

国台学术报告 NAOC COLLOQUIUM

2013 年 第 66 次 / Number 66 2013

TIME: Wednesday, 2:30 PM, Nov. 13 2013 **LOCATION: A601 NAOC**

Sky-Gazing and Season-Granting: Astronomy in Ancient China

Prof. Sun Xiaochun (Chinese Academy of Sciences)

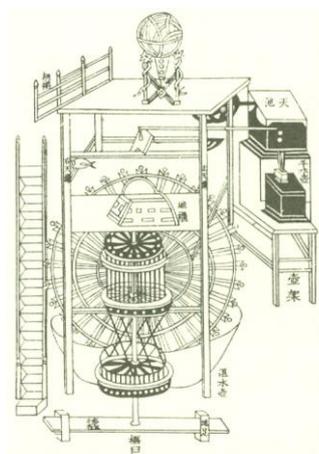


Sun Xiaochun is Professor of the History of Science at the Institute for the History of Natural Science, Chinese Academy of Sciences. He received his Ph.D. in History of Astronomy from the Chinese Academy of Sciences in 1993 and his second Ph.D. in History and Sociology of Science from the University of Pennsylvania in 2007. He has published primarily on the history of Chinese astronomy and co-authored *The Chinese Sky during the Han* (Leiden: Brill, 1997). His current research projects involve archaeoastronomy in China and the reconstruction of Su Song's Water-powered Astronomical Clock Tower

from eleventh century China. Currently he serves as Vice-President of Commission on History of Astronomy of IAU, and a corresponding member of International Academy of the History of Science.

Abstract

The most advanced science in ancient China, and the one which seems to throw the most light on Chinese civilization, is astronomy. The recently discovered Taosi site is perhaps the earliest astronomical observatory in China, dated 4000 years before present. The Chinese had invented many astronomical instruments, culminating with the invention in the eleventh century of the water-powered astronomical clock tower which combined observation, demonstration of celestial movements, and time-reporting into one automatic system. Calendar-making was one of the top priorities of the Chinese rulers. The Chinese calendar provided numerical methods for predicting celestial events such as eclipses and planetary motions. By the eleventh century the accuracy in prediction of planetary motions in China reached the same level as that in sixteenth century Europe. Portent astrology was of utmost importance to the state because it indicated the ruler's performance in governing. That is why the Chinese had maintained the longest continuous records of celestial phenomena, some of which prove to be unique and invaluable data for modern astronomy. Sky-gazing and season-granting were the two major themes of ancient Chinese astronomy, which constituted an eternal Chinese agenda for bringing Heaven and Man into a harmonious unity.



All are welcome! Tea, coffee, biscuits will be served at 2:15 P.M.

You are welcome to nominate speakers to Weimin Yuan (wmy@nao.cas.cn), Mei Zhang (zhangmei@bao.ac.cn), Licai Deng (licai@bao.ac.cn), Xuelei Chen (xuelei@cosmology.bao.ac.cn), Shude Mao (smao@nao.cas.cn)