

History of the Tibetan Medical System

Tibetan medicine is a centuries-old traditional system encompassing spiritual, medical science and social behavior in the paradigm of holistic health. Disease or imbalance is diagnosed mainly through pulse analysis, urinalysis and healthy interrogation and understanding of one's dietary and life style factors. Herbo-mineral formulations in the form of pills, powders, decoctions etc and several supplementary therapies are used to treat illness. Proper diet and lifestyle changes along with healthy mental attitude will be strongly emphasised. The Tibetan medical system is based upon a synthesis of Ayurveda, Unani, Greek, indigenous Tibetan, and Chinese medical systems. The Tibetan medical system is practiced in Tibet, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Siberia, China and Mongolia, and more recently in parts of Europe and North America.

The Tibetan medical system embraces the traditional Buddhist belief that all illness ultimately results from the "Three Poisons" of the mind: Ignorance, Attachment and Aversion. Therefore, the mind, body and spirit play very crucial role in understanding and the treatment of diseases as a whole. Buddhist philosophy states that everything in the universe is in a constant state of flux – that all phenomenon are characterised by impermanence, and that the only permanent feature is impermanence itself. As Buddha said, "No matter whether perfect beings arise or not, it remains a fact, and a hard necessity of existence, that all creations are transitory." It is this impermanence that causes each and every being to suffer at one stage or another. Suffering is thus not accidental but springs from a specific cause, whether from this life or a previous life. Only through proper learning and the genuine practice of Dharma, one can liberate from the vicious cycle of suffering.

A Dark Period in Tibet's History

The Chinese invaded Tibet from the east in 1949. And on March 10, 1959, the Chinese ruthlessly suppressed the peaceful Tibetan uprising in Lhasa. His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, followed by thousands of Tibetans, escaped into exile in India. During the infamous Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) the Chinese destroyed more than 6,000 monasteries, demolished statues, burnt religious, astrological and medicinal books, destroyed forests, and wreaked unimaginable destruction to flora and fauna. As a direct consequence of Chinese repression, more than a million Tibetans have died.

Men-Tsee-Khang Re-established

The Chinese used every possible method to exterminate the culture and identity of the Tibetan people. In order to preserve and promote the richness of Tibetan culture, under the auspices of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, many institutions, monasteries and schools were re-established in India. Men-Tsee-Khang, the Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute of His Holiness the Dalai Lama was established on March 23, 1961, with Dr Yeshe Dhonden and Ven Lodoe Gyatso as the heads of the Medical and Astrological sections, respectively. Initially, Men-Tsee-Khang lacked necessary facilities, money, and staff, and was situated in a room on the upper floor of an old house in McLeod Ganj, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh. At present, the Institute's headquarter in Dharamshala oversees the operation of nearly 48 branch clinics in India, Nepal and abroad. Since beginning operations in exile, the work of Men-Tsee-Khang has undergone significant development with the creation of the Pharmaceutical, Research & Development, Materia Medica, and Editorial & Publication Department, as well as the College for training new doctors and astrologers. The Astrology Department produces range of annual almanac, calendars, amulets and horoscopes. To know more, visit: www.men-tsee-khang.org

About Doctors

Dr Dorjee Raptan Neshar was born in Kyidong, Tibet. Following the Chinese occupation of Tibet, he escaped to India with his family in 1969. Dr Dorjee received his medical training at the Tibetan Medical College in Dharamshala where he completed intensive study in the Tibetan Medical System. He acquired most of his practical experience into the more profound level of health & healing through late Dr Tenzin Cheodrak (the former Chief Physician to the Dalai Lama). Over two decades of dedicated service in the practice of Tibetan Medicine, he has attended many national and international conferences; presented papers on Tibetan Medicine and has published articles. As the Chief Medical Officer of Men-Tsee-Khang Bangalore Branch, Dr Dorjee Raptan Neshar and his medical team covers the Tibetan Medicine health services in south Indian cities and towns regularly.

Dr Tara Ngawang Lodoe was born at Gyaltse in Chinese occupied-Tibet in 1978. He escaped to India in 1989 to study Tibetan Buddhism and Philosophy at the Sera Jhe Monastery. He earned the Kachupa Degree in Tibetan Medicine from the Men-Tsee-Khang, the Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute of His Holiness the Dalai Lama based in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh. Dr Tara Ngawang Lodoe now works with the Bangalore branch of Men-Tsee-Khang.

Registration

Tibetan Medical Camps in Kochi are organised jointly by Men-Tsee-Khang and Friends of Tibet every month. It is necessary to register your name to consult a Tibetan doctor. The registration can be done using the following four methods:

- 1) **SMS:** If you are already registered with us, simply SMS your "Registration Number, Preferred Date and Time" to one of the Friends of Tibet Helpline Numbers: +91.9895103483, +91.9995181777, +91.8089443495. For new registrations, SMS: "Your Full Name, Place, Mobile Number and Preferred Date and Time".
- 2) **Fax:** +91.11.47615142
- 3) **Email:** wellbeing@friendsoftibet.org
- 4) **Internet:** Register online at: www.friendsoftibet.org/wellbeing/

Once registered, you will receive a short message on your registered mobile number confirming your registration and the date and time of your consultation with the Tibetan doctor. Please note that all Friends of Tibet activities worldwide are conducted and managed by its members and supporters who are working voluntarily for the cause. We have no paid staff anywhere. So minor delays in processing your requests can occur sometimes. In such events, you are advised to keep a track of your request and confirm your booking before the camp begins.



Men-Tsee-Khang Tibetan Medical Camp, Kochi, Kerala

www.friendsoftibet.org/wellbeing/

"For all the suffering beings in this world, may I be the medicine and the doctor
And be the nurse to serve them until everyone is healed" **Shantideva**