



Nationalizing the Body

The Medical Market, Print and Daktari Medicine

Projit B. Mukharji

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Description

Examines the different meanings of ‘modern medicine’ that were employed in colonial South Asia, and explores the different discourses that were constructed around ‘modernity’.

‘Projit Mukharji presents a meticulously researched construction of the identity of “Daktari” physicians, or Indian practitioners of Western medicine, through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in British Colonial Bengal. [...] A significant and definitive contribution to this field.’ —*Kavita Sivaramakrishnan, Harvard University, in ‘Social History of Medicine’*

‘This book performs the ambitious and much required task of tracing the distinct vernacular career of imperial medicine in Bengal. [...] Mukharji delves into an enviably exhaustive range of sources. The deeply layered Bengali medical archive has been explored here in unprecedented detail. [...] One can be certain that “Nationalizing the Body” will remain a crucial reference point not just for the histories of medicine in South Asia but colonial medicine more generally.’ —*Rohan Deb Roy, University of Cambridge, ‘Canadian Bulletin of Medical History’*

Nationalizing the Body revisits the history of ‘western’ medicine in colonial South Asia through the lives, writings and practice of the numerous Bengali ‘daktars’ who adopted and practised it. Refusing to see ‘western’ medicine as an alienated appendage of the colonial state, this book explores how ‘western’ medicine was vernacularised. It argues that a burgeoning medical market and a medical publishing industry together gave ‘daktari’ medicine a social identity which did not solely derive from its association with the state. Accessing many of the best-known ideas and episodes of colonial South Asian medical history, it seeks to understand how ‘daktari’ medicine re-positioned the colonized bodies as nationalized bodies.

Readership: This text will be of interest to students and researchers working in the areas of medical and colonial and postcolonial history, social anthropology and medical and comparative sociology.

Contents

1. Introduction: A Vernacular Modernity; 2. Healers in Context: Forgotten Pioneers; 3. Healing Print: Medicine and the World of Print; 4. Contagious Modernity: Domesticating an Idea; 5. The Plague in the Vernacular: A Hindu Nationalist Diagnosis; 6. Marketing Cholera: The Texts and Contexts of Bengali Responses to Cholera; 7. Dhatu Dourbolyo: Diagnosing the Rhizoid Pathologies of Racial Weakness; 8. Conclusion

About the Author

Projit Bihari Mukharji is a Wellcome Fellow at Oxford Brookes University.

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