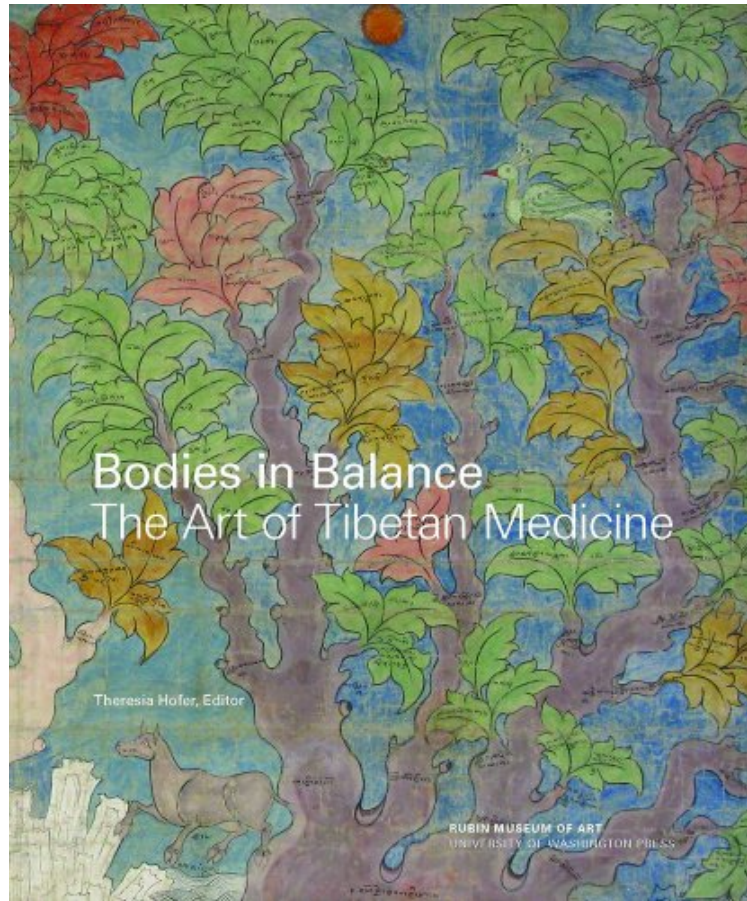


(Download free pdf) Bodies in Balance: The Art of Tibetan Medicine

## Bodies in Balance: The Art of Tibetan Medicine

*From University of Washington Press*

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**From University of Washington Press : Bodies in Balance: The Art of Tibetan Medicine** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bodies in Balance: The Art of Tibetan Medicine:

16 of 16 people found the following review helpful. A superb introduction to Tibetan medicine as expressed in visual images By G. A. BRAVO-CASASThis book is comprehensive and an exquisite collection of essays and art objects related to Tibetan medicine. Theresia Hofer, the book editor and curator of the exhibition at the Rubin Museum of Art in New York, says that the focus is on the visual expressions of the Tibetan healing practices; it is an exploration of “how art, medicine and Buddhism converge in learning and practicing Tibetan medicine.” These various subjects are covered through 12 different essays, written by a selected group of scholars and experts in Tibetan and Buddhist studies, who represent a wide range of disciplines (anthropology, art history, literature, and practical Tibetan medicine). The first part presents the theoretical foundations of Tibetan medicine, its origins, and its varied tools and applications. Ingrained in Ayurveda, the classical Indian healing practice, Tibetan medicine evolved from the twelfth century under various influences, particularly Tibetan Buddhism. Nevertheless, it preserved the key point that health is

the result of a successful balance between the constituent forces that permeate the mind/body relationship. Barbara Gerke (professor at the School of Anthropology, Oxford University) offers a brilliant presentation of the structure and contents of the Four Tantras, one of the basic texts in Tibetan medicine; we are reminded that health is the result of balancing the three Nyepa (constituent forces similar to the Greek humors and the Doshas in Ayurveda) and how they affect digestion, the basis of good health. She also tells us that a Tibetan medical consultation includes pulse diagnosis, exam of the tongue and eyes, and sometimes urine. Geoffrey Samuel (Director of Research Group on the Body, Health and Religion, at Cardiff University) discusses the Tibetan views about the mind/body relationships, the role played by the “subtle body,” which is composed of energy channels and their points of connection (the Nadis and Chakras, or Chakras in yoga), and the quasi-material substance that circulates through the body (Prana). Passang Y. Arya (Tibetan medical doctor) deals with the application of external therapies, including the peculiar “moxibustion” treatment that involves burning some leaves on certain parts of the body. Theresia Hofer (Anthropologist at Oslo University) presents the richness of Tibetan pharmacology. Other essays refer to the role played by astrology and the use of Tibetan medicine around the world today. The second part of the book gives particular attention to the rich portrayal of Buddhism and Tibetan medicine in the visual arts. Gyurme Dorje (former researcher at London University) analyses many of the representations of Buddha as a healer. Yan Ga (School of Tibetan Medicine in Conway, MA) discusses the various sources of the Tibetan medical texts. Other essays explore the details of medical illustrations and their transformations through time. The book contains more than 200 skilfully reproduced images and includes a glossary of terms used in Tibetan, Chinese and Sanskrit with the corresponding English translations. It has three vignettes about the Astrology Department of the Men-Tsee-Khang in Dharmasala (India), the three murals of the Labrang Monastery’s Medical College in Eastern Tibet, and the Chagpori and Mentsikhang Institutes in Lhasa. The book also has a rich and detailed bibliography that invites the reader to explore the medical value of Tibetan medicine and its contribution to holistic approaches to health. It is hoped that a new edition will include some information about the contributors; many of them are outstanding scholars and experts in their own fields and the only way to know about them is by exploring the internet.

*Bodies in Balance: The Art of Tibetan Medicine* is the first comprehensive, interdisciplinary exploration of the triangular relationship among the Tibetan art and science of healing (Sowa Rigpa), Buddhism, and arts and crafts. This book is dedicated to the history, theory, and practice of Tibetan medicine, a unique and complex system of understanding body and mind, treating illness, and fostering health and well-being. Sowa Rigpa has been influenced by Chinese, Indian, and Greco-Arab medical traditions but is distinct from them. Developed within the context of Buddhism, Tibetan medicine was adapted over centuries to different health needs and climates across the region encompassing the Tibetan Plateau, the Himalayas, and Mongolia. Its focus on a holistic approach to health has influenced Western medical thinking about the prevention, diagnoses, and treatment of illness. Generously illustrated with more than 200 images, *Bodies in Balance* includes essays on contemporary practice, pharmacology and compounding medicines, astrology and divination, history and foundational treatises. The volume brings to life the theory and practice of this ancient healing art.

"We get an even larger understanding of [Tibetan medicine]—including a discussion of contemporary Tibetan pharmacology, the history of Tibetan surgery and the global influence of Tibetan healing – in the imposing exhibition catalog, edited by Ms. Hofer." Edward Rothstein, *The New York Times*  
About the Author Theresia Hofer, an anthropologist, is the curator of the *Bodies in Balance: The Art of Tibetan Medicine* exhibition and author of *The Inheritance of Change: Transmission and Practice of Tibetan Medicine in Ngamring*. Contributors include Pasang Yontan Arya, Sienna R. Craig, Gyurme Dorje, Yang Ga, Frances Garrett, Barbara Gerke, Janet Gyatso, Theresia Hofer, Knud Larsen, Katharina Sabernig, Martin Saxer, Geoffrey Samuel, Inger Vasstveit, and Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim.