



No. 3 – November-December 2007

Welcome to the bimonthly newsletter of **MedAsia: Asian Centres of Southern Europe**. This free e-publication is open to all. Subscription details are at the bottom of the newsletter.

## Transmission of scientific knowledge between Asia and the Mediterranean (27 - 28 November 2007)

Scientific meetings on the relations between Asia and Southern Europe are one of the priorities of the MedAsia network. During this Spanish Year of Science in Asia, Casa Asia is devoting the annual MedAsia conference to the dissemination of science between Asia and the Mediterranean. Researchers from the five member countries will present the state of the art and will be able to share methodologies and perspectives.

The aim of MedAsia is to promote cultural and academic exchanges between private and public research institutions of Mediterranean Europe (France, Italy, Portugal, Greece and Spain) dedicated to Asian Studies. Its objective is to make known the human and material resources of each institution, facilitate the dissemination of specific knowledge of areas of expertise, and encourage co-operation, scientific research and technology transfer.

On this occasion, the conference organised by Casa Asia and the Institut Europeu de la Mediterrània (IEMed) seeks to highlight the intense and perennial contact and flow of scientific and technological knowledge existent between East Asia and the Mediterranean world. A process that began in ancient times, endures to the present day and, without any doubt, will continue in the future.

The seminar will consist of three sessions, open to the general public as well as to specialists.

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### MedAsia News

>> **Science and Culture. Comparing scientific practices between the Mediterranean area and East Asia** will be the first session. It will include three conferences on the different concepts of the mathematics in China and the one originated in Greece (Emmanuel Lizcano, UNED, Madrid), on the foreign contributions to Indian arithmetic (Agathe Keller, CNRS, Paris) and on the Portuguese project on the History of Mathematics, by Luis Saraiva (Universidade de Lisboa).

>> **Diffusion of science and technology throughout History** will be the second part, with six contributors on topics such as *Marco Polo's trip and transmission of knowledge*

(Manuel Forcano, writer and Hebraist, Barcelona), *Exchange of astronomical knowledge between the courts of Castille, Maraga and Beijing* during the 13th century (Mercè Comes, Universitat de Barcelona) and the *Almanach Perpetuum* by Abraham Zacuto, written in Salamanca at the end of the 15th century and distributed from Morocco to the Yemen (Julio Samsó). The afternoon session includes the conferences on Images and perceptions of the 19th century scientific French publications in non-European societies (Viviane Fayaud, Réseau-Asie Imasie, Paris), the importance of animals, plants, prescriptions and preparations taken during trips between both territories (Françoise Aubaile, APSONAT-Musée de l'Homme, Paris) and on the historical elaboration of the eastern knowledge in the Mediterranean culture, specifically in Chinese medicine (Carlos Hugo Sierra, Royal Holloway, University of London).

>> **The role of religion and the flow of scientific knowledge** will be the topic of the last part. The first panel will deal on the role of the Jesuit Giacomo Rho in the Ming court (José Antonio Cervera, Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey, México), on the role of Byzantium as a center for distribution of knowledge in both directions, both in sacred texts and science and technological texts (Pedro Bádenas, Cervantes Institute, Athens / CSIC) and on the Jesuit production of knowledge about Japan in Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries (Blai Guarné, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona). The second panel, on Western teachings and basic arithmetic in China (1600-1800) (Catherine Jami, CNRS, Paris and University of Cambridge), on Kangxi emperor and his role on the Jesuit medicine in China (Beatriz Puente Ballesteros, École Normale Supérieure, Paris and Universidad Complutense de Madrid) and the Tartar map drawn by Jesuits in the service of Kangxi emperor (1661-1722) (Davor Antonucci, Università degli Studi di Roma "La Sapienza"). For more information visit <http://www.iemed.org/> and [www.casaasia.es](http://www.casaasia.es)

## Members Information

>> **Human Security in the East West Dialog.** The fourth edition of the East West Dialog focuses its debate on a topic that is gaining increasing importance these days, Human Security. The debates organized by Casa Asia with the participation of Nobel Prize winners, Ministers and former Prime Ministers, that started years ago with the Forum of Cultures in Barcelona, will discuss for two days on migrations; women and peace processes, and energy and democracy, especially the increasing role of nuclear power. As in previous years, young participants for East and West will inquire and raise their questions to the participants, among them Jorge Sampaio, president of the High Level Group of the United Nations for the Alliance for Civilizations, Shashi Tharoor, the Indian writer that was a candidate to succeed Kofi Annan as General Secretary of UN; Kassym-Jomart, Tokayev, president of the Kazakhstan Senate; John Esposito, director and founder of the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University, Vishakha N. Desai, president of Asia Society; Attiya Inayatullah, member of the Parliament of Pakistan and other former high officials, like Hong-Koo Lee, Korean Prime Minister; Jorge Quiroga, president of Bolivia, William J. Perry, Secretary of Defense of the United States, Hitoshi Tanaka, from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Jaswant Singh, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Finance Minister of India or Federico Mayor, Secretary General of UNESCO. Many institutions collaborate in the Dialog, like UNESCO, the Club of Madrid, the CIDOB Foundation, the Three Cultures Foundation and the Association of United Nations for Spain and this year, furthermore, the Universal Forum for Cultures at Monterrey, Mexico, will hold a roundtable on identity and diversity into the East-West Dialog, a few days before the Barcelona event,. For more information, e-mail [gpatinlaloy@casaasia.es](mailto:gpatinlaloy@casaasia.es) or visit <http://www.casaasia.es/dialogo>

>> **Aesthetic perceptions in the Mongolian context.** Anthropology seldom uses the concept of aesthetics, the perceived non interest without function and merely used for

contemplative uses, as defined by Kant. However, the "Altai" young scholars' network thinks that this concept can help a better understanding of fundamental themes in Mongolia, since among the Mongols and Kazakhs, the beautiful, the properly done or the correct gesture appear as one of the basis of daily life. The MSH & CNRS from Paris, with the sponsorship of the Asia Network Paris, have organized a workshop to discuss the way the notion of "aesthetics", though somewhat uncommon in cultural anthropology, may enable new analytic approaches in the Mongolian context. More information at is available at <http://csmc.no-ip.org/~ymen/>

>> **State-of-the-art of Research on Central Asia.** After the success of the latest conference of the Reseau-Asia IMASIE Conference, there will be a new encounter, again focused on research and academic circles. Workshops on Central Asian realities and potentials, a new occasion to exchange initiatives and to try to coordinate the different aspects of research about Central Asia, in which many of the best specialists in Central Asia are due to participate. For more information visit <http://www.reseau-asie.com/cgi-bin/prog/index.cgi?langue=en>

>> **Encounter of Philippine Scholars in Madrid.** The third Tribune Philippines-Spain has allowed the visit to Spain by a number of Philippine scholars, whose presence will be used in order to interact with those from Spain. As a consequence, Vicente Rafael (University of Washington), Fernando Zialcita (Ateneo de Manila), Benito Legarda (National Historical Institute), John Blanco (University of California, San Diego) and Jose Arcilla, SJ (Ateneo de Manila) will hold a conference with Spanish and French Philippines specialists at the Casa Asia premises in Madrid. Under the title of *The Construction of the Philippines*, panels are organised around this idea, such as "The definition of the Philippine Identity" or "The role of the Church". The encounter is organized jointly by CSIC and Casa Asia, where the encounter will take part, on the 3rd of December. For more information e-mail [elizalde@ceh.csic.es](mailto:elizalde@ceh.csic.es)

>> **Dance and the Euro-Asia relations.** Certainly, one of the most original initiatives from the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) is conceiving dance as an avenue for new inspirations in order to strengthening mutual relations. The Project "Pointe to Point" is one of the *Young Artist Exchange* initiatives that aims to empower aspiring young artists from Asia and Europe to reflect upon their views of contemporary society through their individual artistic expressions. The project has evolved into the idea of treating dance and music on an equal basis and is committed to providing young people with a process-oriented platform for artistic exchange and dialogue through the arts, such as inquiring into the relationships between tradition and contemporaneity, between music and dance, and dance itself in urban and rural contexts. The program for this year seems especially promising with a research trip to observe the dances of the Miao minority, in the Chinese province of Guizhou, taken by twelve selected choreographer-dancers, six selected composer-improvisers and four artistic advisors to facilitate and give artistic advice to the participants during the whole period of the project. After that, the results will be seen during five days of intensive artistic collaboration in Beijing that will include a public presentation. For more information visit [http://www.asef.org/index.php?option=com\\_project&task=view&id=1036](http://www.asef.org/index.php?option=com_project&task=view&id=1036)

## Scholarly events

>> **Ming China and the Portuguese.** The always active *Centro Científico e Cultural de Macau*, attached to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Universities, offers a new course with the aim of divulging the context of the historical relations between Chinese and Portuguese in a wide context. Until next December 18th, a course coordinated by Luis Filipe Barreto on "The Portuguese-Chinese Relations during the Ming Period" will take place, offering both the international and intercultural context of the contacts as well

as a comparison with the present situation in order to improve contacts. The same idea provoked also the recent conference organized by the same center on 'Macau during the Ming Period' with the presence of the most important specialists on the topic, such as Roderich Ptak, Manel Olle, James K. Chin or Paolo Santangelo, alongside the most important Portuguese specialists. [www.cccm.mctes.pt](http://www.cccm.mctes.pt)

>> **The IAHA Conference celebrates its 20th anniversary.** One of the most traditional (and crowded) summons for Asia Scholars is on the run for its 20th meeting, the International Conference of Historians of Asia (IAHA), that will be held in the Jawaharlal Nehru University next 8th-11th of December, 2008. Convened by prof. Deepak Kumar of the Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies, School of Social Sciences, who has attended the IAHA Conference for many years. For more info visit <http://www.jnu.ac.in/conference/IAHA>

>> **New Encounter of Philippine specialists.** After the former was held in Leiden, The Netherlands, the forum for scholars engaged in research on the general field of Philippine Studies, ICOPHIL will again gather in the Philippines, next 23-26 July 2008, organized by the Philippine Studies Association (of the Philippines) and the Philippine Social Science Council (serving as conference secretariat), and two of the most prominent members of the Philippine Studies International Council, Bernardita R. Churchill and Belinda A. Aquino. The conference will be held at the Philippine Social Science Center in Quezon City (Metro Manila) and aims at reflecting "on developments and discourses that shed light on Philippine realities in a global era," as well as "chart new directions for the 21st century," and encourage "creativity and innovation with regard to both intellectual content and presentation." The topics suggested for presentation either in panel or as individual papers are the following: Theories and Dimensions of Analysis in Philippine Studies; Changing Philippine Institutions, Ideologies, Practices, and Technologies; Problematizing the Nation and the State; Globalization Issue; Histories, Cultures, Identities; Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Studies; Archaeology and Heritage Studies; Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Studies; The Philippine Diaspora; Gender and Sexuality; Human and Ecosystem Well-being; Education in the 21st Century; Population Studies; Philippine Media; F/Pilipinohiya; and similar topics. For inquiries [nitachurchill@hotmail.com](mailto:nitachurchill@hotmail.com).

[lyndy@hawaii.edu](mailto:lyndy@hawaii.edu)., ICOPHIL Secretariat, [icophil@pssc.org.ph](mailto:icophil@pssc.org.ph) and webinfo, [www.pssc.org.ph/icophil](http://www.pssc.org.ph/icophil)

>> **Iberoamerican Network on East Asian Studies.** The projects in order to coordinate research on East Asia are increasing, and after the Spanish Forum for Research on Asia Pacific held its first conference in Granada (<http://www.ugr.es/~feiap/index.htm>), a new network has been created among a large number of centers from Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula, the *Red de Investigación Iberoamericana en Estudios de Asia Oriental* (REDIAO). Two are from Argentina (Centro de Estudios Asiáticos, Universidad Nacional de Rosario and Programa de Estudios de Asia Oriental, Centro de Estudios Avanzados, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba), one from Peru (Centro de Estudios Orientales, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Perú), two from Mexico (Centro de Estudios de Asia y África, El Colegio de México and Instituto Asia Pacífico, Tecnológico de Monterrey), five from Spain (Centro de Estudios de Asia Oriental, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid; Fundació CIDOB, Barcelona; Instituto de Estudios Internacionales e Interculturales, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona; Instituto Galego de Análise e Documentación Internacional (IGADI) and Panel de Expertos sobre Asia Pacífico, Observatorio de Política Exterior Española) three from Brazil (Centro de Estudos Asiáticos, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais; Núcleo de Estudos Asiáticos (NEASIA), Universidade de Brasília and Centro de Estudos Japoneses, Universidade de São Paulo) two from Portugal (Instituto de Oriente, Universidade Técnica de Lisboa and Instituto Português de Sinologia, Porto) and one from Chile, the Instituto de Estudios

Internacionales, Universidad de Chile. REDIAO aims at creating a space for communication and cooperation among the different centers and networks, organising conferences and seminars and the publication of a yearly journal on-line, and has received funding from the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science. The Centro de Estudios de Asia Oriental at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid coordinates it. For more info visit [www.rediao.org](http://www.rediao.org)

>> **Christianism in Japan.** After two colloquiums about Christianity in China and in India, the Center for Ultramarine History (Centro de Historia de Allem-Mar, CHAM) of the *Universidade Nova de Lisboa* and the Portuguese Congregation of the Divine Verb (Congregação do Verbo Divino) organize a conference with the aim of making known the past and the present of *Christianismo no Japão*. The colloquium will be held in Fatima by the Next 17-18 November with the title “*Christianism in Japan. Christ universalism and Japanese culture*”, and will have conferences of different topics, such as Shintoism, Buddhism and cultural homogenization, new religious movements, the historical discourse of Christianity in Japan, State and Religion, the dialog of Christianity with other religions, and the Christian contributions to Japan, both in art, migration and teaching. Furthermore, some of the most famous researchers will take part in the event, such as James Heisig (Nanzan University), Juan Masía Clavel (Sophia University), José Miguel Pinto dos Santos (CHAM) or Pedro Lage Reis Correia (CHAM). [cham@fcs.unl.pt](mailto:cham@fcs.unl.pt)

## Research reports

>> **Resources for Research on Colonial India.** Good news for South Asia historians: *Focus on Global Resources*, the publication of The Center for Research Libraries, devotes the latest issue to resources for the history of South Asia. The issue starts with the Cartographic resources at the Digital South Asia library, such as the *Imperial Gazetteers of India* (1909, 1931) or the *Historical Atlas of South Asia* published by Joseph Schwartzberg in 1992 (Oxford, Oxford University Press); it includes also the historical journals to be found in Urdu, a compilation of Sources on Early Colonial South Asia, the recent acquisitions of the Center and the new tool to survey data from the Center for South Asian Libraries. To download FOCUS, visit <http://www.crl.edu/FOCUS/TOC.asp?id=41>

>> **What about European studies (and images) in Asia?** The European Studies in Asia (ESiA) network, that embraces all academics and institutions specializing in European studies in Asian countries and endeavors to facilitate the creation of new synergies within Asia as well as between Asia and Europe, organizes a new workshop. The Future of European Studies in Asia will be the topic of the gathering to be held in Manila next 5th-7th of December 2007, in order to share experiences and explore possibilities for future co-operation; in particular, in the field of curriculum development. Organized by ASEF, the National Centre for Research on Europe (NCRE), the University of Warsaw and Ateneo de Manila University, the workshop will also feature major research, “EU through the Eyes of Asia,” to scientifically measure the perceptions of the EU in the Asian region, undertaken in collaboration by different universities. For more information, visit [http://www.asef.org/index.php?option=com\\_project&task=view&id=1052](http://www.asef.org/index.php?option=com_project&task=view&id=1052).

>> **Film and Euro-Asian exchange.** A parallel initiative by ASEF to improve mutual understanding is the SEA-IMAGES (Synergy Europe-Asia) website for the promotion of film exchange between Asia and Europe, aimed at creating a unique pool of information on Asian film industry and its independent sector, classifying data on the numerous and diverse European film industry and providing useful information for independent film makers from Europe and Asia (calls for entries, film events, articles etc). <http://sea-images.asef.org/index.asp>

>> **The evolution of Japanese National Image.** The perception problems of have been recently defined as the main strategic menace for China, but Japan has faced similar

problems for many years, much earlier than Chinese. The Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership (CGP) and the Japanese American National Museum have decided to organize a third U.S.-Japan public symposium on the topic "Is the Image of Japan Changing? - Perspectives of Japanese Americans in Media" where academics will be exempt from attending, allowing politicians to pronounce most of the speeches, such as U.S. senator Daniel K. Inouye and Yasuchika Hasegawa, Chairman of Committee on U.S. Affairs, providing the keynote speeches. The Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership and the Japanese American National Museum are the organisers. <http://www.jpf.go.jp/cgp/e/index.html>

## Publications

>> **More resources about India from Pondicherry.** This former French colonial outpost in the Indian coast of Coromandel (the English rendition of "Chola Mandalam" which means the land of the cholas, a dynasty that ruled the southeast coast of India for centuries) has a active institute that revived the old links through interesting resources, such as a recently published a book in English and a trilingual DVD in English, French and Tamil. *Studies on fortification in India*, by Jean Deloche (EFEQ, 2007) brings together essays on some prominent defensive works which have been constructed over many centuries across the Indian subcontinent, analyzing building techniques, the evolution of military technology and establishing a typology of the structures. Deloche, former head of the centre for History and Archaeology, Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient and one of the most important specialists in Indian History, draws attention to the considerable skills and ingenuities of Indian fort builders. On the other side, the DVD *Bittersweet waters: irrigation practices and modern challenges in South India*, written and directed by Nathanaël Coste and Nicolas Ploumpidis (IFP, 2007, 53 minutes) deals with the issues of water management in South India, showing how its dynamics have evolved over the last few decades and how access to water has brought prosperity but also led to bitter experiences. Thorough this example, it portrays an agrarian society that is undergoing rapid and profound change and finds itself faced with acute ecological, social, economical, cultural and political choices for the future. <http://www.ifpindia.org/>

>> **Abstracts on Muslim civilizations.** A new project has been conceived in order to bridge the gap between Muslims societies and the rest of the world. *The Muslim Civilizations Abstracts* will allow the diffusion of scholarly literature in various languages by providing systematic bibliographic indices and abstracts of works concerning Muslim civilizations. The works will be selected for their contribution to scholarship, both in original research or analysis, to advances in relevant methodology and for their contributions to the understanding of intellectual and social problems affecting Muslims. Furthermore, the abstracts will be provided, besides English, in Arabic, Bengali, Malay/Indonesian, Persian, Turkish and Urdu. The first phase of the project (2006-08) aims at compiling a substantial and comprehensive annotated bibliography of modern encyclopedias on and from the Muslim world. The Aga Khan University - Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations (AKU-ISMC) is in charge of the project. For further details, visit <http://www.aku.edu/ismc/abp.shtml>.

## Art Exhibitions

>> **The first Europeans represented by Chinese.** Coinciding with the Conference on Macau during the Ming Period and with the course on Portuguese-Chinese relations during the Ming period, the *Centro Científico e Cultural de Macau (CCCM)*, offers a new exhibition that will be held until the month of December. The title is 'The inverted mirror: Asian images of Europeans, 1500 - 1800' showing portraits and representations of the

way Chinese perceived the arrival of the new “Barbarians,” both the “Southern” (Iberians) and those “red-haired.” (Anglo-Saxons) <http://www.cccm.mctes.pt/index.php>

>> **Interior decoration from Japan to the Iberian Peninsula.** The Japanese world for folding screens, byōbu 「屏風」, entered into Spanish and Portuguese languages during the earlier contacts in the 16th and 17th centuries as “Biombo” and serves to show the importance of that decoration both in Asia and Europe. The Suntory Museum of Art has organized an exhibition to spotlight this interior decoration and examine again its history and role in Japanese culture from a global perspective. The exhibition includes, furthermore, restored screens of which originals were presented to foreign governments or separately owned by various collectors. For more info and excellent photographs <http://www.suntory.com/culture-sports/sma/exhibition/07vol03/index.html>

>> **The gadget converted into an object of art, and back into product of consumption.** Casa Asia presents a group of lithographies, objects and gadgets by Takashi Murakami (Tokyo, 1962), the Japanese artist that has better transformed the object art into a product of consumption available to a broad public all over the world. Murakami has broken the borders between “high” and “low art” by focusing on the way to produce the artwork and by diffusing it through the market with a broad invasive offer, but first he specialized first in traditional Japanese art, with a PhD on Nihonga, a 19th century mixture of styles, passing later to focus his art and interests on the mass culture. His way of mixing tradition and modernity, old styles of matching ideas and mass culture has become a success, and now Murakami has achieved an unconditional clientele worldwide, converting (with Haruki and Ryū) this not-so-usual family name into a sort of icon of the most recent Japanese ability to innovate. The exposition will be held until the month of December in Madrid’s Casa Asia. [www.casaasia.es](http://www.casaasia.es)

>> **God(s) Instructions.** In a Europe that has become a melting pot of religions, which return with strength to our society, the Villa Cultural Centre hosts an exhibition that echoes the multiple ways that millions of people have of living their faith. The display would like to discover the religious experience, focusing on its universal nature (its question marks) as well as on its personal nature (its multiple practices). Casa Asia collaborates in the organization of the exhibition. More info [www.casaasia.es](http://www.casaasia.es)

## Web Sites

>> **Philippine culture and heritage on the web.** A private initiative is providing a new impulse to preserve and propagate Philippine culture and heritage through two different websites where a numerous team of workers is downloading information. On one side, [www.filipiniana.net](http://www.filipiniana.net) provides photographs, postcards, stamps, maps, and prints that include arcane and rare books on the country in Spanish, Tagalog and English. It has recently celebrated its first anniversary and includes a blog and forums. On the other sites, wikipilipinas, the free encyclopedia featured as the [wikipedia.net](http://wikipedia.net), with a total pf 44,547 pages in the database, of which 11,264 files have been uploaded. For more info, [www.wikipinas.net](http://www.wikipinas.net) <http://www.uam.es/otroscentros/asiaoriental/especifica/biblio/default.htm>

>> **China in the Spanish libraries and archives.** Thanks to grants from the Spanish Aid Cooperation, the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid has compiled information on the books related to China in the archives and libraries in Spain. It is difficult still to know all the belongings of each library, since many of them, specially those belonging to religious orders, have bibliographic fiches whose information is scarce, but the website allows us to create an idea of the resources regarding history and Chinese thought located

in Spain. Hopefully, this project will help in completing the information of the fiches and digitized its contents.

<http://www.uam.es/otroscentros/asiaoriental/especifica/biblio/default.htm>

>>**A non-profit think-tank on India.** South Asia Analysis Group, which aims at advancing strategic analysis on South Asia thinking, offers a website complete with updated and scholarly information for decision makers, strategic planners, academics and the media. Its concept of strategic analysis is a broad one, including both the mobilization and application of all resources to understand national and international security. For more info visit <http://www.saag.org/>

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Editor: [Florentino Rodao](#)

Contributors: Manel Olle, Gaelle Patin Laloy, Lola Balaguer, Elisabetta Corsi and Pedro Lage Correia.

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**Casa Asia. Av. Diagonal, 373, 08008 Barcelona.**

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