

The Science of Sowa Rigpa Explained

[Robert Thurman]: At the end of these kinds of events, we always try to send people off in a non-dual manner so that they don't feel too unhappy leaving *Menla* to go back into the machinery of the universe. Dr Nida will be joining us shortly. In the meantime, if anyone has questions, let's take them.

[Participant]: Are we having a *Puja*? Is it a fire sacrifice ceremony?

[Robert Thurman]: I'm not sure how Dr Nida will perform it, but "Puja" in Sanskrit simply means "offering." There are two ceremonies today. One involves the blessing of the flowers for the *Chulen* (rejuvenation essence) that he prepared yesterday.

In Tibetan medicine, healing power comes from three sources. The first is Substance Power, which is ensured by mixing the right ingredients in the proper way. The second is Mantra Power, where sound energy is embedded through recitation. We are composed of body, speech, and mind, and medicine must address all three levels. The third is Samadhi Power (or Mind Power), which comes from the doctor's or lama's concentration and meditation.

When a medicinal pill is "empowered," it's not just chemistry; it systematically incorporates the placebo effect. The placebo effect is one of the most powerful healing forces on the planet. If people believe something is helping them, it triggers the power of their own immune system and body. In a spiritual tradition, this is a conscious and technical process.

Furthermore, being part of a community and supporting each other increases healing potential. Studies show that isolated individuals have much lower health success rates. Interconnection is vital. Additionally, a Tibetan doctor visualizes being one with the Medicine Buddha or Yuthok Yonten Gonpo. This is not for status, but to prevent burnout and to create a field of calm and compassion that embraces the patient. Compassion is the only valid motivation for healing; if you seek fame or profit, you will be a mediocre doctor.

There are 404 basic types of imbalances or diseases. 101 are incidental and can be cured by simple lifestyle or dietary changes. 101 are provoked by negative

influences or "spirits" (addressed through rituals or the shamanic expertise of a *Ngakpa* like Dr Nida). 101 can be treated with physical medicine—massage, cupping, acupuncture, and herbs. And 101 are considered fatal or karmic, where the primary treatment is meditation and purification to prepare for the transition.

My old teacher, Dr. Yeshe Dhonden, used to say that Western medicine has "Humpty-Dumptyed" the human being: they analyze us so minutely, cell by cell, that they lose sight of the whole person and then don't know how to put the pieces back together. They don't know if a patient should eat spinach or broccoli because they are lost in molecular analysis. Sowa Rigpa maintains synthesis through the Five Elements and the Six Tastes.

Welcome, Dr Nida.

[Dr Nida]: Thank you. Yesterday, we learned about the subtle channels (*Tsa*). We have three main channels: the central (neutral energy), the right (solar/fire energy), and the left (lunar/water energy). From these, 72,000 branches arise.

It's fascinating that our body has its own intelligence. If you go to live in another country, such as Tibet, your channels take about six months to transform and adapt to the vibration of that place. Your body begins to "speak" the local language before your mind does. Language is not just mental; it relates to the skin and the vibration of the channels.

We also discussed the "Vajra Speech" and the five energy winds (*Lung*):

1. Life-Sustaining Wind (*So-zin*): Located in the brain. It is the vehicle for consciousness. When this wind stops, the body dies, but the energy continues its journey into the *Bardo*.
2. Ascending Wind (*Gyen-gyu*): Related to speech and breathing. It is the bridge between the heart and the brain. By controlling the breath, you can control the heart rate and calm mental agitation.
3. All-Pervading Wind (*Kyab-je*): Located in the heart, managing circulation.
4. Metabolic Wind (*Me-nyam*): In the small intestine, it handles digestion.
5. Descending Wind (*Thur-sel*): Responsible for elimination and reproduction.

Modern stress is essentially a wind problem, specifically involving the life-sustaining wind. When you are stressed, your breathing, heart rate, and digestion all change. The best external antidote for stress is *Kunye* massage or *Hormé* therapy. *Hormé* is a Mongolian secret: small herbal poultices (nutmeg, clove, ginger, anise) are dipped in hot sesame oil and applied to specific points: the

crown, the palms, and the soles of the feet. It is exceptional for insomnia. I have had terminal cancer patients who were able to stop morphine and die peacefully just by using this simple therapy.

The root causes of stress are the three poisons: confusion, insatiable desire, and anger. Wanting to do 100 things in one day is ignorance. We don't accept our limits, and we become angry. Simplifying our goals is the best medicine for the mind.

Now let's talk about essence or "drops" (*Tigle*). *Tigle* is the sensation of joy and bliss. Depression is a lack of *Tigle*—a kind of numbness where you feel nothing. That's why "love massage" or physical therapies are effective antidepressants: they reopen the channels so that joy can flow.

There are two profound essences: the white (father/moon/bliss) at the crown, and the red (mother/sun/heat) below the navel. Their balance in our body is like the balance of the sun and moon in our solar system. If the sun were closer, we would burn; if farther, we would freeze. Our life depends on this thermal and fluid balance.

The nature of the mind is absolute bliss (*Maha Sukha*). We are born in bliss, live in bliss, and will die in bliss. Meditation is not intended to be a trial but a rediscovery of that original state. Yoga means "reunion" with our true nature. The result of any practice should be that you feel happy—that life is beautiful.

To achieve this, one must have a mind open to everything and attached to nothing. Inner freedom is the most important; you don't need to protest in the streets to be free inside. If your mind embraces universal freedom, conflicts between religions or schools cease because you see that everything is one.

Finally, we will bless the flower *Chulen*. The mantra is: `Om Sarva Buddha Dakini Hari Nisa Amrita Siddhi Hum`. It invokes the *Dakinis* (enlightened feminine energies) to infuse the nectar of immortality into these flowers. Tomorrow, this will be your breakfast: a small ball of flowers with honey and two glasses of warm water. It is a rejuvenation protocol that cleanses the body and clears the mind.

[Robert Thurman]: It's amazing how the apparent size of the sun and moon is identical from Earth, despite their vastly different distances. It's a perfect cosmic coincidence that allows for life... or perhaps it's collective karma, as Dr Nida says.

[Dr Nida]: Exactly. Now, let's recite the mantra 21 times and visualize long-life and health energy entering us. I wish for you to live 150 years!

[Robert Thurman]: Thank you all. We will continue tomorrow.