The 14th International Conference on the History of Science in East Asia (14th ICHSEA) was held from the 6th to the 10th of July 2015 in Paris, It was organised under the auspices of EHESS, and on behalf of the International Society for the History of East Asian Science, Technology and Medicine (ISHEASTM). It took place at the EHESS centre at 105 Boulevard Raspail.

The 14th ICHSEA belongs to a series of international meetings that have been held in Europe, Asia and North America since 1990. It brought together almost 400 scholars who came from twenty-two countries in order to present and discuss their latest research on the history of science, technology and medicine in East Asia —East Asia being defined as the region where classical Chinese was the main vehicle of elite knowledge for part or all of pre-modern times. With 317 papers delivered, the 14th ICHSEA was the largest international meeting devoted to this field held so far and one of the largest history of science events recently held in France. The conference language was English.[1]

The organisers of this conference were three CNRS researchers who belong to the joint EHESS/CNRS Centre for studies on China, Korea and Japan: Catherine Jami, Frédéric Obringer and Caroline Bodolec. EHESS contributed staffing support, as well as providing the venue. Financial support was also granted by the National Institute for Social and Human Sciences (INSHS, CNRS), by the *Région Île-de-France*, as well as by several groups and units of CNRS: GIS Asie, GDR "History of mathematics", SPHERE, Centre Alexandre Koyré and CRCAO. At an international level, ISHEASTM received funding from the Division of History of Science and Technology of the International Union of History and Philosophy of Science and Technology (IUHPST/DHST), an organisation that brings together historians of science and technology on a global scale. Last but not least, the D. Kim Foundation for the History of Science and Technology in East Asia provided a very generous grant. All this support enabled the organisers to help 35 scholars (mostly PhD students and post-doctoral fellows) to attend the conference.

Two successive calls for proposals (panels and individual papers), followed by peer-review assessment of received proposals resulted in the acceptance of 45 panels and about 130 individual papers. The conference ran for five full days, with up to seven parallel sessions at any given time.

The submission of papers and panels devoted to the chosen conference theme "Sources, locality and global history: science, technology and medicine in East Asia" was encouraged. The choice of this theme deserves an explanation. As all specialists in our field are only too aware, studies of "the West" still dominate the history of science, technology and medicine. As a consequence, the tools, concepts and assessment criteria that are most familiar to specialists have been shaped mainly or solely on the basis of the European historical experience. Working on a different part of the world, in our case East Asia, therefore entails a tension that we need to live with. On the one hand, we need to construct our analytical tools based on the evidence available to us; this means giving priority to a close reading of our **sources**. On the other hand, we need to construct a continuing dialogue with our colleagues, be they "occidentalists" or specialists of other cultural areas; this dialogue must aim at making our respective studies commensurable with one another. This dialogue is all the more necessary for those of us who study the **globalisation** of knowledge in history: the varied representations of this phenomenon need to be studied and compared. This implies taking full

[1] The programme and the book of abstracts of the conference are available online.

account of the situation of the objects we study in time and space — the latter being understood as not only geographical but also social, political and cultural — or in other words, of **locality**. Today historians of science increasingly question the implications for their discipline of new historiographies pertaining to "world history", "global history" or "connected histories". At the same time, historians try to construct narratives that take into account multiple scales and centres. The 14th ICHSEA provided an opportunity to discuss these issues in several ways. Selected contributions relevant to them will be published in the first issue of the online journal of which the Centre for Studies on China, Korea and Japan is about to commence publication.

A quick analysis of the themes of panels shows how the field has changed in recent years. Whereas China remains the most studied country of East Asia, followed by Japan and Korea, two panels were devoted respectively to Vietnam and the Philippines. Many panels took a transnational approach. Comparisons conducted between contemporary Japan, Korea and Taiwan on various issues reflected the intense collaboration and exchanges that have recently developed between scholars based in these three countries. The study of particular scientific disciplines, such as mathematics or astronomy no longer dominate the study of pre-modern periods; instead the focus in increasingly on issues such as the modalities of circulation of ideas and practices. This being said, medicine continues to represent an important part of the research carried out in the field. Another important change in the field concerns the period most studied: whereas studies of pre-1600 China used to be dominant, this period was little represented among papers presented at the 14th ICHSEA. This is in keeping with a general trend in historical studies worldwide. About half of the papers were devoted to the post-1850 period: the main focus of research today seems to be the transition from a world in which so-called "traditional" local knowledge dominated to a "globalised" one, in which science is regarded as universal. It is also worth noting that a large number of contributions discussed the contemporary world (post-2000). The conference thus succeeded in bringing together two fields that are often in competition, while being sometimes difficult to tell apart: history of science and STS (science, technology and society) studies. There was a genuine dialogue between the two research communities.

During the 14th ICHSEA, tributes were also paid to two great scholars in the field who passed away last year: Ho Peng Yoke 何丙郁 (1926-2014) and Nakayama Shigeru 中山茂 (1928-2014). Ho Peng Yoke's work deals with astronomy, divination and alchemy in ancient China; among other things, he contributed significantly to two volumes of the famous *Science and Civilisation in China* series.[2] Nakayama Shigeru, a disciple of Thomas Kuhn, was not only a historian of astronomy in pre-modern China and Japan, who worked, in particular, with Yabuuti Kiyosi 藪内清 (1906-2000), but was also one of the founders of STS studies in Japan. Three panels dedicated to his memory were devoted to a field of research he opened, the study of Japanese science during the colonial period. This bears witness to his continued influence on research conducted nowadays in East Asia.

Catherine Jami

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[2] Vol. 4, Pt. 3. *Spagyrical Discovery and Invention: Historical Survey, from Cinnabar Elixirs to Synthetic Insulin*. Joseph Needham, with the collaboration of Ho Ping-Yu [Ho Peng-Yoke] and Lu Gwei-djen (1976)
Vol. 4, Pt. 7. *Military Technology: The Gunpowder Epic*. Joseph Needham, with the collaboration of Ho Ping-Yu [Ho Peng-Yoke], Lu Gwei-djen and Wang Ling (1987).