## **CONTENTS**

	List of figures	xiii
	List of tables	xiv
	Acknowledgments	XV
1	Becoming human in Tibetan literature	1
	Medicine, science and religion in European thought 2	
	Models of comparison: science and religion, science and Buddhism 4	
	Narratives of embryology 8	
	Caveats and approaches 12	
	Medical epistemology and the embryological narrative 13	
	Narrative, identity and history 17	
2	Theories of human development	20
	Indian medical sources for human development 23	
	Early human development in Indian Nikāya and Mahāyāna Buddhism 26	
	Practicing gestation in Indian Vajrayāna Buddhism 31	
	Chinese traditions of "nurturing the fetus" 33	
	Cultural inheritance and adaptation 35	
3	Interactions between medicine and religion in Tibet	37
	Eurasian cosmopolitanism versus Indian Buddhism: a historiographical conflict 37	
	Linking medical history with Buddhism 41	
	Striking the path: organizing the influx of Indian culture 42	
	The heyday of medical scholasticism 47	

## CONTENTS

	Locating human development in the narrative of Tibetan history 53	
4	The fetal body, gender and the normal	57
	Functional physiologies: humoral and digestive systems 60	
	The circulatory system 64	
	Characterizing embodiment: gendered, defective and "normal" bodies 71	
	Female physiology 76	
	Encountering the narrative's central subject 84	
5	Gestation and the religious path	85
	Conception and debates over the sequence of fetal development 88	
	Fetal development in tantric sources 96	
	The fetal experience of conception, gestation and birth 102	
	Practicing the exoteric path 106	
	Esoteric practices for closing the womb's door 109	
	Purifying death, the intermediate state and rebirth 112	
	The embryologic vision of reality 117	
	Inconsistency, ignorance, or innovation? 121	
6	Growth, change and continuity	127
	Karma and the Buddhist problem of causality 128	
	Causality, the individual, and the cosmos 130	
	The power of karma in the context of conception and development 136	
	The shaky foundations of karma's role in becoming human 140	
	The role of the elements in causing growth 142	
	Attributing causality to winds 146	
	Growth caused by the power of gnosis 148	
	The forces of creation 150	
Еp	pilogue: historiography recapitulates embryology	155
	Notes	164
	Appendix	188

191

205

Bibliography

Index

## **FIGURES**

1.1	The seventeenth-century painting depicts the moment of	
	conception	8
4.1	The medical painting explains that conception on odd days will	
	bring about a boy, and conception on even days, a girl	72
4.2	The Four Tantras tradition also states that the child will be a boy	
	if the woman's belly is heavy on the right side and a girl if she is	
	heavy on the left side	74
4.3	A woman gives birth	81
5.1	In the twenty-second week of gestation, the nine orifices open	88
5.2	During the thirty-sixth week, the fetus feels unhappy	103
6.1	The painting shows the influence of the natural elements on the	
	growth of the fetus	135
6.2	A series of images depict male and female reproductive substances	
	with various sorts of defects	141

## **TABLES**

5.1	The use of terminology in early gestation	93
5.2	Development of the gross body	94
5.3	Development of circulatory channels	95
5.4	Comparison of tantric stages of gestation	101
5.5	Development of the mind/mental sensations over the course	
	of gestation	105
6.1	The names of the winds responsible for fetal development	
	during each week of gestation	145