

## CHINESE WATERCOLOURS ON PITH IN THE MAE RAS COLLECTION. LIST OF SUBJECTS

The series of beautiful miniatures which make up the albums given to Prince Nikolai in China as presents, are, undoubtedly, of great interest not only for specialists in the history and culture of China, but also for all connoisseurs of oriental art. These miniatures give an opportunity to see China in the middle of the 19th century through the eyes of a Chinese artist who presents his country to a foreigner. Here we find street and genre scenes, landscapes, images of birds and vessels...

To such compositions, which continue on several pages, refers, for example, the image of the procession of an official who had passed his state exams entering his home time — a future high rank official honoured with the *zhuangyuan* rank, i. e. a person whose results at exams were so high that he was among the best three. In this composition we can see the winner of the exam struggle as well as numerous people who accompany him and carry the appropriate objects, including the grand hat of a *zhuangyuan*. The tradition of such multi-page composition must root in the traditional Chinese painting, whose main unit has always been a scroll — a long, horizontal stripe of silk, which, for

the convenience of storage and transportation, was attached to a polished stick on one of its narrow sides. Here we come across a variation of the tradition adjusted in accordance with the European concepts of albums, which did not exist in ancient China.

We must also point to the conditional character of images presented in this publication. First of all, this refers to birds. The artist who painted these pictures, as well as any creative person, was observant, but he was not an ornithologist, so identification (at least approximate) of the types of birds depicted is quite a complicated task; in some cases the names of birds given by me can be questioned, as, while the general features of a species were reflected, the artist took liberties when it came to colour. And here I feel obliged to thank the following outstanding ornithologists who took an active part in the definition of birds' species: Leading research fellow of the Zoological Institute, Dr. Sci. in biology Paevskii Vladimir Alexandrovich; research fellow of the Zoological Institute, PhD in biology, Khrabryi Vladimir Mikhailovich; junior research fellow of the Zoological Institute Panteleev Andrei Valentinovich.

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| <b>No. 311-1-12 (1)</b> |  |
| <b>Genre scenes</b>     |  |

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| <b>A</b> | A young master and his wife in full dress.   |
| <b>B</b> | An elderly high rank official in formal dress and his secretary.                                     |
| <b>C</b> | An elderly woman in full dress and her maidservant with a hat in her hands.                          |
| <b>D</b> | A young official in formal dress and his boy-servant giving him a jug with fresh flowers.            |
| <b>E</b> | A young lady in full dress with a book in her hands and her maidservant giving her a cup on a dish.  |
| <b>F</b> | A young official in formal dress and his companion reading a book aloud.                             |
| <b>G</b> | A young lady in full dress and her maidservant giving her a dish.                                    |
| <b>H</b> | A military commander in court dress with arms and a minor official respectfully giving him a letter. |
| <b>I</b> | A young lady in full dress and her maidservant holding a mirror that her mistress is looking in.     |
| <b>J</b> | A young official in semi-formal dress and his servant giving him a cup with wine.                    |