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[Canton] Chapelle de St. Francois Xavier dans l'île de Sancian

Stock#: 82397
Map Maker: Lemer cier & Cie.
Date: 1870
Place: Paris
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 22.5 x 16.5 inches
Price: \$ 2,400.00



Description:

Rare View of the Chapel of Saint Francis Xavier in Sancian (Shangchuan Island, China) Designed by Achille-Antoine Hermitte

Rare lithographic view celebrating the dedication of the new chapel to St. Francis Xavier at Li Zaijiao (李宰桥, Lizai Point), Shangchuan Dao (上川岛), 4 Taishan (台山) in 1869, the original burial place for St. Francis Xavier in 552.

The image shows a romanticized view of the island, with the new chapel of Saint Francis Xavier at the center, including a procession toward the chapel, with Bishop Philippe François Zéphirin Guillemin (the first Apostolic Vicar of Guangdong, 1853 -1886) in front of the church, greeting those attending the service dedicating the new Chapel. A procession of Chinese villagers is shown approaching from a village, with a classical chapel at the right. On top of the hill behind the new chapel is a large cross. At the bottom, a numbered key provides further explanation.

The printing of this lithograph coincides with the visit of Bishop Guillemin to Europe between 1870 and 1875. The image is likely based upon a sketch done by an unknown artist in Macau or Hong Kong. Lemer cier & Cie were likely commissioned by the Church to produce the lithograph to help raise funds. The lithography was the work of Frédéric Sorrieu (1807-87), an artist, engraver, lithographer and illustrator. A chromolithograph by Sorrieu of the same view is also believed to have been made. Sorrieu is more widely known for his nationalist, revolutionary and liberal political work, but his work with Lemer cie & Cie, includes other work for the church, including lithographic work on the Missions in Paraguay from original drawings by Antoine Demersay.



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The Chapel of Saint Francis Xavier at Sancian

The new chapel on Shangchuan Dao was undertaken at the direction of the Bishop between 1867 and 1869 to mark the spot where St Francis Xavier had died on December 3, 1552, and where there had been a regular, annual Portuguese presence since before 1549. St Francis' first burial had been on the island but his body was soon removed. In February 1553 it was taken to Malacca. It was then taken to Goa, arriving in March 1554, and placed in Goa's Basílica do Bom Jesus, where it remains.

In Shangchuan Dao, in 1639 the Jesuits in Macao erected a tomb on the original burial site, marked in Chinese and Portuguese, which was not well maintained. In October 1698, the site was visited by the *L'Amphitrite* on a voyage to China, who upon arriving in Guangzhou gave money to Fathers Turcotti and Videlon, of the Jesuit mission in Guangzhou, who in turn had a small chapel built over the tomb, which was later damaged or destroyed in the anti-Christian activities of 1724 and 1732. By 1813, little remained and the Bishop of Macao paid the villagers to locate and re-erect the engraved, 1639 memorial slab. A pilgrimage from Macau visited in 1864, followed two years later by Bishop Guillemin on the first of his two visits. After the second, he pushed forward with the construction of the Chapel illustrated in this image. Later, a school, mission house and Chapel of Our Lady of Lourdes were built. These stood until destroyed by the Japanese in 1942.

Rarity

The view is extremely rare. Stephen Davies opined that only a few hundred were originally printed for Bishop Guillemin.

This is the only example we have ever seen on the market. We note also a single example of the variant referenced by Davies.

Detailed Condition:

Minor soiling.