

Introduction to the Special Editions on Papers Presented at the International Conference on *Illustrated Regulations for Ceremonial Paraphernalia of the Imperial Qing Dynasty*

Illustrated Regulations for Ceremonial Paraphernalia of the Imperial Qing Dynasty (hereafter *Illustrated Regulations*) is an important large-scale catalogue illustrating various facets related to ritual systems at the Qing court, including six sections dealing with ritual vessels, astronomical apparatus, ceremonial clothing, musical instruments, imperial paraphernalia, and military equipment. The large number of images and texts therein provides an enormous amount of information to fill in details on Qing dynasty palace life, rituals, and objects used. Of particular note is that, as a normative model, *Illustrated Regulations* features numerous imported objects. Obviously, the inclusion of imports is by no means accidental, for such objects were an important link in terms of long-term trade and diplomacy.

With regards to *Illustrated Regulations*, scholars in various fields have come to recognize its importance. Though there have been intermittent publications, scholarship in any one field makes it very difficult to see the overall compilation planning at the Qing palace. Therefore, the “Western Learning and China Research Group” at Academia Sinica’s Institute of Modern History invited scholars from the Graduate Institute of Art History at National Taiwan University and the Art Museum at the Chinese University of Hong Kong to collaborate in holding an international conference on this important Qing court project. The conference held on August 22 and 23 of 2019 brought together scholars in the history of art, technology, economics, material culture, and the Qing court in the hope of overcoming the challenges of studying *Illustrated Regulations* and to further our understanding of scholarship on Qing rituals, economics, material culture, and palace history. The two-day conference included a keynote speech followed by papers presented in seven categories. For the keynote speech, Professor Fang-mei Chen of the Graduate Institute of Art History at National Taiwan University was invited to opening the conference. The seven categories divided according to the medium or subject matter were rituals and ceramics, metalware, technology, apparel, armaments, and illustrations and practice. For further information in Chinese on the conference, please refer to *Ming-Qing Studies Newsletter* (no. 75) at http://mingching.sinica.edu.tw/Academic_Detail/780.

Numbers 2, 3, and 4 in Volume 37 of *The National Palace Museum Research Quarterly* are specially dedicated to *Illustrated Regulations* and feature a total of ten papers presented at the above-mentioned conference, representing its cross-institutional and cross-disciplinary results. At this time, I would like to express my thanks to *The National Palace Museum Research Quarterly* for providing a stringent review procedure and a platform for some of these conference results to be presented to a wider audience and on a deeper level as a means to enhance scholarship in the field. These special editions, however, hopefully represent only the start of further studies on *Illustrated Regulations*, and we hope that by scratching the surface, even more scholars in the future will delve into and discover the academic value and diverse possibilities of this rich trove of Qing dynasty material.

Sincerely,
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(Translated by Donald E. Brix)