Note from the Editor

This issue of *East Asian Science, Technology and Medicine* includes a “Focus” in the form of a group of three articles under the collective title “Displacing Jesuit Science in Qing China”, and an article on Tibetan medicine. The “Focus” is the outcome of a collaboration among three young scholars that began with a symposium at the 14th International Conference on the History of Science in East Asia (Paris, July 2015). Their contributions all start from the hypothesis that, by paying close attention to space, and in particular to locations that have hitherto been neglected, one can shed new light on the early modern circulation of knowledge between the two ends of Eurasia, in which the Jesuits were central actors.

Mario Cams discusses two different sets of land surveying techniques used simultaneously by the Qing court. The first one was implemented on the Khalkha-Mongolian frontier in the wake of the Qing-Zunghar wars of the 1690s. Jesuit missionaries used Paris-made instruments to determine latitudes, while Qing officials measured road distances along the whole route with graduated ropes. After the conclusion of hostilities, missionaries were asked to produce a map of the new frontier by integrating these two practices, which led to the discovery of a technical incompatibility between them. In 1702, the problem was solved by the precise measurement of the terrestrial degree and the redefinition of the *chi* 尺, the basic length unit, in terms of that degree.

Wu Huiyi discusses the role of the Jesuits’ experience of lands other than Europe and China in the construction of European knowledge of China. On the one hand, using a number of examples drawn from Jesuit correspondence and publications, she shows how this experience shaped their agenda in China, and thereby their understanding of that country. On the other hand, she relies on eighteenth century French sources to argue that the Qing conquest of lands beyond those that had been controlled by the Ming made it possible for the China Jesuits to access knowledge about large expanses of Inner Asian territories. Not only the Society of Jesus, but also the Qing empire and the Asiatic ambitions of Bourbon France must be taken into account to fully grasp the ways in which Europe understood China, and more broadly the whole region of East and Inner Asia, in the eighteenth century.

Alexander Statman’s focus is on Beijing during the late Qianlong reign, which is also the period that followed the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773. He brings to light a friendship between the French missionary Joseph-Marie Amiot and the Manchu prince Hongwu 弘晔, a cousin of the emperor. Hongwu thus became a patron of the ex-Jesuits

living in Beijing, and was a valuable informant of Amiot. The latter in turn kept the prince up to date with some of the European innovations of which he knew, such as electrical medicine and gas balloons. The two also conducted experiments together, but decided to keep these secret. Although it appears as an exception to a situation in which scholarly intercourse between missionaries and Beijing elites were rare, the story of this friendship shows that cross-cultural exchange remained possible.

This issue also includes a study by Olaf Czaja of the substitution of certain *materia medica* for rare or expensive ones in Tibetan medicine. This topic is not only of historical importance, but it is also highly relevant to the growing contemporary market in Asian *material medica*. After a survey of references to substitution found in Tibetan written sources, three Tibetan treatises that deal exclusively with the subject are discussed in detail. Czaja explores the underlying modes of substitution, and sheds light on the criteria according to which substitutes are deemed suitable, showing that there are seven such criteria: taste, healing potential, type, substance, name, shape, and smell.

This issue opens with an obituary of Professor Tsun Ko (Ke Jun 柯俊, 1917-2017), a great specialist of historical metallurgy who was, among other things, the founding Vice-President of the International Society for the History of East Asian Science, Technology and Medicine (ISHEASTM). It closes with four book reviews.

Catherine Jami

CNRS

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