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China At The Center: Ricci And Verbiest World Maps



Synopsis

China at the Center focuses on two masterpieces of seventeenth-century map-making that illustrate the exchange of information (and misinformation) between Europe and Asia. The world maps created by Jesuit priests Matteo Ricci (1602) and Ferdinand Verbiest (1674) for the Chinese courts tell fascinating stories about the meeting of two worldviews. They provided Europeans with greater knowledge of China and the Chinese with new ideas about geography, astronomy, and the natural sciences. The maps also show the ways that certain myths were perpetuated, especially as seen in the vivid and imaginative descriptions of the peoples and places of the world and in their depictions of exotic fauna.

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Customer Reviews

This book is the publication associated with the exhibit in San Francisco Asian Art Museum in April 2016 of Ricci and Verbiest World Maps. The book includes comments from experts. Of importance are the centerfold replica maps. The masterpieces on display were million dollars for historical value and significance. Ricci map put China at the world center in Chinese text. It is interesting to see the accurate continental outline of Americas with names of Canada, Cuba, Jamaica, Mexico, Chile, Peru. In the middle of the map, Ricci wrote that: In the past, nobody knew about North and South Americas. One hundred years ago, European made the voyage by ship and reached the coast of American and discovered this new continent. However, in the Pacific Ocean between America and Asia in the map, he wrote a long and important comment,: I employed the local maps and other journey books for more research and evaluation to correct the inaccuracy and miscalculation of the

old maps with inputs update of many hundreds of countries. This rare map is called "Impossible Black Tulip" America did not know the geography of western United States with Lewis and Clark Expedition and reached Pacific Ocean. Did Ricci had the crystal ball to put this information on his 1602 World Map? He lived in China from 1582 and left his body and soul in Peking. The only logical conclusion is that he got the information from the Ming Dynasty Navigator in the Treasure Fleet under Zhang He for his seven voyages. Verbiest made the 1674 World Map with an obvious mistake that California was an island even Ricci had correctly drawn in his 1602 map. The Museum display these two world maps with modern computer interactive features. Visitors will appreciate and value the evolution from maps to GPS.

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