

INTRODUCTION

There is a long record of mutual relations and inspirations between East and West, or between Asia on the one hand and Europe and North America on the other. From the influence of Alexander the Great and Greco-Buddhist Art in India to the popularity of Buddhism and the Dalai Lama in the West. From the translations of Aristotle and Plato into Arabic to Avicenna's and Al-Farabi's impact on European scientific thought. From European demand for Japanese art or Chinese traditional wisdom and luxury goods to Japanese willingness to copy Western solutions in the Meiji era. From the desire for spiritual experiences leading the Beatles and many other Westerners into India's ashrams to the popularity of manga, anime or K-Pop among contemporary teenagers. Thus, people from the East and the West have inspired each other in many ways throughout the ages. At first glance, exchange between the Orient and the Occident is still vibrant in an age of extensive globalisation. Trade between Asian and American or European countries is increasing and new political initiatives aiming to expand economic cooperation are being vigorously implemented. Indeed, economic relations have never been as intensive as today. However, a question arises as to the degree to which mutual relations go beyond extensive trade. Do we still inspire each other? What is the impact of Asian ideas and art on Western aesthetics or cultural life and vice versa? Which ideas travel between the East and the West? What are the patterns of mutual reception of the Orient and the Occident? In short, in this issue of Intercultural Relations we are interested in addressing questions on the cultural exchange between the East and the West in the contemporary world.

This issue consists of nine articles focusing on various cases of cultural contact between the Orient and the Occident. The order of the articles is based on the historical perspective – starting from pieces focusing on examples of cultural relations in the past, continues up to contributions covering more contemporary cultural flows. However, two articles, namely

the first and last, do not deal with cultural relations between any specific countries and take a much broader perspective. Although both discuss general cultural flows between the East and the West, the former (by Paweł Cieślarek) compares classical thought, while the latter (by Marta Kupis) deals with oriental inspirations in popular culture. The most explored question in this issue is related to Japanese culture and the Western impact on it. This extremely interesting topic is covered in five articles (by Magdalena Grela-Chen, Keiichi Kawate, Svitlana Rybalko, Katarzyna Sonnenberg-Musiał, Monika Schrimpf). On the other hand, the issue includes one article on the significance of Japanese art in the West, namely in Ukraine (Alla Ozhoha-Maslovska). Last but not least, one contribution (by Ewa Ciembrownicz) discusses globalisation (westernisation) of cultural traditions originating from China. We are indeed aware that it is absolutely impossible to cover all instances of cultural interactions between the West and the East in a collective volume such as this one. Nevertheless, we strongly believe that all the detailed studies presented in this volume prove how vivid, diverse, and multi-dimensional cultural relations between the Orient and the Occident are.

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