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CHINESE METALLIC MIRRORS

WITH NOTES ON SOME ANCIENT SPECIMENS
OF THE MUSÉE GUIMET, PARIS

BY

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BY FRIEDRICH HIRTH.

LITERATURE.¹

I. CHINESE.

1. PO-KU-T'U-LU,⁽¹⁾ by WANG FU, 30 chapters, first published in A.D. 1107,—an illustrated descriptive catalogue of ancient bronzes collected at the Museum of the Emperor Hui-tsung, at the beginning of the twelfth century (see my *Über fremde Einflüsse*, etc., pp. 5 et seq.). Chapters 28–30 contain 113 illustrations representing metallic mirrors, among which 48 are ascribed to the Han, 64 to the T'ang, and only 1 to the Sui period. This book has been printed in a number of editions, differing considerably in the value of their illustrations, much of the detail of the various ornaments being suppressed in the later editions. The original edition is probably not obtainable anywhere at present; but copies of a facsimile reproduction of it,—entitled "*Ch'i-ta-chung-siu S'uan-ho Po-ku-t'u-lu*,"⁽²⁾ because it appeared during the Ch'i-ta period (A.D. 1308–12) as a reprint (*chung-siu*) of the "*Po-ku-t'u-lu*," the collection described in this catalogue being kept in the "*S'uan-ho*" Museum Palace,—though exceedingly rare, are still in existence. I heard of a complete copy at Yang-chou in 1893, but found that the more I offered, the more obstinate the owner became in not wishing to dispose of it. A fragment of the work, including the chapters on metallic mirrors, is now at the Royal Library of Berlin (Hirth Collection, No. 142),—a folio print, containing in its text portions sixteen columns of seventeen characters on each leaf. A note added to each illustration states whether it corresponds in size to the original, or whether it has been reduced, and the inscriptions are facsimiles of rubbings taken from the originals. In all the later editions the illustrations have undergone considerable

¹ The parenthetical references relate to the corresponding numbers in the list of Chinese characters at the end of the paper (p. 253).

reduction in size, involving the loss of much detail. New editions were published by the firms Pau-ku-t'ang, Tsiang-yang, and Po-ju-ch'ai⁽³⁾ during the Ming, — the last one being dated 1588, and having as collaborators for illustrations the two best-known artists for linear drawings of the dynasty, Ting Yün-p'öng and Wu Ting (see GILES, Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art, pp. 163 et seq.), — and also during the present dynasty, varying in style of print, but not coming up to the first two editions mentioned.

2. SI-TS'ING-KU-KIEN,⁽⁴⁾ compiled under orders from the Emperor K'ien-lung, dated 1749, by a commission of scholars and artists, under the superintendence of two imperial princes, — an illustrated catalogue of the bronze works and coins in the collection of the Emperor K'ien-lung. Among the members of the commission in charge of the work, we find the names of the Grand Secretaries Liang Shī-ch'öng (GILES, Chin. Biogr. Dict., No. 1249), Ts'iang P'u (Ibid., No. 337), and Wang Tu-tun (Ibid., No. 2255), and quite an array of talent out of the emperor's surroundings, including well-known artists, such as Tung Pang-ta and Ts'ien Weï-ch'öng (see my Scraps from a Collector's Note-Book, pp. 36 and 38). Chapters 39 and 40, being the end of the book, which is followed by a supplement on coins, are entirely devoted to metallic mirrors. Of the 93 mirrors reproduced in these illustrations, 1 is ascribed to indefinite antiquity, 57 to the Han, and 35 to the T'ang period, several among which have already been described in the "Po-ku-t'u-lu."

Dr. BUSHELL (Chinese Art, Vol. I, p. 75) mentions a continuation of this work as circulated in manuscript under the title "Si-ts'ing-sü-kien."⁽⁵⁾ "Si-ts'ing" is the name of one of the Imperial Palace buildings, where the collections described were kept. Another palace containing curiosities was the Ning-shou-kung, to which a descriptive catalogue — also existing in manuscript only, and entitled "Ning-shou-ku-kien"⁽⁶⁾ — is devoted. I have not seen either of the two manuscripts mentioned by Dr. Bushell, and am not able to say whether they contain matter bearing on metallic mirrors.

3. T'U-SHU-TSI-CH'ÖNG,⁽⁷⁾ the great cyclopædia, in over 5,000 Chinese volumes, commenced under the Emperor K'ang-hi, and completed under Yung-ch'öng in 1726. Chapters 225–228 of its 32d section contain the most exhaustive material we may desire for