

Needham Research Institute Newsletter

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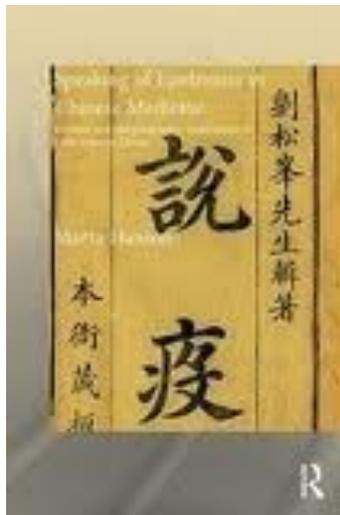
Newsletter edited by Susan Bennett

***Speaking of Epidemics in Chinese Medicine: Disease and the Geographic Imagination in Late Imperial China* by Marta Hanson London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2011**

Eleven books have so far appeared in our Needham Research Institute Series of specialist monographs on the history of science in East Asia – and some are already available in paperback or on Kindle. We are now delighted to introduce the twelfth book in this successful publishing initiative. New proposals for books in this series are always welcome. Marta Hanson, Associate Professor in the Department of History of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University, outlines her research for our readers:

This book takes a “disease biography” approach to trace the centuries-old history of a class of febrile disorders called “Warm diseases” (*wenbing* 溫病) in China. By focusing on traditional disease classifications in Chinese medicine, we may open a new window on medical and cultural history as well as on contemporary cultural studies of the history of science. This biography of a Chinese disease concept explores both the geographical imagination in Chinese medical thought over two thousand years of textual history and its intersection with pre-modern and modern epidemiology.

The Chinese geographic imagination studied in this book in a medical context is part of what may be called the metageography of traditional China - the means by which Chinese people structured and understood the space they lived in. Metageography includes such fundamental binary oppositions as north-south and east-west. It also includes the major natural boundaries of mountain ranges and rivers, and even man made ones, such as the Great Wall. Culturally defined regions also fall under metageography – such as the names of the states of antiquity, the schematic five regions and eight winds of the classical period, or the later provinces and bureaucratic regions of imperial China. This metageography influenced how physicians treated their patients, and had a history as unique to it as does each disease concept.



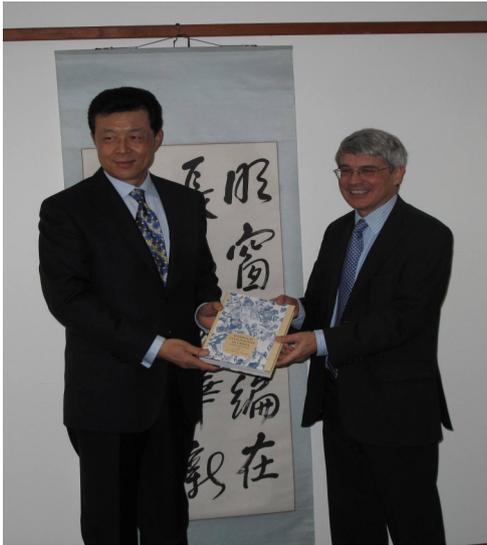
By focusing on conceptions of space in medical thought, the book complements the better-known analysis of medical cosmology in terms of time. It relates this spatial imagination to the changing boundaries and internal divisions of empire as well as to the different social and clinical environments within which doctors practiced. “Warm diseases” acquired their association with the geographical south during the late Ming, following the devastating epidemics of the mid-seventeenth century, and began to be redefined as a distinct “current of learning” in the Qing period. The revisionist epidemiology that gradually developed out of this became the foundation for a

twentieth-century Traditional Chinese Medicine disease classification that linked “Warm diseases” with both acute infections and the regional disorders of the Far South. This book thus connects the biography of Warm Diseases and the Chinese geographical imagination to an evolving older ethno-epidemiology, and also to processes of resistance to and accommodation with modern science in the twentieth century. The conclusion brings the story down to the present, showing how the continuing dialectic between the local and the universal made “Warm diseases” a category that constitutes both Traditional Chinese Medicine’s response to germ theory in the twentieth century, and a southern disease pattern that the world came to know in the form of SARS, the first newly emergent disease of the twenty-first century.

Also in this issue:

- **Visitors to the Institute**
- **Science and the State workshop**
- **University of Cambridge/
University of Science and Tech-
nology of China meeting**
- **Library News**

Visit of H.E. The Chinese Ambassador



Professor Cullen presenting His Excellency with a copy of one of the volumes of *Science and Civilisation in China*.

On 22 February we were honoured by a visit from the Chinese Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Liu Xiaoming, who delivered a lecture at the Judge Business School later that day. We were delighted to give Mr. Liu a tour of the Institute and to show him something of our work, in which he expressed keen interest. During their visit, Mr and Mme Liu and their party met a number of researchers at the Institute.

Visit of HRH Princess Sirindhorn of Thailand

On 16th March, the Institute was honoured to receive a visit from HRH Princess Sirindhorn of Thailand. Following a tour of the Institute which was led by the Chairman, Sir John Boyd, Her Royal Highness and her party heard presentations from five scholars currently conducting research at the Institute. A buffet luncheon was served, during which the Princess was pleased to have the opportunity to talk with scholars about their work.



HRH Princess Sirindhorn of Thailand with the Chairman of the Needham Research Institute, Sir John Boyd.

Photo courtesy of the Royal Thai Embassy

Science and State in Modern Asia workshop Dec 2—3 2010



This workshop, part of the IIAS/NRI workshop series took place at the NRI on December 2nd and 3rd 2010. Nine scholars from regions ranging from the USA and Europe to East Asia made presentations to a large audience drawn from Cambridge and elsewhere in the UK. Major themes explored were:

1. The ways in which the forms taken by scientific activity and the institutions within which it took place have been shaped by evolving state structures and the changing ideologies which underpinned them in different regions of Asia in recent centuries.
2. The roles played by science and its practitioners, and by the wider social and political perception of these, in the shaping of Asian state structures and ideologies in the time period considered.

The Director's travels in China this year

Over the last year I have made several journeys to China. In Beijing last November I gave a keynote speech entitled *Journeys from the West: some patterns and problems in the long-term history of China's international scientific contacts* at a conference organized by UNESCO that took place in the new Museum of Science and Technology. Our librarian John Moffett organised an excellent photographic exhibition on Joseph Needham in China to accompany the conference. I also made a trip to Xi'an in order to promote academic contacts with scholars based at the museum that houses the 'terra-cotta army', and visited Nanjing in connection with our exchange programme generously funded by the Sino-British Fellowship Trust.



More recently, I took part in two major academic events in China on very different scales. The first of these was the 13th International Conference on the History of Science in East Asia, which was hosted by the University of Science and Technology of China (USTC) in Hefei, Anhui province. This series of conferences now take place every four years, and are organised by the International Society for the History of East Asian Science Technology and Medicine (ISHEASTM). They are major events for all scholars concerned with the topics covered by the NRI. The next conference in the series will be held in Paris in 2015, but in 2013 ISHEASTM will also have a major presence at the International Congress for the History of Science, to be held in Manchester. On the academic side, I presented a paper on how we may properly talk about the Chinese system of celestial reference known as the 宿 *xiu* 'lodges', but I also had the pleasure of retiring as Treasurer of ISHEASTM, of which I had previously been Secretary (1990-93) and later President (2005-2008).

After the conference in Hefei, a small group of us travelled down to southern Anhui, where we took part in a very different kind of event in the picturesque town of Tunxi on the slopes of Mount Huang. At the request of the University of Cambridge the NRI had been the organisers of the Cambridge side of the USTC – University of Cambridge Joint

Workshop on 'Man and Nature in East and West'. Seven scholars from Cambridge held intensive discussions with a small group of Chinese scholars on this theme, each participant presenting a paper on a relevant theme which was then discussed by a scholar from the other group. Two of us from Cambridge spoke on China linked themes (Roel Sterckx on 'Ecology and Philosophy in Early China', and Catherine Jami on the writings of the Kangxi emperor on 'The Investigation of Things'). But others from Cambridge spoke on topics that were more or less novel to our Chinese colleagues – Douglas Hedley on 'Nature in Plotinus and its Legacy in 17th century England', Jennifer Rampling on 'Alchemy and Nature in Medieval Europe' and James Montgomery on 'Visions of Man and Nature in Arabic Creativity'. Presentations on the Chinese side included Zhang Juzhong on the origins of rice agriculture in China (discussed by Martin Jones), Sun Xiaochun on the ancient site at Taosi, which is thought by many scholars to be an astronomical observatory (discussed by myself), Gao Lei on imperial altars in Beijing (discussed by Catherine Jami), Jin Zhengyao on technology, faith and religion (discussed by Mei Jianjun) and Fei Jie on natural disasters and the fall of the Jin dynasty (discussed by Roel Sterckx). This was a very unusual occasion that left us all wondering how to continue the dialogue we have begun.

After the workshop, I spent three days as a guest of USTC (with Catherine Jami) visiting a number of sites in Southern Anhui connected with mathematicians, astronomers and associated scholars of the late Ming and early Qing. In one case, that of Jiang Yong 江永 (1681–1762) it was possible to locate his old family house in his home village and find it in good preservation though strangely empty of people. In the case of Mei Wending 梅文鼎 (1633-1721), his house had sadly been demolished only a few years before, but it was possible to visit his tomb. To explore an area so rich in scholarly associations was an unforgettable experience, made all the richer for both of us by the company of a scholar such as Professor Liu Dun.



The two photographs in this article show participants in the USTC – UoC workshop

Visit to China, Summer 2011

This summer I spent nearly 4 weeks in China from July 23-August 18 visiting Changsha and Beijing and attending two International conferences, in Hefei and Xining. I went first to the 13th International Conference on the History of Science in East Asia, held in Hefei, Anhui province, and then on to the 9th International Conference of the History of Science of National Minorities in China, held in Xining, Qinghai province. Both provided a marvellous opportunity to learn about the latest research in our field, to catch up with old friends and to make new ones. I then went down to Changsha, where my hosts were the Yuelu Academy 岳麓书院, one of China's oldest and most famous Confucian academies, and now a research centre for Chinese culture and history within Hunan University. I also visited the College of Architecture 湖南大学建筑学院 at the University, and the National University of Defence Technology 国防科学技术大学, where a small group of scholars work on the history of defence technology. Whilst in Hunan, I headed northwest to Jishou 吉首, where a previous visiting scholar at our Institute, Shao Kan, now lectures on agricultural history and disaster management at the university there. She is part of very energetic and engaging group that focus on environmental history and anthropology, especially relating to the National Minority peoples of the region.

Unfortunately, there my luck ran out and I sprained my ankle. This put paid to my hopes of extensive book-shopping during my 5 days in Beijing at the end of the trip, though I did visit several universities and research institutes to keep up contacts and to discuss library exchange agreements. As always, my thanks go to all those who made my trip such a rewarding and enjoyable experience.



JM, post-sprain, dining in his hotel room with academics from Jishou University.

Library News

The highlight of the past year for the Library was the generous gift received from Zhang Baichun, the Director of the Institute for the History of Natural Science, Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing. The 47 volume 《中国近现代科学技术史研究丛书》 (Collection of Research on the History of Science and Technology in Modern China) includes individual monographs and selections of primary materials that illuminate many aspects of the development of science, technology and medicine in 20th-century China. We are very grateful to Professor Zhang for this essential addition to our Library. We are also indebted, as ever, to the many others who have presented the Library with their research monographs over the past year.

There has been considerable interest in our website of Dr. Needham's WWII China photographs, announced in the previous issue, especially in those he took at the Buddhist caves at Qianfodong 千佛洞, Gansu province. The Dunhuang Academy 敦煌研究院 have very kindly identified all the caves pictured, and this updated information will be added to the website in due course. They also noted that one of the photographs records a statue that to their knowledge is no longer extant!

Readers interested in old photographs of Dr. Needham might also like to visit the history page of the Cambridge University Department of Biochemistry at <http://www.bioc.cam.ac.uk/history/index.html>. The two albums of early photographs mentioned there include many delightful ones of Joseph, Dorothy, as well as Lu Gwei-djen 鲁桂珍, Tsao T'ien-ch'in 曹天钦 and other Chinese and Japanese biochemists who were former members of the Department.

SEMINARS

Our regular Friday text-reading seminars continued through the year, attracting a regular audience of 12-20 scholars. Topics ranged from the latest discoveries of ancient Chinese mathematical texts to farming life in 17th-century China, a comparison of embryological ideas in ancient Greece and China to scientific instruments as ritual objects in the Qing dynasty. Our thanks go out once again to all participants for their part in enriching the academic life of the Institute.

John Moffett, Librarian

Early and Medieval China Reading Group

The Early and Medieval China Reading Group meets at the Needham Research Institute (NRI) every Monday from 3.15 to 4.45. Its aim, complementing the NRI's Friday text-reading seminars, is to provide a casual and participatory venue for reading ancient texts that participants have identified as both important to their own research and helpful to the group's general understanding of the language, thought, and history of early and medieval China. Our approach is hands-on and unhurried: we go around the room, each person reading, translating, and bringing his or her unique background and perspectives to bear on difficult passages. Importantly, we spend as much time on a text as we need to finish it; questions from one week are often addressed the following week, once participants have had a chance to pursue them in greater detail.

Our primary focus is historical and philosophical texts. This term, we began with two chapters—"Dao fa" 道法 and "Guo ci" 國次—from the "Huang-Lao" materials recovered from Mawangdui tomb 3 (interred in 168 B.C.). Daniel Morgan led a crash course in Qin-Han palaeography as we read a photographic reproduction of the manuscript and familiarized ourselves with its strange marriage of Daoist *laissez-faire* philosophy and military opportunism. From there, we have moved to Emperor Wu of Liang's 梁武帝 (r. 502-549) discourse on cosmology as preserved in the *Kaiyuan zhanjing* 開元占經—an attempt to construct an orthodox world-model for a new age as both a creative synthesis of the metaphysical underpinnings of Han and Buddhist cosmologies and a coherent explanatory model for celestial and physical phenomena. We are ending the term with a reading of the third-century BC thinker Xunzi's 荀子 treatment of emotions, in particular the emotions of shame and disgrace. In short, within its chronological scope, the range of materials covered by our group is broad.

The Early and Medieval China Reading Group was established three years ago by a Research Fellow of Pembroke College and member of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Dr. Mark Strange. Since its establishment, it has attracted participants from a wide variety of departments and backgrounds: Ph.D. students from FAMES and Classics; visiting scholars at the NRI; eminent visiting scholars to the University from the P.R.C., Taiwan, and Japan; and senior researchers from Cambridge itself, such as Dr. Michael Loewe, Professor David McMullen, and Professor Roel Sterckx. This year we have benefited in particular from the regular participation of Dr. Nagatomi Seiji, from Waseda University in Japan, and from Dr. Michael Loewe. With the group generously hosted by the NRI, several of its participants have commented on the spectacular and historically-resonant setting for its activities; the benefit of ready access to an extensive library of research materials has also attracted note.

Qiaosheng Dong writes: I established the Chinese Palaeography Learning Group in 2011; it has found a natural home for its activities within the Early and Medieval China Reading Group. I am a PhD student at the Univer-

sity of Cambridge's Faculty of Classics, based at the Needham Research Institute. I initially came to conduct research at the NRI in 2010, supported by a fellowship granted by the Li Foundation of New York. This gave me the opportunity to establish contact with Professor Sir Geoffrey Lloyd and Professor Christopher Cullen, with whose generous help and encouragement I applied for entrance to the University. I am now now engaged in a comparative study of ancient Greek and Chinese medicine under the guidance of Dr. Rebecca Flemming and Professor Sir Geoffrey Lloyd.

Also active in leading the reading group this year, thanks to his background in Chinese palaeography and astronomy, is Daniel Morgan. Daniel writes: I am a Ph.D. student at the University of Chicago and an Andrew W. Mellon research fellow, presently conducting dissertation research at the NRI. I am excited to be, for the first time, a member of a community of scholars devoted to the history of East Asian science. In the two months that I have been here, both the reading group and other forums of research have given me numerous opportunities to present original work and to discuss my ideas. Most importantly, I have established contact with, and benefited from the feedback and guidance of, eminent European Sinologists and historians of science like Dr. Michael Loewe, Professor Sir Geoffrey Lloyd, and Professor Christopher Cullen.

Qiaosheng Dong and Daniel Morgan.



Michael Loewe, Mark Strange, Dong Qiaosheng, Daniel Morgan and others taking part in the Early and Medieval China Reading Group

Dr. Reiko Shinno - Former Mellon Scholar



I was honored to receive an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Research Fellowship for US based scholars at the Needham Research Institute from January to March 2011 to conduct research for and continue writing a book tentatively entitled, *Medical Culture in Yuan China (1206-1368): Aspects of Mongol Rule and Neo-Confucian Activism*. I was born in Japan and then moved to the United Kingdom when I was six months old because of my father's job. After two years we moved back to Japan and have lived there and the US most of my life. I therefore do not have any direct memories of my life in the UK, though my parents told me many stories as I was growing up. So while I was in Cambridge, I enjoyed learning not just about Chinese history but also about British history and culture.

My book is about the development of a new culture in the Yuan period, in which medical practice came to be considered a highly respected occupation for elite men. As world conquerors, the Mongols appreciated the value of specialists, including doctors. By the time they entered China, there was already a culture of respect for physicians who were part of the literati elite but the Mongols greatly added to this prestige by increasing medical-related governmental positions and encouraging the revival of medical schools. Moreover, those Neo-Confucians who felt frustrated by the failure of the Southern Song imperial family and elite to mount an effective defense saw hope in physicians as people able to deliver real benefits to society, not just empty theories. At the NRI, I read the letters and biographies of doctors written by a leading Neo-Confucian of the time, Wu Cheng 吳澄 (1249-1333) and wrote a chapter on his and other literati's illness experiences and perceptions toward doctors. I presented some of the documents at the NRI weekly reading group and gained precious feedback from colleagues. I also gave talks in classes offered at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford. Since returning to the US, I have given two more presentations on this topic and am about to complete a book manuscript that I am considering offering for publication in the NRI monograph series.

The staff of the NRI offered not just excellent academic support, but also shared their insight into British culture and history. Thanks to their hospitality, other visiting scholars, students, and I became good friends. My visit to the NRI was not just valuable to my research, but also helped my knowledge of the wider field to develop rapidly.

Prof. Antje Richter - Present Mellon Scholar

I had the great pleasure to spend this year's Michaelmas Term at the Needham Research Institute in Cambridge. On leave from the University of Colorado at Boulder and funded by an Andrew W. Mellon fellowship, I enjoyed the excellent opportunity to pursue a research project at the interface of Chinese medicine, literature, and calligraphy.



Hundreds of short personal letters of the revered 4th century calligrapher Wang Xizhi 王羲之, transmitted through copies and copies of copies, not only sent their writer's regard to his correspondents, along with the usual epistolary chitchat about the weather, mutual friends, and other miscellanies. They also communicated concern for the recipients' health, expressed wishes for their well-being, and reported on the writer's own health, or rather ill-health, as well as details of treatment. Fragmentary and disjointed as these notes of Wang Xizhi may be, they constitute the earliest sizeable corpus of personal health reports in Chinese literature and are thus a highly significant source of Chinese medical history. Apart from insight into the medical knowledge and practice of a circle of medically non-professional correspondents, Wang's letters also provide a unique glimpse into the conventions of personal communication about health and illness in early medieval China, because they are not patient-doctor consultations, but reciprocal conversations between friends and acquaintances. My current project is dedicated to these two intertwined perspectives on Wang Xizhi's medical narratives: on the one hand, analyzing the medical concepts and terminology emerging in these letters while, on the other hand, exploring the ways in which their writer conveyed to friends and family details of medical conditions, physical and mental suffering, as well as approaches to their treatment.

My research into this challenging and complex field greatly benefited from the rich and unique resources of the NRI. Supported by the exceptional holdings of the East Asian History of Science Library (which moreover included access to the vast resources of Cambridge University Library), I was able to read widely about the medical, historical, religious, philosophical, and literary background of Wang's correspondence. Continuing the translation and interpretation of selected letters, I particularly profited from the easy access to a comprehensive range of excellent reference works in the field of Chinese medicine and pharmacology. No less important than books and electronic resources were the manifold opportunities for scholarly exchange offered at the NRI. The weekly Text Reading Seminars are not only successful in fostering an atmosphere of serious academic inquiry and lively exchange, but also in creating a scholarly community that extends outside the NRI itself to Cambridge University and beyond. Complementing the more formal seminars and talks, I enjoyed many informal conversations with outstanding scholars, whether permanently based at the NRI, visiting, or associated. The stimulating and productive term I could spend at the Needham Research Institute will be tremendously beneficial for my future research and teaching at my home university.