

One small quibble is the occasional misuse of the term “asylum”. An intriguing clinical paper refers to the Orange Asylum in 1939 in NSW. In fact, this term had not been used for a hospital caring for the mentally ill in NSW since the previous century.

In conclusion I would recommend this book to the wide range of professionals who work in the mental health field and to all those in the community interested in the wider issues of mental health care.

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Florence Bretelle-Establet, *La santé en Chine du sud (1898–1928)*, Collection Asie orientale, Paris, CNRS Editions, 2002, pp. xv, 239, illus., €30.00 (paperback 2-271-06010-9)

This French volume on health in southern China offers a valuable insight into the health matters of a little studied area of China during a period of great chaos. It traces the decay of the Qing empire from 1898 to its collapse in 1911, followed by some years of warlord rule until a centralized Chinese government was reinstated under the Nationalist Party in 1928. It also chronicles how rapacious imperial powers carved out areas of preferential trading rights across Chinese territory. While never ceding direct rule to any foreign power, by the turn of the twentieth century the disintegrating Qing empire had granted France concession areas in six major Chinese cities in the three southern provinces of Yunnan, Guangxi and Guangzhou.

Bretelle-Establet focuses in particular on the south-western province of Yunnan, where the French imperialist effort was concentrated because of its juxtaposition to Indochina. After the outbreak of bubonic plague in Guangdong and Hong Kong in 1894, it became obvious to the French colonial authorities that the health situation in China needed to be carefully monitored if its settler population was to be protected and if disease was to be prevented from travelling along the expanding trade routes to Indochina. After the First World War, however, France’s strength as an imperial power waned

and those medical officers who remained in China had to turn from charitable medical activities to more lucrative private practice. This meant that their role shifted from one of observation of Chinese medical practices to a degree of participation with them. Bretelle-Establet is keen to point out that the type of doctor entering China in the late nineteenth century was, unlike his predecessor whose movements were confined to the coasts, a graduate of the Pasteurian school and of the scientific sort. She juxtaposes his viewpoint with the state of medicine and health relief in southern China at that time.

Here Bretelle-Establet offers a thorough account of the diseases prevalent in the region, the way in which local doctors approached them and the state institutions in place to deal with them. While stopping short of providing a distinctive Chinese medicine of the south-west, mainly due to a lack of comparison with medicine in other areas, Bretelle-Establet is successful in displaying some general trends in regional medical practice which will be of interest to other historians of Chinese medicine of the period.

Bretelle-Establet bases her study on a number of original primary sources. These include the sanitary correspondences of French medical officers, held mainly in the archives of overseas records in Aix-en-Provence, complemented by reports from medical missionaries based in the south-west. She also uses a variety of local Chinese prefectural gazetteers along with a handful of high-profile medical writings by doctors of the south-west.

Bretelle-Establet displays a clear understanding of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century history of European medicine as well as a good command of the classical Chinese sources. If I do have a criticism it is that this history is perhaps too French in its orientation. Alphonse Laveran plays a centre role in the background to the history of malaria, but there is no mention of Patrick Manson, a man who spent some twenty years researching in south-east China. There are also a number of English-language works that would have assisted in the analysis of trends in nineteenth-century Chinese medicine but which appear to have gone

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unnoticed, such as Chao Yuan-ling's study of physicians in Suzhou and Ruth Rogaski's work on health and hygiene in treaty port Tianjin over a similar time period.

There is no doubt that this is a welcome contribution to the recent history of medicine in China. Well-researched and well-illustrated with a number of helpful tables and maps, Bretelle-Estabet does a masterful job of uniting French and Chinese viewpoints on health and disease.

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Otto Magnus, *Rudolf Magnus, physiologist and pharmacologist, 1873–1927*, ed. Louis M Schoonhoven, Amsterdam, Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, and Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002, pp. xii, 350, illus., €57.00 (hardback 90-6984-327-7).

While the rise of the medical sciences in the nineteenth century has been studied quite extensively over the last few decades, the development of modern biomedicine during the twentieth century is still a relatively little researched area. This biography of Rudolf Magnus, whose main contributions to experimental pharmacology and neurophysiology belong to the first quarter of the twentieth century, is therefore a welcome addition to our knowledge. Written by Magnus's son Otto, this book builds on family documents as well as scientific papers and publications. It provides detailed information on Rudolf Magnus's background and upbringing in a prosperous, educated Jewish family in Brunswick, before it continues with the period of his medical studies in Heidelberg. Here Magnus was especially influenced by the physiologist Wilhelm Kühne, under whose supervision he graduated MD in 1898 with a study on direct blood pressure measurement in the exposed (animal) artery. In the same year he became assistant to Kühne's son-in-law, the Heidelberg pharmacologist Rudolf Gottlieb. In 1908 Magnus was appointed to a

pharmacological professorship at the University of Utrecht, the first such chair in the Netherlands, which he held until his death. Support from the Rockefeller Foundation allowed him to build here a large institute.

Rudolf Magnus's work, both in Heidelberg and Utrecht, reflected the then very close connections between physiology and pharmacology, as can be seen from the numerous extracts of his research papers that this biography provides in English translation. Under Gottlieb, Magnus worked experimentally on diuresis and the mode of action of diuretics and digitalis; and he devised his own method for pharmacological tests on the isolated mammalian intestine, which later in Utrecht enabled him and his assistant Joan Willem le Heux to identify the role of choline in producing intestinal movements. From early on Magnus was also engaged in neurophysiological research. This became his main field in the Utrecht institute, where he explored the so-called "righting reflexes", which control animal posture and which proved to be useful signs for the clinical diagnosis of human neurological conditions. For this research he and his collaborator Adriaan de Kleijn were considered for the award of the Nobel Prize, when Magnus died unexpectedly in 1927. Magnus had also wider cultural interests, as documented by his Heidelberg lectures on Goethe as a scientist, which are summarized with extracts in English translation in a separate chapter of this biography.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect that this book brings out, chiefly through presenting Magnus's notes on his experiences at the International Congresses of Physiologists between 1895 and 1923, is his close relationship to British physiology. Magnus admired the experimental skills of John Newport Langley and Charles Scott Sherrington, both of whom he visited for joint research (in 1905 and 1908, respectively), following a period of laboratory work with Edward Albert Schäfer in Edinburgh in 1901. The other side to Magnus's enthusiasm for British researchers was his estrangement from his own head of department, Gottlieb, who eventually dismissed him as his assistant with a