

Call for Papers

***The Nature of Health, the Health of  
Nature:  
Perspectives from History and the Humanities***

An international workshop to be held in Beijing, at Renmin University of China,  
30 May–1 June 2019

Co-sponsored by the Center for Ecological History, Renmin University of China,  
and the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, Munich

Since Rachel Carson's path-breaking book *Silent Spring* (1962), many experts and citizens have been trying to understand how the health of nature and of human beings are related in the past, present, and future. Old concepts of disease and illness have been challenged by more holistic approaches that link humans to their environmental conditions. Toxic residues in the air, water, and soil have moved to the forefront of medical analysis, while ecologists have tried to define what a "healthy ecosystem" or "a healthy Earth" might mean. This workshop will bring scholars to address such questions as these:

How have definitions of health changed over time, and how have politics, science, religion, and other forces influenced those definitions?

What connections have different cultures and societies made between the human body and nature in the past?

How have discourses on human health and imaginaries of environmental degradation and planetary decay been linked?

What effect have planetary trends such as climate change had on human and nonhuman health?

The conference will be open to all ranks of scholars, from graduate students to senior professors to independents. Participants will be selected competitively. Those interested in attending should send a one-page proposal (or about 300 words) and include a title and a one- or two-page CV. Please send your proposal (in English or Chinese) to this Rachel Carson Center address: [conferences@rcc.lmu.de](mailto:conferences@rcc.lmu.de).

***The deadline for consideration is 1 January 2019.*** Successful proposals will be announced around 1 February, and complete drafts of papers (minimum of 5,000 words in English or the equivalent in Chinese characters) will be required by 1 May 2019. All papers will be circulated to the participants in advance and will not be orally presented in full during the conference.

Travel expenses for scholars living outside of China will be paid by the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society. Scholars living within China should depend on their own universities for covering travel expenses. For all participants, hotel expenses for four nights will be covered by Renmin University of China.

Nancy Langston, Distinguished Professor of Environmental History at Michigan Technological University, will be our keynote speaker. Her most recent books include *Toxic Bodies*, which asks how and why endocrine disrupting chemicals have saturated our bodies and our environments, and *Sustaining Lake Superior*, which focuses on the interconnected histories of watershed health, human health, and forest health--all in the context of climate change.

The last day of the conference will be devoted to a field trip to the Great Wall of China. Participants are also encouraged to use this travel opportunity to explore the capital city and other parts of the People's Republic of China.

The steering committee for the conference consists of:

- Mingfang Xia, [xiamingfang2@vip.sina.com](mailto:xiamingfang2@vip.sina.com)

*Director of the Center for Ecological History, Renmin University of China, and professor of history in the Qing Institute*

- Helmuth Trischler, [h.trischler@deutsches-museum.de](mailto:h.trischler@deutsches-museum.de)

*Head of research at the Deutsches Museum, professor of modern history and the history of technology at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, and co-director of the Rachel Carson Center, Munich*

- Shen Hou, [houshen@ruc.edu.cn](mailto:houshen@ruc.edu.cn)

*Deputy Director of the Center for Ecological History and associate professor of world history at Renmin University of China*

- Chen Hao, [peterrc@163.com](mailto:peterrc@163.com)

*Assistant Professor of History, Renmin University of China*

- Donald Worster, [dworster@ku.edu](mailto:dworster@ku.edu)

*Hall Distinguished Professor of History Emeritus, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, USA, and Distinguished Foreign Expert, Renmin University of China, Beijing*