УДК 94 (515)

DOI 10.28995/2073-0101-2018-3-926-935

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Tibetan Fond of the Center of Oriental Manuscripts and Xylography of the Institute for Mongolian, Buddhist and Tibetan Studies of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences: Characteristics, Classification of the Medical Collection

Abstract

This article offers a description and subject classification of the medical texts collection from the Tibetan fond of the Center for Oriental Manuscripts and Xylographs of the Institute of Mongolian, Buddhist and Tibetan studies of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (COMX IMBTS SB RAS). One of its main tasks has been to identify and attribute medical texts in the Tibetan collection, which is comprised of over 40,000 texts acquired from

private libraries of the Buddhist clergy of Buryatia. Intensive source work has resulted in creation of a separate collection of medical texts, which includes 508 manuscripts and xylographs registered under 222 storage cyphers. All texts have been thematically classified into 11 groups according to genre of medical literature. This classification reflects the preferences of Buryat physicians in choosing particular works. Although the collection is relatively small, it contains important texts of Tibetan medicine. The article focuses on classification of the most common in Buryatia commentaries on the rGyud bzhi. The authors have identified several terms that Tibetans used for this category of texts, such as sdong 'grems, mchan' grel, bru 'grel, lhan thabs. In general, the texts in the collection are in line with Tibetan medical tradition and correspond to the level of education in the Buryat Buddhist monasteries. Electronic catalogue and data base compiled by the authors facilitate further study of the Tibetan-language medical sources by Tibetan, Mongolian, and Buryat authors. Medical texts should be available to specialists so that new approaches to their classification and systematization may be developed and rational legacy of Oriental medicine may be incorporated in contemporary medical practice. This will allow to study interinfluence of medical traditions, to determine regional, ethnic, and cultural features of medical literary tradition.

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Keywords

Source, Tibetan fond, medical collection, subject classification, rGyud bzhi, source study, history of Tibetan medicine.

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Submitted 21.03.2018, published:

ZHABON, Yu. Zh., VANCHIKOVA, Ts. P., RINCHINOV, O. S. Tibetskii fond TsVRK IMBT SO RAN: kharakteristika, klassifikatsiya meditsinskoi kollektsii [Tibetan Fond of the Center of Oriental Manuscripts and Xylography of the Institute for Mongolian, Buddhist and Tibetan Studies of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences: Characteristics, Classification of the Medical Collection. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik arhivista / Herald of an Archivist, 2018, no. 3, pp. 926-935. doi 10.28995/2073-0101-2018-3-926-935

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Полностью материал публикуется в российском историко-архивоведческом журнале ВЕСТНИК АРХИВИСТА. Ознакомьтесь с условиями подписки здесь .