



# Soktsang Tibetan Herbal Medicine

## Tibetan Medicine Handbook

The Purpose of this Handbook is to provide a simple summary of Tibetan medical theory, diagnosis and therapy. The Handbook contains information that will allow you to understand clearly what is happening when you come to the clinic and the kind of therapies that are used.

Soktsang Tibetan Herbal Medicine would like to fully inform you of the measures taken to ensure your visit to the Tibetan Doctor adheres to the highest possible standards.

- Lobsang Soktsang is educated to the highest standard. He graduated with a First Class General Medical Degree in Lhasa. He was awarded his Masters of Tibetan Medicine Degree (The MEN-RAMPA, Tib.) by the Institute of Tibetan Medicine at Dharamsala, India. After graduating, he went to work at the Lhasa Mentsee Khang Hospital, the premier centre of excellence of Traditional Tibetan Medicine.
- Soktsang Tibetan Herbal Medicine fully complies with the UK law and uses medicines that are entirely herbal.
- Every effort is made to ensure the quality of the herbs received from Tibet, which includes test carried out to ensure the herbs are uncontaminated.
- We deal directly with the institution in Tibetan that cultivates the herbs.

## History

The Tibetan name of the main text of Tibetan medicine is *Gyushi*, which means 'The Four Tantras'. It consists of four volumes that each cover different aspects of Tibetan medical knowledge and practice. The first volume, which is the shortest, presents the history of Tibetan and summarises Tibetan medical knowledge using the metaphor of tree with three roots representing the condition of the body, diagnosis, and treatment. The second volume covers anatomy and pharmacopoeia. The third volume, which is by far the largest, deals with Tibetan disease categories, how they come about, how they should be diagnosed and treated. The fourth volume gives instructions on diagnosis and therapeutic techniques.

The first volume of the *Gyushi* presents an account of the origin of the Tibetan medical teachings. In this account the Medicine Buddha appears in the mandala or palace of medicine, surrounded by many disciples. From his heart is emanated the sage Rigpa Yeshe, who represents the mind aspect of the Medicine Buddha, and from his tongue is emanated

the sage Yilè kyes, who represents the speech aspect. The whole medical teaching then takes place as a dialogue between Yilè Kyes requesting the teachings and Rigpa Yeshe giving them; each chapter in the *Gyushi* begins in this way, with Yile Kyes requesting the medical teachings of the specific subject to be discussed.

Tradition holds that this knowledge was compiled in a Sanskrit text which was translated into Tibetan by the great translator Vairocana in the eighth century, it was then passed on to Padmasambhava, who concealed the text in a pillar of Samye monastery. In 1098 the text was taken from Samye monastery by Drapa Ngön Shé and passed on to Yuthog Yontan Gompa who revised it according to knowledge he had gathered after making several journeys to India. A major turning point in the history of Tibetan medicine was during the period of the fifth Dalai Lama in the seventeenth century. He attempted to establish medical institutions and produce a new xylographic edition of the *Gyushi*. The work he initiated was completed by his regent Sangye Gyamtso (1653-1705), who revised the *Gyushi* and composed his famous commentary to it *The Blue Beryl*.

The view that the *Gyushi* was translated from a Sanskrit original brought from India represents one historical tradition in Tibet. There is another long standing tradition which took another stance, namely that the *Gyushi* is not a translation of a Sanskrit original but was composed by Yuthog Yontan Gompo. Adherents of the Bön religion, the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet, hold another view; they contend that the *Gyushi* is a reworking of their main medical text known as the *Bumshi*.

During the period of the Royal dynasty from the seventh to the ninth centuries Tibet was the dominant imperial force in Central Asia, and as such was open to the influence of the neighbouring regions of Iran, China, Nepal and India. Cultural influence also came from the Central Asian Towns along the Silk Route where Tibet had a strong military presence. During this period physicians from different medical traditions were invited to Tibet and medical works of their traditions were translated into Tibetan.

In the eleventh century, during the period of the later propagation of Buddhism in Tibet numerous Ayurvedic texts were translated into Tibetan including the famous *Collection of the Essence of the Eight Branches* by Vagbhata. Medicine was also influenced in this period by the new influx of Tantric cosmological notions; the Kalachakra tantra, which has had a major influence on Tibetan medicine and astrology was translated in 1027. Also at this time translations were made by Orgyenpa Rinchenpal of Indian medical texts dealing with mercury based medical compounds. Tibetan medicine is thus a highly integrated system which contains elements of Ayurvedic, Persian and Chinese medicine woven together with Tantric cosmology and indigenous Tibetan material.

## **An Outline of Tibetan Medical Theory**

### **The Five elements and the Three Humours in Tibetan Medicine**

One of the basic principles of Tibetan medical theory is that everything in the macrocosmic environment and the microcosm of the human body is made up of various combinations of the five elements of earth, water, fire, air and space. Another fundamental principle is the notion that all psycho-physical processes in the body can be divided into three categories. Each of these series of processes is co-ordinated and maintained by a certain force, which drawing on Galenic terminology, is commonly rendered as a 'humour'. Though there is some justification in using this word, the Tibetan word *nyépa* that is usually

translated as ‘humour’, actually means ‘fault’ or ‘wrong doing’. In order to understand why the Tibetan word has this meaning we need to consider the relationship between Tibetan Buddhism and medicine.

At the very foundation of Tibetan medical notions about health and disease lies the Buddhist concept of the ‘three mental poisons’. The root cause that leads beings to be born into the cycle of death and rebirth is a deep fundamental ignorance of their own nature, this leads to a false sense of self, which in turn leads to the ‘three mental poisons’ of ignorance, desire, and aggression. According to Tibetan medical theory, the ‘three mental poisons’ generate the three humours in the human constitution: desire is the cause of wind (Tibetan, *lung*), aggression is the cause of bile (Tibetan, *tripa*), and ignorance is the cause of phlegm (Tibetan, *peken*). The three humours have a dual nature: if they are in their right proportions and locations, they generate health and well being; but if by some means they are disturbed, this will result in sickness. Following the Buddhist notion that suffering is innate to all forms of life that exist within the cycle of death and rebirth, the humours are named only according to their negative aspect as ‘faults’. Following from this philosophical position, the medical text graphically likens the inherent disposition of the humours to generate sickness to an insect becoming poisoned as a consequence of feeding on a poisoned tree.

Now let us consider the characteristics and functions of the three humours in the human constitution. The three humours are related to the five elements: wind has the elemental nature of air; bile that of fire; and phlegm that of earth and water. The humours are referred to in Tibetan by names, which when translated into English denote specific physical referents, but the Tibetan terms *lung*, *tripa* and *peken* refer to much more than ‘wind’, ‘bile’ and ‘phlegm’. Although the three humours permeate the entire body, each is associated with a certain area of the body: wind is located in the heart region and in the area below the navel; bile is located in the region between the navel and the heart; and phlegm is located in the area above the heart. According to Tibetan medical theory there are five forms of each of the humours. Each of these subdivisions is responsible for certain psychological and physiological functions and is also associated with a specific location in the body. The following table summarise these functions and locations. It can be seen from this table that the three humours are the guiding force underlying all psychological and physiological process. For this reason at the Tara Institute of Tibetan Medicine, to avoid confusion as to the way the word ‘humour’ has been used in other traditions, it is defined specifically as ‘bio-dynamic agent’

THE FIVE WINDS	LOCATION	FUNCTION
<b>Life Holding Wind</b>	Top of the Head	Swallowing, breathing, shedding tears, sneezing, belching, clarity of mind.
<b>Upward Moving Wind</b>	Chest	Speech, body strength, body colour, gives strength to the mind, clear memory.
<b>Pervading Wind</b>	Heart	Capacity for Movement
<b>Fire Companion Wind</b>	Stomach	Separates the nutrients from the wastes during digestion and helps form the body's constituents.
<b>Downward Expeller Wind</b>	Genitals / Rectum	Flow of sperm, menstrual blood, urine and stool.
<b>THE FIVE BILES</b>		
<b>Digestive Bile</b>	Between digested	Digest food, provides body heat and strength.

	and undigested food	Supports of bile humours.
<b>Colouring Bile</b>	Liver	Provides the colour of bodily constituents.
<b>Accomplishing Bile</b>	Heart	Body heat, courage, pride, intelligence, will power.
<b>Eyesight Bile</b>	Eyes	Provides Eyesight.
<b>Complexion Clearing Bile</b>	Skin	Gives a clear complexion.
<b>THE FIVE PHLEGMS</b>		
<b>Supporting Phlegm</b>	Chest	Provides body moisture and supports the other phlegms.
<b>Decomposing Phlegm</b>	Stomach	Breaks down the food in the stomach.
<b>Experiencing Phlegm</b>	Tongue	Provides capacity for tastes
<b>Satisfying Phlegm</b>	Head	Provides the sensation of satisfaction from the senses.
<b>Connecting Phlegm</b>	Articulations	Connects the body's joints and enables movement of the limbs

**Table of the 15 humours**

## **Summary of the Qualities and Functions of the Three Humours**

The division between the body and the mind that is prevalent in western medicine is not present in Tibetan medicine, where the body and the mind form part of a single psychophysical continuum. From the table we can see that each of the three humours is responsible for a range of psychophysical functions. The qualities of the humours relate to their elemental nature: wind is related to the element of air; bile is related to the element of fire; and phlegm is related to the elements of water and earth. In accordance with their elemental nature wind and phlegm have a cold nature and bile has a hot nature, thus in Tibetan medicine all diseases fit into one of these two categories. In what follows a summary will be made of the functions and qualities of each of the humours. It is important to pay particular attention to the qualities of the humours as these are related to the cause of illness and its treatment.

### **The Qualities and Functions of the Wind Humour**

Wind in keeping with its affinity with the element of air is most prominent in bodily processes characterised by flow and motion, in other words to the kinetic elements of the human constitution. It is responsible for the systems in the body that involve movement, such as the nervous, vascular, and muscular systems. It is also responsible for breathing, the passage of bodily wastes, making the senses sharp, and vitality. The wind humour is also fundamentally related to mental processes and our psychological well-being. Wind is primarily located in the heart region and in the area below the navel. The qualities of wind are: rough, light, cool, subtle, firm and mobile.

### **The Qualities and Functions of the Bile Humour**

Bile in keeping with its association with the element of fire is most prominent in bodily processes characterised by heat generation or the production of energy, in other words to the thermodynamic elements of the human constitution. It has a fundamental role to play in the process of digestion and metabolism. It is also responsible for hunger and thirst, body

heat, the clearness of the complexion, courage and intelligence. Bile is primarily located in the region between the navel and the heart. The qualities of bile are, oily, sharp, hot, light, strong-smelling, purgative and moist.

### **The Qualities and Functions of the Phlegm Humour**

Phlegm in keeping with its association with the element of water and earth is associated with the bodily fluids such as mucus production and the synovial fluid; it also governs the thermoregulatory aspects of the human constitution. Phlegm is responsible for the firmness of the body and the stability of the mind; it enables sleep, allows the body's articulations, gives patience, and makes the body soft and lubricated. Phlegm is located primarily in the area of the body above the heart. The qualities of phlegm are, cool, oily, heavy, smooth, dull, firm and adhesive

### **The Cause of Sickness**

According to Tibetan medical theory, health is experienced when the various components of the human constitution, the three humours, the seven bodily constituents (the essential nutriment, blood, flesh, fat, bone, marrow, and regenerative fluid) and the three forms of excreta (stool, urine and sweat) are functioning in a balanced and harmonious manner. For the three humours this means that they remain in their correct locations and proportions. In Tibetan medical theory there are numerous causative factors that can bring about sickness. General causes of disease are related to such factors as negative influences from the environment (such as seasonal changes), poisons, incorrect behaviour, and infection. Specific causes of disease are related to the humour's properties. For example, wind is said to be: rough, light, cool, subtle, firm and mobile. If any factor is present which has any of these properties, and this cause is sustained for a prolonged period of time, this will bring about pathological conditions in the wind humour.

Tibetan medical theory lists three forms of modification that a humour goes through when it is disturbed. The first stage is 'accumulation'. When a cause is present that has similar properties to the humour this will first lead it to accumulate in its own location. As the humour accumulates, a natural process ensues where one begins to desire forms of behaviour or diet, which have the opposite qualities of the humour. The following stage is 'arising', when the humour becomes pathogenic and spills over into the pathways of the other humours; it is at this time that symptoms of the pathological condition manifest in the body. The third stage is 'calming'; this refers to the time when the disturbed humour is returned to a state of balance in its own location by appropriate diet, behaviour and therapy. Disorders may involve a disturbance in one, two or all three of the humours combined.

What is important to note here is that the focus in Tibetan medicine is not so much on biological substrata, that is to say with specific bodily components, but on the functioning of the system as a whole, which is governed by the three humours. Organic disorders are considered to be preceded by a series of functional disorders; if they are recognised in time they can be prevented from reaching the organic stage.

### **Tibetan Medical Diagnosis**

Broadly speaking there are three forms of diagnosis in Tibetan medicine: tactile diagnosis, visual diagnosis, and diagnosis through asking question. Visual diagnosis involves looking at

any abnormal features in the body's appearance. Of particular importance here is the appearance of the tongue: a dry, red and rough tongue indicates a wind disorder; a thickly coated tongue denotes a bile disorder; and a pale coloured tongue indicates a phlegm disorder. Tactile diagnosis involves feeling the patient's body for any abnormal features and taking the patient's pulse. After listening to what the patient has to say about his or her condition, and carrying out visual and tactile diagnosis, the Tibetan doctor will ask questions to verify the nature of the disorder. The type of questions asked usually relate to the typical symptoms of specific humoral disorders. For example questions related to aches in the region of the hips, waist and joints, sharp shifting pains, shivering, and anxiety, could indicate a disturbance in the wind humour.

### Urine Diagnosis

Urine diagnosis is one of the main forms of diagnosis in Tibetan medicine. In Tibetan medicine the urine is likened to a mirror which reflects the condition of the body. First of all it is important that if the urine is to truly reflect the condition of the body it should not be contaminated in any way. For this reason, on the night before the diagnosis the patient should avoid foods that affect the colour of the urine, such as tea, coffee, or alcohol. The patient should also avoid sexual intercourse and any excessive physical or mental activity. The urine to be examined should be passed in the early morning in order to avoid any traces of food from the previous evening.

The characteristics of the urine are examined at three different times. When the urine is hot and fresh the doctor should note its colour, steam, smell and bubbles. When it is lukewarm, the sediment and the surface film should be observed. Finally, when the steam dissipates a change will occur to the colour of the urine; the doctor should note the new colour and how it develops. By doing this the doctor can gather detailed information on the humoral condition of the patient.

***\*Please note, it is not necessary to bring a sample of your urine to the clinic, unless you are asked to do so.***

### Pulse Diagnosis

The main form of diagnosis that Dr Dhonden uses in the Tara clinics is pulse diagnosis. Just as we saw with urine diagnosis it is important that when you come to the clinic your pulse is not agitated in any way that can confuse the diagnosis. Rich foods, alcoholic drinks, strenuous physical or mental activity are examples of behaviour that can affect the pulse.

The doctor will take your pulse by using the tip of his index, middle and ring fingers on the radial artery on both of your wrists. Each finger takes two pulses. These twelve pulses relate to the condition of what in Tibetan medicine are referred to as the five solid and six hollow organs. The correspondences between the fingers and the internal organs are shown in the following table.

Finger Position	Six hollow organs	Five solid organs
Left Hand		

Top of tip of first finger	Lungs	
Bottom of tip of first finger		Colon
Top of tip of second finger	Liver	
Bottom of tip of second finger		Gall Bladder
Top of tip of third finger	Right Kidney	
Bottom of tip of third finger		Bladder
<b>Right Hand</b>		
Top of tip of first finger	Heart	
Bottom of tip of first finger		Intestine
Top of tip of second finger	Spleen	
Bottom of tip of second finger		Stomach
Top of tip of third finger	Left Kidney	
Bottom of tip of third finger		Seminal Vessicle/Ovaries

### The Twelve Pulses in Tibetan Medicine

Pulse diagnosis is a complicated topic and it takes years to master the technique. Each person has a specific constitutional pulse and the doctor must ensure that this is taken in to consideration and not confused as a pathological pulse. The three constitutional pulses are: the male pulse which is 'thick' and 'rough'; the female pulse which is 'thin' and 'fast'; and the neutral pulse which is 'long', 'smooth', and 'supple'. In addition the quality of the pulse varies with the change of the seasons and this must also be taken into consideration. The characteristic pulse of a wind disorder is 'empty' and 'floating', that of a bile disorder is 'fast' and 'thin', and that of a 'phlegm' disorder is 'sunken' and 'slow'. The main Tibetan medical text gives six general pulse for types of cold disorder, 'weak', 'deep', 'impaired', 'slow', 'loose', and 'empty'; and six for types of hot disorders, 'strong' 'prominent', 'fast', 'twisting', 'hard', and 'taut'. The text then goes on to describe the specific pulses of forty-six different kinds of disorder.

## Treatment

There are four forms of treatment in Tibetan medicine: diet, behaviour, medicines, and external treatments.

### 1. Medicines

#### The Elemental Nature of Medicines

As we saw earlier, according to Tibetan medical theory everything that exists is made up of various combinations of the five elements: earth, water, fire, air and space. Disease comes about when the five elements that make up the human constitution are disturbed. The healing properties of a medicine, according to Tibetan medical theory, derives from its constituent elemental nature. Thus a medicine works because its elemental nature addresses the elemental imbalance caused by the disease.

If the element which predominates in the medicine is earth, the medicine will have heavy, firm, blunt, smooth, oily and dry properties; it is used to cure wind disorders. If the element which predominates is water, the medicine will have liquid, cool, heavy, blunt, oily and pliable properties; it is used to cure bile disorders. If the predominating element is fire, the medicine will have hot, sharp, dry, coarse, light, oily and mobile properties; it is used to cure phlegm disorders. If the predominating element is air, the medicine will have, light, mobile, cold, coarse, and dry properties; it is used to cure phlegm and bile disorders.

We saw earlier that each humour has certain qualities. For example wind has the characteristics of being: rough, light, cool, subtle, firm and mobile. We also saw that if a causal factor is present with the same qualities of the humour this will disturb the functioning of the humour. The same logic is also applicable to the healing properties of medicinal substances. Medicines are effective because they have the opposite properties to those of the imbalanced humours; these qualities are referred to in Tibetan medicine as the eight potencies, these are: heavy, oily, cool, blunt, light, coarse, hot and sharp. Medicines with heavy and oily potencies cure wind disorders; cold and blunt potencies cure bile disorders, and light, coarse, hot and sharp potencies cure phlegm. In addition to this: light, cold and cool potencies increase wind; hot, sharp and oily potencies increase bile; and heavy, oily, cool, and blunt potencies increase phlegm.

We also saw earlier that when conditions are present which adversely affect the humours, a process ensues whereby the humour first accumulates in its own location and then spills over into the locations of the other humours. If the disorder is at the first phase, medicines are used, which pacify the humour in its own location. If the condition has reached the second phase, before the humour can be pacified in its own location, medicine is first given which gathers the humour from the pathways it has wrongly infiltrated. In certain cases, the pathological condition may have to be ejected from the body. The whole range of Tibetan medicines thus falls into two categories: pacifying, and cleansing. Thus a Tibetan medical therapy may involve various stages of treatment.

### **Taste as a Reflection of the Elemental Nature of a Medicine**

The elemental nature of a medicine is reflected in its taste. Tibetan medicine identifies six tastes, which are produced by six pairs of elements; this can be seen in the following table.

#### **MEDICINES WITH A SWEET, SOUR, SALTY, AND HOT TASTE CURE WIND DISORDERS**

#### **MEDICINES WITH A BITTER, SWEET AND ASTRINGENT TASTES CURE BILE DISORDERS**

#### **MEDICINES WITH HOT, SOUR AND SALTY TASTES CURE PHLEGM DISORDERS**



Taste	Elements
Sweet	Earth and Water
Sour	Fire and Earth
Salty	Water and Fire
Bitter	Water and Wind
Hot	Fire and Wind
Astringent	Earth and Wind

**The Elemental Nature of the Six Tastes**

Furthermore, during the process of digestion, the tastes of the medicine are transformed producing what in Tibetan medicine are called the three 'post digestive tastes': sweet and salty medicines produce a sweet post digestive taste; sour remains sour; and bitter, hot and astringent medicines, in the post digestive stage, become bitter. Each of the post-digestive tastes cures disorders of two of the humours: sweet cures wind and bile; sour cures phlegm and wind; and bitter cures phlegm and bile.

In traditional Tibetan medicine there are eight forms of medicinal substances: precious medicines (precious stones), stone medicines, earth medicines (minerals), tree medicines, mucilaginous medicines (oils and fluids), shrub medicines, herbal medicines and animal medicines. From these eight classes of medicinal substances 10 types of medicinal compounds are made: decoctions, pills, powders, pastes, medicinal butters, medicinal ashes, medicinal concentrates, medicinal beers, gem medicine, and herbal preparations

### **Information Concerning the Medicines that are used in the Soktsang Tibetan Herbal Medicine clinics**

***\*IN THE CLINICS ONLY MEDICINAL POWDERS ARE USED CONTAINING HERBAL INGREDIENTS WHICH SATISY EXISTING LEGISLATION ON HERBAL MEDICINES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM. NO MINERAL OR ANIMAL INGREDIENTS ARE USED. THE MEDICINES USED ARE COLLECTED AND MANUFACTURED IN EAST TIBET ACCORDING TO SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS.***

Usually you will be given three medicinal powders. Each of these medicinal compounds has a specific function to play, but it is important to note that the three compounds work together as a unit. The specific action of each of the medicines will be explained to you. The morning medicine should be taken about 10 minutes before breakfast; the lunch and evening medicines should be taken 10 minutes after your lunch and evening meals. Put half a teaspoon of the powder on your tongue, and wash it down with hot water. If you are prescribed a decoction, the method of making this involves putting half a teaspoon of the powder into a pan containing a cup (about ½ pint) of water, bring to boil and simmer gently until about a third of the liquid has evaporated. This will take about 10 to 15 minutes. Strain the medicine and discard the dregs. Drink the liquid whilst it is still warm.

***WHEN FIRST TAKING A PRESCRIBED COURSE OF TIBETAN MEDICINE YOU MAY SOMETIME EXPERIENCE A TRANSIENT WORSENING OF YOUR SYMPTOMS WHICH WILL NORMALLY***

**ONLY LAST FOR A FEW DAYS. THIS IS IN FACT A POSITIVE SIGN WHICH HAPPENS WHEN THE REMEDY AND ILLNESS MEET. I.E. A REMEDY WELL TARGETED FOR AN ILLNESS MAY PRODUCE A TEMPORARY REACTION. THIS IS NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT AND IT SHOULD SOON PASS GIVING WAY TO A STEADY IMPROVEMENT.**

## **2. External Treatments**

Traditionally, Tibetan medicine uses a range of external therapies which include: massage, hot and cold applications, methods for inducing sweating, mineral baths, blood letting, moxibustion, acupuncture and surgery. Hot and cold applications, involve pressing on certain areas of the body, with objects such as a warm or cold stone, or fennel seeds wrapped in a cloth and dipped in hot oil. Bloodletting involves making a small incision in a vein and allowing pathological blood to leave the body. The incision is made on one of seventy-nine locations, depending on the nature of the disorder. For several days before it is done, the patient is given a decoction, which serves to separate the pathological blood from the healthy blood. Moxibustion involves the burning of small cones of the herb gerbera on one of seventy-one locations on the body that are related to various disorders. Another form of heat treatment used in Tibetan medicine is cauterisation with a metal instrument. The Tibetan medical text also lists numerous types of medical baths classified according to their mineral content; such natural hot pools are commonly found in the mountains in Tibet and throughout the Himalayan region. If all other forms of treatments have been ineffective, for some disorders the text recommends surgery. However, nowadays, with the exception of minor problems, surgery is not practised.

***\*In the clinics the only forms of external therapies that are used are massage and moxibustion.***

## **3. Behaviour modification**

Behaviour can also affect the humours in a positive or negative way. As both wind and phlegm disorders are by nature cold, a person suffering from such a condition should stay in a warm place. For people with bile disorders, due to its hot nature, they should stay in a cool place. Certain types of activity are appropriate for disorders of each humour; for wind, the Tibetan medical text advises that the individual should stay in pleasant company, calm activity is recommended for bile, and for phlegm, physical exercise is beneficial. The medical text also stresses that the natural processes and needs of the body such as, vomiting, yawning, sneezing, sleeping, hunger, urinating, and so on, should not be impeded. If Dr Dhonden thinks that certain forms of behaviour are appropriate for your condition he will inform you during the consultation. The Following Table lists the behavioural factors that are listed in the medical text that can lead to pathological conditions in the three humours.

<b>Wind</b>	<b>Bile</b>	<b>Phlegm</b>
Excessive bitter, light and coarse foods	Excessive sharp, hot, oily foods.	Excessive bitter, sweet, heavy, cool and oily foods
Exhaustion	Anger	Sleeping in the daytime
Lack of food	Strenuous activity carried out in hot conditions	Being Cold
Lack of sleep	Carrying heavy loads	Eating food before previous meal has been

		digested
Diarrhoea	Violent activity	
Vomiting		
Grief		
Excessive Mental Activity		
Excessive Verbal Activity		
Forcefully restraining body functions such as sneezing, urinating, defecating, and so on.		

#### 4. Diet

Food, like medicine, has certain properties that can affect the functioning of the humours. The same logic applies as we saw for medicines: *foods with the same elemental qualities and characteristic of a disorder should be avoided*. As we saw in the earlier section on medicines: first, the properties of a type of food is related to its elemental nature which is reflected in the foods taste; and second, each type of food can be classified according to one or more of the eight potencies which we discussed earlier. The following table gives a list of types of foods and the corresponding tastes and potencies. Dietary advice in Tibetan medicine is usually related to foods of a similar taste. Foods with a sweet taste are beneficial for wind and disturb phlegm. Foods which combine a sour and sweet taste are beneficial for wind and blood disorders. Foods with a sour taste are beneficial for phlegm and wind and disturb bile. Foods with a salty taste are beneficial for phlegm and wind and disturb bile and blood disorders. Foods with a bitter taste are beneficial for bile and disturb wind. Foods with an astringent taste are beneficial for phlegm. The following table presents the taste and potencies of a selection of common food items.

VEGETABLES		
	Taste	Potency
Onion	Sweet and salty	Hot and heavy
Potato	Sweet	Heavy
Corn	Sweet	Heavy
Peas	Sweet	Heavy
Cabbage		
Red Cabbage	Sweet	Heavy
Aubergine	Sweet	Hot and Heavy
Courgette		
Lettuce	Sweet	Heavy
Carrots	Sweet	Heavy
Celery	Bitter	Light
Spinach	Bitter	Light and Hot
Green Pepper	Hot	Sharp and Coarse
Red Pepper		
Mushrooms	Astringent and Sweet	Hot and Heavy
Sweet Potato	Sweet	Heavy
Chilli	Hot	Sharp and Coarse

<b>GRAINS</b>		
White Rice	Sweet	Light and Cool
Brown Rice	Sweet	Heavier than white rice
Wheat	Sweet	Heavy and Cool
Rye	Sweet	Heavy and Cool
Barley		
<b>MEAT</b>		
Mutton	Sweet	Heavy and Warm
Lamb		
Beef	Sweet	Cool and Light
Chicken	Sweet	Light
Fish	Sweet	Heavy and Hot
<b>DAIRY PRODUCTS</b>		
Milk	Sweet	Cool and Light
Butter	Sweet	Oily, Heavy and Hot
Yoghurt	Sour	Coarse
Cheese	Sour	Coarse
Ice Cream	Sweet	Cool and Heavy
<b>NUTS AND SEEDS</b>		
Peanuts	Sweet	Oily, hot and heavy
Walnuts	Sweet	Oily, hot and heavy
Sesame Seeds	Sweet	Oily, hot and heavy
Tahini	Sweet	Oily, hot and heavy
Peanut Butter	Sweet	Oily, hot and heavy
<b>FRUIT</b>		
Banana	Sweet	Heavy and Oily
Orange	Sour and Sweet	Cool and Light
Grapefruit	Sour and Sweet	Heavy
Grapes	Sweet	Heavy
Apple	Sweet	Heavy and Cool
Strawberry	Sour	Coarse and Cool
Peach	Sweet	Heavy
Tomato	Sour and Sweet	Light and Sour
Watermelon	Sweet	Cool and Heavy
Coconut	Sweet	Oily and Heavy
Pineapple	Sweet and Sour	Coarse and Heavy
Raisins	Sweet	Cool and Heavy
Lemon	Sour	Cool and Coarse

Pear		
Apricot		
Peach		
CONDIMENTS		
Black Pepper	Hot	Hot and Coarse
Salt	Salty	Heavy
Sugar	Sweet	Cool and Light
Honey	Sweet	Light and Dry
Garlic	Sweet	Hot and Heavy
MISCELLANEOUS		
Alcohol	Sweet and bitter	Hot and light
Beer	Sweet and Bitter	Cool and Light
Tofu (soy bean curd)	Sweet	Heavy and oily
Eggs	Sweet	Heavy and Hot
Bread		