Interaction & Exchange: An International Symposium on Westerners & the Qing Imperial Court (1644-1911)

Interaction & Exchange, an international symposium co-sponsored by the Ricci Institute and the Qing History Institute of the People’s University of China on the exchange between Westerners and the Qing Court was held in Beijing on October 17-19, 2008. Twenty-four scholars from ten countries and regions presented their research papers on such issues as science and scientific exchange, Qing protocol and foreign affairs, diplomacy and trade, cross-cultural perceptions, emperors and missionaries, advisors, educators and reformers, and art and artistic exchange.

The symposium was intended to broaden understanding of the scope of interaction between Westerners and the Qing Court and also to explore the perspectives of the Chinese and Western actors involved. A collection of symposium papers is scheduled for publication in 2009.

Ricci Institute Receives Two New Grants

The Ricci Institute recently received a $300,000 grant from the Henry Luce Foundation. Entitled Narratives from the Hinterland: Expanding the Study of Christianity in China beyond the Major Urban Centers, the new grant will allow the Ricci Institute to help Chinese universities in less urban and more rural areas, such as Qinghai and Inner Mongolia, expand institutional resources in the field of Chinese-Western cultural history.

The grant aims to broaden the study of Christianity in China by including multi-disciplinary projects conducted at six centers throughout China. The initiative will promote opportunities for education and research among lesser served regions with the international scholarly community. “It promises to open up new resources and to continue the process of building international networks and improved understanding of cultural and historical issues between China and the U.S.,” says Dr. Terrill Lautz, Vice President of the Henry Luce Foundation about the new Ricci Institute grant.

The Ricci Institute has also been awarded a grant of $50,000 from the Odell Foundation in San Francisco. A matching grant has been provided by the Chinese Province of the Society of Jesus. The combined grants will assist the Ricci Institute in completing the digitization and cataloging of the newly acquired Canton Diocese Archives.
New Guidebook for Oral History Research in China

From July 17-20, 2008 the Ricci Institute co-sponsored a workshop in Shanghai in preparation for an oral history research guidebook. Utilizing existing resource books in English and Chinese and conducting primary research in China and the United States, this project will result in a Chinese publication to assist graduate students and researchers in China in conducting oral history interviews and producing oral history research in multi-disciplinary areas. Fifteen young Chinese faculty members, Ph.D. candidates, and other researchers participated in the workshop. Prof. Li Xiangping of Shanghai University and Dr. Jean-Paul Wiest of the Beijing Center for Chinese Studies led the workshop and will co-author this publication. The project is co-sponsored by Shanghai University, Central China Normal University, and the Beijing Center for Chinese Studies. It is expected to be completed in 2009.

USF Ricci Institute Becomes New Home for Canton Diocese Archives

With an agreement between the Chinese and Portuguese Provinces of the Society of Jesus and the University of San Francisco, the Ricci Institute is now home for Archives of the Canton Diocese. The Archives contain approximately 12,000 documents that date from 1851 to 1949 and consist of correspondence, reports, records, and other materials in French, Latin, Chinese, Italian, English, and Portuguese. Documents fall into the following categories: pastoral and religious matters; administrative and general affairs; and external relations with Church authorities and French or Chinese governments.

2008 Summer Visiting Scholars at the Ricci Institute

Sean Metzger, Ph.D. (Duke University) is currently the Fulbright Visiting Chair in North American Society and Culture at Concordia University in Montreal. He was investigating the history of US missionaries and their depictions of China using resources in the Ricci Institute Library for contemporary depictions of Christianity in Chinese cinema.

Gang Song, Ph.D. (University of Hong Kong) is the recipient of the Ricci Institute’s 2008 EDS Travel Grant for Research. He spent one week in August 2008 at the Ricci Institute, conducting research on the complex role of Catholic baptism in 17th-century ritualistic exchange between China and Europe. After completing his one-year visiting professor appointment at Lafayette College in Pennsylvania, Dr. Song assumed his new position at the University of Hong Kong in September 2008.

Rev. Antoni Üçerler, Ph.D. (Oxford University) was an EDS-Stewart Distinguished Research Fellow at the Ricci Institute. During his residence in summer 2008, he worked with the staff of the Ricci Institute editing an upcoming publication Christianity and Culture: Japan and China in Comparison (1542-1644). This volume of conference proceedings is expected to be published by the Jesuit Historical Institute in Rome in 2009.
Recent Acquisition at the Ricci Institute Library:


This large-format work provides a pictorial history of Chinese astronomical technology from earliest times through the end of the imperial era. Unlike most pictorial histories, this volume includes detailed “three-dimensional” models which clearly depict the construction and use of Chinese astronomical instruments located at the Beijing Observatory. Also included are star maps, water-driven clocks, celestial globes, oracle bones and meteorites. Gift of Prof. Fung Kam-Wing馮錦榮, University of Hong Kong.

2008-2009 Malatesta Scholarship Recipients

Each year the USF Ricci Institute awards grants in memory of the Institute’s founding director, Edward J. Malatesta, S.J., to support research in Chinese-Western cultural history by doctoral students in China. This year’s Malatesta Scholars are:

WANG Dingan, a Ph.D. candidate at Shanghai Fudan University. His dissertation will compare Catholic and Confucian funeral rituals in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. Drawing on primary sources in philosophy, religion, sociology, and especially anthropology, Wang will analyze conceptual structures involved in Catholic and Chinese funerals, views of life, death, and the soul.

DENG Liang, a Ph.D. candidate at the Institute for the History of Natural Science, Chinese Academy of Natural Sciences. His dissertation will focus on Western science introduced to China in the late Qing dynasty by Christian missionaries, and the transmission of scientific knowledge and Christian thought between China and the West.

Dr. Melissa Dale Accepts New Position at UC Berkeley

Dr. Melissa Dale, formally Associate Director for Research at the USF Ricci Institute, accepted a new position at the Institute of East Asian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley in September. Dr. Dale came to the Ricci Institute in 2005 and since that time has been instrumental in launching Ricci Institute Research, a biennial e-newsletter, and spearheaded new research, symposia, projects and publications. These include symposia on Gender, Culture, and Power: Chinese and Western Women Interact in Late Imperial and Early Modern China (2006), Jesuits & Medicine in China at the Qing Imperial Court (2007), and Music & Culture: Chinese-Western Musical Exchange from the 16th – 20th Centuries (2008). The staff of the Ricci Institute and the USF Center for the Pacific Rim wish her well in her new position.

Ricci Website Delivers New Look

In November the USF Ricci Institute went live with a significantly enhanced website—please visit us at www.ricci.usfca.edu.

What’s On Your Desk? Interesting books being read by Ricci Institute research staff

