

Politics and Patronage:

A Re-examination of Late Qing Dynasty Porcelain, 1850-1920

by

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ABSTRACT

Art historians typically consider Chinese porcelain a decorative art, resulting in scholars spending little time analyzing it as a fine art form. One area that is certainly neglected is porcelain produced during the late 19th and early 20th century during the late Qing dynasty (1644–1911) into the early Republic period (1912–1949). As the Qing dynasty weakened and ultimately fell in 1911, there was a general decline in the quantity of porcelain produced in China. Due to this circumstance, porcelain of this era has not received the detailed analysis, characterization of styles, comprehension of themes, and understanding of patronage evident in other periods of Chinese porcelain production. Ultimately, limited research has been conducted to establish the styles associated with late dynastic porcelain into the early Republic's establishment.

This dissertation utilizes a new perspective that considers the patronage of the Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908) as a high point of late dynastic porcelain. Concrete documentation establishes that motifs were appropriated from Cixi's painting, suggesting a direct connection between schools of painting and the imagery selected for porcelain during her reign. The porcelain Cixi influenced directly guided the porcelain produced during the Hongxian era (1915-1916), making Cixi's patronage the key turning point from dynastic porcelain to early Republic porcelain. Utilizing predominately British collections, this study identifies the styles, symbols, and themes associated with porcelain of the 19th and 20th century, elevating late dynastic and early Republic wares to the status of fine art.

For Joe

&

For my family

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LIST OF CHINESE NAMES AND TERMS

Aisin-Gioro Puyi 愛新覺羅溥儀

baitouweng 白頭翁

baizu tu 百子圖

chan 蟬

changchunhua 長春花

ciqi 瓷器

Chief Consort Zhen 恪順皇貴妃

Daoguang Emperor 道光皇帝

Dayazhai 大雅齋

ding yao 定窯

Eight Friends of Zhushan 珠山八友

Empress Dowager Ci'an 孝貞顯皇後

Empress Dowager Cixi 慈禧太後

Empress Dowager Longyu 孝定景皇後

falangcai 琺瑯彩

fei cui niao 翡翠鳥

fencai 粉彩

fenghuang 鳳凰

shi shizi 石獅子

Forbidden City 紫禁城

fu 富

fuguihua 富貴花

ge yao 哥窯

gu 觚

gua 瓜

Guangxu Emperor 光緒皇帝

guan yao 官窯

Guanyin 觀音

Guo Baochang 郭葆昌

Haiyangtang 海晏堂

Hongxian Emperor 洪憲皇帝

huaniao hua 花鳥畫

hudie 蝴蝶

Huizheng 惠徵

Jiangxi Porcelain Company 江西瓷業公司

Jingdezhen 景德鎮

juhua 菊花

jun yao 鈞窯

Jurentang 居仁堂

Kangxi Emperor 康熙皇帝

Lan Guiren 蘭貴人

Lang Shining 郎世寧

lianhua 蓮花

lingzhi 靈芝

lu 鷺

mei hua 梅花

Miao Jiahui 繆嘉蕙

Ming dynasty 明朝

mogu 沒骨

mudan 牡丹

mufurong 木芙蓉

Neiwu fu 內務府

nian hao 年號

Princess Der Ling 裕德齡

Qianlong Emperor 乾隆皇帝

Qing dynasty 清朝

Qingshi shanhou weiyuanhui 清室善後委員會

qingbai ci 青白瓷

rong 榮

ru yao 汝窯

ruyi 如意

shoudainiao 綬帶鳥

shuangxi 雙喜

Shunzhi Emperor 順治皇帝

Song dynasty 宋朝

Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙

Tang dynasty 唐朝

Tang Shaoyi 唐紹儀

Tang Ying 唐英

taohua 桃花

Tongzhi Emperor 同治皇帝

tuotai 脫胎

Wanli Emperor 萬曆皇帝

wanshou wujiang 萬壽無疆

wucai 五彩

Xianfeng Emperor 鹹豐皇帝

Xiwangmu 西王母

xishuai 蟋蟀

xique 喜鵲

Xiyanglou 西洋樓

Xuantong Emperor 宣統皇帝

yingsu 罌粟

Yuanmingyuan 圓明園

Yihetuan Movement 義和團運動

yingxi tu 嬰戲圖

Yongzheng Emperor 雍正皇帝

Yuan Shikai 袁世凱

yueji 月季

Yueyuan hui 月圓徽

Yuin Yeh Bank 裕業銀行

Zaoban chu 造辦處

Zhang Xun 張勛

zhu 竹

ziteng 紫藤

zun 尊

CHRONOLOGY

c. 10,000 – c. 2100 BCE	Neolithic Period
c. 2100 – c. 1600 BCE	Xia Dynasty
c. 1600 – c. 1100 BCE	Shang Dynasty
c. 1100 – 256 BCE	Zhou Dynasty
	Western Zhou c. 1100 – 771 BCE
	Eastern Zhou c. 770 – 256 BCE
	Spring and Autumn Period 770 – 476 BCE
	Warring States Period 476 – 221 BCE
221 – 206 BCE	Qin Dynasty
206 BCE – 220 CE	Han Dynasty
220 – 265	Three Kingdoms
265 – 420	Jin Dynasty
	Western Jin 265 – 317
	Eastern Jin 317 – 420
317 – 589	Southern Dynasties
386 – 581	Northern Dynasties
581 – 618	Sui Dynasty
618 – 907	Tang Dynasty
907 – 960	Five Dynasties
907 – 979	Ten Kingdoms
907 – 1125	Liao Dynasty
960 – 1279	Song Dynasty

Northern Song 960 - 1127

Southern Song 1127 - 1279

1115 – 1234	Jin Dynasty
1271 – 1368	Yuan Dynasty
1368 – 1644	Ming Dynasty
1644 – 1911	Qing Dynasty
1912 – 1949	Republic
1949 -	People's Republic

QING DYNASTY RULERS (1644 – 1911)

Shunzhi	1644 – 1661
Kangxi	1662 – 1722
Yongzheng	1723 – 1735
Qianlong	1736 – 1795
Jiaqing	1796 – 1820
Daoguang	1821 – 1850
Xianfeng	1851 – 1861
Tongzhi*	1862 – 1874
Guangxu*	1875 – 1908
Xuantong	1909 – 1911

*Empress Dowager Cixi controlled China from 1862 – 1908.

PREFACE

China's last dynasty, the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), was characterized by major innovations in art. Influences traveled to the Qing court from Europe, with Jesuits notably gaining favor at the imperial court and therefore impacting painting styles along with a successful continuing porcelain trade industry between China and the Western world.¹ Styles associated with painting were appropriated for porcelain, cultivating new aesthetics. Imperial patrons cultivated the decorative imagery found on porcelain, giving each ruler distinctive wares. While numerous studies have evaluated the art produced during the Qing, the focus has primarily remained on the works patronized by Kangxi 康熙(1662–1722), Yongzheng 雍正(1723–1735), and Qianlong 乾隆(1736–1795). Few scholars have evaluated the art of the late Qing.

During the late Qing, one imperial patron emerged at the forefront of porcelain design. The Empress Dowager Cixi ruled China from 1861 until her death in 1908. Utilizing the power of art to strengthen her imperial power, Cixi cultivated herself in the manner of a traditional Chinese scholar. Surviving examples of her paintings exist in numerous museum collections, allowing insight into the styles she personally championed. While scholars have analyzed the merits of Cixi's paintings, her porcelain remains widely disregarded. During the long duration of the Empress Dowager's reign, she commissioned copious porcelain pieces. Despite scholars citing the poor quality and lack of artistic integrity of the porcelain patronized by Cixi, this study disagrees. Within her commissions, certain porcelain patterns known as *dayazhai* 大雅齋(Studio of great

¹ Western influence was a major factor during the reigns of Kangxi (1662-1722), Yongzheng (1723-1735) and Qianlong (1736-1795), when scholars claim that the porcelain industry reached its peak.

elegance) wares create strong visual connections to the paintings attributed to Cixi. This study evaluates the connection between Cixi's paintings and the designs on the porcelain she patronized, thereby establishing her as a major imperial patron.

This dissertation provides an extensive investigation into Cixi's porcelain patronage and considers the lasting effects her developments had on the early Republic. This study argues that even beyond Cixi's reign porcelain was produced at an imperial caliber, and that the categorization of late Qing porcelains as poor quality must be reevaluated. The last Qing emperor, Puyi, fell from power in 1911, effectively causing imperial porcelain patronage to come to a halt. Out of this chaos, the political opportunist Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 took advantage of China's weakened state and proclaimed himself the Hongxian Emperor from 1915 to 1916.² By reinstating the dynastic system in China, Yuan took on the duties of a traditional emperor. One of these acts was the ordering of approximately 40,000 pieces of porcelain from the imperial kilns at Jingdezhen 景德鎮 and continuing the Chinese tradition of imperial patronage. Nevertheless, fewer than 200 of these pieces are documented within existing collections today. The limited number of surviving porcelains is partly due to the fact that Yuan's reign lasted only 82 days, ending in March of 1916.³ Although Yuan's reign was quite short, it had a lasting impact on the arts and shared a distinct connection with the previous patronage of the Empress Dowager Cixi.

Similar to the academic community's disregard for Cixi's porcelain, Hongxian

² Richard T. Phillips, *China Since 1911* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1996), 24.

³ H.A. Van Oort, *The Porcelain of Hung-Hsien: A Study of the Socio-Cultural Background and Some Characteristics of the Porcelain Produced at Chingtechien During the Imperial Reign of Yüan Shih-K'ai* (Netherlands: Uitgeversmaatschappij de Tijdstroom, 1970), 97.

porcelains are typically not considered “imperial” quality. This study investigates the quality, style, and motifs found on accepted Hongxian porcelain.⁴ By comparing Hongxian porcelain to the porcelain produced under Cixi, this study establishes that imperial-caliber wares were created and that a visual lineage exists between these two patrons. Other scholarship in this area focuses primarily on each dynasty’s porcelain as its own entity. This approach establishes an evolutionary link between motifs connecting the patronage found at the end of imperial China to the patronage of the early Republic. The objects investigated in this analysis primarily derive from collections in Britain. The long-established history between China and Britain provides a strong provenance for *dayazhai* and Hongxian porcelain. By clarifying the designs found during this era of dynastic transition, this research contributes to the establishment of late Qing and early Republic porcelain styles in modern scholarship.

State of the Field

The questions posed in this research delve into an intersection between history and art history. While scholars have provided research covering aspects of this topic, the research rarely investigates both a political figure and his or her patronage of art. Therefore, this study incorporates both historical texts and art historical records to establish new perspectives. To begin, historical records concerning the empress dowager are predominately secondary sources. While she did issue several edicts during her reign, scholars assume that the majority of these were not from her own hand. Letters and texts

⁴ Hongxian porcelain is difficult to date as many reproductions were produced. It is necessary to ensure the porcelain analyzed within the study maintain strong provenance allowing them to represent the porcelain of the period.

that document the empress dowager's life survive in the writings of individuals who entered the Forbidden City during her reign, including Sarah Pike Conger, Der Ling, and Katherine Carl. Early texts on Cixi describe her in a negative light, paying specific attention to her role in rebellions and vilifying her reign. In more recent years, scholars have begun to reevaluate the empress dowager. Works by Jung Chang, Sue Chang, Ying-chen Peng, Marina Warner, and Sterling Seagrave have created a new perspective on Cixi, arguing that she maintained a feminist and modern attitude during her reign. This shift in thought has resulted in numerous exhibitions evaluating Cixi's rule including the Bowers Museum's "Empress Dowager Cixi: Selections from the Summer Palace" running from November 2017 to March 2018 and the Peabody Essex's "Empresses of China's Forbidden City" running from August 2018 to February 2019. While Cixi served as a focal point, only a few porcelain works of art were included within either exhibition.

Works on Yuan Shikai rarely focus exclusively on his brief Hongxian reign; instead, they analyze the entirety of his life. These texts also often focus on other political figures that Yuan interacted with during his career. Recently, research on Yuan Shikai has become more prevalent, with works like *Power and Politics in Late Imperial China: Yuan Shih-kai in Beijing and Tianjin* by Stephen R. MacKinnon focusing on Yuan exclusively.⁵ The majority of references that provide insight into the Hongxian period, and more specifically the porcelain commissioned during that period, can be found in records from Jingdezhen, including the *Jingdezhen Taoci Shigao*.⁶ Kiln supervisor Guo

⁵ Stephen R. MacKinnon, *Power and Politics in Late Imperial China: Yuan Shih-kai in Beijing and Tianjin, 1901-1908*, Center for Chinese Studies, UC Berkeley, No 24 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

⁶ Jiangxi Light Industry Department, Ceramics Institute, *Jingdezhen Taoci Shigao* 景德镇陶瓷史稿 (Draft History of Jingdezhen) (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1959).

Baochang often referenced Hongxian porcelain, which is frequently cited in the research of Geng Baochang and Ye Peilan. While these scholars provide some information concerning the Hongxian era, they often do not exclusively analyze this point in time, focusing instead on a larger period of history.

Research in the field of Chinese ceramics is relatively new, with the majority of its earliest publications occurring during the 20th century.⁷ Generally, Chinese texts on ceramics date far earlier than western scholarship. Books like the *Jingdezhen Tao lu* (景德镇套路) date to the late Qianlong period (1735-1796) offering both text and wood block prints to illustrate Jingdezhen's porcelain production process. Chinese texts formed the basis for western porcelain understanding. One of the oldest known surveys written in the western world is *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain: An Account of the Potter's Art in China from Primitive Times to the Present Day*, completed by R. L. Hobson in 1915.⁸ This text attempts to extensively examine Chinese ceramics from the earliest times to the beginning of the 20th century. The overviews it provides build a foundation for understanding porcelain; however, Hobson barely delves into the porcelain of late dynastic China.

In 1954, William Bowyer Honey's text *The Ceramic Art of China and Other Countries of the Far East*, took Hobson's research a step further in terms of scholarship. Although Honey did follow Hobson, his study considers ceramics by analyzing specific

⁷ Within this study the term ceramics encompasses wares that are both low fired and high fired, meaning it characterizes a broader range of objects such as earthenware, stoneware, and porcelain. The term porcelain will only be used to identify wares that were created using kaolin and petuntse stone fired at a high temperature to generate a vitrified body.

⁸ R. L. Hobson, *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain: An Account of the Potter's Art in China from Primitive Times to the Present Day* (London: Cassell and Company, ltd., 1915), 3.

objects. By investigating the attributes of each piece, such as shape, proportion, color, and texture, Honey was able to provide a new way to understand Chinese ceramics.⁹ Since that point in time, the field of ceramics has been fairly thoroughly studied. The majority of scholars have followed in Honey's footsteps, allowing objects to shape the trajectory of their research within the confines of specific eras. Scholars like Julia B. Curtis, He Li, Margaret Medley, Stacey Pierson, and Suzanne Valenstein have all published works that thoroughly investigate Chinese porcelain. These scholars take a variety of methodologies and collections into account in their research, producing a wide range of literature on the subject. Although scholars have analyzed the topic, the majority of research establishes a solid understanding of Neolithic ceramics up until the 18th-century Qing dynasty. The lack of information readily available on porcelain in the early 20th century highlights a major gap in Chinese ceramic scholarship.

Currently, the most comprehensive study on the porcelain produced during the early Republic is H.A. Van Oort's 1970s publication *The Porcelain of Hung-hsien* and his 1977 publication *Chinese Porcelain of the 19th and 20th Centuries*. Van Oort's work was groundbreaking in establishing the porcelains produced during the early 20th century as worthy of study; however, he only evaluated a small percentage of objects. At the time of both text's publication, the porcelains studied were some of the only published wares dating to this time. A recent dissertation by Ellen Huang "China's China: Jingdezhen Porcelain and the Production of Art in the Nineteenth Century," extensively explored the kilns and the objects being produced. Another dissertation "Staging Sovereignty: Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908) and Late Qing Court Art Production,"

⁹ William Bowyer Honey, *The Ceramic Art of China and other Countries of the Far East* (New York: The Beechhurst Press, 1954), 1.

by Ying-chen Peng evaluated Cixi's involvement in the arts. Both studies establish new perspectives on porcelain production during the late Qing. However, it is evident that a broad understanding of porcelain from this time is still necessary. Institutions such as the British Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Phoenix Art Museum have now exhibited more works from this era broadening the amount of porcelain available for study. Therefore, it is critical to once again reevaluate early 20th-century porcelain utilizing new objects that present a more extensive perspective of the field. This research takes the theories presented by Van Oort and updates them by evaluating previously unstudied porcelain from the early 20th century. Recent scholarship by Simon Kwan, *Imperial Porcelain of Late Qing*, focuses specifically on wares produced around the Hongxian period and extending into the Republic.

Due to the global historical appeal of porcelain, objects dating to this era traveled outside of China's borders. Private collections provide limited access to the porcelain; however, some collectors have published photographs of their collections. The collections at the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum offer the most objects that fall within the time period investigated by this study. Along with these objects, a few holdings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology at Oxford create a grouping of porcelain from the reign of Cixi through the reign of Yuan Shikai.

Methodology

The methodology for this study includes research of kiln documentation, literary analysis of secondary sources and museum visitation to analyze porcelain attributed to

the period in question. The research completed during this process will document known examples of the Empress Dowager's porcelain along with Hongxian porcelain.

Evaluating the porcelain from this time period will show a clear progression of styles over time, unifying the end of the Qing dynasty with the styles presented during the early Republic. As research and the analysis of porcelain objects progresses, this study will utilize an iconographic interpretation of the imagery discovered to solidify existing connections. Examining iconographic meaning from the late Qing into the early Republic will parallel the changes occurring in China as the culture moved towards modernization.

After extensive research, it became evident that traveling to analyze collections was required. I traveled to view an exhibition on the Empress Dowager at the Bowers Museum. I also visited the collections at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Winterthur Museum, Garden and Library, the Peabody Essex Museum, the Art Museum of San Francisco, and a private collection in Phoenix to gain a better visual understanding of porcelain dating to the 19th-20th centuries. After handling examples dating to the period in question, it became clear that a wider grouping would be required to establish trends associated with overall categorization. In the fall of 2018 I traveled to view the holdings at the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology at Oxford and the Fitzwilliam Museum. The porcelain observed during this research became the foundation for stylistically understanding the wares of Cixi and Yuan.

This research is separated into three distinct chapters. The first chapter establishes a biography of the Empress Dowager Cixi. Documentation of painting

attributed to her helps to establish her as a patron and practitioner of the arts. It also forms a solid iconographic comparison to Cixi's porcelain. The porcelain that was patronized by Cixi is explored, investigating the patterns and motifs associated with her reign and the meaning behind each auspicious symbol selected. I will establish her both as a major patron and as a high point within late Qing porcelain innovations. The second chapter will chronologically follow the decline of the Qing dynasty after Cixi's death and introduce Yuan Shikai. Kiln records will establish Yuan's effort to produce porcelain and secondary sources will provide evidence supporting the porcelain being successfully produced. Objects will be analyzed to establish commonalities between documented Hongxian porcelain, thus I will establish it as fine art of high quality. The final chapter will work towards an understanding of collecting Chinese porcelain within Britain. British collections include superior examples of both late dynastic and early Republic wares. These wares prove critical due to the strong provenance behind each object, allowing it to be dated with extreme accuracy. The trends cultivated within collecting traditions in Britain helped shape the method behind acquisitions dating to the 19th and 20th centuries. Ultimately, an object based analysis will provide evidence for a reinterpretation of both late imperial patronage and the caliber of this era's porcelain.

This dissertation presents new perspectives on the porcelain produced during the late Qing and into the early Republic. By interpreting the quality and motifs of the porcelain during this time, Cixi and Yuan Shikai will be established as imperial caliber patrons of porcelain. Ultimately, this study will promote a new understanding of late dynastic porcelain and restore it within the recognized art historical cannon.

Chapter 1: Empress Dowager Cixi

1.1 A Brief History of the Empress Dowager and Her Reign

Cixi 慈禧 was born to the Yehenala clan on November 29, 1835 during the reign of the Manchu-established Qing dynasty (1644–1911).¹⁰ She was the daughter of the mid-level official Huizheng 惠徵(1805–1856). Historically, very little is known about Cixi's early life. Her family's position most likely allowed her to learn fundamental skills such as reading, writing, drawing, and sewing. She was raised with traditional Manchu values, which at times differed from the customs of the Han Chinese.¹¹ As a Manchu, Cixi never bound her feet, although the custom was widely prevalent within China during her lifetime. Throughout her life Cixi continued to adhere to Manchu styles, incorporating the hairstyles and garments traditionally associated with her upbringing. Despite maintaining these connections to her Manchu roots, Cixi was known to learn and appropriate many Han Chinese traditions that became part of her daily life once she entered the Forbidden City. Cixi mastered speaking, calligraphy, painting, and court protocols that were associated with customs of the Han Chinese court. Her broad incorporation of both Manchu and Han styles historically allowed Cixi to stand out and provided her with the confidence and determination to maintain her own individual freedoms within the court.

In 1851, at the age of 16, Cixi entered the imperial palace. She was given the title of Lan Guiren 蘭貴人, making her the fifth-rank imperial consort of the Xianfeng

¹⁰ The Yehenala clan is a Bordered Blue Banner, this is in the lower tier of the eight-banner system. In 1861, this banner would be elevated to a Bordered Yellow Banner which was typical for the families of imperial consorts.

Xu Che 徐徹, *Cixi dazhuan* 慈禧大傳 (Shenyang: Liaoshen shushe, 1994), 22-34.

¹¹ The Qing dynasty was comprised of Manchus, a minority group from Northern Asia.

Emperor 鹹豐皇帝(r. 1850–1861). She won the affections of the emperor when she gave birth to his only surviving son in 1856, allowing her to rise in the consort ranks and ensure that her child was named the imperial heir.¹² Xianfeng's rule was fraught with conflict both within China and on foreign fronts. He ruled during the Taiping Rebellion, the Second Opium War, and the rise of Chinese pro- and anti-Western factions that resulted from these conflicts.¹³ The constant tension within the country weakened Xianfeng, leading many scholars to speculate that Cixi had significant influence over the emperor's political decisions. In 1860, Xianfeng died, making his five-year-old son Emperor Tongzhi 同治(r. 1861–1875). Prior to his death, Xianfeng appointed a group of eight men to serve as a board of regents on behalf of his son until he came of age. Viewing the death of the emperor and the rise of her son as an opportunity, Cixi became increasingly involved in imperial politics. This strategic move gave Cixi immense power within the imperial court, and she continued to wield a level of control in some capacity for the remainder of her life.¹⁴

With her son Tongzhi as emperor, Cixi found a powerful ally in Xianfeng's Chief Consort Zhen 惲順皇貴妃. Cixi took the title of junior empress dowager while Zhen was declared the empress dowager. The duo ultimately ruled China for approximately the next 55 years, which was a major accomplishment given the patriarchal traditions of

¹² As Cixi rose in concubine rank she took on a new name, Yi.

¹³ In 1850, raging famine would lead to a massive uprising in the southern regions of China known as the Taiping Rebellion. The rebellion was somewhat successful, resulting in large areas of the south being held under rebel control. Around 1856, France and Britain would invade, beginning the Second Opium War. Foreign troops would invade the city ultimately plundering and destroying the Old Summer Palace. The Emperor would ultimately die prior to the resolution of these conflicts. Many scholars conclude that the culmination of these events and the emperor's ailing health resulted in his death.

¹⁴ Marina Warner, *Dragon Empress: The Life and Times of Tz'u-Hsi Empress Dowager of China 1835-1908* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1972), 85.

imperial China. Together they strategically removed and imprisoned the eight appointed regents, establishing themselves as the young emperor's only regents.¹⁵ Both women changed their names, reflecting the change in political position. Zhen took the name Empress Dowager Ci'an 孝貞顯皇后, meaning kind and serene. Cixi's 慈禧 name, meaning kind and joyous, would remain attached to her for the remainder of her life. While the two women were active behind the scenes within the imperial palace, they were often not visible and maintained unique personalities.¹⁶ Cixi was known to be politically motivated, and Ci'an, who had a lower level of education, allowed Cixi to take a stronger leadership role.¹⁷ The differences between Ci'an and Cixi were further emphasized when they were given opposing monikers, with Cixi known as the western empress dowager and Zhen as the eastern empress dowager.

In 1873, the regency shared over the Tongzhi Emperor lifted due to his age, but historically both women were still highly involved in monitoring his policies in the Forbidden City. Despite the disadvantages associated with her gender, Cixi successfully navigated the restrictions that confronted her within the Forbidden City. As a woman, she was not allowed in parts of the Forbidden City or to be seen by certain government ministers. Cixi attended meetings seated behind a screen in order to maintain control of her officials. When orders had to be executed in areas of the palace that were off-limits

¹⁵ Many scholars designate Cixi's involvement in declaring herself and Ci'an the regents of Tongzhi as a coup.

¹⁶ Women were not allowed to enter certain parts of the Forbidden City due to their gender and were also not allowed to be seen publicly. The majority of Cixi and Ci'an's influence on Tongzhi was accomplished while sitting behind a divided screen.

¹⁷ Victor H. Mair, Sanping Chen, and Frances Wood, *Chinese Lives: The People Who Made a Civilization* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2013), 195.

to women, Cixi would send her most loyal and trusted male counterparts to carry out such tasks. As a result of these actions, Cixi effectively controlled imperial China.

During this period of time, Cixi revived areas of China that had been affected by the Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864) and the Nian Rebellion (1853–1868). She instituted schools that taught foreign languages and organized China's first foreign service office. These actions were widely accepted and considered revitalizing to China, because they moved China further into modernity. Even though Cixi bettered the country in some respects, Tongzhi no longer wanted to work under the control of the empress dowager. Despite Tongzhi's efforts to remove Cixi from dominating his reign, he was unsuccessful. The young ruler supposedly incurred Cixi's wrath when he selected an empress Cixi did not approve of. The tension between Tongzhi and Cixi was short-lived: the emperor died in 1875.¹⁸ Shortly after, in 1881, the eastern empress dowager also died suddenly, leaving Cixi as the sole political power in China. She chose her nephew Guangxu 光緒(r. 1875–1908), as Tongzhi's successor, allowing her to maintain complete control as the new empress dowager.¹⁹

Over the course of Cixi's reign, the Qing dynasty began to deteriorate. The earlier Taiping Rebellion had already left imperial rule on precarious ground. This instability combined with frequent uprisings which required constant government intervention. Despite these constant problems, Cixi was able to maintain control in China and restore order to many of the areas that had been overwhelmed by fighting due to the

¹⁸ After Tongzhi's death it was discovered that the widowed Empress was pregnant. The Empress killed herself shortly after Tongzhi's death. Many scholars speculate the level of Cixi's involvement in the suicide, citing her desire to continue ruling rather than relinquish power to another individual.

¹⁹ Fang Chao-ying, "Hsiao-Ch'in," in *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644-1912)*, ed. Arthur W. Hummel (Washington, D.C.: The Library of Congress, 1943), 295–296.

rebellions. This restoration was actually considered a success and became known as a time of Qing revival.²⁰ At that time, the West had become one of China's most significant threats, and while Cixi did not relish its close involvement in her country, she did take a stance that cultivated a compromise between total modernization and anti-Western ideology in China. Throughout her reign, Cixi realized that China had to modernize, and as a result she promoted projects like creating a railroad in China. Largely due to Cixi's support, the Beijing-Wuhan railroad was built in 1876, but Cixi was careful to preserve traditional Chinese values by ensuring that the railway did not disrupt any ancestral funerary sites. The railway was met with such negative opinions by the local populations that it ultimately had to be dismantled. Along with these modernizations, Cixi supported the introduction of electricity and coal mining within the country. While evidence supports Cixi's dislike for modernization and the West, it is clear that the issue was not simply one-sided. It was ultimately too little too late for the empress dowager, who became an easy scapegoat for the slow unraveling of the Qing government.

As opinions of the empress became increasingly negative, she appears to have attempted to display her sovereign power by exhibiting her control in ways that had been successful in the past. Harnessing artistic patronage, large-scale celebrations, and radical edicts, Cixi made attempts to reestablish her power. These attempts resulted in primarily unfavorable outcomes. Possibly the worst of these political choices was the organization of a massive and expensive 60th birthday celebration. Her celebratory plans included an immense party, a complete palace renovation, and the procurement of a marble boat

²⁰ Mair, Chen, and Wood, *Chinese Lives*, 195-196.

constructed at the Summer Palace (Yuanmingyuan 圓明園). The financial costs resulted in Cixi having to appropriate the entire naval budget in the beginning of 1894 at the time of China's entry into the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895).²¹ Fighting quickly broke out between China and Japan over control of Korea. Contemporary military leaders of the time thought China would secure an easy victory over Japan. However, Japan had undergone major reforms under the Meiji Restoration and had established a modern national army and navy. China's traditional army based on troops grouped by ethnic lines and its significantly underfunded navy were no match for Japan's modernized forces. Despite efforts to maintain Chinese borders, the war resulted in a loss of territory for the Qing dynasty: China was ultimately forced to cede Taiwan.

By 1889, Guangxu reached maturity and no longer required Cixi as regent. Despite this milestone and her retirement to the Summer Palace, historic records indicate the Cixi still maintained a powerful hold over the imperial government. Guangxu was becoming increasingly influenced by reformers who promoted dramatic modernization within China, especially following the dramatic loss to Japan in the Sino-Japanese War. The defeat highlighted China's weakening state and called for the country's concession to Western powers. Realizing the precarious position that China was in, Guangxu created reforms to move China in a more modern direction and ignite the hope of restoring the Qing dynasty to its former glory. While Guangxu moved in a more progressive and radical direction, Cixi held fast to more traditional, Confucian-based political ideals. In his supposed attempt at modernization, Guangxu issued a series of approximately 40

²¹ Mair, Chen, and Wood, 196. The navy had previously been established by Cixi in 1888. Known as the Beiyang Fleet, the Chinese navy was considered to be quite advanced.

edicts known as the Hundred Days Reform. Copies of Guangxu's reforms held by the British Library reflect the young emperor's desire to Westernize and develop a modernized China. Guangxu hoped the edicts would address some of China's ancient traditions such as imperial examinations, which promoted studying early philosophies and religious texts, and replace them with more modern learning styles. These edicts instituted policies that promoted Western industry, medicine, commerce, and science. Along with these modifications, the edicts also changed the established Qing laws and military and government positions. Ultimately, the edicts were met with mixed reviews since many conservative members of the court did not believe the Chinese state and social system required revision. The tension resulted in a division between the emperor and Cixi. Conservative forces gathered behind Cixi and instigated a counter coup in 1898.²² The tactic was successful. The empress dowager imprisoned her nephew in his palace and repealed the reforms he had put into effect.

The conservative group that opposed Guangxu's reforms organized itself into a society known as the Yihetuan Movement 義和團運動. The group was more commonly known as the Boxers, and by 1900 Cixi had offered them her support. The Boxers were anti-foreign, anti-Christian, and ultimately anti-Western. Organized mobs gathered in northern China to attack foreign embassies and missionaries. These violent actions cemented Cixi's xenophobic tendencies in the historical record and offer scholars evidence of her anti-Western and anti-modern sentiments. The Boxer Rebellion backfired: eight countries counterattacked and occupied Beijing in response to the

²² Mair, Chen, and Wood, 196. One of the individuals who supported Cixi during this event was General Yuan Shikai. The level of his importance within the counter coup is varied based upon sources.

chaos.²³ Cixi was forced to flee the capital for her life. In a desperate effort to finance her departure, she put up porcelain from the imperial collection as collateral with the Yuin Yeh Bank (裕業銀行).²⁴ Although Cixi's support of the Boxer Rebellion does exemplify a moment of anti-Western sentiment, it is critical to note that Cixi did champion a variety of ideas that modernized China. She attempted to allow officials to carry out a series of reforms, many of which were similar to those that Guangxu had previously undertaken, but the attempt was small and ultimately achieved little.

In November of 1908, the Guangxu Emperor died. His death remains historically suspicious, with many scholars speculating as to Cixi's potential involvement, especially after the two had clashed so visibly. The empress dowager herself died one day after Guangxu's death. This coincidence heightened the existing suspicion that Cixi, knowing that her reign was almost at its end, poisoned Guangxu.²⁵ Cixi made a decree that left the throne to Guangxu's three-year-old nephew, Puyi, who reigned briefly as the Xuantong Emperor 宣統 皇帝 (r. 1908–1911). Under Cixi's orders, Puyi also had a woman overlooking his regency: the newly appointed Empress Dowager Longyu 孝定景皇后.²⁶ Despite efforts to maintain traditional imperial rule, Xuantong was forced to abdicate on October 10, 1911, officially concluding the 268-year Qing dynasty.

²³ The eight nation alliance was comprised of Japan, Russia, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Austria-Hungary, and the United States.

²⁴ Anthony Lin Hua-Tien, "An Interview with Lady David," *Orientalism* 23, no. 4 (1992): 56–63. The Yuin Yeh Bank is also referenced as the Salt Industry Bank.

²⁵ A Chinese study from 2008, claims the Guangxu was poisoned with arsenic, although this evidence does not help identify the individual behind the poisoning.

²⁶ Empress Dowager Longyu (1868-1913) had previously been a consort of the Guangxu Emperor. Upon their marriage she took the title Empress Xiaodingjing. The wedding ceremony is analyzed in later chapters. Throughout her life in the Forbidden City, Longyu directly reported to Cixi on the movements of Guangxu.

Cixi held power over China's emperors for more than 50 years and even exerted influence after her death. Historically, many scholars view the empress dowager as a villain whose self-interests, prejudices, and desire for power aided the fall of the Qing dynasty. Scholars speculate that she was widely manipulated by those advising her, resulting in damaging edicts and harmful policies.²⁷ The fact that Cixi was not allowed to fulfill aspects of her imperial role and had to rely on the loyalty of others was most likely a major contributing factor to the manipulative persona that has developed historically. However, this study finds that Cixi is somewhat misunderstood. She ruled during extremely tumultuous times and attempted to navigate this period of uncertainty to the best of her abilities despite the fact that she faced restrictions due to her gender. From a somewhat humble beginning, Cixi was able to establish herself in a powerful position as the empress dowager. Her rule lasted for more than 50 years, making her one of China's longest reigning rulers who utilized her wit, feminist mindset, and power to move China forward into the 20th century.

1.2 Patronage and Collecting: Emulating the Past

As Cixi gained control of China, she harnessed her personal experiences and sharp intellect to strengthen her claim on the throne. Similar to other rulers before her, she used the successes and failures of past emperors to inform many of her decisions. Along with this evaluation of past rulers, she also spent time studying the pastimes of the literati. The traditional pursuits of the scholar official were a means of self-cultivation. Records indicate that Cixi worked extensively in the literati diversions of painting and

²⁷ Most scholars believe too much power was wielded by Cixi's eunuchs.

calligraphy, surrounding herself with skilled artists to instruct her and improve her techniques. Cixi's self improvement through painting, calligraphy, and overall artistic patronage allowed her to further solidify her hold on the throne of heaven. The pursuit of these intellectual endeavors was not unique to Cixi and was a pastime that interested many previous emperors. The shared desire to cultivate oneself via the classics means that Cixi shared a similar foundation to former rulers. Despite sharing this common base, trends of patronage throughout the Qing dynasty were primarily influenced by major shifts in culture.

The earliest forms of Chinese art patronage can be divided into two groups. One group sought patronage from the imperial court, and the other group was associated with the traditional patronage of the literati.²⁸ Artists who resided within the imperial court could be designated as painter officials or academy painters. The painter official typically held an administrative position within the court and painted to better themselves, only occasionally being directed by imperial authority. The academy painter was simply a skilled artist that usually had not completed a civil service examination. Academy painters were expected to complete the commissions directly expressed by the imperial court.²⁹ The high standards that existed within court painting were also present within porcelain production. Only the imperial kilns at Jingdezhen could fulfill imperial commissions, and only the best quality materials and artists were utilized to achieve the desired wares. The established standards for the imperial kilns are examined later in this

²⁸ Wai-kam Ho, "Introduction," in *Artists and Patrons: Some Social and Economic Aspects of Chinese Painting*, ed. Chu-tsing Li (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas, 1989), 23.

²⁹ Daphne Lange Rosenzweig, "Reassessment of Painters and Paintings at the Early Ch'ing Court," in *Artists and Patrons: Some Social and Economic Aspects of Chinese Painting*, ed. Chu-tsing Li (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas, 1989), 76.

chapter. If a porcelain ware did not meet the expectations of the imperial court, it would be destroyed, preserving an elite standard for porcelain wares.

The patronage cultivated during the earlier Qing dynasty is best understood through three specific imperial patrons: Kangxi (1662–1722), Yongzheng (1723–1735), and Qianlong (1736–1795). During this period, artistic media flourished and included new advancements, often drawing from China’s newly established relationships with the West. Scholars have claimed that the porcelain industry reached its peak during these reigns as a direct result of continued imperial patronage. Several overarching elements found within the porcelain commissioned by these rulers contribute to its elite status. One of these elements is the porcelain itself. The porcelain was made of a fine paste that fired to a pure white color. Much of this success was due to technological advancements and knowledge of clay refinement. The other major element associated with the apex of Chinese porcelain is the development of glazes and colors. Building upon the achievements of the Ming kilns, the Qing kilns were able to successfully execute distinct underglaze blue, *famille verte* (*wucai* 五彩), and *famille rose* (*fencai* 粉彩).³⁰ *Famille verte*, or the green family, involved the application of shades of a green hue. *Famille verte* is considered a part of *wucai*, or five colors. The *wucai* styles of the Qing evolved during the reign of Kangxi when the technical ability to apply overglaze blue rather than underglaze blue was achieved, combining the overglaze blue with polychrome enamels. *Famille rose*, or the pink family, is known in China as *fencai*, meaning “soft colors.” The technique combines varieties of pink to create distinct shades. Forms of vessels also

³⁰ Yi-hua Li, *Kangxi, Yongzheng, Qianlong: Qing Porcelain from the Palace Museum Collection* (Beijing: Forbidden City Publishing House, 1989), 10.

expanded, with wares taking on unique shapes that were often influenced by styles and commissioned export wares for the West. At this time, exterior decoration on porcelain underwent the most dramatic evolution, with vessels maintaining all of the previously established styles of former dynasties, such as molding and carved handles, while simultaneously expanding into new techniques. The main contribution relevant to this study is the development of clear painting techniques on porcelain vessels by the potters at the kilns. For the first time, Qing potters successfully deviated from Ming traditions and delved into a more painterly aesthetic. Potters studied the styles of paintings and carefully emulated them within the kilns, creating a clear connection between the production of paintings and porcelain. These established techniques were pushed further by Cixi's patronage. She viewed former imperial patrons as individuals to emulate, with most of her produced porcelain looking to stylistic elements that were cultivated long before her reign.

While imperial patronage can be traced back to China's early rulers, the patronage of Qing ruler Qianlong is undoubtedly the most thoroughly studied. His patronage is also the closest in chronology to that of the empress dowager, making Qianlong's patronage the most logical influence on Cixi's. Qianlong was born in 1711. He was the grandson of Kangxi, which strengthened his connection to the line of patronage established by the former ruler. Following the death of the Yongzheng Emperor in 1735, Qianlong came into power. He was especially interested in both art and scholastic pursuits, which he continued cultivating after taking on the role of emperor. Qianlong began to amass a large quantity of art, ultimately creating one of the largest art collections in the history of China. Qianlong's desire to collect sparked massive growth within the decorative arts.

His patronage of jade, lacquer ware, textiles, cloisonné, and porcelain elevated these media into highly admired goods.

The imperial kilns at Jingdezhen produced thousands of pieces of porcelain every year for use within the imperial courts. Qianlong's patronage meant that the potters and painters who produced the porcelain catered to his imperial styles. Qianlong's porcelain tastes were quite extravagant, often relying on lush colors and impressive techniques to cultivate highly artistic and ornate objects. An example of such an object resides in the Palace Museum (Figure 1).³¹ The *Lantern-shaped zun vase* is finely potted and exquisitely painted. The top and bottom are banded in a deep blue with gilded designs in the shape of a *ruyi* 如意 scepter, which symbolizes many wishes, and an intricate fretwork. Along the body of the *zun* 尊 is a landscape that incorporates a wide variety of colors to allow areas to appear gently washed in color rather than flatly painted. The use of *fencai* colors emphasizes the development that occurred during Qianlong's era. The scene is created in a painterly style utilizing a Western perspective ensuring a distinct foreground, midground, and background. A procession of children progresses over a bridge, not only creating a sense of movement but also connecting to a traditional Chinese symbol for numerous sons. The combination of Eastern and Western ideals within this piece of porcelain emphasizes the evolution of porcelain that occurred during Qianlong's reign and the mastery of the new innovations at the kilns. Qianlong's porcelain style centered on established porcelain techniques but amalgamated numerous elements within one vessel, pushing the limits of what was possible at the kilns. Such porcelain often utilized a traditional form with multiple types of decoration, creating a

³¹ Li, Kangxi, Yongzheng, *Qianlong: Qing Porcelain from the Palace Museum Collection*, 349.

piece that both revived tradition and directly sparked new innovations. This connection to the past is expected in wares dating to Qianlong's era. In almost all forms of Chinese art, artists pay homage to former styles, aesthetics, or masters in order to better themselves.³² As the Qing dynasty progressed, patronage became even more multifaceted. Most significantly, the rise of a wealthy merchant class, especially in regions like Yangzhou and Shanghai, meant that more individuals were able to finance artistic endeavors.³³ This increase in patronage of both an imperial caliber and within the merchant class created an influx of art production during this era.

Given Qianlong and Cixi's close chronological proximity, it seems plausible that Cixi emulated Qianlong's collecting in an effort to mimic his level of patronage and establish herself as a similarly successful ruler. Through these patronage activities, Cixi was establishing herself not only as worthy of the throne, but also as the equal to any intellectual man. In Chinese art forms, artists traditionally look toward the masters of the past in order to emulate them and hopefully progress beyond them. Using this same mindset, it appears that Cixi looked toward the patronage that was successfully conducted by the Qianlong Emperor in a desire to mimic these acts to her benefit. In doing so, Cixi not only connected herself to the productive reign associated with Qianlong, but strove to benefit her current reign. By harnessing the power of patronage, she was able to promote herself and exemplify the expansiveness of her imperial sovereignty. Cixi became directly involved in the patronage of textiles, porcelain, painting, calligraphy, theater, architecture, and photography. Acting at this level of patronage emphasized Cixi's

³² Qianlong showed his appreciation for early master porcelain artists by collecting early Song wares and referencing aspects of these styles within his newly commissioned vessels.

³³ Ho, "Introduction," in *Artists and Patrons: Some Social and Economic Aspects of Chinese Painting*, 5.

commitment to the arts and her desire to advance them. Her ability to maintain control of the country while also molding the influence of shifting politics, modernization, and Westernization directly shaped the patronage of the late Qing dynasty. There are extensive surviving records that detail Cixi's involvement as an artistic patron, especially in the form of first-hand accounts by her contemporaries, which makes it possible to understand the ideology behind Cixi's personal styles and the close relationship across various media.

1.3 Painting and Porcelain: Connections

To begin to understand the styles that Cixi developed within late dynastic porcelain, it is critical to investigate her involvement with painting. The empress dowager was especially involved in painting, with surviving records indicating a heavy contribution in not only patronage but also in actual participation in painting. The empress dowager's direct involvement in painting her own scrolls provides an irrefutable example of the styles, techniques, and overall aesthetics that she found desirable. The surviving works attributed to Cixi reveal thematic recurrences that overlap with the motifs found in other media such as porcelain. It is therefore critical to first understand Cixi's role in painting patronage, because it directly applies to her establishment as the leading porcelain patron of the late Qing dynasty.

The imperial court's involvement in the development of painting was well established by the time Cixi rose to power. One of the largest single contributors to painting's development during the Qing dynasty was the transitional period immediately following the fall of the Ming dynasty. This transitional era influenced the artistic

community for the entirety of the Qing dynasty. Three distinct groups emerged in painting during the Qing: the Individualists, the Orthodox School, and the commercial and court artists.³⁴ The Individualists maintained loyalty to the fallen Ming dynasty. Their paintings often focused on self-expression, typically exemplifying sadness at the recent Manchu conquest. The Orthodox School primarily worked to replicate former masters of the 17th century. Works created by this school often looked toward older models and then subtly included stylistic innovations of the current era. The final group of commercial artists was comprised of masters of painting who worked exclusively on commission. They often produced artwork for the imperial court. While these three groups are clearly separated in the early Qing, by the late 19th century the styles associated with each group had slowly dispersed. Art produced in this time begins to gain the influence of multiple styles and pushes the established boundaries.

Another major force behind the evolution of painting during the Qing dynasty was influence from Europe. Jesuits gained favor at the imperial court, inspiring the painting styles that would be developed during this era. For example, portraiture gained popularity in China during the reign of Qianlong. The Italian Jesuit Giuseppe Castiglione (Lang Shining 郎世寧; 1688–1766) filled the Qing court with new Western painting styles and techniques especially during the reign of Qianlong. Castiglione's *The Qianlong Emperor in Ceremonial Armor on Horseback* dates to the 1700s and exemplifies the cross-cultural exchange that was occurring in the field of painting (Figure 2).³⁵ The portrait, completed with traditional ink and color on silk, depicts the emperor in

³⁴ Claudia Brown, *Great Qing: Painting in China, 1644-1911* (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 2014).

³⁵ Nancy Berliner, Mark C. Elliot, and Liu Chang, *The Emperor's Private Paradise: Treasures from the Forbidden City* (Salem, Massachusetts: Peabody Essex Museum, 2010), 39.

full military regalia. Although the emperor appears to be inspecting troops, the depicted scene never truly occurred and instead represents an idealized and even idolized version of a triumphant Qianlong. The portrait was meant to reflect Qianlong's power after conquering territories in the west of China. Castiglione's inclusion of *chiaroscuro* and linear perspective within the portrait emphasize elements of the West, while the media and attire of Qianlong pay homage to styles found in the east. This portrait of Qianlong in a Western style formed the basis for further portraiture during Cixi's era, while the elements developed within the work created an arsenal from which later artists would draw. These interactions with Western styles shaped the aesthetics cultivated by Cixi throughout her lifetime and provided her with the ability to document historic court occasions.³⁶

Cixi would have been familiar with painting from her childhood exposure to the art form. This knowledge would have grown as she continued to study painting upon entering the Forbidden City and would have been visible as she oversaw the paintings produced under the reigns of Tongzhi and Guangxu. One of Cixi's paintings that is currently at the Palace Museum in Beijing, *Peonies*, dates to the reign of Guangxu in 1902 (Figure 3).³⁷ The hanging scroll details two blooming peonies: one in blue, and the other a light pink. The peony (牡丹) is considered an auspicious image symbolizing wealth and prosperity. Cixi frequently included auspicious symbols within her artwork, and such symbols were prominently featured in art that she commissioned. Auspicious symbols are often found textually within imperial art. However, Cixi predominately

³⁶ Claudia Brown, *Great Qing: Painting in China, 1644-1911*, 147-148.

³⁷ Yuan Hong-qi, *Empress Dowager Cixi: Her Art of Living*, ed. Bao-guang Wang (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Museum of Art, 1996), 93.

selected imagery alone that held an auspicious connotation rather than harnessing actual text to reflect the idea. The light brush application creates subtle washes of color and indicates the artist's immense control. The light hand and delicate touch apparent in each brushstroke indicate a refined touch that is expertly trained. The inclusion of her seal allows Cixi to take complete ownership of this painting. Blending the floral imagery signifying prosperity with her title conveys Cixi's dominance and success at the time the work was created. The juxtaposition of a flower and her power are frequently found within Cixi's paintings, as well as her porcelain. The empress dowager's preference for flowers, embedded symbolism, and delicate styles is overarching within her art and work, ultimately emphasizing her continued power over the imperial court.

Throughout her life in the Forbidden City, Cixi strove to better her own painting and calligraphy techniques. As during the reigns of previous rulers, the Forbidden City had access to some of the most skilled painters of Cixi's era. Firsthand accounts written at the time describe the massive operation surrounding the patronage of painting within the Forbidden City:

Her Majesty has a corps of painters always there. These painters decorate the thousands of lanterns used in the Palace ceremonies and processions. They paint the scenery for the spectacular plays at the Theater, and the flowers used for decorations of the screen-like walls I have already alluded to. Some are very clever flower painters, and one even paints portraits, but they have never seen the Empress Dowager except from afar! Though Mandarins of the Third rank, the painters were obliged to withdraw from court where they worked when Her Majesty and suite passed by. It was amusing to see these dignified, handsomely gowned officials being hurried out of the court on Her Majesty's approach by the eunuchs who precede her. Their paintings were submitted to her by one of the eunuchs, by whom she sent her instructions to them.³⁸

³⁸ Katherine A. Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China* (New York: KPI Limited, 1986), 173.

It is clear that the empress dowager had extreme control over what was produced during the period, subjecting each work to scrutiny and providing the painters with further instructions. Each painter had to work with Cixi in order to complete any paintings. This direct connection within the realm of painting established Cixi's ownership of imperial patronage.

While Cixi invited many artists to paint at the Forbidden City, she specifically employed several female painters to instruct her.³⁹ Art historical research indicates that China had known female artists prior to Cixi's rule. The empress dowager was among the first to surround herself with female painters within the palace. Cixi actively recruited female artists to work in her personal studio within the Forbidden City, which was known as the Studio of Great Elegance. It is this action of surrounding herself with female artists that highlights yet another facet of Cixi's feminist viewpoint. The inclusion of numerous women within the court demonstrates Cixi's acceptance of a much more modern world than she has been given credit for by the historical record. This appointment of specifically female court painters became the first official recruitment of professional female painters within the Chinese imperial court.⁴⁰

³⁹ Claudia Brown and Ju-Hsi Chou, *Transcending Turmoil: Painting at the Close of China's Empire, 1796-1911* (Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 1992), 36-37. A hanging scroll from the Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, attributed to Cixi entitled, *Fungi and Bats (Long Life and Happiness)*, offers evidence of the Empress Dowager's instruction. Small sketched lines near the painted bats suggests another artist provided Cixi with guidance during the painting process. Another hanging scroll by Cixi held by Denver Art Museum entitled *Flower and Insect Sketches*, provides further evidence of Cixi's painting instruction. Areas that required improvement were circled in red by the instructor, indicating Cixi's continued cultivation of her painting techniques. For further information, see Marsha Smith Weidner, *Views From Jade Terrace: Chinese Women Artists 1300 - 1912* (New York: Rizzoli, 1988): 162-163.

⁴⁰ Ka Bo Tsang, "In Her Majesty's Service: Women Painters in China at the Court of the Empress Dowager Cixi," in *Local/Global: Women Artists in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Janice Helland (London: Routledge, 2006), 35-58.

The women Cixi recruited for the Studio of Great Elegance instructed the empress dowager in painting techniques, calligraphic penmanship, and painted works on her behalf. The paintings that these artists completed for Cixi were often then signed with Cixi's imperial seal, becoming what is considered the work of a "ghost painter." These ghost painters' names are often not included in the historic records. An examination of the works in question often results in clues that could identify whether a particular piece is the work of a trained painter or the empress dowager herself. Faint outlines can often be seen on calligraphic lines, indicating that Cixi may have just followed a pre-established form for guidance. Other works expose shaky lines, unusual configurations, or a whimsical touch, which indicates that the empress dowager rather than a formally trained artist actually painted the scene. With more than 700 known works attributed to the empress dowager, it is impossible to establish how many of these works her team of ghost painters, as opposed to the empress dowager herself, produced. Many scholars have questioned whether or not Cixi was an artist in her own right. Some sources have concluded that Cixi was simply surrounded by talented court artists who worked based on her commissions.⁴¹ Regardless of the actual artist behind each work, the paintings associated with Cixi's reign are united by patronage, ultimately resulting in the empress dowager being the final artistic voice behind each piece.

⁴¹ Warner, *Dragon Empress: The Life and Times of Tz'u-Hsi Empress Dowager of China 1835-1908*, 162. It was said that at one time the Empress Cixi had eighteen artists attending to her painting needs, this could indicate Cixi may not have possessed any individualized artistic talent. Many of these court artists were members of the *Ruyiguan* (As You Wish Lodge) within the Forbidden City, where these individuals were solely responsible for supplying Cixi with painted pictures and calligraphy.

While the majority of Cixi's ghost painters remain relatively unknown, her favorite ghost painter, Miao Jiahui 繆嘉蕙, was well recorded.⁴² Many paintings attributed to Cixi are thought to have been painted by Miao, then signed using the Empress Dowager's official seal. *Peach Tree Bough*, depicts a lush blooming peach tree (Figure 4). The peach bough creates a diagonal across the hanging scroll while simultaneously framing two small bats. The combination of peaches and bats is frequently utilized within the field of painting. Peaches are symbols of longevity, while bats represent blessings. Together these motifs symbolize the hope for a long life filled with numerous blessings. Cixi's imperial seal is at the top of the hanging scroll indicating that Cixi painted this depiction herself; however, scholars remain unconvinced theorizing that *Peach tree bough* was painted by Miao. The brushwork appears soft with each object suggested without the use of a dark outline. The employment of a boneless style throughout the scroll suggests a mastery of both Chinese painting styles and brush techniques. Regardless of the artist responsible for the painting, it is evident that Cixi was the primary source behind the style, symbols and techniques used throughout the composition. Miao was likely heavily influenced by her patron, Cixi, resulting in works that look strikingly similar to those painted by the empress dowager's hand. The influence of Cixi's artistic style in Miao's paintings make it exceptionally challenging to determine one artist from the other. Examples like this hanging scroll begin to allow for the establishment of a distinct decorative style associated with the Empress Dowager.

⁴² Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (California: University of California Press, 1996), 6.

The style can be found in her personal patronage of both painting and porcelain, proving Cixi's wide artistic influence during the late Qing.

Cixi established herself as both a painter and a patron of traditional Chinese painting. She also utilized her affinity for painting as a means to explore beyond the Forbidden City and began to embrace trends found within Western-style painting. This exploration is best observed in Cixi's patronage of Chinese portraiture, which was inspired by Qianlong's earlier examination of portraiture. In 1903, Cixi granted permission for an oil painting to be completed by the American artist Katherine Augusta Carl (1865–1938). Along with gaining Cixi's patronage, Carl was also invited to reside in the Forbidden City as a member of the Chinese court.⁴³ The two worked together closely and developed a friendship recounted in Carl's memoirs. According to Carl, the empress dowager was incredibly artistic and knowledgeable in her patronage. Carl's portraits of the empress dowager provided Western audiences with a better understanding of Chinese imperial life and provided a Western woman direct access to the inner workings of Cixi's world.

Carl's portrait was displayed at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904 and gained particular notoriety due to its high amount of visibility (Figure 5). In the painting, Cixi sits on a grand throne surrounded by lavish items like peacock feather fans and tall bird inspired *jardinière* vessels. Within the space images with symbolic connotations are visible, like the peony and phoenix. The latter represents a feminine association with power. The empress dowager wears an elaborate yellow robe draped with lengths of pearls. The motif embroidered into her robe depicts groupings of orchids along with the

⁴³ Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China*, 12.

character *shou*. The orchid connects to Cixi's original namesake, Lan Guiren, which means lady orchid. The character *shou* translates to longevity. The variety of symbols selected for the portrait draw distinct similarities to the paintings and porcelain patronized by Cixi, which will be assessed throughout this research. The portraits numerous hidden symbols convey a distinct message about Cixi's power over China. While Carl acted as the painter of the portrait it is clear that Cixi orchestrated control over what was depicted. Photography dating to this era captures Cixi wearing attire with similar motifs to those exhibited within the Carl portrait. This establishes that Cixi surrounded herself with symbols in photographs and other portraits, not just for the purposes of the Carl portrait. The symbolism included in Carl's portrait will be repetitively found throughout the art patronized by Cixi.

Ultimately, the portrait of the Empress was given to President Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919) as a gift, eventually ending its journey in the Smithsonian Institution collection. This East-West exchange marks the first time a portrait of a Chinese ruler was ever presented to a Western leader as a gift. Cixi used the portrait as a statement, showing the Western world her control of China. Just as her earlier patronage of porcelain or painting had been disseminated within China, Carl's portrait was an opportunity for Cixi to establish her authority on a global level. The portrait showed Cixi dressed in immense finery while seated on a raised throne. Cixi appears stoic and is presented in an almost divine manner. The similarities between this portrait and the earlier portrait of Qianlong are striking. Both portraits establish the subject as an idealized figure that represents imperial China while employing Western aesthetics to convey these ideas. During an era when Cixi was frequently criticized for being anti-

Western, the portrait itself completely contradicts this notion. In this example, the painting was completed by a Western artist in a Western oil medium and utilized techniques, such as a linear perspective and *chiaroscuro*, that were directly associated with Western painting styles. The portrait entirely confronts the negative criticisms facing Cixi within the West and addresses them head on. Examples like this one indicate the intellect with which Cixi approached her artistic patronage.⁴⁴ It was not simply patronage of objects she was aesthetically attracted to, but a demonstrative symbol of her far-reaching power.

Even within China, Cixi carefully manipulated her patronage to take full advantage of each work. Artwork was a vessel that was highly visible and able to hold embedded semiotic value. While the previously examined portrait of Cixi had a distinct meaning for a Western audience, it had an entirely different connotation within the Qing court. The painting included the small square seal of the Guangxu Emperor located along the left border. At the time of the painting, Guangxu had been removed from power by Cixi. Despite the tension that must have existed between Guangxu and Cixi, she included his seal on the work, visually announcing his direct support of Cixi's supreme power within China. Yet another aspect of the commissioned portrait that denotes Cixi's acceptance of the modern era is the fact that the portrait was meant to be publically viewed. Traditionally, within the Qing court the common man would never be allowed to

⁴⁴ Another portrait of Cixi by Dutch-born painter Hubert Vos (1855-1935) held by the Harvard Art Museum entitled *H.I.M., the Empress Dowager of China, Cixi (1835-1908)*, shares similarities to Carl's portrait. In his representation he recorded that the empress placed numerous demands in regards to the paintings style including a lack of shadows around the eyes and a wide upturned mouth. This resulted in a portrait that was aesthetically appealing to Cixi, rather than a work that was realistic.

view an image of the current ruler, because any imperial image was considered sacred.⁴⁵ Cixi therefore used the portrait to make a powerful statement about her authority to an extremely wide audience. According to court official Pulun (1874–1927), the portrait was meant to be both viewed and venerated while on display.⁴⁶ This differs from Chinese paintings of the empress dowager such as *An Imperial Portrait of Empress Dowager Cixi as Guanyin*, which is attributed to Qu Zhaolin (Figure 6).⁴⁷ In this representation of Cixi, she sits in a traditional Chinese landscape. The scenery has limited dimensionality but is filled with auspicious symbols like butterflies, *lingzhi* 靈芝, and peaches. These motifs surround the seated Cixi, who is wearing regal blue robes with an elaborate headpiece. This Eastern representation has a similar essence to that of Carl's portrait, since both represent Cixi as a powerful ruler. Scholars have categorized numerous portraits of Cixi as representations of Guanyin 觀音, a Buddhist bodhisattva that emphasizes compassion.⁴⁸ The connection between Cixi and Guanyin would not have been readily noted in the Western world; though, it would have been evident to individuals who were familiar with Buddhism.⁴⁹ While no textual evidence exists connecting Carl's portrait to a representation of Guanyin, the similarities between the two figures cannot be ignored. Cixi's portrait established herself as a religious icon within China.

⁴⁵ Daisy Yiyong Wang, "Empresses of China's Forbidden City: New Perspectives on Qing Imperial Women," *Orientalis* 49, no. 6 (December 2018), 44.

⁴⁶ Wang, 41.

⁴⁷ Yuhang Li, "Painting Empress Dowager Cixi as Guanyin for Missionaries' Eyes," *Orientalis* 49, no. 6 (December 2018), 59.

⁴⁸ Li, 50.

⁴⁹ Qianlong had also been portrayed in painting as a Buddhist figure. Portraits of the emperor reflect him as the bodhisattva Manjusri. For further information, see Sherry Harlacher Montgomery, "Qianlong as Manjusri-Emperor: Portraits of Early Modern Statebuilding" (MA Thesis, Arizona State University, 2003).

An examination of paintings associated with Cixi indicates a close connection between the imagery found painted on porcelain and that painted on scrolls. Examples of Cixi's paintings from the Bowers Museum exhibition *Empress Dowager Cixi: Selections from the Summer Palace* showcase the empress dowager's skill with a brush (Figure 7).⁵⁰ One work entitled *Peonies*, centers a floral composition along the bottom of a hanging scroll. The three peonies are each depicted in washes of white, yellow, and pink. The peony itself is symbolic as the king of flowers, while the colors chosen for each blossom can also be interpreted to hold meaning. The white peony represents purity, the yellow a representation of the imperial Chinese color and the pink a clear connection to the emergence of the western color palette during the Qing era. The light application of color creates the faintest suggestion of petals, that would be virtually invisible without intimate assessment due to the boneless painting style that eliminates bold outlining. Close examination of this work in person allowed the delicate details embedded by Cixi to become visible. The work reveals a delicate and soft touch, which is an element evident in the majority of Cixi's art. It is clear from *Peonies* that Cixi, while inspired by traditional Chinese painting, also embraced new ideas. Individuals who witnessed the empress dowager painting expressed her competence in the tradition, stating, "Her Majesty's touch is [also] very apparent in her painting, for she is very artistic, and paints flowers in a charming way; in fact, she is remarkably clever with her fingers."⁵¹ The close connection that Cixi maintained between the media of painting and porcelain indicates that the two were tightly linked under her patronage and therefore cannot be

⁵⁰ "Empress Dowager Cixi: Selections from the Summer Palace," exhibition November 12, 2017-March 11, 2018, Bower's Museum, Santa Ana, California.

⁵¹ Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China*, 136.

truly analyzed individually. The designs, aesthetics, patterns, and forms found across the field of art drew from one another and thus must be considered in the context of a semiotic relationship.

It is clear that Cixi was at least partially responsible for the designs on both her commissioned paintings and porcelain, either via direct creation of the imagery or in the thought process behind the motif itself and the provision of instructions to others to create such works. Looking at the available sources, it is apparent that Cixi was artistically inclined and did not solely rely on court artists to create and implement her designs. Her surviving paintings do appear similar in both style and subject matter to the imagery painted on the porcelain she commissioned, making it entirely possible that she was solely responsible for not only patronage of the porcelain but the design itself as an artist in her own right. Yet another example of this crossover can be seen in Cixi's painting *Birds and Rocks*, which dates to approximately 1890 and illustrates a pair of ribbon-tailed birds sitting on a rock (Figure 8). Each bird looks into the distance, one focusing on a bat and the other on a pine branch. Taken together, the implied meaning of the bat and the pine branch is one of blessing and longevity. Along the base of the rock grow colorful *lingzhi*, which further symbolize immortality. Each brushstroke in the composition is deliberate, creating an expressive scene reminiscent of traditional calligraphy. Keeping this motif in mind, a set of *yellow jardinières decorated with flower and bird* commissioned by Cixi with the *dayazhai* mark bear a strikingly similar resemblance to the imagery in *Birds and Rocks* (Figure 9). The *jardinières* have a vivid yellow ground that is detailed with *grisaille* designs. The motif focuses the viewer's attention on a pair of birds on a plum tree branch. The composition of the painting appears on the

jardinières. In the painting, a pair of birds faces one another while sitting atop a rock. The scene fills the lower right of the hanging scroll. In comparison, the *jardinères* feature an asymmetrical branch with a pair of birds facing one another, forming a strong asymmetrical line across the body of the vessel. Both forms utilize the same variety of bird, namely the ribbon-tailed bird (*shoudainiao* 綬帶鳥). The bird's name denotes the most visible attribute: its long, ribbon-like tail. The long tail represents longevity, and in the case of both objects, the inclusion of two birds indicates double longevity. The inclusion of a bird and flower design relates the depiction to traditional Chinese bird-and-flower painting (*huaniao hua* 花鳥畫) joining the works produced by Cixi to the paintings cultivated in the past. In both the painting and the porcelain the birds appear in combination with other auspicious symbols, further emphasizing the objects intended meaning. The birds on the *jardinière* appear identical, if not inspired by Cixi's painting, proving that Cixi clearly utilized her own artwork when commissioning porcelain wares. The shared iconography indicates that cross-exchange occurred between Cixi's patronage of porcelain and painting.

A connection between painting styles and those occurring simultaneously in porcelain is apparent. Cixi's involvement in painting suggests that aspects of Cixi's porcelain patronage were directly influenced by the painting styles she was cultivating within the imperial court. Cixi's preference for floral motifs that demonstrate soft painterly brushwork can be found within her porcelain, as can a reliance on auspicious symbols. While painting was incorporating new styles that appear to show the influence of Westernization and the modern world, similar transitions appear in Cixi's porcelain

commissions, echoing the changing aesthetics within China at the end of the Qing dynasty.

1.4 The Empress Dowager's Porcelain

The Qing court was structured to ensure artistic production prior to Cixi's reign, and it seems that limited changes were made throughout the Qing dynasty with respect to these established avenues of production. The dominant producer of porcelain was the imperial kiln at Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province. Jingdezhen was a completely inclusive kiln with artisans who had obtained mastery of every step of the porcelain process from procuring the clay to packing the wares for shipping. The Qing-controlled Jingdezhen kilns differed from what was inherited from the Ming dynasty. The majority of the workforce was employed rather than comprised of compulsory laborers, meaning that workers were not forced to work in the kilns.⁵² The difference in the treatment of the craftsmen resulted in Qing wares being predominately produced by highly skilled individuals with immense technical abilities, which was not the case in previous dynasties. The level of artistry achieved is reflected in the inclusion of detail within each piece, and these works could then be reproduced with the same level of skill. The control over the entire porcelain-making process meant that Jingdezhen had the ability to completely regulate the quality, uniformity, and cohesiveness within the commissions of each specific Qing ruler.

⁵² Simon Kwan, *Imperial Porcelain of the Late Qing* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1983), 21.

The earliest Qing kiln site dates to the reign of Shunzhi 順治(1644–1661) in 1655, but, these wares were not thought to be good quality.⁵³ Recent scholarship has challenged this idea. The themes found on Shunzhi porcelain connect to imagery found in woodblock prints, scrolls, and albums. The clear appropriation from other painted forms placed a prominence on individuality, allowing the motifs found on Shunzhi porcelain to be unique.⁵⁴ It was not until the reign of Kangxi in approximately 1672 that porcelain from the Qing imperial kilns began to achieve superior quality. This meant that wares were expertly potted with exquisite color application and highly detailed imagery. All of these imperial wares were made exclusively for the imperial court and therefore catered exclusively to imperial needs. A series of departments were required to communicate between Jingdezhen and the Forbidden City. The imperial workshops, Zaoban chu 造辦處, answered directly to the Imperial Household Department, Neiwu fu 內務府. Early records of these departments indicate that during Cixi’s reign, approximately 15 workshops employed hundreds of artists and craftsmen who designed and produced imperial-requested commissions.⁵⁵ Historically, the production of porcelain in the late Qing dynasty began to slow dramatically, resulting in a limited number of porcelain wares being produced. During the majority of the Qing dynasty, a vast number of kiln sites thrived. However, in the late Qing dynasty, only 22 factories

⁵³ Kwan, 20. The lower quality is typically attributed to the transition occurring between the rule of the Ming to the Qing. Despite the quality of the porcelain itself being rather thickly potted, the Shunzhi wares developed innovative landscapes and narratives that draw heavily from paintings of the era.

⁵⁴ For more see Michael Butler, Julia B Curtis, and Stephen Little, *Treasures from an Unknown Reign: Shunzhi Porcelain, 1644-1661* (Alexandria, Virginia: Art Services International, 2002).

⁵⁵ Ying-chen Peng, “Staging Sovereignty: Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908) and Late Qing Court Art Production” (PhD Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2014), 17.

remained intact to produce ceramics in China, with the most notable site still being the imperial kilns at Jingdezhen.⁵⁶ Part of the reason behind the slow production of porcelain in this era was that the imperial kilns did not operate when the government did not function properly. Changes in government, such as the transitioning of rulers or political turmoil, could result in the imperial kilns remaining predominately idle. For example, the Taiping Rebellion led to the destruction of parts of the imperial kilns in 1856. This destruction of the site resulted in Xianfeng being unable to produce the same amount of porcelain wares as the production achieved during the reign of previous rulers.⁵⁷ Despite periods of slow production, the kilns appear to have created porcelain using the same materials and skilled artisans as in prior reigns. This suggests that changes in emperors had little effect on the actual merit of the imperial kilns. The transitional period between rulers only affected the imagery and amount of porcelain being produced.

According to Tang Ying 唐英(1682–1756), the superintendent of the imperial porcelain at Jingdezhen between 1728 and 1756, the process of creating porcelain was comprised of 20 distinct stages.⁵⁸ Under an edict from Qianlong, a series of paintings depicting porcelain production was ordered. The textual annotation of the production process was formed by Tang around 1743. The produced album known as the *Taoye tushuo* 陶冶圖說 (Explanations of Illustrations of Ceramics), includes illustrations of each stage of porcelain production along with textual explanations. However, only the text of the original album survives. The surviving annotations have become the

⁵⁶ Zhiyan Li and Wen Cheng, *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain: Traditional Chinese Arts and Culture* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1984), 91.

⁵⁷ Kwan, *Imperial Porcelain of the Late Qing Dynasty*, 20. The kilns would be rebuilt by Cao Jingqing under the reign of Tongzhi in 1866. This would cost nearly 130,000 taels of silver.

⁵⁸ Kwan, 21.

foundation for “The Twenty Illustrations of the Manufacture of Porcelain,” combining the annotations with later imagery.⁵⁹ Over time, the close adherence to the steps outlined by Tang resulted in flawless porcelain wares that paid homage to ancient styles while also being innovative. While these workshops were centralized locations of artistic excellence, they were strictly confined by the commissions of the current ruler. Based on this practice, it is clear that the desired aesthetic of the ruler was far more crucial than free artistic expression, which directly mirrors the control Cixi held over imperial painting. According to Jesuit missionaries who visited the court of Qianlong, “one does only what one is told and does what one is told to the letter.”⁶⁰ This proves that although artistic style may have flourished at any given time in the Qing imperial court, these styles were expertly cultivated. Visually, the subtle differences can be observed in the prototypes created for each emperor. Drawings of a desired ware were sent to Jingdezhen, and a prototype was then created and returned to the Forbidden City. Final approval was sent back to Jingdezhen prior to large commissions of any porcelain type. The collector Simon Kwan has several prototypes dating to the late Qing, with varieties of blue-and-white bowls produced for the Daoguang Emperor 道光皇帝(c. 1835) showing minor differences within the floral motif (Figure 10).⁶¹ By comparison, the

⁵⁹ The *Taoye tushuo* is often referred to as *Taoye tu bian* or *Taoye tu*. The *Taoye tu* is translated by S.W. Bushell in *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain* (London: Clarendon Press, 1910). The album with Tang’s annotations is available in a reproduction through the Chang Foundation of Chinese Art, *Chinese Art from the Ching Wan Society Collection* (Taipei: Chang Foundation, 1998). For a further updated analysis of the text and album see Peter Lam, “Tang Ying (1682-1756): The Imperial Factory, Superintendent at Jingdezhen,” *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramics Society* 63 (2000): 65-82.

⁶⁰ Ying-chen Peng from series of letters between two Jesuits: Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot and Jean-Denis Attiret. Letters recorded, Deborah Sommer Trans, “A Letter from a Jesuit Painter in Qianlong’s Court at Chengde,” in *New Qing Imperial History: The Making of Inner Asian Empire at Qing Chengde*, ed. James A. Millward et al. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 177.

⁶¹ Kwan, *Imperial Porcelain of the Late Qing Dynasty*, 52.

same style of blue-and-white bowl was produced during the reign of Xuanton (Figure 11).⁶² While the earlier prototypes have slight variations in the outlining of flowers and the color saturation, the later example was created using a stronger application of cobalt. The flowers themselves appear darker and more heavily shaded. These incorporations indicate a completely new style that has been appropriated as a motif, instilling the flowers with a unique and modern aesthetic. These prototypes indicate the variation available within Qing-era porcelain and provide evidence that emperors' shifting styles satisfied their own aesthetic interests. This comparison of prototypes establishes that Cixi not only oversaw the imperial patterns cultivated but was also solely responsible for what porcelain styles were developed within the country.

The resulting wares commissioned by Cixi display a codified series of motifs that appear repeatedly throughout her reign. The use of a codified series of motifs emerged prior to Cixi's reign. Rose Kerr attributes the establishment of this approach to Qianlong. According to Kerr, after Qianlong's reign, porcelain began to reproduce exact designs.⁶³ While the designs themselves are fundamentally exactly the same, they tend to vary artistically. These variations allow for clear delineations between wares of various reigns, establishing conclusive evidence of aesthetic variations in porcelain produced during the reign of Cixi compared to any other time of production. Based upon the porcelain examined for this study, the thematic images utilized for porcelain in this era are predominately designs with birds and flowers, auspicious flowers, Western inspiration, and auspicious imagery including characters. The clear repetition of designs

⁶² Kwan, 147.

⁶³ Rose Kerr and Luisa Mengoni, *Chinese Export Ceramics* (London: The Victoria & Albert Museum, 2011), 70.

is found across the empress dowager's artistic pursuits, with similarities connecting painting, porcelain, and even known textiles. Surviving textiles from Cixi's era include floral representations, such as those on a *Woman's informal coat* from the Royal Ontario Museum (Figure 12). The purple and blue silk coat is heavily embroidered with a motif of butterflies and chrysanthemums. Large groups of butterflies (*hudie* 蝴蝶) represent numerous blessings, while the chrysanthemum symbolizes longevity. Yet another example from the University of Alberta Museums has a similar design in blue and purple silk (Figure 13). In this instance, the motif embroidered represents peonies and flying phoenix.⁶⁴ The peony, considered the king of flowers, complements the inclusion of the phoenix (*fenghuang* 鳳凰), which symbolizes the empress. The inclusion of these auspicious symbols on garments dating to Cixi's period emphasizes that her personal motif preferences influenced the designs of the late Qing dynasty. Looking specifically at the floral embroidery, the chrysanthemum and peony are also images found in Cixi's painting and porcelain imagery, thus connecting these art forms via shared iconography.

Imperial commissions during the Qing can be divided into two categories. The kilns produced regular wares, which were items that had daily utilitarian functions. The empress dowager used these wares in her daily life within her own palace. Within this analysis, Cixi's commission of *dayazhai* wares is investigated further. The other category of porcelain production was special wares. These objects were made to commemorate special occasions.⁶⁵ Cixi also commissioned these specialty wares. For the purpose of this study, the porcelain ordered to celebrate weddings and birthdays is analyzed. The

⁶⁴ For further discussion of textiles see John E. Vollmer and Sarah Fee, "By Design: Imperial Chinese Dress," *Orientalism* 45, no. 4 (May 2014): 108-116.

⁶⁵ Kwan, *Imperial Porcelain of the Late Qing Dynasty*, 22.

distinction between these types of wares requires this study to focus on both regular and special occasion porcelain in order to best establish and examine the patronage of Cixi. Along with the two categories of porcelain from the imperial kilns, it is evident that custom orders were also readily placed. Each member of the imperial family had the ability to commission various amounts of porcelain. As an individual's rank rose within the household, the allotment of porcelain commissions increased. Vessels of certain forms and colors were restricted based on rank. For example, the color yellow was reserved for only the highest ranking imperial family members.⁶⁶ These rules were outlined in 1899 in the *Qinding daqing huidian* or The Illustrated Regulation for Ceremonies in the Qing Dynasty. While Cixi would have had very few restrictions on her porcelain, an understanding of these regulations reveals how carefully she flaunted her status within the court, harnessing the power of colors to emphasize her position.

The primary way to identify the porcelain Cixi commissioned is by identifying the various *nian hao* 年號 or reign marks she utilized. Since Cixi ruled for several emperors, her patronage is associated with several different reign marks, including those of Xianfeng, Tongzhi, and Guangxu. Cixi must be given credit for actively pursuing porcelain patronage, because wares were produced on behalf of the emperors at her request. Many pieces of porcelain attributed to the reigns of these emperors were created while they were child emperors, so it must be concluded that Cixi took responsibility for the production at the imperial kilns. Other scholars share this viewpoint: “Whether these wares were produced in the Tongzhi or early Guangxu period is somewhat academic, however, since neither of the emperors had anything to do with government policy at this

⁶⁶ Kwan, 27. For more information see Appendix C.

time, much less the operation of the imperial porcelain factories. Even though the imperial porcelains were produced with their marks, any innovations came from the Empress Dowager, who ruled in both the political and domestic spheres.”⁶⁷ The emperors’ lack of involvement in the patronage of porcelain indicates that Cixi herself was the force behind porcelain production during the late Qing dynasty.

Along with the reign marks that she utilized while acting as regent for the emperors, Cixi had multiple personal reign marks including several that reference palaces such as *chuxiugong zhi* 儲秀宮製 (Palace of gathering elegance) that she resided in within the Forbidden City. The most well-known of these marks is *dayazhai*, or “abode of great refinement.”⁶⁸ This is a critical element to consider, because each reign mark indicates that Cixi alone was the patron approving the porcelain. This was a drastic progression within the field of patronage, because the laws of the time would have prohibited anyone other than the emperor from having “imperial wares.” The use of these unique reign marks that were not the emperors’ *nianhao* allowed Cixi to bend the legal requirements. Despite being somewhat different than the emperors’ reign marks, she managed to create her own *nianhao* on the porcelain, establishing herself not only as a major patron of the arts but also as the imperial center of China. The imperial kilns also produced porcelain using the reign marks of the emperors that Cixi oversaw as regent, but it is evident that Cixi’s was the distinct aesthetic taste behind the styles being produced whether the porcelain displayed her reign mark or the reign mark of the current

⁶⁷ Ronald W. Longsdorf, “Dayazhai Ware: Porcelains of the Empress Dowager,” *Orientalia* 23, no. 3 (1992): 45–56.

⁶⁸ For a list of reign marks see Appendix B.

emperor.⁶⁹ This is often evident in the repeated designs and thematic motifs of the period. The use of her own personal reign marks as well as becoming the invisible backer for the emperor's porcelain establishes Cixi as the sole imperial patron from approximately 1861 until 1908. By harnessing the porcelain markers, Cixi made herself not only the equal to any man in the Forbidden City, but the emperor's superior.

The wares distinguished as *dayazhai* offer a perplexing combination of qualities that are difficult to study, because a limited number of pieces are known and accessible. Even though these pieces are considered quite "rare," the academic community has deemed many of the known pieces of *dayazhai* wares as being of "inferior quality."⁷⁰ The concept of being inferior is inappropriately applied, because many of the *dayazhai* wares maintain a superior quality when compared to other porcelain vessels produced within the same era. The wares do not appear to be of the same quality as earlier wares produced in China because they were made in a completely different manner. Technological advances in the firing process along with stylistic choices make the wares unique to the period. While similarities can be found, it is unrealistic to compare drastically different porcelain spanning centuries of kiln production. It is clear that these wares exemplify a break with the styles found in earlier Qing porcelain, indicating that Cixi cultivated a new style rather than an "inferior" style. In recent years, more of these wares commissioned by the empress dowager have been discovered within global

⁶⁹ As was the case in her patronage of porcelain, Cixi is associated as the chief patron of porcelain during the reigns of Tongzhi and Guangxu.

⁷⁰ Longsdorf, "Dayazhai Ware: Porcelains of the Empress Dowager," 45. Scholars speculate about 5,000 works were actually a part of the original commission by the Empress. Of this total, about 200 are estimated to be in the National Palace Museum's Collection, while some are documented in museums in Taiwan, and other international institutions. Many pieces are also assumed to be in private collections.

collections and are slowly being reevaluated. Within the catalog *Official Models and the Qing Imperial Porcelain Ware* (官樣御瓷) and *Gugong zhencang Cixi de ciqi* (故宮珍藏 慈禧的瓷器), the aesthetics, forms, and trends that Cixi cultivated are evident.⁷¹

Cixi maintained a level of porcelain standards within her early commissioned porcelain, and it is arguable that some of her earlier commissions were more closely connected to pre-established designs. The wares that appear to be the most traditional and reminiscent of earlier porcelain practices at Jingdezhen are the vessels produced for the emperors she served as regent. It is evident that these porcelain vessels were meant to closely connect to the inherited imperial power of China. The porcelain strongly connected to the past, therefore displaying each ruler's claim to the throne. Porcelain vessels like a *Large Dish*, dating to the Tongzhi period, emphasize the connection that Cixi tried to establish by promoting the stylistic characteristics of earlier Chinese porcelain (Figure 14). This vessel is clearly Cixi's own style due to the incorporation of one of her personal reign marks, *chuxiugong zhi*. The reign mark indicates it was made for the Palace of Harboring Grace, which is one of the palaces that Cixi resided at within the Forbidden City.⁷² This ware is detailed with an intricate underglaze cobalt blue motif of a dragon chasing a pearl as it flies through a design of clouds and flames. The fine detail on the piece allows the viewer to identify each individual scale on the dragon's

⁷¹ *Guanyang Yuci: Gugong Bowuyuan Cang Qingdai Zhi Ci Guanyang Yu Yuyao Ciqi (Official Designs for Imperial Porcelains: Qing Dynasty Official Designs for the Manufacture of Porcelain and Imperial Ceramics of the Gugong Museum)* (Beijing: Forbidden City Publishing House, 2007). A similar exhibition catalog focused on Cixi's porcelain patronage was published in 2013. See Gugong bowuyuan, Shoudu bowuguan 首都博物館 eds, *Gugong zhencang Cixi de ciqi 故宮珍藏慈禧的瓷器* (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2013).

⁷² Ronald W. Longsdorf, "The Tongzhi Imperial Wedding Porcelain," *Oriental Art* 27, no. 9 (1996): 69–78.

body. Subtle shading throughout the cobalt application allows the dragon to take on a painterly tonality. Cixi was clearly inspired by earlier porcelain produced for the imperial court during the Ming era and the reign of Kangxi. To the viewer, Cixi's commissioned porcelain appears strikingly similar to those earlier imperial wares. Cixi clearly incorporated the past traditions of porcelain within her own modern interpretations of the art form, which allowed for this specific dragon motif in *Large Dish* to personify imperial power thriving under her patronage. While the *Large Dish* utilized Cixi's reign mark, other similar examples exist with the reign marks of Tongzhi and Guangxu. The commonalities between wares displaying Cixi's mark and the wares associated with the emperor's indicate the magnitude of the Empress Dowager's patronage during the late Qing.

1.5 Dayazhai

Unlike the porcelain that was produced for the emperors, the wares that are associated with Cixi's specific reign mark, *dayazhai*, have the highest level of artistic deviation. It is these specific wares that allow this study to truly establish what Cixi's porcelain aesthetic was and how this style shaped the porcelain of the late Qing dynasty. Cixi commissioned her own set of porcelain from the imperial kilns using the reign mark *dayazhai*, or "abode of great refinement."⁷³ Based on the examination of numerous examples of *dayazhai* wares, this study challenges the established viewpoint that *dayazhai* is inferior to other imperial porcelain. The *dayazhai* wares exemplify a break

⁷³ Many scholars question the validity of the *dayazhai* mark as it is not an existing palatial site within the Forbidden City. However, the continual renovations within the Forbidden City are now thought to have obstructed the original location.

with the styles found in earlier Qing porcelain, indicating that Cixi cultivated a new style rather than an “inferior” style. In recent years, more of these wares commissioned by the empress dowager have been discovered within global collections and are slowly being reevaluated.

Records at the National Palace Museum in Beijing indicate that Cixi’s *dayazhai* wares were ordered as a set of five dinner services, most likely during the late reign of Tongzhi (1862–1874) to the early reign of Guangxu (1875–1908).⁷⁴ The sets had a total of eight forms within them: bowls in large, medium, and small sizes, along with several covers; saucers in large, medium, and small sizes; two sizes of covered boxes, *zhadou*, and fish bowls. The five designs involved depictions of the seasons: two different patterns for spring and one design each for winter, autumn, and summer. Artists sketched these seasonal designs, and the drawings were used to create the finished porcelain imagery.⁷⁵ The drawings clearly indicate that Cixi created some sort of blue print for these pieces, indicating another correlation between her role as an artist and patron. The imagery created on each piece of porcelain was expertly executed with artistic skill, resulting in all of the patterns maintaining a consistent balance with equal dimensions throughout. The precision of the porcelain imagery is also found in the paintings associated with Cixi, which maintain a strict balance with the composition. Cixi was particularly interested in the changing of the seasons and often explored this subject within her own paintings and in the porcelain she commissioned. Typically, this

⁷⁴ Longsdorf, “The Tongzhi Imperial Wedding Porcelain,” 69.

⁷⁵ For further reading see *Guanyang Yuci: Gugong Bowuyuan Cang Qingdai Zhi Ci Guanyang Yu Yuyao Ciqi (Official Designs for Imperial Porcelains: Qing Dynasty Official Designs for the Manufacture of Porcelain and Imperial Ceramics of the Gugong Museum)* (Beijing: Forbidden City Publishing House, 2007).

exploration was conducted using the iconography associated with flowers rather than a literal illustration of the season, since flowers are a subject found in both her commissioned porcelains sets and some of her surviving artwork, as was previously analyzed.

The first of these seasonal motifs is the spring season. Cixi must have had a particular fondness for spring, because this is the only one of the four seasons that actually has two patterns. The first pattern is a turquoise vessel with overglaze *famille rose*-detailed wisteria and roses. On one bowl with this seasonal motif on the exterior, the motif continues over the upper rim into the interior of the vessel (Figure 15).⁷⁶ The combination of flowers invites the use of vivid colors against the turquoise backing while also embedding additional symbolism. A rose, *yueji* 月季, is a blossom that blooms once a month. The consistent renewal of this species gives it the connotation of longevity. Therefore, the rose can also be known as *changchunhua* 長春花, the eternal flower of spring. Wisteria, *ziteng* 紫藤, is depicted with cascading purple blooms. The form of the draping flowers along with the color closely parallel the sashes and cords of official seals, directly connecting the imagery to the imperial court.⁷⁷ Within this floral design sits an *hwamie* bird, which is identifiable by the distinct white markings around its eyes. The bird supposedly sings a beautiful song that represents a longing for spring.⁷⁸ While the imagery itself clearly depicts a spring scene, the hidden symbols reinforce the season and

⁷⁶ George Weishaupt, *The Great Fortune: Chinese and Japanese Porcelain of the 19th and 20th Centuries and Their Forerunners; from the Weishaupt Collection* (Schefenacker: Weishaupt, 2002). This collection holds the majority of the porcelain known with this specific spring pattern.

⁷⁷ Terese Tse Bartholomew, *Hidden Meanings in Chinese Art* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 2006), 131.

⁷⁸ Longsdorf, "Dayazhai Ware: Porcelains of the Empress Dowager," 46.

reveal Cixi's innermost thoughts. In this instance, the symbols emphasize her connection to the imperial court along with her desire for an eternal rule.

The second spring pattern in the *dayazhai* features a yellow ground (Figure 16).⁷⁹ Once again, a floral motif emphasizes spring, with flowering peonies surrounded by small insects. Imagery is created using white enamel and a *grisaille* style. The *grisaille* technique allows for a striking similarity to traditional Chinese ink painting, drawing a direct comparison between the fields of painting and porcelain. The peony, known as *mudan* 牡丹, is thought to be the king of flowers. The flower is considered to be elegant and beautiful. Another term for the flower, *fugui hua* 富貴花, means “flower of wealth and rank.”⁸⁰ Overall, the peony suggests notions of love and feminine beauty. The auspicious connotations of the peony make it a popular motif within porcelain, and origins within the field of ceramics can be traced back to the Tang dynasty.⁸¹ The iconography associated with this flower made the peony an obvious choice for Cixi, because it united her patronage of painting with her achievements within the court.

Progressing to the next seasonal motif, Cixi designed a summer-themed porcelain. The porcelain is a bright white and is painted with images of lotus flowers surrounded by leaves (Figure 17). The flowers are composed in a *famille rose* color palette, which indicates the continued influence of this earlier Qing style into late dynastic porcelain. The heron (*lu* 鷺) within the design is traditionally considered a symbol of longevity.

⁷⁹ Suzanne G Valenstein, *A Handbook of Chinese Ceramics* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975), 283.

⁸⁰ Eva Ströber, *Symbols on Chinese Porcelain: 10,000 Times Happiness* (Keramiekmuseum Princessehof: Arnoldsche Art Publishers, 2011), 110.

⁸¹ Stacey Pierson, *Designs as Signs: Decoration and Chinese Ceramics* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies University of London, 2001), 29.

The use of a lotus flower (*lianhua* 蓮花) is customarily associated with the summer season, because that is the period in which it blooms. The flower holds a multitude of meanings, with the most prevalent being its association with Buddhism. The lotus itself grows directly from mud, but as it rises out of the murky water it blooms a pristine white or pink color. The unique way in which the flower grows is thought to correspond with the ideals of Buddhism and the ability everyone has to achieve spiritual enlightenment. The actual terms for lotus, *lian* and *he*, are multifaceted.⁸² They can mean love or harmony and, when analyzed together, can communicate the idea of continued harmony. The summer design reinforces the idea of Cixi's continued reign as the head of China and conveys the sentiment of a prosperous outcome to her rule.

The autumn motif returns to a turquoise background. The imagery representing the season is a white chrysanthemum accompanied by several leaves. Additional hibiscus flowers are visible throughout the autumnal design (Figure 18). This combination of flowers symbolizes the autumn, because these types of flowers all typically bloom in that season. Known as *juhua* 菊花, the chrysanthemum term is close to *jiu* 九, which means "nine." The number nine is thought to represent a long time, transforming the word into a wish for a long life.⁸³ Since the chrysanthemum blooms in the autumn while many other flowers are fading, the bloom earned recognition for being a flower that could flourish under adverse conditions. This notion is parallel to the idea of maintaining strong character. With respect to the hibiscus, symbolism is once again used to emphasize attributes that Cixi must have desired. The term for the flower, *fu*

⁸² Ströber, *Symbols on Chinese Porcelain: 10,000 Times Happiness*, 116.

⁸³ Ströber, *Symbols on Chinese Porcelain: 10,000 Times Happiness*, 124.

rong, is a homophone for riches and fame.⁸⁴ As in the other motifs, a bird is flying through the scene, and the *grisaille* technique is once again utilized, recreating the feel of a traditional Chinese ink painting. This technique was often highlighted with subtle inclusions of color similar to the application of color in traditional Chinese paintings. The autumn design is one of the rarest documented pieces of all the *dayazhai* designs, with only two known works with the original motif in existence. Of all the motifs, this autumn design was the only one that would go on to become an official imperial pattern during the reign of Guangxu. The existence of these later editions of the pattern has allowed scholars to study the uncommon porcelain design. Although these pieces were ultimately produced and created with the imperial Guangxu mark rather than the *dayazhai* mark, they still clearly represent the designs Cixi championed.

The final season, winter, is depicted with a deep purple ground. Standing against the purple is an array of polychrome purple, pink, white, and yellow poppies (*yingsu* 罌粟), along with hydrangeas in various stages of bloom (Figure 19).⁸⁵ These blossoms were associated with the winter season, because they bloomed at that time. Additionally, poppies could represent beauty and success. Given the era in which these winter *dayazhai* were produced, it is highly likely that the poppy was used as a means of taking control of China's opiate-related issues triggered by the Opium Wars. The incorporation of hydrangeas within the design strengthens the poppies' message. Hydrangeas are a symbol of love, gratitude, and overall enlightenment. In this instance, the inclusion

⁸⁴ Pierson, *Designs as Signs: Decoration and Chinese Ceramics*, 33.

⁸⁵ The "International Exhibition of Chinese Art" held at the British Museum in London from 1935-1936 featured committee selected works of art from China. After the exhibition these works would travel to National Palace Museum, Taipei. The selection of a porcelain with a *dayazhai* mark for the exhibition suggests that it was considered fine art at the time.

represents China's overcoming of the Opium Wars and possibly achieving a level of enlightenment. Among the many leaves that provide a lush background to this winter scene, a flying white bird moves through the space. This species is a magpie known as *xique* 喜鹊. Magpies have a long history of being utilized within the field of painting and are thought of as the birds of joy and happiness.⁸⁶ Ancient beliefs indicate that magpies foreshadow the arrival of something. In the context of the winter *dayazhai* flowers, it is possible that the magpies herald the arrival of the West in China.

These motifs could all draw some comparisons to the painted porcelain motifs of the earlier Qing dynasty. The continued use of traditional iconography on each vessel connects the earlier Qing styles to those used during Cixi's reign. However, despite having correlations to an earlier era, the *dayazhai* wares are completely modernized. The imagery takes on a new role because it was applicable to the events occurring at the time, transforming the motifs into contemporary interpretations of their former selves. The incorporation of new techniques like the *grisaille*, vivid enamel colors, and even the painterly approach to the enamel application elevate the vessels beyond the standards of the earlier Qing dynasty. While the colors found on the *dayazhai* wares were available during the 18th century, the pigments of the 19th century are brighter and more vivid.⁸⁷ The manner in which these wares are composed appears entirely unique within the scope of Qing-era porcelain, establishing them as a basis for characterization of late Qing porcelain.

⁸⁶ Pierson, *Designs as Signs: Decoration and Chinese Ceramics*, 50.

⁸⁷ Geng Baochang, *Ming Qing ciqi jianding*, 316.

Having evaluated all the seasonal *dayazhai* motifs, it is critical to consider that the design was placed on a variety of porcelain forms, including bowls, dishes, covered boxes, large bowls, jardinières, narcissus trays, etc. Of this list of known forms bearing the standard *dayazhai* seasonal motifs, the most rare form is the narcissus tray.⁸⁸ The form of this vessel was quite different, presenting viewers with a shallow open vessel resting on small feet. Typically, the pattern of a narcissus tray is always consistent, often accompanied by a bird or insect. However, the form of the tray itself, along with the color palette, is always subject to some slight variation. The narcissus was one of Cixi's favorite flowers and can frequently be seen on both the porcelain she commissioned and her personal garments. A *Narcissus bowl* with *dayazhai* marks from the National Palace Museum, Taipei, illustrates how varied this form could be within the scope of Cixi's porcelain (Figure 20). This example has a deep blue ground along with a delicate bird-and-flower motif spreading over a five-lobed form. The narcissus tray is one of the most copied wares from her reign. The style was widely copied during the 20th century, standing as a testament to the aesthetic style Cixi created during her reign. However, there is a drastic difference in the quality of the original narcissus tray commissioned by Cixi and the later copies that is visible even to an untrained viewer. Specifically, the major delineating factor between the narcissus trays produced in these two eras is the quality of the painting on the porcelain. The painting should be reminiscent of the images that were originally ordered and possess the same precisely painted imagery. Copies dating to the 20th century do not suggest the same painting technique as the

⁸⁸ The narcissus appears to be one of Cixi's favorite flowers, with images of it being found on other items belonging to the empress like embroidered clothing. This form is extremely rare with less than ten known examples presently known.

originals. This is perhaps yet another way that the high caliber of Cixi's patronage is evident, since her specifically commissioned works are of better artistic quality than any later attempt.

Along with these distinct seasonal motifs, wares with a *dayazhai* mark were also produced outside of these commissioned sets. They tend to maintain the theme of floral and bird motifs, although the compositions are not typically associated with a specific season. These motifs were utilized on all different types of vessels and were clearly not particular to a distinct porcelain form. These porcelain examples are often considered to be of inferior quality.⁸⁹ However, given the examples examined in this course of this study, it appears that the wares outside of the commissioned porcelain sets still maintain an imperial standard of quality. One ware Cixi ordered was part of the Palace Museum's 2013 exhibition "Treasures of the Palace Museum: Empress Dowager Cixi's Porcelain," which was intended to showcase wares that display the quality of the porcelain that was ordered by the empress dowager. One example is a pristine white *Covered bowl* with an intricate floral design created in a *grisaille* palette with gilding (Figure 21). The design centers on flowering bitter melon, a type of gourd (*gua* 瓜), that often represents fertility which is symbolized by numerous seeds. The interwoven vines and tendrils circling the body of the covered bowl also connote a meaning of continuity. Along with the bitter melon the covered bowl includes imagery of bamboo. Bamboo (*zhu* 竹) represents integrity due to its ability to bend easily without breaking. This bowl clearly illustrates a painterly approach, with gradient color shading the curvature of the vines, leaves and bitter melon. The striking contrast achieved by using the *grisaille* enamel connects to

⁸⁹ Longsdorf, "Dayazhai Ware: Porcelains of the Empress Dowager," 45.

traditions of Chinese ink painting, directly forming another connection between Cixi's painting and porcelain patronage. The covered bowl relates to the styles cultivated on the *dayazhai* wares, harnessing the same color palette as the second spring and autumn patterns. From this analysis, a well-defined style of Cixi's porcelain emerges revealing the repetitive use of floral iconography, artistic brushwork and color palettes. Examples like this one provide evidence that Cixi's patronage was highly artistic and, ultimately, consistently resulted in high-quality wares.

Another point worth noting within this evaluation of patronage is Cixi's consistent use of text within *dayazhai* porcelain. Traditional Chinese painting frequently includes calligraphy, which is considered as artistic an act as the art of painting itself. Cixi uniquely utilized specific inclusion of calligraphy in the majority of her commissioned works, choosing to feature a *dayazhai* mark purposely incorporated into the actual design of the vessel and prominently displayed on the porcelain beneath the upper rim. Typically, in examples of Cixi's porcelain, an oval mark appears next to this calligraphy with interwoven dragons circling the characters' *tian di yi jia chun* 天地一家春 (Heaven and earth united in spring). These visible marks on the porcelain act similarly to an artist's signature on a traditional Chinese painting, perhaps drawing a parallel with painting as an art form. Along with these two reign marks, yet another mark reading *yong qing chuang chun* 永慶長春 (Eternal prosperity and enduring spring) is found on the bottom base of the vessels.⁹⁰ All of these reign marks refer to Cixi as the patron because they refer to the *Changchungong*, or Palace of Enduring Spring, where

⁹⁰ For a list of reign marks see Appendix B.

the empress dowager resided for the majority of her regency over Emperor Tongzhi.⁹¹ The use of text to form reign marks reveals a clear connection to Cixi as the patron, utilizing an archaic form of connection between imagery and text.

Having evaluated the painted imagery of the *dayazhai* porcelain, it is evident that Cixi maintained a specific aesthetic throughout her porcelain patronage. The main influence of the porcelain designs was a result of China's expansion to the West. The culmination of the first Opium War (1839–1842), forced five ports in China to open to Britain for trade. Along with trade, these open ports rapidly carried foreign ideas to China. The modernization promoted by the Western world produced new, innovative ideas in China, but it unfortunately also led to several uprisings, as previously explained. By the 1860s these uprisings were predominately quelled, giving rise to what scholars have called the Qing Restoration. It is quite possible that historic events were the catalyst for Cixi commissioning some of the unique porcelain wares analyzed in this study. As a patron, Cixi was influenced by the modernization that was occurring during her reign. Ronald Longsdorf describes Cixi's aesthetic as “[l]ush floral designs in a fearless new color palette, beautifully-organized geometric patterns of colorful and gilded auspicious symbols, richly managed compositions (often expressive and always symbolic of either the changing of the seasons, her indisputable power or her wish for perpetual youth, fortune, prosperity, happiness, or long life) – these are the icons of her personal taste.” The distinct style that Cixi captured within her paintings is visible in her taste of porcelain and draws a clear parallel between the empress dowager as an artist and a patron.

⁹¹ Longsdorf, “The Tongzhi Imperial Wedding Porcelain,” 69.

Part of the survival of *dayazhai* porcelain is attributed to the interactions Cixi had within her political role and her obligations as a ruler to maintain diplomatic relationships. In this role, Cixi utilized imperial porcelain and paintings as gifts for foreign officials. Other porcelain wares traveled to the Western world as a direct result of the looting of the imperial palaces when Beijing was occupied in 1900. Another factor to consider regarding the spread of the porcelain Cixi commissioned is as a direct result of imperial transitions. As dynastic power began to weaken and ultimately fall, art objects were taken and sold. This is especially prevalent during the late Qing dynasty and the early republic, resulting in some of these wares traveling far from their official commission by Cixi. As the wares slowly dispersed, later versions of them were also produced, although they were arguably not of the same quality as the original works Cixi commissioned. The movement of the wares Cixi commissioned allowed the motifs she designed to be appropriated in later porcelain produced in China, establishing the works Cixi ordered as the foundation of many more modern porcelain styles.

Despite this evidence, scholars still believe that the *dayazhai* wares commissioned from Jingdezhen are meant to copy earlier Qianlong bowls. However, this study does not see enough evidence to support the idea of the *dayazhai* wares as reproductions of Qianlong vessels. It seems abundantly clear that the *dayazhai* wares were uniquely based on Cixi's aesthetic in painted design. Although thematic content or form can be revived, the actual style of each porcelain ware is solely associated with Cixi's influence and patronage. When analyzing all elements of Cixi's porcelain quality, these examples are unique to this era and Cixi's reign. Agreeing on this front, Longsdorf prompts porcelain enthusiasts to only compare the *dayazhai* porcelain to later produced porcelain works

rather than to the works of the earlier Qing dynasty. The wares Cixi commissioned are characterized by new patterns and should therefore be considered new rather than reproductions of earlier works. Although scholars typically associate Cixi's porcelain with inspiration from Qianlong or Kangxi wares, after evaluating the styles, it is evident that this is not the case. Despite the wares all appearing somewhat similar, it is far more likely that Cixi was simply inspired by her daily interactions rather than previous imperial porcelain styles. Her own painted works appear to share similar imagery to the porcelain she specifically commissioned, suggesting that she may have created her own imagery to place on the *dayazhai* wares rather than copying previous imperial designs.

1.6 Wedding Porcelain

Another major aspect of Cixi's patronage was the commissioning of wedding porcelain. Wedding porcelain was unique to the empress dowager because she served as regent for two emperors who married in what was regarded as a Grand Wedding. This ceremony was reserved for rulers who took an empress after their accession to the throne and therefore held the ceremony inside the Forbidden City. During the long reign of the Qing, only four emperors had such ceremonies: Shunzhi (r. 1644–1661), Kangxi (r. 1662–1722), Tongzhi (r. 1862–1874), and Guangxu (r. 1875–1908).⁹² This opportunity allowed Cixi the sole ability to commission two distinct orders of wedding porcelain during her time at court. Drawing on traditional Han and Manchu customs, the Grand Wedding was meant to bestow supreme power on the emperor. Despite this intention,

⁹² This topic was explored in the exhibition “Ceremony and Celebration: The Grand Weddings of the Qing Emperors” at the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, with artifacts on loan from the Palace Museum, Beijing. The exhibition ran from November 30, 2016 – February 27, 2017.

Cixi, who was not the emperor, commissioned the porcelain. She imbedded her own symbolism within the porcelain itself and was the imperial representative who oversaw these artistic endeavors. Cixi also played a major role in selecting whom the emperors married, even having disagreements with Tongzhi when he decided to marry a woman the empress dowager did not favor. Viewed together, these elements indicate that despite the Grand Wedding establishing the new emperor's power, the driving force behind these movements was the empress dowager, who created an underlying message of her complete control of the Forbidden City.

A close visual connection is apparent between the empress dowager's *dayazhai* wares and the wares commissioned for Tongzhi's wedding. The close stylistic similarities and the historic records indicate that the wares were produced around 1872. The similarity between these two styles creates a pattern of transition over time, with the empress dowager's aesthetic evolving over her time as a patron of porcelain. When Cixi's son, the Tongzhi Emperor, was married, she commissioned a total of 10 sets of wedding porcelain for the occasion from the imperial kilns at Jingdezhen. The records from the industrial production of the Imperial Household Department indicate that 24 forms were ordered in a variety of different patterns, comprising dining wares and utility wares totaling approximately 7,294 pieces.⁹³ As observed in the *dayazhai* wares, the Tongzhi wedding porcelain was decorated based on provided painted designs. In this regard, it appears that the design of the Tongzhi wedding porcelain followed a process

⁹³ Longsdorf, "The Tongzhi Imperial Wedding Porcelain," 70. To date ten of these porcelain patterns have been confirmed. Records indicate that a 10,072-piece wedding set was commissioned by the Imperial Household Department (*neiwufu*) for the Tongzhi Emperor. Currently 3,019 pieces from this set reside in the Palace Museum's collection. For further information, see Chen Shen and Wen-chien Cheng, "Making 'The Forbidden City': An Introduction to the Exhibition," *Orientalism* 45, no. 4 (2014): 71.

similar to that of the earlier *dayazhai* patterns. For example, the patterns seen on the Tongzhi wedding porcelain are traditionally Chinese in style, color, and the iconography of the motifs. The majority of these wares are on a yellow ground, which was an imperial color reserved solely for use by the emperor. Drawings of one of these vessels show a spontaneous motif with birds and flowers scattered throughout the ground color. One such bowl maintains a bright yellow ground that supports colorful flying butterflies (Figure 22). The butterflies frame the character *shuangxi* 雙喜, providing a wish of double happiness that is a fitting sentiment for wedding porcelain. The manner of the painting appears finely detailed and almost perfect despite the sense of spontaneity created by the butterflies. The artisan utilized almost all of the available space on this vessel, resulting in a filled design rather than a design emphasizing voids. Although the Tongzhi wedding porcelain is extremely finely painted as evident from the prior example, at times the porcelain appears rather sloppily potted with a thicker body and areas that reveal visible imperfections from the firing process. This poor construction may indicate that potters from an earlier period were still working at the kilns and were not knowledgeable in modernized pottery construction techniques. Potters working in the kilns may have served previous emperors. It is possible that portions of the workforce remained between reigns. This could explain the ability of the kiln workers to cultivate beautifully intricate painted techniques on each vessel.⁹⁴

Yet another example from the Tongzhi wedding commission resides at the Palace Museum (Figure 23).⁹⁵ The porcelain plate is completed in a *famille rose* palette and

⁹⁴ It is generally suggested that potters remained from the earlier reign of Emperor Daoguang (1821-1850).

⁹⁵ Chen Shen and Wen-chien Cheng, "Making 'The Forbidden City': An Introduction to the Exhibition," 71.

depicts children playing, known as the hundred boys (*baizi tu* 百子圖) pattern.⁹⁶ The theme was commonly associated with weddings as it conveyed the idea of many sons. The children are created using vivid colors that stand out against the white tone of the porcelain. The groupings of children featured on the porcelain participate in a variety of celebratory activities in a lush outdoor environment, conveying a sense of movement around the vessel. Boys hold brushes, peaches, and flowers that symbolize ideas such as longevity, immortality, and many wishes. The immense detail is further elevated to a luxurious imperial level with gold along the edge of the plate and surrounding the central motif. Similar to the yellow butterfly-detailed bowl, this example of Tongzhi porcelain is highly ornate, with details added to each child's clothing. The use of many children playing together is representative of the Chinese saying *yingxi tu* (嬰戲圖), meaning "boys at play." This imagery is often achieved by depicting numerous boys of varying ages playing in a garden setting. The concept of boys at play dates back to the Ming dynasty but was frequently utilized throughout the Qing period. The use of this imagery conveys a wish for many sons and the desire for those sons to become noble and honorable.⁹⁷ The selection of this imagery for a piece of wedding porcelain was a traditional choice for the empress dowager, indicating her desire for the rule to move forward successfully with new heirs to continue the dynasty.

⁹⁶ The hundred sons theme dates to the Zhou dynasty (1027-221 BCE). According to legend, King Wen of Zhou (周文王) had 99 sons and adopted one additional son to have a total of 100 sons. For further discussion, see Ann Elizabeth Barrott Wicks, ed. *Children in Chinese Art* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii), 2002.

⁹⁷ Bartholomew, *Hidden Meanings in Chinese Art*, 63.

Empress Dowager Cixi commissioned similar porcelain wares for the wedding of Emperor Guangxu in 1889. These wares have often been mistaken as a part of the Tongzhi wedding porcelain, but scholars have now concluded that they were produced at different times. Scholar H.A. van Oort has ultimately concluded that in 1888, approximately 868 pieces of imperial wedding porcelain of a fine quality were commissioned for the emperor.⁹⁸ While most of the wares within the two wedding sets look extremely similar, some of the wares do appear quite different and allow a careful viewer to find distinct characteristics that separate and delineate the two types. For example, unique to the Guangxu wedding porcelain is a pair of covered bowls in a vivid red ground with medallions containing dragons circling a *shuangxi* character (Figure 24). While the form and styles of the two wedding porcelains are somewhat different, the use of the same character and the recurrence of some floral elements connect both wedding wares. Unlike the earlier Tongzhi *Butterfly bowl*, this covered bowl with dragons appears quite rigidly structured. The spontaneity with which the butterflies were painted is not visible in this ware. Instead, a strong pattern is followed with virtually no sense of movement visible in the composition. This ware is known as the “Wedding Chamber” pattern, which ties directly to Cixi’s earlier porcelain designs. This piece was designed for use in a specific space in the Forbidden City just like Cixi’s *dayazhai* wares, which were designed expressly for use in a particular palatial structure.

The Guangxu wedding porcelain clearly contains better-formed pieces in comparison to the earlier Tongzhi wedding porcelain, which, in certain places, appear thick and heavy. However, the advances in technology only aided in the appearance of

⁹⁸ H.A. van Oort, *Chinese Porcelain of the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Netherlands: Uitgeversmaatschappij de Tijdstroom, 1977), 56.

the vessels' forms: the painting on the Guangxu porcelain is clearly of a lower quality than the prior Tongzhi porcelain, with lines appearing less painterly and showing less technical skill in achieving a convincing design. This speaks to the level of mechanical industrialization that was occurring, which perhaps made it rather superfluous to maintain high skill levels in painting at the kilns. Another factor that has yet to be considered in regard to the lower standard of porcelain during the production of the Guangxu wedding porcelain is the production of wares purely for diplomatic purposes. Documentation reveals that Cixi ordered nearly 1,414 cups, dishes, vases, and plates to be used as diplomatic gifts in 1891 to honor the Guangxu Emperor's birthday.⁹⁹ While the standards for imperial porcelain were exceptionally high, the criteria for exports and diplomatic gifts were not as rigid. As an involved patron, Cixi could have commissioned these wares to be used as gifts rather than ordering them to meet imperial regulations.

After viewing both wedding sets, it is evident that the porcelain commissioned for the Guangxu wedding has slightly differing patterns than the Tongzhi porcelain. However, the symbolism of happiness, love, and a long life within the motifs remains consistent, emphasizing the same patronage and influence of Cixi behind both sets. Despite many similarities between the two sets of wedding porcelain, there are also stark contrasts between them. One major contrast to the earlier Tongzhi wedding porcelain is the manner in which the motifs have been painted. The Guangxu wedding porcelain appears heavily structured, lacking the freedom of the designs found on the Tongzhi porcelain. It seems that even though Cixi was the patron for both wedding sets, they were individualized, and based on the images this study has analyzed, it is possible that

⁹⁹ Warner, *Dragon Empress: The Life and Times of Tz'u-Hsi Empress Dowager of China 1835-1908*, 172.

Cixi provided less artistic contribution to the later Guangxu porcelain set than its earlier counterpart. The Tongzhi and Guangxu wedding porcelain demonstrates a delicate painterly style connecting strongly to the brushwork exemplified in Cixi's personal paintings. The use of clear lines, bright colors, and clear symbolism is visible within the artwork surrounding Cixi. The association to tradition is key within the wedding porcelain; however, it is apparent that despite a strong connection to ancient motifs, Cixi applied them to her current status, making them representative of her hold over the court. Despite the rule of a new emperor and empress, Cixi clearly had control of both patronage and power.

1.7 Birthday Porcelain

Historically, Qing rulers held major birthday celebrations including Kangxi's 60th birthday in 1713, Qianlong's 80th birthday in 1790, and Empress Chongqing's 60th and 80th birthdays.¹⁰⁰ Cixi was no exception to this standard, planning large-scale birthdays for both her 50th and 60th birthdays in 1884, and 1894, respectively. Unlike earlier rulers' celebrations that occurred during times of widespread peace and prosperity, Cixi's birthdays aligned with difficult times for China. Ultimately, the money spent on these lavish celebrations was needed elsewhere. Despite these drawbacks, Cixi pushed forward with the celebrations, perhaps in a desire to emulate the success of former rulers and connect China to an earlier time of peace. Few other female patrons existed in the history of imperial China but several female figures were celebrated while residing within the Forbidden City. Cixi would connect to these previous festivities, especially the birthday

¹⁰⁰ Hong-qi, *Empress Dowager Cixi: Her Art of Living*, 103. Empress Dowager Chongqing was the mother of Qianlong and was a major supporter of the Emperor throughout her lifetime.

celebrations associated with the Empress Dowager Chongqing, cultivating another connection to the past glory of the Qing dynasty.

During the planning of her 60th birthday, Cixi requested that gifts should be given to her in multiples of nine. The term *jiu* meaning nine is a homonym for longevity indicating a wish for Cixi to have a long life. The party was meant to generate rare gifts and to be filled with symbols of auspiciousness. This effect required the building of numerous structures including ceremonial gateways, devotional altars, and pavilions. Just as Cixi had commissioned paintings earlier in her life to establish her claim to China, she harnessed her birthday as a means to further emphasize her power and control. A handscroll from the Palace Museum, Beijing, depicts the anticipated processional route that showcases the decorations throughout city (Figure 25).¹⁰¹ The street has several identifiable structures including the Xihua Gate 西華門 (*xihua men*) and the Xizhi Gate 西直門 (*xizhi men*), both detailed by colorful banners flying in the wind. The road passing through the gates to the palace was designed to hold destinations along the route, including performers and devotional areas. The painting was completed in 1893 prior to the actual celebration, but the documentary value of the imagery alludes to the immense grandeur associated with Cixi.

The cost of the overall birthday celebration to China was approximately 2,190,000 taels of silver.¹⁰² The sum was so large that Cixi had to appropriate the funds for the birthday celebration from the Chinese navy, a decision that left China susceptible

¹⁰¹ Hong-qi, 104.

¹⁰² Hong-qi, 103.

to invasion in the future.¹⁰³ Records indicate that of the total spent on the party, over 121,000 taels of silver were spent solely on porcelain.¹⁰⁴ While some of the porcelain commissioned for Cixi's birthday resembled the previously analyzed *dayazhai* patterns, other pieces were unique compositions for the celebration. A *Large bowl inscribed with wanshou wujiang* 萬壽無疆 (may you have boundless longevity) was created for Cixi's 60th birthday (Figure 26). The porcelain bowl has a yellow ground with four medallions outlined in a *lingzhi* motif. The interior of each medallion presents the characters for long life. Numerous auspicious emblems fill the exterior and interior of the bowl conveying additional birthday wishes. Imagery of peaches growing on branches represents the peaches of immortality and flying bats symbolize blessings. The inclusion of flowers, butterflies, and streamers fill the surface of the vessel establishing an ornate motif. Unlike her *dayazhai* style wares, the birthday porcelain appears far more traditional especially the reliance on characters to distinctly convey meaning. However, it is clear that the motifs Cixi commissioned were styles that were of particular interest to her with the repeated use of peaches, flowers, and butterflies found on both the birthday porcelain and within *dayazhai* styles. Through the consistent use of these motifs, Cixi managed to dominate production, influencing it to adhere to her standards of porcelain beauty alone generating a distinct aesthetic.

After evaluating three distinct commissions made by Cixi, several elements of late Qing porcelain can be established. From the surviving examples, the forms that appear to

¹⁰³ Along with appropriation from the Chinese navy Cixi would also take money from funds to build roads. Historically, the lack of funding to the navy would result in China being unable to defend themselves against Japan in 1894.

¹⁰⁴ Rosemary E Scott, *For the Imperial Court: Qing Porcelain from the Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art* (London: Sun Tree Publishing, 1997), 24.

be the most prevalent are the vase, bowl, and cup. These forms are generic and are often altered in some manner. Many include sculptural handles, finials, and covers that when evaluated reveal vaguely European styles. Patterns appear to be repetitive and reused, often on a variety of forms, creating codified themes. The popular motifs that Cixi preferred are bird-and-flower designs, figural representations, and animal depictions. Almost all of Cixi's porcelain commissions have auspicious meanings that connected her patronage to her control of China. The porcelain is predominately highly ornate with glazes in vibrant colors, often utilizing a *famille rose* coloring. The choice to utilize enamels and painterly techniques in this manner once again connects Cixi to Western influence and the overall modernization of the porcelain industry. Porcelain imagery leaned heavily on her painting styles, creating a fluid movement between painting and porcelain during the late Qing dynasty. These carefully cultivated styles helped the field of porcelain to progress rather than only look toward past styles. While some examples may fall outside of this scope, this categorization applies to the majority of the porcelain commissioned by Cixi alone.

1.8 Conclusion

Despite being viewed in a variety of lights, Cixi undoubtedly changed the direction of Chinese porcelain during the 20th century. The duality of Cixi's life resulted in her maintaining an air of historic mystery. Regardless of the side of history on which one places Cixi, it is clear that she was the most powerful woman in China during the later half of the 19th century and therefore became the largest single influence within the evolution of late dynastic porcelain. Overall, Empress Dowager Cixi thrived as a patron

of porcelain. Although some of her works may have created revivals of earlier styles, it is evident that her personality was present in many of the wares she commissioned. Unlike her male predecessors, Cixi laid new groundwork for porcelain, breaking with tradition and putting her own personal designs on porcelain. Any discussion of patronage revolves around the concept of how a patron affected the nature of the artwork itself. In the case of the empress dowager, the evolution of porcelain styles indicates that as a patron, she directly changed the trajectory of porcelain. Based on visual analysis, it seems abundantly clear that Cixi incorporated the traditional iconography of the past but ultimately pushed porcelain imagery further than it had progressed under the direction of prior emperors. This is evident in the unique composition of the motifs, which arrange the traditional elements according to Cixi's own style while also emphasizing unique colors and brush techniques. The visual changes apparent in her porcelain mimic those found in her style of painting, conclusively identifying favorable aesthetics of the late Qing period. The role of patron casts a new light on Cixi, because it shows one of the few areas of her life that fully embraced contact with the Western world.¹⁰⁵ The quantities of porcelain and paintings utilized as gifts served as a representation of China's emerging global identity in the late Qing dynasty. Cixi harnessed art to convey her appreciation for modernization and Westernization while simultaneously paying homage to more traditional Chinese values.

China's last dynasty was characterized by major changes in porcelain as a direct result of the last key imperial patron, Cixi. Many of these changes were the direct result

¹⁰⁵ During her reign, Cixi presented numerous gifts to individuals from the West. Documented gifts were received by Queen Victoria (r.1837-1901) from the empress dowager in 1897 for her Diamond Jubilee, showing a clear relationship between Cixi and the Western world prior to the Boxer Rebellion. Several gifts dating to the Diamond Jubilee are analyzed in section 3.7.

of key factors occurring at the imperial court, including her invitation to women artists, her desire to incorporate aspects of Western influence and the ability to embrace modern aesthetics. Surviving porcelain visually reveals the continuation of trends like the *famille rose* palette in vivid modern pigments. Along with this, traditional iconography, especially of birds and flowers, connects late Qing painting to porcelain. The emerging styles are unique to the era cultivating bright colors, densely painted flower patterns, and delicate brushwork. By incorporating her own ideas and even her own paintings, Cixi was able to breath originality into Chinese porcelain, ultimately prompting the modernization of porcelain. As a patron, the empress dowager unified the trends of the 19th through 20th centuries by combining the ideals associated with the literati class, the painting academies, and emerging commercial and popular culture. While ruling China was restricted due to established traditions, the patronage of porcelain was unobstructed, allowing Cixi's artistic influence to flourish. Cixi's innovative attitude toward porcelain shaped the trajectory of material culture from the late 19th century into the early republic. When Cixi died in 1908, the porcelain industry lost one of its major artistic catalysts and, arguably, one of the most critical patrons of the late Qing dynasty.

Chapter 2 – Yuan Shikai: The Last Imperial Patron

2.1 The Last Qing Emperor

When close to her death, Cixi selected Aisin-Gioro Puyi 愛新覺羅溥儀 to become the next emperor, claiming that he was the adopted heir of the former Guangxu Emperor.¹⁰⁶ He ascended the throne at the age of three, becoming the Xuantong Emperor in 1908.¹⁰⁷ Puyi required a regent to oversee his imperial authority. While gaining imperial control as regent was a successful tactic during the life of Empress Dowager Cixi, it was not as effective under the leadership of Empress Dowager Longyu.¹⁰⁸ While many reasons could account for the decline, it is worth noting that very little patronage of the arts occurred during the reign of Puyi. Porcelain dating to this era is rare, creating a sharp contrast to the grander levels of patronage achieved by Cixi during her rule. The lack of art production contributed to the overall decline of Qing imperial authority. Ultimately, imperial power was not widely supported, and many individuals supported the idea of a republic rather than a monarchy.

By October 10, 1911, revolution raged in China. The turbulent times forced Puyi to abdicate his throne on February 12, 1912. This drastic political decision marked the end of China's 3,000-year hereditary monarchy, moving China into what is considered the modern era. According to "The Articles of Favorable Treatment for the Members of the Qing Court," the former emperor was allowed to continue residing in the back

¹⁰⁶ Due to the Xuantong Emperor's short rule and eventual abdication he is often referred by scholars by his given name, Aisin-Gioro Puyi, rather than his reign name.

¹⁰⁷ Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi and William John Francis Jenner, *From Emperor to Citizen: The Autobiography of Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1989), 31.

¹⁰⁸ Puyi's father Zai Feng (Prince Chun) was also given the title of Regent Supervisor of the State and was allowed to accompany his son to the Forbidden City. Puyi was not allowed to see his mother for the first seven years he resided within the Forbidden City.

quarters of the Forbidden City. He was also permitted to retain the title “Emperor of the Great Qing.”¹⁰⁹

While Puyi attempted to reestablish himself outside of the role of emperor, a new republican regime arose and took control of China. Under the new republic, Yuan Shikai was made president on March 12, 1912. Yuan was a former official and military leader. His involvement with the former Qing government made him an excellent candidate to assume the political responsibilities of the new republic. While Yuan and the republic assumed power, Puyi attempted to regain his control of China. Numerous attempts were made on behalf of the former emperor, with the first occurring on July 1, 1917, led by Zhang Xun 張勳. Leading troops from the north, Zhang Xun tried to reinstate Puyi; however, the attack lasted only 12 days and resulted in defeat.¹¹⁰ By 1924, Puyi was removed from the Forbidden City and his remaining title was officially removed. With the final remnants of his title stripped, the last emperor of the Qing dynasty lost the little control he had maintained following his abdication.¹¹¹ While Puyi strove to regain power within China, he did not attempt to demonstrate power by taking control of the arts.

During the course of the present research, the only porcelain examples dating to the brief reign of Xuantong that were examined were part of the Victoria and Albert

¹⁰⁹ Pu Yi and Jenner, *From Emperor to Citizen: The Autobiography of Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi*, 37.

¹¹⁰ Yang Xin and Zhu Chengru, *Secret World of the Forbidden City: Splendors from China's Imperial Palace* (Beijing: The Bowers Museum of Cultural Art and The Palace Museum, 1999), 100.

¹¹¹ Puyi attempted to regain power throughout his life; however, these attempts were all unsuccessful. In 1925, he aligned himself with the Japanese remaining under their protection for the next seven years. When Japan established a puppet government in Manchuria, Puyi became emperor of the region. By 1945, Japan had surrendered to China which resulted in Puyi being arrested by the Soviet Red Army for nearly five years. Puyi would eventually be given amnesty. Puyi lived the remainder of his life in relative obscurity, finally dying in Beijing on October 17, 1967. For more on Puyi see Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi and William John Francis Jenner, *From Emperor to Citizen: The Autobiography of Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1989).

Museum's collection. One dish utilized a traditional imperial design of incised dragons chasing a pearl among clouds (Figure 27). The ground of the dish is a vivid yellow with one dragon glazed in brown and the other in green. The dragons are not crisply detailed and appear blurred and hastily designed, showing very little connection to the detail exhibited in prior porcelain commissions by the imperial court. Although the quality of the dish is not as high as the porcelain quality of previous reigns, the iconography is based in tradition. Historically, the dragon is one of the oldest symbols found in Chinese mythology.¹¹² The symbol became an emblem of power strongly connected to the emperor's imperial authority. The emperor associated with this symbol on this particular dish is Xuantong. The mark on the base of the dish dates to the emperor's short reign and reads *Da qing Xuantong nian zhi* (Made in the Xuantong reign of the great Qing dynasty). This inscription allows for a date of approximately 1909 to 1911. Visually, the dish is reminiscent of earlier imperial porcelain designs, revealing a limited amount of influence from Xuantong or his regents. Xuantong's young age prevented him from having the opportunity to act as a patron. This Xuantong dish indicates that traditional imperial porcelain was commissioned during his reign; although, it lacks the artistry found within the porcelain patronized prior to his rule. From this example, it appears that the imperial commissions of porcelain during Xuantong's reign were not of the same quality as those of former rulers.

The second example explored within the Victoria and Albert collection that dates to the reign of Xuantong is a small bowl with underglaze blue floral designs (Figure 28). Unlike the previous example, this blue-and-white bowl does not exhibit a distinct

¹¹² Stacey Pierson, *Designs as Signs: Decoration and Chinese Ceramics* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies University of London, 2001), 67.

imperial motif. The blue underglaze flowers form a border along the exterior below a double band detail. Each flower is rather angular and does not demonstrate any of the soft, graceful touches associated with Cixi's floral *dayazhai* wares. This vessel also has a mark on the base that dates to Xuantong, specifically the year 1910. Along with this information, the mark also reads *Yichun tang zhi* 宜春堂製 (Made for the hall of appropriate spring). This information references the name of a specific studio belonging to Liu Shiheng 刘世珩 (1875–1937).¹¹³ While this mark indicates that Liu Shiheng rather than Xuantong himself commissioned the dish, this study notes stylistic elements that had declined by analyzing this dish. The dish itself is thickly potted, lacking the refinement found in earlier pieces patronized by Cixi. Along with this factor, the underglaze is not applied in a painterly manner, resulting in areas becoming blurred during the firing process. Overall, the dish emphasizes the general decline that most scholars note during the late Qing reign.

Academic categorizations of the reign of Xuantong being a point of porcelain decline are corroborated by this study. It is clear from these pieces of porcelain that officials of this reign spent very little time producing vessels, resulting in a very small grouping of known objects. Along with the limited quantity, the known porcelain displays a lack of the artistry, skilled potting, and refinement associated with imperial porcelain. However, scholars have not considered alternative patrons of the arts that existed contemporaneously with Puyi. This study proposes that imperial-caliber

¹¹³ Ming Wilson, *Rare Marks on Chinese Ceramics* (London: Percival David Foundation, 1998), 150. Liu Shiheng, also known as Juqing, was from Anhui. Records indicate he widely collected antiques. He placed two orders for porcelain during the late Qing, one in 1909 and the other in 1910. These orders indicate that although the imperial Qing was falling, Liu was not experiencing severe financial ramifications as a result of the political upheaval.

porcelain was still created during this era, though not by the Xuanton Emperor. Porcelain thrived at a high artistic quality as a result of the leaders of the early republic. These individuals emulated the established patronage supported by individuals like Empress Dowager Cixi to create high-quality porcelain that symbolized their power over China and thus utilize artistic patronage as a means of political authority. These individuals bridge the successful porcelain production of Cixi's reign and the wares produced in the republic, thus establishing a continuation, rather than a decline, of porcelain patronage.

2.2 Yuan Shikai

The individual who best supports the hypothesis that imperial-caliber porcelain was created after Puyi's abdication is Yuan Shikai. Born on September 16, 1859, Yuan was the fourth of six sons. He was brought up studying classical scholarship in order to pass the civil service examinations.¹¹⁴ However, as a young man, Yuan failed the provincial exams on multiple occasions.¹¹⁵ Left with few options, he purchased a title and joined the army in 1880.¹¹⁶ Despite early indications that Yuan was not an astute student, he learned quickly within the army, rising in both rank and status throughout his career. He traveled to Korea in 1882 and was appointed the Chinese emperor's resident,

¹¹⁴ Stephen R. MacKinnon, *Power and Politics in Late Imperial China: Yüan Shih-kai in Beijing and Tianjin, 1901-1908*, Center for Chinese Studies, UC Berkeley, No 24 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 14.

¹¹⁵ Some scholars claim these failures, occurring in 1876 and 1879, would be the reason that Yuan would later support the removal of China's examination system.

¹¹⁶ Howard Boorman, Joseph K. H. Cheng, and Richard Howard, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 78-89.

holding the position for more than 10 years.¹¹⁷ Upon returning to China, Yuan was tasked with training the Chinese army following the military defeat in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). He trained the army using Western military styles, showing preference for training methods found in Germany. This reveals a distinct inclination for Westernization and modernization prior to Yuan even holding political power within imperial China.

It is during this time in his life that Yuan interacted the most with the previously explored patron Empress Dowager Cixi. Yuan aided Cixi during the aftermath following the Hundred Days Reform in 1898, resulting in the empress dowager rewarding him. Cixi held Yuan in high esteem for the remainder of her life, ensuring that he remained a senior government official.¹¹⁸ The relationship between Yuan and Cixi is difficult to trace. They did interact beyond 1898, since there is evidence that Yuan celebrated the empress dowager's 66th birthday by presenting her with a car in 1901.¹¹⁹ After her death in 1908, Yuan retired from political life. Many scholars believe this retirement was directly tied to his aiding the empress dowager in the Hundred Days Reform and was most likely forced by those in power. In 1911, the Wuchang Uprising marked the onset of revolutionary activities. The Republic of China was founded on October 10, 1911 led

¹¹⁷ H.A. Van Oort, *The Porcelain of Hung-Hsien: A Study of the Socio-Cultural Background and Some Characteristics of the Porcelain Produced at Chingtechen During the Imperial Reign of Yüan Shih-K'ai* (Netherlands: Uitgeversmaatschappij de Tijdstroom, 1970), 46.

¹¹⁸ MacKinnon, *Power and Politics in Late Imperial China: Yuan Shi-Kai in Beijing and Tianjin, 1901-1908*, 21.

¹¹⁹ "Empress Dowager Cixi: Selections from the Summer Palace," exhibition November 12, 2017-March 11, 2018, Bowers Museum, Santa Ana, California. The exhibition displayed the car that was supposedly presented to the Empress Dowager by Yuan, along with a variety of other presents given in celebration of her birthday.

by Western-educated individuals like Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙, who served as the first provisional president.¹²⁰

After being forced from power, Yuan was invited back to help restore order to the revolutionary chaos. Yuan pushed for the abdication of Puyi, who signed paperwork agreeing to terms in 1912, establishing the Republic of China. Yuan was made the second provisional president of the new republic and moved into the former imperial palaces of the Forbidden City.¹²¹ At the time, Yuan was thought to appeal to both traditional individuals and those with revolutionary ideas. Ultimately, Yuan was not able to maintain a high level of support and lost the election in 1913. It is at this point that Yuan harnessed the power of his army to force his opposition, Sun Yat-sen, out of China and through serious manipulation tactics forced the Chinese Congress to establish him as president of China for life beginning in 1914.¹²² Despite the progressive nature that established the republic, Yuan reverted back to the monarchic-style ruling traditions of China and declared himself emperor on December 12, 1915.¹²³ The announcement was made in Yuan's hall *Jurentang* (Hall of Dwelling in Benevolence), which became the inspiration behind one of his porcelain reign marks.¹²⁴ The choice to become emperor of China indicates the traditionalist values that Yuan held. Despite being a part of the ideals

¹²⁰ Howard Boorman, Joseph K. H. Cheng, and Richard Howard, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China*, 170-189.

¹²¹ MacKinnon, *Power and Politics in Late Imperial China: Yuan Shi-Kai in Beijing and Tianjin, 1901-1908*, 211.

¹²² Van Oort, *The Porcelain of Hung-Hsien: A Study of the Socio-Cultural Background and Some Characteristics of the Porcelain Produced at Chingtechen During the Imperial Reign of Yüan Shih-K'ai*, 48-49. Yuan Shikai was suspected of acquiring loans from foreign powers and participating in political murders. He also utilized the military to his advantage, occupying Nanking.

¹²³ Van Oort, 51.

¹²⁴ Wilson, *Rare Marks on Chinese Ceramics*, 44.

of the new republic, Yuan never lost his personal beliefs, which were strongly connected to traditional Chinese values. It seems possible that these core principles contributed to Yuan's attempt to establish a new monarchy.

When Yuan became the new emperor, he established his reign as Hongxian 洪憲, meaning "the great constitutional era."¹²⁵ During his time as emperor, Yuan attempted to reinstate many of the traditions associated with imperial power. He ordered imperial porcelain to be created at the imperial kilns of Jingdezhen bearing his reign mark, which is expanded upon in later sections. Along with this, Yuan performed prayer ceremonies at the Temple of Heaven. Prayer rituals at this imperial site connected the emperor directly to heaven, which was thought to be the source of all imperial powers.¹²⁶ Many of the rites honored Confucius, indicating Yuan's desire to resurrect Confucian ideologies and connect more strongly to former traditions.¹²⁷ He also took up residence within the Forbidden City, which had historically served as China's imperial palace. Despite these efforts to emulate the successes of previous Qing emperors, Yuan began to slowly lose supporters. Major aspects of Yuan's fall from power include the historic events occurring around China. During his brief reign, Yuan lost the support of his main supporters, namely the military and conservatives. The mounting opposition to Yuan was backed by Japan, and the Western supporters Yuan once had were now actively involved in World War I. The decline in both his political support and his health eventually led to

¹²⁵ Rose Kerr, *Chinese Ceramics Porcelain of the Qing Dynasty 1644-1911* (London: The Victoria & Albert Museum, 1998), 127.

¹²⁶ The Temple of Heaven is most widely known for being a site utilized by the rulers of the Ming and Qing dynasties.

¹²⁷ Gunhild Avitabile, *From the Dragon's Treasure: Chinese Porcelain from the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries in the Weishaupt Collection* (London: Bamboo Publishing, 1987), 121.

the end of the Hongxian reign a mere 82 days after it began in March of 1916.¹²⁸ After losing the title of emperor, Yuan attempted to revert back to being president. Despite these efforts, records indicate that Yuan did not have the people's support. With the death of Yuan on June 6, 1916, the last imperial reign in China ended.

Although Yuan did technically take the title of emperor, scholars do not credit him as a part of the acknowledged Chinese monarchy. Therefore, Yuan is frequently not included in the art historical scholarship of either late dynastic porcelain or early republic porcelain.

2.3 Creation of Hongxian

The charged political climate had a direct effect on the porcelain being produced, because the individuals who acted as patrons of the arts began to transition from imperial court figures to the heads of the newly formed Chinese republic. This characterization of the era has led the majority of scholars to disregard late Qing and early republic porcelain, and overall it is considered a period of supposed deterioration in porcelain quality and production. However, analysis of the patronage occurring during the late Qing period reveals that the trends established in late dynastic porcelain patronage progressed further. The continuity in the styles of porcelain created in China during this transitional period indicates that porcelain traditions not only continued during this era, but they also experienced further successful development.

Regarding the era in which the Hongxian porcelain was produced, even if a broader view is applied to consider all early republic wares, a problem becomes apparent.

¹²⁸ Richard T. Phillips, *China Since 1911* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1996), 24.

Many collectors and institutions do not possess porcelain dating to this era. This study concludes that several factors have contributed to this hole within Chinese porcelain collections worldwide. The lack of holdings directly correlates to a much smaller number of vessels being produced during this time period. Additionally, many individuals do not consider this era's porcelain of particular interest, because it is widely discredited as poor imitations of earlier dynastic wares. For these reasons, few examples have been published, making it challenging to understand the aesthetics, styles, and iconography that became popular as a result of Yuan's patronage. This study identifies several collections that hold numerous examples dating to the Hongxian era and the early republic. Each example dates accurately to the era with dates confirmed by museum acquisition years, maintaining a clear provenance. These qualifications enable this study to examine a variety of vessels that can be attributed to China's last imperial-level patron. This chapter investigates an array of collections containing Hongxian-era porcelain, while the final chapter investigates the strongest documented collection of late dynastic through early republic porcelain.

Looking specifically at Yuan as a patron, it is evident that as a ruler he attempted to reconnect to traditional Chinese culture. This connection most likely served as an attempt to validate his new imperial regime. One way in which he attempted this legitimization of his reign was to carry on some of the patronage of porcelain that Empress Dowager Cixi cultivated just a few years earlier. Shortly after taking the title of emperor, production of porcelain returned to the imperial kilns at Jingdezhen, specifically the 22 kiln sites that survived the fall of the Qing dynasty.¹²⁹ These new imperial wares

¹²⁹ Zhiyan Li and Wen Cheng, *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain: Traditional Chinese Arts and Culture* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1984), 91.

were produced and commissioned under the imperial direction of Guo Baochang 郭葆昌 (1879–1942), whom Yuan named the appointed official of Jiangxi Province, the location of the Jingdezhen kiln site.¹³⁰ Originally, Guo was told to create porcelain known as *ru* wares.¹³¹ The *ru* style dates back to the Song dynasty (960–1279) and exhibits a distinct light blue to celadon porcelain. The vessels were originally commissioned by Emperor Huizong 宋徽宗 (r.1101-1125) during the Northern Song exclusively for use within the imperial court. The *ru* ware was widely admired and collected within China; however, it was difficult to produce. Along with the challenge of creating *ru* ware, the style itself was considered inauspicious.¹³² Since *ru* ware was produced around the time of the fall of the Northern Song dynasty, it created a direct connection to an unsuccessful reign. The connotation meant the *ru* ware was found to be inappropriate for commemorating a new dynasty.

Instead, Hongxian porcelain looked toward the achievements of enameled wares of the 18th century, particularly the style of wares produced under Yongzheng and Qianlong. By selecting this era, the Hongxian porcelain industry utilized the “peak” period of Chinese porcelain as inspiration for the wares it produced. Viewing rulers like Qianlong as a source of inspiration for the aesthetics, styles, and imagery created a striking similarity to the mindset exhibited by the empress dowager. Cixi connected her porcelain patronage to the patronage exhibited by Qianlong, cultivating a connection between her reign and Qianlong’s successful rule. By producing porcelain that emulated

¹³⁰ Alfreda Murck, “Décor on Republican Era Teawares,” in *The Scholar’s Mind: Essays in Honor of Frederick W. Mote* (Chinese University Press, 2009), 240.

¹³¹ Kerr, *Chinese Ceramics Porcelain of the Qing Dynasty 1644-1911*, 129.

¹³² Simon Kwan, “Hongxian Porcelain and the Role of Wang Xiaotang,” *Orientalism* 22, no. 10 (1991): 65.

works of the 18th century, Yuan created a connection to both the wares produced during that peak era of porcelain production and the wares that were just fashioned in the reign of Cixi. Commissioned porcelain vessels imitated earlier styles in an attempt to give Yuan's reign legitimacy while paying homage to the iconography and traditional styles of the past. When evaluating the wares made during this era, the repetition of patterns and forms highlights these incorporations. As during Cixi's reign, the porcelain produced during the Hongxian reign constitutes a wide variety, providing evidence of both styles that were associated with traditional imperial patronage and styles that were personal selections based on the ruler's taste. By recreating porcelain inspired by an era characterized by prosperity and success, Yuan visually symbolized his own power over China.

According to the *Jingdezhen Taoci Shigao* 景德鎮陶瓷史稿 (A Draft History of the Ceramics of Jingdezhen), 40,000 pieces of porcelain were ordered to commemorate the new Hongxian emperor. The large order of porcelain followed the traditions of the previous Qing emperors, establishing Yuan as a major porcelain patron. The large order cost nearly 1.4 million yuan and was meant to be utilized as decorations for the imperial palace in celebration of the Hongxian rule.¹³³ The instructions for the wares were simple: they were to be made of a pure white paste that incorporated quiet designs painted with a graceful hand. These basic instructions are actually quite telling, demanding that the wares produced under Yuan's patronage should adhere to the high standards previously associated with imperial commissions. These imperial standards emphasized the quality

¹³³ Jiangxi Light Industry Department, Ceramics Institute, *Jingdezhen Taoci Shigao* 景德鎮陶瓷史稿 (Draft History of Jingdezhen) (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1959): 306.

of the clay itself, settling for only the purest white porcelain in order to achieve an imperial aesthetic. The desire for painted wares indicates that the order was to be painted by artists rather than being produced in a mass quantity with poor craftsmanship. Only the clay and workforce originated within Jingdezhen, while the enamel colors were taken from palace storage.¹³⁴ These specifications indicate the imperial quality of the enamel used during the production process. The *Jingdezhen Taoci Shigao* indicates that within the commission, approximately 100 pieces of porcelain were to be completed in a *falang* enamel style.¹³⁵ The *falang* enamel palette relied on foreign colors, connecting stylistically to the wares produced during the early Qing dynasty. Guo adhered to these high standards and gathered the most skilled potters along with painters who were experienced in porcelain decoration.¹³⁶ This directly connects to the artistry developed during the Qing dynasty, in which artists within the palace actually completed the painting on imperial porcelain.

2.4 Connecting to Past Patrons

While scholars continually discredit Yuan as an inactive patron, close inspection reveals that Yuan was invested in the arts of China. During his presidential rule, Yuan established an art museum within the Forbidden City. The museum was housed in the military officials' Hall of Audience and was open to the public.¹³⁷ The objects were

¹³⁴ Zhao Ruzhen, *Guwan zhinan* (A Guide to Antiques), 1942, 9.

¹³⁵ According to the *Jingdezhen taoqi shigao*, the *falang* porcelain were the only documented wares to be completed. The records indicate that Guo Baochang oversaw their production in 1915. This study was unable to find any documentation of these porcelain vessels within known collections.

¹³⁶ Rose Kerr, *Chinese Ceramics Porcelain of the Qing Dynasty 1644-1911*, 127.

¹³⁷ Juliet Bredon, *Peking* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, Ltd., 1922), 107.

drawn directly from the former imperial collection. However, after Yuan's reign, the location of these objects is difficult to trace.¹³⁸ These actions provide evidence that Yuan actively participated in the arts, specifically imperial porcelain. The act of inviting the public into the Forbidden City to view porcelain marks a major shift in modernization within China. The desire to modernize China traces back to the reign of Cixi, during which porcelain was utilized as a means of artistically incorporating modernization and Westernization. These actions show that Yuan strove to follow in the footsteps of Empress Dowager Cixi as a patron of the arts. Ultimately, the action of patronage appears to have been a means for Yuan to strengthen his authority over China.

One clear parallel between the patronage of Cixi and Yuan is the participation in gift giving on a global scale. In the previous chapter, Cixi's gift giving was explored as a means of projecting a modern China to the Western world. Similarly, Yuan utilized the wares he commissioned at Jingdezhen as political gifts, with one porcelain plaque documented as a gift for King George V of Great Britain.¹³⁹ One of the best-documented of these porcelain gifts was presented while Yuan was still the president of the republic in 1914.¹⁴⁰ The vessel is an *Altar vase* with a rounded pedestal base, baluster form, and elongated narrow neck (Figure 29). The imagery on the porcelain is traditional and

¹³⁸ Most scholars agree that some of these objects most likely ended up within the current collection at the National Palace Museum Taipei. The National Palace Museum was opened in 1925 housing nearly 1.17 million objects. Due to the threat of Japan's army the Forbidden City selected approximately 19,600 objects to be crated. Ultimately, these crates would travel to Taiwan for safety. These selected objects became a part of the National Palace Museum, Taipei. The fact that each object was carefully curated suggests that the porcelain was viewed favorably at the time.

¹³⁹ Li Zhiyan and Cheng Wen, *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain: Traditional Chinese Arts and Culture* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1984), 93.

¹⁴⁰ Avitabile, *From the Dragon's Treasure: Chinese Porcelain from the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries in the Weishaupt Collection*, 127.

composed almost entirely of red enamel decoration. The primary motif depicts large lotus flowers with an assortment of lanceolate leaves. The lotus represents the ideals of Buddhism, emphasizing the notion of purity. This symbol was previously encountered on wares patronized by the empress dowager. Accompanying these designs is a series of stylized leaf designs that are reminiscent of a *ruyi* shape. The altar vase was most likely part of a pair, which was most likely a part of a larger garniture set. Unfortunately, the locations of all the other pieces of this porcelain set remain unknown. The vase was presented on Yuan's behalf to the headmaster of Cheltenham College located in Gloucestershire, England.¹⁴¹

The decoration on the altar vase is quite traditional. In comparison to the styles cultivated during the late Qing, the use of colorful enamel and Western painting techniques is not identifiable. The vessel also utilizes a great deal of blank space, which was seen infrequently in the porcelain produced during Cixi's reign. Although the altar vase appears to look toward the past in terms of techniques, it does maintain the heavy reliance on floral symbolism found throughout the late Qing. These acts of patronage supported Yuan's political career, helping him validate his rule over China and provide the world with a curated view of the country. The fact that Yuan presented some of these gifts prior to his accession as emperor emphasizes his motivation to gain power within China. Due to the brevity of his reign, these gifts do not provide the level of documentation that was available when researching Cixi. However, this study has found that the act of giving porcelain is consistent in both reigns.

¹⁴¹ Yuan Shikai's sons attended Cheltenham College, which most likely explains the gift to the headmaster.

In yet another similarity to Cixi's porcelain, Yuan was associated with several distinct reign marks on the porcelain produced. The first mark, *Jurentang zhi* 居仁堂製, meaning "Manufactured for the Hall of Dwelling in Benevolence," was associated with the palace building in which Yuan resided during his reign.¹⁴² Most scholars consider the *Jurentang zhi* reign mark as the official mark used during Yuan's actual reign. The second mark, *Hongxian nian zhi* 洪憲年制 (Made in the *hongxian* period), was probably used after his rule had ended. There is a third mark associated with Yuan that reads *Huairentang zhi* 懷仁堂製, meaning "Manufactured for the Hall of the Cultivation of Benevolence."¹⁴³ Similar to the *Jurentang* mark, the *Huairentang zhi* refers to a residence within which Yuan resided. This mark was the least frequently found during the course of this research. However, it is worth including in this study because the actual *Huairentang* is located next to a palace formerly occupied by Cixi, indicating yet another connection between these two individuals. For the purposes of this paper, Yuan is considered the major patron behind all of these reign marks.¹⁴⁴ The use of these marks clearly correlates to Empress Dowager Cixi's creation of unique porcelain *nianhao*. Yuan may have attempted to maintain traditions by using a *nianhao* connecting to all past Chinese imperial porcelain. The reign marks selected by Yuan connected his

¹⁴² For a list of reign marks see Appendix B.

¹⁴³ Avitabile, *From the Dragon's Treasure: Chinese Porcelain from the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries in the Weishaupt Collection*, 121.

¹⁴⁴ Scholars that address this time period utilize several terms. The general term for porcelain dating to post 1911 is "early Republic" or even "Republic." While the term "Hongxian" would only identify porcelain that had the reign mark associated with Yuan Shikai's reign. However, the reign marks are not completely accurate indicators of a date, as the mark was often applied to later reproductions. The mark *Jurentang* was supposedly only used while Yuan was residing within the Forbidden City. While the *Hongxian* mark was supposedly utilized after his death. The *Huairentang* mark supposedly dates to only objects produced during his presidency. Due to this, dating a porcelain by the mark alone is challenging. Porcelain with strong provenance is one of the only ways to completely ensure a ware has been accurately dated.

commissions to the wares produced by Cixi, who also referenced her palace within her reign marks, giving both reign marks legitimacy and stability. The adherence to the customary imperial reign mark indicates that Yuan wanted to be included within the lineage of Chinese emperors. This desire for posterity is shared with the empress dowager, who also attempted to use a reign mark to elevate her legacy to that of an emperor.

2.5 Visual Analysis of Collections

Scholars in the 20th and 21st centuries often disregarded Hongxian wares, claiming that they were poor reproductions of earlier imperial wares, especially as China pushed toward modernization and ultimately moved away from the more traditional aspects of Chinese culture. One area that scholars particularly believe was stunted was the creation of porcelain during this transition period. Few of these pieces are known to the scholarly community, and they have not been widely studied because they were previously regarded as being of poor quality and therefore not worthy of in-depth analysis. However, a closer investigation of this porcelain reveals that they are not of poor quality and are instead “ceramics of surprisingly fine quality.”¹⁴⁵ Due to the short reign of the Hongxian Emperor, production of *Hongxian* or *Jurentang*-marked porcelain occurred over an extremely short timeframe. Unfortunately, this resulted in few documented pieces dating to this era of production. Along with this obstacle, many pieces of porcelain were made utilizing these reign marks long after the era had passed. The large market for reproductions has resulted in wares of the Hongxian reign being difficult to

¹⁴⁵ Valenstein, *A Handbook of Chinese Ceramics*, 242.

identify with accuracy. For these reasons, this study examines Hongxian-dated porcelain that has strong provenance and was acquired in close proximity to the date it was produced.

To begin to reevaluate the characteristics of Hongxian wares, an assortment of porcelain had to be examined to establish a consistent quality. One of the major collections of Hongxian and early republic-era porcelain in the Western world is the Georg Weishaupt collection which was exhibited at the Museum für Kunsthandwerk in Frankfurt, Germany from June 24-August 30, 1987. This collection must be considered since it contains nearly 900 pieces of late Chinese porcelain. The scholar H.A. van Oort, one of the first experts on Hongxian porcelain, advised the institution on exhibiting the porcelain and scholar Gunhild Avitabile wrote the exhibition catalog. Due to this distinction, the porcelain within the Weishaupt collection maintains a strong provenance, allowing it to serve as an example of the porcelain typical of the Hongxian reign. The first aspect that this study investigates is the establishment of the porcelain dating to the Hongxian as being of high quality. The claim that vessels were poorly potted was not substantiated during the course of this research. Vessels dating to the Hongxian era expressed the same range of potting that was found in earlier Qing dynasty examples. The examples in which the porcelain itself was most emphasized were monochrome wares, where the enamel color accents the thin potting. Examples from the Weishaupt collection, which includes a *Pair of wine cups* in a vivid imperial yellow, emphasize the skill associated with fine porcelain (Figure 30).¹⁴⁶ The cups themselves were carefully incised with a flying dragon chasing a pearl around the exterior of the vessel. These cups

¹⁴⁶ Avitabile, *From the Dragon's Treasure: Chinese Porcelain from the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries in the Weishaupt Collection*, 125.

are also the only vessels in this study that demonstrate the *Huarentang* mark, suggesting that these wine cups were commissioned prior to Yuan taking the imperial throne. The choice of an imperial color and the imperial icon of a dragon convey Yuan's desire to achieve imperial power. Looking specifically at the porcelain of these wine cups, the thin potting creates a foundation on which the incised design can stand out despite the subtlety associated with incised motifs. The dating of these wine cups along with the quality of the porcelain prove the imperial caliber evident in works patronized by Yuan, establishing him as the only imperial patron of the early 20th century.

A private Phoenix, Arizona collection corroborates the fine level of potting associated with this time period. In this case, the vessel in question is a *Monochrome wine cup* (Figure 31). The use of a monochrome glaze originated quite early in Chinese porcelain history, and in that regard, the cup connects to past traditions in a more modern form. The technical skill of this vessel is apparent, with very fine, thin porcelain creating an eggshell-like (*tuo tai* 脫胎) exterior that can also be traced to the styles of far earlier porcelain. The use of a rose pink color on the cup highlights the influence of the West, since pink enamel was only available beginning in the Qing dynasty after Chinese potters drew from Western techniques to produce this color. The actual monochrome utilized in the cup itself is a representation of technical achievement combining the vivid, highly pigmented enamel with an even application producing a flawless finish. Overall, the level of craftsmanship associated with the eggshell porcelain of this cup exemplifies an imperial-level skillset. The caliber achieved by these porcelain examples proves that one of the most difficult porcelain potting techniques was used during the Hongxian era. While not all of the Hongxian porcelain was completed in an eggshell form, this does

establish that the kilns were operating at the imperial level established during the earlier Qing dynasty.

Having evaluated the caliber of the actual porcelain itself, it was critical to investigate the artistry depicted on the vessels of the era. The first example worth noting depicts a bird-and-flower design dated with a *Jurentang* mark. The pattern is contained on a thinly potted, *Long-necked vase* with a vivid yellow ground (Figure 32).¹⁴⁷ The birds and flowers create a strong diagonal pattern over the body of the vase and interact with a great deal of empty space. The flowers depicted are plum blossoms (*mei hua* 梅花), a symbol of beauty. The birds flying among the flowers are magpies. The magpie was considered the messenger of happiness and had a strong connection to the myth surrounding the Manchu origins. While the bird-and-flower design is much more traditional than the designs found on Cixi's porcelain, the connection to vibrant colors and the symbolic motif remain closely affiliated. The design on the *Jurentang* vase closely resembles a pattern utilized by Cixi in her commission of the *Tongzhi* wedding porcelain (Figure 33).¹⁴⁸ The plum blossom and magpie design on a yellow ground clearly form the original inspiration behind the *Hongxian* vase motif, offering a distinct connection between the porcelain imagery of the empress dowager and *Hongxian*-era wares.

Another *Pair of long-necked vases* from the collection continues with the bird-and-flower theme (Figure 34).¹⁴⁹ This example may date slightly later, having a

¹⁴⁷ Avitabile, *From the Dragon's Treasure: Chinese Porcelain from the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries in the Weishaupt Collection*, 124.

¹⁴⁸ Simon Kwan, *Imperial Porcelain of the Late Qing* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1983), 105.

¹⁴⁹ Avitabile, 128.

Hongxian reign mark. Both vases have a pronounced shoulder and a narrow neck, leading to a flared, garlic-shaped mouth. The base and neck of the vessels are finished in bright pink enamel. The set has nearly identical white bands across the bodies of the vessels and exhibits the bird-and-flower motif. Wares made during the republic were often created in pairs, with the set typically creating a perfect mirror image. Within the scene, trees grow with blossoming flowers emerging from the ground. Roses and chrysanthemums appear in shades of pink, complementing the base and neck of the vases. Roses have numerous interpretations. One of the most prevalent is the translation *changchunhua* 長春花, meaning “flower of eternal youth.” The name originates from the long blooming season associated with roses.¹⁵⁰ Similar to the roses’ meaning, the chrysanthemum was a symbol favored by Cixi that represents longevity. Along with the flowers, magpies move within the scene. Unlike the previous example, this pair appears to be more painterly. The enamels applied are more heavily shaded, and artistic expression is evident in the movement created within the space. These vases not only connect strongly to the iconography Cixi cultivated, but they also appear to be reminiscent of earlier Western painting techniques that were popular during the earlier Qing era. The motif references the designs cultivated in the *dayazhai* wares, which incorporated a variety of bird-and-flower decorations.

Within the category of bird and flower detailed porcelain, it is evident that *Hongxian* wares shared another connection to the porcelain patronized by the empress dowager. The wares produced during Yuan’s reign emulate the styles found in paintings

¹⁵⁰ Terese Tse Bartholomew, *Hidden Meanings in Chinese Art* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 2006), 219. Other translations for the term rose include *yuejihua* meaning monthly rose.

associated with Cixi: in this instance, the use of a flower that held auspicious meaning painted onto an unpainted background. These paintings attributed to Cixi's patronage were fully discussed in the previous chapter. Cixi appropriated the styles of these paintings and applied them to her porcelain, creating designs that contained powerful flower images against colored grounds that demonstrated the brush skills associated with traditional ink painting. A similar style was used during the Hongxian era, indicating a continuation from the porcelain design of the empress dowager. One example found is a small dish that depicts flowers in a *famille rose* palette (Figure 35).¹⁵¹ The plate has the *Jurentang* mark associated with the reign of the Hongxian Emperor. The palette of *famille rose* remains a constant color scheme carried from the late Qing era into the Hongxian period that allowed for the soft washes of color that were previously associated with the delicate elements favored by Cixi. The flowers decorating the dish are a rose and a hibiscus. When these flowers are depicted together, the meaning of the rose shifts, incorporating aspects of the hibiscus. The hibiscus translates to *mufurong* 木芙蓉, and the term becomes a pun for the words *fu* 富 and *rong* 榮, meaning "wealth and glory."¹⁵² Together the terms for the flowers can be interpreted as meaning "may wealth and glory be yours throughout the four seasons," or "may you possess wealth, glory and longevity." The Hongxian plate suggests continuity between Cixi's reign and the brief Hongxian era. The similarities existing between these monarchs substantiates that both individuals strove for a high-caliber porcelain that exhibited painterly effects. The motifs appropriated from Cixi's style utilizing a bird within a floral motif most closely relate to

¹⁵¹ Avitabile, *From the Dragon's Treasure: Chinese Porcelain from the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries in the Weishaupt Collection*, 132.

¹⁵² Bartholomew, *Hidden Meanings in Chinese Art*, 148.

the development of her *dayazhai* patterns. While the painted styles differ slightly, the same expressive quality is still visible in both works. Although differences are visible between the motifs, both types of porcelain patronage generally indicate that a similar style transitioned from Cixi's rule to Yuan's, connecting these two patrons not only chronologically but in terms of artistic aesthetic and technique. During the Hongxian reign, Cixi's motifs were not just imitated, they formed the foundation from which craftsmen drew inspiration and sought to innovate the motifs.

Expanding beyond the Weishaupt collection, it became obvious that the desire to incorporate bird-and-flower painting styles originating from Cixi's late Qing reign could be proven using other porcelain collections. A private collection from the Phoenix region provides more evidence to support the imperial caliber of Hongxian wares.¹⁵³ This collection includes approximately 49 pieces of porcelain, allowing for a major visible representation of Hongxian-era wares. Examining the entire collection dispels the previous classification of poor quality assigned to Hongxian porcelain by displaying a wide range of styles, forms, and artistic caliber. The most prevalent motif within this private collection is depictions of floral imagery, which connect back to the overall theme of birds and flowers. This connection is evident in a small porcelain bowl from the Phoenix collector that exhibits an intricate floral design in a *famille rose* palette (Figure 36). The bowl has a *Jurentang* reign mark. The floral motif wraps almost entirely around the vessel, leaving limited blank space. The abundance of flowers, leaves, and scrolling vines directly references the styles Cixi cultivated. The primary flowers on the vessel are peonies, which are considered the kings of flowers. The peony can represent

¹⁵³ See Appendix A for full list of the collection.

wealth, honor, and high social status. While one peony on the bowl has bloomed, another peony is still closed, waiting to blossom. This aspect could be considered a representation of Yuan's upcoming prosperity now that he controls imperial China. Similar to other examples analyzed, a soft use of enamel color creates a painterly effect. A brush delicately applied each flower petal, resulting in visible brushwork and gradient colors throughout the vessel. One of the most notable aspects of this bowl is the inclusion of an interwoven green vine located behind the peony. The style of this vine is reminiscent of the spring *dayazhai* pattern, which includes a vine of interwoven wisteria. This distinct reference back to Cixi is unmistakable, emphasizing Yuan's clear appropriation of styles that Cixi successfully patronized during her life.

This private collection supports the idea that floral porcelain imagery was a critical aspect of the wares Yuan patronized. Other examples exhibit nearly all of the aspects associated with the porcelain Cixi patronized. A large porcelain vase with a baluster-shaped body, tapered neck, and flared upper rim demonstrates another clear appropriation of late Qing imagery (Figure 37). Again, there is a reliance on large peonies, which were iconic flowers on Cixi's porcelain. The flowers on this vessel occur several times, spreading around the body of the vase. All of the imagery relies on a soft *famille rose* palette. Along with the peonies are several chrysanthemums, which are not fully bloomed. Together these flowers represent a wish for long life, wealth, and honor.¹⁵⁴ The leaves and vines mimic the interwoven pattern seen on the spring *dayazhai* design as well as the previous Hongxian example. Looking specifically at the application of enamel, it is evident that a painterly effect was used to create washes of color that are

¹⁵⁴ Bartholomew, *Hidden Meanings in Chinese Art*, 148.

most clearly visible in the flower petals. Along the shoulder and upper rim, a decorative band divides the vessel. The banding of the shoulder utilizes the same lanceolate leaves found on the porcelain altar vase used as a gift from Yuan Shikai, creating another commonality within the examples of Hongxian this study investigated. While banding is often geometric in nature, the banding selected for the upper rim of this vessel is comprised of curving vines. The selection of a banded design that is non-traditional attributes some originality to the Hongxian vessels, indicating that they were not entirely recycled designs. The designs were selected for their traditional connotations and appropriated for a new, modern vision.

Repeated imagery indicates that certain motifs were more popular than others, providing insight into the styles that Yuan specifically patronized. The previous floral examples provide evidence of the continuation of a design created by the empress dowager. Other motifs do not hold as obvious a connection, allowing for the conclusion that aspects of Hongxian-era porcelain decoration were exclusively a result of the aesthetics desired at the time. An example that is explored further in the final chapter is the inclusion of insects within floral scenes. Several pairs of vases were found during the course of this research that demonstrated nearly identical insects. Another example, a pair of *Baluster vases with insect designs* with *Hongxian* reign marks, presents another version of this design (Figure 38).¹⁵⁵ In this version, a plain white ground forms the background for a flowering sweet corn. Standing on top of the plant are several crickets and cicadas detailed in brown, yellow, and green enamels.¹⁵⁶ While the design itself

¹⁵⁵ Avitabile, *From the Dragon's Treasure: Chinese Porcelain from the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries in the Weishaupt Collection*, 131.

¹⁵⁶ The Weishaupt collection catalog identifies the cricket as a grasshopper. However, this research finds that the long antennae on the insect would identify it as a cricket rather than a

differs from other identified examples, it does utilize a nearly identical insect. In order to maintain the ideals set by Cixi's patronage that auspicious symbols should be utilized, the insects were carefully selected to impart distinct meaning. The cricket has a long history in China: crickets were frequently kept as pets and revered for their fighting ability. The term *xishuai* 蟋蟀 is a pun that has dual meanings. One meaning for *xi* is "happiness," while the other is "auspicious."¹⁵⁷ Similarly, the cicada as a symbol has ancient origins. Often utilized in funerary rituals in an amulet form, the cicada (*chan* 蟬) represents cyclical resurrection.¹⁵⁸ The combination of these two insects could indicate Yuan's desire to resurrect China's monarchy. In this instance, Yuan selected a motif that had specific meaning for his reign. The ideals Yuan held as a patron are evident within this design, providing a visual representation of a style that occurred prominently within the Hongxian era of porcelain production.

The porcelain produced during this era is characterized by forms, painted imagery, and overall craftsmans skill that match those of works created in earlier dynastic China. Although it is evident that change began after the Qing reign, the wares produced in the Hongxian era and into the early republic show an originality generated from the influence of porcelain's new primary patron. During Yuan's life, Westernization was a key influence. He studied Western techniques during his military career. Historically, Yuan also encountered a revolutionary push for both Westernization and modernization. While the pursuit of modern and Western styles was not unique to Hongxian porcelain,

grasshopper. While similar in appearance, grasshoppers are known to have short antennae making this representation clearly a cricket.

¹⁵⁷ Eva Ströber, *Symbols on Chinese Porcelain: 10,000 Times Happiness* (Keramiekmuseum Princessehof: Arnoldsche Art Publishers, 2011), 97.

¹⁵⁸ Bartholomew, *Hidden Meanings in Chinese Art*, 178.

the ways in which these ideals were pursued do appear to be unique to the era. One style that exhibits the most originality is the exploration of landscapes on porcelain.

Landscape motifs did not originate during the Hongxian era; however, they were not frequently used during the previous patronage of Cixi. One pair of porcelain cylindrical shoulder vases with a *Hongxian* mark depicts a large-scale panoramic landscape (Figure 39).¹⁵⁹ The pair has a symmetrical arrangement creating a matched pair, which was often found at this time. The innovative element here is the use of a *grisaille* color palette. The dark colors utilized appear to be reminiscent of traditional Chinese ink painting. Aspects of the landscape combine techniques of tradition with influences from the West. For example, areas of the landscape appeared stacked on top of one another. The background stacks above a pure white midground, which then stacks above the foreground. However, an inspection of the background shows the clear use of linear perspective, with mountains fading into the distant horizon. As figures move through the landscape and lake, a sense of animated movement is created. The combination of techniques along with the vitality embedded within the porcelain create a ware that is remarkably different from those produced in the late Qing dynasty. The porcelain dating to Cixi's reign was predominately ornately decorated with motifs that remained static. Despite the differences achieved by Yuan's patronage, aspects of these vases do connect to styles Cixi cultivated. The use of a rather monochromatic dark palette appears reminiscent of the *grisaille* technique within the *dayazhai* pattern.

Other porcelain examples of landscape depictions emphasize another clear category of imagery found within Hongxian-era vessels. A pair of vases from the

¹⁵⁹ Avitabile, *From the Dragon's Treasure: Chinese Porcelain from the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries in the Weishaupt Collection*, 132.

Victoria and Albert Museum exhibits monumental landscapes (Figure 40).¹⁶⁰ These vases are inscribed with the *Jurentang* mark, dating them to 1916. After observing this pair of vases, it was clear that the porcelain itself is nearly translucent, indicating a high level of craftsmanship. The landscapes that wrap around the bodies of the vases appear to be nearly identical, highlighting the reliance on complementary matched pairs during the Hongxian era. The landscapes are completed in gray enamel. Accent enamel colors of red and green create an effect of subtle shading throughout the scene. The light addition of enamel colors is similar to the *qianjiang* style of painting.¹⁶¹ Usually found in landscape painting, *qianjiang* references the pale umber color used by an artist to denote areas of lighter colors. This style was popular among the literati who predominately painted with ink, creating a similar appearance to the monochromatic palette found on these porcelain examples. When applied to white porcelain the *qianjiang* decoration creates a soft, watercolor effect. Similar to the previous landscape porcelain, these vases utilize a stacked technique while simultaneously incorporating linear perspective. The brushwork exhibited is delicately applied, emphasizing the skill of the artist. Soft brushstrokes create the delicate leaves on the trees, while washes of gray create detail throughout the rocks. The emergence of landscapes on porcelain constitutes a style found within the porcelain developed by Yuan.

One style of Hongxian porcelain that is prevalent within private collections and museum collections is depictions of figures. Figural representations were not new to porcelain decoration; however, they do not share a clear connection to the late styles

¹⁶⁰ Rose Kerr, *Chinese Ceramics Porcelain of the Qing dynasty*, 129.

¹⁶¹ Suk Yee Lai, ed., *Innovations and Creations: A Retrospect of 20th Century Porcelain from Jingdezhen* (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2004), 23.

developed by Cixi. Instead, the majority of these figural scenes delve into mythological references or generally known stories. While figures can become the focal point of a porcelain motif, they often accompany additional elements such as landscapes or auspicious symbols. A figural motif that this study repeatedly observed was scenes of children, typically playing in a garden environment. One example of this type is a vase with a *Hongxian* reign mark dating it to 1916 (Figure 41). The vase is covered with imagery, with limited empty space. One side of the vase reveals a garden crowded with objects including a large garden rock, tall trees, and an architectural perimeter fence surrounding several boys playing. Along the other side of the vase an open grassy area is painted featuring garden rocks in the distance. Boys play games in the grassy field which serves as a popular decorative motif during both the Ming and Qing dynasties. The imagery of boys playing directly refers to a traditional Confucian ideal that requires numerous sons in order to perpetuate the family lineage and maintain ancestor worship. Decorative motifs of boys could also visually represent a desire for noble sons that achieve success.¹⁶² The vase maintains the standards associated with late Qing vessels, namely very limited blank space, auspicious symbols, and vivid colors. The introduction of various figures on porcelain can be considered another way that Yuan patronized the field of porcelain, moving the form in a slightly different direction. The focus on figures that were found in myths, stories, and folktales provides an indication that these objects may have been meant to be understood by a wider audience than previous imperial rulers anticipated. The symbols associated with this particular motif mirrors the political desire that Yuan held to return to the previous glories of Qing imperial rule. A return to this

¹⁶² For further discussion of motifs featuring boys, see Ann Elizabeth Barrott Wicks, ed. *Children in Chinese Art* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii), 2002.

method of government would result in the reestablishment of traditions like the civil service exam and a society built upon traditional Confucian values. The vase's display of numerous sons reflects the traditional values that Yuan's reign attempted to cultivate. The duality cultivated by the patronage of Yuan emphasizes both a modern nature while maintaining a distinct connection to the traditions of the past.

It is possible that Yuan modernized porcelain imagery in an attempt to make it more applicable to the common man rather than relying solely on auspicious imagery that exclusively appealed to the societal elite. As time progressed, porcelain depicting figural motifs became widely utilized by republican artists. Some of these surviving examples were among the first that incorporated artists' signatures, visually representing a break with imperial reign marks.¹⁶³ The trajectory of porcelain depicting figures gained recognition during the Hongxian era and proceeded into the republic to become one of the most thoroughly documented porcelain styles.

Another aspect of patronage worthy of evaluation is the influence Yuan's porcelain style had during his reign and into the republic period. This study has established that the styles Cixi curated lasted well beyond her lifetime, establishing her as a patron that left a lasting impression on the porcelain industry. A similar effect can be observed both during and after Yuan's reign, establishing the styles associated with

¹⁶³ Suk Yee Lai, ed., *Innovations and Creations: A Retrospect of 20th Century Porcelain from Jingdezhen*, 23. Successful studios and workshops began to form as early as 1920. The most notable of these Republic studios was a group of eight men known as the *Yueyuan Hui* 月圓徽 (The Full Moon Society). The men were also commonly referred to as the *Zhushan ba you* 珠山八友 (Eight Friends of Zhushan). The artists comprising the group were: Wang Yeting 汪野亭 (1884-1942), Cheng Yiting 程意亭 (1895-1953), Deng Bishan 鄧碧珊 (1874-1930), Liu Yucen 劉雨岑 (1904-1969), Xu Zhongnan 徐仲南 (1872-1953), Wang Qi 王琦 (1884-1937), Wang Dafan 王大凡 (1888-1961), He Xuren 何許人 (1882-1940), Bi Botao 畢伯濤 (1885-1961) and Tian Hexian 田鶴仙 (1894-1952).

Hongxian porcelain as highly influential beyond their era. The official Tang Shaoyi 唐紹儀(1862–1938) lived during the Hongxian period. He had served the late Qing court as an envoy, and later in his life he was the first prime minister of the Republic of China.¹⁶⁴ Tang had a lifelong interest in collecting porcelain.¹⁶⁵ While aspects of his collection focused on traditional porcelain from the peak era of production, he did collect wares produced during the Hongxian era. One vessel from the era in question is a small *fencai* enamel *gu* 觚 form vase (Figure 42). This vase utilizes an apocryphal mark of Daoguang. The vessel has been reattributed to the late Qing dynasty or early republic, allowing it to serve as a representative of the styles that were prevalently produced at that time. The form of the vessel connotes the shape of an archaic bronze, linking the porcelain to past traditions. The shape flares, allowing ample space to detail a decorative motif along the top and bottom of the vessel. While the middle of the *gu* is a raised design with opaque blue scrollwork, the details along the top and bottom sections of the vessel repeat similar scenes of flowers and insects, connecting back to the styles that this study earlier attributed as iconic of the Hongxian reign. On this vessel, the floral design is rendered simply with bold brushstrokes that contain distinct colors. Unlike some of the earlier examples, the *gu* vase lacks the finesse that was previously noted. However, it is evident that the styles that were cultivated by Yuan during the Hongxian era had a dramatic impact on what was being produced contemporaneously as well as after his abdication. Examples like this vase emphasize the reach of Yuan's aesthetic achievements, further

¹⁶⁴ Tang Shaoyi, *Tang Shaoyi* (Zhuhai Shi: Zhuhai chu ban she, 2006).

¹⁶⁵ Part of the Tang Shaoyi porcelain collection was auctioned at Bonhams during the Fine Asian Works of Art sale on Tuesday, June 26, 2018.

developing the argument that an imperial-quality patron was responsible for Hongxian porcelain.

Based on the examples analyzed, a strong identification of Hongxian porcelain can begin to be categorized. The wares produced span a variety of forms. This research has found that the most prevalent aspect relating to form is that matched pairs were the most frequently produced. The porcelain itself is predominately of an imperial caliber, with more eggshell examples available than examples of thick potting. Exterior enamel decoration was applied using vivid colors, showing particular favoritism for *falangcai* 珐瑯彩 or foreign colors. These colors include the *famille rose* palette emphasizing a variety of bright pinks and greens. Even *grisaille* and sepia-toned enamels were highlighted with accents of these vivid Western colors, which was not a common technique prior to the Hongxian era. The motifs generally exhibit birds and flowers, figures, and traditional auspicious symbols. The unifying factor between the motifs investigated is a major reliance on shared meaning. Few of the porcelain pieces investigated were purely decorative in nature. Almost all the porcelain dating to the Hongxian era exhibits auspicious iconography that conveys a curated vision to anyone viewing the porcelain.

It is clear that the porcelain produced during the late Qing dynasty and into the early republic was dominated by the patronage of political figureheads. Empress Dowager Cixi set a high precedent for patronage, establishing herself not only as a powerful political figure but also as an authority in the arts. The expressive quality her commissions exhibit reveals an originality that has often been overlooked. It seems that Cixi's aesthetic style transitioned effectively into the early republic era and was

ultimately championed by Yuan Shikai during the Hongxian period. Cixi utilized originality in her incorporation of traditional motifs, while Yuan attempted to recreate her styles while appropriating traditions. Yuan's subtle porcelain innovations strongly support the argument for his acceptance as an imperial-level patron. During the production of Hongxian porcelain, Yuan continually looked to past imperial porcelain successes to formulate the styles, imagery, and aesthetics associated with the Hongxian Emperor. The connection that exists between Cixi and Yuan creates continuity between the technical end of the Qing dynasty and the establishment of the early republic. The porcelain produced by both of these patrons exhibited modernization and a desire to produce wares that were unique to their personal reigns, emphasizing that the patronage of these two individuals was a catalyst for the modern porcelain industry in China.

Based on the porcelain analyzed, it is evident that Hongxian wares varied widely, exemplifying the breadth of knowledge possessed by the artists behind each piece. The wide array of collections analyzed for this study also allowed patterns to emerge. The emergence of repetition throughout the various collections viewed allowed for the shaping of the characteristics of porcelain from this era. The porcelain itself ranges in thickness. However, after personally inspecting numerous wares, it is clear that a thicker porcelain body was not indicative of inept craftsmanship. The skill of porcelain potting during this era is most evident in the pieces that are eggshell in form. The greatest skill evident in the Hongxian wares is in the application of enamel to the vessel's surface. Building off of the standards set by Cixi, the wares dating to the Hongxian era embraced a wide variety of enamel colors and applied motifs widely, leaving limited empty space on the porcelain surface. Overall, brushwork was extremely delicate, which is a direct

connection to the styles cultivated by Cixi's painterly approach to porcelain. Based on the grouping of wares investigated, it is evident that the painting on each porcelain is extremely diverse, making it difficult to identify a distinct set of images that were iconic representations of Hongxian porcelain. Landscapes, figures, and auspicious imperial iconography are prevalent. However, the major images found within the wares investigated are illusions to the bird-and-flower painting genre. Birds and flowers were the most repeated imagery found, with some examples also including butterflies or insects. The influence of the empress dowager was clearly a major inspiration for the styles cultivated during the Hongxian era. The expansion to include new styles that were not as popular in the late Qing, such as landscapes, can be attributed to Yuan's specific preferences. However, even designs that depict landscapes were frequently seen in a *grisaille* style, which is associated with a pattern cultivated by Cixi in her *dayazhai* designs. Ultimately, the porcelain of the late Qing dynasty and the early republic era share distinct commonalities. It is clear from these examples that porcelain production maintained an imperial caliber during the early Republic due to the patronage of Yuan. The artistic quality of porcelain cultivated by Yuan during his reign allows him to stand out as an imperial-level patron, extending the trajectory of imperial porcelain patronage further than was previously accepted.

2.6 Conclusion

After the last true imperial patron was removed from power, the Chinese porcelain industry encountered dramatic change. For the first time in centuries it was left without imperial patronage. According to kiln records from the time, "With the failure of

Yuan Shikai's imperial reign, the department set up to supervise the making of official wares was also closed down."¹⁶⁶ While the kilns may have stopped for a brief time, Jingdezhen modernized in an effort to survive beyond imperial China. However, after Yuan's rule, no imperial porcelain was created. This point in time marks the rise of private porcelain companies within China. Prior to this time, a few private kilns did thrive within Jingdezhen, but they were considerably smaller compared to the level at which imperial patronage occurred. However, after the Hongxian reign restrictions on these kilns were loosened, allowing them more freedom in the types of porcelain they could produce. Ironically, it is these private kilns that provide another piece of support for the imperial quality of Hongxian porcelain. After imperial patronage ended, the Jiangxi Porcelain Company (Jiangxi Ciye Gongsi 江西瓷業公司) took control of the entire imperial kiln site.¹⁶⁷ The company took the best workers from the site in order to continue producing the finest quality porcelain. Porcelain from Jiangxi was eggshell, one of the most difficult types of porcelain to produce. Along with this technique, each porcelain exhibited delicate enamel brushwork.¹⁶⁸ Based on these descriptions, it is clear that the Jiangxi Porcelain Company was capable of producing high-caliber porcelain as a direct result of scavenging the kiln site that had been maintained by the previous imperial patron, Yuan Shikai. It is therefore necessary to consider the porcelain produced during the Hongxian reign imperial quality, since the workers, materials, and artistry were

¹⁶⁶ Jiangxi Light Industry Department, Ceramics Institute, *Jingdezhen Taoci Shigao* 景德鎮陶瓷史稿 (Draft History of Jingdezhen) (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1959): 306.

¹⁶⁷ The Jiangxi Porcelain Company was first founded in 1910. It began as a state-merchant factory that was funded by provincial treasuries. The ultimate goal of the company's creation was to create an industrialized and mechanized production of porcelain.

¹⁶⁸ Zhao Ruzhen, *Gu wan zhi nan* (Handbook of Chinese Antiquities), Peking, 1943, 9.

unmistakably of this caliber. Despite maintaining the standards that were previously attributed to imperial porcelain, the modernization of the porcelain industry changed the way porcelain was produced. Porcelain companies, ceramic guilds, artist societies, and even institutions emerged to manage the kilns within the porcelain city.¹⁶⁹ These organizations marked the beginning of modern porcelain production in the republic era. This division is critical to establish because it creates a distinction between what occurred in the early republic and what occurred in the later republic in regard to patronage and overall influences on porcelain.

Although Yuan's reign was exceptionally brief, it had a dramatic impact on the production of porcelain, creating a legacy that continued long after the Hongxian era ended. The continuation of patronage during this reign proves a continuation of imperial-level patronage beyond the fall of the Qing dynasty. As a result, the legacy of late Qing patrons, specifically the empress dowager, continued into the early republic. It is highly probable that the same artists who worked during the late Qing dynasty managed to remain at the kilns and were therefore able to produce the Hongxian wares that Yuan commissioned, along with the early republic wares produced after his death. It is entirely possible that individuals who worked under Cixi's patronage may have remained at the imperial kilns to then serve under Yuan's patronage. Both the empress dowager and Yuan used imperial patronage to establish their power. Since neither Cixi nor Yuan had a traditional route to their reign, their patronage of porcelain by clearly including their own aesthetic styles and reign marks was a way to establish themselves in the hierarchical monarchy of emperors. The clear trajectory of styles, patterns, and themes along with a

¹⁶⁹ Cao Ganyuan, "Innovations and Creations: Jingdezhen Porcelain of the Last Century," *Innovations and Creations: A Retrospective of 20th century Porcelain from Jingdezhen*, 23.

close historical interaction provides evidence for Yuan not only looking toward the hierarchical monarchy of imperial China but particularly attempting to emulate Cixi, who successfully dominated Chinese politics during Yuan's own lifetime. Together, these individuals' reigns can be considered the late peak of imperial porcelain.

Chapter 3: Collecting

3.1 Early History of Chinese Ceramics

The research presented within this study has established the merit of late Qing patrons Empress Dowager Cixi and Yuan Shikai. Both patrons historically impacted the porcelain styles achieved during their reign and cultivated a lasting effect on the porcelain production of China. Due to the limited quantity of surviving and published wares, a large collection of late Qing porcelain is difficult to analyze. The global trade associated with porcelain has promoted the movement of objects to the western world. For this study collections found in Britain serve as the primary source for archiving late Qing porcelain and establishing a visual understanding of iconic styles, motifs, and symbols of the era. China and the West have a long history of exchange, especially in the field of porcelain. Ceramics were first made in China during the Neolithic period (c. 5000 –1700 BCE). With this innovation, a long progression of technological evolution eventually allowed for the creation of porcelain during the early Tang dynasty (618–907).¹⁷⁰ By the eighth century, Chinese porcelain was considered the hardest, most durable, and most colorful ceramic in the world. The vast amount of the raw material known as kaolin present in China was key to the country’s ceramic success. When fired, the clay would vitrify, creating a smooth, white, nearly translucent porcelain material. At this time, China alone had the resources and technical ability to produce porcelain, giving it immense value as both a ware and an artistic medium.

¹⁷⁰ Denise Patry Leidy, *How to Read Chinese Ceramics* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2015), 36.

Early trade routes out of China like the Silk Road initiated the spread of porcelain throughout the world beginning with a progression through the Near East and beyond.¹⁷¹ Although these early trade porcelain pieces were functional utilitarian objects, surviving records indicate that they were collected and appreciated as art. Illustrated manuscripts depict scenes of Mughal India that include rooms with numerous niches filled with Chinese blue-and-white porcelain (Figure 43). The inclusion of porcelain in the manuscript reveals the vast dispersion of this medium throughout Asia, along with the prestige the form was given in the regions within which it was collected. A combination of social, technical, and economic factors allowed transoceanic trade to become a major force within China, making porcelain a global commodity. Europe first encountered the wares being produced in China as a result of Portuguese exploration by individuals like Vasco de Gama (c. 1460–1524), who reached Asia during the late 15th century. A major export market was created, with numerous porcelain wares produced in China and then shipped to the West. The massive scale at which this global trade occurred surpassed even the quantities seen on the Silk Road. It has been estimated that more than 60,000,000 pieces of porcelain were shipped from China to the West in the 18th century alone.¹⁷² Analyzing this transoceanic trade reveals specific trends in the collecting of porcelain, specifically within Britain, since the wares acquired were not only influenced by Chinese exportation but also by the guidance of pre-established European porcelain collecting.

¹⁷¹ One of the largest collections of Chinese celadon and blue-and-white wares is found in at the Topkapi Saray Museum in present day Istanbul. These wares were amassed by the then Ottoman court from the 15th- mid 19th century.

¹⁷² Elinor Gordon, *Collecting Chinese Export Porcelain* (Pittstown, New Jersey: Main Street Press, 1984), 24.

3.2 Establishing Collecting in China

While many scholars have denoted the beginning of collecting in the Western world as the beginning of a porcelain obsession, this study finds that porcelain collecting was not a pastime created by individuals in the Western world. In fact, this pastime was enjoyed by individuals within China, which is where the earliest records of Chinese porcelain collecting began. The collecting of porcelain within China laid a foundation that other cultures appropriated and reinterpreted, allowing each culture that acquired Chinese porcelain to shape its own unique collecting practices. As explored throughout this research, the idea of collecting in China was found earlier within the imperial court and served as a means of projecting authority. The practices that are now associated with porcelain collecting originated within the context of collecting other art forms, because porcelain had not yet been developed when these collecting practices were established. The scholar Lothar Ledderose has established that collected objects legitimized the emperor and proved undoubtedly that he possessed the mandate of heaven.¹⁷³ Collecting in China has a long history, with the earliest documentation of collecting dating to the emperors of the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 AD). The emperors collected a wide variety of objects including jades, bronzes, and calligraphy.¹⁷⁴ These early pursuits to claim ownership of objects that conveyed a sense of power were recorded in the *Zhanguo* 战国策 (Annals of the Warring States) from prior to the second century BCE:

¹⁷³ Lothar Ledderose, “Some Observations on the Imperial Art Collection in China,” *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 43 (1978): 33–46.

¹⁷⁴ Shelagh Vainker, “Ceramics for Use,” in *The British Museum Book of Chinese Art*, ed. Jessica Rawson (London: British Museum Press, 1992), 246.

When you have taken possession of the Nine Brazen Tripods and put your hands on the charts and registers, and when you have the emperor as hostage to rule the empire, nobody in the world will dare not to obey you.¹⁷⁵

These words from an advisor to his sovereign prove the significance that early China placed on the possession of supposed objects of power: in this instance, the famed bronze tripods.¹⁷⁶ Once one possessed these wares, one would inevitably rule, because the ideas of possession and authority were directly linked. The objects were symbols of authority and a representation of rule over all China. It is the history of collecting and owning these ritualistic objects that formed a basis for what became the collecting of fine art objects, allowing porcelain to become a symbol of both power and authority within China.

As time progressed, emperors claimed objects for themselves based more exclusively on aesthetic tastes. Rosemary Scott has traced this development to the reign of Emperor Wudi 漢武帝 (r. 140–87 BCE), who collected a series of calligraphy purely for aesthetic value rather than the meaning of the calligraphy itself.¹⁷⁷ This practice was undoubtedly the most important aspect of collecting within China, because it is the advent of what is considered “court taste.” Court taste directly refers to what was prevalent within the imperial court, which mainly reflected the taste of the current emperor. The idea of court or imperial taste followed porcelain collecting throughout its history, becoming an aesthetic passed down over generations. While the idea of a court

¹⁷⁵ Rosemary E Scott, “The Chinese Imperial Collections,” in *Collecting Chinese Art: Interpretation and Display*, ed. Stacey Pierson (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2000), 19.

¹⁷⁶ According to legend the nine bronze tripods were owned by emperor Yu and were passed down from one ruler to the next. Ultimately, the tripods were lost sometime during the Zhou dynasty. Reliefs from the Wu Liang Shrines, dating to the Han dynasty, include depictions of Qin Shi Huangdi attempting to capture the vessels.

¹⁷⁷ Scott, “The Chinese Imperial Collections,” 20.

taste filtered down and became inspiration for general production of porcelain, it is most visible within imperial wares (*guanyao* 官窯). Imperial porcelain is a vessel made for the emperor, often referred to as an official ware.

An aspect of court taste that must be established is the direct effect that imperial styles had on the porcelain that was being produced. The main center for porcelain production throughout Chinese history was the kilns at Jingdezhen. The city was renowned for its high-caliber porcelain. Several factors contributed to this prestigious title: Jingdezhen had an abundance of raw materials required for porcelain production, as well as a highly organized and skilled workforce, these workers utilized advanced kiln technology, and they possessed direct imperial patronage. These factors contributed to Jingdezhen becoming the central powerhouse of porcelain. By 1606, more than 10,000 workers maintained the kilns in order to fulfill imperial orders. The kilns continued to expand, and by 1712 the city of Jingdezhen had more than 3,000 kilns.¹⁷⁸ The majority of this industrial expansion was a result of imperial patronage. Emperors continually ordered porcelain, which served both utilitarian and aesthetic purposes and demonstrated the emperors' sovereignty to all of China. The scale at which these orders were commissioned undoubtedly influenced other wares that were produced within Jingdezhen, creating a distinct connection between the court taste and what was being produced for the West.

Collecting eventually spread beyond China's emperor, with texts dating to the Song dynasty (960–1279) revealing that individuals other than the reigning emperor were

¹⁷⁸ Ellen Huang, "China's China: Jingdezhen Porcelain and the Production of Art in the Nineteenth Century" (PhD dissertation, UC San Diego, 2008).

actively collecting porcelain. In China the term for porcelain *ciqu* 瓷器 is a broad category including both porcelain and stoneware. In comparison, the West considers porcelain to be an object that is high-fired resulting in a white translucent body. Stoneware is classified as a non-translucent material that is fired at a significantly lower kiln temperature.¹⁷⁹ China's broader terminology for porcelain promoted early collections that included both porcelain and stoneware. Early works like Cao Zhao's 曹昭 *Gegu yaolun* 格古要論 (Discussions about assessing antiquities) dating to 1387 outlined Ming era collecting. One of the categories of collecting discussed included porcelain, forming a basis for both porcelain scholarship and collecting. The porcelain collecting associated with the Ming era inspired the Qing trends analyzed later in this chapter. Chinese officials and scholars began amassing private porcelain collections as a means of self cultivation.¹⁸⁰ These early porcelain collections predate the origins of Western porcelain collections by several hundred years, establishing a dramatically different foundation for both east and west collectors.

Historically, Chinese collectors prized specific porcelains, including those dating from the Song (960–1279), Ming (1368–1644), and Qing dynasties (1644–1911). Collectors attempted to find wares like the elusive five great wares known as *ding* 定窯, *ru* 汝窯, *jun* 鈞窯, *guan* 官窯, and *ge* 哥窯. These wares were produced at five different kilns and were composed of high-fired stoneware with a distinct glaze. The five great

¹⁷⁹ Porcelain is high-fired in a kiln reaching temperatures of approximately 1300° while stoneware is low-fired in a kiln temperature of approximately 1100°-1200°.

¹⁸⁰ For further discussion of Ming era collecting see Robert D. Mowry, "Objects from the Chinese Scholar's Studio: Examples from the Shanghai Museum," *Orientalia* 18, no. 8 (August 1987): 16–27. For further text see Chu-tsing Li and James C.Y. Watt, eds., *The Chinese Scholar's Studio: Artistic Life in the Late Ming Period. An Exhibition from the Shanghai Museum* (New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1987).

wares all display a variety of glazes predominately representing celadon or a green tone; however, variations in glaze can range from crackled whites to light blues. These wares were made for the imperial court and were among the first wares to have regulations relating to production set by the palace.¹⁸¹ One example of this type of collected ware can be found in the imperial collection, which is currently at the National Palace Museum (Figure 44). The collection houses a *Ding ware bowl* dating to the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127). This bowl has an off-white glaze that emphasizes its color due to the absence of additional decoration. The top rim is detailed with a copper edge, which is contrasted by the pure glaze color. The characteristic “tear stain” of *ding* wares can be seen on the vessel’s exterior. This phenomenon occurs as a result of the glaze heating rapidly, slowly running down the vessel’s surface, and finally hardening. The raised pattern that resulted from this occurrence was deemed aesthetically appealing at that time and was also a characteristic desired by later Chinese collectors. Despite some wares being held in remarkably high esteem over generations of collectors, these highly sought-after wares did not make up a huge portion of the collecting that occurred historically in China. This was the result of the five great wares being produced in such small quantities over a condensed period of time making them extremely rare.¹⁸²

There is limited available documentation of how collectors procured their porcelain in China. It is clear that one monumental influence on Chinese collectors was the imperial styles set by the Forbidden City. Ultimately, the emperor had control over

¹⁸¹ Rosemary E Scott and Stacey Pierson, “The Chinese Imperial Collections,” *Collecting Chinese Art: Interpretation and Display*, 2000, 19–32.

¹⁸² Wares of this variety were first produced during the reign of Huizong (1101-1125). Records dating to this reign indicate the rarity of the *ru* type wares, making them extremely difficult to find even in the era in which they were produced.

the gifts that were accepted into the imperial collection and what porcelain was selected for court use. Although few sources survive, records of the imperial collection have been preserved. These imperial records provide insight into the thought process behind the acquisitions of the imperial collection, thus offering indirect insight into how other collectors in China also would have amassed their collections. Many of these records refer to objects using broad titles. While this description can enlighten scholars as to a vessel's form and quantity, it is rather challenging to deduce the style. However, visual documentation of the imperial collection does exist, with two of the rarest resources residing within the British collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum (Figure 45) and the British Museum (Figure 46). Titled the *Guwan tu* 古玩圖, or "Scroll of Antiquities," these rare handscrolls were originally part of a larger set of scrolls that served as pictorial representations of the imperial collection. Very few of these handscrolls are known to exist today, making the British holdings exceptional resources regarding early imperial porcelain collections. The images painted with ink and color reflect the collecting practices that occurred in the Qing period. The handscrolls include more than 250 objects including bronzes, jades, carvings, curios, and a variety of ceramics. The ceramics number nearly 103 objects in total. Under inspection, the ceramic wares that are depicted in the handscrolls appear to be predominately porcelain, and many of these porcelain wares appear to be blue-and-white porcelain. The wares are ornately decorated with thematic depictions of dragons, figures, and floral motifs. The objects found on both handscrolls span dates from 2500 BCE until the scrolls were painted during the Qing dynasty. Archaic bronzes represent some of the oldest wares, while porcelain imagery represents some of the most modern styles of the Qing era. Records like these

handscrolls provide concrete evidence of avid collecting occurring within the Forbidden City. The depiction of the imperial collection reiterates the previously mentioned desire to claim ownership of objects to validate imperial power. In this instance, the imperial power was not only claiming the wares of its own era, but also dominance over all previous Chinese reigns. This sense of ownership connected strongly to traditional Confucian values of filial piety, which stressed respecting elders. Collecting these porcelain wares and paying homage to the past was a mark of deep respect that simultaneously staked a claim to the successes associated with earlier eras. Additionally, the high quality associated with each object painted serves to represent the level of court taste over time. Each object varies, illustrating different techniques that span a variety of eras. The imperial ability to select such a wide array of porcelain emphasizes the emergence of connoisseurship within Chinese imperial porcelain collections.

The handscrolls prove that by the Qing era, collecting porcelain was standard for the emperor. The connotation within the Forbidden City of porcelain representing power was reflected in the rise in collecting in the general population. As porcelain collecting rose in popularity over time, it became a symbol of status. Craig Clunas has argued that by the mid-16th century, porcelain collecting was “an essential form of consumption which was central to the maintenance of elite status.”¹⁸³ While Clunas has suggested that this consumption primarily occurred in areas of southern China, this study finds that as time progressed, the collecting of porcelain was widespread. Similar to what would occur in Europe, China began to collect porcelain more widely. Since highly desirable wares like the five great wares were difficult to obtain, Chinese collectors moved toward

¹⁸³ Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991),108.

collecting porcelain that emphasized ideal aesthetics and exhibited imperial taste. Records of later collectors emphasize this transition, focusing primarily on acquiring “imperial”-quality porcelain. For example, Chen Liu 陳瀏, a retired official and porcelain collector of the 19th century, had a significant preference for Qing porcelain over the porcelain of the Ming dynasty, especially pieces produced during the reign of Kangxi (1662–1722). As a collector, Chen specifically noted an admiration for vigorous colors and soft pastel palettes and strove to obtain wares exhibiting good technical potting and high levels of craftsmanship.¹⁸⁴ Wares such as a bowl decorated with *famille rose* enamels with a peach and bat motif fits this collector’s unique preferences (Figure 47). The bowl dates to the reign of Qing Emperor Yongzheng (1722–1735) and is comprised of beautiful white porcelain enameled with the five peaches of longevity on a branch. The peaches exhibit immense painting skill, giving them natural color and texture. Incorporated into the peach branch are five red bats, each of which is a representation of happiness. This vessel demonstrates one collector’s preferences within China during the 19th century. Chen also explained the dislikes of the Chinese collector during this era, stating, “he regrets the extraordinary virtuosity which resulted in insensitive, repetitive decoration and hard dry colours.”¹⁸⁵ Based on visual evidence this study finds that the wares Chen describes in a negative context are the style of wares that were typically sold in Europe during the 19th century. The era in which Chen lived had an increasing amount of international porcelain movement, resulting from the historic shifts occurring during the late Qing. The traditional preferences exhibited by Chen

¹⁸⁴ Huang, “China’s China: Jingdezhen Porcelain and the Production of Art in the Nineteenth Century,” 196.

¹⁸⁵ Michel Beurdeley, *The Chinese Collector Through the Centuries: From the Han to the 20th Century* (Rutland, Vermont: C. E. Tuttle Company, 1966), 193.

highlight a continuation of Chinese collectors valuing traditional porcelain rather than porcelain produced contemporaneously.

While early Chinese collecting practices focused primarily on the holdings of the emperor, later Chinese porcelain collectors broadened the scope of what types of wares were collected. Chinese collectors placed importance on the porcelain that reveals the best overall quality in regard to form, glaze, and painted motifs. The wares emphasized by collectors appear to be those that were equivalent to an imperial quality or were in fact imperial wares. Overall, Chinese collectors held themselves to a high standard of collecting by focusing on porcelains that were exemplary and avoiding wares that had the distinct characteristics of export wares. These export wares are investigated in the following section. The idea of imperial quality compared to export quality highlights the major difference between early historic Eastern and Western porcelain collecting. Although the thought process and ideas behind the collections of the East and West may have different foundations, both of these collecting groups shared a similar end goal, which was to acquire porcelain in order to establish themselves as a member of the social elite. Along with this, the appeal of aesthetic pleasure spanned collecting in both the East and the West. While material culture shifted the connotation of porcelain within the East and West, at its core, porcelain maintained itself as a representation of wealth, power, and imperial prestige.

3.3 Early Porcelain Collecting in Europe

Despite the traditions of collecting established in China that emphasized imperial quality, the West took porcelain collecting in an entirely different direction. One of the

earliest documented export wares to reach Europe was the *Fonthill Vase* around 1300–1330 (Figure 48).¹⁸⁶ While the vase no longer exists, images depicting the vase have survived. These images have established that the vessel was a *qingbai ci* 青白瓷 bottle with panels featuring cutout motifs and floral decoration. While this may have been the earliest export ware to reach Europe, very little is known about it except for a few drawings of the vessel. Even though wares clearly came from China as early as the *Fonthill Vase*, it was not until the 17th century that Chinese porcelain regularly entered the European market. The first interactions between China and the West were with the Portuguese, who began importing large amounts of Chinese porcelain specifically for Western trade. When the Dutch overtook Portugal as the major traders of the Chinese porcelain industry, that industry had already reached a massive level, exporting as many as 6,000,000 ceramics in addition to filling custom commissions. Porcelain became the largest export out of Jingdezhen with wares reaching Europe, America, Africa, and Australia in either direct trade or indirect trade.¹⁸⁷

As a result of European trade with China, tea was introduced to the West beginning in the mid-17th century. Tea drinking quickly rose in popularity and became a pastime associated with Western cultures. The expense associated with purchasing tea ensured that the drink was reserved for the wealthy, ultimately allowing for the act of drinking tea to become associated with high social status in the West. It was this association that was projected onto porcelain from China, shaping the perception of the object into a representation of wealth and affluence. This practice is clearly visible in

¹⁸⁶ William R. Sargent, *Treasures of Chinese Export Ceramics from the Peabody Essex Museum* (Salem: Peabody Essex Museum, 2012), 3.

¹⁸⁷ Li Zhiyan and Cheng Wen, *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1984), 104.

portraiture like *Two Ladies and an Officer Seated at Tea*, which dates to approximately 1715 (Figure 49). The portrait depicts three figures seated around a table enjoying a cup of tea, with the central focal point being a tea set of fine blue-and-white china. It is this kind of early painted documentation that demonstrates the Western desire to collect Chinese porcelain, because this practice had developed as a symbol of both wealth and prestige. Other depictions of porcelain continued to validate the idea of Chinese porcelain as a representation of societal status.¹⁸⁸ The still life *Teapot, Ginger Jar and Candlestick*, dating to 1695, presents a realistic depiction of an array of luxury objects (Figure 50). These objects include a silver candlestick along with pieces of a blue-and-white porcelain tea set. In this example, the artist has elevated the status of porcelain to the same level as an object formed from silver, in effect making porcelain a highly valuable commodity. While the material culture surrounding porcelain within Europe had a different origin, the value of porcelain as a luxurious object was a reality in both the East and the West. However, in the Western interpretation the value of porcelain was a direct result of the act of drinking tea and the cost associated with this activity.

By 1699, the British East India Company dominated international trade within Asia, focusing shipments on tea, silk, and porcelain. Porcelain became indispensable because it was not only waterproof but served as a sturdy ballast for ships. The combination of porcelain's hearty shipping characteristics and the West's association with porcelain as an indicator of prestige created a steadily emerging market for porcelain collecting within Europe. Collecting within Europe was first visible as a pastime within

¹⁸⁸ Venetian painters Giovanni Bellini (c. 1430-1516) and Titian (c. 1490-1576) include blue-and-white porcelain in their oil painting entitled *Feast of the Gods*, dating from approximately 1514-1529. The work is located in the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

the royal families and societal elite. It is early British royal collecting that builds a foundation for British porcelain collecting. The collecting of Britain forms visual evidence from which this study will establish the high levels of patronage of the late Qing era and the overall imperial caliber of the wares. According to Britain's Royal Collection Trust, the earliest English ruler to procure porcelain from China was Henry VIII (1491–1547). His small collection is mentioned in several imperial inventories but ultimately did not survive beyond Britain's Civil War, at which point in time the porcelain was either destroyed or sold. The act of collecting porcelain rapidly became established in the royal family, with evidence surviving that Henry's daughter Queen Elizabeth I (1533–1603) owned porcelain. Porcelain from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection has custom-produced English silver-gilt mounts with hallmarks of silversmiths who worked during Elizabeth I's reign.¹⁸⁹ One example dates from the collection of Elizabeth I's advisor William Cecil, Lord Burghley (1520-1598) (Figure 51). The blue-and-white porcelain dating to the Wanli period (1572-1620) is detailed with an animal motif. The bowl is fitted with an ornate custom silver gilt frame with figural representations forming the object's handles. The piece documents the desire for British royalty to procure Chinese porcelain. The addition of an English silver mount dating to approximately 1585 provides evidence of the appropriation of the porcelain into British culture, emphasizing dominance over the porcelain itself, since it is held by an object associated with Britain. These early collections were quite small, including only a few pieces of porcelain. Collecting itself served more as a form of curiosity than a way of establishing what scholars would consider a true collection. The inclination to amass large collections

¹⁸⁹ Avery, Louise. "Chinese Porcelain in English Mounts." *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 2, no. 9 (1944): 266. doi:10.2307/3257145.

increased as time progressed, with these early individuals serving as the foundation for later trends¹⁹⁰.

Royal collectors in Europe invested substantial sums of their countries' wealth in order to participate in porcelain collecting. The best researched of these collectors was Augustus the Strong (1670–1733), King of Poland and Elector of Saxony, who amassed one of the largest collections of Chinese porcelain in the world.¹⁹¹ Augustus specifically collected porcelain from the Ming and Qing dynasties. The porcelain was displayed *en masse* in rooms known as “porcelain rooms.” These porcelain rooms were often filled with niches similar to those found in East Asian porcelain collections (Section 3.1, Figure 43), creating a sense of opulence based on the sheer volume of objects filling a designated space. Augustus' collection inspired later collectors to display their own objects in rooms, cabinets, and atop furniture throughout the home. By 1719, Augustus had collected more than 20,000 pieces of Chinese and Japanese porcelain. This collection eventually became the foundation of the Royal Porcelain Collection of Dresden, which continues to display a large portion of the porcelain pieces Augustus acquired.¹⁹²

British royal interest in porcelain collecting was similar to that exhibited by Augustus, with the primary collector of the 17th century being Mary II (1662–1694).

¹⁹⁰ Dutch and Portuguese porcelain trade was established with China during the 16th century. Early collections appear similar to early British collections, with a strong focus on blue-and-white export porcelain. However, collections originating in differing cultures exhibited unique trends. Further research is required to establish a comprehensive understanding of these variations.

¹⁹¹ Eva Ströber, *La Maladie de Porcelaine* (Berlin: State Art Collections Dresden, Porcelain Collection, 2001), 9.

¹⁹² Jan Van Campen and Titus m. Eliens, *Chinese and Japanese Porcelain for the Dutch Golden Age* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2014). The earliest wares within this collection date to around 1709.

Mary wed her first cousin, William the Prince of Orange, in 1677. This union resulted in her being crowned the Joint Sovereign of Great Britain in 1689 alongside her husband, the newly appointed William III. Mary developed a distinct taste for porcelain, favoring the blue-and-white style. Blue-and-white porcelain was developed far earlier than her rule, with the earliest known examples of this style occurring during the Tang dynasty (618–907). The wares were continually developed and improved due to technological advancements in kiln firing. In the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), the application of cobalt reached full development and by the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), blue-and-white porcelain production had achieved near perfection. The porcelain itself was thin and finely potted, achieving a pure translucent white tonality. These wares also exhibited mastery in the application of a deep, vivid cobalt precisely painted to create intricate designs on each vessel's surface. It was these Ming blue-and-white wares that first traveled to a Western market and almost instantly developed a cult following among society's elite. It is likely that Mary II first encountered blue-and-white porcelain while living in Holland. She resided in Holland for nearly 12 years prior to her marriage. In Holland, the successful Dutch East India Company steadily brought blue-and-white porcelain into Amsterdam, exposing Mary II to the blue-and-white style. Numerous works from Mary II's collection have survived. A large pair of blue-and-white lidded jars with covers exemplify her taste for these early Chinese porcelain wares (Figure 52). This pair is marked by the remnants of a red wax seal containing the coat of arms of Mary II and William III, documenting the provenance of each jar dated back to Mary's original collection. Housed at one of Mary II's homes, Hampton Court, the jars reflected the blue-and-white aesthetic trend of the time. Each jar has vivid cobalt decoration in

floral and leaf motifs. Within the pattern there is a clear representation of a peony, which is known as the king of flowers. Accompanying the flower pattern is a design of foo dogs (*shi shizi* 石獅子), which is a symbol associated with Buddhism that acts as a guardian to Buddhist temple entrances or palace buildings. The foo dogs move across the jar's body, jumping through the peonies growing along the vase's body. Mary II's collection is still a part of the Royal Collection Trust, and their records indicate that 787 porcelain objects were acquired during Mary II's reign.¹⁹³

The blue-and-white porcelain Mary II collected was utilized to create intricate decorative displays in her palaces. Hampton Court was filled with Chinese blue-and-white porcelain. Mary II's sets of porcelain decorated tabletops, lined doorways, and created garniture sets within rooms, creating a style that became known within her own time as "fatal excess."¹⁹⁴ Although it is difficult for scholars to identify which pieces of the Royal Collection Trust can be traced back to Mary II, surviving paintings offer insight into how the original blue-and-white porcelain of Hampton Court was displayed. When Hampton Court was opened for public viewing during the Victorian era, the idea of life within the palace became a highly romanticized subject for many artists. James Digman Wingfield (1800-1872) painted *The King's Bedchamber at Hampton Court Palace* in 1849, providing a visual representation of how the space appeared at the time of the painting (Figure 53). At the time the painting was created, the opulent bedchamber

¹⁹³ It is critical to note that these early records only calculate the number of pieces of porcelain found within Mary II's apartment. This method of calculation resulted in a portion of this number being wares produced outside of China, even though they are in the same blue-and-white style. Mary II was known to also collect Delft wares, which would be included within the total amount of porcelain she acquired.

¹⁹⁴ Robert Finlay, *The Pilgrim Art: Cultures of Porcelain in World History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 173.

was idealized with lavish elements conveying a sense of royalty. The painting showcases a distinct garniture set of blue-and-white porcelain above the doorway, which Mary II must have procured. The painting provides evidence that the styles of porcelain that Mary II collected were still utilized far beyond her reign and had become a standard by which British royals understood Chinese porcelain.

Along with the blue-and-white porcelain found at Hampton Court, Mary II and William III also collected porcelain for Kensington Palace, a home they purchased and began remodeling in 1689. Numerous visitors to Kensington Palace recorded their perspectives on Mary's extensive collection of blue- and-white porcelain. Writer Daniel Defoe (c.1660-1731) commented,

and here also a vast stock of fine china ware, the like whereof was not then to be seen in England; the long gallery ... was fill'd with this china, and every other place, where it could be plac'd with advantage.¹⁹⁵

Mary II's collection epitomizes an early British desire to collect Chinese porcelain in large quantities, as indicated by Defoe's description of the space. Mary II continued to collect Chinese porcelain until her death at the age of 32. While she collected other Asian wares, including Persian rugs and Japanese ceramics, it was her Chinese porcelain collection that formed the core of the Asian holdings of the Royal Collection Trust. Collections amassed by collectors like Mary II and Augustus the Strong marked what this study considered the beginning of Western porcelain-collecting traditions. The way in which these objects were displayed within royal residencies created a sense of opulence and abundance within the space. This concept of display for a collection has continued in

¹⁹⁵ Daniel Defoe, *A Tour Through the While Island of Great Britain*, ed. P.N. Furbank, W.R. Owens, and A.J. Coulson (London: Yale University Press, 1991), 72. Defoe's work was first published in three volumes between 1724-1726.

British collecting into the modern era. Museums today display massive amounts of porcelain rather than displaying objects selectively. In such cases, viewers still experience porcelain in a similar manner to the collecting and displaying styles associated with individuals like Mary II. The desire to collect porcelain feeds into the notion that porcelain embodies the “exotic.” The idea of the exotic was frequently found in association with the Far East, because it was a widely unknown and mysterious region. Few Europeans had traveled to China, and stories of the culture became easily exaggerated. China’s ability to maintain a global market and export expensive porcelain wares allowed material culture to transform porcelain into a representation of riches.

With the rise of royal interest in porcelain collecting, the concept began to spread widely throughout Britain. The expansion of the global porcelain market led to Europe demanding more access to Chinese porcelain. Despite the desire for more availability, China confined European trade to Guangzhou until 1842.¹⁹⁶ Guangzhou became a center for the export market and experienced a great deal of cultural exchange as a result of this exposure. While Guangzhou thrived as a center for trade, Britain worked to gain a better understanding of porcelain production. Individuals began to try to create porcelain themselves in an effort to join the growing porcelain market. Despite attempts to create porcelain, Britain lacked the raw materials and technological knowledge to successfully execute porcelain. Watercolors like *Unloading the Kiln*, dating to approximately 1770–1790, offered Westerners a glimpse into kiln production (Figure 54). This watercolor

¹⁹⁶ Guangzhou(广州) is also referred to as Canton. It is the capital of Guangdong province in the south of China. Guangzhou served as a major maritime port dispersing both tea and porcelain. In the Qianlong era and the decades leading up to the Opium War (1840-1842), the Chinese court restricted foreign trade to Guangzhou. Foreign trade was expanded with the Treaty of Nanking in 1842 allowing broader western access.

depiction showcases workers removing fired wares from several kilns. Originally, the watercolor was part of a set of 24, with each revealing a different aspect of the porcelain production process. The desire to produce porcelain spread across the Western world. A comparable set of watercolors was examined at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. This set included only thirteen watercolors that surveyed the porcelain production process. The similarities between these watercolors indicates that both watercolor sets drew inspiration from the earlier writings of Tang Ying. These watercolors appealed to the Western trade market, and individuals purchased them to study and attempt to uncover the secrets of Chinese porcelain production.¹⁹⁷ Unfortunately, the watercolors idealized the creation of porcelain and disclosed few of the actual requirements of the successful production method.

Despite the lack of both materials and knowledge, European potters still attempted to create blue-and-white porcelain. Although many of these attempts appear visually similar to the originals, under close inspection, they differ greatly. One successful imitation ware was produced by Delft (Figure 55). Dating to approximately 1704, this blue-and-white dish depicts a country landscape encircled by a floral scroll border. While the style of the Delft dish is quite similar to the export blue-and-white wares that this study investigates, it is entirely composed of tin-glazed earthenware rather than porcelain. This distinction means that the Delft plate visually captures the allure of Chinese porcelain but lacks the durability. After years of imitating Chinese porcelain, in 1709 Johann Friedrich Böttger (1682-1719) was the first Westerner to successfully create

¹⁹⁷ Ellen Huang, “From the Imperial Court to the International Art Market: Jingdezhen Porcelain Production as Global Visual Culture,” *Journal of World History* 23, no. 1 (2012): 115–45. The depiction of porcelain production would evolve beyond watercolors and become a decorative motif found on porcelain during the 19th century.

hard paste porcelain of the Chinese type. Böttger worked as an alchemist in Dresden under the direction of Augustus the Strong.¹⁹⁸ The highly coveted discovery was known as “white gold,” because the secret of porcelain was considered as valuable as gold within Europe. The discovery led to Augustus the Strong founding the Meissen factory, which successfully created hard paste porcelain as early as 1713. Examples of these Meissen successes can be found throughout British collections. One example at the British Museum dates to about 1725 and imitates a blue-and-white plate detailed with traditional Chinese iconography (Figure 56). The inclusion of plum branches correlates to Chinese imagery, creating a distinct connection between the porcelain produced in the West and the porcelain produced in the East. In this instance, it is clear that even though the West had the capacity to create porcelain, it was still more desirable to have Chinese porcelain. Due to the continued popularity of Chinese porcelain, factories like Meissen worked to produce wares that were influenced by Chinese styles.

As the formula for Meissen’s hard paste porcelain slowly spread throughout Europe, other ceramics companies tried to gain access to the porcelain industry. By 1745, British factories emerged in London, Bristol, Derby, and Worcester to create “Chinese”-inspired porcelain.¹⁹⁹ Although these factories attempted to create Chinese wares, they often did not match the same standards as porcelain from China. While clear evidence for new British porcelain enterprises existed, it was also apparent that the low

¹⁹⁸ Ströber, *La Maladie de Porcelaine*, 9. Despite European kilns attempting to replicate Chinese porcelain, they were unable to accurately capture the look of porcelain with the materials available to them. The only way to replicate the porcelain was to capture the external appearance that often meant utilizing a tin-glaze that created the same color tonality.

¹⁹⁹ Hilary Young, “Manufacturing Outside the Capital: The British Porcelain Factories, Their Sales Networks and Their Artists, 1745–1795,” *Journal of Design History* 12, no. 3 (January 1, 1999): 258, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jdh/12.3.257>.

quality of many of these imitations reinforced Britain's taste for Chinese porcelain, strengthening the desire to own porcelain that originated in China rather than Britain. Along with an imitation market, many British potters chose to create wares simply inspired by Chinese styles rather than attempt to create actual hard paste porcelain. By 1770, Josiah Wedgwood (1730–1795) developed Jasper, a fine-grained matte stoneware.²⁰⁰ Jasperware did not attempt to compete directly with porcelain, because it was an entirely different material. It was able to create a similar blue-and-white aesthetic, allowing it to capitalize on the fashionable aesthetics of the era. Known commercially as Wedgwood, this popular alternative to porcelain gained recognition within Britain, perhaps owing its success to the desire for Chinese blue-and-white porcelain.

From 1715 to 1765, British potters, especially those in the region of North Staffordshire, developed styles of ceramics that were directly inspired by Chinese porcelain. These inspired wares were reliant on highly colored ceramics. The production levels achieved by Stoke-on-Trent put this area on the global porcelain market, emerging as a porcelain city of the West.²⁰¹ While porcelain was attainable to the elite of Britain, it was still too expensive a ware to be purchased by common people. However, as economic shifts occurred within Britain, a rising middle class created even more demand for Chinese porcelain. Improvements within Britain shaped the way food was consumed, resulting in fashionable table manners, extended dinner services, and less reliance on

²⁰⁰ William Bowyer Honey, *The Ceramic Art of China and Other Countries of the Far East* (New York: The Beechurst Press, 1954), 11.

²⁰¹ Claire Blakey, "Bringing China to Stoke-on-Trent," *Orientalisms* 48, no. 4 (2017). The rise of Stoke-on-Trent made it comparable to Jingdezhen. An exhibition in 2011, "Ceramic Cities," explored the connections between these two porcelain centers.

shared wares. The newly emerging middle class demographic wanted porcelain but was unable to afford it. In order to satisfy this new demand, cheaply printed earthenware was invented to provide the appearance of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain without the high price. Using an inked and engraved copperplate, a print on paper was produced. While wet, the paper was pressed to the surface of earthenware to transfer an impression of the design. Manufacturers like the Spode family offered the middle classes blue-and-white printed pottery, flooding the British market with a completely British item produced to effectively imitate a ware from China. The most well-known of these Spode styles is the still-popular Willow pattern (Figure 57). The blue-and-white plate explores a Chinese-inspired landscape, conveying the overly romanticized views surrounding Chinese-inspired objects. Just as earlier British collectors exhibited porcelain to display their wealth, the middle-class owner of porcelain hoped that the purchase of imitation porcelain wares would help to create the illusion of wealth, prestige, and high social status.

Ultimately, the social connotation of Chinese porcelain promoted the rise of what scholars deem a cult of collecting known as “Chinamania” in England.²⁰² This epidemic slowly took Europe by storm (Figure 58), influencing numerous facets of culture. Numerous cartoons and illustrations of the time emphasize this fascination, depicting individuals filling their homes with massive volumes of porcelain. At this time, it was clear that the Western collector of Chinese porcelain was only looking for the porcelain itself as an object. Western collectors were not critically evaluating the artistic value of

²⁰² Anne Anderson, “Chinamania’: Collecting Old Blue for the House Beautiful, c. 1860-1900,” found in *Material Cultures, 1740-1920: The Meanings and Pleasures of Collecting* by John Potvin, et al, eds. (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), 112.

each piece as Chinese collectors did. This highlights a major difference between the collecting of porcelain in the Western and Eastern worlds. Early British collectors did not attempt to cultivate themselves as collectors and approached collection as a means of materialism, appropriating the objects for themselves and imposing their own values on them. Fascination with the East was embodied by a sense of mystery for the Western collector, and it is possible that this orientalism heightened the desire for an individual to “own” a small piece of this foreign culture. In this regard, ownership of the actual object may have represented a sense of dominance over China itself.

By the late 17th century, competition to produce porcelain was widespread. Despite competitors attempting to recreate these Chinese wares, these European counterparts were not always successful in recreating the same forms, shapes, and designs found on Chinese porcelains. Chinese porcelains utilized imagery of landscapes, birds and flowers, fruit, mythical animals, real animals, figures, narrative tales, and religious imagery. The British market found many of these designs appealing due to the allure generated by the far-off East. Trading companies also offered British buyers the ability to custom-order specific patterns, making it possible for Western imagery to be brought to a kiln and painted directly on a piece of porcelain. These custom orders led to the popularity of distinct armorial wares that were customized for individuals. Although some might view this situation as active competition, it actually succeeded in sparking a dialogue between the East and West, since individuals exchanged imagery in order to achieve the specific porcelain they desired from the kilns in China. Cultural exchange within porcelain design is exemplified by corresponding drawings and porcelain that survive in museum collections. *Plate with a Lady with a Parasol* is a design that was

first created by a Dutch painter, Cornelis Pronk (1691–1759), and then used on plates shipped by the Dutch East India Company (Figure 59). When comparing the hand-drawn design to the imagery on the porcelain, it is clear that the Jingdezhen craftsmen were skilled in mimicry. The potter was able to develop a clear understanding of the imagery and recreate it on *en masse* in an assortment of variations.²⁰³ Pronk was a known artist who was able to establish several patterns that thrived in the Chinese porcelain export market, emphasizing a connection between painted imagery and the painting done on porcelain. It is clear that in these early stages of collecting porcelain, individuals were most interested in these export wares that were of very little value to a Chinese collector. The wares were made specifically for the Western market and perhaps only had true value in that geographic location.

3.4 Considering Later Collecting in the East and West

While British culture was being shaped by Chinese porcelain, within China, the influence of the West was becoming more apparent. As global communications between countries improved, more direct interaction occurred between these two cultures. In the relationship between imperial China and the British monarchy, clear interactions occurred in which ideas were shared and diplomatic gifts were exchanged. The underlying motive for these communications was Britain's desire for China to reduce its regulations on trading ports. Surviving letters between the Qianlong Emperor (1711–1799) and King George III (1738–1820) preserve numerous exchanges discussing not only trade but also the exchange of diplomatic gifts. George III attempted to negotiate

²⁰³ Leidy, *How to Read Chinese Ceramics*, 128.

new trade agreements with China, sending an embassy in 1792. Led by Lord Macartney, the mission lasted until 1794. Although the trade agreement failed, the group returned to England with a wide variety of porcelain for the royal court, along with a letter from the Qianlong Emperor that read in part,

You, O King, from afar have yearned after the blessings of our civilization, and in your eagerness to come into touch with our converting influence have sent an Embassy across the sea bearing a memorial. I have already taken note of your respectful spirit of submission, have treated your mission with extreme favor and loaded it with gifts, besides issuing a mandate to you, O King, and honoring you with the bestowal of valuable presents.²⁰⁴

The letter indicates that Qianlong presented gifts to George III. Records belonging to the Royal Collection Trust describe porcelain, although it is now unclear which pieces of porcelain from the collection originated from this exchange. It is necessary to understand that the wares dispersed to the Western market were created with a completely different set of standards than those applied to domestic Chinese wares. Within China, domestic wares were generally of a higher quality. They were produced with finer porcelain and were decorated with exquisite brushwork. This category of porcelain included the highest caliber of wares: the imperial wares. However, the export wares were often of a lower quality, made with poorly developed clay, and characterized by quickly applied painted decorations.²⁰⁵ Early British collectors predominantly procured these export wares; however, these early diplomatic gifts identify a different category of porcelain arriving in Britain. The letter serves as one of the first indicators that British collections received wares from China that fall into the category of an

²⁰⁴ From the Emperor Qianlong's "Mandates" in *Annals and Memoirs of the Court of Peking*, by E. Blackhouse and J.P.P. Bland, London, 1914, 323 – 334.

²⁰⁵ Along with a high demand for export porcelain and the spreading desire to collect it, the Western world was also exposed to the differences between export wares and those wares deemed imperial.

imperial quality rather than a ware specifically produced for export purposes, suggesting that by the beginning of the 19th century, imperial wares were becoming part of British collections.

During the Qing dynasty, a high volume of cross-cultural exchange occurred resulting from the immense export enterprise. Along with export exchange, the Qing era had direct interaction with Jesuit missionaries.²⁰⁶ Jesuits were invited to join the imperial court within the Forbidden City, resulting in the introduction of innovative ideas directly from the West. These ideas became catalysts within Qing art, pushing styles forward in an effort to combine aspects of traditional Chinese art with new techniques from the West. Individuals like Giuseppe Castiglione introduced elements of European painting to the court. Painting practices like linear perspective, *chiaroscuro*, and *trompe l'oeil* were incorporated into Chinese paintings. While many of these techniques were associated with painting, they were directly applied to porcelain produced during this era. The British Museum collection has a variety of examples that highlight these innovations. A Yongzheng-era shallow dish with a green pastel exterior detailed with an intricate floral motif exemplifies the Western influence occurring at this time (Figure 60). The painterly design of plum blossoms was generated using subtle washes of color. The inclusion of an opaque white within each enamel allowed for a gradient effect and pastel tones that were not achievable until the Qing. The shading allows for highly realistic rather than static

²⁰⁶ In turn the Jesuits would describe the Chinese court to individuals in Europe. The most notable exchange recorded belongs to Père d'Entrecolles who resided in both Beijing and Jiangxi province. His letters dating to 1712 would describe porcelain manufacturing at the Jingdezhen kilns. Upon reaching Europe, the content of the letters was published providing first-hand accounts of Jingdezhen porcelain. For more on the Jesuit missions, see Gauvin A. Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions in Asia and Latin America, 1542-1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999). For more on Italian painters in China, see Marco Musillo, *The Shining Inheritance: Italian Painters at the Qing Court, 1699-1812* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2016).

and flat imagery, exemplifying the Western painting techniques entering China.²⁰⁷ The influx of new ideas reached its height during the reign of three specific emperors: Kangxi (1662–1722), Yongzheng (1723–1735), and Qianlong (1736–1795).²⁰⁸ The technological progression of clay refinement along with developments in kilns resulted in the highest quality porcelain to showcase these new techniques. Each of these emperors embraced the recently introduced Western designs, and as a direct result this era is referred to as the Golden Age of porcelain. The Golden Age emperors were also the main patrons behind porcelain entering the imperial collection.

The most prominent characteristic associated with porcelain from the Golden Age is the use of *famille* colors.²⁰⁹ In 1720, a workshop was set up within the Forbidden City to paint porcelain in a new color palette. The discovery of a crimson-pink enamel derived from gold along with an opaque white enamel facilitated a new range of soft shades of color referred to as *famille rose*. The ability to capture these shades on porcelain dramatically changed the way enamels were applied. Artists now had the ability to create any color shade within their painted porcelain and could therefore create a variety of new designs on porcelain by incorporating the newly introduced colors. One example of this style is a vase dating to approximately 1736–1795 (Figure 61). The vase exemplifies the rosy color palette associated with *famille rose* along with the potential for

²⁰⁷ The painting technique exhibited on the dish suggests that the enamel application was completed by a skilled artist in an imperial workshop in Beijing.

²⁰⁸ The Kangxi emperor was very active in the arts and was known as an impressive calligrapher. He was responsible for rebuilding the imperial kilns at Jingdezhen after conquest destroyed the site. Along with this rebuilding project, he established fourteen workshops in the Forbidden City and work to develop Chinese enamels to rival the newly introduced European colors. The legacy of Kangxi's patronage would be carried on by the Yongzheng emperor who would continue to promote the development of Chinese enamels. Both Kangxi and Yongzheng were known to collect for the imperial collection; however, neither procured as large a collection as Qianlong.

²⁰⁹ The phrase *famille* colors refers to three styles: *famille verte*, *famille noir*, and *famille rose*.

artists to create gradient shades with their enamel application. The large motif of a blooming peach branch emphasizes vivid peach tones on the fruit itself while also emphasizing the ability to shade in the white flowers and green leaves. While the color palette identifies the vase as being influenced by the West, the iconography associated with peaches holds strong connections to China. The peach is a symbol of long life often associated with the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu 西王母), who was said to rule over paradise. According to legend, the Queen Mother's peach tree bloomed for 1,000 years, making the peach itself not only an icon of long life but even a representation of immortality. The desire for the *famille rose* decorated porcelain resulted in such demand that the imperial workshop ordered blank porcelain directly from Jingdezhen and, upon its arrival, it was painted within the court studio.²¹⁰ The *famille rose* palette became popular with both the Manchu court and the export market. By the 18th and 19th centuries, porcelain in the *famille rose* style became a global commodity reaching the same popularity as earlier blue-and-white porcelain styles.

3.5 Emperor Qianlong: Premier Patron and Collector

It is generally accepted across the art historical community that the Chinese emperors within the Forbidden City obtained the premier Chinese collection of porcelain. The majority of the imperial collection was amassed during the Qing dynasty, primarily as a result of the procurements of the Qianlong Emperor (r. 1736–1796). This collection was undoubtedly the standard by which many individuals in China judged their personal

²¹⁰ Scholars have suggested that Jesuits may have had a great deal of influence or even provided instruction within this imperial studio.

collections and determined what was considered an “imperial” quality. Historians consider Qianlong to have had a prosperous reign during which he collected thousands of pieces of art in a variety of media. Unlike previous emperors who collected based on their specific interests, Qianlong actively collected almost every category of art for the imperial collection.²¹¹ This collection included thousands of paintings, calligraphy, porcelain, bronzes, jades, treasure boxes, cloisonné enamels, glass and lacquer wares. Qianlong even worked to collect a library known as the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 (Complete library in four sections) that contained more than 3,451 works.²¹² As a result of the collection’s rapid growth, Qianlong required that the imperial collection be recorded and cataloged. Surviving works from this project include the *Shiqu baoji* 石渠寶笈 (Precious Book Box of the Stone Drum), the *Bidian zhulin* 秘殿珠林 (Beaded Grove of the Secret Hall), the *Xiqing gujian* 西清古鑑 (Ancient Mirror of Western Clarity) and the *Tian lu lin lang shu mu* 天祿琳琅書目 (Tianlu collection of masterpieces).²¹³ These catalogs provide insight into the original focus of Qianlong’s collection while also indicating the massive scale of his collection.

Along with having a wide interest in the arts, Qianlong actively participated in the production process, requiring his approval throughout the various stages of fabrication. Qianlong’s active patronage promoted the inclusion of new techniques contributed by the Jesuits and created an environment that promoted both Westernization and modernization within the arts. Qianlong embraced these influences fully, welcoming Jesuit painters to

²¹¹ Scott, “The Chinese Imperial Collections,” 25.

²¹² Scott, 25. For further information, see R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor’s Four Treasuries: Scholars and the State in the Late Ch’ien-Lung Era* (Cambridge: The Council on East Asian Studies at Harvard University, 1987).

²¹³ Scott, 25.

his court and allowing them to instruct artists within his imperial studios. Examples of these innovative styles are evident within the British Museum's collection. One vase dating to Qianlong's reign demonstrates several of these influences (Figure 62). The vessel is painted with *falangcai* enamels, utilizing the emerging *famille rose* palette. The image selected is a portrait of two Western women. The choice of Western individuals indicates the high level of exchange occurring at the time. Wares of this period were not only inspired by the West but were often directly shaped by interactions with Western traders. As a result, Western imagery became commonly incorporated into porcelain designs. While these elements alone indicate that the vase had Western inspiration, it also incorporated linear perspective into the background of the scene. The artist also included a *chiaroscuro* effect created by the shading of the enamels on the vase's surface, emphasizing the movement of light. Scholars believe the enamels were painted in Beijing, indicating that it was painted within the Forbidden City rather than at the kilns of Jingdezhen. From this it is clear that porcelain and painting shared the same influential elements, creating areas of cross-media exchange. This exchange between fields of art occurred frequently, creating a distinct lineage between the trends of patronage Qianlong cultivated. These shared commonalities progressed into later dynastic China and were especially notable during the patronage of Empress Dowager Cixi. Similar to Qianlong, Cixi's patronage reflects distinct shared iconography in both painting and porcelain, allowing for a distinct style to emerge.

Catalog records housed at the National Palace Museum Taipei establish that Qianlong made an effort to document the porcelain added to the imperial collection. These catalogs include: *Jingtao yungu* 精陶韞古 (Refined ceramics of collected

antiquity), *Fangong zhangse* 燔功彰色 (Skilled firing, conspicuous quality), *Taoci puce* 陶瓷譜冊 (Ceramic catalog), and *Yanzhi liuguang* 埏埴流光 (Long-lived clay radiates light). The catalogs provide visual images offering evidence for the styles being collected by Qianlong, along with recorded details for each object. While these surviving records document aspects of Qianlong's collecting, relatively few sources detail the specific ways in which the ruler actively participated in shaping his collection. Qianlong studied extensively and was a gifted painter and calligrapher himself. His works were even included within the imperial collection. Qianlong included his own calligraphic inscriptions on paintings and porcelain within the imperial collection documenting his opinion. These inscriptions Qianlong applied provide evidence of what specific pieces the emperor was drawn to, highlighting his keen collecting vision. Qianlong's inscriptions imply his approval, indicating that he held these works in particularly high esteem. The emperor delegated the task of managing his collection to officials, with records providing evidence of how the collection was to be handled. Notes written by one of these officials, Shen Chu 沈初 (1729–1799), indicate that Qianlong required the objects be grouped into first- and second-class objects.²¹⁴ The act of grouping based on the assessment of each object's perceived value indicates a clear act of connoisseurship within the imperial collection.

It seems that within this collection, objects that did not meet the desired standard were frequently utilized as gifts or, in some instances, sold to cover imperial household expenses.²¹⁵ This trend had been established with documentation traced to Tang Ying

²¹⁴ Nicole T. C. Chiang, "Redefining an Imperial Collection: Problems of Modern Impositions and Interpretations," *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 10 (2014): 1–22.

²¹⁵ Chiang, 15.

(superintendent of the imperial kilns at Jingdezhen, 1682–1756) in 1735, who wrote that nearly 3,000 pieces of ceramic of lesser quality were shipped to Beijing for the emperor to give as gifts.²¹⁶ This evidence establishes that while the ceramics used as gifts were considered to be of lesser quality, they were still produced using the same imperial-grade materials, craftsmen, and kiln workshops. Although the final outcome resulted in a distinction of “lesser” quality, it appears that these wares were produced in a similar fashion and resulted in ceramics that mirrored what would have been used in the imperial household. Regardless of the ware’s quality, a ceramic commissioned by the emperor was still seen as a possession of the emperor, meaning that ceramics produced as a result of imperial order can be viewed as imperial objects regardless of modern scholars’ opinions regarding the quality. Additionally, the gift-giving standard Qianlong set continued into the late Qing and became a method of porcelain distribution that can be traced directly to Western collections.

As both a collector and an art patron, Qianlong set the tone within Eastern and Western understandings of Chinese art collecting. It is primarily his collection that is showcased in museum collections worldwide, which is a fact that is analyzed in a later section. Rulers of the late Qing followed Qianlong’s collecting standards. Qianlong served as an example of not only a fine collector but also a highly capable ruler. As a result, individuals like the Empress Dowager Cixi cultivated a direct connection to Qianlong by emulating his porcelain patronage. Not only did this actively create a bond between the empress dowager and the successful emperor, but it also connected her to Qianlong’s large imperial collection, which actively represented the power he held over

²¹⁶ Wang Guangyao, *Zhongguo Gudai Guanyao Zhidu (China’s Ancient System of Official Kilns)* (Beijing: Zijincheng Chubanshe, 2004), 198.

China. It is pertinent to connect these two rulers because it is clear that other Chinese emperors worked to connect themselves to previous reigns. The connection from one ruler to the past established that individual's imperial rule and paid respect to traditional Confucian beliefs.

In 1796, Qianlong abdicated the throne. Scholars generally agree that imperial collecting in China declined at this point. The Forbidden City experienced several fires prior to 1860 that resulted in the loss of paintings and books. Since no inventories survive that document the imperial collection prior to this point in history, the amount of loss resulting from events like fires cannot be established. Along with this damage, large quantities of looting and pillaging occurred in the late 19th century. The most notable of these events include the 1860 fall of the Yuanmingyuan followed by the later Boxer uprising of 1900 in Beijing. In these instances, both French and British troops removed numerous art pieces as profits of war. These objects traveled back to Britain and France, with many becoming parts of the collections of the British Museum in London and the Musée Guimet in Paris.²¹⁷ As a direct result, portions of the imperial collection that Qianlong most likely commissioned were removed from China and taken directly to the West. The movement of wares to the West has caused institutions and collectors from this region to accumulate collections worthy of intensive study.

Ultimately, scholars cannot track with complete accuracy the works collected by Qianlong. Over the years, parts of the imperial collection were lost, sold, and moved to new locations that have been partly addressed within this chapter. When the Qing dynasty fell in 1911, the imperial collection remained within the Forbidden City. The last

²¹⁷ Elliot and Shambaugh, 55.

emperor, Puyi, was allowed to remain in the palace in accordance with the “Favorable Treatment of the Qing Imperial Household.” He remained in the palace from 1911 until 1924 with complete access to the imperial collection of porcelain.²¹⁸ Puyi ordered an inventory of the imperial collection by 1923. As the inventory began it became clear that numerous objects were missing. Court eunuchs were thought to be behind the thefts, utilizing the objects to earn large monetary sums. As pressure mounted, some of the halls housing the imperial collection mysteriously caught fire and burned down destroying parts of the collection.²¹⁹ The physical loss of imperial collection pieces due to theft and fire was not the only detrimental occurrence during the lifetime of Puyi. The former emperor utilized the imperial collection porcelain wares as gifts for friends and family. Some of these gifts were documented, while many remain unknown.²²⁰ In 1924, Puyi was forced out of the imperial palace and the newly established Nationalist government took possession of the imperial collection. They inventoried the collection, marking the first attempt to analyze the existing imperial collection after the fall of dynastic China. The Committee for the Disposition of the Qing Imperial Possessions (清室善後委員會, *Qingshi shanhou weiyuanhui*) cataloged the entire collection, filling a total of 28 volumes in 1925.²²¹ These volumes reference bronzes, jades, paintings, calligraphy, enamel, lacquer, and porcelain along with other miscellaneous objects comprising the imperial collection.

²¹⁸ Scott, “The Chinese Imperial Collections,” 26.

²¹⁹ Jeannette Shambaugh Elliot and David Shambaugh, *The Odyssey of China’s Imperial Art Treasures* (University of Washington Press, 2015), 55.

²²⁰ Scott, 26. One known gift was presented to the Emperor’s brother, Pujie. While a list survives, limited detail is provided making it difficult for scholars to identify each object with complete accuracy.

²²¹ Chiang, “Redefining an Imperial Collection: Problems of Modern Impositions and Interpretations,” 1.

The objects that remained in the Forbidden City became the foundation for the Palace Museum that opened in Beijing on October 10, 1925.²²² By analyzing Qianlong's catalogs, along with the lists Puyi created documenting his gift giving, the Palace Museum was able to create the *Catalogue of Books, Calligraphy, and Paintings from the Palace Collection* (故宮詩書畫目錄, *Gugong yishi shuhua mulu*).²²³ It is clear that the Palace Museum had a strong desire to reclaim the lost objects associated with the imperial collection. This trend has led to the Palace Museum actively attempting to purchase wares that can be traced back to the imperial collection. While the original 1926 catalog did not directly address the porcelain lost from the imperial collection, it is evident that a great deal of porcelain comprising the imperial collection traveled. This makes it critical to evaluate the holdings of outside collections to establish the styles associated with porcelain of any era. In total, the Qing dynasty collected more than one million art objects, with the majority of those being attributed to the collecting of the Qianlong Emperor. This establishes that the Qianlong Emperor not only established himself as the premier patron of his time but also as one that later rulers strove to emulate, possibly attempting to collect objects similar to those Qianlong desired.²²⁴

²²² Scott, "The Chinese Imperial Collections," 26. Many of the numbers provided for inventories may fluctuate slightly, as the objects were moved numerous times during the 20th century. The major movement of imperial objects occurred when wares were moved to Nanjing in 1931 due to the Japanese occupation of Manchuria and in 1948 when objects were moved to Taiwan as a result of tensions between the Nationalist Government and Communist armies. The move to Taiwan would result in the formation of the National Palace Museum, Taipei.

²²³ Chu-tsing Li, "Recent History of the Palace Collection," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 12 (1958): 61–75.

²²⁴ Chiang, "Redefining an Imperial Collection: Problems of Modern Impositions and Interpretations," 2.

Based on the early inventories of the Palace Museum, only 10,000 pieces of porcelain were recorded, proving that many porcelain wares left the original collection.²²⁵

3.6 An Argument for Continuation

It is clear that Qianlong was a great patron of the arts, especially in terms of his active role in porcelain production. During his time as emperor, Qianlong supported porcelain production and ultimately contributed to the prestige associated with the Golden Age of porcelain in China. The porcelain of this time exhibited a mastery of previous styles including thin potting, molded details, complex enameled decoration, and versatile designs.²²⁶ The aspect that elevated these wares even further was the caliber of painting exhibited. Painting techniques were appropriated onto porcelain, creating strong brushwork. The brushwork turned the flat styles of earlier porcelain into more vibrant, dimensional motifs. The high standards associated with the Golden Age resulted in the premier porcelain of China that, to date, has never been surpassed. However, this study challenges the assumption that late dynastic Qing porcelain declined due to a lack of imperial patronage. Porcelain quantity declined; however, quality remained high after Qianlong's reign. As explored in the first chapter, historical evidence proves that Empress Dowager Cixi filled the role of imperial patron of the arts successfully. Due to her continued efforts, porcelain standards remained high after the peak of the Golden Age. The level of artistic quality, along with direct imperial patronage, remained consistent with that of previous rulers. These successes are evidenced by porcelain

²²⁵ Scott, "The Chinese Imperial Collections," 27.

²²⁶ Yi-hua Li, *Kangxi, Yongzheng, Qianlong: Qing Porcelain from the Palace Museum Collection* (Forbidden City Publishing House, 1989), 13.

preserved in modern British collections. As outlined, British collectors amassed their collections quite broadly. As a result, British collectors often procured items that were considered “undesirable” by a trained Chinese connoisseur. It was due to this perspective that several British collectors retained porcelain objects from eras that have frequently been overlooked, underappreciated, and devalued overall. These collections were unique, because the general trends in porcelain collecting in England did not show interest in the late dynastic era. According to scholars during the mid-20th century, British collectors predominately attempted to collect Chinese porcelain dating to the Ming dynasty or earlier.²²⁷ However, it was common for British collectors to acquire Qing porcelain that they misidentified as earlier Ming ware.²²⁸ A lack of knowledge and scholarship regarding Chinese porcelain allowed British collectors to unknowingly collect more broadly than they had intended.

Since the late Qing dynasty was a period that was considered a “decline” in porcelain, a vast majority of the wares produced were not widely collected or published within museum collections. As British collectors amassed large volumes of porcelain over a historically long period of time, they were able to procure examples from the late Qing period in volumes that are unmatched in other institutions. The quantity held by British collections allowed this study to conclusively identify the styles associated with this era. Scholars have frequently ignored the porcelain of late dynastic China. It is apparent that this is not a current trend, but rather a historically recurring event. An

²²⁷ Judith Green, “A New Orientation of Ideas: Collecting and the Taste for Early Chinese Ceramics in England 1921-1936,” in *Collecting Chinese Art: Interpretation and Display*, ed. Stacey Pierson (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2000), 43.

²²⁸ Stacey Pierson, *From Object to Concept: Global Consumption and the Transformation of Ming Porcelain* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), 66.

exploration of sources at the British Library revealed that even contemporaries writing during the late Qing era found the works being produced to be greatly lacking. One source dating to 1904 states,

The Empress Dowager rules China in the present day with diminished prestige when compared with her illustrious predecessors, K'ang-hsi (1662–1722) and Ch'ien-lung (1736–1795), but undismayed withal, she wields the calligraphic brush with a firm hand on the autograph scrolls which she distributes among her adherents, and is a liberal patron of native art. Her 'seals' are to be seen on many of the vases and dishes lately looted from the palace of Peking, an evidence that the fires are again burning at the imperial potteries.²²⁹

While the catalog clearly indicates that porcelain was continually being produced by Cixi and even refers to her being a “liberal patron,” it manages to belittle her contribution overall claiming she has “diminished prestige,” as a ruler. Works that the empress dowager patronized appear to not withstand comparison to the previous wares of the Golden Age, resulting in them being deemed unworthy of study.

While studies categorize Cixi in a negative manner, thorough investigation into Cixi's artwork, patronage, and historical indications provides a different perspective. Cixi fulfills the qualities of an imperial patron, which is reflected in the vast amount of both painting and porcelain she oversaw during her lifetime. In this regard, the empress dowager can be directly connected to the prior patronage of Qianlong. Just as Qianlong was active in the patronage and collecting of art, the empress dowager continued these traditions. She embraced the innovations of the West by continuing to promote art that reflected aspects of modernization and Westernization. This legacy is one scholars actively associate with Qianlong. A previous chapter established that Cixi clearly

²²⁹ *Catalogue of the Morgan Collection of Chinese Porcelains*, privately printed by Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan, New York, 1904.

maintained the imperial court at a similar standard to Qianlong. The timeline of peak porcelain in China must be revisited and ultimately reestablished. Given the maintenance of porcelain patronage upheld by the empress dowager, late dynastic porcelain can be reinterpreted. These porcelain pieces became the foundation for the wares of the early republic, thus establishing that the empress dowager founded a strong porcelain style that continued to influence porcelain production into the early republic. The style she established suggests that high levels of imperial patronage, artistic integrity, and modern aesthetics existed during this era.

3.7 Porcelain Collecting in the Era of the Empress Dowager

To begin to revise the current concepts of porcelain, one must consider Empress Dowager Cixi's interactions with art. A prior chapter examined these interactions in depth, establishing the major role Cixi played in the continuation of the fine arts during the late Qing dynasty. Works that are attributed to the empress dowager's patronage and even her own personal hand can be found throughout the world. An example at the Royal Ontario Museum exemplifies the distinct style belonging to Cixi in which there is a strong reliance on flower iconography (Figure 63). The hanging scroll *Tree peonies*, dating to the late 19th century depicts the recurring motif of a peony. The scroll reveals peonies blooming across the silk. The use of a white, yellow, and pink blossoms is evocative of the previously investigated scroll *Peonies* (Figure 7). While the composition of each hanging scroll is unique the iconography and technique exhibited appear stylistically comparable. The consistency demonstrated across the paintings and porcelain patronized by Cixi provides visual evidence that a distinct style, which predominantly

relied on floral iconography that promotes power, femininity, and imperial success was generated by the empress dowager during the late Qing period. Looking at British collections specifically, a significant amount of objects have survived that provide further evidence in support of a continuation of imperial patronage beyond Qianlong's reign. While many scholars refuse to credit Cixi as an artist, the British Museum's collection includes an example that is widely accepted as her work. The work, titled *Safe and Sound, Wealth and Honor*, is a paper rubbing of an engraved stele depicting a painting completed by Cixi (Figure 64). The work includes one of her inscriptions on the far left that reads, "sixteenth day of the eighth lunar month in the sixteenth year of the Guangxu reign." After analysis, this inscription suggests a date of 1890, establishing that the work was made during Cixi's lifetime. While scholars might still argue that Cixi did not paint the painting, it is clear that the work is undoubtedly rendered in her style. The main image of the painting is that of a peony in a vase. As previously explored, the peony symbolizes the king of flowers. The flower has frequent associations with imperial China dating back to the Sui and Tang dynasties when it was first recorded as growing within the palace gardens.²³⁰ As this study has explored, Cixi utilized the peony repetitively, making it an icon of her reign and personal artistic style. Along with the vase and flower is a *ruyi* scepter, which further emphasizes Cixi's position as ruler since the scepter was often associated with the emperor. The *ruyi* embodies wishes and translates to "as you wish." During the Qing dynasty, emperors and empresses were frequently presented *ruyi* scepters as birthday gifts.²³¹ The inclusion of the peony and *ruyi* design within this

²³⁰ Terese Tse Bartholomew, *Hidden Meanings in Chinese Art* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 2006), 123. The history of the peony dates back to the reign of Empress Wu Zetian (625-705) during the Tang dynasty.

²³¹ Bartholomew, *Hidden Meanings in Chinese Art*, 264.

depiction conveys Cixi's imperial status while also supporting her reign with auspicious meanings.

By this time in history, women had practiced painting and calligraphy in China for centuries, yet few earned recognition for their contributions to the arts. The lack of acknowledgement of female artists might be the reason the empress dowager was frequently denied credit for her paintings. Ironically, as the reign of the empress dowager progressed, a shift began to occur within China. Throughout Cixi's reign, women slowly became more recognized for their artistic abilities. This study views the shift as a direct result of the empress dowager's influence. She continually supported and provided patronage to female artists, allowing them to thrive during her time in power. Examples of these acts of a female patron supporting a female artist survive within Oxford's Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology. Miao Jiahui, who was previously mentioned as one of Cixi's favorite artists, is represented in the collection by her work *Bouquet of Peonies* (Figure 65). Miao was the best documented of these female artists who were able to avoid anonymity thanks to the direct support of the empress dowager. The hanging scroll depicts a large group of peonies. The flowers, painted in red, white, and yellow, are grouped together and tied with delicate blue ribbons. Each flower is depicted in a soft gradient color effect that closely resembles the soft application of *famille rose* enamel within Golden Age porcelain. The light hand and gentle brushwork is distinct, suggesting a subtle nod to the gender of not only the artist but possibly the female patron behind the painting. Another key element is the inclusion of the peony. The peony recurs as one of the flowers most frequently associated with Cixi and can be found on numerous examples of *dayazhai* wares she commissioned.

Displays of *dayazhai* vessels at the British Museum provide a direct correlation to the styles exhibited on both porcelain and paintings Cixi commissioned. Few pieces in the *dayazhai* pattern have been published and researched, making the collection at the British Museum especially valuable. Directly designed by the empress dowager, the five *dayazhai* wares serve as a critical representation of the style Cixi formed and promoted, which was explored extensively in a previous chapter. The British Museum houses two white plates of this style. The white plates are decorated with *famille* enamel, with each depicting lush leaves and a blooming lotus flower. There is also a heron in the painted scene, which is a direct reference to the summer pattern (Figure 66). The lotus can be viewed as a Buddhist symbol, while the lotus and the heron both represent long life. Another plate in the collection depicts the iconic winter *dayazhai* pattern. This motif is comprised of a strong opaque purple ground. The vibrant ground forms a striking contrast to an intricate design of purple, pink, and yellow poppies and peach blossoms (*taohua* 桃花). These flowers bloom near the Lunar New Year, connecting them to the winter months. Along with the array of flowers is a small magpie placed within the scene (Figure 67). The magpie is a popular motif during the Qing era, especially within painting. It holds a strong mythological meaning for the imperial family, who thought a magpie saved the family's founder.²³²

Finally, a bowl with a yellow ground detailed with peonies, wisteria, insects, and birds in a *grisaille* enamel completes the display of Cixi's *dayazhai* wares (Figure 68). This specific vessel holds the closest connection to the painted imagery of the Cixi

²³² Ronald W. Longsdorf, "Dayazhai Ware: Porcelains of the Empress Dowager," *Oriental Art* 23, no. 3 (1992): 47.

paintings and similarities to the previously analyzed spring *dayazhai* motif (Figure 16). Once again, a strong reliance on the peony is evident. The peony is considered the king of flowers and represents wealth and good fortune. The repetition of the peony throughout the works Cixi commissioned indicates a clear wish for the positive attributes associated with the peony to occur during her reign. The inclusion of wisteria serves as a representation of new life. The numerous petals of the wisteria flower are often synonymous with spring and summer, connecting the vast number of petals to the growth associated with those seasons. The imagery included on the porcelain also integrates a bird into the motif, again drawing a clear connection to the traditional aspects of Chinese bird-and-flower painting. The magpie depicted is considered a messenger of good luck, joy, or even happiness. The positive iconography found within the *dayazhai* bowl serves as a reflection on Cixi herself. The good wishes, happiness, and luck that are conveyed within the imagery were meant to be associated with her and her ability to rule China. The close connection achieved between the imagery found on both the *dayazhai* and the painting clearly unite the media of painting and porcelain, with the key connection between the two being Cixi's patronage. The empress dowager repetitively incorporated the same styles, patterns, iconography, and overall aesthetics in both art forms, creating a distinct, delicate style that had not existed prior to Cixi's reign. The reliance on bird-and-flower motifs is frequent, linking back to the traditional bird-and-flower paintings found in China. The innovation behind Cixi's style followed some of the elements associated with Qianlong's porcelain trajectory but it is evident that Cixi's porcelain was innovative and progressed further than scholar's have previously acknowledged. While her motifs

are traditional and static, they incorporate innovative brushwork and colors that convey an opulent aesthetic that is distinctive to her porcelain.

A survey of British collections also identified several vessels that the empress dowager commissioned but in styles that appear different from the *dayazhai* wares. A set of *jardinières* at the Ashmolean exhibit a similar pattern to the aforementioned yellow *dayazhai* bowl, yet it does not bear the seals and reign marks associated with known *dayazhai* wares. The *jardinières* display the same canary yellow glaze as the bowl, along with the distinct *grisaille* floral decorations (Figure 69). Examination of the floral design again revealed reliance on the peony flower, strongly connecting the imagery to Cixi's styles. Along with these visual clues, the *jardinières* themselves have a strong provenance going back to the empress dowager. The vessels were said to have been kept in Cixi's private apartments, creating a strong connection between the vessels and the empress dowager. In this regard, the *jardinières* serve as an indicator of Cixi's personal taste, since they were her personal belongings. The parallel between the designs of the *dayazhai* wares and these *jardinières* establishes that Cixi did have a distinct aesthetic that she desired and ultimately was able to create through her avid patronage during the late Qing era.

One of the main reasons that British collections include various examples of late Qing porcelain is historic events and the interaction between China and Britain during these occurrences. Many examples of imperial porcelain leaving China and entering Europe during this era were a direct result of military looting. The best-documented event of looting occurred as a direct result of destroying the Summer Palace (Yuanmingyuan) along with the general events associated with the Boxer Rebellion. In

the later development, as anti-foreign sentiments rose in China, several embassies came under siege, beginning a 55-day struggle for power. Foreign troops comprised of nearly 20,000 American, British, German, Russian, French, and Japanese soldiers ultimately subdued the Boxers. Along with overtaking the Boxers, these troops took numerous artifacts from China. The Yuanmingyuan had previously been ransacked beyond repair. Imagery of the palace's original appearance survives at the Victoria and Albert Museum with copperplate engravings documenting the extensive palatial complex (Figure 70). The engraving is part of an album depicting twenty views of the Yuanmingyuan, specifically showing the European Pavilions (*Xiyanglou* 西洋樓). Each view identifies an ornate palace, lavishly designed with the influence of the Jesuits to create the ambiance of a European palace. In this example, the View of the Calm Sea Palace (*Haiyangtang* 海晏堂) is depicted showing a large palace with sweeping staircases and large central fountain. The architecture itself emphasizes the Qing interest in western styles. The engraving also promotes western techniques using strong linear perspective within each landscape. The artist, Yi Lantai (act. 1749-1786), worked at the Qing court and was trained by Giuseppe Castiglione linking again to the imperial exploration of the west. The album serves as one of the few records of the Yuanmingyuan in its original state of being.

According to some records, institutions like the British Museum hold nearly 23,000 Chinese artifacts as a result of troop looting.²³³ Recently, the Chinese press has

²³³ Some sources vary depending on the country of origin. While China feels strongly that the objects were stolen and, therefore, should be returned, the cultures holding these objects argue they are a part of world heritage and are accessible to all. Several of these institutions argue that the objects were in fact purchased and traded fairly, calling into question how many objects were

claimed that 1.64 million Chinese antiques reside in nearly 200 museums in over 47 countries.²³⁴ Other European institutions like the Château de Fontainebleau, claim to hold between 600 and 800 objects that were originally part of the Yuanmingyuan.²³⁵ Institutions that currently possess objects with potential connections to the Yuanmingyuan typically maintain their ownership. Generally, institutions claim that these artifacts were part of their patrimony and if they are removed, it would constitute a loss for their own respective countries. Understanding what was removed from China during this era is riddled with speculation, because no palace records existed at the time to catalog the palace's contents, making it increasingly difficult to track the objects as time progressed. The records that describe what was packed and shipped by the foreign looters are just as difficult to follow, with the majority providing no description and possibly offering vague titles. While it is clear that the objects were removed, it is unclear just how many and exactly what types. Over recent years, numerous auctions have supposedly sold objects that were removed due to looting. Although the idea of looting could be further investigated, for the purpose of this study it allows for the establishment of imperial-caliber porcelain having frequently left China during the 19th and 20th centuries. The country that had the most interaction with these imperial

truly looted during events like the Boxer Rebellion. Sources also change the number of artifacts held by the British Museum with the largest estimates found totaling nearly 230,000.

²³⁴ These numbers were utilized by The China Centre for International Economic Exchanges as early as 1998. A study by UNESCO in 2016, also echoed these exact numbers.

²³⁵ French troops that plundered the Yuanmingyuan were said to have boxed up the best of the collection and shipped the boxes directly to Emperor Napoléon III. According to personal accounts of the time, the Empress Eugénie supposedly took part in opening the crates upon their arrival in France. She was responsible for the arrangement and display of many of these objects within France. For further information, see Jean-Paul Desroches, *From Beijing to Versailles Artistic Relations between China and France* (Hong Kong: Urban Council of Hong Kong, 1997). Additionally, see Colombe Samoyault-Verlet, *Le Musée Chinois de l'impératrice Eugénie* (Paris: Réunion Des Musées Nationaux, 1994).

porcelains was undoubtedly the key political power of this era, namely Britain, which is in keeping with the exquisite collections of Chinese porcelain kept in Britain's museums.

Empress Cixi's actions surrounding the various rebellions that occurred during her lifetime left her with a negative global reputation. She became known as being anti-Western. To combat these criticisms, Cixi turned to patronage as a means to reestablish a more positive image. Major examples of this positive patronage include her interests in both photography and Western portraiture, which were explored in previous sections (Section 1.3, Figure 5). The key factor is that these endeavors allowed Cixi to appeal to a Western audience, ultimately portraying her as a modern ruler. An examination of these portraits provides more evidence of Cixi's specific late Qing style. The clothing that the empress dowager chose has the same iconography that is found on her *dayazhai* wares and in her painting (Section 1.4, 1.5, Figures 11-19). The recurrence of floral imagery, most specifically the use of peonies, is visible. The continued inclusion of this imagery creates a strong argument for the empress dowager establishing herself as the premier patron of the late Qing dynasty and the primary developer of the styles associated with the era.

A less-investigated area related to Cixi's attempt to reestablish herself in a more modern and Western-friendly manner was her frequent reliance on diplomatic gifts. In an effort to restore diplomatic relations that had been strained over the course of her reign, Cixi became reliant on both painted and porcelain gifts. The Victoria and Albert Museum holds one of these gifts from Cixi, a large hanging scroll painted by Miao Jiahui entitled *Peonies* dating from 1906–1908 (Figure 71). The top of the scroll shows the large seal associated with the empress dowager, identifying the work as one of her

paintings. As in previous examples, the artist utilizes the recurrence of peonies in order to reference the strong association between the empress dowager and the flower. The red and white-toned flowers grow up the long scroll and appear with large green leaves. Unlike other paintings analyzed within this research, *Peonies*, uses rich, vibrant colors for each flower petal. The result is soft, yet the vivid colors contrast from many of the works attributed to Cixi that rely almost entirely on nearly imperceptible washes of color. Each representation of peony and leaf exemplify ranges of shading, creating a highly expressive representation. Similar to the previously explored *Bouquet of Peonies*, the painterly style exhibited within the piece places precedence on loose brushstrokes that blend together, creating soft, feminine flowers. Since the date of this hanging scroll places it toward the end of Cixi's lifetime, it was likely given in an effort to overcome the lingering negativity associated with the Boxer Rebellion. A variety of diplomats were invited to have audiences with Cixi, and *Peonies* was gifted to Frau Olga Julia Wegener. Wegener was the wife of a German diplomat who resided in China from 1906 to 1908. It was during this time in China that Cixi presented Wegener with the hanging scroll, thus forming a critical piece of evidence of Cixi's diplomatic endeavors. Wegener had a strong affinity for Chinese art and was known to have collected widely while accompanying her husband. In 1910, approximately 145 Chinese paintings from Wegener's collection were purchased by the British Museum.²³⁶ According to an archived letter from Wegener held by the Victoria and Albert Collection Registrar Files, this particular painting was gifted on July 16, 1909. Within the text, Wegener describes

²³⁶ Michelle Ying-Ling Huang "British interest in Chinese painting, 1881-1910: The Anderson and Wegener collections of Chinese and painting in the British Museum," *Journal of the History of Collections* 22, no. 2, (November 1, 2010): 279–287, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jhc/fhq009>.

that the painting was presented to her by the late empress dowager, thus establishing a firm history of ownership. The strong provenance established by being part of the Wegener collection, along with the striking visual similarities to the *dayazhai* wares, provides further support for the styles that the empress dowager supported during the late Qing era.

The empress dowager also worked to cultivate diplomatic relationships outside of China. One of the most intriguing of these endeavors was the establishment of a relationship between Cixi and Queen Victoria, who rose to power in England and held the throne from 1837 to 1901.²³⁷ These two rulers had something in common, since they both were female rulers in an era dominated by men. While Victoria was experiencing a period of historic rise within Britain, Cixi's power was fluctuating dramatically and ultimately declining. Surviving historic records do not clearly indicate how Cixi and Victoria felt about one another. Opinions of the empress dowager were always recorded by independent entities, which allows for speculation as to their authenticity and integrity. One first hand account of the relationship between Cixi and Victoria was recorded by Princess Der Ling 裕德齡, the First Lady in Waiting to the Empress Dowager. In her writing she states that during her time in the Forbidden City, from 1903-1905, the Empress Dowager said:

Although I have heard much about Queen Victoria I do not think her life is half as interesting and eventful as mine. My life is not finished yet and no one knows what is going to happen in the future. I may surprise the foreigners some day with something extraordinary and do something quite contrary to anything I have yet done. England is one of [the] great powers of the world, but this has not been brought about by Queen Victoria's absolute rule. She had the able men of parliament back her at all times and of course they discussed everything until the

²³⁷ John Douglas Sutherland Campbell Argyll, V. R. I.: *Queen Victoria, Her Life and Empire* (Harper & bros., 1901), 61.

best result was obtained, then she would sign the necessary documents and really had nothing to say about the policy of the country. Now look at me. I have 400,000,000 people, all dependent on my judgment.²³⁸

From this recording it becomes evident that Cixi found her position of power far more demanding than that of Queen Victoria. Despite the Empress Dowager's personal feelings towards Queen Victoria, throughout her lifetime she would maintain a working diplomatic relationship between China and Britain. The relationship is most visible through the continued exchange of gifts between both rulers. The majority of these gifts were works of art including hanging scrolls, calligraphy, and lacquer wares. One of the predominant types of gifts found within the Royal Collection Trust associated within this time period are pieces of porcelain Cixi selected. The most notable gifts exchanged were presented to Queen Victoria in 1897 to commemorate her Diamond Jubilee. Cixi selected a large pair of *famille rose* porcelain vases to present to Queen Victoria for her Jubilee (Figure 72). The vases have broad bodies with long, tapered necks extending to a wide mouth, and dragon-detailed handles. The porcelain is both enameled and gilded, adding a heightened level of luxury to the vessels. Around the body of the porcelain is an intricate landscape scene framed with borders of *ruyi* interwoven designs. Trees, lakes, and distant mountains are visible, creating a style that indicates the European painting technique of linear perspective. The pair dates to the earlier Jiaqing reign (r.1796-1820), an era during which European painting styles remained prevalent. The empress dowager's selection of this specific porcelain pairing indicates that she directly connected herself to the successes of earlier rulers. It also signifies that she was connected to the

²³⁸ The Princess Der Ling, *Two Years in the Forbidden City* (New York: Moffat, Yard and Company, 1911), 356-357.

open atmosphere created within previous courts that led to the incorporation of Western ideas into the porcelain commissioned by the imperial court.

Carefully observation of the painting on the porcelain vases, reveals that the landscape depicted is a clear representation of the Daoist paradise. This is identifiable due to the inclusion of the Eight Immortals within the landscape. On the vases the Immortals are crossing the water and progressing toward several other figures, including a depiction of the Queen Mother of the West in a boat.²³⁹ The Queen Mother of the West is the goddess of both life and immortality. She was thought to reside in a Western paradise, where she grew the peaches of immortality. According to traditional beliefs, the Queen Mother of the West serves as the ruler of all female Immortals. In this context the Queen Mother of the West may be yet another symbolic reference to the empress dowager.²⁴⁰ The selection of a pair of porcelain vases that embody the successes of the previous Qing reigns along with imagery that conveys feminine power indicate that Cixi meant this diplomatic gift to hold extensive meaning, emphasizing her power and authority.

Another gift presented to Queen Victoria in 1897 was a set of Qianlong vases. As previously established, Cixi's connection to the reigns of previous emperors allowed her to identify with the successes of the past, thus establishing herself within the context of accomplishment during her own reign. These vases are made of porcelain that was also painted in the *famille rose* color palette and accented with gold (Figure 73). The vases

²³⁹ The identifiable figures within the scene include Shoulao near the pavilion along with Liu Hai and his three-legged toad. These figures are all indicative of the Daoist paradise.

²⁴⁰ Paintings of Cixi often directly portray her as Guanyin. For further information, see Yuhang Li, "Painting Empress Dowager Cixi as Guanyin for Missionaries' Eyes," *Orientalisms* 49, no. 6 (December 2018), 50-61.

themselves are slender with tapering sides. The body rises into angular shoulders with a broad neck and a slightly flared upper rim. Both the neck and lower portion of the vases have blue overglaze with intricate gilt lotus scrolls. The portion of the vases' detail that is the most relevant to this investigation is the central body, which depicts four distinct floral images. Each side highlights a chrysanthemum, a peony, a lotus, and a peach blossom. The chrysanthemum, *ju*, is a symbol of long life. Often associated with the autumn season, the chrysanthemum manages to bloom at a time when other flowers begin to fade.²⁴¹ The second flower, the peony, has already been thoroughly evaluated as one of Cixi's most relied-upon emblems. This blossom represents the king of all flowers. The next flower found on the vessel, the lotus, has numerous interpretations.²⁴² It can represent the summer season, and it has a connotation as a Buddhist symbol, because the lotus flower grows from muddy ponds and blossoms into a pure white bloom.²⁴³ The final flower found on the vases is a peach blossom. The peach blossom is most frequently associated with Daoism, specifically the Queen Mother of the West, who was thought to grow the peaches of immortality. Clearly, these vases are marked by the classic imagery that this study has found that the empress dowager used repeatedly in both her painting and porcelain patronage. Although the vases date to earlier than Cixi's reign, they utilize the same iconic flowers that are intrinsic to late dynastic styles. Flowers of these varieties can be seen on Cixi's *dayazhai* wares along with the paintings she commissioned, suggesting that although Cixi did not originate the idea of an

²⁴¹ Bartholomew, *Hidden Meanings in Chinese Art*, 175.

²⁴² For further discussion of the lotus see Steven D. Owyong, "The Painting of Minol Araki and the Lotus in Chinese Culture," in Claudia Brown, Richard Barnhart and Stephen D. Owyong, *Minol Araki* (exh. cat.: Phoenix Art Museum, 1999), 25-29.

²⁴³ Eva Ströber, *Symbols on Chinese Porcelain: 10,000 Times Happiness* (Keramiekmuseum Princessehof: Arnoldsche Art Publishers, 2011), 116.

auspicious flower, she was largely responsible for bringing attention to the style during the 19th and 20th centuries. It was the empress dowager who elevated the use of iconographic flowers to make powerful statements within her art patronage. In this instance, a direct connection to Qianlong's reign can be identified proving that Cixi looked to the past for influence and then harnessed her own artistic prowess to innovate new styles that have been identified as belonging to late dynastic China.

These wares ultimately joined the British Royal Collection Trust through the collection of Queen Victoria, strengthening the existing royal porcelain collection and continuing the trajectory begun by Mary II. Queen Victoria may have been influenced by these porcelain diplomatic gifts from Cixi and continued to collect fine art from the Far East. Objects that were part of the royal collection were moved into Buckingham Palace and given prominence within the space. Again, looking back to the trends Mary II established, rooms within the palace were filled with Chinese porcelain. The resurgence of Chinese porcelain within the British royal family continued beyond the reign of Queen Victoria. Her children and grandchildren were among the first members of the British royal family to travel to the Far East. During these travels, even more pieces of porcelain were added to the royal collection, resulting in the British monarchy having an excellent collection of Chinese porcelain. The collection encompassed a broad timeline and included both export- and imperial-caliber wares. This range exemplifies the diversity found within Chinese porcelain more accurately than many other collections in the world.

Toward the end of the Qing dynasty, the concept of the imperial collection became difficult to actually trace. As Cixi's power began to fade, China entered into a tumultuous time period that ended in the fall of imperial rule. As a direct result of this

decline, the imperial collection of art became a source of monetary support for the Qing imperial family. By the turn of the 20th century, the imperial collection became a solution to the financial tensions plaguing the imperial family.²⁴⁴ While it is evident that many objects held within the imperial collection were sold at varying points in late dynastic China, not many of these instances were well documented.²⁴⁵ One of the first accounts of porcelain leaving the imperial collection occurred during the late reign of the empress dowager. Following the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, Cixi fled the Forbidden City and required funds to support herself. Cixi offered parts of the imperial collection to the Salt Industry Yuin Yeh Bank as part of the collateral necessary to gain financial assistance during this exchange.²⁴⁶ The last Qing ruler, Puyi, followed this choice when he approached the same bank, along with several others, to obtain a large loan required to ease the financial pressures of attempting to regain political power.²⁴⁷ When rulers utilized their imperial collections to reestablish themselves, it once again emphasized the importance of ceramics within the imperial realm. These wares were not only seen as fine art, given as diplomatic gifts, and viewed as the results of acts of patronage, but they were also ultimately a personalized bankroll for each ruler. Porcelain was not only used as a means to establish imperial power, but ultimately as a means to keep it. This

²⁴⁴ Chiang, “Redefining an Imperial Collection: Problems of Modern Impositions and Interpretations,” 17.

²⁴⁵ This was not a recent development, historically, records dating to the reign of Chongzhen (1628-1644) indicated sales of the imperial collection to provide financing. Similar to the monetary needs of Cixi, Chongzhen required the funds to enhance military defense against the Manchus. Rather than sell porcelain, Chongzhen sold and melted down numerous bronze vessels from the imperial collection.

²⁴⁶ Stacey Pierson, *Collectors, Collections and Museums: The Field of Chinese Ceramics in Britain, 1560-1960* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 133.

²⁴⁷ Chiang, “Redefining an Imperial Collection: Problems of Modern Impositions and Interpretations,” 17.

establishes that porcelain objects were sold and loaned from the imperial collection. Therefore, the late Qing era marks the point at which the first porcelain from the imperial collection can be traced out of China and directly into the Western market.²⁴⁸ While it is difficult to track each specific porcelain ware, this study has found that modern British collections include examples with provenance suggesting that the objects were purchased from the imperial collection. Under the organization of the Imperial Household Department, sales of imperial porcelain took place during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which likely explains how these objects came to reside in British collections. It is clear that from this point in time, imperial-quality porcelain was shipped to the West either as a result of looting or of sales used to finance Qing rule within China.²⁴⁹ Both of these outcomes resulted in imperial-caliber porcelain with a strong provenance exiting China and joining well-established British collections.

Along with these sales, events occurring within England led to Chinese porcelain being exposed to the masses. London's Great Exhibition of 1851 introduced the general population to an array of Chinese porcelain.²⁵⁰ Unlike previous porcelain introductions, millions of people viewed this exhibition, creating more rapid exposure to the medium. Documentation of the Great Exhibition of 1851, held at the Crystal Palace, is widely available within the British Library. The Great Exhibition displayed Chinese decorative arts. It is critical to note that many of these items had been collected by merchants and

²⁴⁸ Other wares were given prior to this point in time as gifts by rulers or were looted objects. This marks the first major grouping of items to be purchased in the Western world that can trace their provenance to the original Qing imperial porcelain collection.

²⁴⁹ Members of the imperial family sold a variety of objects in auctions throughout the late Qing era. For further information, see *The Remarkable Collection of the Imperial Prince Kung of China*. New York: American Art Galleries auction catalog, 1913.

²⁵⁰ Yvonne Ffrench, *The Great Exhibition: 1851* (London: Harvill Press, 1950).

were not curated by a Chinese connoisseur. Illustrations of the Crystal Palace even depict the variety of Chinese porcelain on display, allowing this study to identify the majority of the wares exhibited as export porcelain. Photographs taken during the exhibition make it possible to identify distinct pieces of porcelain (Figure 74). In one example, two slightly smaller vases flank a large porcelain vase. Compared to earlier porcelain collected within Britain, these examples appear more Western in style. They display the styles associated with the *famille rose* color palette and the opulence of the Golden Age of Qing porcelain. After analyzing the styles documented at the exhibition, it is clear that the majority of the vessels were what was being produced at the time rather than wares that were considered appealing to a traditional Chinese collector. The wares displayed at the Great Exhibition of 1851 were still not of the same styles, quality, or aesthetic as those found within imperial Chinese collections. The evident difference highlights the effect of material culture within both China and the West. While China ascribed specific values to certain types of wares, the West viewed porcelain from its distinct cultural background, allowing different vessels to achieve popularity.

The Great Exhibition was followed by a steady stream of exhibitions held within London that explored the range of porcelain found within China. The trend of Western porcelain collecting and orchestrating displays continued with the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1855 and the London International Exhibition of Industry and Art in 1862. By 1873, at the World's Fair in Vienna, a change occurred in the display of Chinese objects in that this was the first exhibition in the West that was authorized by the Chinese government, indicating approval from Cixi. This exhibition included numerous art forms, but one area that was highly appreciated by the public was the display of Chinese

porcelain. The popularity of this exhibition prompted the purchase of many of these objects, leading to several museums in Europe adding to their own collections. China's involvement in exhibitions during the late 19th century connects to the timeline of the empress dowager attempting to utilize artistic patronage to promote a Westernized and modern China. Many of the empress dowager's interactions with the West resulted from this artistic exchange, making her one of the most globally influential patrons of Chinese porcelain.

During the 1870s and 1880s, China actively participated in both small and large exhibitions worldwide. While art of a wide variety was exhibited, it was not until London's International Exhibition of Chinese Art in 1935 and 1936 that an exhibition included a wide array of Chinese ceramics.²⁵¹ China had the unique role of actually deciding which wares would be sent to the exhibition, and therefore they determined that these wares had to possess superb form, artistic drawing, and glaze color. It seems that even though Western collectors felt they were viewing an exhibition cultivated by Western collectors, a great deal of what was displayed was controlled, and therefore influenced, by China. This occurrence perhaps emphasizes some of the subtle influences of the Chinese connoisseur on the Western market. Therefore, imperial rulers like the empress dowager and Yuan Shikai actively shaped not only the wares produced in China, but those viewed by the West. The relationship cultivated between these patrons and porcelain shaped the way the West encountered and understood porcelain.

By the 19th century, the market for Chinese porcelain had expanded even further. Sales had transitioned from being predominantly export industries reliant on global

²⁵¹ Honey, *The Ceramic Art of China and Other Countries of the Far East*, 3. The ceramics in the exhibition were predominately porcelain dating to the Ming dynasty.

shipping to organizations that focused on the sale of Chinese objects within London. For the first time, an individual was able to browse a catalog and specifically order a piece of porcelain without ever having to leave his or her own home. The emergence of a sales market within Britain shifted the cultural association attributed to porcelain. It was a commodity that could be easily purchased, which turned porcelain into a purely decorative object. Companies like the Eastern Art Manufactures produced their first catalog in 1881 (Figure 75). Investigating this catalog at the National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum revealed that the company allocated an entire section of its catalog to Chinese porcelain. The section details styles, shapes, and colors available for order, indicating the desirability of Chinese porcelain in late 19th-century Britain. Although the styles of porcelain that were collected shifted significantly over the course of time, it is evident that Chinese porcelain has maintained a high level of prominence within Britain. However, it is apparent that during the 19th century there was very little connoisseurship in the collecting of Chinese porcelain. Porcelain that was acquired was viewed without considering its historical context, therefore, collections and exhibitions were often unable to convey the depth of meaning and artistry intrinsic to Chinese porcelain.

3.8 The Sir Percival David Collection and Collecting During the 20th Century

A combination of exposure to porcelain due to exhibitions and early sales directly from China's imperial collection resulted in the greatest collections of Chinese porcelain being amassed in Britain, making Britain's collections a focal point for this study's investigation. These collections were built on the strength and connoisseurship of the

collector. Each collection placed importance on the imperial production process that required only the best porcelain to leave Jingdezhen. By identifying these wares, collectors were able to amass an imperial-caliber collection outside of the Forbidden City. The most prominent of these collections is the Sir Percival David Collection housed within the British Museum. Born on July 21, 1892, in Bombay, India, Percival Victor David Ezekiel David became an avid connoisseur of Chinese porcelain.²⁵² Sir Percival joined his father's business, Sassoon J. David and Co. Ltd., which worked in banking, textiles, and opium.²⁵³ He first visited China for business in 1924, which began a lifelong passion for collecting porcelain.²⁵⁴ Few records from Sir Percival survive detailing how and why he collected the porcelain that ultimately comprised his collection.²⁵⁵ Unlike other collectors of the era, Sir Percival combined his personal aesthetic tastes with a thorough scholarly understanding. Sir Percival studied Chinese porcelain, amassing a large and thorough library on the subject. He also studied Chinese language and developed numerous contacts in China. This academic background in Chinese art history allowed Sir Percival to create a collection of porcelain that aligned with the styles of the imperial collection within the Forbidden City. Evidence of this commitment can be found in Sir Percival's published articles. The first article, written in 1929, discusses the identification of Yue wares. Over his lifetime, Sir Percival published

²⁵² S. H. Hansford, "Obituary: Sir Percival David," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 28, no. 2 (1965): 472–75.

²⁵³ Jessica Harrison-Hall, "Whose Line Is It Anyway? Marks and Inscriptions on Chinese Ceramics in the Sir Percival David Collection," *Orientalism* 40, no. 8 (2009): 63.

²⁵⁴ Anthony Lin Hua-Tien, "An Interview with Lady David," *Orientalism* 23, no. 4 (1992): 56.

²⁵⁵ For an examination of the full collection see Hobson, R. L. *Catalogue of Chinese Pottery and Porcelain in the Collection of Sir Percival David*. London: The Stourton Press, 1934.

numerous academic articles primarily found within the *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*.

It was the combination of these efforts that added to Sir Percival's ability to collect not only on a massive scale, but also with a keen eye. Compared to other collectors of this generation, Sir Percival amassed a collection of porcelain in the manner of a true Chinese connoisseur, not falling into trends often apparent in the collections of other Western collectors, who purchased exclusively export wares or focused on obtaining large quantities. When Sir Percival first began collecting in the 1920s, it was extremely difficult to procure imperial-quality Chinese porcelain within England.²⁵⁶ The major galleries selling Chinese porcelain at the time were Sparks, Bluett, and Spink.²⁵⁷ As previously explored, porcelain could easily be purchased in England. Purchased porcelain was not always of a high imperial quality, export wares comprised the majority and were of varying caliber. Since so little was published on Chinese porcelain, Sir Percival relied on his own knowledge of the subject along with the authenticity provided by purchasing wares with reign marks or inscriptions. Maintaining this standard at such an early point in 20th-century collecting made Sir Percival's collection well-regarded by the scholarly community. Experts like Robert L. Hobson (1872–1941) wrote early catalogs and reviews of Sir Percival's collection.²⁵⁸ The first catalog in 1934 outlines the fine imperial quality of the collection, which is still the accepted opinion of art historians.

²⁵⁶ Harrison-Hall, "Whose Line Is It Anyway? Marks and Inscriptions on Chinese Ceramics in the Sir Percival David Collection," 63.

²⁵⁷ Hua-Tien, "An Interview with Lady David," 57. For further information see the archive of Bluett and Sons at, <https://archive.asia.si.edu/collections/downloads/Bluett-and-Sons.pdf>.

²⁵⁸ Regina Krahl, "Surprises, Discoveries and Puzzles: Reviewing the Sir Percival David Collection," *Oriental Art* 40, no. 8 (2009): 54.

Sir Percival collected widely, which in itself was quite rare for a porcelain collector: they typically focused on one era of production. This variety created a connection between the Sir Percival David Collection and earlier British collectors who procured porcelain. While these early collectors focused on obtaining a large number of objects that denoted a trend of ownership, the Sir Percival David Collection was far more selective.²⁵⁹ As a result, the Sir Percival David Collection included ceramics from the 3rd through 20th centuries, with each object being of superb quality. Within this large quantity of porcelain, several strong groupings can be determined: inscribed wares from all eras, classic Song dynasty ceramics, Ming porcelain of the 15th century, and objects made for the Qing rulers.²⁶⁰ These categories focus on the areas of the collection that have been subject to the most scholarly research, which has left some portions of the ceramics relatively unexamined. One significant category within the collection is the wares procured from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Many of the ceramics that Sir Percival added to his collection held a strong provenance. This is an element to which virtually no other collector discussed in this study attended. Sir Percival predominately purchased wares that had associated inscriptions. Within the collection, approximately 58% of the porcelain has an inscription on the vessel itself.²⁶¹ These inscriptions provide a clear identification of the date of each porcelain ware's production. Along with these inscriptions, many of

²⁵⁹ For further information on the Sir Percival David Collection see Margaret Medley, *Illustrated Catalogue of Ming and Ch'ing Monochrome In the Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art* (London: University of London, 1973). Additionally, see Margaret Medley and The Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, *Illustrated Catalogue of Underglaze Blue and Copper Red Decorated Porcelains* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1976).

²⁶⁰ Harrison-Hall, "Whose Line Is It Anyway? Marks and Inscriptions on Chinese Ceramics in the Sir Percival David Collection," 63.

²⁶¹ Harrison-Hall, 63.

David's objects have recorded places of manufacture, patronage, or connection to the imperial family. For example, Sir Percival purchased approximately 50 ceramics directly from the Yuin Yeh Bank in 1927 that went on to be major components of his Chinese porcelain collection.²⁶² As established earlier, this bank acquired major assets directly from the imperial holdings of Empress Dowager Cixi.²⁶³ In this regard, it is clear that Sir Percival David had direct contact with objects that were not only part of the imperial collection but had been particularly selected by Cixi. As a result, portions of Sir Percival David's collection had a clear provenance back to Cixi, identifying them as representative of her personal aesthetic, which proved to be the major inspiration for the imperial styles of the late Qing era.

Within the Sir Percival David collection, the object with the strongest connection to Cixi's porcelain is a small *dayazhai* marked bowl (Figure 76). The exterior of the vessel is detailed with a yellow enamel ground that is unevenly applied, appearing lighter on one side and slightly deeper toned on the other side of the body. The mouthrim and footrim have remnants of ornate gilding that has worn over time. Overglaze *grisaille* enamel forms a bird and flower motif, featuring a small magpie along with interwoven wisteria and peonies. The design exhibited appears reminiscent of earlier porcelain associated with Cixi's patronage (Figures 16, 68) unifying these examples to form a distinct expression of the porcelain of Cixi's era. The shared style found on all three spring *dayazhai* bowls resulted in clear continuation of a bird and flower motif within Cixi's patronage. Utilizing nearly identical imagery, forms, enamel colors, and

²⁶² Chiang, "Redefining an Imperial Collection: Problems of Modern Impositions and Interpretations," 17. This bank was also referred to previously in the chapter of the Empress Dowager.

²⁶³ Hua-Tien, "An Interview with Lady David," 56.

symbolism, establishes thematic recurrence within Cixi's porcelain. Given the provenance associated with the collection, it is highly likely that this *dayazhai* bowl was acquired directly from the Forbidden City. It is plausible that the bowl had a direct connection to the empress dowager, therefore, establishing the bowl as a strong representative of late Qing designs within the Sir Percival David collection.

After personal examination of the Sir Percival David collection it becomes evident that one of the strongest aspects of the grouping is the range of wares dating to the late Qing period and into the early republic. Few individuals felt that this era was worthy of extensive research or a collector's attention. David's adherence to a broad scope allowed for his collection to include these frequently overlooked objects, creating a dramatic visual timeline of porcelain transitioning into the modern era. After the abdication of Puyi in 1911, the Qing dynasty ended, as did imperial rule in China. The imperial kilns at Jingdezhen had diminished patronage, because imperial patronage ceased to exist. Scholars have chosen to neglect this era, claiming that imperial-quality porcelain could not exist outside of imperial China. However, this study reaches an alternative conclusion. Historically, the kilns at Jingdezhen did continue to produce porcelain that was for official and commercial use after the Qing period. Additionally, the kilns reopened under the brief patronage of Yuan Shikai (1859–1916), who ruled as the Hongxian Emperor for a brief 82 days. The Jingdezhen kilns continued to utilize the same kilns, craftsmen, artists, and raw materials that were in operation during the Qing dynasty. Due to these circumstances, many of the wares produced offer a visual continuation of imperial styles beyond the reign of the Qing.

This era initiated several new innovations within the kilns at Jingdezhen. For the first time, the painters associated with each piece of porcelain gained more prominence. Wares dating to this era often include a factory mark or even an artist's signature, whereas earlier imperial wares consistently required artistic anonymity. This change within porcelain production highlights the modernization that occurred in the art form. For the first time, artists were treated like artists rather than craftsmen that mass-produced on a grand scale. This change suggests that the emergence of artists within the porcelain process would elevate the level of artistry on each vessel. Just as painting saw the emergence of schools of thought, a similar revolution occurred in the porcelain industry. In 1928, groups like the Full Moon Society (*Yueyuan hui* 月圓徽) operating in Zhushan began to form. The group later became more commonly known as the Eight Friends of Zhushan (*Zhushan ba you* 珠山八友).²⁶⁴ While many scholars have found that these groups were only united by their monikers rather than a shared aesthetic, this study argues that these schools of thought cultivated distinct aesthetics that united ceramic artists. This transition became visible in the imagery achieved during the early republic. While wares were different due to the unique artist behind each one, these wares appropriated the intricate painterly brushstrokes that were popular during Cixi's reign and applied them to traditional Chinese concepts, achieving a conservative style that was not as prevalent in prior years.

One area of strength within the Sir Percival David collection is a group of porcelain wares depicting a *falangcai* style. *Falangcai* refers to "foreign colors," denoting the influence of European colors on porcelain enamel palettes. Enamels can be

²⁶⁴ Blakey, "Bringing China to Stoke-on-Trent," 36.

painted on a white ground or a colored ground, leading to the development of numerous subcategories like *fencai*. However, within this study the broad idea of *famille rose*, meaning “the pink family,” has been the most relevant. The wares produced in *falangcai* during the Qianlong reign were unique because they were enameled within the Forbidden City’s workshop. This distinction means that the porcelain was painted by an artist and given a great deal of attention. In *Five miniature garlic-head bottles*, each vessel displays a different floral or bird-and-flower image in the *falangcai* coloring (Figure 77).²⁶⁵ Each vessel displays a globular body, long-neck, and six-lobed garlic-head style mouth. While the motifs are undoubtedly inspired by earlier representations of auspicious flowers and birds, each design is unique. While this study has primarily seen matching pairs, this group of vases maintain complementary designs. The imagery across all five vessels incorporates rocks, chrysanthemums, lilies, asters, and maple. The range of imagery created on each vessel was a direct result of the type of porcelain being produced within the palace workshops, which relied on the painting of an individual artist. In comparison, wares that were finished at Jingdezhen could be attributed to specific workshops. Each workshop relied on the same individual to paint each vessel, or on a group of artists working within the same style. This process resulted in uniformity within the objects painted in each workshop. In contrast, the palace workshops were not standardized. Each painter worked as an individual, and therefore the wares of the *falangcai* style were each unique in their enamel application. Regina Krahl has suggested, “*Falangcai* porcelains were painted individually by court painters with a distinct personal style, rather than by teams of highly specialized craftsmen working

²⁶⁵ Krahl, “Surprises, Discoveries and Puzzles: Reviewing the Sir Percival David Collection,” 61.

production-line style. Rather than bearing repeat patterns, each piece is different – even pairs are complementary but never identical or mirror-symmetric.”²⁶⁶ These wares have a direct connection to the styles produced later during the reign of Cixi and Yuan Shikai. The painters of porcelain during this time looked back to the styles cultivated in *falangcai*, drawing direct inspiration for the styles of the late Qing. The clear connection between wares of the late Qing and the *falangcai* style of enamel leads this study to find that the porcelain produced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was intended to achieve a similar level of distinctive imagery. This is best exhibited by the *dayazhai* wares that focus on a similar bird-and-flower design and rely heavily on intricate brushwork to create a highly ornate design. The idea of continuing a tradition that valued individuality suggests that much of the porcelain produced during the late Qing dynasty was not created on a mass-produced standard and was in fact patronized to achieve a specific aesthetic.

Connections within the Sir Percival David collection progress beyond the wares produced during Cixi’s era. Porcelain created after Cixi’s reign shares distinct commonalities with wares created during her rule, bridging the high standards of the late Qing and the wares produced in the early republic. One of the best examples within the collection is a pair of small porcelain vases with pear-shaped bodies and fluted upper rims on splayed foot rings (Figure 78). Both vases are exquisitely painted in shades of brown and green enamel, with one creating the image of a cricket and the other a cicada. Each vessel has an iron-red mark on the base dating to the Hongxian era. Accompanying this mark is a second iron-red seal that reads *Jurentang*, meaning “the hall where

²⁶⁶ Krahl, 61.

benevolence resides.” These two marks are associated with the rule of Yuan Shikai, who adopted the reign name *Hongxian* and resided within *Jurentang* when he lived within the Forbidden City. Both of these marks date the vases to 1916, and the connoisseurship associated with Sir Percival suggest that these vessels have extremely strong provenance. A cricket is a traditional emblem associated with China. Crickets have long been kept as pets and are symbols of happiness and auspiciousness. The term for cricket is *xishuai*, with the initial character *xi* forming a homonym for both happiness (*xi*) and auspiciousness (*xi*). This study has analyzed insects on the *dayazhai* wares, specifically the spring pattern, associating these vases with imagery produced during the late Qing period. These vessels also exemplify the high standard still occurring within the kilns at Jingdezhen. The pair is made of a thin, opaque white porcelain detailed with delicate brushstrokes that draw close parallels to Chinese painting. The vases indicate that skilled artistry remained at the kilns and that the objects being produced were fabricated with the same care as during the Qing. These factors indicate that these vases share a distinct connection to the wares previously examined in association with the empress dowager.

This pair of vases is a unique case, because a nearly identical pair of cricket and cicada vases resides at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Figure 79).²⁶⁷ This connection proves that while wares were undoubtedly duplicated during the 20th century, they were not mass-produced or poorly painted. Although this may be the case for some porcelain production in China, it is unfair to group all porcelain of this era into the category of mass production. These matching sets substantiate that high-caliber wares were produced

²⁶⁷ The pair of vases were a gift of Mrs. J. Spier to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1925. The vessels can be traced back to London and were held by the Spier family in Britain until becoming a part of the Metropolitan’s collection.

beyond the fall of dynastic China. The pair displayed at the Metropolitan depicts the same insects, but the coloring is entirely different from that of the vases at the British Museum. The shading of each set is unique. The brushstrokes are distinct with differing breaks within the line work, indicating that they were painted by different hands entirely. Due to these similarities, it is evident that imagery was reused and was possibly made on mass scales. Another similar cricket motif was analyzed in the previous chapter (Section 2.5, Figure 38). While this example places the cricket within a floral scene, the crickets appear nearly identical in composition. Glaze application, brushwork, and style are distinctly consistent in all the documented objects. Each ware presents similar iconography but has individual characteristics that would only be evident if a different artist painted each ware. It is clear from this study's comparisons that each vessel produced during the 20th century were not always poorly crafted. Instead, visual analysis conducted in this research proves that an extraordinary level of artistry was produced during the late Qing dynasty and continued into the early republic. The stark difference between the wares produced during the Qing period and those from the early republic is the lack of patronage, which to scholars has invalidated the skillfulness behind the porcelain itself. The inclusion of Yuan as an imperial level patron during the early republic provides a new interpretation of porcelain from this era.

Later in his life, Sir Percival worked to create a center for Chinese art studies in order to promote a wider understanding of China within the West. His wishes resulted in the University of London being presented with his collection in 1950, which opened the collection to the public.²⁶⁸ The Sir Percival collection was on long-term loan to the

²⁶⁸ Loretta Hogan, "Revealing the Past and Enhancing the Future: The Conservation of the Sir Percival David Collection," *Orientalism* 40, no. 8 (2009): 78.

British Museum and was ultimately rehomed within the British Museum's collection by 2007.²⁶⁹ The current display at the British Museum houses almost all of Sir Percival's 1,700 porcelain pieces.²⁷⁰ They currently provide a range of porcelain from as early as the third century into the 20th century. Now housed within the Sir Joseph Hotung Centre for Ceramic Studies, the layout of the space draws directly from the earliest British collectors like Mary II.²⁷¹ Walls in the gallery are designated for high-density storage, resulting in floor-to-ceiling displays of porcelain. The shallow cases allow for the majority of the Sir Percival David Collection to remain on display at all times while also exemplifying the immense chronological range found within the collection. In the center of the gallery, a small selection of approximately 200 pieces of porcelain has been selected to remain in a more "curated" display. The manner in which the 1,700 porcelain objects are displayed emphasizes the original export porcelain collector's notion of amassing a large quantity and displaying it on a large scale. While the British Museum does work to curate an area of the gallery, it is clear that maintaining a connection to previous British collectors plays a major role in the design of the space itself. These choices change the way an individual interacts with the porcelain on view, ultimately shaping the perception of any interactions.

²⁶⁹ Hua-Tien, "An Interview with Lady David," 56.

²⁷⁰ While the Sir Percival David Collection is a large group of porcelain, it is only a small part of the British Museum's holdings. Currently the British Museum houses approximately 10,000 Chinese ceramics.

²⁷¹ The Sir Joseph Hotung Centre for Ceramic Studies within the British Museum opened its new layout on April 23, 2009. The space included a designated study area to allow for constant scholarly access to the massive Sir Percival David Collection. A discussion of the move can be found in Jan Stuart, "The Sir Percival David Collection at the British Museum: Creating Fresh Opportunities for Study," *Orientalism* 40, no. 8 (2009): 50–53.

Overall, Sir Percival forged a pathway that other porcelain collectors followed, particularly placing prominence on connoisseurship rather than earlier British collection trends that placed importance on amassing a large amount of porcelain, typically prioritizing quantity over artistic quality. The collectors of the early 20th century in England primarily belonged to the Oriental Ceramic Society. The group began in 1921, bringing together 12 amateur collectors and museum curators to exchange ideas and thoughts concerning porcelain objects. Collectors such as George Eumorfopoulos (1863-1939) drew directly from the high-caliber scholarship Sir Percival achieved in order to form their own collections.²⁷² Other major early 20th-century collectors include Alfred Clark, Alice Mariquita Sedgewick, Charles Russell, Harry Oppenheim, and Oscar Raphael.²⁷³ These collections became the foundation for the collections currently housed at Britain's premier institutions including the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Fitzwilliam Museum. The collectors involved in the early 20th-century porcelain market participated in what Western scholarship has deemed the Golden Age of Chinese porcelain collecting.

The influence of Sir Percival David as a premier connoisseur of Chinese porcelain was felt widely across Britain, extending beyond the elite porcelain collectors. He led numerous exhibitions during his lifetime, aiming for widespread education about the East and its porcelain traditions. The first of these to take place in the West was "The

²⁷² Eumorfopoulos established a large collection of both ceramics and bronzes. He would also serve as the president of the Oriental Ceramic Society. Much of his collection was donated to the British Museum, with some being sold in 1940.

²⁷³ Hua-Tien, "An Interview with Lady David," 56. The article credits these individuals with the rise of Western connoisseurship and understanding of Chinese ceramics. Other members of the group included: Hon Mountstuart William Elphinstone, Charles Gabriel Seligman, H.R.N. Norton, Stephen D. Winkworth, William Winkworth, Reginald Palmer and Major L.F. Hay.

International Exhibition of Chinese Art,” which debuted at Burlington House in 1935.²⁷⁴ As a direct result of these exhibitions, a new wave of enthusiasm for Chinese porcelain occurred. New stores and galleries opened to capitalize on the popular market throughout the 1930s. Sir Percival’s frequent travels to China also led him to establish several exhibitions in Beijing during the 1920s and 1930s.²⁷⁵ The exhibitions were one of the first documented events that introduced the general Chinese population to what was still held within the Forbidden City, since the Palace Museum had only just been established. The exhibitions were so popular that they ran for an extended amount of time, exposing vast numbers of visitors to imperial porcelain wares.

Overall, this study finds that court taste has persevered into the modern era. To this day, more than 100 years after the fall of the last imperial dynasty in China, “imperial taste” is a major factor in the formation of many private collections in Asia, Europe, and America, just as it was for Sir Percival David when he was collecting in the second and third quarters of the 20th century.²⁷⁶ Sir Percival’s scholastic achievements allowed this study to utilize the porcelain within his collection as a representation of the era from which it originated. In this instance, the wares dating to the late Qing and early republic establish a high level of imperial-caliber quality. Wares from the Sir Percival David collection have vivid enamels, supporting the conclusion that *famille rose* remained one of the most popular color palettes. The level of artistry found within the porcelain is comparable to the wares produced in the earlier Qing era. The exquisite brushwork of the

²⁷⁴ Hua-Tien, 56. For further information, see William Llewellyn, *Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Chinese Art, 1935-6, 5th ed.* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1936).

²⁷⁵ Hua-Tien, 56.

²⁷⁶ Scott, “The Chinese Imperial Collections,” 20.

enamel application within the collection demonstrates that skilled artists worked on each piece of porcelain, resulting in vessels that have artistic merit and express individuality.

3.9 Trends of the Late Qing and Early Republic

This study finds that collecting continued beyond Qianlong's reign, with rulers actively contributing to the patronage and collecting occurring within the Forbidden City. Collecting was able to not only survive but even thrive into the late Qing dynasty. As previously mentioned, porcelain collecting increased during the reign of Empress Dowager Cixi. It also continued to be a major aspect of the attempted reign of Yuan Shikai, as outlined in earlier chapters. The collecting performed by these rulers was dramatically different from that of Qianlong because it was on a smaller scale. The wares were also often utilized as diplomatic gifts. In comparison to Qianlong's collecting, the collections of late-dynasty Chinese rulers often experienced a more global existence rather than remaining within the confines of the Forbidden City. The movement of objects associated with the rulers of the late Qing dynasty made them far more global in their reach than previous rulers. The styles that were patronized by Cixi and Yuan Shikai were created at a time when global exchange was more common and therefore a major factor in the designs found on porcelain. While the mindset of late imperial patronage remained tied to traditions and maintaining an imperial standard, the wares they patronized displayed a unique modern vitality that differed from the dynamic cultivated in earlier dynastic styles.

Along with the previously explored collection housed at the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum contains an extensive collection of Chinese porcelain that

extends well into the 20th century. This collection explores the nuances achieved within the wares of the late Qing dynasty and early republic wares. Previously, this study analyzed the empress dowager's influence on porcelain by investigating the *dayazhai* porcelain pattern, which shares a close connection to the styles she patronized in painting. Attributing the *dayazhai* wares to Cixi's direct patronage establishes a distinct style that can be associated with her reign. The *dayazhai* wares exhibit a reliance on floral imagery that directly connects to the tradition of bird-and-flower painting. They also embrace a style of femininity, often including auspicious imagery that serves as a representation of Cixi's power. While patterns associated with Cixi are quite static, they are highly decorated, filling each vessel with imagery. The inclusion of such a large amount of imagery on each vessel allowed for limited empty space. The overall effect of the porcelain vessels having extensive ornamentation heightened the aesthetic Cixi desired to reflect a rich opulence. Looking beyond the *dayazhai* wares, several examples of late dynastic wares dating from 1875 to 1900 are decorated using imagery similar to that of the wares produced earlier by the empress dowager. The continuation of recurring imagery highlights the establishment of a distinct style that continued to thrive. Looking extensively at a group of three porcelain plates from the Victoria and Albert Museum, a clear visual connection to the *dayazhai* wares is visible. The first of these plates is eggshell porcelain painted in overglaze enamels depicting a bird-and-flower scene, drawing directly from the historic bird-and-flower painting of China while also creating a bond to Cixi's *dayazhai* style (Figure 80). In this case, the bird sits on a branch filled with bright, green-toned leaves and peach blossoms. Blooming beneath the branch are small roses. The branch, flowers, and bird create a strong diagonal across the plate,

producing an asymmetrical layout. The bird painted resembles a Chinese bulbul (*baitouweng* 白頭翁), known for a distinct white patch of feathers on their head. The inclusion of only one bulbul allows the bird to become a symbol of longevity. The peach blossom is a symbol of spring and forms a connection to the traditional Chinese poem “Peach Blossom Spring.”²⁷⁷ The final symbol on the dish is a rose, representing the flower of eternal spring due to the duration of its bloom. Each symbol included within the composition formed a representation of longevity, thus establishing a close connection to Cixi who frequently surrounded herself with auspicious emblems with similar meaning. While the pattern itself is closely related to what was seen on the earlier *dayazhai* wares, the artistic application of each brushstroke is a clear indicator of the skill behind this plate’s decoration. Looking at the flower petals and leaves a gradient effect is visible, creating a style similar to that of the earlier Qing *famille rose* styles. A close examination of the bird’s body reveals delicate brushstrokes that create the effect of intricate feathers across the form. This soft touch is again reminiscent of earlier aesthetics cultivated by Cixi, stylistically connecting the imagery back to her.

The second dish completed in a similar eggshell porcelain style as the previous example. Along with this similarity the dish also utilizes the *famille rose* enamels and dates to the same era, 1875–1900 (Figure 81). In this example, a bird-and-flower style is again achieved. In this instance, the bird and flowers are of a different variety, providing

²⁷⁷ The poem was written by Tao Yuanming c. 421 CE. The tale follows the experience of a fisherman who travels through a forest filled with peach blossoms, eventually stumbling upon a hidden grotto opening. After entering the grotto, the fisherman emerges into an idyllic utopian society. When the fisherman leaves he is warned to never reveal the location of the Peach Blossom Spring. The fisherman attempts to mark his path and inform others of the Peach Blossom Spring; however, he is never able to uncover the route again.

a comparison to the multiple patterns designed in Cixi's *dayazhai*. On this plate, the bird has a white head and brown-toned wings accenting vivid blue feathers. The blue feathers identify the bird as a kingfisher (*fei cui niao* 翡翠鳥). Traditionally, the feathers can be used for jewelry or clothing making the kingfisher an emblem of beauty. The flowering plum branch the kingfisher sits upon stretches horizontally across the dish, dividing the space in half. Plum blossoms hold a variety of meanings within artwork. A plum blossom is highly auspicious due to the meaning associated with its distinct five-petals. Each petal represents one of the five blessings: longevity, wealth, health, love and virtue, and peaceful death.²⁷⁸ The plum blossom was included on Cixi's *dayazhai* wares as part of the winter motif, in this instance representing one of the three friends of winter. The final floral image on the dish are two vibrant pink peonies representing the king of flowers. Again, the inclusion of peonies is a direct connection to the *dayazhai* patterns linking the styles on the plate directly to the influence of Cixi's imperial patronage. This connection to the empress dowager shows an extension of Cixi's personal porcelain style beyond her personal commissions, emphasizing how her aesthetic affected the styles of the later Qing period.

The final plate from the Victoria and Albert Museum once again makes use of a slightly different motif. This plate dates back to the same era and includes a floral design accompanied by a small butterfly (Figure 82). Again, the reliance on vivid colors in the *famille rose* style is reminiscent of an earlier era, thus connecting to the success of earlier Qing rulers. The flying butterfly is considered a representation of blessings, happiness, and longevity. Although this plate composes the butterfly as a major element within the

²⁷⁸ Bartholomew, *Hidden Meanings in Chinese Art*, 35.

depiction, the incorporation of butterflies on *dayazhai* wares appear subtler. The flowers depicted on this porcelain include both peonies and chrysanthemums. Both of these flowers are associated with the empress dowager, who used both symbols on her *dayazhai* wares. The peony is considered the king of flowers and the chrysanthemum represents autumn. Of all the flowers utilized in late Qing porcelain, this study has found the peony to be the most prevalent floral motif. The emergence of the peony occurred long before the time of the empress dowager. The reliance on this imagery within her porcelain and painting prompted the peony to become a widely employed image. Cixi relied heavily on the symbolism instilled within these motifs, which became more popular as a result of her patronage influencing the porcelain produced during the late Qing dynasty.

Looking at these three plates collectively, it becomes clear that they are all thematic recurrences of floral imagery. The color palette of the enamel application of all three is in the *famille rose* technique. The way in which the enamel was applied was also accomplished with a level of painterly skill rather than a quickly applied British transfer print. The styles exemplified by these works strongly connect them to earlier Qing porcelain styles. All three wares were collected by the same individual, which could serve as an indicator that these wares were all procured around the same time, giving the set a strong acquisition history. There is relatively little documentation concerning the collection of this collector, W.H. Cope. Records do reveal that Cope amassed a collection of Asian objects, many of which were Chinese porcelain. According to an article written in July of 1903, Cope owned enough objects to establish his own exhibit within the Cross Gallery at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The Cope collection was

procured using the same levels of connoisseurship Sir Percival exhibited: “Mr. Cope made his collection with great care and judgment, and many of the specimens were acquired at the dispersal of the works of art of well-known collectors.”²⁷⁹ While the extent of Cope’s collection may not be known, it is apparent that the porcelain he purchased had strong provenance and adhered to the collecting standards of the time, which emphasized high vessel quality. Given this strong provenance, the plates can be considered to be from the late dynastic Qing era and can therefore serve as a representation of the styles being cultivated at the time. The close connection that these plates share to Cixi’s earlier *dayazhai* styles allow this study to establish that the porcelain imagery promoted by the empress dowager was much more influential than has been acknowledged.

Looking beyond Cixi’s life, a continuation of artistry is still apparent, connecting Cixi’s styles to the late Qing period and into the early republic. Two plates in the Victoria and Albert Museum, dating to approximately 1890 to 1910, serve as representations of porcelain of this period. The first is a painted in overglaze enamels using the *famille rose* palette (Figure 83). The plate contains a floral depiction focusing on peony blossoms accompanied by a butterfly. The scene created is similar to many of the images Cixi cultivated and uses the same color palette and iconography. On the second plate, a floral image is painted in overglaze enamels and uses the same color palette (Figure 84). On this plate, vivid pink and white begonias fill the space along with small blue Chinese asters. Both of these plates exhibit a reliance on auspicious floral imagery, which is a style that this study has found to be directly connected to the empress

²⁷⁹ “Cope Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 51 (1903): 707.

dowager. Along with this connection, the plates use the *famille rose* color palette, tying these wares directly to the influence of Western styles. While this style has a long history within the Qing dynasty, it is Cixi who can be credited with maintaining the popularity of Western enamels during the late Qing period. Additionally, the enamel itself was been applied with a light, painterly brushstroke, evoking what painters would refer to as *mogu* 沒骨, meaning a boneless technique. This style does not rely on a heavy, dark outline to contain areas of color, instead, the color is applied independently, building washes of pigment. The sole reliance color emphasizes the spontaneity of the brush rather than the structure created by bold lines. This style is one that the empress dowager was known to use in her commissioned paintings and porcelain. The recurrence of this boneless technique is especially visible in Cixi's floral motifs examined in this study, which rely heavily on petals created with washes of color rather than outlines.

The lingering influence of Cixi is apparent in the porcelain patronized by Yuan Shikai as well as the wares created during the early republic period. A pair of large vases from the Ashmolean collection at Oxford forms the best visual evidence of the appropriation of Cixi's style during the brief Hongxian era (Figure 85). The *Pair of vases* is formed using semi-eggshell porcelain, making them extremely thin, delicate, and nearly translucent in appearance. The vessels both have enamel applied in *fencai*, meaning powder colors. This application denotes the application of *famille rose* colors on a white ground. The pair has the reign marks *Jurentang*, associating the vases with the short rule of Yuan Shikai. Visually, the vessels are ornately detailed with a floral design across the entire body. As with the *dayazhai* wares, these vases are densely painted with very limited blank space. The intricate and crowded motif creates a direct

connection to Cixi's porcelain designs. Additionally, the inclusion of a variety of symbolic flowers provides further connection to the empress dowager. In this instance, chrysanthemums and peonies are two symbols used predominately by Cixi. The combination of several insects again pays homage to the spring *dayazhai* pattern that incorporates birds, flowers, and insects into a design. The application of the enamels shows light brushwork, creating a painterly effect on the petals of the flowers. The washes of color generated on the surface indicate a high-caliber artist rather than a mass-produced image that was traced onto the porcelain surface. Examples like these vases indicate that the porcelain produced during the reign of Yuan Shikai looked toward Cixi's patronage and styles of Cixi and maintained the imperial caliber associated with the earlier Qing dynasty.

Another collection worth examining in the establishment of republic ceramics as high art is the collection housed at the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery in Stoke-on-Trent. This study has already addressed Stoke-on-Trent as an area of British porcelain development that relied heavily on Chinese styles. Over time a vast amount of Chinese porcelain moved throughout the Stoke-on-Trent region, allowing Chinese porcelain collections to amass. In 1942, Ronald Copeland (1884–1958), a pottery manufacturer from the Spode family, collected 68-pieces of early 20th-century Chinese porcelain.²⁸⁰ Copeland purchased the majority of his collection from the Sparks Gallery in London. This gallery, which was also frequented by Sir Percival David, provided a strong provenance for the origins of each porcelain ware. This collection proved critical because Copeland acquired it prior to 1942. This date establishes the porcelain was

²⁸⁰ Blakey, "Bringing China to Stoke-on-Trent," 36. The rise of Stoke-on-Trent made it comparable to Jingdezhen, becoming a porcelain city within the West.

produced prior to the emergence of a major forgery market. Due to this provenance, the collection at the Potteries Museum serves as additional representation of the continuation of late dynastic porcelain. Additionally, correspondence between Copeland, Sparks, and the curator of the Potteries Museum survives, establishing the thoughts behind the collection. The survival of dialogue of this variety is not common and offers valuable insight into how the collection was curated. One letter from Sparks to Copeland reads,

He had such a love of the very fine examples in this special china made at Ching-te-Chen during the reign of the late Dowager Empress, that during the number of years I have already stated, he made this completed collection. I can confidently say that is quite a unique collection and another will never be seen, as such quality and fineness has not been produced since the time of the late Dowager Empress.²⁸¹

It is evident from the correspondence that while Sparks spoke highly of porcelain produced under the patronage of the empress dowager, he did not believe that this quality continued strongly into the early republic. Ironically, Sparks' stance is completely unsupported by Copeland's collection. This collection allows for the establishment of shared imagery that transitions into the early republic era, proving that artistic endeavors continued beyond the fall of the Qing dynasty. Historically, traditions passed from one ruler to the next, creating a lineage that paid homage to the past. These traditions did not stop with the Golden Age but rather passed from the empress dowager to the briefly reigning Yuan Shikai.

The porcelain of the Copeland collection predominately dates to the 1920s and 1930s. The wares were created at Jingdezhen. Scholar Claire Blakey has emphasized that the success of porcelain during the early 20th century was mostly achieved by attaching imperial pedigree to each object. In this regard, the porcelain Copeland

²⁸¹ Blakey, 36.

procured strongly indicates that it was inspired by and thus connected to the empress dowager. Within the Copeland collection, a visual connection is apparent between vessels acquired from the republic and vessels of imperial provenance. One of the republic-era plates from the Copeland collection appears to be reminiscent of the plates from the Victoria and Albert collection described earlier (Section 3.9, Figures 79-81). This *Saucer dish* is painted in overglaze enamels and depicts a grouping of flowers (Figure 86).²⁸² The flowers intersect on the plate in the *famille rose* palette reminiscent of the plates from the late Qing era. The soft, graceful brushstrokes and light gradient colors also create a visual similarity to the previously analyzed wares. Along with the visual similarities, this plate also has an inscription on the surface. Inscriptions were a crucial aspect of Cixi's porcelain that allowed her to claim ownership of the vessel and achieve power during her reign. In this instance, the inclusion of an inscription has allowed the specific artist, Chen Qixian (dates unknown), to assert authorship over the ware. The Copeland plate dates to 1926, which is later than the wares produced during the reigns of Cixi and Yuan Shikai. Despite being produced during the republic, the plate maintains the aesthetic influence of the late Qing era, appearing closely related to the patronage of Cixi or Yuan Shikai. The porcelain created during the republic looked to the success of the empress dowager, indicating that the style achieved during late dynastic China directly influenced the aesthetics produced during the early republic.

²⁸² Blakey, 40.

3.10 Conclusion

An analysis of late dynastic porcelain into the early republic would not be possible without evaluating British collections. Historically, the British fascination with Chinese porcelain created a groundwork from which world-class collections were cultivated. Even into the 20th century the British royal family continued to collect Chinese porcelain in connection with the long lineage of historic royal collecting. Rooms specially designed for Chinese porcelain emerged within Buckingham Palace around the turn of the 20th century, with surviving photos documenting what would become known as the *Small Chinese Room* (Figure 87). Following this legacy, Queen Mary (1867–1953), the consort of King George V revealed interest in expanding the British Royal Collection Trust rooms within Buckingham Palace even further to include a Japanese Room, Lacquer Room, and Chinese Chippendale Room. These rooms included Chinese porcelain, adding to the ideas about the importance of porcelain collecting established as early as Mary II. The Asian holdings of the Royal Collection Trust have only recently begun to be evaluated, with a cataloging project led by John Ayers in 2016 being the first to explore the Asian collection in its entirety. The catalog provides an overview of what was gifted and collected by the British monarchs, allowing for the first time a comprehensive understanding of the long history of British collecting of Asian artifacts.²⁸³ It is this legacy that documents insight into the Chinese porcelain of late dynastic China, providing pieces of porcelain of imperial caliber that were not previously thought to exist.

²⁸³ See John Ayers, *Chinese and Japanese Works of Art: In the Collection of Her Majesty The Queen* (London: The Royal Collection Trust), 2016.

Historically, British collectors did not necessarily collect what Chinese collectors would have considered the best porcelain. Many collections include wares that were not from the “peak” era of porcelain, or wares that are not of imperial quality. It is due to this idea of open collecting that British collectors amassed porcelain broadly. The manner in which British collectors amassed porcelain is reminiscent of Qianlong’s desire to represent all types of art within his imperial collection. British collectors wanted as much porcelain as possible, creating massive collections that rival the holdings of institutions in China. Additionally, Britain’s historic access to China allowed collectors to collect porcelain from China directly, creating strong provenance within these collections. After completing this research, it became clear to me that the predominant resource for understanding the wares of the late Qing dynasty and the early republic is the collections housed in Britain. Due to British collecting trends, especially British collectors’ desires to have comprehensive and global collections, these collections sought some of the best examples of late dynastic porcelain. The aesthetic of massive collections was prevalent in Britain, encouraging numerous collectors to pursue a large scope of vessels rather than a narrow collection. These vessels were key components within British collections and were acquired in an era in which reproductions were not as common, establishing unquestionable provenance.

This study has found that current scholarship regarding the late Qing dynasty into the early republic is severely lacking, predominately due to the lack of surviving objects with a strong provenance to accurately establish their authenticity. While many institutions worldwide own pieces of porcelain that date to the 19th and 20th centuries, these often occur in relatively small numbers. Based on the research completed during

this study a firm understanding of late Qing through early Republic porcelain is established. British collections at the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology contributed 314 pieces of porcelain that date within the scope of this examination. Combining these vessels with those evaluated from the Phoenix private collection brings the total of porcelain dating to this period up to 363 objects. This broad expanse of porcelain established repeated forms, motifs, and overall styles for the production of this era.

Of the 363 porcelain objects reviewed the majority of the vessels dated to the era of Tongzhi and Guangxu.²⁸⁴ This dating suggests that the most prevalent patron during the late Qing was the Empress Dowager Cixi, serving as the primary imperial patron during both emperor's reigns. A significantly smaller amount of porcelain dated to the Hongxian period, emphasizing a decrease in porcelain production. Although production after the patronage of Cixi decreased, several factors appeared consistent throughout the end of the Qing and into the establishment of the early Republic. The attention given to porcelain by Empress Dowager Cixi and then by Yuan Shikai allowed the porcelain industry to remain relevant and highly influential. These late patrons were able to impart their own personal "court" tastes to traditional Qing porcelain, leading to the creation of wares that were innovative and modern. The porcelains Cixi patronized were all characterized by several key stylistic achievements. The vessels revealed a favoritism for delicate brushwork that connected strongly to the empress dowager's paintings. Cixi's porcelain also focused primarily on strong iconography that conveyed her power over China. The symbols chosen were predominately static bird-and-flower scenes, which

²⁸⁴ For further details, see Appendix E.

once again connected to Cixi's passion for traditional painting. The visual repetition of bird and flower designs was substantiated by the collections examined during the course of research, which statistically saw bird and flower themes as the most popular motif on late Qing porcelain. The use of vivid enamels established Cixi's strong desire to portray a modern and Westernized China.

It is clear from the holdings at British institutions that the styles Cixi created became popular porcelain styles in both China and the West. It was this major influence that likely caused Yuan Shikai to look to Cixi as a source of inspiration. While Yuan's reign was short in duration, he attempted to cultivate the same level of popularity and power that Cixi had attained through porcelain patronage. The wares once again relied heavily on the *famille rose* color palette, emphasizing Western influence. The imagery found on the wares produced during the Hongxian period and into the early republic continue the style of intricate brushwork exhibited on Cixi's porcelain. The collections examined also established bird and flower themes as the most utilized style in Hongxian era porcelain. While stylistically, the wares of the late Qing and early Republic have similar attributes they also differed suggesting an evolution of designs over time. In comparison to late Qing porcelain, Hongxian vessels had a wider variety of subject matter within the examined collections. Wares of the early republic, specifically those with a Hongxian mark, appear to be meticulously painted, often in soft, subtle, traditional colors. In this regard, the wares dating to 1915 and 1916 may appear more traditional than the vivid porcelain Cixi produced. It is clear that with the loss of an imperial patron the styles of the republic became quite diverse, because the kilns themselves had limited restrictions. The basis for these republic styles was the porcelain of the last great Qing

patrons: Empress Dowager Cixi and, briefly, Yuan Shikai. Both rulers oversaw the progression of porcelain within China, maintaining it as a fine art and ensuring that it was representative of each ruler's imperial power.

It is evident that both Cixi and Yuan Shikai had distinct aesthetics that were achieved within their porcelain commissions, ultimately leaving a lasting legacy that became the foundation for republic wares. These styles created the foundation for republic wares, establishing the foundation of modern porcelain within China.

Ultimately, these collections proved a continuation of strong imperial patronage beyond the Golden Age of porcelain, indicating a high level of artistic expression that was not previously thought to have existed within late dynastic China and the early republic.

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FIGURES

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 1. *Lantern-shaped zun vase*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Qianlong period (1736-1795). Porcelain, *fencai* enamels with design of children-at-play in a landscape. H: 35 cm. D: 13.5 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.

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Figure 2. Giuseppe Castiglione (Lang Shining) (1688-1766), *The Qianlong Emperor in Ceremonial Armor on Horseback*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), c. 18th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk. 332.5 x 232 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.

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Figure 3. Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908), *Peonies*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Guangxu period (1875-1908), 1902. Hanging scroll, color on silk. L: 125 cm. W: 63 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 4. Possibly Miao Jiahui (active late 19th-20th century) signed by Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908), *Peach Tree Bough*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911). Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk. Purchased from Frau Olga Julia Wegener, British Museum, London (1910,0212,0.569).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 5. Katherine Augusta Carl (1865-1938), *The Empress Dowager Cixi*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Guangxu period (1875-1908), c.1903. Oil on canvas. 297 x 173.4 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. (S2011.16.1-2a-ap).

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Figure 6. Attributed to Qu Zhaolin (1866-1937), *An Imperial Portrait of Empress Dowager Cixi as Guanyin*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Guangxu period (1875-1908), late 19th – early 20th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk. 147.5 x 90.5 cm. Sotheby's Hong Kong, "Imperial Consort," October 7, 2015 (Lot 3203).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 7. Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908), *Peonies* (details), Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Guangxu period (1875-1908), c.1902. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper. Palace Museum, Beijing.

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Figure 8. Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908), *Birds and Rocks*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Guangxu period (1875-1908), c. 1890. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper. 48 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 25 in. (123.8 x 60.9 cm.). Christie's Hong Kong, "Dowager Empress Cixi: Elegance of the Late Qing," December 3, 2008 (Lot #2237).

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Figure 9. *Yellow jardinière decorated with flowers and birds*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Guangxu period (1875-1908), 1875-1876. Porcelain, overglaze enamel. H: 15.7 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 10. *Bowl painted with floral sprays*, Qing dynasty (1644-1912), Daoguang period (1821-1850), c. 1835. Porcelain, underglaze blue. D: 9.8 cm. Simon Kwan Collection, Hong Kong.

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 11. *Small bowl painted with floral sprays*, Qing dynasty (1644-1912), Xuanton period (1909-1911). Porcelain, underglaze blue. D: 9.7 cm. Simon Kwan Collection, Hong Kong.

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Figure 12. *Woman's informal coat with butterflies and chrysanthemums*, Qing dynasty (1644-1912), Guangxu period (1875-1908). Silk satin with silk embroidery. 137 x 133 cm. The George Crofts Collection, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (919.6.128).

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Figure 13. *Woman's robe*, Qing dynasty (1644-1912), Guangxu period (1875-1908). Embroidery, polychrome silk and metallic-wrapped silk threads on silk satin. 130 x 130.5 cm. The Mactaggart Art Collection, University of Alberta Museums, Edmonton (2005.5.250).

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Figure 14. *Large dish*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Tongzhi period (1862-1874)-early Guangxu period (1875-1908), *Chuxiugong zhi* mark. Porcelain with cobalt and yellow enamel. H: 9.5 cm. D: 64 cm. Georg Weishaupt Collection published in Gunhild Avitabile, *From the Dragon's Treasure: Chinese Porcelain from the 19th-20th century* (exh. cat.: Museum für Kunsthandwerk, Frankfurt am Main), 1987 (156).

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Figure 15. Bowl with first spring dayazhai pattern, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Tongzhi (1862-1874)-early Guangxu period (1875-1908), Dayazhai mark. Porcelain, turquoise ground with overglaze famille rose decoration. D: 17.7 cm. Georg Weishaupt Collection published in Gunhild Avitabile, *From the Dragon's Treasure: Chinese Porcelain from the 19th-20th Century* (exh. cat.: Museum für Kunsthandwerk, Frankfurt am Main), 1987 (161).



Figure 16. *Bowl with second spring dayazhai pattern*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Guangxu period (1875-1908), *Dayazhai* mark. Porcelain, overglaze painted enamel and gilt. H: 2 ¼ in. (5.7 cm.) D: 4 1/8 in. (10.5 cm.). Gift of Mrs. Harry L. Toplitt Jr. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (1984.286).



Figure 17. *Pair of saucers in dayazhai summer pattern*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Tongzhi (1862-1874)-early Guangxu period (1875-1908), *Dayazhai* mark. Porcelain, white ground with overglaze *famille rose* decoration. D: 10 cm. British Museum, London (Franks.549.1,.2).

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Figure 18. *Small bowl in dayazhai autumn pattern*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Tongzhi (1862-1874)-early Guangxu period (1875-1908), *Dayazhai* marks. Porcelain, turquoise ground with overglaze white and *grisaille* decoration. D: 10.6 cm. Private collection, published in Ronald W. Longsdorf, "Dayazhai Ware: Porcelains of the Empress Dowager," *Oriental Art* 23, no.3 (March 1992): 45-56.

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 19. *Covered box in dayazhai winter pattern*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Tongzhi (1862-1874)-early Guangxu period (1875-1908), *Dayazhai* marks. Porcelain, purple ground with overglaze *famille rose* decoration. D: 29.5 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

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Figure 20. *Narcissus bowl*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Tongzhi (1862-1874)- early Guangxu period (1875-1908), *Dayazhai* mark. Porcelain, five lobed, blue ground with overglaze *famille rose*. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

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Figure 21. *Covered bowl*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), c. 1861-1908, Tongzhi mark. Porcelain, overglaze enamel of *grisaille* flowers. H: 9 cm. D: 10.3 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.

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Figure 22. *Butterfly bowl*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Tongzhi mark and period (1862-1874). Porcelain with gilding and overglaze enamel in *famille rose*. Private Collection. Published in Ronald W. Longsdorf, "The Tongzhi Imperial Wedding Porcelain." *Oriental Art*, no. 9 (1996): 69–78.

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 23. *Plate decorated with One Hundred Children*, Tongzhi wedding commission, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Tongzhi period (1861-1875). Porcelain, *famille rose* decoration. H: 10 cm. D: 64 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.

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Figure 24. *Covered bowl and stand in “Wedding Chamber” pattern, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Guangxu period (1875-1908). Porcelain with gilding and famille rose enamels on iron-red ground. Palace Museum, Beijing.*

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Figure 25. *Artist's visualization of the celebration of the Empress Dowager's 60th birthday*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Guangxu period (1875-1908), c. 1893. Handscroll, ink and color on paper. 65 cm. x 65 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 26. *Large bowl inscribed with wanshou wujiang*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Guangxu period (1875-1908). Porcelain, yellow ground with enamel painted decoration. H: 9.4 cm D: 21 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 27. *Dish with dragons chasing pearls amongst clouds*, Qing dynasty (1644-1912), Xuanton mark and period (1909-1911). Porcelain, incised decoration under colored glaze. D: 10.8 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (C.131-1931).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 28. *Bowl with floral design*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Xuanton mark and period (1909-1911), c. 1910. Porcelain painted in underglaze blue. H: 2.8 cm, D: 7.8 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (FE.131-1996).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 29. *Altar vase*, early Republic, c. 1914. Porcelain, iron-red enamel. H: 22.3 cm. Georg Weishaupt Collection published in Gunhild Avitabile, *From the Dragon's Treasure: Chinese Porcelain from the 19th-20th century* (exh. cat.: Museum für Kunsthandwerk, Frankfurt am Main), 1987 (176).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 30. *Pair of wine cups, Huarentang zhi* mark. Porcelain. H: 3 cm. Georg Weishaupt Collection published in Gunhild Avitabile, *From the Dragon's Treasure: Chinese Porcelain from the 19th-20th Century* (exh. cat.: Museum für Kunsthandwerk, Frankfurt am Main), 1987 (174).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 31. *Monochrome wine cup*, Hongxian period, c. 1915-1916. Porcelain, monochrome pink. H: 4.4 cm. D: 9.5 cm. Private Collection, Phoenix, Arizona.

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 32. *Long-necked vase*, Hongxian period (1915-1916), *Jurentang* mark. Porcelain, yellow ground overglaze enamel. H: 22 cm. Georg Weishaupt Collection published in Gunhild Avitabile, *From the Dragon's Treasure: Chinese Porcelain from the 19th-20th century* (exh. cat.: Museum für Kunsthandwerk, Frankfurt am Main), 1987 (172).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 33. *Large bowl with decoration of magpies and prunus branches*, Qing dynasty (1644-1912), Tongzhi period (1862-1874). Porcelain, *famille rose*. D: 21.2 cm. Simon Kwan Collection, Hong Kong.

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 34. *Pair of long-neck vases*, Hongxian mark and period (1915-1916). Porcelain, overglaze *famille rose* enamel. H: 23.5 cm. Georg Weishaupt Collection published in Gunhild Avitabile, *From the Dragon's Treasure: Chinese Porcelain from the 19th-20th century* (exh. cat.: Museum für Kunsthandwerk, Frankfurt am Main), 1987 (177).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 35. *Dish with floral motif, Jurentang mark.* Porcelain in *famille rose* colors, H: 3 cm. D: 14.2 cm. Georg Weishaupt Collection published in Gunhild Avitabile, *From the Dragon's Treasure: Chinese Porcelain from the 19th-20th century* (exh. cat.: Museum für Kunsthandwerk, Frankfurt am Main), 1987 (182).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 36. *Bowl with floral motif*, Hongxian period, c. 1915-1916. Porcelain, overglaze *famille rose* enamel. H: 6 cm. D: 10.5 cm. Private Collection, Phoenix, Arizona.

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 37. *Large baluster shaped vase with floral imagery*, Hongxian mark and period, c. 1915-1916. Porcelain, overglaze *famille rose* enamel. H: 40.7 cm. D: 13.6 cm. Private Collection, Phoenix, Arizona.

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 38. *Baluster vases with insect design*, Hongxian mark and period (1915-1916). Porcelain, overglaze enamel. H: 19 cm. Georg Weishaupt Collection published in Gunhild Avitabile, *From the Dragon's Treasure: Chinese Porcelain from the 19th-20th century* (exh. cat.: Museum für Kunsthandwerk, Frankfurt am Main), 1987 (181).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 39. *Cylindrical shoulder vase with landscape*. Hongxian mark and period (1915-1916). Porcelain with *grisaille* enamel. H: 27 cm. Georg Weishaupt Collection published in Gunhild Avitabile, *From the Dragon's Treasure: Chinese Porcelain from the 19th-20th century* (exh. cat.: Museum für Kunsthandwerk, Frankfurt am Main), 1987 (184).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 40. *Pair of vases*, Hongxian period (1915-1916), c. 1916, *Jurentang* mark. Porcelain, painted in colored enamels. H: 14 cm. Given by Queen Mary, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (C.567&A-1925).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 41. *Vase with figure motif showing boys at play*, Hongxian mark and period (1915-1916), c. 1916. Porcelain, overglaze enamels. H: 10.7 cm. Lt.-Col. K. Dingwall, DSO, Gift through the National Art-Collections Fund, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (C.129-1924).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 42. *Small enameled gu form vase*, early Republic, Daoguang mark. H: 13.4 cm. Porcelain, with *fencai* enamel. Collection of Tang Shaoyi. Bonhams Fine Asian Works of Art, San Francisco, Tuesday June 26, 2018 (Lot #220).

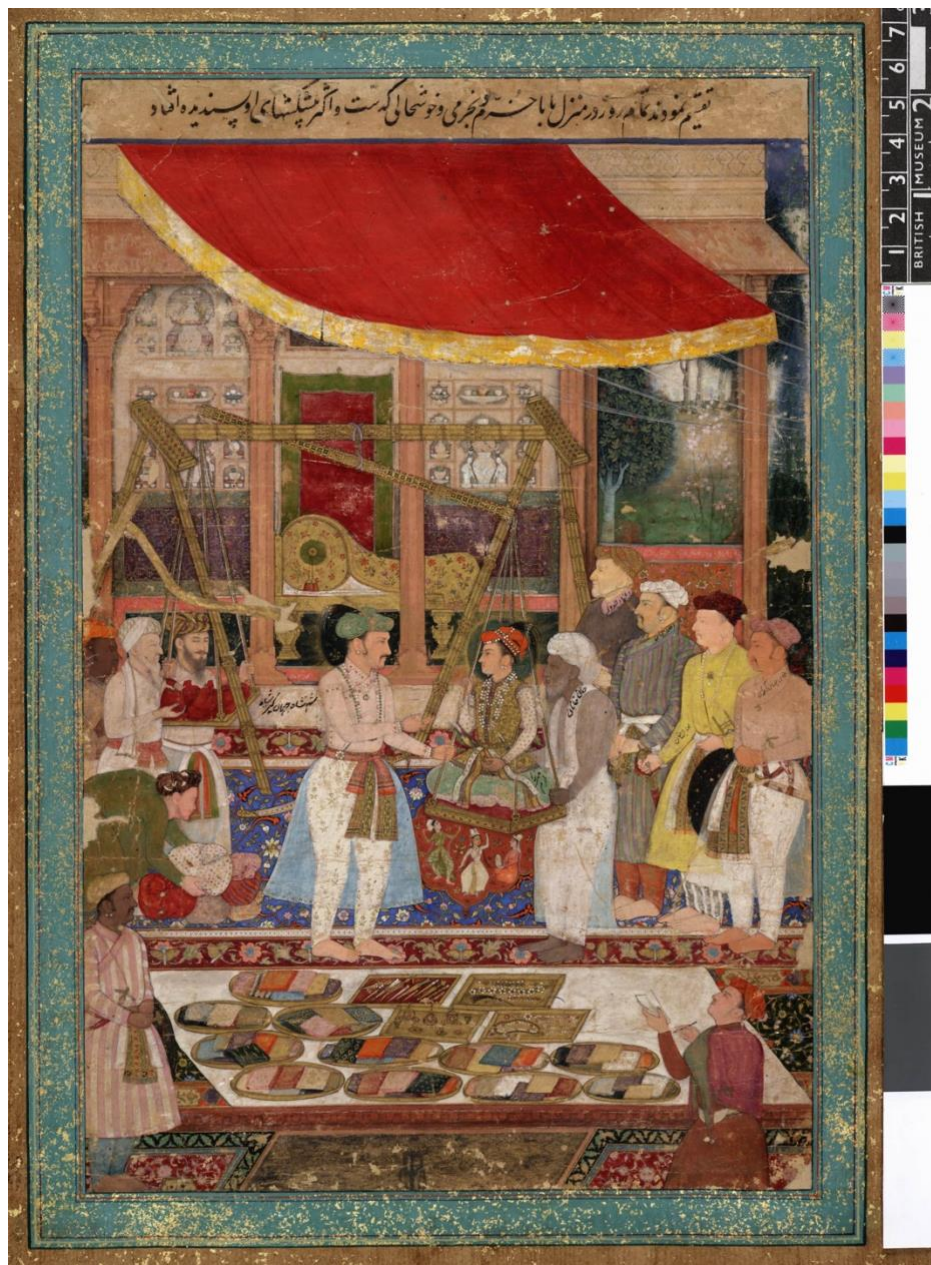


Figure 43. *Jahangir Weighing Prince Khurram Against Gold and Silver*, Mughal empire (1526-1857), India, c.1615. Painted manuscript, part of larger album. H: 44.3 cm. W: 29.5 cm. British Museum, London (1948,1009,0.69).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 44. *Ding ware bowl*, Northern Song (960-1127). Stoneware, copper-rimmed mouth, white glaze with tear stains. H: 9.3 cm. D: 6.6 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 45. *Guwan tu* 古玩圖 (*Pictures of Ancient Playthings*) Detail, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Yongzheng period, 1729. Ink and colors on paper. H: 64 cm. x 2648 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (E.59.1911).



Figure 46. *Guwan tu* 古玩圖 (*Pictures of Ancient Playthings*), Detail, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Yongzheng period, 1728. Ink and colors on paper. H: 62.5 cm. x 20 m. Sir Percival David Collection, Gift of Lady David 1985, British Museum, London (PDF X01).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 47. *Bowl with peach and bat*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Yongzheng (1722-1735). Porcelain, *famille rose* enamels. Collection of Edward Chow, Hong Kong.

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 48. *Drawing of Fonthill Vase*, 1713. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 49. *Two Ladies and an Officer Seated at Tea*, c.1715. Oil on canvas. 63.5 cm. x 76.2 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (P.51-1962).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 50. Pieter van Roestraten (1629-1700), *Teapot, Ginger Jar and Candlestick*, c. 1695. Oil on canvas, painted in London. 68.6 cm. x 54.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (P2-1939).



Figure 51. *Two-handled bowl*, Chinese blue-and-white porcelain, Ming dynasty (1368-1644), Wanli period (1572-1620), c. 1573-1620; British silver gilt mount, c. 1585. Hard-paste porcelain with silver gilt. 15.9 cm. x 24.1 cm. Rogers Fund, 1944, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (44.14.5).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 52. *Pair of jars and covers*, 1645-1650. Porcelain painted in underglaze blue. H: 41 cm. Collection of Mary II (1662-1694), King's First Presence Chamber, Hampton Court Palace, Royal Collection Trust, London (RCIN 1192).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 53. James Digman Wingfield (1800-1872), *The King's Bedchamber at Hampton Court Palace*, 1849. Painting, oil on canvas. Royal Collection Trust, London (3006146).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 54. *Unloading the Kiln*, c.1770-1790. Watercolor and ink on paper, part of a set of 24 watercolors, from Guangzhou, China. H: 40 cm. W: 60 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (E.54-1910).



Figure 55. *Dish*, c. 1704. Delft, Netherlands, Tin-glazed earthenware. D: 9 in. (22.9 cm.) Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1938, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (38.165.18).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 56. *Plate*, c.1725. Meissen, German porcelain, underglaze painted porcelain. D: 25.8 cm. British Museum, London (1941,0710.1).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 57. *Spode Ceramic in "Willow Pattern,"* made in Stoke-on-Trent, 1800-1820. Earthenware with transfer-print in underglaze blue. D: 22.86 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (C.847-1925).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 58. George du Maurier (1834-1896), *Chinamania Made Useful at Last!*, 1879. Cartoon published in British magazine, *Punch*. Archives of Freer and Sackler Galleries, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. (1879-12.12).



Figure 59. Cornelis Pronk (1661-1759), *Plate with a Lady with Parasol*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), c. 1734-1737. Porcelain with cobalt blue under transparent glaze. D: 49.5 cm. Helena Woolworth McCann Collection, Purchase, Winfield Foundation Gift, 1968, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (68.153).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Cornelis Pronk (1691-1759), “*Parasol Lady*” design, c. 1734. Ink and color on paper. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (RP-T-1967-18).



Figure 60. *Green shallow dish*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Yongzheng c. 1723-1735. Jingdezhen porcelain, overglaze enamel. H: 4.4 cm. British Museum, London (PDF,A.808).



Figure 61. *Vase*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Qianlong period (1736-1795). Jingdezhen, porcelain *famille rose* enameled vase decorated with a peach branch and flowers. H: 52 cm. British Museum, London (1936,0413.44).



Figure 62. *Vase with two western women*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Qianlong period (1736-1795). Jingdezhen porcelain, painted with *falangcai* enamels. H: 20.5 cm. D: 10.3 cm. British Museum, London (PDF,A.818).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 63. Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908), *Tree Peonies*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), late 19th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk. 149 x 60 cm. The George Crofts Collection, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (921.1.168).



Figure 64. Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908), *Safe and Sound, Wealth and Honor*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Guangxu period (1875-1908), c. 1890. Paper rubbing of an engraved stele with a painting by Cixi. H: 99.5 cm. W: 43 cm. British Museum, London (2013,3011.96).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 65. Miao Jiahui (1841-1918), *Bouquet of Peonies*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Guangxu period (1875-1908) c. 1891-1908. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper. H: 190 cm. W: 71.8 cm. Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Oxford (EA2015.246).



Figure 66. *Small dishes in dayazhai summer pattern*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Tongzhi (1862-1874)-early Guangxu period (1875-1908), *Dayazhai* mark. Porcelain, white ground with overglaze *famille rose* decoration. D: 10 cm. British Museum, London (Franks.549.1.,2).



Figure 67. *Bowl in dayazhai winter pattern*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Tongzhi (1862-1874)-early Guangxu period (1875-1908), c. 1900, *Dayazhai* mark. Porcelain, purple ground with overglaze *famille rose* decoration. British Museum, London (1951,0410.1).



Figure 68. *Bowl with fluted rim depicting second spring dayazhai pattern*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Guangxu period (1875-1908), c. 1900, *Dayazhai* mark. Porcelain, overglaze painted enamel. D: 8 in. British Museum, London (1963,0719.1).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 69. *Jardinière* (One of a pair), Qing dynasty (1644-1911), c. 1835-1908. Jingdezhen porcelain with yellow glaze and *grisaille* floral decorations. H: 19.6 cm. D: 29.5 cm. Anthony Evans bequest, Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Oxford, (EA2009.37).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 70. Yi Lantai (active 1749-1786), *Haiyangtang (View of the Calm Sea Palace)* from *The Twenty Views of the European Palaces of the Yuanmingyuan*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Qianlong period (1736-1795), c. 1781-1786. H: 20.25 cm. W: 34.75 cm. Copperplate engraving on paper, mounted in album. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (29452:9).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 71. Miao Jiahui (active late 19th – 20th century), *Peonies*, 1906-1908. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk. H: 274.5 cm. W: 82.2 cm. Presented as gift from Empress Cixi to Frau Olga Julia Wegener, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (E.2505-1909).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 72. *Pair of vases*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), mark and period of Jiaqing (1796-1820). Jingdezhen, porcelain painted in *famille rose* enamels and gilt. H: 13 cm. Presented to Queen Victoria from Cixi in 1897, Buckingham Palace, West Gallery, Royal Collection Trust (RCIN 2394).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 73. *Vase and stand*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Qianlong, c. 1736 -1795.
Porcelain painted in *famille rose* enamels and gilt. H: 37 cm. W: 13 cm. Presented to Queen Victoria from Cixi in 1897, Royal Collection Trust (RCIN 117).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 74. *Photograph during Great Exhibition of three Chinese vases,* 1851 Great Exhibition, London. “Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851: Reports by the Juries on the Subjects in the Thirty Classes into which the Exhibition was Divided,” Volume III. Royal Collection Trust (RCIN 2800002).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 75. *Catalog of Eastern Art Manufactures 1881*. 1st Catalog Book of Liberty & Co London. National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Figure 76. *Bowl with bird and flower design*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), late Tongzhi (1862-1874) or early Guangxu period (1875-1908), *Dayazhai* mark. Porcelain, decorated with overglaze enamels and gilding. D: 5 in. (12.6 cm.). British Museum, London (PDF A838).



Figure 77. *Five miniature garlic head bottles*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Qianlong mark and period (1736-1795). Porcelain, overglaze enamel decoration. H: 9.4 cm. Jingdezhen imperial kilns, painted in Imperial Palace workshops, Beijing. Sir Percival David Collection, British Museum, London (PDF A819, A820, 867, 868, 845).



Figure 78. *Pair of vases with insects*, Republic era, 1916, *Hongxian* mark. Jingdezhen porcelain, with overglaze enamel decoration. H: 9.5 cm. D: 5 cm. British Museum, London (1925,0714.1, .2).



Figure 79. *Pair of vases with crickets*, Republic period (1912-1949), Hongxian mark and period (1915-1916). Porcelain with overglaze enamel decoration. H: 4 in. Gift of Mrs. J. Spier, 1925, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (25.152.1, .2).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 80. *Plate with bird, peach blossom and rose*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Guangxu period (1875-1908), c.1875-1900. Jingdezhen eggshell porcelain, painted in overglaze *famille rose* enamels. D: 21 cm. Bequeathed by W.H. Cope, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (647-1903).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 81. *Dish with kingfisher, plum, tree peony and magnolia*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Guangxu period (1875-1908), c.1875-1900. D: 20.6 cm. Jingdezhen eggshell porcelain, painted in overglaze *famille rose* enamels. D: 20.6 cm. Bequeathed by W.H. Cope, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (606-1903).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 82. *Plate with butterfly, chrysanthemums and peony*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Guangxu period (1875-1908), c. 1875-1900. Jingdezhen eggshell porcelain, painted in overglaze enamels in *famille rose*. D: 19.7 cm. Bequeathed by W.H. Cope, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (657-1903).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 83. *Dish with boneless style butterfly and peonies*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Guangxu period (1875-1908), c. 1890-1905. Jingdezhen porcelain, painted in overglaze *famille rose* enamels. D: 14.9 cm. Given by Mrs. Julia C. Gulland, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (670A-1907).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 84. *Dish with boneless style begonia and aster*, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Guangxu period (1875-1908), c. 1890-1910. Jingdezhen porcelain, painted in overglaze *famille rose* enamels. D: 15.2 cm. Given by Sir Harry Garner, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (C.67-1964).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 85. *Pair of vases*, Hongxian period (1915-1916), *Jurentang* mark, c.1915-1916. Jingdezhen semi-eggshell porcelain with *fencai* enamel decoration. H: 21.6 cm. D: 11.4 cm. Bequeathed by Anthony Evans, Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford University (EA2009.39.a,b).

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 86. *Saucer dish*, Painted by Chen Qixian (dates unknown) for the Jiangxi Industrial Porcelain Company, Jingdezhen, 1926. Porcelain with enamel decoration. D: 18.5 cm. Private Collection.

(Image Removed for Copyright)

Figure 87. *Small Chinese room*, Buckingham Palace, 1902-1910. Gelatin silver print.
16.8 x 22.2 cm. Attributed to King George V (1865-1936), Royal Collection Trust (RCIN
2101855

APPENDIX A

PHOENIX HONGXIAN PORCELAIN COLLECTION

Number	Object Description	Height (cm)	Diameter (cm)	Reign Marker
1	Open mouth vase with red bats and flowering branch	18.4	10.8	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
2	Small jar with red exterior and three boys playing	19.5	9	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
3	Pair of wide mouth jars, one with a rooster and one with a chicken	21	11.5	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
4	Narrow neck vase depicting mother with baby	23.4	11.7	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
5	Vase with depiction of seated old man	28.3	10.9	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
6	Lidded jar with flowering branch and two red bats	23.5	11.3	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
7	Spittoon depicting figures in a garden	16	17.4	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
8	Square shaped vase with intricate floral pattern	29.8	11.4	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
9	Tall vase with large pine and old man	34.4	13.4	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
10	Bowl with floral motif	6	10.5	<i>jurentang</i>
11	Pair of vases with animal heads and beautiful women	14.1	5.5	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
12	Lidded box with banded floral pattern	7.8	13.4 (L) x 10.4 (D)	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
13	Small round open jar with seated man	5.7	8.4	<i>jurentang</i>
14	Pair of vases with flowers and bamboo	23	11.4	<i>jurentang</i>
15	Pair of small square vases	13.1	6.3	<i>jurentang</i>
16	Vase with bird and peony	22.3	11.4	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>

17	Cylindrical vase with roosters and flowers	14.7	4.4	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
18	Small brown toned monochrome vase	18.2	6.2	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
19	Monochrome wine cup	4.4	9.5	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
20	<i>Gu</i> shaped vase with birds and flowers	14.4	8	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
21	Small bulbous jar with pink and yellow blossoms and birds	10.2	8	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
22	Spittoon with flying birds and flowers	10.2	7.4	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
23	Diamond shaped vase with floral scenes	16.5	12.3	<i>jurentang</i>
24	Small bulbous vase with narrow neck	13.2	9.6	<i>jurentang</i>
25	Bulbous vase with birds and flowers	21.8	11.2	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
26	Bowl with floral pattern	5.9	12.7	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
27	Pair of cups depicting deer and peonies	5.7	11.3	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
28	Cup with pink flowers	6.3	11.4	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
29	Cup with pink and purple flowers	6	10.7	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
30	Cup with branch and flowers	5.6	10.4	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
31	Cup depicting flowers and yellow bird with long tail	6.4	8.7	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
32	Cup showing a woman carrying a boy	6.5	8.3	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
33	Pair of cups with large pink flowers	6.4	7.6	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
34	Small cup with flowers	6	7	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
35	Cup with roosters	5.4	7	<i>yongzhen nian zhi</i>

36	Pair of saucers with Buddhist symbols	2.6	9.9	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
37	Cup with Eight Buddhist symbols	6.7	8.5	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
38	Lidded bowl with Eight Buddhist symbols	8.3	8.8	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
39	Large baluster shaped vase with floral imagery	41	23	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
40	Large baluster vase with flowers and pomegranates	46.4	19.7	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
41	Large baluster vase with flowers and stylized rock	43.2	19.1	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>
42	Baluster style vase with plants and flowers	40.7	19.3	<i>hongxian nian zhi</i>

APPENDIX B
REIGN MARKS

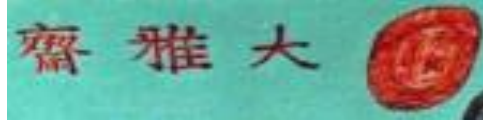


Figure B1. *Dayazhai* 大雅齋 (Studio of great elegance) mark with an oval seal. Seal has two dragons circling the characters' *tian di yi jia chun* 天地一家春 (Heaven and earth united in the spring).



Figure B2. *Yongqing Chuangchun* 永慶長春 (Eternal prosperity and enduring spring). This is the name of one of the imperial halls where Cixi resided in the Forbidden City.



Figure B3: *Chuxiugongzhi* 儲秀宮製 (Palace of gathering elegance). This was the name of another imperial palace Empress Cixi resided in while in the Forbidden City.



Figure B4: *Jurentang zhi* 居仁堂製 (Hall of Dwelling in Benevolence) mark. Relating to a palatial building that Yuan Shikai resided within around 1915.



Figure B5. *Hongxian nian zhi* 洪憲年制 (Made in the *hongxian* period), c. 1915-1916



Figure B6. *Huairentang zhi* 懷仁堂製 (Manufactured for the hall of the cultivation of benevolence) mark.

APPENDIX C

DESCRIPTION OF PORCELAIN OWNED BY THE IMPERIAL FAMILY

Lists were translated in Simon Kwan, *Imperial Porcelain of the Late Qing* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1983): 27. Originally found in *Guochao Gongshi* (History of the Qing Palace).

Each member of the Imperial family was assigned a specific color and design as follows:

Imperial Family Member	Color and Design of Wares
Empress Dowager	yellow
Empress	yellow
<i>Huang guifei</i> (first rank concubine)	yellow outside and white inside
<i>Quifei</i> (second rank concubine)	yellow with green dragon
<i>Fei</i> (third rank concubine)	yellow with green dragon
<i>Bin</i> (fourth rank concubine)	blue with yellow dragons
<i>Guiren</i> (fifth rank concubine)	green with purple dragons
<i>Changzai</i> (sixth rank concubine)	polychrome with red dragons
<i>Daying</i> (seventh rank concubine)	polychrome decorations

The *Palace Regulation* establishes the number of porcelain allocated to the various members of the imperial family. The imperial family members most relevant to this study are as follows:

Royal Family Member	Object	Number of Pieces
Empress Dowager	Yellow Basin	250
	Various Colored Basin	100
	Yellow Plates	45
	Various Colored Plates	50
	Yellow Bowls	100
	Various Colored Bowls	50
	Yellow Tea Cups	300
	Various Colored Tea Cups	70
	Various Colored Cups	100
	Spittoons	6
	Total:	1,071
Empress	Yellow Basin	220
	Various Colored Basin	80
	Yellow Plates	40
	Various Colored Plates	50
	Yellow Bowls	100
	Various Colored Bowls	50
	Yellow Tea Cups	300
	Various Colored Tea Cups	70
	Various Colored Cups	100
	Spittoons	4
	Total:	1,071

<i>Huang guifei</i>	Yellow Basin with White Interior	4
	Various Colored Plates	40
	Yellow Plates with White Interior	4
	Various Colored Plates	15
	Yellow Bowls with White Interior	4
	Various Colored Bowls	50
	Yellow Tea Cups with White Interior	2
	Various Colored Tea Cups	20
	Porcelain Tanks	2
	Total	141

APPENDIX D

OBJECTS HELD IN BRITISH COLLECTIONS, 1850-1920

Objects held in the Ashmolean Museum dating to 1850-1920:

	Title	Time	Period	Dynasty/ Era	Height (cm)	Diameter (cm)	Accession Number
1	Pair of vases with <i>fencai</i> insect and floral decoration	1915-1916	Hongxian	Republic	21.6	11.4	EA2009.3 9.a,b
2	<i>Jardinière</i> with <i>grisaille</i> flower design	c. 1835-1908		Qing	19.6	29.5	EA2009.3 7
3	Blue-and-white dragon dish	1875-1908	Guangxu	Qing	5.5	34.4	EA1967.1 77
4	Blue-and-white box with motif of boy on a hill	1800-1900		Qing	1.9	6.8	EA1978.1 992
5	Vase with copper-red glaze	1800-1900		Qing	37.3	18.5	LI1301.11 1
6	Tripod vessel in a guan ware style	1800-1900		Qing	2.8	5.5	LI1301.20 1
7	White bowl with dragons	1911-1928		Qing	8.7	16.8	LI1301.11 3

Objects held in the Victoria and Albert Museum dating to 1850-1920:

	Title	Time	Period	Dynasty /Era	Height (cm)	Diameter (cm)	Accession Number
1	Pair of bowls with figural design	1851-1861	Xianfeng	Qing	N/A	17.2	84-1883, 84A-1883
2	Pair of lidded bowls with figural motifs	1862-1874	Tongzhi	Qing	N/A	N/A	457&A-1872, 458&A-1872
3	Bowl with incised dragon	1862-1874	Tongzhi	Qing	6.7	15.2	68-1883
4	Cup with iron-red dragon	1862-1874	Tongzhi	Qing	N/A	5.9	803-1883
5	Vase with turquoise glaze	1875-1908	Guangxu	Qing	34.5	N/A	FE.19-1970
6	Bowl with lid with bamboo design	c. 1851-1861	Xianfeng	Qing	N/A	N/A	438A&B-1872
7	Vase with crimson glaze	c. 1870-1900	Tongzhi/ Guangxu	Qing	62.9	27.0	C.565-1910
8	Yellow dish with incised green dragon	c. 1900	Guangxu	Qing	N/A	19.2	C.51-1937
9	Dish with boneless style begonia and aster	1890-1910	Guangxu	Qing	N/A	15.2	C.67-1964

10	Dish with boneless style butterfly and peonies	1890-1905	Guangxu	Qing	N/A	14.9	670A-1907
11	Dish with kingfisher, plum, tree peony and magnolia	1875-1900	Guangxu	Qing	N/A	20.6	606-1903
12	Bowl with two dragons and incised pearl	1875-1908	Guangxu	Qing	6.4	14.9	C.509-1910
13	Pair of vases	1916	Hongxian	Republic	14.0	8.2	C.567A-1925 & C.567-1925
14	Baluster vase with plum-blossom and peonies	1850-1900		Qing	69.9	26.4	C.1313-1910
15	Dish with Wang Xizhi and geese	c. 1875-1900	Guangxu	Qing	N/A	25.4	C. 339-1931
16	Small bowl with blue under-glaze and floral sprays	1910	Xuantong	Qing	2.8	7.8	FE.131-1996
17	Lidded cup with floral sprays	1908	Guangxu	Qing	10.0	10.6	FE.157A, B-1988

18	Narrow vase in <i>famille rose</i> palette with three women	c. 1870	Tongzhi	Qing	43.8	12.7	498-1875
19	Purple and green bowl with dragon	1875-1908	Guangxu	Qing	N/A	15.3	C.99-1952
20	Saucer with chrysanthemum-shaped rims	1890-1908	Guangxu	Qing	2.2	8.7	FE.64-2014
21	Water dropper in peony form	1908	Guangxu	Qing	5.0	19.7	FE.12-1972
22	Vase with figure motif showing boys at play	1916	Hongxian	Republic	10.8	7.1	C. 129-1924
23	Saucer with phoenix and peony	1890-1908	Guangxu	Qing	2.5	9.0	FE.66-2014
24	Dish with insects and flowers	1862-1874	Tongzhi	Qing	N/A	12.7	C.419-1922
25	Baluster vase with plum tree	1850-1900		Qing	70.5	28.3	C.1314-1910
26	Covered dish with roses, lilies and chrysanthemums	1870-1900	Tongzhi/ Guangxu	Qing	N/A	18.3	694-1907

27	Pair of bowls depicted eighteen disciples of Buddha	1851-1861	Xianfeng	Qing	N/A	17.2	84A-1883 & 84-1883
28	Dish with two ladies	1875-1900	Guangxu	Qing	N/A	17.8	650-1907
29	Plate with bird, peach blossom and rose	1875-1900	Guangxu	Qing	N/A	21.0	647-1903
30	Lidded bowl with flowers and foliage	c. 1900	Guangxu	Qing	N/A	N/A	626 to B-1907
31	Painted cup on yellow ground	1862-1874	Tongzhi	Qing	N/A	8.8	C.84-1912
32	Plate with butterfly, chrysanthemums and peony	1875-1900	Guangxu	Qing	N/A	19.7	657-1903
33	Bowl with incised dragons, pearls and waves	1862-1874	Tongzhi	Qing	6.7	15.2	68A-1883
34	Dish with bats and swastikas	1851-1861	Xianfeng	Qing	3.5	16.8	FE.78-1983
35	Vase with dragons	1850-1900		Qing	70.0	26.7	C.1312-1910
36	Lidded bowl with dragon	1850-1900		Qing	8.6	11.1	CIRC.135 1-1926

37	Yellow spittoon with dragons	1875-1908	Guangxu	Qing	8.7	N/A	C.493-1910
38	Lidded paint holder in floral design	1862-1874	Tongzhi	Qing	20.0	28.0 (width)	FE.3&A-1977
39	Dish with dragons chasing pearl amongst clouds	1909-1911	Xuantong	Qing	N/A	10.8	C.131-1931
40	Vase with two women and boy holding <i>ruyi</i> branch	1875-1908	Guangxu	Qing	21.8	N/A	C.427-1926
41	Dish with two ladies in garden	1875-1900	Guangxu	Qing	N/A	19.1	665-1907
42	Vases with plums and pine	1850-1900		Qing	35.6	18.4	615-1903
43	Bowl with incised scrolls	1851	Xianfeng	Qing	N/A	N/A	681&A-1852
44	Pink vase with floral scroll	Late 19th C	Guangxu	Qing	21.0	14.0	196-1905
45	Cup and saucer with flowers	1875-1880	Guangxu	Qing	N/A	N/A	197&A-1881

46	Vase with crimson glaze and silver mouth	1644-1911		Qing	21.3	11.4	618-1903
47	Bowl with bats	1850-1900		Qing	8.3	13.0	C.762A-1909
48	Lidded bowl with angler and woman	1860-1900		Qing	8.3	9.8	4358&A-1901
49	Bowl with four medallions	1850-1900		Qing	8.3	13.0	C.762-1909
50	Lidded cup with grapevine pattern	c. 1908	Guangxu	Qing	9.2	10.4	FE.158A to C-1988
51	Vase with crackled celadon glaze	1875-1900	Guangxu	Qing	21.6	12.7	378-1908
52	Yellow dish	1862-1873	Tongzhi	Qing	N/A	14.6	C.56-1965
53	Hexagonal vase	1875-1908	Guangxu	Qing	35.7	16.0	CIRC.28-1932

Objects held in the British Museum dating to 1850-1920:

	Title	Time	Period	Dynasty/ Era	Height (cm)	Diameter (cm)	Accession Number
1	Rose pink jar	1850-1949		Qing/ Republic	6.5	8.6	PDF,A.54 4
2	Vase with blue-green glaze	1700-1900		Qing	21.8	11.9	PDF,B.56 9
3	Cobalt blue vase	1800-1900		Qing	16.3	7.4	PDF,A.58 7
4	Blue brush-washer	1912-1949		Republic	5.5	8.9	PDF,A.58 3
5	Vase with animal handles	1800-1900		Qing	16.6	10.6	PDF,A.41 5
6	Double gourd vase	1800-1900		Qing	18.5	10.5	PDF,B.50 8
7	Brush-pot with iron red enamels	1800-1900		Qing	9.3	7.6	PDF,A.77 6
8	Bottle with blue dragons	1800-1900		Qing	4.9	4.5	PDF,A.55 9
9	Gourd shaped water-dropper	1800-1911		Qing	6.4	9.7	PDF,A.55 5
10	Vase with crackled glaze	1700-1900		Qing	13.8	8.8	PDF,A.47 3
11	Cup in form of a flower	1700-2000		Qing	9.0	12.4	PDF,B.65 2
12	Pair of bowls with lotus scroll	1700-1949		Qing	6.5	20.2	PDF,A.44 9 & PDF,A.45 0

13	Pale blue vase	1800-1900		Qing	18.0	9.7	PDF,B.564
14	Square vase with dragon	1800-1900		Qing	15.9	7.7	PDF,B.550
15	Vase with black glaze	1800-1900		Qing	8.5	4.3	PDF,B.548
16	Vase with bright yellow enamel	1860-1949		Qing/ Republic	19.4	10.2	PDF,B.537
17	Tall cup	1912-1949		Republic	9.3	9.2	PDF,B.527
18	Baluster shaped vase with iron-red glaze	1800-1900		Qing	15.0	6.0	PDF,B.520
19	Copper colored incense-burner	1800-1900		Qing	6.4	10.3	PDF,C.515
20	Incense-burner with copper-red glaze	1800-1900		Qing	11.3	13.7	PDF,C.514
21	Dish with pair of dragons	1862-1874	Tongzhi	Qing	2.6	13.2	PDF,B.710
22	Water dropper with insect markings	1800-1900		Qing	N/A	6.8	PDF,B.596
23	Vase with brown glaze	1800-1900		Qing	12.2	6.3	PDF,B.595
24	Lidded box with two dragons	1800-1900		Qing	4.8	13.2	PDF,B.591

25	Pot with clear glaze	1700-1900		Qing	3.7	5.7	PDF.473
26	Bowl with hidden dragon	1911-1949		Republic	4.1	9.8	PDF,A.448
27	Vase with animal mask handles	1800-1900		Qing	6.8	8.5	PDF,A.444
28	Pot in shape of peach	1800-1900		Qing	5.3	10.3	PDF,A.418
29	Bowl with goldfish	1800-1900		Qing	3.9	12.3	PDF.735
30	Cup with peaches	1800-1949		Qing	3.6	4.6	PDF,A.788
31	Round box with dragon	1800-1900		Qing	5.5	9.9	PDF,A.440
32	Bowl with two incised dragons	1912-1949		Republic	3.8	9.2	PDF,A.482
33	Water pot and brush rest with dragon	1700-1900		Qing	4.5	13.7	PDF,A.494
34	Wine cup with dragon and red glaze	1862-1874	Tongzhi	Qing	4.9	6.0	PDF,B.711
35	Jar with dragons and clouds	1800-1900		Qing	8.6	N/A	PDF.899
36	Dish with swimming carps	1912-1949		Republic	2.6	13.7	PDF.896

37	Vase with roses and a butterfly	1900-2000		Qing/ Republic	14.6	N/A	PDF.871
38	Pair of cups with quails	1900-1949		Qing/ Republic	4.0	6.5	PDF.830
39	Double gourd vase with red glaze	1800-1900		Qing	12.0	7.0	PDF,B.521
40	Flask with dragon design	1700-1900		Qing	18.8	13.5	PDF,A.822
41	Jar with phoenix and dragon	1700-1900		Qing	4.0	5.0	PDF,A.786
42	Jar with blue fish and waves	1700-1900		Qing	2.8	4.3	PDF,A.785
43	Red glazed cup with handle	1900-1949		Qing/ Republic	3.0	8.7	PDF,A.759
44	Brush-rest with three dragons	1800-1900		Qing	9.5	13.7 (width)	PDF,A.720
45	Rectangular jar with fruit	1800-1900		Qing	8.0	9.9 (width)	PDF,A.719
46	Incense-burner with loop handles	1700-1900		Qing	11.1	10.4	PDF,A.702
47	Snuff bottle with waves	1700-1900		Qing	5.0	3.8	PDF,C.641

48	Covered jar with peaches and pomegranates	1800-1911		Qing	6.0	10.8	PDF,C.640
49	Small bottle depicting individual interactions	1800-1900		Qing	11.1	N/A	PDF,C.629
50	Dish with red dragons	1800-1900		Qing	4.5	18.1	PDF,B.695
51	Jar with lotus flowers and leaves	1700-1900		Qing	5.8	2.6	PDF,B.677
52	Water pot with <i>lingzhi</i> and leaves	1900-1949		Qing	7.7	7.8 (width)	PDF,B.653
53	Vase with crackled green glaze	1800-1900		Qing	20.0	11.2	PDF,A.556
54	Vase with yellow glaze	1860-1911		Qing	26.8	11.7	PDF,A.548
55	Water pot with yellow glaze	1912-1949		Republic	8.0	12.4	PDF,A.508
56	Vase with pale turquoise glaze	1912-1949		Republic	15.0	5.5	PDF,B.533
57	Pair of conical cups with phoenixes	1911-1949		Republic	2.6	7.7	PDF,A.491 & A490

58	Vase with rose-pink glaze	1900-2000		Qing/ Republic	15.0	5.5	PDF,B.53 4
59	Bowl with <i>lingzhi</i> and magpies	1800-1949		Qing/ Republic	5.9	1.1	PDF.888
60	Water pot with brass dragons	1800-1900		Qing	4.9	10.2	PDF.546
61	Vase depicting man and woman with bamboo stick	1800-1949		Qing/ Republic	24.5	N/A	PDF.639
62	Saucer depicting prunus tree and roses	1800-1949		Qing/ Republic	6.0	29.4	PDF,A.81 0
63	Vase with wave pattern	1800-1900		Qing	8.7	4.6	PDF,A.42 2
64	Brush washer in lotus leaf shape	1800-1900		Qing	1.6	8.0 (width)	PDF,A.40 6
65	Cup in form of a water buffalo	1800-1900		Qing	13.2	11.4 (width)	PDF,A.40 4
66	Lidded jar with dragons and flaming pearls	1700-1900		Qing	7.9	N/A	PDF.610

67	Water pot with copper-red glaze	1800-1900		Qing	6.7	N/A	PDF.594
68	Vase with rose glaze	1800-1900		Qing	12.7	N/A	PDF.566
69	Jar with incised dragons and flower sprays	1800-1900		Qing	5.0	5.7	PDF.527
70	Bowl in the form of five bats	1800-1900		Qing	7.8	15.7	PDF.524
71	Snuff bottle with two dragons	1800-1900		Qing	4.9	4.2 (Width)	PDF,A.423
72	Dish with floral motifs	1912-1949		Republic	4.0	16.2	PDF.865
73	Wine cup with fishes	1800-1900		Qing	3.2	5.7	PDF.802
74	Cup with birds and flowers	1900-1949		Qing/ Republic	2.8	8.5	PDF.763
75	Bowl with black glaze	1912-1949		Republic	9.6	N/A	PDF.315
76	Bowl with bird and flower design	1875-1908	Guangxu	Qing	6.0	12.6	PDF,A.838
77	Dish with lotus and dragon design	1800-1900		Qing	1.2	5.8	PDF.464

78	Ewer with animal in flight design	1912-1949		Republic	23.5	13.1	PDF,A.46 3
79	Covered bowl with <i>mille fleurs</i> design	1900-2000		Republic	N/A	11.8	PDF.835
80	<i>Jue</i> with yellow glaze	1800-1900		Qing	13.8	14.3	PDF,A.53 4
81	Square water pot with dragon and waves decoration	1800-1900		Qing	6.0	7.4 (width)	PDF.487
82	Bowl with butterflies and grapevine	1900-1911	Guangxu/ Xuantong	Qing	5.0	15.8	PDF,A.77 5
83	Tall vase with pheasant, quail and peonies	1800-1900		Qing	23.0	N/A	PDF,A.84 1
84	Vase with butterflies and cherry spray design	1900-1911	Guangxu/ Xuantong	Qing	13.3	10.6	PDF,A.79 1
85	Vase with lotus and chrysanthemum decoration	1800-1900		Qing	24.6	12.5	PDF,A.57 1
86	Bowl with copper rim	1800-2000		Qing	8.3	19.2	PDF.180

87	Bowl with dragon medallion design	1800-2000		Qing	5.3	N/A	PDF.463
88	Yellow cub with peonies	1900-1949		Qing	4.3	6.4	PDF.889
89	Wine cup with bamboo and bats	1800-1900		Qing	5.0	6.3	PDF.877
90	Water pot with prunus tree	1800-1911		Qing	5.0	6.2	PDF.866
91	Cup with peonies	1900-1949		Qing/ Republic	4.4	6.4	PDF.837
92	Dish with goldfish design	1800-1900		Qing	4.5	20.2	PDF,A.79 7
93	Blue dish with wave designs	1900-1949		Qing/ Republic	3.8	14.7	PDF,B.64 1
94	Water pot in peach bloom glaze	1860-1949		Qing/ Republic	6.2	9.3	PDF,A.54 5
95	Long neck vase with copper red glaze	1800-1900		Qing	7.4	N/A	PDF.517
96	<i>Meiping</i> vase with copper red glaze	1800-1900		Qing	7.7	N/A	PDF.516
97	Long neck vase with dark red glaze	1800-1900		Qing	9.0	N/A	PDF.515

98	Brush shaper in palm tree design	1800-1900		Qing	1.5	8.8 (width)	PDF.465
99	Bowl with two green dragons	1875-1908	Guangxu	Qing	7.7	16.5	PDF.754
100	Globular vase with white crackled glaze and phoenix design	1800-1900		Qing	17.2	8.3	PDF,A.466
101	Water pot with bat and blossoms design	1800-1900		Qing	4.6	N/A	PDF.456
102	Vase with dragon in clouds design	1800-1900		Qing	13.1	6.2	PDF,A.439
103	Vase in shape of <i>gu</i>	1912-1949		Republic	23.1	N/A	PDF.438
104	Lidded bowl with trellis patterns	1800-1900		Qing	3.0	6.2	PDF.480
105	Vase with white crazed glaze	1800-1900		Qing	12.5	N/A	PDF.457
106	Dish with incised peony scroll	1700-1949		Qing/ Republic	4.5	26.7	PDF.136

107	Pair of conical bowls with two fishes	1700-1933		Qing/ Republic	6.5	19.5	PDF.121 & PDF.122
108	Bowl with fish and plant design	1700-1900		Qing	3.8	11.7	PDF.691
109	Ink stone with dragon	1800-1900		Qing	3.0	9.0 (width)	PDF.675
110	Dish with dragon and phoenix design	Late 18th C-19th C		Qing	2.3	8.3	PDF.786
111	Wine jar with black glaze	1912-1949		Qing	17.4	N/A	PDF.313
112	Water pot with white body	1800-1900		Qing	4.9	N/A	PDF.494
113	Vase with archaic <i>gu</i> form	1800-1900		Qing	22.3	N/A	PDF.461
114	Flower-holder with stand	1800-1900		Qing	35.6	19.0 (width)	PDF.477
115	Vase with turquoise glaze in shape of inverted lotus leaf	1800-1900		Qing	28.3	13.0	PDF,A.56 4
116	Incense-burner with two lion heads	1800-1900		Qing	6.9	N/A	PDF.325

117	Gourd shaped vase	1800-1900		Qing	10.9	N/A	PDF.324
118	Brush shaper in form of ribbon and lotus flower	1800-1900		Qing	1.1	7.9 (width)	PDF.478
119	Ding ware cup with copper rim	Early 20th C		Qing	2.6	9.7	PDF.143
120	Flask with dragon on waves	1700-1900		Qing	2.8	N/A	PDF.131
121	Ding type vase with incised flowers and dragon	1800-1900		Qing	13.5	N/A	PDF.450
122	Cup depicting boy with chicken	1890-1910		Qing	5.8	6.8	PDF,A.823
123	Bowl with greenish-grey glaze	1800-1900		Qing	8.3	17.6	PDF.12
124	Bowl in <i>dayazhai</i> winter pattern	c. 1900	Guangxu	Qing	N/A	N/A	1951,0410.1
125	Bowl with fluted rim depicting second spring <i>dayazhai</i> pattern	c. 1900	Guangxu	Qing	N/A	20.3	1963,0719.1

126	Pair of vases with insects	1916	Hongxian	Republic	9.5	5.0	1925,0714 .1, .2
127	Brush pot with geese	c. 1850- 1920		Qing/ Republic	11.2	6.9	Franks.55 3
128	Poly-chrome bowl with prunus, chrysanthemum, lotus and peony	1850- 1900		Qing	6.5	16.5	1905,0519 .6
129	Set of five lidded jars with historical figures	1850- 1900		Qing	11.5, 9.4, 7.3, 5.8, 3.3	N/A	1996,1005 .4.a-e
130	Saucer with flowers (pair with cup)	1644- 1911		Qing	N/A	12.2	Franks.64 0
131	Cup with flowers (pair with saucer)	1644- 1911		Qing	4.3	N/A	Franks.64 0
132	Dish with flower design	1800- 1900		Qing	N/A	14.5	1983,0203 .14
133	Bottle with copper-red glaze	1800- 1900		Qing	14.0	N/A	1930,0719 .27
134	Bowl with copper-red glaze	1800- 1888		Qing	8.1	18.0	1888,0418 .1
135	Vase with copper-red glaze	1800- 1876		Qing	11.7	24.6	Franks.17 3

136	Bottle shaped vase with copper-red glaze	1800-1900		Qing	22.6	10.9	Franks.172
137	Pair of cups with copper-red glaze	c. 1800-1876		Qing	4.4	6.0	Franks.712
138	Stand with blue underglaze	1800-1900		Qing	N/A	15.0	1938,0521.1.b
139	Vase with greenish decoration and red glaze	1800-1900		Qing	101.1	N/A	1937,0716.119
140	Snuff bottle with brown glaze	c. 1800-1897		Qing	7.4	4.3	Franks.108
141	Snuff bottle with turquoise glaze	c. 1860-1870		Qing	5.4	N/A	OA+.7348
142	Square vase copper-red glaze	c. 1800-1876		Qing	33.7	20.3	Franks.49
143	Vase with crackled copper-red glaze	1800-1900		Qing	26.0	N/A	1936,1012.29
144	Cylindrical vase with ge glaze	c. 1800-1900		Qing	13.5	4.0	1909,0401.66
145	Snuff bottle with flowers and bats	1800-1870		Qing	4.5	1.5	1901,0608.179

146	Yellow snuff bottle with flower and bat design	1800-1870		Qing	5.0	1.5	1901,0608.178
147	Snuff bottle with flower	1800-1870		Qing	5.2	1.6	1901,0608.177
148	Snuff bottle with bats and flowers	1800-1870		Qing	5.1	1.4	1901,0608.176
149	Snuff bottle with turquoise glaze and flower design	1800-1870		Qing	4.1	1.5	1893,0514.76
150	Snuff bottle with flower and inscription	c. 1860-1870		Qing	5.3	2.5	Franks.660
151	Snuff bottle with green glaze	c. 1860-1870		Qing	5.1	5.3	Franks.660
152	Snuff bottle with flower and bats	1800-1870		Qing	4.9	N/A	OA+.7349
153	Snuff bottle with yellow glaze and dragon	c. 1800-1897		Qing	9.4	4.3	Franks.991
154	Snuff bottle with hen and chickens	c. 1800-1897		Qing	7.0	4.0	Franks.868

155	Snuff bottle with dragon and cloud design	c. 1800-1897		Qing	7.9	2.8	Franks.649
156	Snuff bottle with Buddhist foo dogs	c. 1700-1897		Qing	6.9	3.8	Franks.410
157	Snuff bottle with lady on a rock	c. 1700-1897		Qing	5.1	4.1	Franks.362
158	Bowl with copper-red glaze and lotus petal mold	1800-1876		Qing	7.1	19.3	Franks.250
159	Four-sided vase with birds, plants and figures	1800-1900		Qing	N/A	N/A	2005,0530.1
160	Snuff bottle in shape of gourd	c. 1700-1897		Qing	7.6	4.1	Franks.114
161	Snuff bottle with foliage sprays	c. 1700-1897		Qing	6.6	3.3	Franks.109
162	Pair of vases with red dragons	1800-1900		Qing	35.0	N/A	1997,0501.13 & 1997,0501.14
163	Pair of vases with male and female deer	1700-1900		Qing	N/A	N/A	1997,0501.2-3

164	Plate with landscape design	1898	Guangxu	Qing	N/A	27.0	1998,1219 .1
165	Jar with landscape design	1862-1874	Tongzhi	Qing	7.2	N/A	1926,0715 .1
166	Bowl with cracked ice design	1750-1870	Qianlong	Qing	6.9	17.5	Franks.72 4
167	Moon shaped flash with boys flying kites	1800-1897		Qing	5.3	2.0	Franks.41 5
168	Snuff bottle with dragon and flaming jewel	c. 1700-1897		Qing	8.6	3.8	Franks.31 3
169	Snuff bottle with two flowers	c. 1800-1870		Qing	4.4	3.6	Franks.45 1
170	Shallow dish with fruiting pipa	1900-2000		Republic	N/A	N/A	1983,0203 .1
171	Dish with fish and water plants	1900-2000		Republic	N/A	12.5	1983,0203 .5
172	Water pot with copper-red glaze	1700-1900		Qing	N/A	7.6	1947,0712 .274
173	Bottle with animal masks	1800-1900		Qing	12.5	16.0	1938,0524 .11
174	Snuff bottle with crabs and millet	c. 1800-1897		Qing	7.1	3.0	Franks.64 3

175	Conical bowl with fishes	1800-1879		Qing	7.6	22.4	Franks.554
176	Snuff bottle with 2 warriors	c. 1700-1897		Qing	7.9	3.3	Franks.456
177	Snuff bottle depicting boys playing in garden	1700-1897		Qing	5.1	3.6	Franks.417
178	Snuff bottles depicting sages and cricket	1700-1897		Qing	5.1	3.0	Franks.421
179	Snuff bottle with figures in garden	1700-1897		Qing	8.7	3.4	Franks.420
180	Snuff bottle depicting fisherman and his wife	1700-1897		Qing	7.6	3.3	Franks.414
181	Snuff bottle with interlacing tendrils	1700-1897		Qing	7.4	3.3	Franks.413
182	Snuff bottle depicting <i>Lao Laizi</i>	c. 1700-1897		Qing	7.4	2.5	Franks.407
183	Pair of wine cups in copper-red glaze	1800-1876		Qing	4.8	5.8	Franks.105

184	Ewer with copper-red glaze	1800-1876		Qing	N/A	45.5	Franks.707
185	Snuff bottle with landscape	c. 1800-1876		Qing	7.1	2.5	Franks.450
186	Pair of lidded bowls	1800-1876		Qing	8.9	11.4	Franks.48
187	Vase with peach-bloom glaze	1800-1876		Qing	29.2	N/A	Franks.45
188	Globular vase with copper-red glaze	1800-1876		Qing	25.4	13.0	Franks.44.a
189	Bowl with lotus petals	1800-1900		Qing	9.5	18.0	2004,0628.7
190	Lidded jar decorated with flowers	1800-1900		Qing	24.4	20.8	Franks.3113
191	Snuff bottle with flowers, plant and bat	c. 1800-1897		Qing	5.1	2.8	Franks.449.a
192	Snuff bottle with dragons and pearl	1700-1897		Qing	5.8	6.1	Franks.418
193	Snuff bottle decorated with flowers	c. 1800-1897		Qing	8.4	3.8	Franks.115

194	Pair of heirloom jars with multi-colored flowers	1780-1880		Qing	107.0	51.0	As1993,1 3.2 & As1993,1 3.1
195	Pair of green vases decorated with red dragons	1800-1900		Qing	32.5	N/A	1997,0501 .14 & 1997,0501 .13
196	Lidded jar depicting eight horses of <i>Mu Wang</i>	c. 1700- 1900		Qing	17.0	22.9	Franks.96. A
197	Pair of long necked vases depicting wild goose and gander	1916	Hongxian	Republic	16.4	9.5	1935,1015 .3-4
198	Circular snuff bottle with <i>famille rose</i> colors	1820-1897		Qing	6.1	5.1	Franks.65 1
199	Snuff bottle with <i>famille rose</i> enamel	1796-1876		Qing	6.7	N/A	Franks.95
200	Dish decorated with orchid, rock and <i>lingzhi</i>	1900-2000		Republic	N/A	18.5	1983,0203 .11
201	Dish with blue underglaze	1912-1933		Republic	N/A	11.2	1933,0614 .1

202	Jar with small and large lotus flowers	1912-1929		Republic	15.0	N/A	1930,0719.54
203	Water pot with copper-red peach bloom glaze	1880-1915		Qing	9.0	N/A	1915,0409.40
204	Small jar decorated with rural village	1800-1900		Qing	6.5	8.0	1910,1113.5
205	Cup with two women drinking tea	c. 1820-1880		Qing	7.5	9.8	1910,0606.14
206	Bowl decorated with four medallions of <i>shou</i>	1820-1870		Qing	6.0	9.5	1905,0519.73
207	Bowl with bats and <i>shou</i> characters	1875-1904	Guangxu	Qing	6.0	10.0	1905,0519.63
208	Bowl decorated with double gourd and basket of flowers	1862-1874	Tongzhi	Qing	7.0	11.0	1905,0519.62
209	Small bowl with lotus flowers and bats	1820-1870		Qing	6.0	10.0	1905,0519.54

210	Snuff bottle with two women in a boat	1800-1860		Qing	9.7	3.3	Franks.466
211	Snuff bottle with sea creatures	c. 1700-1877		Qing	7.6	3.3	Franks.824
212	Snuff bottle decorated with fisherman and landscape	c. 1700-1877		Qing	8.9	4.1	Franks.825
213	Pair of lidded bowls with butterfly design	c. 1800-1876		Qing	9.0	10.0	Franks.370
214	Snuff bottle decorated with 18 <i>Luohan</i>	1780-1876		Qing	6.4	4.6	Franks.94
215	Yellow dish with two incised dragons	1908-1911	Xuantong	Qing	2.5	10.8	1926,1018.1
216	Saucer dish depicting two dragons fighting over pearl	1865-1908	Guangxu	Qing	2.5	13.0	1925,1222.5
217	Bowl with bats and <i>shou</i> in turquoise ground	1820-1900		Qing	5.5	10.0	1905,0519.68

218	Bowl decorated with bats and flowers	1820-1900		Qing	6.0	10.0	1905,0519.67
219	Bowl with flowers and <i>shou</i> characters	1820-1870		Qing	6.0	10.5	1905,0519.65
220	Snuff bottle depicting peach or plum tree	1880-1900	Guangxu	Qing	6.4	5.1	Franks.592
221	Tray depicting fishermen in landscape	1800-1900		Qing	N/A	5.9	Franks.221
222	Snuff bottle with red flower	c. 1860-1877		Qing	5.3	2.8	Franks.911
223	Snuff bottle with flowers and plants	c. 1800-1876		Qing	5.7	2.8	Franks.449
224	Snuff bottle with court scene	c. 1700-1877		Qing	8.0	6.4	Franks.917
225	Jar depicting <i>Budai Hesheng</i>	1912-1930		Republic	N/A	N/A	1930,0719.10
226	Brush washer with bird and flower decoration	1862-1874	Tongzhi	Qing	5.0	N/A	1910,0606.15

227	Dish with mandarin ducks	1800-1875		Qing	2.5	15.0	Franks.867
228	Teapot decorated with lakeside scene	1919		Republic	20.0	14.0	2013,3007.60

Note: Due to the large quantity held in British Collections, this appendix serves as a preliminary investigation of wares dating from 1850-1920. In the future, a more comprehensive study is required to ensure all objects are evaluated in greater detail.

APPENDIX E

NUMERICAL ANALYSIS OF OBJECTS IN BRITISH COLLECTIONS AND

PHOENIX HONGXIAN PORCELAIN COLLECTION

Breakdown of object type in Phoenix Hongxian Porcelain Collection:

Object Type	Number of Objects	Percent
Vase	22	44.90%
Bowl	3	6.12%
Spittoon	2	4.08%
Dish / Plate / Saucer	2	4.08%
Cup	13	26.53%
Jar	6	12.24%
Box	1	2.04%
Total	49	100.00%

Breakdown of object type in British Collections dating from 1850-1920:

Object Type	Number of Objects	Percent
Vase	72	22.93%
Bowl	57	18.15%
Snuff Bottle	43	13.69%
Dish / Plate / Saucer	43	13.69%
Cup	28	8.92%
Jar	24	7.64%
Other	47	14.97%
Total	314	100.00%

Breakdown of Imperial Reign in British Collections dating from 1850-1920²⁸⁵:

Period	Number of Objects	Percent
Xianfeng	7	9.72%
Tongzhi	16	22.22%
Tongzhi/Guangxu	2	2.78%
Guangxu	33	45.83%
Guangxu/Xuantong	2	2.78%
Xuantong	3	4.17%
Hongxian	9	12.50%
Total	72	100%

²⁸⁵ Only objects where an Imperial Reign could be determined have been included. Objects that spanned for larger time periods have been excluded from this table.

Breakdown of major motifs in the Phoenix Hongxian Porcelain Collection:

Motif	Number of Objects	Percent
Bird and Flower	26	53.06%
Landscape	3	6.12%
Traditional Symbols	4	8.16%
Monochrome	2	4.08%
Figural	9	18.37%
Animal	5	10.20%
Total	49	100.00%

Breakdown of major motifs in British Collections dating from 1850-1920:

Motif	Number of Objects	Percent
Bird and Flower	107	34.08%
Landscape	12	3.82%
Traditional Symbols	65	20.70%
Monochrome	73	23.25%
Figural	35	11.15%
Animal	22	7.01%
Total	314	100.00%