

Tibetan Medicine

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Words from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo at Dzamling Gar, Losar 2018

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



Photo by Daniyal Ibragimov, 2018

I would like to say something about Tibetan Medicine, because it is not only the people in the Dzogchen Community who are interested in the Tibetan medicine. Tibetan Medicine is something very important not only for us, but for all the world. You know that today, for example, Tibet is part of China. And Tibet is a minority. But Tibetan culture is not a minority. Tibetan culture has two things that are very important for everybody in this world. Relatively, it is Tibetan medicine. Tibetan Medicine is very important because originally it comes from Shang Shung, an ancient Tibetan kingdom. They integrated and developed it for centuries and centuries from the medicinal knowledge of India, China and many other countries. So it became really very important for everybody. We need to understand that and we must not lose the possibility to have this knowledge of Tibetan Medicine in this world.

For example, which are the two most important things in a person's life? Relatively, it's very

important to have good health so that everything goes well. Definitely, what we need and what is more important is a spiritual path, spiritual knowledge. That's why everywhere in Tibet all people learn Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen. All these sources come from Tibet.

For example, in Tibet we have the Kangyur, a collection of all the words of Buddha in more than one hundred and eight volumes. There is also the Tengyur, which contains ancient knowledge of the spiritual path and Tibetan medicine translated from Sanskrit to Tibetan. Tengyur has more than two hundred volumes. There is no other nation that has such a wealth of a spiritual path and medicine in this world. This is a treasure of all human beings, not only of Tibetans.

For that reason, it is very important that we do not lose the Tibetan language. Even if the Tibetan language is spoken by a minority, the Kangyur, Tengyur, the origin of all the knowledge of this spiritual path is in the Tibetan language. For this reason, when we apply these words in the Shang Shung Institute and the Dzogchen Community, we also give importance to Tibetan medicine.

You should understand, for example, that our organization ASIA in the Dzogchen Community does not only work for Tibetans, we also work in Mongolia, Nepal and many other countries. So as I said already, it's very important that everybody supports ASIA, etc., and we need to develop in that way. This is something important that you should know and understand.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo:



Thank you! The first thing I want to say is Tashi Delek for Losar. In general, we use “Tashi Delek” in Tibetan for congratulations. So, my congratulations for the year of the Earth Dog. And secondly, on behalf of my family, I want to say thank you and long life to our dear Master. Happy Losar, Rinpoche!

So today I would like to speak about Tibetan Medicine. Our Tibetan Medicine program is not something that was created by me or something that is my idea or a group of people’s idea. It is one of Rinpoche’s activities and I want to make sure you all understand who created this Tibetan Medicine program and why we are doing this. I am doing this because it is Rinpoche’s wish and also one of Rinpoche’s activities.

Another thing I want you to understand, and I am sure you understand it very well, is the reason Rinpoche wanted a Tibetan Medicine program. It’s not something for the benefit of Tibet only, or the Tibetans or Tibetan culture. The medicine is called *men*. *Men* means “benefit”. Rinpoche knows that Tibetan Medicine has such a value to benefit all sentient beings and, for that reason, he created and developed this program because he understands that Tibetan medicine is good not only for Tibet or Tibetan culture, but it benefits all sentient beings.

Many times when I talk with people, they react thinking: “Oh, you are Shang Shung” or “You are Tibetan Medicine”. It looks like they feel, or maybe it’s my misunderstanding, like there is a boundary between us. So, I want to say, preserving Tibetan Medicine is one of our Master’s activities. We all know that our Master is very much beyond any human condition and he has many activities of this kind. One of his activities is yoga, one of his activities is Dzogchen Teaching, and his activities include many things that I cannot count due to lack of my knowledge. But one of them is Tibetan Medicine.

All people who work under Rinpoche’s guidance try to do their best. And our Tibetan Medicine team, we do our best. So far, we have two schools of Tibetan medicine, one is in Tsegylgar East, USA. We opened this [School of Tibetan Medicine](#) in 2005. Today the first graduated students came here to become Tibetan medicine teachers for the future. On February 19th, Rinpoche will give them diplomas. This is a sign of continuation of our activities. The second [School of Tibetan Medicine](#) was opened in Russia. We started in 2013 and the first graduation of students was in 2017. We have thirty-five graduated students and this coming year and in April we are [going to Tibet for practicing Tibetan medicine](#).

There are several reasons that we go to Tibet, but the main reason is that all the Tibetan medicine doctors, experts, professors are in Tibet. We take our students to Tibet to practice in front of them, clinically and with some knowledge, and take the final exams. If the students pass the exam, we will get the equivalent degrees from the government city level, which means that people who studied Tibetan medicine either in Russia or in the USA and people who studied Tibetan medicine in Tibet have the same knowledge, the same equivalence. That’s one of our main goals.

How can we check in Western countries if some particular Tibetan medicine doctor is qualified or not? In Western countries people have a lot of knowledge, there are a lot of talented people, but when it comes to the Tibetan culture and Tibetan medicine they don't have such knowledge so far. For that reason, it's important to bring our students to Tibet, in front of all those standard scholars, to take the final exam in order to make sure that our students are equally qualified to people who practice in Tibet. For that reason, also what we teach, the books we use, methods of teaching, everything that we do is in standard with what they use in Tibet and the way they teach Tibetan Medicine. Simply, how I learned Tibetan medicine in Tibet thirty years ago, that is the same method I use to teach my students.

Another thing is that now we are here, in Dzamling Gar, and we have the Tibetan medicine program that we are going to realize here. Two years ago and also last year I received two letters from Rinpoche when I was in Russia. Also I showed them to some of my friends in Russia. He said, "Dear Pungmo, your Tibetan medicine house in Dzamling Gar is ready". He asked, "When can you come and how long can you stay?" At that time I couldn't make my visa for some reason and I couldn't come. And a few months ago, again, I received another email from Rinpoche saying: "Now the Tibetan medicine house is completely ready for you". So now I am here. It means that Rinpoche really cares about Tibetan Medicine and about benefiting sentient beings. That is Rinpoche's goal.

Here, in Dzamling Gar, we do not have long-term courses so far, because here the construction is still going on, but we have two ongoing courses now. One of them is the course on Ku Nye, which is an external therapy. We did the first level this time and will continue. In the future we will do the first, second, third, fourth level and so forth and keep doing that. During the second course we studied the diet of level one. We are also going to continue that doing level one, level two, level three, etc., until a person becomes an expert. We already have the curriculums, standards and everything. I updated all those programs with Khandro Rosa Namkhai and she approved saying it's very good. This is my future job and I will work on that.

Now what I need is the Community people's support. We do not need ideas, as Rinpoche mentioned, we already have ideas, we have a path. Now we need to concretely move ahead.

Working for Shang Shung is a privilege and also a responsibility. I see the people who work for Shang Shung Institute in the USA or Russia and also here, and at the end of the day they are completely exhausted. After working for Shang Shung Institute for several months they start to look ten years older. It's supposed to be that working for Tibetan medicine we become younger, but no, very quickly we start to look like old people because we don't take time to take care about ourselves. That is because we have a shortage of people, human resources, working on these jobs. For that reason, please join us. Think of it as karma yoga, and you accumulate merits, it's your practice. Working or volunteering for the Community is part of your practice.

I want to thank my students. These students are from Russia or the USA, and they do a lot for

Shang Shung Institute. Without their help the School of Tibetan medicine of the Shang Shung Institute would not be able to function. And I also thank people who volunteer for the Tibetan medicine and also Gars, like, for example, people from Kunsangar, who were very kind and generous for the School of Tibetan medicine, same as also Tsegyalgar, whose gakyil were very kind and supportive for the School of the Tibetan medicine. I hope that the Gakyil of Dzamling Gar will, like other Gars, support the course of the Tibetan medicine program.

This year is the year of the Earth Dog. The dog in the Tibetan astrology means “very faithful”. Once you become friends with a dog, it will never leave you. It does not matter how you change, whether you become rich or poor, crazy or beautiful, the dog always stays with you. The dog feels that the family, the house where it lives and its property all belong to it. We are the Dzogchen Community and the individual Gars of the Dzogchen Community are our home, so Dzamling Gar is our home. I hope this year of the Earth Dog everybody understands which is our home and we make it physical. Besides, it’s an earth dog. Earth means “stable”. Even if you have a thousand ideas, you will be able to select one and follow it. So this year is very special.

I hope you are already doing a lot of group things for the individual Gars, also for Dzamling Gar, but I hope, particularly, if we take this opportunity starting from this year we will be able to do better and take on more responsibilities. In the Tibetan teaching system we call it *gyu*. *Gyu* means “lineage”: lineage of the teaching material, lineage of the attitude, lineage of the determination and the lineage of the faith. Everything we need is to try to, for sure we cannot be like Rinpoche or Khandro or Rinpoche’s children, but we try to learn that path. This is what I wanted to say.

Many people say that Tibetan Medicine is still not legal in the rest of the world. Don’t worry. Laws are made by humans. The first Tibetans who came to America and other countries were not citizens either. They wanted to stay, showed their good qualities and did not do any negative things, so slowly, slowly they became citizens. All laws are made by humans, so if you have knowledge, if we have correct knowledge, the laws will change, everything is impermanent. Impermanence means that something positive can turn negative but also something negative can turn positive, because everything is impermanent. At first, when we opened the schools in the USA and Russia, they were not legally documented. Now both schools are under the governmental law meaning that they are registered and approved. At the beginning we studied Ku Nye, an external therapy that people call massage but it’s not an ordinary massage, but simply we can say that it’s a Tibetan type of massage. When we did the Ku Nye in the USA it was not approved, it was illegal. Now it has received the Massachusetts state license and it is legal. So you see, everything is interdependent.

Thank you very much! All the best wishes to all of you and long life to Rinpoche.

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