



Historical epistemology and the making of modern Chinese medicine

By Howard Chiang

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This collection expands the history of Chinese medicine by bridging the philosophical concerns of epistemology and the history and cultural politics of transregional medical formations. Topics range from the spread of ginkgo's popularity from East Asia to the West to the appeal of acupuncture for complementing in-vitro fertilisation regimens, from the modernisation of Chinese anatomy and forensic science to the evolving perceptions of the clinical efficacy of Chinese medicine.

The individual essays cohere around the powerful theoretical-methodological approach, historical epistemology, with which scholars in science studies have already challenged the seemingly constant and timeless status of such rudimentary but pivotal dimensions of scientific process as knowledge, reason, argument, objectivity, evidence, fact and truth. Yet given that landmark studies in historical epistemology rarely navigate outside the intellectual landscape of Western science and medicine, this book broadens our understanding of its application and significance by drawing on and exploring the rich cultures of Chinese medicine. In studying the globalising role of medical objects, the contested premise of medical authority and legitimacy, and the syncretic transformations of metaphysical and ontological knowledge, contributors illuminate how the breadth of the historical study of Chinese medicine and its practices of knowledge-making in the modern period must be at once philosophical and transnational in scope.

This book will appeal to students and scholars working in science studies and medical humanities as well as readers who are interested in the broader problems of translation, material culture and the global circulation of knowledge.

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Historical epistemology and the making of modern Chinese medicine By Howard Chiang Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #3776686 in Books
- Published on: 2015-08-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 6.40" h x 1.10" w x 9.30" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 262 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

A pioneering work of scholarship at the intersections of historical epistemology, science studies, and Chinese medical history.' -- Marta Hanson, Associate Professor in the History of East Asian Medicine at Johns Hopkins University

"In 2015, Tu Youyou became the first Chinese Nobel laureate in physiology or medicine. She won the prize for her research on the antimalarial drug artemisinin; this work explicitly drew upon traditional Chinese materia medica. The award signaled a public recognition of non-Western medical knowledge. In what forms had pharmaceutical knowledge emerged in China? How had it changed, or not, in response to the introduction of Western biomedicine to East Asia? And how are we to understand contemporary relationships between Chinese and Western therapies? This timely edited volume seeks to answer some of those questions. It will be of manifest interest to scholars of the history of Chinese medicine but also to practitioners of East Asian medical traditions and a broader audience in science studies." - Mary Augusta Brazelton, Isis-Volume 107, Number 4, December 2016

About the Author

Howard Chiang is Assistant Professor of Modern Chinese History at the University of Warwick

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