

## Sowa-Rigpa Day - Keynote Address

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Today is Sowa-Rigpa Day. As all the events and phenomenon of this world are solely dependent on time, space and the current happenings and though the doers who have undertaken those historical events and phenomenon are explicitly not perceivable through our naked eyes at the moment but the historical events are obvious and they are the source of all the beneficial and happy times and events directly experienced by us today.

The events and the phenomena cannot be revisited but remembering and honouring the time during which the events were undertaken to benefit human race and the special person who undertook those events, is a moral responsibility of the human community and the nations of the world. For eg: Even to this day, we celebrate the birthday of Buddha Shakyamuni and commemorate the special deeds undertaken by the Buddha like attaining enlightenment, turning the wheel of Buddha Dharma, taming the demonic forces and we celebrate Diwali, the festival of lights to honor Lord Rama who returned to his city after an enormous victory over the demon king, Ravana. We also commemorate World Health Day and celebrate the joyous day of freedom of one's nation from the clutches of another nation as Independence Day.

Likewise, to vividly remember the space, time, and happenings of historical events of its tradition and to remember those historical figures, the Tibetans also have the fine culture of commemorating the special days, building memorials, and remembering the events through creative performance of art. For example; to commemorate Buddha Shakyamuni's miracle activities at Sravasti, the Great Lhasa Miracle Prayer festival is celebrated, stone pillar of Potala Palace was built in order to commemorate Tibetan Emperor Trisong Duetsen's minister, Takdra Lukang's deed of defeating Tang Empire and initializing tax payment in the country. Such memorials are built even to these days.

Sowa-Rigpa, one of the four great systems of traditional medicine as popularly known by the modern anthropologists, existed on the roof of the world, Tibet. *Trivishtap* that was popularly known by the historians and poets of India, gradually lost its pronunciation and turned into *Trivid* and this gradually turned into *Tibet* as best possibly pronounced in Europe. Trivishtap which means 'heaven' is the land where Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar resides, and is an abode of Lord Shiva and his consort goddess Parvati, and other many gods and rishis live their ascetic lives and attain their ultimate spiritual realization in this land. Tibet is also said to be the place from where Hanuman fetched the

supreme life-restoring herb, *Sanjeevani* for Lord Ram's brother who was severely wounded during the battle against Ravana as per the great epic Ramayana.

In the compendium of precious qualities Buddha Shakyamuni has stated that, "In this world, several rivers flow, varieties of flowers, forest, herbs and fruit bearing trees exist, due to the naga king and the nagas residing in Lake manasarovar, this is the power and glory of the lord of the nagas". As stated above, the great rivers of the world like Brahmaputra (*Yarlung Tsangpo* in Tibetan), the Indus (*Sengye khabab* in Tibetan), the Yangtze (*Drichu* in Tibetan), the Salween (*Gyalmo Ngulchu* in Tibetan); the Mekong (*Zachu* in Tibetan) and so on originates from Tibet, the Land of snows. Sowa-Rigpa, is an ocean that has been formed through gradual accumulation of essential drops of experiences accumulated by the red faced, Tibetans living in this land, while getting acquainted and accustomed to its unique space, time and situation for thousands of years.

Once the right time arrived when the people of this land became receptacle, out of sheer love, the great Toenpa Sherab Miwoche, in order to show the right path to ultimate happiness, the enlightenment, to those who were going astray and were encountering various sufferings, taught the pathway teachings, the vehicles, according to the diverse intelligence of his disciples. And from these pathway teachings disciples like Chebu Trishey thoroughly collated the teachings on medicine and therapies and thus Sowa-Rigpa was born. The Emperors and ministers of Tibet, with their political influence and military power, reigned and collected tax from its neighboring countries like the basins of Ganges in the South, (which is now a days in India), Persia, Abbsid Empire in the West and Tang Chinese Empire in the East and also maintained economic and education ties with these countries by integrating the essence of their medical traditions into Sowa-Rigpa.

Sowa-Rigpa is like an eternal ocean and a never depleting source of wealth from where the channels of critical analysis of the unbiased intelligent beings have been irrigating the vast land of humanity wherein the harvest of longevity and good health is attained without fail.

The foremost medical tradition that spread to Tibet from its neighboring countries was Ayurveda from India. It came along the inception of Buddhism in Tibet during the reign of king Lha tho tho ri in the fourth century. During his reign, the tradition of 'physician to the king or palace' was first pioneered. This enormously triggered and paved way to the development of Study and Practice of Sowa-Rigpa at a national level.

Especially, during the reign of Emperor Trisong Deutsen and his son the theory and practice of Sowa-Rigpa was developed to its entirety like the full moon and with the establishment of thirteen statements, the duties, degree allotment, nomenclature, and rank of Sowa-Rigpa practitioners were made legal and this was made aware to all throughout Tibet.

In the 20th century powerful Chinese military regime invaded entire Tibet and at this critical and ruthless juncture of demolition of Tibetan religion, culture and ethnicity, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama along with his entourage fled to exile in India. And with the non-repayable kindness and support from Indian Government and its people, His Holiness established a separate Tibetan Administration in exile, Tibetan settlements and various religious and cultural centres like central schools for Tibetans, monasteries and monastic schools, thereby giving new life to Tibet's religion and culture which is the profound basis of world peace today.

Among these great events, His Holiness called upon all the available scholars of Tibetan Medicine and Astrology who had followed him to exile, to Dharamsala on September 11, 1961 to revive the extraordinary tradition of Tibetan Medicine and Astrology for the benefit of all humanity. With his kindness, Sowa-Rigpa was yet again presented to the entire humanity irrespective of caste; creed and colour, to eliminate all the sufferings brought about by disease and to acquire long life, spiritual wellbeing and happiness and thus this day surfaced and all the people who are nurtured by this tradition will mark and commemorate this day as Sowa-Rigpa Day.

Just like the Sun that helped to bloom lotus flowers in the garden,  
Sowa-Rigpa Day facilitated to flourish human wellbeing and happiness,  
It is due to His Holiness's vision, that the merit of humanity was raised so high,  
Just like the sun and the wind that paved way to blossoming up of the lotus flower.

The main objective of celebrating the day by all the concerned individuals and institutes will be to remember the kindness of our ancestors and especially be ever grateful to His Holiness the Dalai Lama's kindness. And while remembering their kindness, we study their life story and continue striving to develop our own knowledge of Sowa-Rigpa in order to eradicate the sufferings and its causes of the countless sentient beings who have been always grateful to us.

May His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the source of human happiness, live for hundreds of eons and may all his wishes and aspirations be fulfilled.

Thank You  
*Sarva Manga lam*