PART FOUR:
HISTORY OF TIBETAN MEDICINE
What follows is basically a report on the authorship and content of a very significant manuscript containing two closely related medical writings by the same author found in the Giuseppe Tucci collection in Rome (Rossi-Filibeck 2003: no. 1281). I would like to thank Elena de Rossi-Filibeck and others who made it possible to obtain a copy of this manuscript in microfilm form. I imagine, even in the absence of specific information, that it was probably procured during Tucci’s main expedition through western Tibet and Ladakh in 1935. Although this may be proven wrong, I do not believe Tucci mentioned it in any of his publications—he never seems to have taken a particularly strong interest in Tibetan medicine—although he did include a very brief sketch of medical history in his book *To Lhasa and Beyond* (1956: 99) telling also how a Tibetan doctor in Lhasa cured his feverish bowel complaint using herbal pills.

When preparing the bibliography entitled Tibetan Histories (Martin 1997), I was aware of a great many titles of *khog 'bugs* genre texts that are listed here and there in medical works (*khog 'bugs* texts may be general histories of traditional arts and sciences, and not specifically of medicine). However, I included only those that I felt reasonably sure had circulated in the past. We should distinguish, too, between medical histories that are extant and those which are published. Among the earlier medical histories, some are certainly extant, although not available, or at least not without considerable effort. Among these is the history by Brang ti Dpal ldan 'tsho byed whose present existence was signaled by Kurtis Schaeffer (1998). Of the 48 folios of the extant manuscript, 28 folios are actually on the history of medicine. This probably belongs to the early fifteenth century, as Schaeffer suggests. Another is the medical history by Zur mkhar Blo gros rgyal po—author of the well-known commentary on the *Four Medical Tantras* (*Rgyud bzhi*) called *Ancestral Advice* (*Mes po'i zhal lung*)—which was written in about the middle of the sixteenth century.¹

¹ Martin 1997: no. 172. The 2001 publication of his historical work has only now become available to me.