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## **The Beginnings of Traditional Chinese Medicine:**

### **Mixing Together Natural Remedies**

Alternative medicine and holistic healing are based off of concepts and philosophies of an ancient science. At the root of many holistic practices are the philosophies and ideals that come from Chinese medicine. From the beginnings of this practice has been a growth in natural methods to help promote healing and balance.

The beginnings of Chinese medicine as a practice come from the year 800 BC. Even though this practice began before this, it was only recorded beginning in this year through a book known as the "Huang Di Nei Jeng" or "The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine." The methods that were used in this book were based around the herbal remedies that were most significant in helping with holistic healing.

The idea of this particular book was based off of the Yellow Emperor, one of the greatest rulers in Chinese history. He is thought to have lived in 4700 BC, and is often attributed as a mythical character with a status of royalty that provided inspiration to those living in the orient. It is through this mythical character that this book of medicine is still portrayed under, with the attribution to the Yellow Emperor's knowledge that was passed down holistically.

The beginning of this book included 12 prescriptions through herbs that were used with a combination of twenty-eight different ingredients. By the year 220 BC, the book had become so popular that medical services were established based around the remedies from the Yellow Emperor. The adjustments that were made from this book included detailed classifications of the herbs, how they worked, their strength and what their properties were for healing different ailments.

Overtime, new publications and philosophies were added onto this book in order to provide practitioners with new methods and substances to the basis of the Yellow Emperor's remedy book. These additions provided new insights and books, all the way into the 1700s with the contribution of the Theory of Herbal Medicine.

The ancient practices of Chinese medicine through herbal remedies are a true philosophy that shows how time withstands the ideas of holistic treatments. Through the growth of herbal practices, several in the East have found ways to provide insight and balances between different herbs for better practices to gain energy and balance in one's life.

## **The Five Elements of Oriental Medicine:**

### Assessment through the Natural

One of the major ways in which Chinese medicine determines how one's health is relies on the laws of the universe. This essentially means that any trained person in Chinese medicine will turn towards nature and the characteristics that are in this environment to determine why one may be unhealthy. One of the ways that these determinations are made is through the five elements.

The five elements consist of water, wood, fire, earth and metal. When looking at these elements, there are certain attributes that are analyzed. In turn, the analysis that is made will also determine how it is related to various organs. Not only did these five elements determine the relation of the elements to organs, but went on to include things such as how emotions corresponded with these various elements.

The idea of the five elements is to see how everything is interconnected to each other through the universe. Chinese medicine determines that every man is a reflection of what is in the universe, meaning that each individual can be analyzed in direct co-relation to the elements of the universe.

Take for instance if someone is having trouble with their heart or small intestine. According to Chinese medicine, this would directly relate to Fire, meaning that it would be linked with the qualities of summer and the energy of heat. The result of the heart or intestine trouble would be that the sense organ of the tongue would first be affected. The emotion associated with this would be either joy or shock. The heart and the small intestine will also trigger bitter taste that someone will respond to.

The idea is that everything in the external universe is directly aligned with the internal. In order to be completely healthy, or to get holistic health, the five elements principles have to be applied. By doing this, one is able to find the natural solutions for any season or element that they are looking at.

## **Tying Together the Cycle:**

### Relating the Elements for Holistic Healing

In order for one to be balanced and healthy in Chinese traditions, all of the elements in their body have to be balanced. In order to do this, one must first understand how the elements work together to achieve and maintain complete health. If you are looking towards nature to find a way to heal, then Chinese medicine can help to define what areas you should be looking at.

Not only is the relationship to nature and the body interchangeable, but there are also ways that Chinese medicine uses this relationship in order to help one gain optimal health. By taking the five elements and linking them together, as well as applying them to how one is able to live, there is the ability for one to understand how to remain balanced and healthy.

After the five elements have been divided and completely understood, they are all put into the proper alignment and place. This is known as the Shen Cycle, which translates into the Nourishing Cycle. When one is completely balanced and healthy, they can use the cycle of the elements to help. It is said, according to these Chinese medicine principles that water nourishes wood, wood fuels fire, fire makes earth, and earth yields metal and metal produces water.

Within this same cycle of nourishing, each of the elements can also destroy each other. This is known as Ko, or the Regulating Cycle. When the opposite elements are combined they cancel each other out. Chinese medicine considers both of these cycles to be the natural order of things. They can then take this natural order to help either balance out an imbalanced element in one's body, or help to nourish something that is out of order.

Chinese medicine, at its very roots, carries the philosophy and ideal of combining the natural elements of earth with healing. By cycling together the elements, either through nourishing the elements, or canceling them out, it allows one to keep the natural order in their own life. It is simply understanding when one's body is in the specific element and understanding how it should respond.

## **Back to the Plants:**

### Chinese Medicine and Herbal Remedies

In Chinese medicine everything has a place and a structure in order to help with healing. All of these are natural approaches to bringing holistic health in an individual. One of the concepts that Chinese medicine uses in relation to this is herbal remedies. By combining a variety of elements, there is the ability for the herbs to help in healing everything.

The basis behind herbal remedies is to combine a series of herbs in order to bring about the desired effect. Usually, there will be a formula of four herbs used in combination with each other. This is done in order to treat secondary illnesses that may have been affected by the primary illness. It also helps to balance and strengthen the body while it is healing.

When Chinese medicine begins to divide the various herbal remedies, they will do so by a hierarchy. At the top of this hierarchy is the emperor herb.

This will be used to cure the major illness that is taking place. Underneath this is the 'ministers' of the herbal remedy. This is used to treat any secondary illnesses that are taking place. After this, herbal 'assistants' will be used to support the other two herbs. The last set of herbs will be the messenger herbs, which will tell the primary and secondary herbs where to go and how much of an effect to take on the body.

The herbal remedies that are placed together after this will be divided by the specific symptoms that are being seen. Like all other parts of Chinese medicine, these will first be found through the five elements and how they relate to the body. For example, some herbs will be spicy in order to relate to areas of the body that need this extra element to begin better flow of Qi.

The last part of herbal medicine from ancient Chinese remedies is to determine the type of energy that is needed by a person. This is found by diagnosis and examining the Qi that is in a person. After this, a specific mixture of these four hierarchies will be mixed together in order to help change the energy flow that is in someone.

By examining the Qi and finding respective remedies through herbs, one is able to find the best solutions using a holistic method. This allows one to benefit from the use of Chinese medicine and herbs in order to fight off an illness or block of energy in their system.

### **Being Active With Your Health:**

#### Pathology and your Energy

You walk home from work and feel tired. After an eight hour day, your energy can't let you do anything anymore. However, you also know that there are demands to be met as soon as you walk in the door. If you want to make sure that you can keep up with the activity, you might want to learn how to check your Qi, or energy. If there is a part of your body that is blocked, it can prevent you from getting what you want to done, or having the energy to be alert when you need to be. Starting by finding the flow of your energy, and looking at your pathology, may be able to help.

Pathological imbalances, in Chinese medicine, are known to be a result of your energy being disturbed. This means that your energy is moving too quickly or too slow in your body and in your organs. This is the foundation of Chinese medicine. Changing the flow of your Qi is what will help you to get back to the energy that you want to.

Pathology and Chinese medicine is divided into three major categories. These categories are ones that stop your Qi from flowing properly.

Internal pathogens, the first category, are when your internal organs dysfunction. The second, external pathogens are when outside sources affect your body. The third type of pathology is categorized into trauma, where the damage comes from external or internal disturbances.

Within each of these different changes in flow by disturbance are specific target areas that can be focused on in order to move the body back to normal flow. For example, if you have suffered a trauma, your Qi will most likely change and become stagnated. This can cause pain in various places of your body. Your Qi, instead of moving upwards will move down. It will take a change in the flow of energy in order to change the trauma and pain.

By beginning to understand the relation of pathogens to energy in the body, you can begin to find alternatives to healing. The philosophy basis of Chinese medicine is directly linked to the idea of Qi and how one is able to stay healthy and with energy. If you want to focus your energy on meeting all of your activities, then following the alternatives with Chinese medicine can begin to change your flow in a different direction.

### **Connecting the Dots:**

#### Understanding Internal Organs through Zang Fu Theory

Traditional Chinese medicine is the idea that everything is interconnected in one's body and in the universe. Through this concept, there was a development of the way in which the system could be divided. The understanding of this system is what allowed one to practice alternatives towards health and balanced energy.

The Zang-Fu theory is the concept that the functions of the different organs interact with each other. This interaction allows them to function in different ways, and also balances out the health of different individuals. When one's internal organs are completely balanced, they have reached complete health because their energy is able to flow naturally and without any blocks.

From this major concept, the internal organs are divided into various categories. The first set of categories is the Zang, which are the Yin organs. This includes the heart, liver, spleen, lungs, kidneys, and pericardium. The Fu are the Yang organs and includes the intestines, gall bladder, urinary bladder and stomach. Each of these organs will be paired together; meaning that one Yang organ corresponds to one Yin organ.

Through each of these categorizations, the organs are able to correspond and function by relating to each other. When these organs are not functioning properly together, it will be the cause of dysfunction in the body. Beyond this, it is the functioning of these organs that directly link

to the way that the mind and the spirit function together. The Zang organs will be directly linked with specific emotions as well as senses. The Fu system is the opposite of this because it is linked to the hollow system and digestion.

The combination of all of the elements of the body is the major concept in the Zang Fu theory. By combining the internal organs and discovering the relationships that they have between each other, one is able to find the necessary answers to healing. Chinese medicine, through combining all of the elements is able to work towards an internal healing that leads to external functions of health.

### **Connecting To Your Breath:**

#### Chinese Medicine as Meditation

The holistic approach to medicine doesn't just include sticking needles in your system or taking an extra set of herbs every day. It also consists of finding an approach to your life that will lead to a well rounded well being. If you are working towards healing, gaining energy or just feeling better about your every day life, than approaching Chinese medication is a great way to begin approaching your life differently.

Along with the diagnosis and assessments of your physical body, is the connection to the mind and spirit within Chinese medicine. Because this is an important concept in Chinese medication, meditation will often be used as a basis for many of the practices. This is especially seen in practices such as Qigong and Yoga, where meditation combines with physical movement in order to open the energy centers of the body.

If you are working towards achieving balance in your physical life, then you will want to begin by opening the body centers through meditation. Even though this is often considered a mental and spiritual practice, it will also affect you physically. The idea of breath in any Chinese medicine is important, as it clears several of your centers. This is one of the elements that are never ignored in Chinese medicine.

Not only will your breath begin to clear your body centers, but it is also proven that the meditation methods will help to improve other areas of your body. Scientific research has begun to study meditation and how its applications can directly affect your well being. When you breathe deeply, the extra oxygen will cleanse your system and will also move into areas of your body that need the extra oxygen. It will also begin to affect your nervous system by stimulating chemicals in your body. Over time, the meditation practices can detoxify your entire system, helping you to be more energized in your daily life.



If you are looking into the practices of Chinese medicine, you will also want to consider meditation. This practice can't be separated from Chinese medicine or holistic health. By approaching the mental and spiritual aspects of the medicine, as well as the physical, you will be able to enjoy a well-rounded approach towards the ancient medical practice.

### **Developing a Connection:**

#### **Mind, Spirit and Body and Chinese Medicine**

The idea of connectedness between the universe and the system of a human is at the basis of philosophies for Chinese medicine. If you have ever heard of the basics for any type of Oriental practice, you are also familiar with the idea of the connection between the physical, mental and spiritual ideas. If you want to learn how these can work together holistically and for your health, you don't have to look any further than Chinese medicine.

The idea of connecting all of the elements in your body for optimum health is known as Shen. This comes from the idea that all of the elements in the universe are interconnected and related to one's body. When taking the ideas of the elements of the universe and incorporating them into how a human is interconnected.

The first point of focus in order to connect Shen is the one that is related to waking consciousness. According to the Shen philosophy, this consciousness is in the heart. Everything that is related to heart health, under this method, is also linked with the consciousness needing to wake up.

The next part of Shen is the spirit. According to this science, the spirit is located in the liver. In Chinese, this is referred to as the Ethereal Spirit. The next Shen is the soul of the body, also known as the corporeal soul. This resides in the lungs of one's body. Intellect, or Yi is in the spleen and Will, meaning the urge to do something is in the Kidney.

The idea of this particular system is to combine the elements of the physical with the elements of the mind and the spirit. By doing this, one is able to find the physical elements and work on two approaches to healing a person through physical and spiritual at the same time.

Combining the mind, spirit and body together is the basis of all Chinese medicine and philosophy. By learning to combine these, one is able to find the best approaches to healing a person in a holistic method. Using Shen, the concept of elements of the universe, and seeing how they relate as a system to the body, allows one to find a way to become unified within themselves.

## **Find the Cure:**

### Balanced Cures for Imbalances in Problems

There are a variety of problems that are directly linked to health in the world today. Everything from mental ailments to physical diseases to problems reflected by other more serious problems are becoming better known. In the increase in knowledge for better health is also the desire to find the correct cures for the problems. Not only are Western scientists trying to find solutions, but traditional Chinese medicine is also working towards increasing the availability of ancient solutions.

Not only is Chinese medicine known to help cure common ailments, but it is now being proven that they are working towards finding alternatives in other ways. There are several that are turning towards Chinese medicine to help alternate things such as obesity, smoking and addiction to hard drugs. This is not only a continuation of Chinese medicine, but is also an increase in evidence of the effectiveness of this alternative.

One of the proven effects of Chinese medicine comes from recent research done by a variety of acupuncturists. In this particular study, acupuncture practitioners conducted acupuncture on those who were suffering from obesity and addiction. It was found that there were direct results by refocusing the energy of the person by using specific acupuncture points.

The major change that occurred with the acupuncture is that the chemical of endorphin, which is usually a response to addiction, began to flow differently. This occurred because there were direct pressure points used in the acupuncture that linked to the nervous system. The areas of this nervous system are the ones that carry the endorphins, telling your body that it needs certain things and responds to addictions.

Not only are acupuncturists working with those that are addicted in order to open up channels for releasing endorphins into a different direction, but they are also finding ways to use acupuncture in direct areas for the addictions. Ear acupuncture is one of the most well known ways to change the imbalance of endorphins and is done by stimulating specific nerves in the ears, which causes an increase in endorphins and releases the chemical stimulants to stop addictions.

If you are suffering from an addiction, you can try using acupuncture and ancient Chinese medicine in order to help find a cure. Most likely, your body is telling you to release specific chemicals that cause the addiction. By using holistic methods, you can begin to reverse this process and work towards a well-balanced alternative towards your health.

## **Finding the Right Method for Healing:**

### Chinese Medicine Hierarchy of Medicine

Chinese medicine is not based on the typical ideas and facts that you would see in every day doctor's offices. The science of Chinese medicine is based on philosophies of the spiritual being in tune to the mental and physical bodies. When all three of these are aligned, it allows for Qi, or energy, to move through your body without having any trouble. If you are looking for your own method to using Chinese medicine, there are several approaches you can take.

There are typically eight different methods of Chinese medicine that are used for healing. Each of these methods can be used simultaneously with others, depending on a person's Qi and what they need. Unlike Western medicine, none of these methods are invasive and have very low side effects. This means that you can try a variety of them on your own and find ones that work best for you.

The first types of category of methods that are used in Chinese medicine are self-administered methods. These are done by someone researching what they need and finding the necessary solutions. Meditation is a common method that can be used by anyone in order to facilitate healing. Practicing exercises with Qigong, an ancient form to move energy is also common. Exercise and changing your diet to balance out nutrition in a different form is also used as a self-administered method.

If you still are having trouble healing, you can use the second category of methods in order to get the proper alignment. These are the types of healing that are administered by a practitioner who has studied Chinese Medicine. Acupuncture is the most common type of healing that is done with the help of someone who is trained in the healing methods. There are also herbal medicine remedies that are used along with moxibustion. Moxibustion is the burning of herbs, instead of using them as a remedy, and is often associated with aromatherapy. Cupping, which is close to the practice of acupuncture or massage is also a common method that is done in order to get your Qi moving in the right direction again.

No matter what type of healing remedy you feel that you need, Chinese medicine can find an alternative and holistic approach to helping. If you are working towards better energy levels, feel ill or are looking for a new method to going to the doctor, than finding the right type of Chinese medicine as a method is an easy place to start without the side effects.

## **Getting the Body Back to Work:**

### Tuina and Chinese Medicine

If your body is out of sync with what it is supposed to be doing, it can cause endless amounts of problems. You may feel tired all of the time, or restless. For no apparent reason, you may get headaches or feel nauseous during the day. Beyond this, you can catch the viruses and colds going around all of the time.

According to Chinese medicine, this simply means that your flow of energy is off. If this is the case, and you want to find an alternative method to getting back in touch with what your body needs, you don't have to look any further than Chinese medicine. One of the methods that can be used for Chinese medicine is Tuina, also known as Oriental bodywork therapy.

Tuina originated in 1700 BC in order to help with children's diseases that were directly related to the muscles and skeletal system of children. The concept of Tuina was also developed for help with digestion for adults. After the year 600, the concept of Tuina was considered to be an art, and was banished by the government. It wasn't until the beginning of the Communist regime in the 1960s that it became popular again as a method for medical arts.

Tuina is like a combination of acupuncture and a massage. A practitioner will work on changing the flow of your energy in your body by using various hand techniques. The hand techniques will first be used in order to massage the tissues and muscles of your body. Afterward, specific points, also used for acupuncture will be focused on. This added pressure is known to change the flow of Qi. After this, the practitioner will focus on realignment of the bones, skeletal structure and ligaments in order to realign them.

Beyond these basic techniques, practitioners may also choose to combine herbs, salves and ointments to enhance the Tuina. This will help to completely shift all levels of the energy systems that are in your body, allowing you to become more generated, balanced and healthy.

If you are looking for an alternative method to get to the depths of your health, Tuina is the method you will want to look into. This particular method is known to heal those that use it on all levels, with a combination of Chinese medicine techniques that are popular. By doing this, there is the ability for those using it to change their energy flow into better health.

## **Health beyond the Physical:**

### Chinese Medicine and Mental Health

Sometimes, common ailments for not feeling well or functioning at a higher level don't come from the virus that is going around. Most are learning that there is physical pain that is linked to emotional and mental symptoms as well. If you are suffering from a mental pain, and want to find a way to get healing outside of therapy, you can turn to Chinese medicine for help.

Problems with mental health are now being found to directly link to physical pain. One example is with things such as depression. Those who suffer from depression will also commonly have head aches, stomach pains, or have low levels of energy. According to science, as well as Chinese medicine, these mentalities are directly linked to the mind.

There are specific hormones, nerves and chemicals that are affected by one's mentality. When one is suffering from a specific mental illness, there are different levels of chemicals that are produced to try and rebalance the body. Take the example of depression again. When one is depressed, there will be extra levels of serotonin produced in the mind in order to try to balance this. The effect is that the body becomes imbalanced from the emotion.

Because of the evidence of mental and physical health being linked together, there is also a need to find alternatives for healing. There are several types of medications that are available; however, some find that these simply cause more side effects or don't work. Because of this, there is a turn towards Chinese medicine in order to help cure the problem. By using herbs, massage techniques and even acupuncture, the mental health can begin to change back to a normal level.

If you are suffering from any type of mental imbalance, using holistic approaches may be able to help you find a cure. Chinese medicine will focus directly on finding ways to alternate the flow of energy from the problems and redirect the energy into better mental health. If you are looking for alternatives, Chinese medicine may be a positive cure.

## **How Do They Know What I Need?**

### Finding a Diagnosis with Chinese Medicine

Because Chinese medicine is a method that doesn't use the technology, checks the heart rate and sets you up to a monitor, it is hard to see how a practitioner can find what you need. If you are looking into Chinese methods as an alternative, you may also want to find how a practitioner can determine where your Qi is off and what type of help you need. You can use basic tools for your own diagnosis as well if you are trying to find a remedy to give you more energy and more well-being.

The basic principle that will be used when determining a diagnosis for your health is to find physical affects that are causing differences in how you function. The rule of thumb for anyone practicing Chinese medicine is that the exterior is guidance to what is happening in the interior. Most practitioners will use what they see as a way to speak with what your body needs.

Because Chinese medicine will use the exterior as a basis, you will most likely be taken through a series of questions that help to determine your condition. These questions are based on a series of ten categories, and can consist to up to one-hundred questions. All of these will reflect parts of the Qi that need to be worked on. The categories of these questions are temperature, perspiration, digestion, sleep energy, exercise, urine, thirst, appetite, reproduction and stools.

From here, practitioners will look at various areas of your body to see how they are not working or working together. To begin, a diagnosis will be made on how you are breathing. This includes both the steadiness of your breath and the way that your voice sounds. The smell of your body will also be diagnosed in order to make sure that your temperature elements are balanced.

After this, you will have various other areas of your body looked at to see how they are balanced or imbalanced. Diagrams for the tongue are important as they are seen as a reflection of the way in which the internal system is working. Practitioners will also listen to your pulse to see what the rate is and to see if it is even in comparison to the rest of your body functions.

By examining the various parts of your body, a practitioner is able to find what is best for you and what parts of your body are either imbalanced or not receiving the right amount of energy. From this point, they are able to use the proper methods in moving things back to a normal pace. The proper diagnosis in Chinese medicine is working from the outside in.

## **Is Acupuncture For You?**

### Understanding the Benefits and the Risks

Usually, science driven societies are optimistic about the ideas linked to acupuncture and their effectiveness. Even though this ancient practice has become more known in the past ten years, it is still a procedure that is not completely understood. By understanding how the process is done, the possible side effects and the outcome, you can determine if this ancient Chinese medicine practice is right for you.

The experience of getting acupuncture done, despite what many think, is not as painful as it looks. Acupuncture is generally painless when you are going through the process. Usually, the effects will be no more noticeable than a mosquito bite, but this is even considered rare. Most likely, going through the process of acupuncture will either give you more energy or cause you to relax into a state of meditation.

During the procedure, you can expect the acupuncturist to be prepared with several practical things. The needles that are used will generally be of an inch to several inches long. The needles are made out of sterilized silver, stainless steel or copper and are considered safe by the same standards used in any hospital.

In order to ensure that the needles are safe, there are several places that will regulate what is being used. The National Commission for the Certification of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine has a specific department that ensures that all needles that are used are sterile and safe. If you want to be certain, you can make sure that the acupuncturist you go to have a CNT, also known as a Clean Needle Technique Certification. This will ensure that there are no problems with the procedure in terms of other health issues.

Of course, there are still other risks that may occur. By standards of other procedures, acupuncture is not as risky. The most serious problem may be a punctured organ. However, these are uncommon with most practices. This is the only major problem that one may run into. Beyond this, the only possibilities for problems may be things such as dizziness, nausea or bruising.

If you are considering acupuncture as an option for any possible reason, you will also want to make sure you know exactly what you are getting into. Overall, acupuncture is considered to be a safe process, as well as helpful in relieving any kind of imbalance or misguided energy. Before walking into this ancient Chinese medicine practice, you will want to make sure that you know the procedure and the possible outcomes.

### **Learning to Balance Energy:**

#### The Practice of QiGong in Chinese Medicine

The use of meditation as a form of healing is one of the most important concepts used in Chinese medicine. From ancient practices, it is believed that meditation links one to their energy, allowing them to remain clear and with a better energy flow. The energy flow of Qi is the one that enables one to have the energy that they need on all levels, leading to a practice of Qigong, which helps one to focus their energy on what is needed.

Qigong is one of the most popular medical meditation practices used for Chinese medicine. From its origins, it has been known to be not only a meditation, but also a self-medicating practice by moving the flow of energy, or Qi. When one practices Qigong, they will focus on specific focal points of the body. This allows them to clear these points and continue to stay balanced, energized and healthy.

Qigong is best known for combining its ideas of meditation, breathing and movement. This begins with a series of breathing exercises that are used in order to begin the flow of energy. This is then combined with exercises that allow the muscles to become tense and relax. These exercises are known to help the muscles to become heated, which in turn, allows for an increase in producing energy and digesting nutrients that are needed throughout the body.

When one is beginning Qigong, there will be a focus on deep breathing as well as meditation of visualizations and clearing of the mind. This purpose is to begin creating a discipline in the rhythms in one's body. The idea is that this will then begin to reflect the rhythms of life that is surrounding a person. The result will be an elimination of tension of nerves, irregularities and dysfunctions in the body. The long term result of this will be strengthening and balance of the body.

The main purpose behind Qigong is to active channels of energy that are in every person. This is a holistic practice to healing that everyone has the ability to practice, either as a meditation or a way to develop a strengthening of the entire system. The combination of meditation techniques with movement allows one to become in sync to the rhythm of their own body and life, giving them a holistic and balanced way to living.



## **Pointing To Your Health:**

### Finding Alternative Solutions through Meridian Systems

One of the important concepts in Chinese medicine is that every part of the body is linked to another part of the body. Together, these work as an entire system that either functions with a natural flow, or stops in its functioning because it is blocked. If you want to be sure that you are functioning in complete health, you will want to begin to examine the meridian systems.

The meridian systems are used in most Chinese medicine as points that will help to heal. They are most often used in acupuncture and massage that is practiced through professional practitioners of Chinese medicine. These particular points, when measured scientifically, are known to be like pressure points that affect other parts of the human system.

The meridian systems are divided into two categories. One of these will be on the arms and the other will be on the legs. By pressurizing these specific points, or massaging them, it will affect internal organs, physical illness, and the flow of energy. The different meridians are also divided into Yin and Yang systems, all that can be affected by positive and negative flows of energy.

The division of the different meridian systems in the arms and legs allows acupuncturists to directly link places in the body that are external with internal organs. For example, an acupuncturist who sees that you have heart trouble will find a Yin meridian on the arm that is directly linked to the heart and pressurize it in order to begin the flow of energy.

By following the Chinese meridian model, one can begin to see the relationship between the internal organs and the external structure of the body. Through the meridian systems, one can determine how the flow of energy needs to be changed and can find ways in which the body is affected through the various organs. This is one of the effective ways to use Chinese medicine for better health.

## **Sit Back and Relax:**

### Using a Massage for Healing

The growth in medicine and technology has also made significant growth in possibilities to stay in good health. There are medications for sleeping and staying awake, relaxing and gaining energy, headaches and an imbalance of systems. All of these medications begin to pump various things into your system that your body then is forced to react to, sometimes not so naturally.

If you want to take a different approach to your healing, why not try a more natural remedy? Chinese medicine understands how the body can be naturally healed, and has developed a variety of methods to help bring this into place. One of the popular methods used are traditional healing massages. Not only will this help you to heal by clearing up blocks that may be making you ill, but it will also help you to relax in the process.

The Chinese traditional healing massage was developed over 2500 years ago in the orient. Through this development was an understanding of how the human touch, combined with specific pressure points could help to stop disorders. Each of these touches would stimulate specific areas of the body that were not in tune with the natural flow of energy. This would then allow one to begin their own healing process.

Not only did massages begin to develop various reactions to touch, but they also began to develop into focus points for healing. For example, many of the traditional massages for healing will be focused on the abdominal area in order to help balance out internal organs. Other parts of the massage will focus on the tissues and muscles that may not be receiving the proper nutrients or flow of energy.

The idea of Chinese medicine is one that moves beyond the prescription pills and into a method of complete relaxation. By doing this, one is able to find an alternative method to begin healing and developing a holistic approach to health. The various massages that have been developed through Chinese medicine are a great way for you to stop taking the extra medications, and instead, sit back and relax.

## **Studying the Internal Stars:**

### **The Use of Energy in Your Body**

If you have ever heard of ideas from physical fitness or Yoga, then you are familiar with the idea of using the energy in your body properly. In Chinese Medicine, the energy that you have is something that is much deeper than a physical fitness. The idea of Qi (Chee), is an energy force that is often referred to in order to stay healthy.

The idea of Qi begins with elements that are in the universe that make up energy. This same Qi that is in the universe is, by Chinese medicine philosophy, also in every living being. The Qi that is being referred to is something that Chinese philosophy considers to be in every part of every thing. It can't be destroyed, only changed.

One way to explain the way that Qi functions in Chinese philosophy is through the element of water. Under certain conditions, water will change into ice or evaporate. Even though it is changing form or place, it still functions as the same type of energy in the other form.

Through the idea of energy being in everyone's being, and changing as the person needs, is the relation to how this can be used for medicine. All of the Qi that is moving through the body has currents that the energy flows through, much like the circulation system. The Chinese medicine system states that there are fourteen major points where the Qi flows through a person. All of these points will have Yin and Yang access to them and are used in practices such as acupuncture.

As the system of Qi flows through someone, it also functions within the body to specific things. When all of your Qi is flowing properly then you are considered healthy. Not only does your Qi track your energy, it also makes sure that the different systems that are functioning transform the different parts of the body so they are balanced. For example, some types of Qi will take nutrients to the muscles. It is also known to keep parts of the body protected from the wrong types of food, while other areas of the body contain the elements that are needed.

The idea of Qi is to keep the energy of the body functioning in the proper way. When one is in complete health, they are known to have reached Upright Qi. By keeping everything flowing in the right manner, and paying attention to how the body is changing, there will be the ability to continue to hold the energy of the universe in one's body.

## **Taking Your Medicine Naturally:**

### Chinese Food Therapy

You go into your kitchen after a long day's work and open the refrigerator. The availability of food isn't looking good for you again. It's either left over pizza, or another microwave meal. You find the fastest and easiest solution so that you can continue with your day and not let the food stop you from getting what you need to done.

According to Chinese medicine, this can be one of the major causes of illness. Not eating balanced and properly can lead to a stop in the right energy flow in your body, causing your body to not have the ability to process its nutritional needs correctly. The alternative that is suggested is Chinese food therapy, where there is a balance between the food that you eat and the nutrition that you get.

The philosophy behind Chinese food therapy is that everything must be balanced. This begins by discovering the polar opposites of foods that are available and combining them for a middle ground. Yin and yang are the philosophy that is used for foods, giving the best combination of elements for health. Yang is known to increase body heat, which will raise the metabolism to process nutrients. Yin then combines with this to decrease the body heat, which will balance the nutrients that are being processed in the metabolism.

In order for Chinese food therapy to work properly, there has to be an understanding of how your body reacts to specific things. If you are completely balanced, too much of either yin or yang will cause a reaction by your body, allowing you to stay balanced. Everything that your body does, when using Chinese food therapy, will be communicating to you how to use your food and balance it out properly.

If your body is imbalanced, you can use some foods in order to use the Chinese food therapy correctly. For example, some foods may cause your energy to be lower. You can use roots of foods in order to increase this, which are directly linked to the Yang foods. Ginseng is one popular example that will help to increase circulation and the metabolism. This is one of several examples that can help you to heal and balance naturally.

Next time you are ready to eat your meal, make sure that you have both Yin and Yang in combination with each other. Over time, you will notice that the balance of your energy, as well as the various effects of the food makes a difference in how you function. Using Chinese food therapy as a method of health is one of the easiest ways to help chewing in your health.

## **The 6 External Pathogens:**

### Finding New Flows in Chinese Medicine

The idea of pathology in Chinese medicine is what determines the need for a change in energy flow. If you are looking into finding better alternatives for your health, looking at possibilities for external pathology and how it relates to your Qi is one of the places to begin. By doing this, you will have the ability to gain back your health through holistic means.

The external pathogens are one of the ways in which your energy flow can be affected. There are six general pathogens that are examined when looking at external pathogens. When these are flowing correctly, they allow the body to be balanced and have energy. However, sometimes the external pathogens can stop their flow.

The characteristics of external pathogens are named after the weather patterns in the earth. This is because all Chinese medicine takes environmental and universal laws and applies it to each individual. These are divided into wind, heat, cold, summer heat, damp and dryness. When one who is practicing Chinese medicine is able to define one of these in the body as not being aligned correctly, then they can begin to move back the Qi to normal.

The external pathogens begin with wind. When looking at the human body, this is directly linked to the lungs and the air passage ways. When the 'Wind Qi' is off in a person, there will be coughing and often times aches in specific joints. Because there is not a steady movement of air, passageways and other areas are unable to remain clear.

If you are looking at temperature, such as heat, cold or summer heat, you can simply look at how warm or cold your body temperature is. If there is not a steady flow in specific areas, you can determine that your Qi in those areas is off. If there is severe heat in one area, such as from a temperature, then this is where the flow of energy is, significant in the relation to summer heat.

The last two external pathogens are the damp or dryness that is related to Qi. If there is dampness, you can expect that the Qi in that area is not flowing correctly. Dampness is known for blocking Qi from its proper flow. Dryness, the absence of moisture, is significant because it decreases flexibility. This is because dryness is brittle and is known for taking off bits and pieces.

These various external pathogens all can tell what parts of a person's energy are blocked. By understanding the 'symptoms' that are taking

place externally you can begin to change the flow of energy throughout your body.

### **The Art of Needles:**

#### Acupuncture in Chinese Medicine

If you are like most, you may not see the pleasure in being treated with needles poking into your skin. However, to those in Chinese medicine, and to several who have discovered alternatives with holistic healing, this is the perfect remedy. The idea of acupuncture in Chinese medicine is important to help with healing the energy flow in someone.

Acupuncture is based off of the idea that there are certain points in the body that can help one to heal. When these points in the body receive extra pressure through a device, they will be able to assist with the healing. In the practice of Acupuncture, needles will be used as the major transports to reconnect the energy flow in the body.

The use of acupuncture begins by studying the various areas that the flows of energy are. These are known as meridians or channels in the body. The body has twelve major channels where energy will flow and cycle. The places where these channels connect are usually where energy can become blocked off. By using acupuncture, the connecting areas for the channels are examined and unblocked by pressuring the specific points.

Once one has found the connections for the acupuncture, then it is important to find the effects that all of these connections have. Each different point will have elements that are linked directly to what the body needs in order to stay balanced. These are specifically linked to the five elements that are considered to be the basis for the laws of the universe.

By finding the various channels and connections in the body, acupuncture specialists are able to find which areas of Qi are not flowing properly. This allows them to effect the way that the body flows in order to help restore and revitalize the energy levels in the body. By getting one into a better flow of their energy, they can achieve complete health.

## **The Importance of the Beat:**

### Checking Your Pulse for a Diagnosis

Chinese medicine will always use natural observations in order to determine which parts of the body may be off in their energy. By observing the external functions of the body, they can make assessments on how this affects the internal structure. From here, they will be able to decide on how to change the energy flow.

One of the most important areas of observation for Chinese medicine diagnosis is the pulse. The different pulses of the body are so important to Chinese medicine, that they are considered an art by learning how to use them appropriately. Usually, only the most trained practitioners can find how to use the pulse properly.

The reason why the pulse is important to the observations is because Chinese medicine has found connections between the pulse and every area of the body. In Western medicine, there is an understanding that the pulse of the heart is located in the wrist and also the neck. In Chinese medicine, there are also pulses for the kidney, liver, and other body areas.

Not only do all of the internal organs have specific pulses in different areas of the body, but these also have different depths. This means that a reading of a pulse can be heard in 'layers' in each position. Typically, each pulse will have three different depths that can be observed. These can be found in nine different areas when the diagnosis is being made from pulse.

If a practitioner is looking for a diagnosis for a pulse, they will look for several attributes. If you are in Chinese medicine, you will most likely know about twenty-eight different characteristics to look for. These may be related to how the pulse sounds, the rate it is beating at, and other factors such as this. The characteristics that are determined will also help to draw conclusions about which areas of the body are off of their regular energy flow.

If you are moving into Chinese medicine, expect your pulses to be checked. This is one of the main considerations in Chinese medicine, and is never over looked in the diagnosis. The art of checking the pulse in Chinese medicine is one of the main foundations for understanding how the internal Qi of someone is functioning.

## **The Points of Acupuncture:**

### Fitting Together Holistic Health

Acupuncture is an ancient Chinese medicine that is used to help restore health. By focusing on specific points in the body, acupuncturists are able to find the way in which the body's energy is flowing and find new ways to make sure that everything flows properly. This helps one to remain balanced and holistically healthy.

Most of us know that acupuncture will find specific points in the body and place needles in that area in order to restore or unblock energy in the body. Understanding the different points that an acupuncturist looks for will help one to understand why the different points of the body and how these link together in this form of Chinese medicine.

The first sets of points that are used in acupuncture are transporting points. There are five known transporting points that are focused on throughout the body. These will mostly be found in the legs and arms. Each of these transporting points is named after characteristics of water, and all hold the same characteristics that a water form would. For example, the sea is where the points connect energy with the body to the organs because it is a set of deeper points in the body.

From here, the points will be determined by the five elements of the earth. These are usually found at finger and toe tips in the body. For an acupuncturist, it is important that the five elements are represented and flowing with the right Qi in all of the points that they should be found. Yuan-source points are also important to examine. These are the points that will link all of the organs together. Each point represents one organ.

If you have ever seen acupuncture at work, you know that the needles will all be placed into a person's body at different lengths. This also links directly to the points that are being examined in the body. The shallowest set of points is known as the Xi-Accumulating Cleft Points. These are wider and shallower spots that make it easy for Qi to become blocked. The upper third of the body has a special set of points that will be used. These are known as the window to sky points and are directly linked to one's spirit and relationship from heaven to earth.

Mu-Front-Alarm Points are also examined. These are in the front of the body and are also associated with organs. Only the organs that have been diagnosed as blocked will have needles placed to help their flow. Of course, everything that is done to the front also has to be done to the back. Shu-Back Points are the points that correspond with the front diagnosis, only on the other side of the body.



Knowing the different points as an acupuncturist is one of the most important parts of understanding how to heal. By beginning this process and finding the points that need different types of Qi unblocked, one will begin to feel the difference and begin to heal.

### **The Search for Chinese Medicine:**

#### **How to Find Practitioners for Alternative Health**

Many who have had a few bottles of prescription drugs that haven't worked are now trying to find alternatives to healing. If you want to join the growing numbers of people who are working towards alternative medicine, you can look directly into Chinese medicine. There are a variety of practitioners available, all which understand the methods to helping you heal.

If you are familiar with Chinese medicine as an alternative, you may have also noticed that it doesn't seem like there are a lot who are advertising the alternatives. Just because this is true, you don't have to give up hope to finding your options with your health. Through some simple searching, you can find the best way to optimize your health and energy.

The good news about Chinese medicine is that most practitioners that come from the orient are first trained in the ancient practices. Even though it may say that they are specialized in a specific type of practice, you can suspect that they know a few things about the complete picture of Chinese medicine. For example, if you know an acupuncture practitioner, you will be safe in asking about herbal alternatives as well.

Not only can you ask local practitioners about Chinese medicine practices, you can also find other resources that can help. Because alternative medicine is becoming more popular, you can easily find national associations and organizations that are dedicated to promoting alternative methods of Chinese medicine. By linking to these organizations as an alternative, you will be able to expand your possibilities and knowledge of holistic health.

Finding a way to link the mind, body and spirit also means finding examples of those who have been initiating alternative health. There are a variety of possibilities that are available, all which can link you to understanding and practicing your flow of energy.

## **The West Meets the East:**

### Using Science to Prove Chinese Medicine

Even though Chinese medicine has been used as an effective method for over 5,000 years, Western scientific proof continues to debate whether this is a logical method to help with healing. If you are interested in Chinese medicine, but are not certain of its effectiveness, you can look at the various research studies that have helped others to reach conclusions about its effectiveness.

The most debated science between East and West is the use of acupuncture as a medicine. At this point, the research studies have not led to any complete conclusions about whether acupuncture can be considered a science. At the same time, research indicates that the use of meridians in acupuncture is effective in healing. Scientists have also stated that because the treatment is harmless, it can be used, and simply needs to have more investigations related to it.

Another debate that has been studied by Western scientists is herbal medicines that are used from traditional Chinese medicine methods. While some of these have not been studied, other parts of the herbs are used in pharmaceutical medications that are prescribed to patients. Chinese wormwood, Ephedra, and artemisinin are some examples of ancient remedies that have moved into Western medicine from Chinese ideals.

One agreement that all Western research shows, with the various ideas of Chinese medicine, is that the treatments are safe. All of the medical studies indicate that even if the medications are not scientifically proven, they are still not detrimental to one's health and most have few side effects. Because this is a proven point to the holistic methods, most scientists will also state that it is simply a lack of research from the medicine that is used in Chinese philosophies.

From the philosophy to the science, Chinese medication is a debated concept in Western society. However, there is also a growth and a beginning to understanding the concepts that have been used and experimented with over time. Through the various techniques of Chinese medicine to the continuous use by individuals who are looking for holistic health, Chinese medicine continues to become prominent in Western society.

## **Towards a Well-Rounded Lifestyle:**

### Defining Chinese Medicine

If you were ever asked about what Chinese medicine was, you could think of a variety of definitions, ideas and concepts that are used in the practice. Chinese medicine is not limited to a specific set of rules or processes that are used in healing and helping one with their ailments. However, there are specific concepts that are used with the practice of Chinese medicine that can be applied in any area.

Since the beginning of Chinese medicine, there has been an expansion into a variety of methods and ideologies that help to enhance one's well being. Overall, Chinese medicine is an approach to a holistic lifestyle. This means that with the practice of Chinese medicine is also the unification of the physical with the mental and spiritual. When one has unified all three of these aspects, they are healthy.

Not only does Chinese medicine approach health through holistic methods, it also uses ideas of natural law in order to enhance the experience of this type of medicine. All of the laws that are in the universe are inversely related to one's body. In this practice, they are considered to be a reflection of each other. Whether you are looking into acupuncture or Qigong as a practice, you can expect that natural laws will be at the basis of understanding how your body works.

After there is an understanding of natural laws as well as the holistic lifestyle, Chinese medicine will move into approaches towards energy. This is one of the major universal laws that are applied at all levels of Chinese medicine. Through any practice of Chinese medicine, it is also said that there are specific energies that are linked. The idea behind Chinese medicine is to find a way to unite the energies and to keep them flowing in a way that is complete and natural.

The idea of Chinese medicine is to create a lifestyle that is balanced and flows with the proper type of energy. No matter what area or aspect of Chinese medicine you are looking into, you can expect to see the practice with these foundational ideals. The goal of this is to allow one to move into a lifestyle that enhances all areas of living.

## **Tuning Into Opposites for Health:**

### The Principle of Yin and Yang for Medicine

Chinese medicine is not only a way of science that incorporates the discoveries made for holistic health. It also incorporates philosophies that are important for one to be able to stay in the best health. Along with these philosophies are practical principles that are applied with Chinese medicine in order for holistic health to be achieved.

The idea of Yin and Yang is one of the many principles that are at the root of Chinese medicine and it's functioning. This particular method was applied through Taoism, one of the religious practices in the Orient. From this philosophy, the Chinese discovered that the laws of the universe could be applied to each individual in order to gain optimum health.

The idea of Yin and Yang incorporates five major ideas that are then used in order to help one gain the best of health. The first of these is opposition. This means that everything and everyone has two polar opposites. When one is balanced, both of these are controlling each other. This opposition is essential to one being able to exist in the universe.

Not only is this opposition essential for existence, but it is also what allows one to be healthy. By balancing out these two opposites, one is able to nourish them as well as grow into new understanding and balance. However, even if these are not balanced, there is still a little of one side into the other making the idea of Yin and Yang interchangeable.

When one applies these particular philosophies to health, they can find that they are able to use the principles to help with health. With each side of your body is another side that is the polar opposite. A good example is your abdomen, which needs your back in order to remain balanced. By focusing on both sides, you will be able to gain balance, energy and a holistic approach to your life.

The idea of Chinese medicine is one that doesn't just record symptoms through a scientific perspective. It takes into account the dark and light sides of everyone. By learning how to apply the principles of Yin and Yang to every part of your health, there is the ability to learn to exist with a new balance.

## **Twisting Back Into Health:**

### Yoga as a Chinese Medicine

On the Western side of the world, Yoga is considered an exercise that helps with strength, cardiovascular and weight loss. However, in ancient Chinese medicine, Yoga was also used as a practice in order to cultivate health. If you are interested in Yoga, or have begun the practice, you will begin to recognize that the health related to Yoga also provides nourishment for a better balance towards health.

The idea of Chinese medicine is to create a balance of the flow of energy that is happening in one's body. The incorporation of this medicine doesn't just include the balance of the body. It also includes the relationships of the mind and the spirit that relate to the body. All are considered to be intertwined. When the energy flow of one area is off, it changes the energy flow of the entire system.

The basis of this idea in Chinese medicine is also the ideal behind Yoga. This form of exercise was used as a method to help with healing and balance in one's life, and can be considered one of the ways to use Chinese medicine. The practice of Yoga, while it can help to treat ailments, is recognized more often as a way to prevent disease and imbalance. By practicing Yoga, one can keep their health on all levels.

The way that this is done through Yoga is through the opening of the various points in the body with the practice. Every Yoga move is directly linked to various chakras, or points in the body that help with energy flow. Yoga helps to open these chakras, and to help in keeping them open. By doing this, one is able to increase their energy and begin to stay in better health. Yoga is especially known for helping with problems such as insomnia, and in the functioning of internal organs.

If you want a natural alternative to healing, Yoga as a practice can help. This particular method is known to help increase energy as well as clear blocks that may be in your system. Over time, your energy will begin to increase and flow naturally, allowing you to stay in the best of health without the unnatural twists.

## **Tying Into Ancient Philosophies:**

### **Does Chinese Medicine Work?**

You have had a head cold for over a month. No matter what type of medication you try, you simply can't get rid of the problem. It continues to linger, knocking you out of your ability to have the energy you want to and function at the level you want every day. Getting desperate for an answer to get rid of the illness, you begin to look for alternatives.

A friend recommends an acupuncturist to you in order to help to cure the problem. There happens to be someone that she has also gone to who could probably help you to be cured of your cold. Even though you laugh at first, the cold has dragged on long enough, and you are willing to try the alternatives. You schedule an appointment and get ready to try something a little different with some alternative.

For most, there is some cynicism on whether the ideas of Chinese medicine really work. Even though it is an ancient practice that has been developed through both the physical and spiritual aspects, it doesn't tie into much science that Western thought would give a second look at.

Chinese medicine, even though it is not a proven science, is a good alternative for those that are dealing with any type of illness. For about 90% that use the method, they will say that there are positive results that come from the practice. All you have to do to see if this is true is to look at the amount of time that it has lasted. You can also look at the growing popularity of various holistic methods that are now being used. Most of these come from Chinese medical philosophies.

If you are considering an alternative to your health, you can start to turn to ancient philosophies to better your energy. Even though science hasn't proven its validity, time and people have. Chinese medicine, no matter what level of health you are working towards curing, can be effective if you walk in with the desire to finding the best healing alternatives.