



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

Guide to MS 7162 Book of Chinese watercolor paintings illustrating modes of punishment

National Anthropological Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Anthropological Archives
Title:	MS 7162 Book of Chinese watercolor paintings illustrating modes of punishment
Date:	before 1825
Identifier:	NAA.MS7162
Creator:	Morse, Charles H. (Collector)
Extent:	1 Volume (cloth-bound album containing 12 watercolor paintings on pith paper; 9.5 x 13.5 inches (bound volume), 8 x 11.5 inches (paintings)) 1 Folder (2 sets of 16 pages of notes)
Language:	The title of the album is in Chinese. Explanatory notes are in English.
Digital Content:	Image(s): MS 7162 Book of Chinese watercolor paintings illustrating modes of punishment
Container:	Box 7162 / 7421 / 7508 / 7591, Item 1; Box 7162 / 7421 / 7508 / 7591, Item 1

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The album was donated to the United States National Museum by Charles H. Morse of the U. S. Pension Office in 1876. A note indicates that it was "procured from China in 1825." The album and accompanying notes were transferred from the object collections of the Department of Anthropology to the National Anthropological Archives by Chang-su Houchins in February 1985.

Processing Information

English titles for the album and most paintings were provided by the donor. A label with an English title was added to the album cover by USNM. The archivist assigned titles in square brackets [] to untitled paintings.

Preferred Citation

MS 7162 Book of Chinese watercolor paintings illustrating modes of punishment, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

The collection is open for research.

Access to the collection requires an appointment.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Historical Note

Chinese export watercolors were painted in the port cities of China for sale to western customers in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Many of the watercolors were done in sets such as trades, domestic interiors and gardens, boats, birds, mandarins, and punishments.

Scope and Contents

A cloth-bound album containing twelve (12) watercolor paintings on pith paper. The paintings depict various modes of corporal punishment. The Chinese title, *Xing ren zhuang ren*, or "Punishment with Strong Sword Blades" is apparently figurative, for the twelve drawings in this collection depict punishments other than those by the sword. Included with the album are two sets of explanatory notes written by the donor and/or a United States National Museum curator or clerk. The two sets of notes have slight differences.

Please note that the contents of the collection and the language and terminology used reflect the context and culture of the time of its creation. As an historical document, its contents may be at odds with contemporary views and terminology and considered offensive today. The information within this collection does not reflect the views of the Smithsonian Institution or National Anthropological Archives, but is available in its original form to facilitate research.

Local Numbers

USNM Accession Number: 4505

USNM Catalog Number: 21249

Variant Titles

Punishment with strong sword blades

Xing ren zhuang ren

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- China trade watercolor painting
- Chinese
- Corporal punishment

Cultures:

- Chinese

Types of Materials:

- Albums
- Watercolors

Works of art

Places:

China
East Asia

Container Listing

A culprit before the magistrate

[Image\(s\): Before the magistrate](#)

[Image\(s\): Before the magistrate](#)

Notes: NAA MS 7162 (1)

NAA INV 10000017

This painting shows a magistrate seated at a silk-covered table, two assistants with large bamboo canes, and the prosecutor. The accused is before the magistrate on his hands and knees.

Malefactors chained to iron bars

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

Notes: NAA MS 7162 (2)

NAA INV 10000018

Shown are two seated men, both shackled to long staffs of iron. One man is smoking and the other is making tea.

The manner of beheading

[Image\(s\): Manner of beheading](#)

[Image\(s\): Manner of beheading](#)

Notes: NAA MS 7162 (3)

NAA INV 10000019

Shown are two men on their knees before an executioner with a sword. One of the men has been beheaded.

Minor criminals fastened to large blocks of wood

[Image\(s\): By block of wood](#)

[Image\(s\): By block of wood](#)

Notes: NAA MS 7162 (4)

NAA INV 10000020

Shown are two men with shackled feet who are chained from the neck to blocks of wood. They are fighting over a game of dominoes.

The punishment of the wooden collar, or cangue

[Image\(s\): By Cangue](#)

[Image\(s\): By Cangue](#)

Notes: NAA MS 7162 (5)

NAA INV 10000021

Shown are a man with shackled feet and a cangue (wooden collar) around his neck and a minor official, armed with a scourge of rattan, who has been assigned to prevent the offender from long periods of rest or entering a house.

Heads of the malefactors exposed at the road side

Image(s): [By public exposure of the head](#)

Image(s): [By public exposure of the head](#)

Notes: NAA MS 7162 (6)

NAA INV 1000022

Shown are two executioners, each with a severed head in a bamboo cage. One executioner has hung his cage on a pole which he is erecting by a roadside.

[Female rebel executed by disemboweling]

Image(s): [By Disemboweling](#)

Image(s): [By Disemboweling](#)

Notes: NAA MS 7162 (7)

NAA INV 1000023

The watercolor depicts a woman tied to a wooden cross, her hair passed through a hole in the upright post above her head, her face and breasts cut. She is being disemboweled by an executioner.

Beheading a corpse

Image(s): [By beheading a corpse](#)

Image(s): [By beheading a corpse](#)

Notes: NAA MS 7162 (8)

NAA INV 1000024

The picture shows a corpse lying in a coffin. The executioner is in the act of cutting off the corpse's head and has a cage in which to display it.

"Ling Chih" or being cut in ten thousand pieces

Image(s): [Ling Chih \(Cut in ten thousand pieces\)](#)

Image(s): [Ling Chih \(Cut in ten thousand pieces\)](#)

Notes: NAA MS 7162 (9)

NAA INV 1000025

Shown is a man who has been cut in two at the waist by an executioner.

A malefactor in a tub

Image(s): [\[Punishment\] by the tub](#)

Image(s): [\[Punishment\] by the tub](#)

Notes: NAA MS 7162 (10)

NAA INV 1000026

Shown is a man covered with an inverted wooden tub. His head sticks out from a hole in the bottom and his hands from holes in the side. A minor official stands nearby with a scourge in his hand.

Prisoner in the pillory

[Image\(s\)](#)

Image(s)

Notes: The drawing shows a man reclining on a wooden platform. His head is held in place by an upright wooden board. A minor official sits nearby, his scourge on the ground.

NAA MS 7162 (11) NAA INV 1000027

The capital punishment of the cord

Image(s): [Punishment] by the cord

Image(s): [Punishment] by the cord

Image(s): [Punishment] by the cord

Notes: NAA MS 7162 (12)

NAA INV 1000028

The drawing shows a man tied to a cross. An executioner is behind him, using a stick to tighten a rope around his neck. A minor official sits nearby, his scourge on the ground.