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With increasing modernity and jet-set lifestyles, our present world is characterised with much stress, tension, fatigue and pressure. Above all, we are now becoming all the more dependent on allopathic treatments making us enter a pill-popping culture. This has subsequently made our ancient and more reliable practices of healing seem obsolete and ineffective. However, efforts are still underway to revive these centuries-old practices to cure us of our physical, mental as well as spiritual ailments.

One of such practices which is currently being revived and popularised once again is the traditional Tibetan healing practice known popularly as *Jampeche* which in Tibetan means "gentle external treatments". *Jampeche* refers to different treatments including *kunye* (massage), water therapies etc. that help protect us of undue tensions and troubles which cause mental and physical disorders.

"There is an increasing interest and demand from the West regarding the ancient Tibetan Science of Healing", informs Carroll Dunham, founder of Wild Earth (WE), an organisation that produces handcrafted herbal products primarily for spas and works for securing fair trade for

the Himalayan herb traders". This surge in demand of Himalayan herbs and *Jampeche* has now given a certain degree of recognition to the ancient Tibetan art of healing which has further necessitated the growth of its practitioners", adds Carroll.

WE which formally started in 1997 has now started giving special training, the first of its kind in the world, to the traditional Himalayan herbal healer popularly known as *Amchis* in the traditional Tibetan art of healing. WE was envisaged to generate income for the highland women and thus empower them economically.

"The training is specially meant to revive the ancient tradition of external treatment used by the highlanders", says Carroll. "At the same time, we also face the challenge of regaining the lost recognition for the *Amchis* and their ancient practice of healing".

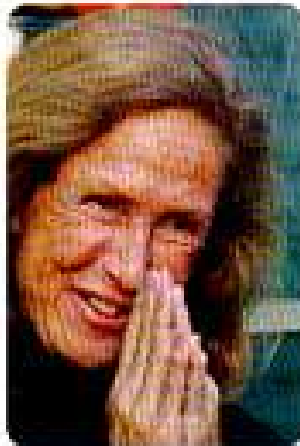
"There aren't a lot of people left who still practice the Tibetan Science of Healing", laments Carroll adding, "which is why there was the need to restore the faded glory of the Tibetan technique of healing both physical and mental illnesses". The *Amchis* who are trained will be sent abroad to practice this ancient art of healing but are also bound by contract to return a small proportion of their income to provide for the

educational scholarship of the children in the rural hinterlands of Nepal.

"We also face the issue of sustainability of the Himalayan herbs which are used extensively in *Jampeche* because for some of the herbs, we don't have the knowledge of their reproduction", informs Carroll. Thus, this training is also designed with the objective of not depleting the huge base of Himalayan herbs. This can be achieved by exporting the knowledge and wisdom of the highlanders in the Himalayan herbs and their medicinal value.

Carroll asserts that due recognition of these traditional herbal healers and the ancient Tibetan Science of healing by the Government of Nepal can greatly assist in boosting the national income of the country and prevent the annual loss of revenue through foreign exchange as well as the flow of Nepali youths emigrating the country.

The Wild Earth *Jampeche Amchi* Training as the training is entitled is scheduled to run from 30 January to 24 February 2006 and is being offered by a veteran Oriental Medical Practitioner, Joanne Claire. WE is also giving out a training on Pulse Diagnosis starting 12 February and will continue up to the third week of March from 8 am to 9 am. The Pulse Diagnosis training is being delivered by Rinpoche Tserang.



Joanna Claire A 73-year old Oriental Medical Practitioner from California, Joanna Claire has been practicing the art and science of Jampeche for the last 30 years. Joanna learnt the basics in Chinese medicine from the American College of Traditional Chinese Medicine, San Francisco, 40 years ago only to discover later that she would be spending the rest of her life teaching

and thus intensifying her knowledge and love for this ancient practice of healing. "Jampeche mainly involves massages or gentle external treatment based on traditional Tibetan therapy. Young Amchis have no formal training on ancient massages and part of my training is to train them on these gentle external treatments which can be passed on to their next generations. It is indeed very rewarding to work with young people", confesses Joanne who offers Jampeche training to young Amchis at the WE premises, adding, "especially to realize the fact that now the ancient and valuable knowledge and wisdom of healing will be transferred to the posterity and preserved for the eternity".

Pulse Diagnosis

Pulse Diagnosis is a very important tool used by all Oriental Medical Practitioners. It is a very important tool used by Chinese and Tibetan Health Practitioners as well as conventional medical doctors. To a skilled practitioner, taking your pulse is more than counting the beats. The functioning and health of the entire mind-body constitution can be determined from the pulse,

including the balance of the doshas (faults that cause the body to move out of balance), the health of the various organs, advance warning signs of potential problems that may crop up later etc. By detecting early symptoms of imbalance and disease reaction in the body, one can take preventive steps to correct the problem before it manifests into a major one.

"Mastering" pulse diagnosis is difficult without the guidance of a skilled teacher. However, even at basic levels, the pulse provides the practitioner with immediate and specific information that can help clarify contradictory diagnostic information and symptomatology.

Health Benefits of Jampeche

- Successful for chronic imbalances such as asthma, arthritis, neurological disorders and all types of hepatitis
- Effective for the cure of sexual problems and diseases or pregnancy-related complications
- Cures disorders of the gall bladder, intestines, heart problems, liver and kidney ailments
- For proper circulation, pain in joints or tired aching muscles, rib problems

About Tibetan Medicine

The Tibetan Science of Healing- "Sowa Rigpa" in Tibetan- has been taught and practiced throughout Central Asia for more than 2500 years. Elements of Indian, Chinese and Greek medical traditions are integrated with Tibetan practices in a coherent and powerful system. Today, the Tibetan Science of Healing continues to be practiced in Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and Mongolia and is spreading to North America and Europe. This is an effective and

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natural means of healing. Sowa Rigpa is an **art** because it uses diagnostic techniques based on the creativity, insight, subtlety and compassion of the medical practitioner. And it is a **philosophy** because it embraces the key Buddhist principles of altruism, karma and ethics. Jampeche is actually a part of the greater Sowa Rigpa and basically involves curing of ailments through massages or "gentle external treatments". According to the Tibetan texts, the human body is based on the five cosmic elements; earth (solidity), water (fluidity), fire (heat), air (motility) and space. These five elements must be harmonised for optimal health. In addition, physical and mental health require a balanced circulation of three additional energies- Vital wind, Bile and Phlegm. Vital wind is related with stress disorders, Bile is related with hotness disorders such as inflammation and Phlegm is related with digestive disorders. Each of these energies have five sub-divisions that runs throughout the channels, organs, tissues and coordinating centers of the body. When any of these energies are out of balance or impeded in their flow, disorder results. The cause of energetic imbalance and blockage include poor diet, emotional shock or trauma, fatigue, tension, overwork, exposure to bad weather, micro-organisms as well as immediate (ie. a recent injury) and remote causes (ie. a chronic infection) and spiritual causes. All of these causes can be traced primarily to the 'three mind poisons'-desire, hatred and delusion. Delusion is when the mind sees the self and things in a way in which they do not really exist which generates mental states that makes the foundation for the causes and conditions of disorders. Tibetan Herbal supplements are made of carefully balanced ingredients in time-tested combinations and concentrations. The herbs are integrated based upon their specific portions such as roots, bark, leaves, flowers, fruits etc. with their properties, tastes, natures and benefits (all types of roots correct bone disorders, barks, correct muscle disorders, branches correct nerve disorders, leaves correct disorders in the hollow organs such as the intestines, gall bladders etc., flowers correct disorders in the sense organs such as eyes, ears etc. and fruits correct disorders in the vital organs such as the heart, liver and kidneys). The process of formulation is extensive making each formula capable of rooting out a poisonous tree rather than its branches and leaves. Tibetan supplements heal the whole disorder, not just symptoms, with no side effect.



Carroll Dunham Free-spirited and strong-willed, Carroll visited Nepal for the first time in 1984 to complete her research as part of the academic curriculum at Princeton University, United States. Carroll, who was in her early twenties then, spent three years among the wild herbs and landscape of Humla in Western Nepal, studying the myriad of rituals of the people from the rural hinterlands, surveying the domestic techniques used by rural women to cure various illnesses and ailments. What really struck Carroll by surprise was the discrimination based on sex wherein the traditional healing practices men used were well-documented and preserved in the form of sacred texts. But there wasn't a single testimony to the indigenous methods applied by the womenfolk to cure people of mental and physical illnesses, including those related to sex, unwanted pregnancy and many more. In response to this, Carroll avowed herself then to help these women from the remote parts of Nepal. She applied her ingenuity in using the same herbs from our majestic Himalayas and tap the existing knowledge and wisdom of the people from the rural hinterlands in order to start up an enterprise for the very people that would support them financially. This thought gave birth to 'Wild Earth' which trains Tibetan youths from rural areas like Mustang where traditional Tibetan healing methods are still prevalent to diagnose and treat many diseases. Having spent over 20 years of her life in Nepal, Carroll has earned many accolades for her untiring work and dedication to stand for the betterment of the people of Nepal, especially those hailing from the rural hinterlands. She has also been recently nominated as 'Personality of the Year' by the Spa Asia magazine for being the only anthropologist involved in the spa world. Along with her husband, Thomas Kelly, Carroll has shot many documentaries for the National Geographic. Adding another feather to her cap is the recently launched book titled 'Sacred Landscape and Pilgrimage in Tibet' which explores the sacred places in Tibet, rich in its cultural heritage and of course, its cache of medicinal herbs.

- *Ayushma Pandey*