

Einladung zum Vortrag

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East Asian Maps of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries in the MacLean Collection

Dienstag, den 24. April 2012, 16 Uhr c.t.

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Map of Japan, 1830–43, plate, blue and white arita-ware, D. 45.5 cm, MacLean Collection

During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries, in spite of the extensive exposure to and interest in Western maps and Western map making techniques introduced to East Asia, each region typically chose to create maps that maintained their indigenous visual traditions. A number of factors are found to support this observation; first physical reality was usually tempered with subjective experience in an East Asian context through the use of variable perspectives or unfixed viewpoints and changing scales, like those seen in traditional landscape painting, that were without regard to geometric perspective or accuracy. And second, as shall be shown, East Asian maps were considered useful for considering spatial relationships between landmarks represented, but written description continued to provide the exacting information about distance and direction. In other words, where the Western cartographic approach tended to polarize subjectivity and objectivity, East Asian cartography tended to unite it, and thus East Asian maps of the period often bare little trace of Western influence and should be understood and examined in an East Asian context.