

明清時期的職業女性：穩婆與仵作
The Professional Women in the Ming and Qing Dynasty: Midwives and Coroners

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穩婆在中國古代女性生產的過程中扮演著重要的角色。不同於明清通俗小說中她們唯利是圖的形象，社會醫療史語境下穩婆的專業性使她們在實際社會生活中難以被輕易取代。除了收生和墮胎這些眾所周知的職能，明清時期穩婆的另一重身份——勘驗，卻鮮少被提及。受到了正統道德觀，尤其是女性貞潔觀的影響，穩婆的勘驗職能在這一時期逐漸發展起來。這些職能不僅包括勘驗處女膜、辨驗男女、為皇宮甄選奶口等，並且，她們還受到了官方聘用，為女性死者驗尸，并在刑案中充當了‘仵作’的角色。隨著這一職能的逐漸發展，為官府勘驗的穩婆逐漸脫離民間收生的穩婆而成為一個獨立的群體。本次學術報告將從穩婆的勘驗職能入手，多維度地展現中國古代這一職業女性群體的工作及其在社會上的影響。

Midwives played an important role during the process of childbirth for females in ancient China. Different from their images of quack doctor who sought nothing but profit that have been portrayed in public novels in the Ming and Qing Dynasty, under the lenses of social medical history, midwives cannot be easily replaced due to the fact that they were professionals in the real society. Besides the duties of children delivery and inducing abortions that have been widely known, midwives' duties of inquest have been seldom mentioned. Due to the influence of traditional moral values, especially the feudalist notion of virginity, the roles played by midwives as female examiners gradually developed during the Ming and Qing Dynasty. Their duties not only included examining maidenhead, distinguishing sex, and selecting wet nurses for the palace, but they were also officially employed by the government. Midwives examined female corpses, and they played the role of coroner when criminal cases happen. With the development of this duty, midwives who worked for government gradually distinguished themselves from other midwives who only delivered babies, and forming an independent group. This talk will focus on this group of professional women in ancient China from a multi-dimensional perspective.

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