This brief outlook on research in the history of Tibetan medicine is the result of deliberations over a period of several years by five researchers,\textsuperscript{1} aided by a board of five advisors in 2004,\textsuperscript{2} in preparation of future research work on the history of Tibetan medicine. We decided to publish a preliminary report at this point in time, in the hope that it will articulate and eventually help redress the present scarcity of reliable and comprehensive academic research and publication on the history of Tibetan medical traditions. This contribution is therefore not intended as a survey or review of the present state of research, highlighting its merits, but as an attempt to chart out the most apparent lacunae in the field in order to formulate reasonable and feasible longer-term research targets.

Anyone who wishes to familiarise themselves with the history of Tibetan medicine will soon discover that the academic discourse on the subject still is in a nascent and fragmented state. The few academic monographs presently available cover a limited range of synchronic and diachronic issues.\textsuperscript{3} Surveys have only appeared as brief monograph introductions or as popular, often traditionalist presentations with limited academic merit. At present the most urgent desideratum in the field therefore is broad and groundbreaking research; this outlook is intended to help define a framework for future work on the history of Tibetan medicine.

The present state of academic knowledge has been developed by a surprisingly small group of dedicated and productive scholars. The amount of work that needs to be done is daunting. Over more than a

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\textsuperscript{2} Harm Beukers (Leiden), Jan Meulenbeld (Groningen), Fernand Meyer (Paris), Geoffrey Samuel (Cardiff, see contribution here), and Wim Stokhof (Leiden).

\textsuperscript{3} See, e.g., Meyer 1988 and Taube 1981.
millennium, Tibetan medical traditions have produced a vast corpus of literature analogous in complexity to the medical scholasticism of India, China, or Greece, and they have developed in highly involved dependencies on the latter, which still require illumination. Today, Tibetan medicine is not only practised widely in Asia, but its use is growing in Europe and North America as well. A history of such an important and highly diverse body of knowledge can only be accomplished satisfactorily if a carefully chosen range of major periods and relevant disciplines are addressed in conjunction, which, ideally, requires a multidisciplinary team of specialist researchers working collaboratively for a period of several years.

RESEARCH TARGETS

Looking at the present academic discourse on Tibetan medicine as a textual scholar, one cannot help but be struck by the prevailing lack of detailed analytical (rather than encyclopaedic) knowledge of even the most essential textual sources of Tibetan medicine. The precise origins, contexts, textual history and intertextuality, even of such basic sources as the *Rgyud bzhi* or *Yan lag brgyad pa*, in recent decades do not seem to have raised much academic appetite and at the beginning of the third millennium are still awaiting satisfactory and in-depth coverage. Presently we still subsist on a few excellent but preliminary or only tangential treatments of several decades ago.4 As much as the central texts of Tibetan medicine still await proper philological and historical attention, within our research group it also soon became apparent that there is another area that perhaps provides even more uncharted terrain, the human chains that transmit medical expertise: medical teaching lineages, in all their various forms. For a proper and balanced understanding of the development of medical knowledge in Tibet, research on various aspects of medical lineages forms an indispensable complement to textual-historical work, and an interdisciplinary approach is therefore essential. As is well known, Tibetan historical writing (on medicine) mostly touches on precisely those two issues, chronology of transmission (mostly codified in texts) and lineage. Thus we have had to conclude