

# Foundations of Tibetan Medicine with Dr Nida Chenagtsang

In this episode, I am joined once again by Dr Nida Chenagtsang, Buddhist teacher, doctor of Tibetan medicine, and author of \*Foundations of Sowa Rigpa: A Guide to the Root Tantra of Tibetan Medicine\*. Dr Nida discusses the traditional Tibetan medical system of Sowa Rigpa and reveals its core doctrines, such as health as balance, pulse and urine analysis, and how to discover your own body's typology.

Dr Nida also delves into the esoteric side of Sowa Rigpa, including Tibetan demonology, intersections with Tantra, and the use of magical rituals and spells to treat mental and physical illnesses. Furthermore, he comments on the similarities between Sowa Rigpa and Ancient Greek medicine, the importance of sleep, the toxicity of emotions, and offers a direct warning to spiritual people worldwide.

So, without further ado, Dr Nida Chenagtsang.

[Steve James]: Dr Nida Chenagtsang, welcome back to the podcast.

[Dr Nida]: Thank you for having me again.

[Steve James]: Well, I'm delighted to speak with you once more. And this time—wow! You have published \*Foundations of Sowa Rigpa: A Guide to the Root Tantra of Tibetan Medicine\* through Sky Press Books, and this is quite an achievement. 660 pages! So, first of all, I wanted to congratulate you. I have it right here.

[Dr Nida]: Yes, it is a big book.

[Steve James]: Could you tell us a bit about what the book is about? Why did you decide to put it together with the Sky Press Books team?

[Dr Nida]: Yes, well, Sowa Rigpa is the traditional name of Tibetan medicine. It originated in Tibet and then historically expanded to its neighboring countries: Nepal, Bhutan, Mongolia, Northern India, and so on. But we can say that, compared to Traditional Chinese Medicine and Ayurveda (Indian medicine), Sowa Rigpa is very little known in the West, especially.

That is why I made it my mission to spread Sowa Rigpa in the West for almost 25 years. We used to call it "Traditional Tibetan Medicine" or just "Tibetan Medicine." Then, different countries call it by various names: in Mongolia it is known as Traditional Mongolian Medicine, in Bhutan as Buddhist Medicine, in Nepal as Himalayan Medicine... it has so many names. So I thought it would be good to use the original name, Sowa Rigpa. That way, we are all under one umbrella. Regardless, Sowa Rigpa does not belong to a single group of people or a nation; I would say Sowa Rigpa is the universal natural medical science.

So, to spread the knowledge of Sowa Rigpa worldwide, it is very important to present its foundations, right? The basic understanding and knowledge, the theory and philosophy, to the general public. That is the base; that is why I call it "Foundations of Sowa Rigpa." If someone is completely new to this, they can truly see what the root of this natural medical science is.

[Steve James]: Truly very interesting. Several introductory books on Sowa Rigpa have been published in English, of a shorter nature, including indeed your own \*Tibetan Guide to Health\*. This book, however, goes significantly further than most of those volumes. Could you say something about the special characteristics of this particular book?

[Dr Nida]: Yes, you know, I have been teaching Sowa Rigpa for over 25 years, both in the East and the West. At first, I didn't have much experience on how to teach, right? I simply taught based on what I knew and what Sowa Rigpa is. But then, as you integrate more into modern society, especially Western society, you are exposed to Western culture, and you have to learn that new culture, that new tradition, the different ways of thinking.

Then I started to see more clearly how Sowa Rigpa can be a very integrative medical system. For that reason, I often compare it with Ancient Greek medicine. There are many elements of Sowa Rigpa and Ancient Greek medicine that are very similar. That was a very interesting point for me because we always talk about why we are different, right? Why our colors are different, our cultures, traditions, histories, and languages are different.

But I think it is also an important point to see the similarities—how our ancient human civilizations assimilate. It is not that one group of people or one nation owns the "copyright" of art or literature. In reality, I believe it is all knowledge or science shared by humanity.

Therefore, upon discovering Ancient Egyptian medicine, which then became Ancient Greek medicine and later Roman medicine—I live in Rome—for me, that

was a kind of bridge of internal knowledge that goes beyond our external limitations like language or nationality. When I saw that kind of bridge, I thought: "Okay, we have to go a bit deeper." In reality, what I am trying to do is preserve Tibetan medical science and share it with Westerners or modern people.

The more I personally integrate into modern society, the more I discover that the knowledge of Sowa Rigpa was already rooted here—with a different name, such as Roman or Ancient Greek medicine or Naturopathy, whatever it might be. And that really gave me the perspective that I am not different, what I teach is not different. What I teach is the ancient knowledge that also existed in Europe. The important thing is that we try to reconnect how similar they are.

And not only the similarity between ancient and traditional medical science, but also with modern medical science. Look at how many things are discussed today: the importance of diet, lifestyle, the importance of sleep and its quality, the weight of environmental problems for our health, human connections, and socialization... this has a direct connection with our psychological well-being. All these things are already mentioned in Sowa Rigpa.

Today it seems we need to present this as the "word of science" to be believed; research is done, it is proven, and then "this is correct" and "that is incorrect." That's fine, I have no problem with scientific research; it is good. But so many things that science says today are exactly the same things that Sowa Rigpa already mentioned a thousand years ago.

I am not saying "no to science, only traditional knowledge." I am happy to see the common ground or shared understanding between ancient or traditional medical science and modern medical science. It makes me happy that there is that point of encounter. But on the other hand, sometimes I think we are too driven by what science says is right or wrong, and that is perhaps too much. We need to pay more attention to ancient medicine or wisdom, because these were passed from century to century, from generation to generation. In a way, it is the accumulation of human experience and knowledge; it is the true natural science.

So, it is a good opportunity to use this modern research to say: "See, what ancient medical science was saying actually makes sense." Perhaps in ancient times they had a different explanation, but now we have a new scientific language, a different translation, and we can understand it better.

In the beginning, when I was teaching Sowa Rigpa, it was like a Tibetan nomadic teacher trying to teach Tibetan medicine to a new group of Western people. But little by little, by integrating into this modern society, I refined my knowledge and my

experiences. Instead of creating a cultural clash, I found an internal cultural connection. I understood which parts are truly different and which are exactly the same. Deep down, we are all the same; we are all human. That gave me a lot of courage to talk more about Sowa Rigpa on a different level—not just to say it is "Tibetan medicine, ancient, sacred, and secret." I tried to take the explanation of Sowa Rigpa to another level, but a level that is integrative and that modern people can digest, understand, and handle.

Otherwise, if I say "this is sacred, this is secret, this is what we have in our tradition and if you like it, take it, and if not, it has nothing to do with you," it doesn't help. Perhaps in the past I was more in that mode, but now, probably because of the aging process as well... I spent 25 years in Tibet and another 25 in the West. In one single lifetime, I feel like I've had two lives: my past life in Asia and my second life in the West. Therefore, this book is truly becoming the experience of my own life as well.

[Steve James]: It's very interesting. I'd like to talk about the history of Sowa Rigpa and some of its key characteristics in terms of medical theory, wellness, and disease. What you just said leads me to ask: what are some of those cultural connections you discovered? You said you found certain connections within yourself. I'm curious about that and also about the correspondences you found between Sowa Rigpa and Greek medicine.

[Dr Nida]: Yes, well, you have several questions. First about history, right?

[Steve James]: Yes, we could go back to that, but what you just said is very interesting—this idea of having found a personal connection with Western culture and the medical correspondences between the two systems.

[Dr Nida]: Yes. Humans, externally, look different: skin color, hair, nose size... physical appearance varies. That is why each ethnic group presents itself in a certain way. I see myself as Asian, you as European, and I try to present my culture as I was conditioned. But if we go down one level below the skin, we have muscles, blood vessels, internal organs, and tissues. At that level, we no longer talk about colors or body sizes; we are at the level of the physical body, and the deeper we go, the more alike we are.

The same happens with our psychological world. Especially when we talk about \*kleshas\* or afflictive emotions, both negative and positive. Basically, we are the same; we all have human emotions. Anger in Asia is the same anger as in the West; it is human anger. How we react, how we talk about it, or how we handle it may vary by culture and conditioning, but the emotions are the same. If we share

anger or desire, fundamentally we all function the same way. Only the external conditions change. For example, if we are conditioned to eat with our hands or with a knife and fork; that is just an external presentation. But internally, the sensation of hunger is the same; the desire to eat is the same. Therefore, I believe that the more we immerse ourselves in the human internal world, the more alike we are physiologically and psychologically, even if externally we are distinct.

And culture is also conditioning. We grew up in different conditions and react in different ways, but internally there is not much difference. For this reason, Ancient Greek medicine and Sowa Rigpa are similar. Greek medicine says: "We are what we eat." Sowa Rigpa says exactly the same thing. Greek medicine says that walking is the best medicine; Sowa Rigpa says that walking is the supreme lifestyle. They are different expressions with the same meaning. Both say that herbal medicines are important, but as support for the body—not something one should take forever. Each person must manage and heal themselves through their own energy, the "humors." In Greek medicine, they talk about four types of humors (bile, black bile, phlegm, and blood). In Sowa Rigpa, we talk about three types of humor (or sometimes four, including blood), which is very similar.

What we call humors is energy. Today I translate it as "energy" because it is the force that joins the body and the mind. Some doctors say: "I only deal with the body, I don't care about the mind." Others say the opposite. In specialization, one can do that, but in holistic medicine, we cannot divide the functions of the body and the mind; there is no separation thanks to energy, which is the link that joins everything together. In Tibetan, we say \*Lüsem Yermel\*, which means body and mind inseparable. Or \*Lungisum Yermel\*: body, energy, and mind inseparable.

Today, some think energy is something distinct from emotions or the physical body. No, energy is in the body, and it is the power of our mind and emotions. To balance a person, the best way is to work on the energy, because once it is balanced, the body and the mind are balanced. That is why the Greek and Tibetan humoral theories are, basically, the same.

Historically, Sowa Rigpa originated in the Himalayan region, in Tibet. I like this historical event: it is said that in the 8th century, the Tibetan King Trisong Detsen supported local doctors to invite international doctors from China, Mongolia, India, Nepal, Bhutan, and also from Persia. These doctors gathered in Tibet and stayed there for six months. It was probably one of the first international medical conferences. They had translators and time to exchange their knowledge. I think it was an amazing event.

Some historical texts say that this was the base for forming Sowa Rigpa as a solid medical system. Personally, I believe it makes sense. Just as Greek medicine traveled from Greece to the Middle East and then toward Asia, there was a very potent cultural exchange. It wasn't just trade along the Silk Road; that route was fundamental for medical development and the exchange of scientific knowledge, art, and mathematics. That is why I say Sowa Rigpa is a universal medicine because it speaks of human health and is integrative; it can be adapted to any society or ethnic group. It is not something imposed upon you, nor does it force you to have this or that belief. Sowa Rigpa says that, if you have the knowledge, nothing on this planet is not medicine. If we know how to use plants, they can be medicine; if we don't know, everything can be poison.

At the end of the 12th century, Yutok (whom we call the father of Tibetan medicine) made it very systematic and logical. He presented it scientifically through the book he wrote: the *\*Four Tantras\**. Many people wonder why a medical book is called "Tantra." It took me a long time to understand it too. Originally, "Tantra" was a medical term in ancient times. *\*Tan\** means body, and *\*tra\** means to protect—protecting your body from disease or imbalances. Similarly, "Mantra" means to protect your mind from pain and suffering. So Mantra is almost like psychotherapy, and Tantra is like physiotherapy or body therapy. In this case, Tantra means protection of the body through medical science: learning the nature of our body, its functions, and its balance, and knowing how to treat it when it becomes sick.

The first tantra is called the Root Tantra, which is the base or introduction. That is why my book is based on it. It has only six chapters, but those six chapters have now become 600 pages. In the traditional form, the expressions are very simple and direct, but today we need to "untie" them to explain them more clearly and add commentaries. The second tantra deals with basic studies: embryology, physiology, anatomy, pathology, diagnosis, and treatment. To give a clear picture of the foundations, I had to cite heavily from the second tantra as well. The third tantra is very professional for medical practitioners (it deals with pathologies extensively), and the last one is the clinical and practical part: what the doctor does when the patient arrives at the consultation. The Four Tantras remain today the fundamental base in all Sowa Rigpa colleges and universities.

Some say: "This book is 800 years old, why are they still studying it?" One reason is so as not to get lost on the path of what Sowa Rigpa truly is. The authentic root is maintained. But Sowa Rigpa has the openness to embrace new studies and cultures. For example, in the Mediterranean, rosemary is very common; we know it is anti-inflammatory and digestive. Even if it is not a typical Himalayan plant, we can integrate it into the Sowa Rigpa system if we understand its function.

[Steve James]: It's very interesting, and I understand that one of the appendices of this new publication is a fresh and complete translation of that Root Tantra.

[Dr Nida]: Yes, and I have to thank the people who supported me in finishing this book. Translation is essential because it is a transmission. If you translate words incorrectly, you transmit wrong meanings. Sometimes it is better to keep original words in Sanskrit or Tibetan and offer different translation possibilities so that the reader chooses how to understand it. For example, the word "Buddha" has many meanings; fixating on a single translation can make you lose the reality of what "awakening" means.

We tried, together with Ben Joffe (a great translator), to be careful with very specific words so that they are easy to digest and have a direct sense. The Four Tantras come from 800 years ago, in a different location and culture. Some expressions from that time don't fit exactly today; that's why the translation seeks to be more integrative. Additionally, this book was born from classes I gave at the Sowa Rigpa Institute, accumulating the questions and experiences of students. Therefore, I thank all the editors, designers, and collaborators involved.

[Steve James]: Yes, and it's worth noting that the Sowa Rigpa Institute offers several courses based on this material: from one-year orientations for self-health to four-year courses for practitioners, counselors, massage therapists, and more. It is a very deep training that stems from these Four Tantras but integrates other influences, such as the counseling course with Dr Caroline Van Dam, a Belgian psychiatrist. What is happening at the Institute is very exciting.

[Dr Nida]: Yes, thank you.

[Steve James]: Let's talk a bit about the Sowa Rigpa model. You write in the introduction: "At its core, Sowa Rigpa is about balance and interconnectivity. Tibetan medicine teaches that our underlying natural state is a state of health. Staying healthy in Sowa Rigpa means maintaining our body, energy, and mind in a dynamic but stable balance. Conversely, disease is what occurs when we fall out of balance, when our healthy equilibrium is compromised or interrupted." I wonder if you could say something about what you call the core of the Sowa Rigpa medical model.

[Dr Nida]: Well, the core of Sowa Rigpa is balance. What are you drinking now, tea or coffee?

[Steve James]: Tea.

[Dr Nida]: Good. Let's use that example: is tea good for health or not? It depends. Is it green tea or black tea? Green depends on whether it comes from Japan or China. Black usually comes from India. Some researchers say green tea is detoxifying and this and that. I say, sometimes jokingly, that if researchers are paid well, they will always find a way to say something is good for us. That is why I say one shouldn't stick too closely to what science says is right or not; unfortunately, sometimes it is decided by the power of money.

What Sowa Rigpa says is: first, look at where your tea comes from. Hopefully, it is organic. That is the most important thing. And second, how much tea do you drink? Drinking in excess or at the wrong time can affect you. Tea has caffeine; it is a very light psychoactive drug. If you drink it late, it influences your sleep, causes insomnia, and the next day you are tired. So, what is the balance? To understand that, we need intelligence and wisdom. First: what is the nature of my body, my typology? Am I a Wind, Fire, Earth, or Water type? Second: what tea am I drinking and when is the best or worst time? We don't say "don't ever drink tea" or "tea is the best, drink it all the time." Everything is a matter of balance, and that is the core of Sowa Rigpa.

We don't have to live with rigid rules of "this many grams of protein" or "this many steps per day." We have to live with our own intelligence, knowing the nature of our own body and our relationship with what we consume. When we are younger, we don't think about these things, but with age, we become wiser and more experienced. A scientific study may say one thing, but you know that for you it is different because we are all individuals.

The same applies to sleep. "Eight hours" is said, but some need more and others less. If you are conscious and mindful, you know what is good and what is bad for you. The key point is to find the balance between those two.

[Steve James]: Thank you. One of the fascinating things about Sowa Rigpa is its diagnostic system. How do you detect that you are out of balance? There are obvious signs, but Sowa Rigpa has very subtle means of diagnosis that can detect imbalances before they mature into disorders.

[Dr Nida]: Yes, the diagnostic methods are mainly three. The first is observation: looking at the body and the sense organs. Our body is perfectly designed; we don't see the internal organs, but they are connected with the external ones. Through the eyes, we analyze the liver; through the ears, the kidneys; through the tongue, the heart; through the nose, the lungs. There is also urine analysis, which as we said, was super important in both Greek and Egyptian medicine 5,000 years ago. We analyze the color, the concentration of sediment, and the smell to obtain a lot of

information. We also observe facial expressions, skin, and hair.

The second method is pulse reading. It is the Asian diagnostic art par excellence (done in Chinese Medicine, Ayurveda, and Sowa Rigpa). First, we check the physical condition of the heart (whether it is irregular or balanced) and then we go down to an energy level: if the pulse feels like wind, or like fire (sharp and burning), or constant like earth or water. But beneath that, there is a psychological level. Our internal organs communicate through the body. A good Sowa Rigpa doctor listens to what the liver is "saying"—if it is overloaded with sugar, alcohol, or toxins. If someone drank a lot of alcohol, the next day their urine comes out cloudy and dark because the kidneys and liver are suffering in the detoxification process.

The pulse is more subtle. The body always tries to speak, to express what is wrong. The problem is our ignorance; we are not attentive, we have no awareness of our vital organs and we ignore them. Sometimes we are in an "auto-destructive mode": we eat something because it is tasty or sweet without thinking about the liver or digestion. It isn't self-love; it's a simple addiction. We are poisoning ourselves and we think we enjoy it; it is a state of constant delusion. That's why, by reading the pulse, I can tell a patient that their lungs are suffering. Or perhaps by how their breathing sounds. The body communicates that something is wrong, but we usually blame it on age or the weather.

Pulse diagnosis is a subtle communication between the invisible internal world and the tangible world. That is why the doctor must have experience and the patient must be at rest. It sounds a bit psychological, but organs have their own languages; the most severe signals are pain. But before the pain, there are extremely subtle levels of expression.

Sometimes people tell me: "I am happy, my life is fine." And I ask: "And your dreams? Are you happy when you dream?" If there are difficulties in the dream, perhaps at your conscious level you think you are happy, but in the unconscious, there is stress. If your dreams are strange, you are a stranger to yourself. What we experience when meditating or dreaming is what is in our subconscious. Physically it's the same: you can feel great on the surface, but your organs—like a fatty liver—might be suffering without obvious symptoms. The liver sends us signals that it is heavy, that it is storing too much sugar. If we imagined each organ as a person, we would realize how we are poisoning them with sodas or junk food.

The third method is conversation. At the end of the day, the person who knows most about the patient is the patient themselves. Therefore, it is important to ask the right questions and listen. Sometimes patients lie about their health, consciously or unconsciously, to maintain their image or reputation. They don't tell

you they drink alcohol every day; they say they "try their best." As a doctor, you have to be a good detective, ask intelligent questions, observe emotions, and not judge.

Here, the Buddhist vision is fundamental: interconnectivity and causality. Every disease has initial and secondary conditions and causes. It is important to know what you eat, but also \*why\* you do it. Why don't you move? Is it laziness, procrastination, or depression? We try to understand the origin of fixed habits that damage the body. If you have poor circulation from sitting in a high chair in front of the computer, giving you herbs is not enough; you have to change the condition. But sometimes you have a thousand excuses. Ultimately, the fundamental problem is ignorance or confusion. We are confused, and that confusion is the root of all our physical and mental health problems. That confusion is detected through conversation. These three pillars—palpation, observation, and communication—are essential.

[Steve James]: Thank you very much. Another central and fascinating aspect is the idea of the three "Nyepas." I quote from your introduction: "The three humoral energies of Lung, Tripa, and Bekin are fundamental dynamic principles through which health, pathology, diagnosis, treatment, and various environmental, seasonal, and cosmic processes are understood. They are at the heart of the Sowa Rigpa's distinctive understanding of the world and inform nearly every aspect of its approach to health and well-being. They also serve as a bridge between Tibetan medicine and Buddhist teachings." I'm curious: why are they so fundamental, and how do they connect medicine with Buddhism and Tantric teachings?

[Dr Nida]: About the connection with Tantra and Buddhism: when we talk about toxins or emotional poisons, the main ones are ignorance, desire, and anger. It is a very powerful theory. We know toxins are harmful and we want to avoid them, but we cannot escape from ourselves. The best way to deal with this is to be intelligent. Today I use the word "toxic" more than "poison": toxic confusion, toxic desire/attachment, and toxic anger/hatred. If the mind is toxic or sick, the energy—which is its expression—will also be so. And if the energy is toxic, it manifests in the body.

For example, toxic desire or attachment increases our \*Lung\* energy (wind). Desire means wanting more and more, attachment and clinging (\*Sepa\* in Tibetan). We are addicted to junk food because we tasted it again and again and now it is a compulsive craving. That craving generates toxic wind energy. If you don't have it, you tremble, you get stressed, you feel brain fog. You eat and you are happy for a moment. Mental toxin generates energy toxin, and this generates a toxic reaction in the body: inflammation, metabolic problems, loss of balance.

In a holistic vision, we cannot separate mind, energy, and body; they go hand in hand. To help the body requires helping the mind, and vice versa. We call these humoral energies \*Nyepa\* (\*Lung, Tripa, Bekin\*), which is the translation of \*Dosha\* in Sanskrit, and means "fault" or "error." Why do I have a tension headache? It is a \*Lung\* fault. Wind brings tension. Why do I have tension? Because I have too much desire—the desire to finish a hundred things in an hour. That desire doesn't match physical reality; it generates tension, and that causes the headache. Medicine says that energies are the main faults behind our imbalances. Buddhism complains about the mind, medicine about energy, and together they explain how these disorders manifest in the body and its organs.

[Steve James]: You talk about this link between the Sowa Rigpa model and Buddhism, but there are also ties with Tantric and esoteric teachings associated particularly with the \*Ngakpas\*. I quote from your book: "Historically, many hereditary \*Amchi\* (doctors) were also \*Ngakpas\*: non-celibate, non-monastic Tantric yogis and ritual specialists. Many lineage doctors have studied Sowa Rigpa simultaneously with Tantric yoga, Mantra Healing, alchemy, divination, and shamanic practices." Can you tell us more about this esoteric side? For example, the causes of disease that are not just diet and lifestyle, but "external provocations" through interaction with spirits.

[Dr Nida]: In Tibetan culture, there is the monastic group and the lay group, the \*Ngakpas\*. In old society, there was a gap: monks were highly respected, isolated in their monasteries (\*Gompas\*), and local people made donations but didn't have such easy access to them. That is why the \*Ngakpa\* tradition was crucial; they were spiritual healers in the villages, ritual specialists—some were doctors, astrologers, or weather controllers. They made amulets to protect animals... they covered needs that the general public asked for organically. If someone got sick, it was easier to turn to the village \*Ngakpa\* than to the great Lama busy in the monastery.

That lineage (\*Kim-gyu\*, family or hereditary) kept medical knowledge for everyone. Today, most doctors are laypeople; it is the century of the laypeople, and there are many young female doctors now. But remembering this culture is important because these Tantric practitioners know how to perform specific rituals: \*pujas\* for the spirits of the earth (\*Sabda\*), of the water (\*Naga\*), of fire, or planetary spirits.

In nature, there are many invisible spirits; we don't necessarily have to call them "demons." There are good and bad humans; it's the same with spirits. If our relationship with them is good, we call them local deities; if they cause problems, we call them demons. Most health problems caused by "spirits" are related to

environmental issues. If we humans disturb the peace of the environment and try to control nature abusively (sucking oil, creating toxic substances, destroying everything), we are performing a very violent action. Spirits and nature are intimately connected. Rituals are, in essence, a way of respecting nature: we invite those spirits, apologize if we damaged their home by cutting trees or messing up their village, and make offerings to pacify the situation.

Ngakpas\* are experts in these \*pujas\* and get very good results, not only in mental illnesses (like psychosis that may be interfered with by spirits) but also in physical or autoimmune diseases. Sometimes, after a well-performed ritual, the problem is resolved. That is the spiritual aspect of Sowa Rigpa. Unfortunately, today many Sowa Rigpa doctors try to present it only as an integrative and scientific medical knowledge, leaving aside the ritual part or Mantra Healing for fear of appearing superstitious or because of being atheists. But in the \*Fourth Tantra\*, Yutok says it depends on the patient: if they need a shamanic ritual or a prayer, it must be performed for them. If you don't know how, find someone who does. It is important not to lose our roots.

[Steve James]: Truly fascinating. It has been an incredible interview. Thank you, and congratulations again on the publication of \*Foundations of Sowa Rigpa\*.

[Dr Nida]: Thank you.

[Steve James]: It's available at Sky Press, with online courses and eBooks. It's quite a launch. To finish, do you have any final thoughts or comments about the book or what we've discussed?

[Dr Nida]: In conclusion: you asked me what the core of Sowa Rigpa is, and I said balance. Energy is the bridge between mind and body. We have to find the balance between both. This means that, for spiritual people: please, do not ignore your physical health. Eat well, rest, exercise, and sleep well; only then meditate well. Many spiritualists tend to ignore the body, saying that everything is mind; that is a dangerous idea. Taking care of the body is a fundamental part of the spiritual path.

And for materialistic people who are not interested in meditation or yoga: that is also a dangerous extreme. If you don't deal with your toxic emotions, sooner or later the result will manifest in your body as an autoimmune disease, diabetes, or cancer. Even if you don't believe in spiritual mental peace, peace of mind is the root cause of happiness and good health. There's no need to be an extremist; at the end of the day, we are a cocktail of body, mind, and spirit. Finding the balance between the three is essential. That is the essence of Sowa Rigpa. Thank you.

[Steve James]: Dr Nida Chenagtsang, thank you very much.

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