SHORT REVIEWS

TIBETAN MEDICINE.

By Rechung Rinpoche Jampal Kunzang. Publications of the Wellcome Institute of the History of Medicine, New Series, Vol. XXIV, London 1973. *viii*+340 *pp.*, 20 *plates and frontispiece.*

Medicine was one of the sciences (*rig-pa*) studied in the monasteries of Tibet until the disruption of monastic life in 1959. A comprehensive history of Tibetan medicine remains to be written, but it is at least clear that it has been influenced by Chinese as well as Indian medical tradition, and that it has recourse to a variety of methods, including herbal and mineral pills, powders, etc., dietary rules, surgery, cupping, bloodletting, and moxa.

Although fully integrated in the over-all pattern of Mahāyāna Buddhism in Tibet, medicine nevertheless retained a high degree of autonomy and was—within the limits imposed by the specific history and culture of Tibet—an empirical branch of knowledge, as evidenced, for instance, by its highly sophisticated methods of diagnosis, based primarily on examination of the pulse and the urine.

The qualifications of the Rev. Rechung Rinpoche for writing this volume are unique, and in certain respects it is the most informative work yet to appear on the subject of Tibetan medicine in a European language. Born in Lhasa in an aristocratic family and recognized at the age of thirteen as an incarnation of the former abbot of Rechung (*Ras-čhuṅ*) Monastery south of Lhasa,[1] he studied medicine in its traditional form in Tibet before seeking refuge outside that country as a consequence of the events of 1959. He is at present attached to the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology in Gangtok (Sikkim).

Rechung Rinpoche is among the small but growing number of Tibetan scholars who combine traditional erudition with familiarity with Western scholarship and mastery of English or other European languages.[2] It is extremely encouraging

1 The monastery – a *bKa-brgyud-pa* one - is situated on the spur of the hill separating the *Yar-kluṅs* and the *Phyoṅ-rgyas* valleys. Cf. A. Ferrari, Mk'yen brtse's Guide to the Holy Place of Central Tibet, Serie Orientale Roma, Vol. XVI, p. 127 n. 265.

2 The most important contribution from a Tibetan scholar of this type which has been published so far, is probably Samten G. Karmay, M. Phil., The Treasury of Good Sayings : A Tibetan History of Bon. London Oriental Series. Vol. 26, London 1972.

that these Tibetan scholars are now gradually publishing Tibetological studies with only marginal assistance from Western colleagues; this is in fact the only way in which Tibetology can become firmly established as a major Orientalist discipline and thus adequately witness to the originality and vitality of Tibetan culture.

The present volume contains a short general introduction (p. 3-7) by Marianne Winder, Keeper of Oriental Manuscripts in the Wellcome Institute; this is followed by a History of Tibetan Medicine, written (on the model of a traditional Tibetan treatise) by Rechung Rinpoche (p. 8-26), including a description of the course of studies and daily routine in the "Medicinal College" (Man-rcis khaṅ of the Tengyeling (bsTan-rgyas-gliṅ) Monastery in Lhasa,[3]) clearly based on the author's own experience. There is also a short note (p. 26-28) on contemporary Tibetan medical practice.

Then follows a translation (p. 29-97) of the Second and Fourth Books of the basic Tibetan medical text, the *rGyud-bži* ("Four Treatises"). The importance of this text has long been recognized, and in fact three separate translations of the First and Second Books appeared in Russian between 1901 and 1908 [4]; more recently

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3 For a description of *bsTan-rgyas-gliṅ* and further references, see Ferrari, op. cit., p. 93 n. 67.

4 i. Badmaev, P.A., Glavnoe rukovodstvo po vrachhneboi naukie Tibeta Zhudshi v novom perevodie P.A. Badmaeva s ego vvedeniem, raz'yasnya-yushchim osnovy tibetskoi vrachebnoi nauki (The principal textbook of Tibetan medicine rGyud-bzi in a new translation by P.A. Badmaev with his introduction explaining the basic ideas of Tibetan medicine), St. Petersburg, 1903.(Contains abridged translation of the first two books of the rGyud-bži).

ii. Pozdneev, A.M., Uchebnik tibetskoi meditsiny. S mongol'skago i tibetskago pereved A.P. (Textbook of Tibetan medicine. Translated from the Mongolian and Tibetan), St. Peterisburg, Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1908, Vol. I. (no more published). (Russian translation of the first two books of the rGyud-bži).

iii. Ul'yanov, D., Podstrochnyi perevod I-i chasti Tibetskoi meditsiny 'Zavidzhyud' (Interlinear translation of the first part of Tibetan Medicinea r*Caba'i rGyud*, i.e. the First Book of the rGyud-bži), St. Petersbug, 1901. 2nd ed. 1903.

it has been studied by J. Filliozat, " un chapitre du Rgyud-bži sur les bases de la santie et des maladies," *Asiatica*, Festschrift Friederich Weller, Leipzig 1954, p. 93–102. The present translation is the first readily accessible presentation of *this basic text*, thus constituting a major contribution to the study of Tibetan medicine.

There is an extremely valuable Bibliography (p. 98-102), listing practically everything that has been written on the subject of Tibetan medicine in European languages. One does indeed wish that similar Bibliographies existed for other areas of Tibetan culture ! However, one or two points should be mentioned in connection with this Bibliography. In the first place, texts dealing with ritual expulsion of disease caused by nāgas and other non-human beings are listed (Lalou, Laufer, Schiefner nos. 47, 48 and 62 respectively). There is no objection to including these texts, although they are not, strictly speaking, *medical* - but if one does, there should be some effort towards completeness, and a number of contributions by F.W. Thomas and R.A. Stein have in fact been omitted, viz. F.W. Thomas, Ancient Folk-Literature from north-eastern Tibet, Berlin 1957; R.A. Stein, La civilisation tibétaine, Paris 1962, p. 206-208, and Stein, Du récit au rituel dans les manuscrits tibétains de Touen-houang, in : Etudes tibétaines dédiées à la mémoire de Marcelle Lalou, Paris 1971, p. 479-547.

Further, I see no reason why the Bibliography should neglect Tibetan veterinary science, which has been intensively studied by A.-M. Blondeau, Matériaux pour l'étude de l'hippologie et de l'hippiatrie tibétaines, Publications du Centre de Recherches d'Historie et de Philologie de la IVe Section de l'EPHE, II, 2, Paris 1972.

Finally, a few items which have escaped the attention of the author may be added to the Bibliography, viz. V. Bateson, Some Observations on Tibetan medical methods, Medical Magazine, New Series, XIII (Tel Aviv, 1904), p. 690 et seq.; P. Cordier, Introduction à l'étude des traités médicaux sancrits inclus dans le Tanjur tibétain BEFEO, III (1903), p,. 604–629; J. Filliozat, Fragments des textes koutchéens de médecine et de magie. Textes, parallèles sanscrits et tibétains, traduction et glossarie. Paris, 1948; B. Laufer, Loan-Words in Tibetan, T'oung pao XVII (1916) (p. 440-41 contain a criticism of F. Hübotter, Beitrage zur Kenntnis der chinesischen sowie der tibetisch-mongolischen Pharmakologie, Berlin 1913); T. Pech, Die Tibetische Medizin, Globus, Illustrierte Zeitshrift für Lander– und Völkerkunde, LXXIII (Braunschweig 1889), p. 294 et seq.; A. Schönebeck, Tibetansk medisin, Geografisk Tidsskrift, XX (Copenhagen 1897), p. 224 et seq.; G. Schüttler, Die letzten tibetischen Orakelpriester. Psychiatrisch-neurologische Aspekte, Wiesbaden 1971, p. 58-67 ("Gesprach mit tibetischen Heilkundigen"); further the description of the formation of an embryo in *gZer-mig*. chpt. III, translation A.H. Francke, Asia Major, Vol. I (1924), p. 334-35, and a short exposition of "caring for others by means of diagnosis" (*dypad-kyis 'cho-ba*) in *gZi-brjid*, transl. D.L. Snellgrove,

The Nine Ways of Bon, London Oriental Series Vol. 18, London 1967, p. 36/37-40/41. One might also add W. Stablein, A Medical-Cultural System Among the Tibetan and Newar Buddhists : Ceremonial Medicine, Kailash, Vol. 1, no. 3, (1973) p. 193-203, and A. Wayman, Buddhist Tantric Medicine Theory on Behalf of Oneself and Others, Kailash Vol. 1, no. 2, (1973) p. 153-58. T. Burang, Tibetische Heilkunde, Zürich 1957, has appeared in English translation since the publication of the present volume: Tibetan Art of Healing, London 1974.

There are 15 anatomical charts with interesting and useful vocabularies (p. 104-129), as well as two thankas, reporoduced in colour, depicting the founder of Tibetan medicine, *g.Yu-thog Yon-tan mgon-po*, as well as various figures connected with the mythical appearance of the *rGyud-bži* (thanka I) and scences from the introduction of medicine into Tibet (thanka II). However, it is to be regretted that the reproduction of these thankas is not very clear. It may perhaps be of interest to mention that there exists in a private collection in Antwerp an exceptionally fine thanka of *g.Yu-thog Yon-tan mgon-po* (possibly "the Younger", see below). This thanka has been described in two articles : P. van der Wee, A Tibetan Thanka in a Private Collection, Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda, Vol. XIX, no. 3, March 1970, p. 265–72 (with two reproductions of the thanka); and D.I. Lauf, g. Yu-thog-pa und Medizingottheiten in Tibet, Sandoz Bulletin No. 23, Basel 1971, p. 11-24 with complete analysis and 6 colour plates of reproductions from the thanka. In addition, the thanka has been reproduced in two other publications, viz. Katalog zur Ausstellung "Tibetische Kunst", Zurich 1969, ill. no. III/82, and D.I. Lauf, Das Erbe Tibets, Bern 1972, ill. no. 76 (entire thanka, in colour).

Part II of the present volume consists of a complete translation of the biography of *g.Yu -thog Yon-tan mgon-po* (p. 147-327). The translation is made on the basis of a xyl. consisting of 149 fols. (India Office Library, Lhasa J 12), the blocks of which were were by made by Dar-mo sman-pa bLo-bzaṅ čhosṅ-grags, the physician of the Fifth Dalai Lama, and kept in the printing-house (par-khaṅ) of Žol at the foot of the Potala. Another edition was subsequently produced at Derge.

*g.*Yu-thog is considered to be the founder and patron of Tibetan medicine, although according to the traditional account, medicine was introduced into Tibet from India as early as the reign of Lha–tho tho–ri, i.e. simultaneously with the first penetration of Buddhism (p. 180-81). While one may doubt the historical validity of this tradition, there is, on the other hand, no reason to doubt that during the 8th or 9th centuries, if not earlier, medical theory and practice was brouhgt to Tibet from

surrounding countries. [5] g. Yu-thog is supposed to have lived from 786 to 911, i.e. to an age of 125; he is also supposed to have visited India on three occasions.

It is difficult to sort out fact from legend in the present biography, which is not, in any case, a contemporary or in any sense historical document, but rather a "historical novel" of the same kind as the famous "biography" of Milarepa (Mi-la ras-pa), with which our text has many traits in common.[6]

The biography of g. Yu-thog has, in fact, considerable literary merit, even in translation. The "human touch", the robust sense of humour, which is so typical of the best of Tibetan biographical literature—and of the Tibetan character—is certainly not lacking when the fifteen-year old g.Yu-thog advices king Khri-sroń lde-bcan, who had trouble with his eyes, to stop worrying about them as "you will get worse diseases than this... because horns will be growing from your knees", and tells his royal patient to "make your knee bones smooth by rubbing them with your hands". And "the king did as gYu-thog told him and his eyes recovered because he did not touch them with his hands !" (p. 195-6).

The figure of g.Yu-thog is rendered problematical by the existence of another personage, bearing the same name and being likewise revered as a great doctor, who lived in the 11th century. He is the author of numerous medical texts, one of which, a commentary to the rGyud-bži, has been published in the Śatapiṭaka Series [7].

The connection between the lives and literary output of these two figures is no doubt complicated, and remains to be elucidated; at the present moment I will only point out that the matter is further complicated by the fact that not only the Buddhists, but also the Bonpos lay claim to gYu-thog, although this claim quite clearly concerns the "*Younger*" g.Yu-thog. According to "The Treasury of Good Sayings" [8] (p. 306 line, 26) he is identical with the well-known Bonpo *gter-ston* (discoverer of

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5 It is interesting to note that a Persian (or perhaps a Byzantine Greek) doctor styled Galenos is supposed to have settled in Lhasa during the reign of *Sroń-bcan sgam-po* i.e. during the 7th century (p. 15).

6 Our text may have been composed a century or so after the "biography" of Milarepa, the author of which was *gCań-smyon He-ru-ka* (1455-1529). cf. E. Gene Smith, The Life of the Saint of Gtsań, Introduction p, 3, Śatapiṭaka series Vol. 79, New Delhi 1969.

7 Yuthok's Treatise on Tibetan Medicine, ed. L. Chandra, Śatapiṭaka Series, Vol. 72, New Delhi 1968.

8 See n. 2. Referred to henceforth as LSJ.

apocryphic writings) *Khu-cha zla-'od'bar* who was born in 1024 [9], and who is said (ibid., p. 307, line 34) to have discovered "the fourfold treatise of the (art of) healing" (gso-ba' i rgyud-la sde-bži). Likewise the Sūtra-section of the Bonpo Kanjur contains a text entitled *bDud-rci baṅ-mjod 'bum-bži i. mdo* ("The Sūtra of the 400,000 Treasuries of Nectar"). According to the author of the Index *(dkar-čhag)* of the Bonpo Kanjur, this text was "discovered" by the *gter-ston Bu-mcho Srid-pa'i rgyal-po*[10], who likewise flourished in the 11th century.[11] The text which he discovered is explicitly stated to have been 'transformed', i.e. retouched, in order to become acceptable to the Buddhists, by *Vairocana,* the famous 8th century Tibetan translator, and given the title *rGyud-bži.*[12] Among his reasons for claiming that the *rGyud-bži* is a Bonpo text, the author of the Index points out that it frequently uses the word *draṅ-sroṅ*, i.e. ṛṣi. This he considers to be a specifically Bonpo word, *draṅ-sroṅ* being, in fact, the Bonpo equivalent of the Buddhist *dge-sloṅ* (i.e. bhikṣu).[13] To this argument one must, of course, object that the mentioning of "ṛṣis" in medical literature is quite normal whenever this literature is of Indian origin; however, the Bonpos are quite correct in pointing out that a medical text like the *rGyud-bži* is not — at least in its origins — specifically Buddhist.

On the other hand, it must be pointed out that this Bonpo claim to g.Yu-thog, is denied by non-Bonpo sources; thus Vol. KA of the *Rin-čhen gter-mjod,* fol. 42a6-43a4, explains that Ku-sa sman-pa was contemporary, but not identical with g.Yu-thog, and that he lived during the 2nd *rab-byuṅ* (1087-1146) (fol. 227b6). According to Buddhist sources, the "discoverer" of the *rGyud-bži* is *Gra pa mṅon-žes,*[14] and on the thanka published by van der Wee and Lauf, a figure, whose name is indicated as *Grags-pa mṅon-gšes* is shown taking a text out of a cliff or cave. According to the *Rin-čhen gter-mjod* (KA. fol. 46, cf. TPS I, p. 258) this discovery took place in 1098. There the matter could rest, if it were not for the fact that the discovery made by Ku-cha Zla-'od bar took place in the same year, i.e. Earth-Tiger but one

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9 P. Kværne, A Chronological Table of the Bon po. The bsTan rcis of Ñi ma bstan jin, Acta Orientalia, Vol. XXXIII (1971), p. 205-248 (p. 229). Referred to hencefourth as STNN.

10 P. Kværne, The Canon of the Tibetan Bonpos, Indo-Iranian Journal, Vol. XVI, No. 1 p. 18-56 and No 2. p. 96–144 (1974). See p. 101 (K 44). Referred to henceforth as "Canon".

11 See "Canon" p. 45 (B 23).

12 See "Canon" p. 101-102.

13 See Snellgrove, The Nine Ways of Bon, p. 10.

14 G.C. Toussaint, Le Dict de Padma, Padma Thang Yig, Bibliothèque de l'Institute des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, Vol. III, Paris 1933, p. 380.

sixty-year cycle earlier, i.e. in 1038 [15]. This may be mere coincidence, but nevertheless one feels that this fact may, on the other hand, be significant, and that the *rGyud-bži* is yet another instance of a Tibetan text the origins and formation of which involve a multiple and very complicated tradition, and that the figure of g.Yu-thog may have ramifications not discernible in the later "official" tradition.

P. K.

THE ADVENTURES OF A MANCHURIAN — THE STORY OF LOBSANG THONDUP
by Sylvain Mangeot, *pp.* 82 *illustrations and maps.*
Published Collins, London, 1974, Price: n. a.

This is a remarkable tale which should be read by all who are interested in contemporary Himalayan or, in a wider sense, Central Asian events. Sylvain Margeot is no Michel Peissel, no Geogre Patterson. The hero of his story is "Lobsang"; and if the author, in his role as ghost-writer, intrudes from time to time in Lobsang's story he does so modestly and effectively to explain to the general reader the modicum of political background necessary to the understanding of Lobsang's astonishing biography. The case-history method has of course been used often in the past by anthropologists in their professional communications. But seldom, to my mind, has it been used with more telling effect by a political journalist. We have here, in Mangeot's words, a document which tells us "a great deal about the passions and divided loyalties of ordinary people in China and Central Asia during and after the Chinese Civil war - people who have never had an opportunity to tell their story and which we in the west have only been able to guess at obscurely through what has been written by ideological apologists or political historians" (p. 10).

Lobsang was born in Dairen (I shall follow the author's spellings throughout) Manchuria in 1925, the son of a prosperous Chinese business man; his mother came from a big Manchurian land-owning family settled near the Korean border. At the age of three, Lobsang was betrothed to the daughter of an important government official. At fifteen, he was sent to the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering at Tokyo University. During his last vacation home, he was married to his childhood fiancée in a traditional Manchu ceremony. In 1944, he became a Pilot Officer in the engineering branch of the Japanese Kwantung Chou army. After the atomic bombs which ended that war, he surrendered to the Soviet military authorities in Mukden and was

15 "Canon", p. 43 (B 8).

sent to Anshan by the Russians to dismantle machinery which was being taken away to Russia. Indeed, before the Chinese Nationalists arrived in this part of Manchuria in 1946, the Russians had completed a gigantic machine-looting operation. In thesummer of that year, Lobsang was sent by the Russians to a prisoner-of-war camp in Vladivostok and was then assigned to an-engineering unit in Siberia concerned with re-assembling the dismantled Japanese plants. Ultimately he was sent back with a few other Chinese prisoners-of war to Mukden to be handed over to the Kuomintang military authorities. Two months later, he entered the KMT army as a lieutenant-colonel at the age of 23. He married again. In 1948, he surrendered once more, this time to the People's Army. In 1950, he passed out of a 'change-idea' school and became senior instructor at a Tank Training Centre in the Peking region- from which appointment he resigned, less than two years later, for personal reasons. After an unhappy time as a civilian, he headed west towards Sinkiang. There he earned his living by repairing hospital equipment and married for the third time, this time with the daughter of a Chinese from Amdung and his half-Russian half-Mongolian wife. A year later, and after a journey of four and a half months, he arrived in Lhasa, where he started a mechanical work-shop. Shortly after the Dalai Lama left Lhasa for India in 1956, Lobsang as co-secretary of the local Buddhist society, left Tibet for China with a group of Lamas on a good-will tour. En route he became the lover of Dorje phag-mo. On his return to Tibet, after an accident to one of his lorries, he was arrested by the Political Branch of the Chinese Army. He spent thirteen months in jail in Lhasa. Eventually he escaped, being sheltered for a few days by the State Oracle, and made his way through the Khams-pa held areas to the monastery of Dorje phag-mo. After a month there, he felt compelled to leave for Bhutan. Then, after crossing the Indian frontier, he was imprisoned by the Indian authorities at Misamari. He walked out of that prison, went to Calcutta and, after a short stay in Bombay, journeyed to Delhi. In December, 1960, as an accredited official to the Government of Bhutan, Lobsang re-entered Bhutan to set up a workshop concerned with road-building projects. In August of the following year, he married a Bhutanese girl. He also worked for some time on the Dzong Reconstruction Scheme at Thimpu. He was then arrested because of his role as bodyguard to Lhendup Dorje and spent four and a half months in Thimpu dungeon. In March 1965 he was released and made his way to Nepal. Since then, with his Bhutanese wife and four children, he has lived mainly in Nepal

I have given only the bare outline of the story. After so many chronicles of travellers' misfortunes on the roads to Kathmandu, and the spate of ill-informed rubbish generated by the exodus of a fraction of the population of Tibet to India in the wake of the Dalai Lama, this narrative brings with it a breath of fresh air and commonsense which is refreshing This is undoubtedly not the whole of Lobsang's story, and

it may contain minor errors of fact; events may have been forgotten or suppressed for obvious reasons; and many names are spelt unscientifically. But I believe the story, as Mangeot tells it, to be basically true. Voltaire would have liked this book.

A. W. M.

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