

Book Reviews

ANTHONY DENT (editor), *The horse through fifty centuries of civilization*, London, Phaidon Press, 1974, 4to, pp. 288, illus., £8.95.

For more than five thousand years until about sixty years ago, the history of the horse was the history of man. Although the dog has been man's best animal friend, the horse has been much more a part of his civilization than any other of his domesticated animals. As a means of transport in commerce, agriculture, recreation, warfare, and sport, and even as food, the horse has been man's foremost ally. In medicine it has provided physiologists, pathologists, immunologists and others with an experimental animal of great value and potential. And even today when its traditional role in association with man has lapsed, the horse as a manufactory of biological products continues to serve.

Anthony Dent, an authority on the history of the horse, provides here an anthology of readings on this subject, supported by a splendid array of excellent illustrations; there are 236 in all, with thirty-two in colour, but some do not relate to the adjacent text. It begins with a survey of 'The age of the horse', then, in chronological sequence from the Hittites to the early twentieth century, the history of man's association with the horse is told by citations from contemporary documents selected by Julian Hall, and each briefly introduced. Unfortunately, the full references to the extracts are not given, and this diminishes the usefulness of the book as a source of reference. Also, as so often happens in British and American anthologies, material readily available in English predominates and this leads to imbalance.

Nevertheless the book can be highly recommended as an authoritative text on the horse as both a zoological entity and a social necessity in human history. Mr. Dent, as well as presenting accepted fact, also deals with issues concerning the horse, both biological and historical, which have not yet been resolved; in this regard more could have been made of the significance of the introduction of the stirrup. His opinions on such problems add a stimulating element to an elegant and informative book.

GUENTHER B. RISSE (editor), *Modern China and traditional medicine*, Springfield, Ill., Charles C Thomas, 1973, 8vo, pp. viii, 167, \$8.95.

In April 1972 a symposium on Chinese medicine was held in Madison, Wisconsin, and this book contains expanded forms of the papers presented, each with a bibliography, in addition to a general bibliography. There is first an excellent historical background of traditional Chinese medicine and of traditional medicine in modern China. Then follows a section on acupuncture, and one on health care delivery in modern China.

The increasing interest in China, as relations with the West grow, was one of the stimuli for the symposium. It is clear that the achievement in medicine and public health is held by the Chinese to be one of the greatest advancements made possible by the Maoist regime. Acupuncture anaesthesia, the bare-foot doctor, family planning, and post-traumatic reconstructive surgery are the highlights. It is valuable to have discussions of these aspects of modern Chinese medicine gathered together, although most of the information can be found elsewhere. There is no adequate explanation given for the apparent success of acupuncture, and three years later it is still awaited.