

The social life of opium in China

Zheng Yangwen, author

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Abstrak

In a remarkable and broad-ranging narrative, Yangwen Zheng's book explores the history of opium consumption in China from 1483 to the late twentieth century. The story begins in the mid-Ming dynasty, when opium was sent as a gift by vassal states and used as an aphrodisiac in court. Over time, the Chinese people from different classes and regions began to use it for recreational purposes, so beginning a complex culture of opium consumption. The book traces this transformation over a period of five hundred years, asking who introduced opium to China, how it spread across all sections of society, embraced by rich and poor alike as a culture and an institution. The book, which is accompanied by a fascinating collection of illustrations, will appeal to students and scholars of history, anthropology, sociology, political science, economics, and all those with an interest in China.