QUESTION 1

The Ming Dynasty ruled China from 1368 to 1644, following the collapse of the Yuan dynasty. Literature, painting, poetry, music, and Chinese opera of various types flourished during the Ming dynasty, especially in the economically prosperous regions of the empire. Famous painters of the Ming Dynasty included Ni Zan, Dong Qichang, Shen Zhou, Tang Yin, Wen Zhengming, and Qiu Ying, amongst others. They added new techniques and styles to traditional Chinese paintings. Under the Ming dynasty, Chinese culture bloomed. Narrative artworks with a vast array of colors and a busier composition gained popularity during this time. European culture influenced Chinese art during this period which brought about different techniques of perspective and shading. There were two main traditions of Ming paintings. Literati painting (wenrenhua) and that of the Professional academics (huayuanpai). Artists generally stressed independent creation, impressing their work with bold marks of their styles. Porcelain sculptures also flourished during the Ming dynasty. Chinese Porcelain art has shown continuous development since the pre-dynastic periods and is one of the most significant forms of Chinese art. Raw materials required to make porcelain are available in China. Porcelain items ranged from construction materials, such as bricks and tiles, to sophisticated Chinese porcelain wares made for the imperial court. In the Ming Dynasty, the invention of polychrome pigments was a breakthrough in porcelain artwork. The Ming sculptures included figures of animals and flowers. Some of these techniques were modeling, carving, engraving, embossing, and relief decoration. Artists paid particular attention to realism, considering the posture, mood, and deity symbols to make their work as accurate as possible. Artists conveyed the deity's character by using careful observation and great attention to detail. These details were crucial to the patrons because the sculptures were often used for worship. Ming Dynasty is famous for its cobalt blue-white porcelain, sea-green celadon glazed stoneware, and white porcelain sculptures. The Yongle period (1402–24), Xuande period (1425–35), Chenghua period (1464–87), Zhengde period (1505–21), Jiajing period (1521–67), the Wanli periods (1572–1620) of the Ming Dynasty were particularly famous for its pottery and sculptures. New types of Chinese Ming pottery developed. "Swatow ware," "Sancai ware" (three-color), and Yixing ware were the most popular among others. One of the most notable masters of Porcelain sculptures in the Ming Dynasty was He Chaozong. The works of He Chaozong include Buddhist, white porcelain statues. Documented evidence of He Chaozong, apart from extant examples of his ceramic art, is negligible. A gazetteer entry from 1763 mentions him with other art notables of the Ming Dynasty and establishes that the artist had earned a considerable reputation in his day. His works, identified by his seal and were in an entirely different category. They were thickly potted and exhibited an artistic expressiveness and creativity unmatched by thinner and standardized works.

QUESTION 2

Sotheby's

Sotheby's is a British-founded American multinational corporation headquartered in New York City. It is one of the world's largest auction houses of art, jewelry, and collectibles. It has 80 locations in 40 countries, but maintains a significant presence in the UK. Sotheby's Institute of Art (educational facility), Sotheby's International Realty (real estate dealers), and RM Sotheby's (classic car dealers) are subsidiaries organisations.

Sotheby's was established on 11 March 1744 in London by Samuel Baker, a bookseller. In 1767 the firm became Baker & Leigh, after George Leigh became a partner, and was renamed to Leigh and Sotheby in 1778 after Baker's death when Leigh's nephew, John Sotheby, inherited Leigh's share. Sotheby's auctions are usually held during the day. The majority are free and open to the public, with the exception of occasional evening auctions, which require tickets. Attendees have no obligation to bid.

Bidding finishes when only one bidder remains willing to purchase the lot at the bidder's declared price. The auctioneer "knocks down" the lot, declaring it sold to the winning bidder. The winning bid for a lot is also called the hammer price.

Christie's

Christie's is a British auction house founded in 1766 by James Christie. Its main premises are on King Street, St James's in London and in Rockefeller Center in New York City. It is owned by Groupe Artémis, the holding company of François-Henri Pinault.Sales in 2015 totalled £4.8 billion (US$7.4 billion). In 2017, the Salvator Mundi was sold for $400 million at Christie's in New York, at the time the highest price ever paid for a single painting at an auction. On November 2007, an album of eight leaves, ink on paper, by China's Ming Dynasty court painter Dong Qichang was sold at the Christie's Hong Kong Chinese Paintings Auction for US$6,235,500, a world auction record for the artist.

China Guardian Auctions

China Guardian Auctions Co. Ltd., or simply China Guardian, is a mainland Chinese auction house that specialises in the auction of Chinese artwork of all types. When China Guardian was first established in 1993, it focused primarily on the Mainland Chinese market until it decided to expand to Hong Kong in 2012.The Chinese artwork regularly sold by China Guardian includes Chinese paintings, calligraphy, porcelain, furniture, sculptures, rare books, rubbings, jewellery and watches. Approximately 60% of China Guardian's sales are in the categories of ink painting and calligraphy.

First founded in May 1993 by Chen Dongsheng, China Guardian is China's oldest art-auction firm. For years, China Guardian has successfully staged more than 300 auctions with more than 200,000 lots sold. China Guardian holds major Spring and Autumn Auctions, as well as its Quarterly Auction series. Ming Dynasty framed bed made in Huanghuali wood with six horseshoe legs and cloud clusters patterns sold at the 2010 Autumn Auctions for transaction price 43.12 million yuan (USD $6.21 million).

QUESTION 3

The story ‘The Chinese Statue’ sheds light on an important Chinese traditions. One of the traditions is : If an honoured guest requests something the giver will grow in the eyes of his fellow men by parting with it.”

“The Chinese Statue” illustrates this tradition. Once in Peking Alexander Heathcote meets an old craftsman Yung Lee who shows him an excellent statue of Emperor Kung made in ivory. Alexander is so much fascinated by this statue that he expresses a desire to possess it. The old craftsman is sad for a moment to learn this. But respecting the old tradition he agrees to part with it. He also fixes a base to the statue so that Alexander is able to put it to view easily.

As s oon as they leave the workshop of Yung Lee, the Mandarin reminds Alexander of an old Chinese custom. It is ‘when a stranger has been generous, you must return the kindness within the calendar year.’ Alexander smiled his thanks which evinced the Mandarin that he will honour this custom. With the help of Mandarin , Alexander is able to assess the true value of the statue. He writes to his bankers to send a large part of his savings to reach him in Peking. Then he asks the Mandarin to find out the complete bio-data of the old craftsman. He learns that the old craftsman Yung Lee wants to retire from active life and live in a valley where his ancestors have died. Without telling anyone he gets a small beautiful white house built in the valley which the old man loved so much.

Almost a year to the day, Alexander goes to the old man’s house. The old craftsman recognises him and welcomes him with a bow. Alexander requests him to accompany him on a short journey and the old man agrees without question. They go to the far side of the village and stop near a hollow in the hill from where one can have a magnificent view of the valley. In the hollow stands, a newly completed small white house. Two stone lion dogs guard the front entrance. Pointing to the house Alexander tells the old man that it is ‘an inadequate gift’ from him to repay his kindness. The old man is reluctant to accept it but the Mandarin assures him that the Empress has sanctioned Alexander’s request.

QUESTION 3

The story ‘The Chinese Statue’ sheds light on an important Chinese traditions. One of the traditions is : If an honoured guest requests something the giver will grow in the eyes of his fellow men by parting with it.”

“The Chinese Statue” illustrates this tradition. Once in Peking Alexander Heathcote meets an old craftsman Yung Lee who shows him an excellent statue of Emperor Kung made in ivory. Alexander is so much fascinated by this statue that he expresses a desire to possess it. The old craftsman is sad for a moment to learn this. But respecting the old tradition he agrees to part with it. He also fixes a base to the statue so that Alexander is able to put it to view easily.

As s oon as they leave the workshop of Yung Lee, the Mandarin reminds Alexander of an old Chinese custom. It is ‘when a stranger has been generous, you must return the kindness within the calendar year.’ Alexander smiled his thanks which evinced the Mandarin that he will honour this custom. With the help of Mandarin , Alexander is able to assess the true value of the statue. He writes to his bankers to send a large part of his savings to reach him in Peking. Then he asks the Mandarin to find out the complete bio-data of the old craftsman. He learns that the old craftsman Yung Lee wants to retire from active life and live in a valley where his ancestors have died. Without telling anyone he gets a small beautiful white house built in the valley which the old man loved so much.

Almost a year to the day, Alexander goes to the old man’s house. The old craftsman recognizes him and welcomes him with a bow. Alexander requests him to accompany him on a short journey and the old man agrees without question. They go to the far side of the village and stop near a hollow in the hill from where one can have a magnificent view of the valley. In the hollow stands, a newly completed small white house. Two stone lion dogs guard the front entrance. Pointing to the house Alexander tells the old man that it is ‘an inadequate gift’ from him to repay his kindness. The old man is reluctant to accept it but the Mandarin assures him that the Empress has sanctioned Alexander’s request. During the Ming dynasty, classical forms of painting continued, and new schools of painting flourished. Famous painters included Ni Zan and Dong Qichang, as well as the Four Masters of the Ming dynasty, Shen Zhou, Tang Yin, Wen Zhengming, and Qiu Ying. They drew upon the techniques, styles, and complexity in painting achieved by their Song and Yuan