

## **Brief view of chi and alternative therapy**

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### **CHI AND DOGONG**

#### **Chi (Qi) : Major life force in our bodies**

The ancient Oriental doctor perceived the human beings as a microcosmos within the universe. They imagined the human being as a part of one unbroken wholeness, called Tao, a singular relational continuum. Oriental medical thinking developed with a focus in the relationship of the human being and nature. And so the system of examination, diagnosis and treatment for Oriental medicine is based on the body-mind-spirit.

The concept of human health then follows laws inherent in the flow of the life 'Energy (Chi)' inherent in nature. The existence of humanity and, in fact, all of nature is dependent upon this Chi (Qi). It is only by Chi that the planets move, the wind blows and the elements exist. It is only by Chi that human beings live and breathe. When Chi is flowing, all of life's processes are in operation in a rhythmic and harmonious way. The Chi energy is the vital force in all of life, and the Tao is the path and method to sustain the pure Chi energy.

In watching the universe, the ancient Chinese saw that this energy could be spoken of in a dualistic way, a kind of brothersister team which is called Yin and Yang. In reality these two are one but one of the forces may be more or less apparent at a certain time. For instance, when night is upon us, we do not at that moment experience the day, and yet the day emerges from the night. We tend to think of either one or the other of force existing, rather than of both being present with one aspect manifesting more than the other at a given moment. Yin-Yang is not a dialectic of opposites clashing. It is the unity of two aspects of Chi energy whose continual movement revolves in a constant interplay of balance and harmony.

Like Yin and Yang, the five elements are further descriptions of the Chi energy as it goes through its

cyclical transformations. Everything in life is made up of a mixture of these elements being wood, fire, earth, metal and water. All phenomena of the universe contain the energies of Yin and Yang through which the cause of ailment and the use of natural food and herbal medicines can be explained.

#### **'Meridian lines' pathways to prevention**

The "meridian lines" in the body are the main pathways through which "Chi," or life force energy, moves and flows. In fact, all of nature, including humanity, is dependent upon this vital force. When chi is flowing smoothly, all of life's processes operate rhythmically and harmoniously. Therefore, in oriental medicine, sustaining this pure chi energy is more important than anything else in order to keep the body strong and healthy. Our body has three major systems: the circulatory, nerve and meridian. Through the circulatory system, every part of the body is supplied with essential nutrients. The nerve system, which is closely related to the circulatory system, plays an important role in controlling each organ, muscle and tendon in the body. Because the circulatory and nerve systems can be seen, it is much easier to predict and find problems in them than in the meridian system, which invisible to the naked eye. The meridian system protects our internal organs just as the skin protects our body from harmful virus invasions that cause diseases.

There are 12 meridians in the body which protect the organs and provide life force energy to them. And within these 12 meridians, which connect the surface of our body to our internal organs, are eight special "life lines." These life lines are again divided into two major meridian lines: the "governal" and "functional" meridians. Chi circulates through these lines in a full circle. It flows in the governal line from the "hwayoom" - located between the anus and reproductive organs - to the "injoong" - located in the head, just above

the soft palate at the roof of the mouth. In the functional line, it flows from the injoong to the hwayoom, completing the circle.

Doctors of Oriental medicine (OMDs) believe that the strength of our immune system to fight disease is completely dependent upon how powerfully and quickly chi moves in the meridian system in the body. It follows, then, that people whose chi energy moves in the body without obstructions are less likely to have health problems. To better grasp this concept, think of the traffic lanes on a highway. It usually takes longer to get to one's destination on a one-lane road than on a four-lane road as, due to the decreased space, there is more of a chance of extreme traffic congestion. This makes for a not so pleasant driving experience.

One of the main culprits in weakening the meridian system is emotional trauma. The meridian system can be easily damaged by excessive emotional swings as well as an unhealthy diet and viruses. When strong emotions - more potent than those touched off by shallow, superficial everyday problems -- emerge, the meridian system is the first to be affected, and in a very negative way. And if the underlying cause of the trauma is not found and emotions continue to flare, the negative affects spill over into the two other systems, causing serious health problems. People who have damaged the meridian lines controlling the function of the heart through emotional imbalance likely feel intense pain in the center of the chest or at the elbows. In worst cases, overlooked first stage symptoms of emotional disorder can result in serious, sometimes incurable diseases. It goes without saying, therefore, that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." And keeping the meridian system free from emotional disturbances as well as strengthening it make it possible to lead a healthy and happy life.

OMDs, before making any diagnosis or prescribing treatment, touch and press down several acupuncture points in order to check the condition of the heart and emotional state as well as to see where problems are located. In traditional acupuncture treatment, touching is one of the five major examination methods, which also include looking, listening, smelling and asking. During an acupuncture treatment, points linked to major

organs are stimulated through the insertion of long thin needles into the skin. This acts to unblock meridians and increase the flow of chi through them.

#### **Weather affects the flow of 'chi'**

The word "chi" literally means "breath" and "air," as well as "energy." And all forms of life in the universe are animated by this essential life force. According to the tenets of Oriental medicine, humans and all other living things stand between "heaven," the source of chi, and the earth, which gives life to all things on the planet. And the energy of weather, which is called "celestial energy" as it also springs from heaven, passes through the human body system like electricity moves through a conductor. It circulates across the surface of the body, just below the skin, protecting the entire organism from invasion by extremes of environmental energy such as heat, cold, dryness and wind.

It follows, therefore, that the human energy system - the meridians through which chi flows - is strongly influenced by the various types of environmental energy, and weather conditions in particular. When certain climatic conditions become extreme, specific internal organs are directly affected. The energy of cold, for example, attacks the meridian associated with the kidneys, so extreme cold can cause kidney malfunction. In addition, the energy of strong wind or brutally cold weather has a negative influence on life force energy in the body, keeping chi from flowing smoothly in the meridian lines. This sometimes causes bodily aches and pains that seem to have no other apparent cause, and in many cases brings on the symptoms of a second-stage cold like headache, chills, and fever.

It goes without saying that working outside for a long period of time in the summer or winter, exposed to extreme temperatures, is harmful to health. Symptoms of this type of overexposure include fever, dry lips, constipation and heaviness in the chest.

Some people who sit in damp grass or get caught in the rain, experience headache, arthritis, and bodily swelling, as moisture blocks the flow of chi in meridian lines. Sudden shifts in emotion and mood can also trigger a chain-reaction of energy

imbalance throughout the body. And these reactions are just as strong as those caused by extreme climatic conditions.

It is a well known fact that a person suffering from extreme personal grief, such as the death of a spouse, becomes highly vulnerable to all sorts of disease. Fear is a symptom of temporary kidney dysfunction, but prolonged chronic fear can actually cause permanent kidney damage. Frequent fits of anger reflect liver problems, but a person who is almost constantly angry will damage an otherwise healthy liver. This then generates even more anger, creating a vicious psychosomatic circle. So, when you are angry, try to stop thinking about what is making you angry. You can do this by meditating, sitting in quiet place, or simply listening to calming music.

In the same sense, mental shock or psychological disorders - which can stem from anything from bad childhood experiences to watching too many horror movies -- can also hinder the growth of the body. When the pathways and meridian lines of chi are disturbed by mental illness, they directly influence the condition of the bones, disrupting or even stopping normal growth.

Chi energy moves just as electricity moves through a computer, along a well-defined circuit, the meridians. And this energy can be manipulated to release blockages and increase health through meditation, acupuncture and moxibustion therapy, in which moxa (*artemisia*) sticks are burned close to the skin over certain points on the meridians. Moxibustion and acupuncture are especially effective in treating breathing problems, pains in the chest and the back as well as disturbed chi circulation caused by an imbalance of energy in the meridian lines.

#### **'Dogong' movements unlock your 'chi'**

Moving meditation, one of the two major meditation methods, keeps the mind and body balanced and, along with silent meditation, works wonders in bringing about inner realization and transformation. As far as moving meditations are concerned, "dogong," one of the most well known moving meditation systems in Korea, which has been discussed in this column over the last few weeks, comes highly recommended.

According to dogong practitioners, there are hundreds of forms of the exercise. Only 16 certain steps, however, are regarded as simple to practice and effective in opening the "chi," or life force channels in the body. A detailed explanation of four of these 16 steps follows.

The first movement is called "li," which symbolizes the body movements of a woman lifting up a large water jar in ancient times. It is recommended for those with heart and lung problems and weak back and leg muscles, as it helps strengthen the areas near the heart, waist and legs. To start this movement, stand up straight with your feet shoulder-width apart. While inhaling, stretch your hands out to the sides of your body, until they are above your head and fully extended. Imagine that you are holding something above your head. While exhaling, bend your knees slightly and bring your hands together down slowly to your knees. Next, while breathing in, raise your hands up above your head again, looking forward. While breathing out, bring your hands together down to your knees again and finally, stand up straight. The next movement, "ya," symbolizes one of the circular tai chi symbols. Its steps are believed to help reinforce the function of the heart and, in particular, intensify the capacity of the lungs. To start, take a deep breath and relax. While inhaling, raise your left leg with your toes pointing downward and, at the same time, raise your left hand up above your head with your palm facing the sky. Next, bend your left leg a little to the left and stretch your right leg slightly to the right side of your body with your palm facing down. Immediately after doing this, and while exhaling, raise your right leg to the left and bring it down slowly in a half circular motion. Finally, gather your hands together near your lower abdomen and bring them down to your knees. Make sure that while doing this, you focus on your own breathing, in and out, and concentrate on every sense in your body. "Do," the next step, is considered very good for develop a sense of equilibrium and balance as well as maximizing the effectiveness of all the functions of the inner organs. To start this movement, stand straight with your feet open to the width of your shoulders. While breathing in, raise your left leg with the toes

facing down and raise your arms and stretch them out in front of you. While exhaling, lean forward a little and bring your hands down over your chest with the palms facing in, and with your left leg still bent. After this, while breathing out, lower your left leg and bring your hands down to your abdomen and stand straight again. When the full set is finished, switch from your left leg to the right and go through the same procedure again. "Rae," the next movement in the form, has the effect of opening the chi channels in the parts of the body where life force energy is prevented from flowing because people in today's fast-paced society neglect to exercise. To do this movement, you should stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. While inhaling, raise your hands up slowly to the sides of the body, about thirty degrees higher than your shoulders, so that your right hand is above your head and your left hand is a little bit over your shoulder. While exhaling, bend your left leg backward slightly with your right palm facing the sky and the left palm facing away from you. After this, while breathing in, bring your hands slowly down to the sides of the body. While breathing out again, go back to the original position and stand up straight. It is recommended that you practice each movement of the whole form for at least a half an hour a day for a couple of months. This exercise is regarded as very effective for those who have suffered from heart or blood problems such as hypertension and heart attack.

After only a month of practice, you will be able to see a difference. If you have high blood pressure, it will go back to normal, and your inner body will get much stronger and healthier. Another way to practice this meditation is simply to listen to music and dance. Move your body slowly according to the sound of the music and hear the blood flowing in your body as well as the beating of the heart.

#### **'Dogong' generates healing power**

Our bodies have a "meridian" system in addition to the nervous and blood systems. "Chi," the life force energy, flows through these meridians. And just as the skin protects our bodies from virus invasions, so the meridian system protects our internal organs. But the meridians can be damaged by excessive or prolonged emotional changes,

including swings among fits of joy, anger, sadness, pensiveness, grief, fear and fright.

Meditation, whether sound or moving, is one of the most effective methods for renewing the functions of the meridians. "Dogong," a style of moving meditation in Korea similar to "Qigong," enables one to improve his or her immune system and help to generate healing power.

The first step in doing the "Tae-eul-joo" form, a well-known Korean moving meditation based on a mantra, was introduced here last week. Following are more steps in this exercise, starting with the second movement, called "chee." To do this, while standing up straight, put your left foot forward a little, with your feet open to the width of the shoulders. Next, gather your hands together in front of you and raise them up over the chest, right above the navel, while breathing in. Bend the upper part of your body slightly forward, putting your weight on your left leg, so that all the energy can gather there. After this, while breathing out, lean back a little, stretching your hands out to the sides of your body. After this, bring your hands together again near the navel and slowly raise them up above the chest. Finally, bring them down slowly below the navel again. Do not worry so much about getting the form exactly right. The important thing to remember is that when you raise your hands, you should breathe in, and when bringing them down, you should breathe out. When the full set of these movements is finished, switch from your left leg to the right and go through the same procedure again. The chee movement is considered by practitioners of Dogong to greatly reinforce the function of the lungs and help in recovering from breathing problems.

"Tae," the third movement of this form, symbolizes a circle, or, more exactly, the circular Tai Chi symbol, which looks similar to the yin and yang symbol. To start this movement, stretch your hands out to the sides of your body and then bend and raise your right arm above the shoulders so that your hand is just above your head. At the same time, bend and lower your left arm so that your hand is in front of your navel. Do this in a smooth, continuous motion, keeping your arms slightly bent the whole time. After this, reverse the position of your hands, so that your right hand is

in front of the navel and your left hand is above your head. Practice this set of the movement over and over again. The next movement in the form is "eul," which symbolizes the motion of a bird flapping its wings.

Dogong practitioners recommend this for those suffering from bad circulation of chi and blood, especially in the upper part of the body, because it helps generate chi in the muscles of the shoulders and chest in addition to wiping out or greatly reducing headaches, dizziness and heart disease. To practice this movement, slowly flap your arms up and down - just like a bird flaps its wings when flying. What is more important than trying to replicate each movement perfectly is to pay attention to each movement and concentrate on your breathing - inhaling and exhaling in a smooth, easy manner.

There is no need to follow the exact steps mapped out from beginning to end, forcing yourself to complete it. Just enjoy moving your body, keeping your mind in a most relaxed state. Listening to music while practicing can boost the effectiveness of the meditation. It is needless to say that the body should be thoroughly relaxed when practicing, allowing the mind to return to a state of equilibrium.

Also, natural breath control can calm excessive emotions and strengthen the immune system, so much so that you will rarely become ill. Practice daily for a few minutes and see the difference.

#### **'Chun' movements ease shoulder, leg pains**

Of all the moving meditations - which are considered tremendously powerful in getting "chi," or life force circulating and strengthening the body and the immune system - "Dogong" is one of the most well-known in Korea.

The steps of a certain form based on a chant, named "Hoom," "Chee," "Tae," and "Eul," were introduced in this column over the last few weeks. A detailed explanation of more steps follows. The next movement is called "Chun," and is recommended for those suffering from shoulder and leg pains. To start this movement, put your left foot forward slightly while standing up straight. Gather your hands together in front of your lower abdomen. While breathing in, raise your hands up

over your chest with your palms facing upward. Push your hands forward and lean back a little, breathing out. After this, while breathing in, shift your weight to your left leg in order to gather energy in it. Next bring your hands down together slowly so that they are in front of your chest with your palms facing each other. Next, while breathing out, gather your hands together again with your palms facing downward, and stretch them out to the sides of your body. Do this in a smooth, continuous motion. Finally, move your left foot backward a little.

When the full set of these movements is finished, switch from your left leg to the right and go through the same procedure again. While doing these movements, it is very important to keep in mind that both the mind and body should be in the most relaxed state possible. When it comes to tapping into the amazing power of our minds, meditation is most effective, as it leads one to return to the origin, or nature of one's life. Those who practice meditation diligently, therefore, are more likely to discover their inner healing power and defense against disease.

"Sahng," the next movement in the form, has the effect of relaxing and calming the body and refreshing the mind. It is a long and somewhat complicated exercise, so the directions will be broken into two parts. To do the first part, stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and turn your left foot so that the toes are pointing out to the side. While inhaling, stretch your hands out to the sides of your body, until they are above your head and fully extended. While exhaling, turn your body counterclockwise and raise your right hand up above your head with your palm facing upward and bring your left hand below your hip with the palm facing down.

Next, while breathing in, move back into the starting position with your hands stretched out straight to your sides. As you breathe out, lower your hands back down to your sides. Change from the left foot to the right and practice this part of the form over and over again. Finally, stand again with your feet shoulder-width apart.

Continuing with the rest of the exercise, stand as if you were riding a horse and bring your hands down to your lower abdomen. While breathing in,

raise your hands up over your chest with your palms facing together and your fingers up. While breathing out, bend your knees a little more and push your left hand out to your left side and pull your right hand to your right side while turning your head to the left and looking at your fingertips. Next, while breathing in, raise your hands up over your chest with your palms facing up. While breathing out, bring your hands down and put your weight on your knees by standing up straight. After finishing the complete exercise, go back to the very first step of the movement and start practicing again.

Don't forget to breathe deeply in and out while practicing. Try not to think about anything; just concentrate on keeping your mind empty, completely free of thoughts. This movement is a little bit difficult but the results are long lasting. It normally has a great influence on the functions of the lumbar spine, kidney and the liver. So, for those having problems with these parts of the body, it is very good to keep practicing this movement. To maximize the effectiveness of this exercise, doctors of Oriental medicine (OMDs) recommend that patients practice the whole form at least for a half an hour a day for a couple of months. Whenever you feel down in the dumps, do any of the forms explained so far. Soon you will feel calm and peaceful, full of the energy of life once again.

## MEDITATION

### **Meditation: Calming the body and mind from within**

The words 'meditation' and 'medicine' come from the same root. Medicine means that which heals the physical. Meditation means that which heals the spiritual and psychological. Meditation is a journey inwards. It takes one's consciousness deep to the source of one's being. In the east, those who undertake this difficult journey are given great respect and reverence. But one does not need to shave his head, wear robes and join the monks sitting in a dark cave for days on end to attain the benefits of meditation.

One may and should use meditation in their daily lives to relieve the stress associated with living in modern cities. It is believed to make a person inwardly rich and put him in control of his

life. When the mind is calmed and in control the body naturally follows bringing therapeutic benefits to the overworked organs and internal systems. Medical science and physiology are similar in the sense that they are only doing their work on the surface, whereas meditation works on the inside or the source of one's being. It is this 'source' and the method of getting there that I would like to explain today.

In Western medical systems, it is common for one to take 'Aspro' if one has a headache. But 'Aspro' is not a cure. It simply makes one unaware of the symptom of the headache. Or the headache may disappear and some other affliction may arise in its place. In oriental medicine a person is considered a whole one totality. When one pushes a problem from one side, it will assert itself from another. The headache is not the disease, nor should it be considered one's enemy. Albeit painful, it should be looked upon as a friend. It is in one's service. It alerts one and explains when something goes wrong in the systems of the body. Now rather than changing the wrong, most people simply turn the alarm off and take an Aspro. Next time you have a headache try this small experiment. Sit silently and watch it, look into it. Look at it as one's friend. Watch, so if there is some inner message the headache can reveal it. If one looks silently, three things will happen. First, the more one looks into it, the more severe it will become. If the severity increases, one can be satisfied that they are looking properly. The second thing is that it will become more pin-pointed, not spread over a larger area. It is not the whole head, it is just a small spot.

When it is in one point it's intensity will be more severe. Continue to look into it, and the pain will become less and less. And then the third thing will happen. If one goes on looking at this point, they will see many times that it disappears. When one's gaze and concentration is perfect it will disappear. And when it disappears one will understand where it is coming from and what the cause is. One will know his mind is ready to reveal what the cause is. One may have been angry lately and he may have not expressed it or let it out. When these frustrations and emotions are pushed inside and kept there they build to a point where it becomes

too much, and the only answer is release. When one realizes that the pent up emotion or environmental situation is causing the headache, then the pain naturally will disappear.

In doing this little experiment few people actually realize that this is meditation. Often it is more effective than taking medicine. If one takes Aspro, the pain should pass away. But the anger and emotions remain hidden inside oneself. Therefore the real cause has not passed away. It will transform itself and appear again later as another pain, whether it be a stomach pain, shoulder pain, etc. Meditation can calm down the anger or pent up emotions and get rid of the pain.

What is the true meaning of meditation? Meditation exists so one can experience the true appearance of life. Meditation should be known as a way to experience the source of life. There are many types of meditation: breathing meditation, analysis meditation, visual meditation, mantra meditation, etc. Each meditation method has its own style and forte but all meditation methods have the same purpose. That is to make one return to the original nature of one's life.

#### **Meditation for whatever ails you.....**

In Oriental medicine, there are many methods to cure patients. Among the most effective but rarely used is meditation. Those who practice meditation can attain a change of body and mind. But what kind of changes are they and how are they helpful? Usually, meditation calms our mind and conscience. Almost everyone has some kind of worry, complaint, grudge or bitterness. The stronger the negative emotion, the easier it is for one to develop disease or illness. Thus, it is important for people to eliminate or reduce such an emotion. A bout of depression, for example, can seriously lower one's immune power. This, for example, illustrates how the line between biology and psychology cannot be drawn with any certainty. Most doctors recommend reducing stress as a way to live a long and healthy life. The reduction of mental stress allows one to relieve the unnecessary stress placed on their body. The physical world, including one's own body, is a reflection of the observer. Simply put, we create our body as we create our experience in the world. According to Oriental philosophy, our body, in it's

essential state, is composed of energy and information, not solid matter. The mind and the body cannot be separated. The unity that is "I" separates into two streams of experience. One experiences the objective stream as their body. One experiences the subjective stream as thoughts, feelings, and desires in their consciousness. At a deeper level, however, the two streams meet at a single creative source that one is meant to live. Meditation can make one aware of this original union of their mind and body.

The original gate to life, the tanjon, is located just below one's navel. The tanjon is often called the 'ocean of chi' for it is the center of one's orbiting, internal life energy. The tanjon serves as the generator of electricity and supplies energy to all other body parts. When one focuses their consciousness diligently, one will feel one's energy (chi) rising from this point. Thus, concentrating on the gate to life will also increase one's immune power by opening the internal circuits and supplying the body with energy to reorganize and circulate the stagnant energy.

Even though the patient may strive to recover his or her health, the disease affecting his or her immune system stops him or her from recovering and medicines may have little or no effect. Meditation enables the patient to improve his or her immune power and help him or her to generate healing power. However, there is a huge difference between treatment and healing. Treatment is the act of taking medicine, or having an operation, etc. whereas healing uses pure, internal energy, chi, to resolve an ailment. Those who practice meditation diligently will find their inner healing power and immunity fighting off diseases before they become ill, rather than spending a lengthy time laying in bed resting.

#### **Breath, the bridge to meditation**

What is breathing? Since it is impossible to stop breathing long enough to examine it closely, most people do not understand the proper way to breathe. In oriental medical theory it is common belief that the body follows the mind and the mind in turn follows the spirit. In reverse, breathing effects not only the body but also the mind and one's emotions as well. For example, short and fast breathing makes one irritated whereas long, deep

breathing allows the organ systems to rest and work calmly as they were intended. As one begins to feel angry, frustrated, or like letting off some steam, it is recommended to take a few deep breaths to regain one's composure and balance. Breathing controls one's emotions, consciousness and physiological functions. There are six types of breathing - mild, rough, cold, hot, dry and wet. Usually, it is common for chronically sick patients to display abnormal and uncomfortable breathing patterns. But if a patient controls his breathing patterns his immune power can be stimulated, allowing his natural, spontaneous healing power to arise.

To begin properly, the patient's body and mind should be thoroughly relaxed. In this relaxed state it is much easier to cure an ailment by allowing energy to flow freely to and from the deficient system whether it be the skin, lungs or stomach, etc. To attain the full benefits of breathing one must make an effort to do it consciously at all times. Fully become aware of your breathing in everything you do. As you inhale through your nose, it expands your belly and pushes outward and drops the diaphragm down, filling the lower lungs with air.

As you exhale, your belly should decrease, gently squeezing upwards and inwards with the bowel, upper pelvic and diaphragm muscles allowing the air to comfortably and slowly exit through the nose. In oriental medical theory the belly is the most important part of one's body as it is closest to the source of life: the tanjon (the ocean of ki energy). Oriental doctors believe that the tanjon (which is approximately five centimeters below the navel and centered inside the body) is the source of one's life. The patient who improves the power of his tanjon can cure many difficult diseases.

During breathing, therefore, it is best to concentrate one's consciousness on the tanjon. Most people have had some cough or lung related illness at one time or another that didn't allow them to sleep well at night. The next morning they may have felt tired or drained even though they slept for eight hours or more. This is directly due to the lack of relaxed, gentle breathing necessary for one to attain the deep alpha and delta sleep levels.

Most patients' breathing is unbalanced - either too mild, rough or short - which prevents their

immune systems from controlling the onset of disease and illness. To practice natural, full breathing the body should be relaxed, allowing the mind's equilibrium. Patients must try to forget and decrease their fears that the disease won't and cannot be cured. Natural breath control can calm all excessive emotions and strengthen the immune system so much that you will rarely become ill. Practice daily for a few minutes and see the difference.

#### **The sound of harmonious living.**

There are two methods of meditation; one uses silence and the other uses sound. Through both methods of silence and sound, one can experience the true origin and nature of life. However, sound provides one with a better vehicle to true experience of life. Stillness exists at all times within movement, therefore they are not separate. Complete silence is not a state of lifelessness, but rather is a state where silence exists within movement or sound. It is impossible to define the one without the other. True silence and deep peace can only be experienced within the world of sound where there is movement.

Sound is the original source of life and the universe. The fundamental basis of life is composed of sound and vibration. Western molecular theorists are now finding scientific evidence that light and sound are in fact the same at a subatomic level. The original nature of sand, mountains, rivers, clouds and all things in the universe exist as sound. All things experience and express their existence through the movement of sound. The mother's womb is the first place where one receives the sound of life. The formation of our characteristics is dependent on the sound we were first influenced mother tends to produce a hyperactive, highly tense and overly emotional child.

A serene, well-rested and joyous mother, free from stress, tends to produce a calm, patient, and more well-rounded child. The cells of one's body are programmed with an original vibration or sound. When one becomes ill, the result is a change in the vibration of the cells caused by the nature of the disease. To recover one's health the cells must return to their original vibration. What is the original sound? How can one speak, listen or connect with that sound? First of all, we should close our eyes and feel the sound which are present

within our own body: heartbeat, breath, pulse and rhythms, etc. Simultaneously, we must breathe in and out deeply, using our diaphragm to control the rate of breath.

We should keep breathing smooth, soft and natural while focusing our consciousness on our tanjon (the ocean of life - located a few centimeters below the navel). Secondly, we should slowly whisper to the places where we feel imbalance in our body - "I love my arm, heart and stomach, etc." The sound is a mantra which will return us to the origin of life. These words can convince our mind that recovery and balance are possible. Thus, it is easier for patient, who practice this method, to overcome an ailment.

Sound in this form can help us to feel well. When people listen to calming music, they may experience a relief from the sickness. Listening to music enables people to calm their mind. The vibration of music enables their bodies to recover their own vibration. The vibration of negative words and violent music makes our body's vibration unbalanced.

### **Sound meditation, positive thinking**

It is often said that thinking and talking positively leads to a rewarding life while negative thinking and talking leads only to failure. In the same sense, words or sounds of speech vibrate and resonate within the body, influencing all parts of the body, down to the organs, tendons, muscles and cells. If you are ever sidelined with illness or disease, you would be wise to think optimistically, repeating positive words and letting them echo in your mind. Say to yourself, "I can surely overcome this disease," out loud, over and over again. Slowly, you will see an inward and outward change to match your way of thinking, and eventually recover from sickness. Furthermore, if this practice is kept up, it will not be long before you are gaining renewed strength and power.

A number of cases have been discovered throughout the world in which diseases thought incurable were completely overcome through the practice of vocal prayers or chants. Through analysis of these cases, "seed sounds" have been discovered which contain an abundance of life force, or "chi" energy. One of the most powerful seed sounds, which is able to vibrate to the very core of cells and

muscles with its life force energy, is "hoom."

In the United States, Dr. Deepak Chopra showed through a series of experiments that the hoom sound is able to break into cells, act on them effectively, and destroy cancer cells. In the experiments, he put cancer cells or substances known to cause cancer into a container and vibrated them with the hoom sound for a period of time. Amazingly, the cancer cells were totally destroyed. In another experiment, he put normal cells into a container and vibrated them with the hoom sound. The cells exhibited an increased degree of activation afterward. The hoom sound is very similar to the "phew" sound of deep relief that people sometimes make when depressed or relieved. Sounding meditation is based on this seed sound of hoom. If you practice this type of meditation for 5 to 10 minutes a few times a day, you will see a difference in your life.

The key to chanting the hoom sound is to focus on the feeling which moves from what Koreans call the "dahnjun" (abdomen), to the rest of the body. The dahnjun is the place where the chi normally gathers and moves. Life force energy can be activated and generated by the vibration of the hoom sound. If you have succumbed to a serious illness, chances are your mind-frame has become negative. People who have taken ill are more likely to subconsciously repeat negative words like depression, loneliness, grief and hopelessness. These kinds of words can effectively darken a person's mind enough to make them think even more self-destructively. This also feeds a disease, making it worse in some cases. To escape from this destructive cycle, and eventually recover from the disease, try repeating optimistic words - such as longevity, life, happiness, luck, good fortune, luminous mind, sincerity, faith, confidence, etc -- whenever you have the chance.

To begin with, write each word on a piece of paper and then make some optimistic sentences in addition to visualizing them. You might come up with sentences like, "I'm living a happy and productive life," or, "I'll carry out my plans and achieve my goals." People who practice meditation will tell you that words full of hope and confidence, if repeated with feeling, eventually bring about positive results. This is a powerful tool

that can free your mind from deepening negativity, and, ultimately, make it possible for you to recover from any disease.

A great number of people have been able to overcome incurable diseases by repeating positive phrases like, "I can do it," or, "I can make it to the end." And don't forget the old saying, "Nothing is impossible if you put your mind to it."

### **Silent and moving meditations**

The human mind has got to be one of the most complicated and tremendously powerful mechanisms ever created. Science has not yet been able to come up with anything that even comes close to it. And when it comes to tapping into the power of our amazing minds, meditation is most effective, as it leads one to return to the origin, or nature of one's life. Those who practice meditation diligently are more likely to discover their inner healing power, which can fight off diseases even before becoming ill. In Oriental medicine, there are two major ways to meditate that keep the mind and body balanced: silent meditation and moving meditation. Silent meditation, such as Zen meditation, aims at inner realization and inner transformation, which are accomplished through the purification of the inner world and attainment of equilibrium. If you want to try silent meditation, just pick up a book on the subject or pull up some information on the Internet on a style that suits you. This kind of meditation can be done in any kind of position, from the classic lotus posture to sitting on a chair or even lying down. The most important thing is just to relax your body.

Moving meditation, like "Taekeukkwan" or "Qigong," on the other hand, is considered excellent for getting the "chi" or life force circulating and strengthening the body as well as the immune system. Be warned, however, that every meditation or exercise is not always good for health. Some intense exercises like aerobics or heavy gymnastics may seem to reinforce the function of the body at the time they are practiced, but the results do not last long. And excessive or intense exercise can cause the tendons and muscles to loosen and can eventually wreak havoc on the whole body.

One moving meditation that is great for health, and is one of the most well-known in Korea, is called the "Tae-eul-joo." The movements of this

meditation symbolize the Tae-eul-joo mantra, which is recommended especially for those just beginning meditation. The meditation is based on the "hoom" sound, an expression of deep relief regarded as very effective in comforting both mind and body. To begin this, stand up with your feet open - and slightly pigeon-toed - to the width of your shoulders and bend your knees slightly, keeping your back straight and your chin drawn down tightly while looking straight ahead. Next, while breathing in, slowly raise your hands high above your head and then bring them down again, breathing out. Do this slowly over and over. This moving meditation can help the circulation of the blood, especially in the arms, and also strengthens the lungs. The important thing to remember is that you should breathe in when you raise your hands up and then breathe out when you lower your hands. To maximize the effectiveness of this exercise, you should concentrate on your breathing. Strive not to be distracted by any thoughts of work or people and focus on the inner part of your world.

These days, in our high-stress society, people spend less and less time paying attention to the significant things in life - body changes and the inner self. If you get in the habit of meditating, however, you will not miss the precious chance to focus on yourself. While practicing meditations such as Tae-eul-joo or Qigong, concentrate on the feelings sensed in the body, especially the sound of your breath. Breathe in and out slowly and try to feel and hear the blood flowing in your body as well as the beating of the heart - these are the sounds of your life. Through this meditation you can come to realize relaxation and peacefulness.

Another way to practice moving meditation is to simply listen to music and dance. Don't take it seriously, just "play" with your life energy. Move your body slowly and naturally according to the sound of the music and concentrate on every movement of the body. Feel it - allow your body to move in its own way, just like the wind blows and the river flows.

## **A FEW ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES**

### **Healing, one mind and forgiveness**

Healing, from the Taoist perspective, is all about

“chi,” the one life force which flows through everyone and everything. And this chi, Oriental medical doctors have come to realize, is owned and controlled by the mind. Because chi flows from "the source of life," people must not limit themselves in their concept of what healing is. Healing is not simply a process of curing someone who is sick. Healing is not something that can be abstractly understood as a theory, either. According to ancient principles of Oriental medicine, which are based on Taoism, healing is something that can only be understood when you have received healing yourself and have “healed” many others.

To do this, you need to be aware that the flow of chi depends on and changes according to one’s consciousness, one’s thoughts and one’s mind. So in the initial stage of healing, what is important is the relationship between the mind and chi. You need to ask yourself: “How can I straighten my ‘self’ out?” and “How do I use my mind correctly and justly?” In healing, what is important is to purify your chi. And it is through this process, which naturally includes purifying the mind, that you attain “one mind,” a connection with the source of life.

In order to enter the “healing state of mind,” you must close your eyes and meditate on what state of mind you “feel” you need to be in to heal. Just by going into your meditation with this intention, the proper state of one mind will arise. But the usefulness of one mind does not just stop there. Even in daily affairs, if you are to be successful in all things and live life joyfully, you can depend on one mind. There is fundamentally one reason why you need to have one mind in all approaches to the world. It is because this one mind is the mind of life, the mind of success, the mind of the future.

One mind may seem an extremely esoteric concept. But it is really nothing more than emptying the mind. This principle is the most important in trying to understand the innate nature of mind. And it is one thing you should never forget. From ancient times all the enlightened ones -- from Shakyamuni Buddha to Jesus, Mohammed and all the others -- had emphasized one thing that is very important, that the mind must be empty for knowledge to enter. The innate nature of mind is indeed empty. So, in

order to feel the inherent form of mind, we need to be empty ourselves. People often say that you must “erase” or “get rid of” impurities in the mind. But, like it is said in Zen Buddhism, it is better to just let go of all thoughts.

What does “letting go” mean? Obviously the mind is not something that you can grab on to. But that does not mean that it cannot be let go of. To understand this, you need to sit down in quiet meditation and see the rising and falling of thoughts in the mind. Once you recognize this, then you can begin to let go, which is no easy feat. There is, however, something you can do to “let go” in your everyday life - and that, simply, is to forgive. When you truly forgive someone, with a great wide open mind, that is when you really let go.

#### **Abdominal massage removes toxins from body, soothes nagging pain**

One of the most effective treatments for a variety of pains and problems is the abdominal massage, according to Oriental Medicine. The following example illustrates just how effective it can be:

A woman who suffered extreme pain in her neck, shoulders, arms and legs once came to see me. She said doctors at the hospitals she went to were unable to give her a clear diagnosis of what was causing her to have these great pains. After many examinations by a procession of doctors, she was told that there was nothing wrong with her that could produce such serious aches and pains. She had suffered this agony for over 10 years. During my diagnosis, I found that her stomach and small and large intestines were all dysfunctional, due to an excess of what Korean doctors of oriental medicine (OMD) call “dahm,” or toxins, and other waste materials which accumulate in the abdominal region and fail to be properly eliminated. Normally, the excessive production of dahm is due entirely to poor dietary habits. Especially the almost exclusive consumption of cooked, unnatural and processed foods. As excess of dahm directly causes or contributes to a variety of health problems - including fatigue, distress and chronic constipation - removing it from the body is very important to keep the body healthy and strong. And doing abdomen massages is considered by OMDs to be one of the most effective ways to eliminate excess

dahm and strengthen the stomach and intestines. I advised the woman who came to see me to find sore and tender spots on her abdomen and massage and press on them for 20 minutes twice a day, never skipping a day. To her surprise, two weeks after she began massaging her abdomen, over 80% of the pain had disappeared or been greatly reduced.

If pain is primarily felt between the navel and the sternum, you probably have a stomach dysfunction. If you feel pain near the navel it means your small and large intestines are most likely not functioning properly. There are two basic postures that should be held when massaging - lying down and sitting. The first involves simply lying down on the floor or a firm mattress. Do not forget to bend your knees toward the chest in order to ease the tension of the abdomen and reduce the pain while pressing on the tender spots. This position is perfect for when you have someone who can do the massaging for you and is also the best position for beginners. When first starting the abdomen massages, it is advised that you press the painful spots very slowly; otherwise you may cause yourself more pain. Massage the sore spots gently and slowly with hands for the first few minutes and then gradually press harder using the fingertips. Massage in a small circular motion and then rapidly move your fingers up and down and back and forth, almost making the stomach shake. After you feel fairly proficient at this and want to step up the effect, switch from the lying down posture to the sitting posture. When holding the sitting posture, sit cross-legged in the "lotus" position or on a chair or firm stool, with thighs parallel to the ground and calves perpendicular.

For optimum effectiveness, bend forward and press the abdomen hard and deeply with the fingers in order to reach the deepest part of the abdomen, if it doesn't hurt too much. Make sure you continue pressing and massaging for at least 20-30 minutes twice a day. Some studies show that women are more likely to have aches and pains in the area right below the navel while men have soreness right next to it. It is best to do one massage in the morning, drinking a couple of cups of mineral water before doing so. If you are too busy in the morning, do it at night, whenever you have a

chance to sit or to lie down. Even two weeks of massaging can make all the difference.

### **Dancing yourself to health**

In the last few decades, music therapy has become a very popular form of treatment. To understand how the therapy works, let's take a look at the relationship between music and state of mind in order to see how it functions in the body. If someone is sick, it is a good bet that he or she is more irritated, impatient and generally unstable than a healthy person. As a result, his or her immune system is more likely to be weak. Because of this, sick people are now widely advised to listen to music because it helps soothe the nerves, comfort a weary mind, and, therefore, help the immune system to recover.

In addition to helping regenerate the body's defenses, the waves of sound in music can have a great influence on cells and muscles. The vibrations and rhythms of classical, meditation or other quiet, slow-paced styles of music resonate with cells and muscles and increases blood flow and the surge of "chi," or life force, through the meridian system. To maximize the effect of music, it is highly recommended that breathing or moving meditation be practiced along with it. Regardless of which posture you adopt for breathing meditation, always bear in mind that you should focus only on the deepest levels of the music, your breath and heartbeat.

For the beginner, a standing or lying posture is recommended to practice breathing meditation. To begin, slowly take deep breaths in and out while listening to the music, your breath and heartbeat. Try not to think about anything; just concentrate on keeping your mind empty, completely free of thoughts. In order to achieve an empty mind, totally immerse yourself in the sound of the music and then - quietly in your mind - start counting from one to five over and over again while continuing a steady breathing rhythm. Counting numbers helps get rid of any thoughts or ideas occupying your mind.

Today, people have become addicted to fast-paced, exciting music such as heavy metal, alternative rock and techno, which normally go hand in hand with fast, aggressive, violent or erotic dancing. These kinds of dances result in a serious state of

despondency, frustration and exhaustion after performance. On the other hand, slow music plays an important role in easing the tension of mind and body. Slow, easy dancing is therefore the perfect accompaniment to this type of music. To practice a moving meditation - one of the most well known meditations in Oriental medicine - just move your body slowly and naturally according to the sound of the music and concentrate on every little movement of the body, from the top of your head to the toes on your feet. When listening to music, do not think; stay focused on the feelings sensed in the body. Dance has a long history of artistic expression, where bodily movements express and symbolize thoughts, ideas, inner desires, and feelings. In addition to this tradition, however, in the Orient, dancing is considered a very essential part of treatment. It is known to help heal ailments and is used in various ways, especially in association with music therapy.

So, when you feel down in the dumps, listen to some slow music in a quiet room and dance away, free from rules or formalities. Soon you will feel calm and peaceful, full of the energy of life once again.

### **Harness the power of music for greater health**

Most people love to dance, or at least listen to music. And the expression of life through movement of the body is a very natural tendency. Erotic and impulsive music, however, has had a negative influence on our minds and spirit. Music has the ability to greatly affect the state of the human mind and can spark furious, out-of-control states as well as cause someone to be happy and relaxed. And the human mind, feelings and emotions fluctuate according to the kinds of sounds in music.

If you have fallen ill or are feeling under the weather, try listening to quiet, slow-paced music in order to soothe your nerves and comfort your weary mind. This will have an even better effect if you practice a breathing meditation along with the music. Music therapy is also highly recommended for anyone who has gone through a traumatic experience, such as childhood abuse, a failed relationship, family breakdown, death, or assault. Music is believed to be able to get at and help relieve the deepest states of trauma. And this in

turn can alleviate chronic health problems, as deep-seated trauma is many times the source of illness which seemingly has no cause.

Our bodies are not composed of fixed or steady materials, but waves which keep changing and moving inside over and over until we die. The cells, muscles and all the organs in the body are made up of atoms and molecules, which consist of smaller elements which are in constant fluctuation. Our bodies never stop changing, and they respond very sensitively to the waves of sound in music. When we listen to music, the vibrations and waves of the sound from instruments resonate first within the ears, and then gradually move through the whole body. But this resonance not only stimulates emotions and feeling; it also has a great influence on the organs.

It is very important, therefore, to know what kind of music is proper to listen to. According to oriental medicine, there are distinct relationships between some organs of the body and music. Let's take a look at the relationships and associations in order to better understand the idea. It is known that the wooden bell (like the one Korean monks hit) sound is closely connected with the liver; the pipe organ sound is related to the heart; the drum sound is tied to the stomach; the resonant, cymbal-like sound is associated with the lungs; and the string sound is closely linked with the kidneys. More than this, each music is also functionally associated with each of the "five elemental energies." The lute sound has a lot of wood energy; the pipe organ sound contains high levels of fire energy; the drum sound is full of earth energy; resonant, cymbal-like sounds consist of metal energy; and the string sounds embrace water energy. For those who have heart diseases, it would be wise to listen to the harmonious sound of the wood bell in Korean Buddhist temple music because it helps the smooth circulation of the blood. Listening to an excess of string music, however, can cause heart disease to get worse because string sounds contains a high level of water energy, which is likely to damage the heart. Excessive water energy can "extinguish" fire energy, the motive power of the heart, which can lead to dysfunction.

The five elemental energies work perfectly together when all five sounds are in good

harmony, mixed and balanced well. Any kind of music, whether it is slow or fast paced, quiet or noisy, has both good and bad aspects of effectiveness, depending on where and how its used and for whom. Regardless of what kind of music you are going to listen to, however, one thing is essential - that it help your mind and body to regain equilibrium and balance, reaching the peak of peacefulness and emotional stability.

#### **Poor diet can cause depression, paranoia**

When a patient displays symptoms of emotional stress, mental confusion, paranoia as well as a variety of aches and pains in the body, the first treatment suggested by oriental medicine is a change in diet. After carefully analyzing the patient's dietary habits, doctors of oriental medicine (OMDs) are able to spot critical deficiencies in vital nutrition and extreme imbalances in foods eaten. If such problems are detected, they proceed to redress the imbalance by prescribing strict dietary guidelines supplemented with herbal therapy. To understand what causes these pains and problems, we must take a closer look at our daily dietary habits to see if we consume too much fatty cooked meats, eat too fast or go to bed right after eating a large amount of food.

A variety of health problems can be traced directly to an excess of "dahm," a term for the toxins or poisons that gather in the abdomen after consuming and digesting food. To release the excess toxins, press on or massage any tender or painful spots in the abdominal area for 20 minutes twice a day until the areas are soft. It is essential for your health to avoid eating refined starches, sugar, salt and artificial seasonings. Even small amounts of food containing these substances can severely pollute the bloodstream after being swallowed and produce toxic wastes, which normally stay trapped inside and weaken the body in addition to causing many diseases over time.

It goes without saying that what you eat determines your state of mind and who you are. What many people do not know, however, is that emotional trauma is also caused by a buildup of toxins in the body. Emotional traumas, of course are not traceable to a single source. A variety of causes such as failures in relationships, financial

problems, family breakdowns can block the channel of life energy and prevent it from smooth circulation throughout the body. When we suffer from problems with our "chi" (life energy), we are likely to reveal it in the words and expressions we use. Patients with weak or blocked chi are likely to say things like, "I'm at a loss for words," "I'm stifled" or "I feel cheap" or "I am losing heart." If we are being mistreated, emotional trauma can result, and life energy is further prevented from circulating naturally. In the end, the situation can get worse and worse, and the body will respond by failing to excrete accumulated waste.

The toxins and poisons that build up in the body bring about many health problems like chronic fatigue syndrome, bad headaches, constipation and diarrhea as well as bad breath, the result of dysfunction of the stomach affected by toxins. The people whose lung and large intestines are dysfunctional are more likely to have the skin problems such as itchy skin, pimples, and are especially prone to allergies of the nose and excessive coughing.

I can't emphasize the abdominal massage enough for the improvement of both mental and physical health. For optimal effect, drink a glass of water before doing this and follow the earlier directions carefully. Never forget that you should press on or massage any tender or painful spots in the abdominal area for 20 minutes at least twice a day for two to three weeks continuously. Furthermore, while doing this, massage the back, the opposite side of the abdomen at the same time. It will increase the effectiveness of the massage because the muscles of the abdomen and those of the back are linked closely together.

#### **Eating well is the best medicine**

"Good food is good medicine for health," according to oriental medicine, and it is said to have the same medical effectiveness as medicine in curing diseases. In line with this, poor dietary habits are said to be as harmful - if not as fatal - to health as taking the wrong medicine.

To keep healthy and fit, here are some basic personal dietary guidelines to follow: First, eat sparingly, and you will live a long and healthy life. The oriental measure is to eat until you are 70-80

percent full. The human body simply cannot utilize the enormous quantities and complex combinations of food civilized, sedentary people tend to gorge themselves on daily. Second, chew food thoroughly before swallowing it. Solid foods should be chewed to close to liquid form before swallowing. Ideally, liquids should be swallowed as slowly as solid food. Enzymes in the saliva, which help in digestion and proper stomach function, have no chance to be released if drinks are gulped down rapidly. Third, avoid extreme hot and cold temperatures in foods and beverages. Excessively hot soup, for example, irritates the tender lining of the mouth and esophagus, which impairs salivation and peristalsis.

In order to promote digestion and facilitate the rapid elimination of waste, avoid skipping meals, overeating and eating too fast. People who don't eat regularly or avoid eating because of indigestion and constipation should try not to skip meals because eating after skipping any meal can greatly worsen the function of the stomach.

If you suffer from this problem, doctors of oriental medicine (OMD) recommended drinking a mixture made with different kinds of powdered grains like brown rice, black sesame and dried beans - called "sunshik," available in department stores - in the ratio of 1:1:2, instead of having solid foods. Drink 10 grams of this mixture with water or milk when you are hungry or when you inevitably have to skip meals. This mixture of grains not only supplements nutrition, which people with these kinds of problems are likely to lack, but helps eliminate toxic wastes from the body.

If you have had too much alcohol or overeaten, it is advised that you eat less solid food for a while. Drink sunshik instead; it comforts the stomach and cleanses the intestines very quickly. It also provides essential nutrition without making the stomach work too hard. Brown rice, in particular, is believed to play an important role in excreting accumulated toxic waste (what Korean OMDs call "dahm") from the body. Beans are said to be able to counteract the effects of poisons and toxins in the body. This is why bean paste, or "twenjang," is considered effective in helping cure many serious diseases, including cancer and diabetes. Black sesame, or "deulkay," helps purify the intestines and

supplements nutrition. Sunshik, or any other foods consisting of different kinds of high-nutrition grains and beans, is also very good for people with weight problems, who are more likely to overeat after skipping a couple of meals.

OMDs believe people also need to consume some fat from meat, in combination with other foods, to keep up energy and strength. Many Koreans believe that when you feel fatigued and weak, you should eat some meat. Due to the factory farming methods employed today, however, "free-range" or organic meat is recommended. A good dietary habit to develop is to eat meat with raw vegetables. Koreans do this when eating "bulgogi," a barbecued meat usually wrapped up in lettuce. This helps in the absorption of nutrients and also aids digestion.

#### **Improved diet means better health**

In today's modern civilized society, the development of amazing new medical techniques and medicines has made curing a variety of diseases possible. But many of the diseases so widely spread across this planet, like cancer and hypertension, are caused by diets high in fatty cooked meats, refined starches and sugars, and low in fresh fruits and vegetables, enzymes and organic nutrients. Foods eaten on a daily basis today are also heavy on artificial seasonings like monosodium glutamate (MSG), which is known to have a very negative effect on health. Furthermore, many Western foods like hamburgers, ice cream and carbonated soft drinks have forever changed global diets.

There is an old saying in Korea that the best way to keep the body in top form is to eat well, sleep sound simple, but it indicates that eating properly is one of the most important aspects of keeping you healthy both physically and mentally. After consuming and digesting food, microorganisms extract any toxins or poisons and they gather in the abdomen before being excreted. Sometimes, however, the toxins build up and are prevented from circulating and moving out of the body naturally. Korean doctors of oriental medicine (OMDs) call these wastes "dahm." It is in everyone's best interests to release the dahm as it keeps the body from reaching peak physical health.

The excessive production of dahm can be traced

back to poor dietary habits, especially the heavy consumption of cooked, processed food - where the "life energy" has been all but drained out - and pasteurized milk and refined starch, Smoking and consumption of alcohol, of course, make levels of dahm skyrocket. If you feel unhealthy, or just want to purify your body to achieve a vibrant state of health, stick to the following three rules:

1) Eat less processed foods, carbonated soft drinks and foods containing high levels of artificial seasonings.

2) Avoid sugar and sweets. According to a 1971 Kanazawa University (Japan) study, sugar is detrimental to the health of bones and eventually destroys bodily functions. In the study, lab rats were divided into two groups - one fed a steady diet of sugar for three months while the other ate regular meals. After three months, the sugar-fed group had a 30 percent higher rate of bone problems than the control group. It should not be forgotten that excess consumption of refined sugar is one of the main culprits in polluting the bloodstream and damaging bones. And drinking water instead of sugar-loaded soft drinks is the first step in correcting bad dietary habits.

3) Massage the abdomen to help rid the body of toxins and dahm.

The large and small intestines play the biggest role in absorbing nutrition and excreting waste. When toxins stay trapped inside the body, you are more susceptible to disease. And massaging the abdomen is not only good for removing excess wastes, but it keeps the intestines strong. In addition, a good massage can relieve constipation and diarrhea by smoothing out the intestines and making it easier for accumulated wastes to be excreted.

If you suffer from exhaustion for no apparent reason, excess toxins may be the problem, and a massage may be the perfect remedy. To release the excess toxins, press on or massage any tender or painful spots in the abdominal area for 20 minutes at least twice a day. Intense pain in the abdomen is caused by incomplete digestion of processed foods or anything "that doesn't agree" with you. Continue to massage the area until it gets soft. Drink a glass of water before doing this for optimal effect. After massaging your abdomen your body should feel both light and refreshed.