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Suchuen et Xensi, Provincia seu Praefecturae Regni Sinensis . . . (Heightened with Gold)

Stock#: 37971
Map Maker: Jansson

Date: 1655 circa
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 20.5 x 18.5 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

A fine example of Jan Jansson's map of the Sichuan and Shaanxi Provinces, oriented with West at the top, heightened with Gold.

This attractive and detailed map shows all of the Sichuan (called here 'Suchuan') and Shaanxi ('Xinasi') provinces. The Sichuan capital of Chengdu ('Chingtu') and Chongching ('Chungching') are located to the center-right of the map, while the city of Xi'an ('Sigan'), an ancient capital of China, is located to the right in Shaanxi. The western end of the Great Wall of China passes further to the right, and even further still are the sands of the Gobi Desert, the 'Desertum Europaesis'. The map also features great detail as to the positions of mountains, rivers (including the mighty Yangtze) and villages, all of which are finely engraved.

During the time in which this map was produced, Sichuan and Shaanxi were recovering from the rebellion spear-headed by the peasant leader Zhang Xianzhong(1606-1646), nicknamed "Yellow Tiger", who briefly took control of these regions, declaring himself emperor of the Daxi Dynasty. He met with spirited resistance from the local nobility, and a bloody conflict ensued. While Zhang was overthrown in 1646, it would take several decades for the population and economy of Central China to regain its former strength.

The map is based on the groundbreaking work of Martino Martini (1614-61), a legendary Italian Jesuit missionary and scholar. Martini arrived in Beijing in 1644 just as the Ming Dynasty fell to the Manchurian rebels (who formed the Qing Dynasty), and remained in the country until 1651.

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Following in the footsteps of his fellow Italian Jesuit Mateo Ricci, Martini sought out the very best maps and surveys of the Chinese Empire. He compiled a series of maps that were by far the most accurate depictions of China to date. Martini's suite of 17 regional maps was first published by Joan Blaeu as the *Novus Atlas Sinensis,* which accounted for volume 10 of his *Atlas Maior* (Amsterdam, 1655). Blaeu's arch-rival, Jan Jansson (a.k.a. Jansonius, 1588-1664), issued this edtion shortly thereafter. Martini's work was described by the great German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen, as:

"*the most complete geographical description of China that we possess, and through which Martini has become the father of geographical learning on China*."

Indeed, even Jean-Baptiste du Halde's *Description…de la Chine* (Paris, 1735), published 80 years later, did not fully supersede Martini's work.

The present map is thus one of the foundations of the modern cartography of Central China.

Detailed Condition:
Old Color. Heightened with Gold.