



Out of the Ordinary: A Life of Gender and Spiritual Transitions

Michael Dillon, Lobzang Jivaka

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Now available for the first time--more than 50 years after it was written--is the memoir of Michael Dillon/Lobzang Jivaka (1915-62), the British doctor and Buddhist monastic novice chiefly known to scholars of sex, gender, and sexuality for his pioneering transition from female to male between 1939 and 1949, and for his groundbreaking 1946 book *Self: A Study in Ethics and Endocrinology*. **Here at last is Dillon/Jivaka's extraordinary life story told in his own words.**

Out of the Ordinary captures Dillon/Jivaka's various journeys--to Oxford, into medicine, across the world by ship--within the major narratives of his gender and religious journeys. Moving chronologically, Dillon/Jivaka begins with his childhood in Folkestone, England, where he was raised by his spinster aunts, and tells of his days at Oxford immersed in theology, classics, and rowing. He recounts his hormonal transition while working as an auto mechanic and fire watcher during World War II and his surgical transition under Sir Harold Gillies while Dillon himself attended medical school. He details his worldwide travel as a ship's surgeon in the British Merchant Navy with extensive commentary on his interactions with colonial and postcolonial subjects, followed by his "outing" by the British press while he was serving aboard The City of Bath.

Out of the Ordinary is not only a salient record of an early sex transition but also a unique account of religious conversion in the mid-twentieth century. Dillon/Jivaka chronicles his gradual shift from Anglican Christianity to the esoteric spiritual systems of George Gurdjieff and Peter Ouspensky to Theravada and finally Mahayana Buddhism. He concludes his memoir with the contested circumstances of his Buddhist monastic ordination in India and Tibet. Ultimately, while Dillon/Jivaka died before becoming a monk, his novice ordination was significant: It made him **the first white European man to be ordained in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.**

Out of the Ordinary is a landmark publication that sets free a distinct voice from the history of the transgender movement.

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