

THE CONCEPTS OF GSO.BA-RIG.PA

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Abstract

In gSo-ba-Rigpa, the fundamental healing philosophy is the concept of three somatic humors (basic types of energy or functional principles): rLung (from ether and air), mkhris.pa (from fire and water), and Bad.kan (from water and earth). According to the principles of gSo.ba rig.pa, they are present in everyone and everything. rLung is the energy of movement. Mkhris.pa is the energy of digestion or metabolism. Bad.kan is the energy of lubrication and structure. Although all three somatic humors are present in everyone, one is usually predominant in any given individual. gSo.ba rig.pa medicine sees disease as a result of an excess or deficiency in rlung, mkhris.pa, or bad.kan, and also the presence of toxins. Good health indicates a balance of these three energies in a body that is relatively toxin-free.

In gSo.ba-Rig.pa, herbs are used to treat illness to restore this balance. For example herbs that deal with energy or movement are used to achieve rlung equilibrium. Herbs that treat digestion, assimilation, absorption, and metabolism balance the mkhris.pa, and those herbs used to treat structure and musculoskeletal system (the "glue" that holds the body together) disorders restore bad kan balance.

Key words: *gSo.ba Rig.pa, rLung, mKhris.pa, Bad.kan*

Introduction

'Health' in gSo.ba-rig.pa is an expression of balance of the three humors and that of imbalances within the body. Each of the body systems must be in balance within itself as well as with its relationships to other organ systems. Diagnosis in gSo.ba-rig.pa is aimed at identifying the state of imbalance of the somatic humors and the patterns of disharmony. This is not possible without the examiner himself being attuned and sensitized to register and recognize the signs of disharmony. For this reason the traditional systems like gSo.ba-rig.pa concentrated more on sharpening the direct powers of observation, palpation and interrogation or listening of the healer while the western medicine advanced towards increasing and perfecting diagnostic technologies.

The effects of imbalance of the three somatic humors are treated in ways that ensure that the relapse of such disease would not occur. For example the methodology of treatment for vitiated rlung is enema, a treatment procedure to eradicate all the abnormality in the lower part of the body (abdomen). Enema is also highly beneficial as a rejuvenating treatment. Medicated oil or ghee and herbal decoctions are given as enema to clean the colon and increase the muscle tone.

Similarly, medicated purgation therapy removes mkhris.pa toxins accumulated in the liver and gallbladder, completely cleansing the gastro-intestinal tract.

In the case of people with high bad.kan imbalance, medicated emesis therapy is administered. This removes Bad.kan toxins collected in the body and the respiratory tract. Daily treatment involves loosening and mobilizing the toxins in an effort to finally eliminate them. Nasal irrigation involves administration of medicated oil through the nose to cleanse accumulated Bad.kan toxins from the head and neck region. Bloodletting is a procedure to cleanse the blood and is advised only in very rare conditions. It is not advisable during general procedure due to the high risk of infection involved in bloodletting process.

Origin of gSo.ba Rig.pa

It was in the Buddha period that gSo.ba-rig.pa was first practiced. In this period, all practitioners following gSo.ba-rig.pa used mercuric-sulphur combinations in their mixtures of different medicines. This was because in the period of Buddha, sulphur, mercury and other metals were used in abundance with herbs to prepare different medications to help cure many ailments and diseases. Nagarjuna was one of the most important gSo.ba-rig.pa practitioners of the Buddha period. He was very famous for the invention of new drugs that were used for the treatment of different ailments. Many practitioners followed Nagarjuna in the Buddha period, achieving great progress in the world of gSo.ba-rig.pa. This was why the Buddha period was often referred to as the Golden Period of gSo.ba-rig.pa. It was after the victory of the Kalinga War that emperor Ashoka banned bloodshed in his kingdom. This led to many gSo-ba rig.pa practitioners abandon surgery and adopt new medicinal treatments where there was no shedding of blood of any kind. It was this that led gSo.ba-rig.pa to flourish with the invention of new drugs; new innovations and new methodologies to cure medical conditions that otherwise needed surgery. It remained so till the invasion of the Mughals, Alexander and the English on India. The people of India were able to preserve gSo.ba-rig.pa as a traditional 'science of life or healing' for its people and the world despite the increasing adoption of European medical techniques to cure diseases under the English rule.

gSo.ba-rig.pa was and is a science that operates on the conviction that some of the different materials of animals, vegetables and mineral origins have some medicinal value to cure and prevent diseases. The medicinal properties of all these materials were documented by the gSo.ba-rig.pa practitioners in the past over many centuries. These properties of different materials have been used to cure illness and help the patients maintain good health.

gSo.ba-rig.pa medicaments are basically made from herbs or a mixture of herbs which are used either alone or combined with minerals, metals or ingredients of animal origin. The combination of mixtures to be used is determined by the nature of the case to be treated. If minerals or ingredients are to be used in gSo.ba-rig.pa, they are all purified by individual processes to make the gSo.ba-rig.pa medicine safe for consumption. There was much misunderstanding that gSo.ba-rig.pa employed unhygienic methods to cure ailments. However, this was not true as all the components of gSo.ba rig.pa employed individual processes to assure the safety of the mixtures for consumption.

The Meaning of gSo.ba-rig.pa

The word “gSo.ba” is “healing” and “rig.pa” meaning “Knowledge”, is the knowledge of healing of any disorders in the human body, or “The state of equilibrium of the three somatic humors”. Gso.ba.rig.pa defines health as the proper excretion of the wastes, Happiness of the senses, mind and the spirit.

Aims of gSo.ba-rig.pa

- To maintain the health of Healthy Persons
- To cure the diseases of the patients
- To increase the longevity of the person’s life span

According to the aims of the gSo.ba-rig.pa, the treatments are of two types:-

1. Health Promotion Therapy
2. Treatment of Patients

Definitions of gSo.ba-rig.pa

1. The science which imparts knowledge of life.
2. The science which describes the span of life and tells what are useful and harmful for healthy life, what is happy and unhappy life, and gives guidelines on what is beneficial and harmful to life.
3. The science which describes what is useful and harmful to life and also the pathogenesis and treatment of diseases.
4. The science which provides guidelines on what would be beneficial for the present as well as the future lives.
5. The science which describes signs of health and factors responsible for its maintenance, including etiological factors, pathogenesis, clinical manifestation, diet and drugs in disease states.

Eight Branches of gSo.ba-rig.pa །མནལག་མཚན།

1. Internal Medicine. ལུས་གསོ་བ།

Internal medicine is the main branch of gSo.ba-rig.pa that treats our entire nature. Ayurveda considers the human being as a whole, comprising body, mind and the soul. Mind and body affect each other and together form the seat of disease. The approach of Ayurveda from the very beginning is psychosomatic. In gSo.ba-rig.pa all human beings are grouped into seven different types of psychophysical constitutions according to the predominance of the three biological humors (rlung, mkhris.pa and bad.kan). It similarly groups them into seven psychological constitutions according to the predominance of the three mental qualities (purity, the production

of pleasure, peace and materialistic attitude). All these factors are taken into account during the treatment of a disease of an individual. Diseases are caused by imbalances of the *nes.pa.sum* or properties, which in turn damage various tissues and systems. Internal medicine mainly deals with diseases that have an internal or organic origin in addition to injuries and poisons. A number of infectious diseases are described in gSo.ba-rig.pa but great importance is not given to pathogens as the agents of these diseases. Instead gSo.ba-rig.pa emphasizes on the internal factors and the conditions of the individual behind all diseases, even those appearing to come from the outside. For example if the soil remains sterile, the seed will not grow. In the same way, if the internal energies are balanced, disease has no field in which to act.

2. General Surgery. དུད་པོལ།

Surgery is not just an invention of modern medicine but it was already highly advanced in several ancient cultures, including India, Greece and Egypt. Its low profile in Europe during the middle Ages was a period of decline, a temporary dark age. However this was not indicative of its condition in ancient and Oriental cultures; where it remained more advanced and popular. gSo.ba-rig.pa still contains some forms of surgery but this component of it has been declining. On the other hand modern allopathic medicine has made great advances in the field of surgery that gSo.ba-rig.pa must acknowledge and admire. However, gSo.ba-rig.pa believes that surgery must be integrated with other aspects of medicine in creating a truly complete system of medicine. Surgery is not the only method of treatment nor it is always the best, but it has its importance and in certain circumstances may have no alternative. For an instance while dealing with traumatic injuries or large tumors surgical treatments may be the most appropriate and effective means of medical care.

3. The treatment of diseases of the head and neck/ENT. རྒྱུ་མེད་ལུ་ལྷོ་རྒྱ།

This is the gSo.ba-rig.pa branch of Ophthalmology and Otorhinolaryngology, the branch of medicine dealing with the diseases of the eyes, head and throat. One of the texts describes seventy-two eye diseases along with surgical operations for such conditions as cataract and pterygium. Special techniques are described for many diseases of the ear, nose and throat that can be treated locally with various instruments and herbal applications.

4. Paediatrics. ཕྱེ་པ།

This branch deals with prenatal and postnatal baby care along with the care of the mother both before conception and during pregnancy. Special methods for conceiving a child of the desired sex, intelligence, and constitution are detailed in this branch of gSo.ba.rig.pa. In addition various diseases of children and their treatments are described under this branch. The science of gSo.ba-rig.pa, recognizes the health of children as the key to a healthy society. It stresses right diet and exercise for children as preventive methods for diseases likely to occur later on in life.

5. Toxicology. ལྷན་ལྷན་

This branch deals with toxins and poisons of the vegetable, mineral and animal kingdoms and how they can adversely affect our health. Special attention is given on the concept of pollution of the air and water. These pollutions were described as the cause of various epidemics and the collapse of civilizations. Benefits of certain poisons in small doses as medicines are described in detail under this branch of study.

6. Psychiatry. ལྷན་ལྷན་

gSo.ba-rig.pa gives equal importance on mental diseases and their treatments as much as with physical disorders. Its treatments not only include physical methods like diet and herbs, but also yogic methods for improving the condition of the mind like meditation. Generally, the gSo.ba-rig.pa doctors prescribe both types of approaches and stress their interrelationship. A history means the influence of the past, and shows how previous karmas and mental patterns weigh down the mind and the heart. Therefore, clearing negative merits from bad actions in the past lives is part of this branch of gSo.ba-rig.pa. There are huge materials for further research on this branch in the oldest source of universal knowledge, religious treatise, and the gSo.ba-rig.pa's methodically arranged collection of verses and texts.

7. Science of Rejuvenation /Tonics/ Promotive therapy. ལྷན་ལྷན་

gSo.ba-rig.pa addresses all the needs of life including how to prolong life and how to renew our vitality after a disease or during the aging process. Rejuvenation therapy is used to prevent diseases and for promotion and extension of a healthy life. However, proper detoxification is an essential prerequisite for rejuvenation. A code of right conduct in life also has to be observed as part of the rejuvenation process, including meditation. Details of rejuvenation regimen in terms of diet and herbs have been described in detail in this branch of gSo.ba-rig.pa.

8. Aphrodisiacs. ལྷན་ལྷན་

Sexual energy is the root of bodily health and disease. This branch of gSo.ba-rig.pa deals with increasing sexual vitality and efficiency necessary for a happy sex life, health and procreation. For achieving good descendants, the therapy of preventing decay (rejuvenation) and aphrodisiac are closely interrelated. Aphrodisiac medicines also act as rejuvenatives because the sexual energy can function internally to revitalize our tissues and organs.

The eight branches of gSo.ba-rig.pa overlap and are connected in various ways. So one should not view them as separate but as integral parts of the same approach.

gSo.ba-rig.pa Concepts of Health & Disease

gSo.ba-rig.pa is the science of life or longevity, which helps in the promotion of health, prevention of diseases and the achievement of a long life. The basic philosophy of gSo.ba-rig.pa is based on the five elements theory. This theory states that the universe and the human body are made up of five elements, namely earth (Sa), water (Chu), fire (Me), air (rLung) and space (Nam kha). These elements combine to form controlling forces or biological humors called NES PA GSUM (three somatic humors). These humors are responsible for sustaining the living body in its normal state and are of 3 types: rLung, mKhris.pa and Bad.kan. These controlling forces or the humors act on the tissues of the body known as the Lue.zung.bduen and help in the various physiological functions. The waste products formed as a result of various bodily functions are the “Dri.ma.sum”, the end products of the body. Thus the science of gSo.ba rig.pa deals with Nes.pa.sum, leu.zung.bduen & dri.ma.sum.

Lue.zung.bDuen are as follows;

1. Plasma or cyle རྩལ་མཉམ་པ།
2. Blood རྩལ།
3. Muscle tissue རྩལ་གྱི།
4. Fats རྩལ་མཉམ་པ།
5. Bone tissue རྩལ་མཉམ་པ།
6. Bone marrow རྩལ་མཉམ་པ།
7. Reproductive cells (sperm and semen) རྩལ་མཉམ་པ།

Three somatic Humors རྩལ་མཉམ་པ།

Some particular parts of the Leu.zung.bduen always tend to wax and wane due to difference in factors like food, activities during day and night, age, time and place. The other parts of the body called tissues’ also may wax and wane from diseases affecting particular parts of the body. The parts of the Leu zung bduen liable to such easy changes are called ‘Nes.pa.gsum’ in aetiological studies.

The ‘rlung’ is explained in general as the erana that fills the gaps and the large pores of the body. Fluids like gastric juices used for digestion and nutrition and blood or much of the substances

latent in these fluids are included in ‘mKhris.pa’. All fluid and solid parts of the body like saliva, lymph, plasma, fat, mucus membranes and mucus, when in their proper places, are called ‘BAD.KAN BYO.BYED’. The increase or decrease of one or more of these humors is the main cause of disease as it upsets the biological activities of the Lue.zung.bduen.

Characteristics of three Somatic Humors

The real forms of rLung are dryness, cold, lightness, clearness, movement, formlessness and instability.

The real forms of mKhris.pa are heat, acuteness, liquidity, moderate unction, colours excluding white and red, odour of raw meat, acrid and sour tastes and flowing nature.

The real forms of Bad.kan are whiteness, cold, heaviness, unction, sweetness, and slimness.

Seasons for the Accumulation, Aggravation and Alleviation of the Three Somatic Humors

Three Somatic Humors ཉེས་པ་གསུམ་པོ།	Accumulation གསོག་པའི་དུས།	Aggravation ལྡང་བའི་དུས།	Alleviation ཞི་བའི་དུས།
rLung	May-June-July	July-Aug-Sept	Sept-Oct-Nov
mKhris-pa	July-Aug-Sept	Sept-Oct-Nov	Nov-Dec-Jan
Bed.kan	Jan-Feb-March	March-Apr-May	May- June- July

There are 5 types of rLung:-

rLung is responsible for active movements of different organs and parts of our body.

1. **Srog.Zin** refers to functions of the brain and nervous system responsible for the sensations of smell, taste, touch, hearing and vision, movements of upper and lower limbs, rectum, sex organs and breath.
2. **Gyhen.Rgyu** refers to movements of the chest, diaphragm and voice box. It controls the movements of breathing out, sneezing and speech.
3. **Khyab.Byed** is concerned with movements of all kinds of voluntary and involuntary muscles. It is responsible for movements of the heart e.g. blood vessels, lymph, (a white fluid present in different parts of the body) glands and glands which produce hormones.
4. **Me.sNam** refers to movements of the intestine along with digestion and absorption of food substances.
5. **Thur.Sel** refers to the movements of the bladder, rectum, and uterus and is important for passing urine, stools, menstrual fluids, semen and foetus (delivery).

The diseases caused by the disorders of rLung are: Asthma, Epilepsy (fits) and other mental disorders, Urticaria (a skin disease), viral fever (due to temperature changes), Anemia (lack of iron in blood), Obesity (increased weight gain), Diabetes, Diarrhea, constipation and reduced functions of thyroid and adrenal glands.

Mkhris.pa

It is responsible for the chemical reactions that take place in our body. It is of 5 types:-

1. **Ju.Byed** consists of digestive enzymes and other chemicals in the body. It controls the digestion and absorption of food substances.
2. **mDans.sGyur** is responsible for hemoglobin (the iron-containing pigment in the blood) production.
3. **sDrub.Byed** is responsible for normal functioning of the mind.
4. **mThon.Byed** is responsible for the biochemical activity of the eye, which enables perception and vision.
5. **mDog.Gsal** is responsible for removing waste products in the form of sweat and enhancing the natural glow of the skin.

The diseases caused by disorders of MKHRIS.PA are as follows:

Toxic fevers, Hyperacidity (Gastritis), Vomiting, Diarrohea, Jaundice, Anemia Bronchitis, Skin diseases associated with pus formation and all infections due to toxins and microbes.

Bad.kan

It consists of promotion and growth brought about by different secretions from the organs. It is of 5 types:-

1. **Tren.Byed** refers to the cerebrospinal fluid which is a secretion surrounding the brain and spinal cord. It provides nutrition to the brain and protects it from toxic substances.
2. **Myag.Byed** refers to secretions from the mouth, stomach and intestines that dissolve food and destroy the bacteria.
3. **Myon.Byed** is the watery secretion of the glands around the taste buds of the tongue that help in perceiving the taste.
4. **Tshim.Byed** refers to secretions by the respiratory tract from the nose to the lungs and facilitates passing of air and flushes out foreign substances.
5. **Byor.Byed** consists of fluids lying in the bones and joint spaces called as synovial fluid producing movements of bones and joints with ease. The watery fluid surrounding and protecting the heart and lungs are also referred to as byur.byed

The diseases caused by disorders of Bad.kan are as follows:

Common cold, Infection of the lungs and other parts of respiratory system, Diarrhea due to infection, Jaundice, Eczema, Pimples and other skin infections, Arthritis (painful joints)/ Rheumatic heart disease, Swelling and infection of the kidneys (glomerulonephritis), Peritonitis (swelling of abdominal cavity), Encephalitis, Meningitis and other infections of the brain and Benign tumors of different parts of the body.

Dri.ma.gSum (Waste products of the body)

This comprises the waste products of the body secreted by different organs and body systems. They are urine, faeces and sweat. Dri.ma.gsum basically consists of impurities or waste products from the human body.

Conclusion

As evident and presented in this paper gSo.ba-rig.pa is a complete way of life. It is a holistic health system comprising diet, massage, detoxification, herbal application, meditation and daily lifestyle. It not only improves a person's health, but also takes care of his well being, behavior and state of mind.

gSo.ba-rig.pa is a system emphasizing prevention-oriented healthcare free from harmful side-effects. It treats the root cause of a disease rather than just the symptoms. It views illnesses as caused by imbalances in a person's physical or mental constitution and therefore seeks to gently bring a person's body and mind back into a healthy equilibrium. Although gSo.ba-rig.pa can be used to alleviate various conditions, it was founded on the principle of preventing disorders in the long term rather than waiting for problems to manifest themselves. Thus it is the ideal way for healthy individuals to maintain good health and general well being.

With a few small changes to a person's daily life it is possible to live the gSo.ba-rig.pa way and reap the benefits. It is certainly not intended to replace modern medicine, rather it provides the people with tools to treat their body according to its needs, resulting emotional and mental well being and ultimately good health.

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