

Editorial

This volume is different from the past issues in that we have two articles on Chinese materials, one on mathematics and the other on astronomy. In the field of the history of exact sciences in China, there have not been many ‘new source materials’ in the strict sense. As the civilization which invented paper and block printing technique, China has a long history of printing documents instead of keeping them in the form of manuscripts. Thus the principle of providing new source materials, which is the main aim of our journal, has been difficult to keep in the case of Chinese literature.

However, recent excavations in China have drastically changed the situation, and new source materials are coming to light. The two articles in this volume deal with the newly excavated documents, one in 1973 in Mawangdui and the other in 1984 in Zhangjiashan. Although the texts were published shortly after the excavation, until now no detailed study or English translation has been made. Thus it is my great pleasure that we can publish these articles from Japan, a country whose culture owes heavily to China.

In the editorial of the seventh volume of *SCIAMVS* I wrote that when we launched this periodical in 2000 we wished to publish at least six volumes, thus we prepared six different colors for the cover pages, and with the seventh volume we returned to the color of the first volume. At that time I was not so optimistic as to hope to complete the second round of the six colors.

The number twelve is significant in various aspects. A duodecimal cycle, along with decimal and sexagesimal, has been used in different civilizations in different contexts since the ancient times. To be noted among them are twelve months constituting a year, twelve zodiacal signs in astronomy and astrology, and twelve stems and the twelve-year cycle of Jupiter in China. To modern people the most familiar duodecimal counting system would be that of the day and night, each consisting of 12 hours. This originated in Egypt.

Now at the end of the first twelve-year cycle of *SCIAMVS*, I am uncertain whether I can be in charge of this journal for the whole second cycle. It is not because of the financial problem. Thanks to the regular subscribers and occasional orders of the back issues, our financial shape is fine and improving gradually. Nor is the problem the number and quality of contributions. We might be allowed to say that we have contributed considerably to the scholarship in the history of exact sciences. My uncertainty is rather about my editorship of this journal. I am not so efficient as I

used to be, and less and less confident of being an editor of such a quality journal. The problem is that there are some articles which I cannot read through easily and to which I cannot give useful suggestions for improvements. This means that I cannot but be more and more dependent on the judgment of our referees. Without the help of the referees the publication of this volume would have been impossible. Since I do not like to remain a nominal editor, I would like to invite some young and efficient persons who will take charge of this journal and allow me to retire.

Kyoto
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Michio Yano