Note from the Guest Editor

The idea of having a special issue on Society and Illness in Early Modern Japan materialized from the panel “Apocalypse Then: Interpretations of Disaster and Calamity in Late Tokugawa Japan” held at the annual meeting of the Association of Asian Studies in 2008, Atlanta. Sponsored by the Early Modern Japan Network, William Johnston (Wesleyan University), Laura Nenzi (Florida International University), Gregory Smits (Pennsylvania State University), and I examined late Tokugawa society through the lens of syphilis, the 1858 Comet, representations of calamities in woodblock prints, and cholera respectively. The stimulating and appreciated comments of our discussant Ann Jannetta (University of Pittsburgh) and the positive feedback and questions by the audience encouraged us to combine our research on discourses of society and disease in a printed collaboration. Further contributors were won right there in Atlanta: Susan L. Burns (University of Chicago) and Andrew Edmund Goble (University of Oregon). While it may be common that the guest editor also writes the introduction, I hoped to leave this task to William Wayne Farris (University of Hawaii’), whose broad erudition in the field of disease and epidemics in Japan makes him the obvious choice. I am glad that he accepted.

There are many more people to thank. We are fortunate that Hans Ulrich Vogel, editor of EASTM, offered generous space to our special issue even when it ended up needing to be presented in two instalments. I am grateful to the many anonymous readers of our five articles. Their remarks, criticisms, and suggestions were essential for the improvement of our articles. I am also indebted to the editorial team of the journal, who worked hard on the smooth transition from manuscript to the final product. Special thanks and appreciation go out to my collaborators. Working with you was a pleasant and fruitful experience.

My hopes are that this special issue will encourage further explorations and discussions of the important topic of illness in early modern society.

Bettina Gramlich-Oka
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Das folgende sollte noch in meinen eigenen Beitrag als erste Fußnote eingebracht werden:

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zu of Juntendo University, who allowed me to go through the Yamazaki collection with my camera.