

Seasonal Behavior

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Abstract

gSo-ba Rig-pa explains that the external seasons exist because of the solar and lunar systems. Similarly, the internal solar and lunar channels reflect the phenomenon and give the internal seasons. Most people know the seasons, but few of them know their effects on the body/mind and their prevention. However, the external earth rotation is the life of the earth, and wind is its breathing. Temperature is its life energy, and beings its production. *IngSo-ba Rig-pa* medical system, these four seasons are furthermore divided into six divisions. Each season has two months. They are called *dhue-tsig*. The six season concept is related to the changes of the subtle elements energy and qualities of body and food items into other qualities, according to the season dominant element. *dPyid-ka* starts with the first month of the lunar calendar and during this season, earth begins to increase its heat and sun melts the glaciers. The same phenomenon also takes place in the body of living beings where *Bad-kan* begins to melt which is frozen during winter. *Sos-ka* comes with a very hot sun-heat and the crushing down of the Phlegm energy. The quality of the weather becomes dry and light and similar to the wind humor, but hot. Therefore, the Wind humor accumulates in this season. *Yar-ka* is hot and humid and the monsoon climate begins. There are heavy clouds in the sky, and the rains make the earth wet and humid. *sTon-ka* is the season where food and body qualities become oily and sharp. Thus, the body nature becomes of *mKhris-pa* nature and gains hot and sharp energy. *dGun-sTod* generally coincides with the beginning of cold weather. Especially the external coldness blocks the body pores and keeps the heat inside the body.

dGun-sMed is much colder and more humid than the early winter. The external coldness is also much more concentrated than before.

Introduction

Before starting with the seasonal influences on the human body/mind, one should get some short general information on season and its potency. Seasons are natural global earth clock and the rhythm of the world. Equinox and Solstice make the two main divisions of the seasons, which further into four or six seasons. The same seasonal phenomenon is found inside the body of every being in the world. *gSo-ba Rig-pa* explains that the external seasons exist because of the solar and lunar systems. Similarly, the internal solar and lunar channels reflect the phenomenon and give the internal seasons. Most people know the seasons, but few of them know their effects on the body/mind and their prevention. However, the external earth rotation is the life of the earth, and wind is its breathing. Temperature is its life energy, and beings its production.

The temperature and wind make the world move around the sun. Through the changes between earth rotation and sun, the temperature increases or decreases, producing the four main seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter. In the *gSo-ba Rig-pa* medical system, these four seasons are furthermore divided into six divisions. Each season has two months. They are called *dhue-tsig*, which means 'joints' or 'part of time'. The six season concept is related to the changes of the subtle elements energy and qualities of body and food items into other qualities, according to the season dominant element. The detailed information and the rotations of the sun, moon, earth and their influence may be learned from the traditional astrology and astronomy systems. A difference of roughly forty-five days, or even sometimes two months (e.g. 13-month year), can be found between the Gregorian and lunar calendars as one is based on the sun and

the other one on the moon. Therefore, the spring season usually falls around the middle of February (see the table).

In short, the increase of earth temperature is called ‘spring season’ (which traditionally means the beginning of the earth life) and the peak of temperature happens in summer. Maturation or fruition of trees takes place in autumn and sleep or energy concentration inside earth is called winter. Their reflection can be found in all aspects of living and non-living beings. For instance, rebirth, adulthood, aging and dying are the beings’ natural phenomena similar to the four seasons; this is the natural evolution of the macrocosm and microcosm. Therefore, the seasons’ influence on human beings and quality of the food is powerful. It can vary the body constitutions, pathology, and symptoms. In *gSo-ba Rig-pa*, seasons are regarded as one of the fundamental factors in etiology and pathology, and a powerful instrument in the prevention of diseases.

The seasons

The six seasons (each having two months), or twelve months, are related to the earth, and the twelve zodiac houses are related to the sky. They are the cosmic clocks. Seasons naturally influence the human body and make diseases appear and spread under three aspects or stages: the disease may accumulate, manifest or pacify under the seasonal influence. (See the table below) The human beings’ lives are ruled by the seasons, as the seasons’ power and temperature automatically change the natural flow of the body. With the rhythm of earth, seasons bring birth, life sustaining, aging and also death. With the proper knowledge on seasons, one can follow the right way of diet and behavior that can harmonize and maintain a stable health. Especially, the constitutional disorder manifestations will decline by following the correct diet and behavior. Therefore, according to *gSo-ba Rig-pa*, an adapted seasonal behavior is very important for preventing diseases, harmonizing the humors and re-equilibrating

the energy cycle in the body. For instance, if a season is delayed, that will probably provoke some disturbance of health, rhythm and organs functioning.

The natural law of seasons and health

Two seasons have opposite forces, and two seasons have a neutral energy. Summer should be hot in general, and winter should be cold. This is the natural phenomenon that is reflected in the internal body temperature changes and which could bring a better health by expulsing or concentrating the body energies and toxic products.

Spring is the waking up from the deep winter sleeping and the increasing of heat that melts the frozen Phlegm. Autumn begins to increase the external cold and concentrates the heat by expelling the bile energy. These two seasons, through the two equinoxes, make the heat and cold cycle, and maintain a balance of energy and humors, as well as the sustainment of the psychic equilibrium.

Month ↓	Early-Spring <i>dPyid-ka</i>	Late-Spring <i>Sos-ka</i>	Summer <i>dYar-ka</i>	Autumn <i>sToen-ka</i>	Early-Winter <i>dGun-sToed</i>	Late-Winter <i>dGun-sMed</i>
Western	2 & 3	4 & 5	6 & 7	8 & 9	10 & 11	12 & 1
Lunar	1 & 2	3 & 4	5 & 6	7 & 8	9 & 10	11 & 12
Body Strength	Medium	Weak	Weak	Medium	Strong	Strong
Higher Element Potency	Earth + water	Water + Air	Fire + Earth	Fire + water	Earth + water	Fire + Air
Higher Taste Potency	Astringent	Bitter	Sour	Salty	Sweet	Pungent
Nature of 3 Nyes-pa	<i>rLung</i>	Accumulation	Manifestation	Pacification		
	<i>mKhirs-pa</i>		Accumulation	Manifestation	Pacification	Pacification
	<i>Bad-kan</i>	Manifestation	Pacification			Accumulation

Table showing variations of *nyes-pa*, according to seasons.

EARLY-SPRING (*dPyid-ka*): The beginning of heat and humidity

1st and 2nd Month of Lunar calendar

This season is the beginning of the heat and humidity. *dPyid-ka* starts with the first month of the lunar calendar and New-year in Bhutan is observed in this month. During this season, earth begins to increase its heat and sun melts the glaciers. The same phenomenon also takes place in the body of living beings where *Bad-kan* begins to melt which is freeze during winter. Thus, producing humidity, which starts to produce *Bad-kan* symptoms in the body. Earth produces clouds and rains and diminishes the quality of water that cools down and disturbs the digestive-fire (*me-drod*: metabolism) in the body. Many *Bad-kan* disorders begin to manifest during these months, therefore it is called *Bad-kan* manifestation season. The sun begins to spread-out its rays which controls the superficial *Bad-kan*. But the *Bad-kan* humor still does not pacify because of high humid nature. According to the external increasing heat, the internal temperature and climate becomes humid. So, one should then regulate the diet and behavior to keep humors in balance.

According to *gSo-ba Rig-pa*, one should check one's own constitution and physical disorders. For the Phlegm and Phlegm/Wind constitutions people, phlegmatic disorders like weak digestion, rheumatism, arthritis, obesity, different types of diabetes, depression, melancholy, sinusitis, allergies tends to manifest in this season.

During this season, one should eat food that possesses the three following tastes: bitter, hot and astringent. For example, bitter food such as various bitter salad, hot food like ginger and other spicy food, and astringent food such as artichoke. One may also drink some coffee.

In this season, meals should be based on light, dry and rough qualities like aged barley and barley flour, game meat, chicken, turkey, honey, cooked vegetables,

warm soups, and fishes. Vegetables should be well cooked and spiced with ginger, cinnamon, curcuma and black cardamom, During this season one should avoid the excessive consuming of sweet (natural and artificial) and salty foods and drinks.

A glass of boiled water every morning before breakfast helps clean the Phlegm. Ginger tea helps even better for cleaning Phlegm and reducing its disorders. It also improves the energy circulation and prevents from cold and flu. Hot boiled water with a spoonful of honey and fresh lemon juice helps reduce phlegm and rid-off thirst. Light black tea is fine in this season but one should avoid or drink less milk tea.

Every day, one should practice physical exercise, and remove the excess of Phlegm and excess fat with massage of chick peas or beans powder. One should stay in shed and avoid the direct sunlight to reduce the accumulation of Phlegm and its symptoms, and to keep the body and humors balanced. One should not stay in cold, foggy, damp, or humid places. Physical exercise during this season is must but not too exhausting.

LATER-SPRING (*Sos-ka*): Hot and dry season

3rd and 4th Month of Lunar calendar

The later-spring comes with a very hot sun-heat and the crushing down of the Phlegm energy. The quality of the weather becomes dry and light and similar to the wind humor, but hot. The strong heat of the sun deprives the body of its strength and the quality of the food and body. Therefore, the Wind humor accumulates in this season if the diet is not appropriate but wind disorder does not manifest yet, due to the sun heat.

To prevent one's body/mind from the aggressive sun heat and dryness, and the wind disorder accumulation, one should use a food that possesses sweet, light and oily tastes and qualities. For instance, mutton, chicken, turkey with little oil

and without deep frying. Rice, wheat products like noodles, bread, cookies, polenta, sweet fruits like apples, pears, banana, red grapes and mangos. Vegetables should be well cooked with spices like ginger, cinnamon, little garlic and nutmeg. One should avoid food that has salty, pungent, and sour taste. And also avoid strong physical work and exercise in sunny days.

Wine mixed with water helps cool down and control the wind humor. Some milk tea, light black or green tea, lemon tea, fresh water and fruit juices are advisable. Such food and drinks help to tolerate the seasonal influences.

One should take cold shower, stay in cool and fresh places with cool breeze. Use perfumes with cooling quality and thin cotton cloths. One should avoid staying too long in the sun, near the heater, taking long sunbaths, saunas, having heavy physical exercise, sleeping during day or in the sun.

SUMMER(*Yar-ka*): humidity and monsoon

5th and 6th month of lunar calendar

The spring season heats the earth and oceans, and a great deal of steam evaporates and rises to the sky to form clouds that make summer. The same phenomenon appears in the human body: The spring heat warms up or melts the body's Phlegm and the blood and water then begin to circulate more actively throughout the whole body in the summer. The body cells and organs awaken from the long winter sleep and regain life. Therefore, *Yar-ka* season corresponds to the adult stage of life in relation to the human life season clock. In the summer, energy increases, flowers blossom and the world smiles.

Yar-ka is hot and humid and the monsoon climate begins. There are heavy clouds in the sky, and the rains make the earth wet and humid. The cold wind and monsoon rains attack aggressively and increase the bad quality of rivers and springs waters. Consumption of these waters may produce the decline of *me-drod* (metabolic forces), which could give a chance to some founding phlegm

disorders to arise in the deep and profound level of the body, and to wind disorders to manifest. Therefore, *gSo-ba Rigpa* literature describes summer as the wind manifestation season. During these months, due to the heat, people drink cold drinks and wear thin cloths. Hot and cold drinks and lots of sweating reduces the body mineral quantity and push out the body *me-drod* every day. People feel fresh although losing a lot of body energy, which becomes the cause of phlegmatic disorders such as obesity, blood circulation, arthrosis, arthritis and chronic bad digestion.

Either monsoon or dry climate, these two different aspects of the climate eventually show external heat, but bring internal cold that becomes the cause of indigestion and chronic phlegm disorders.

Two different kinds of diet could be followed during this season: People should consume sweet, sour and salty food (bile balancing tastes) in order to keep *me-drod* strong and sustain the loss of minerals due to sweating. The quality of the food should be light, warm, little oily, e.g. dry land grains, rice, chicken, sea food, dry fruits, cooked vegetables and etc. To compensate the loss of body energy and *me-drod* decline due to the dry and hot season, one needs to consume, as counter-balancing diet and behavior, food and drinks with mild cooling and fresh qualities that reduce the external sun heat but protect the internal digestion. For example, one should consume cooked vegetables, salad, fresh fruits, rice, pasta like bread, a little bit of goat meat and beef. Dry fruits and olive oils are also advisable.

One should drink cool water or at room temperature, sparkling drinks, fruit juices, hot or warm boiled tea, and warm boiled water at breakfast. Generally one should drink enough water to sustain the body, and one may drink a little amount of light wine or alcohol from dry lands.

During this season, one should avoid an excessive consumption of alcohol, sweet and ice creams, and especially the cold drinks or food kept for a long time in the refrigerator or in the freezer.

During this season, it is also better to avoid strong spicy food and strong alcohol, milk and milky products, dry meat and sausages, over cooked or baked food.

One should avoid the excess cold water from the refrigerator or drinks with much ice. Consuming cold drinks when one feels hot is dangerous as it freezes the throat and stomach. It could lead to bad digestion, gastric problems, breathing difficulties, cold and flu and sinusitis.

Consumption of cold drinks and cold foods in excess is not good in this season, even if the weather is hot. Taking them cool or at room temperature is safer and helps soothe the organs and body. People having a *mKhris-pa* constitution and its tendency symptoms should not expose themselves too much to the sun, because the sun heat easily penetrates and burns them and make them get irritations, headaches, lowering blood pressure and so on. One should avoid staying in the underground floor of the house because of humidity. It is better to stay in higher places of the house. The body temperature should be kept slightly warm by thin cloths like cotton. It is preferable not to use synthetic cloths too much if the temperature is too hot.

The rainy and hot season declines *me-drod* and strongly expels it out of the body therefore diet and behavior concern is to keep and sustain the digestion in order to have a healthy and strong immune system that prevents from the post-seasonal imbalances.

The external heat joined with an unfavorable food and behavior could turn into powerful conditions or factors that increase the *mKhris-pa* disorders, especially for people who have *amKhris-pa* or *rLung-mKhris* constitution.

AUTUMN (*sTon-ka*): Hot and sharp sun energy season

8th and 9th Month of lunar calendar

sTon-ka is the season where food and body qualities become oily and sharp. Not only the external conditions, food and beverages promote bile, but also the body nature becomes of *mKhris-pa* nature and gains hot and sharp energy. Even if the external summer heat strength begins to reduce, sunrays concentrate more like a laser to the earth. Therefore, the quality of the seasonal energy becomes similar to *mKhris-pa* and fever. In a prevention point of view, the danger of this season is to increase *mKhris-pa* that might, if strongly accumulated during the summer by wrong diet and behavior, manifest *mKhris-pa* disorders such as bad digestion, gastric disorders, headaches and nauseas,

As prevention measures, one should eat more sweet like fresh fruits, sugar, soft drinks, rice, bread, pasta (but not fatty sweets like milk and chocolates), bitter and astringent food (*mKhris-pa* and *rLung* balancing taste) such as banana, beans and lentils, artichokes in order to balance the *mKhris-pa* and *rLung* humors.

One should drink jasmine tea, light black tea, green tea, fruit juice, mineral water and mountain cold and fresh spring water.

Strong alcohols, fatty milk and milky products, meat in excess, sharp and strong spicy food, oily and fatty -fried foods should be avoided.

During these months, one should take shower and use natural perfumes or essence, oils produced from white sandal, camphor, *Dendrobium Nobile* that are excellent to calm the *mKhris-pa*. Sprinkling essence oils on cloths and in rooms may also help balance it. One should wear light cloths and stay in the cool breeze and shed of a beautiful garden near a water fountain, river, or spring. The pleasant and harmonious atmosphere and the beauties of the autumn season enrich the quality of the nature energy that is assimilated by the body/mind and rejuvenates the life and harmonizes the humors.

EARLY WINTER (*dGun-stod*): Conflicting temperature season
9th and 10th Month of lunar calendar

The early winter season generally coincides with the beginning of cold weather. Especially the external coldness blocks the body pores and keeps the heat inside the body. It helps the heat concentrate inside the body and protects the heat loss. Therefore, the heat increases the inner heat and the power of digestive fire is stimulated by the fire-like wind. The food is digested faster and the long winter nights endanger the body and organs constituents to be consumed by the digestive fire. Therefore, one needs to neutralize the seasonal harmful effects by an appropriate diet and behavior in order to keep a healthy balance.

One should select the right food (sweet, sour and salty tastes) such as pear, apple, banana, sweet taste vegetables, cereals, wheat products, milk products (not too fat), porridge, and warm soup, and specially meat and bone soup. Generally the food should contain more proteins and animal products. The food mentioned above cools down the internal heat but without increasing the *Bad-kan* humor. If one does not eat enough of this kind of food, they should make mustard oil massages to compensate the consumption of the body constituents caused by the long nights.

Clothes should be warm and if possible made of animal skin. One should wear socks and warm shoes, gloves and cap to cover head. The house should be well protected from cold and cold winds by insulation or a heating system, fire, sun or any other warming methods. From time to time, beside the external warming methods, one should apply warm fomentations on the back, abdomen and joints, as they help circulate the blood and energy flow deflected by the external cold temperature, and they also prevent possible seasonal joint pains.

LATER WINTER(*dGun-sMed*): Cold and humid season

11th and 12th Month of lunar calendar

The later winter is much colder and more humid than the early winter. The external coldness is also much more concentrated than before. The cold penetrates the body widely, and many body tissues become macro-iced. By the coldness and humidity, *Bad-kan* humor is accumulated during these two parts of the winter season. This period is called “accumulation stage of *Bad-kan* humor”. However, *Bad-kan* does not manifest because it begins to freeze like water in the winter and is going to melt only in spring.

The diet and behavior are the same as that of early winter.

Conclusion

Spring season: earth and body warm up and melt the *Bad-kan* coldness, but the coldness is still kept externally and internally. Later spring and summer: the earth and body totally warm up, externally and internally and heat deeply penetrates the body. Autumn season: the heat of sun gradually decreases and the external heat reduces, but the internal heat is still high like fire under ash. Winter season: the external cold reduces the external heat and gradually enters into the body. There is a cooling effect of the heat externally and internally. Finally, summer heat is completely cooled down and the macro-body parts and tissues freeze.

This world and body variation of temperatures is a natural method of keeping the balance of energy, body tissue transformation and process of development and aging. Through temperature, seasons give the power of movement to the body and help circulate the energy flow, which keeps the body organs and tissues to be healthy. If the body and humors are well functioning, this process keeps them healthy without accumulation of disease, whilst if the body state is unhealthy, it produces blockages, manifests symptoms, and then expels the disease. It is a natural process of healing called “seasonal healing” process, the seasonal clock and rhythm which is very essential to every being living on this earth.

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