

Newsletter

Number 9 November 1986

Centre d'Etudes de l'Inde et de l'Asie du Sud EHESS, 54 bd Raspail, 75006 Paris, France



International Association for the Study of Traditional Asian Medicine

President: Prof. P.U. Unschuld (Munich/W. Germany).
Vice-Presidents: Prof. Ma Kanwen (Beijing/China), Hakim M. Said (Islamabad/Pakistan), Prof. K.N. Udupa (Varanasi/India). **Honorary Fellows:** Dr. Li Jingwei (Beijing/China), Prof. J. Needham (Cambridge/U.K.), Dr. Y. Otsuka (Tokyo/Japan), Prof. S. Reddy (Hyderabad/India). **Secretary-General:** Dr. M. Weiss (Cambridge/U.S.A.). **Associate Secretary:** Dr. D. Wujastyk (London/U.K.). **Associate Administrator:** Ms. J. Parkinson (Canberra/Australia). **Publications Editor:** Dr. F. Zimmermann (Paris/France). **Treasurer:** Prof. M. Lock (Montreal/Canada).

Members of Council: Dr. A. Akahori (Yawata-shi/Japan), Dr. V. Brun (Copenhagen/Denmark), Prof. J.C. Bürgel (Bern/Switzerland), Dr. G.M. Carstairs (London/U.K.), Prof. T.H. Chan (Taichung/Taiwan), Prof. W.S. Hong (Seoul/Korea), Prof. A. Kleinman (Cambridge/U.S.A.), Dr. Y.C. Kong (Hongkong), Prof. Ch. Leslie (Newark/U.S.A.), Dr. L. Raggay (Dharamsala/India), Dr. F. Meyer (Paris/France), Dr. G.J. Meulenbeld (Groningen/The Netherlands), Prof. R.K. Mutatkar (Pune/India), Dr. R.B. Sutrisno (Jakarta Timur/Indonesia), Dr. Khin Tint (Camden/Australia).

Munich SYMPOSIUM

Fifteen papers were presented at the FIRST INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICAL LITERATURE, organized by Prof. Paul U. Unschuld, President of IASTAM, at the Institute for the History of Medicine, University of Munich, W. Germany, August 25-29, 1986. Several afternoon sessions were also devoted to the discussion of texts. Although each of the participants represented a different approach to interpreting and rendering ancient Chinese medical texts, they spent together a week of fruitful exchanges in a very harmonious atmosphere.

The Proceedings of the Symposium will be published by D. Reidel Publishing Co. (Dordrecht/Holland) in 1987.

SEE REPORT IN P. 7 TO 13

important books reviewed

JUDITH JUSTICE on Primary Health Care	Page 2
KENNETH G. ZYSK on the Vedas	Pages 4 & 6
obituary	
VAYASKARA N.S. MOOSS	Pages 5 & 6

Co-editors

All our energies are applied to the task of strengthening the Newsletter, to make it into a useful tool and to establish a forum for the discussion and review of recent publications and meetings. Plans are on the way for a more ambitious Journal but, given the necessary funds and the large number of collaborators to be mobilized, a first issue cannot be scheduled to appear before 1989. Meantime, the Newsletter will serve as a prototype, to help building an audience and to establish an homogeneous albeit interdisciplinary field of studies.

Two co-editors are joining Francis Zimmermann in the venture: Dr. (Mrs.) Catherine Despeux, a scholar of Chinese medical history, and Dr. Fernand Meyer, MD., already an officer of IASTAM and a scholar of Tibetan medical anthropology.

Moreover, this issue of the Newsletter is published with the financial help of the French CNRS, through RCP 798 "Histoire des Techniques et des Sciences en Chine, au Japon et en Corée".

See more details in page 3.

Next issue will be Number 10 to be published in May 1987

Primary Health Care

Judith Justice

Policies, Plans, & People

(Culture and Health Development in Nepal)

Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1986

ISBN 0.520.05424.5 202pp.

Practitioners among us, members of IASTAM, as well as historians and anthropologists are concerned in the planning of health policies and the activity of international funding agencies. Either we may try to locate a suitable function for traditional medicine within a given nationwide system of health care, or we may try to discover the hidden causes that too often render health programs unsuitable for the local conditions and cultures. In both cases, in pursuing both goals - which are compatible, both within the scope of IASTAM, provided we mean social science research, not propaganda -, we do not study Asian medical traditions as simply anti-quarians would do, that is, for their curiosity value! Asian medical traditions are part and parcel of a health system, they should be set back in the more general context of Culture and Health Development policies. This is the reason why a review of Judith Justice's book is right in place in IASTAM Newsletter.

Why do health care programs often fail to achieve their long-term goals in developing countries? Using Nepal's rural health program as an example, she shows how the failure to take cultural factors into account, as the planning process moves from international policy making to national planning and finally to the delivery of services at the village level, has too often resulted in ineffective programs.

"Primary Health Care evolved as a concept from the social experiments being carried out in China, North Vietnam, and Cuba, especially the Chinese model of the 'barefoot doctor'...", in the 1970s (p. 59). Elsewhere (for instance, in Nepal) at that time another approach predominated: the 'vertical' (disease-specific) health programs to control smallpox, malaria, leprosy, tuberculosis. "But since then the international health agencies have been promoting Primary Health Care as the solution to the health problems of developed as well as developing countries. The rhetoric and jargon of Primary Health Care are prominent in many re-

cent articles and books on rural health in the Third World, as well as in policy statements and other documents from the international agencies" (p. 61). One may question the efficacy of such a rhetoric. Moreover, health policies are suffering from a striking fickleness. "Policy changes came too fast and frequently for the Nepali system to absorb them. Within a decade, international policy shifted from vertical approaches, to integrated basic health services, to community participation, to primary health care. By mid-June 1979, the focus of international policy was already shifting away from primary health care toward infant diarrheal-disease control - in effect, a new vertical program. Conferences and reports on infant survival were then receiving priority attention" (p. 62). Nothing followed but confusion at the village level.

Judith Justice does not tell us enough about the role of traditional medicine in the global health care system, but one suspects (1) that the official health policies have gone against traditional medicine, by systematically substituting functionaries for local healers, (2) that these policies have failed, and (3) that traditional doctors have still a card to play. "Nepalis willingly used both traditional and modern medicine. It often appeared that only planners and government health practitioners perceived conflict between different medical systems. Interviews with patients in Chittre and other districts showed that those who did seek treatment at health facilities chose the facility because of location and quality of care rather than type of medical system. If the Ayurvedic clinic was close by, the patient went there rather than to the health post... Traditional healers are part of the local community, whereas most government health workers come from urban areas outside the community and have a higher social status. [Most of them] disenchanting with the isolation and discomforts of rural life [are essentially] interested in finding a way to transfer out. [Not so good a mood] for encouraging community involvement" (p. 95-6). Traditional medicine might be more akin than health bureaucracy to the PHC philosophy!



Newsletter

International Association for the
Study of Traditional Asian Medicine

Our three Co-Editors represent three different cultural areas and three different approaches:

• Madame (Dr.) Catherine DESPEUX teaches Chinese at the National Institute of Oriental Languages (INALCO), and she is in charge of the section on Medicine in a research group on the History of Science and Technology of China, Japan and Korea, directed by Professor Jacques Gernet at the Collège de France*. This group has given us direct financial support to print this issue of the Newsletter.

Write to:

Dr. Catherine Despeux
RCP 798
Collège de France
11, place Marcelin Berthelot
75231 Paris Cedex 05
France

• Dr. Fernand MEYER, MD., a medical anthropologist at the CNRS [Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique], does research on Tibetan medicine. He is a member of the research group on Ethnoscience based at the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, and the Editor of the Bulletin d'Ethnomédecine.

Write to:

Dr. Fernand Meyer
Laboratoire d'Ethnobiologie
Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle
57, rue Cuvier
75005 Paris, France

• Dr. Francis ZIMMERMANN, a Sanskritist and a researcher at the CNRS (Philosophy Dept.), is attached to the Center for South Asian Studies of the EHESS [Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales], where the Newsletter also is based. The EHESS has given us financial

support for the mailings of the Newsletter.

All mail regarding IASTAM and the Newsletter should be addressed to:

Dr. Francis Zimmermann,
Publications Editor of IASTAM

Centre d'Etudes de l'Inde
et de l'Asie du Sud,
Ecole des Hautes Etudes
en Sciences Sociales

54, boulevard Raspail
75006 Paris, France

Medicine & Landscape

IASTAM's intellectual field should not be comprised of the mere juxtaposition of different cultural areas ignoring one another. That is why we refuse to divide the 16 pages of the Newsletter into fixed domains enjoying fixed allotments of printing space under the exclusive responsibility of a specialized editor. On the contrary, the Newsletter should depict an interdisciplinary field, the cross-cultural fertilization of research, a variegated landscape, where Sanskritists can learn about Japan, and vice versa. Moreover, we would like to give "Medicine" an extensive meaning, to include all the related natural sciences and techniques such as Pharmacy, Botany, Agriculture, and all the ethnosciences of Asia, that is, traditional sciences that are embedded in Asian soils, since - as one may say - Asian medicine is closely related to Asian landscapes. It is the reason why, for example, a review of Augustin Berque's marvelous new book on Japanese landscapes (next page) is right in order. It is just because of this variegation that writing the Newsletter gives pleasure to its editors.

Francis Zimmermann

*A CNRS [Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique] project, RCP [Recherche Coopérative sur Programme] no. 798, on "Histoire des Techniques et des Sciences en Chine, au Japon et en Corée".

Let us mention a few other members of RCP 798, who research into Medicine, Pharmacy and the Natu-

ral Sciences: Francesca BRAY, Christian MALET, Georges METAILIE, Frédéric OBRINGER, Elisabeth ROCHAT DE LA VALLEE (who is the new Treasurer of IASTAM-Europe), Françoise SABBAN.

In the Vedas

Kenneth G. Zysk

*Religious Healing in the Veda,
With translations and annotations of
medical hymns from the Rgveda and the
Atharvaveda and renderings from the
corresponding ritual texts*

Philadelphia: The American Philosophical
Society, 1985 (Transactions of the American
Philosophical Society, Volume 75, Part 7, 1985)

ISBN 0 87169 757 2 xviii-311pp.

From the Preface: "Our aim is to understand the particular group of demonic beings and forces which were considered to have brought about disease and the religious rites by which these malady-causing demons were evicted and kept away. The hymns employed in the rites are the principal sources of information and have been translated in their entirety. An examination and a translation of later ritual prescriptions provide continuity in the tradition and offer a basis for comparison with the practices found in the earlier hymns. The selection of hymns is based on the data which they contain rather than exclusively on the traditional classification of the charms offered in the *bhaisajya* (medical) section of the *Kauśika Sūtra* (25-36). [...] The work is divided into two major sections: the first examines the various diseases which afflicted the Vedic people and the treatments used to cure them. Translations of the particular hymns devoted to the eradication of specific maladies and symptoms and to the consecration of the medicines are offered in their appropriate places. The classification of internal and external diseases and medicines has been suggested by the hymns themselves [pp. 12-102]. The second section encompasses the textual annotations to the individual hymns [pp. 103-256]."

Apart from various indices, a short glossary of plant-names, and an exhaustive "specialized bibliography" [pp. 277-290], a very useful appendix is devoted to a critical bibliographic history of the most significant studies on traditional Indian medicine in western languages ["Bibliographical Essay", pp. 261-276].

The hymns translated and annotated here were selected and classified on an empirical basis. It is interesting to note the outstanding predominance of internal diseases - the exemplar being 'yákṣma' (consumption) or 'takmán' (fever) -, and the relatively unimportant position of medicines in the panoply of healing methods (where charms predominate, surgery being occasionally mentioned). The table of

contents illustrate this implicit valuation of internal diseases caused by demonic entities:

I. Internal Diseases

A. related to yákṣma and/or takmán [pp. 12-48]

B. not closely related to them (e.g. ascites, insanity, worms...)[49-71]

II. External Diseases (wounds, fractures, blood-loss, skin disorders) [72-89]

III. Medicines (water, 'jalaṣá' [? urine], simples) [90-102].

Curiously enough, a reader of Benveniste and Dumézil would recognize in this table of contents a trifunctional division (charms in I, surgery in II, medicines in III), which was apparently not among the conscious intentions of the author.

continued in page 6

Fûdo

Augustin Berque

*Le Sauvage et l'Artifice,
Les japonais devant la nature*

Paris: Gallimard, 1986

ISBN 2 07 070677 X 315pp. FF 140

A tentative translation of this typically artful title would be: "Wildness and Artfulness. Japanese attitudes in the face of Nature." Nature, i.e. the natural scenery, landscapes, milieus, hills and waters, herbs and trees, the cycle of the seasons, and much more than that, the values of natural life, the idealization of our natural roots. In the face of Nature, Japanese attitudes are ambivalent. On the one hand, the surrounding landscape is ignored, either neglected or devastated. On the other hand, the highest cultural values are invested in the art of gardening, and in the philosophy of *fûdo*, a Japanese word for "milieu, climate, temperament".

Augustin Berque is a professional geographer turned linguist and anthropologist. Written in a superb literary style, this book is from someone who truly fell in love with Japan. It deconstructs and recreates from inside the Japanese apperception of the natural world. What does this book have to do with medicine? Everything indeed, as soon as you are willing to admit that medicine is a meteorology, an ecology, an art of gardening ourselves and our soil!



Newsletter

International Association for the
Study of Traditional Asian Medicine

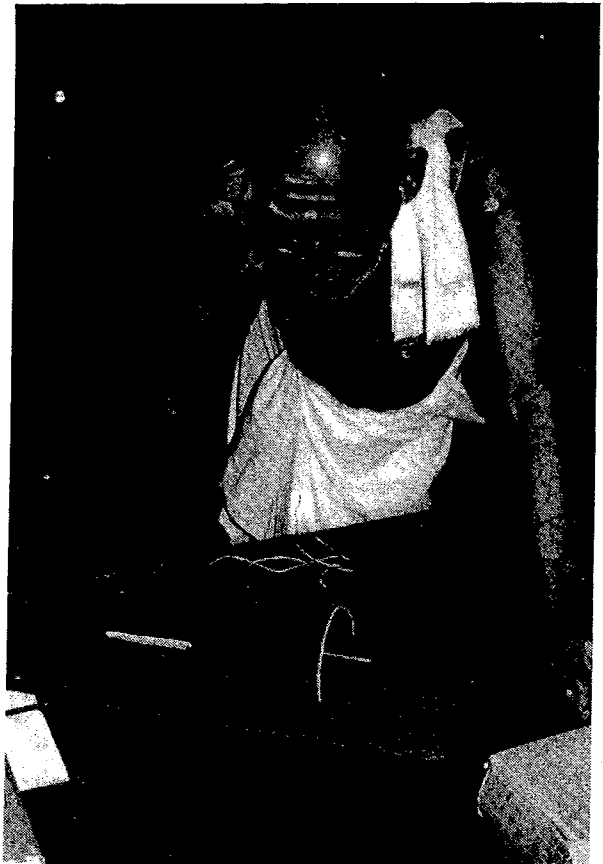
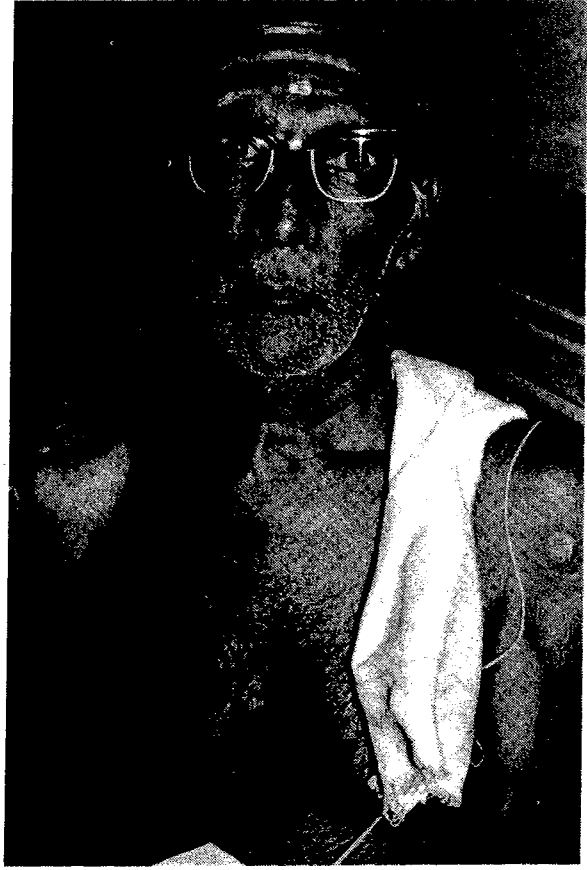
OBITUARY

Vayaskara
N. S. MOOSS

I am very sad to announce the death of Ashtavaidyan Vayaskara N.S. Mooss, on September 5, 1986 in Kottayam, Kerala, South India. Born on November 6, 1912, Dr. Mooss was a Nambudiri brahmin belonging to one of the famous Ashtavaidya lineages of Ayurvedic physicians. He first studied Sanskrit under his father and Pandalam Krishna Variyar (1859-1932), a famous scholar (See K. Kunjunni Raja, *The Contribution of Kerala to Sanskrit Literature*, Madras, 1958, p. 267). Although they were very orthodox, these noble brahmin families have traditionally been open and receptive to English education, and young N.S. Mooss went to the Church Missionary Society High School and later to the C.M.S. College, where he could develop his taste for English and his aptitude for botany and the natural sciences, while he was learning Sanskrit and Ayurveda privately through the *gurukulavāsa* system of education.

In 1936, his father gave him permission to launch a Journal, which was sponsored by the Maharajah of Travancore: *Vaidya Sarathy, An Anglo-Vernacular Monthly Medical Journal* (XIII vols. publ., Kottayam, 1936-1948). A printing press was imported from Germany, just before the war, which is still working today. Dr. Mooss started publishing bits by bits in each issue of the journal an edition of the *Kairālī* commentary on the *Aṣṭāṅghṛdayasamhitā, Uttara-sthāna*, each time printing a few hundred copies more, which were bound together afterwards and made up the first book from the Vaidya Sarathy Press. Author, editor, proof-reader, press manager: Dr. Mooss did everything himself for the fifty books or so he published in Sanskrit, Malayalam, and English. Marvels of ingenuity, in decyphering manuscripts or identifying medicinal plants, and millions of hours of solitary but quiet work went into a series of Ayurvedic books that will

continued next page



Pictures taken by Dr. Mitchell Weiss 1981

last for ever. In the late 1970s, N.S. Mooss's achievements were being recognized in the West and he was corresponding with all the best scholars, or receiving them in his study, lending his manuscripts and his unrivalled knowledge of Ayurveda with an exquisite modesty. Alas, his son had died at the age of twenty. But his daughters gave him grandsons who, one may hope, will keep alive the values of Sanskrit culture to which Dr. Mooss was so passionately dedicated. Dr. Mooss truly is to me the most venerable and inspiring incarnation of the learned tradition of India, and a very dear friend and Guru. I studied Ayurveda with him in 1974, 1976-78, and sporadically between 1981 and 1984. But we had common projects still on their way: first of all, an edition of the *Hṛdyā*, which I hope to complete and bring out within the next few years. A small tribute will be paid to the memory of my Guru in a forthcoming book devoted to the classical tradition of Ayurveda in Kerala.

Francis Zimmermann

Books by Vayaskara N.S. Mooss can be ordered for by writing to:
The Vaidya Sarathy Press
Vayaskara
Kottayam, Kerala State 686 001
India

Let us mention at least a few titles:

[Special] *Ayurvedic Treatments of Kerala* [1944], 3rd. ed. augm., 1983
Ayurvedic Flora Medica, 2nd ed., 1977
Single Drug Remedies, 1976
Indu's Paribhāṣā or Discourse on Pharmaceutics, ed. & transl., 1979
Gaṇas of Vāhata, ed. & transl., 1980
Vāhata's Aṣṭāṅghṛdayasaṃhitā, Kalpa-sthāna, ed. & transl., 1984

But N.S. Mooss was best known for his truly admirable editions of Vahata's Medical Collection, and some of its medieval commentaries, especially: *Vāhata's Aṣṭāṅghṛdayasaṃhitā* with the *Saśilekhā* commentary by Indu, Six vols., 1963-1978. All available except Vol. I which should be obtained by all means, however. Essential to a Sanskrit library!

Recently published:

Madanādinighantu, 1985; announced in *IASTAM Newsletter*, no. 8 (June 1986).

Abhidhānamañjarī [1st ed. 1946] has been reprinted; I shall provide a short index before it is bound.

KENNETH G. ZYSK Religious Healing in the Vedas

To do Kenneth Zysk full justice, we should cite at least a sample of his erudite and exhaustive annotations. This is a philological tool, thus offered to the students of Ayurveda and the Vedas, that is bound to become a text-book, but in a very specialized field. It will help to homogenize this field, which has until now been split into two camps: the philologists, and the historians of medicine. Each and every translation, commentary or reference offered by K. Zysk will be checked, challenged, elaborated upon either by Vedic scholars or by a few medical historians who have access to the Sanskrit texts. Both groups of interested scholars will like to argue about the way K. Zysk selected the hymns he studies, or the way he has delimited his subject: "religious healing". Some would like to say that, in the Vedas, everything is religious, and everything has connections with healing, and that the Vedic corpus of texts should have been tackled as a whole. [For a structuralist approach to the nexus of ideas/myths/hymns/rites/etc. connecting religion and healing: See Charles Malamoud & Jean-Pierre Vernant, eds. *Corps des Dieux*, Paris: Gallimard, 1986.] But K. Zysk had good reasons, practical reasons, to focus on philological problems in the nomenclature and the identification of internal diseases, or diseases which, although they are intruded upon the body by demonic attacks, yet prefigure the later Ayurvedic conception of internal diseases, exemplars of which are Fevers and Consumption.

Just a few lines about *takmān*, a disease-demon [and a syndrome] which bears a very close resemblance to malarial fever. "The chief symptom which the *takmān*-victim exhibits is a hot-cold fever-syndrome. He also suffers from severe headaches, pounding in the eyes [] thirst, and redness and soreness of the joints. He is often jaundiced, coughs [] *takmān* has a special connection with the yellow color of jaundice []". I skip the detailed references, and the difficult terms (left untranslated, but with discussions and hypotheses). And this is too short to be fair to the meticulous exposition offered by K. Zysk: a medico-philological monograph which is hitherto unparalleled.

