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CONTENTS

I. ARTICLES

1. "Early Buddhism and the Urban Revolution," by Bal-
krishna Govind Gokhale 7
2. "Pilgrimage and the Structure of Sinhalese Buddhism," by
John C. Holt 23
3. "A New Approach to the Intra-Mādhyamika Confrontation
over the Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika Methods of Refu-
tation," by Shohei Ichimura 41
4. "'Later Mādhyamika' in China: Some Current Perspectives
on the History of Chinese *Prajñāpāramitā* Thought," by
Aaron K. Koseki 53
5. "The Doctrine of the Buddha-Nature in the Mahāyāna *Ma-
hāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*," by Ming-Wood Liu 63
6. "The Development of Language in Bhutan," by Lopon
Nado 95
7. "Prolegomena to an English Translation of the *Sūtrasamuc-
caya*," by Bhikku Pāsādikā 101
8. "The Issue of the Buddha as *Vedagū*, with Reference to the
Formation of the *Dhamma* and the Dialectic with the
Brahmins," by Katherine K. Young 110

II. BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

1. *Focus on Buddhism. A Guide to Audio-Visual Resources for Teach-
ing Religion*, edited by Robert A. McDermott; and *Spiri-
tual Discipline in Hinduism, Buddhism, and the West*, by
Harry M. Buck 121

2. <i>Fundamentals of Tibetan Medicine</i> , ed. and tr. by T.J. Tsarong, et al.	124
3. <i>Pratītyasamutpādistisubhāṣitahṛdayam of Acārya Tsong kha pa</i> , tr. by Gyaltsen Namdol and Ngawang Samten	127
4. <i>Répertoire du Canon Bouddhique Sino-Japonais, Edition de Tai-shō. Fascicule Annex du Hōbōgirin</i> , compiled by Paul Demiéville, Hubert Durt, and Anna Seidel	128
5. <i>Three Worlds According to King Ruang: Thai Buddhist Cosmology</i> , tr. by Frank E. Reynolds and Mani B. Reynolds	132
6. <i>The Way to Shambhala</i> , by Edwin Bernbaum	133

III. NOTES AND NEWS

1. Computing and Buddhist Studies	136
2. Terms of Sanskrit and Pali Origin Acceptable as English Words	137
3. A Report on an Educational Television/Film Series on Tibetan Buddhism	138
4. Proposal for an Index of Publications in Buddhist Studies	141
5. 6th Conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies	143

IV. OBITUARY

Isaline Blew Horner (1896–1981)	145
Contributors	150
Contributors	150

"wheel of life" is held not in the jaws of "illusion" (p. 26), but of Yāma, the Lord of Death. A lama, contrary to what Prof. Buck says (p. 24), is not necessarily a "priest," and only occasionally is a *tulku*. Tibetan meditation (with which Prof. Buck seems rather unfamiliar) is founded on considerably more than the "basic texts" listed by Prof. Buck, viz., the publications of Evans-Wentz (p. 24). In addition, there are various misspellings, misprints, and misplaced diacriticals, which more careful editing might have eliminated.

Despite its limitations, *Spiritual Discipline in Hinduism, Buddhism, and the West* may be used profitably, if cautiously, by teachers of courses in Asian religion or comparative religion, who may find its discussions occasionally stimulating, and its reviews of audio-visual materials useful.

Roger Jackson

Fundamentals of Tibetan Medicine, edited and translated by T. J. Tsarong, et al. Dharamsala: Tibetan Medical Centre, 1981.

One of the biggest problems in reviewing a book on Tibetan medicine is deciding on the proper approach to take. Should one approach the subject as an example of cultural history or anthropology? Should one see the book as an example of history of science? Some, I know, would take it as a medical textbook with no questions asked; but in the interests of maintaining neutrality, I shall take none of the above approaches, and yet all of them at the same time, by first discerning the purpose of the book, and then examining whether or not the book succeeds in its purpose.

The purpose of the book according to the publisher, is to "establish the Tibetan art of healing on a correct academic basis" in order to make a presentation to the "international community." The publishers complain, and in some cases justifiably, that the few works published on the subject have often created "much misunderstanding and confusion." The publisher goes on to name a number of authorities who had a hand in the work so that no one can doubt that this work was not the product of someone's mistaken imagination.

The editors, along with the translator, echo the publisher's sentiments, saying again that though the international commu-

nity has become "increasingly aware of the rich cultural heritage of Tibet," Tibetan medicine has become the victim of "much neglect, prejudice and indifference." Therefore, they are going to do their best in correcting the situation.

The book is divided into three parts. Part one is to serve as an introduction to the basic concepts of Tibetan medicine. Part two is to go a little deeper, into the causes of disease, its diagnosis and its treatment. Part three, according to the editors, is for the serious student. There are also appendices. The arrangement is such that there are needless repetitions. In addition, some concepts are mentioned, but not explained. For instance, the text gives varying explanations of the five Indian elements: earth, water, fire, air and space, but neglects the five Chinese elements: earth, water, fire, metal and wood. This is a shame, since the Chinese elements appear in two important illustrations, leaving the reader to wonder what they are. There is also the matter of the use of the word "iatrogenesis." The editors have it mean the natural course of a disease. In fact, it means a disease caused by medicine.

I don't mean to nitpick, but if it is the purpose of the book to present Tibetan medicine to the international community, some improvements should be made. For instance, part three, which does little but repeat the rest of the book, is in Tibetan. I would suggest to the publishers that it is not the people who have taken the time to learn Tibetan and are able to read a medical text in that language that need to be convinced of the worth of Tibetan culture.

In a similar vein, it is not very convincing to say to a Western audience that Tibetan medicine is not based on "witchcraft and magic as some misinformed critics have noted," (p. 41) when 13 pages earlier it says that if the doctor is unable to read the pulse of a patient, then he can check the pulse of the patient's wife in order to make a diagnosis. There are other such instances, which I will not mention here.

In the last analysis, maybe what this book really does is present a modern Tibetan view of a tradition existing in a world dominated by Western ideas. The book's dedication gives a hint of this: "To the people of Tibet who must preserve their cultural heritage and identity at all costs." The book really represents an attempt to do just this. It is evidence of a determination to preserve Tibetan culture on the part of some of its members. In this it succeeds, at least partially.

The book is unlikely to convert Western doctors to Tibetan

medicine, though I know of many who are interested in it for its possible practical (as opposed to theoretical) applications. There is interest in its pharmacology and methods of diagnosis, as well as methods of therapeutics, such as the Tibetan version of acupuncture (which, unfortunately, is not well treated here). The statement that Tibetan medicine is part of a great tradition and that it was first taught by the Buddha will be compelling to a few apart from Asianists, Buddhists and others already somewhat outside the mainstream of Western culture.

However, for those outside the mainstream, the book might be interesting. I think the book would be helpful for one wanting to read Tibetan medical texts, because it translates many terms and gives an outline of the basics. There is nothing in it that hasn't been published before, but here, it is all included in one small and convenient book. The tables and appendices are helpful in organizing information.

One high point, which should not go unnoted, is footnote #2, which weakens the common claim that the *rGyud bzhi* was originally an Indian work. This sound point of scholarship however, is undercut in note #14. There, the author claims that Tibetan physicians knew about the circulation of the blood long before Harvey because the *rGyud bzhi* said that the blood left from and returned to the region of the heart. This is a common error among apologists for traditional medicine. That the blood came and went everywhere was never in dispute in the West. What Harvey did was describe how the blood circulated, how it went out through arteries and back through veins, what the anatomical differences between arteries and veins were, what part of the heart the blood from the body entered and went out, and what part blood from the lungs entered and went out. This is something the Tibetans did not do.

The idea behind the book, a presentation of Tibetan medicine for the international community, is a good one, but a revised version seems necessary. As a reference work, it has some value, but it is too superficial. As a manual for practitioners, it is also too superficial, though it might inspire some to exploration. As an apology for Tibetan medicine, it is a failure. As a document for historians and social scientists it is evidence of the ways in which a people try and preserve their culture, in what may very well be a losing battle.

E. Todd Fenner