

Tibetan

Materia Medica

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Traditional Tibetan Materia Medica

- **Tibetan Materia Medica**
- **Concept of the Medicine**
- **The legend of the origin of medicine and poison**
- **Theory of the elements**
- **Theory of the origination of plants**
- **The art of the preparation of the medicine**
- **Phytotherapy**

Materia Medica is a very important subject, to which Tibetans have paid great interest for thousands of years. They have always enjoyed the richness of herbs and minerals and their cures. But their various uses and the law of Materia Medica was brought in Tibet from India during the 7th century. From then on, the translation and practice of different medical systems, coming from many different central Asian countries, continued to flourish. The Materia Medica knowledge, principally based on the 'Four Tantras' texts, doesn't differ much from the one of Indian Ayurvedic medical system. Tibetan people still respect and keep on a high position the legend of Tibetan medicine's origin (see under Tibetan medicine history section). Tibetan physicians learned the foreign medical systems, and experiment them with their own local herbs and mineral resources. According to the law of Buddhist Materia Medica, they found a great number of herbs and minerals that possess a great value of healing properties. They adopted the law of Materia Medica and practiced with local resources, integrating them with the local environment to fulfill the necessity of curing patients. On the basis of the Four Tantras, Tibetan physicians researched, practiced and developed the art of preparing medicine to find good remedies for the various illnesses and prolong life. They took one step further towards the *Ciudlen* 'essence abstraction' method. It is an essence abstracted product that possesses a very refined and subtle elemental energy which rejuvenates the body elements, organs, constituents and general body tissues. Gradually the method brought to the art of practicing 'alchemy' which is believed to slow down the physical tissue degeneration and the universal problem of aging process. In the last part of the alchemy practice development, the journey of the research, physicians integrated meditation, visualization, mantra recitation and spiritual practice in order to develop a higher level of transformation of the body/mind totality. The main goal is to become 'completely free from suffering' and this continues to be the research subject through material power and spiritual practice tradition.

Brief introduction to the Tibetan Materia Medica

Tibet, a country of medicinal herbs

Tibet has always been praised by the Central Asian countries as being the 'Land of medicinal herbs' with its legends such as 'Shambhala or Mystic land' where spiritual practices and precious herbs that extend life and even give immortality could be found. In Indian mythology, 'Ramayana'- the story of the epic Indian God Rama who killed the nine-face demon Ravana - mentioned that the Rama's brother, Shri Lakhshman, hurt by a demon's arrow, was miraculously cured by a 'Soma plant' brought from Mount Kailash, Tibet. The majestic Kailash Mountain is a sacred place for the Hindus, Buddhist, Sikh and Tibet's native Bon religion¹. Natural healing water and two divine essence energies (masculine and feminine) flow there. Believers think that its sacred substances heal the psychological, pathological and spiritual disequilibriums. The glorious moon and bright stars touch the majestic mountains and make nectars spring. Cool wind and fresh snow nourish plants constantly. Tibet is very far from the sea and lowlands but it is very rich in herbs and minerals. For thousands of years, inhabitants of Tibet have earned experience with these natural resources. This knowledge was later developed in the form of a medical system. The first Materia Medica work was translated from India by the Indian physician Shantigarbha² during the 8th century. Later, the great Tibetan translator Lotsawa Rinchen Sangpo (958-1055) translated *Astangahrdaya Samhita* and *Chandrika* composed by Bhaghvata and Chandranadana of Kashmir, that became the main standard texts of the Tibetan pharmaceutical works. The Chandrika Materia Medica contains about 600 drugs and 4225 nomenclatures. Later, the celebrated Yuthok Yonten Gonpo the younger (1126-1202) introduced the *Gyud-shi* - 'the Four Tantras', taught by Buddha and translated by Vairochana in the 8th century - which has become, and remains the backbone of the Tibetan Medicine theory and practice until now. Three of its chapters (19th to 21th) of the second tantra are about the Materia Medica and have eight categories of drugs resources and altogether 374 main ingredients are described³.



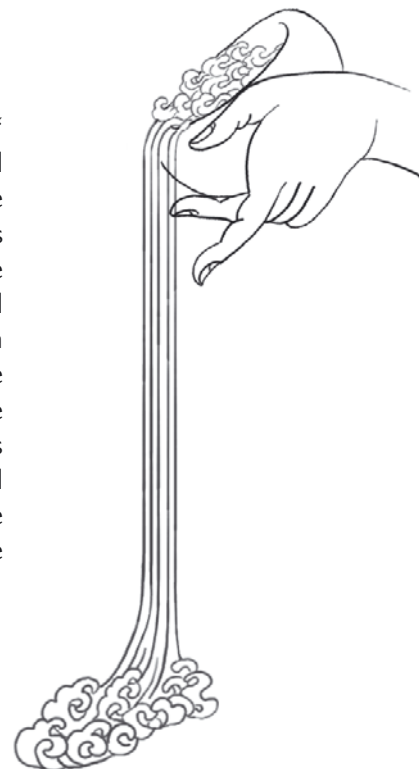
Desid Sangye Gyatsho

The 'life giver' to Tibetan medicine was the great scholar and fifth Dalai Lama's regent, Desid Sangye Gyatsho (1653-1705), who had the Chakpori medical college built in Tibet in 1696. He went through great adventures and made researches in Tibetan as well as in Ayurvedic, Chinese, and Greeko-arabian medical systems of that time. He personally travelled, from north to south and east to west in all the rich vegetation places of Tibet to search the medicinal plants and herbs. After his return to the Potala, the palace of H.H. the Dalai Lama, he placed the countries, where he found rich medicinal values, under the government's protection and wrote environment restrictions to protect and preserve the medicine resources. He crafted the list in the rock where the medicine was available, so local people could produce the raw medicines for the public health centre in the Potala, instead of having to pay a normal tax. He composed greatest commentary books on the four tantras, specially the *Bedurya-ngonpo*, 'Blue Beryl', as well as a supplement book of practice for the third tantra, *mangag lhenthab*, and 'History of Tibetan Medicine'. According to the 'Blue Beryl', he had 79 Medical thangkas painted that illustrate the meaning of all four tantras, from anatomy to clinical work and medical theory to spiritual illumination. Throughout mankind's history, such a beautiful and analogous great work had never been shown in any medical systems. It described the whole Materia Medica according to the real plants, herbs and minerals which were brought from different countries. All were illustrated under Sangye Gyatsho's personal guidance and his own findings and researches. Another celebrated physician, the Tibetan monk Deumar Tenzin Trinley (1672-?) composed numerous works on the Materia Medica and other subjects. The most renowned work is *Shelgong shelphreng*, which is the latest on Materia medica and the most detailed drugs description. It described almost 1176 principle ingredients with 2294 sub-ingredients. This is one of the most important masterpieces of the

Materia Medica work in the history of Tibetan Medicine. Recently, some Materia Medica books have been published in and outside of Tibet and some of them are useful⁴ as they can help reveal the basic knowledge of the Tibetan medical Materia Medica.

CONCEPT OF THE MEDICINE

In the Tibetan medicine concept, Medicine means ‘antidote’ to the cause or effect of the disease. The Tibetan word *Man* means ‘medicine’ and its action helps to reduce the pain, heal disease and prolong the life. *Dud-tsi* (nectar) is also a synonym for the medicine used in Tibetan medicine from about two thousand years. *Dud* means demon and demons produce disease and make beings suffer. *Tsi* is an antidote for the disease released by the demon. Therefore ‘Tibetan Materia Medica’, *Dudtsi*, means ‘referring to the well-prepared healing medicine’. In fact, the real demon is our ignorance and that ignorance is found in all visible and invisible existences. It brings us illusion and leads us to the misunderstanding of the truth. This is the real root of the disease and the cause of sorrow and sufferings.



THE LEGEND OF THE ORIGIN OF MEDICINE AND POISON

According to the history of Tibetan medicine, the origin of the disease and medicine is found in the Materia Medica under the form of mythology. It is said that when the world began its existence, it was like a water ball hanging in space, containing the potencies of everything visible and non-visible that could exist in the future. Gods and Asuras (demi-gods) wanted to churn it to get the immortal nectar pervade in the ocean like milk and butter. But before the nectar was found, an awful demon with fire coming from mouth and hairs, full of lethal poison, appeared from the water and burned all the surroundings. Gods and Asuras fainted. God Brahma spelled the mantra ‘OM AH THA’ which he had received from the Buddha Kashyab and the demon disappeared into living and non-living poisons like mercury, aconitum, Dadura and poisonous snakes, scorpion etc. The poison smell and vapor gone into space, were absorbed by the sun and spread to the beings. This is how the poison began to spring in the world and started to produce sickness.

Later, gods and Asuras churned the ocean again, found the nectar and went to heaven. But Rahul, king of demons, stole the vase containing the nectar and ran away to use it for him only. The gods began the war with Rahul and won it, and the sun and moon became the enemies of Rahul. After the war, the gods drank the nectar, obtained a long life and were called immortal beings. The smell and vapor of the nectar went to space and were absorbed by the moon. Nectar like herbs and plants began to grow in the world⁵ as said in the Materia Medica.

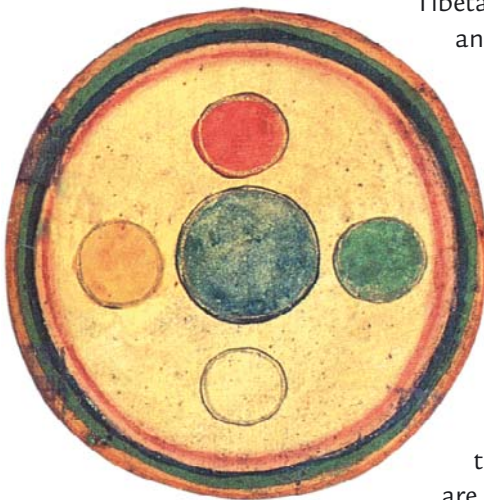
The legend of nectar and medicine is also popular in the Buddhist tradition of the four medical tantras. The Aquamarine blue Medicine Buddha, who dwells in the pure land of this world East direction, holds in his right hand a Myrobolan (latin. *Terminalia chebula Retz*), symbol of the king medicine, which cures all the physical disorders as it possesses all the six tastes, eight powers, and 17 secondary qualities are grown from the seed of the nectar. Medicine Buddha’s

left hand holds a bowl of nectar, which is the symbol of prolonging life by medicine and spiritual realization. The Myrobolan was offered to the Medicine Buddha by Goddess Trogma, a protector of Medicine, during the medicine discourse held by Buddha Shakyamuni. The nectar bowl was offered to Buddha Shakyamuni by the four Dharma kings (four kings of heaven) after he achieved enlightenment at Bodh Gaya in India. The symbolic gesture is an ultimate silent teaching for the internal eternity. Many ancient Buddhist literatures mentioned the nectar because it is the symbol of the purified and permanent freedom from sufferings.

Through generations, the ancient physicians have gathered their experiences according to the law of pharmacology and then constantly developed the Tibetan Materia Medica. Through the observation and experimentation of the animal's auto-healing knowledge, many medicinal plants and their natural cure systems were discovered. For example 25 chadjor plants (plants that heal wounds immediately) to be used against poisons, physical wounds and traumas etc. are mentioned in the Tibetan Materia Medica. These ingredients are still used by Tibetan doctors⁶.

THEORY OF THE ELEMENTS

The Buddhist cosmology⁷ and Tibetan medicine both explain that everything that exists in the world, is manifested from the five basic elements of earth, water, fire, wind and space. The Tibetan word *Jungwa* means 'appearing' or 'possible to be born' and expresses that anything can arise through the inter-reaction of the elements. The wind moves and its friction produces heat and consequently the fire element mandala, and then the water and earth mandalas. It is like butter and milk. The elements are the seeds of the living and non-living beings, they are the source of vegetation growing and the being's evolution. But in Buddhism, the sentient beings' mind is considered as having no beginning, as there is no starting point or more simply as past lives are uncountable for the ordinary human being. However, everything in this world grows with the combination of five basic elements. Medicines derive from the elements so does the disease. The combination of two or three different elements gives particular shape and nature to the plants, trees and minerals, which possess different tastes and powers. The curing power of a single or combined drug is also produced by the elements. As mentioned above in the origin, both the disease and medicine are grown by the elements. Wrong combinations give ill health and produce poison while homogenous combination produce harmony and positive effect. Therefore the right way of selectioning and combining drugs can help to heal and cure the diseases.



Quality and function of the elements

Earth element dominated food and medicine has a heavy quality, and has the power to make things firm, has a slow action or blunt, reacts smoothly, produces grease, and dries. Its function is to make the limbs firm, develop the body and make it compact and it helps cure wind disorders.

Water element dominated food and medicine has a liquid quality, and is cool, heavy, blunt, oily and has mobile powers. It provides the moisture and softness to the body, keeps it compact and cures the bile disorders.

Fire element dominated food and medicine has hot, sharp, dry, coarse, light, oily and mobile powers. It increases the body heat, matures the body constituents, clears the complexion and cures the phlegm disorders.

Wind element dominated food and medicine has light, mobile, cold, coarse, absorbent and dry

powers. It fortifies and articulates the body, spreads the nutriments throughout the body and cures the phlegm and bile disorders.

Space element is common to and pervades the other four elements, food and medicines. Its function is to bestow hollowness, to provide extensive space and cure disorders arising from the combinations of the other elements.

Taste

The taste is given by the elements combination. There are six principal tastes: sweet, sour, salty, bitter, hot and astringent. Taste is produced by the quality of the elements combination and it can give desire for flavor to the living being's life. The definition of the taste is that particular foods give particular flavors in the tongue, and consciousness distinguishes them. The following table gives the elements and tastes relationship and their effects.

Elements	6 tastes	3 post-digestion tastes	curing	increasing
Earth+water	sweet	sweet	wind/bile	phlegm
Fire+earth	sour	sour	phlegm/wind	bile
Water+fire	salty	sweet	wind	bile/phlegm
Water+air	bitter	bitter	bile/phlegm	wind
Fire+air	hot	bitter	phlegm	wind/bile
Earth+air	astringent	bitter	bile/phlegm	wind

Quality of the taste

Sweet taste medicines or food have the particular function to be wholesome. It increases strength and the body constituents, is beneficial for children, and the aged and undernourished people. It develops the body, heals wounds, brightens the complexion and clears the sense organs. It promotes longevity, sustains the body and cures poisoning and the combined disorders of wind and bile.

Reaction: If there is an excess of the sweet taste consumption, phlegm humor, fat and diabetes increase, the digestive heat is reduced and fleshy excrescence, urinary disorders, goiter and glandular growths (lymph) are produced.

Sweet taste: Earth and Water, e. g. molasses and banana.

Sour taste substances (medicine, food) increase heat, improve the appetite, satisfy the mind, break down food, remove phlegm imbalances and facilitate digestion; external application of sour substances causes loss of sensation and moves the blocked wind.

Reaction: The assumption of excess sour substances brings to an increase of blood and bile, makes the body limp, and produces blurred vision, dizziness, first and second stage of oedema, erysipelas, cutaneous itches, pimples, thirst and contagious fevers.

Sour taste: Fire and Earth, e. g. lemon and apple

Salty taste (medicine, food) toughens the body and removes the whorls of wind and the channels blockages. Hot-salt fomentation increases perspiration and digestive heat and improves the appetite.

Reaction: The excessive assumption of salty substances causes fall of hair and makes hair become gray. It increases wrinkles, decreases strength and produces thirst, leprosy, erysipelas and blood and bile disorders.

Salty taste: Water and Fire, e. g. salt and celery.

Bitter taste (medicine, food) cures anorexia, worms, thirst, poisoning, leprosy, fainting, and infectious fevers, vomiting of fluids and bile disorders. It dries necrosis, fat, grease, marrow stool, and urine. The bitter taste substances improve mental alertness and cures breast disorders and hoarseness.

Reaction: The excess assumption of the bitter taste substances consumes the bodily constituents and increases wind and phlegm.

Bitter taste: Water and Wind, e.g. Gentiana, Swertia chireta and Ruccola

Hot taste (medicine, food) cures throat disorders, throat constriction, leprosy and second stage of edema. It dries wounds, fat and necrosis, increases the digestive heat, facilitates digestion and improves appetite; it is purgative and opens the channels.

Reaction: The excess of the hot taste substances consumes the semen and strength of the body, causes physical deformity, produces shivering, fainting and pain in the waist, back, etc.

Hot taste: Fire and Wind, e. g. red chili and black pepper

Astringent taste (medicine, food) dries blood, bile, fat and necrosis, heals wounds, cleans fat and brightens the complexion.

Reaction: The excess intake of astringent taste collects mucus, retains stool, causes distension of the abdomen and the heart disorders, dries nutriment, fluid, etc. and constricts the tip of the channels.

Astringent taste: Earth and Wind, e. g. artichoke and Terminalia chebula

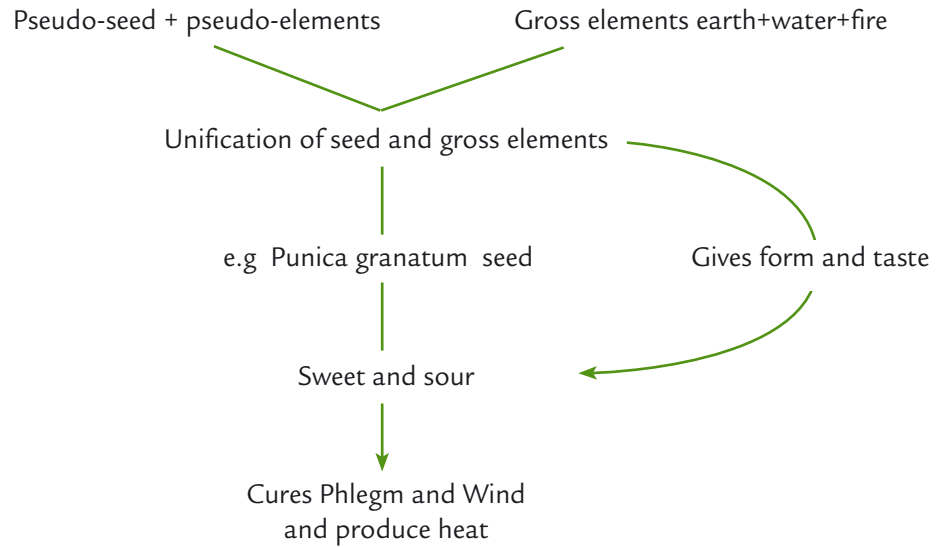
In short sweet, sour, salty and hot tastes dispel wind disorders. Bitter, sweet and astringent tastes cure bile disorders. Hot, sour and salty tastes cure phlegm disorders.

When a sweet taste is experienced, it dissolves on the tongue and, being tasty, produces craving. A sour taste sets teeth on edge, puckers the face and causes one's mouth to water. Saltiness heats and makes the saliva accumulate, whilst a bitter taste purifies the mouth odor and depresses the appetite. A hot taste burns the tongue and mouth and causes the eyes to water, whereas an astringent taste stick to the palate, producing a coarse sensation. The different characteristics of the tastes, like strong taste, combined taste or sweet and smooth, etc. give direct information on the quality nature of the drugs or food that we consume or use. Different tastes come out from the different tastes and elements combinations, so the value of their powers and properties also follow the same orientation.

THE PSEUDO-ORIGIN OF THE PLANTS SPECIES

Firstly, the seed exists in a potency form with the pseudo-elements. Buddhism says that the differences between the existing seeds in the world are due to the power of the individual and collective karma. Even if sharing the same earth, different kinds of people are born in different countries and in different life conditions like wealth or poverty. Similarly, different types of herbs, plants and animals exist. When the pseudo-elements and pseud-seeds are united by karmic power with the gross elements, they begin to form the new plant's life. The elements also give the different tastes and potencies that produce plant's powers. These powers manifest 17 secondary qualities that can be used as an antidote for the disorders produced by humors.

For example of Punica granatum and its power:



The elements and their power or inter-reaction are the conditions for the organic and inorganic lives. Wind gives respiration and lightness, fire produces heat and maturation, water manifests liquid and heaviness, earth produces matter and forms while ether or space gives space to grow and live. If any of these elements is lacking or missing, no species could grow at any place or time. The seed is the ‘concentrated central energy’. The elements are attracted to it like magnet and iron and nourish it.

THE QUALITY OF THE MEDICINE

Depending on the combination of the elements, the organic or inorganic existences are predominated by one or two elements; they also contain the other elements in a lesser quantity. However, the dominant element influences the quality or power of the medicine and it rules through the taste. The power and concentration of the energy is here called pharmacological value or property that can be used against the disease. As all things existing in the world grow from the elements, they share the similar very nature, and so can influence each other naturally; then, everything potentially possesses a medical value.

Arya Nagarjuna acharya said

*“The life saving nectar grows in the mountains
But only, if you correctly identify the herbs and plants
with the proper knowledge in accordance to the master.”⁸*

The qualities of the taste derived from the elements.

1

Quality of the SWEET taste					
Earth medicine		Water medicine		Result	
Power and quality	%	Power and quality	%	Power and quality	%
Heavy	6	Heavy	5+	Heavy	11
Blunt	4	Blunt	4+	Blunt	8
0	0	Cool	6	Cool	6
Dry	1	Thick	7-	Thick	6
Stable	5	0	0	Stable	5
Oily	2	Oily	3+	Oily	5
Smooth	3	Smooth	1+	Smooth	4
0	0	Gentle	2	Gentle	2

2

Quality of the SOUR taste					
Fire medicine		Earth medicine		Result	
Power and quality	%	Power and quality	%	Power and quality	%
Hot	7	0	0	Hot	7
Dry	5	Dry	1+	Dry	6
Oily	2	Oily	2	Dry	4
Mobile	1	Stable	5-	Stable	4
Light	3	Heavy	6-	Heavy	3
Sharp	6	Blunt	4-	Sharp	2
Rough	4	Smooth	3-	Rough	1

3

Quality of the SALTY taste					
Water medicine		Fire medicine		Result	
Power and quality	%	Power and quality	%	Power and quality	%
Thin	6	Dry	5-	Thin	1
Cool	5	Hot	7-	Hot	2
Heavy	4	Light	3-	Heavy	1
Blunt	3	Sharp	6-	Sharp	3
Oily	2	Oily	2+	Oily	4
Gentle	1	0	0	Gentle	1
0	0	Rough	4	Rough	4
0	0	Mobile	1	Mobile	1

4

Quality of the BITTER taste					
Water medicine		Air medicine		Result	
Power and quality	%	Power and quality	%	Power and quality	%
Cool	5	Cold	4+	Cool	9
Thin	6	Dry	1-	Thin	5
Blunt	3	0	0	Blunt	3
0	0	Rough	3	Rough	
Heavy	4	Light	6-	Light	2
Gentle	1	0	0	Gentle	1
Oily	2	Absorbent	2-	0	0
0	0	Mobile	5	Mobile	5

5

Quality of the HOT taste					
Fire medicine		Air medicine		Result	
Power and quality	%	Power and quality	%	Power and quality	%
Light	3	Light	6+	Light	9
Rough	4	Rough	3+	Rough	7
Dry	5	Dry	1+	Dry	6
Mobile	1	Mobile	5+	Dry	6
Sharp	6	0	0	Sharp	6
Hot	7	Cold	4	Hot	3
Oily	2	Absorbent	2-	0	0

6

Quality of the ASTRINGENT taste					
Earth medicine		Air medicine		Result	
Power and quality	%	Power and quality	%	Power and quality	%
0	0	Cold	4	Cold	4
Blunt	4	0	0	Blunt	4
Dry	1	Dry	1+	Dry	2
Heavy	6	Light	6-	0	0
Stable	5	Mobile	5-	0	0
Smooth	3	Rough	3	0	0
Oily	2	Absorbent	2	0	0

There are total 63 taste formulas

Taste combination methods:

1. Six single taste (above mentioned)

2. Double taste combination has 16 formulas:

1. Sweet	5
2. Sour	5
3. Salty	3
4. Bitter	2
5. Hot	1
.....	
	16

5. Triple taste combination has 20 formulas

1. Sweet	10
2. Sour	6
3. Salty	3
4. Bitter	1
.....	
	20

6. Quadrennial taste combination.

1. Sweet	10
2. Sour	4
3 Salty (hot, bitter and astringent)	1
.....	
	15

7. Quintal taste combination

1. Sweet	5
2. Sour	1
.....	
	6

The 57 formulas and six single tastes give a total of 63 formulas that can be used against diseases manifested from the humors and infections (the detailed formulas are mentioned in the Materia Medica.)

Eight Powers

The Tibetan word 'nuepa' means power. It is the highly concentrated quality of the property in herbs or plants that comes from the elements. It gives the taste and power to the very nature of drugs. This is the principal mechanism of Tibetan pharmacology that combines the ingredients according to the health, pathology and the restoration of the energy.

There are eight powers:

1. Heavy
2. Oily
3. Cold
4. Blunt
5. Light
6. Rough
7. Hot and
8. Sharp

The above eight principal powers can cure all energy and pathological disorders while they also can increase the opposite power if wrongly used. The natural cooling power of plants is stronger when plants grow in Himalayas or in cold mountains side while their hot nature is more developed naturally if they grow in lowland and hot places. The theory of curing the disease is to apply the opposite force or power to pacify the nature of the disequilibrium or diseases.

Curing order

1. Heavy and oily powers cure wind disorders

E.g. the first quality of heavy power of *Agaru nagbo* (*Aqularia agallocha Roxb*) and the oily power of bone marrow and butter cure wind disorders.

2. Cool and blunt powers cure bile disorder

E.g. *Tikta* (*Swertia chirayita*), cool power and *Chugang* (kaolin) blunt power, cure bile disease.

3. The last four powers light, rough, hot and sharp cure phlegm

E.g. lightness, like Letre (*Tinospora sinensis*), rough quality like ginger and hot power like *Phowarilbu* (*Piper nigrum*) and sharpness like *Pipiling* (*Piper longum*) etc cure phlegm disorder.

Reaction

Light, rough and cold powers could increase the wind humor.

Hot, sharp and oily powers produce bile.

Heavy, oily and cold and **blunt** four powers increase the phlegm humor in general.

All single and combined medicine powers are produced by the inter-reaction of the five elements and therefore may increase and decrease the humors or diseases caused by the imbalance of elements.

Seventeen (or twenty) secondary powers

There are seventeen or twenty different secondary qualities, which are more specific and detailed qualities of the previous eight powers. These 17 or 20 qualities of the medicines can match and destroy the twenty disease characters (six characters with wind, and bile and phlegm with seven characters what makes a total of 20 characters).

No	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Medicine quality	Smooth	Heavy	Warm	Oily	Stable	Cold	Blunt	Cool	Gentle	Thin
Disease character	Rough	Light	Cold	Subtle, hard	Mobile	Hot	Sharp	Hot	Light	Mal-odor
No	11	12	13	14	15	16	17			
Medicine quality	Dry	Absorbent	Hot	Light	Sharp	Rough	Mobile			
Disease character	Purgative, wet	Oily	Cool	Heavy	Blunt	Smooth, sticky	Stable			

How to prescribe the herbal products

The administration of the medicine generally uses two main methods: The first one is to choose the safest way to treat the patient, which gives a slow cure but without negative reaction and the second is a strong treatment for priority disorders.

In the first method, one should prescribe the patient's phlegm disorder medicines to be taken early in the morning (one hour or half an hour before breakfast or on an empty stomach) with warm previously boiled water. Bile or infections medicines should be taken one hour, or at least half an hour, after lunch with cold previously boiled water. Wind medicines are prescribed for the late evening after dinner or before going to bed with warm and previously boiled water or little wine. The second method is generally done by experienced doctors, who first treat the strongest disease with medicines, and the rest once the priority disease has been cured.

Vehicle of the medicines (*Menta*)

Herbal medicines are generally taken with boiling water, which is called vehicle in Tibetan medicine. The vehicle can take the medicine potency in accordance with its own quality, and increase the power of the medicine. Therefore Tibetan doctors pay great attention to the medicine vehicle during the cure. To prevent a disease, boiling water has a great curative power and cleans all the physical toxins, especially if it is drunk early in the morning. Therapeutic history records mention that the first disease in the world was indigestion and the first medicine was boiled water. But therapeutically, boiled water is used to cure many diseases. Boiling water is the best method for the prevention of chronic digestive system and phlegm disorders in general. For bile and fever diseases, the best is to take medicines with cold previously boiled water. To cure wind disorders, one should take the medicine with bone soup, meat soup or good wine etc. but hot water is also excellent for wind disorders.

Resources and classification of the ingredients

The resource of Tibetan medicine purely depends on the natural material, collected from mountains and vegetation zones. Tibetans don't only use herbs and plants but also use minerals, precious stones, animal products, fossils, water, fire and other organic and inorganic substances. In the past, some parts of Tibetan native habitants used only minerals to cure all disorders and some others blood letting and moxibustion only. In the north, land of nomads, herbs are only used in order to cure all disorders. Nomads are experts in herbs identification and cure for high altitude disorders. Eastern and southern Tibetan physicians mainly use herbs, fruits as well as expensive medicines imported from India, Nepal, China and other countries. In Tibetan pharmacology, many different raw materials including gems, precious stones are used.

Here is the classification of the eight sections of materials described according to the resources and uses of the *Materia Medica*:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Rinpochemen</i> | Precious and semiprecious stones |
| 2. <i>Dhomen</i> | Stone medicines |
| 3. <i>Samen</i> | Earth medicines |
| 4. <i>Shingmen</i> | Wood medicines |
| 5. <i>Tsimen</i> | Concentrated and expensive medicines |
| 6. <i>Thangmen</i> | Plants medicines |
| 7. <i>Ngomen</i> | Herbal medicines |
| 8. <i>Sogchagmen</i> | Animal medicines |

Notes

- ¹ Deumar Geshe's "Shelgong Shelphreng" Publ. By Tibetan medical and astro. Institute, Dharamsala, India and Desid sangye gyatsho's "Khogbugs" History of Tibetan Medicine, Publ. by Kansu province, China, 1982
- ² Desid Sangye Gyatsho's "Khogbugs" History of Tibetan Medicine, Publ. by Kansu province, China, 1982
- ³ The number of single drugs in the four tantra is less than in "Chandrika" Materia Medica but it is more practical in Tibet.
- ⁴ Baghwan Dash, "Indo-Tibetan Materia Medica" Publ Classic India publication, 1987, Arya, Pasang Yonten's "Dictionary of Tibetan Materia Medica" publ. by Motilal Banarsi Dass, New Delhi 1999 in English and by Scherzverlag in German.
- ⁵ Desid Sangye Gyatsho, "Bedurya ngonpo" commentary on the first tantra publ in Delhi 1973
- ⁶ Kongtrul Yonten Gyatsho- Rinchen-gnulchusbyorsde phyogs bsdebs. Pub. By Tibetan works and archives, Dharamsala 1986
- ⁷ Kalachakra tantra and Rigdhen-nyingthig publ by council of Tibetan exile Government, Dharamsala, India.
- ⁸ Deumar Tenzin Phuntsok's "Laglen chedue"
- ⁹ Deumar Geshe Tenzin Phuntshog's "Laglen chedue publ. in Delhi in 1970 and Karma Negedon Tenzin Trinle's "Chimed Nortreng" Published by Tibetan medical and Astro. Institute, Dharamsala 2000

