

G3. Cross Cultural Borders of Care

G3:1 Rohini Dasgupta, *The Other Pains: Cervical Cancer, Colonial Medicine, and Reproductive Subjectivity in 20th-Century India*

This paper examines the history of "other" abdominal diseases of women that are related to their reproductive organs, focusing specifically on cervical cancer in 20th-century India. It analyses the critical tension between the invisibility of the disease in official colonial health commissions' reports and the prominent visibility in the accounts of Western-educated Indian and British physicians. It challenges the notion of the concurrent reductive framing of Indian women's medical and clinical identity as solely reproductive subjects. I argue that this narrow medical-colonial gaze rendered women's subjective experience of sickness and obscured their suffering in medical discourse—pain they suffer from being women, which was often depoliticized and dismissed by prevailing medical conceptions. Employing a subaltern feminist framework, this study moves beyond the clinical experience of women to highlight the cultural, social, and emotional barriers—particularly the stigma, shame, and moral retribution of suffering—associated with their pain, giving voice to archival narratives marginalized by colonial medical discourse. Drawing specifically upon Arthur Kleinman's distinction between disease and illness, this research demonstrates and captures the unevenness in how the imperial medical establishment systematically privileged a function-focused conception of clinical reproductive health over the embodied suffering of its female patients, while simultaneously advocating the need to understand their "other" pain. This analysis offers a crucial intervention into the histories of medicine, gender, and empire, revealing how the construction of medical knowledge created a new epistemological anxiety regarding both the marginalization and revival of subaltern experiences of chronic and reproductive pain.

Learning Outcomes

- My project will deepen the understanding of illness and suffering.
- It will understand the dynamic history of medical ideas and practices, their implications for patients and health care providers, and the need for lifelong learning.
- It also recognizes the dynamic interrelationship between medicine and society through history.

G3:2 Xiaoyun Zhao, *Nursing Book Publishing and the Development of Modern Chinese Nursing during the Republic of China (1912–1949)*

The Republic of China (1912–1949) was a formative period during which modern nursing was newly introduced to China and required rapid development. To disseminate nursing knowledge and expand the nursing workforce, more than one hundred nursing books were published during this era. Understanding the content, publication context, and professional significance of these works is essential for reconstructing the early history of nursing development in China.

This study systematically collected and analyzed nursing books produced during the Republic of China and identified seventeen major thematic categories: basic nursing, comprehensive nursing, pediatric nursing, military nursing, infectious disease nursing, basic medical sciences, nutrition, family nursing, ophthalmic nursing, internal medicine nursing, surgical nursing, maternity nursing, psychiatric nursing, the nursing profession, nursing ethics, public health nursing, and nursing history. These categories reflect the diverse and expanding knowledge needs of Chinese nursing during its early institutionalization.

Publication patterns reveal important historical turning points. The years 1914 and 1916 saw the fewest publications, likely reflecting the nascent stage of nursing education following the establishment of the Chinese Nurses Association. In contrast, the peak years —1935, 1936, 1947, 1948, and 1949—correspond to periods of institutional consolidation prior to the Second Sino-Japanese War and renewed professional momentum during the postwar reconstruction era. These fluctuations demonstrate how sociopolitical conditions shaped the development and dissemination of nursing knowledge.

Most early nursing books were translated or compiled under the auspices of the Chinese Medical Association, indicating that nursing had not yet emerged as an autonomous discipline and received substantial support from physicians. As the profession matured, the Chinese Nurses Association began participating in the compilation and review of several nursing works, reflecting nurses' increasing engagement in building their own professional identity. During the Anti-Japanese War, the surge in publications related to military nursing and the appearance of works by Japanese scholars further reveal how wartime conditions influenced the content and priorities of nursing literature. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how nursing knowledge was introduced, adapted, and institutionalized in China during the Republic of China period. By analyzing the themes, publication patterns, and institutional actors involved, this research provides insight into the professionalization of Chinese nursing and the historical forces that shaped its development. 1

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G3:3 Yao Tang, *Crossing Borders of Care: The Professionalization of Women in Nursing and China–U.S. Collaboration at Xiangya, 1909–1926*

Abstract

Purpose and Background:

In the early twentieth century, the professionalization of nursing in China emerged at the intersection of transnational influence, cultural negotiation, and gender reform. The Xiangya School of Nursing, founded in Changsha in 1909 by the Yale-in-China Association (YCA), became a key site where American missionaries introduced modern nursing education and gradually trained Chinese women to join the profession.¹ Amid China's post-1911 revolution and the global women's movement,² Xiangya offered new opportunities for women while navigating traditions that limited female participation in public life.³ Although Xiangya appears frequently in historical narratives, ⁴ detailed analysis of its nursing program remains scarce. Existing scholarship has largely focused on coastal and internationally oriented institutions such as Peking Union Medical College, ⁵ overlooking central China as a distinctive arena of cross-cultural adaptation. By examining Xiangya's bilingual curriculum, training model, and evolving gender dynamics, this study illuminates how transnational collaboration shaped the indigenization of modern nursing and advanced women's professional identity in early twentieth-century China.

Methods:

This historical analysis draws on archival materials from Yale University and both Chinese and English secondary sources, including correspondence between Edward H. Hume and Nina Gage and YCA annual reports. These sources provide the foundation for examining four domains of professionalization: institutional self-regulation, professional training, knowledge formation, and cultural adaptation. It situates these developments within concurrent global movements—the U.S. women's suffrage and professionalization of nursing—and China's post-1911 reforms in women's education.

Results: Findings show that Xiangya pioneered key innovations in nursing education and gender reform. Institutionally, it achieved administrative autonomy uncommon in missionary schools, with Nina Gage serving as one of the first female deans of nursing worldwide. ⁶ Educationally, the school introduced a rigorous bilingual curriculum that combined science, public health, and liberal arts, anticipating university-level nursing programs.⁷ The study also traces how the Chinese translation of “nurse” (, hùshi) symbolically elevated caregiving to a respected profession, paralleling linguistic shifts in Japan and Korea. ^{8 9 10 11} Despite challenges—including gender norms, ¹² labor disputes, ¹³ and political unrest ¹⁴—the program cultivated trust through culturally responsive practices such as modifying uniforms, ¹⁵ translating Western concepts, ¹⁶ and integrating public health outreach.¹⁷ By 1926, Xiangya graduates represented about 10% of credentialed nurses in China, ^{18 19} demonstrating the school's national impact.

However, the program also reflected a “savior narrative” that simplified Chinese healing traditions and religious beliefs. 20 Globally, missionary nursing thus served not only humanitarian ideals but also broader political and religious agendas. 21

Conclusions:

By 1926, as anti-foreign movements rose, both Nina Gage and Edward Hume left China, 22 but Xiangya’s influence endured, and it remains one of the top nursing schools in China today. 23 Although Western-centric assumptions persisted, Xiangya’s hybrid pedagogy—anchored in bilingual instruction, 24 feminist mentorship, 25 and community trust 26—created a durable model for culturally responsive nursing education. This study expands nursing historiography by repositioning central China within the global narrative of professionalization and highlighting the transformative potential of women’s cross- border collaboration in shaping modern healthcare.

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