

**TEN THOUSAND THINGS ON CHINA AND
THE CHINESE: BEING A FIXTURE OF THE
GENIUS, GOVERNMENT, HISTORY,
LITERATURE, AGRICULTURE, ARTS, TRADE,
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND SOCIAL LIFE
OF THE PEOPLE OF THE CELESTIAL EMPIRE**

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Ten Thousand Things on China and the Chinese: Being a Fixture of the Genius, Government, History, Literature, Agriculture, Arts, Trade, Manners, Customs, and Social Life of the People of the Celestial Empire by Barnum's Chinese Museum

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BARNUM'S CHINESE MUSEUM

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INTRODUCTION.

WITHIN a few years past, attention has been particularly directed towards China, by her war with England, and since the conclusion of that war, the United States and other nations have hastened to make treaties with the Celestial Empire, by which to put themselves on a footing with the most favored. The zeal and enterprise of individuals have also been awakened. Christian communities are adding to the number of their Missionaries among this nation of idolaters, and merchants are flocking to the shores of China in pursuit of gain. Many excellent works have been written on China, but the best descriptions do not equal a view of the objects described or leave as permanent an impression upon the mind. As information is now eagerly sought after concerning China and its hundreds of millions of inhabitants, this collection and the accompanying work have been made to furnish it. The collection was formed, without reference to labor or expense, with the aid of Chinese, and the American Missionaries, who have resided a long time in the country, and are well acquainted with the language, manners and customs of this curious people. In collecting the materials for this book, the best works on the subject have been consulted, and in most instances the information derived from them is presented in a condensed form. Among the works used may be mentioned the Chinese Repository, Dr. Bridgman's Chrestomathy, and the works of Medhurst, Davis, Barrow, Staunton, Timowski, Kidd, and Gutzlaff, as the principal ones to which this work is indebted.

GENERAL VIEW

OF THE

ENTRANCE AND INTERIOR OF THE CHINESE MUSEUM.

OVER the spacious entrance to the building, is an inscription in large golden characters, reading from right to left, as follows: "Choong-wa-tie-Koon," or in English, "An extensive view of the central flowery nation." On the sides are two tablets with the following characters upon them, reading downwards and beginning with the one on the right, viz: "Een-tsze-chaow-shy-hum-wy-gni." "Mow-tsze-eeu-yon-she-maw-laa-ung." A Chinese aphorism. A free translation of which is, "Words may deceive, but the eye cannot play the rogue."

Suspended over the interior porch, with a lantern on each side, is a "Tsoi Moon," or "Lucky door," a fanciful shaped frame divided in panels, richly carved and finished in gold and lacquer, such as are hung up at the entrances to Chinese "Jos Houses," or Temples.

The cases are numbered around the room in regular order as in the catalogue; the largest, with the exception of one, contain groups of figures of the full size of life, likenesses of individual Chinese, dressed in the costumes appropriate to the situations and employments in which they are represented. Two of the cases are fac-similes of

occupied rooms, completely, but differently furnished, in the houses of a wealthy person. Another is a complete representation of a Chinese store with the merchant, his assistants, a purchaser, &c.

Some of the small cases contain models of houses, bridges and vessels, and others an immense number of specimens of Chinese arts and manufacture; articles esteemed curiosities by the Chinese themselves, beautiful specimens of their curious and wonderful art of carving in ivory, sandal-wood, tortoise-shell and stone; articles of food peculiar to the Chinese, such as birds' nests, sea-slugs, sharks' fins, &c.

There is also a large and beautiful collection of Chinese paintings in oils and water-colors, consisting of landscapes, portraits of Mandarins, Sadiac, and Hong merchants, views of the different processes of manufacturing porcelain, silk and cotton, raising and curing tea and rice, and a great variety of others.

The ceiling is covered with a great number of lanterns suspended from it, many of them of beautiful construction and materials, and others the forms of which could hardly originate in any other than the distorted fancy of a Chinese.

The Museum is exclusively Chinese, collected from all parts of the Empire, and with the aid of this work, will give the visitor a better knowledge of this curious people than can be acquired by reading the most faithful descriptions alone, or even by a transient visit to China.

There is only one other Museum of this kind in the world; which is that brought from China, by the late Mr. Dunn, of Philadelphia, who resided in the "Celestial Empire" for a number of years. His Museum was opened in Philadelphia in 1839, exhibited for a few months, and then taken to Europe, where it now is.

THE present collection has been leased, for a short time, by P. T. BARNUM, Esq., of this city. In order to increase its attraction, and invest its picturesque still-life with a living interest, he has secured and attached to it, regardless of the expense, the celebrated Chinese Beauty, Miss Pwan-ye-koo, and her *suite*, who recently arrived at this port in the ship *Ianthe*, from Canton, *en route* for London. The entire group is composed of

Miss PWAN-YE-KOO.....	aged 17.....	<i>A Young Lady.</i>
Miss LUM-AKUM.....	" 23.....	<i>Her Maid-Servant.</i>
Mr. SOO-CHUNE.....	" 32.....	<i>Professor of Music.</i>
Miss AMOON.....	" 7.....	<i>His Daughter.</i>
Master MUN-CHUNG.....	" 5.....	<i>His Son.</i>
Master ALEET-MONG.....	" 18.....	<i>An Interpreter.</i>

Miss Pwan-ye-koo will be pronounced peculiarly prepossessing. She is young and handsome, vivacious, artless, refined in her manners, and delicate in her deportment. She is well known to belong to a family of high standing in the Celestial empire, and possesses all the accomplishments of mind and person so eloquently enlarged upon by the poets of that mysterious country. She is the first Chinese *lady* that has yet visited Christendom; the only other female ever known to have left the "Central Flowery Nation" in order to visit the "outside barbarians" having been one of apocryphal reputation and position in her own country.

When it is considered that the watchful jealousy of a Chinese gentleman excludes from even a casual glance at the females of his family, not only his male friends, but his most intimate male relations—that a residence for years in China will not secure to a European, under any circumstances, the sight of any but a Chinese woman of the lowest condition—some idea may be formed of the difficulty attendant upon an attempt to induce a young lady of acknowledged respectability to visit this country, and of the interest such a rare curiosity in our midst may legitimately inspire.

Miss Pwan-ye-koo is a capital specimen of a Chinese belle. Her feet are only two and a half inches long, and are remarkably symmetrical. Her figure is good, though much concealed by the *bizarre* costume of her country; while her face, for regularity of feature, and a *naïve* expression of innocent amiability, will bear a close comparison with some of the loveliest of our own land. Her waiting-maid, Miss Lum-Akum, is a fair specimen of the Chinese women of her class. She is comely and agreeable. She is quite a study, in her way, for a curious observer.

Mr. Soo-Chune, the professor of music, is a gentleman of education and character. He is considered an *artiste* of reputation, in China, as a master of the Chinese violin and other musical instruments. He will, at stated times during the day and evening, gratify the visitors with popular Chinese songs, as well as manifest his musical ability in his extempore airs and accompaniments. His two children, Miss Amoon and Master Mun-Chung, will be found perfect novelties, as types of Chinese juvenility. Unlike the notions many of us have formed of the rising generation among that odd people, we are compelled to admit that these specimens of "young China" are really pretty, graceful, and intelligent. They can not but please, with their bright eyes, light-hearted smiles, lively tongues, and modest behavior. Master Aleet-Mong, who speaks English readily, has been engaged as an interpreter. His services will be of important value in transferring the unique expressions of these strange Orientals into our own more sober tongue. With such striking additions, it will at once be perceived that this Museum can not have its equal in the world. It is complete in every respect. It transports us to China itself; and furnishes to the eye and ear a perfect and lasting impression of the Chinese as a nation, their habits, their customs, and their singularities.

CASE I.

- No. 1. *The Emperor Taou Kwang, (reason's glory.)*
 2. *Mandarin of the first rank.*
 3. *Mandarin of the second rank.*
 4. *Mandarin of the third rank.*
 5. *Mandarin of the fourth rank.*
 6. *Military Mandarin of the fifth rank.*
 7. *Military Mandarin of the sixth rank.*
*Magnificent embroidered satin screen suspended
 on the wall.*
*View of the Great Wall of China, through the
 doorway on the right.*
*View on the left of part of one of the ancient Im-
 perial palaces, on the island of Tseou-shan, in
 the Yang-tsz-Keang near Nanking.*

THIS case contains a figure of the Emperor, six Mandarins of the highest grades, and a beautiful embroidered red satin screen.

The figures are clothed in the splendidly embroidered satin state dresses, worn only at court or upon the most solemn occasions.

In the head of His Imperial Majesty we have an admirable likeness of His High Commissioner Keying, who is said to bear a strong resemblance to him, and has had the honor to negotiate all the late treaties made by the Celestial Empire with foreign nations.

The "Son of Heaven," or "Ten thousand years," as his titles read, clothed in the richest embroidered Imperial

Description of Figures, Dress, &c.

yellow, which his subjects may not wear, and seated in the dragon chair of state, upon which a liberal number of heads of this fabulous animal stand conspicuous, has just affixed the vermilion pencil ratifying the treaty between China and the United States, presented by one of his counsellors.

The four Mandarins standing in front with their heads respectfully covered according to Chinese etiquette, which is the opposite to ours in many respects, are of the four highest grades in the empire; this is also the number of the chief officers of the Imperial Council, two of whom are Tartars and two Chinese, who serve as a communication between the Emperor and the different boards of civil office, revenues, rites, war, &c., having charge of the Empire.

The Military Mandarins standing a little in the rear of his Majesty, as body guards, are of the fifth and sixth grades.

Each figure in this case has a string of court beads about the neck, part of which consists of a single string running a short way down the back and terminating in an ornament made of some precious stone set in gold. Peacocks' feathers, which are also badges of rank, are fastened to the knobs of their caps and hang down behind, and the usual accompaniments of rank and wealth are seen at their sides, consisting of embroidered fan cases and small bags for containing areca nut and tobacco. A great part of the embroidery upon the dresses of most of the figures in this case is concealed by the "*Makwa*," "riding coat," or upper garment.

The splendid screen suspended at the back of this case, together with that in No. 2, are supposed to have been taken at the north during the war with Great Britain,

Emperor, his Prerogatives, &c.

and were presents to two aged persons from the officers of the districts in which they resided. They are made of beautiful materials, and the elegant writing and rich embroidery upon them, done in gold thread and floss silk, show that no labor or expense were spared in making them every way worthy of the donors and those they intended to honor. A translation of one of them has been deemed sufficient, and will be found in the description of figures, &c., in No. 2.

The Emperor is distinguished from his officers by his yellow dress, upon which the imperial dragon is wrought in gold, and a pearl of great value adorning his cap. He is called the father of his people, and is supreme ruler of the lives and fortunes of about four hundred millions of the human family, or more than one-third of the inhabitants of the globe. "He is held to be the viceregent of Heaven, especially chosen to govern all nations, and is supreme in every thing, holding at once the highest legislative and executive powers, without limitation or control. He is hence entitled Tien-tsze, the son of Heaven; and is clothed with most of the prerogatives of Deity. From him emanate all power and authority; the whole earth it is ignorantly supposed (and it is the policy of such as are better informed to perpetuate the ignorant notion) is subject to his sway; and from him, as the fountain of power, rank, honor and privilege, all Kings derive their sovereignty over the nations. It is in conformity with these haughty pretensions, that China has ever refused to negotiate with 'outside barbarians,' until compelled to do so by force stronger than her own.

"The power of the sovereign is absolute, as that of a father over his children; although, theoretically, he is