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Tibetan Medicine: With Special Reference to Yogaśataka, by Vaidya Bhagwan Dash. Dharamsala, India: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1976. pp. xvi + 390

The study of Tibetan medicine is still a very sparse field. Of the thirty-one books and thirty-five articles listed in Rechung Rinpoche's "Bibliography of European Works on Tibetan Medicine" in his *Tibetan Medicine* (1973), many treat the subject only incidently and some are but brief notices. Still other books are totally uncritical in their approach, with either unabashed admiration for, or a prejudiced condemnation of, this medical system.

Bhagwan Dash would contribute to this sparse field with his book, *Tibetan Medicine*. He wrote this book as his Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Delhi, though he does not say which department he wrote it for. Previous to this dissertation, however, he was already a *vaidya*, an Ayurvedic physician of some repute, I gather, as he has already published some books in that field. The writing of a book on Tibetan medicine by one with his training and experience ought certainly be welcomed. This is especially so considering the technical difficulties involved in the study of the subject. However, his book falls short of the expectations one might have, for a number of reasons.

The book itself consists of two major parts. The first part is an introduction to Tibetan medicine in general. It is here that the disappointment begins. It appears to be directionless, a collection of notes rather than a part of a research paper. For instance, he says that the Tibetans learned medicine from India. Then he says that while pulse and urine examinations are described in Tibetan works, they are "conspicuous by their absence in Ayurvedic classics" (p.4). He cites as an example the *Rgyud-bñi*, the primary textbook of medicine in Tibet, as having chapters on such examinations, then points out that the *Rgyud-bñi* is the translation of the Sanskrit *Amṛta Aṣṭanga Gubhyopadesa Tantra*, which no one in India seems to have ever heard of. He then stops and goes on to talk about something entirely different. At no point in the book does he pick up and deal with the questions these statements raise, nor does he seem to realize that a question has been raised. Perhaps the *Rgyud-bñi* is not a translation of a single work at all but a Tibetan compilation of different words both Indian and Chinese, where examination of the pulse was (and still is) most common.

The rest of the first part is much the same, a string of notes mentioning items of use and interest here and there but never putting anything together. In fact, at some points his notes contradict themselves. For instance, on page 3, Dash writes "Bon, the native religion of that country, was completely wiped out of Tibet . . ." This is a curious statement in itself; yet on page 48 he talks about publications in 1972 by the Bon-po Monastic Centre. There are other problematic points as well. Dash has a chapter entitled "Ayurveda in Pre-Buddhist Tibet and Secular Medical Literature." One might reasonably expect from such a title a discussion on pre-Buddhist Indo-Tibetan contacts and the practice of medicine in Tibet outside the scope of the monastic centers, both of which are interesting and unexplored topics. Instead, what Dash offers the reader is but four pages with the topic "Ayurveda in Pre-Buddhist Tibet" covered in one sentence that says because the Bon-po practice Ayurveda, Ayurveda must have arrived in Tibet before Buddhism.

All this is not to say that the first section is entirely bad. Many of his notes are useful and can serve as a sort of reference work. Further, they do raise questions, as I have pointed out; however, the reader should be warned not to expect more than this.

The second part of the book is much better. Here Dash has made a critical edition of the Tibetan versions of Nagarjuna's *Yogaśataka*, making use of the Derge, Narthang and Peking editions along with the edition made by Bu-ston. He translates the Tibetan back into Sanskrit and then compares this with another critical edition he has made of Vararuci's work of the same name. It is here that Bhagwan Dash's years of experience as an Ayurvedic physician can be appreciated. The *Yogaśataka* is an extremely terse text, meant as a manual and reference work. As the title implies (*The 100 Recipes*), the work is a list of short formulas and what they are used for: X mixed with Y overcome Z etc. Being of this nature only someone like Dash could handle it adequately.

In addition to the two critical editions he has made, Dash also translates the two into English. That is, he attempts to do so. This is the disappointing part of the second section. Quite simply, he failed to complete his translation: almost half the English translation is still in Sanskrit, and in some cases the only English in the sentence are words like "of" and "and". It is not the case either that the Sanskrit words involved have no English equivalent. His glossary at the end of the book testifies to that. Nor is there any uniformity in his type of translation, for a word in Sanskrit on one page might appear in English a few pages later.

If I seem a little harsh in this review, it is only because the book might have been very good. Instead, it seems incomplete. Had Dash thought about his notes a little more and given them direction, and had

he given an English translation as promised, the book would have been a fine contribution to both Buddhology and the History of Medicine. As it is, it is a shame that after the years of work mentioned in the preface, Bhagwan Dash couldn't have spent just a little more time polishing his work before he published it.

E. Todd Fenner