Editorial

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The frequently quoted statement by Heraclitus (c. 535–475 BCE), ‘the only thing that is constant is change’, aptly summarises the wide range of transformations analysed in this issue’s articles and translations. The issue consists of a stand-alone article that raises new insights through both a gender analysis and textual exegesis of a famous medical case in the Zuo Zhuan (Zuo Commentaries, comp. 4th cent. BCE), a main section consisting of four articles and three translations that innovatively address the central theme of ‘Transformations of the Treatise on Cold Damage in East Asia’, and a concluding section featuring thirteen reviews of books on the history and anthropology of medicine in Tibet, China, Japan, and Southeast Asia.

Zhang’s opening article ‘Enchantment, Charming, and the Notion of the Femme Fatale in Early Chinese Historiography’ argues that the cultural concept of the femme fatale had ritual and political as well as medical resonance in Chinese antiquity. By examining the range of textual responses to the famous sex-related medical case of the Lord Ping of Jin (who reigned in the mid-sixth-century BCE), Zhang proposes that they reveal a broader concern about the sexual excess of patriarchs in early Chinese polygamous families. Zhang thus shows how complex, varied, and political the discourses on illness were already before the first versions of what became the medical canons—such as the two parts of the Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor (c. 1st cent. BCE) and the Treatise on Cold Damage and Miscellaneous Disorders (Shanghan zabing lun, c. 196–219 CE)—came into existence later in Chinese antiquity during the Han dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE). Culturally resonant notions of enchantment, charming, and the femme fatale as potentially pathogenic were circulating centuries before we have evidence of climatic factors, such as cold and wind, articulated as dominant pathogenic vectors of disease.

The remaining four articles and three translations thus turn their attention to the second of the two above-mentioned Han medical classics. Volker Scheid’s introduction to the first four articles reveals how illuminating his research group’s focus on the Treatise on Cold Damage has been as a window on historically emergent formations of different medical practices in China, Japan, and Korea between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries. Previous scholarship on
medical history in East Asia has dominantly taken the Cold Damage medical current that developed in response to the later Song editions of the *Treatise on Cold Damage* as representative of the more conservative flank of classical Chinese medicine. Wedded more to the idea that the best responses to their patients’ illnesses remain preserved in the canonical formulas from the second-century *Treatise* rather than the many innovations in Chinese drug therapy and disease concepts that developed after the Song dynasty (960–1279), this flank has been considered by some scholars to be more or less stagnant. Certainly, such scholars recognised that the Cold Damage medical current had a complex commentarial tradition but they largely understood its revisions, rearrangements, and reinterpretations as textual forms of conservative resistance to broader changes in clinical practice and medical thought.

The four articles in the section on ‘Transformations of the *Treatise on Cold Damage* in East Asia’ put an end to such a simplistic assessment. Together they reveal varied ways physicians across East Asia used the *Treatise on Cold Damage* to think through complex concerns about the human body, disease, the environment, and appropriate therapeutic responses in their own eras. Scheid’s physicians thus found inspiration in the *Treatise* to conceptualise the human body in new ways that in turn opened up the possibility for the newly emergent medical currents of warm disease within China from the seventeenth century on and the classical formula current in Japan during the eighteenth century. Keiko Daidoji picks up this second thread in Japan through a contextualised analysis of eighteenth-century physicians, especially Yoshimasu Tōdō, and their innovative interpretations of the *Treatise* as responses to both Chinese influence and local Japanese consumer expectations. Eric I. Karchmer then shows how the innovations Yoshimasu Tōdō and other Kanpō physicians developed in Japan returned to Mainland China in the first half of the twentieth century and became part of a broader movement within the Chinese medical community to use the potent formulas of the *Treatise* as a resource for strengthening the Chinese national body. In conclusion, Soyoung Suh analyses not only how Korean physicians also found the *Treatise* useful to think through their medical concerns from the sixteenth to twentieth century but also how useful the *Treatise* can be for medical historians as a lens into specific historical periods and local responses to disease in East Asia broadly.

The three contributions to the following translation section amplify this issue’s opening theme on transformations within the Cold Damage tradition in East Asian medicine. Asaf Goldschmidt begins this section with translations of three medical case histories on cold damage disorders from the Song physician-official Xu Shuwei’s *Ninety Discussions on Cold Damage Disorders* (printed