

SPECIAL INTERVIEW WITH DR. (PROF.) SANJEEV RASTOGI ON CARRER, SCOPES AND FUTURE CHALLENGES OF THE TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

Central Council of Tibetan Medicine (CCTM), Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS) and Chagpori Tibetan Medical Institute (CTMI) organized 5 days 3rd International Conference on Tibetan Medicines at Sarnath, Varanasi from 25 February 2018 to 1 March 2018. We, a five student of Central Institute of Buddhist Studies [(CIBS)- Deemed To Be University] also participated in this conference and got the opportunity to interview Dr. Sanjeev Rastogi ,the famous Ayurvedic Physician from Lucknow University about the career, scopes and future challenges of the Traditional Medicine. Here is the final version of the interview:



CIBS Students: Could you tell us a little bit about yourself, sir?

Sanjeev Rastogi: I am Sanjeev Rastogi. I am working in the field of Ayurvedic Medicine (Internal Medicine) which is called as Kaya-Chikitsa in Ayurveda at Lucknow University. I am in this profession over twenty years.

CIBS Students: How did you develop interest in Ayurvedic medicine?

Sanjeev Rastogi: It's a long story how I got interested in Ayurveda. When I began my journey in medicine, I was not at all interested in Traditional medicine. I was willing to go for the modern medicine. In India, there is a system of an entrance examination for entering into medical streams—you may go for modern medicine or any other recognized system of medicine like Ayurvedic medicine.

Initially I came into Ayurvedic medicine because my score was not enough. But I wasn't really happy with the state of Ayurvedic Medicine at that time—with the studies or education system. I thought it was not good to be here. I prepared again and got through in medical entrance. I went to a medical college in Allahabad and started studying the modern medicine (Allopathy). But somehow it happened that I couldn't continue it and was compelled to be back again to Ayurveda. That's how I restarted my studies in Ayurveda. Later I started realizing that it was not me, who had chosen Ayurveda but it was the destiny that had chosen me for Ayurveda. So I took it seriously as I had the knowledge of both the Allopathy and Ayurveda. I was one among the few people who could understand Ayurveda along with Allopathy— someone with the rare blend, who can mix them together.

I gradually realized that these type of people are really required not only in Ayurveda but in all traditional health care system including Sowa Rigpa. You need to understand it traditionally first and then in tune to the modern medicine (Allopathy)—This matters that how a traditional medicine experts understands his own science in terms of modern research and how modern experts look at Traditional Medicine?

Then, gradually I started enjoying my position in Ayurveda. I am really happy that I am able to do something with the help of Ayurveda which lot many people are not able to do. If I had been in Allopathy, I would have limited scope, as hundreds and thousands of doctors are already there. Now I started saying to my students that it's the blessing of God that you are in Ayurveda. It's the real blessing! Unfortunately, you don't understand this now. In the Traditional Medicine, because you not only help others becoming healthy but help yourself also to remain healthy and contended.

CIBS Students: What are the various career options we have in Traditional Medicines?

Dr. Sanjeev Rastogi: If you want to have the career in Sowa Rigpa, possibly, you may not get immediate opportunities. The world is not yet mature enough to accept all what is there in traditional wisdom. Ayurveda has got a better acceptability now. Twenty years back when I started working in Ayurveda, things were different. Further back to this, Ayurveda was a kind of isolated system of medicine and nobody was bothering about knowing what Ayurveda is. Now everybody bothers about what Ayurveda has to say for a particular condition. The time has changed.

Again after 20 years, this time what we see now is again going to change and the world is going to be further more open and acceptable for all kinds of traditional thoughts. By that time you also have to become mature enough to take up the upcoming responsibility. You can't wait blindly till your time comes. If I say that after 10 years you are going to get an opportunity—what you are going to do for 10 years? You can't wait for the opportunity to come. You can't be and you should not be. In the meantime you have to continuously evolve yourself, upgrade yourself; you have to become mature, so that after 10 years, when the opportunity knocks, you should be in a position to grab it.

CIBS students: How Traditional medicine and Modern medicine are dependent on one another?

Dr. Sanjeev Rastogi: Traditional Medicine and Modern Medicine is complementary to each other in multiple ways. Of course, these are two different knowledge systems but there are

always chances of mixing them together for mutual benefits. What you can do is that when you are researching in your field, you can take lot of help from the Modern Medicine and from the tools of the modern medicine- research tools or laboratory or what all is already available there. You take their help to understand things better. At the same time, you can contribute to the Allopathy with the resources which you have and which the Modern Medicine lack altogether. For example, lot of preventive and promotive health care is being talked in Traditional Medicine. Modern medicine does not really bother about that. Modern medicine does not have much to say about the preventive medicine. They focus in the treatment and are only worried that how a person suffering from an illness can be cured. So from the preventive aspect, Traditional Medicine can contribute a lot to the Allopathy. If something good you have, everybody are willing to take from you and vice versa.

CIBS Students: What are the challenges and plans of Govt. of India for Traditional Medicine?

Dr. Sanjeev Rastogi: Challenges are too many:

The First challenge is to prove yourself—what you say and what you talk about. What all is there in the classical text, you have to prove it as per the current knowledge because people say it is 5000 years old and it is not applicable in current context.

The Second challenge is that you have as an ambassador of your system have to become more reliable and dependable. If I tell a patient that Sowa Rigpa or Ayurveda is going to help him recover from an illness, it should be replicable which mean if I am able to treat him, I should also be able to treat others suffering from the same illness. But this is not there in any traditional system of medicine.

We have number of cases where we were able to treat individually, and able to cure lots of patients in critical condition. But I can't take it as an example because it is not dependable. If the results are dependable, all patients of that kind should come to you. Take an example of simple and common disease like Common Cold. You can say, 'I am able to treat Common Cold.' If this is true to all patients who had come to you, all should have been cured. But this is not the case. You are able to treat and cure some patients and at the same time, some other patients don't get a cure. So we need to understand the response pattern in order to increase it. We need to work with the remaining patients who don't get a cure and need to identify the reason why they are not getting a cure. Hence, when you are getting this response ratio increased, eventually the dependability will be increased. The more dependability you have, the more patients are going to come to you. A lot of research however needs to be done in this area.

The Third Challenge is we do not identify what is the need of the people. This is a bigger challenge. What we do is trying to sell what we have. You do not really identify what the people ask for. We get number of patients who come to the hospital asking if there are any Traditional Medicines which can reduce the side-effects of Allopathy. They don't directly switch to the traditional medicines; they want simply remove the side-effects of the Allopathy which they might be taking. I can't clearly answer to this question because we do not have such medicines. Similarly, they come for reduction of the doses of Allopathic medicines. For example, if a patient is taking a drug two times in a day, he/she might be happy having it one time a day. Again there

are no clear answers. Moreover, many patients say that they want to stop the modern medicine, but they want to be healthy also. So they needed to have that kind of medicine which is as effective as the Allopathy is, but at the same time, has no side-effect. They need traditional medicine which is safe and yet as is effective as Modern Medicine because they want to be cured, and not to be experimented.

Plans of Govt. of India: Government of India tries to do and has done a lot in terms of research, education, propagation, creating awareness among people in Ayurveda. Many new institutes have been built up and new courses are introduced, but still more serious efforts are required. It is largely felt that the policies and plans made in traditional medicine, are more of ritualistic value and the basic concept health keeping is not being spread and also its challenges have not yet been identify.

CIBS Students: What message do you have for the future generation and those who want to pursue the field?

Dr. Sanjeev Rastogi: Despite all odds in traditional medicine, I am still optimistic. I am happy to be in traditional medicines. This is the place and the system which still has lots of scope of evolving. There is a chance of growth because here the things are still growing. You can evolve in traditional medicine because you are still young and there are opportunities of touching new heights in this field which is still emerging. If you remain dynamic in thinking and moving forward, there are bigger opportunities to come in the way. So I am very optimistic. Moreover, I have told you that the future is going to come when all the traditional system of medicines and all other kinds of medicines are going to be merged together for the betterment of the mankind. So, lots of good are going to happen in future.

But the most important thing is that till this day comes, you have to evolve yourself continuously by identifying that what is really required to be done. You have to become more knowledgeable and mature, so that when the opportunity arrives, you should be in the position to take up those opportunities.

I am really hopeful and optimistic and I give this message to all students that they should have hope and should be optimistic, because the future is there, the future is yours. You are going to be the brand leaders in traditional system of medicines and the future is of Traditional Medicine.

To know more about Dr. (Prof.) Sanjeev Rastogi, Please click below link:

<http://tibmedcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/2-dr-rastogi.pdf>