

Ancient
Wisdom for
Modern
Wellness

HARMONY

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FEAR FACTOR OR FAITH FACTOR?

The message seems calculated to instill one emotion in particular: fear. The media beam a steady diet of cataclysm, conflict and unresolved dilemma—actual and looming. For mostly commercial reasons information is delivered in such a way as to stimulate our most instinctive and primitive responses to a perceived threat. According to one study, North Americans on average watch four and a half hours of television every day. Western mental health professionals disagree regarding the effect repetitive exposure to broadcasts of negative events has on health. And yet for some of us, the fear messages of the world we are sent via the media and society compete heavily with the nearly continual ones we send ourselves. These personal fear messages (along with those involving other emotions) frequently fall way below the radar screen. We simply are unaware of the content of our self-talk—and its effect on our well-being. On the first take it may seem surprising, but the ancient medical system of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) has a lot to say on this subject.

To begin with, in the TCM paradigm, body, mind, emotions and spirit are inseparably connected. This means that each of these aspects of being impacts the others; at a deep level they are interwoven. Each of us is a whole being, so it's very difficult—if not impossible—to have true physical health without a balanced mind and spirit. For thousands of years TCM has understood the important role emotions play in health. Western society has many stress-related health problems; it's crucial for individuals to understand how emotions affect their overall health, how unbalanced emotional reactions—to personal circumstances and also to larger, more global events—are at the root of many physical problems.

In TCM theory there are seven basic emotions: joy, worry, sadness and grief, anger, and fear and terror. Any one of these can cause health difficulties if experienced in excess, suddenly, or chronically over an extended period of time. Classical TCM texts call this occurrence

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Healing with Qigong

A FEW THINGS TO CONSIDER

WHEN CHOOSING A QIGONG SYSTEM

As treatment with acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) grow more commonplace in the West, there is increasing interest in Qigong, a self-healing energy practice and an important modality of TCM. People want to know how to find a Qigong teacher and a place to study. There are a few key points to consider; however, finding the right teacher and system is really more of an art than a science.

Because Qigong is such a powerful energy practice, great care should be given to selecting a teacher and a school. This process is not made easy by the fact that there are literally thousands of systems. Some are “instant” systems, created by modern masters; some are ancient, passed down from master to student in a lineage over the millennia. The spiritual traditions that have influenced Chinese culture—Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism—have each left their imprint on Qigong. It is thought that the

oldest forms are Taoist, and that Qigong's very root is in Taoist practice. Medical Qigong traditionally has been used in Chinese hospitals and is the form that is steadily generating interest and study in the West. Some systems are related to the martial arts. Breathing and visualization techniques are employed by certain Qigong systems; gentle movements and stationary postures are used by others. It's important to know that the various Qigong systems work on the body's energy in dissimilar ways, which is why it's ill advised to practice different systems at the same time.

In general, Qigong can be divided into two broad categories: systems based on form and those based on message. Systems based on form utilize specific postures and movements that stimulate Qi and heal the practitioner. In form-based systems it is important to follow the master's directions exactly in order to derive

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Opening the heart is seen
as the gateway to the
highest form of practice.

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE



Traditional Chinese Medicine
WORLD FOUNDATION

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The trees have all dropped their leaves, their energy streaming deep down to the roots. Animals burrow and hibernate. Ponds freeze over. All grows quiet. If you look closely at nature during winter, everything has come to a deep state of rest. Rest and conservation of energy during this time of year is a part of the natural cycle—without it there is no energy for spring! Practitioners of traditional

Chinese medicine have long understood that following Nature's Way is the path to true wellness and harmony of spirit. May your winter be one of deep rest and peace.

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ABCs of TCM: Qigong

At the very center of Qigong is Qi, the vital life energy that animates everything in the universe, including the human body. Although it is a practice that uses movements and postures and can create many physical healing benefits, Qigong is *not* physical exercise. It moves beyond the muscle and tissue and works at the level of Qi. Qigong breaks down energy blockages and promotes the free flow of energy throughout your body's meridian system, the invisible pathways through which Qi moves. Consistent Qigong practice increases and balances your body's Qi. Working directly on the meridian system, it stimulates and nourishes the internal organs, making the energetic communication between them more efficient. And by increasing the effectiveness of all body systems, Qigong helps conserve Qi. These qualities are important to your health because traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) theory holds that in order to have good health you must have sufficient Qi and your internal organs must function together in harmony.

The health benefits of Qigong are numerous. It is successful in alleviating chronic conditions such as asthma, arthritis, digestive problems, insomnia and pain. Qigong can also help those suffering from more serious conditions such as HIV/AIDS and cancer—it reduces the frequently debilitating effects of radiation and chemotherapy. Qigong practice lowers blood pressure, pulse rate, metabolic rates and oxygen demand. Because Qigong triggers the body's relaxation response, it is extremely helpful for stress. Recent studies have shown that this energy practice relieves anxiety and depression. Qigong is an effective complement to treatment for people recovering from surgery, sports injuries or traumatic injuries because it sparks the body's innate self-healing capacity and can accelerate the healing process.

This ancient self-healing practice can also convey many spiritual benefits. Qigong has the ability to enhance sensitivity, develop intuition and expand your perception. It integrates the body, mind and spirit, promoting physical health, peace of mind and harmony of spirit. Further, it creates harmony of self with the Universal—viewed as the deepest source of healing in the Chinese tradition. In essence, Qigong moves you far beyond the five senses, allowing you tap into the healing energy of the universe.

Traditional Chinese Medicine World Foundation, a nonprofit, 501(c)3

organization, is dedicated to building bridges of understanding between East and West in the areas of TCM, natural healing, and Qigong and other internal martial arts. Our mission is to serve as the source for authentic information on health and healing with TCM for the general public and practitioners. We are a resource where all individuals can learn about TCM (including acupuncture, acupressure, herbal therapy, and internal martial arts such as Qigong and Taiji) as well as the body's natural healing ability. And we seek to help people develop the skills to apply this knowledge in everyday life for prevention, healing and spiritual balance.

Help Us Spread the Word about TCM

Traditional Chinese Medicine World Foundation relies on the generous support of individuals and organizations to further its mission of educating individuals and health-care professionals about TCM and self-healing modalities. We invite you to support this important work with a tax-deductible donation. Every dollar you donate goes directly toward supporting the Foundation's ongoing operations and programs.

You can mail a check, payable to Traditional Chinese Medicine World Foundation now. Mail your donation to TCM World Foundation, 396 Broadway, Suite 501, New York, NY 10013. Or, you may make a donation using your Visa or MasterCard by calling 212.274.1079. Your donation is fully tax-deductible. All donors will receive an acknowledgement letter for tax purposes. **Your support is deeply appreciated.**

Practitioners – Want *Harmony* in Your Office?

If you're a health-care practitioner and would like to put some *Harmony* in your office, we invite you to share the empowering self-healing information in our newsletter.

Send a \$10.00 check or money order (please do not send cash) for 10 copies plus \$3.50 S&H to TCM World Foundation, 396 Broadway, Suite 501, New York, NY 10013. Attention: *Harmony*.

Minimum order is 10 copies. Additional orders are available in 10-copy increments.

Please specify the number of copies, which edition, and the mailing address where copies should be sent. We thank you for helping us spread the word about TCM!

Discovering Original Spirit

Harmony Talks with Dr. Liu Dong



Harmony: From your perspective, what is Qigong?

LD: The definition of Qigong for me is vital breathing—it's not just the general meaning of Qigong from the translation from Chinese to English. Qigong comes from the word "Qi," which means energy. If we translate word for word, it means "energy work," but I want to give a deeper meaning. For me, Qigong means "vital breathing," which is the original breathing that humans have without emotions. When you have emotions, your breathing is influenced by them.

Harmony: Is original breathing the type of breathing we had as babies?

LD: After we are born, because of education and the influence of society, we lose vital breathing. We are influenced by the energy from the outside and we lose the capacity to breathe vitally. There are too many emotions. From the point of view of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), there are seven different emotions [anger, joy, worry, sadness, grief, fear, and terror], and they can influence your breathing. Originally we breathe with our abdomen, but after years of influence from the external world and our emotions, we begin to breathe with just the upper chest. So the area of breathing is smaller than before—it becomes very limited.

Harmony: Many people think of Qigong as only a physical practice or movement, but isn't it also a movement into other aspects of being?

LD: Yes. We can say that it's not just movement. There is, of course, physical movement, but we need to go further into the mind, and also to get balance between the mind and the physical body. The harmony between the mind and the body is very important in Qigong.

Harmony: What is the name and origin of the type of Qigong you teach?

LD: Jade Body Qigong and Wisdom Qigong. The lineage is from my grandfather and the theory is from the traditions of China

... of traditional Chinese medicine. The practice I learned from my grandfather, from my family.

Harmony: If someone wants to learn this type of Qigong, what would the process be like?

LD: There are three elements in the practice of Qigong in general. The first is to harmonize the heart because the heart is the master of the mind. The heart is very important. It is the basic element in the practice of Qigong because the heart is the master of all in Chinese medicine. The purpose of harmonizing the heart is to develop "intention," which in Chinese is called "yi."

There is a kind of intention inside your body. There is a difference between the intention inside and outside the body. What we practice in this kind of Qigong is to create intention inside your body without adding outside influences. So just one concentration replaces all other intentions. In everyday life, for example, to drive or to work, we need a different kind of intention—we do different things at the same time—but in Qigong we do one thing: concentrate our energy so at that moment we have just one intention. One intention can be pure; two intentions cannot be pure. The reason why we are so stressed in modern society is that we have so many intentions together at the same time in our body and in our mind.

The second element in Qigong practice is to harmonize the breathing—the Qi. So we do "exercises" to rediscover our original breathing: breathing long, smoothly and deeply. The third element is to harmonize the movements. The physical element comes in at the end. So we can say that harmonizing the physical movements is a result of the first and second elements. And as a result of the first and second elements, we can have a relaxed body and move slowly to be strong inside and soft and relaxed outside. With a calm heart your body becomes more healthy and gentle.

Harmony: When you reach the state of having a calm, peaceful heart is that the same thing as original spirit?

LD: At the moment when the heart is calm and quiet, you can listen to the sound from your original spirit (*yuan shen*). Otherwise you cannot listen to this voice of your original spirit—you cannot hear it because you are so exhausted and un-centered. After we're born we don't use our original spirit anymore, we use knowledge, education, information from the outside world. . . . There are three kinds of spirit: original spirit, knowledge spirit, and the spirit of desire. Only the original spirit is the pure one. This original spirit was given by the cosmos at the moment of conception. That is why it is pure. Original spirit exists when the subconscious works without any work on the part of the conscious mind.

Harmony: So it's beyond the conscious mind?

LD: It's Universal—without any definition, without any concept. In this very moment you can discover your original spirit and you can heal yourself because you can hear the real voice of your body, your mind, and also, the real voice from the universe. Buddha, Jesus—all of these great people—found their original spirit, so they had the capacity to transform all of their emotions to compassion, to transform everything to compassion. And this is why they are great. Of course, this is difficult for

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Dr. Liu Dong is an internationally recognized Qigong master and doctor of Oriental Medicine. A graduate of the Beijing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, he has conducted scientific research on the medical effects of Qigong in China, Japan, the United States (Harvard School of Medicine), and in France (National Health and Medical Research Institute in Marseille and Marmottan Hospital in Paris). He is a Qigong healer with many years' experience treating patients, including China's former president, Deng Xiao Ping, and other dignitaries. The author of several books and articles on Qigong, he founded Liu Dong's Qigong Method, which is registered in the Official Repertory of Chinese Medicine. Visit www.linggui.org for more information.

Each October, Traditional Chinese Medicine World Foundation hosts *Building Bridges of Integration for Traditional Chinese Medicine*. This premier conference, designed for both Eastern and Western health-care professionals, presents insightful and cutting-edge speakers in an in-depth exploration of traditional Chinese medicine. Learn first-hand from TCM experts in an inspiring weekend! *Building Bridges 2007* will take place October 18–21 at the Westfields Marriott in Chantilly, Virginia. Visit www.tcmconference.org or call 1.888.TCM.6909 for information and registration.

Winter



The Water Element

The internal organs are much more than mere physical structures in the TCM view. They are complex systems also involving aspects of the mind, emotions and spirit. Not only does each organ have a physiological function, it has functions at the invisible level of vital energy, or Qi. Each organ is uniquely related to a body tissue, a sense organ, emotion, taste, sound, climate, and a direction, among a seemingly endless range of correspondences. These associated qualities are organized in TCM's age-old Theory of Five Elements. Functioning as a template systematizing all phenomena into five universal patterns, this theory provides TCM practitioners with a comprehensive framework to understand, diagnose, and treat health problems.

The energy of the Kidney and its partner organ, the Urinary Bladder, are predominant in winter. And during each day they reach their peak from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. (Bladder) and 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. (Kidney). The Kidney performs many energy functions in your body.

Forming Your Energy Foundation

The Kidney organ system is crucial to the health of your body as a whole. The Kidney is your body's energy foundation—it is the primary source of Qi for your body and helps support the function of all the other organs. Inherited from your parents, Inborn Qi is stored in the Kidney along with Acquired Qi, which is created from what you eat and drink. Inborn Qi controls growth and development of the body and supports sexual maturation and function as well as all aspects of reproduction. Problems such as infertility, impotence and repetitive miscarriages, for example, can be an indication of deficient Inborn Qi. It also determines your basic constitution in terms of physical and mental capacity as well as your life span. From the TCM point of view the length of your life is a function of fate and cannot be changed. What does fall under your control is how you manage the constitution you've inherited and how you use your allotted time. The daily choices you make regarding lifestyle can create the basis for a healthy, peaceful life or an unhappy, stressful existence that forms the ground for health problems.

Regulating Water

The Kidney regulates water and fluid metabolism in your body. This function has two aspects: one is to disseminate nutritive body fluids created from food essence to nourish all the organs; the other aspect is to rid your body of any waste fluids produced by the organs and body processes. Difficulties with processing water, such as edema and frequent urination, can be an indication of a Kidney organ system imbalance. Drinking too much water, as suggested by some popular diets, can overtax and unbalance the Kidney, according to TCM. So drink only when you are thirsty.

Supporting the Bones and Teeth

Did you know that the Kidney nourishes the bones, bone marrow, the brain and spinal cord? Also, in TCM, the teeth are called "the surplus of the bone" and are supported by Kidney Qi.

Governing the Knees

Strong, healthy Kidney Qi is reflected in supple and strong knees. With age, Kidney Qi naturally declines, so it is often common for the knees to weaken with age. Keeping your Kidney energy strong will help to keep this health issue at bay.

Opening into the Ears

The ears are the "opening" of the Kidney and they are nourished by the Kidney. Earaches, tinnitus, hearing problems and loss of hearing can signal a Kidney energy deficiency.

Maintaining Head Hair

Essence (*jing*) stored in the Kidney turns into blood (as well as Qi). Your hair is nourished by blood. Loss of hair, graying, brittle hair can indicate a deficiency of Kidney essence.

Controlling the Lower Back Area

The actual kidneys are located in the lower back (the lumbar area), so TCM views this part of the body as corresponding to Kidney Qi. Persistent low back pain can result from insufficient Kidney Qi. ○

Four Ways to Conserve Your Qi

Conservation is the natural principle associated with the Kidney. Think of what happens in its corresponding season, winter: nature takes a rest!

You can conserve Kidney energy, including Inborn Qi, by following these lifestyle suggestions:

- ▶ **Go with the natural flow of the season.** Rest more. Go to bed earlier and sleep later. Keep activity to a minimum. Try not to overwork yourself now and definitely reconsider shopping 'til you drop. (Yes, this does move against the holiday tide.)
- ▶ **Eat well.** By keeping your daily source of energy—Acquired Qi—strong and balanced, energy is saved because a healthy Spleen and Stomach can extract more Qi from food and drink. Choosing food wisely and eating at regular intervals helps accomplish this. What Qi the Spleen and Stomach can't manufacture has to be pulled from the Kidney, an irreplaceable supply.
- ▶ **Have sex in moderation.** Be aware that sex draws heavily on the energy of the Kidney. So moderation in sexual activity, particularly in winter, can help conserve your Kidney Qi.
- ▶ **Practice energy.** Practices like Qigong tune up the organs and balance the entire body, helping to heal health difficulties. By making the organs function more efficiently, Qigong reduces the amount of Qi your body uses on a daily basis.

TCM HEALTH TIP

According to TCM's Theory of Five Elements, winter is a time of conservation and storage. Because the Kidney organ system is associated with this particular season, it is now a perfect time to build, conserve and store Kidney Qi. Over the millennia, TCM practitioners have created many practices that do this. While particularly effective when done in winter, the following healing technique can be done anytime during the year.

EAR RUB

The ears are considered a microcosm of the physical as well as energy bodies. This means that by stimulating the ears you are effectively treating all the internal organs and body systems. This simple technique is very beneficial for strengthening Kidney Qi and promoting longevity.

Cup each of your hands over your ears (the entire ear) and rub them vigorously. Continue rubbing until the ears are red and warm. Do this every day or as often as possible.

**ANCIENT STORY,
MODERN MESSAGE**

Mrs. Wong's Problem

THERE ONCE WAS AN OLD WOMAN named Mrs. Wong. She had two sons: her older son sold umbrellas for a living and the younger son had a stand in the village open-air market, where he sold fruits and vegetables to support himself and his family.

Leaving her house one rainy morning, Mrs. Wong bumped into her new next-door neighbor, Mr. Cheng. "Oh my, what will I do?" exclaimed Mrs. Wong upon seeing the heavy rain. "My poor son who sells food at the market won't do well today. How will he ever support his family in weather like this?" she cried. "Try not to worry too much," said Mr. Cheng calmly.

The following day, which was beautifully sunny, once again Mrs. Wong ran into her neighbor as she left her house. "It's just so terrible," she complained to Mr. Cheng, who was sitting on the steps of his house. "There's no rain today, who will buy an umbrella from my oldest son on a day like this?" she wailed.

Seeing the woman's obvious distress—and its cause—Mr. Cheng leaned toward Mrs. Wong and said softly, "Why don't you think of your youngest son, who sells food, on sunny days and your oldest son, who sells umbrellas, on rainy days—that way you'll be content with the weather no matter what!"

Sometimes all it takes is a change in perspective.

Discovering Original Spirit

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everybody, but we all have this seed—this tiny seed—in our body when we are born, so little by little, through our practice, we can approach this seed in our body.

One concept of the Taoists is that just as we can focus outside on the external world, we can also move easily inside into our internal world. Qigong practice is like taking a shower . . . to purify our mind, our body, and to transform our emotions into something better, into something pure—into compassion. When we go outside of the practice and go back to society to continue our daily life, our body and mind have been transformed. And just like after taking a shower, we feel much better than before. We feel more centered, more pure. ○

A heartfelt thank-you to Hua Zhang for her invaluable help with this interview.

Visit www.tcmworld.org and click on "Publications" and this issue of Harmony to read the full-length version of this interview.

SPIRIT— The Ultimate Technique

Healing is ultimately an affair of the heart; the true healer lies within. Technique plays a role, but it is not the deciding factor in helping patients create harmony and healing. Spirit is the ultimate technique.

Our Foundation's educational forum, *Building Bridges of Integration for Traditional Chinese Medicine—Transformation: Spirit in Healing*, occurred this past fall, and we're delighted with its continued growth. What resonated with so many were the in-depth discussions about finding the root causes of illness.

Today, we're awash with new healing techniques, tools and technologies. Often, practitioners in the healing arts embark on an endless quest for the latest techniques. While this search may satisfy those hungering for the next "new thing in healing," it leaves others starved for a deeper understanding of how to truly help patients.

TCM offers a way to look at the human body by applying principles derived from observing nature. Technique is secondary. In ancient China, it was understood that the best warrior needed only one sword. Why? The tool itself wasn't extraordinary; it was only an extension of the individual's talent and intuition. Tools are mere conveyances for the user's heart and spirit.

Where are the masters who can talk about this wisdom and help us experience it? Sadly, they're hard to find today. Our busy lives prohibit us from making the kind of commitment necessary to follow a master as apprentices did long ago. So, we've developed a thirst for shortcuts and new technologies. We've come to believe healing depends on external things. Unfortunately, this desire creates a passion for more knowledge, not wisdom. The outcome is that one rarely has the chance to nurture the patience to learn one thing well enough to own it and amplify it.

In the healing process, good technique has its place. Yet technique only provides transportation for healing. It is the conduit that allows spirit to flow between practitioner and patient. Tools are not the healers. If practitioners lack a deep understanding of healing principles and the true energy and spirit behind technique, the technique becomes dry, devoid of power. How is it a master's work can produce a powerful healing effect, while his student's cannot? Same technique . . . different outcomes. The difference has everything to do with the spirit and level of the master, along with everything infused into the healing—training, Qi, spirit and love.

Our recent conference provided a unique stage for a special faculty of Eastern and Western practitioners. Among them was a group of Chinese TCM practitioners who have studied many years with high-level masters in China. Each has strong academic training and an extensive background in contemporary medicine. These doctors are, however, unusual precisely because they have apprenticed with some of China's most respected masters and healers.

Traditional training involves an intense closeness with the master, living with him almost daily. Often it includes bringing the master tea, cleaning herb drawers, eating with and listening to the master. This training allows students to perceive firsthand how the master thinks, feels, and approaches patients. The wisdom derived from this experience is beyond book learning or language. It is experiential and of the heart. Few doctors, East or West, have been fortunate enough to gain healing insights this way.

Today in China, the traditional way of transmitting information from master to student is becoming extinct. This makes our Chinese TCM conference presenters all the more extraordinary. They represent the bridge from one generation to another. Through these healers, our conference participants can still glimpse something intangible—beyond technique.

If you were fortunate enough to attend *Building Bridges 2006*, we hope you "caught the spirit" of this special forum. Participants resonated with the energy and heart of *Building Bridges*, as well as its content. The experience helped attendees regard healing in a fresh, new light—one that brought them closer to the heart of healing in an intimate, powerful way. We invite each of our readers to join us next October 18–21 for *Building Bridges 2007—Whole Family, Whole Health*, where we will come together in community to nurture ourselves, explore topics that will help deepen patient relationships, and find the essence of true healing spirit within our practices. ○

Nan Lu, O.M.D., is the founder of the Traditional Chinese Medicine World Foundation. He has spent more than a decade helping his patients discover the path to true healing and true health. He is the founder of Building Bridges of Integration for Traditional Chinese Medicine and will speak at this educational forum in October 2007.



Supremely Complicated Issues



By Michael A. Taromina, Esq.

Sometimes the Supreme Court gets it right. Their 6-3 majority decision to uphold Oregon's physician-assisted suicide law quashed (at least for now) the federal government's recent attempt to intrude upon the states' long-standing domain to regulate medicine. So let the debate of allowing medically assisted suicide continue. Let it be heard and decided within the states, where it belongs. And let different states decide differently on this critical issue of our time, if they so thoughtfully choose.

If all fifty states are permitted to regulate medicine differently, then why is there virtually no practical differentiation (save doctor-assisted suicide) in the scope of practice of a licensed physician from one state to the next? Like everything else in life, the answer lies in timing. The practice of Western medicine in the U.S. predated, hence created, its statutory regulations. Long before medical laws, boards, schools, or associations, "medicine" was diversely and perversely practiced—or perhaps better stated, in some cases "performed"—in urban centers and across the frontiers of America without legal constraint. Eventually public safety and scientific advancement demanded restriction and codification of medicine by statute based upon universally adopted biomedical theory. Being offspring of the practice itself, medical laws in all states were drafted and amended to meet already well-established standards. The result: No public confusion about a licensed physician's scope of practice from one state to another. Today, a doctor is a doctor in the U.S., from New York to California and everywhere in between. The only issue for the states looking forward is whether that scope should now include suicide assistance.

Timing, on the other hand, was not favorable to the legal birth of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM)—and other CAM therapies—in the U.S. State laws created the practice of TCM in the U.S. Unlike Western medicine, the practice of TCM in this country did not widely preexist the laws governing it. (Prior to state legislation, TCM was permitted, if at all, under licensed physician statutes. Remarkably, this is still the case today in some states.) Despite being much older in theory and practice, TCM was only recently imported to the U.S. and therefore subject to unique interpretations by each state. (Note: Historically the U.S. expanded westward by influx of immigration from the West. Had Eastern immigration waves started earlier, we may have developed a dual medical system.) Most significantly, TCM laws were (and still are) enacted under the enormous political influence and control of the embedded Western medical establishment. Medical supervision, medical referral, and medical recommendation are just a few of the many statutory controls Western medicine enjoys over TCM.

The result: Forty states and counting with some form of a TCM practice act, each one with a different scope of practice—a supreme long-term set of problems for the practice, practitioner and public.

Michael A. Taromina, Esq., has represented practitioners, institutions, organizations and students in the TCM field. He serves as a member of the NCCAOM Ethics and Disciplinary Committee and has designed and taught programs in health law, ethics, professional liability and practice management.

Do you have a question, comment or issue you'd like Michael Taromina to address in an upcoming column? E-mail *Harmony* at newsletter@tcmworld.org.

Man follows the earth.

Earth follows heaven.

Heaven follows Tao.

Tao follows what is natural.

—Tao Tè Ching

Healing with Qigong

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benefits from the system. Here, results depend on how correctly the student does the posture, how much time he or she practices, and how well the master teaches. Benefits are gained in direct proportion to personal effort expended. Connection to the posture and getting it right are the key points.

The second type of Qigong system is based on an "energy message" passed from the master to the student. This message conveys the system to the student—it is like a key for learning and understanding the system, and at the same time connects him or her to the greater Universal energy. In these systems, movements and postures are often used, but they play a secondary role; they function as a vehicle for transporting the energy message from the teacher to the student. In this type of system it is the relationship—the energy connection—between the master and the student that is of primary importance. Systems based on message are more difficult to find than form-based systems, and finding a competent master to teach this type of system is rare.

Finding a qualified Qigong teacher is extremely important. What specific qualifications are needed to teach Qigong? The teacher is the link between the system and the student. He or she guides the experience of energy movement in the student's body. The process of rebalancing energy and opening blockages can create various physical, mental and emotional states which may need monitoring, interpretation and explanation by the teacher or master. A certain level of experience is necessary, but more significant is the master's level of understanding. Does this individual have a deep understanding of the body's energy system? Does he or she have the heart and dedication required to teach Qigong? Given these factors, you can be guided by a feeling of resonance with the teacher, or what is sometimes characterized as a feeling of instantaneous connection. There has to be the possibility for a bond to form.

When selecting a Qigong school, a sense of concordance with the teacher should be a good indicator of the quality of the school. Observe the spirit of the school. How does it feel to be there? Is there a feeling of care and connection, or do the students show up to practice and leave right away once class is finished? Does the school have a focus in service or helping the community? As with choosing a teacher, going with a gut feeling or your intuition is helpful.

One concept to bear in mind is that the heart of Qigong is the human heart. The traditional Chinese concept of the heart goes beyond the physical heart to encompass the *shen* or spirit. It is the center from which Universal love emanates, and this compassion is at the core of all systems that promote spiritual growth. Opening the heart is seen as the gateway to the highest form of practice. One key Qigong principle is that in order to change the physical body at a deep level, there must be an opening of the heart. So perhaps the most important thing to consider when choosing a Qigong teacher and school is the following: Does the person and path speak to your heart? Beyond this, the old saying "When the student is ready, the master appears" has its foundation in truth. ○

Baked Marinated Salmon with Scallions

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) understands that all foods have a particular essence that travels to one or more organs. To gain maximum healing benefit from the food you eat, follow the seasons when choosing what to eat. Foods that have an essence that heals the Kidney are most effective when eaten in the winter, the season when this organ system is predominant. So the most beneficial foods and spices to eat at this time of year are black beans, black sesame seeds, cauliflower, cinnamon, pine nuts, walnuts, and seafood, particularly shellfish (“salty” is the taste that corresponds to the Kidney and the Water element).

BAKED MARINATED SALMON WITH SCALLIONS

Delicious and easy to make, this recipe combines two nourishing foods: salmon enhances your Kidney Qi and scallions benefit your Liver. And this is the perfect time of year to make this dish. You can use salmon fillets or steaks, or even the whole fish. Preheat the oven to 425° and then bake the fish with this rule in mind: For each

inch of thickness of the fish (measuring at its thickest part), bake it for 10 minutes.

Ingredients

- Oil for baking (corn oil works well)
- 4 or 5 scallions, washed and trimmed, then cut in half lengthwise
- Marinade (see recipe below)
- Salmon (about 1 pound) marinated overnight

Directions

- Cover the bottom of a baking dish with oil. (For an 8-inch by 12-inch baking dish use about 5 tablespoons of oil.)
- Line the bottom of the oiled dish with about 3/4 of the scallions and spoon about 1/2 of the marinade over the scallions.
- Place the fish in the center of the dish on the bed of scallions already covered with marinade.
- Spoon the remaining marinade over the fish and toss the remaining scallions over the marinade.
- Cover the dish with foil and refrigerate, allowing the fish to marinate overnight (if you

are really pressed for time, this step can be several hours, however, the flavor is best when more time is allowed).

- Remove dish from refrigerator and bake uncovered at 425° until fish is fully cooked. Serve hot.

THE MARINADE

This recipe makes about 5 to 6 tablespoons of marinade, which is enough for approximately 1 pound of fish. The various sauces used in this marinade can be found at your local Asian food market.

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons of hoj sin sauce
- 1 tablespoon of oyster sauce
- 2 tablespoons of soy sauce (try mushroom-flavored soy sauce for a treat)
- 1/4 teaspoon of fish sauce
- 2 teaspoons of finely chopped ginger root

Directions

Combine all ingredients thoroughly in a small mixing bowl.

FAITH FACTOR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“internal injury by the seven emotions.” Each emotion corresponds to an organ, according to TCM’s Five Element Theory, which organizes all phenomena into five Universal patterns or groups. The five organ systems have functions at the level of Qi, or vital energy, in addition to their physical functions. When an emotion is unbalanced it can cause an energy dysfunction in its related organ. (And the reverse is also true: a physical impairment in an organ can manifest in emotional difficulties.) Because the five major organ pairs must work together harmoniously, a dysfunction in one can seriously impact the others—and your health.

In the case of fear and terror, these emotions directly affect the Kidney organ system. (TCM views fear as an internally generated emotion and terror as a response to external factors.) Feelings of fear on a continual basis or a situation that strikes terror in your heart (whether real or imagined) have strong implications for your health because the Kidney is the major source of energy in the body, according to TCM. (See “TCM This Season” for more on the Kidney organ system.) The Kidney powers all body functions and supplies the energy for all the other organs. With deficient Kidney energy you may have symptoms like lower back pain, loss of hair, or ringing in the ears. Each of these parts of the body is associated with the Kidney in the Five Element Theory and can function as a sort of barometer, signaling the state of that organ system. One key TCM principle is “outer reflects inner.” With regard to fear, from the TCM perspective, a person with strong Kidney energy will not have fear. Panic and anxiety attacks, for example, are signs of deficient Kidney Qi. So the approach TCM takes to deal with messages of fear is to build your Kidney Qi. What’s the best way to do this?

Along with natural methods like acupuncture and herbs, one time-tested way to build internal energy is with Qigong. This self-healing practice helps your body build, balance and conserve Qi. TCM advocates soft, water-like forms of movement such as Qigong, Taiji, and yoga to help the body, mind and spirit process life issues and enhance

health. Meditation and walking in nature (and not a gym, where you are separated from the healing qualities of nature) are also effective ways to quiet the mind and balance emotions.

Another very beneficial practice is “letting it go.” A great part of TCM treatment involves pushing illness and disease-causing conditions from the body. By letting emotions go—letting them flow—and not holding onto them, you can rid yourself of elements that can potentially affect your health in an adverse way. Balanced emotions also help conserve Qi. Letting it go, a key TCM philosophy, involves a perspective change. It understands that while we can’t really control events and circumstances, we do have a choice in how we react to them. It takes a step back and allows that what sometimes seems “bad” can result in positive changes, and what appears “good” can have unforeseen consequences that may bring problematic issues to the surface. One traditional Chinese adage says, “Your heart can create heaven or hell.” The modern version of this might read something like, “Your consciousness creates your reality.”

Perhaps the most powerful practice of all is to tap into the energy of nature. One very essential TCM principle is that we are inseparably connected to nature and the universe. TCM theories, principles and practices are based on a deep understanding of natural law. By understanding the laws and patterns of nature—and following them—you can foster and maintain your health. The TCM approach always links the individual back to nature and the Universal and uses them as an inexhaustible healing resource. So ultimately TCM sees nature as the antidote to any emotional and health imbalance. Tapping into the pure energy of nature and the Universal connects you with a vibration that creates internal balance and harmony. It helps cultivate a spirit of acceptance and trust—in the inborn healing ability of your own body and in the process of life itself. It builds an authentic faith and makes you strong and unafraid—unsusceptible to the fears ever fanned by this world. ○

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