

ISA RESEARCH FORUM

## Murals in the medical college at Labrang Monastery in Eastern Tibet: A historical and ethnomedical study

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**ÖAW Building Wohllebengasse**, Seminar room 1  
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In the inner courtyard of the medical college at Labrang Monastery the visitor will find nineteen murals, none of which have been previously analysed and described. With the help of an 'unfolded tree' (*sdong vgrems*) metaphor they illustrate the content of the *Rgyud bzhi*, the major classical text of Tibetan Medicine, thus providing a vivid visual structure to the contents of the book. The murals were photo-documented by myself in 2004 and 2005, however, they now appear to have been repainted similarly, but less elaborately in the meantime.

Some of the Labrang murals depict the contents of the *Rgyud bzhi* in exact detail, whereas others are less circumstantial. In some cases the illustrations show divergences. A preliminary comparison of the Labrang murals with the illustrations attached to the famous commentary on the *Rgyud bzhi* by SANGS RGYAS RGYA MTSHO, the *Vaidurya sngon po* (Blue Beryl), reveals a whole string of significant and often complementary differences. These divergences raise questions about the doctrinal traditions that influenced the murals at Labrang. Are these differences evidence of certain regional characteristics or are they based on another text-tradition?



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Several articles on Tibetan Medicine.