

BOOK REVIEWS

L. AUSTINE WADDELL : *Lhasa and its Mysteries* XXII & 530 pp. London : John Murray 1905. Reprint (photo-mechanic) 1975. Delhi : Sanskaran Prakashak 1975. Rs. 180/\$36.

Lt. Col. L. A. Waddell of the Indian Medical Service was already a specialist scholar in the language and religion of Tibet when he accompanied the British Expedition of 1903-4. He had made painstaking studies of Buddhism in Burma, Nepal and Himalayas and was not undeservedly reputed as an authority on Buddhism. His abilities as an antiquarian and linguist notwithstanding, Waddell's attitude to Buddhism was unsympathetic and to Tibetan Buddhism it was openly hostile. This hostility was sharpened when the Dalai Lama XIII and his Lama advisers refused the British entry into Tibet. The book which Waddell wrote on return from Tibet, *Lhasa and its Mysteries*, has ever remained a book of denigration of Tibet: culture, religion, society and people—nothing could escape from the hostile pen of the bigoted scholar. The book today constitutes handy ammunition in the hands of Tibet's critics even though much of what Waddell wrote on religion and culture was later found by objective observers and sympathetic scholars as grossly misinformed and excessively exaggerated.

In the pages of the same book the author even unwittingly contradicts himself. Ill-equipped Tibetans' resistance against British army at Phala and Gyantse evokes the author's unstinted praise.

"... The determination, resource, and bravery shown by the Tibetans in this fight was no surprise to those who had seen them at the attack on our post, and should dissipate, once for all, the absurd delusion that the Tibetans cannot fight. Their daring is superb. Although generally clumsily armed with antiquated weapons, they have some modern firearms and know how to use them. They have little to learn in the matter of fighting behind defences and taking advantage of cover, and they know how to charge. No finer feat of personal bravery could be conceived than the charge made by a party of 15 warriors, mounted on black mules with a party of 40 infantry, who burst out from the fort in a storm of bullets which slew them almost to a man, to carry aid to their comrades at Phala, whom they thought too hardly pressed."

"The bravery of the Tibetans was now beyond dispute. Here they courageously stood their ground when our shrapnels were bursting over them, and pluckily returned shot after shot to our guns for hours, notwithstanding that few of their shots carried far, whilst our shells were seen to be inflicting on them much loss. They have a good eye to positions, and are almost perfect at fighting behind defences, and would make excellent soldiers if trained and led by competent officers."

An anticlimax to the author's anathema for Lamas is provided by his own record of his interview with the Regent, Gaden Ti Rimpoche.

“Talking of the religion of the country, he had heard, he said, of the interest I took in his creed. Then looking fixedly at me for a moment, he leaned forward across the table with a searching gaze, and asked slowly: “Are you a Buddhist, or are you not?” I replied that I was not, but, as Christians, we had very much in common with the teachings of Buddha. He enquired eagerly: “Is Buddha mentioned in your Christian Scriptures?” to which I had to reply in the negative. But I said he would see how similar in many ways were the two creeds when I told him that the mainspring of Christ’s doctrine was “peace and goodwill to men”, as was Buddha’s; that Christ had said, “Love your enemies, and do good as yourself,” “Love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you, and despitefully use you and persecute you,” and that our Christian commandments were of exactly the same number as Buddha’s decalogue, and all of them were couched like his in the negative form—“thou shall not” do so and so—and that many of them were identical in their substance.”

“On this he exclaimed bitterly, smarting under the defeat inflicted on his country by our troops: “The English have no religion at all!” And on my enquiring why he thought so, he replied deliberately and emphatically: “Because I know it! Because I see it for myself in the faces and actions of your people! They all have hard hearts, and are specially trained to take life and to fight like very giant Titans who war even against the Gods!” I was bound to admit that a military expedition was an inconvenient object-lesson in practical Christianity, and urged that it was not a fair test, as war stirred up the worst passions in men’s hearts; and after all we did not want the war, that it was his people who had always fired the first shot; besides, they too had trained their men as well as they could to take life in war. “It is not only your military, but all your people, even those who are not military; you are all the same, except [here he added somewhat apologetically, probably out of deference to my feelings] you doctors, of whose humane work I have heard: but all the others are utterly devoid of religion!””

“I assured him that the people of England spend enormous sums of money on religion, and everywhere have built beautiful churches, several hundreds of which are much finer and more costly than any temple in Tibet, and that the commentaries and other books on our religion would fill enormous libraries, many times larger than those of the Tibetan monasteries, and that their priests were real ecclesiastics, preaching to and teaching the people, unlike the Lamas, who never teach the people but keep all their education within their order, and are therefore not ecclesiastics. Hereupon he answered with a fine scorn: “But what is the good of all these buildings, and all these books and teachings, if the people do not read them, or, in any case, do not practise their maxims?” As he was so hopelessly biassed, I could only reply that I hoped he would judge us more generously when he knew us better, and that he might discover that, because of our superior strength in war, we could now afford to exercise the Christian principle of showing mercy to the weaker.”

“On hearing that Buddha was not mentioned by name in our Scriptures, he did not evince a great desire to know more about other salient points of Christianity, but seemed interested in hearing that one great point of difference was, that man was to be saved, not by his own merits, but by the saving grace of God, his sins being atoned for by the sacrifice made by Christ. This was

quite foreign to all his conceptions, as he had been educated in the strict traditions of Buddhism with its ethical doctrine of retribution or karma, which teaches that each soul has to work out its own salvation, and to counterbalance by a corresponding number of good deeds all his accumulated misdeeds before the latter are forgiven by the inexorable "Judge of the Dead." "

No honest reader can go wrong far with this book if he would care to read another classic on Tibet, *Peaks and Lamas* by Marco Pallis, reviewed below. Waddell's book remains a compulsory reading for many reasons. *Lhasa and its Mysteries* was the first publication in any European language to present a fairly comprehensive account of Lhasa and Central Tibet. Fairly accurate maps and plans numbering 8, and 16 appendices covering Tibetan Year Cycles, Population, Climate and Meteorology, Geology : Mines and Metals, Fertility and Salinity of Soil, Fauna of Central and South Western Tibet, Trade : Imports and Exports besides information about political history and the progress of the British expedition make *Lhasa and its Mysteries* a source-book of highest value. More than a hundred photographs are of great archival interest.

Gaden Ti Rimpoche, Shata Shape, Bhutan Maharaja (Tongsa Penlop), Nepal Consul in Lhasa and members of the British expedition are found here in authentic pictures. No careful reader can miss here the only 'non-martial' element in the Younghusband Expedition : the Bengalee Babu (Mr Mitra).

Photo-mechanic reproduction of such a valuable book could have been much better elsewhere in India.

NIRMAL C. SINHA

MARCO PALLIS : *Peaks and Lamas*, XVII & 433 pp. London : The Woburn Press 1974. £ 6.50 [Originally published in 1939, this is a revised and enlarged edition].

The author, Marco Pallis, is a many splendoured personality. Born of Greek parents in England, the author is wellgrounded in the Classical learning as understood in Europe and began as a historical scholar. Early in his youth he answered the call of mountain. He is a distinguished mountaineer and is equally distinguished in performing early music. He possesses deep on-the-spot knowledge of the Himalayas and of Central Tibet. With a mastery of the language, he could live and converse with the Lamas without any interpreters and was at home in the monasteries. Mysticism, eastern and western, finds expression in the author's writings. High scholarship and deep understanding make *Peaks and Lamas* a work of abiding value to both scholars and pilgrims in search of truth.

This considerably revised edition is substantially supplemented with four Appendixes: Shamanistic Elements in Tibetan Religion, Landed Estates in Tibet prior to 1950, The Criminal Law in Tibet, and The Arts of Tibet. With solid data acquired through sojourns Marco Pallis gives an authentic account of culture and society in traditional Tibet. The author's magnificent photographs, of landscapes and architectural wonders, are here in excellent reproductions. The layout and get up of the book are in unison with the grandeur of the theme. The price, £ 6.50 UK, is not high for such a superb production.

The following extracts on the relationship between different types of Buddhism and between Buddhism and Hinduism will bear out this reviewer's finding that high scholarship and deep sympathy inform, and thrive in, the pages of *Peaks and Lamas*.

"In seeking to determine which is the principle of unity animating the Tibetan civilization one must beware of being satisfied with an easy answer, such as saying that this principle is no other than the Buddhist doctrine itself; for though this statement is correct as far as it goes, it lacks precision, failing as it does to indicate which one, out of a whole body of ideas comprised within the one doctrinal plan, has been recipient of that greater emphasis required for the moulding of an entire traditional structure according to a particular form, and, as it were, in its image. Though one knows that Buddhism, by imposing certain fundamental concepts, has become the rule of life over very wide areas extending from Ceylon to Japan, and that this has produced a certain community of outlook among all the peoples that have come within the Buddhist orbit, one cannot fail to recognize that in this general whole certain clearly distinguishable forms of civilization are to be found, the intellectual frontiers of which are in no wise determined by the Buddhist influence. The common presence of Buddhism does not, for instance, warrant one's placing the Chinese and Tibetan civilizations under one heading, even though they are next-door neighbours; and if Buddhism is admittedly a factor common to both, this fact has been insufficient to produce any very marked likeness in the two points of view, let alone identity.

"The chief difference between them lies in the fact that whereas in Tibet the Buddhist tradition is everything, having completely replaced its Bon-po predecessor, in China Buddhism was something in the nature of a graft, admittedly a most timely and successful one, upon a civilization of which the pattern, in all essentials, had been already set before the arrival of the foreign influences. Since nothing in the existing Chinese form was found to be actually incompatible with the Buddhist point of view, the latest arrival from India found no difficulty in taking its place in the traditional life of the Far East on equal terms with its two other great constituents, namely Taoism, representative of an intellectuality so pure as to be adapted for the use of an exceptionally qualified "elite" only, and Confucianism, which is not, as is commonly supposed, a separate creation, still less a "religion", but which corresponds to that side of the Chinese tradition in which all without exception are able to participate, concerning itself as it does with social institutions and human relationships in general—the later being given expression especially through its characteristic concepts of the race, the family, and the family ancestors. It might also be mentioned, in passing, that in the course of time Buddhism and Taoism engaged in many intellectual exchanges, some of which gave rise to that school, so rich in spiritual initiative, that is commonly known in the West under its Japanese name Zen.

"Similar considerations would have applied in India during the centuries when Hinduism and Buddhism coexisted there as separate currents of tradition: both continued to belong to the same civilization, the form of which had been laid down, under purely Hindu inspiration, at a time long anterior to the specific formulation of the Buddhist teachings. In any case, both in virtue of its origin and by the nature of its thought, Buddhism remains an Indian doctrine, having derived most of the basic conceptions, if not all, from

the common root-stock of the Hindu metaphysic. It is not on that score that Buddhism can be called original; nor indeed, does it put forward any such claim, since the Buddha Himself always was at pains to repudiate, as a monstrous heresy, any suggestion that He had come to teach something new in the matter of doctrine; it is only modern Western writers, themselves imbued with individualistic prejudices, who have been determined at all costs to discover in Buddhism a radical innovation amounting to a revolt against the traditional spirit, and in the Buddha an early revolutionary working on Reformation lines.

“Where Buddhism was highly original, however, was in respect of its methods, affecting both the way of expounding the principles and the form of the spiritual disciplines that went with that knowledge. Indeed, but for a large measure of originality in the manner of restating the eternal truths the Buddhist apostles would have been unable to carry out their appointed task of adapting the Indian metaphysic so as to render it eventually assimilable by non-Indian peoples, especially by the yellow races, whose mentality was so very different from that of the Indians. This task once accomplished, however, Indian Buddhism had little further cause to exist as a separate form and gradually disappeared, gently subsiding back into that Hinduism whence it had sprung and from which, despite controversies on the surface, it had, at heart, never been entirely severed.

“The Tibetan branch was one of the latest offshoots from the main stem of Buddhism, having only come into being during the seventh and eighth centuries after Christ, chiefly through the work of Indian monks from Bengal and Kashmir. While accepting all the basic ideas taught by the Buddha, which it continued to share with all the other peoples of similar spiritual allegiance, Tibet early developed certain clearly marked features of its own, to the point of giving rise to a distinct form of civilization, comparable, on every count, with the other principal traditional forms of the world. This is possibly due in part to the incorporation of such features of the previous Bon-po tradition as could be usefully readapted; it was on the face of it unlikely, however, that any element specific to a form actually in process of replacement by another would retain sufficient intrinsic vitality to provide a whole civilization with its principle of unity, in the sense given to that term at the beginning of this chapter—that is to say, with an idea both distinct and powerful enough to create and nourish its own forms, conferring on them the means for perpetuating their own character through long ages and of impressing it firmly and unmistakably upon the face of things and upon the thoughts of men.

“In fact, the idea that enjoys pride of place in the Tibetan tradition is one that figures in the Buddhist doctrine as originally introduced from India. This presiding idea, colouring the outlook of sage and simple peasant alike (as we were repeatedly enabled to observe during our journeys), is the conception of Bodhisattvahood, the state of the fully awakened being who, though under no further constraint by that Law of Causality which he has transcended, yet freely continues to espouse the vicissitudes of the Round of Existence in virtue of his Self-identification with all the creatures still involved in egocentric delusion and consequent suffering. Such an attitude must not, however, be confused with a kind of sentimental “altruism” in the social sense; indeed, a moment’s reflection will show that he who has finally been set free from the false notion of a permanent “I”, to be individually experienced, is at the same

time automatically rid of its correlative notion of "other". The Bodhisattva behaves as he does precisely because, for him, any kind of conceptual polarization is inoperative, because, to his singleness of eye, all contrasted pairs such as the Round and Nirvana, Bondage and Deliverance, Material Substance and Spirit, together with all the subsidiary oppositions born of such contrasts, are alike resolved in the unity—or, as the Tibetans would say, in the "two-lessness"—of That which he himself realizes as the All-Principle (Tibetan Kun-ji), the eternal Cause and ground of all phenomenal existence."

NIRMAL C. SINHA

RECHUNG RINPOCHE JAMPAL KUNZANG : *Tibetan Medicine illustrated in original texts* VII & 340 pp. London : Wellcome Institute of History of Medicine 1973. £ 6 [Berkeley : California Paperback 1976. \$6.95]

Gautama the Buddha was appropriately apotheosized as Bhaishajyaguru (Sman-gyi-bla or Sman-bla in Tibetan), that is, Master of Medicine: 'Medicine Buddha' is a poor construction in English and hardly conveys the meaning of the epithet Bhaishajyaguru or Sman-bla. In diagnosing the malady of sufferings which afflicts all animate or sentient beings, Buddha spoke of (i) *roga* or *dukha*, (ii) *roga hetu* or *dukha hetu*, (iii) *ārogya* or *dukha nirodha* (*nirvāṇa*), and (iv) *bhaishajya* or *mārga* (*ashtamārga*). Buddha's Four Truths were based on ancient truths preserved and pursued by saints and seers who specialised both in medicine and meditation. The monks and scholars who followed the Path of Buddha took a special interest in developing further the 'science of healing' and during the Kushana period Ayurveda along with Dharma from India travelled into Inner Asia. In later time in Tibet (and Mongolia) Indian medicinal literature was intensively studied and progressed with the learning of Tibetan (and Mongol) scholars. Tibetan (and Mongol) literature preserves for posterity a treasure house of knowledge on medicine and surgery, pharmacology and chemistry, botany and zoology. Russian, German and British scholars have been for several decades probing into this treasure house.

The Wellcome Foundation has sponsored this publication and deserves our thanks. The author, Rechung Rinpoche—an incarnation of the famous monk-scholar who presided over the Rechung monastery in the twelfth century of Christian era and who narrated the story of the great mystic poet Milarepa—is that rare combination of a Tibetan scholar who has gone through a full course of traditional schooling in Lhasa, who took a special course on medicine in Mentsikhang, and who can render Tibetan idiom and imagery into English. He seeks to present a history of Tibetan medicine around the figure of the Great Yuthok (786-911 AD), the reputed founder of Tibetan medicine. A good number of chapters from Yuthok's book and from Yuthok's biography are translated into English for the first time and the author can claim to be a first in the field.

The book is illustrated with 20 plates; 15 plates depict the anatomical and physiological data about human body; 2 plates illustrate the equipment of a Tibetan doctor, medical and surgical instruments; 2 depict, from painted scrolls, the Great Yuthok's life and work; 1 consists of 2 photographs of Heads of Mentsikhang. There is an excellent and useful bibliography of books and articles in European languages. The book is not free from defects and

lacuna, particularly from the point of view of the Orientalist: linguist or antiquarian. The transcription of Sanskrit and Tibetan words has many faults and the Glossary is too inadequate. These defects, it is expected, will be attended to when a new edition is under preparation. Rechung Rinpoche's *Tibetan Medicine* is the most informative work on Tibetan medicine and associated sciences in a European language so far. The book should be of great value to modern and non-Tibetan students of medical sciences all over the world. I take this opportunity to highlight some points about history of medicine in Tibet.

Art of healing was certainly not unknown in one form or other in ancient (that is, pre-Buddhist) Tibet. Shaman and Bon priests were possibly competent doctors and pre-Buddhist knowledge about healing no doubt survived and continued till the middle of the twentieth century when both Bon and Buddhist physicians of Tibet faced the same crisis. Tibetan Medicine or Tibetan Buddhist Medicine does solemnly trace its origins to Bhaishajyaguru but does not deny other influences. Rechung Rinpoche, who writes his introductory "History of Tibetan Medicine" in traditional style, may be quoted in this connection.

"To Tibet during the reign of King Lha-mtho-ri gnyan-brtsan, the twenty-fifth king of Tibet, two doctors came from India: Doctor Bi-byi- dGah-byed and Doctor Bi-lha dGah-mdzes, and taught the populace some branches of Medicine, for instance, how to diagnose diseases. Before the two Indian doctors came, the Tibetans had only known some dietary rules and simple instructions like how to stop bleeding by applying hot butter.

"Three generations later King hBron-gnyan Lde'u was attacked by a disease caused by demons. So he buried himself alive in a hole in the ground to prevent his descendants from contracting the disease caused by demons. His last words to his son, Prince Kon-pa Kra, were an injunction to worship the text gNyan-p gSan-ba which had come down from the sky during the reign of his ancestor King Lha-mtho-ri gNyan-btsan. In this way the Buddhist teaching was believed to have appeared for the first time in Tibet. Kon-pa should invite a doctor from Ha-sha to operate on his eyes which were blind. The father also instructed him how to rule the country. The son did as he said and invited a very learned doctor who operated on his eyes with a golden instrument. Then he saw the demons living on sKyid-shod stag-mo-ri. Since then he was called Stag-ri gNyan-gzigs. During the reign of his son, King gNam-ri Sron-brtsan, medical and astronomical text was believed to have been brought from China, but it is not clear which text it was.

"Under his son, King Sroñ-btsan sGam-po, the Tibetan alphabet was adapted from the Sanskrit Devanagari letters by Thonmi Sambhota who had gone to India and studied there. King Sron-btsan sGam'po's Queen, a Chinese princess, brought the medical text called Sman-dpyad Chen-mo (Great Analytical Treatise on Medicine) from China, and it was translated into Tibetan by Ha-shang Mahadeva and Dharmakośa. He invited the following three great doctors to his Court: from India Bharadhaja, from China Han-wang-Hang and from Persia Doctor Galenos. Each translated a book in their own way into Tibetan. The Indian doctor's texts were called hBu-shag-ma Bu-Chee-chhung (Big and Small Louse Gravel), and sByor-ba Mar-gsar (Preparation of New Butter), the Chinese doctor's text was called rGya-dpyad

Thor-bu Chhe-chhuñ (Treatise of Great and Small Scattered Chinese Surgery), the Persian doctor's were called mGo-snon bs-Dus-pa (Collection of Main Additions) and The Treatment for Cock, Peacock and Parrot. And from the discussion between the three doctors they composed a medical text called Mi-hjigs-pa'i mTs'ong-chha (The Weapon of the Fearless One), comprising seven chapters, and presented it to the King. They received presents from the King, took their leave, and went home, except for Galenos who stayed behind as the King's Court Physician. He settled down in Lhasa, married and had three sons: the oldest one he sent to the upper gTsan district where he married a member of the Bibi lineage, as a result of which it was continued from there. The middle one he sent south of Tibet, to gYor-po, which started the lineage of the Southern doctors. The youngest one stayed with his father and they called him Jo-ron and he continued the lineage at Lhasa."

The Persian doctor Galenos was probably a Hellenistic physician, a Bactrian or Byzantine Greek. Tibet was having scholars and scientists from the west even before the King Sron-btsan, but the study of medicine and other sciences from the west could be possible only after a phonetic alphabet was adopted. The three imports from India—Dharma, Akshara and Bhaishajya—determined the growth of science and civilization in Tibet.

Origin of Objects or Hetu is the basis of Dharma and the same is true of Ayurveda. The theory of three humours: Air, Bile and Phlegm, as the basis of Life Science was accepted and further developed in Tibetan system. In developing Indian medicine Tibetan (and Mongol) scholars and scientists no doubt drew upon their own experiences and findings as they drew upon western (Graeco-Iranian) and eastern (Sinic) traditions. A student of modern medicine can thus profit from Tibetan pharmacology as practised till the middle of this century. I quote Rechung Rimpoche's list of medicinal preparations "still used today".

"(1) glan-chen bcho-brgyad. Medicine with eighteen ingredients : yellow pigment taken from a concretion in an elephant's head or in the entrails of other animals, camphor, coriander seed, olive, black aloewood, bitter re-skon, red sandalwood, white sandalwood, saffron, blue water lily, aquatic insect, medicinal climber, costus speciosus, justicia ganderussa, gold flower, bitumen, chiretta, cloves. A different quantity of each ingredient is specified. When mixed, it helps against convulsions, choleric cramps, swellings and lupus. One teaspoonful should be mixed with boiling water and taken after meals.

"(2) srog-hdzin-bchu-dug, which has sixteen ingredients : cloves, black aloewood, nutmeg, a mineral drug called sho-sha, costus speciosus, saffron, frankincense, sandalwood, lime, rush, yellow pigment, shan-drill, sha-chhen, salt, ginger, piper longum. It is used against nervous diseases and melancholia. To be taken in beer, or about one teaspoonful of hot water.

"(3) tsa-tsi rdo-sbyor, which has ten ingredients : scopolia/praealta Don., saffron, sulphur, sman-chhen, myrobalan, rush, asafoetida, musk, black aloewood, white and black hawthorn. Used against syphilis. To be taken with melted butter.

"(4) sga-lo, which has seven ingredients : herb whose root is used for purple dye, soma plant, justicia ganderussa, camphor, costus speciosus, olive,

in appropriate quantities. Used against tuberculosis. To be taken in a spoonful of boiling water.

“(5) bdud-rtsi-gsum-sbyor, which has three ingredients : Soma plant, syrup, camphor. These three, mixed together, should be taken with beer. Used for vomiting, against bone fractures, tuberculosis and leucorrhoea.

“(6) nor-bu-bdun-than, which has seven ingredients : myrobalan, olive, Solanum jaquinia, Terminalia belerica, Sophor Flavescens, Inula Helenium, Hedychium Spicatum. Three spoonfuls of these should be mixed together and boiled in a pint of water until the water is reduced to two thirds, and then drunk. Used against high blood pressure, fever, colds and influenza.

“(7) gser-mdog bchu-pa, which has ten ingredients : some plant, myrobalan, liquorice, bitumen, ginger, pomegranate, cardamom, piper longum, erycibe paniculata, rock salt from Sindh in Western India. Used against diphtheria and high blood pressure. One spoonful to be taken in boiling water.

“(8) gser-mdog-bchu-gsum, which has thirteen ingredients : piper longum, saffron, blue lily, creeper, olive, justicia ganderussa, costus speciosus, salt, camphor, soma plant, low-growing rhododendron, iron filings, snake meat. It should be made into a tablet the size of a small bean, which should be taken with boiling water. Used against high blood pressure and jaundice, tumours, indigestion, stomach trouble and fever.”

Rechung Rinpoche has, wisely in my opinion, refrained from attempting a modernized version of history of medicine in his own country. His account bristling with legends and beliefs gives the facts of medicine and science as known to Tibetans for generations. A modern student of medical sciences should be able to find out positive and firm data that he is looking for. I write this review as a layman tired of numerous synthetic and anti-biotic recipes, and warmly invite modern physicians to investigate into Tibetan recipes. The Wellcome Foundation no doubt shares my sentiments.

NIRMAL C. SINHA