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There exists a domain of Tibetan antiquity which merits careful and even urgent investigation. I am speaking of the ancient science of medicine whose traditions are still being continued in medical schools attached to monasteries throughout Tibet and Mongolia. This vital subject requires urgent investigation for with the advent of modern ages, this ancient knowledge tends to disappear, and its adepts find it difficult to find disciples. What can be done today, will be impossible to-morrow. The difficulties of this field of research are manifold. One has to gain the confidence of native medicine men, patiently work over thousands of pages of written records, without indexes or tables of contents, often compiled in an extremely difficult technical language, make oneself familiar with the native point of view, and above all to preserve to the last an open-minded attitude. Before one is able to obtain precise data, one has to investigate a rich folklore material, in which popular knowledge is frequently combined with phantastic legends of primitive religious creeds that have crept into the technical text-books of native medicine. In many cases this medical knowledge is considered a sort of tabu, and the teacher will impart it to his disciple only on deathbed. Frequently medical training is preceded by a rigorous observance of obscure religious practices which in their turn require investigation.



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In existing medical colleges of Tibet and Mongolia, the students have to work through an intricate system of learning, the outward difficulties of which often screen its real value. The text-books themselves can often be only understood with the help of an experienced native practitioner, well-versed in all the technicalities of his science. Frequently these text-books belong to different systems of medical knowledge, and one has to make oneself familiar with their fundamental tenets, before one can successfully work through the text. These tenets are often given out orally or in the form of sutras, that is short statements, compiled in an extremely brief style, and which are incomprehensible without a commentary. Much of this ancient medical knowledge is preserved by oral tradition, from teacher to disciple. Its chief tenets are found in medical text-books published by the principal medical colleges throughout Tibet and Mongolia. These works incorporate the ancient knowledge of medicine which Tibet owes to ancient India. The ancient Indian Science of Life or Ayur-Veda, based on a classification of different kinds of prana or vital energies ( Tibetan:           , lun ) which circulate in the nerves and in blood vessels of the human body, has had a long history, from the magic spells of the Atharva-Veda, to the intricate theories of the Caraka-samhita. This Caraka-samhita is considered to be the fundamental text on ancient Indian medicine,



and is attributed to the famous physician Caraka, a native of Kashmir, said to have lived in the IIInd century A.D. at the court of the great Indo-scythian king Kanishka #).

Another important work of ancient medicine is the samhita composed by Susruta. The famous Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna is said to have revised this text ##). In the VII-th and VIII-th centuries A.D. a number of medical works have been translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan, for it is a known fact that Buddhist missionaries in Tibetaand Central Asia achieved much of their success in the propagation of their faith with the help of their medical knowledge. The Tibetan Tangyur ( bsTan-'gyur ) contains several translations of medical works, and the late Dr.P.Cordier has given us an analysis of Tibéann medical works contained in the Tangyur, the second of the two large collections of Buddhist scriptures in Tibetan.###)

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 #) The samhita was revised by Drdhabala, a Kashmirian author, who lived in the VIII-th or IX-th centuries A.D. The work was translated into Persian, and an Arabic translation was prepared c.800 A.D. ##) There existed another medical school represented by the Bhela Samhita, known from a single and defective manuscript, presenting an inferior tradition. ###) The Indian medical texts incorporated in the Tangyur are the following ( NNo.4306-12 of the Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon, publ. by the Tohoku Imper. Univ., Sendai, 1934; Cordier's Catalogue, part 3, p.468 and fl.):

( Skrt. Yogasataka ), by Nagarjuna;  
 ( Skrt. Jivasutra ) by kLu-sgrub snin-po;  
 ( Skrt. Acaryanagarjunabhasita-avabhesajakalpa ) by Nagarjuna;  
 ( Skrt. Vaidyastangahridayavrtti ) by Candranandana;  
 ( Skrt. Astangahridayasamhita-nama ) by  
 Vagbhata; ( Skrt. Astangahridaya-nama  
 vaiduryakabhasya ) by Vagbhata;  
 ( Skrt. Padarthacandrikaprabhasa-nama-astangahridayavrttê ) by Candranandan  
 dana.



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At least two of the medical works incorporated in the Tibetan Tangyur seem to have been composed by the famous Buddhist sage Nagarjuna, one of the founders of the Mahayana or Northern Buddhism. Two texts mention Vagbhata, the third famous physician of ancient India, as their author. There seem to have existed two authors by the name of Vagbhata. One was the author of the well-known Astangasamgraha, and was called Vrddha Vagbhata or the elder Vagbhata. He is said to have been a disciple of a Buddhist scholar Avalokita, and probably lived in the VII-th century A.D. The two texts incorporated in the Tangyur seem to belong to the second Vagbhata, possibly a descendant of the first, and author of the Astangahrdaya-samhita.

The medical works in Tibet can be divided into two main divisions:-

- a) so-called fundamental works, including those translated from Sanskrit originals, and incorporated in the Tangyur.
- b) commentaries and text-books, mostly the works of Tibetan scholars.

To the first division belongs the fundamental , rGyud-  
bsi ( pronounced ju-shi ) or the "Four Books". There exist  
two Tibetan traditions on the origin of this important text.  
According to one, the rGyud-bsi is an ancient Indian work com-  
posed by the legendary founder of Tibetan medical science,  
, Tsho-byed gzon-nu ( Skrt. Kumarajivaka ),



probably identical with Jivaka of the Buddhist Canon. According to this tradition, the text of the rGyud-bai has been translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan by the famous translator Pagor Vairocana who lived in the reign of the Tibetan king Khri-srong lde-btsan ( c.755-788 A.D. according to the chronology of Csoma de Koros ). The text was then revised and edited by gYu-thog-pa Yon-tan ngon-po, the famous Tibetan physician who lived in the VIII-th century A.D., and who had studied medicine at the famous Buddhist University of Nalanda in India.#)

The second tradition says that the rGyud-bai is the work of gYu-thog-pa Yon-tan ngon-po, and is based on the so-called "baga rGyud-bai" or "little Ju-shi", incorporated in the Tangyur ##) The second tradition has something to say for itself, since the Sanskrit original of the rGyud-bai has been apparently lost, and the style of the rGyud-bai does not look like a translation from Sanskrit. Moreover gYu-thog-pa wrote several commentaries on the rGyud-bai, thus following the custom of ancient Indian authors to compose commentaries on their own books. His best known commentary on the rGyud-bai, is the sa-log bco-brgyad, a work in eighteen chapters.

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 #) gYu-thog-pa Yon-tan ngon-po or gYu-thog ngon-po was born in upper Nyang in the Tsang Province of Central Tibet. The biography of this famous physician is told in the gYu-thog-pa'i rnam-thar, or "Life of gYu-thog-pa", of which two editions are known to exist, one printed at Lhasa, the other in Bhutan. As usual, the Bhutanese edition is better printed. ##) probably the Astan-gahrdayasamhita by Vagbhata ( Tib.Pha-gol).



The school found by gYu-thog-pa is said to have flourished until the end of the XVII-th century.

There exist several editions of the Tibetan rGyud-bzi. The best is that printed at the great medical college on the lCags-po ri in Lhasa. There exists also a Peking edition of the work printed at the Sung Chu Ssu ( Temple of Sacrifices to the Mountains ), where a printing establishment for printing Tibetan and Mongolian books exists , dating from the Ming period.

The rGyud-bzi is divided into eight chapters or sections:

- 1) chapter on anatomy.
- 2) chapter on gynecology.
- 3) chapter on children's diseases.
- 4) chapter on nervous diseases.
- 5) chapter on treatment of wounds and sores.
- 6) chapter on poisons and treatment of cases of poisoning.
- 7) chapter on human organism in old age.
- 8) chapter on treatment of old age infirmity.

The above arrangement into eight chapters was undoubtedly influenced by the eight topics of the ancient Hindu Ayur-Veda, also called Vaidyasastra:- major-surgery, minor surgery, healing of diseases, demonology, children's diseases, toxicology, elixirs and aphrodisiacs. The work besides chapters on physiology and therapy contains chapters on the materia medica listing about 1200 vegetable, mineral and animal drugs. To this is added a chapter on drug preparation, listing over 116 powders



and about 22 pills.

The second division of Tibetan medical literature is more numerous and contains a number of important works written by Tibetan and Mongol scholars.

After the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet in the VII-th century A.D., the first centers of medical learning must have been situated in Central Tibet. However, after the severe persecution of buddhists by the Tibetan king gLan-dar-ma in the second half of the IX-th century A.D., many of the foremost scholars fled to North-Eastern Tibet, and founded there, especially in the Derge Province, a flourishing center of buddhist learning and art. Since then Derge became famous as a center of medical learning. In the XV-th century and throughout the following centuries two famous medical schools flourished in Kado in North-east Tibet. They are known by the names of the monasteries to which they were attached: The Chang-ba school and the Surkhar school. The first was founded by \_\_\_\_\_, rNam-rgyal zla-ba ( pronounced: Nam-jyel da-wa ), born in 1431 A.D., and a disciple of the famous lama-physician

\_\_\_\_\_, dPal-ldan phyogs-las rnam-rgyal ( pronounced: Palden chog-le nam-jyel). He composed many treatises on medical science, among them the \_\_\_\_\_, bKa'-'phrin mun-sel, a commentary on the rGyud-bzi, and the Rin-chen dum-bu.



Both works are considered to be fundamental text-books or yig-cha for the study of Tibetan medical science.

The Surkhar ( Zur-mkhar) school was founded by

། mNes-nid rdo-rje ( pronounced Nye-nyid dorje) , a famous physician who lived between 1415 and 1452 A.D. He was the author of two voluminous commentaries on the rGyud-bzi, the dNul-dkar me-lon (

), and the ,Bye-ba rin-bsrel. His disciple ,bLo-gros rgyal-po ( pronounced Lo-t<sup>r</sup>o jye-po ) of Surkhar was also known as scholar and author of important medical treatises. These two schools are often referred to in texts as , Byan-zur. They are well-known throughout Tibet and Mongolia, and possess an uninterrupted line of teachers who transmitted the medical knowledge.

, Sans-rgyas rgya-mtsho ( pronounced Sang-gye jyamts'o ), the famous Tibetan Regent of the XVII-th century, has been a disciple of these two medical schools. He was the author of several important works on astrology, history, and medicine, among them the , Lhan-thabs chen-po, and the Vaidurya-snon-po (or ) or the "Blue Lapis Lazuli", a voluminous commentary on the rGyud-bzi. The Lhan-thabs is perhaps the most important work of this class of Tibetan medical literature. It is a considerable and extremely popular work, containing eight chapters



with something like 156 paragraphs, dealing with physiology, therapy, pathology, surgery, nervous diseases and epidemics. Each of the chapters on the treatment of diseases is divided into two sections: diseases caused by the disturbance of the vital energies of the body, and bilious diseases.

The Vaidurya snon-po is considered to be the best and most exhaustive commentary on the rGyud-bzi. It consists of ~~ffufokurjarge~~ volumes, and has never been translated, nor analysed, and contains much valuable material on the materia medica of Tibet. At least two editions of the work are known to exist : one printed at the Chag-po-ri Medical College in Lhasa, and the other at the Sung chu-ssu Temple in Peking. The work is often illustrated by pictorial tables representing the vegetable, animal and mineral materia medica listed in the book.

Sans-rgyas rgya-mtsho founded the Chag-po-ri Medical College in Lhasa, which to the present day remains the most important medical center in Central Tibet.

A contemporary of Sans-rgyas rgya-mtsho was the well-known physician Darma sman-rans-pa Chos-bdag blo-bzan ( , pronounced Cho-dak lobzang), author of a man-nag-rgyud.

To the same class belong the , Sel-phren, and important treatise on pharmacology, by the lama-physician



, bsTan-'dzin phun-tshogs

( pronounced: Ten-dzin p'un-ts'og). To the same author belongs the well-known Nus-pa rkyan-sel, listing various drugs of the Tibetan materia medica according to the following division: vegetable drugs, mineral drugs and animal drugs. In each case the name of the medicine is given as well as its use. The work is well known throughout Tibet, and is much used in Mongolia.

To the same class of Tibetan medical literature belongs the valuable and important sDe-dge sman-bsdus. It is a large work printed at Derge in North-eastern Tibet, and contains important chapters on therapy and pharmacology, with detailed lists of materia medica. It remains to be seen how much of it has been influenced by the " pen-tsao" of China.

Besides the above text-books there exist numerous works on pharmacological botany, in which each plant is minutely described, with detailed indications about its habitat, and the proper time for collecting. Such books, some of them are found in manuscript form only, contain numerous illustrations, often in colour, of the described plants, and are of the greatest importance for the study of the medicinal plants of Tibet. To the same class belong the medical atlases, containing botanical sections which



greatly help the proper identification of various vegetable drugs. Such an atlas is included in the Arya-Pandita'i gsun-  
gsum, or " Collection of Works of the Arya-Pandita", printed at the Pandita-gegen sumu situated in the Dzun Abkha tribal territory of the Shiling-gol League in Inner Mongolia

Very important for the study of the native materia medica are the different , sman-sbyor, or lists of recipes. These sman-sbyor ( Pronounced: men-jyor) are found in manuscript form only, and are usually composed by lama-physicians for their own personal use. They often contain descriptions and drawings of medicinal plants, as well as indications about their habitat, and the proper season for collecting. Some of these sman-sbyor or lists of prescriptions contain interesting material not included in the larger standard works on Tibetan medicine.

Besides text-books on medicine and lists of recipes, there exists another class of Tibetan and Mongolian medical literature which contains useful knowledge. I am speaking of the manuscript diaries kept by well-known lama-physicians in which they enter the history of various diseases, as well as details of treatment. These extremely valuable, and often voluminous, texts are unfortunately extremely rare, and the author or owner will never agree to part with his manuscript. Such diaries composed by famous physicians are highly prized and sometimes are found to exist in several copies prepared by disciples. Such records are of the greatest assistance



for the study and proper understanding of the printed works. To this class of medical works belong the so-called gter-ma or ~~hidden~~ works on medicine, which are frequently ascribed to famous physicians of the past, and contain besides incantations and descriptions of magic rites, useful information on drugs and treatment of diseases.

Among the printed works on medicine there exist a number of illustrated works on anatomy and surgery, giving a description of surgical instruments and their use.

The above brief enumeration of the most important and best known works on medical science in Tibet and Mongolia does not purport to be an exhaustive list on the subject. Until now very little has been done in the study of this vast literature. There exist lists of Tibetan medical works containing up to 300 items! Most of this literature remains unknown and untranslated. The translation itself presents often considerable difficulties. It is often extremely difficult to establish a correspondence between our scientific terms and those of the Tibetan medical texts. Tibetan nosology should be studied in details to enable us to interpret it in terms of our own medical science. An ideal solution would be to have a Western doctor working side by side with



a lama-physician. One of the principal difficulties is that in Tibetan medical texts different phases of the same disease are not unfrequently called by a different name. For example, a general name for cancer in Tibetan is , lhog-pa, but the medical texts will tell you that there are at least eighteen kinds of lhog-pa or cancer, and is known by a special name. In my previous work on the subject, while engaged in translating the Lhan-thabs, I have used with considerable success large coloured photographs of cancerous patients. I must say that my informants, Tibetan lama-practitioners very quickly got used to these photographs, and would interpret each photograph describing the disease and its treatment in Tibetan. This method helped a lot in identifying Tibetan names of diseases.

Considerable difficulty is experienced with identification of the materia medica. Many of its drugs are sold in powdered form. Others have ambiguous names. For example, the plant *Selaginella involvens* used in hemorrhages and leprosy, and known in Chinese materia medica by the name of chuan-po, is known in Tibet by the name of , chu-srin sder-mo which means the "claws of crocodile". Many students of Tibetan materia medica have classified it with other animal drugs!



Another example is furnished by the valuable drug known by the very ambiguous name of dbyar-rtsa dgun-'bu ( pronounced: yar-tsa gun-bu ) which means " grass in summer, and insect in winter". It is exported in considerable quantities from Eastern Tibet to China. The Tibetan name is a word-for-word translation of the Chinese hsia-ts'ao tung-ch'ung. Some authors thought it to be a kind of grass. In reality it is a parasitic fungus growing on the pupa of a caterpillar ( *Caddyceps sinensis* ). This most extraordinary combination of animal and vegetable is said to belong to the class of drugs called leng-tan-huo, or things uncommon, but not in great demand. The Pen-tsao compares its action to that of ginseng. It is considered to be restorative and tonic, and in Tibetan materia medica is listed as a remedy for cancer.

At least 69 % of the Tibetan materia medica consists of vegetable products. Many of the Tibetan names of medicinal plants are generic terms applied to various species of the same genus. We have already said that in the study of native texts on medicine, the assistance of a native practitioner with a good knowledge of the subject is essential. No existing dictionary gives sufficient information about medical terms, and most of the materia medica, especially the vegetable class, has been hardly identified, not to speak of the fact that in different localities, the same



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plant name corresponds to different species. The Tibetan authors often designate drugs by names from which one can hardly recognize either the use or the composition of the remedy. For example a powerful laxative is known by the name of the "Four Governors". Another way of naming remedies, is to mention only the name of the principal ingredient, followed by a number indicating the number of other ingredients, as for example "a-ga-ru bco-lna" meaning "Aloe-wood and fifteen ( other ingredients)". The above can serve as an example of the difficulties encountered by the student of the Tibetan medical science. The only practical method is to go over the whole procedure of drug preparation with a competent lama-physician, and to carefully note down the process of preparation, the ingredients, and the use. Only thus one is able to obtain a clear picture, and avoid the difficulties of identification. Such places as Peking, where there is always a large number of Mongols and Tibetans, have several drug-stores dealing in Tibetan materia medica. The medicines are sold in powder form mostly, and in such cases identification becomes hopelessly difficult, if not impossible.

Some of the drugs of this materia medica have recently been readmitted into Western pharmacopoeia, as for example Ephedra. Ephedra or                   , tshe-pad in Tibetan, is frequently used in Tibetan medicine, and is prescribed in fevers, colds and asthma. It is one of the "three precious



ones ", the other two being , sug-pa, or Juniperus excelsa, and , ba-lu, or Rhododendron anthopogon. These three are considered sacred and are much used in ceremonies as incenses. Their smoke is said to possess a purifying effect and restores prana ( Tib. , lun ) or vital energy. The Juniper tree, called chili in the Shina dialect, is an object of popular worship among the Dards, and throughout Western Tibet #). An Ephedra is used by the Parsis of India as the sacred Homa of the Zoroastrian ritual ##), and Sir Aurel Stein during his excavations of an ancient burial ground in the Lop desert of Eastern Turkestan in 1914, had discovered small packets of broken Ephedra twigs in the graves, a fact which seems to point to the existence of an ancient rite in which Ephedra was used.###)

The medicine men of Tibet and Mongolia possess an extensive empirical knowledge of the curative properties of certain herbs growing on the Tibetan uplands and in the highlands of Mongolia. This empirical knowledge is the result of centuries of patient observations carried out by generations of medicine men and faithfully preserved by the followers and disciples. Frequently the curative properties of certain plants were discovered

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 #) J. Biddulph: Tribes of the Hindoo Koosh, Calcutta, 1880, p. 106 ff.  
 ##) Sir G. Watt: Dictionary of the Economic products of India, III, pp. 246 ff. ###) Stein: Innermost Asia, I, p. 263 ff. Also Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, VI, 2, pp. 501 ff.



through observations of the behaviour of wild animals and cattle. For example, ibexes were observed to breed their young in certain localities abounding in a certain kind of herb, from this the medicine men of Tibet concluded that the herb, a kind of *Poa*, must possess curative properties, and included it in their materia medica, classifying it under the heading of "herbs possessing a heating effect". Similarly by observing the musk deer, its diet, and environment in which the deer breed their young, or spend the coldest months of the year, a number of herbs have been discovered said to possess tonic and heating effects, and administered to patients in case of nervous breakdowns, loss of condition, and heart weakness.

Among the animal drugs included in the Tibetan materia medica we find organ extracts and glands secretions, which with our present knowledge of the actual principles in some glands and animal vitamins, represent an interesting subject of study.

Since ancient times the Tibetan monasteries have been centers of medical learning. Most of the larger monasteries maintain medical colleges where student-monks receive their training. At present, the largest and most famous medical college is the *lCags-po ri sman-gyi grva-tshan* in the vicinity of Lhasa, founded by *Sans-rgyas rgya-mtsho*, the famous Regent of Tibet, in the second half of the XVII-th century. The college consists of about sixty students sent by the sixty great



monasteries of Tibet. The teaching staff of the college is headed by a mkhan-po (pronounced khen-po) or dean. It takes eight years to complete the course which consists of the study of the principal medical texts, as well as of text-books on the philosophical systems of Buddhism. The students receive their sustenance from the government, and are assigned to the several lama-physicians who form the teaching staff of the college. During the first year the student acts as an assistant to one of the teachers of the college, helping him to prepare powders and pills, and in the summer months accompanies his teacher with a group of students to the mountains to collect medicinal herbs. It is during these months of field work that the student gets his knowledge of the vegetable materia medica, and is only then introduced to the study of the fundamental medical text-books, such as the rGyud-bzi, and the Lhan-thabs. In order to assist the student in his study of the difficult texts, special charts of the human body, as well as atlases of the materia medica are prepared and exhibited during lectures. After completion of the college course, the student can present himself for final examinations, and if successful receives the degree of , sman-rang-pa, or Doctor of Medicine.

Most of the large monasteries in Tibet have on their staffs medical practitioners or sman-pa whose duty it is to



attend to the needs of the monastic community, and to give instruction in medical science. A dispensary and a drug-store or sman-khan are often maintained by a monastery for the benefit of the monks and pilgrims visiting the monastery, as well as for the lay population of the district. Such drug-stores usually keep in stock the most current drugs and preparations. Plants are dried in small packages hung to the ceiling, are often aired in order to preserve their aroma as well as to protect them from dust and rotting. Some of these drug-stores print lists of drugs or sman-gyi dkar-chag which often contain interesting material and supplement the larger works.

Some of the larger Tibetan monasteries maintain whole faculties of medicine or sman-gyi grva-tshan, with numerous teaching staffs. Among the best known are the medical faculty of the Kumbum monastery in North-east Tibet, and those of Labrang and Derge.

Some of the well-known lama-physicians maintain private schools of their own. The programme of such schools is essentially similar to that of the medical faculties. Some of the most famous practitioners obtained their medical training in such private schools. The lama-physicians never give out their entire knowledge, not even to their own disciples, and I knew to know one



lama-doctor who had several disciples, and to each one of them he used to impart information on different drugs and treatment. It is difficult to say what lies behind such a system, perhaps it is prompted by the desire to test the disciple and his eagerness to acquire medical knowledge, anyhow it is an old tradition.

The Mongols came early into contact with Tibetan medical science. It is a known fact that Buddhism in Mongolia owes much of its success to the medical knowledge of the early buddhist missionaries in Mongolia. Already in 1247 the Sa-skya Pandita (

Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan ) made a sojourn at the court of Godan Khan, son of Ogodai, in Kansu, and is said to have made several remarkable cures.

The Mongol monasteries have followed the example of Tibetan monasteries and maintain medical faculties, and temples dedicated to the cult of sMan-bla , or Bhaisajyaguru, The Healing Buddha. Such temples are known by the names of emchin-sumu or manlain-sumu. The most important medical center of Northern Mongolia is situated in Urga ( at present Ulan Bator khoto ) where there are two colleges dedicated to the study of medicine : the emchin-datsan, or college of medicine, and the manlain-sumu, or Temple of sMan-bla ( Bhaisajyaguru ). In the first of these, only senior medical students are permitted to attend lectures and religious services. Lectures for



junior students are given in the Maalain-sumu.

In Inner Mongolia there exist several faculties and temples dedicated to the study of medicine, such as the Shara-sumu in Dolon-nor, the Emchi-ju in Koko-khoto, the medical faculty or datsan of the Ulan-khalga monastery in Udzumchin, and the Nambarasu-sumu in the Otok tribal territory of Ordos. In recent years some of the Inner Mongolian princes made an attempt to revive the study of Tibetan medicine, and To-wang, the Prince of Barun Sunit has even established a drug-store and dispensary of Tibetan medicine at his Residence.

In the XVIII-th century the principal of Tibetan medical texts, the rGyud-bzi was translated into Mongolian.

In Mongolia, medical science came under the influence of Chinese medicine, and a number of Chinese medical works have been translated into Mongolian. During the reign of the Emperor K'ang-hsi, medical science in Mongolia came into contact with Western medicine, through the medium of the catholic missionary fathers working at the court of the Manchu Emperor. In recent years this influence of Western methods became even stronger, penetrating into Mongolia through Russia, China and Japan. It is therefore of vital importance to record this disappearing ancient knowledge which has still much to teach us.