LMU LUDWIG-MAXIMILIANS-UNIVERSITÄT MÜNCHEN

DEPARTMENT FÜR ASIENSTUDIEN

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"Ruling and Healing: Managing Health and Empire in Qing China 1644-1912"

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Institut für Sinologie, Kaulbachstr. 53, Raum E04



(photograph: courtesy of the speaker)

Before the rise of modern public health in China, Qing emperors built a medical infrastructure that joined pharmacology, military logistics, frontier diplomacy, epidemic relief, and bureaucratic surveillance. Drawing on a database of 3,489 Manchu- and Chinese-language memorials, this article reconstructs the channels through which the court dispatched physicians and pharmaceuticals from Beijing to Tibet, Xinjiang, Mongolia, Manchuria, and the nineteen inner provinces. It identifies two systems of distribution: an ad hoc military channel for campaigns and emergencies, and a routinized bureaucratic channel centered on the imperial pharmacies. These systems sustained armies, bound frontier elites, gathered political intelligence, and answered epidemics. Medical care was not just therapeutic. It made sovereign benevolence administratively visible and converted healing into a technique of imperial rule.