



Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China (Asia: Local Studies / Global Themes)

Ruth Rogaski

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Placing meanings of health and disease at the center of modern Chinese consciousness, Ruth Rogaski reveals how hygiene became a crucial element in the formulation of Chinese modernity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Rogaski focuses on multiple manifestations across time of a single Chinese concept, *weisheng*—which has been rendered into English as "hygiene," "sanitary," "health," or "public health"—as it emerged in the complex treaty-port environment of Tianjin. Before the late nineteenth century, *weisheng* was associated with diverse regimens of diet, meditation, and self-medication. *Hygienic Modernity* reveals how meanings of *weisheng*, with the arrival of violent imperialism, shifted from Chinese cosmology to encompass such ideas as national sovereignty, laboratory knowledge, the cleanliness of bodies, and the fitness of races: categories in which the Chinese were often deemed lacking by foreign observers and Chinese elites alike.

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