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978-0-521-49975-0 - Knowledge and the Scholarly Medical Traditions

Edited by Don Bates

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Knowledge and the scholarly medical traditions

However much the three great traditions of medicine – Galenic, Chinese and Āyurvedic – differed from each other, they had one thing in common: scholarship. The foundational knowledge of each could be acquired only by careful study under teachers relying on ancient texts. Such knowledge is special, operating as it does in the realm of the most fundamental human experiences – health, disease, suffering, birth and death – and the credibility of healers is of crucial importance. Because of this, scholarly medical knowledge offers a rich field for the study of different cultural practices in the legitimation of knowledge generally. The contributors to this volume are all specialists in the history or anthropology of these traditions, and their essays range from historical investigations to studies of present-day practices.

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To Owsei Temkin and Charles Leslie

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