



BAREFOOT DOCTORS DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Medicine, politics, and social life in Mao's China

présenté par le

CENTRE POUR UNE HISTOIRE DES SCIENCES VUES D'ASIE (CHSA)

(SPHERE, UMR 7219, UNIVERSITÉ PARIS DIDEROT & CNRS)

In 1968, at the height of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), the Chinese Communist Party endorsed a radical new system of health-care delivery for the rural masses that was inspired by the principles of revolutionary socialism and promoted nationwide. The lynchpin of the new system were so-called barefoot doctors. Soon every village had at least one barefoot doctor to provide basic medical care, creating a national network of healthcare services for the very first time in China. This massive public health initiative had far-reaching consequences for the medical development of the world's most populous country. The barefoot

doctors were portrayed nationally and internationally as revolutionary heroes who waded undaunted through rice paddies to bring effective, low-cost care to poor peasants.

Looking beyond the nostalgia dominating present scholarship on barefoot doctors in China, this comprehensive study offers a powerful and carefully contextualized critique of the prevailing views on the role of barefoot doctors, their legacy, and their impact. Drawing on primary documents from the Cultural Revolution and personal interviews with patients and doctors, this research examines the evidence within the broader history of medicine,

politics, and social life in revolutionary and postreform China. The study finds that rather than consolidating traditional Chinese medicine, as purported by government propaganda, the barefoot doctor program introduced modern Western medicine to rural China, effectively modernizing established methods and forms of care. It portrays social life in Chinese villages during the Mao era and shows that the development of rural medicine and healthcare occurred in the contradictory context of the violation of political ideology and the use of state power.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER



XIAOPING FANG is Assistant Professor of History at the School of Humanities of the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He received his PhD in history from the National University of Singapore (NUS), where he majored in modern China and the history of science, technology, and medicine in East Asia from 2002 to 2008.

He studied and worked at the Needham Research Institute of Cambridge, UK (2005–2006), the Asia Research Institute at the NUS (2008), and the China Research Centre at the University of Technology, Sydney, Australia (2009–2013). He is Fellow of the National Humanities Center, USA (2019–2020). His current research interests focus on the history of medicine, health, and disease in twentieth-century China, specializing in the post-1949 period. He is the author of *Barefoot Doctors and Western Medicine in China* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2012 and 2015). He is currently completing a manuscript entitled "Global Pandemic, Local Politics: Disease and Social Restructuring in Mao's China."

mardi 12 mars 2019
14H–16H

UNIVERSITÉ
PARIS DIDEROT

Bâtiment Condorcet,
salle Juan Gris, 734A
4, rue Elsa Morante,
75013 Paris

SPHERE
SCIENCES, PHILOSOPHIE, HISTOIRE
UMR 7219



UNIVERSITE PARIS DIDEROT

Campus PRG, 75013 Paris

1 LES GRANDS MOULINS

Esplanade Pierre Vidal-Naquet
16 rue Marguerite Duras
5 rue Thomas Mann

2 LA HALLE AUX FARINES

Esplanade Pierre Vidal-Naquet
10/16 rue Françoise Dolto

3 TOUR VOLTAIRE

2 rue Marguerite Duras

laboratoire SPHERE, UMR 7219

4 CONDORCET

4 rue Elsa Morante
10 rue Alice Domon et Léonie Duquet L.

5 BUFFON

4 rue Marie-Andrée Lagroua Weill-Hallé
15 rue Hélène Brion

6 LAMARCK B

35 rue Hélène Brion
5 rue Marie-Andrée Lagroua Weill-Hallé

7 LAMARCK A

39 rue Hélène Brion

8 SOPHIE GERMAIN

8 Place Aurélie Nemours
9 rue de la Croix Jarry

9 LAVOISIER

15/17 rue Jean Antoine de Baïff

10 OLYMPE DE GOUGES

8 Place Paul Ricœur



Accueils



Bibliothèque



Cafétéria



Restaurant



Complexe Sportif



Médecine préventive



BVE / Service culture



Relais handicap

