

Correspondence

To the Editors:

Buddhism and traditional medicine in Sri Lanka by Jinadasa Liyanaratne

I wish to bring the attention of medical practitioners (both traditional medicine and Western medicine) and other interested readers to the above book. Professor Senaka Bandaranayake in his Preface states that this book "...initiates a new program to re-examine aspects of traditional learning and culture from a modern perspective. His series of studies on aspects of traditional Sri Lankan medicine forms the first serious and sustained scholarly attempt to examine the extant historical literature in the fields of pre-modern medical science and pharmacology. The importance of traditional medicine in the study of the history of science as well as in contemporary clinical applications is now well recognized. Liyanaratne brings to his project a lifetime devoted to highly focussed scholarship and detailed textual investigation. His work shows us that although Sri Lanka historical manuscripts have been the subject of modern

scholarship for more than one hundred and fifty years, an enormous wealth of uncharted material and major research programs still lie ahead of us."

This book covers several areas. These include: Buddhism and traditional medicine in Sri Lanka, Indian medicine in Sri Lanka and relations between South India and Sri Lanka in health and medicine; information on Sinhala medical manuscripts in Paris and the Bodleian Library, Oxford; information on Pali medicinal texts (*Siddhasara and Abhinava Madhavanidana*); information on plants used in the ayurvedic sciences and on blood letting and remedies for snakebite. Although one has to be conversant in Pali to read the whole book I found certain chapters quite informative. It is published by Kelaniya University Press (ISBN 955-9044-354), and has 360 pages.

R L Jayakody, Professor, Department of Pharmacology, University of Colombo.