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The first section deals with his life from the cradle to 1845, the year he published the first edition of his *Die Pathologie und Therapie* . . . Griesinger grew intellectually in the Germany of the turbulent 1840s, and his political involvement in Tübingen led to his forced departure to Zurich. Soon after completing his medical studies, he spent a period in Paris and this seems to have kindled a love for travelling that took him repeatedly to Vienna, London, and even to exotic places like Egypt, where he worked for a time after 1850.

Physiology was his main preoccupation during these earlier years, and his first six publications are in general medicine. His first psychiatric paper, on 'Psychische Reflexactionen', appeared in 1843, and his magnificent book of 1845 was published after another eight medical and neurological publications. In this long first section, Dr Warhig-Schmidt analyses Griesinger's views on physiology, philosophy, and his opposition to *Naturphilosophie*.

The second half of the book is dedicated to Griesinger's psychiatry. It starts with a penetrating analysis of the state of alienism in the Germany of the 1840s and of its uneasy relationship to brain physiology. A glimpse is also offered of the early process that led to the divergence between asylum and academic psychiatry, which was to hamper so much the progress of both during the second half of the century. It ends with a fifteen-page study of Griesinger's 1845 *Textbook*, which, on account of its freshness and depth, merits separate English publication. Dr Warhig-Schmidt fails to explain, however, one of the running mysteries in the history of psychiatry, to wit, how did Griesinger manage to write such a comprehensive textbook, which, apart from the usual theorizing, contains a great deal of clinical material, when in fact he had had a meagre experience with the mentally ill?

But it would be wrong to begrudge this oversight. Like all good historical books, this one includes over forty pages of notes, a list of Griesinger's writings, and a good bibliography. One hopes that the author may want to regale us with a second instalment, in which the later Griesinger, the founder of the *Archiv für Psychiatrie*, the fierce critic of the therapeutic pessimism of asylum psychiatrists and the champion of acute psychiatric units and psychiatric education, is considered with similar care.

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PAUL U. UNSCHULD, *Medicine in China. A history of ideas*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, University of California Press, 1985, 8vo, pp. x, 423, £33.95.

In complex societies such as that of China an enormous variety of differently conceptualized systems of therapy is encountered, all of which are representative of Chinese culture. The author's intention is to contribute to an understanding of plurality and change in health care concepts. China, with a long established literacy from the fifteenth century BC to the present time, provides the necessary historical sources. During this period of nearly 3500 years, the following types of medicine were practised: (1) oracular therapy from the cracks in sheep's shoulder bones; (2) demonic medicine ascribing the source of the disease to demons; (3) Buddhist and Taoist religious healing; (4) pragmatic drug therapy; (5) the medicine of systematic correspondences including acupuncture; and (6) modern western medicine. The author distinguishes Buddhist medicine from religious (presumably Taoist) healing, thus dividing the process into seven systems. Item (4), for reasons given later in this review, would be better named "empirical plant therapy". Many of these systems overlap most of the time, and it is a matter of the preponderancy of one or the other at a given time.

This excellent presentation of a vast panorama is marred by the author and his two translators being insufficiently acquainted with English usage. He consistently translates the word "patient" as "victim", uses the word "gall" indiscriminately for "gall bladder" and "bile", speaks of illnesses instead of diseases, and refers to Chinese *yao* as "drugs" rather than "remedies" or "materia medica". This goes so far that he calls *Ts'ai-yao* "the gathering of drugs" rather than "herbs" or "plants". The word *ch'i* is consistently translated as "influences"—admittedly, there

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is no modern English word for this ancient concept, but in western literature it appears as *pneuma* in Antiquity and during the Middle Ages right up to and including the Renaissance. If he felt that the general reader was not sufficiently acquainted with this term it would have been better to retain *ch'i* and put a explanatory note at the beginning of the book or at the first mention. He may have chosen the word "influences" in connexion with astrology but the latter plays a very small part in his description of Chinese medicine, and *ch'i* appears quite apart from astral speculations.

The book, which is part of the series *Comparative studies of health systems and medical care*, is informative on the swing of the pendulum in modern times, in accordance with government directives, between partial adherence to the Confucian system including shamanistic and demonic features on the one hand, and the Legalist system including rational experimental medicine and the findings of modern science on the other. But such a simplification cannot do justice to the detailed study of the subject contained in this beautifully produced work.

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C. G. URAGODA, *A history of medicine in Sri Lanka*, Colombo, Sri Lankan Medical Association (6 Wijerama Mathawa, Colombo 7), 1987, 8vo, pp. ix, 326, illus., US \$20.00.

The intention of the author—a distinguished local chest physician—was to write a short history, as he states in his preface, at a leisurely pace. Two equally distinguished and influential colleagues encouraged him to complete it in time for the centenary of the Sri Lankan Medical Association (formerly the Ceylon Branch of the British Medical Association until independence in 1948).

After a short introduction, the book begins with ancient medical practices, which embrace Ayurveda and Siddha—a similar system practised only by the Tamils.

The first foreign influence was that of the Portuguese, who arrived in Colombo in 1505. As they occupied only the coastal areas, their occupation was marked by incessant hostilities with the Kandyan kings of the interior. The Portuguese medical influence—although Western—had an Oriental flavour as well. They were responsible for Mannar and Jaffna Hospitals. They were subsequently expelled by the Dutch in 1658, who, in turn, occupied the maritime provinces. They governed their territory through the Dutch East India Company, founded in 1602. This company built the Colombo Hospital, whose walls were over 50cm thick, not for the local population, but for its own European employees. It was restored in 1985. The Dutch were also responsible for introducing a system akin to the present-day barefoot doctors to cater for the health needs of the local villagers.

Dutch rule ended in 1796 with the British capture of the coastal provinces, and the annexation of the Kandyan Kingdom in 1815. The author gives credit to the British for creating a sound basic structure of medical care which, after independence, was comprehensive enough to continue despite having changed little in outline up to modern times. The teaching of medical students was at first based on the Bengal Medical College, Calcutta, founded in 1839. Students continued to go there until 1870, when the Colombo Medical School was established.

A miscellany of diseases and disciplines completes the text. The former includes opium addiction, smallpox, leprosy, and tuberculosis; the latter ophthalmology, dermatology, and occupational medicine.

There is a table of contents, an index, and an excellent bibliography of nineteen pages. Each chapter ends with its own notes and references.

This is a first-class single-author short history, chock full of facts. It also illustrates the effects of Western influences, both good and bad, on a small island. It still has lessons for us in the West today.

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