
Chapter 6 The Perspective of Chinese Medicine

On Health Maintenance

DURING its history of more than five thousand years, China has developed many effective exercises that promote health, such as Tai Chi and Qi Gong.

These health-promoting exercises have carried on through the centuries and are popular even in our present time.

They have several similar characteristics:

- They must be practiced daily in order to enjoy their beneficial effects.
- They enhance our body's ability to combat disease.
- They are harmless and do not have bad side effects if practiced correctly.

According to the Chinese philosophy of medicine, illness occurs when:

- Qi and blood are weakened,
- The ying and the yang (natural balance of opposites) are disrupted, or
- The natural and organic systems of the body are impaired.
- The breakdown of these processes lead to the impediment of the normal circulation of qi and blood. This results in the retention of the body's heat and toxins, accumulation of moisture and mucus, leading to an eventual illness.
- In Chinese medicine, it is believed that extreme emotions also play a very important role in a person's susceptibility to illness.

For example, extreme fear or excitement may cause:

- Restlessness
- Palpitations
- Insomnia
- Psychiatric disorders
- Extreme anger may cause:
- Liver dysfunction
- Back pain
- Depression
- Anxiousness
- Irritability
- Menstrual disturbances
- Impairment of blood circulation leading to internal bleeding

Extreme sadness may lead to:

- Spleen and stomach dysfunctions such as lack of appetite and discomfort after eating
- Chinese medicine also subscribes to the belief that an unbalanced diet and exposure to certain climatic elements (known also as the "six external negative elements": wind, cold, heat, dampness, dryness, and fire) may also cause illness.
- Therefore, according to Chinese Medicine, an individual must follow the guidelines below in order to enjoy good health.
- Practice health-promoting exercises to aid the circulation and maintenance of qi, to balance the ying and the yang, to enhance the functions of the body's systems and organs, and to increase the body's immunity to diseases.
- Be optimistic, stable, and have a firm grip on his/her emotions.
- In addition, a person should also live in accordance with the natural environmental changes and maintain a balanced diet to have good health.
- If a person becomes ill, he/she must face the reality of his/her illness, adopt a positive and optimistic attitude, and cooperate with the doctor's treatment.
- A patient should not abandon established Western medical treatment or rely solely upon traditional Chinese medicine.