**SHOT Report on First Joint Meeting of Asian Society of the History of Medicine & History of Medicine in Southeast Asia in Jakarta**

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The First Joint Meeting of Asian Society of the History of Medicine (ASHM) and History of Medicine in Southeast Asia (HOMSEA) took place at the Indonesian Academy of Sciences, located in the National Library of Indonesia building, Jakarta, from 27-30 June. Of all 65 papers that were selected for presentation, over half, or 38, dealt with topics in the history of medicine, health, and disease in Indonesia; 26 of these were presented by Indonesian scholars. This meeting was thereby the largest meeting on the history of medicine in Indonesia organized thus far. It had a large presence of young Indonesian scholars, signifying that the history of medicine is becoming a burgeoning topic of research in the country. Other participants came from various countries in East, Southeast, and South Asia, as well as from the United States, Australia, and the Netherlands.

While Asia has a rich history of medicine, characterised by a myriad of vibrant healing traditions in both pre- and post-colonial times, the meeting focused on “Colonial Medicine in Post-Colonial Times: Continuity, Transition and Change”. The meeting kicked off with a plenary address by Professor Sangkot Marzuki, President of the Indonesian Academy of Sciences (AIPI). He discussed the transition of the Eijkman Institute for Medical Research, which was established by the Dutch colonial administration in 1919, to the Lembaga Biologi Molekuler Eijkman (Eijkman Institute for Molecular Biology) in Jakarta during the tumultuous years from 1940 to 1955. Prof Sangkot examined the impact of the execution of Dr Ahmad Mochtar, the first Indonesian director of this institute, at the hands of the Japanese near the end of World War II, on the development of medical science in Indonesia. His plenary speech was followed by a plenary session on the history of the *Medical Journal of the Dutch Indies* (Geneeskundig Tijdschrift voor Nederlansch-Indië), a medical journal that was published from 1852 to 1942 in the Dutch East Indies. This session was followed by the launching of an edited book on this topic: Leo van Bergen, Liesbeth Hesselink, and Jan Peter Verhave, *The Medical Journal of the Dutch Indies: A Platform for Medical Research* (Jakarta: AIPI, 2018). A translation into Indonesian will be available soon.

The three-day meeting covered a wide spectrum of themes, ranging from the production of medical knowledge, medical research, medical education, end-of-life care, medical institutions, therapeutic technologies, bioethics, health care and philanthropy, drug policies, addiction, sanitation and the disposal of excrement, to epidemics and disease-focused studies, such as malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy, plague, and others. Some of these themes intersected with non-medical themes, such as inter-regional contact/collaboration, the Cold War, World War II, nation building efforts in newly independent nations, and civil war. Of all panels, eight were dedicated to the history of medicine in Indonesia.

One particularly interesting panel dealt with the history of leprosy, one on the history of nutritional programs, and two on psychology. One of the psychology panels specifically discussed mental health problems associated with the 1965 massacres in Indonesia that brought Suharto to power. This panel is not only laudable for making good use of the privilege of scholarly space to accommodate marginalized voices, but also for enriching the study of psychology through community engagement. The panel was enriched by the testimony of a survivor, and a performance of the Dialita choir, which consists of women survivors of the 1965 violence.

A great variety of topics was discussed. Claudia Surjadjaja, who gave her paper during the second plenary session, discussed a variety of ethical approaches for dealing with (Indonesian) human remains that are currently present in (Dutch) museums. This is a particularly fascinating and timely topic, as museums must decide what to do with the countless human remains in their possession. Surjadjaja’s presentation was followed by Harry Wu’s, which dealt with the transformation of end-of-life care from a moral economy to a medicalized practice. Dimas Iqbal Romadhon and Moordiati, panellists for “Leprosy in Indonesia”, the third plenary session, not only dealt with the past of the disease, but with present efforts of de-stigmatizing leprosy patients as well. The diversity of topics undertaken by young Indonesian scholars is an encouraging sign of the richness of this growing field.

East Asian scholars were a significant presence at this meeting. Of the 19 scholars from East Asia, 15 investigated the history of medicine, disease, and sanitation in East Asia, while two focused on the Philippines during its Spanish and American colonial periods, while one participant focused on India and one on Vietnam. Their topics were just as diverse as those of their Indonesian counterparts. Incorporating the theme of transnational mobility, Xiaoping Fang chronicled the cholera pandemic in Indonesia and China caused by the migration of Chinese citizens to Indonesia, which was closely associated with Sino-Indonesian politics during the early 1960s. John DiMoia’s paper also addressed transnational contact and mobility. He discussed inter-Asian collaborations between Japan, Korea and Vietnam through a platform named the Asian Parasite Control Organization during the Vietnam War, and paid attention to the presence of international political power as well as the function of professional expertise present in this project, which, naturally, was presented as benevolent.

Apart from the paper by DiMoia, there were four additional papers that merged the history of medicine with that of international conflict and war. Discussing events in two different countries, Malaysia and Indonesia, Sandra Manickam and William Bradley Horton discussed inter-empire competition in tropical medicine during war time. They demonstrated how colonial empire used tropical medicine to portray themselves as superior. Hong Sookyeong investigated the lasting legacies of forgotten Japanese physiologist Uramoto Masasaburo, whose efforts to construct a national philosophy of science and medicine were regarded as consisting of “unscientific and irrational Japanism” by Marxist scientist. Nara Oda untangled the complex process of remaking Vietnamese Traditional Medicine in the context of competition between local practitioners and French-trained doctors, and the conflict between North and South Vietnam during the Cold War.

Sonja van Wichelen stood out because she discussed the emerging problems associated with the rising global bioscience industry. Her paper paid attention to existing regulatory frameworks and how they shape and are shaped by practices in the bioscience industries in Asian and Western contexts.

The meeting was unusually rich in themes, broadening insights in the history of medicine in Asia, which has long been dominated by research on the history of medicine in China and India. Most papers offered thick historical descriptions and maintained a close engagement with historical texts and other historical data. Hopefully the next meeting will see more papers that focus on theorization as well as on inter-Asia or inter-colony comparisons. The absence of papers on the history of medicine in other parts of Asia, such as West Asia and Central Asia, and the under-representation of scholars from these regions, was the only shortcoming of this meeting. Over the years, both ASHM and HOMSEA have been very active in promoting research in the history of medicine and improving the quality of research in this field. However, it continues to be challenging to engage scholars from less affluent parts of Asia to write their own history of medicine.