

## Death in Beijing

In this innovative and engaging history of homicide investigation in Republican Beijing, Daniel Asen explores the transformation of ideas about death in China in the first half of the twentieth century. In this period, those who died violently or under suspicious circumstances constituted a particularly important population of the dead, subject to new claims by police, legal and medical professionals, and a newspaper industry intent on covering urban fatality in sensational detail. Asen examines the process through which imperial China's old tradition of forensic science came to serve the needs of a changing state and society under these dramatically new circumstances. This is a story of the unexpected outcomes and contingencies of modernity, presenting new perspectives on China's transition from empire to modern nation-state, competing visions of science and expertise, and the ways in which the meanings of death and dead bodies changed amid China's modern transformation.

Daniel Asen is Assistant Professor in the Department of History at Rutgers University, Newark. His published research has investigated the social and cultural contexts of science and medicine in late imperial and twentieth-century China, with attention to transnational and global perspectives. His work has been published in *Social History of Medicine* and *East Asian Science, Technology and Society*, as well as within edited volumes on legal history and the history of medicine in China. He is a member of the American Historical Association, the Association for Asian Studies, and the International Society for Chinese Law and History.

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# Death in Beijing

## *Murder and Forensic Science in Republican China*

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Daniel Asen

*Rutgers University – Newark*



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