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BOOK REVIEW

G. Jan Meulenbeld and Dominik Wujastyk (ed.), *Studies on Indian Medical History*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd. Hardcover, Reprint edition, 2001, pp.243, Rs.325.00.

Studies on Indian Medical History edited by G. Jan Meulenbeld and Dominik Wujastyk constitutes Volume V of the series on Indian Medical Tradition published by Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Delhi. The first edition was based on the Proceedings of the International Workshop on priorities in the study of Indian Medicine organised by the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine in London and was printed in U.K. in 1987. The volume under review is the reprinted edition of the same without any addition made in Delhi in 2001.

The volume has three parts : Part I - The Classical tradition, Part II - Colonial interactions and Part III - Modern observations. The division is based on the availability of source materials, and the involvement of different historians, indologists, medical anthropologists and pharmacognosists engaged in such activities. Part I is divided into seven chapters, first dealing with basic concepts of Indian pahrmacology - taste (*rasa*), post - digestive taste (*vipāka*), potency (*vīrya*), and specific action (*prabhāva*); each is further dealt with in detail. Other chapters cover the topics like identification of vedic plants, *pāṭā* and *soma* by Rahul Peter Das; philosophical underpinnings of *Caraka Saṃhitā*, by different schools of thought, Nyāya Vaiśeṣika and Sāṅkhya, in understanding entities like *manas, ātman upadhā, mokṣa* by Antonella Combea; the symptoms of epilepsy as available inTibetan text *Rgyud - bzi* and *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya* of Vāgbhaṭa by R.E. Emmerick; the use of *Vaidūrya*, and magical formularies as prescribed in Indian Medicine by Mariann Winder and Arion Rosu. Attention is also drawn on the Ms. collection and importances of *Mādhavacikitsā* by Johannes Laping. The contributors of these chapters are eminent scholars and have succeeded in unearthing, though at times disjointed, many new materials. The Part II of the book deals with the colonial interactions. It is divided

into three chapters. The first chapter deals with the Indian and European practitioners of medicine from the sixteenth century and the reaction of Indian people to the introduction of European medicine in India since the Portuguese which has been written by T.J.S. Patterson. The second chapter covers studies of how the British dealt with the introduction of smallpox vaccination in India. This chapter has been contributed by the well known historian Dominik Wujastyk. The third chapter has been dealt with by Waltrand Ernst about the British Indian encounter in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. This period was marked by the presence of the English rule in India which was visible by the creation of Courts of Law and other measures of social control, such as the erection of public hospitals, dispensaries and lunatic asylums. Part III which is the last part of the book is divided into four chapters. The first chapter gives an interesting account of a medicinal plant *Centella asiatica* written jointly by the scholars R.P. Labadie and K.T.D. De Silva. The second chapter evaluates the methods designed for the assessment of doctor-patient relationships for consultations in ayurvedic medicine. The contributors of this chapter are D. von Schmadel and B. Hockkirchen. The third chapter has been written by G.M. Carstairs, a psychiatrist about the contrasting treatment of witches in three communities in Mewar - Sujarupa, Delwara and Bhils. The last chapter by Johannes Laping highlights the dialogue in research on traditional Indian medicine. The details of the contributors given in the last part of the book is very informative. The Index too is well prepared and exhaustive.

This volume is a collection of papers presented at the workshop and carries important analysis of different facets of ayurvedic knowledge which I am sure will provide a deeper and better understanding of the basic history and principles of ayurveda for individuals who have interest in the subject. The book is rightly priced considering the wealth of information it contains on Indian medical history for students in this field. It is hoped that the book will benefit students of Indian medical history in general for whom it provides a survey of possible approaches to the subject.

Kiran Arora