

A Study of the Manchu, Mongolian, Western Region, and European Elements in *Illustrated Regulations for Ceremonial Paraphernalia of the Imperial Qing Dynasty*

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Abstract

Early in his reign, the Qianlong emperor ordered the revision and compilation of books on rites to put his respect for Confucian ideas into practice and to standardize related ceremonies and their implements. In 1748, he took personal control of revising these ceremonies and objects as well as reviewing their illustrations, eventually yielding a full group of six categories with catalogs and explanations on ritual vessels, crowns and clothing, musical instruments, astronomical apparatus, imperial insignia, and armaments. Afterwards, he further ordered each category be compiled into a single volume for a text to be printed together as *Illustrated Regulations for Ceremonial Paraphernalia of the Imperial Qing Dynasty*, forming a complete set of illustrated rites that was circulated widely. Although these new rites and music at the Qianlong court were based on antiquity and textual studies, a closer examination of the *Illustrated Regulations for Ceremonial Paraphernalia of the Imperial Qing Dynasty* shows that not only did ceremonial objects and military armaments differ from the categories and forms of such items in classic texts on rites and ceremonies, they also included “non-Han Chinese” elements from Manchu, Mongolian, Western Region and European sources. The Qianlong emperor in particular pointed out that clothing and accessories be based on current dynastic practice and not revised to reflect Han-Chinese forms of clothing, making *Illustrated Regulations for Ceremonial Paraphernalia of the Imperial Qing Dynasty* a practical example of Manchu traditions as well. This compilation underwent revisions and additions over the years and was also related to the proclamation of pacifying what is now the Xinjiang area in the tenth lunar month of 1759. This accounts for the large number of elements from these “Western Regions” in the *Illustrated Regulations for Ceremonial Paraphernalia of the Imperial Qing Dynasty*. The main point of the present study is to explain the process of compiling the *Illustrated Regulations for Ceremonial Paraphernalia of the Imperial Qing*

Dynasty and the phenomenon of Manchu, Mongolian, Western Region and European elements that appear in it. Not only does the study offer a better understanding for the plurality of sources in *Illustrated Regulations for Ceremonial Paraphernalia of the Imperial Qing Dynasty*, it also helps recognize the political and cultural facets to court rituals and music in the Qianlong reign.

Keywords: *Illustrated Regulations for Ceremonial Paraphernalia of the Imperial Qing Dynasty*, Manchu, Mongol, Western Regions(Xiyu), Europe (the West)

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