



Though this cover would seem to indicate that Joen Kinnan was the second author, actually Dr. Dachman had the idea and found the publisher, but he is not a writer and therefore wrote none of the book.

(This is a small portion of the original manuscript for The Self-Health Handbook.)

Chinese Medicine, Traditional

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) is a complete healthcare system imported from China, where it has been practiced for thousands of years. Preventive in philosophy, TCM relies upon medicinal herbs, acupuncture (see ACUPUNCTURE), acupressure, diet and food therapy, therapeutic exercise, breathing techniques (see BREATHWORK), and massage to maintain health and cure disease.

The first medicines that human beings ever used were herbs. Herbalism predates any other form of medical practice by thousands of years. In the beginning, healers had to discover what worked by trial and error, and they had only the plants native to their area to rely upon. But as civilization advanced, traders carried herbs from one part of the world to another.

At least 5,000 years ago, China already had a well-developed system of medicine that relied largely on medicinal herbs. In China as in other parts of the then-civilized world, healers experimented with various plants and wrote down what they learned in books called *herbals*. One very early Chinese herbal lists plants that are still used today, among them poppy, aconite, and rhubarb.

The emperor Shen-nung is reputed to be the author of a famous Chinese herbal, the *Pen ts'ao*. Legend has it that Shen-nung had a transparent abdomen, the better to view what happened to the hundreds of herbal concoctions he swallowed.

Chinese medicine began with herbalism, but it didn't end with it. Chinese healers became strongly influenced by the Taoists, who believe in the oneness of all things in nature. Human beings are microcosms of the larger universe, so the principles that govern one also govern the

other. Taoists preach moderation in all things, and it is from this doctrine that Chinese medicine developed its theories about lifestyle, diet and exercise. More than 2,000 years ago, the famous Yellow Emperor, Huang-ti, wrote one of the most famous of all medical texts: the *Nei-Ching* or *The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine*. The book was probably actually a compilation of many writers over the ages, but it was the first text to set forth the doctrines of Chinese medicine. Although it is not used as a primary text today, the underlying principles are still the basis of TCM.

Acupuncture — one of the basic tools of TCM from early times — appeared in Western medical texts in the late 19th century, and the 1901 edition of *Gray's Anatomy* mentions its use for sciatica. However, interest in acupuncture and other aspects of TCM wasn't widespread in the United States until fairly recently.

In China itself, TCM nearly fell into disrepute after the Chinese Revolution in 1949. Modernization was high on the agenda of the new leaders, and some wanted to replace TCM with contemporary Western medicine. Others supported their traditional system. To settle the dispute, Chinese researchers conducted studies of TCM versus Western medicine for various ailments. Their results showed that TCM was effective for many conditions, and in the end, leaders decided that TCM and Western medicine should have equal status. Today it is common for Chinese physicians to learn both systems.