EBERHARD KARLS
UNIVERSITÄT
TÜBINGEN



China in the World: Negotiating Worlds of Health

China Centrum Tübingen (Dec 03, 2026), 3–6:30 pm s.t.
Seminarraum,
Hintere Grabenstr. 26,
72070 Tübingen

If you are interested in joining the conference,
please write to info@cct.uni-tuebingen.de.

China in the World:

Gefördert von:
VolkswagenStiftung

VCdH
Verbund der Chinazentren an deutschen Hochschulen

CHINA CENTRUM TÜBINGEN

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Negotiating Worlds of Health

Time: Thursday December 3, 2026, 15:00–18:30 | Host: China Centrum Tübingen

Venue: Hintere Grabenstraße 26, 72070 Tübingen

This conference investigates how worlds of health are continuously assembled, negotiated, and reassembled in China and globally. We approach health and illness not as natural categories and given facts, but as socially constructed and continuously negotiated within society.

Each presenter takes one lens through which they look at how worlds of health are shaped, be it through animals, water, emotions, or violence, or along the tensions between knowledge and ignorance, between the past and the future, or between the inner and outer worlds of a patient.

The conference is structured along three themes: First, health can be defined along different medical paradigms. Binary categories of “modern” and “traditional” health practices, or “Chinese” and “Western” medicine, often overlook how this kind of seemingly static dichotomy was shaped through complex processes of negotiation that both enriched and challenged these categories. While binary categories may appear as separate worlds of health, their making is deeply entangled and codependent.

Second, similar binary categories can underlie medical practices in which the line between “healing” and “hurting” is negotiated. In specific historical periods, transgressions in medical practices have revealed how societal norms are negotiated, often in retrospect but also for future practice, when the line between healing and hurting is formalized, crossed, and reformulated.

And finally, the concepts of an inner and outer world can reveal changes that occurred in the construction of health and illness, or the “normal” and “pathological”, in medical theory. This occurs when external environmental factors are weighed against inner factors, or when the inclusion or exclusion of certain factors in a world of health reveals how it was previously shaped, be it when certain emotions are pathologized, or environmental factors are medicalized.

This conference brings together Sinologists and Medical Historians specializing in both premodern and modern periods into conversation to discuss China’s role in how the normal and the pathological are and have been negotiated globally.

Presentations are limited to 10 min, followed by a 15 min discussion.

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14:30 **Arrival and Registration**

15:00 Jun.-Prof. Dr. Emily Graf (Tübingen) and Charles Schildge (Tübingen)

Welcome and Opening Remarks

15:10 Prof. Dr. Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer (Göttingen/Nürnberg)

Zehn Jahre China Centrum Tübingen – Ein Rückblick und Ausblick

Negotiating the Worlds of "Chinese" and "Western" Medicine (Chair: N.N.)

15:20 Dr. Renée Krusche (Erlangen-Nürnberg)

Negotiating between Human and Animal Worlds of Health in the PRC

15:45 Jun.-Prof. Emily Graf (Tübingen)

Barefoot Doctors between Medical Knowledge and Medical Ignorance in Mao's China

Transgressions in Worlds of Medicine (Chair: N. N.)

16:10 Charles Schildge, M. A. (Tübingen)

Houtian 后天 and xiantian 先天: Temporal Worlds of Health in the Discourse of Eugenics in Republican China

16:35 Prof. Dr. Henning Tümmers (Tübingen)

Between Healing and Hurting: Medicine and Violence in 20th-century Global History

17:00 Coffee Break

Negotiating Inner and Outer Worlds (Chair: N. N.)

17:15 ZHENG, Xinyu, M. A. (Tübingen)

Investigating a Patient's Inner and Outer Worlds: Constructing Health and Pathology in Classical Chinese Medicine

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17:40 Prof. Dr. Angelika Messner (Kiel)

Was there a Medicalization of Emotions in Late Imperial China?

18:05 Prof. Dr. Huang Fei (Tübingen)

Transforming Water of Daily-use into Medicinal Waters in Premodern China

18:30 *Closing Discussion,* moderated by Prof. Dr. Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer (Göttingen/Nürnberg)

18:45 Closing Remarks and Walk through the international Schokoladenfestival

19:30 Dinner

Restaurant: Historische Weinstube Forelle, Kronenstraße 8, 72072 Tübingen

Time: Friday December 4, 2026, 09:00–12:00 | Host: China Centrum Tübingen

Venue: Hintere Grabenstraße 26, 72070 Tübingen

4th Quarterly Meeting of the VCdH (members only)

Images on the front page:
Left: Calligraphy: Knowing and Not-Knowing 知與不知 by Dan-Wei Zhu-Mittag
Right: "Zuyue matai tu" 足月孖胎圖 [Image of Full-Term Twin Fetuses], in Benjamin Hobson & Chen Xiutang 陳修堂. *Quanti xinlun* 全體新論 [*A New Treatise On Anatomy*], Shanghai: London Missionary Society Press, 1851: 60a.

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