

'Wellcome' Asia: Histories of Medicine in the UK

The Wellcome Trust, the well-known British educational charity, has played a sterling role in encouraging the development of research and teaching expertise in the history of medicine in the United Kingdom. At the moment the Trust funds three different units at the universities of Oxford, Manchester, and East Anglia (Norwich), and one major centre in London.

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General

By *Sanjoy Bhattacharya*

The Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at University College London, now directed by professor Harold Cook, has recently strengthened its Asian Studies component with two lecturers and a fellow in addition to the two lecturers already working there. Dealing with the history of South Asia, Sanjoy Bhattacharya mainly works on the nineteenth and

twentieth centuries, while Vivienne Lo concentrates on the ancient and medieval periods in China.

Dominik Wujastyk has recently been appointed as a senior research fellow and is now working on medical trends in India on the eve of colonialism. The centre's new specialist on Central Asia, research fellow Hormoz Ebrahimnejad, researches the introduction of Western medical practices in nineteenth-century Iran, which he describes in this issue of the *IIAS Newsletter*, but is also interested in Afghanistan's history. Alex McKay, who joined us on 1 October 2002 with a three-year fellowship, is working on the transmission of Western medicine in Himalayan South Asia between 1900 and 1947.

The centre's Asian Studies component will be enhanced through the development of large projects in collaboration with international research organizations. Such collaborative work could be developed with the help of a

range of funds and be deployed to examine a variety of important issues. Medical ethics in Asian contexts has recently become the focus of discussions between the Wellcome Trust Centre and the IIAS, and will hopefully lead to a collaborative research programme in the near future. It is to be hoped that the examination of this significant topic will encompass a transnational and multi-disciplinary perspective. A similar approach could also, of course, be used in a broad study of the attitudes held by Asian minority and migrant communities in Europe towards state-sponsored healthcare provisions – another important theme that has received far less attention than it deserves. Hopefully, the start that the Wellcome Trust Centre and the IIAS made in this regard will lead to a series of productive international partnerships. ◀

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For fellowship applications, you may contact professor Cook with a copy of your CV and a two- or three- page research proposal, to be considered by the Centre's Research Committee before selected names are forwarded to the Trust for its fellowship competition.

Doctoral candidates (with their own funding) may contact Dr Michael Neve: m.neve@ucl.ac.uk
Details are available from the centre's website:
www.ucl.ac.uk/histmed