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[Second Opium War Map] The North East Provinces of China Including The Coast From Chusan to the Gulf of Liau-Tong Compiled From Du Halde's Maps of 1738, McCartney, Barrow, Parish and Staunton 1793-7, Klaproth & Biot 1842, The Admiralty Survys By Captns. Bethune, Kellett & Collinson 1842, Capn. Vansittart 1855, Comr. Ward & Lieut. Bullock 1858, Monsr. Ploix' Survey of The Tien-Tsin River 1858. Part of the Coat of Pe-Chilli From A Survey by Major A Fisher, R.E. Sepr. 1859

Stock#: 61664
Map Maker: British Admiralty
Date: 1860
Place: London
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 25 x 38 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Rare Admiralty Chart of the Northern Chinese Provinces from the Second Opium War

Detailed and rare chart of the northeastern provinces of China, published by the British Admiralty in 1859 to illustrate the theater of the Second Opium War (1855-1860). Interestingly, this chart is on a conical



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projection, marking it as a propaganda piece rather than a navigational aid.

The chart includes annotations in French showing the course of a ship which entered Shanghai from the south and thereafter departed to the north between June 8 and July 3. The user was thwarted, however, by the conical projection, making the course incorrect, as can be seen with the correction to the position of July 2.

The large chart, which folds into the accompanying case, offers a sweeping view of northeast China, from Nimrod Sound and the Chusan Archipelago in the south to the Gulf of Liau-Tong in the north. The chart includes sounding depths as a navigation aid, but it also contains a lot of information inland, such as roads, rivers, cities, and—marked with a crenulated pattern—the Great Wall.

The unadorned title block to the right includes the title, a glossary of Chinese and Tartar words, two scales, and notes on vocabulary and terminology. There is also the seal of the Hydrographic Office and the price of this separately-issued chart, 5 shillings. The author of this chart, Edward J. Powell, also completed charts of Bombay Harbor and New Zealand for the Hydrographic Office.

Additionally, the title block includes a list of sources for this chart, which includes Duhalde's classic 1738 map. Most of the sources, however, are more recent surveys from the 1850s. These recent surveys, and the detail inland, signal that this is no ordinary chart. Unlike most Admiralty charts, this item clearly had purpose other than navigation; it was meant to offer a better delineation of the theater of the Second Opium War.

Also, unlike most Admiralty charts, this example was apparently issued in full original color, as this copy matches the color employed on the example in the Bibliotheque National de France ([here](#)).

It seems that this was one of several charts issued by Edward J. Powell, Hydrographer to the Admiralty, that were used by the army and other branches of government. It shows that the Hydrographic Office is central not only to navigation, but to the cultural production of imperial Britain.

European trade with China and the Opium Wars

The Portuguese made their way to China in the early sixteenth century. Previously, Europeans had traded



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with China via middlemen and over the Silk Road, although a few, like Marco Polo, supposedly visited China in the late medieval period. After a half century of tension and conflict, the Portuguese were eventually allowed to trade with select Chinese ports, but with severe restrictions. From the late seventeenth century, the Qing Dynasty loosened their restrictions on foreign trade somewhat, allowing a few ships each year from several Western Empires. However, Westerners were still not allowed within the walls of port cities and were restricted to factories near the waterline.

From 1757, the Chinese employed what became known as the Canton System, which made Canton the sole port of entry for Western goods into China. A cohort of Chinese merchants, the *Cohong*, mediated between the Chinese government and Western traders. Though the Western empires tolerated the Canton System, they did not like it and wanted more open access to Chinese goods, especially tea, and markets. By the late-eighteenth century, the British had accumulated a massive trade deficit as China had no interest in Western goods; they only accepted silver as payment. The East India Company began to bring opium from its Indian plantations to China instead of silver, causing a massive increase in the number of Chinese addicted to the substance.

Although the Chinese banned the import of opium, the trade continued. When China attempted to halt the trade in 1839, the British responded with force. During this conflict, the First Opium War, the British captured the factories in Canton in March 1841. The war ended with the Treaty of Nanking (1842), which forced the Chinese to allow British, and eventually other, traders to live in several Chinese ports unmolested. It also granted them the liberty to trade with whomever they chose. Additionally, Britain was granted a colony at Hong Kong.

Unsurprisingly, the Chinese government was dissatisfied with the Treaty of Nanking. The British too were not entirely satisfied, as they still did not have the ideal open trade conditions they desired. In 1856, the powers went to war again.

The Second Opium War began in Canton, where Chinese marines seized a British-registered ship, the *Arrow*, in October 1856. The British bombarded Canton in late 1856, causing many fires, and they took the city in late 1857, with the support of the French.

By mid-1859, the British and French had failed to take the important forts. However, by June, they were in



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the final stages of negotiating a treaty. The British insisted on signing the treaty at Tientsin (Tianjin), which meant passing up the Pei-ho river by the Taku forts. The Chinese suggested an alternative signing venue, but the British tried to force their way into the entrance of the Pei-ho. They lost three ships in the process.

The treaty was eventually signed, ending the first phase of the war, but fighting continued into the next year. Eventually, Anglo-French forces advanced and burned the Summer Palaces near Beijing, forcing the Chinese to capitulate. In January of 1860, just as this chart was published, at the Convention of Beijing, China granted diplomatic presence in Beijing to the Russian, French, and British. They also agreed to the payment of an indemnity and the cession of Kowloon to Britain. The opium trade was also declared legal and Christianity recognized.

Rarity

The map is very rare. We note no examples at auction or in dealer catalogs. OCLC locates examples in the British Library, SOAS University of London and the Bibliotheque National de France (see above).

Such a rare chart on a conical projection is a cartographic novelty. It is also linked to one of the most important conflicts of nineteenth-century imperialism. It would therefore make a worthwhile addition to any collection of China or Opium War maps and charts.

Detailed Condition:

Dissected and laid on linen. Early cloth covers, with paste down title "Chine Provinces-Nord-Est" on the spine.