

Proceedings from the First Conference of Sorig Practitioners

First Conference of Sorig Practitioners held in Dharamsala (January 2004)

Dharamsala, January 5, 2004: After months of hard work and preparation by the Department of Health, CTA, the first conference of Sorig (Traditional Tibetan Medicine) Practitioners could finally materialize. More than a hundred Tibetan doctors of "Sowa Rigpa" have gathered here from India and abroad at the Gangkyi Staff Mess' conference hall for the two-day conference of Tibetan Sorig medical doctors.

Organized by the Department of Health, the conference formally introduced the "Exile Tibetan Sorig Doctor's Association Act" to participants. The Act has been passed by the 13th Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies during its 5th session.

Chief guests for the inaugural function were Mr. Pema Jungney, Chairman of the Tibetan Assembly and Kalon Tripa Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche. The function began with the offering of scarves and lighting of butter lamps by the chief guests. Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche expressed his appreciation over the response from the doctors in the form of a strong attendance at the conference. He said that Kashag is concerned about the upliftment of the Tibetan healing tradition. Also present were Mr. Thupten Lungrig, Kalon for Department of Education and Religion & Culture and Mr. Lobsang Nyandak Zayul, Kalon for the Department of Health and Finance and Health Secretary Mr. Tenpa C. Samkhar.

The Health Kalon, in his address to the gathering, said that the Tibetan traditional healing system is now being commercialized and that a governing body should be set up to preserve and promote the unique healing tradition of Tibet.

The other important aspect of the conference was to elect a governing body of Medical Council, for which the members will be three senior doctors from the Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute (TMAI), four non TMAI doctors and an allopathic doctor appointed by the Department of Health. They will function

according to the Act passes and are entrusted with the implementation, monitoring and collecting suggestions to bring positive changes for the benefit of Tibetan "Sowa Rigpa" tradition.

Mr. Tenpa C. Samkhar, Health Secretary, in his speech said that everyone is concerned about the deteriorating condition of the Tibetan tradition of *Sowa Rigpa* and that the council should function to "bell the cat" so as to preserve the rich tradition of Sowa Rigpa.

During the meeting, participants also expressed their opinions for future amendments and a budget was set aside to support the working of the medical council. the conference ended on a happy note with a word of thanks from the Health Secretary and a farewell dinner.