

BOOK REVIEW

J.K. Rechung(ed): Richardson Paper. Contributed to the *Bulletin of Tibetology* (1965-1992) by Hugh Richardson. Gangtok (Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology), 1993. xii + 169 pp.

Hugh E. Richardson spent a total of nine years at the British, later Indian mission at Lhasa. No Westerner has ever spent a longer period at Lhasa, and certainly none has a more intimate knowledge of life in Central Tibet before the Chinese occupation.

The *Bulletin of Tibetology* was launched in 1964 by the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology (since 1975 known as the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology). Since 1965 Richardson has been a regular contributor to this journal. In the present volume, these papers, totalling eighteen, are conveniently brought together. They form an impressive contribution to the study of the history, ancient as well as modern, of Tibet. As the *Bulletin of Tibetology* is not always available in libraries in the West, this volume (only marred by the curious singular form "Paper" in the title) is most welcome, and is at the same time a tribute to the still active dean of Tibetan studies in the West. The usefulness of the volume is increased by an updated, complete bibliography of H.E. Richardson's publications.

courtesy : University of Oslo

Bulletin of Tibetology: aspects of classical Tibetan medicine, special volume of '993, Gangtok, Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology, 1993, pp. xii, 128., Rs. 245

In this special issue of the *Bulletin of Tibetology* Marianne Winder has edited the proceedings of a symposium held at the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London, on 18 April 1986. As pointed out by Rechung Rinpoche in the preface, the volume is dedicated in honour of the late Terry Clifford's life work by Arthur Mandelbaum, has been unintentionally omitted and will appear in the February 1995 issue of the *Bulletin of Tibetology*. Winder's 'General Introduction' (pp.i-ii) is followed by Clifford's own contribution, 'Tibetan psychiatry and mental health' (pp.3-14). This is a study of three chapters (pp.77-9) devoted to demonic possession, madness and epilepsy, from the third of the *rGyud bzhi*, the "Four Treatises" which are the foundation of Tibetan medicine. The author argues that Tibetan psychiatry is a complete tradition of a etiology, diagnosis and treatment, as

well as a holistic system related to the Buddhist doctrine.

The second paper, 'Diagnosis and therapy according to the *rGyud-bzi*' (pp. 17-35), by Elizabeth Finckh, deals with 180 terms found in chapters 4 and 5 of the first of the "Four Treatises" concerning diagnosis (observation, feeling the pulse and questioning) and therapy (nutrition, behaviour and medicaments). This traditional classification is illustrated in two painted scrolls appended to Ronald Emmerick's paper in the same volume (pls ES 12-3).

In 'Past, present and future life in Tibetan medicine' (pp.40-52), Trogawa Rinpoche discusses chapters 2 and 7 of the second of the *rGyud bzhi*, dealing with death and birth: presages of on-coming death, the intermediate experience between death and rebirth known as *bar-do*, and physical and environmental circumstances conditioning birth. The author closely relates medical notions to the Buddhist doctrine, and defines Tibetan medicine as "an interrelated combination of philosophy and practice" (p.41). When speaking of conception, Trogawa accepts the Western biological notion of the union of semen and ovum (p.48), which, as pointed out by Nawang Dakpa in his paper, 'Certain problems of embryology according to the Tibetan medical tradition' (pp. 82-95), is unknown to traditional Tibetan medicine (p.84). Nawang Dakpa deals with some points of embryology according to the *Vaidury sngon-po* ('Blue Beryl'), the famous commentary to the *rGyud bzhi*, written in 1678-1688 by the great scholar and lay regent of Tibet. Sangs-rgyas-rgya-mtsho. The whole process of conception and birth is conveniently illustrated by two of the twelve black-and-white plates appended to Emmerick's paper (ES16).

Emmerick's contribution. 'Some Tibetan medical tanks' (pp.56-78), is a detailed analysis of sixteen painted scrolls photographed during the author's visit to the Medical and Astrological College of Lhasa in 1983. Emmerick has compared these pictures with relevant Tibetan medical iconographic sources published up to 1988. The paintings belong to a series of seventy-nine scrolls, the earliest set of which was commissioned by Sangs-rgyas-rgya-mtsho to illustrate his *Vaidury sngon-po*. Although a set has been recently published by Serindia in *Tibetan medical paintings* (by Y Parfionovitch, G Dorje and F Meyer, London, 1992), Emmerick's contribution is interesting in as much as it shows variants between paintings

belonging to different sets, both in the iconography and in the captions.

A place apart is occupied by Charles Bawden's paper. 'Written and printed sources for the study of Mongolian medicine' (pp. 100-25), where the author, besides classifying the literature on the subject, attempts to assess the bearing which the Tibetan medical tradition had upon Mongolian medicine. Biographical notes on the contributors are appended to the volume (pp.126-8).

It is pity that the publication of these proceedings should have been delayed for so many years and followed that of *Tibetan medical paintings*, which have provided so much new information, especially concerning the Tibetan materia medica. In spite of this handicap, *Aspects of classical Tibetan medicine* is a useful contribution to the history of Tibetan medicine and shows that the only possible approach to such a complicated topic is the close collaboration of Western and Tibetan physicians, linguists and historians.

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**Courtesy : MEDICAL HISTORY, THE WELLCOME INSTITUTE FOR THE
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