

Best Practice – I - Sowa-Rigpa at CIHTS

Objectives

- To preserve the rich traditional knowledge and training of Sowa-Rigpa flourished through millennia.
- To disseminate best standards maintaining tradition intact and supplementing through modern pedagogy.
- To provide practical knowledge in handling patients & medicine processing under experienced practitioners, further, exposing to best practices of other system of medicine.
- To offer accessible and case-based treatment modalities through Sowa-Rigpa that the disease is rooted out from the source.
- To shape students into a rationale human being in handling any medical situation with the available resources.
- To bring altruism and compassion into healthcare as a novel strategy in healing with human touch.

The Context

Sowa-Rigpa, being an important part of Tibetan studies, CIHTS established the Department in 1993. After obtaining recognition of Sowa-Rigpa from the Govt of India in 2011, with the initiatives of CIHTS, the entire system came under the Ministry of AYUSH. From 2017 guidelines of CCIM are followed strictly with regards to number of intake of students, number of teachers and other facilities. To mould the millennia old tradition into a new system is a transition period. Therefore, CIHTS is very cautious to maintain the rich knowledge system and practices while adopting the modern mechanism in a new framework. In the Sowa-Rigpa tradition, cultivation of compassion, altruism is regarded significant for better deliverance of service to patients without which the treatment would not be effective. Similarly, there are various trainings and practices like empowering the drugs, which is discussed among the modern medical scientists. Balancing modernity with tradition is important.

The Practice

As a traditional system, the initial learning takes place from adaptive learning through memorization of classical texts such as *rGyud bZhi* (Four Treatise) familiarizing with the glossary, nomenclature, concept- mapping by which self-

reflection in and on one's action takes place regularly. Classics are highly sophisticated, systematically presented and easy to comprehend for learners eventually helping in clinical practice. In the next level, commentaries as references gives clear meaning into the world of health and wellness. By incorporating site survey, visitation, plant cultivation and preparing medicines, students are introduced to learn from patient, staffs and their environment. Training and experience gaining from doctors and clinical team also help them to learn systematically. Weekly class presentation extends ones' understanding and competencies of how to learn individually and in groups.

Adopting **research culture** is considered one of the primary objects and thus students are given boost in written assignments and practicum to analyze unexplored formulations in small scale with their clinical aspects. Encouraging and initiating open discussion and project supported by administrative staffs and collaborating with the students of other disciplines have been constructive in their skill development.

Sowa-Rigpa education has traditionally flourished initially through monastic institution and family lineage and patient receives best care from them. With the concept of teaching hospital from the modern paradigm and the recent establishment of 10-bed hospital with the 4 OPD Units and separate labs for pharmacy, pathology, anatomy and physiology are new to the traditional practitioners. These are pivotal in gaining clinical experiences with patients and documenting detailed health condition.

Sowa-Rigpa field learning culture includes identification of crude medicines macroscopically and their processing into a safe medicine. Exploring into the natural habitat is given priority as the best standard practice for collection and harvesting. GPS based plant collection are new avenues in standardizing traditional medicine and efforts are made to introduce these into regular teaching-learning process.

CME, conferences and faculty orientation program are encouraged to develop the knowledge of faculties which boost their teaching techniques and instilling best updated information to their students and its' application in their medical practice.

Evidence of Success

- OPD consultation number is more than 80-per day and more than 2000 patients from local community per year receiving various therapies without

any advertisement. Quality of life for chronic patients has been relieved through Sowa-Rigpa Medication and therapies.

- 70% of our graduates are still in their Sowa-Rigpa practice among which 23% are working in the campus, 30% have migrated abroad who are working in different healthcare sector.
- Increase in the applications for UG program is an indication of its standard.
- Pilot studies on management of Gastritis, Diabetes and hypertension have been very constructive in understanding and validating the efficacy of Sowa-Rigpa medicine.
- Classical text translation from Sanskrit to Tibetan have been robust and welcoming by wider practitioners of Sow-Rigpa.
- First of its kind an antiviral study of Tibetan Medicines in USA has been very prolific in terms of its efficacy with no toxicity study on various Viral replicons.
- Satellite facility for our herbal garden in Tawang, AP has led to conserving high altitude medicinal-plants in their natural habitat and ex-situ cultivation has been phenomenally regaining green wealth.
- Deputation of our Senior faculties has been keystone in establishing Sowa-Rigpa Department in NIT, Sikkim.

Problems Encountered and the Resources Required

- With limited post sanctioned, running a single batch as per CCIM MSR guidelines has been challenging.
- As a budding traditional system with small number of practitioners nationwide, nurturing Sowa-Rigpa practitioners is a load of pressure for administration and academic to meet the MSR laid in the CCIM guidelines. Thus, developing those practitioners into a competent professional is another challenge.
- Without a recurring financial support to meet the Minimum Standard Requirement so to run a Sowa-Rigpa UG program.
- With the limited resources available, hiring resourceful person to conduct research scientifically and validating Sowa-Rigpa has been another challenge.

Notes

- Adopting research culture and attitude supported by genuine spiritual guidance is necessary to be implanted.
- External search into the material world is domineering than exploring emotional hygiene inside. Thus, with the blend of oriental thoughts for regulation of emotional well-being and sophisticated hi-tech materials to engage in physical study will help cater combo health services to the entire humanity.

Best Practice – II- Research Work in CIHTS: A Milestone in Buddhology & Tibetology

Objectives

An enormous amount of Ancient Indian literature of Buddhism and other various disciplines were translated into Tibetan from Sanskrit. But unfortunately, most of the original Sanskrit texts lost in course of time. This great treasure of knowledge mandates rigorous research endeavors to restore them into Sanskrit from Tibetan versions and make them available into other languages like Hindi and English. Unpublished MSSs, another treasure, is to be brought out with thorough research. Creation of dictionaries of general and technical natures are part of the exercise. The research works in CIHTS is carried out as envisaged in the objectives of the University which makes a deep impact on revival of ancient Nalanda tradition and on modern system of knowledge and society.

The Context

The great tradition of the knowledge and wisdom of ancient Nalanda, Vikramshila and Tkshashila went to Tibet with huge amount of literatures translated along with the teaching transmission and practices. This legacy is one of the world's greatest treasure but preserved only in Tibetan as most of the original Sanskrit texts lost in course of time, particularly during the Chinese invasion. Hence, it was envisioned to restore the lost treatises of Buddhist philosophy, epistemology, logic, metaphysics, psychology, science of mind, medicine, arts and many others into Sanskrit from Tibetan sources and translate them into modern languages for general people. This also includes researches on unpublished rare MSSs which are critically edited and creation of lexicons of various nature. This knowledge system is still extremely relevant today as it reveals the realities of mind and matter comprehensively at a very high level. The legacy of Nalanda is very significant for India and for the rest of world as it has the potentials to benefit the entire humanity.

The Practice

The University undertakes research works with high level of scholarship in Indology, Buddhology, Tibetology, Sanskrit and various other languages with

expertise in ancient Indian scripts in the case of research on MMSs applying modern research methodology.

The practices of the five research departments:

Restoration Department

This department Restores the important lost works of the great ancient Indian masters like Nagarjuna, Aryadeva etc. of Nalanda and others. The restoration work is a tedious work which needs expertise in at least two languages, command on the subject and scripts. It is done with meticulous efforts to regain the originality of the text of the author with thorough research on his other works, in terms of vocabulary, style etc. So far around 90 works have been restored. This is the only place in the world, where such works are done.

Translation Department

The Translation Department is also an important constituent of the Research Departments which engages itself in the translation of works of canonical texts of both ancient Indian and Tibetan masters thus making them available to wide range of readers from scholars to students and from practitioners to public. The translation and the restoration works are accomplished with thorough study and research on the text, content, author and related materials providing a complete information.

Rare Buddhist Texts Research Department (RBTRD)

A major portion of the ancient Buddhist texts in Sanskrit had been lost in India but some portion of this lost treasure still exist in Nepal and Tibet. The Rare Buddhist Texts Research Department conducts research on the hitherto unpublished Buddhist Tantric manuscripts written in various scripts and prepares critical editions of the Sanskrit texts along with their Tibetan translations with a thorough study and research.

Dictionary Department

When Mahayana Buddhism and Tibetan studies, began to gain popularity around the world, there was no comprehensive dictionary of Tibetan to Sanskrit. Hence CIHTS along its project of restoration of the lost Sanskrit treatises, launched the project of comprehensive dictionary of Tibetan to Sanskrit which took more than a decade to complete. Finally, sixteen hefty volumes come out in 2005. Many technical dictionaries are being compiled and are about to be published.

Center for Tibetan Literature

Tibet has a huge corpus of literature covering a wide range of areas. The Center established in 2009 is the first of its kind devoted to studies and researches exclusively on Tibetan literature. Its first priority is to write a comprehensive history of Tibetan literature. The draft in four bulky volumes are brought before the scholars for comments. It has been producing other important literary works.

Evidence of Success

The research work of the University has been globally acclaimed with the increasing demand of its research publications worldwide. The restored works have special significance in the context of revival of ancient treatises of Nalanda and other seats of learnings. Multifaceted translations, meticulous works on MSSs, compilation of various kinds of dictionaries and works on Tibetan literature have become exemplars. Most of the works are cited and referred widely by the scholars of Buddhism and Tibetan studies around the world. The dictionary is widely used by the scholars and students of Mahayana studies around the world.

The following series including the research works by the research departments of the University have been published as on date with a marked evidence of success:

Sl. No.	Research Series	Titles Published
01.	Bibliotheca Indo-Tibetica Series	85
02.	The Dalai Lama Tibeto-Indological Series	37
03.	Samyak Vak Series	17
04.	Samyak Vak Special Series	10
05.	Lecture Series	04
06.	The Rare Buddhist text Series	36
07.	Avalokitesvara Series	07
08.	Miscellaneous Series	35
09.	Tibeto-Mongolian Series	01
10.	“Dhih”: A Rare Buddhist Texts Research Journal	60 Volumes
11.	Kosh Series (Dictionary)	18 Volumes
12.	Neyartha-Nitartha Series	08
	Total	320

Problems Encountered and Resources Required

Lack of infrastructural and more manpower support required for such an important research work of national and international significance is the major obstacle faced by the university. The publications can be projected on international platforms for much wider distribution maintaining international standards, which is currently not possible with financial constraints.