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The First Medicine

"If you're lucky at some point in your life, you'll come to a complete dead end." Dr. Peter Kingsley. *In The Dark Places of Wisdom*

As long as there have been bipedal humans, there has been some form of natural medicine. Natural medicine did not just spring up with settlements and planting. Cultural evolution has a long and global history from the first bipedal human to the Neolithic period, which witnessed settlements, the invention of farming and stone tools. If we had to put a date on upright humans we could agree to anthropologist, Richard Leakey's (1) estimate of between 7 million to 2.5 million years ago. And if we went back about 30-35,000 years ago, Richard Leakey believes that there is "a clear signal of the evolution of modern

humans." This signal was the era of the development of the first medicine people, known to us as "shamans."

Shaman healing practices from almost every culture was based on observations and experiences of the shaman-healers living in nature. As hunger-gatherers, they followed the lead of the animals to hunt and gather food. They imitated animal movements and created dances to gather the subtle energies of the animals, which they called "animal medicine." Shaman medicine reflected living with nature. In Asia, Chinese shamans were healers, mystics and priests who viewed humans as inseparable with nature, a microcosm of the stars. Chinese medicine evolved from observing live humans by looking at the hands, face, feet, by smelling odors, from taking pulses, from listening.

On the other hand, the allopathic medical tradition, which we are familiar with in the west, was integral with the practice of cadaver dissection, which began in Europe in the Middle Ages long after the Neolithic period. These European "doctor-scientists" drew their conclusions from what they observed in dead tissues of cadavers and since they did not find spirit or energy in cadavers they did not generate a concept of Qi or spirit in their medicine. These dissecting European physicians were colonized literates who used Aristotelian logic and language to classify and identify, thereby creating a practice of naming diseases/illnesses.

Contemporary allopathic medicine is, therefore, concentrated almost exclusively on physical medicine. Whereas, the natural medicine of ancient shamans was a part of a worldview that did not separate energy from matter, the spirit from the physical, heaven from earth was rooted in the changing seasons, and in the spirits of nature and animals. They saw the human condition as fluid and changeable.

Modern Chinese scholars agree that it was from the practices of the ancient shamans and the Taoist priests/priestess that the concept of Qi or spirit as subtle energy evolved. According to them Qi is ubiquitous. Physical medicine was considered to be the lowest form of medicine while the treatment of spirit was the first and highest medicine. The origins of Qi or spirit predate the Neolithic period. This concept has been torn out of western civilization by design and happenstance. And it is most important to understand the significance of this fact.

Before the invention of writing, which occurred only as recently as 6000 years ago, humans enjoyed a life in which words were only spoken and never written. The lives of these early humans were experienced in the seasons of nature and acted out in rituals and recorded in the collective memories of all tribal members. Literacy played no role in their lives, their memories or their concepts. According to author Dr. Huston Smith, "the spoken word" what he calls the culture of "primal morality" has "a distinctive genius" that is far more versatile than written language (2):

Speech is a part of a speaker's life, and as such shares that life's vitality. ...It gives a flexibility that can be tailored to speaker and hearer alike. Familiar themes can be enlivened by fresh diction. Rhythm can be introduced, together with intonations, pauses, and accentuations, until speaking borders on chanting, and storytelling emerges as a high art. Dialect and delivery can be added to flesh out characters that are being described, and when animal postures and gaits are mimed and their noises simulated we are into theatre. ... To commit living myth and legend to lifeless script they assume would be to imprison it and sound its death knell. ...We do not understand the distinctiveness of primal morality until we confront its exclusiveness, the way it views writing not as a supplement to speaking but its foe. For once introduced, writing does not leave the virtues of morality intact. In important ways it undercuts them.

Now Back to the West

Before Plato amputated our mythological history, there were ancient spirit practices of healing that have been lost to the west. Plato and the Greeks substituted time and "rational logic" for ancient mysticism and mythology. As westerners now search for personal and cultural answers by looking eastward, western philosopher Peter Kingsley points out that we are merely searching for this piece that was taken from us before the Greeks (3):

Our modern image of doctors and healing was first shaped by Hippocrates; and the famous school he founded soon felt the need to define its aims by excluding from medicine anything that didn't specifically have to do with medicine. So it lashed out at those philosophers, attacking them because of the way they insisted that before you can really heal anyone you first have to know what men and women are in their deepest nature—what human beings are from the beginning, not just how they react to this or that condition.

There used to be a famous tradition about Pythagoras that he went around from city to city and town to town 'not to teach but to heal'. And the first great philosophical systems created in Italy and Sicily weren't theoretical products at all. The knowledge of how the universe came into being, or of the elements that make up reality, was meant to have a practical application.

But above all it was bound up with healing—with getting one's own life in order on every possible level and helping other people get their lives in order as well.

...there's one thing that makes the knowledge those early philosophers had so difficult to grasp and make sense of. This is the fact that it didn't have its origin in thinking or reasoning. It came from the experience of other states of consciousness. Those philosophers, those people attacked in the Hippocratic writings, happened to have been Istromantis figures; they were mystics and magicians. And as far as they were concerned there's no real healing until you come to discover what you are behind the world of the senses.

What is illness what is health?

"Health is typically defined as the absence of disease. To me, health is a happy, vibrant

exuberant life every single day of your life. Anything less is certain about of disease." People are always in process until they die. You don't cure an ulcer, you have remission. You don't cure depression, you help a person find happiness according to their own definition, and hopefully you help them perpetuate that."

*Patch Adams, a laughing M.D. creator of Gesundheit! Institute,
The Washington Post, Feb. 4, 1988*

In the east, Chinese scholars tell us that humans have always sought to influence the forces in nature and to change their bad fortune to good. Shamans danced, chanted, sang and meditated focusing wishes, thoughts and images in order to affect the weather, the crops, animals, and hostile tribes.

The Yellow Emperor's Classic, whose authorship is ascribed to Huang Ti, the Yellow Emperor living between 2698-2598 B.C. is said to have been written down during the Warring States, 480-221 B.C. Regardless of the possibility that its characters may be fictitious, this document is accepted as the Chinese scholar's classic of Chinese medicine.

The Yellow Emperor speaks of the Heart as the source of illness. The Chinese heart embodies much more than the physical heart of the west (4):

The heart is the sovereign of all organs and represents the consciousness of one's being. It is responsible for intelligence, wisdom, and spiritual transformation. ... If the spirit is disturbed and unclear, the other organs will not function properly. This creates damage. The pathways and roads along with the qi flows will become blocked and health will suffer.

Though Tibet is principally Buddhist having come under the influence of Shakamuni Buddha, still brings us into contact with an ancient and uncolonized lineage. From the Tibetans we learn how an uncolonized people viewed healing.

Sogyal Rinpoche author of The Tibetan Books of Living and Dying identifies the cause of illness as the mind, which is similar to what the Chinese shamans called the *heart-mind* (5):

The mind is the root of everything; the creator of happiness and the creator of suffering...as the great guru Padmasambhava said 'Do not seek to cut the root of phenomena, cut the root of the mind.' That is why I find these words of Buddha so inspiring 'we are what we think, and all that we are rises with our thoughts. With our thoughts we make the world. Speak and act with a pure mind and happiness will follow.' If only we were to remember this, keep it in our hearts, and keep our heart and mind pure, the happiness would really follow. The whole of the Buddha's teaching, then, is directed towards taming this mind, and keeping our heart and mind pure.

In spite of all of its attempted isolation, Chinese culture met with quite

another fate. Ambitious emperors and their trade policies brought China under the influence of great western colonial powers. Later the British educated Mao Tse Tung brought about the communist revolution whose mentor was Karl Marx, a wealthy British bourgeois author and colonialist. As a result, China's original traditional medical practice has been "colonized" and has lost most of its original shaman spirit practices. Though the concept of Qi and subtle energies still prevails somewhat in what is sometimes referred to as Chinese Communist Medicine, known to us as TCM, like allopathic medicine it has become primarily a physical medicine essentially devoid of shamanistic spirit/energy practices with TCM doctors primarily treating the physical body rather than the whole person.

Dr. Smith tell us that as literate people with a colonized education, westerners have lost the vital spirit inherent in the spoken word and we, therefore, fall quickly into traps that exclusively oral cultures do not (6):

We summarize... by quoting. Anthropologist Paul Radin: "The disorientation in our whole psychic life and in our whole apperception of the external realities produced by the invention of the alphabet, the whole tendency of which has been to elevate thought and thinking to the rank of the exclusive proof of all verities, never occurred among tribal peoples.

The loss of our shaman roots was deliberate and calculated. Peter Kingsley author of In the Dark Places of Wisdom has written much about this so we get a glimpse of our mythological past. (7)

Before the beginnings of what's known as 'rational' medicine in the West, healing always had to do with the divine. If people were sick it was normal to go to the shrines of gods, or else to the shrines of great beings who once had been humans but now were more than humans; the heroes. And they'd lie down.

They would lie down in an enclosed space. Often it was a cave. And either they'd fall asleep and have a dream or they'd enter a state described as neither sleep nor waking--and eventually they'd have a vision. Sometimes the vision or the dream would bring them face to face with the god or the goddess or hero, and that was how the healing came about. People were healed like this all the time.

What's important is that you would do absolutely nothing. The point came when you wouldn't struggle or make an effort. You'd just have to surrender to your condition. You would lie down as if you were dead; wait without eating or moving, sometimes for days at a time. And you'd wait for the healing to come from somewhere else, from another level of awareness and another level of being.

There would be people in charge of the place--priests who understood how the process worked and how to supervise it, who knew how to help you understand what you needed to know without interfering with the process itself.

We still have priests, except that now they belong to a different religion. Underneath the surface of the rhetoric and persuasion there's not much to choose between modern

science and ancient magic. But because there's no knowledge left any more of how to find access to what's beyond our waking consciousness we have to take anesthetics and drugs. And because there's no longer any understanding of powers greater than ourselves we're denied any meaning to our suffering. So we suffer as liabilities, die as statistics.

It is Robert Lax, the 20th century American poet who lived for 30 years on the famous Island of Patmos for 30 years who has the simplest explanation of the cause of illness that I have read yet (8):

I think that what happens to somebody who's so much into that sort of rat race that they never have much contact with their real self – what happens to hem often, it seems to me, is that physically they destroy themselves. Perhaps the poor old deep self says: 'I can't stand living in this mad-house any longer—let's drink ourselves to death. At least I'll be up and out of it then.' The shallow one's habits get to be so much that biologically he can't stand it any more, but the may have the god fortune to collapse and be taken to the country or to a good hospital and come up with his real self.

Where does this leave us then?

The disorientation of which Dr. Smith speaks has contributed to our obsession at naming and classifying things in western medical and healing practices. Even holistic thinking macrobiotic teachers have not escaped this misdirection. Kingsley puts it bluntly and truthfully (9).

Life for us has become an endless affair of trying to improve ourselves: achieving more and doing more, learning more, always needing to know more things. The process of learning and being taught has simply become a matter of being fed facts and information—receiving what we didn't have before, always being given something different from ourselves.

That's why whatever we learn never touches jus deeply enough, why nothing really satisfies us. And the more we sense this the more we rush around trying to find other substitutes to fill the void we still feel inside. Everything pushes us outside ourselves—further away from the utter simplicity of our own humanity.

Even when we go back into human mis-history and try to reconstruct it, and bring it forward, we do so with a literate, colonized consciousness. That is fallacy of the logic of taking the whole apart and then try to put it back together. And for us there is little escape from this prison of our times and our history. The best we can hope for is to resist the temptation to try to make macrobiotics sound and look like allopathic medicine, resist drifting further and further away from ancient spirit medicine. We can resist colonizing ancient history further. We can eliminate a little more colonization from our practices and add more of the shaman spirit with each day with each new seeker of wisdom. Perhaps, only then

can we begin to escape little by little our own cultural prison. And so we must accept the depressingly true fact that as a colonized people, we are lost in a maze thinking we know but suspecting that we do not.

Back to the East and The Art of Healing

"The sage helps the ten thousand things find their own nature." Tao Te Ching

What then is the role of the healer? The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine, which makes it very clear that mere physical medicine cannot succeed in a curing illness puts spiritual or spirit/energy medicine central to healing (10):

Qi Bo answered:

"To completely heal a person acupuncture, herbs and these other modalities are only one aspect of the treatment. You must also come into synchrony with the patient in many other ways. For example, when patients lack the confidence to conquer illness, they allow their spirits to scatter and wither away. They let their emotions take control of their lives. They spend their days drowned in desires and worries, exhausting their jing/essence and qi and shen/spirit. Of course, then even with all these other modalities, the disease will not be cured."

And in The Tibetan Art of Healing, the Dalai Lama supports this view as well, albeit in more modern language (11):

...Tibetan medicine views health as a question of balance. The physician's role within this system is to guide the patient towards greater self-awareness, beyond the self-imposed limitations that foster disease.

There is a very specific reason why the Chinese believe that physical medicine alone is insufficient medicine, why physical medicine alone cannot cure. This is largely because it is the Qi and the positive spirit and intention of the medicine-person/healer that is central to any treatment (12):

A good healer cannot depend on skill alone. He must also have the correct attitude, sincerity, compassion, and a sense of responsibility. ... When a doctor and patient are in a state of harmony, the illness will not linger or become terminal.

Before any specific recommendations are the healer's competence on many levels is said to be of primary importance as it is the medicine person who is an active agent in the healing process. And the spirit, the soul and feelings of both the healer and the patient play an important role. Together they form a complete unit. Healing, it is believed begins in the world of the spirit before it effects the

physical plane.

The art of healing is achieved when all our actions are inspired by a higher reality in which our individual identity is inseparable from the creative forces of the Cosmos. When the memory of wholeness is restored, healing takes place within our mind and body. This is a universal way of ancestral shaman healers whether east or west and I for one think we need to return to it.

Who are you? Finding the Missing Pieces

"Having a peaceful heart is a powerful key to good health."

Traditional Chinese Medicine World, Summer 2003, pg. 12

The central question then is this: What is macrobiotics really about and for what purpose should it exist at all? Many people, myself included, have become increasingly disillusioned with the prevailing materialistic interpretation of illness and health. I harmonize more with the shaman beliefs that this reality in which we live is an illusion. And I agree with the Tibetan healers "...it is the mind that directs the body toward sickness or health" and the Tibetan goal that the "...vehicle for realizing perfect health in mind body and spirit" is "a bridge to our highest potential."

As a "way of life consultant," when considering a person's concerns macrobiotic consultants are presented with a dynamic, living, breathing, evolving human being, not a mere word to be defined by some medical system or a mere concept or a even a disease. What we see is a whole person asking questions about the meaning of life and death. We often see a person at a crossroads. This is a profound truth - one we too easily dismiss, by finding it easier to look at physical health. To merely see the client's stage in life as a named disease per se, e.g. "cancer," "diabetes," "MS," "water in lungs," etc. without undertaking a sincere consideration of the entire person would result in a lack of insight.

To illustrate the profundity of this truth, I quote here one of the most beautiful medicine stories I have ever heard (13)

On the bulletin board in the front hall of the hospital where I work, there appeared an announcement. 'Yesdhi Dhonden,' it read, 'will make rounds at six o'clock on the morning of June 10.' ... Followed by a notation: 'Yesdhi Dhonden is Personal Physician to the Dalai Lama.' ...Thus on the morning of June 10, I join the clutch of whitecoats waiting in the small conference room adjacent to the ward selected for the rounds. The air in the room is heavy with ill-concealed dubiety and suspicion of bamboozlement. At precisely six o'clock he materializes, a short, golden, barely man dressed in a sleeveless robe of saffron and maroon. His scalp is shaven, and the only visible hair is a scanty black line above each hooded eye.

He bows in greeting while his young interpreter makes the introduction. Yesdhi Dhonden, we are told, will examine a patient selected by a member of the staff. ... We

are further informed that for the past two hours Yeshi Dhonden has purified himself by bathing, fasting, and prayer. ...

The patient had been awakened early and told that she was to be examined by a foreign doctor, and had been asked to produce a fresh specimen of urine, so when we enter her room, the woman shows no surprise. She has long ago taken on that mixture of compliance and resignation that is the *facies* of chronic illness. This was to be but another in an endless series of tests and examinations.

Yeshi Dhonden steps to the bedside while the rest stand apart, watching. For a long time, he gazes at the woman, favoring no part of her body with his eyes, but seeming to fix his glance at a place just above her supine form. I, too, study her. No physical sign or obvious symptom gives a clue to the nature of her disease.

At last he takes her hand, raising it in both of his own. Now he bends over the bed in a kind of crouching stance, his head drawn down into the collar of his robe. His eyes are closed as he feels for her pulse. In a moment he has found the spot, and for the next half-hour he remains thus, suspended above the patient like some exotic golden bird with folded wings, holding the pulse of the woman beneath his fingers, cradling her hand in his. All the power of the man seems to have been drawn down into this one purpose. It is palpation of the pulse raised to the state of ritual. From the foot of the bed, where I stand, it is as though he and the patient have entered a special place of isolation, of apartness, about which a vacancy hovers, and across which no violation is possible. After a moment the woman rests back upon her pillow. From time to time she raises her head to look at the strange figure above her, then sinks back once more. I cannot see their hands joined in a correspondence that is exclusive, intimate, his fingertips receiving the voice of her sick body through the rhythm and throb she offers at her wrist. All at once I am envious--not of him, not of Yeshi Dhonden for his gift of beauty and holiness, but of her. I want to be held like that, touched so, and received. And I know that I, who have palpated a hundred thousand pulses, have not felt a single one.

At last Yeshi Dhonden straightens, gently places the woman's hand upon the bed, and steps back. The interpreter produces a small wooden bowl and two sticks. Yeshi Dhonden puts a portion of the urine specimen into the bowl and proceeds to whip the liquid with two sticks. This he does for several minutes until foam is raised. Then, bowing above the bowl, he inhales the odor three times. He sets down the bowl and turns to leave. All this while, he has not uttered a single word.

As he hears the door, the woman raises her head and calls out to him in a voice at once urgent and serene. "Thank you, doctor," she says, and touches with her other hand the place he had held on her wrist, as though to recapture something that had visited there.

We are seated once more in the conference room. Yeshi Dhonden speaks not for the first time, in soft Tibetan sounds that I have never heard before. He has barely begun when the young interpreter begins to translate, the two voices continuing in tandem--a bilingual fugue, the one chasing the other. It is like the chanting of monks. He speaks of winds coursing throughout the body of the woman, currents that break against barriers, eddying. These vortices are in her blood, he says. The last spendings of an imperfect heart. Between the chambers of the heart, long, long before she was born, a wind had come and blown open a deep gate that must never be opened. Through it charge the full waters of her river, as the mountain stream cascades in the springtime,

battering, knocking loose the land, and flooding her breath. Thus, he speaks, and a now he is silent.

A professor asks, "May we now have the diagnosis?"

The host of these rounds, the man who knows answers. "Congenital heart disease," he says "Interventricular septal defect, with resultant heart failure."

A gateway in the heart, I think. That must not be opened. Through it charge the full waters that flood her breath. So! Here they are the doctors listening to the sounds of the body to which the rest of us are dear. He is more than doctor. He is priest. I know...I know...the doctor to the gods is pure knowledge, pure healing. The doctor to man stumbles, must often wound; his patient must die, as must he.

Now and then it happens, as I make my own rounds, that I hear the sounds of his voice, like an ancient Buddhist prayer, its meaning long since forgotten, only the music remaining. Then jubilation possesses me, and I feel myself touched by something divine.

It would be a profoundly deep spiritual and healing achievement for any macrobiotic consultant to reach one tenth of the depth, insight, compassion, knowledge and sensitivity illustrated in this single act of reading the pulse. All else seems to be a futile and excessive, and misdirecting of valuable energy.

The healer within us has a sacred otherworldly source that can never be licensed, legislated or controlled by the ordinary world as much as they and we might try. Instead of it being legislated, it is the source of just laws. It is a direct path for the mystic.

A Redirection

"It's quite an achievement. We've actually succeeded in creating the illusion that we're wiser than people used to be." Peter Kingsley, *In the Dark Places of Wisdom*, 172

Given all that I have said already, I therefore believe, that the *clinical case approach* is much more consistent with the original healing traditions of the ancient shamans and traditional Chinese medicine. It is more illuminating of the challenges brought by a client than is the *spiritless disease classifying practices* of modern western allopathic medicine. Therefore, I elect to use the narrative form to describe the individuals who have brought their questions to me and to describe how I undertook to redirect each of them.

In conclusion, I feel that we all need to return more to the original shaman energy medicine of both East and West if we are to help people and ourselves understand the nature of reality and the ultimate fulfillment of our human lives.

In my experiences, I believe that the purposes of a way of life/macrobiotic consultation is to help the another fulfill their divine and human potential, change their destructive attitudes, appreciate their lives, enjoy every moment, and be happy. A tall order! - and a task that can only be achieved if the teacher/counselor lives the way of life (s) he is trying to impart.

This Author's concluding comment

Quite frankly, when I began offering my help to others in 1987 I expected to be of help. I expected that those who were seeking answers would find them.

When I first began, Shizuko Yamamoto advised me to take everyone who asked, and later I would be more experienced to narrow down the field. So that is what I did. I took everyone. About 3000 everyone. With each one I intended they would be healed, be enlightened; be motivated to take charge of themselves. Very few succeeded.

Now 16 years later, what has crept into my consciousness is a truth that I never expected to find. And I confess it to you here. I do not like being a failure. And so many of these clients have made me feel like a failure because they have failed. I feel that I have been little or no help at all. This is an experience I do not wish to have again so I am limiting my interaction to only those who come with the intention to succeed.

I really do not know how to help another person motivate themselves to practice a sensible, life of staying well and disease prevention. But if I concentrate on living my life in this way, then perhaps that will help show others a way through their confusion.

Alternative Treatments

"Chinese Holistic Medicine came into being at least eight thousand years ago through the first two of the eight Branches of the Tao Healing Arts. Over the centuries the other six branches evolved into a unified way of life." Jeff Nagel (1)

It was the ancient Shamans who discovered Qi. Since their lives were simple, tribal ones, not contaminated by colonial education, literacy, conceptualization, urbanization, and industrialization, they could feel subtle energies. They lived close to nature. They could hear subtle vibrations. They were not distracted so much as we moderns are.

Classical Chinese Medicine has been derived from shaman and Taoist practices and by the Eight Divisions of Indian Ayurvedic and Tibetan Buddhist Medicine.

The 8 Taoist Branches of Classical Chinese Medicine are:

1. Meditations
2. Qigong exercise (2)
3. Diet
4. Astrology
5. Geomancy
6. Massage

7. Herbology

8. Acupuncture/moxibustion

The above first three practices constitute traditional daily health preservation. Astrology and geomancy are next and are practices of environmental importance, balancing and directing the energy in the environment. Massage by practitioner follows in 6th place to make up for what is not balanced in 1-5. Next, herbs are recommended and finally, acupuncture/moxibustion when all of the above practices has failed to adjust subtle energy imbalances.

Based upon the ancient Taoist traditional practices I use Medicineless medicine: Qi Practices including: 1) Self-Massage (3) , 2) Qi movements/exercise, 3) Meditation

And these other recommendations to alternatives to allopathic as adjuncts with macrobiotic cooking order of importance:

Immediate Remedies – for symptomatic relief

Motivational/Spiritual guidance for balancing spirit

Lifestyle- for holistic overview and balance

Exercise/Movement/Breathing – to balance Qi energies

Dietary – for correction, prevention, and growth

Supporting Notes

1. 8 Branches of the Tao Healing Arts Before TCM, by Jeff Nagel, M.A., The Empty Vessel, Summer 1999

- 8 Branches of Ancient Taoist Health Practices

2. "Standard Chinese Medicine (SCM) is not the same as Daoist medicine. .SCM known as TCM endorsed and regulated by the Chinese Ministry of Health is the national styles of standards of diagnosis and care established by national symposia of the best Lao yi sheng, "old Chinese doctors," for all over China has been refined over the last 1800 years published in 1747 by imperial decrees as the Yi Zong Jin Jian (Golden Mirror of Accumulated Medicine). This is a medical encyclopedia compiled in the Qing dynasty. After 1949, the communists made standardization of national policy. The majority of the literature was created by confucianists." Bob Flaws, from personal correspondence with Phyllis Parun, 2000

2) Qi movements/exercise

"The purpose of qigong is not to become proficient in qigong but to become expert at being more fully who you are." Ken Cohen

"If you want to know what your experiences were like in the past, examine your body now. If you want to know what your body will be like in the future, look at your experience now."

A Tibetan Buddhist Saying

"...simple, mild exercise is actually a superior fitness practice. Mild fitness practices mobilize greatly enhanced internal resources. Jo of American Medical Assn. 1989, Blair found that fitness levels are most effectively enhanced by regular, moderate, low impact exercise." From The Health Within, by Roger Jahnke, pg. 34

Kenneth S. Cohen . External Qi Healing: Philosophy, Practice, and Clinical Guidelines

“External Qi Healing (EQH) is at the core of China’s ancient, sacred science of Qigong. In EQH, healing energy is projected from the palms and, without physically touching the client, directed into an area of disease, distress, or pain. First we will learn a complete personal Qigong practice—exercises and meditations that cleanse the body of toxic or unneeded energy and recharge it with vitality. Personal practice prepares and centers the healer, increases sensitivity to Qi (life energy) fields, and improves clinical efficacy. Then we will learn the methods of EQH health assessment and specific therapeutic gestures used to treat imbalance. In vitro and animal studies conducted in both China and the West clearly demonstrates that EQH is not dependent on a client’s belief system or culture. It has been found effective for the same range of illnesses treated by acupuncture, including cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and chronic pain. Yet EQH does not require knowledge of Chinese medicine. The system is rooted in Chinese shamanism and Taoism, spiritual traditions based on harmony and communion with natural forces. It is safe, easy to learn, and may be used as an adjunctive therapy with both conventional and alternative medicine. In China, EQH is often combined with acupuncture and massage for both in-patient and outpatient care. We will identify scientific models that suggest how EQH works, including the biochemical and bioelectric “signatures” of EQH treatment. Yet, exploring what can be known does not preclude healthy respect for the unknown. Taoism maintains that there may be aspects of Qi which scientific instruments cannot measure. We will discuss this transpersonal, spiritual dimension of EQH, including how to open the body and mind to the universal well of Healing Power in Nature, so that the healer is never in danger of depleting his or her own resources. We will note the similarities between EQH and other ancient energy medicine traditions, especially African and Native American. EQH is more than a science of healing; it changes the way we view the world and ourselves. This workshop is open to beginners and all levels.”

3) Self-Massage

"The earliest records of traditional Chinese medicine suggests that the original method for distinguishing the acupuncture point was to find sore points on the body.... When people simply find these sore spots and then work them over thoroughly on a daily basis, their health will improve.

"...most important, it became obvious to me that people could learn to perform this primary therapy (massage) on themselves and thus decrease their dependence on medicines and doctors. ... " From The Healer Within by Roger Jahnke, pg. 60-62

The secret of self-massage is to locate the tender, stiff, stagnant or sore areas and work them. These stiff areas are the beginnings of stagnation and lack of flow. They are connected to your inner organs. By self-massaging these sore areas on the outside of the body, you send vibrations inward, stimulating the inner areas as well, to release and relax. This is why you should always massage the tender and stiff local areas daily as needed.

When you massage an area count by 9's. A clockwise rotation counts 9 times and then goes in a counterclockwise rotation 9 times. Count up to 18 or 36 total rotations, alternating by 9's. A total of 18 would be 9 clockwise and 9 counterclockwise. A total of 36 would be 9 clockwise, then 9 counterclockwise, then 9 clockwise, and a final 9 counterclockwise.

The stories of Seekers I have met along the way

Cancer as revenge

The phone rang. It was John. He told me that a friend of his had an ex-wife with cancer. It was in her liver. He asked would I see her. I agreed and we arranged that I should meet him at her house on Wednesday afternoon. So I did.

April lived on the Lakefront in a very nice house. Her former husband was a surgeon and they had never wanted for material wealth. April explained that she loved to travel and didn't have much time to spend in the kitchen. She asked me if I would cook for her and bring her meals to her by the pool. "No," I said. "I am a teacher not a maid. If I agreed to your request I would merely be supporting your cancer by supporting your continued desire to be a victim." This she understood so her reply was appropriate, "That is healthy. I like that."

As the meeting continued I learned that 10 years previous her husband had had an affair with a woman. April got mad at him and married another whom she did not love. In response the husband afraid that he would not have anyone married the mistress and has two children by her. April was angry. And now the husband wanted her back more than ever.

April told me, "Now that he has children I cannot take him back. Think of the children." And so she has her cancer to comfort her.

Eight months later I learned that she had died.

Strangers as friends

I first met Terry when I ordered a video to be made of Dr. Martha Cottrell's visit to New Orleans. Terry who was overweight and on high blood pressure pills discovered the macrobiotic diet in this way and having felt it was a god send decided to make more programs for cable TV.

Over the course of two years we run programs on several subjects and we get calls weekly. One day I received a call from Cammie. She said her best friend and neighbor were just diagnosed with cancer and that she wanted to help

her. She asked me what could she do.

"Well," I answered, "would you be willing to cook very simple meals for her?"

"Yes, I would," she affirmed confidently.

"Well, then please go ask your friend if she would like to try and call me back."

The next day, I received her call on my answer phone. Cammie said, "My friend died last night. So I won't be needing the program after all. But thank you very much."

New experiences

In an attempt to help one of my clients maintain his health, I gave him some advice about daily practices. On this occasion I recommended that he walk on the early morning dew. Well, he could only think of one place that had grass near him and it was the neutral ground or divider between to lanes of the avenue across from the little store he owned.

So one morning he decided to begin. He took off his shoes and socks, stepped onto the grass took his first step right into dog shit. And that was the last time he walked on the early morning dew.

Healing

Maya, who is now 79 years old, receive massage from me every month. 1993 was a particularly difficult year for her since two of her very best friends died, and she fell down twice. On this particular occasion, Maya's boy friend Jim was in the hospital and she was once again feeling grief and loss having had so many changes to face in one year.

I gave Maya a very gentle treatment not so much for vigor as much as for harmony and peace of mind. Maya always comments about her feelings during the massage, and this time was no exception.

"I really enjoy the massage. Massage in general is very good, I feel, for one's well-being. But more importantly it is especially important to get a massage from someone you like and feel close to and have some affinity with. And I especially like that it is you who gives me the massage."

What could be more accurate, I thought.

Dorothy's last lesson

We sat together in the back yard after the shiatsu session. It was Dorothy's last session prior to her departure from New Orleans. Dorothy bemoaned her progress, while I was very happy about how far she had come.

"I'm very goal-oriented," Dorothy proclaimed. "I want to see more progress

more quickly."

"Well, look at the progress you've made so far," I responded.

"But I've been here before," Dorothy retorted.

"No, I do not believe that you have," I replied, having never been in this setting myself with her. "Sitting here in this yard, having had a shiatsu session, studying macrobiotics, and talking with me. This is entirely new for you as it is for me. You have changed your life significantly, and you never did that before."

After a moment of reflection Dorothy replied, "Oh, yes, I do see what you mean."

Susan

When Susan first called me she described her physical pains – pains and swelling in her knees. When she arrived for her consultation after we got acquainted for a few minutes talking about her work, which was as a teacher at a local dental school. To begin the inquiry, I asked her what she wanted to accomplish. Without hesitating Susan laughed and said, "I am in my early 50's and I would like to turn my life around and give up my teenage bullshit."

My first impression was that Susan was very clear about her purpose at this stage of her life. While staring at the page upon which I had written her reply, I hesitated, took a deep breath, and asked: "Susan would you please tell me very briefly what your life is about? "

Again without hesitating Susan replied rather succinctly: " I want to be freed of being controlled by western medicine. I want to be able to develop myself even further, and help others in the process because I am in a position to do so as a teacher."

I can't tell you how riveted I was by Susan's reply. I just sat there staring at my notes. Gathering my words, I began to repeat what she had said back to her thinking that maybe I did not hear her right.

"So it seems that you feel that you would like to be free of some of the constraints that modern civilization may place on you, that you want your work and life to contribute toward your personal self-cultivation and self-development, and our wish to serve others and help others as an extension of your own development? Is that what you mean?"

As I spoke, she began to tear up, and by the time I completed my summation, she was drying her tears with a hanky all the while apologizing for being "so emotional." At this point I remembered a comment my own teacher, Shizuko Yamamoto had made to me 10 years earlier when I asked her why my voice was so watery. She had said. "You have excess water because of where you live." I had only seen this condition once in my consultations and it was 15 years ago when out of desperation a young mother brought her 6-month-old daughter for a consultation. The child had been diagnosed by her doctor as having water in the

lungs, and sure enough when I put my ear to her chest as she breathed in and out, I was able to hear the water in the lungs.

So I reminded Susan that her initial complaint was that her knees were swollen. Then she showed me her hands. She had a “water ball” in the wrist of her left hand and a very enlarged soft lump at the base of her index finger—to much yin which turned out to be her habit of drinking liquids constantly all day long esp. coffee. This it seems she was doing to compensate for lack of kidney yin energy.

My recommendations included: reducing liquid, getting more rest, no coffee, regular qigong to build up yin and balance yang, less work, early to bed along with following macrobiotic principles in her cooking, no eating 3 hours before bedtime, meditation practices for rest and yin balance. walking exercise, ginger compress on kidneys and knee daily.

Footnotes

1. Leakey, Richard. The Origin of Humankind, "The Origins of Modern Human" p. 79.
2. Smith, Huston. The Worlds Religions, "The Primal Religions, "p. 366
3. Kingsley, Peter. In the Dark Places of Wisdom,. 143.
4. Ni, Maosing. The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine, p. 34
5. Sogyal Rinpoche. Tibetan Books of Living and Dying,
6. Smith, p. 370.
7. Kingsley, p.80.
8. Robert Lax in conversation with Peter France in Hermits
9. Kingsley, p. 188.
10. Yellow Emperor, p. 54.
11. Tibetan Art of Healing, "Forward", pg. 7-11.
12. Yellow Emperor, p. 54.
13. Ram Dass & Paul Gorman. How Can I Help? "The Listening Mind", 118-119.

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About the Author

Phyllis Parun, philosopher artist-poet-essayist born in New Orleans, attended Louisiana State University in New Orleans, University of Pennsylvania, LSU, and

Delgado. As a consummate explorer of global philosophical and spiritual traditions in pursuit of personal self-knowledge, Phyllis has spent the greater part of her adult life exploring the health and spiritual ways of traditional cultures.

With a keen interest in the esoteric, Phyllis is a prolific writer on global health, spiritual traditions, mysticism, philosophy, art, love, writing, culture and liberation with over 50 published articles. An activist for health and culture for over forty years, Phyllis has helped shape the untold culture of the New Orleans landscape. Currently she writes and publishes The New Orleans Avant-Garde documenting the visual and literary culture in New Orleans.

Phyllis' belief that everyone can take charge of their own health has led her to seek out prominent master teachers of traditional healing arts in cooking, food energetics, shiatsu, meditation, spiritual practices, yoga and qigong. She is a certified as a practitioner by the Am. Organization for Bodywork Therapies of Asia, Macrobiotic Shiatsu by Shizuko Yamamoto, Reiki, Levels 1 & 2, Qigong Level 1 by Dr. Yang Jwing-Ming, Jin shin Jyutsu, Level 1 by Susan M. Brooks, PhD., External Qi Healing by Kenneth S. Cohen, Death and Dying, Shaman Level 2, Shaman Journey, Level 1 by Sandra Ingerman, Macrobiotic Counselor Training by Macrobiotics America, Community Practice Facilitator by Dr. Roger Jahnke, Institute of Integral Qigong and Tai Chi, Roger Jahnke, Ph.D., Plant-Based Nutrition with T. Colin Campbell and eCornell University.

END NOTES

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