



## 天花

## Smallpox Inoculation

The first breakthrough in inoculation (introducing a weak form of a disease to treat or prevent a disease) against the small pox disease was made in China. Smallpox, or *Variola*—a deadly virus disease characterized by skin blisters drying to scab-coated pustules and leaving crater like scars—existed in Europe, Asia, and Africa from the tenth century onward. The technique of inoculation, or variolation, was first publically recognized in China when the eldest son of Prime Minister Wang Dan (A.D. 957–1017) died of smallpox. Hoping to prevent the same thing from happening to other family members, Wang Dan summoned physicians and other specialists from all over China. A Daoist monk brought the technique of inoculation to Wang Dan and introduced it to Chinese physicians in the capital. They continued to experiment with inoculation, and by the sixteenth century it was widely practiced against smallpox in China.