



Taiwan Lectures on
Chinese Studies

臺灣漢學講座

'Grasping Heaven and Earth' (*Qian Kun zai wo* 乾坤在握): The Healer's Hand in Classical Chinese Medicine

13 October 2022 10:00 AM Paris (CEST)

Online Lecture via ZOOM: <https://tinyt.io/76NN>

When physicians used their hands to memorize concepts related to clinical practice, calculate within specific temporal parameters to make prognostications, and carry out ritual gestures intended to reduce risk, improve fortune, and even cure, they instrumentalized their hands to extend memory, calculate fate, and secure ritual efficacy. This presentation has three parts: "Divination and Revelation" introduces when I was first introduced to Chinese divination practices, "Arts of Memory" explains how I first framed the related Chinese medical hand mnemonics, and "Body as Technology" addresses how I have since expanded upon that original frame. During this lecture I will ask you to indulge me by physically participating in two ways: stand up to do an exercise using your body to memorize the order of the 12 western zodiac signs; and carry out a divination on your hand using a Chinese strategy that goes back to at least the late 15th century. In the process, I will survey a range of Chinese examples of the hand as extension of the mind from earliest evidence in the 7th century to the 18th century and make some comparisons with hand mnemonics from medieval and early modern Europe.

About the Speaker:

Marta Hanson 韓嵩 was Associate Professor of the history of East Asian at Johns Hopkins University (2004-2021) and Visiting Scholar at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science (2021-2022). Her research interests include: history of Chinese science and medicine, history of epidemics, disease, and public health in China, and disease maps in East Asia. She is the author of *Speaking of Epidemics in Chinese Medicine: Disease and the Geographic Imagination in Late Imperial China* (Routledge Press, 2011).



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