



Cultural Legacies: Classical Thought, Visual Art, and  
Contemporary Relations between China and the West

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Much has been written and discussed of late about the coming “clash of civilizations” between China and the West. Is this inevitable? Can this be averted? This presentation, will attempt to shed light on this matter through an inquiry into the distinctive differences in the fundamental assumptions and tacit dimension of foundational premises that underlie and define Western and Chinese ways of perceiving, conceiving, and representing the world. This will engage us in an examination of the legacies of the classical thought and art of Mediterranean civilization and that of traditional China, that continue to inform the ways we respectively define our notions of self, relations to others and to the natural world. Informed by this knowledge and a familiarity with recent history, we may better understand the differences in social, political, and economic outlooks that lead to mutual misunderstandings and possible future conflicts between China and the West.