

CERTIFIED CHINESE HERBOLOGY ONLINE COURSE - SESSION 13

- What is Acupuncture?
 - What is Cupping?
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 - What is Chinese Face Reading?
 - What is Qi Gong? A Brief History
 - Yan Xin Qigong
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- Miscellaneous Articles: The Value of Herbs in the Treatment of Cancer, Treatment of Diabetes Mellitus with Herbs, Pros and Cons of Ephedra Ban, Ginseng - A Guide for Consumers, Chinese Herbal Prozac: Depression and Traditional Chinese Medicine, The Fascination of Kombucha, Don't Rule Out TCM for Menopause Symptoms, Common Chinese Herbal Formulas for Pain Due To Trauma, Rou Cong Rong – Herba Cistanche

What is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is an ancient medical art. Today in most western cultures it is considered a "new alternative" medicine. In reality Acupuncture (and its related Moxibustion) are practiced medical treatments that are over 5,000 years old. Very basically, Acupuncture is the insertion of very fine needles, (sometimes in conjunction with electrical stimulus), on the body's surface, in order to influence physiological functioning of the body.



Acupuncture can also be used in conjunction with heat produced by burning specific herbs, this is called Moxibustion. In addition, a non-invasive method of massage therapy, called Acupressure, can also be effective.

The first record of Acupuncture is found in the 4,700 year old Huang Di Nei Jing (Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine). This is said to be the oldest medical textbook in the world. It is said to have been written down from even earlier theories by Shen Nung, the father of Chinese Medicine. Shen Nung documented theories about circulation, pulse, and the heart over 4,000 years before European medicine had any concept about them.

As the basis of Acupuncture, Shen Nung theorized that the body had an energy force running throughout it. This energy force is known as Qi (roughly pronounced Chee). The Qi consists of all essential life activities which include the spiritual, emotional, mental and the physical aspects of life. A person's health is influenced by the flow of Qi in the body, in combination with the universal forces of Yin and Yang. If the flow of Qi is insufficient, unbalanced or interrupted, Yin and Yang become unbalanced, and illness may occur. Qi travels throughout the body along "Meridians" or special pathways. The Meridians, (or Channels), are the same on both sides of the body (paired). There are fourteen main meridians running vertically up and down the surface of the body. Out of these, there are twelve organ Meridians in each half of the body (remember they are in pairs). There are also two unpaired midline Meridians. There will be a diagram of Acupuncture points for treating diseases of the Meridians at the end of the digestive system. The acupuncture points are specific locations where the Meridians come to

the surface of the skin, and are easily accessible by "needling," Moxibustion, and Acupressure. The connections between them ensure that there is an even circulation of Qi, a balance between Yin and Yang.

Energy constantly flows up and down these pathways. When pathways become obstructed, deficient, excessive, or just unbalanced, Yin and Yang are said to be thrown out of balance. This causes illness. Acupuncture is said to restore the balance.

Yin and Yang is an important theory in the discussion of Acupuncture treatment, in relation to the Chinese theory of body systems. As stated earlier Qi is an energy force that runs throughout the body. In addition, Qi is also prevalent throughout nature as well. Qi is comprised of two parts, Yin and Yang. Yin and Yang are opposite forces, that when balanced, work together. Any upset in the balance will result in natural calamities, in nature; and disease in humans. Yin is signified by female attributes, passive, dark, cold, moist, that which moves medially, and deficient of Yang. Yang is signified by male attributes, light, active, warm, dry, that which moves laterally, and deficient of Yin. Nothing is completely Yin or Yang. The most striking example of this is man himself. A man is the combination of his mother (Yin) and his father (Yang). He contains qualities of both: This is the universal symbol describing the constant flow of yin and yang forces. You'll notice that within yin, there is Yang, and within Yang, there is the genesis of Yin. Whether or not you believe in Taoist philosophy, (which all this is based on), one thing is indisputable: Acupuncture works.



Acupuncturists can use as many as nine types of Acupuncture needles, though only six are commonly used today. These needles vary in length, width of shaft, and shape of head. Today, most needles are disposable. They are used once and discarded in accordance with medical biohazard regulations and guidelines. There are a few different precise methods by which Acupuncturists insert needles. Points can be needled anywhere in the range of 15 degrees to 90 degrees relative to the skin surface, depending on the treatment called for. In most cases, a sensation, felt by the patient, is desired. This sensation, which is not pain, is called deqi (pronounced dah-chee). The following techniques are some which may be used by an Acupuncturist immediately following insertion: Raising and Thrusting, Twirling or Rotation, Combination of Raising/Thrusting and Rotation, Plucking, Scraping (vibrations sent through the needle), and Trembling (another vibration technique). Once again, techniques are carefully chosen based on the ailment.

There are a few related procedures that fall into the range of Acupuncture treatments. The first is Electro-Acupuncture. This is the using of very small electrical impulses through the Acupuncture needles. This method is generally used for analgesia (pain relief or prevention). The amount of power used is only a few micro amperes, but the frequency of the current can vary from 5 to 2,000 Hz. The higher frequencies are generally used for surgery (usually abdominal), and the lower frequencies for general pain relief. The first reported successful use of Electro-Acupuncture was in 1958 in China for a tonsillectomy. Today, it is a common method of surgical analgesia used in China. Other methods for stimulating Acupuncture points have used Lasers and sound waves (Sonopuncture). A very commonly used treatment in the United States is Auriculotherapy or Ear Acupuncture. The theory is that since the ear has a rich nerve and blood supply, it would have connections all over the body. For this reason, the ear has many Acupuncture points which correspond to many parts and organs of the body. Auricular Acupuncture has been successful in treating problems ranging from obesity to alcoholism, to drug addiction. There are numerous studies either completed, or currently going on which affirms Auricular Acupuncture's effectiveness.

Another popular treatment method is Moxibustion, which is the treatment of diseases by applying heat to Acupuncture points. Acupuncture and Moxibustion are considered complimentary forms of treatment, and are commonly used together. Moxibustion is used for ailments such as bronchial asthma, bronchitis, certain types of paralysis, and arthritic disorders.



Cupping is another type of treatment. This is a method of stimulating Acupuncture points by applying suction through a metal, wood or glass jar, in which a partial vacuum has been created. This technique produces blood congestion at the site, and therefore stimulates it. Cupping is used for low backache, sprains, soft tissue injuries, and helping relieve fluid from the lungs in chronic bronchitis.



One of the most popular alternatives to Acupuncture is Acupressure. This is simply Acupuncture without needles. Stimulation of the Acupuncture points is performed with the fingers or an instrument with a hard ball shaped head. Another variation of Acupressure is Reflexology (also called Zone Therapy). This is where the soles of the feet and the postero-inferior regions of the ankle joints are stimulated. Many diseases of the internal organs can be treated in this manner.

The question arises, how does Acupuncture work? Scientists have no real answer to this; as you know many of the workings of the body are still a mystery. There are a few prevailing theories.

By some unknown process, Acupuncture raises levels of triglycerides, specific hormones, prostaglandins, white blood counts, gamma globulins, opsonins, and overall anti-body levels. This is called the "Augmentation of Immunity" Theory.

The "Endorphin" Theory states that Acupuncture stimulates the secretions of endorphins in the body (specifically Enkephalins).

The "Neurotransmitter" Theory states that certain neurotransmitter levels (such as Serotonin and Noradrenaline) are affected by Acupuncture.

"Circulatory" Theory: this states that Acupuncture has the effect of constricting or dilating blood vessels. This may be caused by the body's release of Vasodilators (such as Histamine), in response to Acupuncture.

One of the most popular theories is the "Gate Control" Theory. According to this theory, the perception of pain is controlled by a part of the nervous system which regulates the impulse, which will later be interpreted as pain. This part of the nervous system is called the "Gate." If the gate is hit with too many impulses, it becomes overwhelmed, and it closes. This prevents some of the impulses from getting through. The first gates to close would be the ones that are the smallest. The nerve fibers that carry the impulses of pain are rather small nerve fibers called "C" fibers. These are the gates that close during Acupuncture.

In the related "Motor Gate" Theory, some forms of paralysis can be overcome by Acupuncture. This is done by reopening a "stuck" gate, which is connected to an Anterior Horn cell. The gate, when closed by a disease, stops motor impulses from reaching muscles. This theory was first stated by Professor Jayasuriya in 1977. In it he goes on to say:

"...one of the factors contributing to motor recovery is almost certainly the activation of spindle cells. They are stimulated by Gamma motor neurons. If Acupuncture stimulates the Gamma motor neurons, the discharge causes the contraction of Intrafusal Muscle fibers. This activates the Spindle cells, in the same way as muscle stretching. This will bring about muscle contraction."

There are many diseases that can be treated successfully by Acupuncture or its related treatments. The most common ailments currently being treated are: lower backache, Cervical Spondylosis, Condylitis, Arthritic Conditions, Headaches of all kinds (including migraine), Allergic Reactions, general and specific use for Analgesia (including surgery) and relief of muscles spasms. There have also been clinical trials in the use of Acupuncture in treating anxiety disorders and depression. Likewise, very high success rates have been found in treating addictions to alcohol, tobacco (nicotine) and "hard" drugs. Acupuncture can rid the body of the physical dependency, but can not rid the mind of the habit (psychological dependency). For this reason, Acupuncture treatment of addictions has not been fully successful.

Case Studies

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has sponsored three studies examining the effectiveness of Acupuncture for the treatment of substance abuse.

The first was at the Lincoln Medical Medical Center in Bronx, NYC, New York. It was headed by Dr. Douglas Lipton, and completed in 1991. This study used Auricular Acupuncture on Crack Cocaine users. The study was split into groups, one getting the correct Acupuncture treatments, the other getting "placebo" Acupuncture (needles placed in the "wrong" spots). Urinalysis results showed that the subjects receiving the correct treatments had lowered their use of the drug, in as little as two weeks. This was verified by testing for cocaine metabolite levels. However, the reduction was not as significant as had been anticipated. *Note that no other type of treatment, such as counseling as given.

In two other studies currently going on, (the first by Dr. Janet Konefal of Miami School of Medicine; and the other by Dr. Milton Bullock at the Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis), counseling combined with acupuncture is being tested. The preliminary results have been quite promising.

Additional studies, too numerous to mention here have proven the effectiveness of Acupuncture therapy in Nicotine addiction, (look in Bibliography for some case citings).

Between 1971 and and 1972 a series of doctors (Frank Z. Warren: New York University Medical Center; Pang L. Man and Calvin H. Chen: Northville State Hospital, Northville, Michigan), conducted seven surgeries at both Northville State Hospital and at Albert Einstein Medical Center. They used both standard Acupuncture and Electro-Acupuncture techniques. They found that in all cases of surgery (six invasive and one dental) these Acupuncture treatments were successful in stopping the pain of surgery without additional anesthetics. In only one case (a repair of an inguinal hernia) did the patient complain of "discomfort;" and only in one additional case did a patient (the same one) complain of post-operative pain.

Acupuncture should be considered a valid form of treatment alongside, not only other "alternative" forms of treatment, but also along side mainstream medicine. More and more insurance companies are discovering the cost effectiveness of Acupuncture. Unfortunately, many insurance companies still do not cover Acupuncture therapy, with the exception of Drug Addiction treatments; and then only if other therapies have been unsuccessful, or as

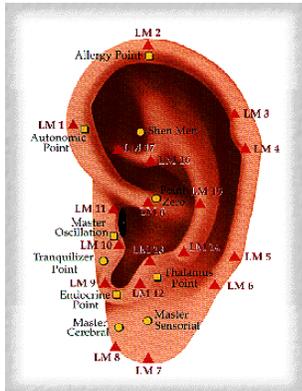
part of another program. Part of the reason for this is that the Food and drug Administration classifies Acupuncture needles as "investigational" devices. However, the FDA has reclassified acupuncture needles and so, now, one great block to insurance coverage has been removed.

Acupuncture Doctors are licensed independently in most states while some states require you to be a Medical Doctor to practice Acupuncture.

Acupuncture schools are federally accredited by the ACAOM (Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine). This accreditation allows the school to offer federal guaranteed student loans.

Ear Acupuncture

Ear acupuncture, also known as auricular therapy, is based on the principles of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Auricular therapy is widely used for many conditions, including addiction treatment, mood disorders, obesity, pain, and other conditions. This medical system emphasizes a holistic approach to medicine, an approach that treats the whole person. The acupuncture points found on the ear help to regulate the body's internal organs, structures, and functions.



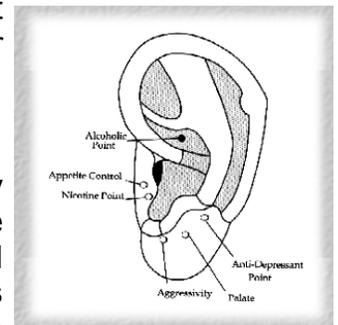
Auricular therapy has a long history of use in China. It was mentioned in the most famous of ancient Chinese medical textbooks, "The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine." In modern times, auricular therapy has been shown to stimulate the release of endorphins, the body's own feel-good chemicals.

How is ear acupuncture used in a treatment?

Ear acupuncture is generally incorporated into a regular acupuncture treatment. In addition to using acupuncture points on the rest of the body, your acupuncturist may select a few ear acupuncture points that they feel will be helpful for your particular condition.

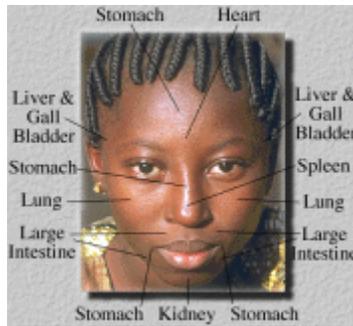
What are ear seeds and ear tacks?

Ear acupuncture points may be stimulated for a longer period of time by using ear seeds or ear tacks. Ear seeds are small seeds from the Vaccaria plant. These seeds are held in place on the ear with a small piece of adhesive tape. Ear seeds may be left in the ear for a few days or up to two weeks. Ear tacks are very small needles with an adhesive backing. Ear tacks are inserted into the ear and left in the ear for a few days or up to one week.



WHAT IS MIEN SHIANG?

The age-old Taoist practice of Mien Shiang is an art and a science that means literally face (mien) reading (shiang). It is an accurate means of self-discovery, and a great way to help us understand others. As the ancient Taoists said, the face records the past, reflects the present, and forecasts the future.



What we look for when we read a face are the characteristics associated with the sizes and shapes and positions of each facial feature, as well as the lines, shadings and marking that appear on the face. Simply by looking at someone's face, we can determine his or her character, personality, health, wealth potential, social

standing, and longevity.

Our Faces Accurately Record Our Chronological Passages of Life

Certain facial traits are inherited from our parents and our ancestors, while others are acquired. These acquired lines, shadings and shapes should be celebrated as 'proof' that we have learned our life lessons. If we don't do our life's work at the proper times, we can suffer emotionally, physically, and spiritually. So, it's good to see those markings of passage appear on our faces. People don't value wisdom if they don't value aging.

The Face Is a Puzzle with Perfect Pieces

Every part of the face reveals something significant. There are five to ten unique face shapes, the two sides of the face, the three primary zones, and the twelve principal features. Each of the 12 principal facial features, the

- Ears
- Hairline
- Forehead
- brow bones
- eyebrows
- eyes
- cheeks
- nose
- lips and mouth
- chin
- jaw

tells something specific about the person. Learning to read the face shapes, the two different sides, the significance of the dominant zone, and all of the features together, is an intricate art.

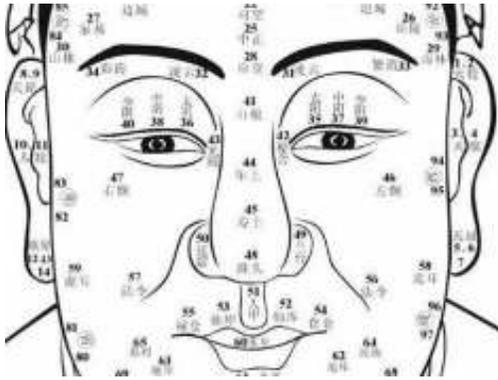
Here's Looking at You

Mien Shiang is not about reading facial expressions. Many people have good poker faces; they are experts at covering up their feelings by controlling their expressions. A good bluffer can easily change a look or a movement to fool others. But shapes, positions, lines, shadows, and other facial markings tell the truth. They are foolproof signs, if you know how to read them.

Because Mien Shiang is such a vast, extensive study that can take years to learn - for example, we could easily analyze 30 different types of eyebrows or 47 types of mouths - let's start off with the bigger picture.

The Two Sides of the Face:

- The left side represents the true, inner, private self.
- The right side represents the outer, public self.



Suppose you meet someone who has a great smile, but you notice that the right side of their mouth goes up. That is probably someone who is “putting on a good face” - chances are they don’t feel, inside, as happy as they look, on the outside. See? Already, you can read a face!

Who Uses Mien Shiang?

We all use Mien Shiang, all the time. For instance when you changed seats because the well-groomed man next to you had narrow, mean eyes . . . when you chose the employer with the easy smile over the other who had a tight, thin mouth, . . . when you advised a friend to see a doctor because you noticed unusually dark circles under his eyes . . . when you hired the lesser experienced person for the job because he had the more trusting face . . . you were reading faces. You were practicing Mien Shiang.

We all have instinctive responses and reactions to people, but Mien Shiang is more than a gut level reaction. Mien Shiang recognizes that every facial shape, size, feature and position has a significant meaning. Each line, shading and marking reveals a little bit more to the whole face reading.

In Part I of this series, we established that the facial features each have distinct characteristics regarding character, personality, health, longevity, wealth, and social status. Let us first define each of the 12 major features’ general characteristics:

- ears - risk taking ability, longevity
- hairline - socialization
- forehead - parents’ influence
- brow bones - control
- eyebrows - passion, temper, pride
- eyes - receptivity
- cheekbones - authority
- nose - ego, power, leadership, wealth
- lips and mouth - personality, sexuality
- chin - character, will
- jaw - determination

Now look in the mirror and see how much risk-taking ability you have. The bigger your ears, the bigger your risks; the smaller your ears, the more cautious you probably are.

Are your eyebrows dark and thick? If so, it is quite feasible that you have a lot of passion and anger. What about your eyes? The more open your eyes, the more open your heart. Do you have high, prominent cheekbones? If you do, you are likely to be authoritative. (Some might even call you bossy!) What if your left eyebrow is thicker than the other? Remembering that the right side of the face represents the outer, public self and the left side represents the inner, private self, you can see plainly that your face reveals that you are apt to feel more

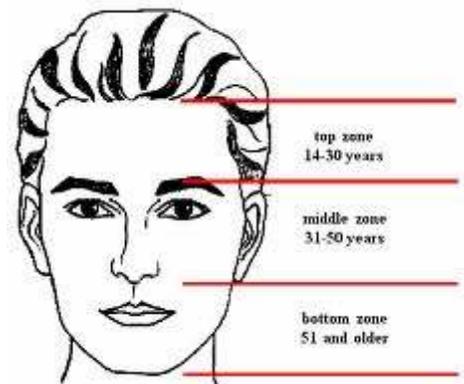
anger (inside) than you show (on the outside). Take a closer look at your ears. Are they the same size? The same shape? Even the same height? It's not unusual for our 'matching features' to be different, though most of us do not notice such differences, on ourselves or on others, unless we are looking for them. If, indeed, your right ear is bigger, or more prominent in shape or position, it means that you appear to take more risks than you actually do take. Interestingly, if our right side features are so much more distinct, or prominent, than the left features, we will sometimes 'act out' a certain behavior even though it may go against our inner nature. For instance, some people who have a more prominent right ear find that they take more risks than they actually feel comfortable taking.

Keep looking in the mirror. See if you can establish how much character you have, how determined you are, how much ego you have, and how outgoing you are. Do your features match your feelings? Do you think others see you as you really are?

The Marks of Wisdom and What They Mean

As we age our face changes. We get wrinkles and lines, dark spots and shadings. And though we tend to resent them, these signs of experience are good because they are recording our chronological passages of life. They are visual proof that we have been feeling the emotions of our experiences, struggling through our difficult times and learning the lessons of life. We can celebrate them as marks of wisdom that come with age.

Most markings appear on an area of the face that represents the age that the emotional experience first occurred.



The Face Represents a Chronological Map of Experiences:

- left ear rim - conception to early childhood
- right ear rim - mid childhood to adolescence
- hairline to eyebrows - adolescence through the 20s
- eyebrow area - early 30s
- eye area - mid to late 30s
- nose - 40s
- mouth area - 50s
- chin - 60s
- jaw - 70s and beyond

Facial lines and markings generally appear first on the forehead and work their way down to the bottom of the chin over the years. Take a close look at your own face, at your parents', your children's, siblings', friends' and co-workers' faces and see if their marks of passage correspond with their ages.

Using Mien Shiang we read the face by interpreting the appearance of the lines and marks. We look for placement, size, shape, depth, color and shading of each line and marking. Lines between the eyes usually appear in the early to mid 30s and are frequently the first lines we notice on our own faces as well as on others. In Mien Shiang we call this area the Seat of the Stamp, or Yin Tong, and issues with father or the dominant parental figure are marked here.

Yin Tong Markings

- a single, vertical line can mean that one has difficulty getting or staying appropriately angry.
- a single, but stronger and deeper, vertical line indicates estrangement from father
- 2 vertical lines means one tends to anger easily
- 3 or more vertical lines suggest the ability to stand up for oneself and use anger appropriately.
- horizontal lines also represent separation from father, or son, or one's own yang (male) side, as well as women who were never allowed to get angry
- a dark mark, or discoloration, indicates that one is backing off from their power.

The mouth is another area we tend to notice. Though the predominant lines and markings generally appear in one's 50s, they often occur as early as one's 20s. Pursing the lips creates lots of tiny lines cutting into the lips, both top and bottom. Those lines show all the hurts that have been held on to, that have never been forgotten. They belong to the person who has 'done all the right things' but hasn't been 'rewarded' for her 'goodness.'

There are so many, many more lines that appear on the face that reveal our experiences or tendencies. Like the Grief Line that runs down the center of the cheek, or the Fa Ling Lines that show whether or not we are on our Golden Path. The telling lines around the eyes that warn us of an inclination for unfaithfulness, or reveal the pain of unshed tears. As you notice the lines and markings on your own face, as well as on others', remember . . .



- the right side of the face presents the outer, public self, and that it represents the mother's influence
- the left side of the face presents the inner, private self, and that it represents the father's influence.

And remember the significant characteristic and trait that belong to each facial feature. Now look in the mirror and combine what Mien Shian has taught you, so far, about each side of the face, each of the 12 major facial features, and the different lines and markings and their placements. Does Mien Shian help piece together the puzzle of who you really are?

Qi Gong Basics

Chi Kung (Qi Gong) means literally, "Energy Cultivation," and refers to exercises which improve health and longevity as well as increase the sense of harmony within oneself and in the world. There are thousands of such exercises. In fact, anything you do with the intention of benefiting your energy can be considered Chi Kung. All Chi Kung contains common principles - mind, eyes, movement and breath. Another way to express this is - the mind is the presence of intention, the eyes are the focus of intention, the movement is the action of intention, the breath is the flow of intention. These are the "secrets" of Chi Kung - and they are often taught at the beginning of training. Of course it takes years of exploring these ideas in practice to begin to truly grasp their significance.



A Brief History of Qigong



The history of Chinese Qigong can be roughly divided into four periods. We know little about the first period, which is considered to have started when the "Yi Jing" (Book of Changes) was introduced sometime before 1122 B.C., and to have extended until the Han dynasty (206 B.C.) when Buddhism and its meditation methods were imported from India. This infusion brought Qigong practice and meditation into the second period, the religious Qigong era. This period lasted until the Liang dynasty (502-557 A.D.), when it was discovered that Qigong could be used for martial purposes. This was the beginning of the third period, that of martial Qigong. Many different martial Qigong styles were created based on the theories and principles of Buddhist and Daoist Qigong. This period lasted until the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in 1911; from that point Chinese Qigong training was mixed with Qigong practices from India, Japan, and many other countries.

Before the Han Dynasty (Before 206 B.C.)

The "Yi Jing" (Book of Changes; 1122 B.C.) was probably the first Chinese book related to Qi. It introduced the concept of the three natural energies or powers (San Cai): Tian (Heaven), Di (Earth), and Ren (Man). Studying the relationship of these three natural powers was the first step in the development of Qigong.

In 1766-1154 B.C. (the Shang dynasty), the Chinese capital was located in today's An Yang in Henan province. An archeological dig there at a late Shang dynasty burial ground called Yin Xu discovered more than 160,000 pieces of turtle shell and animal bone which were covered with written characters. This writing, called "Jia Gu Wen" (Oracle-Bone Scripture), was the earliest evidence of the Chinese use of the written word. Most of the information recorded was of a religious nature. There was no mention of acupuncture or other medical knowledge, even though it was recorded in the Nei Jing that during the reign of the Yellow emperor (2690-2590 B.C.) Bian Shi (stone probes) were already being used to adjust people's Qi circulation.

During the Zhou dynasty (1122-934 B.C.), Lao Zi (Li Er) mentioned certain breathing techniques in his classic "Dao De Jing" (or Tao Te Ching) (Classic on the Virtue of the Dao). He stressed that the way to obtain health was to "concentrate on Qi and achieve softness" (Zhuan Qi Zhi Rou).^(*) Later, "Shi Ji" (Historical Record) in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods (770-221 B.C.) also described more complete methods of breath training.

About 300 B.C. the Daoist philosopher Zhuang Zi described the relationship between health and the breath in his book "Nan Hua Jing." It states: "The men of old breathed clear down to their heels..." This was not merely a figure of speech, and confirms that a breathing method for Qi circulation was being used by some Daoists at that time. During the Qin and Han dynasties (221 B.C.-220 A.D.) there are several medical references to Qigong in the literature, such as the "Nan Jing" (Classic on Disorders) by the famous physician Bian Que, which describes using the breathing to increase Qi circulation. "Jin Kui Yao Lue" (Prescriptions from the Golden Chamber) by Zhang Zhong-Jing discusses the use of breathing and acupuncture to maintain good Qi flow. "Zhou Yi Can Tong Qi" (A Comparative Study of the Zhou (dynasty) Book of Changes) by Wei Bo-Yang explains the relationship of human beings to nature's forces and Qi. It can be seen from this list that up to this time, almost all of the Qigong publications were written by scholars such as Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi, or physicians such as Bian Que and Wei Bo-Yang.

From the Han Dynasty to the Beginning of the Liang Dynasty (206 B.C.-502 A.D.)

Because many Han emperors were intelligent and wise, the Han dynasty was a glorious and peaceful period. It was during the Eastern Han dynasty (c. 58 A.D.) that Buddhism was imported to China from India. The Han emperor became a sincere Buddhist; Buddhism soon spread and became very popular. Many Buddhist meditation and Qigong practices, which had been practiced in India for thousands of years, were absorbed into the Chinese culture. The Buddhist temples taught many Qigong practices, especially the still meditation of Chan (Zen), which marked a new era of Chinese Qigong. Much of the deeper Qigong theory and practices which had been developed in India were brought to China. Unfortunately, since the training was directed at attaining Buddhahood, the training practices and theory were recorded in the Buddhist bibles and kept secret. For hundreds of years the religious Qigong training was never taught to laymen. Only in this century has it been available to the general populace.

Not long after Buddhism had been imported into China, a Daoist by the name of Zhang Dao-Ling combined the traditional Daoist principles with Buddhism and created a religion called Dao Jiao. Many of the meditation methods were a combination of the principles and training methods of both sources. Since Tibet had developed its own branch of Buddhism with its own training system and methods of attaining Buddhahood, Tibetan Buddhists were also invited to China to preach. In time, their practices were also absorbed.

It was in this period that the traditional Chinese Qigong practitioners finally had a chance to compare their arts with the religious Qigong practices imported mainly from India. While the scholarly and medical Qigong had been concerned with maintaining and improving health, the newly imported religious Qigong was concerned with far more. Contemporary documents and Qigong styles show clearly that the religious practitioners trained their Qi to a much deeper level, working with many internal functions of the body, and strove to obtain control of their bodies, minds, and spirits with the goal of escaping from the cycle of reincarnation.

While the Qigong practices and meditations were being passed down secretly within the monasteries, traditional scholars and physicians continued their Qigong research. During the Jin dynasty in the 3rd century A.D., a famous physician named Hua Tuo used acupuncture for anesthesia in surgery. The Daoist Jun Qian used the movements of animals to create the Wu Qin Xi (Five Animal Sports), which taught people how to increase their Qi circulation through specific movements. Also, in this period a physician named Ge Hong mentioned in his book *Bao Pu Zi* using the mind to lead and increase Qi. Sometime in the period of 420 to 581 A.D. Tao Hong-Jing compiled the "Yang Shen Yan Ming Lu" (Records of Nourishing the Body and Extending Life), which showed many Qigong techniques.

From the Liang Dynasty to the End of the Qing Dynasty (502-1911 A.D.)

During the Liang dynasty (502-557 A.D.) the emperor invited a Buddhist monk named Da Mo, who was once an Indian prince, to preach Buddhism in China. The emperor decided he did not like Da Mo's Buddhist theory, so the monk withdrew to the Shaolin Temple. When Da Mo arrived, he saw that the priests were weak and sickly, so he shut himself away to ponder the problem. He emerged after nine years of seclusion and wrote two classics: "Yi Jin Jing" (or Yi Gin Ching) (Muscle/Tendon Changing Classic) and "Xi Sui Jing" (or Shii Soei Ching) (Marrow/Brain Washing Classic). The Muscle/Tendon Changing Classic taught the priests how to gain health and change their physical bodies from weak to strong. The Marrow/Brain Washing Classic taught the priests how to use Qi to clean the bone marrow and strengthen the blood and immune system, as well as how to energize the brain and attain enlightenment. Because the Marrow/Brain Washing Classic was harder to understand and practice, the training methods were passed down secretly to only a very few disciples in each generation.

After the priests practiced the Muscle/Tendon Changing exercises, they found that not only did they improve their health, but they also greatly increased their strength. When this training was integrated into the martial arts forms, it increased the effectiveness of their techniques. In addition to this martial Qigong training, the Shaolin priests also created five animal styles of Gongfu which imitated the way different animals fight. The animals imitated were the tiger, leopard, dragon, snake and crane.

Outside of the monastery, the development of Qigong continued during the Sui and Tang dynasties (581-907 A.D.). Chao Yuan-Fang compiled the "Zhu Bing Yuan Hou Lun" (Thesis on the Origins and Symptoms of Various Diseases), which is a veritable encyclopedia of Qigong methods listing 260 different ways of increasing the Qi flow. The "Qian Jin Fang" (Thousand Gold Prescriptions) by Sun Si-Mao described the method of leading Qi, and also described the use of the Six Sounds. The Buddhists and Daoists had already been using the Six Sounds to regulate Qi in the internal organs for some time. Sun Si-Mao also introduced a massage system called Lao Zi's 49 Massage Techniques. "Wai Tai Mi Yao" (The Extra Important Secret) by Wang Tao discussed the use of breathing and herbal therapies for disorders of Qi circulation.

During the Song, Jin, and Yuan dynasties (960-1368 A.D.), "Yang Shen Jue" (Life Nourishing Secrets) by Zhang An-Dao discussed several Qigong practices. "Ru Men Shi Shi" (The Confucian Point of View) by Zhang Zi-He describes the use of Qigong to cure external injuries such as cuts and sprains. "Lan Shi Mi Cang" (Secret Library of the Orchid Room) by Li Guo describes using Qigong and herbal remedies for internal disorders. "Ge Zhi Yu Lun" (A Further Thesis of Complete Study) by Zhu Dan-Xi provided a theoretical explanation for the use of Qigong in curing disease.

During the Song dynasty (960-1279 A.D.), Chang San-Feng is believed to have created Taijiquan (or Tai Chi Chuan). Taiji followed a different approach in its use of Qigong than did Shaolin. While Shaolin emphasized Wai Dan (External Elixir) Qigong exercises, Taiji emphasized Nei Dan (Internal Elixir) Qigong training.

In 1026 A.D. the famous brass man of acupuncture was designed and built by Dr. Wang Wei-Yi. Before that time, the many publications which discussed acupuncture theory, principles, and treatment techniques disagreed with each other, and left many points unclear. When Dr. Wang built his brass man, he also wrote a book called "Tong Ren Yu Xue Zhen Jiu Tu" (Illustration of the Brass Man Acupuncture and Moxibustion). He explained the relationship of the 12 organs and the 12 Qi channels, clarified many of the points of confusion, and, for the first time, systematically organized acupuncture theory and principles.

In 1034 A.D. Dr. Wang used acupuncture to cure the emperor Ren Zong. With the support of the emperor, acupuncture flourished. In order to encourage acupuncture medical research, the emperor built a temple to Bian Que, who wrote the Nan Jing, and worshiped him as the ancestor of acupuncture. Acupuncture technology developed so much that even the Jin race in the distant North requested the brass man and other acupuncture technology as a condition for peace. Between 1102 to 1106 A.D. Dr. Wang dissected the bodies of prisoners and added more information to the Nan Jing. His work contributed greatly to the advancement of Qigong and Chinese medicine by giving a clear and systematic idea of the circulation of Qi in the human body.

Later, in the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279 A.D.), Marshal Yue Fei was credited with creating several internal Qigong exercises and martial arts. It is said that he created

the Eight Pieces of Brocade to improve the health of his soldiers. He is also known as the creator of the internal martial style Xing Yi. Eagle style martial artists also claim that Yue Fei was the creator of their style.

From then until the end of the Qing dynasty (1911 A.D.), many other Qigong styles were founded. The well known ones include Hu Bu Gong (Tiger Step Gong), Shi Er Zhuang (Twelve Postures) and Jiao Hua Gong (Beggar Gong). Also in this period, many documents related to Qigong were published, such as "Bao Shen Mi Yao" (The Secret Important Document of Body Protection) by Cao Yuan-Bai, which described moving and stationary Qigong practices; and "Yang Shen Fu Yu" (Brief Introduction to Nourishing the Body) by Chen Ji Ru, about the three treasures: Jing (essence), Qi (internal energy), and Shen (spirit). Also, "Yi Fan Ji Jie" (The Total Introduction to Medical Prescriptions) by Wang Fan-An reviewed and summarized the previously published materials; and "Nei Gong Tu Shuo" (Illustrated Explanation of Nei Gong) by Wang Zu-Yuan presented the Twelve Pieces of Brocade and explained the idea of combining both moving and stationary Qigong.

In the late Ming dynasty (around 1640 A.D.), a martial Qigong style, Huo Long Gong (Fire Dragon Gong), was created by the Taiyang martial stylists. The well known internal martial art style Ba Gua Zhang (or Ba Kua Chang) (Eight Trigrams Palm) is believed to have been created by Dong Hai-Chuan late in the Qing dynasty (1644-1911 A.D.). This style is now gaining in popularity throughout the world. During the Qing dynasty, Tibetan meditation and martial techniques became widespread in China for the first time. This was due to the encouragement and interest of the Manchurian Emperors in the royal palace, as well as others of high rank in society.

From the End of Qing Dynasty to the Present

Before 1911 A.D., Chinese society was very conservative and old-fashioned. Even though China had been expanding its contact with the outside world for the previous hundred years, the outside world had little influence beyond the coastal regions. With the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in 1911 and the founding of the Chinese Republic, the nation began changing as never before. Since this time Qigong practice has entered a new era. Because of the ease of communication in the modern world, Western culture now has great influence on the Orient. Many Chinese have opened their minds and changed their traditional ideas, especially in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Various Qigong styles are now being taught openly, and many formerly secret documents are being published. Modern methods of communication have opened up Qigong to a much wider audience than ever before, and people now have the opportunity to study and understand many different styles. In addition, people are now able to compare Chinese Qigong to similar arts from other countries such as India, Japan, Korea, and the Middle East.

I believe that in the near future Qigong will be considered the most exciting and challenging field of research. It is an ancient science just waiting to be investigated with the help of the new technologies now being developed at an almost explosive rate. Anything we can do to accelerate this research will greatly help humanity to understand and improve itself.

Yan Xin Qigong

Qigong is Chinese medical meditation, and Dr. Yan Xin is the leader of its most popular form. Of the estimated 160,000,000 people worldwide now doing qigong, perhaps a third are following Dr. Yan's basic nine-step method. Yan Xin qigong is one of the least physically active and most mentally active of the some 150 approaches that exist.

As qigong diffuses from China to the West, we are witnessing a now familiar turn of events. In the 1970s the Chinese began to 'export' acupuncture to North America in a big way. At first, Western scientists claimed that acupuncture did not work, that stories of people undergoing surgery with only acupuncture anaesthesia were impossible and false. Before long they began to admit that acupuncture did work, but they labelled it a 'placebo effect.' Gradually, some came to understand that, instead, acupuncture does have scientifically observable effects. For example, it enhances production of naturally occurring morphine-like substances called endorphins and enkephalins that moderate pain. Now qigong is invading the West in a big way, and the cycle is repeating itself.



Looked at from a purely Western perspective, qigong is a form of positive thinking. It combines meditation, breath control and gymnastics (Porkert w/Ullmann 1982: 106). There are breathing exercises, muscular exercises involving both tension and relaxation, and meditation. Qigong induces a whole-body relaxation response (see Benson w/Proctor 1984: 100-01). One clinical research fellow at the Harvard Medical School has written: "A one-hour session of Qi Gong combines aerobic, isometric, and isotonic exercise with the relaxation response, meditation, guided imagery, and probably several unrecognized behavioral techniques. It evokes simultaneously almost every behavioral intervention known to Western medicine" (Eisenberg w/Wright 1985: 227-8).

The Qigong Tradition

The practice dates back beyond the earliest recorded history. We still have pictorial writing on artifacts referring to qigong from seven thousand years ago (Wozniak, Wu & Wang 1991: ii). There is archaeological evidence suggesting that qigong may date back as far as a million years. Qigong predates the martial arts, and all of what we now know as religion as well. It blossomed fully during the period of the Warring states. The very early Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine (1972) treats it at length. Chinese Taoists were early advocates of qigong, but Indian Buddhists have influenced its later practice.

Secular qigong is firmly in the Chinese tradition. Probably all of China's most important ancient scholars, philosophers and religious leaders practiced qigong, including Confucius, Lao Ze and Mencius (Eisenberg w/Wright 1985: 208-11). Despite claims in *Tone Magazine* (Leung 1995: 6), the qigong approach now sweeping the West, Yan Xin qigong, is not primarily a "Buddhist path." One may of course pursue qigong as a Buddhist path, as the Ottawa [Canada] Qigong Association is doing with excellent results. The International Yan Xin Qigong Association, however, is intentionally secular, as are most of its local chapters. Dr. Yan Xin often tells audiences that practicing qigong should be a regular part of everyday secular life, "just like brushing your teeth."

In addition to being a health-promoting practice, qigong is an ancient philosophical system. According to Dr. Yan, its basic purpose is to promote the harmonious integration of human beings with the universe (Wozniak, Wu & Wang 1991: i). The medical premise is that people's lives and bodies can come to be at odds with the cosmic forces that surround us, and of which we are apart. In doing qigong, we therefore align ourselves with the earth's magnetic field (and we should sleep in beds so aligned as well).

Qigong helps restore the harmony of ourselves, of our beings, in nature and with nature. This cures an enormous range of the illnesses and diseases that plague our species. One student finds his arthritis suddenly disappear, another notices that her visual acuity has improved, a third finds a chronic pain has vanished. A fourth is surprised to find himself driving more courteously (UAQA). all sense what it means to be happier, more alive, more at home on the planet. We all have latent potential abilities that qigong can help us realize. Qigong is a consciousness-raising activity par excellence.

Doing Yan Xin Qigong

A person practicing Yan Xin qigong may appear to be sitting quietly and perhaps thinking of nothing. This is both true and untrue. The person is listening but not really listening, thinking but not thinking in the normal sense, imagining but not imagining, aware of the surroundings but not too aware. Such is the qigong meditative state. Smiling and good wishes are important qigong techniques. Although sitting quietly, a beginner is trying to breathe deeply, slowly and regularly -- and counting each breath. At first it takes a lot of effort to exert harmonious control over the diaphragm, chest walls, throat, tongue and nasal passages. The beginner is also pushing virtually to the breaking point the human capacity to imagine.

At first the imagination is not up to this task. One must simultaneously imagine a flow of energy, information, light, colors, sounds and even fragrances entering the body through the top of the head. This infusion of qi, one imagines, all rushes out and down from the forehead. It passes through the nose down to one's open palms opposite the navel. It then passes in to the seat of qi, a point deep within the pelvis some two inches below the navel. Students gradually learn to focus upon this vital center or 'dan tian' point, and to sense the qi as localized warmth or heat. It takes much longer, months or years in fact, to learn to activate the channels and move qi around the body through will power alone.

In step one, the novice qigong meditator has a lot to imagine. Try to visualize a fire or bright light in the dan tian area, above which is water, on top of which is a blossoming red lotus flower. The flower opens and closes with one's breathing. As one inhales, the pores of the skin also open to take in energy/information from the universe. This all travels to the flower. Gradually the internal light intensifies and lights up the internal organs, especially the heart. The heart contracts as one inhales and relaxes as one exhales. The meditator eventually changes hand positions to hold a large imaginary fruit that glows and spins and changes size as one breathes.

How Qigong Works

A basic purpose of these activities is to impose a disciplined and rhythmic pattern on one's body. We impose willed control over breathing, normally an involuntary function of the parasympathetic nervous system. Doing so helps bring the body into phase with the larger rhythms of daily life, the cycles of the days and the seasons. Most diseases are irregularities and dysfunctions. Put the body into phase and flow with the universe, and the qi will flow more freely. Freely flowing qi can eliminate irregularities and dysfunctions. Qigong permits a person to gain some control over autonomic functions. The exercises produce 'autonomic learning' that modulates and rectifies the flow of the life force (Porkert w/Ullmann 1982: 106- 7). This form of biofeedback does not require machines.



We have lost the ancient way of living in quiescence and tranquillity. Qigong helps to bring this back. Beyond the basic imagination exercises, when we have a fever we think of the sea, bamboo leaves, or the cool forest floor. If we are restless we think of the blue sky, cool and serene moonlight, etc. (Yan 1994b: 6) Being in phase with the cosmic environment greatly strengthens the body, and it strongly helps to produce an optimistic and happy attitude toward life. Central to the philosophy of qigong is the understanding that we must cultivate moral and physical strength together to prolong life, develop human potential and help others. A cardinal rule of Yan Xin qigong is to treat others with compassion. When one family member practices qigong, the others benefit.

The regulation of thoughts, breathing and posture all help to reduce the mind/body's neural activity. Qigong practice strengthens the body's electrical and biochemical signals, and the structure and sensitivity of the receptor cells. This quieting of the body permits physiological and biochemical functions to regain their healthy flows. This cures specific ailments, but it also strengthens one's overall biological field or bioenergy, drastically cuts down the number of free radicals and minimizes their damage at the cellular level. That prolongs life.

Qigong meditation works best by far in the company of a group. While one must regularly practice alone at home, this is not enough. When people come together to practice qigong, they put their biological fields in proximity. These fields begin to resonate with one another, and so to multiply the benefits of practice for each person. For this to happen requires two things. First, ill people must truly want to get rid of their diseases. Second, they must cultivate the positive, open and optimistic attitude necessary for resonating in harmony with the field.

Sceptical Westerners sometimes mistake this openness to change for a 'placebo effect.' In a placebo-effect situation, the subject is fooled into thinking a therapeutic treatment is happening when it is not. The open optimism necessary for success in qigong is much different. In the case of the placebo effect, belief produces a consequence, a self-fulfilling prophecy or at least the mistaken perception of improvement. When people doing qigong agree to resonate in harmony, this is a prerequisite to success. Good, real and lasting effects follow. Dr. Yan Xin calls this necessary precondition for success "synchronous resonance" (Wozniak, Wu & Wang 1991: 81).

It does help to play a trick with one's mind when doing qigong to treat some specific problem. So long as one's mind is focused on a specific problem of ill health it is not possible to enter fully into the deep qigong state in which lasting healing can occur. One must therefore learn to forget about the problem and look only for general benefits. If the cosmic forces of the universe are to do their healing task, we must be fully open to receive them.

Advancing More Deeply into the Process

As one advances more deeply into qigong practice, and into the qigong state, significant physiological changes occur. Consumption of oxygen decreases. The lung's capacity to absorb oxygen greatly increases. So does the lung tissue's oxygen storage capacity. The white blood cell count goes up dramatically. Dr. Yan Xin writes that doing qigong "improves micro-circulation of the cerebrum and this cannot be obtained through any other kind of practice. The brain's deeply layered cerebral cells are enriched with sufficient blood by doing qigong" (Wozniak, Wu & Wang 1991: 43). This oxygen enrichment of the brain is an important key to many qigong effects.

After practicing for several months, one who does qigong faithfully will begin to experience spontaneous physical movements. As the Chinese doctors like to say, "life has to move." Paradoxically, only when the mind becomes calm and serene does one's bioenergy

becomes strong enough to produce spontaneous movements. The first appearance of spontaneous movements represents significant progress along the qigong learning curve. One cannot seek them out. They must come along spontaneously, in their own good time.

Advancement in qigong follows a natural course. One should strive to stay relaxed, calm and in good spirits. It is especially important to be and remain on good terms with family members. Some bad feelings, pains or excessive spontaneous movements are likely to occur. These may represent mental discord, pessimism or a lack of family support. Everyone will at times feel uncomfortable, upset, angry or depressed. Everyone will experience sorrow, unfair treatment or a guilty conscience. When these happen, try to overcome them with good works, internal resolve and a positive attitude (Wozniak, Wu & Wang 1991: 86).

Strong spontaneous movements may at first feel frightening, but those who have strong movements without internal discord have a great advantage. They will be able to achieve a stronger state of qi after guidance and instruction. Dr. Yan says: "... after one reaches a certain level in qigong, one depends heavily on virtue and good deeds to get more Qi and energy" (ibid.:79).

After a lot of practice, one will begin to sense the activation of a small qi channel. This channel runs from the top of the head down the front of one's chest, between the legs, up the spine back to the top of the head. Activating one's qi will make a person feel "sore, numb, hurt, cold, cool, warm, hot, floating, sinking, big, small, dizzy, etc. (Wozniak, Wu & Wang 1991: 39). This is another major advance along the qigong learning curve. With sufficient practice, one may eventually become able to move one's qi at will anywhere inside the body. A person's own willpower can then effect miraculous cures. Once the flow of qi can reach the site of disease or illness, the cure can be astonishingly rapid.

Conclusion

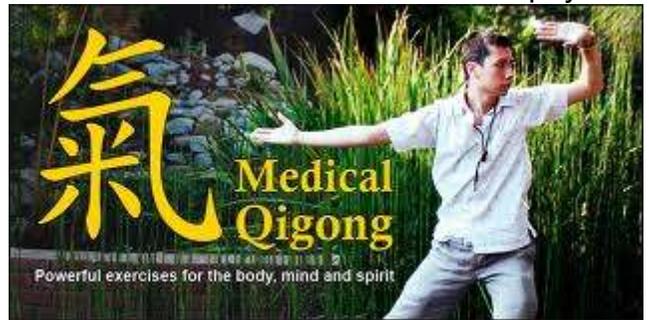
Western science leaves off its study of life's energy at the inanimate level of chemicals. But life has another entire level of organization above that of the cells, tissues and organs. What is it that controls cell replacement, tissue regeneration and metabolic energy? The Chinese call it qi. We can train this vital life force itself to keep regenerating our good health for many, many years (Dong & Esser 1990:18). Every great ethical system upholds virtue for highly practical reasons. What goes around comes around.

Wrongdoing against others may result in some immediate gain, but our minds will indelibly record our guilt, while our bodies will record such behavior by becoming twisted. If we harm others, this act will block the free flow of qi within our own bodies. It is very dangerous to continue immoral activities once one has begun to practice qigong. Dr. Yan says that crimes, sins and simple wrongdoing record themselves as signals in the body. These signals interfere with qigong progress (Yan 1994a: 8). Yan Xin writes: "Within the higher realm of qigong there is a rule: do not try to harm others or you will harm yourself. Virtue is very important. Without it, one's qi will decrease or be totally lost" (Wozniak, Wu & Wang 1991: 75).

If one wants to advance one's qigong practice, it will become necessary to admit the wrongs we have done against others and to take action to correct these wrongs. Ultimately, good health requires peace of mind. Let me repeat that Yan Xin qigong does not require any particular religious commitment. Whatever religion you practice or do not practice, qigong can work to improve the length, well being and quality of your life.

Introduction to Medical Qigong

Qigong (pronounced chee goong) is a system of Chinese health care that combines physical training, preventive and therapeutic medicine, with Eastern philosophy. The word “qi” (or chi) means air, breath of life, or vital essence. “Gong” means work, self-discipline, achievement, or mastery. Qigong is said to be “the cultivation and deliberate control of a higher form of vital energy,” (Dong & Esser1990:xi), as well as “an ancient philosophical system of harmonious integration of the human body with the universe,” (Yan Xin (1991:i). Qigong challenges the foundations of Western biomedical thought by rejecting the idea that the human species is unaffected by nature. More specifically, this art combines the physical benefits of isometrics, isotonics, and aerobic conditioning, with the healing elements of meditation and relaxation. Qigong is a discipline that focuses on gaining awareness and control over the life force or “qi” present in our bodies. There are more than 3,000 varieties of Qigong, which can be divided into five major categories: Medical, Taoist, Buddhist, Confucian, and the Martial Arts. Qigong is one of the soft forms of a sub-set of disciplines that includes Taiji (Tai Chi Quan), and the hard form of Kung Fu. In this article, we will discuss Medical Qigong.



For many centuries, Qigong has been a mainstay in Chinese medical practices. Ancient turtle-shell artifacts conclusively show the art was important at least 7,000 years ago. Archaeological evidence suggests the practice may date back one million years. About 2,000 years ago The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine was the first literature to systematically describe the tradition. However, during the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1965-76) the Communist Party and Red Guards suppressed the discipline. Around 1978, renewed interest in the medical art began to arise in China. This trend continued into the 1980s. In 1988, the Chinese held the first World Conference for exchanging Qigong medical research in Beijing (MacRitchie 1993: 4). Subsequent World Conferences took place in Tokyo and Berkeley. Another was held in the summer of 1996 in New York City.

North American psychological, physiological and medical researchers are also studying Qigong with great interest. University students throughout North America have formed Qigong groups. Even such institutions as the film industry, (with the creation of Kung fu movies) and the New Age Movement have significantly increased the study's proliferation. Qigong homepages are blossoming on the Internet World Wide Web as well.

Today, more than 70 million Chinese practice Qigong daily (McGee w/Chow 1994:xiii). Some view the method as a curative step for existing afflictions, while others use the method as a preventative measure. Qigong can be an integral component in the fight against virtually any disease. As many as 50% of all diseases dismissed by orthodox doctors as untreatable or 'psychosomatic' may be impressively impacted by the method; some of which being eradicated completely.

Chinese doctors have applied Qigong in hospitals and clinics to treat individuals suffering from a variety of maladies.

The following is a list of some of the common ailments frequently treated with Qigong:

| Circulatory & Nervous Systems | Digestive System | Respiratory, Ocular & Auditory Systems | Other Chronic Diseases | Other |
|--|-------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| Arthritis | Constipation | Myopia | Diabetes | Substance abuse |
| Rheumatism | Ulcers | Retinopathy | Cancer; reduce side effects of chemotherapy | Insomnia |
| Sciatic Neuralgia | Liver disease | Meniere's disease | Cerebral Palsy & Multiple Sclerosis | Stress |
| Peripheral Vascular disease | Kidney disease | Allergies | Parkinson's disease | Paralysis, due to external injury |
| Headaches | Obesity | Asthma | Post-stroke syndrome | Chronic pain |
| Hypertension & High Blood Pressure | Gastritis | | Gout | Aphasia; temporary loss of speech |

Since it is best used for staving off disease and treating chronic conditions or disabilities, Qigong may not be the most suitable treatment for acute illness or medical emergencies. It can be used as a compliment and supplement to conventional medical practices. If one decides to try Qigong during the course of treatment of an existing illness, it is advisable that do so under the guidance of a licensed Chinese medical doctor. Professional supervision is strongly suggested for beginners.

Preventing Disease

In addition to its curative potential, by preventing the onset of disease, Qigong can significantly reduce the amount of suffering and financial burden experienced by many patients due to long-term health care. Qigong increases physical strength, heightens resistance to infectious diseases and premature senility, and helps ensure a long life. Practicing this method can greatly reduce the likelihood of stroke. It can improve blood sugar levels for diabetics. Because it normalizes the level of sex hormones, it helps ward off sexual impotence and frigidity. In fact, Qigong's stress relieving attributes may improve one's overall sex life -both quantity and quality. Practicing this discipline can hasten recovery from surgery, as well as from sports and other injuries by up to 50% (McGee w/Chow 1994:17-9). Qigong offers individuals a way to achieve a relaxed, harmonious state of dynamic equilibrium. It typically improves overall health, allowing them to maintain a pain-free life full of vigor and grace.

How does Qigong Work?

Breathing and meditation are an important part of Medical Qigong. In a Qigong meditative state, one is fully relaxed, yet not in a trance. One can increase qi and direct it to any area of distress. Anxiety and self-doubt are replaced with peace of mind and increased confidence. Gradually, all distractions, worries, and hints of depression begin to dissipate. Meditation fosters feelings of happiness, which, in turn, stimulate circulation of blood and qi. This therapy contributes to the healing of those who are already ill, as well as increasing the vitality of healthy individuals. People of all ages can develop and maintain internal vigour and good health through Qigong.



Practicing Qigong lowers blood pressure, pulse rates, metabolic rates, lactate production, and oxygen demand. It raises the endocrine system's capabilities. It also has a regulating effect on the substances cyclic adenosine monophosphate and cyclic guanosine monophosphate, which play important roles in proper respiratory function and the delivery of oxygen to the body's cells. The sense of serenity the exercise produces is the result of slightly elevated body temperature and an increased rate of oxygen absorption. Qigong activates qi, improves blood circulation, and balances yin and yang. It bolsters the immune system, and stimulates the conductivity of the meridians and channels through which qi flows (Dong & Esser 1994:94-6).



In Chinese medical theory, many diseases come from adverse environmental conditions such as: Heat, cold, wind, dryness and humidity; wrong diet; spoiled food; worms and microbes; poisoning and pollution; trauma and accidents. Internal conditions can arise from excess or deficient emotions of anger, joy, sympathy, grief or fear [and] inappropriate mental attitudes and beliefs. There are also maladies of the spirit that [sic] can cause serious problems. These factors can cause one's chi (qi) to become excessive, deficient, stuck, blocked, congested or stagnant, and thereby cause all manner of problems. -MacRitchie, 1993:64

The goal of Qigong is to encourage the circulation of qi throughout the body. This helps the body resist or overcome imbalances or blockages, and the resulting disharmonies. It shares similar objectives with some other disciplines such as acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine. As illustrated by Dong and Esser:

Chinese herbology, acupuncture, and chi gong are three parts of a single entity, as closely related as water, steam, and ice. They can be and often are used separately, and may be used together. With dietetics and massage they are considered to be the indispensable components of traditional Chinese health care.... While acupuncture and herbal medicine typically focus on curing sickness, chi gong usually focuses on maintaining good health (as do massage and balanced – for yin and yang – nutrition). -Dong and Esser 1994:66

A primary aim of Qigong is to maintain or restore balance and harmony of mind and body, while becoming aware of the human body's place within nature's oneness. As a Qigong practitioner becomes more conscious of the state of his or her body, he or she gains a greater resistance to the imbalances and blockages affecting qi. This sensitivity aids in the balance of the yin and yang, the two opposing forces of Universal Order. In the seventeenth century, Descartes' postulate, (which most Westerners still accept today) stated that the mind and body are separate entities. The Qigong student will contend that such a notion is a fallacy. It is in this context that we are able to understand the philosophy of Qigong, where qi is the force that integrates the relationship between body (matter, structure) and mind (process, function). Scholars of this art gain more than improved health. They learn another way of viewing and experiencing the dynamic unity of life, an attitude far removed from the feelings of disenchantment and alienation common in Western civilization. Students of qigong learn to achieve their potential as highly successful members of our species.

How Does One Practice Qigong?

One need not become a Qigong master to experience many of its healing effects. For health purposes, one needs to learn only a few exercises. One must achieve a state of tranquillity, find release from tension, take on a positive attitude, and develop strong will power. Benefits can be further achieved in one of three ways. First, one can go to a master for treatment by that master's external qi. Although some masters exist in some Western metropolitan areas such as Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, or Vancouver, the most experienced masters reside in China. Second, one can seek education from a master and practice exercise and meditation. Third, in a supervised group, one can learn to treat oneself. The latter is the most realistic option for most North Americans.

In order to fully benefit from Qigong training, one must apply time, patience, commitment, determination and persistence. This art involves more than simple physical training. It requires retraining one's breathing and thought processes. Learning the basics can take from three months to a year (Dong & Esser 1990:52). As with any other human endeavour, some people will prove more adept at the art than others, and so will progress more quickly. However, anyone with enough motivation can learn adequate skills to make a positive impact upon one's quality of life. While there are no shortcuts, there are also no limits to how far one may progress.

Some Caveats

Although Qigong has numerous invaluable benefits, there are a few pointers for the novice that will make every experience a positive one.

Because Qigong thins the blood and increases circulation, pregnant and menstruating women, persons with internal bleeding, persons suffering from acute infectious diseases, and those recovering from oral surgery or trauma should avoid the practice until the condition disappears. Avoid exercising if you are prone to dizziness. Qigong is not for severely disturbed mental patients. Because of the elevation of energy levels, people may find the temptation to slight one's nutritional needs while utilizing this program. Fasting (bigu) does have a place in the discipline; however, a genuine fast should only be performed under the strict supervision of a Chinese medical doctor well versed in Qigong. People with anorexia should exercise caution. Do not eat or drink, especially alcohol, within an hour and a half before a session. Avoid sexual intercourse for at least one hour before and after a session as well. When exercising, face either North or South, in line with the earth's magnetic field. Exercise at the same time of day and the same days through the week.

For neophytes, it is exhilarating to take in energy from the universe. People often prematurely try to emit external qi like a Qigong master through the eyes, fingertips or palms. Doing this can dangerously deplete one's own vitality. One should not attempt to do so until after many years of practice, and only then under close supervision of a Qigong master or Chinese medical doctor.

The Twenty-Four Rules for Chi Kung Practice

By Yang, Jwing-Ming

When I began studying Qi Gong (Chi Kung), one of my classmates who had been at it for a while, said that when it comes to feeling your Qi moving within your body, it will take two years to feel anything, and five years to believe it.



While taking two years to feel the Qi wasn't exactly right, the essence of his comments are still very true. Qi Gong is a path, not a destination, and along that path are many signposts that you will pass. Feeling the Qi, believing you feel the Qi, learning to direct it with physical movements, learning to direct it with just your mind's intent, directing it somewhere in the future, in the past, etc... are all steps along a never ending path.

The article that follows is designed to prepare you for a life of discipline, not instant gratification. The only true gratification that comes from doing Qi Gong is to enjoy the activity while your doing it, no matter what your level. Gratification that is dependent on obtaining any sort of power will only get in the way of the most sacred of all side-effects of Qi Gong, and that is enlightenment itself.

The Twenty-Four Rules for Chi Kung Practice

In this section we will list the twenty-four rules which have been passed down by generations of Chi Kung masters. These rules are based on much study and experience, and you should observe them carefully.

Don't be Stubborn about Plans and Ideas

This is one of the easiest mistakes for beginners to make. When we take up Chi Kung we are enthusiastic and eager. However, sometimes we don't learn as fast as we would like to, and we become impatient and try to force things. Sometimes we set up a schedule for ourselves: today I want to make my Dan Tien warm, tomorrow I want to get through the tailbone cavity, by such and such a day I want to complete the small circulation. This is the wrong way to go about it. Chi Kung is not like any ordinal-v job or task you set for yourself -- YOU CANNOT MAKE A PROGRESS SCHEDULE FOR CHI KUNG. This will only make your thinking rigid and stagnate your progress. EVERYTHING HAPPENS WHEN IT IS TIME FOR IT TO HAPPEN. IF YOU FORCE IT, IT WILL NOT HAPPEN NATURALLY.

Don't Place your Attention in Discrimination

When you practice, do not place your attention on the various phenomena or sensations which are occurring. Be aware of what is happening, but keep your mind centered on wherever it is supposed to be for the exercise you are doing. If you let your mind go to wherever you feel something "interesting" happening, the Chi will follow your mind and interfere with your body's natural tendency to rebalance itself. Do not expect anything to happen, and don't let your mind wander around looking for the various phenomena. Furthermore, don't start evaluating or judging the phenomena, such as asking "Is my Dan Tien warmer today than it was yesterday?" Don't ask yourself "Just where is my Chi now?" When your mind is on your Chi, your Yi is there also, and this stagnant Yi will not lead the Chi BE AWARE OF WHAT IS HAPPENING, BUT DON'T PAY ATTENTION TO IT. When you drive a car, you don't watch yourself steer and work the pedals and shift gears. If you did, you'd drive off the road. You simply put your mind on where you want to go and let your body automatically drive the car. This is called regulating without regulating.

Avoid Miscellaneous Thought Remaining on Origins

This is a problem of regulating the mind. The emotional mind is strong, and every idea is still strongly connected to its origin. If you cannot cut the ideas off at their source, your mind is not regulated, and you should not try to regulate your Chi. You will also often find that even though you have stopped the flow of random thoughts going through your mind, new ideas are generated during practice. For example, when you discover your Dan Tien is warm, your mind immediately recalls where this is mentioned in a book, or how the master described it, and you start to compare your experience with this. Or you may start wondering what the next step is. All of these thoughts will lead you away from peace and calm, and your mind will end up in the "Domain of the Devil." Then your mind will be confused, scattered, and very often scared, and you will tire quickly.

Hsin (Shen) Should not Follow the External Scenery

This is also a problem of regulating the mind (Hsin). When your emotional mind is not controlled, any external distraction will lead it away from your body and to the distraction. You must train yourself so that noises, smells, conversations and such will not disturb your concentration. It is all right to be aware of what is happening, but your mind must remain calmly, peacefully and steadily on your cultivation.

Regulate your Sexual Activity

You should not have sexual relations at least 24 hours before or after practicing Chi Kung, especially martial or religious Chi Kung. The Essence-Chi conversion training is a very critical part of these practices, and if you practice Chi Kung soon after sex, you will harm your body significantly. Sex depletes your Chi and sperm, and the Chi level in the lower portion of your body is lower than normal. When you practice Chi Kung under these conditions, it is like doing heavy exercise right after sex. Furthermore, when your Chi level is abnormal, your feeling and sensing are also not accurate. Under these conditions, your Yi can be misled and its accuracy affected. You should wait until the Chi level regains its normal balance before you resume Chi Kung. Only then will the Essence-Chi conversion proceed normally and efficiently.

One of the major purposes of Chi Kung is to increase the Essence-Chi conversion and use this Chi to nourish your body. Once a man has built up a supply of Chi, having sex will only pass this Chi on to his partner. As a matter of fact, many Chi Kung masters insist that you should not have sex three days before and four days after practice. During sexual relations the female usually gains Chi while the male loses Chi during ejaculation. The woman should not practice Chi Kung after sex until her body has digested the Chi she has obtained from the man. There are certain Taoist Chi Kung techniques which teach men how not to lose Chi during sexual activity, and teach women how to receive Chi from the man and digest it. We will leave the discussion of this subject to Chi Kung masters who are qualified and experienced in it.

Don't be Too Warm or Too Cold

The temperature of the room in which you are training should not be too hot or too cold. You should practice in the most comfortable environment which will not disturb your mind and cultivation.

Be Careful of the Five Weaknesses and Internal Injuries

Five weaknesses means the weaknesses of five Yin organs: the heart, liver, lungs, kidneys, and spleen. When you realize that any of these five organs is weak, you should proceed very gradually and gently with your Chi Kung practice. Chi Kung practice is an internal exercise which is directly related to these five organs. If you do not move gradually and gently, it is like forcing a weak person to run 10 miles right away. This will not build up his strength, instead it will injure him more seriously.

For the same reason, when you have an internal injury your internal Chi distribution and circulation is already disturbed. If you practice Chi Kung your feelings may be misled, and your practice may worsen your problem and interfere with the natural healing process. There are certain Chi Kung exercises which are designed to cure internal injuries, but to use them properly you need to have a very good understanding of the Chi situation of your body.

Avoid Facing the Wind when Sweating

Don't practice in the wind, especially facing the wind. When you practice Chi Kung you are exercising either internally, or both internally and externally. It is normal to sweat, and since you are relaxed, your pores are wide open, If you expose your body to cold wind, you will catch cold.

Don't Wear Tight Clothes and Belt

Always wear loose clothes during practice because this will help you to feel comfortable. Keep your belt loose, too. The abdomen is the key area in Chi Kung practice, and you must be careful not to limit the movement of this area because it will interfere with your practice.

Don't Eat too Much Greasy and Sweet Food

You should regulate your eating habit while you are practicing: Chi Kung. Greasy or sweet food will increase your Fire Chi, making your mind scattered, and your Shen will stray away from its residence. You should eat more fruit and vegetables, and keep away from alcohol and tobacco.

Don't Hang your Feet off the Bed

In ancient times the most common place in Chi Kung practice was sitting on your bed. Since most beds were high, if you sat on the edge of the bed your feet would hang off the side of the bed above the floor. When you practice Chi Kung your feet should touch the floor. If they do not, all of the weight of your body will press down on the lower part of your thighs and reduce the Chi and blood circulation. Furthermore, when you practice you should not put your feet up on the table, because this position will also stagnate the Chi and blood circulation.

Don't Practice with a Full Bladder

You should go to the toilet before you start your practice. If you need to go during practice, stop your practice and do so. Holding it in disturbs your concentration.

Don't Scratch an Itch

If you itch because of some external reason, such as an insect walking on you or biting you, do not be alarmed and keep your mind calm. Use your Yi to lead the Chi back to its residence, the Dan Tien. Breathe a couple of times and gradually bring your consciousness back to your surroundings. Then you may scratch or think of how to stop the itching. However, if the itching is caused by Chi redistribution in the Chi Kung practice, remain calm and do not move your mind there. Simply ignore it and let it happen. Once it has reached a new balance, the itching will stop. If you scratch this kind of itch it means that your mind has been disturbed, and also that you are using your hands to interfere with the natural rebalancing of your body's Chi.

Avoid Being Suddenly Disturbed or Startled

You should avoid being suddenly disturbed or startled. However, if it does happen, calm down your mind. You must absolutely prevent yourself from losing your temper. What has happened has happened, and getting mad cannot change anything. What you should do is prevent it from happening again. Most important of all, though is learning how to regulate your mind when you are disturbed.

Don't Take Delight in the Scenery

It is very common during practice to suddenly notice something that is going on inside of you. Perhaps you feel Chi moving more clearly than ever before, or you start to sense your bone marrow, and you feel elated and excited. You have just fallen into a very common trap. Your concentration is broken, and your mind is divided. This is dangerous and harmful. You have to learn how to be aware of what is going on inside you without getting excited.

Don't Wear Sweaty Clothes

This happens mostly in moving Chi Kung practice, especially in martial Chi Kung training. When your clothes are wet from sweat you will feel uncomfortable, and your concentration will be affected. It is better to change into dry clothes and then resume practice.

Don't Sit When Hungry or Full

You should not practice Chi Kung when you are hungry or when your stomach is full. When you are hungry it is hard to concentrate, and when you are full your practice will affect your digestion.

Heaven and Earth Strange Disaster

It is believed that your body's Chi is directly affected by changes in the weather. It is therefore not advisable to practice Chi Kung when there is a sudden weather change, because your practice will interfere with your body's natural readjustment to the new environment. You will also be unable to feel and sense your Chi flow as you do normally. You must always try to remain emotionally neutral whenever you do Chi Kung; even if you are disturbed by a natural disaster like an earthquake, you must remain calm so that your Chi stays under control.

Listen Sometimes to True Words

You need to have confidence when you practice Chi Kung. You should not listen to advice from people who do not have experience in Chi Kung and who are not familiar with the condition of your body. Some people listen to their classmates explain how they reached a certain level or how they cured a certain problem, and then blindly try to use the same method themselves. You need to understand that everyone has a different body, everyone's health is slightly different, and everyone learns differently. When the time comes for you to learn something new, you will understand what you need. Play it cool and easy, and always have confidence in your training.

Don't Lean and Fall Asleep

You should not continue your Chi Kung training when you are sleepy. Using an unclear mind to lead Chi is dangerous. Also, when you are sleepy your body will not be regulated and will tend to lean or droop, and your bad posture may interfere with the proper Chi circulation. When you are sleepy it is best to take a rest until you are able to regain your spirit.

Don't Meditate When You Have Lost Your Temper or are Too Excited

You should not meditate when you are too excited due to anger or happiness. Since your mind is scattered, meditation will bring you more harm than peace.

Don't Keep Spitting

It is normal to generate a lot of saliva while practicing Chi Kung. The saliva should be swallowed to moisten your throat. Don't spit out the saliva because this is a waste, and it will also disturb your concentration.

Don't Doubt and Become Lazy

When you first start Chi Kung, you must have confidence in what you are doing, and not start doubting its validity, or questioning whether you are doing it right. If you start doubting right at the beginning you will become lazy, and you will start questioning whether you really want to continue. In this case, you will not have any success and your practice will never last.

Do not Ask for the Speedy Success

This is to remind you that Chi Kung practice is time consuming and progress is slow. You must have patience, a strong will, and confidence to reach your goal. Taking it easy and being natural are the most important rules.

From the book entitled "The Root of Chinese Chi Kung, The Secrets of Chi Kung Training", YMAA Publication Center, Jamaica Plain.

A T'ai chi Primer: T'ai Chi Ch'uan Explained

In today's high tech world even the most basic of our needs have become conspicuously dependent on technological gadgets of one sort or another. Activities as simple as walking or running call for special shoes, pulse monitors, or treadmills (even the lower end models being fully computerized for maximum convenience.) In refreshing contrast to this state of affairs we are gifted with the ancient art of T'ai Chi Ch'uan. No designer lycra outfits, no digital things, no rackets, bells or whistles...T'ai Chi is decidedly low-tech.



T'ai Chi Ch'uan is the most widely practiced martial art/health care system in the world today. In China, millions of people commit to beginning each day with its practice. This is due largely to the fact that T'ai Chi is understood to offer those who practice it a range of benefits for the mind, body and soul.

At this time, as we embark on a new millennium, T'ai Chi has become firmly rooted in our own western culture as well. Only recently have organized studies begun to explore the reputed health benefits of T'ai Chi. Yet, centuries of empirical evidence lay claim to T'ai Chi's efficacy as a health care and wellness modality. In China, T'ai Chi has typically been indicated for a wide range of chronic illnesses, including, but not limited to:

- Back or knee problems
- Hypertension and other stress related issues
- Circulatory system disorders
- Nervous system disorders
- Addictions
- Arthritis
- Asthma
- Mental illness

T'ai Chi's application in addressing medical issues such as these remains largely untapped here in the west. Nevertheless, there is little question that T'ai Chi has a great deal to offer, and if the growing number of medical studies citing T'ai Chi for its wide-ranging benefits are any indication of this, then western science and medicine are starting to sit up and take notice. Today almost everyone has had some exposure to T'ai Chi via the various media. Film clips or documentaries on China often depict (albeit briefly) groups of people practicing early morning T'ai Chi exercises. In China, the parks and waterfronts are full of people who begin each day with this healthy slow-motion routine. The Chinese regard T'ai Chi as an official

exercise and as a national treasure. The effective manner in which it contributes to their vast population's wellness and reputed vitality is so important for a country historically lacking in sophisticated medical resources.

T'ai Chi made its first great leap forward into the American stream of consciousness back in



1993, with Bill Moyers' critically acclaimed PBS series "Healing and the Mind." Since that time, T'ai Chi's growth in America has been exponential. Yet, a clear understanding of the purpose and intricacies of this ancient art remains elusive, even for teachers experienced in other fields of martial arts, let alone for the average layperson. T'ai Chi is like the proverbial iceberg in that there is more to it than meets the eye.

By way of explanation, "T'ai Chi Ch'uan" is a generic term. There are several different styles of T'ai Chi popularly practiced. Common to each of the different T'ai Chi systems is a slow motion movement routine. Beyond that the differences depend on the teacher with who you speak. But one thing that T'ai Chi is not is slowed down Karate or Kung Fu. The principles of genuine T'ai Chi differ fundamentally from those of harder style martial arts. T'ai Chi as a martial art maintains its own autonomy.

Although T'ai Chi's benefits are wide-ranging and not limited to those listed below, I understand its practice to be of particular value in four regards:

1. The cultivation of Ch'i or life force energy
2. Exercising and conditioning the body on a very deep level
3. Learning to understand and apply the inner structure of the body
4. Learning to be focused in the moment.

These four areas are pretty much all encompassing. Any of T'ai Chi's other benefits can arguably be assigned to one of these categories. Some of these ideas may seem a bit foreign and difficult to grasp at first, but concealed within these concepts is the magic that T'ai Chi has to offer. It is however, the actual living of these principles that enables the T'ai Chi practitioner to experience renewed health and well-being on all levels. T'ai Chi students may also experience the feeling of being more integrated both with themselves and with their environment. It is the living of these principles that serves as the focal point of this book. [A fifth and separate equally important regard that begs mention, but which I will not address in detail in this book, is T'ai Chi's application as a fighting art.]

Life Force Energy, or Ch'i, is what animates humans as individual living beings. T'ai Chi Ch'uan exerts a gentle balance on one's life force (Ch'i) energy, and promotes improved health and longevity, and an enhanced quality of life. Cultivating a practical understanding and reservoir of Ch'i for self-healing or for martial arts purposes entails a very specialized approach that is best learned from others, who are already knowledgeable in such practice.

T'ai Chi body conditioning is unique in how it simultaneously challenges and addresses the needs of body and mind. Slow, gentle and continuous, T'ai Chi stretching increases the body's range of motion while improving muscle and soft tissue tone and resilience. This manifests on a level deep enough to begin to counter the long-term effects of chronic stress/tension/pain that many people carry. After just a few months of practice, T'ai Chi students often find themselves able to enjoy activities and freedom of movement thought long lost.

The inner structure of T'ai Chi refers to the anatomically correct alignment of the skeletal frame and connective tissues. Advanced level T'ai Chi is quite precise and entails an exact, often frustratingly subtle, positioning of the body's various components. The bones, tendons and ligaments must be aligned "just so" in order to facilitate a mechanical advantage in movement or stillness. This can take quite some time to master, but once grasped the benefits of improved posture, rooting and economy of movement become self-evident.

Finally, we are learning to be in the moment. As simple as this sounds it is probably the concept most challenging to the average westerner to actually implement. From the moment we wake up each day each of us is deluged with a barrage of sensual stimuli. We often find ourselves preoccupied with the world around us. We spend the greater part of our waking time, and all too often our sleeping time as well, dealing with it, buying it, selling it, wearing it, listening to it, eating it, watching it and otherwise trying to secure it for ourselves, or trying to secure our place in it.

T'ai Chi teaches us that there is another world, equally vast, and equally important...the world within.

In Taoism it is said that whatever is outside is also inside. If we spend our lives speeding down the highway, how much will we miss at life's roadside? The slow motion approach of T'ai Chi doesn't just allow, but rather compels, an enhanced state of self-awareness. T'ai Chi Ch'uan students learn to cultivate two important concomitant states, those of attention and intention, combing them into an inseparable "One." This facilitates personal clarity and allows us to proceed through life in a more conscious, deliberate and enriching manner. As such, these are important "ingredients" in evolving towards better health and towards a sense of feeling more fully integrated as human beings.



As appealing as all this may sound, the real challenge is to do it right, because practicing incorrectly will fail to produce the full range of desired results. In order to learn T'ai Chi well, and derive all the aforementioned benefits, one must have a suitable guide and be prepared to commit to regular practice. T'ai Chi Ch'uan is indeed delightful to watch. Even just observing someone practice T'ai chi form can induce a feeling of calm and wonder. But that which is truly important in T'ai Chi is typically beyond the casual observer's abilities. It is the internal experience of T'ai Chi that is so valuable and that can prove so elusive.

T'ai Chi Ch'uan can certainly be many things to many people, but one thing it will do for anybody who practices it is slow them down, even if just for the duration of practice. At the very least, it serves as a model for reprieve from the out of control pace of modern life. As one flows through the slow and gentle movements of the T'ai Chi sequence, the whole psycho-physiological system (the body/mind) relaxes (parasympathetic response), including the cardiovascular, nervous and endocrine systems. Notably, this produces a rejuvenating effect rather than a dulling of the mind or body as one might expect with such a deep level of relaxation. Surely in relaxing the body/mind and calming the spirit, T'ai Chi is, at the most basic level, an oasis for modern humankind from many of the stresses and distractions of life in today's world.

Things to remember

1. Ch'i or Life Force Energy animates us as living beings.
2. T'ai Chi body conditioning increases your range of motion while improving muscle tone and resilience.
3. The Inner Structure of T'ai Chi facilitates a mechanical advantage in movement or stillness.
4. Being In the Moment compels enhanced self-awareness and integration.

Why Do You Keep On Asking Me to Stick My Tongue Out?

My question to you is why do you keep closing your eyes when you stick your tongue out? The tongue is an important useful organ for many animals. It is used by birds and frogs to catch insects. Dogs and cats stick their tongues out to show affection. It is helpful in chewing and swallowing our food. It plays an important part in forming the sounds we speak. It is also the chief organ of taste. It helps us to determine what and how much food to eat (for some people). Of course, our sense of smell also determines how the food tastes.



But the tongue is more than that to a Chinese Medicine practitioner

Since it is highly vascular and contains many important taste receptor cells, it is richly supplied by both the nervous system and circulatory system. It is also constantly nourished or “bathed in” saliva. Saliva is secreted by our salivary glands and controlled by our autonomic nervous system. It contains water, electrolytes, mucus, and enzymes. It serves many functions and can change the appearance of the tongue. Therefore the tongue is a very sensitive organ and its appearance can change with many physiological changes in the body. By observing the tongue we can see how our whole body is functioning and able to detect imbalances in different systems in our body. When we ask you to stick your tongue out, we are observing the appearance of the tongue in three distinct areas. The first area is the tongue proper.

We may evaluate the size of the tongue compared to the opening of the mouth or observe any teeth marks on the sides. This may indicate edema or swelling in your body. We may search for any ulcerations or lacerations of the tongue. It may indicate a body that is prone or having some form of inflammation. The color of tongue can give us ideas of the strength of one's health. The normal tongue is pinkish red with a certain shine. When the tongue appears pale, it may be a sign of anemia or weakened body. When it is red, it may be exhibiting hyperactivity in different systems of the body. When the tongue color has a tinge of purple, this might be an indication of pain, congestion and blockages in the body. In general, the tongue proper exhibits the strength of your body's own immunity and functioning.

The second area is the tongue coating

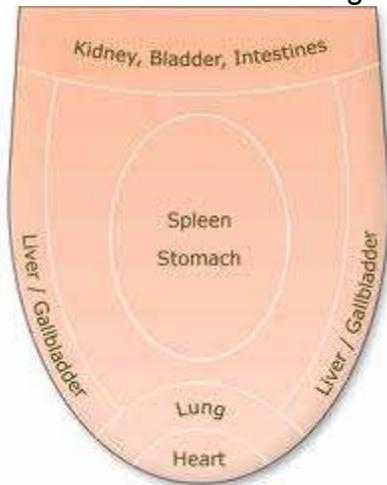
A normal tongue should have a very thin clear coating that exhibits proper enzymatic content and salivary secretions. When the coat becomes thick, it is frequently a sign of imbalance in the digestive system.

When the coat turns thick and cruddy, it is frequently a sign of decreased immune system with Candida (yeast infection) presentation.

When the coat peels, it is frequently a sign of damage or weakening to a certain systems of the body. When the coat turns yellow, it is frequently a sign of infection or inflammation in the body.

The third area is regional analysis.

Different areas of the tongue are represented by the functioning state of different regions of the body. For example, Area A of the tongue represents the functioning of the nervous system and the immune system. Any changes in this area can point to common colds, flu, upper respiratory infections, sleep disorders, and changes in mental state. Area B of the tongue is represented by the liver and detoxification function of the body. Changes in this region can indicate changing toxicity levels in the body.



Darkening color in this region can mean pain and discomfort in the body. Area C is represented by the functioning of the digestive system and any changes in this area can be an indication of imbalance in the digestion and absorption functions in the body. Area D is represented by the urogenital systems as well as the intestines. Peeling in this region can mean adrenal

weakness or chronic low back pains. Thickening of yellow coating in this region can mean either constipation or urinary tract infections. Other changes in this area can indicate problems in the urinary, reproductive and elimination systems.

So next time when we ask you to stick your tongue out, please do it with gusto and you do not need to close your eyes!

Tui Na - Chinese Bodywork Therapy

Tuina is an Oriental Bodywork Therapy that has been used in China for 2,000 years. Tuina uses the traditional Chinese medical theory of the flow of Qi through the meridians as its basic therapeutic orientation. Through the application of massage and manipulation techniques Tuina seeks to establish a more harmonious flow of Qi through the system of channels and collaterals, allowing the body the naturally heal itself.



Tuina methods include the use of hand techniques to massage the soft tissue (muscles and tendons) of the body, acupressure techniques to directly affect the flow of Qi, and manipulation techniques to realign the musculoskeletal and ligamentous relationships (bone-setting). External herbal poultices, compresses, liniments, and salves are also used to enhance the other therapeutic methods.

Tuina has a variety of different systems that emphasize particular aspects of these therapeutic principles. The main schools in China include the rolling method school which emphasizes soft tissue techniques and specializes in joint injuries and muscle sprains, the one finger pushing method school which emphasizes techniques for acupressure and the treatment of internal diseases, and Nei Gung method school which emphasizes the use of Nei Gong Qi energy generation exercises and specific massage methods for revitalizing depleted energy systems, and the bone setting method school which emphasizes manipulation methods to realign the musculoskeletal and ligamentous relationships and specializes in joint injuries and nerve pain.

In a typical session, the client, wearing loose clothing and no shoes, lies on a table or floor mat. The practitioner examines the specific problems of the client and begins to apply a specific treatment protocol. The major focus of application is upon specific pain sites, acupressure points, energy meridians, and muscles and joints. Advanced Tuina practitioners may also use Chinese herbs to facilitate quicker healing. Sessions last from 30 minutes to 1 hour. Depending on the specific problems of the client, they may return for additional treatments. The client usually feels relaxed but energized by the treatment.

Tuina is now being popularized in this country as a powerful therapeutic extension of traditional western massage methods. Tuina's simplicity and focus on specific problems, rather than a more generalized treatment, make it both an excellent alternative and/or extension of the Swedish-style massage. By utilizing treatments of shorter duration, it can be used in a variety of settings, including home, office, clinic or hospital. It is well suited for both the professional massage therapist or the active, health conscious individual.

History

Tuina dates back to the Shang Dynasty of China, 1700 B.C.E. Oracle bones show that tuina massage was used to treat children's diseases and digestive complaints in adults. By 600 C.E. Tuina was included in the Imperial Medical College as a separate department. Tuina flourished throughout China until the Qing Dynasty where it was suppressed along with other Chinese cultural arts. Following the Communist revolution, Tuina was restored along with other traditional medical arts and was included in the creation of the current system of Traditional Medicine Colleges.



Currently, Tuina is taught as a separate but equal field of study in the major traditional Chinese medical colleges. Tuina doctors receive the same demanding training as acupuncturists and herbalists and enjoy the same level of professional respect.

Benefits, Limitations, Contraindications

Tuina is well suited for the treatment of specific musculoskeletal disorders and chronic stress-related disorders of the digestive, respiratory and reproductive systems. Effective treatment protocols have been tested in a practical setting. Tuina is not especially useful for those seeking a mild, sedating and relaxing massage since it tends to be more task focused than other types of bodywork. Contraindications include conditions involving fractures, phlebitis, infectious conditions, open wounds, and lesions.

Miscellaneous Articles

The Value of Herbs in the Treatment of Cancer



Of all conditions which the herbalist/traditional Chinese medical doctor may treat, cancer represents a major test of the herbal tools we have at our disposal. A common and largely accurate perception of the damaging effects of malignancy is that "if the cancer doesn't kill you, the biomedical treatments for it will." This statement, while accurate in some regards, doesn't take into account the growing effectiveness of chemotherapy against many forms of cancer. Determining the effectiveness of biomedicine must be considered within a long-term perspective, however; survival rates are commonly measured in 5- and 10-year intervals, while a "cure" is considered when a cancer survivor has been cancer-free for seven years after cessation of treatment. The issues surrounding human health and the sequelae of malignancy are not as simple as these statistics suggest, however. While some rapidly growing forms of cancer may develop within ten days to two weeks of cancer cell implantation (malignant melanoma, for example), other slower-growing tumors (consider prostate cancer) may take up to ten years to make themselves detectable. To use the term "cured" for a patient who remains cancer-free after seven years is both unrealistic and arbitrary, given the unpredictability of cancer.

Aside from whether or not a cancer survivor is presently 'cancer-free', also of consideration is the general state of health of the individual, which oncology tends to disregard. Of primary concern to the oncologist is whether malignancies have redeveloped, not whether conditions exist which may portend the derangement of cellular processes which could ultimately lead to loss of differentiation. This is one of the most appropriate and effective roles the TCM doctor/herbalist can fulfill—to help reestablish an underlying balance in the individual, and to unravel the complex patterns inherent in the body which can, if left untreated, lead to the development of cancer.

Another appropriate role for TCM doctors and advanced herbalists is in the use of herbs as an adjunct to ongoing biomedical treatment for existing cancer. This can be addressed using any or all of three main approaches: 1) to offset the damaging side-effects of radiation and chemotherapy; 2) to benefit the patient's immune system, which biomedicine overwhelms and supplants with its powerful agents; and 3) to aid in tumor reduction itself, potentially shortening the length of time the patient needs to receive radiation and/or chemotherapy.

Listed below are ten herbs from the Chinese and western herbal traditions which address this third treatment approach--tumor reduction itself, via their 'antineoplastic' action. Consider that different forms of malignancy are treated with different substances, and each individual case may require entirely separate treatment principles, suggesting that anti-neoplastic herb choices must be chosen from appropriate categories of action. Obviously, there are more than 10 herbs with antineoplastic action in the Chinese and western pharmacopeia, but these can be considered a 'jumping off' point for further study; this is my personal intent. Information provided on these herbs is based on both empirical and clinical evidence gathered third-hand; verification of clinical and/or empirical findings is difficult to provide without access to the studies themselves, and no guarantees are made for these herbs' effectiveness.

References for all information is provided below.

Chinese Herbs:

Common Name: Oldenlandia

Chinese Name: Bai He She She Cao

Latin: Herba Hedyotidis Diffusae/Oldenlandia Diffusae

Family: Rubiaceae

TCM Category: Clear Heat/Relieve Toxicity

Antineoplastic Action(s):

--Used in treatment of stomach, esophageal and colon cancer;

--Activates reticuloendothelial system and increases phagocytosis by lymphocytes. Also, in high concentrations shows inhibitory affect in vitro on cells from acute lymphocytic and granulocytic leukemia.

Common Name: Selaginaella

Chinese Name: Shi Shang Bai

Latin: Herba Selaginellae Doederleinii

Family: Selaginellaceae

TCM Category: Clear Heat/Relieve Toxicity

Antineoplastic Action(s):

--Mice inoculated with granuloma-180 and injected with Shi Shang Bai showed 40-50% tumor inhibition of tumors; Mice with hepatic cancer lived significantly longer than control group not treated with Shi Shang Bai.

--Helpful in treatment of lung and throat cancer, and malignant hydatidiform moles, with remission in 50% of patients. Commonly used in China in treatment of smaller body cancers in nose, throat, lung and liver. When used with chemotherapy and radiation shown to accelerate cancer remissions.

Common Name: Sophora Root

Chinese Name: Shan Dou Gen

Latin: Radix Sophorae Tonkinensis

Family: Leguminaceae

TCM Category: Clear Heat/Relieve Toxicity

Antineoplastic Action(s):

--In doses of 60g/kg had significant effect in treatment of cervical cancer in mice, and an inhibitory affect on sarcoma-180. Used in treatment of acute lymphocytic/granulocytic leukemia, inhibiting dehydrogenase activity and cellular respiration of malignant cells.

Common Name: Zedoania

Chinese Name: E Zhu

Latin: Rhizoma Curcumae Ezhu

Family: Zingiberaceae

TCM Category: Invigorate Blood

Antineoplastic Action(s):

--Inhibits granuloma-180, often combined with San Leng (Rhizoma Sparganii Stoloniferi).

--In China, 80 cases of cervical cancer patients were treated with a solution of Zedoania, which was injected directly into the tumor sites. 30 patients were completely cured, while 15 were found to have a 50% size reduction.

Common Name: Rhubarb Root and Rhizome

Chinese Name: Da Huang

Latin: Radix et Rhizoma Rhei

Family: Polygonaceae

TCM Category: Clear Heat/Relieve Toxicity

Antineoplastic Action(s): --Injected subcutaneously had a killing effect on neoplastic granulomas in mice. Inhibited growth of melanoma, breast tumor cells and ascitic hepatic carcinoma in humans via the actions of emodin and rhein, major constituents of Da Huang.

Western Herbs:

Common Name: Red Clover

Latin: Flos Trifolium pratense

Family: Papilionaceae

Antineoplastic Action(s):

--Red Clover contains isoflavone compounds, such as genistein, which have weak estrogen properties. Various laboratory studies show that these isoflavones may help prevent and combat malignant tumors, especially of the breast and prostate.

Common Name: Pau D'Arco, Lapacho, Taheebo

Latin: Tabebuia impestiginosa

Family: Rubiaceae

Antineoplastic Action(s):

--Lapachol and beta-lapachone (known collectively as naphthaquinones) are two primary active compounds in Pau D'Arco. These compounds have anti-cancer/anti-tumor properties, although the effective dosage is considered toxic; Pau D'Arco is commonly used in the treatment of cancer in Central and South America with good results.

Common Name: Mistletoe

Latin: Viscum alba

Family: Loranthaceae

Antineoplastic Action(s):

--Contains anti-tumor proteins, and has been shown by current cancer research in Germany to have antineoplastic activity.

Common Name: Cleavers

Latin: Galium aparine

Family: Rubiaceae

Antineoplastic Action(s):

--Cleavers is considered the best lymphatic tonic in the western herbal pharmacopoeia, and is both alterative and diuretic. It has a long tradition of use for tumor reduction and lymphatic drainage, especially indicated when cancer has nodal involvement.

Common Name: Sweet Violet

Latin: Flos Viola odorata

Family: Violaceae

Antineoplastic Action(s):

--Sweet Violet has a long tradition and reputation as an anti-cancer herb, used especially as a poultice for cancers of the skin. Current scientific research has yet to bear out this reputation in the clinical setting

Treatment of Diabetes Mellitus with Herbs

Diabetes, affecting up to one-third of the population of industrialized countries, is the most common endocrinologic disorder. Beyond the more immediately-perceptible metabolic dysfunction accompanying a typical hyperglycemia, long-term complications of diabetes mellitus involve disorders of the eyes, kidneys, nerves, and blood vessels. Due to the widespread prevalence of diabetes and the severity of its complications, extensive research and development efforts are underway to find more effective remedies to improve the quality of life of those affected by the disease. This article will focus on an

integrative approach of the treatment of diabetes from the perspectives of both western and Oriental medicine.

DEFINITION

Diabetes mellitus is a chronic endocrinologic disorder characterized by high blood levels of glucose due to insufficient secretion of insulin by the pancreas or improper utilization of insulin by target cells.

WESTERN MEDICINE

Diabetes is classified into two categories: Type I Diabetes, or Insulin-dependent Diabetes Mellitus (IDDM); and Type II Diabetes, or Non-Insulin-Dependent Diabetes Mellitus (NIDDM).

Type I, IDDM, is also referred to as juvenile-onset diabetes, with onset in the early teen years in many patients. Affected individuals usually experience an abrupt onset of symptoms, including thirst, excessive urination, increased appetite, and paradoxical weight loss. Untreated, symptoms may progress to ketoacidosis and even coma. Patients secrete little or no insulin, and must rely on exogenous injections of insulin to control blood glucose levels. Type I, IDDM, does not respond to prescription drugs, such as sulfonylurea therapy.

Type II, NIDDM, is also referred to as adult-onset diabetes, with symptoms appearing around or after age 40, or into advanced ages, but occasionally affecting juveniles. Patients with NIDDM are usually obese, but may show few symptoms or no symptoms in the early stages. As the disease progresses, patients begin to notice increased thirst, increased consumption of water and food, excessive frequency and volume of urination, and other symptoms and signs related to complications. Patients with NIDDM have normal-to-elevated levels of insulin secretion, but blood glucose levels remain high due to insulin resistance. Type II, NIDDM, responds to both insulin and prescription drug treatments.

Long-term complications of Diabetes Mellitus affect various tissues and organs. Complications of damage to blood vessels include poor circulation, delayed wound healing, heart disease, impotence and gangrene; complications affecting the eyes include decreased vision and blindness; complications damaging the kidneys manifest in increased urinary volume and frequency, and kidney failure; complications in the nervous system include peripheral neuropathy, sudden or gradual weakness of a leg, chronic damage to nerves; and complications of the blood include increased susceptibility to infection, especially of the urinary tract or skin.

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

According to Traditional Chinese Medicine, diabetes mellitus is a disorder characterized by Yin deficiency with dryness, heat and dampness. Yin deficiency is the underlying cause of the disease; dryness and heat represent the symptoms and signs; and dampness is reflected in increased blood glucose. Diabetes mellitus is most closely related to Wasting (Xiao Ke) syndrome, which can be categorized into Upper, Middle and Lower Wasting (Xiao Ke)

syndrome, with the organs affected including the Lungs, Stomach and Kidneys, respectively.

Upper Wasting (Xiao Ke) Syndrome is characterized by Lung heat drying up body fluids. Symptoms are fidgeting, polydipsia, dry red tongue (with or without cracks), with a thin, yellow coat, and a forceful, rapid pulse (especially at the cun position). Middle Wasting (Xiao Ke) Syndrome is characterized by Stomach fire damaging fluids, with such symptoms as polyphagia, constant hunger with good appetite, red tongue with a yellow coat, and a slippery, forceful, rapid pulse. Lower Wasting (Xiao Ke) Syndrome is sub-divided into Kidney Yin deficiency or Kidney Yin and Yang deficiencies. Kidney Yin deficiency is characterized by symptoms such as polyuria (especially at night), red tongue with little or no coat, and a deep, thready, rapid pulse; Kidney Yin and Yang deficiency is characterized by polyuria (especially at night), teethmarks on both sides of the tongue, pale red tongue with a white coat, and a deep, thready, weak pulse.

Despite the similarities between Diabetes and Wasting (Xiao Ke) Syndrome, it is important to keep in mind that they are not identical. Both Diabetes and Wasting (Xiao Ke) syndrome may be characterized by the presence of the three P's: polyuria, polydipsia and polyphagia. Diabetes, however, is defined as an increase in blood glucose levels, with or without the presence of the three P's. In addition, Diabetes may have many complications not present in Wasting (Xiao-Ke) syndrome, such as visual disturbances, impotence, amenorrhea, and frequent infections. Conversely, the presence of the three P's constitutes diagnosis of Wasting (Xiao-Ke) Syndrome. Polyuria, polydipsia and polyphagia may be caused by factors other than diabetes, such as fever, dehydration, or kidney disease. Understanding the similarities and differences between the two is essential for an accurate diagnosis and for optimal treatment of the patient.

LABORATORY VALUES

The ideal blood glucose level is 70-100 mg/dL fasting, 70-100 mg/dL preprandial, <160 mg/dL postprandial (1 hour), and >65 mg/dL at 3 A.M.

An acceptable blood glucose level is 60-130 mg/dL fasting, 60-130 mg/dL preprandial, <200 mg/dL postprandial (1 hour), and >65 mg/dL at 3 A.M.

Levels above the acceptable range are considered high, and require treatment.

WESTERN MEDICINE

I. Oral Antidiabetic Drugs

Oral antidiabetic drugs are commonly used to treat Type II, NIDDM, patients. There are three types of oral antidiabetic drugs: sulfonylureas, biguanides, and glucosidase inhibitors, each with its unique functions and side effects.

Sulfonylureas are the most common oral antidiabetic drugs. These drugs lower blood glucose levels by stimulating the pancreas to release insulin. Patients with Type I, IDDM, do not respond to sulfonylureas because their pancreas is not capable of producing insulin regardless of drug stimulation. Despite their effectiveness, sulfonylureas have unwanted side-effects and toxicity, including nausea, vomiting, hematological and dermatological reactions, obstructive jaundice, hyponatremia, and intolerance of alcohol. Examples of sulfonylureas include tolbutamide (Orinase), chlorpropamide (Diabinese), glyburide (Micronase) and glipizide (Glucotrol). b. Biguanides lower blood glucose levels by increasing the uptake and utilization of glucose by muscle cells. They also reduce glucose production by the liver. Biguanides

are only effective in patients with Type II, NIDDM, because their ability to function requires the presence of insulin. Common side effects of biguanides include nausea, vomiting, epigastric distress and diarrhea. There are also risks of developing lactic acidosis and hepatic disease. Metformin (Glucophage) is the most common type of biguanide. c. Glucosidase inhibitors reduce the peak of blood glucose levels following a meal by delaying and inhibiting the absorption of carbohydrates. Glucosidase inhibitors work on both Type I, IDDM, and Type II, NIDDM, as the inhibitors' effectiveness is not dependent on the function of the pancreas. The major side effects are gastrointestinal, including nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and cramps. Acarbose (Precose) is the most common glucosidase inhibitor.

II. Insulin

Patients with Type I, IDDM, secrete little or no insulin and are dependent on external sources of insulin to regulate their blood sugar. Insulin is injected from once to several times daily to control the fluctuation of blood glucose levels. Though effective, insulin injection has numerous side effects, including hypoglycemic reactions, local lipodystrophy, visual disturbance, edema, allergy, and insulin resistance.

Note: In recent years the use of Chinese herbs has become a more and more popular option. To facilitate the understanding between drugs and herbs, we have dedicated a whole section entitled the Drug-Herb Index in our Clinical Manual of Oriental Medicine: Lotus Collection. Our goal in creating this section is to point out the similarities between the drug and the herbal treatments, so that a practitioner may suggest herbal alternatives to their patients who are unable to tolerate drugs or the side effects of drugs. This handy reference includes a combination of more than 300 most commonly used brand names and generic drug names. Knowing herbal alternatives to drugs gives the practitioner another treatment option so they can decide with their patients on the best therapy possible.

HERBAL TREATMENTS

Chinese herbs are very effective in treating patients with Type II, NIDDM. When prescribed correctly, Chinese herbs lower blood glucose levels, manage common signs and symptoms, and treat the complications of diabetes mellitus. Patients generally respond to herbal treatment within three-to-four weeks, with significant reduction in blood glucose levels and little fluctuation throughout the day. However, some patients may require up to six-to-eight weeks. For patients with Type I, IDDM, Chinese herbs are used in conjunction with insulin to manage symptoms and complications. Chinese herbs can also reduce the frequency and dosage of insulin injections. However, it is important to keep in mind that herbs cannot replace insulin, and patients with IDDM will still require insulin injections.

I. Equilibrium

Equilibrium is the formula of choice for treating diabetes mellitus. From the perspective of Western medicine, Equilibrium contains herbs with excellent hypoglycemic effects, lowering blood glucose levels and reducing synthesis of fatty tissues. In addition, Equilibrium contains herbs that lower blood cholesterol levels and improve blood circulation to the coronary arteries and peripheral parts of the body--thus managing common complications of diabetes, such as hyperlipidemia, atherosclerosis, coronary artery disease, peripheral neuropathy, etc.

In terms of Chinese therapeutic actions, Equilibrium nourishes Lung, Stomach and Kidney Yin, clears heat, and dries dampness. It can be used for patients with Upper, Middle or Lower Wasting (Xiao Ke) syndromes. It effectively manages the three cardinal symptoms of Wasting (Xiao Ke) syndrome: polydipsia, polyphagia and polyuria.

Equilibrium treats both the cause and the complications of diabetes mellitus. American ginseng (xi yang shen) greatly replenishes the vital essence of the body and promotes the secretion of body fluids, to treat polydipsia. Gypsum (shi gao) and anemarrhena (zhi mu) are a pair commonly used to treat heat in the Middle Burner (Jiao). They sedate Stomach fire and suppress appetite to relieve polyphagia. Scrophularia (xuan shen) enters the Lungs, Stomach and Kidneys to simultaneously replenish vital essence and clear heat. According to Oriental Medicine, an elevated glucose level is equivalent to excess retention of dampness in the body. Therefore, astragalus (huang qi) and dioscorea (shan yao) are used to tonify Qi and strengthen the Spleen to enhance its functions to dispel dampness. With their aromatic properties, white atractylodes (bai zhu) and atractylodes (cang zhu) strengthen the Spleen and directly dry dampness. Salvia root (dan shen) and carthamus (hong hua) invigorate blood circulation and enhance the overall effectiveness of the herbs by improving micro-circulation. Activation of blood circulation also reduces the risk of atherosclerosis by preventing buildup of cholesterol on the inner walls of blood vessels. Lastly, lotus embryo (lian zi xin) and lotus stamen (lian xu) tonify the Kidney and control frequent urination.

II. Modification of Herbal Treatment Based on Wasting (Xiao-Ke) Syndrome

Equilibrium is the essential herbal formula used to lower blood glucose if the patient shows no other significant complications. If diabetic patients exhibit prominent signs and symptoms of Upper, Middle or Lower Wasting (Xiao Ke) syndromes, treatment must be modified by combining Equilibrium with the following formulas:

1. Upper Wasting (Xiao-Ke) Syndrome is characterized by Lung heat drying body fluids, resulting in symptoms such as fidgeting, polydipsia, a dry red tongue (with or without cracks) with a thin, yellow coat, and a forceful, rapid, pulse (especially at the cun position). Patients with Upper Wasting (Xiao-Ke) Syndrome should combine Equilibrium with Ginseng & Gypsum Combination (Bai Hu Jia Ren Shen Tang).
2. Middle Wasting (Xiao-Ke) Syndrome is characterized by Stomach fire damaging the fluids, leading to such symptoms as polyphagia, constant hunger with good appetite, a red tongue with a yellow coat, and a slippery, forceful, rapid pulse. Patients with Middle Wasting (Xiao-Ke) Syndrome should combine Equilibrium with Rehmannia & Gypsum Combination (Yu Nu Jian).
3. Lower Wasting (Xiao Ke) Syndrome with Kidney Yin deficiency is characterized by such symptoms as polyuria (especially at night), a red tongue with little or no coat, and a deep, thready, rapid pulse. Patients with Lower Wasting (Xiao Ke) syndrome with Kidney Yin deficiency should combine Equilibrium with Rehmannia Six Formula (Liu Wei Di Huang Wan).
4. Lower Wasting (Xiao Ke) Syndrome with Kidney Yin and Yang deficiencies is characterized by polyuria (especially at night), teethmarks on both sides of the tongue, a pale red tongue with a white coat, and a deep, thready, weak pulse. Patients with Lower Wasting (Xiao Ke) Syndrome with Kidney Yin and Yang deficiencies should combine Equilibrium with Rehmannia Eight Formula (Ba Wei Di Huang Wan).

III. Modification of Herbal Treatment Based on Complications

If diabetic patients exhibit prominent signs and symptoms of complications, treatment must be modified by combining Equilibrium with the following formulas:

1. For patients with high cholesterol, combine with Cholisma.
2. For patients with hypertension, combine with Gentiana Complex or Gastrodia Complex.
3. For patients with chronic buildup of cholesterol leading to coronary artery disease, combine with Circulation.
4. For patients with blurred vision or vision impairment, combine with Nourish.
5. For patients with impotence due to diabetic complications, combine with Vitality For Men.
6. For patients with recurrent urinary tract infections, combine with Gentiana Complex.

CAUTIONS

Patients should not stop using drug treatments abruptly as there is a risk of hyperglycemia or diabetic ketoacidosis. Herbal and drug treatments should overlap for 1 to 2 weeks before patients are to begin tapering off drug treatments to ensure adequate control of blood glucose levels.

Concurrent use of drugs and herbal treatment may have synergistic effects on lowering the blood glucose levels. During the transition period when the patients take both drugs and herbs, their blood glucose levels should be monitored at least twice daily to assess the effectiveness of the treatment and to avoid hypoglycemia. Dosage must be adjusted as needed to keep blood glucose within the normal range. Herbal treatment may reduce the dosage and frequency of insulin injections needed; however, it can never replace insulin, especially in insulin dependent diabetes mellitus (IDDM) patients. Patients with IDDM should always be treated with insulin, or a combination of insulin and herbs.

LIFESTYLE INSTRUCTIONS

Lifestyle adjustments are absolutely critical for short-term management and long-term recovery of diabetes. Patients should be encouraged to engage in regular daily exercise, sleep by 10 p.m. to enhance restoration of Yin elements in the body, and eliminate sugar, carbohydrates and caffeine from the diet. Additional dietary advice may be useful based on the primary organ systems affected.

CLINICAL NOTES

For patients with Type II, NIDDM, Equilibrium in combination with diet and exercise provides excellent clinical results. Most patients will get satisfactory clinical results within three-to-four weeks of beginning herbal treatment. Maximum effectiveness may require up to six-to-eight weeks of herbal treatment. Clinical effects include a significant reduction in blood glucose levels and less fluctuation throughout the day.

Diabetes mellitus is defined simply as a rise in blood glucose levels. The clinical manifestations of the disease, however, are much more complicated than its definition. Patients with chronic diabetes mellitus are frequently plagued by various complications, such as visual disturbances, prolonged healing of wounds, frequent recurrences of infections, impotence, etc., which must be addressed within the overall treatment strategy.

CONCLUSION

Diagnosis and treatment of the most common and complex endocrinologic disorder continues to pose a challenge for health care practitioners. Diabetes mellitus commonly may go undiagnosed as patients with early stages of Type II, NIDDM are often asymptomatic. Also, as patients with chronic Type II, NIDDM often have a wide variety of complications, diabetes mellitus is frequently overlooked or mis-diagnosed. Once the correct diagnosis is made, diabetes and its complications can be effectively managed by both western drugs and herbal remedies. In conclusion, herbal medicine offers a safe and effective alternative for patients with diabetes mellitus.

CASE STUDIES

1. J.K., a 45-year-old female, was 5'3" and weighed 160 pounds. She had urinary tract infections once or twice each month within the last 12 months. Her other symptoms and signs included constant thirst, increased fluid intake, increased frequency and volume of urination. She was diagnosed with diabetes mellitus after testing positive for high levels of blood glucose. She was prescribed Equilibrium, 4 capsules TID before meals. Two weeks after the initial treatment, she reported significant improvement of her signs and symptoms. Two months after the initial treatment, her blood glucose levels were within the ideal range. She did not have any urinary tract infections during these two months. She continues to take Equilibrium, 4 capsules TID before meals. Clinical Note: Urinary tract infection is a common complication of chronic diabetes. The frequency of infections, polydipsia and polyuria, in combination with her age and body weight, indicated possible diabetes. Prior to treating the urinary tract infection, her blood glucose levels must first be tested to rule out diabetes. In this case, persistent high levels of blood glucose levels confirmed the diagnosis of diabetes mellitus. After treatment with Equilibrium for two months, both symptoms and complications of diabetes mellitus were under good control.
2. A.G., a 60-year-old male, was 6'1" and weighed 280 pounds. He was always hungry and ate two or three bowls of rice with every meal. He noticed that his cuts or scratches required a longer period of time to heal, sometimes up to one month. His diagnoses were diabetes mellitus and high cholesterol. He was given Equilibrium, 4 capsules TID for his diabetes, and Cholisma, 4 capsules TID for his cholesterol. After taking the herbs for three months, his blood glucose levels were within the ideal range and his cholesterol level dropped from 260 to 220. His weight also dropped from 280 to 255 pounds. He ate less and did not feel constantly hungry. He continues to take both Equilibrium and Cholisma. Clinical Note: High cholesterol levels are a common complication of diabetes mellitus. If untreated, high cholesterol levels can lead to atherosclerosis, hypertension, coronary heart disease, angina, and myocardial infarction. Therefore, effective treatment must address both blood glucose levels and blood cholesterol levels. In combination with dietary changes, this patient showed excellent progress in reducing his blood glucose and cholesterol levels.

Pros and Cons of Ephedra Ban

As many of you are aware, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has removed ephedra-containing supplements from the shelves. This means that diet pills and body-building products that contain ephedra (ma huang) and similar "stimulant" supplements will no longer be available.



As a holistic veterinarian, I understand that some natural products can be dangerous if not used correctly. Many people equate "natural" with "safe," but this is not always true. In my practice, while I prefer natural products when possible for treatment, occasionally a "drug" might work better and more safely than a natural supplement (I find this to be the case with some deworming products, for example.) So when I heard of the FDA announcement, I had mixed reactions.

Initially, I thought the move was a good one. Ma huang is a Chinese herb with thousands of years of use. In traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), ma huang is a popular treatment for respiratory problems, especially asthma. Using it for weight loss is a misuse, as there is no indication in TCM for the herb to be used to control weight.

Second, there are more than 100 deaths and a number of reported and unreported cases of people exhibiting side effects (increased heart rate, palpitations, jitteriness, etc.) when using the herb. As far as potentially dangerous supplements, you'd have to place ephedra supplements in this category.

My second reaction was the opposite of my first, however. While it is true that ephedra can be dangerous when used incorrectly, it is a helpful supplement when used under doctor's supervision for respiratory problems.

Keep in mind that while there have been more than 100 reported deaths attributed to ephedra supplements, there are thousands of deaths and side effects attributed to prescription drugs (especially non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) each year and, of course, these very potent medicines (some available without a prescription) are still legal.

It's hard to know what to make of all of this. I guess for me, the take-home message is this: Supplements that contain potent ingredients such as ephedra should either be available by prescription only or at least have clear warning labels on the products and require identification for purchase to prevent minors from having access to them.

While some supplements can be dangerous and even fatal if not used correctly, prescription drugs properly prescribed by doctors cause even more illness and death than any nutritional supplements reported to date. My recommendation: Choose supplements over drugs when possible, but only use supplements under a doctor's supervision to ensure maximum safety and effectiveness. (Editor's Note: Ma huang is still legal when prescribed and overseen by a licensed TCM practitioner.)

Ginseng - A Guide for Consumers

Ginseng is the best known and most popular Chinese herb. It is known as the "King" of Chinese herbs. With Ginseng, you get what you pay for. Some roots cost thousands of dollars. Most consumers will not be seeking out the highest quality Ginseng. The more affordable Codonopsis Root (Dang Shen) may be substituted in most situations.



All Ginseng is not created equal. There are three major types of ginseng, compared in the table below.

| American Ginseng (Xi Yang Shen) | Panax Ginseng (Ren Shen) | Korean Ginseng (Gao Li Shen) |
|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Least effect on qi of the three. | Stronger effect on qi than Am. Ginseng. | Strongest effect on qi of the three. |
| COLD | Warm | HOT (red in color) |
| Nourishes the yin (its best use) | Generates fluids, stops thirst | Very bad to use when yin deficient. |
| Good for fever/coughing up blood | Calming action | May cause headache/anger/etc. |

The average consumer who walks down the herb aisle in the drug store may be unaware of the consequences of their choices. The popular conception that ginseng equals energy, much like coffee equals energy is not necessarily so.

If you are looking for energy, first of all, you need to be sure that you really need it. Many people would never feel that they have enough energy. Some people may actually be Yin Deficient with Heat signs. In this case, the appearance of energy (which may be scattered and manic) is really heat and, underneath, the person is deficient. This is analogous to spending money on a credit card when you're already in debt. You appear to be rich, but your finances are actually in very bad shape. You can spend what you do not have but you will pay the price. The price may be your sanity, or other health problems down the road. These people would do better to nurture their yin, which is deficient, and spend less energy. Look at American Ginseng; it nourishes the yin and benefits the qi. The heat of yin deficiency sometimes manifests as excess energy in the head: headaches, and tempers flaring. Anyone with heat signs like this would actually be harmed by Panax or Korean Ginseng. It is liable to make your headaches and temper worse.

American Ginseng is considered an endangered species due to excess harvesting. If you plan on using it, the ethical thing would be to grow it yourself, or at least be knowledgeable of the source of your Ginseng.

If you really need energy, you might not even take Panax Ginseng (Ren Shen). Traditionally, it is used for the elderly, or in extreme health situations. The more common, and more affordable, choice is Codonopsis Root (Dang Shen).

The following table shows that moderate situations call for codonopsis root, while serious situations, or extreme age call for panax ginseng.

| Codonopsis Root (Dang Shen) | | Panax Ginseng (Ren Shen) | |
|---|---|---|------------------------------|
| neutral | | warming | |
| "supports the normal" | | "fosters wisdom" | |
| Used For: | | Used for: | |
| Spleen qi deficiency | Lung Qi deficiency | Abandoned Syndrome | Collapse of Qi |
| Lack of appetite, fatigue, weak limbs, diarrhea, prolapse | Cough, shortness of breath, reluctance to speak | Heavy sweating, cold hands and feet, sagging jaw, closed eyes, incontinence | Shock, loss of consciousness |

When NOT to take Ginseng: If you have headaches, palpitations, insomnia, pregnant, hysteric, manic or schizophrenic do not take ginseng. If you have very high blood pressure (systolic >180mmHg), and/or are hypertensive, do not take panax ginseng.

| Panax and Korean Ginseng | Codonopsis Root | American Ginseng |
|--|----------------------|---|
| headaches, anger, palpitations, insomnia, pregnant, hysteric, manic or schizophrenic, very high blood pressure (systolic >180mmHg), hypertension, yin deficiency | No contraindications | Stomach problems (damp-cold of Stomach) |

It is important to know what the things you are putting in your body are going to do for you, and to you. After all, if you just want to dig a hole in your garden, it is better to use a shovel than a stick of dynamite!

Chinese Herbal Prozac: Depression and Traditional Chinese Medicine

Introduction

In clinical setting we frequently see patients who are taking antidepressants like Prozac, Zoloft, Paxil, Effexor, and Wellbutrin. Chinese herbs like Albizzia may be an alternative to psychiatric drugs. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is a holistic medicine- it has never separated the mind and body, and so can comprehensively treat conditions with both physical and mental symptoms.

Causes of Depression

As with all disease, we need an accurate diagnosis before we can begin treatment. Depression has many causes. Not all of them will be helped by antidepressants. If your self-esteem is intact, your mood does not vary during the day, and you are not impaired socially, your depression may have a physical cause.



Some physical/biomedical causes of depression are: chronic pain, chronic fatigue, normal grief, vitamin B12 deficiency anemia, folate deficiency anemia, viral disease, connective tissue/collagen disorders (arthritis), an organic brain disorder, drug side-effects, cancer, and endocrine abnormalities. Chinese Medicine can enhance the health of anyone with any of these conditions.

Psychiatric Drug Therapy

Controlling depression with pharmaceuticals usually requires weeks or months of experimentation with various drugs at different dosages. During this experimentation, the patient experiences physical and mental side-effects which can range from the annoying to the unbearable. Chinese herbal medicine, properly practiced, does not cause side-effects and so may ultimately be preferable to psychiatric medications.

However, there are many grave situations where psychiatric pharmaceuticals are essential, and not taking them can endanger the well-being, or even the life of the patient. More and more M.D.'s are now working to minimize the amount of pharmaceuticals taken by each patient, and some are even working with OMD's to utilize acupuncture and Chinese herbs to slowly take the patient off of drugs and cure the root problem.

How Chinese Medicine Diagnoses Depression

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), we always conduct a thorough evaluation of the patient. Symptoms and other diagnostic findings are like the pieces of a puzzle. The puzzle is a diagnosis that describes a patient's particular imbalances. Treatment arises naturally from this diagnosis. In TCM (unlike western biomedicine) there is a treatment for every diagnosis.

One simple way to understand depression is to use TCM's 5-Element system. The 5 Elements are Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water. Each element is associated with a particular strength, weaknesses, color, sound, etc.

Three common 5-Element types in depression are Earth, Water, and Wood.

| Earth-Type Depression | Water-Type Depression | Wood-Type Depression |
|---|---|---|
| "Can't keep up" | "Can't get it up" | "All bunched up" |
| Digestive Problems, Weight Gain, Fatigue, Loose Stool | Impotence, Morning Diarrhea, Knee and Low Back Problems, Frequent Urination | Eye Problems (red, painful, dry, etc.), Wiry build, Pain in ribcage area, Headaches on top or sides of head |
| Worry, Overwhelm | Fear | Irritability, Frustration, Anger, Short Temper |

Earth types can't keep up. They often experience digestive deficiency, become tired and overwhelmed easily, and are prone to worry and weight gain. They become depressed as a result of deficiency.

Water types have deficiencies in their 'root' energy. This is most associated with old age, or extreme chronic illness.

Wood types get depressed because they are all bunched up. They are easy to anger. When anger is focused inward, it turns into depression. They are irritable, have short tempers, and tend to be skinnier than the Earth type. Wood types become depressed as a result of stagnation.

Of course, a TCM diagnosis must be much more specific than this before treatment can begin. Then the practitioner moves from diagnosis (What is the disease?) to treatment principles (What strategies should we use to balance the patient?). For example, they may want to increase the patient's energy, move stagnation, and calm the spirit. Herbs and herb formulas are chosen that fit the patient's symptoms, diagnosis, and the practitioner's treatment principles.

Albizzia - Chinese Herbal Prozac Alternative?

Cortex Albizzia Julbrissin (mimosa tree bark) is a TCM herb in the Nourish the Heart and Calm the Spirit category. It is traditionally used to calm the spirit and relieve emotional constraint when the associated symptoms of bad temper, depression, insomnia, irritability and poor memory are present. It also relieves pain and dissipates abscesses and swelling due to trauma (including fractures).

The flower of the mimosa tree is also used to relieve constrained Liver qi, and calm the spirit when the associated symptoms of insomnia, poor memory, irritability, epigastric pain, and feelings of pressure in the chest are present. Research has shown that the flower of the mimosa tree has a sedative effect.

German scientists assert that mimosa tree bark is part of the heavily-guarded Coca Cola recipe (a concoction that has been making people happy for decades!).

Understanding the meaning of Spirit

In Chinese Medicine, spirit is conscious awareness, the more emotional and elusive aspect of being. The body must be in a good state of health, and there must be

sufficient nourishment and balance for the spirit to be at peace. When improper diet, extreme emotions, trauma, and external diseases injure the body, the spirit does not have a comfortable place to rest. To address this problem, we balance the underlying problem, but in the meantime we also calm the spirit. Thus, in TCM, we treat the cause of the depression AND we calm the spirit so that the patient feels happier and more at peace.

Conclusion

It is safe to say that there are people on anti-depressant medications that do not need them. More exacting diagnosis by all healthcare practitioners will lead to more appropriate treatments. Psychiatric medications often cause unwanted side-effects. Proper TCM treatment does not cause side-effects. Because TCM is a holistic medicine that integrates the body and mind in its diagnostic process and treatment strategies, it is a viable solution for the treatment of depression.

The Fascination of Kombucha

Nowadays we experience a return to healing measures that are close to nature; also remedies and foods of unnatural origin - away from industrial packaged products. This may be one of the reasons for the great attractiveness and fascination of the healthful beverage called Kombucha. Communalities of yeasts and bacteria have been used by people, and applied for their well-being, since ancient times in all the world for the creation of health-promoting fermented drinks and foodstuffs.

We read already in the Bible (Ruth 2:14) that the land-owner Boas invited the Moabite Ruth, who later became his wife, during her gleaning of grains: Come over here and eat some bread and dip your morsel into the vinegar-drink! And she sat down beside the reapers; and he reached her parched corn and she ate and was sufficed and left." This biblical report from around 1000 B.C. not only gives us a hint of their exemplary nutritional habits, although they were modest by our perspective, we see from it also that, even at that time, people prepared beverages with microorganisms of lactic acid and how they served the people for strength and refreshment during the hard work of harvesting.

An ancient, pure relative of these related symbioses of bacteria and yeasts is the tea-fungus called Kombucha. It comes from the area of East Asia and came to Germany via Russia, around the turn of the century. This ancient house-remedy is used more and more also in other countries against all possible defects. The mushroom consists of a gelatinoid and tough mushroom-web membrane in the form of a flat disk. It lives in a nutrient solution of tea and sugar, in which it constantly multiplies through germinating. The fungal disc at first spreads over the entire surface of the tea and then thickens. When one treats the mushroom correctly, it thrives, germinates, and will accompany its owner for life.

During the fermentation and oxidation processes, the mushroom effects diverse complicated reactions in the tea-setting, either one after the other or side by side (these are assimilation- and dissimulation- processes). The tea-mushroom feeds on the sugar and, in exchange, produces other valuable substances which change into the drink: glucuron-acid, lactic acid, vitamins, amino acids, antibiotic substances, and other products. The tea-mushroom is, therefore, a real, tiny biochemical factory.

KOMBUCHA - REMEDY FOR EVERYTHING?

There is a treasure of extensive experience regarding the Kombucha mushroom. Besides its use as a refreshing drink, one can read in nearly all reports also of its usage as a remedy. In the reports of oldest and modern times, a large number of diseases are quoted, for which Kombucha-tea is used and praised. The palette reaches from the most harmless indisposition up to the most serious diseases.

Numerous doctors and scientists have concerned themselves with the effects of the Kombucha-beverage as a home remedy. Many scientific works are at hand concerning Kombucha. They speak of its therapeutic effectiveness based on glucon-acid, glucuron-acid, lactic acid, acetic acid, as well as the life-supporting vitamins C and the B-group. As has been proven especially by Russian researchers, many of its components have antibiotic and detoxifying characteristics, and they play a decisive role for the biochemical processes in the body.

In contrast to the many pharmacological agents with unpleasant side effects, the active substances of the Kombucha address themselves to the whole body system; through its friendly metabolic properties, it can reestablish a normal condition in the cellular membranes without any side-effects and thus promote one's well-being. Let us use these natural powers for

maintaining our vitality, activity, as well as our mental and physical capacities!

AN EXTENSIVE WORLD-LITERATURE

Already Bacinskaja (1914) noted that the drink is effective for the stomach-intestinal activity. The authoress recommended that one drink a small glass of it before every meal and to increase the portions gradually.

Professor S. Bazarewski brought forth a report in the "Correspondence for the Association of Nature Researchers in Riga, 1915, that among the Latvian population of the Baltic Russian Provinces of Livland and Kurland, they had a folk-remedy by name of "Brinum-Ssene" Verbally translated, it means "Wonder-mushroom". The Latvian population ascribed to this mushroom "a wonderful healing power for many diseases", according to Bazarewski. Some people asked by Bazarewski insisted that it helps fore head aches, but others assured him that "this mushroom is useful for all diseases.

GOOD FOR CONSTIPATION

Prof. B. Lindner(1917-1918) reported that the remedy is mostly used as regulator of the intestinal activities. Also Hemorrhoids were cured.

Privy Councilor Prof. Dr. Rudolf Kobert(1917-18) recalls that an "unfailing remedy against joint rheumatism" was made with this mushroom.

Also Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Henneberg(1926) reports that a drink made with tea- mushroom was prepared, called "Teakwass" in Russia, being used in all those areas as a "remedy against all sorts of diseases, especially against constipation. "

According to Dr. Madaus in the "Biologic Healing Arts" (1927), the mushroom, and its metabolic products, has excellent influence on the regeneration of the cellular walls and is, therefore, an excellent remedy for arteriosclerosis.

GENERAL IMPROVEMENT OF ONE'S OVERALL CONDITION

H. Waldeck (1927) tells of a chemist he met during W.W.I in Russia-Poland, 1915, with whom he had his quarters, and who cooked for him a "Wonderdrink" against his severe constipation. The chemist entrusted to Waldeck that he always keeps this "Russian secret home remedy" at hand, it being "said that it is good for all kinds of ailments" and "because of its naturally formed acid, it successfully counters aging problems, thus, contributing to life extension."

Prof. Br. Lakowitz (1928) confirms Waldeck's statement that digestive disturbances are quickly removed by the mushroom-tea. Strong headaches and nervous disturbances also are removed experientially. Lakowitz comes to the conclusion: "An extensive spreading of the mushroom-tea for the production of such Tee-Kwasses, as a remedy against digestive disturbances is desirable for all types of people."

In the "White Flag" (1928) is reported: 'The refreshing taste of this tea-beverage is generally pleasing, and its effect is ... a very good one. The taste of the fermented tea is very pleasant, being reminiscent of light, sparkling wine or sweet Most (pear juice).The effect of the tea usually shows up very fast. Most of all, it works blood-cleansing and detoxifying and is said ... to give excellent services for facial skin rashes. Further, according to doctor's orders and evaluations, it is very effective for constant headaches, pain in the limbs, gout, rheumatism, and other aging problems. The general effect of the mushroom-tea shows already in a few weeks through an improved general condition and in one's raised performance capacity, which may be connected with the mushroom's high vitamin and hormone effect, which are

also emphasized by doctors.

Further, the mushroom stimulates the metabolism ... excellently and, thereby, helps in clearing out the body, i.e. the elimination of all types of disease toxins.

FAVORABLE EFFECT IN ARTERIOCLEROSIS

Dr. Maxim Bing (1928) recommends the Kombucha mushroom as a "very effective remedy for Arteriosclerosis, gout, and intestinal deficiency." "A favorable effect in the sense of lowering blood pressure, cessation of anxiety, of irritability and pains, headaches, dizziness, etc. in arteriosclerosis" occurs from the use of fresh, good cultures. "Intestinal sluggishness and its accompanying effects also can be quickly removed. It gives especially favorable results in calcification of the kidneys and the capillaries of the brain."

Dr. Siegwart Hermann (1929) describes experiments with cats who had been poisoned with Vigantol (an anti-rickets Vitamin B-preparation). He noted a positive influence in their cholesterol level when the animals received Kombucha extracts. This is interesting because in cases of human arteriosclerosis there is also a raised cholesterol level. Hermann's resume based on these experiments is: "The observations by doctors at the sickbed, as also the animal experiments, showed that folk-wisdom quoted effects have been observed in general."

THE GLUCURONIC ACID

In my opinion, there are factors speaking for the good effects of the mushroom for gout, rheum, arthritis, etc. as being explainable by the accumulated toxins of the body being made water-soluble and kidney- manageable through their conjugation with the Glucuronic acid in the beverage, and thus being eliminated through the urine. This conjugation is a form of bio-transformation; by it, both endogenic and body-foreign substances become bound with Glucuronic acid into Glucuronoids, also named "paired Glucuronic acid."

In 1961, Dr. med. Valentin Koehler stimulated a discussion on the therapeutic usage of Glucuronic acid through his article titled, "Glucuronic Acid Gives Courage to Cancer-Patients in the periodical "Medical Practice". Glucuronic acid is one of the products that are produced during the fermentation process in the Kombucha-tea. Dr. Koehler reported at that time about encouraging results in treating cancer patients with Glucuronic acid. The maximally long effect of Glucuronic acid is able to bring about an increase in the body's own defenses and, possibly, also of the Interferon-production.

The detoxifying function of Glucuronic acid goes hand-in-hand with an improvement in the general condition and in the oxidative metabolism.

Dr. Koehler also noted surprising successes in the treatment of sick trees. Various Institutions were doing scientific tests for resolving the problem of dying trees. By combining nutritious substances, trace- elements, and heavy metals ions a building process was activated or accelerated. The capacity of the Glucuronic acid to enter into combination with both foreign and endogenic toxic substances, effects protection for the plant cell. Over 200 substances can be made harmless by this way, including those which are contained in acidic and radioactive rain, as well as sulfur dioxide, nitrites, ozone.

According to Dr. Koehler's research, the protective activity connected with Glucuronic acid preserves also the genetics of the plant from growth disturbances or promotes their restoration in the further course of its growth. The insights arising from Dr. Koehler's examinations can be transferred onto all human cells. When the processes of growth and decomposition in the human metabolism are maintained on an optimal level through adding small dosages

of Glucuronic acid, as contained in the Kombucha beverage, it presents a combination of scientific data and a product of nature which is currently still much preferred by the laity. Here is a possible aid for a humanity that is more and more threatened through toxic environmental substances. By Glucuronic acid, the "disturbance products in the human body are disintegrated into end-products, eliminated and, thereby, made harmless. This detoxifying function of Glucuronic acid benefits the variety of cellular functions.

This shows up as increased endogenic capacity towards the toxic and environmental stresses battering us from many sides, as a revival of damaged body cells, and a restoration and firming upon our well-being. When many people say that they use Kombucha not to necessarily heal a particular disease, but they drink it as a beverage for supporting their well-being, we have in this a contact point where scientific insights and folk-wisdom can go hand in hand.

THE NORMALIZATION OF INTESTINAL FUNCTIONS

Dr. L. Mollenda (1928) reports that the Kombucha beverage is especially effective for disturbances of the digestive organs, by practically normalizing their functions. Moreover, the drink has proven itself as helpful for gout, rheumatism, and diverse stages of arteriosclerosis. About additional areas of application he writes: "In the case of angina, especially when there is a coating of the tonsils, the drink should not merely be used for gargling but for drinking, and that, for the destruction of bacteria which reach the stomach through food and drink. Such gargling in angina brings fast recovery, and in pains of gout and arteriosclerosis, surprising successes are reached even in serious cases. ... Even though the beverage is acidic, it does not cause any acidic condition in the stomach; it facilitates and noticeably promotes the digestion even of difficult to digest foods. Equally favorable successes after taking Kombucha beverage have also been reached for gouty eczema and for stones in kidneys, urine, and gall." Dr. E. Arauner (1929) reports of diverse medical reports and evaluations and reaches the following conclusion: "In summary, one can say that the Kombucha mushroom or its extract, has proven itself as excellently prophylactic against diabetes, but especially against aging problems, such as arteriosclerosis, high blood pressure with its consequences such as dizziness, gout, hemorrhoids; for the very least it is a pleasant laxative." Dr. Arauner reports that in his home-country the tea-mushroom has been in usage for centuries by Asian people because of its surprising healing successes, being a most effective, natural home-remedy for tiredness, fatigue, nervousness, beginning aging problems, arteriosclerosis, intestinal lassitude, gout and rheumatism, hemorrhoids, and diabetes.

Arauner adds to this, that not only professors, doctors and biologists have confirmed the surprising healing successes but also those who have imbibed the mushroom-tea report about "entirely excellent effects on the general body functions."

RECOMMENDED FOR MENTAL STRESS

Hans Irion, who was then the Director of the State-recognized Academy for Chemists in Braunschweig says in his "Course for Druggist Specialty Schools" (1944, Vol. 2, pg. 405): "By the intake of the drink described as Teakwass, there happens a remarkable invigoration of the body's entire glandular system and a promotion of the metabolisms. Teakwass is recommended as an excellent prophylactic for gout and rheumatism, furunculosis, arteriosclerosis, high blood pressure, nervousness, intestinal lassitude, and aging problems. It is also very highly recommended for sports-people and those who do strenuous mental work. Through the promotion of the metabolism, undue fat deposits in the body are avoided or removed. With the drink, also microorganisms reach the body which transform damaging deposits, such as uric acid, cholesterol, etc. into easily soluble forms, thus removing them. Foul intestinal bacteria are suppressed."

"DETOXIFYING IN EVERY REGARD...."

The first description having mushroom-tea as its theme in bookform appeared in 1954. This booklet of 54 pages is written in the Russian language and carries the title "The Tea-Mushroom and Its Therapeutic Properties". The author, G.F.Barbancik refers in his introduction to the first application of the mushroom-tea decoction (in 1949) as a healing remedy at the therapeutic clinic of the Omsker Hospital for water laborers. He reports of successful therapy for tonsillitis, diverse internal diseases, especially those of inflammatory nature, stomach catarrh due to deficient acid production, intestinal inflammations, dysentery, arteriosclerosis, high blood-pressure, scleroses, etc.

The med. doctor, Dr. Rudolf Sklenar of Lich, Oberhessen, reported in 1964 in the periodical "Experiential Healing Science" about his methods of diagnosis and therapy successes: "An outstanding natural remedy is the mushroom beverage named Kombucha, which acts detoxifying in every regard and which dissolves microorganisms as well as cholesterol." Dr. Sklenar had developed a biologic cancer therapy in which Kombucha, as well as other biologic remedies such as Coli-preparations, held an important place for the sanitization of the intestinal flora.

In a small publication of 8 pages, titled "Cancer Diagnosis Based on Blood and the Treatment of Cancer, Pre-cancerous Conditions, and other Metabolic Diseases with Kombucha and Coli-Preparations", Dr. Sklenar reports that vitamins, lactic acids and glucuronic acid are (viruses, bacteria, fungi) and to the dissolution of waste matter and toxic deposits (uric acid, cholesterol, etc.). Kombucha effects "an outstanding detoxification of the organism". Through enjoying this beverage there is, additionally, a "noticeable invigoration of the entire glandular system and enhancement of the metabolism."

Dr. Sklenar reports that he was able to treat successfully with the mushroom-tea: gout, rheum, arteriosclerosis, arthritis, dysbacteria, constipation, impotence, nonspecific draining, obesity, furunculosis, kidney stones, cholesterol, cancer and especially its early stages, etc.

CANCER KILLER?

Dr. Veronika Carstens (1987), wife of the former German President, recommends Kombucha in a series titled, "Help from Nature-My Remedies Against Cancer", with the words: "Kombucha detoxifies the organism and enhances the metabolism; this improves the defense capacity."

The Natural Healing specialist A.J.Lodewijkx of Ermelo, Netherlands, writes about Kombucha in his very recommendable book "Life Without Cancer" (obtainable in the Dutch and German languages): "The Kombucha mushroom has strongly antiseptic properties. The tea purifies the glandular system and promotes elimination; uric acid is neutralized and eliminated through Kombucha tea. Therefore, this tea is an excellent remedy against gout, rheum, arthritis, kidney stones, intestinal dysbacteria, but especially cancer and its early stages because the Kombucha mushroom exerts a mighty influence on the disease-causing endobionts. As we have seen, it is these endobionts which eliminate the red corpuscles when the pH changes unfavorably. In all metabolic diseases and cancer, Kombucha is a unique beverage for the detoxification of the body. Kombucha removes the metabolic dross and normalizes thereby the blood pH."

Gottfried Mueller, founder of the world-wide "Salem Children's and Youth Villages" praises the Kombucha tea-mushroom this way: "A gift from heaven, especially for health emergencies" (in "Salem-Help" 15, Nr. 3, August 1987, page 2).

JUDGING FOR ONSELF

In both the literary reports and also in the many personal experiences reported during my focusing on Kombucha, the broad palette of complaints relieved by it is conspicuous. This is explainable on the basis that Kombucha does not target a specific body organ but, rather, it influences the entire organism positively by effecting a stabilization of the metabolic situation and through its detoxifying effect of its glucuronic acid. This leads in many people to a heightened endogenous defense capacity against those toxic influences and environmental stresses which inundate us from many sides, resulting in the invigoration of a damaged cellular metabolism, and the restoration and firming up of one's well-being.

Some of the health-promoting properties ascribed to Kombucha-tea require further research. However, other active mechanisms are entirely proven both by scientific testings and experientially, such as: regulation of the intestinal flora, cellular strengthening, detoxification and dross elimination, metabolic harmonization, antibiotic effect, facilitating pH- balance.

MAKE IT YOURSELF! NO PROBLEM IF YOU KNOW HOW!

The Kombucha beverage can be made in one's home for just pennies. Because the mushroom constantly grows, one can begin with a piece of a mushroom- tea membrane and allow a health-promoting source of drink to bubble up. The preparation is no problem if one knows how. From ancient days, one prepares the Kombucha beverage right at home and passes the tea-mushroom from family to family as a sign of friendship and mutual helpfulness. Tea-mushroom has high vitality and a great capacity for regeneration. If it did not have this high biologic energy, it would not have survived the long timespan from its reported discovery in the Chinese Empire more than 2000 years ago until now.

Nowadays, there are occasional warnings - mostly coming from ignorance or economic interests - not to make the Kombucha beverage by oneself. Such a warning is justified in so far as the know-how about the precise method, wherewith, and why, etc. had often been lost and people wrongly experimented instead of abiding with proven recipes.

However, when one works clean and abides by proven directions, then there is no hesitation in making the Kombucha drink, as in many generations past. Whoever has the necessary knowledge can deal successfully with the tea-mushroom - just as one deals with other "open" foodstuffs in one's household. When abiding by proven instructions, one can produce an impeccable, tasty, wholesome and effective Kombucha beverage. The mushroom will increase and accompany its owner lifelong and serve him or her well.

THE KOMBUCHA MUSHROOM PROTECTS ITSELF

Whoever treats his mushroom culture according to proven rules with thought and carefulness, need not expect disturbances. In the Russian reports it is even mentioned that no special precautionary measures are needed because the mushroom protects itself against impurities. It has a number of protective features: the organic acids, the low alcoholic content, carbonic acid, the antibiotic products all these jointly block the development of all foreign microorganisms not belonging to the tea- mushroom organism.

The Russian researcher I.N. Konovalow mentions in his report of 1959, that the intensive growth of the tea-mushroom leaven and bacteria distinctly suppresses the spreading of other yeast and bacterial varieties.

Also the Russian Professor G.F. Barbancik(1958) reports In his book about the tea-mushroom based on laboratory tests which showed that the tea- mushroom bacteria drive out all other microbes energetically (antagonism).

In contrast to other reports. this mushroom is easy to multiply and part. Because It grows cheerfully and is parted willingly, all friends and acquaintances can soon benefit. It is a good custom to pass on the Kombucha mushroom to other people as a sign of friendship and mutual helpfulness.

Source: Guenther W. Frank, "Kombucha, Healthy beverage and Natural Remedy from Far East" Publishing House W. Ennsthaler, Steyr, Austria, 9th revised edition 1995

How to make Kombucha - at a glance

INGREDIENTS

- The Kombucha culture (the ferment)
- Approximately 70 - 100 g (2 1/2 - 3 oz) of refined white ...sugar per litre (about one quart) of water
- 2 teaspoons black or green tea per litre (about one quart) of water

UTENSILS AND MATERIALS

- One 2 - 4 litres (2 - 4 quarts) pot to boil water
- One 2 - 4 litres (2 - 4 quarts) glass or porcelain jar
- A linen/cotton handkerchief or a paper tissue
- Bottles

PROCEDURE FOR THE PREPARATION of Kombucha

It's best if you begin first with two litres (2 quarts). When your Kombucha culture has grown big enough and has reproduced itself, you can produce larger quantities of the beverage.

1 - Make tea in the ordinary way. Per litre (quart) of water, infuse 2 teaspoonfuls (about 5 g = 0.2 oz) of black or green tea in freshly boiled water. You may also use tea bags. Let the tea leaves "soak" for 15 minutes. Green tea comes from the same plant as black tea and is distinguished from it principally by the way it is processed: it is not fermented. Japanese doctors found out that green tea prevents cancer growth. I would suggest to use green tea for the Kombucha beverage. If you don't want to use black or green tea you can also use herbal teas.

2 - Strain off the tea leaves through a sieve, or remove the tea bags from the water, as the case may be.

3 - Add about 70 - 100 g (2+ - 3 oz) of white sugar per litre (quart) of water into the filtered infusion before it has cooled. Stir the tea so that the sugar dissolves totally. 1 tablespoon of sugar is about 20 g (0.7 oz).

4 - Let the sugared tea cool down to a temperature not higher than 20 - 25 degrees Centigrade = about 68 - 77 degrees Fahrenheit (lukewarm). The culture dies when it has been placed in a hot nutrient solution.

5 - When the tea has cooled to room temperature, pour the solution into a glass, china, glazed earthenware or stainless steel container. Glass is best. Metal containers of other types than stainless steel are unsatisfactory and should never be used because the acids formed may react with the metal. You could also use a high-grade synthetic material of the polyefine group, e.g. polyethylene (PE) or polypropylene. Wine or cider is also kept in containers made of this food-grade material. However, you should avoid containers made of polyvinylchloride (PVC) or polystyrene.

6 - If you prepare your first Kombucha drink, add the liquid that you got with the culture. On all later batches, always keep enough Kombucha drink to add about one tenth (10%) of the quantity to your new batch as a "starter liquid".

7 - Place the live Kombucha culture in the liquid.

8 - Cover the mouth of the fermentation container with a cheesecloth, a tea towel, paper towel or similar light cloth to keep out fruit flies, dust, plant spores and other pollutants. Tie it down with a large rubber band to ensure that fruit flies can't get in. The cloth must be porous enough to allow air to circulate so the culture can breathe, but not so porous that tiny fruit flies can get in to lay their eggs.

9 - The fermentation should proceed for 8 - 12 days, depending on the temperature. The higher the room temperature, the faster the fermentation. The period of 8 - 12 days is given merely as a guide. The Kombucha culture needs a warm and quiet place and should on no account be moved. The temperature of the tea should not fall below 68 degrees F (= 20 degrees Centigrade) and not rise above 86 degrees F (=30 degrees Centigrade). The ideal temperature is about 74 to - 80 degrees F (=23 - 27 degrees C). Light is not necessary. The culture also works in darkness. The culture may be damaged by exposure to bright sunlight. Half shade is better. During the process of fermentation the sugar is broken down by the yeast and converted into a gas (CO₂) and various organic acids and other compounds. It is the combination of these processes which gives the Kombucha beverage its characteristic flavor. The infusion is at first sweet but this sweetness disappears as the sugar is broken down. At the same time an acid flavor begins to develop as a result of the activities of the bacterium, so there is a transition from sweetness to sourness. If a slightly sweet drink is preferred, the fermentation has to be stopped earlier. For a dry or slightly acid flavor it has to be continued longer.

10 - When the tea has attained the right acid degree (pH 2,7 - 3,2), depending on individual taste, remove the culture with clean hands. Clean the culture under cold or lukewarm water. Fill new tea into the jar and add the culture immediately. Respect the right temperature of the tea. Pour the beverage into bottles, which should be filled to the brim. Keep about one tenth (10%) as starter for the next batch. Stopper the bottles securely. I don't think it necessary to strain the fermented beverage through a cloth. A certain amount of sediment is normal. It is due to the growth of yeasts, which produced the gas which aerates the beverage. The yeasts are said to have some desirable positive effects on the human organism.

11 - To find ultimate satisfaction in this drink it should be allowed to mature for a few days (at least 5 days), after having been bottled. The activity of the bacterium is stopped because the bottling excludes the air, while the yeast continues to work. If the bottles are securely stoppered, the gas produced by the yeast's activities, is unable to escape. Thus an effervescent drink is produced. For this a few days in the bottles is usually sufficient; the Kombucha beverage, however, will keep well for months. Do not worry: The yeast will stop the gas production at a certain point. It is advisable to keep the beverage in a cool place.

12 - The drink has an agreeable taste. It is sparkling, slightly sour and refreshing. One normally drinks three glasses a day, one glass (4 to 6 ounces or more) on an empty stomach in the morning, the second glass after a meal in the course of the day, and the last glass a short time before going to bed.

13 - When you start a new fermentation process, never forget to add to the new tea at least 10 % of the liquid from a cultivation which has already fermented.

IMPORTANT POINT TO BE NOTED

Sometimes the culture floats on the surface, sometimes it sinks to the bottom of the liquid. Both is OK. When the culture sinks to the bottom a new culture (a baby-culture) will begin to grow on the surface of the tea. For more details see page 33 of this book. The Kombucha culture needs some time to reproduce itself. It begins with a thin and filmy layer. The longer you leave it in peace, the thicker the new culture will grow. Because the growing of a new culture needs more time you should separate it from the preparation of the beverage that you want to drink. Please allow the new culture on the surface of the liquid 3 to 5 weeks to grow.

The Kombucha culture grows and covers the surface of the tea completely. While growing on the surface of the tea the culture thickens considerably. The thickened culture will be composed of easily separable superimposed layers. The layers can be peeled off one from another and each can be used as independent units for the production of Kombucha beverage. If the culture should sink to the bottom of the vessel, a new culture will form on the surface of the tea. In this way each culture will continue to propagate itself until it gradually begins to turn a dark brown color. When it is dark and dirty brown discard it and replace it with one of its offspring. Thus this unique culture can provide you and your family with an ongoing supply of Kombucha tea at very low cost.

Don't Rule Out TCM for Menopause Symptoms

Recently in a paper published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* 2002;137:805-813, authors Fredi Kronenberg, Ph.D. and Adriane Fugh-Berman, M.D. made some sweeping conclusions about the effectiveness of CAM therapies on the treatment of menopausal symptoms. I would like to take issue primarily with their generalizations about the effectiveness of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) in treating menopausal symptoms.



Based on a total of three very poorly designed clinical trials, two on single Chinese herbs and one on acupuncture, Dr.'s Kronenberg and Berman have downplayed the effectiveness of TCM by lumping it into a category of herbs and complementary and alternative medicines (CAM) therapies, that in their view, are not supported by clinical trials for the treatment of menopausal symptoms. The conclusions drawn by the authors were based on studies they found through a search of MEDLINE, the Alternative and Complementary Database of the British Library and their own "extensive files." While the authors state that they did not limit their search to English-language literature, undoubtedly the wealth of studies that have been done in China and Japan could have been investigated before drawing any sweeping conclusions from such miniscule and faulty data.

The first of the two studies cited pertaining to the use of Chinese herbs on menopausal symptoms focused on the use of Dang Gui (*Radix Angelica Sinensis*) as a single herb for treatment of hot flashes. First of all, Dang Gui is rarely used as a single herb by qualified practitioners of TCM for the treatment of any condition, much less hot flashes. Why then cite a study on Dang Gui as a single herb for the treatment of hot flashes, and then use the results as a basis for conclusions about the effectiveness of Chinese herbs on menopausal symptoms? Although the authors mentioned in passing that it would be valuable to study TCM formulas in the context of TCM diagnostic methods, such lip service is hardly sufficient to counter balance the inadequacy and faulty use of the research cited. The authors then went on to point out the danger of using Dang Gui concurrently with warfarin therapy. The truth is drug-herb interactions with blood thinning agents are a real concern. Any qualified Chinese herbalist would be fully aware of this and exercise caution accordingly.

The second study cited focused on the use of Ginseng (*Radix Ginseng*), also as a single herb, for the treatment of general menopausal symptoms and quality of life measures. Although for certain conditions, ginseng would more likely be used as single herb than Dang Gui, it would not be prescribed singly to treat menopausal conditions. Truthfully, in order to make any valid statements on the efficacy of Chinese herbs on menopausal symptoms, it would not only be "interesting," but it would be imperative to study TCM herbal formulas in the context of TCM diagnostic methods.

The third and final study cited that related to TCM, focused on the use of acupuncture to treat hot flashes. 24 menopausal women were randomly assigned to either an electro-acupuncture group or to a control group where shallow needle insertion was administered on the same points. Essentially then, this study was looking at acupuncture versus electro-acupuncture on the treatment of hot flashes. According to Dr.'s Kronenberg and Fugh-Berman, the result was that both groups showed a significant decrease in hot flashes. Based on these results, imagine how effective acupuncture would prove to be when administered by qualified practitioners of TCM, using point selections individualized for each patient, and based within the context of TCM methodology. The authors then went on to state that acupuncture can cause occasional tissue trauma, and in rare instances, pneumothorax and cardiac tamponade, and possibly transmission of hepatitis or other infectious disease. It is true that occasional tissue trauma is the most frequent complication of acupuncture, in other words: A

bruise. As for instances of pneumothorax and cardiac tamponade, they are so extremely rare that malpractice insurance for acupuncturists remains in the hundreds of dollars per year for \$1,000,000 in coverage. As the authors themselves mention, the standard use of disposable needles in the U.S. eliminates any danger of the transmission of infectious disease.

The bottom line is that to date, not a lot of good research has been done on TCM in the United States, due primarily to a lack of funding. In spite of this, TCM has been refined and practiced for thousands of years to good effect, and to the benefit of millions of people over hundreds of generations. As TCM gains wider acceptance in the United States, patient testimony and consumer demand alone are ranking acupuncture and the use of Chinese herbs as effective and safe alternative treatments for many women's health issues, including menopausal symptoms. While it is extremely difficult to devise randomized, placebo-controlled, double-blind clinical trials that can accurately reflect the effectiveness of TCM on menopausal symptoms, this research is forthcoming and will undoubtedly bear out the effectiveness of this time-tested tradition. In light of the early discontinuation of the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) study on hormone-replacement therapy in July of this year, it is crucial that the benefits of TCM on menopausal symptoms be recognized. The NIH study was halted early due to findings of slightly increased risk of heart disease, blood clots, stroke and breast cancer.

By all indications, medicine in the 21st century is moving toward an integrative model that will encompass the best of all traditions. As consumer awareness and discernment continues to increase, practitioners of medicine from all fields are being called upon to embody the pure motives and ethical standards that have been codified in both the Hippocratic oath, and The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine. In other words, the health and safety of the public should always be more important than money, even multi-billion dollar pharmaceutical industries. Yes more research needs to be done in the field of TCM, but unfortunately it is not all that lucrative to prove the effectiveness of such natural and benign therapies. The research will be done however, as it is the nature of all true and good things to eventually be revealed for what they are. As practitioners of medicine, it's time to clarify what our motives are. It's time for us to put all misinformation and squabbling aside and stand together as the leaders we have promised the world we would be.

Common Chinese Herbal Formulas for Pain Due To Trauma

Throughout my many years in my sports and martial arts, I have come across many trauma (known in Chinese as dit da, literally "fall and strike") prescriptions for herbal liniments, powders, plasters, and decoctions. Many Chinese are familiar with herbal liniments that are used for bruises, sprains, strains, fractures, and other trauma, due to a blow or fall. These formulas can all be used by weekend athletes and others who have to visit their sports medicine doctor. Beware of claims, "My secret formula is the best!" In the past, I stared with amazement and almost revered the brown, smelly liniment as I rubbed it into my bruises and training aches and pains.



After studying Chinese medicine and learning the fundamental principles, etiology of disease, methods of diagnosis, herbology, massage, acupuncture, moxibustion and cupping, I learned that a Chinese medicine practitioner must tailor treatments to the individual, and no set method is used to cure everyone or every injury. Indeed, one liniment I used regularly for bruises did heal my bruises in a few days, but always made me break out in a rash that lasted for two weeks! It always seemed to me that the cure was almost as bad as the injury or worse!

I later analyzed the prescription's individual ingredients and, through diagnosis, found my personal constitution had a lot of heat. Although the traditional formula has some very toxic and warm herbs in it, based on my constitution, these herbs were not for me. The result of having a warm constitution, living in a warm climate (Los Angeles), plus using warm herbs was inflammation, a rash.

Tradition or not, this prescription was not for me. Instead, I substituted the prepared versions of the above herbs and the effect was more agreeable for my individual constitution. Most experienced herbalists take a base formula and customize it for the individual. Thus, there is not one true, secret, ultimate trauma prescription! So beware of such claims.

Generally speaking, commercial forms of Chinese herbal trauma formulas like Xiao Huo Luo Dan (small invigorate collaterals pill), Bai Hua Yu (white flower oil), Tian Qi Jiu (first aid antiseptic), Yunnan Bai Yao (yunnan white powder), and Zheng Gu Shui (correct the bone liniment), are safe and effective for most everyday injuries. Many Chinese would rather use these herbal formulas first for a minor injury. I would certainly advise readers to seek proper medical attention in case of serious injury.

Xiao Huo Luo Dan is taken as a pill, and generally used for backaches, muscle strains, and broken bones. This is available prepackaged with directions for use. Like all herbal medicines, it is best to use as directed on the package.

Bai Hua Yu is a fragrant analgesic oil, used for stiff muscles and strains as a result of "over doing it." I usually refer to it as "Chinese Ben Gay." Avoid getting the oil on your face, as it can irritate the eyes.

Tian Qi Jiu is an herbal liniment for bruises. Usually, the person using it rubs it on topically into bruises or contusions.

Yunnan Bai Yao is a powder that stops bleeding immediately and is used when you have minor cuts or scrapes, or if you cut yourself shaving. During the Vietnam War, soldiers were given a supply of this powder for firearm wounds. It was so precious that soldiers referred to it as a "gold they wouldn't trade." Dramatically, this powder can stop bleeding instantly and promote healing with little to no scarring.

Finally, Zheng Gu Shui is a fine liniment for minor bruises, strains, and minor fractures to the fingers or toes. It also helps stop the pain that may occur due to minor sports injuries. It is also best to avoid on the face as it can irritate the eyes.

All of these commercial patents are available at your local Chinatown drug store or Chinese herbalist. If your goal is hard training, or you have sustained a more severe injury, it is better to visit a Chinese herbalist to create a formula based on your individual constitution, climate, and type of training or injury. Just because herbal formulas are natural, does not mean they are not dangerous medicine when used incorrectly. Many immuno-compromised individuals and pregnant women should avoid herbal trauma prescriptions as the herbs may be somewhat toxic or have affects regarding blood flow and may lead to miscarriage.

A good reference book for the majority of Chinese trauma herbs and their uses is Chinese Patent Herbal Formulas by Jake Fratkin (Shya Publications, 1985).

Rou Cong Rong – Herba Cistanche

When I was studying acupuncture, one of my favorite things to do was to sneak a piece of Rou Cong Rong from the herbal pharmacy at my school. While many of my fellow students snacked on the usual suspects - Gou Qi Zi or Long Yan Rou, it was the chewy sweet taste of Rou Con Rong that I always pined for.



Rou Cong Rong is a hardy perennial that lives mostly in dry areas and deserts. It is sometimes referred to as the “Ginseng of the desert.” This title refers to its ability to act as a tonic for the body. In particular, it strengthens Kidney Yang. In addition to being sweet and warm, its salty nature has an affinity to the Kidney meridian. Rou Cong Rong is primarily used to treat Kidney deficiency with symptoms such as impotence, infertility, premature ejaculation, spermatorrhea, urinary incontinence, and excessive uterine bleeding. The heavy and cloying nature of the herb also moistens the intestines and helps ease constipation, especially senile constipation.

In a recent study, chemical analysis of Rou Cong Rong demonstrated that it has antioxidant, anti-aging, and neuroprotective qualities. This is because the plant contains volatile oils, non-volatile phenylethanoid glycosides (PhGs), alditols, lignans, iridoids, oligosaccharides, and polysaccharides. The study revealed that it's the PhGs in Rou Cong Rong that offer neuroprotection and antioxidation. It's also the chemical responsible for helping to reinforce the vital function of the Kidneys. The polysaccharides improve overall immune function. Galactitol and oligosaccharides are the chemicals that aid in constipation relief.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Rou Cong Rong | |
| Properties | sweet, warm, salty |
| Meridians | Kidney, Large Intestine |
| Functions | tonify Kidney, strengthen yang, moistens the intestines |
| Indications | infertility, impotence, premature ejaculation, spermatorrhea, urinary incontinence, and excessive uterine bleeding, constipation |
| Contraindications | Yin deficiency with heat signs, constipation due to weak Spleen/Stomach energy |
| Dosage | 9-21grams |

CERTIFIED CHINESE HERBOLOGY ONLINE COURSE - SESSION 13 – QUESTION & ANSWERS

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP, PC: _____

PHONE: _____

FAX: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Please be sure to fill out the information above, complete the test and e-mail or fax it back to us at iridology@netzero.net or 530-878-1119. We will grade your question & answer session and will let you know if we have any questions or concerns. Please use a separate sheet to do this assignment.

1. Who Uses Mien Shiang?
2. Now look in the mirror and see how much risk-taking ability you have. The bigger your ears, the bigger your risks; the smaller your ears, the more cautious you probably are.
3. Are your eyebrows dark and thick? If so, it is quite feasible that you have a lot of passion and anger.
4. What about your eyes? The more open your eyes, the more open your heart.
5. Do you have high, prominent cheekbones? If you do, you are likely to be authoritative. (Some might even call you bossy!)
6. What if your left eyebrow is thicker than the other?
7. Remembering that the right side of the face represents the outer, public self and the left side represents the inner, private self, you can see plainly that your face reveals that you are apt to feel more anger (inside) than you show (on the outside).
8. Take a closer look at your ears. Are they the same size? The same shape? Even the same height?
9. Keep looking in the mirror. See if you can establish how much character you have, how determined you are, how much ego you have, and how outgoing you are. Do your features match your feelings? Do you think others see you as you really are?
10. What is Acupuncture?
11. What is Yan Xin Qigong and how can it benefit you?
12. How does Qigong Work?
13. What is Ear Acupuncture and what is it used for?
14. What do you think of the Twenty-Four Rules for Chi Kung Practice? Pick your favorite one and tell us why it's your favorite and how you could relate it to your life.
15. What is T'ai Chi and how can it benefit you?
16. What is the Chinese and Latin name for Sophora Root?
17. What is Medical Qigong?
18. What is Tui Na and why would you refer a client for it?