

"The Reception of Chinese Medicine in Europe (17th-20th centuries)"

Panel Organizer: Dr. Ronald Guilloux

Laboratoire d'Etudes du Phénomène Scientifique - Université Claude Bernard
Lyon1, Groupe de Recherche en Epistémologie Politique et Historique - Institut
d'Etudes Politiques de Lyon Université de Lyon, France
ronald.guilloux@gmail.com

Dr. Frédéric Obringer, CNRS Paris, France

obringer@orange.fr

"French Missionaries and their Curiosity: A Detailed Analysis of the First Translations of Chinese Medical Texts during the Qing Dynasty"

The reception in Europe of "Chinese medicine" was conditioned by multiple factors: state of Western knowledge at a given time, which allowed or not the integration of concepts or practice in different taxonomic representations, problems of terminology and translation, statute and objectives of the advisors and writers, forms of thought processes (curiosity, denunciation...). The six Jesuits mathematicians sent by Louis XIV in China, Jean de Fontaney, Guy Tachard, Joachim Bouvet, Jean-François Gerbillon, Louis Lecomte and Claude de Visdelou, left Brest on March 3, 1685, for the Far East with a list of questions written by the Academy of Science of Paris. This questionnaire comprised one hundred and nine questions, of which several had relations with medicine. Answers appeared very quickly in the writings of missionaries, in the *Nouveaux mémoires sur l'état présent de la Chine* by Father Louis Lecomte, published in Paris in 1696, in the great series of the *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses écrites des missions étrangères par quelques missionnaires de la Compagnie de Jésus* (Paris, 1711-1776) and in the *Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique et physique de l'empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie chinoise*, compiled, starting from texts of twenty-seven contributors Jesuits, by Father Jean-Baptiste Du Halde. Confronting the Chinese text and the translation proposed by missionaries of various Chinese medical texts (like *Bencao gangmu*) I shall examine thoroughly in my paper the intellectual choices and attitudes of the French translators.

Lucia Candelise, PhD student, Centre d'Études sur la Chine Moderne et Contemporaine, EHESS Paris
luccicando@tiscalinet.it

"Acupuncture and Chinese medicine in Italy, from a Western reconstruction to a global knowledge"

Around 1970s, in Italy, some physicians begin to taking up an interest in acupuncture. If this situation is compared to other European countries, it is very late that acupuncture practice and knowledge around Chinese medicine begins to spread in Italy. It is through France that all first notions and know-how linked to this therapy arrived in Italy thanks to the narrow relations between Italian physicians and the French Association of Acupuncture (Association Française d'Acupuncture) as well as the Vietnamese physician Nguyen Van Nghy.

A few decades later, acupuncture teaching and practice became quite widespread, and several attempts to recognize and legitimate this medical practice began to appear. As acupuncture evolved in the Italian medical landscape, connections with French teachers decreased. On the other hand, serious interest concerning its country of origin, China, led Italian acupuncture physicians to collaborate more and more closely with Chinese universities and their teachers. The situation of acupuncture in Italy during the nineties changes from a partnership with "French traditional acupuncture" and its knowledge - which has for source French military physicians speculations- in a context of exchange and a trend towards Chinese medicine as it is practised in China as well as in other Western countries (the United Kingdom and the United States among them). In our presentation we will therefore concentrate on the evolution of Chinese medical practice in Italy, and the shift from a mainly European source (principally from France) to references set in a global knowledge context.

Maria Tighe, PhD student, Department of Health CAMS Programme,
Department of Sociology, University of Bristol
Maria.Tighe@bristol.ac.uk

"The Transnational Chinese Medical Gesture: How the Past becomes Present in a Chinese National Healthy Living Centre (CNHLC) in the UK"

In the UK, traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) is a popular health care practice: this reflexive ethnographic study explores transnational identity processes in the UK Chinese medical encounter. My method involved participant observation in a Chinese TCM clinic in a Chinese National Healthy Living Centre. Collaborative agreement was informed by the local NHS research ethics committee. I undertook weekly participant observation at three six monthly intervals; observing three hundred and eighty five consultations with forty four patients, five qualified TCM practitioners and

six students; participating in audit evaluation, interviewing the TCM practitioner and manager, six bi-lingual women users and six English speaking others.

The study reveals a paradoxical 'transnational intimacy' in the various ways that Chinese practitioners of TCM offer a flexible range of treatments to meet Chinese consumer demand. A sense of shared history offers real and symbolic means of access to this clinic; making transnational connections between 'host' and 'homeland' countries provides a link with the past that reduces isolation in the present. Professional and consumer use of Chinese and/or English languages is competitively inter-subjective, mediated between family, gendered and occupational roles in wider social networks. Health complaints are often undifferentiated and symptoms of pain are common, including mental and emotional features. Interplay between ethnic and cosmopolitan perspectives of the role of TCM promotes reflexive 'self-help' engagement with 'natural' knowledge-based alterities. This suggests need for a plural Chinese medical gesture; promoting sustainable health economies that support the diversity of professional and consumer commitment to the transnationalised complementary and alternative medicine sector.

Dr. Ronald Guilloux, Université de Lyon, France

"Why acupuncture 'was never appreciated by Westerners until our own time'? From individual descriptions to power-knowledge conditions in the French case (17th – 20th centuries). Tribute to Celestial Lancets"

Describing the first publications on acupuncture by Europeans, Lu and Needham state that "one is struck [...] by their extreme incompleteness, so that it would be fair to say that the full systematisation of the Chinese acu-tracts and acu-points was never appreciated by Westerners until our own time" (*Celestial Lancets*, 2002). This abstract analyzes why acupuncture "was never appreciated by Westerners until our own time", although first described by Europeans three centuries ago. It focuses on the French case as a major historical one.

1) "From whatever perspective we view *Celestial Lancets*, it remains a unique contribution to the history of acupuncture" (Vivienne Lo, p. xxvii). Indeed, the section dealing with the description of acupuncture in "Europe and the West" is undoubtedly the first exhaustive one on a large scale (17th – 20th c.).

2) But paying tribute to a scholarly work also means to challenge its authority. *Celestial Lancets* never asks why "the full systematisation" of Chinese acupuncture was not appreciated before the 20th century. For its authors, it is

obvious that such a delay stemmed from the “incompleteness” of individual descriptions.

3) Yet, there is a real gap between the physicians of the Dutch East India Company (17th c.) and the French acupunctural doctors (20th c.): the former were agents of the western expansionism whereas the latter discovered acupuncture during the decolonization era. Thus, this abstract argues that a history of the “appreciation” of acupuncture in France must analyze individual descriptions in their political and epistemological contexts (Guilloux, 2006).

David Luesink, PhD student, Department of History, University of British Columbia, Canada
david.luesink@gmail.com

“Wong and Wu’s History of Chinese Medicine: The first generation of English Scholarship on Chinese medicine”

Wong Jimin and Wu Liande’s 1932 *History of Chinese Medicine* is an ambiguous text in the small but vigorous field of historians of Chinese medicine. Widely recognized amongst Chinese historians of medicine, generally ignored by Western historians of native forms of medicine, the *History of Chinese Medicine* is copiously used as a reference book by historians of Western medicine in China. While Wong and Wu’s text has admittedly been more than surpassed in excellence of scholarship about medical developments in China up to the nineteenth century, this paper argues that Wong and Wu made a successful intervention in the Orientalist English language literature on Chinese medicine of their time (most accounts of the history of medicine ignored China altogether). While I admit that Wong and Wu were committed to seeing Western medicine supersede previous forms of medical practice, their success can be seen from two perspectives. I argue that they were not as adamant as colleagues like Yu Yunxiu who sought to eliminate the “herbalists”, but instead sought to establish a strong discipline of *Chinese* medicine, drawing on the long history, and extending into the present and future successes of *Chinese* physicians who with the establishment of state medicine and public health had already superseded the limited successes of missionaries and philanthropic medicine. From our perspective, I also argue that we need to give credit to Wong and Wu for establishing a discursive space to take native Chinese medical practice seriously, thus providing space for Needham’s great project and all the subsequent refinements in our understanding.