

Fasting as Medicine and the Anatomy of Consciousness with Dr Nida Chenagtsang

[Dr Nida]: To study Tibetan Medicine (Sowa Rigpa), we begin with embryology, followed by anatomy and physiology. In this regard, we are very similar to Western medicine: we study real muscles, real bones, and real organs. These are not metaphors. A doctor must understand the body to know what balance is and what imbalance is.

The Three Doors

When we think about ourselves, we have three main aspects or "doors": Body, Speech, and Mind. In the West, things are often divided into either Body or Mind, but in Asian traditions, Speech (energy) is just as important.

* Body: Understanding your anatomy helps you accept and love yourself more. Those who know themselves the least are the ones who reject themselves the most and wear "masks" out of fear of others' judgment.

* Speech (Energy): This refers to *Prana* or *Chi*. It is the energy that allows us to move and express ourselves.

* Mind: The invisible driver of this highly sophisticated machine that is the human body.

Subtle Anatomy: Channels, Energies, and Essences

Once you understand the physical level, you move to the subtle level. Imagine that inside your physical body, there is another structure:

1. Channels (*Tsa*): There are 72,000 energetic channels, like the roots of a giant tree.
2. Energy (*Lung*): The movement that flows through those channels.
3. Essence (*Thigle*): It is like an "essential oil" or internal fluid that travels through the channels, driven by energy.

The Basis of Happiness: Thigle

In Tibetan medicine, the mind is not just in the brain; it is in the heart and, in reality, it is everywhere there is Thigle. Thigle is the physical basis for the mind.

* If your Thigle is flowing well, you are in a good mood and feel joy for no apparent reason.

* If Thigle decreases or becomes blocked (for example, due to grief or deep sadness), you feel empty, lonely, or numb. Food loses its taste, and music no longer moves you.

* You can even increase your Thigle through visualization, meditation, or "La Massage" (a gentle skin-level massage that changes one's mood almost instantly).

Fasting and Bliss

Fasting in Sowa Rigpa is not simply about not eating. It is about replacing food with the "food of bliss" through meditation. When you meditate deeply, you can experience a sense of bliss (similar to an orgasmic feeling but a hundred times stronger) that removes the biological craving for food.

If you cannot do a full fast, do a partial one: skip breakfast or dinner and use that time for your meditation. If you feel dizzy or weak, the text recommends having a little broth or soup.

Secret Remedies

Everyone must find their own "secret remedy" in their own kitchen. For some, it might be garlic or onion (excellent medicines, though monks avoid them because they cause sleepiness). For others, like the Italian lady Emma Morano who lived to 117, the secret was three eggs a day and raw meat. The important thing is to find what works for you individually.

Please remember: self-understanding is the key to removing the masks and starting to enjoy life.