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## Summary

On 21 February 1988, at the Tibetan New Year Festival at Queens College University of Melbourne, Victoria. Ven. Kinjo Rinpoche discussed the theory of Tibetan medicine.

A summary of his talk and comments follows.

### TIBETAN HEALING TALK

by Venerable Kinjo Rinpoche

Tibetan medicine, as taught, has its origins in four root lineages of Tantra which came from the traditional medical system of India brought by two doctors who came at the time of the 25th King of Tibet. The Gyu-zhi (rGyud-bzhi) contains four tantras. This text contains the original information given by the two Indian doctors. The Tibetan King offered the doctors his daughter and a child was born from this union. The child became the first Tibetan doctor on this system. Later, a Tibet medical college was established which had a non-broken lineage teaching till 1959 C.E. Such medical training required fifteen to twenty years of study and practice.

The first part of the training was to memorise the four root texts. This might take one to two years for the average novice. Until this memorising step was complete, the Doctor Teacher would not give teachings. It would appear that this step is a karmic cause for allowing the physical manifestation of the herbs, flowers, animal products and gems that would be desired in the future.

Such beginnings are usually difficult because of the natural greed of untrained persons for precious things. As future doctors, they must give away precious things to their patients, so any greed would hinder cures. Greed may hinder learning rates. When this natural greed is removed by this learning process, some degree of dedication might be expected to replace this former defilement in the medical student.

The first Tantra explains physical forms; the second Tantra deals with horoscopes. Past lives can determine present karmic return. If unwholesome actions were undertaken in past times, the return of such actions could appear as disease in the present time or could appear in the future time of the patient. The texts may indicate the action time which is best for treatment or preparation of medicine.

When the medical student has completed the memorising stage of learning, he is taken to the mountains by his Preceptor. Meditation on the Medicine Buddha

is practised together with Eight Precepts.

At this stage, the Teacher explains how and when to pick herbs and take gemstones and place in a bamboo bag.

Students carry their own food and live on dairy products. This training process may take two or three months.

The method of drying flowers and removing the poisons from herbs is taught. The use of a Medicine Buddha is an important part of training. (1) Whereas dried herbs may spoil in one year, the same herbs prepared into pills under correct conditions are still fresh thirty or forty years later.

The next stages are to explain the 'channels', ('black' and 'white') for the winds, (Tib. rLung). The winds interconnect (somewhat). The main check is on the pulse (pulses) on the wrist. The main channel is termed Ratna Channel (Skt. Ratna = gem or jewel). The five most important physical organs are examined.

By staying with the Teacher from one to five years, these skills are learnt and verified by the Teacher.

The next training step deals with the methods of separation of bad blood from good blood from the channels such as for example, by pill use. Bad blood is not taken from the chest region, but rather from legs or arms. Different sorts of blood are taken from, for example, the face. Physical removal of bad blood may be made by cutting with fire to seal. Sometimes cures are made by indirect methods.

Teaching includes pulse and urine tests, (for correcting medicine diets). In many cases, the doctor can tell problems one year ahead of the appearance of physical 'symptoms'. Undue seasonal changes cause problems. Tibet did not have many diseases in ancient times. The Medicine Buddha predicted the types of new diseases which would appear in future times.

In essence, there are two types of disease from either internal and/or external causes. The 'internal diseases causes are the three root delusions (hate, greed and ignorance) meeting with different conditions.

It is considered 'external' disease is not very important compared with 'internal' diseases.

Wrong moralities are conditions for diseases. They are like seeds. If you do not meet conditions, they will not sprout and ripen. For example, if seeds were kept in a strong bottle, it would not matter where the bottle was put. However, if the constraint of the bottle is broken the seeds can sprout. The Buddha Path is the complete practice for internal disease. The trainee doctor must practice Buddha's Teachings.

For external diseases, treatment with warm clothing, medicine, (and so on) will suffice.

Some conditions are incurable this life, and the patient must die.

Tibetan Doctors examine family backgrounds, food used and the weather situation. They understand diet effects at a very subtle level. There are three main types of country in Tibet and, hence, three main climatic states. They understand climate effects at a very subtle level.

In old Tibet, nomads came to small towns to bring butter, cheese, meat and dairy products. The nomads ate these products regularly. In contrast, the villagers ate mainly fruit and vegetables. The nomads considered the villagers like animals eating grass. When the nomads traded their dairy products and wool, they wanted barley grain from the villagers. When the nomads ate much fruit and vegetables or the villagers ate much dairy products, both had trouble with their stomachs and became ill. So it becomes clear that health depends, not so much on what is eaten, but what the body has become adapted to use. Therefore, Tibetan Doctors are careful in advising any sudden change of diet. The accumulated conditions of effects of former lives diet patterns could be expected to provide health or illness induced by diet. In Western World countries, much of the debate and controversy in respect of the character, nature and efficacy of 'alternative' medicine have led Western World Committees to the opinion that the two paradigms of health care are largely contradictory and irreconcilable. At best, their co-existence in some societies demonstrates the freedom enjoyed by individuals to choose their own mode of health care. (2)

In Tibet, if little salt were available, over long periods of time, in the diet, then amounts of salt are taken, salt disease is acquired. In like manner, 'sugar disease' and so on.

All the accumulated karmic causes effect the wind channels.

The Root Texts (3), may list four hundred and twenty-four diseases, eighteen of which are most dangerous. Since there are many different conditions in this world, it is important to avoid bad conditions if possible.

If we practice to remove the three root causes, we would become wise and healthy.

A few Tibetan Doctors operate from hospitals in Dharamsala, India. At present, foreign patients may be accepted for treatment. Inquiries should be made directly to Ven. Kinjo Rinpoche. Buddhists in the Western World ought to consider a closer study, understanding and practice on the basis of Buddhist medicine. (4), for their own and others well-being.

The Merit of this article is dedicated with the wish that all beings be well and

happy and, more particularly that Ven. Kinjo Rinpoche may have long life and great health and continue to teach the Buddha Dharma.

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