



Golden-Silk Smoke: A History of Tobacco in China, 1550–2010

By Carol Benedict

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Golden-Silk Smoke: A History of Tobacco in China, 1550–2010 By Carol Benedict

From the long-stemmed pipe to snuff, the water pipe, hand-rolled cigarettes, and finally, manufactured cigarettes, the history of tobacco in China is the fascinating story of a commodity that became a hallmark of modern mass consumerism. Carol Benedict follows the spread of Chinese tobacco use from the sixteenth century, when it was introduced to China from the New World, through the development of commercialized tobacco cultivation, and to the present day. Along the way, she analyzes the factors that have shaped China's highly gendered tobacco cultures, and shows how they have evolved within a broad, comparative world-historical framework. Drawing from a wealth of historical sources—gazetteers, literati jottings (*biji*), Chinese *materia medica*, Qing poetry, modern short stories, late Qing and early Republican newspapers, travel memoirs, social surveys, advertisements, and more—*Golden-Silk Smoke* not only uncovers the long and dynamic history of tobacco in China but also sheds new light on global histories of fashion and consumption.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Required reading for anyone interested in global commodity history or Chinese consumer history.”
(L. Teh *Choice* 2011-12-01)

“A font of empirical information and a model of source analysis.”
(*Social History Of Medicine* 2012-05-04)

“A success on many fronts... It is easy to see that numerous audiences would find this book a rewarding examination of an engaging topic.”
(Matthew P. Romaniello *Journal Of World History* 2012-10-10)

From the Inside Flap

Golden-Silk Smoke is the best account we have of Chinese tobacco use over the last 400 years of history. Benedict takes us on a very enjoyable guided tour of late imperial and Republican Chinese culture. Along the way, she presents us with some surprising findings, such as her recovery of a large but mostly forgotten industry of cheap, hand-rolled cigarettes for the urban poor. This is a lucidly written, cogently argued and exhaustively researched book.”—Kenneth Pomeranz, author of *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*

“This is a richly detailed exploration of the history of tobacco in China. Benedict pursues this New World Crop down through the centuries of Chinese history, seeking at each turn to make sense of how global tobacco 'became Chinese.' The result is an ambitious and important work.”—Antonia Finnane, author of *Changing Clothes in China*

About the Author

Carol Benedict is Associate Professor in the School of Foreign Service and the Department of History at Georgetown University. She is the author of *Bubonic Plague in Nineteenth Century China*.

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