

Bulletin of Tibetology

ASPECTS OF CLASSICAL TIBETAN MEDICINE

Special Volume of 1993

SIKKIM RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY
GANGTOK, SIKKIM

INDIA

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Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology

Price per copy Rs. 245/-

Published by :
THE DIRECTOR
SIKKIM RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY
GANGTOK-737 101, SIKKIM, INDIA

Printed at :
The Radiant Process Private Limited, Calcutta-700 013



Bhaisajya-guru-vaidurya-Prabharaja
Eight Medicine Buddhas

Preface

It is a privilege for me to have become associated with the publication of this commemorative volume on Aspects of Tibetan Medicine dedicated in honour of the late Dr. Terry Clifford who was well-known for her works on the subject. Contributors to the issue include a galaxy of distinguished scholars who had originally presented these papers in course of a symposium held at the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine on 18th April, 1986. The whole project of compilation of these papers and bringing them out in a book form is the result of keen interest and active cooperation on the part of Miss Marianne Winder, Ex-Keeper of the Oriental Manuscripts in the celebrated Wellcome Institute in London.

We of the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok, Sikkim, on our part have taken it up as an unique opportunity to present this subject before the general viewers, especially to those of the west, through the very eyes of some western scholars who have assiduously put in their efforts towards understanding its intricacies and to make others develop interest and understanding in it as well.

The concept of Tibetan Medicine as propounded by the system concerns itself not merely with the "Science of Healing" through observation of physiological processes of ailments but rather, takes recourse to esoteric principles believed to be in control of those processes. Having been originated as part of a deeper spiritual quest of the Tibetan people, the system is more closely related to their religion namely, Buddhism and Buddhist view of life and death together with the causes of sufferings inherent in the life of sentient beings. Its basic premises are therefore, emanated from the believer's standpoint as characterised by the deep-seated spiritual culture of the Tibetans themselves.

According to Tibetan Mahayanic Buddhism, the human body is the best medium for the attainment of enlightenment and, therefore, in lengthening the precious human life, Tibetan Medicine plays a fundamental role. Although the opinion differs about

the origin of rGyud-bzhi (the tract in four parts) most of the scholars on Tibetan Medical science, however, subscribe to the view that rGyud-bzhi was preached by the Buddha Himself. The Buddha Sakya Muni, having transformed into "Medicinal Buddha", taught rGyud-bzhi to a congregation of gods, human beings and others.

I hope that this compilation of articles by eminent scholars will help in creating interest and better understanding of the Tibetan medical system and its practices among interested readers other than the Tibetans.

Lastly, I am greatly indebted to Miss Marianne Winder for her active involvement and collaboration in implementing the project to its successful completion. I express once again my gratitude and thanks to her.

24th November, 1993
Sikkim Research Institute
of Tibetology, Gangtok
Sikkim : India

Rechung Rinpoche Jampal Kunzang

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Twelve medical thankas from Lhasa

Aspects of Classical Tibetan Medicine as Reflected in
(Central Asian Literature). Proceedings of a Symposium
held at the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine,
London, on April the 18th, 1986 published in honour of the
Late Terry Clifford.

	ENGLISH	FRENCH	GERMAN	
3	church	c	é	c
4	church hall	ch	čh	ch
5	rats	ts	c	é
6	cats home	tsh	ch	éh
7	jungle	j	ǰ	j
8	lads	dz	j	ǰ
9	leisure	z	ž	z
10	shade	ś	ç	ś

MARIANNE WINDER

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

After a few biographical notes and a short appreciation of the life work of Terry Clifford by Arthur Mandelbaum, the scene is set by her own paper on Tibetan psychiatry. Dr. Elisabeth Finckh explains the chief tenets and divisions of the fundamental Tibetan medical work, the *Rgyud-bzi*, the Four Treatises, Four Tantras or Four Roots as it is called in Mongolian. This is usually described as dating from 750 CE with additions made during the 11th century when it was discovered in a pillar of Samye Monastery in Tibet. Possibly further additions may have been made during the 17th century when it was first printed. She illustrated diagnosis, therapy and the taste and action (potency) of medicines by means of the symbol of the tree of medicine depicted on thankas used by Tibetans as teaching material. The questions of origin and dating of the *Rgyud-bzi* are treated by Dr. Trogawa and Dr. Dakpa. Dr. Trogawa describes the medical aspect of death and after-death experiences and the birth following upon them. Professor Emmerick compares medical thankas, including those of the tree of medicine, he has photographed in the Medical School in Lhasa with thankas on the same subject elsewhere. Dr. Dakpa concentrates on the thanka which deals with the subject of embryology spanning the time from the end of the death experience to the beginning of a new life at birth. Professor Bawden describes—1. the Library holdings of Mongolian traditional medical works in the Mongolian People's Republic, China, Japan, the United States, Britain, Germany, Denmark and Sweden. He then—2. deals with monographs and handbooks summarising Mongolian classical works, ultimately derived from Tibetan works, on practice and plant and animal remedies. They are of special interest because most of the material remains untranslated into western languages and presents a challenge for the future. His—3. subject is concerned with popular handbooks on folk remedies consisting of either natural substances or, on the other hand, divination for diagnostic purposes and subsequent recitations, substitution rituals, and the propitiation and expelling of demons for cures. And finally—4. the use of classical Tibetan

medicine by Mongols today and the revision and re-editing of classical works for this purpose. At the end a few biographical details of the contributors are given.

I should like to express my gratitude to Dr. Nigel Allan, my successor as Curator of Oriental Books and Manuscripts at the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, for many useful suggestions, and to Dr. Gyurme Dorje for editing Arthur Mandelbaum's notes on Terry Clifford.

The transliteration of Tibetan words has been preserved in the convention followed by each contributor. In front of The transliteration of Tibetan words has been preserved in the convention followed by each contributor. In front of Dr. Clifford's contribution a list of the Anglo-American divergent transliterations is appended which also applies to the papers by Dr. Trogawa and Professor Bawden. In front of Dr. Finckh's contribution the German divergencies which also apply to Professor Emmerick's paper, and in front of Dr. Dakpa's contribution the French transliterations are appended. Finally the reader will find a comparative table of English, French and German transliterations of those letters which differ from each other, with the Tibetan original letters on the left-hand side.