



popular religious ritual

ARGO-EMR AT A GLANCE

The Anthropology Research Group at Oxford on Eastern Medicines and Religion (Argo-EMR) is a coordinated anthropological effort to explore Eastern medicines and religions in popular rural, institutionalised urban and transnational settings.

*Argo-EMR emphasises long-term fieldwork
and linguistic competency*

Bringing anthropologists together who normally work in separate institutions, Argo-EMR offsets the divisive trend of Area Studies. By exploring family resemblances between Eastern medicines and religions, Argo-EMR offers an arena for innovative anthropology.

ANTHROPOLOGY IN POPULAR SETTINGS

The opening of China — in particular Western China, and other parts of East Asia has also opened up new areas of research. As Daoist, Buddhist, Bon and other local religions have been revived; striking continuities to medicine come to the fore.

ANTHROPOLOGY IN INSTITUTIONALISED SETTINGS

Institutionalised Eastern medicines have been most widely studied, often from the Science and Technology Studies perspective. Eastern medicines certainly are culturally-specific forms of science, yet simultaneously show continuities to religion and everyday life.

ANTHROPOLOGY IN TRANSNATIONAL SETTINGS

Contemporary movements towards well-being have prompted thriving businesses around the world. Anthropologists are expert in addressing the cultural misunderstandings and stereotypes that enhance and/or discourage the consumption of medicines.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The University of Oxford has more anthropologists working on Asia and East Asia than any other British university. Argo-EMR promotes doctoral, postdoctoral and senior research projects on the anthropology of Eastern medicines and religions.

KEY RESEARCHERS

Dr. Elisabeth Hsu

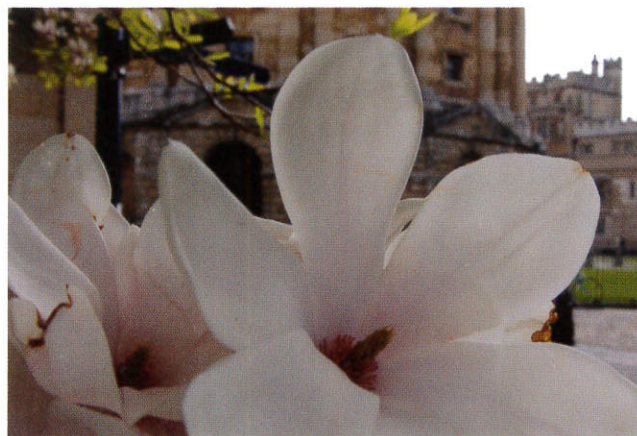
- Reader in Social Anthropology, course convenor of the MSc and MPhil in medical anthropology, School of Anthropology
- Research profile: Chinese medicine; medical anthropology, ethno-botany, anthropology of the senses, texts and language; China, Southwest China, East Africa

Prof. David Gellner

- Professor in Social Anthropology, Head of the School of Anthropology
- Research profile: religion, politics, ethnicity in Nepal and North India; medical anthropology in the Himalayas; Buddhism, including Theravada Buddhism as a modernist movement

Dr. Sondra Hausner

- University Lecturer in the study of Religion, Faculty of Theology
- Research profile: religion and ritual, Hinduism, public policy and development; South Asia and the Himalayas



Magnolia, source of medicinal houpu and xinyi, seen at Oxford

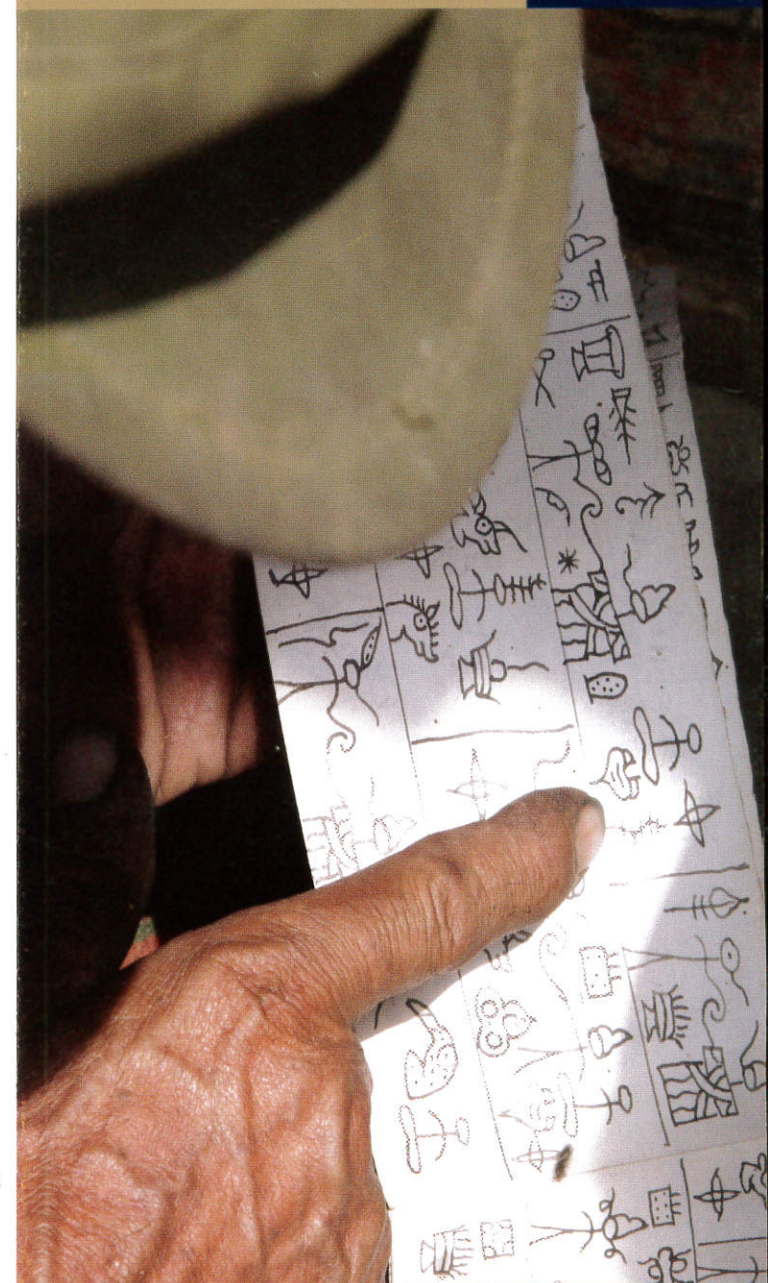
CONTACT US

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transnational formula medicines



institutional acupuncture



popular health boosters

WHO ARE WE?

Argo-EMR is one of several research groups working on social, medical and ecological anthropology within the School of Anthropology, University of Oxford. Our perspective is informed by social anthropology, critical-interpretive medical anthropology, ethno-botany, ethno-ecology, and nutritional anthropology.

WHY EASTERN MEDICINES AND RELIGIONS?

Eastern medicines and religions are 'traditional' aspects of East and South Asian cultures that are still very much alive in contemporary Asia and beyond. They comprise practices as varied as Chinese medicine and Daoist healing modalities; Japanese kampo; Korean medicine; Inner Asian shamanic practices; Tibetan medicine and Buddhism; Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani medicines of India; Hmong healing rituals; and Southeast Asian martial arts.

With their expansion to other cultural spheres, including Britain, Eastern medicines have reached significance on a global scale

To date, Eastern medicines have been researched mostly as traditions of non-European science technology and medicine, whereas Argo-EMR stresses the continuities between religion and medicine.

WHAT ARE OUR OBJECTIVES?

Argo-EMR promotes long-term fieldwork and local language competencies. We offer a meeting ground for anthropologists and researchers who adopt an anthropological orientation in the study of Eastern medicines and religions. We facilitate collaborative efforts across geographical areas and theoretical perspectives by promoting anthropological research in popular rural, institutionalised urban and transnational settings.

ARGO-EMR IN THE ACADEMIC LANDSCAPE

Eastern medicines are not merely medicines, but culture, and therefore fall into the domain of medical anthropology and social history. As the presence of Eastern medicines and religions is increasing globally, it requires a culturally sensitive investigation. So far, most research on Eastern medicines and religions has been on historical aspects. In the UK, Eastern medicines are also studied as the complementary and alternative medicines (CAM), as which they are offered increasingly within the National Health Service. Researchers of Argo-EMR, due to their linguistic competencies, can investigate cultural continuities to and transformations from their practices in their home regions.

Argo-EMR was founded in 2006 with strong support from the OUP John Fell Fund of Oxford University and the ESRC (a three year project on "Generating synchronicity as a religiomedical technique in Southwest China"). It is an international community led by anthropologists. In addition to research in core projects, it offers postdoctoral fellowships, visiting scholarships and doctoral studentships.

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ARGO-EMR RESEARCH AND PROJECTS

Argo-EMR facilitates research collaboration, holds a fortnightly seminar, and organises an international workshop once per year. Workshop topics include "Embodiment, healing and the sacred landscape in Tibetan healing" (2007), "The body in balance: humoral medicines in practice" (2008), "The viewpoint of the technique: time and crisis resolution in Eastern religions and medicines" (2010), "Korean medicine in anthropological perspective" (planned for 2011), "Exegesis and innovation in Asian religious texts" (planned for 2012).

CORE PROJECTS

- "Icons and innovation in Southwest China's religious texts", Dr Katherine Swancutt and Dr Elisabeth Hsu (large research grant of the "Religion and Society" programme AHRC-ESRC)

Argo-EMR promotes ethnographic research on Eastern medicines and religions in popular rural, institutionalised urban and transnational settings

POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS

- "Plant-words and the transformation of personhood in Masikoro healing practices in Madagascar", Dr Gabriel Lefevre, Marie Curie Post-doctoral Research Fellow, 2010-2012
- The anti-malarial herb qinghao in traditional Chinese formularies and materia medica", Post-doctoral Research Fellow in Chinese medical literature from the Shanghai TCM University, 2010-12

VISITING FELLOWSHIPS

- Qigong, the military and the martial arts", Dr Chee Han Lim, Green Templeton Visiting Scholar in Medical Anthropology, four lectures, Hilary Term 2010
- "From brush to keyboard, digital writing practices of Chinese youth", Dr Gladys Chicharro, Assistant Professor, Paris 8 University and Singer-Polignac Foundation Visiting Scholar, Trinity Term 2010

DOCTORAL PROJECTS

- "The introduction of homeopathy into Japan as *Iyashi* healing", Yuri Nonami.
- "Chinese medicine in Singapore: how cultural heritage and state control shape healthcare", A Rittersmith (Evans Fund)
- "Manufacturing Tibetan medicine: the creation of an industry and the moral economy of Tibetaness", M Saxer (Clarendon)