ELISABETH FINCKH

DIAGNOSIS AND THERAPY
ACCORDING TO THE RGYUD-BŽI
# Diagnosis and Therapy According to the Rgyud-Bzì

Elisabeth Finckb

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</table>
GERMAN TRANSLITERATION OF TIBETAN

ñ as in 'onions'
ň as in 'ring'
c as in 'church'
c as in 'cats'
čh as in 'cats' home'
čb as in 'church hall'
j as in 'jungle'
j as in 'fads'
á as in 'rose' but often as in 'syn'
đ as in 'leisure' but often as in 'shade'
s as in 'shade'
### The System of Tibetan Medicine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 Roots</th>
<th>9 Trunks</th>
<th>47 Branches</th>
<th>224 Leaves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 parts of medical science</td>
<td>47 general details</td>
<td>224 specific details</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Root A
- I Healthy organism
  - 3 12 25 68
- II Diseased organism
  - 9 63

Described in the book *rgyud btsi*, Part I, Chapter 3.

#### Root B
- III Observation
  - 2 6
- IV Palpation (feeling the pulse)
  - 8 3 38
- V Questioning
  - 3 29

Described in the book *rgyud btsi*, Part I, Chapter 4.

#### Root C
- VI Nutrition
  - 6 35
- VII Behaviour
  - 3 6
- VIII Medicines
  - 15 27 50 95
- IX Methods of treatment (externally)
  - 3 7


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INTRODUCTION

Tibetan medicine, greatly influenced by Indian and Chinese medicine, has, however, most definitely developed a distinctive character of its own. The system described in this paper is without doubt of Tibetan origin. At the start of research into Tibetan medicine, it is vital to determine the medical terminology which has to be taken from the sources. The starting point is the standard work of Tibetan doctors, the rGyud-bti. From the texts of this book we learn that the basic principle of Tibetan medicine is the three-part division. The three "humours" are wind (rlna), bile (mkrais pa) and phlegm (bhum kan). Some of the important characteristics of these three "humours" are to be found in part I of the rGyud-bti, the Root Tantra, in which the system is described as a tree with: 3 roots, 9 trunks, 47 branches and 224 leaves.* The intention of this paper is to present the terms of the roots "diagnosis" and "therapy" — (Roots B and C) — derived from the texts of the rGyud-bti (180 terms = 2 roots, 7 trunks, 35 branches and 136 leaves). It follows that the three "humours" are recognised through diagnostic methods as types to which specific kinds of treatments are assigned, so that one can speak of a doctrine of constitution. The description of the types is not an integral part of the subject of this paper: only in order to add more colour to the description of the three "humours", mention is made of characteristics which are found in the second part of the rGyud-bti, the Explanatory Tantra, a commentary on the statements made in part one. The following typology is drawn from Chapter 6 (Nature and temper) and Chapter 9 (Conditions which give rise to diseases) of the Explanatory Tantra. Perhaps you can observe very carefully all the characteristics to find out your type and to see if Tibetan types correspond to the Western ones.

* See preceding diagram
I. Nature and temper

rgyud-btsi, part 2, chapter 6.

Wind: small, graceful, dark-skinned, sensitive to cold, talka
tive, lively, communicative, likes to laugh and sing, bad sleeper.
Sleep during the day is useful. Bile: medium-sized, yellowish
colour of the skin, cannot endure hunger and thirst well, sweats
easily and a great deal, talented and proud, sleeping during the
day is very bad. Phlegm: plump and tall, pale-skinned, can en-
dure hunger and thirst well, deep sleeper, pleasant and friendly
disposition.

II. Conditions which give rise to diseases

rgyud-btsi, part 2, chapter 9.

Wind: dissolve life, lack of sleep, sleepless nights, hard work,
long conversations when hungry, worry and sorrow. Bile: sleep-
ing during the afternoon, excessive strain when lifting heavy ob-
jects, too much movement in every respect — especially when
the weather is warm, irritability, Phlegm: sleeping during the
day, rest after meals, staying in damp regions, bathing for too
long, too light clothing, eating too much and too quickly.

Diagnosis

The rgyud-btsi (Four Tantras) consists of four parts. Root B
(Diagnosis) of the tree of medicine is described in part 1,
chapter 4

SYSTEM
Root B. Diagnosis (Trunks III, IV and V) . . . . . . 38 leaves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trunk III</th>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>2 branches</th>
<th>6 leaves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branch 1)</td>
<td>Tongue</td>
<td>3 leaves</td>
<td>(during wind, bile, phlegm diseases)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch 2)</td>
<td>Urine</td>
<td>3 leaves</td>
<td>(during wind, bile, phlegm diseases)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trunk IV</th>
<th>Feeling the pulse</th>
<th>3 branches</th>
<th>3 leaves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branch 1)</td>
<td>During wind diseases</td>
<td>1 leaf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Branch 2) During bile diseases 1 leaf
Branch 3) During phlegm diseases 1 leaf

Trunk V Questioning 3 branches 29 leaves
Branch 1) Productive causes 3 leaves (during wind, bile, phlegm diseases)
Branch 2) Conditions of illness 9 leaves (during wind diseases) 5 leaves (during bile diseases) 9 leaves (during phlegm diseases)
Branch 3) Congenital food 3 leaves (during wind, bile, phlegm diseases)

Root B = 38 leaves

ROOT B

Diagnosis (bsha bying rtags)
rgyud-btsi part I, chapter 4
3 trunks, 8 branches, 38 leaves

The numbers in double brackets on the left refer to the sequence of the verses in the rgyud-btsi. The numbers followed by a single bracket refer to items discussed in the verses.

TRUNK III Observation (btsi) (lha ba)
(8-13) 2 branches, 6 leaves
(8) rlung gi lec ni dmam 'zin skam la riub //
(9) mkhris lec ba'i kan srya sar mthug pos g-yogs //
(10) ba'i kan srya gleg mdans med hjam la rlon //
(11) rlung gi chu ni chu hjra thu ba che //
(12) mkhris chu dmam ser rla'ss che dri ma dugs //
(13) ba'i kan chu ni dkar la dri rla'ss chu'n //

branches:
1) tongue (lece)
   red (dmam), dry (skam), rough (riub) : wind

22
crowned with thick, unsway phlegm (bad kan skye sar mthug par g-yogs) : bile
gey (skya), thick (glegs), lustreless (mdun snigs med), smooth (gjam), moist (rson) : phlegm

2) Urine (chu)
like water (chu lha), big bubbles (bu ba che) : wind
reddish-yellow (dmars sers), much vapour
(rma ser), hot smell (ma ma dugs) : bile
white (dmars), little odour (ma che),
little vapour (ma shun) : phlegm

TRUNK IV
Feeling the pulse of the veins (reg pa)
(14-16) 3 branches, 3 leaves
(14) rlu' gi rea ni rgyal stong skabs su skad il
(15) mdre lha rea ni lha yongs rgyas grims par byas il
(16) bad kan rea ni byin rgyud dat bah il
branches :
1) swimming (skyari), empty (ston),
    stopping at times (skabs su skal) : wind
2) beats quickly, spreads (and beats)
    subtly (lha yongs grims par byas) : bile
3) sinking (byin), weak (rgud), slow (dal) : phlegm

TRUNK V
Questioning (di ri ba)
(17-30) 3 branches, 29 leaves
(17) di ri ba yas iu rgyal po chams spyod kyi il
productive causet [slow ryen]
light (yun), rough (rub)
shag (nwo), hot (tha)
heavy (ici), oily (swnum)

conditions of illness [na lugs]
gaping, shudder [g-yul haar] stretching (byu rmyun) shivering with cold (graz sum byed), pain in all bone-joints of the thigh and hip (dpyi rked pa rua chigs ma las na), indefinite aches that change (gzer ba hes med hyo), making vomit (on an) empty (stomach) (non skyugs byed), the sense-organs are tot
weight (dbon po mi psal), knowledge is stifled
(yes pa 'khub pa), pains at the time of hunger (bgres cha na) (9 leaves)

bitter taste (kha kha), headaches (mgo na), hot flesh (fever) (sa drey cha ba), aches in the upper part of (the body) (shod gzer), pains after digestion (tsu rjes na) (5 leaves)

uncomfortable appetite (dat ga mi bde), difficulty in digesting food (kha zas bya ba diksh), vomiting (shug), (bad taste in) the hollow of the mouth (sha yin), dis tended stomach (pho ba cha), eructation (zung), body and mind being heavy (together) (las sems lei), being cold both outside and inside (phyi rna gling la gra), discomfort after eating (tsu rjes mi bde) (9 leaves)

: wind

3) food (zas) (and behaviour) (upsed)

oily (sram) food, if patient feels better after eating

: wind

cool (sgil) food, if patient feels better after eating

: bile

warm (dmor) food, if patient feels better after eating

: phlegm

29 leaves

Summary:

Root B concerned with Diagnosis
3 trunks, 8 branches and 38 leaves

These terms are derived from the text of Root B of the rGyal-lugs, part 1, chapter 4.
**Therapy**

Root C (Therapy) is described in part 1, chapter 5.

Root C Therapy (Trunks VI, VII, VIII, IX) 98 leaves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trunk V Nutrition 6 branches</th>
<th>35 leaves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branch 1) food (wind)</td>
<td>10 leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch 2) drink (wind)</td>
<td>4 leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch 3) food (bile)</td>
<td>9 leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch 4) drink (bile)</td>
<td>3 leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch 5) food (phlegm)</td>
<td>6 leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch 6) drink (phlegm)</td>
<td>3 leaves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trunk VII Behaviour 3 branches</th>
<th>6 leaves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branch 1) wind</td>
<td>2 leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch 2) bile</td>
<td>2 leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch 3) phlegm</td>
<td>2 leaves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trunk VIII Medicaments 15 branches</th>
<th>50 leaves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branch 1) taste wind</td>
<td>3 leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch 2) taste bile</td>
<td>3 leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch 3) taste phlegm</td>
<td>3 leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch 4) potency wind</td>
<td>3 leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch 5) potency bile</td>
<td>3 leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch 6) potency phlegm</td>
<td>3 leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch 7) scops</td>
<td>3 leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch 8) oils</td>
<td>5 leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch 9) syrups</td>
<td>4 leaves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Branch 10) powders 4 leaves
Branch 11) pills 2 leaves
Branch 12) pastes 5 leaves
Branch 13) enemas 3 leaves
Branch 14) laxatives 4 leaves
Branch 15) emetics 2 leaves

Trunk IX: Treatments 3 branches 7 leaves
Branch 1) wind 2 leaves
Branch 2) bile 3 leaves
Branch 3) phlegm 2 leaves

ROOT C
Therapy (gso thabs)
rgyud-bzhi part 1, chapter 5
4 trunks, 27 branches, 98 leaves

TRUNK VI
Nutrition (zas)
(3-13) 6 branches, 35 leaves
(3) rta boh bshigs ba lo ma ka chen dags
(4) bhru marr lo marr hu ram zyog skya bloh
(5) zo ma les ba ra mges zan chais dags
(6) bur chen rus chen rin to na gnay zas
(7) ba rabs zo dar mar gser ni dvegs la
(8) ra la skem la gser pa chags tse dags
(9) skyebs dars khur chod chab cha chu tshil dags
(10) bsko dna si mkhri slob na kyi zas su byad
(11) lug dars g-yog rgyud gsum gsum na yi bo
(12) shrims rtsi skam sahi bhru rlung zan dron dags

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1) food (tsa)
   horse (rva), donkey (boh), marmot (gyi bo),
   flesh that is a year old (lo sa), "great flesh"
   (sa chen) [According to: a) the doctors at
   Dharamsala: flesh of a hero that died in a battle
   (communicated in writing).
   b) Geshe Gedün Lodro (late of
   Hamburg University): flesh that normally
   would not be eaten, e.g.: flesh of dogs.
   c) R. E. Emmerick: human flesh (TTC:
   nam sa). d) B. B. Badarnev, Ulas-Ude:
   human flesh (communicated orally)].
   sesame oil (shru mar), oil that is a year old
   (lo mar), crude sugar (bu ram), garlic (syog
   skyas), onions (benom) : wind

2) drink (skom)
   milk (bo ma), carrot and onion soup
   (lbs ba ra mbe schen chen) liquid (extract of)
   crude sugar (bur chen), booe soup (ras chen) : wind

3) food (tsa)
   curds of cow and goat (la rgyi lo),
   buttermilk (dar), fresh butter (mar gsear),
   ganze flesh (ri dvags sa), goat flesh (ra sa),
   fresh flesh of animals of mixed breed (skom
   la gser pa), young barley (cag che), "skyabs"
   [a sort of dandelion, according to the
   doctors at Dharamsala (communicated in
   writing)], dandelions (bur chod) : bile

4) drink (skom)
   hot water (chab cha), cool water (chu bsil),
   boiled and cooled water (chu bikel grae) : bile
5) food (tsa)
- sheep (lag), wild yak (gyag gnod), beasts of prey (gcon gnos), fish-flesh (bas yi sa), honey (bum ri), hot pop of old grain from dry land

- drink (skom)
- curds and buttermilk of the yak (byi ba la sa), strong beer (gar chen), boiled water (chu rdo)

TRUNK VII  Behaviour (spyon)

(15-17) 3 branches, 6 leaves.

(15) ra nh lag so ta yid khor gnyis bstan zin

(16) mkhris pa yid na la bral sar d pal pa bsdod

(17) ba ckan na la réol bcag drs sa bsten

branches:

1) keep agreeable company
- (yid khor gnyis bstan), warm place (dro sa)

2) sit calmly
- (da bar bsdod), cool place
- (bsal sa)

3) make an energetic walk
- (réol bcag), warm place
- (dro sa)

TRUNK VIII  Medicaments (sman)

(18-27) 15 branches, 56 leaves

(18) ra nh las mo sskur las ba sma lel or la bjam

6 leaves
branches:

Testes (1) and potencies (2) (powers, actions) necessary for remedies to cure excess of humours:

1) taste (mo) : wind
   - sweet (maur), sour (skyar), saline (lan cha) : "

2) potency (nus pa) : "
   - oily (snum), heavy (lo), smooth (hjam) : "

3) taste (mo) : bile
   - sweet (maur), bitter (khu), asringett (bska) : "

4) potency (nus pa) : "
   - cool (bsil), thin (sla), dull (rul) : "

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5) taste (ra) : phlegm
pungent (cho), sour (skyur), astringent (baka) : "

6) potency (nus pa) : phlegm
sharp (mo); rough (richi); light (yin) : "

Medicaments to treat excess of humours

7) soups (khu ba) — making calm (ti byed)
soop from bones (ras khu), the four juices (chau bsi), "ngo kh-ru-t" (according to the doctors at Dharamsala: old and ground sheep’s head. (communicated in writing)) : wind

8) medicinal oils (sman mar) — making calm
(ti byed) nard (ju til), garlic (seg skyur), the three fruits (khras bu gsum) [the three myrobolanus: 1. a ru ra (chebulic myrobalan = Tereminalia chebula) 2. ba ru ra (beleric myrobalan = Terminalia bellierica). 3. skyur ru ra (emblic myrobalan = Phyllanthus emblica)].
the five roots (rica ba lha), aconites (sman chen) : wind

9) syrups (thaw) — making calm (ti byed)
chet sosun (ma nas), gudach (zle res),
chirata (rig ta), the three fruits (khras bu gsum) : bile

10) powders (sung na) — making calm (ti byed)
carphoe (ga bar), sandal (can dan), saffron
(gur gsum) bamboo manna (cu gwan) : bile

11) pills (ril ba) — making calm (ti byed)
aconite (can dag), various kinds of salt
(chua sna mam) : phlegm

12) pastes (tres sam) — making calm (ti byed)
pomegranates (sr bhrus), rhododendrons (lda il),
"mule face" (rgod ma kha) [a preparation of

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sharp substances, communicated orally : R. E. Emmerick), alkaline medicaments (male) from burnt salt (chwe bser gi pald shal mnan), white stone (rov ili) : phlegm

13) oily emusnas (byam ré) - making clean
(phyon byed), mild (še byam), purgative
(bkrus byam), purgative-net mild (bkrus ma sles) : wind

14) laxatives (byas mnan) - making clean
(phyon byed), general (spyi), particular (spons), severe (drug), mild (byam) : bile

15) emetics (shugs mnan) - making clean
(phyon byed), severe (drug), mild (byam) : phlegm

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRUNK IX</td>
<td>Treatments (external) (dpjad)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(38-40)</td>
<td>3 branches, 7 leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(38)</td>
<td>dpjad du bsku mite hor gyi me bcah dain //</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(39)</td>
<td>riul dbyan gkar ga chu yi byam bkhor dain //</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(40)</td>
<td>dugs dain me bcah rim boin dpjad kyis boos //</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

branches :

1) use of ointment with massage (bsku mite)
Mongolion type cauterisation (hor gyi me bcah) : wind

2) production of sweat (riul dbyan),
bleeding (gkar ga), the magic water-wheel (chu yi byam bkhor) : bile

3) heat treatments (dugs),
cauterisation (me bcah) : phlegm

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 leaves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Summary

Rose C concurred with Therapy
4 trunks, 27 branches and 96 leaves

These terms are derived from the text of the *rgyud-btsi* part 1, chapter 5

Summary

This systematic summary of the characteristics — in the *rgyud btsi* many more are mentioned — does, however, show just how clearly the three types are set out. Nevertheless, in practice the three types do not always occur in such an unduplicated form; more often one finds mixed types. Western medicine is also aware of a large number of divisions into constitutional types, and there are very many mixed types. The Tibetans categorize their mixed types according to a very simple method; a distinction is made between 7 kinds: 1) the pure wind-, bile-, and phlegm-types = 3 kinds. 2) one type displaying the characteristics of all three types = 1 kind. 3) the types with pairs of characteristics: wind + bile, wind + phlegm, bile + phlegm = 3 kinds.

The purpose of this paper is not only to present the terms of the roots diagnosis and therapy — derived from the texts of the *rgyud btsi*, but also it is only by means of the precisely defined diagnostic methods that the respective types with their symptoms of illness can be recognized and successful treatment is only possible if the method of treatment assigned to this type is applied.
Notes

1. Concerning taste (Na)
The tastes are: sweet (miaoz); sour (akyar); salt (lan chu); bitter (kha); pungent (ula); astringent (bika).

Ryod bts part 2, chapter 19:

(67) men kor saw lan chu buh shech hyms ko lha
sweet, sour, salty, pungent overcome wind.

(68) chu daik menar dom buka bua makhepa po sel lha
bitter and sweet and astringent remove bile

(69) chu akyar lan chu buh bua kan sel bar byes lha
pungent, sour, saline remove phlegm. [astringent]

Discrepancies between Ryod bts part 1, ch. 5 and Part 2, ch. 19 regarding the tastes of remedies for excessive humours

2. Concerning potency (Nau pu)

Ryod bts part 2 chapter 20

(4) nau pu kha namm baal dan red bu dan lha

(5) yam reh buh bua bua mna pu byang lha
heavy, oily, cool and dull and light, rough.

(6) yam reh buh bua mna pu byang lha the first four of them remove wind and bile.

(7) buk ma buh bua kan sel bar byes lha

(8) yam reh buh bua mna pu byang lha
light, rough, cool. these three produce wind.

(9) chu ma namm pu gna pu byang lha
hot, sharp, oily: these three produce bile.

(10) chu ma namm pu buh bua mna pu byang lha
heavy, oily, cool, dull: these two produce phlegm.

Better to understand in pairs (yi-wa-yi):

Removing diseases Producing diseases
wind wind
kha heavy yam light

34
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>phlegm</td>
<td>phlegm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sun light</td>
<td>sun light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rash rough</td>
<td>rash rough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cho tox</td>
<td>cho tox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mo sharp</td>
<td>mo sharp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rash dull</td>
<td>rash dull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heat cool</td>
<td>heat cool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heat hot</td>
<td>heat hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phlegm</td>
<td>phlegm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heat cool</td>
<td>heat cool</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to ch. 5, there are 9 potencies, three to remove each tumour. According to ch. 20, there are 8 symmetrical potencies.