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The Map of China [Huang Ming yitong fang yu bei lan -- Comprehensive view map of the Imperial Ming]

Stock#: 58174
Map Maker: Purchas

Date: 1625
Place: London
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 14.5 x 12 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

Important Early Map of China from Purchas' Famous Voyage Collection

Nice example of Samuel Purchas' map of China, part of his bestselling voyage collection. It is considered the first map of western China published in Europe. The map was derived directly from Chinese sources and is a prime example of East-West exchange in the early modern period.

The map shows China is sharp detail, with provinces labeled and settlements marked with boxes and circles. The riverine system is shown, as are the islands of Hainan province in the south. Significantly, Korea is shown as a peninsula, a rarity on a map of this time.

The map's title runs across the top of the map in Roman script and Chinese symbols. To the left is a portrait of Matteo Ricci, the Jesuit priest credited with making the first Western style map in China. He also facilitated the exchange of cartographic materials between Europe and China at the beginning of the seventeenth century. In the bottom corners are examples of the dress of a Chinese man and woman.

The maps of *Hakluytus Posthumous, or Purchas his Pilgrimes* (1625)

Purchas was interested in the wider world, particularly its history and geography. The first edition of his travel collection contained nearly ninety maps, some of which were completed by Jodocus Hondius. Not all the maps were original, but there are nevertheless several highly influential items. For example, the

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famous John Smith Map of Virginia featured in Purchas' work. Purchas also included the Henry Briggs Map of North America, the first map in English to show California as an island, as well as the first map to name Hudson's Bay and the Hudson River. Additionally, there is the William Alexander Map of the Northeast, which pioneered many new place names and Roe's map of North India, the earliest English map of Mogul lands.

Also influential, this map was based on a sheet map printed in China from a woodblock. It was collected by John Saris, a captain working for the East India Company. He found the map in Bantam, where he was serving as the company's chief factor. The map had been in the possession of a Fujianese merchant who owed Saris money; the Englishman took the map as partial payment of the debt.

Once returned to England, Saris gave his prize to the well-connected travel writer Richard Hakluyt. Hakluyt, whose work is the basis for Purchas', passed the map on to Purchas. It was translated, as the original was entirely in Chinese, and prepared for inclusion in Purchas' own travel collection, with Saris referenced as the source of the map.

On the initial map, each settlement is named with a Chinese symbol. Unable to translate these, Purchas replaced the symbols with boxes and circles instead. The original map may be what is now called the Cao Map (1593), of which there is only one surviving example.

Purchas' map improved upon Ortelius' map of China (1584) and would be used as the model for the De Bry and Semedo maps. It was included in one of the most important publications in the history of travel writing and is a significant milestone in the history of cartography of China. It would be an integral part of any collection of travel or China maps.

Detailed Condition: