



Tibetan Medicine Training Program in four levels

The four levels of training follow the traditional order studied by doctors for centuries, based on the Four Medical Tantras, the basic scripture of Tibetan Medicine. Instead of only relying on memorization of principles, there is a unique visual and meditative learning system employed which allows the entire system of medicine to be accessed simply. First the outline is built, then the details are filled in with each succeeding level.

The first level covers fundamental principles of Tibetan Medicine, the essential tools necessary to understand the body and how it functions and goes out of balance. Various therapies are introduced, as well as simple herbal and home remedies.

The second level begins an immersion into diagnostic techniques, especially pulse, urine, and the analysis of the sense organs. Then there is a deeper study of herbology and pathology.

The third and fourth levels comprise the advanced training of treating various diseases. Each module will cover causes, diagnosis, and treatment of specific conditions. While following traditional formats of teaching from the texts, current biomedical understandings will be introduced when useful. There will be more clinical training opportunities with Tibetan doctors, both locally and in Tibet.

While this program will train future practitioners of Tibetan Medicine, the first segments of the course are beneficial for anyone that wants to learn more about their body and energy system from a Tibetan perspective.

LEVEL 1: Fundamentals of Sowa Rigpa

1.1 Sorig Foundation Course

1.2 Sorig Anatomy, Physiology, and Subtle Anatomy

1.3 Lifestyle, Diet, and Basic Pathology

The first level covers the fundamental principles of Tibetan Medicine. First, all the principles and map of the territory of Tibetan Medicine is covered in the Sorig Foundation Course. It sheds light on our human body and how to keep it in balance in all activities of our lives. Then, a deeper, comprehensive study of the principles of Tibetan Medicine begins with the second and third modules.

1.1: Sorig Foundation Course

This class opens the door into the vast, profound world of Tibetan Medicine. All aspects of the healing system are introduced in simple, yet comprehensive terms;



using the visual system of metaphorical trees. This unique method employed for teaching follows the format of the Root Tantra, the first text studied by all Tibetan doctors for centuries. It allows the entire system of medicine to easily be accessed by the student. While this class is the basis of all further studies of Sowa Rigpa, it also is in itself enough to develop a foundational understanding in maintaining health and discovering the fundamental causes of imbalance. The wisdom of Tibetan philosophy will also be introduced, portraying human life in context with the interconnected web of all existence.

- Introduction to Sowa Rigpa, the Five Elements, Three Humors & Tree of Balance
- The Tree of Imbalance- basic principles of disease
- Principals of diagnosis, intro to pulse /urine analysis & symptoms of disease
- Basic treatment with food and lifestyle
- Principles of herbal remedies
- Overview of Tibetan external therapies
- Home remedies and commonly available herbs
- External therapy training: basic moxabustion and wind points
- Additional home study in the History of Tibetan Medicine, the great masters and doctors who revealed the science.

1.2: Sorig Anatomy, Physiology, and Subtle Anatomy

The Sorig Foundation Course covers the Root Tantra, which gives an overview of the entire system of medicine. Here the program begins the study of the Explanatory Tantra, which covers all aspects of medical practice and theory in depth. Tibetan medicine has a very precise educational structure, which in many ways resembles modern science. There is first a basis in anatomy and physiology, and then other topics are introduced, step by step, systematically.

- Embryology according to medical and spiritual systems
- Anatomy of the body including tissues and energy channels
- Physiology according to the 3 humors. The dynamics of life.
- Constitutional typology
- Signs and omens of death
- Subtle anatomy according to the Vajrayana yogic tradition- anatomy and structure of Vajra Body, Speech, and Mind.
- External therapy training: Horne- hot herbal oil compress treatment
- Additional study of points, meridians, and blood vessel points
- Training in breathing techniques, the foundation of Tibetan yoga



1.3 Diet, Lifestyle, and Basic Pathology

Tibetan medicine has two main aims: preventing and curing diseases. Of these, prevention is considered more important than curing. Natural medical science places great importance on healthy people maintaining their health. To have good health, we need to consider the causes of diseases. According to Sowa Rigpa, the primary cause is negative emotions and states of mind, fundamental misperceptions of reality. The secondary causes are improper lifestyle and diet, out of balance with our circumstances and seasons. Working with diet and lifestyle has a very deep curing effect, rebalancing our energy state with the natural world. It is thus strongly emphasized as an ideal treatment, rather than depending on strong or harsh medicines.

- Basic disease pathology
- Causes and conditions of disease
- Basic pathology of the three humors
- Healthy lifestyle guidelines
- Individual lifestyle- Includes all our daily activities in a day, from eating, working, sleeping, sexual activity, yogic exercises, geomancy, etc.
- Basic herbal remedies and treatments
- Social lifestyle- Looking at health on a larger perspective through the eyes of interdependence. How to be a healthy part of our human and natural community.
- Seasonal lifestyle- working with the changes of the Earth and heavens, keeping balance. Includes a basic study of Tibetan astrology
- Spiritual lifestyle
- Rejuvenation practices
- Principles of diet- including the energetic nature of different foods
- Basic explanation of food and drink
- Food combinations & Nourishment
- External Therapy: Kunye massage, Num Cho oil therapy
- Tibetan healing yoga
- Additional study in Tibetan astrology, Satche geomancy

LEVEL 2: Applications

2.1 Sorig Analysis

2.2 Herbal Study- Basics of Pharmacology

2.3 Pathology 1- Three Humors



The Second level of training goes deeper into clinical aspects of Tibetan Medicine.

First, the system of analysis is covered in depth, especially pulse and urine analysis. Next, more herbs and formulas are covered, which are put into use experientially and through observing subjects. By this time, the student has background training to study the advanced topics in the Upadesha Tantra, which goes into depth on the nature of all the different diseases recognized by Tibetan Medicine. This begins with the analysis of the three humors, the last module of level 2.

In addition, the second level adds more clinical training, observing subjects with Dr. Nida and other Tibetan doctors.

2.1 Sorig Analysis

All of the main Asian systems of traditional medicine are renowned for their special analytical sciences. Pulse specifically is quite well known. In Tibetan medicine, there is also a uniquely developed system of urine analysis. This course goes into detail in the study of analysis, pulse, and urine from the Explanatory and Final Tantras. Other aspects of analysis, such as observation of eyes and other sense organs, are included from another text, the Somaradza.

Pulse reading- healthy and sick pulses

Seasonal pulse variations

Pulse theory of disease

Pulse of specific organs and pathologies

Types of divination through pulse- a unique ancient Tibetan technique

Urine analysis

Urine of healthy and diseased patients

Urine of three humors and specific pathologies

Hypothesis from urine

Examination of sense organs, including eye, nose, tongue, skin

Basic clinical training

External therapy: Stick therapy- a unique method of healing originating from the yogic terma tradition using gentle rhythmic pulsation with special rattan sticks and mantra to maximize healing potential.

Additional study: The Ethics of a Physician

2.2 Herbal Study: Basics of Pharmacology

Herbal study is a very important topic in Tibetan Medicine. More than 70% of the pharmacopeia is based on herbs. This study is diffused in the whole program, with herbs and formulas being gradually introduced. However, here we go in depth into



Tibetan herbalism. The training is both didactic and practical, with additional study into making herbal formulations.

Introduction- study of taste, potency, and quality of substances

Cultivating, harvesting, processing herbs

Study of over 100 herbs, their qualities, therapeutic functions, and usage

More formulas and combinations of herbs

Divisions of herbs into groups

Mixing herbs for decoctions

Powdering and processing substances

Practical training in making pills, medicinal butters, wines, decoctions, oils, etc.

External therapy: Tibetan copper cupping, various herbal compresses

2.3 Pathology 1: Three Humors

Here the study of the Upadesha Tantra begins. The study of pathology commences with the three humors, the dynamic trinity of energies that make all life possible. In Tibetan Medicine, the 3 humors are the foundation of all imbalances and pathology of body energy and mind.

Causes and conditions of pathology

Pathology of 3 humors

Pathology of wind, bile, and phlegm- an in-depth study of causes, divisions, symptoms, and analysis

Clinical practice- how to analyze and promote wellness within the three humors

External therapy: more depth on moxabustion techniques, herbal bath therapy

Additional study: More in-depth acupoint study.

Optional Training in Tibet

This trip is conducted every August, circumstances permitting. It is open to TTM students of IATTM internationally from the second year of training on. Training will be in the Amdo region, at the Traditional Tibetan Medicine hospital in Xining, and the rural clinic in Malo.

Topics include:

External therapy training in a traditional clinical setting

Herbal bath therapy at the most famous herbal bath center in Tibet

Herbal study in the mountains of Eastern Tibet, on identifying, gathering, and using plant medicines. (Around 80 herbs will be studied in their native habitat.)



LEVEL 3: Upadesha Tantra I

3.1 Pathology 2- Hot and Cold

3.2 Pathology 3- Internal Organs and Sense Orifices

3.3 Pathology 4- Sorig Psychology and Common Diseases

The third level and fourth levels of training go deeper into the Upadesha Tantra. From here on, all training modules will be on analysis and application of therapy for specific conditions. There will be specific herbal formulations and external therapies introduced for each section, related to the subject being covered.

3.1 Hot and Cold Conditions

After the three humors, the next big category of pathology is divided into hot and cold. This is a general view, but there is great depth as well. According to TTM, there is a specific group of pathologies encompassing fevers, infections and inflammation, called tshawa. Tshawa conditions have the ability to spread rapidly and can be life-threatening, therefore Tshawa studies hold an important place in the study of pathology.

Many slowly developing chronic diseases are caused by cold. They need to be studied with a focus on prevention.

General study of hot-natured conditions

6 states of Tsawa

4 types of Tsawa

Introduction to cold-natured conditions

Indigestion

Abdominal pain and swelling

Constipation

Degenerative conditions

Metabolic conditions

Edema

External therapy: more acupoint therapy

3.2 Pathology of the Six Hollow, Five Solid, and Five Sense Organs

The body functions and lives thanks to our internal organs. The hollow organs are the channels bringing nutrition, vitality to the solid organs, where solid organs maintain the balance of hollow organs. Together, they connect to the sense organs. This whole system is interconnected together, known in Tibetan as dreljyor- the system of



connecting and attaching. Solid connects to hollow and the sense organs. Thus they are studied together. The interplay between them is all based on the five element dynamics.

The five sensory organ pathology includes basic pathology of head and neck diseases- originally called 'upper body diseases'.

Also introduced are cleansing therapies, more commonly known as 'Panchakarma' or 'Shodhana' treatments from Ayurvedic medicine. They are a way to directly expel imbalanced humors from the body, especially through the hollow organs' pathways.

Imbalances of 5 solid organs

imbalances of 6 hollow organs

Imbalances of 5 sense organs

Cleansing therapies

3.3 Sorig Psychology and Common Imbalances

Basic psychological issues are related to the pathology of the three humors, as our mind is strongly connected to our inner energy. The mind and body are inseparably linked. The study of the mind, its structure and functions helps us to understand and facilitate healing.

The Tibetan science of mind is well known from Buddhism, and its profound systems of cultivation. Here, the perspective will be medical, addressing mental issues from the physical, energetic, and spiritual perspective. This will include training on the nature of mind, thoughts, emotions and emotional blockages. More serious mental disorders such as schizophrenia are often believed to be connected to supernatural influences, where certain spiritual healing practices are used.

This course will also include treatments for some common conditions. They are traditionally linked and studied together.

Study of mind and energy

Emotions, emotional wounds and traumas

Study of the causes and symptoms of mental disturbances

Therapies- diet, lifestyle, herbs, external therapies

Connection to provocations

Spiritual healing

Throat and respiratory tract issues

Srin (lit. 'tiny beings')- parasites, worms, bacterial infestations in different parts of the body.

Vomiting and diarrhea



4.2 Traumatology

In Tibetan Medicine, traumatology is a huge study. In ancient times, and in Tibetan hospitals today in Asia, it is used to treat all types of injuries- from simple falls to battlefield medicine. When the conquering Mongolians translated the Four Tantras into the Mongolian language, they used these principles in treating their battle wounds. Currently in the West, we have modern hospitals and don't need to learn treatment of severe, life-threatening injuries directly. Our program will focus on common injuries, restorative and practical Sorig sports medicine.

There will be internal and external herbal applications for various injuries. Externally, various herbal bandages, compresses, plasters, and tinctures will be introduced.

Injuries to the head, neck, trunk, limbs and to tendons, muscles, bones, vital points

4.3: Neoplastic Imbalances and Toxicology

Since human history, oncology has been a life-threatening condition. In Tibetan Medicine, for over a millennium there have been distinctions between benign and malignant tumors; with an extensive teaching on the causes, symptoms, natural ways of treatment, and prevention. As in any medical system, there is no cure for cancer- yet Tibetan Medicine offers a different understanding and a very helpful system of complementary support.

In old times, we were exposed to many toxic substances. In nature there are toxic plants, heavy minerals, animal bites and stings, etc. There are also many formulated, man-made poisonous substances. Today, there are many sources of toxicity: food, chemical drugs, environmental exposure, etc.. Sowa Rigpa identifies various types, stages, and support of many types of poisons and toxins.

Neoplastic diseases

Oncology

Chemicals

Poisonous bites & other types of toxins and their treatments

Individual Thesis

A thesis or article comprising 50-100 pages of doctrinal or clinical research. This helps the students to deepen their research and studies in Tibetan Medicine. Good quality articles may also be published by Sorig Publications. As there are not many materials currently in English, this will serve as a benefit to future generations of students.