

Book Reviews

The issue is important, not least because “management” was the basis for moral treatment, and Foucault—whose view of it has been followed so widely and uncritically—failed to grasp the cultural basis of that approach in England. For someone out of control, being controlled was the first step in the restoration of sanity, but Pargeter lays emphasis on the need for this to be done always in a humane way. He is particularly critical of laymen with dubious qualifications who set up private madhouses—a situation that has unfortunately returned to relevance, 200 years later. Amongst psychological measures, he emphasizes “catching the eye”, which Dr Willis used in treating George III, but did not describe. Pargeter’s list of Errata ends with the charming general disclaimer, “other inaccuracies, it is hoped, will be excused”.

Also echoing the theme of moral management is Thomas Trotter’s essay on drunkenness of 1804, since he advises clinicians to obtain ascendancy over the patient by emphasizing moral arguments, so making the habit of heavy drinking cease. Roy Porter is again the editor here and, although finding the work “puzzlingly anecdotal” and lacking wholly original ideas, nevertheless rates it “a pioneering contribution to the understanding of alcoholism” as a medical disorder. Pargeter showed awareness of the social and psychological factors which then favoured heavy drinking, at the same time as asserting that its problems fell within the medical domain. Just as abuse of heroin and marijuana spread in the 1960s through cultural and technical changes, so the later eighteenth century experienced an enormous increase in alcohol consumption because agricultural and industrial development produced grain surpluses, larger urban populations, and more ready money. Pargeter saw the habitual drunkenness of his time as part of a civilizing process which had got out of control and had opened a Pandora’s box of unexpected consequences. It is a view that remains highly relevant.

The claim for this series, then, that it will “break new ground in the history of psychiatry” seems a very reasonable one.

Hugh Freeman, *British Journal of Psychiatry*

ELISABETH FINCKH, *Foundations of Tibetan medicine*, vol. 1, London, Watkins, 1978, pp. 103, illus., £9.95, vol. 2, 2nd ed., London, Shaftesbury, 1988, pp. 126, £9.95; *idem*, *Studies in Tibetan medicine*, Ithaca, N.Y., Snow Lion, 1988, pp. 77, \$9.95.

YESHI DONDEN, *Health through balance*, Ithaca, N.Y., Snow Lion, 1986, pp. 252, illus., £10.95.

TOM DUMMER, *Tibetan medicine and other holistic health care systems*, London, Penguin Arkana, 1989, pp. xxiv, 307, illus., £8.99.

RECHUNG RINPOCHE, *Histoire de la médecine tibétaine. Vie de Gyu-thog-pa l’Ancien*, Paris, Le Chardon, 1989, pp. 278, illus., Fr 390 (leather-bound numbered copies Fr. 860).

Traditional medicine is sought after more and more to complement orthodox Western medicine. Both have their value in the scheme of things. Tibetan medicine is Buddhist medicine and therefore equally helpful in healing body and mind.

Dr Finckh is a naturopath from Hamburg. Her two-volume work is a meticulously scholarly exposition of the Tibetan medical system, with a list of the chief Tibetan works on the subject, and with a detailed analysis of the “trees of medicine with their branches, leaves and fruit” encompassing the *rGyud bzhi* (*Four Treatises* or *Four Tantras*), the fundamental medieval Tibetan work on the subject. Her *Studies* are an abridged version of this, with an additional chapter on pulsology that compares it with the Chinese system. She bases her exposition on two passages from this work in the original Tibetan transliterated into Western script, and has worked out a terminology for the German (her work being an English translation from the German) and English translation of the technical terms.

Dr Yeshi Donden has been for many years the personal physician to the Dalai Lama. While his text is based on the *Four Tantras*, there are several sections of questions where his answers to a modern audience bring the subject matter from the medieval framework of its composition between 750 and 1100 CE home into our own time and place. His assumptions will not always be ours, and the reader will have to work out where he or she stands in those matters. The special value of this work is that it is seen through Tibetan eyes.

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Tom Dummer is an English osteopath who compares Tibetan medicine with such Western alternative systems as Western herbalism, homeopathy, and osteopathy. The first part of the book, however, is taken up by the Buddhist view of the body in relation to the universe, Buddhist cosmology, Tantric physiology, and Buddhist psychological counselling. Here the ancient teachings are evaluated from the modern Western point of view and collated with Western ways, each having their place in the variegated healing dance.

Finally, the history of Tibetan medicine and life of the ninth-century Tibetan physician gYu-thog, out of print in the English version called *Tibetan medicine in original texts*, have now been resuscitated in a French translation which is beautifully and lavishly illustrated.

Marianne Winder, Wellcome Institute

JOHN K. CRELLIN and JANE PHILPOTT, *Herbal medicine past and present*, vol. 1, *Trying to give ease*, 8vo, pp. x, 335, \$35.00, vol. 2, *A reference guide to medicinal plants*, 8vo, pp. 549, illus., \$59.50, \$19.95 (paperback), Durham, North Carolina, Duke University Press, 1990.

The authors of these two fat volumes, respectively a medical historian and a botanist, were teaching a medicinal plant course at Duke University when they were invited to evaluate the work of an elderly herbalist with an impressively large practice of some 2,000 people yearly. This was in the uplands of north-east Alabama, an area outstandingly rich botanically and intermediate culturally between the Appalachians and the deep South. Tommie Bass proved to be a gifted narrator with an exceptional memory, and over an eight-year period an enormous mass of information was elicited from him and from others in his local community about the remedies in circulation and the social context in which they were used. The result is a study unique in the range of its probing, which will surely prove of lasting value to anthropologists, medical sociologists, and students of folklife no less than to members of other disciplines with a specialist interest, for one reason or another, in herbs and the how and why of their utilization.

The first volume consists in the main of an exhaustive account of the Bass practice in all its manifold aspects (including self-treatment and popular ideas about disease), accompanied by nearly 50 pages of end-notes and nearly 60 of annotated bibliography. An introductory chapter provides a helpful historical overview of Western phytotherapy since classical times, paying special attention to the respective contributions to herbal lore of empiricism, theoretical concepts and reliance on analogy, the role of sensory properties in the rationalizing of herb reputations, and how far the indigenous North American flora has been exploited for medicinal purposes. In this last connection the authors note the problems inherent in isolating genuinely native (i.e., Amerindian) uses from those derived from the early colonists—problems all too familiar to anyone who has attempted to separate the basic and autochthonous from later, immigrant overlays in other regions of the world. No more than about seventeen remedies, it has been suggested, have been taken into mainstream regular medical use from Amerindian practice, though a good many more have been adopted domestically. At the same time reliance on naturalized European plants has to a surprising degree persisted: Bass was found to be using such age-old British standbys as comfrey, dandelion, elder, ground ivy, and mullein, among others.

The second volume, intended to stand as a work in its own right, is essentially a *catalogue raisonné* of the various herbs known to Bass, with his description of their uses and an editorial commentary in each case placing the plant in question in its wider historical and pharmacological context. With this comes a further annotated bibliography of another 60 pages.

The two together constitute a major milestone of scholarship in a field that for far too long has been deplorably notable for the all-too-general lack of that.

David Allen, Wellcome Institute