

placing them in a hierarchy, and that they thought closely about the interaction between different non-naturals.

The book makes important methodological contributions through its critical assessment of the wide range of sources which inform our understanding of early modern health, from regimens and childbearing manuals to personal correspondence and household objects. The diversity of the evidence enhances the interdisciplinarity of the volume. In terms of written sources, the authors urge us to pay closer attention to genre as we use medical texts. Maria Pia Donato explores genre with particular sensitivity, noting the importance of subgenres of regimen – like plague treatises and Lenten diet tracts – and tracing change over time with acuity. With regard to material culture, Marta Ajmar's imaginative chapter on a hot drinking vessel argues that we shouldn't merely seek to 'read' an object, but can try to 'experience' it as well. Experience is also an important theme for Frances Gage, who thinks about how paintings were used to evoke positive emotional responses in seventeenth-century Rome. Objects also played an active role because, when observed and experienced, they helped to share health-related values.

The clarity and readability of this book are striking, and reflect superb editing. The precision with which contributions to historiographical debates are articulated is particularly helpful. The reader repeatedly encounters a vivid detail: a recipe for a paste to fill the joints of your bed to exterminate bedbugs; the early eighteenth-century concern that the new fashion for wigs impeded evacuation through the hair; or how Eleonora Boncompagni Borghese sent chocolate to her grieving daughter to console her for the loss of her son. The editors express a wish to stimulate ideas and ongoing discussion. They will succeed on both counts. The volume will inspire continued scrutiny of the relationship between the health of the individual and the health of the population and how it shifted over time. The comparative approach – achieved through a mixture of chapters about one or both countries, or places within them – will prompt future scholars to think comparatively, to interrogate the significance of locality in health practices, and to ask valuable questions about the intersections between climate, politics, religion and health.

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**Janet Gyatso**, *Being Human in a Buddhist World: An Intellectual History of Medicine in Early Modern Tibet* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), pp. 544, £45.95/£24.95, hardback/paperback/ebook, ISBN: 978-0-231-16496-2 / 978-0-231-16497-9 / 978-0231-53832-9.

One of the most important scholars of Tibetan and Buddhist studies of the past generation, Janet Gyatso charts what is new territory for her in the history of medicine with *Being Human in a Buddhist World*. This is a beautifully produced, amply illustrated, and well documented history of Sowa Rikpa (the 'Science of Healing') that charts Tibetan medicine's secularising (albeit incomplete) divergence from Buddhism by the seventeenth century. Previously, Gyatso had been primarily interested in the visionary dimensions of Tibetan Buddhism starting with her Berkeley PhD thesis on the fifteenth-century visionary saint Tangtong Gyalpo (1981). This focus continued with her first edited book *In the Mirror of Memory: Reflections on Mindfulness and Remembrance in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism* (1992), which focused on Buddhist notions of memory (*smṛti*). Her contribution

was about how dhāraṇī sounds and letters functioned as auditory and visual mnemonics for basic truths and teachings. She then, with Hanna Havnevik, edited *Women in Tibet* (2005), a major contribution to Tibetan gender history. Her work on the visionary and gendered dimensions of Tibetan Buddhism came together in her first monograph, *Apparitions of the Self: The Secret Autobiographies of a Tibetan Visionary* (1998), in which she examined the autobiographical dimensions of visions as well as the enigmatic female figure (*dākinī*) who appeared within them.

*Being Human in a Buddhist World* marks a shift in direction from Gyatso's previous scholarship by focusing on one of the most important political figures of seventeenth-century Tibet, Desi Sangyé Gyatso (1653–1705). Although primarily known as the regent for the Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso (1617–1682), and chief strategist behind creating an independent Tibetan state, he was also responsible for major transformations in Tibetan medicine during the same period. Indeed, many of the medical texts and artwork produced under Desi's patronage became integrated into the rich textual tradition of Sowa Rikpa. Although the primary sources for this book span the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries, it is organised thematically rather than chronologically around the major argument that Tibetan medicine had separated out from Tibetan Buddhism as an independent realm of inquiry beyond the realm of 'religious revelation' by the second half of the seventeenth century. Gyatso shows through close reading of visual as well as textual evidence how Tibetan medical authors and artists challenged the prevailing religious authority based on 'Buddha's word' through processes similar to those found in early modern science and medicine in Europe – empiricism, scepticism, individualism, etc. – but independent of any European influence. Gyatso's bold comparative framing with science in early modern Europe as well as arguments about modernity (or rather modernities), and conflicts between religion and science, makes the Tibetan historical record more broadly significant.

The book's seven chapters are divided into three parts that move in reverse chronological order from the second half of the seventeenth century when Sowa Rikpa reached its high point back to the twelfth century when its textual foundations were established. Part I, 'In the Capital' (Chapters 1–2), thereby introduces the reader to Desi Sangyé Gyatso and the political, institutional and medical world of seventeenth-century Lhasa in which he lived that made it possible for him to patronise a rare set of seventy-nine illustrated *tangka* scrolls on a wide range of medical issues; the voluminous biographies of both the Fifth and Sixth Dalai Lamas; the history of the Gandenpa medical school in Lhasa and Desi's history of medicine up to that time. Part II, 'Bones of Contention' (Chapters 3–5, plus a coda), then examines several debates within Tibetan medicine that put textual and religious authority in conflict with authority based instead on historical experience, material conditions and observations of the human body. The second part's coda examines how Desi's responses to these earlier debates favoured authority based on Buddhist revelation over medical knowledge despite having contributed significantly to the development of medicine as a realm of inquiry separate from religion. Finally, Part III, 'Roots of the Profession' (Chapters 6–7), goes back to the formative Tibetan medical texts in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that discussed empirically the human body, gender differences – even a third sex – as well as the medical ethics, virtues, values and ways of learning necessary for the formation of a good physician.

Although a historical narrative would have been more conventional and one I would have preferred, the reverse chronological structure of this book – from the seventeenth-century highpoint of Sowa Rikpa back to its foundations from the seventh century on –

works as Gyatso's narrative strategy to capture her readers' attention. She thus first places her main protagonist, Desi, and his medical legacy within the broader late seventeenth-century political world in which he was a key player. She then disentangles the various 'bones of contention' and 'roots of the profession' that Desi inherited from his medical predecessors. The final chapter on the 'Ethics of Being Human' details the key virtues the ideal Tibetan physician should embody based on both clinical experience and real-life professional competition and sums up the 'medical mentality' or human way of practising Tibetan medicine that stressed compassion toward patients and an understanding of the absoluteness of death. *Being Human in a Buddhist World* is written for historians of medicine and religion in Asia with an eye toward historians of medicine, science and religion in Europe but with its clear structure, well-articulated arguments, and beautiful illustrations it could potentially capture the attention of Buddhists and healers anywhere in the world.

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**Sarah Kay**, *Animal Skins and the Reading Self in Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2017), \$49.00, hardback/ebook, ISBN: 9780226436739 / 9780226436876.

A genre devoted to taxonomising animal life, the medieval bestiary has proven deeply resistant to its own neat scholarly classification. Nearly a century ago, M.R. James, in *The Bestiary* (Oxford: Roxburghe Club, 1928), proposed the nomenclature of the 'family' to describe the loosely affiliated manuscript traditions that developed from the earliest example of the bestiary form, the *Physiologus*, translated from Greek into Latin as early as the fourth century CE. These family trees have grown new branches in the decades since, with recent scholarship largely following the foundational work of Florence McCulloch's *Mediaeval Latin and French Bestiaries* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1962). Sarah Kay's *Animal Skins and the Reading Self in Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries* marks the first major challenge to the genealogy of the bestiary families since McCulloch, highlighting a continental bestiary tradition too often side-lined in English-language scholarship.

This manuscript argument, however, is secondary to the primary focus of *Animal Skins and the Reading Self*, which centres on a different kind of family resemblance – that between the bestiary reader and the book itself. This resemblance for Kay coalesces in parchment. Drawing on work in critical animal studies as well as psychoanalytic theory and New Philology, Kay argues that bestiaries problematise the very questions of resemblance and difference that they are designed to illustrate. As the literal 'skin' that facilitates the reading experience, parchment bears the physical evidence of the animal bodies it once enclosed. The question of whether and to what degree readers saw their own fleshly natures reflected in this surface lies at the heart of Kay's study.

This is not a question that Kay seeks to answer in a positivist way; rather, she takes a phenomenological approach to the bestiary page, organised around close readings of image, allegory and *mise en page*. Kay grounds her argument in the philosopher Didier Anzieu's concept of the 'Skin Ego', the idea that identity formulates itself at the infant stage in the differentiation of the mother's body from the child's, with skin serving as the medium of contact as well as separation. Alongside Anzieu, Kay places Giorgio