

# Anthropologie

Zeitschrift für Medizinethnologie • Journal of Medical Anthropology

hrsg. von/edited by: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ethnomedizin e.V. – AGEM



AGEM und 60 Jahre

„Interdisziplinäres Arbeitsfeld Ethnologie und Medizin“, Teil II  
AGEM looking at Six Decennia of Interdisciplinary Discourses  
in “Anthropology and Medicine,” Part II



## Zeitschrift für Medizinethnologie Journal of Medical Anthropology



**Herausgeber / Editor-in-Chief** im Auftrag der / on behalf of:  
Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ethnomedizin e.V. – AGEM  
EKKEHARD SCHRÖDER (auch V.i.S.d.P.)  
e-mail: ee.schroeder@t-online.de (Korrespondenzadresse)

**Postadresse / Office:** AGEM-Curare  
c/o E. Schröder, Spindelstr. 3, 14482 Potsdam, Germany  
e-mail: info@agem-ethnomedizin.de

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### IMPRESSUM Curare 38(2015)4

#### Verlag und Vertrieb / Publishing House:

VWB – Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung, Amand Aglaster  
Postfach 11 03 68 • 10833 Berlin, Germany  
Tel. +49-[0]30-251 04 15 • Fax: +49-[0]30-251 11 36  
e-mail: info@vwb-verlag.com  
http://www.vwb-verlag.com

#### Bezug / Supply:

Der Bezug der *Curare* ist im Mitgliedsbeitrag der Arbeitsgemein-  
schaft Ethnomedizin (AGEM) enthalten. Einzelne Hefte können  
beim VWB-Verlag bezogen werden • *Curare* is included in a  
regular membership of AGEM. Single copies can be ordered at  
VWB-Verlag.

#### Abonnementspreis / Subscription Rate:

Die jeweils gültigen Abonnementspreise finden Sie im Internet  
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www.vwb-verlag.com/reihen/Periodika/curare.html

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ISSN 0344-8622 ISBN 978-3-86135-804-6

Die Artikel der *Curare* werden einem Gutachterverfahren unter-  
zogen • The articles of the journal *Curare* are peer reviewed.

### Titelabbildungen (Vorder- und Rückseite) Curare 38(2015)4

Cover-Vorderseite: Eine Begegnung: Der Khambo Lama im Gandan Kloster in Ulaanbataar 1960 (Foto: Peter Brand),  
siehe Editorial • Cover-Rückseite: Abbildungen der zuletzt erschienenen drei Hefte *Curare* 37(2014)4, 38(2015)1+2,  
38(2015)3 sowie des nachfolgenden 39(2016)1.

Front: Encounter with Khambo Lama in Gandan monastery in Ulaanbataar 1960 (photo: Peter Brand), see editorial •  
back: covers of *Curare* 37(2014)4, 38(2015)1+2, 38(2015)3, and 39(2016)1.

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Herausgeber/Editor: **Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ethnomedizin – www.agem-ethnomedizin.de**

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*AGEM, the "Working Group 'Ethnomedizin'/Medical Anthropology,"* is a German non-profit association with legal capacity, founded 1970 and seated in Hamburg, and unites researchers as well as sponsoring persons and institutions to promote the interdisciplinary cooperation between medicine, history of medicine, life sciences and cultural and social anthropology, psychology, and (medical) folklore. The aim is to enhance the research in medical anthropology, human ecology and sociology of medicine especially in global contexts. AGEM acts in particular as publisher of a peer reviewed journal in the field of medical anthropology, organizes specialist conferences, and collects relevant literature.

*AGEM, le «Groupe de travail 'Ethnomédecine'/anthropologie médicale»* est une association du type Loi 1901 (siège à Hambourg, sans but lucratif, fondée 1970). Cette association réunit des chercheurs et des personnes et institutions promouvant la coopération interdisciplinaire entre la médecine, l'histoire de la médecine, les sciences de la vie et l'ethnologie, la psychologie et le folklore et a pour but d'intensifier l'étude d'anthropologie médicale, mais aussi de l'écologie humaine et de la sociologie de la médecine surtout dans le cadre de la mondialisation. Elle s'efforce d'atteindre ces objectifs par la publication d'une revue d'anthropologie médicale à comité de lecture, par l'organisation régulière de réunions spécialisées et en réunissant les publications relatifs à ces thèmes.

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AGEM looking at 6 Decennia of Interdisciplinary Discourses in  
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edited by / herausgegeben von:  
EKKEHARD SCHRÖDER

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Redaktionsschluss: 28.02.2016

Lektorat und Endredaktion: EKKEHARD SCHRÖDER

Die Artikel der *Curare* werden einem Gutachterverfahren unterzogen / The journal *Curare* is a peer-reviewed journal

**Errata**

***Curare* 37(2014)3:** 178 und 249, korrigierte Anschrift: Helmut Krumbach, Vida 518, 36053 Skruv/Schweden //

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- HANS-JOCHEN DIESFELD\*, Prof. em. Dr. med., Tropenmedizin (Starnberg) h-j.diesfeld@t-online.de – S. 261
- WINFRIED EFFELSBERG\*, Prof. Dr. med. Dr. rer. nat., Psychiater, Ethnologe (Freiburg) winfried.effelsberg@t-online.de – S. 258, 261, 273
- † HERMANN FISCHER-HARRIEHAUSEN, Dr., Ethnologe (Bundesgesundheitsamt Berlin) – S. 278
- THOMAS HAUSCHILD\*, Prof. em. Dr. phil., Ethnologe (Halle, Berlin) thomas.hauschild@ethnologie.uni-halle.de – S. 266, 268, 315
- HELMAR KURZ\*, M. A., Ethnologe (Münster) hkurz\_01@uni-muenster.de – S. 303
- LISA MÄRCZ, B. A., stud. phil., Ethnologie (Mainz) l.maerz@gmx.net – S. 308
- LIOPA ROSSBACH DE OLMOS\*, P.D. Dr. phil., Ethnologin (Marburg) rossbach@staff.uni-marburg.de – S. 282
- KATHARINA SABERNIG\*, Dr. med., Ethnomedizin (Mag.), Medizingeschichte (Wien) katharina.sabernig@meduniwien.ac.at – S. 296, 298
- WULF SCHIEFENHÖVEL\*, Prof. Dr. med., Humanethologe (D-Seewiesen) schiefen@orn.mpg.de – S. 264
- WOLFGANG SCHMIDBAUER, Dr. phil., Psychoanalytiker, Autor (München) info@wolfgang-schmidbauer.de – S. 275
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- EKKEHARD SCHRÖDER\*, Psychiater, Ethnologe (Potsdam) ee.schroeder@t-online.de – S. 252, 255, 265, 270, 320, 322

\*Mitglieder der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ethnomedizin (zum Zeitpunkt des Beitrags)

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HOLLE GREIL: Age, Sex and Group Specifics of Physique and State of Nutrition. (Reprint 1996)

## “Transforming Tibetan Anatomy,” Vienna, June 12–13, 2014. A Report

KATHARINA SABERNIG

This report is based on a symposium held in Vienna at the Institute for Social Anthropology (ISA) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (AAS) in cooperation with the Department for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies of the University of Vienna. The meeting, organized by the present writer, was concerned with historical, etymological, metaphorical and other aspects of Tibetan knowledge of the body within the general context of anatomical knowledge in Asia. The initial impulse for organizing such a symposium was the remarkable development of medical texts and institutions in seventeenth-century Tibet. The significant progress made at the time is closely connected with the name of Dar-mo sman-rams-pa BLO-BZANG-CHOS-GRAGS (1638–1710?), an outstanding physician and anatomist who wrote a number of medical texts and played an important role in advancing the Tibetan medical understanding of the body. Interestingly, similar developments took place in China at around the same period. Jesuits and other Christian missionaries who used anatomical texts and paintings for their own purposes had a stimulating effect on medical knowledge, especially during the later Ming and early Qing Dynasties. These historical developments gave rise to the idea of studying the spread and development of medical knowledge and anatomical depictions in Asia in a broader perspective. Researchers of various disciplines – physicians, historians, philologists, and anthropologists endowed with skills in Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese, Korean, Hebrew and even languages written in cuneiform, assembled from Korea, Russia, India, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, England and the United States in order to discuss the scope, transfer and perception of anatomical knowledge in Asia. Some contributions focused on the understanding of how anatomical knowledge was transferred and transformed across Asia while others presented findings regarding points of contact and transmission. The interdisciplinary symposium was held as part of my project on the anatomical findings of the Tibetan physician mentioned above and has been supported by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF

P 26129-G21). Additional support came from the Institute of Social Anthropology (ISA), the University of Vienna, the Medical University of Vienna, the Austrian Ethnomedical Society, and the Padma AG of Switzerland.\*

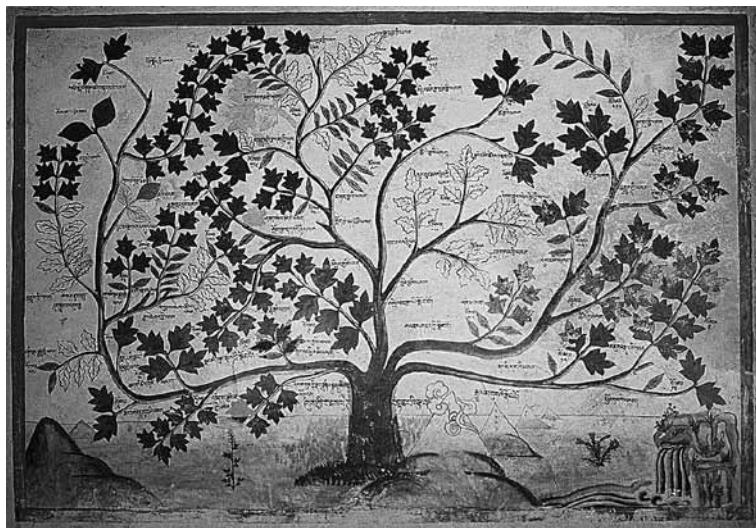
### Visit to *Josephinum* and Keynote

Within the scope of the cultural side program the participants of the symposium visited a famous historical collection of elaborate eighteenth-century anatomical and obstetric wax models, which are permanently exhibited in the *Josephinum*, home of the Institute for the History of Medicine in Vienna. The following keynote lecture by JANET GYATSO entitled *How to map the body—and how it matters*, hosted in the historical rooms at the Institute of Medical Ethics, was introduced by CHRISTIANE DRUML, vice rector for clinical affairs and director of the collections of the Medical University of Vienna, and by KLAUS-DIETER MATHES of the Department for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies. JANET GYATSO examined the conflict between tantric Buddhist and empirical corporal perceptions. Anatomical concepts of the differing channels of the human body were contextualized in the light of both the intellectual history of Tibetan medicine and pan-Asian history of culture and medicine. The interesting contrast is described in more detail in her book “Being Human in a Buddhist World: An Intellectual History of Medicine in early Modern Tibet” (Bookreview in *Curare* 39[2016]1).

The panels were arranged in such a way as to approximate Tibetan anatomical knowledge historically, geographically and linguistically. Welcoming speeches were delivered by Prof. KLAUS-DIETER MATHES and by STEPHAN KLOOS as a representative of the ISA. These were followed by introductory remarks on the means and scope of my own project focusing on the anatomical achievements of BLO-BZANG-CHOS-GRAGS, the medical vocabulary he used in his writings, and a database initiated with the aim of a better understanding of traditional Tibetan terminology\*\*.

\* Abstracts of the conference are available online at: <http://www.katharinasabernig.at/anatomy-symposium/book-of-abstracts/>.

\*\* It is already freely accessible under the address: <http://crossasia.org/en/service/lab/tibetanterms.html>.



**“Tree of Anatomy.”**  
**Mural in the Medical**  
**College at Labrang**  
**Monastery symbolizing**  
**the structure of the**  
**human body. (The picture**  
**in color is chosen for the**  
**cover picture in**  
**Curare 39[2016]1)**

The first panel, chaired by DOMINIK WUJASTYK, offered ample space for discussions ranging from metaphorical explanations of physiological processes and material structures in ancient Mesopotamia to symbolic numbering of bodily structures in a Hebrew text and means and use of taoistic body images. Presentations included ULRIKE STEINERT: *Concepts of the female body in Mesopotamian gyn-aecological texts*, RONIT YOELI-TLALIM: *Counting body parts: views from the Hebrew Book of Asaf*, and RODO PFISTER: *Philology of the visual elements of the body maps in The Song of the Bodily Husk and their transmission through time, media and places*.

The afternoon panel, moderated by MICHAEL BALK, focused on the developments of traditional anatomical knowledge in Tibetan neighborhoods on the eve of modernity up to the twentieth century. Reasons why medical reforms were blocked or took place “from inside” were discussed, as well as political and specialist discourses, which evolved when traditional Asian concepts encountered modern anatomical descriptions and depictions. Papers were read by DOMINIK WUJASTYK: *What’s Inside? The Ayurvedic components of the body*, CHA WUNG SEOK: *Exchanges of medical knowledge and the status of anatomy in the East Asian culture*, and NATALIA BOLSOKHOEVA: *Anatomical paintings from Atsagat Medical School* (see BOLSOKHOEVA).

The morning of the second day was dedicated to different questions within Tibetan medicine such as the relation between the physical and heavenly body, metaphorical and structural meaning of Tibetan anatomical terminology, the formation of medical institutions, and the exchange of medical expertise between Tibet and China. Presentations were held by WANGDUE: *The anatomy of TTM corresponding to astrology and the universe*, FLORIAN PLOBERGER: *Anatomical terms of the 27 chapters of the Subsequent Tantra (Phyi mavi rgyud) from the Four Tantras of Tibetan Medicine (rgyud bzhi)*—, STACEY VAN VLEET: *The circulation of anatomical knowledge between Tibet and Ming-Qing China*, and ELISABETH HSU: *The anatomy of heart and liver in Tibetan and Chinese pulse diagnostics*.

The final discussion conducted by DOMINIK WUJASTYK resumed the manifold aspects introduced during the symposium. A major point was the relationship between empirical structures and single organs inside the body in contrast to the ideal knowledge connected to bodily functions and the cosmology of certain “energies” circulating through the body. The remaining afternoon was used for informal conversations and sightseeing including a visit of the Austrian National Library where a facsimile of the famous materia medica known as “Vienna Dioscurides” was presented to the participants.

## Note

The following contributions will be published in *Curare* 39(2016)1:

NATALIA BOLSOKHOEVA: Tibetan Medical Illustrations from Atsagat Medical College and other Anatomical Achievements of the Buryat Lama and Physician D. Endonov

KATHARINA SABERNIG: Anatomical Structures and the Structure of Anatomy in Tibetan Medicine. The Fourth Chapter of the Explanatory Tantra in its Commentaries

FLORIAN PLOBERGER: Anatomical terms of the 27 chapters of the Subsequent Tantra (*Phyi mavi rgyud*)

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RUDOLF PEISTER: On the Meditative Use of the Body Maps Found in the Composite Text “Songs of the Bodily Husk” (*Ti ke ge*)

WUNG SEOK CHA & HYUK SANG JUNG [with Assistance of DONG RYUL KIM, YOU SANG BAIK, and TAE WOO KIM]: Body Perceptions in East Asian Culture

## “Comparative Perspectives on Body Materiality and Structure in the History of Sinitic and East Asian Medicines,” Ann Arbor, 2–4 October 2015. A Report

KATHARINA SABERNIG

This discussion-based workshop, organized thoughtfully by LESLIE DE VRIES, MIRANDA BROWN and Yi-Li WU, focused on historical understandings of the material and invisible structures of the human body, and on how knowledge about bodily structure was created, assessed and disseminated. The international roster of invited paper presenters were all specialists in the field of the history of medicine of China, Tibet, Vietnam, Korea, or Japan, and the invited commentators also included experts on complementary and alternative medicine as well as the history of the body or medicine in East Asia or other cultural settings. Generous sponsors of the workshop were 1. the Wellcome Trust through the “Beyond Tradition” project at EAST*medicine*, University of Westminster, London (UK), 2. The American Council of Learned Societies/Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation’s “Comparative Perspectives on Chinese Culture and Society” program, and 3. the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI (USA).

The workshop format was aimed to foster fruitful and stimulating discussions and to provide individual support for every paper in a cooperative atmosphere. In addition to an abstract, every participant submitted a “work in progress” paper which was pre-circulated and meant to be read by everyone

in advance. Panels consisted of three or four papers grouped by theme. Each paper presentation was limited to 10 minutes, and followed by 10 minutes of remarks by a commentator. Then an additional 25 minutes was allocated to group discussion of the paper to delve into various aspects mentioned in the paper or issues raised by the commentator. The commentator was not necessarily a specialist in the field represented by the paper but rather a scholar with who could offer comparative insights from his or her work in medicine, the history of medicine, or Asian history. Each panel of papers then concluded with a round-up discussion emphasizing general or even universal questions regarding the respective topic. Below are details of each panel:

### Locating and treating illness in the body

This panel chaired by Yi-Li WU included presentations by SHIH-CH’I CHIN: “The emergence of ying (營) and wei (衛) in the medical texts of ancient China” (commentator MIRANDA BROWN), VOLKER SCHEID: “Locating illness in the collaterals (luo 絡): Exploring re-imaginings of the body during the Ming/Qing transition through the work of YE TIAN-SHI 葉天士 (1664–1746)” (commentator HENRY BUCHEL), and C. MICHELE THOMPSON: “Mirror mirror on the wall, who’s the healthiest of them all?”



Diagnostic use of the skin in Vietnamese traditional medicine” (commentator SUZANNA ZICK).

Although different in timeframe and topic, the papers by CHIN and THOMPSON both raised questions about the audience to which the examined sources were directed, what the source authors’ intentions were, what kind of information was left unsaid or omitted, and how one might explain the lack of definite written information on specific topics. On the other hand, the commonly-observed Vietnamese practice of facial skin diagnostics that THOMPSON’s paper discussed are not described in any known medical texts. This phenomenon was discussed with regard to practitioner and author gender, in particular the fact, that women’s healing knowledge may not be documented and that family practices or secret techniques may not be formally transmitted in texts. The paper by SCHEID took a different approach and raised different questions, using the concepts of “free flow” (*tong*, 通) and “obstruction” (*bu tong*, 不通) to examine the Zeitgeist of an important seventeenth century development: locating illness within “reticular networks” (thin collateral vessels aside from the twelve major vessels) and anatomical and material structures.

### Anatomy, structure and metaphor

VOLKER SCHEID chaired presentations by RONIT YOELI-TLALIM: “Metaphors of the body: notes from the Tibetan *Gyushi*” [*Rgyud bzhi*] (commentator VOLKER SCHEID), KATHARINA SABERNIG: “Anatomical structures and the structure of anatomy in Tibetan medicine” (commentator: MICHAEL SAPPOL), WUNG SEOK CHA: “What were East Asian physicians looking at when they created and viewed illustrations of body structure? (commentator LESLIE DE VRIES), and LESLIE DE VRIES, “Tracing the interior body in Sino-Vietnamese medicine” (commentator KIEBOK YI).

YOELI-TLALIM’s paper evinced different Tibetan views of the human body, discussing depictions of the abstracted locomotor system as a palace with windows indicating openings for the five senses or ministerial functions in analogy to inner organs, and comparing these to similar concepts in other cultures. Together with my own presentation of anatomical examinations based on dissections conducted by the personal physician of the Fifth Dalai Lama, it showed the broad spectrum of bodily perceptions in Tibetan medicine. CHA’s paper dis-

cussed the development of depictions of the human trunk with its inner organs and their adaption with regard to the increasing influence of western knowledge in Eastasian medicine (see forthcoming article “Body Perceptions in East Asian medicine”, *Curare* 39[2016]1). The paper by DE VRIES described Sino-Vietnamese views on how to locate internal structures especially with regard to the “Gate of Life,” a vital structure that has no identifiable biomedical correlate. Overall, the discussion of these papers reflected on the key historical factors that enable the modification of medical knowledge, metaphorical thinking as a way of knowing, and the ways that illustrations accompany text in medical works.

### Materiality, religion and ethics

The session chair LESLIE DE VRIES moderated presentations by PIERCE SALGUERO, “Bodily structure and materiality in medieval Chinese Buddhism” (commentator JUHN AHN), ANDREAS NIEHAUS: “Eating ideas:’ body, food and ideology in the Yōjōkun (1713)” (commentator: HITOMI TONOMURA), KIEBOK YI: “The body sentimental and beyond: the medical body practiced and envisioned by Yi Chema in 19<sup>th</sup> century Korea” (commentator RONIT YOELI-TLALIM).

The centerpiece of SALGUERO’s paper was a contrast between the existence of human beings, who are burdened with a physical body in this material world as a result of bad deeds, and the possession of bodily relics of the historical Buddha. The workshop participants mooted the remaining dead body from meditative observance of its decomposition process through the cult of mummification processes or the conserved physical presence of a late teacher as a didactic tool for the transmission of knowledge. The paper by NIEHAUS examined Neo-Confucian ethics, aesthetics, dietetics and moral ideology as these pertained to physical health in Japan’s Edo period, as well as their revival in modern days as a contrast to the modern “Western” lifestyle. The third paper, by YI, focused on the life and medical theories of YI CHEMA, the “father” of Korean *sasang* medicine. Of central importance was the concept of moving the “medical body from the heavenly universe down to the human society” by creating a “psycho-social body” through the fostering of “subjectivity” and “diversity.”

## Body and malady (Parts I and II)

In Part I, KIEBOK YI chaired presentations of SUSAN BURNS' paper "From 'bad karma' to 'bad blood': The medicalization of leprosy in early modern Japan," delivered in her absence by her commentator ANDREAS NIEHAUS ), PAUL BUELL, "Brain surgery and head injuries in the *Huihui Yaofang* 回回藥方, *Muslim Medicinal Recipes* ( HHYF)" (commentator AILEEN DAS), and LI JIANMIN: "Chinese 'external medicine' and its views of the body: A case study of the manuscript *A Treatise on Seeking the Roots of Ulcer Medicine* (*Yangyi tan yuan lun*)" (commentator: YI-LI WU). In Part II, MIRANDA BROWN chaired presentations by DANIEL TRAMBAIOLO, "Representation and manipulation of the material body in TAKI MOTONORI's *Kōkei saikyū hō* 廣惠濟急方 (1790)" (commentator KATHARINA SABERNIG in absence of SUSAN BURNS), and YI-LI WU: "Bodily structure and function in healing practice: the medical cases of Chinese trauma expert HU TINGGUANG (fl. 1808–1815)" (commentator PAUL BUELL).

The *first session* of this double panel began by discussing on themes from BURNS' paper, particularly the stigmatization of leprosy and diseases with similar visual appearance in a religious and societal context. BUELL's paper focused on the management of wounds within a thirteenth century text, which he called a Mongol hospital manual. The text is associated with a Nestorian Mongol officer by the name of YESU, and gives deep insight into contemporary knowledge of different head injuries, including warnings against damaging the brain membrane. At the same time, some of the officer's statements were examined critically, for example, unusual quotations identifying JALINŪS [GALEN] as a Muslim. The paper by LI reflected on a text written in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century which showed Chinese doctors' ambivalence towards ex-

ternal treatments such as surgery or acupuncture. These were seen as "superficial" and "spiritless" treatments that could cause damage, in contrast to the administration of internal medicines that would "eliminate the root" of illness and leave the body intact, without scars.

The *second panel session* returned to the themes of tactile body manipulation and the transmission of knowledge of manual skills through text and images. TRAMBAIOLO's paper showed how emotional, expressive Japanese depictions of treatments for dislocated limbs, including so-called "X-ray" style illustrations, served to stimulate the visualization and understanding of manual techniques. The differences with Chinese styles of depictions and the influence of Western ideas was also discussed. Finally, WU's paper examined the tensions among hereditary doctors descended from medical families, literate physicians, uneducated practitioners and how these shaped the creation of a text on the treatment of traumatic injuries to the bones and joints. The discussion also highlighted the universal conflict between theory and practice and the circumstances in which individuals undertake medical innovations.

## Wrap-up commentary

With the help of visual images taken from his published volume *Hidden Treasures: The National Library of Medicine* (Blast Books, 2012), MICHAEL SAPPOL summarized and contextualized the diverse topics of the given papers and their respective discussions. He pointed out the hierarchy of paired concepts such as text and image, diagram and body, or text and body within the whole corpus of the history of medical ideas and suggested how further consideration of these could illuminate aspects of East Asian medicine.



**Katharina Sabernig** is an independent academic scholar associated with the Medical University of Vienna and the Institute of Social Anthropology at the Austrian Academy of Sciences. She is a lecturer for different fields of Tibetan Medicine at the Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies at the University of Vienna. Beyond her research on the medical murals at Labrang Monastery her interests focus on different kinds of medical illustrations, history, terminology and the development of contents in Tibetan medicine, particularly in the field of anatomy.

e-mail: [katharina.sabernig@meduniwien.ac.at](mailto:katharina.sabernig@meduniwien.ac.at)  
<http://www.katharinasabernig.at>

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Zeitschrift für Medizinethnologie • Journal of Medical Anthropology

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The Human Body in Asian Texts and Images

