Pneumonic Plague, Environmental Changes and the International Fur Trade

Human-Animal Relations and the Retreat of the Tarbagan Marmots from Northern Manchuria, 1890s-1930s

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5pm, January 25, 2017 (Wednesday); Rooms 8 & 9, FAMES

All seminars take place on Wednesdays (unless otherwise arranged) at 5pm in rooms 8 & 9 in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. Tea will be served at the same venue at 4:45pm. All are welcome!
Abstract  Inspired by recent environmental historical studies on animal extinctions and human-animal relations, this paper sheds new light on the Manchurian plague epidemic (1910-1911), by shifting our attention from the plague to its host animals, the tarbagan marmots (*Marmota sibirica*), and examining their near-extinction in Northern Manchuria in the early twentieth century. Based on primary sources, it will demonstrate how pneumonic plague, environmental changes, and the international fur trade, together resulted in the retreat of the tarbagan marmots from this region. It also uses this case study to help us better understand human-animal relations in Chinese history, origins of China's current environmental crisis, and global concerns over species extinctions.

Speaker  Yubin Shen has recently completed his dissertation project, entitled *Global Networks of Malaria: Tropical Medicine in Modern China, 1900-1950*, in the Department of History at Georgetown University (Washington DC, USA). Currently, as a Jing Brand Research Fellow in the Needham Research Institute, Cambridge, he is initiating a new project on applied entomology and pest control in 20th-century China from a global and environmental historical perspective. His fields of specialization include the history of science, technology, and medicine in modern China, environmental history, and global history.