Chinese Medicine:
Food and Health Connections

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Dr. Chen will discuss the correlation in traditional Chinese medicine between foods and health, and how that approach influences customs in Chinese culture and literature. For example, because of their similarity in appearance, traditional Chinese medicine taught that eating pigs' feet would aid recovery from foot injuries or that eating red dates would make one produce more blood; etc. Dr. Chen will outline the evolution of this concept, which has a long history and far-reaching impact even on daily diet of Chinese people today. Through a comparative overview of relevant excavated items such as oracle bones and the silk manuscripts and from historical texts, Dr. Chen will discuss the relationship between this concept and treatment based on paronomastic correspondence—for example, eating a peach (tao 桃) might help one escape (tao 逃).. The origin of such concepts is a correlative mode of thinking, which links the biological or physical properties of flora and fauna and their medical effects to corresponding human organs. This mode of thinking has led to particular behaviors and customs in Chinese culture.

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