“Hygiene, on a small scale, affects the health of individuals and families, but on a large scale, defines the fate of a country and its people,” argued the author of a 1905 article “On Hygiene” in *Dongfang Zazhi* 东方杂志. This view of national health was common among Chinese modernizers in the aftermath of the 1894 Sino-Japanese War when China was labeled as “the sick man of Asia.” Chinese modernizers, including professionals of modern medicine, intellectuals, journalists, merchants and officials, promoted Western medicine and public health with the political rhetoric of national strength and social progress. A close examination of China’s modern history demonstrates that medical and health modernization was intertwined with national struggle against foreign dominance and the political and social transformations of traditional China into a modern nation. Issues of medicine and public health were played out in the larger context of political and social revolutions. People of different political convictions advocated different visions of healthcare systems in the national modernization scheme. Of all the different political and intellectual persuasions of 20th-century China, however, there was a shared common goal of building a strong modern state with national unity.

**ABOUT THE SPEAKER**

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