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The Human Body in Asian Texts and Images





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“Tree of Anatomy.” Mural in the Medical College at Labrang Monastery symbolizing the structure of the human body, used as an emblem of the symposium in Vienna 2014, see this issue • Back picture: Anatomical painting from Atsagat Monastery in Buryatia, depicting the eight major blood vessels in Tibetan medicine and a modernized illustration of the spine and brain.

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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.

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KATHARINA SABERNIG

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A Bibliographical Survey of Medical Literature in Tibetan Language Based on the Post-war Holdings of the State Library at Berlin: A Strand of Pearls to Encourage Researchers*

MICHAEL BALK

Abstract The present overview of medical publications is based on the Tibetan-language holdings of the State Library at Berlin. Currently its catalogue (www.stabikat.de) will account for approximately 10,000 titles in the Tibetan language. Around 64 percent of these books and journals originate from China, around 24 percent from India (the remaining 12 percent come from various countries of origin including western countries, for example in the form of text editions). Roughly 5,5 percent of these Tibetan-language publications can be identified as medical literature in the broader sense, which represents a considerable proportion. By far the major part of the Tibetan-language medical literature relates to traditional Tibetan medicine; only a small part is focused on biomedicine. The article traces the development of medical literature published in India and the People's Republic of China since around 1950. Concerning the Chinese part, a noteworthy production of Tibetan-language medical literature can only be observed in the nineties of the past century. Since the advent of the new Millennium, however, one can speak of a "boom" in recent publications in China, clearly indicating that traditional Tibetan medicine is enjoying growing attention. Regarding the Indian part, a substantial production of Tibetan-language medical works already began in the late sixties. Yet this book production is not upheld by the Tibetan exile community, as one might assume, but predominantly comes from Tibetans in Ladakh — that part of Kashmir around the principal town of Leh traditionally Tibetan and Buddhist in character. Only toward the end of the nineties an increased activity can be observed emanating primarily from the Men-Tsee-Khang in Dharamsala.

Keywords publications – Tibetan medicine – China – India – State Library Berlin

Ein bibliographischer Überblick über medizinische Literatur in tibetischer Sprache basierend auf den Nachkriegsbeständen der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin

Zusammenfassung Der vorliegende Überblick über medizinische Literatur beruht auf den tibetischsprachigen Beständen der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. In deren Katalog (www.stabikat.de) lassen sich zurzeit etwa 10.000 Titel in tibetischer Sprache nachweisen. Etwa 64 Prozent dieser Bücher und Zeitschriften stammen aus China, rund 24 Prozent aus Indien (die übrigen 12 Prozent verteilen sich auf verschiedene Herkunftsländer einschließlich der westlichen Länder, etwa in Form von Textausgaben). Etwa 5,5 Prozent dieser tibetischsprachigen Publikationen lassen sich als medizinische Literatur im weiteren Sinne identifizieren, was einen beachtlichen Anteil ausmacht. Der weit überwiegende Teil des tibetischsprachigen medizinischen Schrifttums bezieht sich auf die traditionelle tibetische Medizin; nur ein geringer Teil ist biomedizinisch ausgerichtet. Der Beitrag zeichnet die Entwicklung des medizinischen Schrifttums nach, das in Indien und der Volksrepublik China etwa seit dem Jahre 1950 erschienen ist. Auf der chinesischen Seite lässt sich ein nennenswertes Aufkommen an tibetischsprachiger medizinischer Literatur erst für die neunziger Jahre des vorigen Jahrhunderts beobachten. Seit Anbruch des neuen Millenniums indes kann man geradezu von einem „Boom“ neuerer Veröffentlichungen in China sprechen, der deutlich anzeigt, dass sich die traditionelle tibetische Medizin zunehmender Beachtung erfreut. Auf der indischen Seite setzt eine substantielle Produktion tibetischsprachiger medizinischer Werke bereits Ende der sechziger Jahre ein. Diese Buchproduktion ist aber keineswegs von der tibetischen Exilgemeinde getragen, wie man annehmen könnte, sondern stammt überwiegend von Tibetern aus Ladakh, dem traditionell tibetisch-buddhistisch geprägten Teil Kaschmirs um den Hauptort Leh. Erst gegen Ende der neunziger Jahre lässt sich eine gesteigerte Aktivität beobachten, die vor allem vom Men-Tsee-Khang in Dharamsala ausgeht.

Schlagwörter Publikationen – Tibetische Medizin – China – Indien – Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin

* This book report is based on a presentation given at the Centenary of the inauguration of the Medical College at Atsagat Monastery on September 15, 2013 organized by Natalia Bolsokhova (for more see BOLSOKHOVA in this issue, p. 7–9).

Introduction

Over the past decades there has been a remarkable increase in publications about Tibetan medicine published in both China and India. It reflects a growing interest in the art of traditional Tibetan healing, as well as its increasing standing. What is surveyed in the following short paper are books published in the Tibetan language about Tibetan medicine, so not publications written about Tibetan medicine in other languages such as English, Russian, Mongolian or Chinese (of which there are many). What follows is also not intended as an overview of Tibetan medical writing in general, including pre-modern works in terms of manuscripts or xylographs written or carved in former centuries. The focus is on work that has been published in Tibetan during the post-war period, i. e. after 1945, viewed on the basis of the today's holdings accessible in Berlin.

There are only a limited number of libraries worldwide that have been collecting Tibetan language publications on a large scale and over a longer period of time. Among them is Berlin's State Library or "Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz" as its full name reads in German. Founded in 1661, the library has been renamed a number of times reflecting political changes. For most of its history it was known as "Königliche Bibliothek" Royal Library 1701–1918). After the First World War, which ended the monarchy in Germany, it was named "Preußische Staatsbibliothek" (Prussian State Library) until Prussia was formally abolished as a state in 1947. In the aftermath of the Second World War, which resulted in the division into a West and an East German state, there were two State Libraries in Berlin, one located in the western and the other in the eastern part of the city. The two libraries were reunited in the course of German unification (1990) and now appear under the present name, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

At present, the State Library holds about ten thousand books published in the Tibetan language after World War II (let me stress again: not counting books in languages other than Tibetan, such as English books on Tibetan medicine for example). This is a substantial collection and is the result of the relatively continuous acquisition of Tibetan publications in recent decades. Bibliographic references to these works can be found on the Internet under the web address <http://stabikat.de>. You may search

for Tibetan terms by simply typing one or the other relevant term in transliteration such as for example *gso-ba rig-pa*. The transliteration scheme that is consistently used in the catalogue is in line with the well-known "WYLIE" system with the exception of the two consonantal letters *va-chung* (འ) and *xa-chen* (མ), which are romanised as "v" in accordance with a well-established Chinese standard, and "x" respectively. The convention was introduced in the Library over two decades ago as it was felt to be imperative in order to provide a secure and correct retrieval of data from a library catalogue. So please note, for example: *bkav-vgyur* "Kanjur" and *xa-mdo* "Amdo"—not *bka'*-*gyur* or *a-mdo*.

A useful tool is "Erweiterte Suche" (advanced search) offering a good deal of search options. You can filter the results by year of publication, select the language in which the book is published, search for books published in a particular country, or look for certain catchwords such as "Medizin" (medicine). The following survey is based upon these search options. I shall abstain from translating book titles so as not to overload the presentation. All publications explicitly mentioned can be found in the bibliography at the end of this paper, and all of them are easily retrievable in the library catalogue. It should be stressed that, naturally, the holdings of the library do not cover all publications that may have appeared during the post-war period, but what we do hold is probably representative, at least in relative terms.

Publications from China

Let us start with a look at China. There were a number of Tibetan language publications during the nineteen-fifties of the past century, ranging from about ten to thirty items per year (153 during the whole 1950–1959 period) yet there is not a single book on medicine among them. It is mostly political stuff such as the collected works of MAO ZEDONG (spelled MAVO-TSE-TUNG or MAVO-RTSE-TUNG in Tibetan transcription), a history of the Communist Party, biographies (sometimes in the form of comics) of heroes fighting for the cause, and the writings of STALIN and others rendered into Tibetan as well. For example, LENIN's famous booklet Социализм и религия (Socialism and religion) was published under the title *Spyi-tshogs ring-lugs dang chos-lugs*. But not everything is political. You will also find

dictionaries, books on language, folklore, and so forth.

Tibetan-language book production in China came to an abrupt end when the Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959. This is reflected in the number of Tibetan books from China as far as they found their way into the library. Whereas you can still find thirty books published in 1959, the number of Tibetan books for the following year (1960) is only seven. There are no Tibetan books from 1961 and only one published in 1962. The ensuing Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) was a grim period for the production of cultural goods such as books. One can hardly find any books published until 1978 in which year we find five—on politics, hunting, literature, a drama, and a book on the locative case (*la-don*) in the Tibetan language based on the classical works of *Sum-cu-pa* and *Rtags kyi vjug-pa* on Tibetan grammar and orthography (*Sum-rtags las la-don gyi gnad-don kha-shas*).

In 1980 nineteen Tibetan language books were published including, for the first time, a publication about medicine: *Rgyud-bzhivi rtsa-ba dang besngon gyi dkar-chags* (usual spelling: *dkar-chag*), which appeared in Lhasa and comprises of only 14 pages. During the period from 1980 to 1989 just over 500 Tibetan publications from China were documented in our library (511 in all), of which 19 were books on medicine (3,7 percent). Apart from the book just mentioned in 1980 we find a Tibetan dictionary of medical terms (*Bod gang-s-can-pavi gso-ba rig-pavi dpal-ldan rgyud-bzhi sogs kyi brda dang dkav-gnad vgav-zhig bkrol-ba sngon-byon mkhas-pavi gsung-rgyun G'yu-thog dgongs-rgyan*), historical works on Tibetan medical texts from Dunhuang (*Tun-hong nas thon-pavi bod kyi gso-rig yig-cha bdam-bsgrigs*), and commentaries to the *Rgyud-bzhi* and other classical works. Many items, however, are medical guidebooks for nomads on things like hygiene, dentistry, female disorders (*monad*), and the like.

The 1990s saw a substantial increase in the production of Tibetan language books in China, as the number more than doubled. 1166 books were published, among them no less than 77 on medicine. These 77 books represent 6,6 percent of the whole output, a figure which implies the growing importance of Tibetan medicine (compared to 3,7 percent in the 1980s). We find a collection of biographies about famous Tibetan doctors compiled by BYAMS-

PA-VPHRIN-LAS (*Gangs-ljongs gso-rig bstan-pavi nyin-byed rim-byon gyi rnam-thar phyogs-bsgrigs*) and a similar work, which also contains a detailed bibliography of medical works (*Bod kyi mkhas-pa rim-byon gyi gso-rig gsung-vbum dkar-chag mu-tig phreng-ba*). There is a compilation of evidence on medicine from the Kanjur (*Bkav-vgyur las gsungs-pavi rang-byung tshan-rig gi cha-shas lus-khams nyi-mavi gnyen-po mdo-tsam bstan-pa*) and even a book on Yoga (*Vphrul-vkhor nyi-zla kha-sbyor gyi rtsa-vgrel*). Tibetan-Chinese dictionaries were published (*Bod-rgya gso-ba rig-pavi tshig-mdzod*, *Rgya-bod shan-sbyar mivi lus-povi gshag-las rig-pavi tha-snyad*), a Tibetan-Chinese-Latin dictionary of traditional drugs (*Bod-rgya-la gsum gyi bod-sman ming-mdzod*), a work on Tibetan anatomy (*Bod-lugs gso-rig gi lus-khams grub-tshul skor gleng-ba*), on medical thankas (*Bod-lugs gso-rig rgyud-bzhivi nang-don bris-cha ngo-mtshar mthong-ba don-ldan*), or on the origin and development of Tibetan medicine (*Bod kyi gso-rig byung-vphel gyi lo-rgyus*). A number of collected writings (variously denoted as *gsung-rtso* *phyogs-bsgrigs*, *dp Yad-rtso* *phyogs-bsgrigs*, *sman-yig phyogs-bsgrigs*) appeared, and so on and so forth. We still find some general guidebooks on hygiene, the prevention of venereal diseases and typhus, or the propagation of birth control, but by far the majority are substantial and often well-done works on traditional Tibetan medicine proper. A considerable upturn, if not a boom in the production of books on medicine can be observed since the middle of the 1990s, which is hardly conceivable without the assumption of significant support by the Chinese state.

Since the turn of the millennium, we have noted an even stronger increase in production figures for Tibetan books. No less than 4506 such items were recorded in the library since 2000 of which 364 are related to medicine (8,0 percent—again implying a further increase in the relative importance of books on Tibetan medicine). There are a fair number of general introductions on Tibetan medicine, sometimes stressing the (political) contention, in the title of at least one of these books, that Tibetan medicine should be part of Chinese medicine (*Krung-govi gso-rig kun-vdus las bod kyi gso-ba rig-pa*). Books on Tibetan medicine are now published by the series. One notable example is *Bod kyi gso-ba rig-pavi gnav-dpe phyogs-bsgrigs dpe-tshogs*, which began in 2002 and concentrates on classical works on

medicine composed by authors such as G'YU-THOG YON-TAN-MGON-PO, but also less widely known ones: BYANG-PA RNAM-RGYAL-GRAGS-BZANG (also known as GRAGS-PA-BZANG-PO, 1395–1475), GONG-SMAN DKON-MCHOOG-VPHAN-DAR (1511–1577), CHA-HAR DGE-BSHES BLO-BZANG-TSHUL-KHRIMS (1740–1810), to name only a few. No less than 77 volumes of this series have been registered so far. Another series known as *Dus-rabs 21-pavi bod-lugs gso-rig dngos-tshan slob-gsovi vchar-vgod slob-deb* was started in 2004 and is devoted to certain themes such as anatomy (*grub-pa-lus*), gynaecology (*manad gso-ba*), pharmacology (*zhi-byed sman-sbyor*), surgery (*lhan-skyes-rma gso-ba*), and even astrology (*gnam-rig skar-rtsis*), mostly contributed to by contemporary authors. *Rgyal-khab krung-lugs gso-rig sman-rdzas do-dam-cus mi-rigs gso-rig phyag-dpe legs-sgrig dpe-tshogs* is another series started in 2004, in which, among other things, a useful bibliography appeared (*Bod-lugs gso-rig gi dpe-rnying dkar-chag bod-rgya-dbyin gsum shan-sbyar-ma*). Yet another series is *Bod kyi gso-rig dpe-rnying phyogs-sgrig gangs-ri dkar-povi phreng-ba*, which began in 2001 and contains commentaries on the *Rgyud-bzhi* or an edition of the *Gso-rig vbum-bzhi*.

A number of handbooks (*lag-deb*) on traditional medicine have been published since the new millennium began, for example: *Bod-rgya shan-sbyar gyi rgyun-spyod bod-sman lag-deb*. Useful bibliographies have been published (*Bod-ljongs Bod-lugs Gso-rig Slob-grwa Chen-mor bzhugs-su gsol-bavi dpe-rnying dkar-chag*) as well as biographies on such eminent physicians as BYAMS-PA-VPHRIN-LAS (*Mkhas-dbang Byams-pa vphrin-las mchog gi bod-lugs gso-rig gi dran-gsos gnam rna-bavi bcud-len*). A nice assortment of dictionaries appeared, such as *Sman-sdeb nye-bar mkho-bsdus xa-ru gser-vbras do-shal*, *Bod kyi gso-rig dang skar-rtsis rig-pavi tshig-mdzod* and, in particular, the impressive *Bod-lugs gso-rig tshig-mdzod chen-mo*. It should be mentioned that a critical edition of the *Tanjur (Bstan-vgyur)* was undertaken in the 1990s. Four volumes, namely volumes 111 to 114 published between 2002 and 2004, are on medicine (*gso-rig*). Numerous commentaries (*vgrel-pa*, *vgrel-chen*, *mchan-vgrel*, *rnam-bshad*) on the *Rgyud-bzhi* were published such as the one written by BLO-BZANG-CHOS-GRAGS (*Phyi-mavi rgyud kyi mchan-vgrel mun-sel sgron-me*). We find books on special topics such as moxibustion (*Me-btsavi rnam-bshad mthong-*

ba don-ldan) or bloodletting and medicinal baths (*Bod kyi gso-ba rig-pavi dmigs-bsal gyi bcos-thabs gar-bsreg-lums gsum gyi skor dpyad-pa mes-povi zhal-rgyun*). Some publications concentrate on regional medical traditions of places like Yar-klungs (*Yar-klungs gso-rig Bod-ljongs Lho-kha Sa-khul gyi bod-sman ched-rtson phyogs-bsgrigs*, *Tsong-khavi gso-rig zhib-vjug rtsom-btus*, *Yul-mdo khams-stod kyi mkhas-dbang rnam-pas mdzad-pavi gso-rig bstan-bcos vgav phyogs-gcig tu bsgrigs-pa bdud-rtsi rgya-misho*). Newer medical developments in epidemiology and other problems are addressed in guidebooks on SARS (*Dmigs-bsal glo-tshad vgonzon bya-thabs khyab-spel dpe-deb*), AIDS (*Xe-tsi vgos-nad kyi rgyun-shes klog-deb*) or drug abuse (*Dug-rdzas gtan-vgog gi rgyun-shes klog-deb*).

Publishing houses in China

Taking a look at the main publishing houses for Tibetan books in China, the one with the biggest output in the field of medicine is Mi-rigs Dpe-skrunkhang in Pe-cin (Beijing). Another publisher based in Beijing, generally specialised in Tibetology but with an output of some twenty books on Tibetan medicine, is Krung-govi Bod-rig-pa Dpe-skrunkhang including a limited, but high-quality programme in traditional medical works. Second to Beijing in publication figures is Lhasa where two publishing houses are located, namely the Bod-ljongs Mi-dmangs Dpe-skrunkhang with quite a large output in books, and a smaller one, Bod-ljongs Bod-yig Dpe-rnying Dpe-skrunkhang, specialising on older Tibetan works. A fair number of books on medicine are produced in Zi-ling (Xining) in a publishing house called Mtsho-sngon Mi-rigs Dpe-skrunkhang and in Khreng-tuvu (Chengdu) where the Si-khron Mi-rigs Dpe-skrunkhang is based. Less prolific in medical books is Kan-suvu Mi-rigs Dpe-skrunkhang in Lan-krovu (Lanzhou), which seems to be more specialised in modern literature.

In summary, one can observe a regeneration of China's publishing industry in the 1980s, once the disaster of the 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution' had come to an end, however only isolated works on medicine were released during that decade. The picture had changed dramatically by the mid-1990s when an increasing interest in Tibetan medicine became noticeable. The numbers continued to rise after the turn of the millennium, with

peaks in the years 2004 and 2007 when not less than 51 and 58 books on Tibetan medicine were published and recorded by our library, respectively.

Publications from India

Let us now take a look at the other Asian country with substantial book production in the Tibetan language, namely India. There are only some isolated publications in the 1950s and 1960s, reflecting the fact that there was no Tibetan exile community before the Dalai Lama fled the People's Republic of China in 1959. However, starting at the end of the 1960s substantial Tibetan book production became noticeable in the Subcontinent, and it was not the exile community who became particularly productive in publishing Tibetan books on medicine. Prominence must be given to a publishing house located in the town of Leh (Tibetan: Gle) in the region of Ladakh (La-dwags) in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. A series called *Smanrtsis shesrig spendzod*—spelled in this fashion in Latin letters equaling *Sman-rtsis shes-rig dpe-mdzod* if transliterated orthographically from Tibetan script—was published over quite a long period, from 1969 up until the middle of the 1990s. Works of SDE-SRID SANGS-RGYAS-RGYA-MTSHO were reproduced under the title *Ayurveda in Tibet*, containing his work *Dpal-ldan gso-ba rig-pavi khog-vbugs legs-bshad bai-dū-ryavi me-long drang-srong dgyes-pavi dgav-ston*. A large number of other central works of traditional Tibetan medicine followed over the years, not less than 91 in number. An important contemporary representative of Tibetan medicine, PA-SANGS-YON-TAN (PASANG YONTEN ARYA), also began to publish his works in Leh: *Bod kyi gso-ba rig-pavi lo-rgyus kyi bang-mdzod G'yu-thog bla-ma dran-pavi pho-nya*.

The Tibetan exile community started its publishing activities in the Tibetan language in the 1960s with output modestly rising in the 1970s. But there are hardly any books on medicine—what we find are mostly religious works, often collected writings (*gsung-vbum*) of eminent lamas. Only a of handful medical works can be found in our catalogue from the 1980s, beginning with an edition of the *Rgyud-bzhi* (full title: *Bdud-rtsi snying-po yan-lag brgyad-pa gsang-ba man-ngag gi rgyud*) which came out in Dharamsala in 1984, however it only represented the mere reprint of an earlier edition made in China. There is a booklet on how to practice medicine

(*Bod-sman stabs-bder lag-len byed-tshul dngul gyi me-long*), an instruction by His Holiness on the matter, not more than 34 pages (*Gong-sa skyabs-mgon chen-po mchog nas vphags-yul bod-gzhung sman-rtsis las slob-tshor snga-rjes btsal-bavi bkav-slob phyogs-bsdus*), a three-volume textbook (*Bod kyi gso-rig slob-deb*), and a few other works on medicine.

The figures for the 1990s are a little higher; about twenty Tibetan books on medicine were published in India. Many of them come from a publishing house in Dharamsala, namely the Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute. Its Tibetan name is Bod-gzhung Sman-rtsis-khang, sometimes Bod-gzhung Dbus Sman-rtsis-khang (English spelling: Mentseekhang), which indicates that it is affiliated with the Central Tibetan Administration, i. e. the Exile Government. Among these publications I would like to particularly mention a register for pharmaceutical drugs (*Bod kyi gso-ba rig-pavi sman-rdzas dpe-ris gsal-bavi me-long blo-gsar dgyes-pavi nyin-byed*), a *Dictionary of Tibetan materia medica* compiled by PA-SANGS-YON-TAN (translated from Tibetan with original title: *Bod kyi sman-rdzas rig-pavi tshig-mdzod G'yu-thog sngo-vbum dgongs-rgyan*), an edition of the well-known work *Shel-gong shel-phreng* written by DEVU-DMAR DGE-BSHES BSTAN-VDZIN-PHUN-TSHOGS, and a handbook of common illnesses and their cures in Tibetan medicine published as *Nad-rigs dkyus-ma bcos-thabs kyi lag-deb*, again authored by PA-SANGS-YON-TAN.

Not unlike the situation in China, figures have again soared since the year 2000; almost fifty books (48) on medicine can be found. Of course, this is less than China's impressive figure of 364 publications during the same period (see above), but it is still a remarkable figure when we consider that it comes from an exiled community, limited in number and disposing of much fewer resources than a country as gigantic as China. There is, for example, a book on paediatrics (*Byis-pa la nye-bar spyod-pavi tshul legs-par bshad-pa drang-srong rgan-povi vbel-gtam ma yi rna-bavi bcud-len*). Sometimes medicine is combined with astrology as in "An anthology of articles on Tibetan medicine and astrology" (*Bod kyi srol-rgyun sman-rtsis rig-pavi dpyad-yig mu-tig phreng-mdzes*). Efforts were made to standardise Tibetan medical vocabulary in English (*Xin-bod shan-sbyar gtan-vbebs brda-chad vdzin-skyong sman-rtsis dngos-khams rdzas-sbyor*

rtsi-shing nges-tshig mnyam-sbrags), the relationship between Tibetan medicine and Ayurveda is examined (*Bod kyi gso-rig dang xa-yur we-dha krung-dbyivi sman-gzhung bcas las bstan-pavi skye-dngos sman-rdzas kyi dpar-ris dang lag-len gces-btus blo-gsar rig-pavi sgo-vbyed*), and other remarkable books were published.

Summarising the small report on Tibetan-language publications presented here, a remarkable upswing can be seen with regard to Tibetan medicine since the 1990s with yet another increase in book production since the year 2000. This is true for both China and India in a similar fashion and in comparable relative proportions.

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