asian Archaeology and Ethnology at The Field Museum, Chicago.

This book is absolutely a great reference book about Emperor Qianlong and his court art. A lot of photos, which make it a great coffee table book for Chinese Art Lovers. I have a few words to the court art of Qing dynasty: The stereotype of the art flavor in the middle of Qing dynasty is obvious. It produces a great number of delicate art pieces, which lacks of spirit and artistic impulse. The suppressive atmosphere of politics in that period is intense, which produced a large quantity of art-craftsmen but very few geniuses. Most of the pieces in this book were produced by the art-craftsmen --- Beautiful but not touching! Compare to "China: The Three Emperors 1662-1795", this book contains more descriptions, which makes readers to understand more details about the pieces of art. Downside: the price of this book is very high! Many pictures are very small!

Splendors of China's Forbidden City: The Glorious Reign of Qianlong is a marvelous work of art in and of itself. Splendors is published to coincide with the special exhibition of the same name currently being held by Chicago's Field Museum that is set to run until the first week of September, 2004. The book, like the exhibit, is very well done and contains the only published photographs of the objects featured in the exhibit, making this book an extremely rare resource as photography is prohibited in the actual exhibit. These objects have never been publicly displayed in China, so aside from attending the exhibition yourself, this book is your only opportunity to view the collection that Emperor Qianlong amassed throughout his reign. The book is not, however, simply a catalogue for the exhibition, but features wonderful commentary that gives great insight into the political, religious, and cultural tides of Qianlong's reign. It is the only book of its kind to be published in the English language. As a lover of art and literature, Qianlong himself would be quite pleased with the content of this work.

This must be one of the most beautiful book that I have ever come acrossed. The cover is very imposing and impressive with the portrait of the Emperor Qian Long, the 4th emperor of the Ching Dynasty. The book contains wonderful history about the rise of the Manchurians and how they replaced the Ming Dynasty in the 17th century A.D. In this book it discusses the origins of the Manchurian and where they originated from and how they ascended the imperial throne of China and ruled over a nation with the largest human population of their time. A country that has been known for its inventions and a long history dating back to early beginning of Chinese civilization. This book talks about the Emperor Qian Long and the reign that brought China prosperity and peace. The centuries before that, relations between the Han Chinese and the Manchurians were a little bit unstable. However during Qian Long's reign the country became stable. The country prospered, the relations between the Han Chinese and the Manchurian wasn't as much strained. There are wonderful photographs of robes and jewelry worn by the emperor and his wives and family members. Also sections talk about traditions that were Manchurian and others that were created through generations like the wearing of triple earrings by the women. The large headdresses worn by the Manchurian court ladies and the emperor's wives, princesses etc... which in the beginning weren't even of Manchurian origin that has become part of a iconic tradition often associated with the Ching Dynasty. The dragon robe worn by the emperor and the long queues kept by Emperor and the Han Chinese subjects were made to conform to practice which became the stereo type associated with the West in regards to the Chinese. The book also talks about the private lives of the Emperor Qian Long and his wives and also day to day business and affairs. There are so many artifacts that

belonged to Qian Long like his own personal things like brushes, ink stone, wooden lacquered screens, throne, and crockery as well as gold and silver utensils used by him when dining. The information was vast in book and who can ever get bored reading it. Each page I turn it gets more interesting. From the personal life through to the day to day business affairs etc... The book contains wonderful collection of paintings and also a few old photographs of the imperial residences before the turn of the 20th century. This is a lovely book even though its a little bit bigger than most books and a little bit more heavier. However its guaranteed that its worth while too to have a look and have a read in regards to one of the great rulers of Chinese history.

the book is fantastic... comprehensive, authoritative, and filled with beautiful historical art photos! a great deal, as book was immaculate like new at used price!

It is rather unfortunate that such a wonderful book has too small pictures. In some pictures one can hardly see the fine details of the pictures which are described in the accompanying text.

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