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NEWS

AN ORIENTAL AUTUMN IN LONDON: ENCOUNTERS – THE MEETING OF ASIA AND EUROPE 1500-1800, AT THE VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM

Luís Miguel de Andrade Baptista Peixoto¹

The fresh winds that enlivened the London Autumn came directly from the East, and were received with great enthusiasm by an immense cultural apparatus, eager for visual treats and scientific knowledge and, likewise, satisfied the British public's eternal fascination with the exotic Orient.

In fact, the end of the month of November in the British capital was an exalted moment, anxiously awaited by several institutions (both public and private entities), which satiated a variety of cosmopolitan and heterogeneous audiences, with the arrival of the Week of Asian Art in London (the seventh edition of this event, held between 4 and 12 November 2004). Thus, in this veritable web of fantastic relations, held in the most diverse of cultural milieus in the city, the effervescence of this ancient fascination for the Orient was visible in its many facets.

Auction houses and antiquarians, including venerable names like Sotheby's, Christie's or Bonhams, who opened the season with Oriental Art, highlighting the enormous quality and high value of the items they presented, joined hands with the most emblematic institutions in England in order to develop a co-ordinated programme of sales, auctions, exhibitions, conferences, pedagogical activities, literary assemblies, international meetings and publications revolving around the theme of the Orient.

If, on the one hand, the dozens of Antiquarians who specialise in this geographical area developed their exhibitions for commercial purposes, on the other hand, the *Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation*, *The Japan Foundation* and other institutions directly associated with contacts between the East and West (such as the *Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art* or the *Bhavan Institute of Indian Art and Culture*) promoted exhibitions to raise awareness about ancient and contemporary art forms.

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One can highlight *Asia House*, a British organisation that promotes contacts between the East and West in the most diverse sectors, that, along with the *Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at University College London*, a private research centre, founded by Sir Henry Wellcome (1853-1936), that has a specialised library – the *Wellcome Library* – with important collections about medicine (with an extraordinary documental corpus of images that is available on-line via the *Medical Photographic Library – Wellcome Library*), organised the exhibition *Asia: Body, Mind, Spirit*, at the *Brunei Gallery*, logically situated right in front of the *School of Oriental & African Studies – London University*, of which it is a part.

This exhibition, with pieces/documents from the Wellcome Trust's own valuable collection focussed upon the complex and harmonious relationship between a person's physical, mental and spiritual health, according to Asian philosophies, in a display that was outstanding for its sleek lines in terms of design. When viewed from this outlook, religions, cultures, beliefs and energies are always questions that are inseparable and inextricably intertwined with the physical disposition of human beings, whose good health derives from the harmony between the three elements: Body, Mind and Spirit.

The modular nature of this exhibition was presented in five distinct sections: *Body in Balance* (in which the concepts of equilibrium and vitality were focussed upon, as determining elements to ensure good health, as well as the diagnostic processes and treatments with herbal medicine); *Living in Balance* (lifestyle options and their influence upon your health, the value of one's diet and physical exercise as ways of establishing an equilibrium between one's body and one's spirit); *Harmony with the Environment* (energetic questions in one's environment and the effects this has upon one's health; architecture according to *feng shui* and channelling positive energies); *Harmony with the World Beyond* (the importance of elements of astrology, astronomy and cosmology in the discovery of cosmic forces that influence the human body; the use of amulets and spiritual practices as treatments in cases of disequilibrium); *Migrating Medicine* (this section highlighted the exchanges between Eastern and Western medical knowledge, over the ages, emphasising the changes/renovation/influences that have taken place in medical knowledge, and awareness of health and diseases, with this exchange of information).

In this way, in this lavishly documented exhibition, with the variety of typologies that characterise the collections of the *Wellcome Library* (diverse objects, manuscripts, archives, old printed books, varied iconography, films, audio and photographic records) we travel through ancient Oriental cultures, traditions and medicine (from the Islamic, Buddhist and Hindu world) in which medical knowledge is inextricably linked with religious beliefs and in



FIGURE 1. *Geka kihai*, the illustration shows the excision of a cancerous growth from a woman's breast, an operation which Hanaoka Seishu first carried out in 1804 using general anesthetic, by Kamata Keishu, Japan, 1851, ©Wellcome Library, London.

Between instruments and representations of gods associated with medical questions or health in general, from practitioners of Ayurveda, to surgical operations, acupuncture figures and astral maps that influence one's health, we would like to highlight this detail from the *Geka kihai* by Kamata Keishu, a treatise on surgery that shows/records the use of general anaesthetic for the first time anywhere in the world during a surgical procedure, carried out by Hanaoka Seishu in 1804, in the course of an operation to extract a tumour from a patient's breast.

which good health is considered to be a result of the harmony between three elements, influenced by one's diet, exercise and prayer (to protect one's physical state and promote cures). One must stress that this exhibition was accompanied by a varied pedagogical programme that included debates about the subject in question, workshops (on Tibetan painting) and guided visits by specialists and curators/programmers of the exhibition, thus promoting the development of complementary activities in addition to the production of the exhibition that resulted in a better and more profound understanding/absorption of the panorama on display.

Another lavish spectacle for lovers of the Orient, and others, was produced by the British Museum whose Oriental wings host permanent collections that are priceless in terms of material culture and focus upon a chronological and/or thematic approach that is of great interest, displaying representative aspects of each period.

This is the case with the Chinese gallery that, through objets d'art that are priceless in terms of artistic and aesthetic value, reveal various facets of Ancient China (social, cultural, religious, economic aspects – focusing, for example, on the production of porcelain and the subsequent export trade to Europe) arranged in chronological segments, apart from fascinating us, in the Corridor/Gallery, with the exhibition: *7000 Years of Chinese Jade from the Collection of Sir Joseph Hotung*, with a vast variety of forms and techniques, applied to this precious stone, which has a symbolic/magic element for the Chinese. The subject has been approached in a markedly technical manner and has been subjected to a chronological analysis from 5000 B.C. until present times, in which the value of this material and the way in which it is employed is clearly demonstrated.

On the other hand, the Japanese Gallery has been developed with a policy of displays that varies between rotation of a large part of the collection and permanent exhibitions of a smaller segment of the collection, whose interest lies in a more effective representation of Japanese culture and one that must always be highlighted (objects related with the culture of the Japanese courts and samurais, netsuke and inrô and Japanese Buddhist sculpture).

In fact, the collection of Japanese arts, the largest collection of this kind at a national level and undoubtedly one of the most important collections at an international level, includes items of material culture dating from the Jōmon period, which began in c. 11000 B.C., with the oldest ceramics ever to have been dated in the world being represented in the Museum by a small nucleus dating from around the third millennium B.C., down to present times, with the multi-typological segment of graphic arts. From an ethnological/anthropological point of view, one can find the *musealia* and respective information pertaining to this question including eyewitness accounts and field research about the Ainu culture, from the island of Hokkaidō in the Department responsible for this discipline and, in the Department of Medieval Antiquities one can find an interesting collection of Japanese clocks.

Thus, due to the vastness and diversity of the Japanese collection as well as the policy of rotating the collections on display, keeping in mind obvious considerations for the conservation of the pieces in question, one was pleasantly surprised to find the temporary exhibition: *Cutting Edge: Japanese Swords in the British Museum*.

Keeping in mind that the arts and the universe of the samurai are one of the great attractions of Japanese culture, one has to state at the very outset that this exhibition was a resounding success, not merely in terms of the fantastic collection, the studies realised, the catalogue published on the occasion and the sober and inspiring designs of the pieces, but also due to the curiosity that this theme inspires in a younger and predominantly male target audience, whose tendencies for recreation, personal affirmation and virility in their attitudes interestingly reflect some points of the samurai ideology, such as supremacy in the face of enemies or opponents, the question of warrior combat, the skilled wielding of the sword, belonging to a group and, finally, questions of honour and position (inevitable elements prized in a modern competitive world and promoted by the news of the environment that surrounds us and animated entertainment, much of which, curiously enough, or not, originates in Japan).

This exhibition revolves around the most emblematic collection of Japanese swords in Europe, dating from the 12th to 13th centuries until the Meiji period (1868-1912), with over a hundred swords, along with their accessories and paintings/engravings with iconographic elements pertaining to the samurai/warrior culture that provided the context for the objects on display. Questions such as the sacred symbology of the sword, its character as a superior object at the technological level, elegant, beautiful and endowed with great qualities on a spiritual level, its manufacture, typologies and references to historical episodes of wars, in which swords played a decisive role, were the highlight of this exhibition.

The Victoria and Albert Museum, the self-proclaimed “Best Museum for Art and Design in the World”, excels, without a shadow of a doubt, on account of its dynamism, the innumerable activities that it constantly organises and the cultural management of the institution. One can clearly see how effective management in terms of publicity and even a commercial character can have its benefits without necessarily clashing with scientific aspects, with their commitment to knowledge and a level of seriousness with regard to the production and awareness of a museological institution and its contents. In fact, in my opinion, these activities complement each other and, on the other hand, the profits obtained will always be an asset for an increased development of projects and activities in various areas of knowledge and cultural and pedagogical entertainment. This system is like a fantastic cycle that shows that dynamism and cosmopolitanism have arrived in Museums in full force. Before expounding upon the question of this great exhibition, part of the Oriental circuit underway, one must focus upon some particularities of the Oriental wings of this museum. Thus, starting with the Middle East, continuing through Southern Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia and the Far

East, one can find priceless objects that support the anthropological perspective and the inevitable artistic/stylistic vision, whose main illustrative aspects include religion, court life and the daily life of the people.

In the Chinese gallery, the first thing that strikes one is the well thought out design and stylistic Chinese touches (colours, shapes and signs/symbols/characters) incorporated into the support structures. One can highlight the modules about everyday life in Ancient China, forms of burials, displayed chronologically with the respective artefacts that were found and drawings of plans/shapes of tombs, religious sculptures, priceless pieces selected from European collectionism enamoured by the Orient (with the interesting problem of the existence of fake objects/copies made in Europe to satiate the desire to possess luxurious objects from Asia), imperial objects (very exclusive on account of their material and decorative quality) and Chinese art made for the export market.

Japanese culture, presented in a more intimate ambience, with a structure clearly inspired by traditional Japanese houses (with a slight touch of theatricality in the presentation, in an attempt to achieve an atmosphere that is faithful to the original environment of the pieces), is represented in this Museum, above all, by the decorative arts of the Edo period (1615-1868) and Meiji period (1868-1912) and by textiles and ceramics, displayed in their respective, specialised wings. Lacquer-ware, various kinds of porcelain, the incense ceremony, writing implements, kimonos, priestly robes, *inrō*, *netsuke*, warrior/samurai arms and armour, Buddhist sculptures and utensils associated with tea are the fundamental groups on display.

With regard to these two galleries, dealing with China and Japan, one of the most curious questions is linked with the nuclei of objects from the 20th century, consisting of ceramics, paintings, lacquer, sculptures, metal objects and others, that trace the fascinating dialogue between ancient and contemporary art, demonstrating a recurrent inspiration and stylistic constancy in themes such as nature. It also reveals the novel use of materials, already traditionally used in the past, in a new approach to the form of materials.

The spectacular exhibition *Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500-1800* was presented in a calm and emotive atmosphere, with a background of Oriental music. In the first place, one must highlight the carefully focused lighting, the fantastic selection of objects and the low levels of overall lighting, thus ensuring that our senses are predisposed to being dazzled by the pieces themselves as well as enabling a greater focus on details and serenity while contemplating the exhibit.

One entered the world of 300 years of contacts between Europeans and Orientals and the exchanges and interaction in terms of art, technology and culture that resulted from this encounter, the early years of this period being

the true beginning of a globalisation of relations, trade and various other exchanges between peoples, ties that translated into a mutual fascination and permanently changed the prevailing perception of the cosmos and ways of life in different cultures.



FIGURE 2. Detail of a Japanese Namban Screen.

Exhibition: Encounters: The Meeting of Asia And Europe 1500-1800.

Date: 23 September-5 December 2004.

Pictured: Six panel screen depicting the arrival of a Portuguese ship

Ink, colours and gold-leaf on paper. Japan, c.1630s.

© Private Collection, New York.

This magnificent 16th century screen, painted and overlaid with gold-leaf on paper constitutes one of the most complete documents we have in terms of iconography and representation of the crucial moments of contacts between Portuguese and Japanese. The arrival, exchanges, commodities transacted and the Jesuit presence are some of the key elements, this piece providing a faithful portrait of the physical characteristics of the participants as well as the typology of the environment in which the scene took place.

The museography of the exhibition was based on a descriptive discourse divided into three main themes: *Discoveries*, *Encounters* and *Exchanges*, whose pieces, framed within each question, are the physical legacy that document the encounter between the East and West.

As an introduction, we can note a map showing the maritime routes that developed towards the East in conformance with a chronology that begins in 1488, with the rounding of the Cape of Good Hope by Bartolomeu Dias, and then proceeds to highlight the most important dates of the arrival and establishment of the Portuguese, French, English and Dutch presence, with their respective East India Companies, in the main centres of Asian commerce, until the English managed to establish their control over South India, with the death of Tipoo Sultan and the end of the fourth Mysore War, in 1799. The refined beauty of a *Namban* screen makes a striking first impression. The piece shows the Portuguese, the *Namban-jin* (barbarians from the South), arriving at a Japanese port in their black ship and entering the city, bringing the marvels of their voyages with them, highly coveted products such as silk, porcelain, gold and lead, which they exchanged for copper, lacquer-ware and silver with the Japanese.

The section *Discoveries* focused upon the Western desire for exotic and luxurious objects from the Orient that necessitated a direct sea-route that would link Europe to Asia, without having to pass through the terrestrial routes dominated by the Turks, which greatly raised the prices of the merchandise. Vasco da Gama's voyage of 1498, where he reached the Malabar coast in India enabled the establishment of a direct maritime connection and a burgeoning trade in *Rarities and Novelties* from this new world. Lisbon thus became the key commercial centre which received a vast array of objects (*naturalia* and *artificialia*) coming from Asia. These wares corresponded to an interest in all that was exotic, a European taste for collecting that was redoubled by a fascination with these new lands along with the symbology of dominating a whole new world that had opened up, concepts directly related with the Curiosity Rooms that were all the rage in the 16th and 17th centuries, conceived of by the upper aristocracy/spheres of European knowledge who increasingly became the trustees of the cultural, geographical, human and natural knowledge of the world. In these spaces, an infinite number of natural objects, man-made creations and other items that combined both these aspects were gathered together in an inventory that illustrates a culture of objects and of curiosity, denoting the intention of a totalisation of knowledge contained within the walls of a hall, i.e. the macro-cosmos (world) in the micro-cosmos (hall/room). These rooms became mirrors that reflected the world, all of known reality displayed in these halls, studied, stored and preserved to bedazzle and to reflect an awareness and domination of everything

to which the owners had access (in this regard we recommend that you do not miss the hall that hosts the display *Enlightenment - Discovering the World in the Eighteenth Century in the Restored King's Library*, that was recently inaugurated at the British Museum, where one can find a magnificently mounted curiosity room, that belonged to the highest social echelons and enabled access to and the collection of hundreds of objects and documents from the whole world, which was sought to be encapsulated in that elegant and exclusive hall.



FIGURE 3. Nautilus Cup

Exhibition: Encounters: The Meeting Of Asia And Europe 1500-1800.

Date: 23 September-5 December 2004.

Pictured: Nautilus shell, with parcel-gilt silver mounts by Nikolaus Schmidt.

Shell: Western Pacific Ocean; mounts with Nuremberg town and maker's mark. c.1600.
Royal Collection © 2003 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The exoticism of this world is represented, in this section, by objects that are extraordinary and, in a certain way, magical on account of their formal composition and their discernment in this context, excelling in their use of non-European natural materials with elegant decorative elements. A **fan in magnificently worked ivory** (Ceylon, mid 16th century, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), a **casket** in tortoise-shell with silver fittings (India, 16th or early 17th century, V&A), a **stool** made of elephant bone engraved with the coat of arms of Maximilian II (Austria - Vienna, 1554, Benediktschrift, Kresmünster Abbey), a teak wood **casket** with mother-of-pearl and gilded silver (casket: India-Gujarat, early 16th century; mounts: France - Paris, 1532-33, Musée du Louvre, Paris – one can view this on the exhibition website) or the **Nautilus Cup**, whose composition in silver and gold frames a shell from the Pacific Ocean, exemplify the elegance and exotic nature of the objects brought from these new lands.

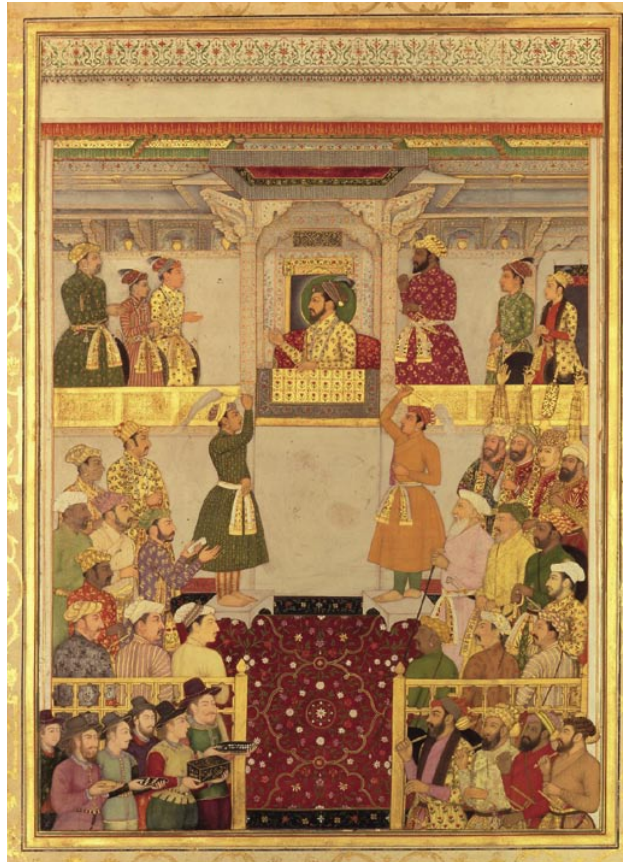


FIGURE 4. Europeans Bring Gifts to Shah Jahan. From the Padshanama manuscript. Opaque watercolour on paper. Mughal India, c.1650. Royal Collection © 2004 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The representation of diplomatic encounters, such as the one depicted here that shows Europeans at the court of Shah Jahan or the extraordinary painting on cloth entitled *The Embassy of Johannes Bacherus en route to the court of Aurangzeb* (colours on cloth, India - Golconda, late 17th century, Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam) illustrate, apart from the contacts and participants in these encounters, the objects that were exchanged. We can highlight some objects that were offered as gifts: a **casket** given by the VOC to the Shōgun (wood veneered with ivory, with metal and engraved rock crystal panels, Italy, late 17th century, Rinnō-ji, Nikkō); **suit of armour** (*Iwai Yosaemon*) given by the Shōgun Tokugawa Hidetada to John Saris as a present for James I (lacquered iron plates with copper, gold, leather and woven silk, Japan, c. 1613, Royal Armouries, Leeds – this piece can be viewed on the exhibition’s website); **Ruyi** (an object symbolising a privilege offered by the Emperor to one of his subjects) presented to George Staunton, Lord Macartney’s deputy and minister plenipotentiary to the mission, by the Qianlong emperor in 1793 (jade, China, Qianlong period, 1736-95, V&A) and a **telescope** with a clock (Fraser and Son) given by Lord Macartney to the Qianlong emperor in 1793 (gold with enamel coating, pearls, glass, England - London, 1790, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich).

The second segment, *Encounters*, highlights the human component of these contacts, showing the diplomatic meetings (*Diplomatic Encounters*) in its ceremonial dimension, the retinues of the embassies, the forms of alliances and the eagerly awaited exotic presents, exchanged between representatives of the two sides coming into contact, in an attempt to develop cordial relations and establish close ties, prerogatives and privileges in order to ensure the commercial nature of these missions.

On the other hand, the Portuguese presence now faced the rivalry of the Dutch and English, with their respective East India Companies. In reality, with a view to fostering commercial exchanges, the Europeans favoured the conditions and supremacy of local authorities in China, Japan and Mughal India but, on the other hand, in areas such as the southern coast of India and the Indonesian archipelago, agreements largely followed European dictates and sometimes the force of arms and violence decided issues. Although many of these encounters became confrontations, this age was characterised by a fascination and mutual curiosity.

The Jesuits and other religious orders in the Orient were the main protagonists of the *Religious Encounters*. The European desire for evangelical activities and the conversion of people translated into one of the richest and closest moments at the human level and in the ambit of exchanges of values and concepts between the West and East. The strategies employed by the missionaries to overcome cultural barriers included the study of local languages as well as resorting to pedagogical plans and the use of local garments, which resulted in a high degree of closeness and reciprocal fascination. The Christian community in India, characterised by a human and religious intermingling afforded the development of Indo-Portuguese art, which is of great stylistic interest, in which formal and thematic characteristics fused together, giving rise to pieces of art with hybrid characteristics at the level of the use of materials and iconography. On the other hand, in China and Japan, places where this human fusion was not so profound, the missionaries resorted to the use of Oriental robes/garments to minimise differences, although they were unable to match the significant numbers of Christian converts in Portuguese India, the exchanges and mutual interest are clearly evident and are reflected in the production and trade of objects, also linked with religion, that circulated between various points of the Orient and Europe, where, once again, one can highlight the reciprocal influences on cultural and religious mores.

If, on the one hand, taking missionary activities to the Orient was one of the main objectives of the Europeans, with Papal support that also granted them the right to found churches and colleges, on the other hand, the growing interest in cultural exoticism in a multi-religious Asiatic milieu

proved to be very important and the Europeans studied these new realities, collecting information about Oriental ceremonies and religious objects. Of particular interest in this segment is the trajectory of Christianity in Japan, which from being tolerated and supported by the Japanese *daimyōs* (at the time of the arrival of the Portuguese in 1549) was finally, in 1639, prohibited by decree, the Jesuits being expelled and all Christians or supporters of the religion being persecuted, fined and tortured.

In this section with a wealth of objects, we can highlight: a **Child Jesus** (rock crystal, carved, with gold mounts and rubies and sapphires, Ceylon, early 17th century, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem – this piece can be viewed on the exhibition website); **The Bodhisattva Guanyin** (*Kannon*) that was associated with and adored as the “Virgin Mary” by clandestine Christian communities, the piece being nicknamed “*Maria-Kannon*” (porcelain with white glaze Dehua ware, China-Fujian province, 17th century, Kobe City Museum, Kobe); a **Crucifix and pair of cruets** (jade, inlaid and mounted with gold and rubies, Mughal India, 17th century, Museu Nacional Soares dos Reis, Oporto); **Portable altar** with a painting of the Virgin and Child (altar: wood covered in black lacquer with gold *hiramakie* and mother-of-pearl; painting: oil on panel, Japan, late 16th-early 17th century, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem – this piece can be viewed on the exhibition website) and an **Edict** prohibiting Christianity (ink on wood, Japan, dated 1682, British Museum, London).

Personal Encounters resulted in a fusion between Europeans and Orientals, in a process that differed from place to place. As we have already mentioned, in India and Southeast Asia, there was a greater racial intermingling when compared to places in China and Japan, where the Europeans found themselves confined more to their own areas in port cities. In any case, there are many examples presented in this section in which the reciprocal communion and contacts between peoples are clearly evident, be it at the level of an exchange of customs, at the human level, of statutes, behaviour/manners, food habits or with regard to the typologies of dresses.

A superb display was the complementary presentation of the **painting of Captain John Foote** (by Sir Joshua Reynolds, oil on canvas, London, 1765, York City Art Gallery, York), where he is depicted in Oriental garments that are displayed beside the canvas: **Jama** (robe), **patka** (waist sash) and **shawl** (Muslim, embroidered with coloured silk and gold thread, India, mid-18th century, York City Art Gallery, York), that would have been offered as *khil'at* (a kind of ceremonial robe) by Indian rulers to subjects as part of the *darbar* ritual. There are several artworks that portray these encounters: Western men in the Orient, Asian women, mixed families and, from amongst these, one can highlight: **Two Dutchmen and Two Courtesans** (hanging scroll; ink and colours on paper, Japan – Nagasaki, c.1800, Private Collection – this piece can be viewed on the exhibition's website) and **Dutchman and Maruyama Courtesan - Chōkōsai Eishō** (woodblock print on paper, Japan - Edo, 1790s, V&A).

Visual Encounters and Visual Responses: the aspect of visual communication in these initial contacts, between people that were very different at all levels that characterise Mankind, underwent a veritable revolution. One can imagine what it would have been like to meet human beings who were

physically different and with diverse codes of understanding and experiences that were very dissimilar from one's own. From wonder to curiosity and to cultural and anthropological interest, the representations and portrayals of Orientals by Europeans, and vice-versa, were developed in various ways and used diverse materials, and were also used as the main theme in many other art-forms. The novel human forms and other physical aspects such as robes and objects and social and cultural customs entered the world of visual references and human conceptualisation of the peoples that came into contact with each other. The objects created, for example, to be used by the



FIGURE 5. Tiered food box. Wood covered in black lacquer with gold *takamaki* lacquer and gold and silver foil, Japan, 1600-1625, photography by Carlos Monteiro. Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon.

© Division of Photographic Documentation - Portuguese Institute for Museums.

In this block, one can highlight: a **Pair of Stirrups** (iron, with silver and brass inlay; wood linings lacquered in red with mother-of-pearl, Japan, 17th century, private collection), a **Sake bottle** with Europeans represented on it (porcelain, with decoration in blue underglaze, Japan - Arita, 1750-1825, V&A), **Inrō** depicting a Dutchman with a matchlock gun (wood covered with tortoise-shell, bone and crackled eggshell, Japan, 1650-1750, V&A), **Netsuke of a European figure** (ivory, carved, Japan, 1700-1750, British Museum, London); and this **Tiered food box**, that is one of the most interesting objects on display, along with the Screens from the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga in Lisbon, which reflect the fascination that the *Namban-jin* caused amongst the Japanese that was illustrated in everyday objects belonging to the upper sections of society.

ruling Japanese classes, with *Namban* iconography, or the interest in objects brought by the Portuguese are valuable reflections of the exchanges and visual responses of this exotic and fascinating encounter.

A fundamental point and one of the principal driving forces behind the discovery of the direct maritime route to the Orient was the commercial aspect. With the arrival of the Europeans at the ports and sources of the exotic and much sought after Oriental products, international commerce acquired increasingly active and fascinating dimensions and dynamics. The section on *Exchanges* reveals how the commercial aspect, with the trade in cotton, spices, teas, silks, porcelain and many other luxury goods that were exchanged for significant amounts of silver from Europe, was combined with an interest in diverse technologies, artistic and aesthetic aspects and European scientific instruments. If, in fact, we know that the European taste for the Orient was undeniably evident, we must also highlight the interest that was aroused on the other side of the globe for Western exotica and for everything that it represented, at a human, cultural, scientific and technological level. This mutual curiosity left an indelible stamp upon lifestyles and concepts in various spheres for both peoples.

Asia in Europe: from the very outset of the Portuguese presence in India, they came across a vast quantity and variety of luxury goods, in terms of forms and materials, which rapidly conquered the interest and fuelled the fashion for collecting exotica in Europe. This demand for diverse wares, including furniture, exclusive textiles, paintings, lacquer-ware and an infinite range of luxury objects resulted, in a second dynamic, in the initiative of detailed orders on the part of the European upper classes for objects that combined, for example, traditional Asian techniques but with the new forms they desired (for example, objects conforming to the neo-classical aesthetic). The high costs involved in the production and transportation of these exclusive items resulted in attempts to manufacture these typologies in Europe itself. On the other hand, the Orient witnessed the development of the trend of manufacturing luxury goods aimed at the export market, as was the case of the distinct Oriental style: *chinoiserie*.

The luxuriousness of these objects can be highlighted by means of the following objects: **Sword**, commissioned by the VOC as a gift for Johan van Leenen (steel blade, with *sawasa* hilt and mounts, with a scabbard made of wood, covered in lacquered rayskin; blade – Holland; mounts and scabbard – Japan, late 17th century, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam); **Shield**, probably commissioned by Johan van Leenen (rhinoceros or buffalo hide, covered in black and gold lacquer; hide – Bengal; lacquer – Japan, late 17th century, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam); **Scrutore – fall-front cabinet** (wood, the exterior covered with plaques of mother-of-pearl secured with silver rivets; the interior covered in black lacquer with gold *hiramakie* and mother-of-pearl inlay; with silver mounts, Japan, early 17th century, Kobe City Museum, Kobe); **Cabinet on stand** (wood, inlaid with ivory, incised and highlighted with lac; cabinet – Western India, mid to late 17th century,

stand – England, mid-18th century, V&A – this piece can be viewed on the exhibition’s website); **Sack-back gown and petticoat** (painted silk; cloth – China, c. 1760; garment – England, 1760-1770, V&A); **Banyan – man’s robe** (cotton, painted and dyed; cloth – India, Coromandel Coast, 1750-1775; garment – England, 1750-1800, V&A), which exemplifies decorated cotton textiles, in the sub-section entitled: *The Chintz Trade*; and the fantastic **Wallpaper panels depicting Canton** (water-colour on paper, China – Canton, c. 1780, Martyn Gregory Gallery, London), in which the activities of the port of Canton are richly and accurately portrayed – the European style buildings and the production of tea and porcelain, which were two of the most important products exported from China. This wallpaper was prepared for the Ladies’ Salon at Strathallan Castle, Scotland, and is a lavish example that reflects the Asian influence on European decoration, being considered an extremely elegant and very exotic element, very much the “dernier cri” of the age (we recommend a virtual visit to the exhibition via the official website, in which one can appreciate the dimensions and lavishness of this object).

Concurrent to this, in the Orient, interest in the West took new forms, considered to be different and innovative as well as useful and complementary, in many aspects, to ancient Oriental knowledge. *Europe in Asia*: deals with the Asian interest in European art and scientific knowledge. European knowledge in the fields of medicine, astronomy, cartography, precision instruments or knowledge in the field of military technology were decisive elements that resulted in a new and complementary application of learning for the Asians. The ruling classes, thinkers, artists, scientists and savants perceived the appearance of new information in this encounter, along with objects such as mirrors, clocks, glass items such as lenses, that were introduced and modified many aspects of their lives. On the other hand, a trend now began to manufacture them in the Oriental style, to better adapt them to their aesthetic tastes and formal discernment. At the level of the arts, that clearly circulated between the various places, the aesthetic influence in the Oriental perspective and approach was further evidence that had a thematic and stylistic influence in the manufacturing process and aesthetic dictates. As an unequivocal example, the depiction of Orientals in European styles or the introduction of some Western architectural aspects in India and China reveal this enthusiasm and admiration for these new elements, brought about by this encounter.

The new technologies and information brought to the Orient that aroused great scientific curiosity can be exemplified by: **Terrestrial globe** by Yang Ma-nao (Manuel Diaz) and Long Hua-min (Niccolò Longobardi), (wood, painted lacquer, China – Peking, 1623, British Library, London – this object can be viewed on the exhibition’s website); **World Map and Twenty-Eight Cities** (pair of eight-fold screens; colours on paper, Japan, early 17th century, Imperial Household Agency, Tokyo); **Pair of hand-held mirrors** (carved polychrome ivory, China – possibly Canton, Qianlong period – 1736-95, private collection, London – this object can be viewed on the exhibition’s website); **Rose-water sprinkler** (lead glass, probably England, mid-18th century, V&A); **Clock** (clock: steel, bronze, copper, with engraved decoration; stand: black *Somada*-lacquered wood, with inlaid mother-of-pearl, Japan, 18th century, British Museum, London); and an **Outer Kimono – uchikake** (woven silk; cloth – France, Lyon, c. 1760s; garment – Japan, late 18th – early 19th century, private collection, Kyoto) that shows the symbiosis and complementary nature of knowledge/techniques of elaborating garments that took place between the East and West.

This universe of fantasy and fascination on the part of the Chinese and Indians with regard to Western culture and lifestyles is highlighted in the section on *Indian and Chinese Fantasies of Europe*, where one can find architectural plans of palaces in India built in the European style or paintings of scenes showing Indian interiors with decorations that are clearly Western in origin. With regard to Chinese examples, apart from the same influence at the level of architecture and decoration, with a visible interest in European objects, one can highlight the stylistic influences at the level of representations of Chinese individuals from the upper echelons of society in a naturalist European fashion. Similarly, at the level of painting, the use of shadow,



FIGURE 6. The Yongzheng Emperor in European Dress. Ink and colour on silk.
China (Qing Court), Yongzheng period (1724-35).
© Collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing, China.

Apart from revealing a remarkable level of assimilation of the characteristics of Western clothing, and although it is rather unlikely that he actually wore these garments, at least while this artwork was painted, this portrait of the **Emperor Yongzheng** wearing European clothes reflects the dominion of this Chinese emperor as ruler of “everything under the heavens”, namely even over the individuals who used this style of dress (this object can be viewed on the exhibition’s website). Another representation entitled **Street Scene** (opaque water-colour on paper, India, late 18th century, British Museum, London), a **Chair** (Zitan, carved, China – Qing court, c. 1759, palace Museum, Beijing) or an **Architectural ornament from a Western-style palace in Yuanming Yuan** (stoneware with turquoise glaze, China, 1747-1770, V&A) reveal how aesthetic directives were assimilated into paintings, furniture and decorative or architectural ornaments and sculptures.

perspective, the representation of the third dimension and European themes, along with the inherent value of the portrait, of the individual, in a naturalist fashion and no longer following uniform Oriental canons and aesthetics, would revolutionise the ways in which man and his environment were depicted.

In Europe, the exotic, luxurious, relaxing, luxuriant, calm, inspiring and romantic aspect of the Orient was also reflected in the attempts to recreate an Oriental ambience, both at the level of architectural structures, such as pavilions, tea rooms and Chinese gardens or sumptuously decorated interiors, imitating Indian halls, as well as in parties or receptions in the Oriental fashion. This is highlighted in the section on *European Fantasies of Asia*.



FIGURE 7. East India Company Official, Probably William Fullerton, Seated on a Terrace.
Dip Chand. Opaque watercolour on paper. India (Murshidabad), 1760-63.
Victoria and Albert Museum ©V&A Images.

The lifestyle, exoticism, relaxation, an entire atmosphere associated with Asian lands, as exemplified by this official in India, living life like an Indian prince, were eagerly transferred to Europe in which buildings, palaces, halls and Oriental style decorations are represented, frequently mixing stylistic influences of areas from the Middle East to China and Japan. In this section, in addition to paintings presenting Oriental landscapes that combine extraordinary examples of architecture, one can find a sequence of slides that show projects and buildings in Europe that have also assimilated these influences, such as **The Chinese Teahouse, Sans Souci, Potsdam, 1757** (Stiftung Preussische Schlösser und Garten, Berlin-Brandenburg) or **The East Front of the Royal Pavilion, Brighton** (photography by John Nash).

The last section shows the less than positive result and the inevitable shift in the dynamics of relations between the East and West, whose nature changed radically in the late 18th century. The European economic domination of Asia acquired an increasingly violent and oppressive element, with a role and presence that progressively determined commercial dynamics. The

English presence culminated in the Opium Wars in China, whose social and economic structure was debilitated thanks to the large-scale introduction of Indian opium, giving rise to tensions that enabled the establishment of the English presence by force. In India, the collapse of the Mughal Empire, along with the defeat of Tipoo Sultan in 1799 afforded the English the opportunity to seize administrative and military power in the Indian subcontinent.



FIGURE 8. Tipoo's Tiger. Automation with mechanical organ.
Wood, painted, with metal and ivory figures. India (Mysore), c.1795.
Victoria and Albert Museum © V&A Images.

Tipoo's Tiger is a sculpture/organ that represents a tiger devouring an Englishman along with the respective sounds of the animal and the victim. In this way, Tipoo Sultan, known as the "Tiger of Mysore" was depicted metaphorically and the piece also reflected his position against the English presence in India (see the interesting display on the exhibition's website that shows how the piece works and how the sounds are produced).

At this point, the definitive process of English colonial domination in India became firmly established, which led to the effective modification of the forms of interaction between the East and West. If, at different moments, these encounters between diverse peoples had become confrontations, this period marks the irreversible passage towards a new kind of relationship, based, above all, on oppression, imposition and violence. Tipoo's Tiger was taken to England as a trophy of war and the symbol of a domination that left little space for the fantastic, almost innocent, bedazzlement that so characterised the early contacts with the Orient... the cycle of relations with elements of marvel came to a definitive end...

This exhibition contains the entire cycle, in its various forms, from start to finish, in the 300 years of contacts between the East and West. A discerning and brilliantly illustrative choice of pieces set the tone for the displays that

have been developed, the priceless pieces originating from diverse points of the globe reveal how communications and exchanges/loans/renting of pieces between various institutions and entities enable the construction of truly stunning moments of knowledge and museum displays. On the other hand, the design and modular nature of the spaces were elements that were very successful, apart from having a considerable area to mould according to the exhibition's requirements, with the interpolation of different forms of support structures in a harmonious and cohesive manner, thus ensuring the connection between various typologies of objects and introductory texts in a continuous manner, achieving sections that were light in terms of written content, but very important in visual terms and in the issues they presented.

The development of a variety of parallel and complementary events and pedagogical activities ensured a more profound absorption of the exhibits on display. If, on the one hand, the exhibition catalogue (which shall shortly be discussed in further detail) is, in truth, an extension of these efforts, with complete and precise studies about various aspects of the dynamics of the encounters mentioned therein and presents a wealth of images, documents and objects related to the exhibits, on the other hand a cycle of international conferences about the theme in question was also promoted.

The exhibition commissioners, Dr. Amin Jaffer, curator of the Asiatic department of the Museum and a specialist in the field of furniture from the early colonial period in the Indian subcontinent, and Dr. Anna Jackson, Deputy Keeper of the Asiatic Department who is also responsible for the Museum's collection of Japanese textiles and costumes, realised the initiative of organising two days of conferences on the theme *Encounters: "Perception and Reality – How the Meeting Engendered Visions of Asia and Europe in the Imagination of Each Other"* (Day 1) and: *"Interaction and Exchange – New Perspectives on the Cultural and Material Dialogue between East and West"* (Day 2), with the collaboration of researchers from several European institutions.

One must highlight the participation of Dr. Annemarie Jordan, a researcher who expounded upon the theme of the Hapsburg penchant for collecting and the fascination for the exotic in the constitution of these royal collections, that consolidated the values of the Curiosity Rooms of the 16th century, in her paper entitled "Something Marvellous and Singular: Exotic and Asian Curiosities and Luxury Goods in European Collections". Lisbon made its presence felt as a leading commercial emporium between Europe and Asia, from where an immense variety of luxury goods – of great value in aesthetic, exotic and even magical (such as the rhinoceros horns that had a magical-medicinal element) terms as well as in material terms, due to the rarity and exclusiveness of the materials used – were redistributed,

which satiated a vast demand to possess exotica on the part of the upper social classes, as was naturally the case of the royal houses of Lisbon, Madrid, Prague and Vienna, which established the circulation of these rare commodities along with exotic animals such as parrots, monkeys, lions, cheetahs or even elephants and rhinoceroses.

Similarly, the paper presented by Dr. Cynthia Viallé, researcher at the Institute for the History of European Expansion of the Department of History of the University of Leiden (Holland) was extremely interesting. Her presentation entitled: "In Aid of Trade: Dutch Gift-giving in Tokugawa Japan", revealed the wealth of information she has gathered from the archives of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) with regard to the products desired by the Shogun as diplomatic presents, which were suggested or even almost "demanded" of the Dutch, to ensure their installation and commercial activities in the port of Deshima. The Dutch soon became aware of the high levels of interest on the part of the Japanese in exotic products brought by the Europeans and of how these rare products became highly sought after gifts and diplomatic presents that ensured Japanese consent and pleasantness towards the Dutch presence. In 1610, Jacques Specx, the head of the Dutch factory in Japan, wrote to the higher authorities of the Dutch East India Company, detailing precisely how important presents were to preserve and ensure the Dutch presence in Deshima and described how diplomatic ceremonies, in which gifts were indispensable, played an extremely important role in Japanese society. "*Fine woollen cloth, glassware, mirrors which are beautiful and fine, pieces of ordinance and glass panes with painted decorations*", are some of the products mentioned by Specx that, according to him, were greatly desired by the Shogun, as well as the fact that they aroused an enormous demand amongst the Japanese, who were bedazzled by these rare items and were prepared to pay high sums for these pieces that were unknown in Japan until this time (an excellent example of the concept of "object-fetishism", which can be seen even in present times). In this way, the Japanese were already the ones who stipulated the trends of transactions of goods between the Dutch and Japanese, fixing norms, prices and taxes, the presents offered symbolised and, undoubtedly, tried to conquer beneficial trading opportunities in addition to good relations.

Textiles, glass objects, arms, mirrors, telescopes, corals, lead pencils, musical instruments or even enormous lanterns and candelabras, with Western aesthetics and of a high material value, that literally "filled the eyes" of the Japanese, demonstrate the variety of goods that were in demand. From the point of view of merely diplomatic presents, which were offered in response to the interest manifested, the most intriguing aspect is to observe the growing degree of exigencies and the variety of effective requests that

transformed these presents into offerings that were demanded. In fact, the Shogun defined a list of presents that was elaborated in great detail, with regard to the kind of products that were sought after as well as their actual characteristics. It is in this regard that this paper proved to be one of the liveliest ones presented, given that the author presented manuscripts and their illustrations of these lists of presents, which also showed the kinds of animals in demand. The dogs or horses referred to therein were carefully mentioned along with all the details that were prized and those traits that were undesirable. These descriptions included the measurements of the various parts of the body, colours, physical details, all these elements are mentioned and lavishly illustrated, such as the kind of fur or marks of these animals, the colour and kind of mane, given alongside representations of the same animals but this time with undesirable characteristics, i.e. examples of what was not sought after in Japan. These lists caused obvious problems for the Dutch who sought to ensure that these detailed Japanese requests were satisfied at whatever cost, and were further hindered by the additional factors of the animals dying during the voyage and, finally, the evaluation and final acceptance of the gifts on the part of the Japanese.

Dr. Laura Hostetler, Associate Professor at the University of Illinois in Chicago, presented a paper that expounded upon the theme of one of the most fantastic pieces of the exhibition. "Europeans in the Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributary Peoples" focused upon the subject of the iconographic and textual record of the peoples who interacted with China in 1751. The "Illustrated Tributaries of the Qing Empire" or "*Huang Qing zhigong tu*" (Ding Guanpen and others, hand-scroll from a set of four; ink and colour on paper; China, 1751-1775; Palace Museum, Beijing, China), on display in the second hall of the exhibition, in the section entitled "Visual Responses" is precisely one such piece in which the reciprocal representation and interest in exotic/different humans is approached. It is an excellent pictorial work that depicts various peoples of the world that paid tribute to the Qing empire (1636-1911), in which one can identify 301 different peoples/nationalities, identified by a pair consisting of a man and woman, in which the characteristics of each race are developed, evidenced by each couple. Contained within each couple, who represent a country or region, the artist provided information about their place of origin (location and history of the region, costumes, products, colonial relations or commerce of the people with the rest of Asia) as well as, almost in the fashion of a report of an ethnological nature, the characteristics of the people, both in physical terms (hair, eyes, features, statures, clothes) as well as in descriptions of the cultures and customs of the people in the most dynamic variants. Two-thirds of the people are from China and the remaining group includes Asians from Tibet, Koreans, people from the

Ryukyu Islands, Annam, Siam, the Sulu Archipelago, Burma, Japan, Luzon, Java, Malacca, the Solomon Islands and the Europeans: Italians, Portuguese, Dutch, Hungarians, Poles, Englishmen, Swedes and Spaniards. In addition to a cultural and ethnological geography of the peoples represented, this document reflects a great interest and curiosity about those with whom China interacted but, above all, in the political facet of the piece, the position of the supremacy of the Emperor Qianlong (r. 1736-95) over those who are represented in his list is clearly evident.

In conclusion, amongst the various other contributions that vied for the best and most profound formal and semantic understanding of the pieces in question and the dynamics portrayed, one can highlight the paper presented by Dr. Anna Jackson, also one of the commissioners of the exhibition, who developed the theme of “The Fashion for the Foreign: The Taste for Exotic and Dress in Momoyama and Edo Japan”. This presentation expounded upon the extraordinary contact between the Portuguese and Japanese. This theme, lavishly illustrated and captured for eternity by means of the screens and other objects of *Namban* art, reveals just how fascinating this encounter between two vastly different peoples was and aspects of the assimilation and fusion of elements between the two cultures. Especially, amongst the Japanese, who, in these *Namban-jin*, saw barbarian men coming from the South (a generic name that included Cantonese and Koreans in an early phase) arrive in enormous black boats, laden with merchandise that dazzled on account of its variety and novelty, in search of trade in their land. The visual impact of a new reality in terms of humans and objects gave rise to an enthusiasm, fascination and curiosity, alongside a certain and inevitable fear as well. These men with a strange appearance, with big noses, lanky silhouettes, capes, ruffled collars or clerical collars, gold chains around their necks, crucifixes dangling on their chests, baggy pants (breeches), with jerkins, and small brimmed hats with rounded crowns edged with gold, clothes with buttons, brilliant cuffs and sword and dagger guards, handkerchiefs of white gauze in their hands and the missionaries with long black robes with rosaries and crucifixes dangling, had a fascinating exotic dimension that assumed a symbolic-magical perspective. The huge black ship, traditionally represented as a treasure-boat (*takara-bune*) was considered to be an auspicious vessel that brought happiness, health, fortune and good-luck, fantastic and exotic objects, marvellous textiles, such as silks in varied hues, satin, damasks or taffeta, which were quickly adopted, along with elements of clothing worn by the Portuguese that were associated with auspicious fortunes. The clothes brought by the Portuguese, their style and accessories, such as crucifixes or white handkerchiefs, were absorbed by the Japanese community as well as by Hideyoshi himself, as a Jesuit revealed in 1594 while defending the fact that the use of

Portuguese clothes and Christian symbols were viewed with admiration and fascination, of a current relationship with a new fashion and with a magical conception, the pieces being used as amulets/talismans that would bring the wearer success in their everyday life. In this way, iconographic motifs were adopted, such as the motifs of Portuguese vessels applied on kimonos, presented in theatrical performances or at altars during the *matusri* ceremonies; on the other hand, the use of textiles or patterns brought by the *Namban-jin* were incorporated in codes of Japanese garments, just like the shape of clothes, as is exemplified by the case of the Portuguese-style breeches (baggy pants). The fascination of the *Namban* pieces of art consists precisely of the extremely faithful representation of the fashionable and magical character of the visual aspect of the Portuguese, as is the case of the food-box and screen that have been mentioned above, or in the details of another screen, which we shall examine shortly.

The contents of the two editions of the catalogue that were released, one in hard-cover and the other a paperback version, are extremely rich in scientific terms and expound upon the themes presented in the exhibition in great detail. The collaboration of specialists in the preparation of the articles and the contacts established throughout the world, while gathering valuable information that was essential in mounting this exhibition, ensured a scientific rigour and the production of knowledge that was intended to be the heart of the configuration of a museological/museographical message. On the other hand, the variety of pieces mentioned and presented in the book, apart from the objects on display in the exhibition, enable one, apart from a cross-referenced reading of these objects, to join together and connect the museological realities both with regard to the perspectives and themes that have been approached as well as at the level of their collection or at the level of the message transmitted. We can only conclude that the catalogue, given the manner in which it expounds upon and develops the themes in question, with the debates presented with regard to the objects, the inter-relationship between the objects on display and other pieces, with the map and chronologies offered to the reader, is an excellent piece of work and ably presents the knowledge and readings that were utilised in this production, that are never watertight or permanent.

Logically, the catalogue follows the intricacies of the exhibition, likewise beginning with a map of the routes and the principal ports of the chronological period in focus (1500-1800) and begins with an introduction by Anna Jackson and Amin Jaffer: "1 – Introduction: The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500-1800", that presents the main themes of the exhibition and the questions raised in each module, which we have already mentioned while discussing the exhibition itself.

"Part One: Discoveries" begins with "2 – Mapping the World", by David Woodward, which deals with the representation of the world on the part of European and Oriental peoples, their conceptions of space and the way in which the encounter between the two changed them. The sub-chapters: "European mapping of Asia and the World", "Asian Mapping of the World" and "Introduction of Western Maps to Asia" reveal the kind of approach that the author uses with regard to the cartographic element. One must mention the role of the Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) who, upon travelling to China in 1583 made a map to show where he came from in order to satisfy the curiosity of this community, and reveals the spatial/cartographic knowledge of the time, not just as an end in itself but as a means of demonstrating the scientific and technological knowledge of the Europeans. Questions such as the round shape of the Earth, longitude and latitude and the need to project these onto maps, the veracity and importance of real distances in the cardinal directions and the concept of scale were novelties for the Chinese, who merely valued the element of the distance between places. In different representations, one can observe that the conceptions of space and the world are always centred in the space where they emerge, the centre of the Earth for the Europeans is Europe while for the Chinese it was China. Despite the fact that the Jesuits made the first globe in China in 1623, until the 20th century, Oriental cartographic traditions remain virtually unchanged, the European influence having been more profound at the level of navigation technology, measurements and warfare.

"3 – Rarities and Novelties" is a theme that is once again developed by Annemarie Jordan Gschwend, who expounds upon the rarity of the natural and artificial objects brought to and traded with the new points around the globe. These had miraculous powers (the *mirabilia*), and were of great value on account of their rarity, luxuriousness, splendour and technical virtuosity. The demand for exotic animals such as rhinoceroses, zebras, parrots, monkeys, falcons, antelopes, lions, cheetahs and tigers reveals an exotic facet of the courts and the upper echelons of the aristocracy that developed a taste for luxury, rarity and differences in shapes and materials, giving rise to the *Kunstkammer* (with artistic objects) or the *Wunderkammer* (with extraordinary objects), the Curiosity Rooms of the Renaissance that exemplified the art of collection, the culture of the object and the dominion of the macro-cosmos within a single chamber (micro-cosmos).

"4 – Chinese Porcelain in Early European Collections", by Rose Kerr, reveals the fascination for one of the most curious materials ever created by man and that is so difficult to conceive: Chinese porcelain. Its lightness, purity, translucency, white colours, fragility and elegance were the characteristics that were greatly appreciated by Europeans and gave rise to com-

missioned porcelain, in shapes and decorations to suit European tastes, very different from the original shapes and thematic content.

“5 – Asian Trade and Exchange before 1600”, by John Guy, expounds upon the typologies and characteristics of Asian commerce, highlighting spices and perfumes, painted textiles, the trade in ceramics, Chinese porcelain, “Thai Ceramics and Shipwrecks in South-East Asia” (mentioning the differences between diverse ceramics and the dynamics of the trade in Asian commerce) and, finally, the importation of ceramics associated with the tradition of tea in Japan (tea jars for dried tea leaves, tea caddies for powdered tea made by grinding dried tea leaves and tea bowls etc., highlighted by Rupert Faulkner in: “Imported Ceramics and Japanese Tea Drinking”).

“*Part Two: Encounters*” begins with “6 – Diplomatic Encounters: Europe and South Asia” by Amin Jaffer. The importance of diplomatic presents, the ceremonies of Asian monarchs (and consequent European embarrassment before the ceremony of prostrating and kissing the foot of the Mughal ruler of Bengal), the exotic animals and objects that were taken (horses, dogs, arms adorned and embellished with luxurious materials such as gold or mother-of-pearl, or lacquered furniture, paintings, tapestries, sculptures in silver and gold), technological objects (lenses, mirrors, microscopes, telescopes) were determining factors in alliances and commercial projects and are ably described in this chapter, along with questions relating to embassies and missions.

“Siamese Embassies to the Court of the Sun King”, by John Guy, summarises the Embassy sent from Siam to Europe by the Thai ruler, Phaulkon Narai, who wished to establish diplomatic relations with a view to intellectual knowledge, commercial exchanges and a desire for cosmopolitanism in his kingdom, and this came to pass in 1684.

“7 – Diplomatic Encounters: Europe and East Asia”, by James L. Hevic, expands upon the same diplomatic questions involved in the ceremonies, embassies, technological presents (such as the clocks taken by the Europeans), festivities and banquets, in China and Japan. “Japanese Diplomatic Relations with Europe”, by Greg Irvine, focuses upon the 1582 mission to Europe organised by the Jesuit Visitor, Alessandro Valignano, with Japanese converts to Christianity in order to impress and justify the Jesuit cause in Japan. In 1585, they were received at the papal court in Rome, by Gregory XIII, later returning to Japan, and thus, in 1590, they once again gave rise to an interest in the West, at a point when Christianity was already being persecuted and the Dutch presence at the port of Deshima was already a reality. Amongst the presents given to the Japanese by the Dutch, one can highlight the enormous Dutch brass chandelier preserved at the Nikkō Tōshōgū, the mausoleum of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first Tokugawa Shōgun,

and the late sixteenth-century ivory-veneered casket with an inset relief on the lid depicting the biblical story of Susannah and the Elders, with engraved crystal on the slides.

“8 – Religious Encounters: Christianity in Asia”, by Gauvin Alexander Bailey, reveals the beauty of the dialogue between cultures, styles, techniques (*cloisonné* in Christian sculptures) and symbols (the sacerdotal robes in Oriental silk with embroidered dragons are but an example of this) in religious exchanges that gave rise, for example, to Indo-Portuguese sacred art, the phenomenon of the “Painters’ Seminary”, the Jesuit art academy in Japan founded by the Italian Jesuit and artist Giovanni Niccolò in 1583 in which Japanese and Chinese students combined Christian themes with Oriental techniques (silver and gold dust – *makie* and mother-of-pearl inlay – *raden*), materials, styles and themes. This school, which had a great influence upon the community, was one of the foci of the waves of anti-Christian persecution at the time of the expulsion of the Christians by Tokugawa Ieyasu (1614) after the first initiative to expel the Jesuits in 1587 by Toyotomi Hideyoshi (on the basis that it had a great following and gave rise to edicts such as the one dating from 1682 displayed in the exhibition: Edict prohibiting Christianity: ink on wood, Japan, dated 1682, British Museum, London). Within this ambit one can note the ceremony in 1633 in Nagasaki in which Christian artistic productions were flung to the ground so that their creators could stamp upon them and destroy them.

“Hastings, Jones and the European Interest in Hindu Traditions”, by Nick Barnard focuses upon the 18th century interest in the culture and religions of India, Warren Hastings (1732-1818), Governor-General of India from 1774 to 1785, standing out for his vision of control by means of an inclination towards and effective knowledge about the traditions, cultures and languages of the communities controlled by the English, as did Sir William Jones (1746-94) who arrived in India in 1783 and was a judge in Calcutta, on account of his study of and knowledge of Indian languages, culture, history and music.

“9 – Portuguese Settlements and Trading Centres”, by Paulo Varela Gomes, expounds upon the dynamics, architectural questions and representations of the main cities/ports of the Portuguese presence in the Orient; “10 – Dutch Settlements and Trading Centres”, by Leonard Blussé, focuses upon the cities of Batavia and Deshima and their role in the commercial dynamics of the VOC; “11 – British Settlements and Trading Centres”, by J. P. Losty, refers to Madras, Calcutta and Bombay, their representations and their commercial dynamism and in “Canton: Centre of Trade”, by Kee Il Choi Jr., the centralising aspect of Canton in Asiatic trade is highlighted, the city linking China with the rest of Asia, where tea, silks and high quality porcelain were bought in exchange for silver.

“12 – Personal Encounters: Europeans in South Asia”, by William Dalrymple, portrays the symbiosis of lifestyles in India, the miscegenation of peoples, the exchange of habits, personal contacts, the hybrid flavour of the lives of the Europeans in India and Western influences upon the Indians, represented, for example, in the paintings of families in which the father is European and the mother Indian, thus mingling together to form a symbiosis of cultures and habits.

“13 – Personal Encounters: Europeans in South-East Asia”, by Leonard Blussé expands upon the trajectory of the Dutch, until they arrived in Batavia (Jakarta), and their sentiments and records of their encounters with various non-European peoples. From the joy of sighting land at the Cape of Good Hope, after almost eight months of travel, to the curiosity of the Asians with regard to the Europeans (the need to touch, smell and feel people, the clothes and their amazement with regard to the fairness of European skin) and on the other hand a certain European repugnance with regard to their encounters with some peoples, due to their smell, appearance and grime, are some of the stories and reports related with these travels. On the other hand, at a more advanced stage, the need for women to increase the colony’s population, the not very successful attempt to bring young Dutch girls to marry in Batavia and, finally, the resorting to the Portuguese example in India of marriages with local women. This aspect had an immediate impact in terms of an exchange of cultures and assimilation that made this city/society a multi-cultural one, where one can highlight the presence of the Chinese community, indispensable on account of its mercantile role, as well as the community of the *Mardijkers* or *orang merdeka* (Christian free-burghers of mixed race who were descended from Portuguese-speaking freemen and slaves from the Indian subcontinent, the Moluccas and Malacca) with a different lifestyle and distinctive garb who were the main element in the city’s defences.

“14 – Personal Encounters: Europeans in East Asia”, by Rupert Faulkner, reveals the intimate relations between Europeans, namely, the Dutch, in the Japanese areas where they were based. The images that portray these kinds of relationships are extremely interesting, depicting sexual relations between Europeans and Japanese women, as is the case of the prostitutes/courtesans in Nagasaki with the Dutch and the reports that were written around this reality attesting to a desire on the part of aficionados of pornography in gathering the exotic and even monstrous Dutch masculine element in their world of sexual fantasies (one can consider this fact to be a natural genesis for the kind of *Manga Hentai*, *Eru-guro* or *Kemono* of our times that are increasingly popular throughout the world, in which drawn/represented pornographic sexuality revolves around monstrous, abnormal or sexually perverse figures, a parallel to the Japanese sexual descriptions about the Dutch,

in this context, in the 18th-19th centuries). Female and male prostitution, as homosexuality was a notable aspect of Japanese or Chinese sexual conduct, would prove to be one of the aspects that most displeased the missionaries in these regions as well as perturbed ordinary people who viewed this with disapproval and shock, especially in the case of male prostitution. Along with



FIGURE 9. Portuguese ship arriving at a Japanese port, 1550-1615 (detail). Japan. Momoyama period (1573-1615). Pair of six-panel screens, ink, colors and gold on paper. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery Brundage Collection, B60D77+ and B60D78+. Used by permission

This detail from a *Namban* screen reveals how the fashions brought by the Portuguese were assimilated as a sign of fascination and how their elements, similarly considered to be magical and harbingers of good luck, were effectively used by the Japanese as “fashion statements”.

The Avery Brundage Collection at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco stands out for its collections (with more than 14,000 objects) organised in a very interesting manner, and the intense rotation of the *musealia* on display, in a discourse that follows three fundamental themes: The Development of Buddhism, Trade and Cultural Exchange, and Local Beliefs and Practices. The collections span 6,000 years of material culture in a geographical expanse that includes: India, the Persian World and West Asia, Southeast Asia, the Himalayas and the Tibetan Buddhist World, China, Korea and Japan. The Japanese collection contains rare painted scrolls and screens, ceramics from the 3rd millennium B.C. to present times, major Buddhist sculptures and superb decorative arts and textiles. With the recent gift of the Lloyd Cotsen Collection of Japanese Bamboo Baskets, the museum holds the largest and most notable collection of this craft outside of Japan. The Lloyd Cotsen Collection of Japanese Bamboo Baskets: 832 objects from this prized collection, recognised as one of the largest and most remarkable collections of its kind in the world. Acquired in the summer of 2002. Further information is available on the museum’s website.

these contacts, it is also possible to interpret Japanese interest in the Dutch community through the very illustrative representations of this curiosity, with an emphasis upon the role of the missionaries in bringing these extremely different peoples together by studying the languages and the first compilation of the dictionary, *Bango-sen* (Japanese-Dutch in 1798) and the *Rangaku* phenomenon (or study of Dutch, in the second half of the 18th century) on the part of the Japanese, thus enabling the translation of information in fields such as medicine, sciences and languages into Japanese. One of the most fantastic elements of these links is, undoubtedly, the adoption of lifestyles and other elements on the part of the Japanese with regard to the Europeans. The element of fashion, as we have already mentioned, at the level of clothes, use of furniture and decorations and even changes in their diet, such as the use of beef or chicken eggs, on the part of the Japanese flourished once again.

“15 – Visual Responses: Depicting Europeans in South Asia”, by Rosemary Grill and “16 – Visual Responses: Depicting Europeans in East Asia”, by Anna Jackson, once again highlight the fascination that this new human reality aroused in Asians and the way in which various artistic forms, with different techniques and supports (painting, sculpture, weaving), revealed and represented this new foreign and bizarre element, its particularities, behaviours and stereotypes (as is the case of *Namban* art). “European Depictions of Asians”, also by Rosemary Grill, presents the pictorial and textual variants of the impressions and images constructed around Asian peoples, this time by Europeans.

“*Part Three: Exchanges*”: begins with “17 – Asia in Europe: Porcelain and Enamel for the West”, by Rose Kerr, and “East Asian Metalwork for the Export Market”, by Greg Irvine, studies which focus upon the predominant role of porcelain and precious metals from China within the conception of the luxury goods that were so sought after in Europe, as well as their production in larger quantities keeping the export trade in mind.

“18 – Asia in Europe: Lacquer for the West”, by Julie Hutt, shows the fantastic craftsmanship in diverse objects such as furniture, boxes or chests lacquered with iconography and allusions to Oriental themes such as landscapes as well as the confluence of techniques and forms of furniture that satiated European desires and aesthetic preferences with luxurious Japanese materials and techniques, such as black lacquer, gilded lacquer *hiramakie*, *takamakie* lacquer or details in *shibuichi*.

“19 – Asia in Europe: Furniture for the West”, by Amin Jaffer, shows the variety of furniture in exotic materials from Asia, such as ebony, sandalwood, ivory, mother-of-pearl or lacquer. “20 – Asia in Europe: Textiles for the West”, by Rosemary Grill, reveals the exoticism of the silks and printed cottons from India in garments for Europe and, in conformance with the

fashion of the moment, the interweaving of cotton and silk for bed linen or elegantly worked quilts and the use of pashmina and cashmere. “21 – Asia in Europe: Chinese Paintings for the West”, by William R. Sargent, highlights the exoticism and luxury attributed by Europeans to paintings of Oriental landscapes used in the decoration of their houses (such as in Chinese halls) as well as to having their portraits painted by Orientals. “Company School Painting”, by Graham Parlett, reveals how, in the 18th century, the “Company paintings”, works painted by Indian artists for Westerners who lived and worked in India, form a magnificent fusion of traditional Indian artistic styles and European aspects/themes and techniques in their visual representations, in these pictorial records of a new human and existential reality that came into being, thus creating rich works that intersect at the aesthetic, technical and thematic level.

“22 – Europe in Asia: The Impact of Western Art and Technology in South Asia”, by Susan Stronge, and “23 – Europe in Asia: The Impact of Western Art and Technology in China”, by Catherine Pagani, demonstrate how the arrival of the Europeans in the Orient gave rise to an enormous interest in their astronomical, military, mechanical and medical knowledge, as well as in the use of new materials and techniques, translating into an ardent enthusiasm and desire for objects such as clocks, telescopes, mirrors, enamelled objects and their techniques, maps, globes, books on plants, rifles and other arms. The interest in and adoption of these novelties are clearly evident, for example, in a painting of Shah Jahan with a rifle (Payag, opaque water-colour and gold on paper, Mughal India, c. 1630, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin), thus demonstrating his authority and military control/supremacy, or in Oriental portraits and paintings in which the traditional motifs shown are influenced by realism, naturalism and by techniques of chiaroscuro and perspective, brought by the Europeans, and by other compositions that reflect the assimilation of objects such as mirrors and clocks in Asian domestic spaces.

“24 – Europe in Asia: the Impact of Western Art and Technology in Japan”, by Timon Screech, is very interesting because, apart from the questions that have already been mentioned above with regard to the desire for new knowledge, and the interest in the language, techniques, mechanical and optical objects etc., it shows how the Japanese reacted to the “peepbox”, the first one having been taken to the archipelago by the Dutch and gifted to Shogun Iemitsu in 1646. These were boxes of optical illusions that transmitted depth and perspective, affording visual games by resorting to mirrors that recreated landscapes and house interiors and were rapidly nicknamed the “paradise box” (or *gokurakubako*), conceived of and exhibited by the Japanese themselves as curiosities in fairs. The technical/mechanical questions inherent to the device would always arouse enthusiasm and amazement,

thus conferring, on the other hand, an increasingly important place to objects of observation on the path towards knowledge by means of empiricism. “The Impact of European War Technology”, by Greg Irvine, and “Japanese Map Screens” by Miyoshi Tadayoshi show how military knowledge and firearms were one of the main elements of European influence in Asia. The matchlock guns, ship mounted cannons and muskets were adopted and considered to be decisive factors in the new dynamics of war that were defined by the use of this novel military technology. Never before had the power of arms been so great and the importation of the same (the *Tanegashima*, named after the place where the Europeans were installed) and their subsequent manufacture in the Orient became a growing phenomenon, new adaptations being made to these pieces, such as the example of a mechanism to protect the matchlock of the gun from rain. In the light of this new military element, armour and helmets also underwent modifications, keeping in mind their efficiency in protection against this new bellicose might. These elements also witnessed a wealth of stylistic, artistic and technological modifications with the adoption of European forms in these objects that were profusely decorated with Oriental artistry. On the other hand, cartographic knowledge, increasingly more complete, detailed and profound, would provide a new understanding and conception of the world,

“25 – Indian Fantasies of Europe”, by Sally North, and “26 – Chinese Fantasies of Europe”, by Ming Wilson, reveal European influence in the architecture, plans and decoration of houses, exemplified by neo-classical elements in buildings such as the Constantia palace (1795) in Lucknow (India), designed and built by Claude Martin to serve as a house, mausoleum and school, in which he lived with his Indian wives and adopted children, mixing neo-classical elements with Indian ones. In China, one can highlight the adoption of European dress and representations, such as portraits, in Western stylistic moulds, as well as the adoption of European elements in objects such as chairs and in the decoration of spaces or the architectural construction and conception of gardens.

In conclusion, “27 – European Fantasies of Asia”, by Steven Parissien, followed by a final bibliography and chronology, reveals the repercussions of the great enthusiasm and fascination for Asia as experienced by the Europeans. From *chinoiserie*, to varied Oriental luxury goods, clothes, ornaments, and even the influence and adoption of the style of Chinese gardens, as an exotic space for luxurious relaxation, of Oriental pagodas in architecture and the construction and production of fantastic Chinese halls in palaces and other luxurious edifices constitute magnificent examples of this fantasy. The Asian way of life, viewed as something exclusive and elegant, can be appreciated by means of the fabulous example of the Royal Pavilion in Brighton,

whose architecture, decoration and profusion of precious ornaments reveal and embody, with great splendour, the enormous fascination with which the cultures and visual techniques of the Middle East, Persia, India, China and Japan were viewed in the West.

In conclusion, one must highlight the fact that the success of this initiative, with the exhibition serving as a focal point, was the obvious result of a cultural dynamic that involves various institutions and an integrated system of management in which communication and interaction amongst diverse environments enabled the production of scientific knowledge and allowed the public to access an extremely well organised cultural circuit.

On the other hand, the decisive role of sponsors who served as Maecenas, as is the case of the Nomura Group (Holdings, Inc.) for this exhibition shows how the cultural conscience of large financial /investment groups and relations with cultural entities, that are viewed as prestigious and afford a certain status, can bring benefits to the production of culture and knowledge in various spheres, such as museology.

In this manner, highlighting the dynamic character of the Museum and its relations, one can develop a kind of management that seeks not just to generate knowledge and produce a cultural “show”, the exhibition, but, above all, the element of attractiveness that can be based on various pillars. To this one can add the enormous publicity machine and the preparation of the exhibition website, a high quality display in terms of contents, information and showcasing of the products, which were presented with scientific seriousness but were also sold, and the pleasant collaborations with Asian restaurants that offered, in exchange for the exotic foods that are typical of the countries highlighted in *Encounters*, the possibility of buying two entry tickets for the price of one.

On the other hand, the development of a line of diverse and high quality merchandising (that essentially constitutes the materialisation of a wealth of memories directly related with the theme in question) and the production of innumerable theme-related *Events* (ranging from the screening of films, international conferences, Oriental festivities, guided visits, meetings about Asian fashion, amongst innumerable other activities also aimed at different kinds of audiences – see the calendar of events on the exhibition website) allowed the consolidation of an image and dynamic activities, but also helped promote the constitution of a museological entity as a site that offers numerous and attractive cultural and recreational services, that can only attract the public.

It is in this dynamic, of promotion and diffusion of knowledge within the environs of museums, that highlighting questions of the very conception of the exhibition itself, in terms of design and presentation, with tricks that seek

to break visual monotony, with an interesting division of segments, show-cases moulded around the pieces interpolating diverse forms and typologies of objects, the audio guides (with direct access to the contents on display, themes or explanations about the objects), the large print folders (with magnified titles of the pieces), the use of slide projections of great visual importance (such as the European ports in the Orient) or the use of thematic music, can win over audiences who are increasingly demanding, not only with regard to the scientific content but also with regard to the scenographies and presentation.

Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500-1800 thus distinguished itself as an exhibition with an enormous scope so typical of a great museological institution with international influence, on account of the discerning selection of the main themes, the fantastic collection and symbiosis of objects, the excellent and exciting presentation, the notable generation of knowledge, recorded for posterity in the catalogue and, above all, for the impact it had upon the public.

“The great objective of museums is that of bedazzlement” in the words of our master sculptor Lagoa Henriques, and this was effectively on display in this exhibition whose theme continues to attract and fascinate a variety of different audiences with varied interests and diverse notions about what exactly a museum should be. It is always fascinating to see how objects continue to transport people to different ages and spaces, distant both in terms of time and physical remoteness, arousing curiosity and enthusiasm and, above all, to witness the unfolding of an interesting kind of public, perhaps a more recent one, that, in the midst of a crowd, goes to museums simply to be bedazzled and to “kill time”...

Websites of interest:

Oriental Art in London:
www.asianartinlondon.com

Asia House:
www.asiahouse.org

The Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at University College London:
<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/>

Medical Photographic Library – Wellcome Library (The Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine):
<http://medphoto.wellcome.ac.uk/>

The Brunei Gallery:

<http://www.soas.ac.uk/gallery/home.html>

The School of Oriental and African Studies – University of London:

<http://www.soas.ac.uk/>

Exhibition: *Asia: Body Mind Spirit:*

www.soas.ac.uk/gallery/bodymindspirit/home.html

British Museum:

<http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk>

Exhibition: *7000 Years of Chinese Jade from the Collection of Sir Joseph Hotung:*

<http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/compass/ixbin/goto?id=ENC11668&tour=sel>

Exhibition: *Cutting Edge – Japanese Swords in the British Museum:*

<http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/cuttingedge>

Hall: *Enlightenment – Discovering the World in the Eighteenth Century in the Restored King's Library:*

<http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/enlightenment/>

Victoria and Albert Museum:

<http://www.vam.ac.uk>

Exhibition: *Encounters – The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500-1800:*

http://www.vam.ac.uk/vastatic/microsites/1196_encounters/

Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga de Lisboa

National Museum of Ancient Art in Lisbon:

<http://www.mnarteantiga-ipmuseus.pt/>

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco:

<http://www.asianart.org/>