

Name of the Element : Sowa-Rigpa (Knowledge of Healing or Science of Healing)

Community : Traditionally Sowa-Rigpa practicing families and Sowa-Rigpa Gurus were the custodians of this ancient healing system of India. The Sowa-Rigpa practice is well fitted into the socio-cultural system of Trans-Himalayan region since ages, where every village has an Amchi (practitioner of Sowa-Rigpa) family to look after the public health. The traditional practice of Sowa-Rigpa runs in some particular Amchi families from generations and in some cases it is transferred from Guru to his disciple. The father Amchi or Guru trains the student and after completion of education the young Amchi has to give a community exam (rTsa-Thid) in the presence of some expert Amchis (examiners). After passing the exam the Amchi becomes the custodian of Sowa-Rigpa practice. At present the traditional Amchi families, institutionally trained Sowa-Rigpa doctors, different monasteries, educational centers of Sowa-Rigpa, and Sowa-Rigpa research Institutions and individual practitioners are the bearers of the element. Further a vast corpus of ancient literatures, commentaries and oral transmissions are developed and preserved in different monasteries and by individual practitioners. Today, besides the traditionally trained Amchis, hundreds of Sowa-Rigpa doctors trained through institutional training are the bearers of the element. Sowa Rigpa education, healthcare delivery and research is formally recognized and promoted by Government of India.

Region: Sowa Rigpa originated in India 2500 years ago and was introduced in the Trans-Himalayan region around 8th Century AD. Since then it has been propagated and transmitted through teacher-student-lineage, including family lineage; prevalent among secular and monastic contexts in the Trans Himalayan regions of India. Sowa-Rigpa is the traditional medical system in Ladakh and Paddar-Pangey region of Jammu and Kashmir State, Sikkim, Darjeeling and Kalingpong (West Bengal); Lahoul-Spiti, Kinnour, Dharamsala regions of Himanchal Pradesh; Mon-Tawang and west Kameng regions of Arunachal Pradesh and Tibetan settlements in various parts of India. Sowa-Rigpa is traditionally practiced in Bhutan, Mongolia, Tibet, China, Nepal and some parts of Central Asia.

Brief Description : The term Sowa Rigpa is derived from Bhoti language which means 'Knowledge of Healing'. It is an ancient Indian medical system conceived and propounded by Lord Buddha in India and later was enriched in the entire Trans-Himalayan region. Sowa Rigpa has been developed and incorporated into different environmental and cultural contexts through the centuries. (Sowa-Rigpa has moulded itself into the socio-cultural lineage since ages), where every village has had an Amchi family to look after public health. Today, Sowa Rigpa is

acknowledged as a traditional medical system by the governments of India, Bhutan, Mongolia and Tibet. The principle medical text "rGyud-bZi" (Chatush Tantra-a textbook of fundamental principles of Sowa-Rigpa in Sanskrit language) was pioneered by Lord Buddha and translated into Bhoti language around 8th -12th Century and amended by Yuthok Yontan Gombo and other scholars of Trans Himalayan region according to the socio-climatic conditions. The fundamental principles of Sowa Rigpa is based on Jung-wa-nga (Panchmahabutha), Nespa-sum (Tridosha), Luszung-dun(Saptadhatu) etc. According to Sowa- Rigpa health is an equation of balance of tridosha (English translation) and five cosmophysical energies (Panchmahabuta), balance within the body, balance with the environment, and with the Universe. Pulse examination and astrological evaluation/analysis of an individual are the unique diagnostic tools in Sowa-Rigpa. The natural resources which are safe, effective and time tested are used as the sources of medication. Sowa Rigpa education, healthcare delivery and research is formally recognized and promoted by the Government of India.