

VICTORY OF SOWA RIGPA

The Central Council of Tibetan Medicine (CCTM) is an apex body of Tibetan Medicine in Exile and at present there are four medical colleges and over four hundred practitioners registered under this council. It gives us immense pleasure to share our activities through this Sorig Newsletter.

First of all, I would like to congratulate all the Sowa Rigpa practitioners around the world for legally recognizing Tibetan Medicine or Sowa Rigpa as an important medical system among the Indian Medical systems. The Sowa Rigpa Medical system originally developed in Tibet and spread to entire Himalayan regions. Today it is practiced and known internationally because of the efforts of Tibetan Govt. in exile and His Holiness the Dalai Lama's blessings, support and continuous guidance and inspirations. The recognition of Sowa Rigpa has been the core issue for preservation and promotion of Sowa Rigpa in India. Therefore, various institutions like Men Tsee Khang (Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute of His Holiness the Dalai Lama), Himalayan Buddhist Cultural Association and Central Council of Tibetan Medicine etc. have put constant effort in the last two decades to gain the legal recognition of Tibetan Medicine in India.

Tremendous effort has also put in this regard from number of prominent politicians across the Himalayan regions like Lama Chosphele Soepa (President Himalayan Buddhist Cultural association), Ven Tsona Rinpoche (Arunachal Pradesh) as well as Sowa Rigpa practitioners from the Himalayan region like Dr. Padma Gurmet (President Ladakh amchi Sabha). Prof. Geshe Ngawang Samten (Vice chancellor of CUTS) had also played prominent role and worked very hard in the recent years during the process of legal recognition of Sowa Rigpa in India. I would like to thank all the people involved in realizing the legal recognition of Sowa Rigpa by the government of India (Union Cabinet, AYUSH Secretary, concerned members of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha, and Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad (Minister of Health and Family Welfare).

I would like to specially thank the department-related parliamentary standing committee on Health and Family Welfare headed by Chairman Shri Amar Singh and six members of Rajya Sabha and twelve members of Lok Sabha who took the issue of legal recognition of Sowa Rigpa in India very seriously. The above committee during its 14th meeting held at 3.00 p.m on Wednesday, the 21st July, 2010 in Committee Room 'A', Ground Floor, Parliament House New Delhi invited four important members connected to the Sowa Rigpa system of medicine: Prof. Geshe Ngawang Samten (Vice Chancellor, Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Deemed University, Saranath, Varanasi), Dr. Tsewang Tamdin (Director, Tibetan Medical and Astro. Institute, Dharamsala), Dr. Tsering Thakchoe Drungtso (Chairman, Central Council of Tibetan Medicine, Dharamsala) and Shri Ven. Lama Chosphele Zotpa, (Former MP, Ladakh Buddhist Vihar, Delhi). The four members entertained the questions

put by members of parliament during its meeting on the Indian Medicine Central Council (Amendment), Bill, 2010. The four members satisfied the members of parliament by giving all the required answers and clarifications on Sowa Rigpa Medicine and also submitted required written supporting documents to the parliament in due time. On behalf of CCTM, I would like to thank again the entire team of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha for their support of legalizing the Sowa Rigpa system of Medicine in India.

The legal recognition of Sowa Rigpa in India is not only a victory for the Tibetans but it is a victory for all the people living in the Indian part of Himalayan regions as well as all the lovers and friends of Tibetan Medicine. Most people living in the Himalayan regions share the same culture as we Tibetans, including belief system, writings and medical practice, etc. In the past, people living in those Himalayan regions like Ladakh, Sipiti, Gangtok, etc had travelled all the way to Tibet to learn Sowa Rigpa in Lhasa Men-Tsee-Khang and were certified to practice Tibetan Medicine. So, the legal recognition of Sowa Rigpa Medicine by Government of India is not only an inspiration to the people living in the Indian part of Himalaya but it also signifies respect to their living culture. At a time when there is a growing demand for Sowa Rigpa system of Medicine due to its healing powers in the treatment of various diseases, the legal recognition of Sowa Rigpa by the Government of India is timely and most welcome by international community. Therefore, on behalf of the Central Council of Tibetan Medicine (CCTM), I would like to thank the Government of India in granting legal recognition to Sowa Rigpa or Tibetan Medicine in due time.

Tibetans have high regard and enjoyed very good relationships with the people of India in general and particularly those living in the Indian part of Himalayan region. His Holiness the Dalai Lama also places great hope in the people living in the Himalayan region of India in helping us to preserve our Tibetan culture in general and in particular Tibetan Medicine if the Tibetan struggle remains unsettled for a longer period of time. Therefore, we should all work hard in the future to realize the wishes of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and serving the ailing sentient beings by promoting, preserving and keeping the standard of Sowa Rigpa. With the legal recognition of Tibetan Medicine by the Government of India, the scope of Sowa Rigpa will be much greater than ever here in India. The market potential for this system of medicine will also surely accelerate here in India. The Government of India will grant a special budget related with education, research, documentation and seminars associated with Sowa Ripa. We must prepare to take full advantage of such grants to uplift the resource development among the Sowa Rigpa practitioners and to engage in scientific research without losing the traditional value. There will be also more legal restrictions and guidelines in the preparation of medicine as well as medical practice. Thus, all Sowa Rigpa practitioners must prepare to face such challenges in the coming years as well.

It is our hope that all those with an interest in Sowa Rigpa will enjoy reading this newsletter and perhaps the reading experience of this newsletter will further encourage them in the preservation, promotion and keeping the standard practice of Sowa Rigpa. Furthermore, we

also hope this newsletter will deepen the bonds of friendship between CCTM and friends of Tibetan Medicine as well as creating a better understanding among the practitioners of Sowa Rigpa

Tashi Delek!

Dr. Tsering Thakchoe Drungtso

Chairman