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A
Chinese Poem,
INSCRIBED ON PORCELAIN,

IN THE THIRTY-THIRD YEAR OF THE CYCLE,

A. D. 1776.

WITH

A DOUBLE TRANSLATION AND NOTES.

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INTRODUCTION.



THE engraving here exhibited is a copy of certain verses on a china cup, which may be called a scholar's cup, because when the student has drunk what it contains, he may be induced to examine its outside, and imbibe the learning of its exterior. The poem in question consists of eighteen lines, and seven characters in a line; but in order to make the cup hold it and the decoration, it has been reduced to seventeen lines, with eight characters in a line, which has so much disturbed both the metre and the sense, that they are no longer intelligible. The truth of this will appear incontestible to any one who shall be at the trouble to make the experiment, first with seven characters and then with eight in the first line, and if in the first the disorder be seen, a fortiori, in the second and third, and so on to the end. The confusion occasioned by this derangement is more than enough to destroy the metre, and unavoidably pervert the sense of any language, but more particularly of the Chinese, that depends so much on the juxtaposition of its words,

and the collocation of its characters. In such a case as this a native has been consulted, and the advice of very learned and ingenious Chinese scholars resident in the country, where the language is well understood, has become necessary; and without these helps nothing could have been done. Fourmont indeed held another language, when he boasted that he understood Chinese better than the natives, and in his closet without going near them; and this perhaps might have been true in the way in which he could have explained it. The reader will not find much vivid effusion, or any extraordinary poetic merit in this poem, but more simplicity than ornament, and more truth than invention; still the examination of the facts it asserts may afford some information, and the comparison of its construction with Chinese prose point out the difference between the colloquial and the poetic style of composition.

N. B. The lines are shown as they are on the cup, and stopped as they should be by a figure of 7 after every seventh. The characters also, as is common on porcelain, are often blundered and badly represented.

TRANSLATION.

LINE I.

THE progress of fine metallic vases of the age of Lie, and the dynasty of Tang, has ceased, and man is no longer employed to make them.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Lie.	Jin, <i>man</i> .
Tang,* <i>Imperial family</i> .	Hiên, <i>idle</i> .
Kũe, <i>progress, key, tseòu</i> .	Vôu, <i>no more</i> .
Ky, <i>tool, vases</i> .	

* A. D. 618. Vide Vases of this dynasty, vol. 59, tab. 44, Philosophical Transactions. See Tang in De Guigne's Dictionary, Key Kieòu.

LINE II.

The royal furnaces of Chaô, of the dynasty of Sung, have disappeared like the morning star.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Chào.	Chin, <i>morning</i> .
Sung.	Sing, <i>star</i> .
Kuon, <i>royal</i> .	Tùn, <i>fly, hide themselves</i> .
Yao, <i>furnace</i> .	

Note.—See du Halde, and Fourmont L'Histoire des anciens Peuples, et les Empereurs de la Chine, vol. ii. at the end.

LINE III.

The sacred Tripods of the dynasty of Chou in this age still abound.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Hây.	Chý, now, time present.
Chou.	Po, very.
Ting, dynasty.	To, much.
Y, sacred vases, tripods.	

Note.—See in the Lettre de Pekin sur les Caracteres Chinois Vases of the dynasties of Chang, Hang, Tang, Tcheou, as it is supposed.

LINE IV.

The vases or tripods which are of metal are strong, and of earth fragile.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Kien, firm.	Yü, this.
Tsouy, fragile.	Tchoáng, strong.
Tchý, of.	Tsáy, be.
Tchín, see.	

LINE V.

The firm, simple, the fragile, curious, exquisite:
the firm last long, the brittle break to pieces.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Kien, *firm.*

Kièou, *long time.*

Po, *simple.*

Tsân, *short time.*

Tsouy, *fragile.*

Fen, *divide, break.*

Kiao, *beautiful.*

LINE VI.

The setting up of virtue for an example, and the
contemplation of good deeds must always delight.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Lee, *to place.*

Y, *good deeds.*

Te, *virtue.*

Ko, *able.*

Cien, *follow.*

Van, *to delight.*

Sing, *examine.*

LINE VII.

There has been from Châo of the Ming dynasty
till now no great interval of time.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Châo.

Fo, *not*.

Ming.

Chin, *much*.Kuu, *gone*.Yeôu, *travelling of time*.Yè, *even*.

LINE VIII.

The faultless works of Ching, and of Siven it is
still time to see.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

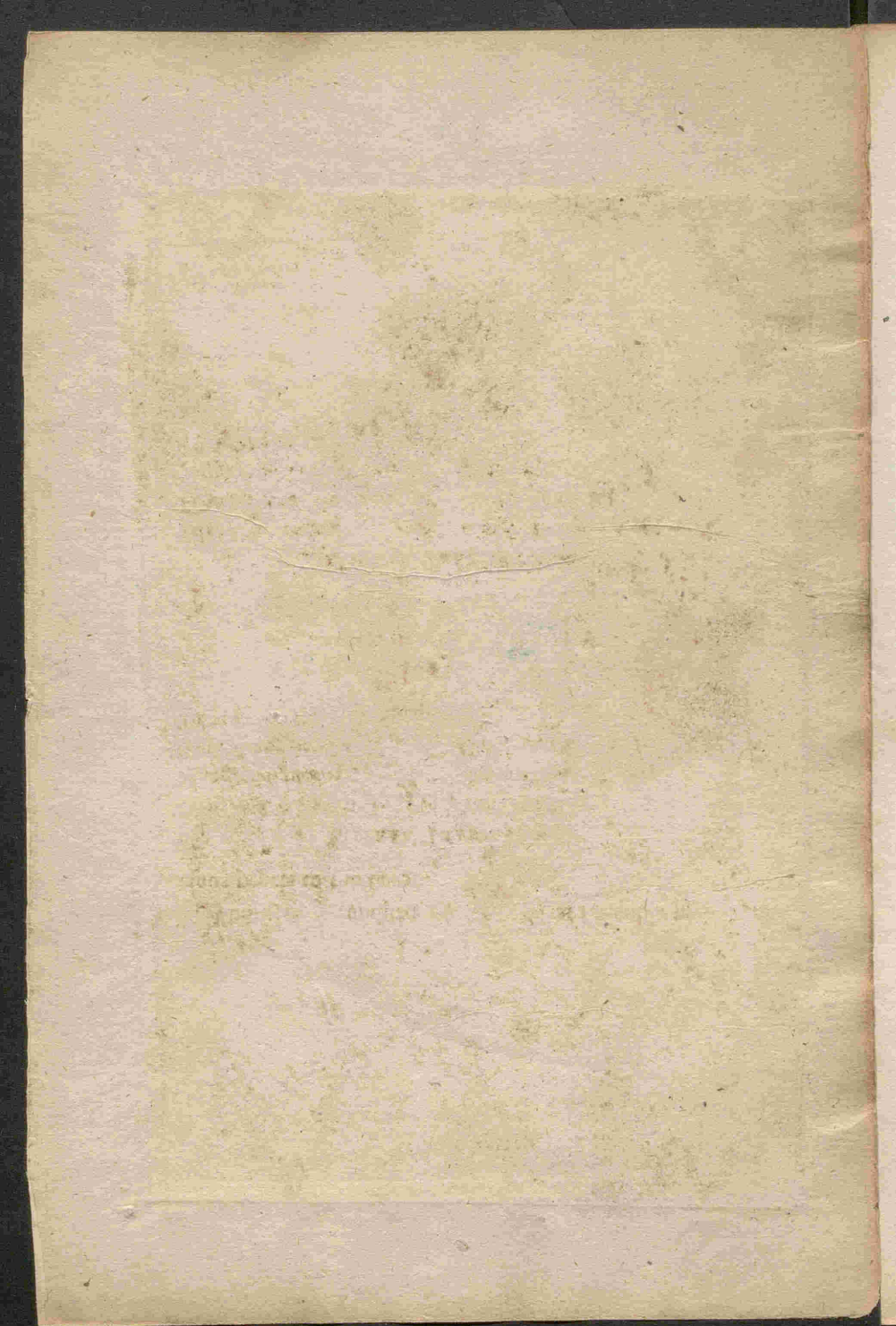
Siven.

Chy, *time*.

Ching.

Tsieou, *now*.Yá, *excellencies*.Kien, *to see*.Ky, *those*.

李唐越器人間無趙
宋官窰晨星看殷周
鼎彝世頗多堅脆之
質於焉辨堅撲脆巧
久豎分立德踐行義
可玩朱明去此弗甚



LINE IX.

Whose cool subdued flower-berries resemble precious pearls in the ocean.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Han, *cool.*

Yào, *abundant.*

Mang, *fatigued.*

Sie, *transparent, pure.*

Sieu, *flower berries.*

Chin, *precious pearls.*

Tsay, *gathered.*

LINE X.

The cup however, in which is the cock, is brilliant above the rest.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Tsieóu, *however.*

Kāng, *the cup.*

Tchóng, *hits the mark, is
approved most.*

Goey, *for (it is.)*

Quan, *superior.*

Ky, *of the cock.*

LINE XI.

The piony-tree with its splendid flowers is shone
upon by the sun, and fanned by the harmonious airs
of the spring.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Mou.	Chun, <i>spring</i> .
Tan.	Fung, <i>wind</i> .
Ly, <i>splendid</i> .	Fo, <i>concord</i> .
Je, <i>day</i> .	

LINE XII.

The cock of various colours is followed by the hen
gathering together her chickens.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Pin, <i>female</i> .	Hiang, <i>fowls</i> .
Ky, <i>cock</i> .	Ry, <i>male</i> .
Cho, <i>follow</i> .	Hiven, <i>variegated</i> .
Tuy, <i>assembling</i> .	

遙宣成雅具時猶見
寒芒秀采總稱珍就
中雞缸最爲冠牡丹
麗日春風和牝雞逐
隙雄雞絢金尾鉄距
首昂蔽怒勢如听賈



LINE XIII.

His tail is of gold, his spurs of iron, his head or crest proudly eminent.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Kin, <i>gold.</i>	Teou, <i>head.</i>
Vy, <i>tail.</i>	Gang, <i>proud.</i>
Tie, <i>iron.</i>	Tièn, <i>top-knot.</i>
Kiu, <i>spurs.</i>	

Note.—Tièn is the character for a certain plant called Rhinanthus, Crista Galli, Yellow Rattle, or Cock's Comb. The key is tsao.

LINE XIV.

Angry, and as it were enraged, he seems to hear and attend to the call of Hia-chang.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Nu, <i>anger.</i>	Kià,
Hô, <i>inflamed.</i>	Chang.
Su, <i>as it were.</i>	Huon, <i>call.</i>
Ting, <i>hears.</i>	

Note.—Kià, a proper name.—Key, Péy.—Tchang, the name of an idol.

LINE XV.

The works of good artists are lost, and few remain.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Llang, *good.*

Chão, *consumed.*

Cum, *artists.*

Vu, *not.*

Vo, *works.*

Y, *left.*

Tai, *emblems.*

LINE XVI.

Flowers soon change like the wind, which varies with the seasons.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Hôa, *flowers.*

Say, *follow.*

Fung, *wind.*

Su, *season.*

Ky, *air.*

Pien, *change.*

LINE XVII.

I alone searching my mind give these verses to the world.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Go, I.	Tsay, in.
Tý, alone.	Xi, giving.
Tsă, search.	Xy, verses.
Sin, mind, heart.	

LINE XVIII.

Do not dare to look to the time of repose from noise and tumult.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Po, not.	Ngăn, repose.
Kan, dare.	Hiông, noise.
Chý, time.	Y, from.
Fàng, begin.	

DATE.

Chý, time.

Kien, of Kien.

Lung, in the 33d year of the Cycle, A. D. 1776.

Kien Lung reigned 60 years from 1736.

Note.—Ornaments on Chinese cups, we know from the best authority, sometimes bear a strong resemblance to those of the most polished periods of Grecian sculpture and Grecian architecture. A specimen of this kind appears on

a precious cup embossed with the flower of the lotus, presented by her Royal Highness the Princess Elizabeth to Lady Banks. At the bottom of the cup are four Chinese characters, for Kien, Lung, gift, cup. See a beautiful engraving of this cup with explanatory notes.

昌喚良工物態貴無

遺逸華風氣隨時變

我獨警心在資詩不

敢時耽安與以晏

乾隆丙申御題

