Note from the Editor

With the present issue of *East Asian Science, Technology and Medicine* I am taking over the editorship from Prof. Hans Ulrich Vogel (Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen). During the eighteen years when he was in charge of the journal, Prof. Vogel has turned it into a regular biannual publication, the only one that covers the history of science, technology and medicine in East Asia. Following in his footsteps entails keeping up the academic and editorial quality of the journal and the reputation it has acquired under his editorship, while ensuring the publication of two volumes every year. I hope to prove equal to the task entrusted to me by the International Society for the History of East Asian Science, Technology and Medicine (ISHEASTM).

The transition from Tübingen to Paris has taken place gradually, so that all four articles published in the present issue were originally submitted to the journal when Prof. Vogel was still the editor. I have taken up the editorial work for these four articles at different stages. The quality of these articles and their authors' responsiveness during the editorial process make me look forward to working on further contributions.

Dominic Steavu studies the ways in which Āyurvedic medicine, which entered China with Buddhism, reshaped the categorisation used in medical texts; for this he focuses on recipes designed to facilitate sexual intercourse, showing that the distinction between the recipes falling under 'nourishing life' (*yangsheng* 養生) and those falling under spellbinding (*zhuzu* 祝詛) became increasingly blurred under the influence of Āyurvedic classification. He traces this influence into non-Buddhist medical treatises, and it turns out to have been much broader than has often been assumed.

Xie Xin-zhe's contribution examines two nineteenth century Chinese forensic casebooks, showing that their compilers were concerned with the weighing of evidence and with symptoms that sometimes pointed in different directions. Xie argues that these casebooks contributed to reinforcing the authority of the famous canonical forensic textbook *Xiyuan jilu* 洗冤集錄 (Collection on Washing away the Wrongs), by making it more applicable to a complex reality. In that sense it could be said that such casebooks pertained to professional literature rather than to evidential scholarship.

Lobsang Yongdan's article sheds light on the very little studied field of astronomy written in Tibetan in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, when some of the computational methods introduced by the Jesuits were translated from Chinese into Tibetan in Beijing. He focuses on a manual for predicting solar and lunar eclipses composed in Tibetan by a monk who

resided in the Qing capital, which eventually reached the region of Amdo – incorporated into Qinghai province since the 1720s – under somewhat obscure circumstances. The article analyses the complex memory left by this instance of transmission of Western learning into the Tibetan language via classical Chinese, and shows how this learning was appropriated in some monasteries for local calendar-making.

Finally, Noël Golvers's contribution reconstructs the genesis and circulation of a unique mathematical textbook, written in Latin by Antoine Thomas, SJ (1644-1709), the *Synopsis mathematica...* (Outline of mathematics, 1685). It aimed to present mathematics and its applications – most importantly astronomy – to novices of the Society of Jesus, to whom Thomas taught mathematics before he left for China, and to candidates for the China mission. The two-volume textbook was completed before Thomas' departure for Asia in 1680, but it was published only in 1685, when he was already working as an astronomer at the Qing court. Golvers reviews the sources Thomas used to compile it, and provides an inventory of the known copies, most of which are located in Europe. Some copies, however, travelled along the same routes as Jesuit missionaries, to China, but also to Latin America.

It is thanks to the support of Prof. Vogel, and to the tireless helpfulness of Ms Ailika Schinköthe at the Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen that the transition of editorship has taken place so smoothly. Help from the Board of ISHEASTM, and especially from its Treasurer, Prof. Florence Bretelle-Establet (CNRS, SPHERE, Paris), has been essential to ensure that all its members have online access to the journal. I am grateful to Dr Jiří Hudeček (Charles University, Prague) for taking on the new role of book review editor and to Mr John Moffett (Needham Research Institute, Cambridge) for continuing to work as English language editor. The support of my research unit, *Chine, Corée, Japon* (UMR 8173, CNRS & EHESS) has helped to secure the collaboration of Ms Aurélia Martin as production editor.

Catherine Jami

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