

Institut für Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften
Zentralasien-Seminar

Tibet Kolloquium

Einladung

Dr. Barbara Gerke
(Zentralasien-Seminar)

The Poison of Touch: Tracing Mercurial Treatments of Syphilis in Tibet

When Captain Samuel Turner travelled to Tibet in 1783-1785 on a British mission to re-establish contact between the young Panchen Lama in Tashilunpo and the British colonial government in India, he was accompanied by a British surgeon, named Robert Saunders. In 1789, Saunders published his observations on medicine in Tibet, which includes a peculiar description of a mercury detoxification process and the use of mercurials for treating syphilis in Tibet. Since Saunders himself was an avid mercurialist, trained in the British school of the eighteenth century, his account gives us insights into the British as well as Tibetan methods of mercurial syphilitic treatment at the end of the eighteenth century. Where is syphilis mentioned in Tibetan medical texts and what kind of mercurials were used to treat it? How were they purified? Was Saundser's description of Tibetan methods accurate or influenced by his own practices of mercurialism? This paper also includes comments by contemporary Tibetan doctors, whom I showed and discussed Saundser's account with.

Mittwoch, 16. Mai 2012

18.00 Uhr

Invalidenstr. 118, Raum 507

(Zugang über Schlegelstraße 26)

(S-Bahn Nordbahnhof, U6 Naturkundemuseum)