

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION



Fundamental Principles
of Health, Longevity,
and Essential Well-Being

Angelo Druda

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

Fundamental Principles
of Health, Longevity,
and Essential Well-Being

Angelo Druda



DHARMACAFÉ BOOKS
COBB, CALIFORNIA



NORTH ATLANTIC BOOKS
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

Copyright © 2009, by Angelo Druda. All rights reserved. No portion of this book, except for brief review, may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without written permission of the publisher. For information contact North Atlantic Books.

Published by
DharmaCafé Books
P.O. Box 1289
Cobb, California 95426
and
North Atlantic Books
P.O. Box 12327
Berkeley, California 94712

Cover design by Matt Barna and Kouraleen MacKenzie
Book design by Matt Barna
Printed in the United States of America

The Tao of Rejuvenation is sponsored by the Society for the Study of Native Arts and Sciences, a nonprofit educational corporation whose goals are to develop an educational and cross-cultural perspective linking various scientific, social, and artistic fields; to nurture a holistic view of arts, sciences, humanities, and healing; and to publish and distribute literature on the relationship of mind, body, and nature.

DharmaCafé Books' publications are available through most bookstores. For further information, visit our website at www.dharmacafe.com.

North Atlantic Books' publications are available through most bookstores. For further information, visit our website at www.northatlanticbooks.com or call 800-733-3000.

MEDICAL DISCLAIMER: The following information is intended for general information purposes only. Individuals should always see their health care provider before administering any suggestions made in this book. Any application of the material set forth in the following pages is at the reader's discretion and is his or her sole responsibility.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Druda, Angelo, 1948-

The tao of rejuvenation : fundamental principles of health, longevity, and essential well-being / by Angelo Druda.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-1-55643-775-5

1. Rejuvenation. 2. Longevity. 3. Self-care, Health. I. Title.

RA776.75.D78 2009

613.2-dc22

2008039337

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 VERSA 14 13 12 11 10 09

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>FOREWORD</u>	ix
<u>PREFACE</u>	xi
<u>INTRODUCTION:</u>	xv
<u>CHAPTER ONE:</u>	1
<u>CHAPTER TWO:</u>	9
<u>CHAPTER THREE:</u>	25
<u>CHAPTER FOUR:</u>	45
<u>CHAPTER FIVE:</u>	65
<u>CHAPTER SIX:</u>	87
<u>CHAPTER SEVEN:</u>	101
<u>CHAPTER EIGHT:</u>	113
<u>CHAPTER NINE:</u>	135
<u>CHAPTER TEN:</u>	151
<u>APPENDIX ONE:</u>	167
<u>APPENDIX TWO:</u>	177
<u>APPENDIX THREE:</u>	179
<u>APPENDIX FOUR:</u>	181
<u>ENDNOTES</u>	186
<u>INDEX</u>	189
<u>ABOUT THE AUTHOR</u>	201

FOREWORD

For many of us, rejuvenation is a passionate pursuit. We use cosmetic surgery to smooth deepening wrinkles ... Pilates to tone weakening torsos ... cutting-edge nutritional formulas to “upregulate” anti-aging genes. And who can blame us? From dentures to dementia, aging ain’t pretty. Given the chance, why wouldn’t you opt for a long, refreshing soak in the Fountain of Youth?

Well, it’s unlikely you’ll find said Fountain bubbling away in the atrium of the local mall. But if you’ve walked into that mall’s bookstore and starting paging through *The Tao of Rejuvenation*, you may have found the next best thing....

In this book, Angelo Druda—a practitioner of the rejuvenating modalities of Traditional Chinese Medicine and a devotee of Avatar Adi Da Samraj, the Giver of ultimate rejuvenation in the radiant wellspring of Conscious Light—shares his knowledge and experience with fortunate readers.

Angelo and I have been friends and fellow devotees of Avatar Adi Da Samraj for many years. When he asked me to write the foreword for this book, I happily said yes—even before reading it. That’s because I knew that any book written by Angelo would reflect his understanding of the powerful three-part process of purification, rebalancing, and rejuvenation as taught by Adi Da Samraj. To me, this process is truly the “tao”—the way—of rejuvenation. And Angelo provides practical methods for implementing the details of the Tao: among them, methods to develop the calming attitude of faith; to cleanse and invigorate the organ-nourishing blood; to energize the endocrine glands, so they continue to secrete their vitalizing hormones; to practice the balancing regimens of diet, physical activity and sexuality; and, perhaps most importantly, to live a self-transcending life of service and love, the source of true peace and happiness.

While writing my most recent health book, *Breakthroughs in Drug-Free Healing* (Bottom Line, 2008), I reviewed thousands of recently published scientific studies that attempted to discover ways

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

to rejuvenate the body and mind—to prevent disease and restore health. One such finding was that the most simple habits—eating five servings a day of fruits and vegetables; having a physically active life, whether at work or at play; drinking moderately; and not smoking—can extend life by fourteen years, compared to people who don't have those habits. Supporting the findings of that study, Angelo's book presents simple, reliable, time-tested habits—what he explains as the Taoist “Third Grade” practices of “right living”—for enjoying a long and healthy life.

I am delighted that Angelo has codified his experience and enthusiasms in this book—and that it is in your hands. May you read it happily and use it healthfully. And may what Angelo calls the “secret spring” of rejuvenation refresh and bless your life.

Bill Gottlieb

Author of Alternative Cures and Breakthroughs in Drug-Free Healing;
former editor-in-chief, Prevention Magazine Health Books and Rodale Books

P R E F A C E

As a young man, I fell in love with chemistry. If I had had it my way, I would have always been in the lab, marveling at the dramatic reactions you could make just by separating or combining molecules. Wanting to always be able to access this magic, I built a lab in my parents' garage. With almost no restrictions on the chemicals and equipment we could buy, my friend and I set about making our own tests, combining elements and watching them interact. There was great energy in some of those reactions—enough to give me some bodily scars I still carry to this day. But there was also mystery and wonder. And the more we played around, the more I came to feel that the magic of the human body was right there, just below the surface of the skin, in the chemicals of life.

Growing up, I always wanted to be a doctor. I wanted to put that love of chemistry to work in a noble vocation, helping to alleviate some of the suffering that I saw around me. In high school, the family doctor noticed my passion and took me in, letting me hang around the office with him from time to time, showing me medical books, pictures of the human body, and some of those amazing devices that are always on doctors' shelves. Fascinated, I began to delve deeper into the great schools of Western science, immersing myself particularly in the study of biology and botany. The scientific pioneers of the Western enlightenment—men like Koch, Fleming, and Pasteur—became my childhood heroes, right up there with the legends of the Brooklyn Dodgers. Their work grounded me in a valuable realism that remains with me to this day.

As I entered adulthood, however, my pre-medical education was cut short by the passion and politics of the sixties, thus beginning a young man's inevitable disillusionment with the aspirations of his childhood. I began to drift from my early dreams in other directions, coming under the spell of the Eastern philosophical teachings that were beginning to arrive in the West. I became obsessed with yogic meditation, diligently studying and practicing the classical Indian systems of diet, breathing, and internal concentration.

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

While others were out drinking and partying, I was at home meditating and doing yoga for hours at a time. Though these techniques are not the path to God that many people claim they are, they do offer something truly profound: a means to work with the higher energy systems of the human body, allowing us to magnify healing and promote well-being far beyond what is possible via ordinary means. In giving me this knowledge, these techniques taught me to understand that our universe is animated by a conscious, living, breathing magic that is every bit as real as the mechanical chemical processes I played with and studied in my youth.

In the late seventies, a dear friend of mine took my hand in hers and put her fingers on my wrist. She told me she was demonstrating Chinese pulse diagnosis, an ancient, sophisticated form of diagnosis she had been learning whereby she was able to read the energy patterns in peoples' bodies. Here was a way to literally feel this subtle magic, I thought, and so to understand in depth how it relates to our health and well-being altogether. In an instant, my passion for medicine returned. This time, though, it would be the Eastern systems in which I would immerse myself: the great traditional healing schools of rejuvenative medicine.

My first exposure to rejuvenative medical teachings, though, came with my study of early Western naturopaths and turn-of-the-century Eclectic herbal doctors. These doctors spoke of the virtues of right diet, livelihood, and action, and the medicinal power of herbs. Just through applying what they taught, I was able to transform my life from one driven by confusion and self-indulgence to something entirely more enjoyable. Those changes, and the understanding that came with them, immediately restored my health and calmed my heart, giving me a logic for right living and well-being.

It was the teachers from the East, however, who talked most compellingly about the possibility of accelerated human growth and regeneration. Their work not only went beyond the mere healing of sickness, it went beyond what even the greatest of the Western doctors and naturopaths had taught. They pointed to a world that looked so much brighter than the one in which I lived. The Oriental medical doctors held that our bodies could be raised to a level of function beyond anything Western medical scientists

believed to be possible. The scope and depth of their teachings quickly infused my scientific realism with a strong dose of inspiration and wonder. It was in the company of these doctors that I began to understand the immense and mostly untapped potential for the regenerative life we have as human beings, that our brief time here on Earth could not only be longer, but also much brighter, happier, and healthier than it is for most people. Inspired, I began to seriously study Oriental medicine. Here was a discipline, I realized, that allowed me to combine my love of the chemistry and science of life with my passion for the more intuitive, sensory style of the Eastern traditions, and serve people at the same time.

If it were not for one more encounter, the story I have told thus far might well sound like that of many of my generation who crossed the great psychic land bridge from West to East. The most important meeting of my life was to come in 1975, when I met the man to whom the greatest debt in my life is owed: Adi Da Samraj. Adi Da Samraj is a teacher and adept of the ultimate degree, someone who has realized complete identification with reality, with Radiant Light. Before I met Adi Da Samraj, I thought that such a complete realization was a myth, a pointer towards a purity that lies somewhere beyond the life we live. But the utter peace and tangible radiance that I felt in Adi Da's company convinced me otherwise. He embodied everything for which I had always searched.

Adi Da Samraj is a person of such magnitude that there is nothing contained in this book that will make any difference to him. Like all the greatest realizers of humankind, he is living proof that there is a much higher spiritual attainment possible than the achievement of physical longevity or rejuvenation. Having awakened while alive, such beings see no need to preserve the body forever. When you exist in this life fully conscious and utterly happy as the immortal life-current itself, why would you need to?

In saying this, though, Adi Da Samraj also confirmed how possible and even necessary it is to raise the level of the body's functions and rejuvenate ourselves. To that end, Adi Da Samraj spent decades serving the transformation of thousands of human beings, all the while demonstrating a capability to conduct and transmit the higher energies of life far exceeding anything that I thought was

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

possible in a human being. In fact, much of the information communicated here is derived from my more than thirty years of participation in the great instructional and transmission demonstration that he has been conducting for the benefit of humankind. To me, Adi Da Samraj embodies and demonstrates and teaches the ultimate regenerative life, and the ultimate spiritual life.

Among the many gifts that Adi Da Samraj has given his students is the understanding that healing and rejuvenation takes place as a three-part process, in which the body is purified, rebalanced, and ultimately rejuvenated. Over the years of my practice of Traditional Chinese Medicine, I have been blessed to combine this understanding with the traditions of my earlier life, becoming, in effect, the student and beneficiary of three great streams of human endeavor: the modern field of Western medicine and science, the ancient art of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and the eternal tradition of spiritual realization. Adi Da Samraj and other great realizers embody. Together, these streams have allowed me to continue growing in my practice and understanding of health and healing, and inspired me to write this book.

For this, I also owe a lot of gratitude to all the doctors of traditional medicine, both ancient and modern, whose teaching and experience have influenced me over the years. These great doctors have helped me find a vocation that fulfills my desire to serve the health and well-being of humanity. I have tested their teachings and practices in life, both in my own case and with thousands of my clients. Their efficacy has been proven to me.

Angelo Druda, May 2008

The more they came to understand this play of energy, the more these early Confucian, Vedic, and Taoist practitioners became concerned with eliminating disease altogether. This pursuit led them to develop sophisticated medical systems that are still revealing their insights today. Simply by restoring the natural flow of the body's energies, they found, we can unlock the body's native intelligence, allowing it to undo the deeper patterns of imbalance that lie at the root of all disease. Less interested in cures than in a whole rejuvenative way of life, these early yogis, monks, and sages took up regenerative practices while they were still vital and healthy, thus greatly enhancing the quality and duration of their lives. Magnifying health, they discovered, is always easier than rebuilding it.

Of all these ancient religions and systems of thought, it was Taoism that laid out the most complete map of rejuvenation, one as stunning in its scope as it is remarkable in its simplicity. A system of practices and beliefs that dates back to ancient China, Taoism was based on a recognition and understanding that all beings exist in a living unity with one another and the cosmos. Happiness and peace, Taoists believed, were simply a matter of harmonizing oneself with the universe and all its playful changes. For them, realizing this harmony was first a matter of restoring health, of rejuvenating themselves to the point where their energies could circulate without obstruction. Over time, this led to the development of a number of significant healing modalities—systems like Oriental medicine, acupuncture, and forms of energetic exercise like Tai Chi and Chi Gong—that allowed them to consciously harness and conduct the body's energies for the purposes of rejuvenation. For the regular practitioners, these practices made possible an awakened life of health and well-being; while for the more advanced among them, this often led to extraordinary feats of balance, strength, and longevity.

The beauty of Taoism lies in its freedom from dogmatic and suppressive beliefs, and in its pragmatic and fluid approach to the practice of life. Anyone could get well, Taoist practitioners believed, regardless of their age, or apparent health or station in life. The only requirement was a simple and balanced life, one that took into account how everything we do—our actions, our emotions, our

diet, the Third Grade person learns the art and science of using powerful elixirs from the Earth, like herbal medicines, teas, and soups. Rightly practiced, the Third Grade way of life allows people to enjoy peace and harmony and long and healthy lives.

If you are someone who enjoys serving others, if you appreciate how good pure food makes you feel, and if you are willing to educate yourself relative to the right use of herbs, then the Third Grade Practice can add years of health and well-being to your life.

SECOND GRADE

The Second Grade person performs all the basic right life practices of the Third Grade type but goes even further, learning how to exercise the subtle energies upon which life depends. Investigating the subtle workings of the human body, the Second Grade practitioner develops an understanding that the physical body is only the outermost layer of a much more complex vehicle, and that our bodies are surrounded by subtle forms of “principal” food—food, that is, that our deeper being thrives upon. Essentially, Second Grade practice is a matter of learning how to feed on and conduct these principal food sources.

The Second Grade practice involves cultivating our qi energy through yogic exercises known as *Qi Gong* (literally, “energy work”), a practice that allows us to heal ourselves and others. As this capability and practice intensifies, so too does the regenerative chemistry in the body, enabling us to enjoy health, longevity, and brightness of life as we live.

If you are someone who enjoys the practice of yoga, meditation, and breathing exercises, if you are capable of disciplining the body in a happy and wholesome way, then the Second Grade practice will transform your life and health.

CHAPTER ONE

The Human Body Contains a Great Healing Spring

In 1870, the old mahatma Krishna Singh wandered up into the hills of Assam, India, to die. The area's many caves had provided him with shelter over the course of his life, and now, at one hundred years of age, he was exhausted and nearly blind, and in need of a suitable place to rest his bones. Time had taken its toll: His spine was bent with age, and most of his teeth had fallen out. For Singh, this trek across the rugged Indian landscape would be one last superhuman effort in a lifetime of superhuman efforts.

The son of a Rajput Maharaj, Singh had been born into a world of opulence and political power, spending his youth in the military service as a fierce, decorated Sikh warrior. Then one day, seemingly without any warning, Singh turned his back on his life, giving it all up to become a wandering, penniless ascetic. Choosing the path of severe physical denial, Singh traveled alone throughout India, applying his austerities, living off the land and the handouts given to him by those who valued and respected his spiritual quest. He slept and meditated in temples and caves, nourishing himself only with the occasional bowl of alms. He spent weeks, even months in deep trance meditation. Singh, whose reputation for sheer intensity of practice remains unsurpassed among India's many saints, yogis, and sadhus, was given the name "Tapasviji Maharaj," the "Great King of Fire," by which he is still known today.

Tapasviji's lifetime of intense asceticism exacted a heavy physical price, and as he climbed, looking for his resting place, he found his once strong body beginning to fail him. Using his last reserves of strength, Tapasviji made his way up the hills and found a suitable cave. Ready for the end, his last wish was to pass on from life in the

ancient magic potions for the promise of science and technology, we hope that their discoveries can offer us the means to extend human life that our ancestors never found. Each new pharmaceutical and technological “breakthrough,” every shiny ad for supplements and medicines, plays upon this ancient search, promising us an extended lifetime somewhere in the future. Looking at it this way, we are not so different from our ancient ancestors: We too hope that health, happiness, and well-being can be as simple as something we swallow.

Stories of a profound rejuvenating substance date back thousands of years. Thirty-five-hundred years ago, the authors of the *Vedas*, the earliest known Indian literature, were singing hymns of praise to a secret and powerful regenerative substance called *soma*. Soma, the authors of the *Rig Veda*³ declared, not only contained the secret to the regenerative life, but was capable of sending its host into raptures of spiritual ecstasy and joy:

*We have drunk Soma and become immortal;
we have attained the light the Gods discovered.
As a wise Friend to friend: do thou, wide ruler, O Soma,
lengthen out our days for living.
These glorious drops that give me freedom have I drunk.
Closely they knit my joints as straps secure a car:
Let them protect my foot from slipping on the way:
yea let the drops I drink preserve me from disease.
O Soma, King, prolong thou our existence as Surya
makes the shining days grow longer.
Our maladies have lost their strength and vanished:
the feared, and passed away into the darkness.*

For thousands of years this passage has given rise to endless speculation about the identity of the magical soma. Indeed, many have suspected that Tapasviji and his sadhu cracked the code and found the legendary soma, leading to endless speculation about the make-up of the decoction he drank.

CHAPTER TWO

The Ancient Regenerative Secrets of Faith, Prayer, and Fasting

There is no pill that can save us, no silver bullet that can promise us health and longevity. And this discovery, at once frightening and liberating, must send us in an entirely new direction. Rejuvenation, as the ancients knew, is a constant and ongoing process, one that necessarily involves our whole bodies, and eventually, the whole of life. As much as we wish there were, there can be no true rejuvenation through just working on one part of ourselves, or through the isolated practice of a single technique. We need to understand the body as a whole, something in which everything relates to and relies upon everything else. To really awaken and magnify our regenerative chemistry, we need to cultivate all the body's key systems—the blood, the nervous and glandular systems, and the key organs themselves—in a single, harmonious practice.

First, though, we must “learn” the body, both its physical systems and its higher functions and potential. An excellent example of such a “learning” is provided by the ancient Christians, some of the first pioneers of regeneration and rejuvenation.

In the centuries following the death of Christ, a number of early Christian monastic groups, seeking to deepen their communion with God, developed various sophisticated rejuvenative practices that remain as relevant today as they were 2,000 years ago. As practitioners of the Third Grade foundation practices of right life, these monks based their life and practice on the virtues of self-responsibility and discipline. It is easy to see why: In those days, with no medical safety net, no emergency systems for saving lives, either you got it right, or you died at twenty-five. For these devout monastics, rejuvenative practice was not a matter of diagnosis, medicine, and treatment. Living in isolation, they instead learned to harmonize their systems through an intuitive process of faith, prayer, and

Malcolm Ritchie was the first Westerner to be initiated into an ancient Japanese form of psychic healing called *Seiki-Jutsu*. Writing in *The Shamanic Healer*, a book he co-authored with his teacher, Ikuko Osumi, Ritchie talks of how our culture prevents us from knowing who we really are:

... in the West we have created a “culture of anesthesia and amnesia,” a “culture” that encourages us to stop feeling our bodies and minds and prevents us from experiencing and realizing ourselves as part of the universe. Instead we exist as paranoid strangers within it, and this divests us of the knowledge of our spiritual destinies—our true nature.⁶

True faith, or the real, moment-to-moment recognition of the actual circumstance in which life is occurring, is the cure for this “amnesia.” True faith allows us to understand that subtle energies and Light itself surround the body, and that this Light is a principal food—as important, if not more so, than ordinary lunch. Rightly understood, this knowledge dramatically transforms our relationship to life, the body, and its health by bringing us into harmony with the energies around us.

In the practice of true faith, we come to understand that reality, the truth of our existence, is perfect Light and Being, and that, in the most profound sense, this reality is utterly free of disease and death. All the anxiety of trying to get well, all our concerns about disease itself, are intentionally relaxed, released, and replaced with the abiding intuition of the wholeness of true being. This disposition eliminates all of the stress, worry, and fear that we carry with us—feelings that only serve to sap our healing energy and spirit in the first place—thus allowing the healing power of Light itself to become effective in our life. In the practice of true faith, concern and fear are replaced quite naturally with gratitude.

Dr. Larry Dossey, writing about the power of faith in his book *Healing Words*, tells the story of “YH,” a teacher in a Japanese Shinto church who developed throat cancer at the age of sixty-four. Facing death, YH’s disposition changed radically one day after the president of his church praised YH’s service. Responding to the presi-

dent's gratitude, YH gave up all concern about the outcome of his disease, and, instead, simply inhaled in his faith without fear. Before he knew it, he began to notice his symptoms were improving, first gradually, then completely. Several months later, his doctors discovered that the cancer had disappeared. YH lived on for more than a decade, preaching the power of faith.⁷

TRUE PRAYER

Like faith, prayer is a word that has lost much of its meaning. When we think of prayer, most of us think of a wish to an external God, or something we might do as a last resort when things do not work out. In reality, though, true prayer has nothing to do with wish fulfillment. Instead, true prayer is a matter of receiving and conducting that which is much greater than the physical body, a matter of observing and transcending the limits and obstructions on our intake of the subtle energies that sustain us. In practical terms, it is an actual capability that allows the body to open, rest, and relax in its greater circumstance. Rightly practiced, true prayer magnifies the healing power of fundamental Light throughout the entire body and beyond, helping our healing chemistry to be effective.

In many ancient schools of religion, magnifying this Light and healing power was done via the transmission of a living awakened teacher, one who was capable of receiving and conducting the subtle energies at a great depth. These "transmission schools," common in Buddhism, Taoism, and among the Himalayan yogis in India, traditionally represented the most potent form of true prayer.

Esoteric Second Grade exercise systems like Qi Gong, yoga, and Tai Chi—now all popular in the West—were originally developed so that students in these schools could receive, magnify, and conduct subtle forms of energy, food, and blessings from their teachers. To whatever degree students were able to receive it, through the practice of right prayer, the virtue and healing power of that transmission could then be directed to their own body, or to others. The school's adepts, along with its most advanced students, served to constantly initiate and quicken this transformative process in students with their own advanced transmission.

HOW TO DO THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

As one of the simplest methods of healing prayer, the laying on of hands can be practiced by almost anyone. And because true prayer is not subject to the normal laws of physics, your hands do not necessarily have to touch the person's physical body during the laying on of hands—it can also be effective if the hands are kept slightly above the physical body. If you can, try and offer it among intimates regularly.

While practicing the disposition of true prayer, place your hands on the person in need. Always touch the heart first and allow well-being to flow through your hands into them.

Breathe in the healing qi and throw out any negative influences with your exhaled breath.

Be sure to touch the heart, the navel, and the cheeks gently with the palms of your hands.

Practice this for periods of up to half an hour and as often as you like.

mana (spirit-force) during their religious activities. The Hawaiians called these people “haole,” or “without breath,” and you can be sure it was not an honorific title.

Cultures like the Polynesians, Chinese, and Indians have understood since ancient times that a higher process of reception and release can be engaged via the breath, one that magnifies the healing chemistry in our own bodies and increases the effectiveness of our healing prayer. Just as the pores of the body open and close, releasing toxins and receiving qi, the breath can be used in a similar way. When we draw in healing energy with our inhalations and release negative energies when we exhale, we engage the breath in a way that calms the body, establishing us in the right disposition for deep and effective prayer and the reception of life, qi, and Light.

HOW TO DO A HEALING PRAYER FOR SOMEONE YOU LOVE

A healing prayer is best done sitting down in a comfortable place, although it can also be done while walking or dancing, or anywhere at all.

Simply relax and allow the breath to go as it will. Unburden your heart and breath and body. Feel the utterly happy and pleasurable reality of existence. Feel that we are all alive in indestructible living Light.

Now give that blissful feeling to the one you love, the one who is in need. Visualize and affirm wellness for the one you love. Grant that powerful healing affirmation to that person through your simple intention. Do not indulge in any concern or doubt about distance or separation. Feel your unity with that person and simply give the healing to that one.

JUDITH'S STORY

Years ago, when I was working in Australia, I was contacted by Judith, an American woman who had just arrived in Melbourne. Judith had cancer and wanted my help, so we arranged to meet.

Judith's cancer was severe: A tumor in her breast was spreading to other areas of her body, and the signs were not good. But despite her predicament, her Buddhist faith and practice was keeping her strong, and she remained full of hope. I joined her health team and contributed what I could. At that time, there was a group of people, all fighting for their lives, who regularly met at my office. Judith joined

our group, and we sat around the fireplace, talking about healing, rejuvenation, God, and death. At first, she was happy with the good company and the plant medicines I gave her. Then, after a month or two, she disappeared.

Weeks later she called, sounding extremely frail, asking me to come and visit her at her flat near the beach. She was too weak to come to the office.

I went straight to her house, bringing my friend Ruth along to help. We were both shocked when Judith came to the door: Her body looked pale and broken, her qi gone. She could hardly speak, let alone walk. We sat on the floor together, and I checked her out. Her pulses were very rapid and wiry, clearly coming up to the surface of the body, indicating that the remaining qi was already breaking free from its foundation. Judith told us that she had gone off to try an experimental treatment where boiling saline solution had been injected into the tumor in her liver. The treatment had all but killed her.

We laid Judith on her back on her living room floor, so that we could lay our hands on her. Our intention was to touch her, love her, and transmit healing energy to her in order to help relieve some of the extreme shock that had traumatized and drained her body. Death seemed imminent, so we tried to help her to relax enough for her to be able to begin to engage that process.

As Ruth held Judith's feet, and I held my hands over her liver, the room became bright and full with energy. A profound descent of Light began to enter Judith, a sublime intensity filling the room. The three of us swooned in bliss. The Light washed our bodies and minds, and then we all became very full and still.

We continued in this communion for almost an hour before Judith slowly began to sit up on the floor with us. Her color had returned, a sign that her circulatory system was beginning to work again. She looked bright, happy, and

calm. There was energy in her voice again. Clearly, her spleen and kidneys were working again. I was shocked by the transformation: all this in a woman who seemed on the point of death only moments before.

Sitting up, Judith smiled, saying she had to get something from the bedroom to show us. She walked calmly now, but with vigor. There was energy in the solar plexus again. She returned and showed us a crayon drawing of a stick figure lying on the floor, with two people laying their hands on her. A bright column of yellow light was pouring down from the top of the picture into the chest of the figure.

Judith had spent some time with a man named Ian Gawler in Melbourne. Gawler had been given up for dead with metastasized cancer, but managed to throw out the tumor and, despite losing a leg, heal himself. He now offers a comprehensive meditation-based approach to cancer patients who come to him looking to duplicate the miracle. Gawler asks his clients to make a crayon drawing of the moment of their healing, and Judith had drawn her moment months before.

She called us the next day, thanking us profusely. “I don’t know what you did to me yesterday,” she said. “But I feel better than I have felt in a very long time. I feel truly rejuvenated. I don’t how much longer I have to live, but I am going off to Hawaii to either be finally cured or to die.”

We expressed our love for each other, and then she was gone. Later on in the year, her son called me and told me that she had finally passed away after living for months in Hawaii. He made a point of passing on her thanks for the extra months of life she received.

CHAPTER THREE

Conserving Energy, Regenerating Life

There are two great forces at work in the world: the force of degeneration, and the force of regeneration.

Eventually, everything around us breaks down, decays, and dies. This is the force of degeneration, pulling everything that lives back toward the Earth like a kind of gravity. Ultimately, it cannot be stopped—it can only be slowed.

Thankfully, in the midst of all this appearance and disappearance, there is an equally powerful opposing force: the force of regeneration.

As we saw in the last chapter, the body has an amazing capability to heal itself: Disease can be thrown out, while energy can be magnified. The force of regeneration straightens and strengthens the body, lifting it up against this gravity.

Put simply, rejuvenation is a matter of harnessing this force and making it effective in our lives, as the early Christians did through their faith, prayer, and fasting. And there is no better place to start than with the body's energy, or qi—that miraculous stuff on which our entire bodily existence depends.

SLOWING THE SPEED OF DEGENERATION

A human life requires a tremendous amount of energy, or qi, just to happen. Everything we do, from our thinking and talking to the simplest movements of our limbs, is driven and sustained by the various forms of qi. Stored in key organs and channels throughout the body, qi gives us life, substance, and shape. Its quality and flow determine our health: If our qi is healthy and flowing properly, our bodies are sustained, balanced, and strong, right down to the cells.

LIVING IN A TOXIC ENVIRONMENT

We are surrounded every day by an invisible sea of synthetic chemicals, and our bodies absorb them like sponges until we are toxic.

We consume foods that have been depleted of essential natural healing nutrients. These nutrients have been replaced by synthetic chemical additives. These additives in our processed foods interact synergistically in our bodies with synthetic chemicals absorbed from our water, our air, and consumer products, weakening our immune systems.

Once weakened we become susceptible to illness and diseases that medical practitioners treat with synthetic chemical drug compounds that often prove even more toxic to us.

And this cycle in our culture and our lives repeats itself over and over...¹²

Randall Fitzgerald
The Hundred-Year Lie

Little more than a hundred years ago, a human life was only expected to last just thirty years, forty if you were lucky. So how did we get to this point, where we all expect to live twice that long? The most common reason cited for the ongoing rise in human life expectancy is the modern industrial lifestyle, with its manufactured technology, foods, and medicines. In reality, though, we are enjoying longer lives primarily because of a simple factor most of us take for granted: the practice of right hygiene. Since the germ theory alerted us to the dangers lurking all around us, we have learned how to control and eliminate a high percentage of the toxins that were getting into our bodies, thus greatly reducing our exposure to the many diseases that limited human life in the past.

In addition to our more conscious hygiene, the last hundred years have seen a number of social changes that have added years to our lives. In the West, at least, poverty has been reduced, and the less physically strenuous middle-class lifestyle most of us enjoy has

doing you any damage, be sure to filter it before drinking. If you use bottled water, choose a brand with low residues. And if it comes in a plastic bottle, decant it into a glass container as soon as you open it to prevent any of the chemicals from the plastic seeping in.

USE ONLY PURE, GREEN, AND SAFE COSMETICS

Far from being an impermeable barrier, the skin absorbs whatever we put on its surface. Treat the skin and the exterior of the body as you would the interior, and use pure, green, and safe cosmetics wherever possible.

USE ONLY GREEN AND SAFE HOUSEHOLD CLEANSERS

Some of the most dangerously toxic chemicals can be found under the sink. Have a “spring cleaning” of all the nasty chemicals your household has accumulated, and replace toxic household cleansers with benign, safe alternatives wherever you can.

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM AIR POLLUTION

The lungs are easy to damage and difficult to heal, so, as much as possible, avoid direct exposure to toxic vapors. If you live in an urban environment, this means keeping the windows shut on those “bad air” days, and closing the vents in your car when you are driving through truck fumes and heavily polluted areas.

USE ONLY NATURALLY OCCURRING VITAMINS AND SUPPLEMENTS

Not all vitamins are created equal these days: Even so-called “natural” vitamins can be highly processed and potentially harmful. Raw medicinal herbs, though far safer than most synthesized supplements, also contain some toxic residues.

The safest way to take medicinal herbs is in tinctures. The process of making tinctures naturally rids the herbs of heavy metals and toxins, making them the safest and best choice for long-term use.

EAT AN ABUNDANCE OF RAW, ORGANIC GREENS

Raw, organic greens are nature's great cleansers, purifying the blood and lymphatic system while you enjoy them. The more raw, organic greens you eat, the more you can keep the body purifying and eliminating any nasties that do manage to make their way in.

FIGHTING STAGNATION, INCREASING REGENERATION

The human body, with all its intricate systems and elaborate machinery, can seem like a very complex organism. If we look at the body as a whole, though, we see that it is not as complicated as we think. Essentially, the body is a system of channels and organs through which many kinds of life essences flow. Some channels are for processing food and waste, while others function as blood, air, and lymph pathways. There are microscopic channels, called "meridians," that help our qi flow through the body. While all these pathways are connected in myriad and intricate ways, the essential principle of the body's machinery is, in a sense, exquisitely simple.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), it is understood that for the body to be properly nourished, these pathways need to remain open and unobstructed, allowing the free movement of the essences and energies that sustain us. When these pathways become obstructed, according to TCM, a condition called stagnation occurs. Stagnation, which is one of TCM's central teachings on imbalance and disease, accounts for a great number of human health problems, from the tiniest ailments to the most serious diseases. Consider a bruise, for example. Caused by a blow or shock to

THE IMPORTANCE OF REST

According to one study published several years ago, we take in more information in one day than our nineteenth-century ancestors did in their entire lives. More and more, we are constantly bombarded with more stimuli than we can take in. In the relentless busyness we associate with being successful, we are frequently asked to take on more than we can do. All this comes at the expense of rest and rejuvenation, and we are starting to show the signs of a society that is chronically over-extending itself. In the West, we are witnessing a new epidemic of stress, as we force our bodies to keep up with the ever-increasing speed and complexity of competitive modern life. This stress, which goes by different names—burnout, information fatigue, exhaustion—not only makes us weary and unhappy, it also has serious health consequences, leaving us more susceptible to disease, depression, and breakdown. In this modern, 24/7 world, a carefree, leisurely attitude—one that allows ample time for rest and rejuvenation—seems like a kind of rebellion.

If we truly want to rejuvenate, we must buck this trend. The body cannot regenerate itself without proper rest, and technology, for all its wizardry, will never find a substitute for lying down and switching off. There are some things that just cannot be done on the run, certain things that cannot be multi-tasked. And rest is one of them. For the body to thrive, we must get enough deep, anxiety-free sleep. There must be sufficient, worry-free, restful time in order to heal.

Put simply, a life that allows for regular retreat allows for profound rejuvenation. To live long and happy lives, we must learn how to detoxify and properly rest the body from all the stresses our lives contain. If we do not, we allow toxins and stress to break down the body's systems and accelerate the forces of degeneration. As we will see later in this book, giving the body time to repair and restore itself can do more than make you feel a little better—it might just save your life. *(For more information on rest and retreat, see Chapter Nine)*

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

In TCM, sorrow is understood to damage the lungs, while also affecting the heart and spleen. People dealing with grief commonly develop lung imbalances, and often become slow, sluggish, and depressed as the spleen weakens. Life energy fails to fill up the center of the body and flow upwards to the head, while the contraction in the head obstructs the free flow of energy and Light down from above.

It is natural and even necessary to grieve for the loss of our loved ones, or to feel sadness when something dear to us changes or passes. But when we fail to finally let go and move on, we allow sorrow to become chronic and impact our health. It is not uncommon to see adults still carrying sorrow from events in their early life. Left unresolved this long, sorrow, like any reactive emotion, begins to seriously compromise our vitality and well-being altogether.

There is no human life that is entirely free from sorrow. Sorrow, as the Buddha taught, is inherent in a mortal life. If we are honest in our feeling, if we allow ourselves to be sensitive to the fact that everything changes and passes, that our friends and loved ones all finally go, then we will always feel a heart wound. While it may not be comfortable, such wounded feeling has a benign, healthy effect, magnifying our compassionate empathy with all beings. Chronic sorrow, on the other hand, is a failure to let go, an inability to allow life to move and change. We must allow ourselves to feel the naturalness of the emotion of sorrow and then let it pass.

TREATING SORROW

To prevent sorrow from damaging our health, we must accept the play of the universe as it is, understanding that love, life, and existence change but are never truly destroyed. The truth of our existence—and that of our loved ones—never dies. When our loved ones pass on, as we will look at later in this book, they are merely being changed and transformed—not annihilated.

To release the sorrow that inevitably comes up in our lives, we must first allow ourselves to fully feel it, rather than struggling against it. This way we can let go of the sorrow when the time comes to do so. If the sorrow becomes chronic, it can be treated by tonifying¹⁴

Chinese herbal formulas can be extremely useful for restoring liver function and qi flow, and they also help clear the damaging inflammation that anger creates. Gentle hands-on treatment of the liver, heart, and small and large intestines can also be very helpful (but be careful, if you are performing this treatment, not to initiate a strong, sudden release.)

On an emotional level, people suffering from anger must be helped to understand that they themselves are responsible for their reaction, so that they can begin to relax and release the pent-up energy that they feel. They need to honestly confess their feelings in a way that helps them get in touch with the deeper hurt and frustration that is driving the anger.

OVERCOMING ANGER

Robert was an executive in Melbourne who came to me for a general check-up because, he said, “he did not feel well.” Robert was always angry. His face would flush and his breathing would become obstructed even as we talked. His heart rate was accelerated, and the pulse rhythms on either side of his body were completely out of sync. His body was full of inflammation, the bulk of it moving out of the liver and into his heart. Robert was an excellent candidate for heart disease. And I told him so.

Robert was a unique individual. Once he was able to see the destructive patterns he was living, he completely changed his act. He began a new dietary and herbal regime, which cleansed inflammation while supporting the heart and liver. He began to enjoy a weekly day of rest and retreat, and he established a confidant relationship with a close friend, which allowed him to release his frustrations before they accumulated. Robert continues to thrive to this day.

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

Each of us needs to observe and understand the patterns we enact as emotional beings, and how these patterns affect our bodily chemistry and our lives as a whole. We all react to life's many challenges sometimes, but we need to make sure our reactions do not harden, becoming automatic and chronic. If we do, it does not matter what we eat, how well we sleep, or how much we exercise—our health will always be compromised.

Reactive emotions represent significant obstructions in the free flow of qi, preventing the descent of higher energies and Light down into the body and the deeper awakening of our regenerative chemistry. In a very real sense, they prevent rejuvenation. If we can learn to feel beyond them in the midst of all the challenges and difficulties we face, we open the door to the rejuvenated life.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Regenerative Power of Conscious Exercise and Sexuality

One of the best ways to release the knots in our body and get our energies flowing again is conscious exercise, a system of bodily movements designed to open the circuitry of the body and keep it that way. Developed in ancient China and India, conscious exercise is based on the understanding of the body as an integrated, energetic whole, something much more than just the physical. In contrast to regular exercise, which primarily works the physical body, conscious exercise helps us to magnify the qi in our bodies, allowing us to directly contact the force of regeneration while working and strengthening the physical at the same time. In sexual conscious exercise, which we will look at later in this chapter, we use our lovemaking as a form of exercise, thereby harnessing the powerful energies of sexual union to serve our health and rejuvenation.

Gentle enough to be done by almost anyone, conscious exercise helps us conserve and magnify life by overcoming the unconscious tendency to throw off and waste energy and essences. Ordinary exercise, which most of us do, definitely has its place: Muscles become stronger when they are worked. Regular exercise improves blood circulation, clears and expands our body's passageways, and strengthens the heart and lungs. For all their positive effects, though, most ordinary exercise programs are limited to working the physical, and are usually unable to effect any deeper change in our chemistry. Modern exercise, which so often focuses on achieving aesthetic results, is not designed to help us release reactive knots or magnify our deeper feeling. Indeed, in many cases, the exercise regimes we do actively work against the development of deeper sensitivity. How often do we see people in health clubs running on

8. Do not become concerned by any knots you notice in your body. Remain in this relaxed disposition, noticing and relaxing these obstructions and allowing the breath and deepening feeling to do their work.

As you grow in this practice, you should begin to notice its benign transformative effect on your breath, your mind, and your feeling altogether, as the knots in the body open and release, and you begin to develop your capability to ingest and circulate subtle forms of energy.

In addition to its remarkable health benefits, conscious exercise gives us a deeper and deeper feeling sense of what is subtler than the flesh. Over time, as we begin to feel the tangible reality of the energies in and around us, we start to develop a more profound awareness of the unity of mind and body, and even existence altogether. As we become more sensitive to the true nature of reality, we make possible a deep energetic communion that actively fosters rejuvenation.

So where do you start? The reception and release exercise in this chapter is a great, simple way to dip your toe in the waters. For those wanting to go deeper into the practice, traditional systems like Hatha Yoga, Tai Chi, and Qi Gong are all excellent forms of conscious exercise that combine postures, movement, stretching, breathing, and feeling in such a way that energy is conserved and intensified as you move.

These traditional forms, which have all gained great levels of popularity in the West over the last few decades, were originally derived from Second Grade transmission schools as forms of exercise given to magnify the living transmission offered by the teacher to their students. In addition to helping students magnify and conserve the qi they received, these exercises made it possible for prac-

tioners to direct energy to particular areas of the body, allowing them, in many cases, to heal themselves. Over the years, I have practiced conscious exercise in the company of accomplished Qi Gong masters, sometimes for up to eight hours at a time. The first thing I notice during these sessions is a significant increase in my energy levels; by mid-session, I feel a host of low-grade imbalances disappear. Altogether, the positive chemical changes in the body continue for weeks afterwards.

In the practice of Qi Gong, qi is drawn into the body via feeling and breathing. Once ingested, the qi can then be directed to a particular organ system through simple intention and visualization to strengthen or improve its function, or transferred to another person for the purpose of healing.

Great masters of Qi Gong can access and conduct large quantities of energy in order to serve their healing work. Years ago, during a class on TCM, I saw Professor Yang Shou-zhong, a scholar, clinician, and Qi Gong master, leave the podium and cure a student of a sore throat and flu simply by waving his hands in the etheric field of energy that surrounded her physical body. Such was Professor Yang's mastery of the subtle energies that he was able to cure her without ever touching her physically.

As these masters demonstrate, in the realm of conscious exercise, feeling is senior to form. In other words, it does not matter how we look when we do conscious exercise. What matters is our sensitivity, our practice of reception and release. I have seen students of Qi Gong and Hatha Yoga quite capable of demonstrating perfect form while still incapable of deeply contacting the qi. In order to drink deeply of the universal qi and to release the body's knots, we must first really awaken our feeling. Once we do, we can really take charge of our health and release the obstructions that cause imbalance and disease simply by remaining attentive to the stress points in the body and allowing them to gently relax.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A TEACHER
IN CONSCIOUS EXERCISE AND BEYOND

Traditionally, esoteric cultures have spoken of the rare and unique advantage of practicing in the company of an advanced teacher. These teachers, who are found throughout the religious and healing traditions of humankind, are prized for their ability to transmit the very substance of their work and realization to others. Through practice with such a one, techniques like conscious exercise can be elevated from something we do to improve our bodies to something entirely more profound, something that involves the whole of life.

With Qi Gong, the basic law regarding teachers is simple: The teacher magnifies the qi of the student, quickening that person's development. This principle, which lies at the heart of the teacher-student relationship in esoteric traditions, remains true no matter what the level of realization involved. In the same way a Qi Gong master transmits the qi to the student, for instance, an enlightened teacher transmits the Transcendental Light to willing devotees. Such beings have undergone a profound process of transformation in which their physical, emotional, and mental knots have been purified (and, in the most advanced cases, even eliminated). Free from obstruction, their perfectly transformed bodies become instruments of transmission. The transmission takes place through the teacher's eyes, breath, and touch. In many cases, this transmission can be tangibly felt in the bodily presence of the master, and sometimes even in the place where the teacher has lived or taught. In each case, this transmission has a positive effect on the student's practice, deepening the practitioner's reception of subtle energies.

Whether you are seeking instruction in conscious exercise or in a more intensive practice, there is no better help than the living transmission of an advanced teacher.

KEEP THE BODILY CIRCUIT FULL

Adi Da Samraj, in his investigation of the human energetic circuit, observed that most of us suffer the effects of what he calls a “closed head” and an “open bottom.” In other words, instead of a full circuit, taking in higher energies from above and circulating them through the body, our heads are cut off from what lies above, and what energies are in our body are lost through a weak base. Unable to receive subtle food, and wasting the qi in our bodies, we hasten the onset of degeneration.

To open up to the bounty that surrounds us, we first need to look at the head differently. Much more than simply an organ for thinking and cognizing, the head is actually a crucial conduit for higher energies, and one of our main tools for feeling. By awakening our feeling, we can truly learn to “feel” with the head, thus opening ourselves to the descent of powerful energies from above, which can then be circulated throughout the whole body. If we keep the head closed, on the other hand, we tend to think too much, causing the brain to heat up and the flow of subtle energies to slow to a trickle.

Along with the process of opening the head, we must also learn how to strengthen and close the base of the body: the anal sphincter. If this aperture remains open and weak, we lose most of the energy that our bodies receive and generate. According to Taoist teacher Steven Chang, the anal sphincter is the critical point in the body at which the aging process is fundamentally measured. As we get older, our lower muscles tend to get progressively more flaccid and loose, causing us to lose more and more qi and vital essences. Without these energies and essences to keep us upright, degeneration sets in and the aging process begins to accelerate.

Strengthening the bodily base is critical. If we do not shore up the lower body, it does not matter how much universal energy we can learn to draw in—it will only be lost to the Earth. By exercising the lower sphincter, as we will see in a moment, we can strengthen these muscles, stimulating the lower glands while retaining and circulating our qi, allowing us to remain upright and healthy as we age.

To get the most out of the exercise, try to focus on tightening only the pelvic floor muscles, being careful not to flex the muscles in your abdomen, thighs, or buttocks.

When you are doing Kegels, try not to hold your breath. Just relax, breathe freely and focus on tightening the muscles around the anus at the bodily base.

REPEAT THREE TIMES A DAY

Perform a set of ten Kegel exercises at least three times a day. The more you do them, the easier they will become. Try fitting in a set every time you do a routine task, like checking your e-mail or commuting to work.

CHANGE IT UP

You can also vary your technique. Try doing sets of mini-Kegels. Count quickly to ten or twenty, contracting and relaxing your pelvic floor muscles each time you say a number. Or slow it down, gradually contracting and releasing your pelvic floor muscles. As you contract, visualize an elevator traveling up four floors. At each floor, contract your muscles a little more until you reach maximum contraction at the fourth floor. Hold the contraction and then slowly release the tension as you visualize the elevator traveling back down. Repeat ten times.

ADVANCED CONSCIOUS EXERCISE: THE HEALING POSE

Over the course of his teaching demonstration, Adi Da Samraj has conducted an exhaustive consideration of the possibilities of conscious exercise, in doing so bringing the form to a most profound point. In combination with his instruction on conscious exercise, Adi Da Samraj's uniquely potent transmission has allowed students to ingest and conduct not only subtle energies, but the Transcendental Light itself. This practice, which represents the most advanced form of conscious exercise, involves the whole of life, as all bodily functions are adapted to feeding on and conducting the Light transmitted and magnified by the adept.

In its most advanced stages, this opening towards the Light becomes naturally effortless, as the head and bodily circuit become soft and open, and the Light is able to descend right down into the kidneys and toes. Known as the "Healing Pose," this advanced regenerative practice utterly transforms the entire shape and circuitry of the body, awakening the body's deepest regenerative chemistry. This transformation repolarizes the body's energies, which become magnetized towards the Light above the body rather than the Earth below. Practiced through a profound application of feeling and breathing, the Healing Pose allows the practitioner to release obstructions in the body moment-by-moment in a perfectly natural and easeful practice, free of effort or stress.

In one long session in 1991, while Adi Da Samraj swayed and moved among a group of around fifty students, I felt a profound descent of Light pour down into my head and root deep in my kidneys. Prior to this occasion, I had been suffering several years of severe chronic lower back pain. As the descent deepened, I suddenly felt a chronic energy knot located at the base of the body open and

release, completely restoring the spinal circuit of energy in my back. The condition has never returned.

The Healing Pose is a spontaneous manifestation rather than an actual practice. It is an advanced response to Adi Da Samraj's powerful healing transmission and unique to the way that he offers. I have not seen it discussed in any traditional or contemporary texts.

SEXUAL REJUVENATION

The importance of the sexual glands as the motor of rejuvenation cannot be overemphasized.

Dr. Stephan Chang
*The Tao of Sexology*¹⁵

Sex, as five minutes watching TV or reading a magazine will tell you, is a powerful and pervasive force in our lives. And it is just this power, this focus of energies, that gives it such great potential as a form of rejuvenative conscious exercise.

Though our obsession with it has confused the issue somewhat, the urge for sex is, at its root, a motive towards physical reproduction, a hormonally driven activity patterned into our very cells and glands. Like any animal, humans are compelled by preconscious, instinctual forces to perform the activity that ensures their survival as a species. Practiced rightly, though, sex is much more than a matter of reproducing ourselves, just as conscious exercise is more than simply working the muscles. Conscious sexual exercise allows us to convert sex into a rejuvenative process, by conserving the essences and energies sex produces and allowing them to re-circulate and take on a regenerative role in the body.

CONVERTING ORGASM

Every time we have sex, we are stirring up a tremendous amount of life energy and essences. But instead of luxuriating in these energies, and letting them flow throughout the body, for most of us, sex tends to be a circumstance in which to throw them out. This motivation toward tension and release, which has its primary expression in the drive toward orgasm, has its roots in the stagnation, or obstructions, in our body. During sex, a powerful combination of feeling, pleasure, energy, and bodily fluids builds around our knots and points of stagnation. By throwing this energy and feeling out via regular orgasm, we achieve a feeling of temporary relief from the discomfort this stagnation creates. In terms of our energy, though, this “degenerative” orgasm represents a significant donation from our bodily reservoir. The male ejaculation, as Taoist teacher Mantak Chia explains, is loaded with the qi and essence of human life:

Sperm is the storehouse of male sexual energy. A single ejaculation has 200 to 500 million sperm cells, each a potential human being. There are enough spermatozoa lost in a single orgasm to populate the entire United States if each cell was to fertilize an egg. The manufacture of a sperm fluid capable of such psychic super potency consumes up to a third of a man’s daily energy output and is especially taxing on the male’s glandular/immunological system.¹⁶

And it is not only the production of sperm that taxes the male: Sperm needs a delivery system too. The little rocket thrust that propels the semen beyond the gravity of the man’s body is driven by kidney energy. With each ejaculation, the male loses essence, vitamins, hormones, enzymes, minerals, and the critical kidney energy that powers the body.

While it is not uncommon for women to experience feelings of depletion from the ordinary orgasm, the loss in women is not nearly as severe as it is in men. (Many women feel more depleted by their monthly menstrual flow, a time during which they lose sig-

nificant amounts of blood and essence.) Even so, for women, ordinary, conventional sex still represents a kind of limit, because it throws off the heightened energies and essences of the body before they can really become profound.

The occasional loss of these essences and energies for the sake of reproduction, loving intimacy, and bodily balance is fine in the case of younger people. As we age, though, the losses increase in impact. If we are enjoying regular recreational sex and ritually finish each occasion with this orgasmic outpouring of hormones and essences, then the loss becomes significant. Mantak Chia continues:

Those who fully understand conventional ejaculatory sex know it grossly exploits every gland and organ. With ejaculation, the internal pressure of life is expelled from the body, leaving behind in some sex-obsessed men only enough life force to fold the newspaper, squeeze food through the bowels, and make for the psychiatrist's couch.

The sages considered one drop of semen equal in vital power to one hundred drops of blood. The Hindu holy men refer repeatedly to Amrita, the elixir of life, a rejuvenation substance that may be produced during prolonged sexual activity without ejaculation. The production of this elixir, which westerners might call a higher hormonal secretion, requires a sexual technique that prevents ejaculation, and thereby allows the body to enter higher and higher states of energy.¹⁷

Our bodies are simply not used to high levels of pleasure, arousal and fullness. Having learned to subsist on superficial and stimulating enjoyments—bad food, TV, hyperactive lifestyles, and the daily news—we have become more drawn to what desensitizes us than what is truly pleasurable. When we encounter intense pleasure, as we do during sex, we do not have the means to conduct it, to luxuriate in for extended periods of time. Most of us have no idea what to do with it! So we get rid of the intensity, by first building it to a peak and then letting it go before it can become truly profound.

Learning to not indulge in the degenerative orgasm, as we will take a look at in a moment, lets us prolong our sexual occasion, deepening our pleasure and communion while allowing the stimulated energies and essences sex produces to flow back into the endocrine system. Tapping the deeper reserves of the glandular system, we allow our lovemaking to release a host of regenerative hormones into the body.

TRANSFORMING ORGASM

Fundamental to transforming the degenerative orgasm is the control of motion and intensity during sex. Try to experiment with slowing and even stopping your sexual motion in the midst of your intimate play. Slowing down allows the qi and essences that build up in the lower part of the body during sex to be diffused and circulated up and throughout the body.

Once you have begun to control the motion of your lovemaking, the anal lock we looked at earlier in the Kegel exercises can be employed to help circulate the energies that build up at the bodily base. Try to gently perform this lock during the pauses or slow periods in your lovemaking. Direct your attention upwards, even to a point above the body. Throughout the occasion, breathe and circulate the excess energy and essence throughout your body and in communion with your partner.

Though these methods are helpful, the conversion of the degenerative orgasm is not truly founded in any technique. To really transform orgasm, as we will look at more in a moment, love and feeling are key. When we are capable of truly feeling love for our partner, and when we can express and conduct this love to them via our hearts, eyes, and deep feeling, our energy is repolarized up from the root of our bodies. The natural expression of love and intimacy opens the knots in our pathways, allowing the magnified regenerative substances sex produces to gently rise up and feed the body.

THE REGENERATIVE EFFECT OF POLARIZATION

In TCM and Taoism, the male is understood to be the embodiment of the “yang” fire force to the female’s watery “yin”; in the Tantric teachings of India, the male force is *Shiva* to the female’s *Shakti*. In both systems—and there are many others that use a similar framework—conditional existence is seen as a great play of opposing forces: light and dark, hot and cold, pain and pleasure, birth and death. It is a play of endless modifications. Opposites attract each other, looking to find equanimity and resolution in each other. The hot yang of the man seeks balance in the cool yin of the woman. When the yang force of the male builds up, he finds himself moving quite naturally towards the female, looking to be relieved of the excessive fire he feels. Even among homosexual couples, sexual activity and attraction arise out of this play of yin and yang—someone is predominantly yin, someone is predominantly yang.

In our sexual lives, we make this “polarity” truly effective, truly powerful, when we conserve the reproductive substances our love-making stimulates. In doing so, we unlock a tremendously potent force, one not only regenerative for our sexuality, but for our health altogether. Through feeling and sensitive service to his partner, the male can help the woman to open and release the deepest knots at the base of her body, increasing her ability to conduct and receive love and life. As she opens, the woman can then grant her deeper yin essences to the man, cooling and refreshing him. As the genitals and the solar plexus open in this play, the bodily base becomes deeply stimulated. The yang of the male and the yin of the woman combine and become one at the point where the tip of the penis and the cervix meet. This point is the root of the life-force in the body, and it is here where the greatest regenerative chemistry is released. In this heightened play of polarity, the “end-game” of degenerative orgasm is replaced with feeling beyond limit, transforming our sex and our health.

TRANSFORMING SEXUALITY THROUGH FEELING

Though it can be looked at in terms of converting orgasm, allowing pleasure, and heightening polarity, the transformation of sex is, fundamentally, a matter of awakening our feeling. Feeling, which manifests as love, vulnerability, and openness, is the depth in which the play of sex occurs. It is the source of the pleasure we derive from making love, an infinite well sex allows us to tap. But it is also where we tend to be bound. When we are obstructed and conflicted about sex, it is almost always due to knots in our feeling being. If we do not allow feeling to intervene in our intimacy, to heal of us of these obstructions at a depth, sex becomes bound to these knots, a ritual of tension and release devoid of real pleasure and communion.

We begin to heal our sexuality when we consciously bring feeling into our intimate play and allow each sexual occasion to be used to feel beyond obstructions in love. As we learn to breathe and feel from the heart at a depth, we start to be able to release the stress knots in the circuit of the body wherever they come up. This deepening heart feeling diffuses the energy and attention that is ordinarily stuck in the genitals and head, allowing the energy at the base of the body to gently rise up and radiate outward. The more we grow in this practice, the more we strengthen our feeling, as we “reprogram” ourselves to allow and prolong pleasure. As sex becomes a matter of whole bodily enjoyment, the motive to throw out our energy and essences via the genitals begins to weaken.

By diffusing bound energy in the head, feeling allows us to free ourselves from the sexual mind. With all its endless accumulations of erotic imagery, the sexual mind increases the tendency for the life energy to run down to the genitals and remain there, encouraging patterns of tension and release. Far from bringing us into a depth of feeling, our sex-mind actually preserves our insensitivity and reinforces our limits on feeling and love. As we come to engage feeling more consciously in our intimacy, our mind-based eroticism—with all its attendant life-suppressing, loveless strategies—naturally begins to dissolve.

Until the reactive stress knots in the body and mind are released,

we all tend to suffer our inhibitions, our self-imposed limits and taboos on pleasure and life. Sexuality, such a charged and deeply intimate part of all our lives, tends to stoke these inhibitions, making them feel strong and intractable. We have trouble being seen in pleasure, trouble accepting our desires. We have trouble expressing ourselves, trouble penetrating or being penetrated, trouble magnifying and expressing our love.

The list of human inhibitions goes on forever.

These inhibitions are not the basis of a happy, healthy life. No matter what our religion or beliefs, inhibition and prejudice should not be granted the force of philosophy, memorialized with doctrine, and allowed to become taboos. Inhibitions are simply obstructions in the free flow of feeling, love, and life, and they need to be transcended, not formalized. Instead of reinforcing our limitations, sexual intimacy should provide a regular regenerative circumstance in which to release them, allowing you and your partner to grow in pleasure and feeling by going beyond your limitations and permitting life where you have, for whatever reason, always denied it.

Going to war with our sexual impulses, whatever they are, is fruitless and unnecessary. Instead, we must encounter them, confess to them, and play them out in love. Without this willingness to feel and grow, sex remains a degenerative affair, a minefield of inhibitions that yields quickly to gravity, drawing our essences away and into the ground.

Where we normally exercise to get “in shape,” sexual conscious exercise requires us to do the opposite. In response to our knots and inhibitions, we all tend to take on a particular shape or form in life. With sexual conscious exercise, as we allow feeling to unravel these obstructions, this shape starts to loosen and fall away. More and more, we start to get “out of shape,” and in doing so we release the form of our ordinary inhibited life. In this way, regenerative sexual exercise truly humanizes men and women, freeing the reluctant and inhibited brides and grooms from holding themselves back from pleasure, ecstasy, and love in their bedrooms. Likewise, sexual conscious exercise calms the more sexually aggressive types. We accept our humanness with pleasure, humor, and love and are

improvements in aging-related conditions, he has found, come through treating the blood in addition to the condition itself. Through focusing on improving blood circulation and production, De-Xin has been able to successfully treat many conditions Western medicine still has few answers for, like Alzheimer's disease, stroke, senility, and heart disease. According to the venerable doctor, by remaining attentive to blood circulation and production early in life, we can prevent these problems and many others from happening in the first place. Still, as he has found with his older patients, it is never too late to begin cultivating the blood.

ESSENTIALS OF HEALTHY BLOOD

Keeping the blood healthy is a matter of always making sure the body is producing enough blood, and that the blood it produces stays pure and freely flowing. So what is the secret? As with all regenerative practices, there is no quick fix. To truly maintain healthy blood, as we will see, requires the combination of right diet, sufficient rest, and the occasional use of herbal formulas. Through these simple and effective means, we keep the blood nourishing the whole body, building the foundation for rejuvenation.

RIGHT DIET

In a very basic sense, blood is transformed by the food we eat. "Right diet," or the intelligent, easeful intake of foods that serve our health and well-being, ensures the blood is kept pure and freely flowing, and that any toxins that get into the system can be dealt with quickly and effectively, preventing the build-up that leads to imbalance and disease.

Like most things, right diet is a matter of balance. The best diet is one that is fluid and intuitive, always allowing the body to make use of what it needs and to eliminate what it

does not. And there are no better foods for helping the body do this than fresh, unprocessed (or whole) foods. Easily assimilated and eliminated, high-quality unprocessed foods like organic fruits and vegetables are natural blood precursors, making them perfect for nurturing and purifying our blood and improving blood volume. Highly processed foods, on the other hand, have had most of their organic qi and essence destroyed. Stripped of their nutritive value, they tend to toxify the blood and stifle its production. If our diet is too unbalanced, containing too many highly processed foods and not enough of the natural blood precursors we need, blood production and quality suffer, and blood deficiency sets in.

Right diet involves constant adjustment and sensitivity to our own bodily needs, and the discovery of what nutrition works best with our particular lifestyle and body type. The foundation of Third Grade Practice, right diet is a creative affair, and one we must master in order to enjoy the fruits of the regenerative life.

(We will take more of a look at right diet and healthy blood later in this chapter. For a more general description of right diet, see Appendix One.)

IMPROVING BLOOD VOLUME

The safest and best way to naturally improve blood production is with the introduction of raw greens into the diet. Raw greens have a similar tonifying effect on blood production to meat, but they are much more suitable for regular consumption than flesh foods, which tend to cause a fair amount of wear and tear on the body. (Flesh foods, though often used by traditional doctors to treat low blood volume, are best saved for short-term use in severe cases.)

The best way to take raw greens in sufficient quantity is in the form of a green smoothie. Green smoothies boost

our blood in a very healthy and pleasurable way without any toxic side effects. To make a green smoothie, just make use of whatever green foods are in season: Kale, chard, and collard greens are all good choices. Put them in your blender with a banana and some water or rice milk, and enjoy.

HERBAL FORMULAS

Herbal formulas are excellent for improving blood quality, production, and circulation. As we will see later in this chapter, the Chinese herbal decoction *Si Wu Tang* is almost a perfect blood food. In combination with right diet, *Si Wu Tang* helps ensure maximal blood production, while also improving circulation. Contact your herbalist about getting some made up for you.

PROPER REST

In addition to the right nutrition, the body also needs enough proper rest to maintain the health and volume of its blood. Rest unburdens our systems, allowing the body the time and energy it needs to easefully maintain blood flow, production, and quality, ensuring this amazing elixir nourishes us like it should. Rest, which is also critically important to the nervous system, will be looked at in much more detail in the coming chapters.

Yogeshwaranand, who spent much of his life living and practicing in the Himalayas, was able to rest his very attention in the body's organs and their energies. Speaking of the heart as the "seat of the soul," the yogi identified the right auricle, the smaller of the two blood chambers on the right side of the heart, as a place of great significance. It was here, he said, where spirit and matter coincide. Swami Yogeshwaranand described the blood passing through the right side of the heart on the way to be oxygenated in the lungs. There, he said, the blood is infused with higher qualities of intelligence and bliss. Similarly, Adi Da Samraj has spoken of the right auricle as the seat of feeling and intuition in the body. It is here, he says, in that tiny interior space just behind the heart's pacemaker, that subtle energy and transcendental Light combine with conditional life.

William Harvey, the seventeenth-century court physician to Charles I of England, was the first Westerner to publish detailed observations of the circulatory system. An acute observer by any standard, Harvey studied the development of a chicken in an egg, noticing that the first sign of animated life appeared in a single drop of blood that began to mysteriously pulse. As the drop enlarged, the form of the chicken began to appear. The throbbing drop of blood, Harvey observed, becomes the auricle, and then finally the heart itself. Relative to the human heart, Harvey observed:

I have also from time to time noticed that, after the heart proper and even its right auricle were ceasing to beat and appeared on the point of death, an obscure movement/undulation/palpitation had clearly continued in the right auricular blood itself, doubtless for as long as this blood was visibly imbued with warmth and spirit.¹⁹

This mysterious pacemaker of the heart, as Adi Da Samraj explains in his masterwork on subtle anatomy, *The Enlightenment of the Whole Body*, is not ultimately linked to the brain but to the Divine life-current itself. Essentially, the heart and its beat are simply the primary physical manifestation of the unconditional living Light that sustains all of us.

If the heart is the center of everything, then the blood is its messenger, transporting not only physical nutrients and qi but the higher, subtle qualities from which conscious life is derived. When blood production and circulation become weak, then, it is not only our bodies that suffer, but our consciousness as well, leaving us feeling dull, unclear, and in the most severe cases even depressed. Happily, though, the reverse is also true: When we increase blood circulation and production and tonify its quality, we can dramatically lift our spirits, increase our intellectual and creative capabilities, and magnify our sense of existential well-being.

THE BLOOD IS THE ETHERIC

Throughout history, there have been numerous men and women like Swami Yogeshwaranand gifted with the ability to visualize the subtle workings of the human body. And almost to a person, they offer a very similar report of a human's true anatomy: The physical body, far from being all we are, is merely the densest, most extended visible part of a much greater mechanism.

This "esoteric anatomy," which forms the basis of much esoteric spirituality and holistic medicine, is made up of several subtle layers or "energy sheaths," which all envelop a central core of living light. In conjunction with the Radiant life-current in which it ultimately appears, the physical body is sustained and animated by these subtle sheaths, which are also responsible for our higher functions.

The health of our physical structures depends on us being in proper alignment with our subtle "bodies," particularly the "etheric" body, the sheath immediately surrounding the physical. A warm shawl of life-force that envelops our organs, muscles, and bones, the etheric passes subtle forms of energy and nourishment into the physical while helping to contain and organize our human energies. Over the course of a lifetime, the etheric body conforms itself to the physical body.

So why can we not see it? Essentially, the etheric body's vibratory energies are subtler than those of the flesh, which means they

THE BLOOD IS THE WOMAN

Traditionally, Chinese doctors understood women to be a yin manifestation of life: receptive, cool, and watery, the natural polar opposite of men. Understanding these feminine qualities, ancient Chinese doctors worked to protect and preserve them, helping women manage their hormonally complex and sensitive reproductive cycles via the cultivation of the blood. Long before anyone else, Chinese doctors established the first specific gynecological practice, one that remains effective to this day.

Critical to the creation of this branch of medicine was the discovery of a combination of nutrients that the doctors found to have a profoundly beneficial effect on a woman's blood cycle. Certain plants, the doctors discovered, are natural blood precursors. Working with the oil-rich roots of these plants, they eventually arrived at what they considered to be the most potent combination of elements, blending four key ingredients into a uniquely effective blood tonic. The formula, known as *Si Wu Tang*, or "Four Substances Decoction," was found to have an extremely beneficial effect on the female cycle, toning the blood while increasing its production and circulation in the body. Over time, the doctors observed, *Si Wu Tang* actually regenerates the ovaries and optimizes the hormonal balance altogether.

Si Wu Tang is a great all-purpose tonic, suitable for use by almost any woman. While particularly effective with the menstrual and reproductive cycles, it can be modified to treat a host of gynecological and health imbalances. One of the great secrets of TCM is how effective and powerful this combination can be when it is blended correctly.

I have used this ancient prescription in the treatment of countless women over the years in some form or other, and it has proven to be truly one of the great elixirs of the Earth. And while it is most commonly used to treat and restore ovarian function, it is also excellent for men, a fact that has been somewhat overlooked over the years. The boost in blood production and circulation provided by *Si Wu Tang* regenerates the circulatory system in anyone who uses it, reducing the possibility of stroke, embolism, and intellectual

deterioration. A perfect blood medicine, Si Wu Tang is highly recommended for anyone interested in cultivating the blood and its circulation.

A PURE BLOOD FORMULA	SI WU TANG	YAN DE XIN'S ANTI-SENILITY FORMULA FOR INCREASED BLOOD CIRCULATION
Taraxacum Burdock Yellow Dock Echinacea Coptis Forsythia	Angelica Sinensis Ligusticum Wallichii Peony Alba Rehmannia Glutinosa	Carthamus Persica Ligusticum Wallichii Platycodon Achyranthus Citrus Aurantium

These three great natural formulas are excellent for cultivating and purifying the blood. Contact your herbalist about getting them made up for you.

USING SI WU TANG

Jane, a talented musician and an old friend of mine, contacted me one day to consider her health. She had already lost one of her ovaries to a chronic cystic condition, and now her periods were beginning to taper off prematurely. She was still in her thirties.

A decade later, and Jane is thriving. Through the regular use of Si Wu Tang, Jane was able to normalize her periods while protecting the surviving ovary. At the first sign of any menstrual irregularity, Jane orders her formula and takes it for a cycle. This rejuvenates the ovary, increases her menstrual flow back to normal levels, and balances out her hormones. Jane is living proof of how simple and effective right cultivation of the blood can be.

SUGAR IS JUST TOO SWEET

Sugar is one of our most deeply rooted addictions, something almost all of us struggle with in some form or other. And while most of us know something of sugar's degenerative effect on our teeth and its relationship to obesity and diabetes, sugar's profound effect on our blood remains largely ignored.

Under the influence of regular sugar intake, the bloodstream becomes a feeding ground for bacteria, fungus, yeast, and viruses. Prolonged ingestion of sucrose weakens digestive action, promoting inflammation and yeast infections, while bringing on early diabetic imbalances that prematurely undermine the heart, eyes, and brain. Sugar also taxes our organs, overworking the pancreas and burning very hot in the stomach and spleen. The list goes on. Generations that grow up on the high-carbohydrate, sugar-laden diets so common in the West have all but burned out their pancreatic hormonal system by the age of fifty.

My first drug experience was with sugar. It was the only drug permitted by my parents, so I would finish my paper route each day with a chocolate soda, potato chips, and a five-cent box of candy for dessert. This was my personal reward for being alive and for having a job, and as a prepubescent child, that sweet glow in my belly and head was the highlight of my day. And for many people, this is what sugar is considered: an innocent treat, a pleasurable reward for doing less pleasurable things.

But with Type 2 Diabetes now considered to be the fastest growing disease in the West, perhaps it is time we start looking at sugar in a different light. Could it be that this simple additive, once worth its weight in gold, is something altogether more dangerous than we think? Writing in *Food of the Gods*, ethnobotanist Terence McKenna put forth the idea that our relationship to sugar, far from the guilty pleasure it is commonly portrayed as, bears all the hallmarks of deeply patterned substance abuse:

Is it stretching a point to discuss sugar in a history of human drug use? It is not. Sugar abuse is the world's least discussed and most widespread addiction. And it is one of the hardest

of all habits to kick. Sugar addicts may be maintenance users or binge eaters. As with all stimulants, ingestion of sugar is followed by a brief euphoric “rush,” which is followed by depression and guilt.²¹

The sugar habit, as McKenna says, can be very difficult to break. Difficult, but not impossible. Instead of trying to replace sugars with sweeteners and substances—in effect pandering to the same craving—we must take a different kind of dietary approach, one that starts with an understanding of why we crave sweetness in the first place.

The sugar- and carbohydrate-rich diet most of us eat tends to weaken the spleen, setting off a chain of reactions that culminate almost inevitably in sugar dependency: A deficient spleen craves energy, and we reach for sugar hoping for an instant quick fix. But the resulting rapid sugar burn only weakens the spleen qi further, intensifying our cravings and reinforcing the cycle of addiction.

So what can we do? To really kick the sugar habit, as we will look at in a moment, we need to change the pattern of our eating altogether. By practicing right diet, and replacing sugars with wholesome foods, we can strengthen the spleen and balance the body’s blood sugar, creating a natural equanimity that breaks sugar’s hold on us once and for all.

KICKING THE HABIT

While achieving the right dietary balance is an individual matter, if we really want to free ourselves from sugar addiction, there are a few things we all need to do. First and foremost, we need to dramatically cut down or eliminate all forms of concentrated sweeteners. Ultimately, these sweeteners have no real purpose in the body—we can manufacture glucose, our main energetic fuel, well enough without them. (If your constitution is sensitive, it is particularly important to steer clear of all concentrated forms of sweetness—even dried fruits—to let the body do its work.)

But it is not only these sweeteners that have to go: To really make the switch, we need to try to limit our sugar intake altogether.

In practical terms, this means seriously cutting down on our intake of foods that the body converts to sugars, particularly “junk” carbohydrates like white flour and sugars. (This is especially important if you are over fifty, a time when our pancreatic hormonal system starts getting sluggish.) These foods, though a staple of many Western diets, have an essentially degenerative effect on the body, stimulating too much insulin secretion and promoting inflammation and parasites. Spiking the body’s blood sugar levels, they cause the body to trigger its own defense mechanisms. Responding to what it senses to be an invasion of the system, the body floods the bloodstream with inflammatory substances, eroding the protective mucous membranes in the body. Left untreated, a pattern of imbalance develops that can seriously endanger our health.

To understand what best serves our own blood sugar balance, we must first learn what the ideal protein-to-carbohydrate ratio for our particular body type is, and then what regenerative foods help us maintain it. Once we get this balance right, our blood sugar stabilizes, harmonizing our pancreatic activity and letting the body keep its inflammatory defenses for when it really needs them.

As we remove excess sugars from our diet, we need to replace them with high-quality fresh foods. Adapting to a consistent diet of wholesome foods helps us strengthen our spleen and digestive function and purify our blood. This, in turn, balances our appetite and energy over time, and allows our sugar cravings to relax and eventually disappear.

During this transition—as always—we should feed our body like a lover, and offer it nature’s most qi-rich nutrition: green, living foods (including seaweed), fresh fruit, and lots of raw green vegetables and sprouts. Come to enjoy the true flavor of real foods, including the sweet ones, in the proportions that are right for you.

If you have particular trouble keeping your blood sugar levels stable even after transitioning to a diet higher in natural food, try consuming a lot of raw and steamed vegetables and green drinks with small portions of fruits, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and other high-quality protein foods. When you need a powerful protein source in the short term, try chicken and fish.

BLOOD-HEALTHY FOODS

Algae
Nuts and seeds
Whole grains
Brown rice mochi
Royal jelly
Organic chicken
Gelatin
Deep-sea fish
Blackberries
Green vegetables
Apples
Raw green smoothies

When switching your diet from one high in junk carbohydrates to one rich in fresh foods, you will probably notice you are a bit hungrier at first while the body adjusts. This is perfectly natural. Still, be careful not to starve the body. Keep the body fully nurtured, while maintaining the edge of economy. From time to time you can consume greater quantities of food than you would normally as a form of regenerative feasting: The body will be able to absorb an even higher amount of nutrients if the digestive system has been toned and periodically rested through fasting and times of light eating.

A big part of making this transition is becoming more conscious of everything we put in our mouths. This means checking the ingredients on things we buy, and coming to understand, through observation and experience, how sugars and carbohydrates affect our particular bodily balance. Unfortunately, it is not as simple as taking the “low-sugar” or “low-GI” option, or even shopping in the health food section. (These days, even many foods from the health food stores are full of cane juice, a potentially harmful form of sucrose.) Instead, it is a matter of finding your own balance through maximizing your intake of regenerative foods.

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

Compared to what you might be used to, this diet may seem bland at first glance. Over time, though, as you transition from the cheap hit derived from concentrated sweeteners and junk carbohydrates, you will begin to discover the joys of eating real food. But the primary benefits will be in your renewed health. Time and again, this kind of neutral nutrition has worked wonders with my clients, clearing inflammation, purifying the blood, and quickening the healing process. And you should not have to wait too long to see results: The positive effects of making this change can usually be seen within a matter of days. As we become restored to balance, the skin begins to glow, and the body becomes more and more capable of healing itself. In women, the ovaries start to thrive; for men, the qi becomes strong and balanced. In the longer term, this diet helps us preserve precious muscle tissue as we age and get more in touch with our etheric and deeper feeling.

To take the sting out of the transition, and to give you something benign to focus your energies on, you can try complementing the dietary change with conscious exercise and tonification therapies. Do what you can to magnify the restorative effects that the change in diet is having on your body. The more you do, the less likely you are to go back to your old patterns.

It may be a difficult adaptation for a sugar lover to make, but its progressive rejuvenating effect should help you ride the first few bumps and begin to enjoy its many pleasures.

DIGESTION AND THE BLOOD

In TCM, digestion function and the blood are closely intertwined. Our digestive systems, which involve the combined efforts of the spleen, stomach, and liver, are built to extract the life-energy from food the body needs to nourish and sustain itself. After extracting the qi and essence from our meals, the digestive system then has to ferry those raw ingredients off to the right places so that the body can make blood. If we let our digestive system weaken, this supply drops off, and the quality and quantity of our blood quickly suffers.

Keeping the digestive system strong is a matter of maintaining

strong spleen, liver, and spleen function. These three organs share a unique cooperative relationship: The spleen, which is responsible for processing the food before it makes it into the stomach, is the source of the digestive energy centered in the abdomen. It, in turn, is directly affected by the liver, the body's most temperamental organ. The liver immediately reflects all our stresses, our emotional difficulties, and our indiscretions. When the liver becomes toxic, stressed, constrained, depressed, or over-active, stomach and spleen function are quickly undermined, seriously affecting our digestive function.

You may have noticed that when you are stressed or full of anxiety, you have trouble with your digestion. Physical and emotional difficulties, as we learned in the last chapter with anger, often affect healthy liver function. If the liver gets too stressed, it starts to over-heat, causing inflammation to invade the gut, disrupting digestion, and creating further problems in the stomach and spleen. A chronically stressed liver can become like a little furnace in the chest, burning up with all the life-force trapped inside. Once this cycle begins, the excess heat suppresses the spleen, compromising blood production and circulation.

This cycle of liver and spleen dysfunction lies at the root of many of the gynecological problems that women suffer. Once the spleen is weakened, it becomes difficult for the body to produce enough blood, and the blood it does make becomes toxic as the liver's detoxifying powers weaken. To truly cultivate the blood, then, we need to keep our liver and spleen as healthy and unburdened as we can.

THE ANCIENT SPLEEN AND STOMACH SCHOOL

Li Dong-Yuan was a founder of TCM's Spleen and Stomach School, a branch of TCM that traced the root of many seemingly complex diseases back to poor stomach and spleen function. A brilliant medical theoretician and clinician, Li observed the negative effects of poor diet and reactive emotions on digestive function in patient after patient, describing in detail the various patterns of disharmony

he saw. The gut, according to Li, was the origin of most of their problems. Advocating right living and the use of herbs, Li pioneered a unique healing approach that eliminated serious patterns of imbalance by bringing harmony to the digestive organs.

Every day, practitioners of TCM around the world continue to prove the efficacy of Li's theories. According to Li, by staying attentive to these precious organs—our “granaries of life,” as he called them—the digestive system starts to thrive. And when the digestive system thrives, he found, so does the body. As with all our bodily systems, though, taking care of our digestive function involves much more than the physical.

For some, life can be a kick in the gut. I have seen people become so shut down and closed in the abdominal region that they can barely digest their food. Usually, these people have endured a great deal of emotional stress and shock. Many have tried to limit their feeling in order to protect themselves from further pain, sometimes to the point of total numbness. Sadly, this attempt to armor themselves only causes more pain by closing and tightening the midsection and contracting the liver, stomach, and small intestine. When you place your hands on such people, you can feel the hardness of all their emotional energy trapped underneath the skin.

Ultimately, we cannot truly armor ourselves against life, because we are not separate from the process that is life. We *are* life; there is really no other place that we can go.

Problems of this kind—rooted, as they often are, in serious emotional wounds—can be difficult to treat until the person takes some responsibility for relaxing the knots and letting the body open up again. In time, treatment should involve helping them to love again and restoring them to feeling. Only then can the spleen and stomach truly flourish. In the beginning, though, touch therapies are often effective: Acupuncture, Network Chiropractic, and *Chi Nei Sang* (a form of deep organ and qi massage) are all excellent for opening the body.

Herbal medicine is another extremely useful option for treating disharmonies of the liver and spleen. TCM has complex formulas that restore liver function, strengthen digestion, and tonify blood production, many of which are the same combinations devel-

oped years ago by Dr Li. An integral part of TCM for hundreds of years now, these formulas have been proven to be as safe as they are effective. A skilled practitioner of naturopathy and Western herbalism can also often help with liver and spleen imbalance.

LI DONG-YUAN'S RULES FOR
NURTURING THE SPLEEN AND STOMACH

Do not overeat.

Economize thinking and speaking in order to nurture the qi.

Minimize your desires.

Be modest and do not seek the attention of others. This protects the heart.

Protect the body from cold and wind.

Do not over indulge in cold drinks, they weaken digestive energy.

Refrain from eating too much salt, it can damage the kidneys.

Keep serene and quiet in the face of life's changes and keep the natural laws.²²

The digestive system is the center of nourishment in the body, and it functions best in those who are open to receiving life. We should eat well, in happiness and peace. The digestive system should purr and hum, allowing us to enjoy our food, metabolize it completely, and then convert it into blood.

CHAPTER SIX

A Balanced Nervous System Awakens the Soma

In 1972, I returned to the town of New Paltz in upstate New York, my time in the military finally done. I had been drafted into the army just days after finishing college, and now I was back, wandering aimlessly, with no idea what to do. I felt lost, disturbed, and directionless. I was in shock.

My time in the military had been a major emotional and spiritual ordeal, but through grace I had been able to survive it. Seeking a return to happier times, I wandered back to the scene of my old college friends, who invited me to come and visit them in the country.

On a beautiful summer day, I drove over the Hudson River to Stone Ridge, New York, to the lovely cottage my friends were renting there. The cottage dated back to the 1800s, and was originally part of a large estate with a mansion that had long since burned down. As it turned out, this spacious and beautiful old building had been home to the Indian adept Swami Vivekananda during his time of living and serving in the West. A great realizer and transmission teacher from the Vedantic school of India, Vivekananda spent a good deal of his short life instructing students in the United States and Europe, where he was the first Hindu teacher to take on Western devotees.

Late in the nineteenth century, Vivekananda made the bold move of initiating the first Western woman into a previously all-male Eastern renunciate order in the very house my friends were renting. Pulling into what had been his home, though, I knew nothing of this saint, nothing of the profundity of what had transpired inside those four walls.

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

Vivekananda's bedroom was situated at the back of the cottage, and was regarded, my friends said, as a special place. The lease made certain provisions outlining the sacred nature of the room, prohibiting anyone from living there. Over the years, the tenants had used the room for healings of all kinds, making use of the room's remarkable energy to restore life to plants, pets, and people. Shortly after I had settled in, one of my friends suggested that I might want to sit and meditate in there for a while.

As I sat on the floor of the great adept's small bedroom, I felt immediately touched and embraced by a powerful presence that seemed to come out of the walls and ceiling. The longer I sat, the more it became clear to me that my disturbed state was rooted in a nervous system disharmony, one that I had been unable to remedy on my own.

As I continued to sit, I felt my nervous system calm down and begin to harmonize, dropping me into a feeling of deep peace and happiness, a state I had not known for a very long time. Finally, a bright light from above somewhere seemed to lift me up into delicate visions of vibrating colors and shapes. It was an exquisitely sweet and happy experience.

After twenty minutes of quiet contemplation in the great sage's bedroom, I had become gracefully restored to my ease, just by walking in and sitting down. All I had done was relax, allowing myself to stop and feel the place. Whatever touched me there had been in the room itself.

This experience of the Swami's tangible grace, his calming of my nervous system without any apparent effort on my behalf, was my first real healing contact with a great Second Grade transmission school, and the beginning of my own real investigation of the possibilities of rejuvenation.

HARMONIZING THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

In a sense, the universe is a chaotic place, an infinite sea of information competing for our attention. This is especially true of modern times, where our senses are being bombarded like never before by stimuli of all kinds. To process this constant torrent of information,

our physical machinery is wired from head to toe, its circuits humming with electronic impulses from birth until death. To prevent us from becoming overloaded, the body uses its sensory organs to process all these different messages, before transferring them into the central nervous system deep in our bodies. While these messages are being sent, the central nervous system is sending its own messages out to the body, initiating movement in the muscles and bones. This autonomic system never stops, operating independent of our conscious awareness twenty-four hours a day, keeping all our organs, all the machinery that supports our life, running.

The autonomic nervous system is divided into two parts: the parasympathetic, which inhibits and relaxes heart rate, and the sympathetic, which accelerates the heart. Both systems respond to the hypothalamus, the body's control center in the lower brain. A tireless worker functioning without any help from our conscious minds, the hypothalamus never stops running. It literally keeps us going: If it stopped, so would we. One of the hypothalamus's main jobs is to measure the amount of oxygen the body takes in and feed this information to the nervous system, which can then regulate the heartbeat and the breathing, speeding them up or slowing them down as needed.

On average, we breathe about twelve times per minute, whether we are awake or asleep. At times (if we are meditating, for instance), we tend to breathe less, while at other times (like during physical exercise), we tend to breathe more. Over the course of a single day, we inhale and exhale more than 8,000 liters of air.

But there is more to all this breathing than we think. With every breath, the body absorbs not only oxygen, but the essential etheric or pranic qi energy within it—the very stuff of life. This qi is then transferred into the blood while the body disposes of the carbon dioxide, the waste gas of the human combustion engine.

With such a heavy workload, the last thing we want to ask the nervous system and the lungs to do is to work harder. But when we allow the blood to become toxic, these organs have no choice. As carbon dioxide and toxin levels increase, the nervous system must respond in kind, speeding up the heart rate and respiration in order to maximize oxygenation of the impure blood. Only once we get rid of these waste products can the respiratory and nervous systems

begin to relax and restore themselves to ease. In this sense, the harmonizing of the nervous system represents the second great stage of bodily rejuvenation, directly following—and reliant upon—the cultivation and purification of the blood.

Along with keeping the blood pure, we need to restore sanity and balance to our lives. And we do this not by ingesting powerful prescription drugs, but by allowing the body the rest and recuperation it needs to heal itself. If we let our lives get too stressful, our autonomic nervous systems, forced to do too much, become imbalanced, leading to a domino effect of physical symptoms. First, the overworked nervous system starts to generate heat in the liver, gallbladder, and heart, thereby stimulating our conceptual minds while stressing the body's critical tissues. Responding to the stress, our sympathetic systems go into overdrive, constricting our breathing and causing our heart to beat too fast. The body begins to conform itself to our stress, with the muscles tightening and contracting. Eventually, the overstimulated mind begins to overheat the brain itself.

It can be a difficult cycle to break. As our systems begin to break down, the body starts to secrete stress chemistry, further weakening our defenses. Sensing there is an invader in the system, the body triggers its defense mechanisms, which respond by depositing acidic, hormone-like inflammatory substances into the tissues and fluids of the body, further exciting the nervous system and toxifying the blood. But in reality, there is no invader in the body, only this pattern of self-replicating stress. And the more we react to this negative chemistry in the body, the more harmful substances our glands secrete, creating, as Pandit Acharya, author of *Breath, Sleep, The Heart and Life*, writes, "havoc in the body and mind."²³ By this point, most of us are so out of balance that we begin to dramatize all kinds of negative emotions, further stressing our battered nervous systems. We are left worn out, unable to contact the native feeling of calm and fullness that ordinarily sustains us.

At any point, though, we can break this cycle. We can stop ourselves, we can breathe, regain our faculties, and begin the process of regeneration. The first thing we need to do is restore feeling. Feeling, as we have seen, is more than just emotion: It is our primary human faculty. In essence, we live from a deep feeling core of being, surrounded by the nerves and ganglia of the nervous system.

If we can exercise our feeling consciously, calming the breath and the body, we begin to contact this core at greater and greater depth, thereby allowing its profound depth of energy and peace to calm and quiet the nervous system and release any tension and disharmony. We naturally become stable, rested, and full, and a spring of healing and regenerative energy awakens in the body.

Truly exercised, feeling offers us a deeper awareness of our body's functions, allowing us to notice where we are out of balance, and giving us the chance to re-harmonize the body's systems before the stress cycle begins. And the more feeling develops, the more natural and intuitive this faculty becomes, and the more easily we can contact it. Throughout this chapter, we will take a look at a number of simple, pleasurable ways you can use feeling to restore your nervous system—and your life—to balance.

ROLLING ON THE RUG: WARM ROOM EXERCISES

The simple act of lying on the floor has a uniquely benign effect on the nervous system. Once we relinquish the standing posture and make ourselves supine, the body's natural healing impulse takes over, releasing knots and obstructions and calming the nervous system. We lose face, so to speak, when we lie on the floor, giving up much of the armoring that we take on in our upright life.

Spend regular time lying and exercising on the floor. Keep the room warm and comfortable, making sure that there is no chill in the air against which the body has to defend itself. Relax on your back, allowing the body to gently open and stretch along the spinal line.

Doing Hatha Yoga postures on a thick rug in a warm room is another particularly effective and enjoyable way to harmonize the nervous system. It also helps restore the body's flexibility. Try to relax into each posture, while breathing gently with deep feeling and allowing the knots to open and fall away. End each session with an extended period of deep relaxation on your back.

The breath is as exact, detailed, and complex a discipline as any we know today. But it is not in the annals of science and medicine that we discover its secrets. Instead, we must look to ancient Second Grade practitioners like the Northern Indian yogis, men and women whose pioneering experimentation with breathing remains as groundbreaking today as it was millennia ago. Understanding the connection between the breath and nervous system, these yogis developed specific breathing techniques to calm and harmonize the body through increasing their intake of oxygen. When the body is flooded with oxygen, the yogis found, it can purify toxic blood more quickly and efficiently than usual, freeing energy and attention and restoring the body's natural balance. (In addition to their breathing practices, the yogis maintained a simple, conscious diet that kept the blood pure, furthering the depth and effectiveness of their practice.)

The yogis found that, as their practice developed, the abundant oxygen they were able to take in allowed them to slow down—and even occasionally stop—the heartbeat and respiration. Both Paramahansa Yogananda, the founder of The Self-Realization Fellowship, and Swami Rama, the founder of The Himalayan Institute, demonstrated to Western scientists their ability to slow the heartbeat and respiration at will, placing their bodies in a condition of deep relaxation. Yogis have long maintained that this practice is more than just a technique to improve their health: They assert it actually allows them to increase their lifespan. As the heartbeat slows down, so does the body's metabolic rate, which means less wear and tear on the machinery—a claim supported by the recent scientific finding that each heart comes with a certain preprogrammed number of beats. The slower the heart rate, then, the longer the life.

We may not all be yogis, but the underlying principle of their practice remains true for all of us: The more we consciously cultivate the breathing, the more control we have over our health and longevity.

THE ANCIENT PRACTICE OF BREATH CONTROL

After my discharge from the military and my experience in Vivekananda's bedroom, I became hungry for spiritual instruction. In 1972, after a year of preliminary meditative practice, I was initiated by Swami Mokshananda into the practice of Kriya Yoga, an ancient form of *pranayama*, or life-force and breath control, handed down from teacher to disciple for hundreds of years.

The key to increasing the oxygenating capacity of the breath, I was taught, is the mouth. As novices in this technique, we lubricated the back of our throats with olive oil, allowing us to feel the sensation of the breath deep in our throats, and to become more conscious of its cycles. Taking extended inhalations through the mouth, we learned to quite easefully increase our atmospheric capacity.

One of the golden rules of breath control, we came to understand, is to never force or manipulate the breathing. With this in mind, novice students were granted an extended period of time—sometimes even years—in which to adapt to a full session of 108 *Kriyas*, or breath cycles.

My first twelve repetitions of the Kriya technique were subtle but impressive in their effect, slowing my heartbeat and respiratory rate and allowing me to deeply relax.

The more my practice deepened, the more I became obsessed by it. Adopting a minimal diet and abstaining from sex, I practiced the techniques for several hours each day, while on the weekends I would practice all day long. Over time, my capability to slow my breathing and heart rate steadily improved, allowing me to spend hours each day in peaceful, quiet meditation.

In time, Kriya Yoga helped me develop the ability to slow my heartbeat and respiration to the point where I began to enjoy deeply pleasurable periods of *kumbak*, or

suspension of the breath. I would typically feel strengthened and refreshed after such sessions. Over the years, the practice dramatically improved my health.

Nowadays, these same practices are offered not only as a means for improving health, but as a path to enlightenment. Could it be possible? Could we evolve that far just through controlling the breath? In my experience, there is no mere technique capable of liberating humanity from the self-involved habits of the ego, the deeper patterns to which we are addicted. But as a means for improving health, the science of Kriya Yoga—as proven by thousands of practitioners over hundreds of years—remains sound, a great example of the unique regenerative power of the breath.

No matter where we are or what we are doing, each of us can use the breath to harmonize our nervous system. Simply by consciously combining our breathing with our deeper feeling, we awaken one of the body's most powerful regenerative tools. This practice, known as “deep-feeling breathing,” is simply a slightly elaborated practice of more ordinary breathing, and it can be done almost anywhere. One of the simplest means to connect the etheric to the physical, deep-feeling breathing allows us to literally contact the Qi and light via our feeling to calm and heal the nervous system. In time and with practice, we can develop the ability to go even deeper than that.

THE REGENERATIVE POWER OF LOVE

Of all the ways to heal the nervous system and awaken the body's deeper chemistry, there is none more powerful or more profound than love. "Falling in love" is an apt description of how love affects us: True love quiets the nervous system, causing us to feel like we are almost falling into a deep, bright well of feeling, the kind that connects us sympathetically to everything. Love and our nervous system share a deeply symbiotic relationship: When the nervous system is harmonized, we unlock the love of our being; when we love, we harmonize the nervous system.

Love is the very nature of our being, and the best food for rejuvenation. Love, love-bliss, love of each other, love of our teachers, love of the world, love of God—whatever form it takes, love is the most effective healer we have, dissolving the pressures we place on our heart and restoring us to true feeling.

In our hearts, we all know this. In practice, though, we all know how profoundly difficult it is to love for real, and all the time.

It was essentially love that healed me in Swami Vivekananda's bedroom. Swami Vivekananda was a hero of love, and everything he did in his life remained there in the walls and ceiling of his room, decades after he had died. Truly awakened in us, love knows no physical or temporal bounds. It opens us to what is greater, to what is beyond our confined feeling, breaking down our defenses, our ordinary mind. Real love, as the great Tibetan Buddhist teacher and translator Chogyam Trungpa wrote, leaves us vulnerable and transparent, no longer sure where we begin and where we end:

When you awaken your heart in this way, you find, to your surprise, that your heart is empty. You find that you are looking into outer space. What are you, who are you, where is your heart? If you really look, you won't find anything tangible and solid.

Of course, you might find something very solid if you have a grudge against someone or you have fallen possessively in love. But that is not the awakened heart. If you search for awakened heart, if you put your hand through

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

your rib cage and feel for it, there is nothing there except for tenderness. You feel sore and soft, and if you open your eyes to the rest of the world, you feel tremendous sadness. This kind of sadness does not come from being mistreated or because you feel impoverished. Rather, this experience of sadness is unconditioned. It occurs because your heart is completely exposed. There is no skin or tissue covering it; it is pure raw meat. Even if a tiny mosquito lands on it, you feel so touched. Your experience is raw and tender and so personal.²⁷

Real love, as Trungpa says, may leave us raw, but at the same time, it awakens within us that most sacred human virtue: compassion. Compassion gives us the ability to feel the sufferings and pain of others, to have a feeling relationship to the world around us. Compassion is a profound virtue, the sign that our feeling has broken free, and it heals and restores our nervous systems, opening the deepest springs in our bodies.

Unlocking the Secret Spring of the Endocrine System

The ancient sages of China founded an entire medical system on one essential observation: The body, when brought into a profound state of balance and equanimity, heals itself.

In many ways, this wisdom has been lost to us. So much of the focus of modern medicine is on our *being* healed—by technology, by doctors, by medicines, by anything but ourselves. When we go to the doctor with an illness, it is almost as if we are making an admission that we have given up on the body’s capacity to heal itself. As “patients,” we become passive participants in our own health, reliant on medications and sophisticated treatments to get better. Too dependent on being “cured,” we have forgotten about the body’s native intelligence, its remarkable capability to restore itself to balance and equanimity.

Once we begin to cultivate the body’s regenerative capabilities, we suddenly have tools at our disposal far more powerful than any conventional treatment. And among the body’s tools, there is none more powerful than our own endocrine system, a system so advanced and intuitive that it can literally perform miracles.

A network of glands set deep in the body, the endocrine system’s pathways of little “secretor fountains” are the very means by which the energy and essences of nature are converted into the hormones and emotions of human life. Our hormones, which are produced and secreted by small clusters of specialized cells, act as the endocrine system’s chemical messengers, helping to regulate our moods, growth and development, our bone growth, tissue function, and metabolism, as well as our sexual and reproductive functions. These endocrine secretions also carry our body’s qi, delivering it to wherever the body needs it.

In essence, the endocrine system is where the messages and motions of bodily life are produced. This incredible system, which is responsible for regulating so many essential parts of the body, has a reach that extends to literally every cell within us. This unparalleled reach, combined with its immense capability to effect change across the spectrum of human functions, makes the endocrine system home to the body's most profound regenerative potential. Once we unlock its deepest chemistry, as we will see in this chapter, we uncork the secret spring of the regenerative life.

MIRACLES AND ENDOCRINE SHIFTS

For almost 150 years, the waters of Lourdes, France, have been renowned for their healing powers. Famed for curing the incurable, the grotto at Lourdes receives millions of visitors each year, many hoping the waters can succeed where conventional treatments have failed. Since the Virgin Mary first appeared to a young girl there in 1858, thousands of miraculous healings have been reported—so many, in fact, that, in the late nineteenth century, the Catholic Church went so far as to establish a board, the *Bureau des Constata-tions Médicales* (forerunner of the *Association Médicale Inter-nationale de Lourdes*, the Lourdes Medical Bureau), to examine and rule on the claims.

The vast majority of claims, the Bureau maintains, do not meet their strict criteria. Still, in spite of the Bureau's stringent guidelines, sixty-seven cures have been declared to be truly miraculous and divine.²⁸ In addition, approximately 2,500 cases remain unexplained.²⁹ If we add to that number all those who have left the grotto feeling happier and more restored to health, we begin to get a sense of Lourdes's sizable body of healing testimony.

In his book, *The Healing Power of Faith*, American writer Will Oursler tells the story of the miraculous healing of the

Flemish laborer Pierre de Rudder at Lourdes. An extraordinary story of the body's capability to regenerate itself, de Rudder's healing provides a great insight into the powerful genius of the endocrine system.

In 1867, de Rudder was struck by a falling tree, fracturing his lower left leg. Despite intensive medical treatment, the wound became infected and would not heal. To make matters worse, a large ulcer developed on his foot. Having exhausted other treatments, physicians finally removed a fragment of bone from his leg and recommended amputation, telling him it was the only way they could relieve his pain. But de Rudder, believing there was a way to heal it, refused.

Amazingly enough, de Rudder endured the pain of his condition for seven more years. In 1874, he returned to the doctor, this time to Dr. van Hoestenbergh of Stahille, who performed a thorough examination, confirming the severe cellular damage de Rudder was suffering:

De Rudder had a wound on the upper part of the leg, at the bottom of the open wound could be seen the two ends of the bone about an inch apart. There was not the slightest appearance of "cicatrization" (growth of scar tissue that proceeds healing). The lower part of the leg could be turned in any direction. The heel could be lifted so as to practically fold the leg in half. The foot could be twisted until the heel was in front.

Finally, on April 7, 1875, still unwilling to amputate, and wracked with unbearable pain, de Rudder set out on the difficult journey to Lourdes, determined to appeal to higher sources for healing. Once at the waters, witnesses recounted, de Rudder limped in and was promptly healed on the spot. "The bones which had been separated by almost an inch were suddenly joined," his confounded doctor later wrote. "The bleeding had stopped and infectious matter was gone."³⁰

All this in an instant! A full medical examination confirmed the miracle.

De Rudder lived happily for another twenty-three years, finally succumbing to pneumonia at the age of seventy-five. Shortly after his death, Dr. van Hoestenberghé inspected de Rudder's body again. De Rudder's broken bones, he observed, had been bonded by the regeneration of new bone, which appeared whiter than the other bones in the leg. The bone regeneration, the doctor concluded, "could not be explained on natural grounds."

Though it precedes the establishment of the Bureau by several years, de Rudder's well-documented healing nonetheless fulfils all their strict criteria: De Rudder's horrific injury showed evidence of bio-chemical degeneration and dysfunction; the cure held for more than a year; the transformation was sudden; and there was no plausible explanation for his healing. De Rudder's miraculous cure, like so many of the others that have occurred, boggles our scientific minds, our understanding of what our bodies can actually do. How could this be possible?

While an extreme case, de Rudder's healing can be explained in terms of what we know about the body's capability to regenerate itself. Bone growth, which is driven by the secretions of our endocrine system, continues into our adult years, allowing us to form new bones and heal fractures at almost any age. The spontaneous healing of de Rudder's bone, it seems, would have required an extraordinary and sudden secretion from his pituitary gland and testes. Something in the water—or even, perhaps, in de Rudder's open and vulnerable state—must have allowed an infusion of Light and qi into his body, awakening his deepest regenerative chemistry and allowing his endocrine glands to accomplish the seemingly impossible in a matter of seconds. A remarkable healing, de Rudder's story remains a stunning example of the endocrine system's capability to restore the very cells of our body.

ginseng, calcium and magnesium. There are plants that wake us up, plants that stop our pain, plants that put us to sleep.

Ancient cultures commonly used the Earth's vegetation for healing. But the doctors of ancient China took this a step further, noticing that it is possible to replace what the body has lost by transplanting the same energy found in nature, a treatment they dubbed "tonification" therapy. Certain plant and animal substances, they found, possessed the ability to dramatically raise the kidney pulse and energize the body. These tonics, it is now understood, are perfect for tonifying the endocrine system.

The best endocrine tonics are made from plants whose qi most closely matches the qi in our own bodies, whose watery essences are almost the same as our own. These pure, naturally occurring essences are taken in their original form, replete with the innate intelligence of nature. Having not undergone any processing or manufacturing, their molecules and atoms remain unaltered and intact, making them the Earth's premier endocrine fuels.

FINDING YOUR FUEL

So which of these fuels should you use? The first step in choosing the right combination of endocrine tonics for your health is a proper, accurate diagnosis of the patterns of imbalance in your body. What bodily systems are affected? Which organs are weak? In most cases, getting an accurate diagnosis will involve heading to a qualified experienced TCM doctor or naturopath. After diagnosing what particular patterns are in play, the doctor or herbalist can then help you choose the proper combination of elixirs you need to restore the body to balance.

There are some elixirs, like kidney tonics, for example, that can and should be used by a wide variety of people. (Kidney tonics are recommended for pretty much everyone over the age of fifty. They are also useful for young people experiencing enervation and immune dysfunction.) Other tonics are particular to different constitutions and patterns, and should only be used in conjunction with the advice of a trained herbalist. In each case, the best time to

take these tonics is when we are relaxed and rested and, ideally, when the blood is pure.

Occasionally, I take a potent tonic “cocktail” and enter into meditation. In such a state of rested sensitivity, it is possible to feel the herbs begin to awaken the body’s deeper chemistry, and even to direct this energy to the particular parts of the body that need it.

Tapasviji Maharaj, the great ascetic in his Indian mountain cave, was doing the same, albeit on a deeper level. When advanced Second Grade practitioners like Tapasviji settle into those long and deep meditations, it allows all the body’s reserve qi to flow in abundance back into the glands. It is then that our endocrine systems begin to glow. In the process of Tapasviji’s kaya kalpa, as in Taoist rejuvenation regimes, this reserve qi—the secret elixir of the Himalayan yogis—is combined with the Earth’s best endocrine tonics to maximize the regenerative effect.

The story of Tapasviji’s kaya kalpa treatment is a great example of the efficacy of these tonics, and the process of rejuvenation altogether. Allowing the body to come to rest, and with a dedicated doctor watching over him, Tapasviji entered into a profound depth of rest and balance. As his regenerative chemistry awakened, his heart became rested and rejuvenated. His blood was cleaned and purified, and his nervous system profoundly harmonized. In the end, his endocrine system woke up, secreting the elixir of life.

SOME POWERFUL ELIXIRS FROM THE EARTH

Panax Ginseng

Rehmannia glutinosae

Fructus Lycium

Cistanche deserticolae

Morinda officialnalis

Curculigo orchoidis

Dipsacus asperi

Cuscuta chinensis

Withania somnifera

Dioscorea oppositae

Polygonum multiflora

Deer Antler

Epimedium grandiflorum

Psolorea corylifoliae

Eucommia ulmoidis

Drynaria fortunai

Turnera diffusa

Instead of trying to balance the hormones, TCM instead endeavors to optimize all the body's functions. When all the organs run with intensity and in harmony with one another, health and hormonal balance are the natural result. To help the process along, TCM uses a number of potent kidney tonics, pure endocrine fuels that work to restore the regenerative hormonal chemistry in the body and maintain it over time.

In contrast, the medical industry and the pharmaceutical companies maintain that we cannot rely on our bodies to take care of our hormones. Endlessly tinkering with the body's chemistry, modern medicine is essentially attempting to supersede the endocrine glands with ever more complex combinations of processed and synthesized hormones. It is an almost impossible task: Each person's hormonal needs differ according to a number of greatly variable factors, making it extremely challenging to get the dose and combination correct. Moreover, there are some hormones and secreted substances that we have yet to isolate and reproduce. Essentially, hormone prescriptions are a guessing game, and one that can have real consequences. If a hormone dose is too much or too little, or of the wrong kind, it can throw the body's chemistry into havoc. Take the hormone estrogen, for instance. When estrogen is not properly balanced by another hormone, progesterone, the chance of the body suffering a tumor greatly increases. Simply by not being balanced by another hormone, this otherwise wonderful, life-serving hormone can actually cause disease. Furthermore, there are the side effects of hormone replacement, many of which can still affect us even when the doctors manage to get the dosage right.

When we introduce synthesized hormones into the body, the endocrine system, which is responsible for their secretion and regulation, becomes lazy and weak, seriously damaging our body's capability to regulate and restore itself. And once we stop taking them, it can be difficult to get the glands to kick back into action again.

Some years ago, I treated a woman who could not even stand up or get out of bed after stopping her hormone replacement therapy. In spite of several efforts to kick-start her endocrine system again through diet and herbs, she finally had to go back on the hormones just to function again. Happily, she is a rare case: Nearly

everyone can make a successful transition back from hormone replacement therapy with a little help from herbal medicine.

Underlying the practice of hormone therapy seems to be a powerful and misguided assumption: Our bodies are riddled with a few fundamental errors, it seems, and it is just a matter of time before medicine fixes them for good. Post-menopausal hormone replacement therapy was founded on the absurd assumption that menopause was a kind of terrible natural mistake that synthetic hormones could eventually cure. The birth control pill's marketing plan was to make women feel their natural cycles—and even their bodies themselves—were somehow flawed. Such thinking, to put it mildly, is dangerous and misguided. In reality, menopause represents a very natural, intelligent shift in a woman's body; one that, served rightly, can be regenerative in its effects. The birth control pill—initially introduced as a form of regenerative medicine—was supposed to finally liberate women from bearing the burden of contraception. Instead, it has created a host of imbalances that negatively impact women's health, often within a few years of use. If we really want to maintain our body's ability to look after itself, hormone replacement therapy should be employed as a last resort, and only once the many natural regenerative approaches have been exhausted.

There is nothing regenerative about going to war with our bodies. We need to embrace acceptance, understanding and tolerance. TCM is based on the Taoist principle that health and happiness are established through harmonization with all the changes in life and nature, in our bodies and in the world. Ultimately, health and happiness *is* harmonization—with our environment, the climate, with the particular stage of life that we find ourselves in. Only with this disposition can we achieve anything like true health.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Restoring Our Organs the Natural Way

THE REGENERATIVE POWER OF PLANTS

The relationship between plants and humans is as deeply intimate as it is utterly unique. The great mother of human life, plants have nurtured and sustained us with their essences and energies for as long as we have lived on Earth. Whether it be through the foods and medicines they provide, or their role in maintaining the air we breathe, plants are essential for our very existence. They are also central to rejuvenation: The perfect mediators of yin and yang, plants are full of the qualities and substances that make the regenerative life possible.

As Michael Pollan wrote in his excellent book *The Botany of Desire*, our evolution is closely woven together with that of plants. Over the many millennia of human history, plants have grown and changed in order to fulfill all kinds of basic human needs and desires: our yearning for sweetness, beauty, and health, even our desire for intoxication. Remarkably adaptable, plants can change their programming and processes from generation to generation in order to give us exactly what we want. We live from the bounty of a garden alive with living, serving plants.

This is not to say all the Earth's plants are sweet and benign—it is not all papayas and apples out there. But even the deadliest plants, when properly prepared, can serve life. Most of us know the old tale of the doctor who sends his students out into the countryside in search of substances without medicinal value: The wisest students, despite their best efforts, return empty handed. Everything on the Earth can have medicinal value for someone, some time.

This profound diversity—not to mention the untold wonders we have yet to discover—makes the rapid and unchecked destruc-

tion of the Earth's eco-systems all the more worrying. As our exploitation of the Earth's resources pushes the Earth's systems further and further out of balance, our happy symbiotic relationship with plants has begun to suffer. Many of the most helpful and useful plants are becoming harder and harder to find. As the world becomes more polluted, the very properties of the Earth's plants are beginning to change.

Still, wherever we find plants thriving, we can be assured that the regenerative chemistry of the Earth is thriving there too in some form or another. Even the homeliest plant growing in the harshest land contains the whole genetic pattern and chemistry of its own survival struggle. (And often, the harder this struggle is, the more potent the plant's healing energy: The healing oils of the lavender plant, for example, actually improve in poor quality soil.)

Ultimately, this regenerative chemistry of which plants are such a rich source is all around us. We find it in the oxygen-rich air and the invisible water vapor that plants feed upon, in the dripping, yin-rich essence of the roots, and in the tough protective bark that protects trees as they grow. It is all there, pushing out of the ground in the regenerative manifestations of sunlight and water, soil and air. Plants—feeding, transmitting all of it—just help make it palatable. And among the hundreds of thousands of plant species on Earth, there are some that offer the virtues of this chemistry in uniquely regenerative ways.

As we saw in the last chapter with endocrine fuels, there are certain plants in nature that are particularly rich in the qi, chemistry, and essences so fundamental to human life. Each of these plants serves the body in different ways, offering us an almost infinite wealth of remedies and combinations for every kind of imbalance and dysfunction. In this chapter, we will be looking at the specific plants that serve the strength and function of the body's organs, and how, through natural means, we can serve each organ throughout the various stages of life to ensure our health and longevity.

The organs, as we have seen, are the body's machinery, doing the hard work that keeps the body running. They reflect all our stresses and excesses, which means they are often the first part of the body to show signs of imbalance and disease. Thankfully, nature

offers us plentiful means to nurture and sustain our organs throughout life: There are plants for tonifying the liver, plants that purify the lungs, and plants that nourish the heart. These plants, which can be taken in the diet or in the form of herbal concoctions, minimize wear and tear on our organs, helping our bodies to head off the imbalances and degeneration that accelerate aging and bring on disease, keeping us healthy and vital well into old age.

HERBS, THE ESOTERIC DIET OF MAN

The regenerative chemistry of the body requires a broad range of nutrients, each in their proper proportions, in order to awaken and thrive. While we can satisfy most of these needs through eating an abundance of fresh, clean plant foods, there are times in life when, for whatever reason, our dietary intake is inadequate. Enter medicinal herbs. Full of essential energies, essences, and nutrients, herbs are nature's great healers, perfect for restoring the balance we need for well-being, healing, and rejuvenation.

Years ago, while traveling in the Far East, I took pity on a fellow traveler who had been nauseated and vomiting for days, giving him a couple of doses of a traditional formula I had thrown into my luggage as an afterthought. The digestive system, as this poor fellow was discovering, is delicately balanced. When we eat, the spleen raises up the extracted qi from the food while the stomach pushes the leftovers down through the organs to be processed. There is a lot that can go wrong, especially when we come into contact with substances the digestive system is not familiar with. The traditional formula I offered the traveler, known as *Pinellia Combination*, brought both these spleen and stomach functions back into harmonious play almost immediately. With an hour, the man was transformed, his bodily chemistry completely restored simply by taking this formula of six finely balanced herbs. Since that day, I have not left home without it!

Herbs are uniquely powerful things, and should not just be kept for when we are sick: If you are already in good health, the right use of herbs can open us up to higher possibilities of well-

liver do too much, it starts to become weak. Unable to cope with the workload, it lets the toxins out into the bloodstream, where we have seen the damage they can do. To keep your liver healthy, make sure your diet consists of fresh foods with plenty of good quality water, and is light on the alcohol and sweets.

As well as being the body's great cleaner, the liver is closely associated with the etheric body, which makes it a big player in regulating our blood, qi, and emotional life. It is also a key organ in our reception of the fundamental Light. One of the most sensitive organs, the liver registers all the emotional shocks we feel as we go through life, from the tiniest insult to the deepest wound of loss. Though we can minimize the negative bodily effects of emotion through the practices we looked at earlier, each of us feels a level of emotional shock simply by virtue of being alive. Even when life is at its best, and we are at our happiest, we are still always dealing with the underlying threat of mortality itself, the stress that everything we love, including ourselves, will one day come to an end. And our liver feels it all. The great teachers of pulse diagnosis used to tell their students that this stress, this fear of ending, is the reason they would never take a perfectly health liver pulse: The low-grade stress of a mortal life, they said, is always there to be felt.

When the liver registers a physical or emotional stress, it tightens and contracts, trapping energy and blood inside itself. Reactive emotions, which are often at the root of these stresses, also tend to inflame the liver, stagnating the qi and blood flow in the body. When this stagnation becomes chronic, the inflammation begins to move across the body, eventually moving into the heart channel. Along with poor diet, this pattern of stress inflammation, rooted in the liver, is one of the primary causes of heart disease, and a reason so many people struggle with their cardiovascular systems as they get older.

Fear and its attendant bodily tension particularly impact the liver. When the body is under threat, the muscles, fascia, and even the bones tighten and clench inward. This tension and contraction greatly impedes our energy and blood flow, constricting our air passages and flooding the liver with damaging fear chemistry. When the liver becomes tight and contracted, as it does when our bodies

are reacting to fear, we become cut off not only from the flow of qi and blood that sustain the physical, but also from the ascended energies and Light on which our higher growth depends.

So how do we serve the optimum functioning of this complex organ in our everyday lives? First, as much as we can, we need to encounter and transcend any chronic and unconscious patterns of emotional reactivity that are shutting us off to what is above, as we looked at in Chapter Three. A good way to get started is by engaging in conscious, loving activity, which has an immediate positive impact on liver congestion. Selfless service to others, in which the inward, self-serving gesture is released, helps to open the liver and restore free flow by counteracting the tendency towards bodily recoil and enclosure.

Qi Gong is another great means for releasing liver stress. In the practice of Qi Gong, the liver is softened and its tension released through the opening of the liver and the torso. Gently expanding and opening the arms, we relax and release our emotional and physical tension into the infinite feeling space in which we exist.

In early Buddhist orders, monks understood this need to release and open as an essential preparatory practice, one that helped to establish the proper disposition for receiving healing and Grace. As part of their routine, the monks would regularly perform full bodily prostrations, ceremonial enactments of humility that prepared them to receive what is greater than their own self-enclosure. Similarly, Adi Da Samraj instructs his devotees to begin each period of meditation with the practice of a specific opening and expanding *mudra*, or gesture—the offering of oneself to the Divine—and then a full prostration. This practice allows the devotee to open and release any self-consciousness, and to physically animate the surrender we need to receive the Divine transmission. Such a disposition directly works the liver, heart, and the emotional, feeling being.

Anything that serves the release of contracted emotion and stress will help the liver to relax and soften, whether it is conscious exercise, sex, meditation, massage, acupuncture, or happy, loving times with intimates and friends. The right combination of herbs can also have a great detoxifying and softening effect. The practice

The Heart

Primary Regenerative Principles:

Keep the circulatory pathways in the heart open and unobstructed.

Keep stress and inflammation off the heart.

With heart disease still the leading cause of death in the West, it appears that for all our knowledge, for all the sophisticated treatments and medicines we have developed, we are still not really sure how to take care of the body's most important organ. Heart disease is a completely preventable condition and a tragic sign of a world that has lost touch with its natural rhythm.

In physical terms, the underlying cause of most heart disease is obstructed blood flow. When we do not exercise the body enough, and we allow too many undigested fats to put pressure on the heart, it eventually gives out. On a purely physical level, preventing heart disease is really a no-brainer: Simply by choosing regenerative foods and maintaining a regular, restorative exercise regime—one that helps to flush out the system while nourishing the heart tissue and qi—we can quite easily head off the patterns of imbalance that result in heart disease. Counteracting the damaging stress chemistry that arises from our emotions and lifestyle altogether, however, presents more of a challenge.

In a world becoming more negative and destructive by the day, the heart can be subjected to some major punishment. We eat toxic food, breathe toxic air, think toxic thoughts. We do everything at a frantic pace, even when we are supposed to be relaxing. In such a hectic world, most of our hearts, weakened through stress, unhappiness, and lack of care, give out before their time. All our hearts wear out eventually, but they are designed to permit more longevity than most of us get.

The heart, for all its esoteric magnificence, is subject to the same laws as any machine: If we do not take care of it, constantly forcing it to work at high speeds, the heart wears out before its time. Each of us, on average, gets around 2.7 to 3 billion heartbeats in a lifetime. The more we rest the body and consciously exercise the breath, as India's ancient yogis so ably demonstrated, the more we get out of the heart's lifetime, greatly improving the quality of our lives in the process.

Stress, anxiety, hate, anger, worry, concern—all negative emotions exact a toll from the heart, forcing it to work harder. In the more extreme cases, these emotions can even be felt as a kind of trauma, setting off toxic chemical reactions that injure and weaken the heart muscle. Anxiety, for instance—a more and more common ailment these days—tends to irritate the kidneys, causing a secretion of adrenal stress chemistry that directly impacts the heart's rhythm and rate.

But it is not only the obviously negative emotions that can disrupt the heart's natural balance. TCM teaches that even too much joy can damage the heart. This “joy” they are talking about, though, is not the warm, happy feeling you feel when you are in love, or are enjoying time with friends. It is, rather, the kind of the agitated, hyperactive excitement we seek in our search for distraction and entertainment, the kind that stimulates our nervous system and hypes us up. It is a joy free of equanimity, free of true feeling. And in the end, it wears us out.

The heart thrives on the greatest qualities of human life: love, peace, and happiness. These qualities heal the heart, keeping it strong. The heart relaxes in the contemplative life, thriving during times of meditation, deep relaxation, massage, and conscious exercise. If we want to protect the heart, we must build periods of deeply quiet time into our life. If we conform ourselves too much to the superficial entertainments and stressful motivations of the TV world, as Pundit Acharya writes, our movements, lacking feeling, become a series of automatic, “jerky actions,” that break the natural rhythm of the heart.³¹ So turn off the insanity of the daily news, and let the mind and body relax in contemplation of its natural state. Let the brain and nervous system cool. Let the heart relax, rejuvenate, and smile. The more we learn to do this, as Pundit Acharya explains, the more we help the body release its natural soma:

The surest cure of all heart trouble is the smile of happiness. This smile is not the smile of a salesman, or of a social butterfly, to coquette the other fellow's heart, so that the other fellow will be beguiled and give a sweet response.

This smile must come out and rise out from every nerve cell and muscle cell of the body and the mind. This smile must be an explosion of the "Amiya" (the Nectar), in the cells of the body.

Here one must learn, once and for all, without any question or suspicion of inquiry or analysis, how to feel the thrill that one gets out of these smiles of the cells of the body. Cell smile and cell happiness will save your heart trouble.³²

HEART REGENERATORS	HEART DEGENERATORS
<p><i>Green vegetables and salad greens</i></p> <p><i>Brown rice</i></p> <p><i>Corn</i></p> <p><i>Millet</i></p> <p><i>Aduki and mung beans</i></p> <p><i>Brussels sprouts</i></p> <p><i>Apricot</i></p> <p><i>Watermelon</i></p> <p><i>Asparagus</i></p> <p><i>Beets</i></p> <p><i>Garlic</i></p> <p><i>Cucumber</i></p>	<p><i>Tobacco</i></p> <p><i>Excess alcohol</i></p> <p><i>Fried foods</i></p> <p><i>Caffeine</i></p> <p><i>Saturated fats</i></p> <p><i>Excess fats</i></p> <p><i>Excess dairy products</i></p> <p><i>Excess red meat</i></p> <p><i>Excess sugars</i></p> <p><i>Overly spicy and rich foods</i></p>

HEART MEDICINES		
<p><i>Vitamin E</i></p> <p><i>Hawthorne berries</i></p> <p><i>Ginseng</i></p> <p><i>Schisandra</i></p>	<p><i>Zizyphus seeds</i></p> <p><i>Biota seeds</i></p> <p><i>Safflower</i></p> <p><i>Brahmi</i></p>	<p><i>Reishi mushroom</i></p> <p><i>Poria mushroom</i></p> <p><i>CoQ10</i></p> <p><i>Angelica Sinensis</i></p>

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

balance right is a matter of varying and refining the diet, and making use of digestive herbals when necessary. As we get more in touch with the particular needs of our own digestive system, we can usually remedy any digestive imbalance with simple changes in diet. If your stomach is feeling dry and irritated, for instance, then the addition of raw food helps restore it to balance; if the spleen is too cold from too much raw food and is starting to create mucous, cooked food helps to warm it up. To find out more about how diet can serve your own digestive balance, see Appendix One.

SPLEEN AND STOMACH REGENERATORS	SPLEEN AND STOMACH DEGENERATORS
<i>Brown rice</i>	<i>Excess concentrated sweeteners</i>
<i>Squash</i>	<i>Excess spicy foods</i>
<i>Pumpkin</i>	<i>Excess carbonated beverages</i>
<i>Sweet potato</i>	<i>Extremely cold foods</i>
<i>Yams</i>	<i>Excess oily foods</i>
<i>Organic chicken and turkey</i>	<i>Too much food</i>
<i>Millet</i>	
<i>Onion</i>	
<i>Leek</i>	
<i>Garlic</i>	
<i>Black and garbanzo beans</i>	

SPLEEN AND STOMACH MEDICINES		
<i>Ginseng</i>	<i>Slippery elm</i>	<i>Dioscorea</i>
<i>Codonopsis</i>	<i>Meadowsweet</i>	<i>Coptis</i>
<i>Atractylodes</i>	<i>Comfrey</i>	<i>Scute</i>
<i>Poria fungus</i>	<i>Pseudostelleria</i>	
<i>Licorice</i>	<i>Vitamin B12</i>	

The Lungs

Primary Regenerative Principles:

Keep toxic vapors out of the lungs.

Keep the lung tissue moist but clear of phlegm accumulation.

Humans can survive for days without water, for weeks without food, but we cannot go more than a few minutes without taking in air through our lungs. The lungs are the bellows of the body, taking in the qi from the air and passing it on to the blood, allowing it to spark life in all the billions of cells of our bodies.

With each inflation and deflation, the lungs perform a host of crucial functions, circulating fluids throughout the body, opening and closing our pores, and helping a protective shield of qi to form and run along the surface of the skin. Known in TCM as the *wei qi*, this shield keeps out a whole range of toxins, viruses, and bacteria. Little known in the West, the *wei qi* is a critical part of the body's defenses, playing a major role in keeping us vital and free of illness.

The common cold and flu viruses, which are most active during the winter, usually get into our bodies via the lungs. Winter viruses tend to first inflame the bronchial tissue, before moving on to the lung tissue. This inflammation weakens lung energy, disrupts spleen function, and causes phlegm to get trapped in the breathing passages. As much as you can, try to take particular care of your lungs in the months leading up to winter, doing what you can to rejuvenate them through the practice of conscious exercise, relaxation, and right diet.

Because all our bodily organs work in such close harmony with one another, if we let one get weak, it inevitably affects the others. It is important, then, to understand our particular strengths and weaknesses, and to tonify our weaker organs on a regular basis. Digestive energy, for instance, directly supports lung function,

which means any long-term spleen and stomach imbalance eventually weakens the lungs. Taking care of the lungs, then, also means watching what we eat. Some foods can leave non-metabolized fluids, or phlegm, in the stomach. This phlegm then makes its way into the lungs, making them too damp. Particularly a problem in the winter months, lung dampness impedes the proper flow of lung energy and weakens our immune system. Dairy products commonly produce dampness in people, so be sensitive to their effect on you. If you start to notice blockage or dampness in your lungs after eating dairy or any other kinds of food, try and minimize them in your diet, especially in the lead-up to winter.

As we looked at earlier, of all the emotions, sorrow has the most degenerative effect on the lungs. Compromising our wei qi and weakening the lungs, sorrow lets viral pathogens work their way deep into the body, causing potentially serious damage to the lung tissue and core organs. Similarly, grief, if allowed to become chronic, tends to depress lung function, leaving us vulnerable to a host of bronchial diseases.

It is important to allow for sorrow and grief in our lives. But it is essential to release these emotions too, to let go of them. During periods of grief and sorrow, feel and breathe the native radiance of life and love as much as possible. Feel the sorrow inherent in life, but also release it, allowing free and regenerative flow in the body.

LUNG REGENERATORS	LUNG DEGENERATORS
<i>Peppers and chilies</i>	<i>Polluted air</i>
<i>Onions</i>	<i>Tobacco</i>
<i>Garlic</i>	<i>Chemical fumes</i>
<i>Ginger</i>	
<i>Horseradish</i>	
<i>Daikon</i>	
<i>Cabbage</i>	
<i>Seaweeds</i>	
<i>Barley and wheat Grasses</i>	
<i>Flaxseed</i>	
<i>Carrot</i>	
<i>Squash</i>	
<i>Pumpkin</i>	
<i>Broccoli</i>	
<i>Kale</i>	
<i>Watercress</i>	
<i>Pears</i>	

LUNG MEDICINES		
<i>Marshmallow root</i>	<i>Coltsfoot</i>	<i>Aster</i>
<i>Fritillaria</i>	<i>Ginseng</i>	<i>Stemona</i>
<i>Playcodon</i>	<i>Astragalus</i>	<i>Eriobotryea</i>

By the age of fifty, as our reproductive chemistry starts to slow down, everyone begins to show some level of significant kidney deficiency. A half-century of living in this world takes its toll on all of us, especially if, for whatever reason, we have not taken as good care of our bodies as we might have liked. Still, no matter how old we are or how much we have subjected our kidneys to, there is always a lot we can do to keep them healthy and strong.

Thousands of years ago, Chinese doctors noticed that when we enter into deep sleep every night, our body participates in a mini-rejuvenation retreat. As our bodies slow down and come to rest, so too does our functional machinery. Free of the demands of action, the body's energies and native healing powers are free to circulate, restoring us while we dream. There is no cheaper and quicker way to rejuvenate the kidney yin and yang—and the organs altogether—than high-quality deep sleep.

As profound as it is, though, sleep cannot do it all. As we age, we need to supplement our diet with natural herbs and essences. No matter how regenerative our diet has been, foods alone simply cannot maintain or restore the primal aspects of the body's deepest

YANG SUPPORTING KIDNEY FOODS	YIN SUPPORTING KIDNEY FOODS
<i>Walnuts</i>	<i>Barley</i>
<i>Chicken</i>	<i>Mung beans</i>
<i>Garlic</i>	<i>Kidney bean</i>
<i>Onions</i>	<i>Millet</i>
<i>Leeks</i>	<i>Watermelon</i>
<i>Black beans</i>	<i>Seaweeds</i>
<i>Salmon</i>	<i>Blackberry</i>
<i>Lamb</i>	<i>Sesame seeds</i>
	<i>Eggs</i>
	<i>Cheese</i>
	<i>Sardines</i>

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

organ. As we have seen, the most powerful form of natural help for the kidneys is tonification therapy. Kidney tonification serves to easefully keep the life-force vital and strong well into old age, and should be part of everyone's health practice as they enter their later years. Contact your herbalist or naturopathic doctor to consider the treatment that is best for you.

YANG SUPPORTING KIDNEY MEDICINES

Ginseng

Cinnamon

Aconite

Morinda

Eucommia

Damiana

Ashwaganda

Dipsacus

YIN SUPPORTING KIDNEY MEDICINES

Rehmannia

Lycium

Asparagus root

Ophiopogon

Anemorrhena

Phellodendron

Scrophularia

Rejuvenating in the Pleasure Dome

A new plague has struck the world. It is the cause of more than one of every four health complaints in the United States, the leading cause of death in Japan, among the top five reasons people call their doctors, and directly contributes to early death more than any other factor.

The lethal killer is not a virus or bacteria, although it severely weakens the body's defenses against these invaders. It is not the result of poor diet, lack of exercise, or failure to reduce stress. It is a lack of joy, the lack of sufficient daily bliss to bring about psychological and physical health, and I call it "Delight Deficiency Syndrome."³³

Paul Pearsall

The Pleasure Prescription

One day in 1976, while I was living in San Francisco, I became suddenly and seriously ill, coming down with an extremely high fever, nausea, and vomiting. Exhausted, I was left motionless in bed, unsure of what was happening to me. To this day, I am still not really sure what struck me down, whether it was a virus, or food poisoning, or even some extreme effects of emotional and spiritual purification brought on by the spiritual practice I had recently taken up in the powerful transmission company of Adi Da Samraj. Whatever its cause, it came, like sickness so often does, at the most inopportune moment, just as I had been invited to attend a teaching and transmission gathering with my Guru that weekend.

With the weekend approaching, it looked like I was not going anywhere. As my housemates prepared to head up north to the gathering, my condition only seemed to be getting worse. I

remained bedridden, feeling violently ill and still almost unable to move. Still, I did not relish the idea of staying sick and alone in the city, or checking into a hospital. So I asked my friends to carry me to the car and take me with them to the Mountain Of Attention Sanctuary. If I really was dying, I reasoned, it seemed to me to be a better place to go than a downtown hospital. Even if I could not make it to the gathering, I thought, I could at least stay on the Sanctuary and be nearby.

And so I dragged myself into the back of a Volkswagen Beetle, burning with fever and pain, struggling to keep the contents of my stomach in place as we traveled the winding road north to the Mountain Of Attention Sanctuary. After a few hours, we arrived, my friends helping me to my room before heading to the gathering in the nearby pavilion. After resting on the bed for an hour or so, I somehow found the strength to get up and make my way, inch by inch, along the walk to the gathering. Supporting myself with the hand railing, I took a step or two at a time, stopping after each for a rest. Finally, I made it to the entrance.

Pushing myself through the door, the ecstatic scene that confronted me could not have been more of a contrast to my bodily state: Men and women were dancing happily around the room, the air thick with bliss and delight, the sounds of laughter and happiness gently bouncing off the walls. Adi Da Samraj sat up at the front of the room talking with a small group of people gathered around his chair. As I hobbled in, he immediately noticed me. Pausing in his discourse, he looked directly into my eyes for a moment.

Suddenly, I could see an incredibly bright orb of Light above my head. Looking into it, I was graced with a vision of my esoteric anatomy: My body, I saw, was a great circuit through which that Light was trying to circulate and pass into and down. But its flow was blocked, obstructed by numerous knots in my bodily circuit. And my disease, I could see, was emanating from those very blockages.

The great master looked back at me once more, and then he looked above my head. Amazed, I watched as the knots unraveled, one by one, under the graceful force of his healing transmission. A few moments later, they seemed to be gone. I felt suddenly restored to life: healed, blissful, and full of energy. My posture changed, the

pains disappeared. My central equilibrium returned. I moved into a group of people and found myself happily dancing with them. Released into the native feeling of happiness and Light, all sense of disease had vanished.

Nothing shortens a human life more than chronic unhappiness. Love and bliss, true bodily pleasure, real happiness—they are the human's principal food, the primary and most effective medicine for everyone. Unhappiness, in all its many forms, short-circuits the body's chemistry, stressing our organs and stagnating the body's energy. Over time, it can create patterns of imbalance as profound as any we might get through improper diet or a lack of exercise.

Many years ago, I served as a health team member for a small church group. Though sweet and benign, they were living an essentially puritanical way of life, suppressing their bodily energy in order to conform themselves to their teachings. Over time, this suppression of energy caught up with them, and the community began to see abnormally high rates of disease and sickness. The women particularly suffered, always hormonally out of balance and full of gynecological complaints, some quite severe. Observing this pattern, I learned a great lesson about the importance of joy and happiness to basic health. I began to understand the deadly effects of suppressing basic bodily pleasure, even—and perhaps especially—when in pursuit of a great idealistic goal like enlightenment.

There is no reason, no justification, for denying our bodies their principal food. The body only truly heals and rejuvenates itself in a “pleasure dome” of life and love. This pleasure dome is the secret kaya kalpa cave, the miraculous healing water grotto, the place where our optimal regenerative potential is realized and unlocked. And its foundation is the great ancient healing secret, the underlying core of all true spirituality, philosophy, and medicine: Be full of love. Be full of love for each other and love for God. Be rightly disciplined and straight, but only in a way that serves your health and well-being, your compassion and feeling, your capability to live and love. Always be loose and relaxed, in communion, to whatever degree you can, with Light and love. Life in this pleasure dome combines us with the body's deepest regenerative powers, and changes our lives altogether.

THE HEALING SANCTUARY

Any man who gets up out of bed in the morning, puts on his clothes, and walks out the door is only asking for trouble.

Adi Da Samraj

Just a few feet out beyond our front doors lies the high-octane modern world, a place of ceaseless noise and color roaring past faster than we can take it in. It is a world dominated by male energy, an uncooled yang fire that each year seems to create more anger, war, and destruction. Left unchecked for so long, this excess male heat is beginning to alter and even destroy the very systems on which life depends. Viewed in terms of polarity, global warming, the Earth's current and perhaps most pressing crisis, is essentially an imbalance of yang energy, moving like inflammation through the body. War is the same. The Earth has a fever, as former American Vice President and environmental campaigner Al Gore likes to say. And it needs to be healed.

The healing starts with us. The yang fire of the world is not something lit by others, burning out of our control. In reality, this global pattern is merely a manifestation of what is happening in each of our own lives: the yang fire moving through the body, eventually consuming everything. Reversing this effect, in our lives and in the world altogether, is a matter of cooling and balancing ourselves with the deep yin of the regenerative life.

The yin is found in the pleasure dome of life and love, the deep peace of rest and retreat. Spending significant time in the pleasure dome cools the excess heat in our bodies and lives altogether, restoring our health and relationships to balance, giving ourselves and the world a better chance of a long, healthy life.

Bringing the yin's benign influence into our life begins in the home. As much as we are able, we need to try to set up a deep yin sanctuary where we live, somewhere we can go to rest and heal the effects of the mechanical yang world. This can be as simple as a room we can go to, a place that is undistracted by television and free of too much external noise, where we can do the Second and Third

Grade regenerative practices like conscious exercise and meditation in peace. Alternately, you can also go to this place regularly and do nothing at all, perhaps lying on a warm rug there and letting your nervous system come to rest as we looked at earlier. Each time you go to your pleasure dome, try to feel the natural balance being restored in your body, how the living essence of water is tempering the fire, awakening your regenerative chemistry. In its most profound form, as we will see in a moment, this pleasure dome practice lets the organs and nervous system unwind and come to deep rest, awakening the body's endocrine system and releasing its soma.

This practice, based as it is around doing very little, sounds simple. And it is. But in another sense, it is also very difficult, something few among us really know how to do. In our hectic, stressfully motivated world, the sacred art of the healing retreat has been largely forgotten. Our vacations are trips to theme parks, action-packed exercises in stimulation. Starved of real rest, we are becoming bored, worn down, and apathetic, unable to find the tether of the truly pleasurable life. It is time to stop, to cultivate real retreat. And it does not have to be for days or weeks, at least initially. Stopping during the day, allowing yourself some quiet, is a great place to start. There is never a bad day to stop and unwind. Doing so every day might just save your life.

And you do not have to do it alone. Loving intimacy is a kind of pleasure dome in itself. In the best intimacies, we can drop out for days together, simply luxuriating in rest, pleasure, and love. In the most healing of intimacies, we just enjoy the pleasure of each other. Very little in the ordinary sense gets done, but that is perfectly okay: We are allowing a much deeper process to go to work.

Try to cultivate these pleasure domes with others. Happy, loving families, true intimates, positive and cooperative clans: Wherever there are examples of benign human community, there tend to be also pleasurable healing spaces and homes. A wise clinician knows how this works. The best healers and doctors always create a peaceful, living space in which to receive their clients. Such small healing sanctuaries can have as positive an effect as the medicines and the treatments themselves. Sometimes just being in such a space can heal people.

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

Years ago, an elderly woman who had read about my work in a magazine showed up at my door carrying her portable respirator. She was close to the end, her circulatory system rapidly collapsing and beyond treatment. Her son, who accompanied her, was already beginning to grieve. The woman said she wanted to come inside, so I let her come in and sit down for a time. She sat in the office for an hour or so, simply and quietly, eventually coming deeply to rest. “I just needed to be here for a time,” she said as she left. “I am doing well now. Thank you. I am now going home to die.” As she left, it was clear that despite her condition, despite being so close to the end, she had, through the simple practice of retreat in a healing space, allowed herself a deep feeling of peace and well-being.

example, transmitted through a combination of music, ceremony, and herbs; the great yogis through communicating the energy of their own central nervous systems via their breath and eyes. In the company of a truly great adept, I have observed the brightness coming out of every pore.

A real master, these schools say, brings the Light into our body far more profoundly than we can on our own, not only teaching and instructing us, but accelerating and growing the very evolutionary physics of our being as well. The whole living chemistry of the body changes when we are touched by the Light from such a one, as it did for me at the Sanctuary all those years ago. When we allow ourselves to truly feel this Light, to surrender self-consciousness and fear in pleasure and love, the body relaxes and opens, unwinding from the top of the head to the soles of the feet. We become free of stress, threat, and worry, and we enter the purest pleasure dome.

We may not all have a teacher, or even be interested in spiritual practice, but the core of these masters' transmission, this native feeling of peace and stillness, is something vital to all of us. It restores sanity, health, and well-being, infusing our minds and bodies with the greatest human qualities. So how do we draw on it in our everyday lives? The best way to re-connect with this Light, which engenders the deep yin, is to go on retreat. Frequently recommended by traditional master healers as a transformative health practice, retreat allows us to drop our usual busyness and overactive mind and open ourselves to what is greater. Real retreat, in which we withdraw from the world of worry, social face, and distraction, allows us to draw from the same well as these great saints and masters.

THE REJUVENATION RETREAT

We cannot all be like Tapasviji, sequestered in a hut for weeks at a time. But we can follow in the great saint's footsteps, just by taking a conscious break now and then. One of the simplest ways to get well, retreat brings together all the things we have looked at so far—the purifying of the blood, the calming of the nervous system, and the awakening of the endocrine system—in a period of deep immersion in the yin, re-establishing the rejuvenative chemistry in our bodies like nothing else can.

Far from the sluggish and groggy feeling some people associate with it, the true yin is intense and strong, like the electric calm of deep meditation. True yin is the stillness that comes from deep relaxation, when the body and its organs are calm and quiet. When we truly rest in its deep water, the body responds by balancing the yin and yang, building new life-fires and restoring us to ease.

Retreat is a play of fire and water. Sunshine tones yang and water tones yin. So, without overdoing it, let your body feed on sunlight and water when you are on retreat. There is a reason the archetypal image of R & R is a deserted tropical beach: For most people, such places are ideal for rejuvenation. When choosing your retreat, be sensitive to your own constitution and stage of life: If you are a cooler body type, or are over fifty, take your retreat somewhere warm. If you fall on the warmer side, a more moderate climate is usually better. Wherever you are staying during your retreat, make sure to keep the living environment clean, conscious, and as quiet as possible.

Pleasurable eating is an important part of the healing retreat. Eat high-quality, organic raw and cooked food in the proportions that are right for you. Luxuriate in fruits and vegetables and other good foods. Retreat is not usually a time for fasting. Fasting tends to greatly magnify the purification phase, often setting off a host of distracting symptoms. If you want to incorporate fasting into your retreat process, consider doing the fast before going on retreat.

In the weeks leading up to your retreat, eliminate as much as possible all toxic foods from your diet. This helps minimize the discomfort that can accompany the stages of early purification. (If

your diet has generally been good, then you should not have to worry too much about detoxification reaction in the early stages.)

It is important to handle all your life business before the retreat. The more you are free of the daily stresses of life, the more you will be able to really drop out and relax. The rejuvenation retreat is time spent in the healing pleasure dome of life, and its mood should be totally calm and intensely pleasurable. There should be no agenda, only the deeply relaxed life of contemplation and rest.

Phase One

The Purification Phase:

Let the Liver and Heart Open and Unwind

The purification phase is all about magnifying the body's ability to release, and allowing any knots and obstructions to fall away. Over the first few days of our retreat, we start to observe a different level of motion as the speed of everyday life gives way to the unhurried pace of quiet and relaxation. As we begin to let go of our usual motions and concerns, the liver begins to soften and open. As it relaxes, the liver starts to do its most effective work, releasing stagnant pockets of qi and eliminating toxins in the blood, softening the front of the body and allowing the other organs to relax and open in response. Just by virtue of opening and letting go, the body begins to absorb and conduct more light and qi, beginning the process of rejuvenation.

In this early stage, as the body begins to free and conserve its qi, it is critical not to waste energy. Indeed, this principle should inform and guide your entire retreat. Retreat is a delicate play: While we need to enjoy ourselves completely, and to be moved by the impulse to pleasure, happiness, and enjoyment, we also need to

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

go beyond our tendency to waste the newly conserved energy through our usual patterns of agitated self-indulgence. We need to let the energy circulate and do its work. This can often mean adjusting to a new paradigm of pleasure, as we come to allow energy to flow rather than indulging in its dissipation. With this in mind, try not to indulge the degenerative orgasm during the retreat. Instead, if you can, refrain from sex entirely, at least in the purification phase. (If you are involved in Second Grade practices of yogic sexuality, you might find that you can intensify nerve energy and hormonal secretion through loving contact with a partner during retreat. While these practices can be beneficial, they are best saved until after the initial drop-out stage when the body's energies have had a chance to re-balance themselves.)

Allow the body to rest as much as it wants. Forget the daily news. Spend time simply contemplating happiness and the unity of all life. Allow yourself to become a devotee of happiness and love. Indulge in the excesses of optimism. Drop out and luxuriate in fundamental peace and happiness, worshipping the Light in the way that you do.

In phase one of the retreat, enjoy:

<i>Meditation</i>	<i>Good food</i>
<i>Sleep</i>	<i>Hatha Yoga</i>
<i>Sunbathing</i>	<i>Special rejuvenative formulas</i>
<i>Swimming</i>	<i>Walking and hiking</i>
<i>Massage</i>	<i>Deep breathing with periodic long exhalations</i>
<i>Good music</i>	
<i>Colon cleansing regimes</i>	

organ cell patterns for the better, clearing inflammation and repairing mucous membranes. As the organ system begins to purr, our energy and clarity increase, further promoting a sense of deep well-being.

This final phase of the retreat can be greatly enhanced through the use of herbal tonics, acupuncture, and tonifying massage. As Tapasviji and other great practitioners have demonstrated, rightly employed, traditional therapies can have profound—even miraculous—rejuvenative effects. If possible, consult with your naturopathic doctor or herbalist before (and, if need be, during) the retreat, working out what means you can employ to maximize the retreat's effectiveness.

Retreat is a highly individual matter: No two people will see the same results, even if they undertake the same retreat process. The results vary according to the intensity of application, our personal genetics, and the residual effects of our past lifestyle and health issues. Even so, no matter who you are or what your body's history, a real retreat will magnify your body's healing and rejuvenative power, allowing you a much greater sense of peace, calm, and health than you ever thought possible.

CHAPTER TEN

The Regenerative Effects of Sleep and Death

Sleep takes you to the only and true reservoir of life.

Pandit Acharya

*Breath, Sleep, The Heart and Life*³⁵

SLEEP: THE BODY'S DAILY RETREAT

There is no greater tonic in life than a good night's sleep. Fundamental to a long and healthy life, high-quality deep sleep is a kind of automatic meditation programmed into the body, allowing us to unconsciously rest in Light and bliss every night. In deep sleep, no matter what the stresses or limitations of our waking life, we all enjoy the advanced Second Grade experience, contemplating the quietude and peace at the core of our beings. As any insomniac knows, when you cannot sleep, when you are unable to drop into this deep place of quiet and rest, it is a kind of torture.

There is no one among us who does not need sleep. Even the happiest and healthiest of us can only endure seventeen or eighteen hours of waking life before they are confronted with an overwhelming need to switch off and close their eyes. So how much sleep do we need? When the body is functioning happily, and its systems are unburdened, most of us need between seven and eight hours sleep per night. The test of how much sleep is ideal in your case should be in how you feel when you wake up. When you open your eyes in the morning, ask yourself: Do I feel rested and refreshed? If you do, and you can manage this regularly, you are well on the way to a long and healthy life.

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

When we sleep, all the body's machinery slows down and rests. Our body temperature and blood pressure drop, and the breathing rate slows. As we cycle into deeper and deeper levels of rest, stress hormone levels begin to fall and the body begins to open, relax, and drop out. Sleep harmonizes the autonomic nervous system, permitting the body to come to rest in the pure core energy and qi of the central nervous system. In its deepest states, it even allows us to contact the fundamental Light.

Every part of our being, from the physical to the etheric and beyond, loves sleep. In deep sleep, our regenerative chemistry wakes up, strengthening and healing the body's organs and systems. After unwinding in the early stages, in the deepest sleep the body actually hibernates for a time in total peace, quiet, and rest. We let go, freed of our usual concerns, dispassionate, and at peace. That short period each night, that wonderfully oblivious respite, is the very place where the great spark and motion of life is hatched. It keeps us alive, refreshing our energy and allowing us to face the world again when we wake up.

The bliss of sleep should be carried through into your daily life. And this does not mean being a zombie—quite the opposite, in fact. Through cultivating our practice of meditation, we can develop the ability to deeply drop out while we are awake, allowing us to enjoy sleep's depth and benefits throughout the day. Sleep and meditation are deeply connected, which is why the morning is an excellent time to meditate. Meditating after we wake up, we move from the peace of deep sleep and carry that over into our waking day, keeping the nervous system calm and our stress levels low, giving our body the perfect start to the day.

GOING TO SLEEP

As the world becomes more stressful, and the pace of life exacts a bigger and bigger toll on our bodies and minds, many of us are becoming increasingly unable to enjoy regular deep sleep—or even sleep at all. While rates of insomnia and sleep disorders are on the rise, even those among us who usually sleep well are not getting as much rest as we need. In a recent study by the British Sleep Council, two-thirds of people reported getting less sleep than they did even a few years ago.³⁶ Any problem we have with sleeping inevitably spills over into the rest of our lives, altering our moods, robbing us of energy, and, in some cases, even leading to anxiety and depression. With this in mind, it is easy to understand the steady rise in our use of powerful prescription sleeping medications: We just want some rest, some relief from all the noise of our lives.

Sleep-inducing drugs, though, are only a quick fix. Far from providing a cure, they often actively prevent people from addressing the root imbalances that cause sleeplessness. Exploiting powerful centers in the brain, these drugs can actually prevent the body's regenerative chemistry from coming to life. While they can help provide some relief to people with chronic sleep problems, they should only be used sparingly, and as a temporary solution. When we go too long without regular, natural deep sleep, the body starts to break down, leaving us more susceptible to disease and degeneration. We simply cannot survive without good sleep.

So why can we not sleep? Primarily, it is because we do not let ourselves. For the most part, our lives are excessively extroverted and over-stimulated. Thinking, working, commuting, worrying, caring, fearing, wanting—the sum total of all we subject our bodies and minds to creates an incessant motion in our lives that overworks the nervous system and depletes the body of its calming yin essences. For most people, there is simply not enough time in the evening to bring all the motion of our lives to rest. Unable to get its releasing and unwinding done in the waking hours, the body is forced to do it when we should be asleep. When we try to come to rest, the body is too dry, under-hydrated, and deficient in blood and living essences for the yin to extinguish the yang and bring on deep, peaceful sleep.

Getting to sleep also becomes more difficult as we get older. In our later years, the yin levels in the body naturally decrease. This in turn causes the nervous system to go up a frequency or two, making it harder to come to rest.

And then there is that other drug: caffeine. As the world seems to require more of us every year, we increasingly turn to caffeine to keep up. There is barely a street corner in any major city in the world that does not have a coffee shop. In a sense, coffee keeps the modern economy running at the pace that it does. The drug of choice for writers and those who work early in the morning or late at night, caffeine stimulates and unbalances the nervous system, making it harder to get to sleep at night. When properly used, some caffeine-rich herbs can be beneficial. Still, if you want a good night's sleep, try to keep your caffeine intake to a minimum. If you do need it for some reason, use a milder form that has some health benefits, like green tea.

According to TCM, the body's qi cycles from organ to organ over the course of a twenty-four hour day. After midnight, the energy cycles to the liver, releasing all the pent-up stress and emotion from the day. This keeps the autonomic nervous system activated, stimulating dreams and shortening the body's pure, undistracted hibernation time. As much as you can, try to do the work of opening, unwinding, and releasing the day's tensions and stresses before you actually head to bed for the night. Releasing and refreshing the liver before you lie down to sleep can go a long way to helping you enjoy a full night of peaceful restoration.

In practical terms, this means consciously slowing our lives down much earlier in the day. At least several times per week, declare an absolute end to the yang activity of the day in the early evening and completely unwind. Allow at least four hours before bedtime on those days, and enter into a time of complete indifference to the concerns of your life. Drop out, quiet down, and give up stressful stimulations of the ordinary life.

The first thing to do as you begin the unwinding period is to hydrate the body. Calm and nourish yourself as much as you can. If you can, contact your herbalist for some yin-rich herbs to nurture and tonify the basal essence of your kidneys and liver. If you

DEATH: THE ULTIMATE REGENERATIVE RETREAT

Years ago, someone, while waiting to die, calculated that 35 billion human beings have lived and died on Earth. It boggles the mind: 35 billion people—more than five times the Earth’s current population—have come and gone, have loved and lost. And no matter what we try to do to fight it, we are next in line. Death is as much a part of the cycle of existence as birth. In a sense, it is a totally casual event on Earth: Beings are dying all the time. Eight thousand die each day just from air pollution.³⁷

It feels so fixed, so solid and real, this earthly life of ours. For most of us, it seems like it will go on forever, or at least long enough for us not to have to concern ourselves with death now. But death can come suddenly. One day we wake up, and it is the day we die. And when it is our turn, it only takes a few hours, a couple of days at most, for this whole conditional pattern—what we consider “Earth” and “life”—to change and disappear from view.

As a species, we have never really become comfortable with the fact of our own passing. Death, we feel, is the fundamental problem with life. It frightens us to our core. This primal fear, this never knowing how or when the end will come, becomes a stress that informs our whole life, an underlying sensation that lies at the root of all our reactivity. Thankfully, though, we can free ourselves of this stress, in life and in death. As we will see, this fear is less a fundamental part of being human, as many people think, and more an unnecessary by-product of a society that fails to understand the natural pattern of our appearance here. With the right approach, we can prepare for death, and we can understand it. Once we do, it becomes possible to make our passing—and the passing of others—a peaceful, even happy event.

ACCEPTING DEATH

Death, perhaps more than anything else, makes us uncomfortable. We do not like to talk about it, and we do not like to face it. So we try our best to get as comfortable as we can in this temporary, mortal shape, always shifting about, trying to get free of this fear that disturbs us so. This fear makes us think crazy thoughts, and even do crazy, sometimes destructive, things. It also makes us vulnerable, easy prey for clever people who promise us relief or quick salvation.

Most of us, though, just try to forget about death. It is an approach we inherit at birth, and one reinforced by the world. Just try to have as good a time as possible, the message seems to be, presuming that you will live a long and healthy life, and that death will occur at some other time far off into the future. It is a tough strategy to pull off, especially as we get older. For us to really make it work, we have to suspend reality, becoming oblivious to everything but what consoles and stimulates us. We could turn off the news, stay away from hospitals, and never read the obituaries, but we would eventually find out. There is just too much death around us.

For those people who cannot forget, medications are fast turning out to be the most popular alternative. The last few decades have seen an astronomical rise in the use of antidepressant medications all over the world. Now the most commonly prescribed drugs in the United States, antidepressants have become a \$21 billion a year industry.³⁸ But the real beneficiaries of this boom, it seems, are usually not the people who take the drugs, but the companies who manufacture them. A widely publicized recent study by the medical journal *PLoS Medicine* discovered what many people have long suspected: For many people, antidepressants are little more useful than a placebo, and they are really only effective for people with severe depression.³⁹

Manufactured antidepressants exert a profound influence on our essential brain chemistry, strongly increasing the brain's yang acceleration. For people with severe depression, this change in chemistry allows them to live a more stable, functional existence than they might otherwise enjoy. But with so few guards against their use—they are now even being prescribed to young women

with PMS—more and more people who probably do not need them are abusing them, often creating more problems than there were to begin with.

Antidepressants tend to deeply upset our higher psychic well-being, throwing the deeper anatomy out of sync. In doing so, these drugs often prevent people from getting a deeper diagnosis of what is affecting them. By covering the wound with a temporary bandage, people can blind themselves to the true root of the problem.

Whether we numb ourselves or try to forget, this fundamental psychic and emotional disturbance at the heart of our existence remains. But, thankfully, there is a cure, if not for death itself then at least for the stress associated with it—a way to understand death for what it is, and to not be made so crazy by it. There is a wealth of traditional and modern literature available on what the transition of death actually entails, some of it based on the wisdom of truly awakened beings. These works, which attest to the inherently benign nature of our passing, offer us a framework of understanding about the process, and a way to contact a depth in life that we can also enjoy in death. (*For a selection of some of these works, see the reading list at the end of this book.*)

We can also seek professional help. There are many health practitioners who specialize in helping people adapt to and deal with the challenges of the human ordeal by pointing people toward higher wisdom relative to the changes involved with death. But perhaps the greatest cure, as we will see, is at the hands of the transmission healers of humankind, those who have realized the perfect deathless condition and can impart that bliss to those who come to them, healing the heart of this fundamental stress.

THE REACTION TO DEATH

Many people today are familiar with the work of Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, a pioneer of modern death and dying education. Seeking to understand more about death, Kubler-Ross spent time with people when they were preparing to die, talking with them and their loved ones and observing their behavior. In several landmark books,

Kubler-Ross showed us what was actually taking place in the room when people die. In doing so, she outlined a number of stages people tend to go through as they face death—denial, anger/betrayal, bargaining, depression, and acceptance—that have now become part of the popular consciousness.

Denial, the first emotional response Kubler-Ross noticed in dying people, can be a hard one to get past. Many of us deny our own mortality in subtle ways throughout our lives, and it becomes an ingrained part of our approach to life altogether. When we get near the end, we can find it hard to face what is happening, even as the body starts to break down. When the doctors come to tell us that there is nothing more that they can do, our first impulse almost before we even think about it—is to deny it. “They must have made a mistake,” we think. “They’re actually looking for the guy in Room 35, not me.”

Fundamentally, denial is the refusal to feel and accept the real information about our circumstance: that something old is now ending and something new is about to begin. But when the end gets closer, when our body really begins to deteriorate, denial starts to give way. As the reality begins to sink in, we start to react, dramatizing anger and betrayal. Through our reactions, we are signaling that we are finally starting to get the message. Still, getting the message does not mean we like what is happening. In fact, we hate it. So we get angry: angry at God, the universe, the world, and the people around us.

It is not uncommon for some people to become filled with anger as they approach their death. Previously self-sufficient men and women find themselves suddenly helpless and infirm, the insult of the body breaking down and dying too much to bear. My father had been a rock of stability throughout his life. From my earliest memory, he appeared as the steady, stoic warrior, standing balanced and clear, taking care of his people when everyone else was in panic and need. He was my childhood hero. Even as his life faded, he kept firm, maintaining his stoic disposition right through until near the end. Finally, when his body really began to break down, he broke down into that awful rage.

Dealing with this anger can be very difficult both for those who

are beginning to die and for the ones who are trying to serve them. Rage and anger are sometimes almost impossible to manage with equanimity, requiring friends, nurses, and intimates to become like saints to stick with it. In these cases, sometimes powerful pharmaceuticals can be used to good effect, helping to stabilize the person and restore order and calm to the circumstance. If the reactive anger is allowed to go on too long, it begins to drain and enervate the body. Eventually, the spleen gives out, the liver compresses in on itself, and the person becomes depressed.

In some cases, a faint hope persists during, and sometimes beyond, this period of anger. This hope might come in the form of an appeal to a deity or force that a dying person might think can bring them back from the brink, or some newfound belief in an alternative treatment that the person hopes might succeed where everything else has failed. This process of “bargaining” usually lasts until the signs are clear that the body is really failing, and that death is inevitable.

Depression, the penultimate stage, is a sure sign people have finally gotten the message. This realization, which can happen whether or not the person has been through a period of anger, often triggers a kind of collapse in people, causing the person’s life-force and emotion to implode. At this point, if the person is not willing or able to feel beyond this depression, they run the risk of burning up their remaining quantities of yin and yang energy. In the most severe cases, this cycle actually hastens the onset of death.

Those who find a way to move beyond this cycle of reactive emotion associated with the first four stages commonly move on to the final stage: acceptance. The level of acceptance we reach depends on a number of things, from our belief about what death is, to how we are served, and how profound our denial, anger, bargaining, and depression have been. Sadly, much of what gets called acceptance these days is more a kind of sorrowful resignation. While this does serve to reduce the grossest resistance to dying, true acceptance should brighten us, healing us of any emotional reactivity, and leaving us at peace.

Throughout history, the wisest men and women have always taught that dying is not the end, that it is simply a matter of moving

on, of leaving this form of existence and taking up another. If possible, we should try to accept what is going on while we are still alive with those who love us, rather than when the body has passed, and we are further along in the process. Which is why, as we will look at in a moment, we should “learn” death while we are still alive.

DEATH IS A BENIGN PROCESS

Slowly one falls asleep, and when he is asleep, he is dead. There is certainly nothing to fear in any part of the process of dying.

Charles Hampton

*The Transition Called Death*⁴⁰

In the Second Grade esoteric schools, there was considered to be no difference between the way a practitioner should approach life and how such a one should face death. Both, it was taught, should be met with profound devotion to that which is deathless and eternal, an understanding of the nature of things that goes far beyond mind. Call it what you will—Being, the Divine, the Light—the nature of reality is an indestructible unity, and this must be our fundamental understanding at death. When we are able to behold and recognize this deathless reality throughout the death process, dying becomes entirely benign. Death, we realize, is transformation, not annihilation. This recognition allows the death process to unfold harmoniously, even auspiciously.

In *Easy Death*, Adi Da Samraj’s masterwork of wisdom and instruction on the death process, the great master talks about death as actually being a time for regeneration. Death, he writes, is “a necessary, purposeful and (ultimately) benign psycho-physical process”⁴¹ which is intended to refresh “the conscious being.”⁴² This “conscious being” is our existence at a level deeper than the physical, the subtlest etheric aspect and beyond. This deeper being sustains our appearance here, and it continues on after death. Death might be the end of this appearance, but it is also a time of regeneration and growth for the being itself.

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

The best thing to do with a human life, then, as the great teachers of mankind have always taught, is to use our years to grow our deeper beings, doing whatever we can to commune with and realize the bright deathless Reality in life. Death, like birth, is much more natural and easeful when we practice and prepare for it. Practicing this communion during the death process, to whatever degree we are capable of, allows us to release our stressful sense of control, and to give ourselves up to the natural motion of the process.

During the death process, the life-energy goes up and out of us, and the body dies from the toes to the crown. The natural motion of the death process is ascending: The life-energy moves up and out of the body towards a new reality above the head. The less resistant and confused we are, the more smoothly the energy can move. The cycle of reactivity tends to interrupt the natural motion of the death process, pulling energy back down towards the body and world that we now need to leave. The more we struggle, the more discomfort and pain we experience. If we can truly let go, we can move up and out without obstruction, moving on peacefully and with ease.

I have seen people die in a state of deep peace, free of any real suffering. In the transmission company of Adi Da Samraj, I have watched people become full of radiance and peace as they died, their faces literally shining as they moved through all the difficult physical and emotional travails death brings up.

As with any process, the capability to rest deeply in peace as we die requires practice, and, optimally, greater wisdom and transmission. Just as we do not expect to pick up the violin for the first time one morning and play Carnegie Hall the same night, we should not expect to be a grouch our whole life and suddenly become ecstatic in death. It is a profound matter, and one that requires time, practice, and help.

The study of death is the best kind of learning, the kind that informs our whole being. As we study, feel, and observe the death process as it occurs in others and as it is spoken about in the traditions, we begin to understand that the Light that shines in life also shines in death, that existence is never destroyed, only transformed. Truly exercised, this feeling-understanding relieves us of much of the fear and negative bodily chemistry death tends to bring up in

us. Armed with this understanding, death ceases to be the monster under the bed, the elephant in the living room. Once it is examined and understood, we become free of the taboos on death and dying; free, to a large extent, of that primal, motivating fear.

SERVING THE DEATH PROCESS IN OTHERS

Studying the death process while we are alive not only helps us to pass in peace, but also allows us serve others whenever the opportunity arises. Traditionally, serving the death process in others was regarded as an auspicious opportunity: Not only are we able to help another being during what for many people will be their most difficult hour, but we are given an opportunity to feel the death process with them, serving our own understanding of what the process actually involves.

As a person approaches the end, quality care is essential. The best care helps to guide the person through the most difficult parts of the process, thereby easing the ordeal. If a dying person is surrounded by loving, sane, and instructive company, a good deal of the rage and depression that comes up can be relieved and transformed, leaving such a one free to move through these cycles quickly and die in peace.

Herbs and other natural medicines can be extremely useful as the person nears the end. The right combinations can relieve pain, help people to sleep, and even treat some of the secondary infections early on in the process. As with all medicines, you should use them in a sensitive and intelligent manner, making sure they are having a positive healing effect and are not aggravating the situation in any way. Often as people approach death, and the physical and etheric bodies begin to separate, bodily sensitivities can be magnified. Always monitor the effects of any medicines, being sensitive to what most serves the dying person at each stage of the process.

As the end nears, do whatever you can to help relieve the dying person of all responsibilities. Their human affairs should be put in order, farewells expressed among friends. Only then can the final retreat really begin.

During the final days, the dying person should be fully protected in every way, and made as comfortable as possible. Pain should be managed with whatever means necessary. I always loved my father's death instructions. In his written final directives, it was emphatically indicated that he wanted no invasive life support measures used at all—he wanted nobody to interfere with him in the final moments of his life. He did, however, call for maximum pain relief. I laughed when I read it: In death and in life, it was our family philosophy to a tee.

If possible, have an experienced death and dying counselor and nurse around during the last days: They can be an invaluable help with handling the practical details of the process. Fortunately, hospice care is well established in the West. Hospice staff members do wonderful deathbed work for people they never knew in life and provide good support to the surviving family and friends.

In physical terms, the body should be as balanced as possible in the stages leading up to death. The more the bodily energies are in equanimity, the more the dying person can spend the final phase of life in deep relaxation and contemplation of the bright deathless condition. Always try to encourage this depth of feeling in a dying person, no matter whatever religion or beliefs are involved.

Try to serve those who are dying consciously and happily, and provide for a similar circumstance in your own case when it comes time to go. Love the person as much as you can, while allowing yourself to let them go. Allow grief, but remember it is important to let the person pass, unencumbered by any desire to stay on Earth with the body. The more we dramatize unhappiness and fear, the harder it is for our loved one to die. Be as loving and positive as you can, while trying to serve this disposition in others.

There is no substitute for surrounding a dying person with love, compassion, and peace. Love and compassion are always the best medicines, and they avail, even in death. People should be protected and cared for when they die and actively loved until the end.

PASSING IN PEACE

Sarah had it all: the money, the boyfriend, the great apartment, the whole modern dream of a rich, successful life. Then, suddenly, at the age of thirty-six, she was struck down with an aggressive form of cancer, and given only months to live.

Sarah was a uniquely beautiful woman, and I was graced to spend some time with her in the period leading up to her death. Blessed with a naturally intelligent approach to life, Sarah was able to adapt and enter into the death process quickly and profoundly. Within a matter of months of being told she was going to die, she read *Easy Death* and established a deep relationship with Adi Da Samraj, which enabled her to advance in her spiritual practice in an extraordinarily short amount of time. Though she would never meet her transmission master in the flesh, they were able to communicate with one another by other means, and her spiritual practice was greatly quickened by his instruction to her during that time. She was clearly transformed by his healing transmission, and this was palpable in her presence.

Over the course of those final months of life, Sarah's profound preparation for death touched not only her family and friends, but everyone who met her. Through her intense study and practice, she was able to live much longer than the doctors predicted. There were several remissions, and then, finally, she was gone.

My last memories of Sarah are of sitting in her living room overlooking a magnificent seaside cove, my hands on her face and heart as she rested deeply in peace, the room bright around her. We hugged, we kissed, and we said our goodbyes. She died the next day, the sense of peace that she radiated leaving a profound impression on all those around her.

THE BRIGHTEST COMMUNION IN LIFE AND DEATH

There is no better way to prepare for death than in the spiritual presence of those who are bright and awake. An enlightened teacher, operating from a position of non-separateness with the Light, allows us the true vision of life and death, liberating us from our fears and limitations. Realizing this, traditional devotees and aspirants would spend as much time as possible in the radiant company of a realized teacher, over time becoming more and more sensitized to the transcendental reality that such rare beings reveal. Many became healed at heart long before they died.

Taoist, Buddhist, and other serious practitioners have always valued a human lifetime as an auspicious opportunity to make use of such help. As a human, they believed, they were able to become more sensitized to the Light than they might in other incarnations, in so doing adding something of great value to the human community. Theirs was—and remains—the highest motive of the heart.

The greatest practitioners and healers of humankind have always treasured the liberating instruction and radiant company of our greatest human teachers, knowing that by communion with these beings, it is possible to realize the deathless state. If you find yourself graced to be in the company of a great teacher, feel and enjoy the peace and happiness that such a one exudes, knowing it to be your own true state. Let it serve your life and your death. Truly, the practice of bright communion with a realized teacher is the most auspicious way to live a human life, and the best way to die.

Getting the Dietary Balance Right

There is no one diet that suits everyone. We each have different bodies and different lifestyles that require specific nutrition. The ideal diet, then, is one that is specifically tailored to meet the full range of your needs, one that takes into account how your bodily balance is constantly changing from day to day, place to place, season to season, and climate to climate.

Finding the foods that promote health and balance in our own case is a matter of intelligent observation and experimentation. As a starting point, some people make use of blood and metabolic typing to get a sense of their own body type and nutritional requirements. While these systems can often point you in the right direction, always remember they are only guidelines, and that no system is fool proof. Come to trust your feeling-intuition, your own observation about how different foods make you feel. When you eat a particular food, ask yourself: Do I feel energized or enervated? Do I feel sated or still hungry? Clear or burdened? Over time—as you begin to notice how different foods and patterns of eating affect your energy and sense of well-being—you will become more in tune with what your body needs, making diet an increasingly simple and happy affair.

Let us take a look now at the different kinds of foods we can eat, and how each can serve well-being and rejuvenation in our own case.

Raw Foods

The best foods in any diet are those that provide the body with optimal nutrition and constant elimination. In other words, our bodies thrive on foods that are full of living qi and essence, easy to digest, and purifying to the blood. In short, our bodies thrive on nature's bounty of raw foods. Left as nature intended, raw, organic fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds are the most living, purifying foods available, and they should form the basis of any regenerative diet. Cleansing to the blood and cooling to the system, raw foods lift energy up in the body, keeping the bowels open and the lymphatic system eliminating.

Raw foods also help keep our bowels in motion, a process critical to health and well-being. When we become constipated, or when bowel function becomes sluggish, the body retains the toxins it should be eliminating. This directly compromises the immune system and our emotional and physical life altogether. As we get older, and the body's essences start to get consumed, we begin to "dry out," making us more susceptible to constipation. Thankfully, it is easy to fix: Just up your intake of raw foods, and you should be regular again in no time.

Perhaps the greatest virtue of raw food is in the enzymes it gives us. The body's hardest working molecules, enzymes keep our digestive, metabolic, and eliminative functions running. Though rich in raw food, enzymes are extremely sensitive to heat, and usually do not survive the high temperatures of cooking. If we do not give our bodies enough enzymes through the food we eat, as happens with a diet high in cooked food, our digestion begins to take them from other parts of the body, which can lead to a deficiency. When we are young, and our bodies are full of enzymes, this is not such a problem. As we get older, though, and enzyme production slows down, we need to continually introduce them via a diet high in raw foods. If we do not, we run the risk of serious damage: Research shows

your intake of cooked foods. If, at any stage, you feel too cool or too airy, or your qi and essence are becoming depleted, cooked foods will usually help.

So what cooked foods are best? Brown rice is a sound choice for most people. Considered by many Taoist practitioners to be an almost perfect food, cooked brown rice is nutritious and benign, neutral in its energies, and easy to digest and eliminate. While most whole, organic cooked grains can be added to the diet to good effect, some grains tend to be acidic, so be sensitive to how they affect you.

Flesh foods like poultry, meat, and fish can be a good addition to the diet in times where you need a blood tonic or a higher level of protein or energy. As a general rule, though, they are best saved for when we are working hard and the body is running cold, times when we require more high-energy food fuel than usual. Red meat, though a potent blood and qi tonic, is best used only in emergency circumstances. Fish, which is perhaps the most benign of the flesh foods, can help tonify blood production in the body, while the essential fatty acids in fish oils can have a beneficial effect on the cardiovascular system. As with all foods, though, choose your fish carefully. Toxicity levels in fish have risen sharply over the past few years, with many types containing high levels of mercury. If fish works for your type, try to keep up to date on which types of fish remain safe and in good supply, and steer clear of farmed fish, which tend to be dangerously high in antibiotics and hormones. Wherever possible, choose deep-sea fish that have been caught in the wild.

Our society's ever-increasing addiction to meat is not without its costs. Not only does industrial meat production consume an immense amount of our precious energy resources, it also pollutes the environment and grievously mistreats animals. So choose your meat wisely. When you do need to eat flesh foods, try to find meat that is organically raised. If possible, go for meats that have been grown locally under humane circumstances. With flesh foods, as in all things, moderation is best.

Sugar

Sugar, as we saw in Chapter Five, is a drug, and one we should be wary of. As a general rule, most body types do well when all forms of sugar are conserved, which means watching your intake of dried fruit, and even, for some types, fresh fruit.

Sugar tends to toxify the blood and weaken the liver, causing inflammation in the body. If you are experiencing any signs of bodily inflammation—skin rashes, acne, itching in the lower body, and cloudy-headedness are all telltale signs—try to cut down or eliminate all forms of concentrated sweeteners. Within a few days you should notice real improvement.

While an occasional, naturally occurring sweet can nurture our spirits and satisfy the basic craving for pleasure we all have from time to time, we need to feel and observe the effect sugar has on our bodies, and learn over time to tame these cravings with live foods. Fresh fruits are a good choice when our sweet tooth kicks in, and tend to be better for the body than dried fruits, which are high in sugar.

Diet without Suppression

While a consistent, healthy diet is the best defense against ill health, our choice of foods needs to be a natural and easeful one, and not a matter of righteousness. We all indulge ourselves occasionally, and as long as it is the exception rather than the rule, there is no need to worry too much. Even occasional junk foods are okay, as long as their use is rare and for the right reasons and that, as a daily practice, you are otherwise eating for health. It is when junk foods become too much a part of our diet that they start to become a

etable juices (although you can also make use of teas and clear broths if you are moved to). These fluids provide essential nutrition that can be easily metabolized without getting the digestion churning again, while keeping the body hydrated and the excretory system flushing out properly. When the digestion comes to rest, all the energies we usually use to process and eliminate food are suddenly freed to serve the body's health and well-being.

In a deeper sense, fasting is a matter of letting go, both physically and emotionally, and freeing ourselves from our dependencies, particularly our vital appetites and the hold they have on us. It is an opportunity for a deeper process to begin in us, one of real growth and deep psychic enjoyment, a time for moving on to more refined and subtle states of being. Far from the ordeal many people think it is, a fast often brings on extended periods of profound bodily brightness and well-being. Fasting cleanses and purifies the body's blood and lymphatic systems, while also quickening our eliminative processes, allowing us to burn any excess quantities of fat. When so much that has been burdening us is let go, we start to feel clear, strong, and calm. Over time, the nervous system becomes deeply harmonized and relaxed, awakening the endocrine system and leaving us with a deepening peace and equanimity that further authenticates the practice.

After just a couple of days on only liquids, you start to notice just how much of human life is taken up with the matter of food, how much time and energy we spend procuring, preparing, eating, and digesting it. When you give all that up for a few days, and all the bodily functions required to process food come to rest, a great deal of the usual noise of life disappears. You suddenly have a lot more time on your hands. The discovery that our happiness is not ultimately dependent on food—that the body is sustained by finer things—is liberating.

This is not to say fasting is not difficult at times—the purification that accompanies the first few days of a fast can be uncomfortable, and occasionally even unpleasant. Still, it does not usually take long for the body to get rid of the nastiest toxins and for the roughest symptoms to pass. If we prepare intelligently, by eating only pure foods in the days before we begin and tailoring the fast to our

specific body type and condition, we can easefully minimize these early purification symptoms, and allow the body to move more quickly into the more enjoyable stages of the fast. You can also try a daily clear water enema throughout the fast. Enemas help to ensure that the toxins the body is releasing are properly eliminated from our system.

Though the early period of purification can be a trial, it is the end of the fast that requires the most of you, as all of those finally quieted appetites come suddenly roaring back with the tiniest bite of an apple. More typical of the first couple of fasts, the raging awakened appetite tends to recede as you become more experienced in the practice. When you are starting out, the best way to minimize any surging food desires is to make a detailed and specific food plan for each day after the fast and stick to it. Minimizing your sensory contact with rich, stimulating foods during this time also saves you a lot of pain and yearning! The end of the fast is also the most auspicious time to regenerate the tissues and organs of the body. As we begin to eat again, the intelligent use of endocrine tonics can have a powerful anabolic effect, helping the body build and regenerate its cells.

Fasting can be done at any time, but in my own experience, warm weather fasts are much more enjoyable than ones done in the colder months. Fasts should be a time of retreat, an opportunity to rest, meditate, and enjoy the simple things in life. (See Chapter Nine for more tips on how to engage this retreat process.)

There are many different ways to fast, and lots of different opinions on the subject. Before you begin fasting, it is a good idea to read one of the many books about fasting and consider what regime is best for you.

If you are considering taking a fast, get a full check-up from your health practitioner first, especially if you are not experienced in the practice. This allows you to tailor the fast to your type and needs.

APPENDIX TWO

Alternative Therapies in the Three-Part Process of Bodily Regeneration

PURIFICATION

To eliminate toxins from the bloodstream, try:

- Eliminating junk foods
- Maximizing whole, organic, raw foods
- Dietary fasting on whole, organic, raw juices
- Colonics
- Herbal bowel cleanses
- Coffee enemas
- Lymphatic massage
- Herbal organ cleanses
- Sunbathing
- Physical exercise
- Breathing exercises
- Liver and gallbladder flushes

REBALANCING

To balance and harmonize the autonomic nervous system, try:

- Acupuncture
- Massage
- Network chiropractic
- Breathing exercises
- Hatha Yoga
- Qi Gong
- Tai Qi
- Meditation
- Herbal harmonizing formulas
- Laying on of hands
- Sexual conscious exercise

REJUVENATION

To directly stimulate the endocrine system, try:

- Acupuncture
- Tonic herbal formulas
- High-potency foods
- Qi Gong
- Laying on of hands
- Sexual conscious exercise

APPENDIX THREE

Rejuvenating the Autonomic Nervous System with Acupuncture and Network Chiropractic

Network Chiropractic and Acupuncture, two highly developed forms of touch therapy, represent some of the most powerful therapeutic means available for healing disorders in the autonomic nervous system. Both completely benign and extremely effective, acupuncture and Network Chiropractic are perfect for anyone wanting some help relieving the stress of modern life.

Acupuncture, long a central part of TCM, involves the manipulation of energy via some of the more than six hundred energy points through which the qi flows in the body. Essentially a form of “qi surgery,” acupuncture seeks to restore the body’s native energetic patterns, freeing stagnated qi and improving its circulation through the twelve organs of the body, thereby preventing deeper patterns of imbalance developing. Using very thin needles, the acupuncturist penetrates the surface of the body looking to find the exact locations where the critical qi reservoirs can be restored. The best acupuncturists are able to fine-tune the qi balance in the body, boosting it where it is low and calming it where it is agitated. When the qi is balanced in the body, the nervous system naturally harmonizes and relaxes.

A much newer touch modality, Network Chiropractic involves the releasing of stagnated qi via healing touches to key trigger points along the axis of the body. In a Network Chiropractic treatment, the chiropractor first identifies the areas of trapped energy by palpating the surface of the body. The chiropractor observes the structural alignment of the spine and the movement and function of the breath, pinpointing where the energy has stagnated, before laying hands on the affected areas. The process is very soft, pleasurable, and gentle, and like acupuncture, it immediately calms and harmonizes the nervous system, causing an immediate magnification of our deeper regenerative chemistry.

Appendix Four: Resources for Rejuvenation

SHERRILL SELLMAN ND

Women's Health and Empowerment

Books by Dr. Sellman:

Hormone Heresy, Get Well International, 2000

Mothers Prevent Your Daughters From Getting Breast Cancer,

Get Well International, 2003

www.whatwomenmustknow.com

TERRI NEWLON

Holistic Consulting Co. LLC

Health, Healing and Balanced Living

PO Box 10576

Sedona, AZ 86339

www.TerriNewlon.com

THE CHI NEI TSANG INSTITUTE

2218 Woolsey St

Berkeley, CA 94705

cnt@slip.net

www.chineitsang.com

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

ENDNOTES

1. Anantha Murthy, T. S., *Maharaj: A Biography of Shriman Tapasviji Maharaj, a Mahatma Who Lived for 185 Years* (Dawn Horse Press, 1986), 60
2. Talbot, Michael, *The Holographic Universe* (Harper Perennial, 1992), 103, 153
3. The *Rig Veda* is a holy book from the ancient Aryan civilization that populated the Indus Valley in northern India two thousand years before the Common Era.
4. Da Samraj, Adi, unpublished talk, November 15, 1977, (taken from *Maharaj: A Biography of Shriman Tapasviji Maharaj*, p220)
5. Bordeaux Szekeley, Edmond, *The Essene Gospel of Peace* (Nelson: International Biogenic Society, 1981), 2
6. Osumi, Ikuko and Ritchie, Malcolm, *The Shamanic Healer* (Rider Books, 1987), 2
7. Dossey, Larry, *Healing Words* (Harper San Francisco, 1993), pp30-33
8. Edgerly Ring, Phyllis (taken from *Healing Solutions*, July 29, 2004)
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. *The Essene Gospel of Peace*, 4
12. Fitzgerald, Randall, *The Hundred-Year Lie* (Dutton, 2006), 13
13. *The Hundred-Year Lie*, 89
14. Tonification is a process of replacing lost bodily energies and essences with those found in nature. For more information on tonification, see Chapter Seven.
15. Chang, Steven *The Tao of Sexology* (Tao Publishing, 1986), 18
16. Chia, Mantak, *Taoist Secrets of Love* (Aurora Press, 1984), xvii
17. Ibid., 3
18. Da Samraj, Adi, *The Dawn Horse Testament* (Dawn Horse Press, 2004), 737
19. Harvey, William, *The Circulation of the Blood*, (Everyman, 1963), 27
20. Steiner, Rudolf, *The Occult Significance of Blood* (Kessinger Publishing Company, 1907), 31
21. McKenna, Terence, *Food of the Gods* (Rider, 1992), 175
22. Dong-Yuan, Li, *Treatise on the Spleen and Stomach* (Translated by Yang Shouzhong and Li Jian-yong) (Blue Poppy Press, 1993), 257-261
23. Achrya, Pandit, *Breath, Sleep, The Heart and Life* (Dawn Horse Press, 1976)
24. Atlantic Monthly, May, 1991 (taken from Clarity Seminars publication, 1995-2007, The Nemours Foundation)
25. Benson, Herbert, M.D., Harvard Medical School, http://focus.hms.harvard.edu/1996/Mar1_1996/Off_the_Quad.html
26. International Journal of Neuroscience, 1992 (taken from Health News & Review, 1993, Vol. 3 Issue 2)

Endnotes

27. Trungpa, Chogyam, *The Sacred Path of the Warrior* (Bantam Books, 1986), 23
28. Official Site of Lourdes, France, http://www.lourdes-france.org/index.php?goto_centre=ru&contexte=en&id=687#
29. Oursler, Will, *The Healing Power of Faith* (NY: Berkley Books, 1989), 48
30. *The Healing Power of Faith*, 48
31. Achrya, Pandit, *Breath, Sleep, The Heart, and Life* (Clearlake: Dawn Horse Press), 84
32. *Breath, Sleep, The Heart and Life*, 114
33. Pearsall, Paul, *The Pleasure Prescription*, (Alameda, CA: Hunter House, 1996), 9
34. From personal correspondence with author.
35. *Breath, Sleep, The Heart and Life*, 5
36. The Guardian, from the article “Pillows, Pills and Potions,” February 5, 2008 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/feb/05/health1>
37. From the CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) media release “Air Pollution: Eight Thousand Deaths Per Day,” August 24, 1999 <http://www.csiro.au/files/mediarelease/mr1999/AirPollution.htm>
38. US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
39. From the PLoS Medicine article, “Initial Severity and Antidepressant Benefits: A Meta-Analysis of Data Submitted to the Food and Drug Administration” <http://medicine.plosjournals.org/perlserv/?request=get-document&doi=10.1371%2Fjournal.pmed.0050045>
40. Hampton, Charles, *The Transition Called Death* (Quest Books, 1979), 28
41. Da Samraj, Adi, *Easy Death*, (The Dawn Horse Press, 2005), 15
42. Ibid., 172

INDEX

- A
- abdomen massage, 127
 - accepting death, 157–158
 - Acharya, Pandit
 - harmonizing nervous system, 90
 - heart health, 124–125
 - on sleep, 151
 - acupuncture, 149, 179–180
 - addictions
 - meat, 170
 - sugar, 78–79
 - transitioning to healthy diet, 172–173
 - Adi Da Samraj, ix, 138
 - author's spiritual path, xiii–xiv
 - on conscious exercise, 51
 - on death, 161
 - death and transmission, 162
 - Dr. Targ and, 15
 - Healing Pose, 54–55
 - on heart, 72
 - liver health, 121
 - passing in peace, 165
 - rejuvenation in pleasure dome, 135–136
 - on sexuality, 62
 - on soma, 7–8
 - adrenal glands, 132
 - aging
 - blood volume and, 67–68
 - death and. *see* death
 - finding and treating imbalances, 118
 - kidney health, 132–133
 - meditation and health, 98
 - regeneration through sleep, 154
 - AIDS and prayer, 15
 - air pollution, 32
 - alchemy, organ
 - heart, 123–125
 - kidneys, 132–134
 - liver, 119–122
 - lungs, 129–131
 - spleen and stomach, 126–128
 - alcohol, 119
 - Alzheimer's, 68
 - Amanita Muscaria mushroom, 6
 - amaroli, 6–7
 - amrita, 63
 - anal sphincter strength, 51–53
 - ancient art of bodily rejuvenation
 - defined, xv–xviii
 - kaya kalpa, 2
 - ancient practice of breath control, 94–95
 - ancient regenerative secrets
 - fasting, 21–23
 - overview, 9–10
 - true faith, 11–14
 - true prayer, 14–20
 - anemia, 67
 - anger
 - deep-feeling breathing, 92
 - effect on health, 42–43
 - reaction to death, 159–160
 - Anthroposophical Medicine, 74
 - anti-depressants, 157–158
 - anxiety. *see also* stress
 - heart health, 124
 - treating fear, 38–39
 - vs. true faith, 13
 - art of bodily rejuvenation, xv–xviii
 - asceticism
 - balanced diet, 171–172
 - vs. pleasure dome, 135–137
 - of Tapasviji Maharaj, 1–2
 - atmospheric toxicity, 29–30
 - Australians, indigenous, 12
 - autonomic nervous system. *see* nervous system
- B
- balance
 - alternative therapies, 177
 - blood volume, 68–69
 - in diet, 167
 - finding and treating imbalances, 116–118
 - healing sanctuary, 138–140
 - hormonal, 109–111
 - kidney health, 132–133
 - nervous system. *see* nervous system
 - regenerative effect of polarization, 59
 - rejuvenation retreats, 144–149
 - right diet, 80–82
 - soma revealed, 8
 - in Taoism, xvii–xviii
 - treating fear, 38
 - bargaining stage, 160
 - basal circulation and fear, 38
 - benign process of death, 161–163
 - Bergson, Henri, 12
 - birth and death, 156
 - birth-control pills, 111
 - bladder control, 52–53
 - blood
 - cultivating and purifying, 65–66
 - dietary balance, 79–82
 - digestion and, 82–83
 - as etheric, 73–75
 - heart and, 71–73
 - purification therapies, 177
 - regulation by nervous system, 90
 - spleen and stomach school, 83–85

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

- (*blood continued*)
 sugar and, 78–79, [171](#)
 true healing, 105–106
 volume, 66–70
 as woman, 76–77
- blood deficiency, [67](#)
 blood pressure, 98
 bodily base strength, 51–53
 bodily rejuvenation. *see* rejuvenation
 body type and diet, [167](#)
 body-refashioning, [2](#)
 body's pathways, 33–34
 bone regeneration, 103–104
The Botany of Desire (Pollen), [113](#)
 bowels, [168](#)
- brain
 anti-depressants and, 157–158
 effect of anger on, [42](#)
 nervous system. *see* nervous system
- Brave New World* (Huxley), [8](#)
- breaking fasts, [175](#)
- Breakthroughs in Drug-Free Healing* (Gottlieb),
 ix
- breast cancer
 Divine invocation, 141–142
 Judith's story, 18–20
- breath
 conscious exercise and, 46–49
 healing power of prayer, 16–17
 lung health, 129–130
 regulation by nervous system, [89](#)
 settling nervous system with, 92–96
- Breath, Sleep, The Heart and Life* (Acharya),
[90](#)
- British Sleep Council, [153](#)
- bronchitis
 health effects of sorrow, [41](#)
 laying on of hands and, xv
 lung health, [130](#)
- brown rice, [170](#)
- Buddhism
 communion in life and death, [166](#)
 healing prayer, 18–19
 liver health, [121](#)
 regenerative power of love, 99–100
 regenerative practice of faith, [12](#)
 on sorrow, [40](#)
- Bureau des Constatations Médicales*, [102](#)
- Byrd, Dr. Randolph, [15](#)
- C
- caffeine, [154](#)
- cancer
 Judith's story, 18–20
 passing in peace, [165](#)
- carbohydrates, 80–81
 care while dying, 163–164
 Chang, Dr. Steven
 on bodily base, [51](#)
 on sex, [55](#)
- chemicals in environment, 28–33
- chemistry
 anti-depressants and, 157–158
 breath and, [17](#)
 of endocrine system. *see* endocrine system
 rejuvenation retreats, 148–149
 soma revealed, 7–8
- Chi Nei Sang, [84](#)
- Chia, Mantak, 56–57
- Chinese Medicine. *see* TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine)
- Chinese pulse diagnosis. *see* pulse diagnosis
- Chiropractic, Network, 179–180
- Chogyam Trungpa, 99–100, [144](#), 184–185
- Christ
The Essene Gospel of Peace, [10](#)
 healing power of prayer, [16](#)
- Christianity
 ancient regenerative secrets, 9–10
 fighting stagnation, [35](#)
 healing power of prayer, 15–16
 regenerative fasting, [21](#)
- circuit of the body, 51–55
- circulation
 blood as etheric, 74–75
 blood volume, 66–70
 converting orgasm, 56–58
 fighting stagnation, 33–35
 heart health, 123–124
 importance of heart, 71–73
- cleaners, toxic, [32](#)
- cleansing
 with raw organic greens, [33](#)
 through fasting, 21–23, 173–174
- closed head, [51](#)
- clotting, blood, [75](#)
- coffee, [154](#)
- cold
 lung health, [129](#)
 raw food, 169
 spleen and stomach health, [85](#)
- compassion
 healing power of, [100](#)
 serving death process, [164](#)
- concentrated sweeteners, 79–82
- confession and anger, [43](#)
- conscious exercise
 converting orgasm, 56–58
 full bodily circuit, 51–55
 overview, 45–50
 polarization, [59](#)
 rolling on the rug, [91](#)
 sexual rejuvenation, [55](#)
 transforming sexuality through feeling,
 60–63
- conserving energy. *see* energy conservation

- cooked foods, 169–170
 cosmetics, 32
 counseling, 164
 culture, Western. *see* Western culture
 cures, 101
- D
- dampness, lung, 130
 de Rudder, Pierre, 103–104
 death
 acceptance, 157–158
 as benign process, 161–163
 health effects of sorrow, 40
 reaction to, 158–161
 as regenerative retreat, 156
 serving process in others, 163–166
 deep-feeling breathing, 92–96
 degeneration
 heart, 125
 liver, 122
 lung, 131
 orgasm as, 56
 slowing speed of, 25–27
 spleen and stomach, 128
 denial, 159
 depletion through ejaculation, 56
 depression
 accepting death, 157–158
 death and, 160
 food and, 173
 detoxing. *see* purification
 diabetes, 78–79
 diagnosis, 116–118. *see also* pulse diagnosis
 diet. *see also* foods
 balance in, 167
 blood health, 79–82
 blood volume, 68–70
 cooked foods, 169–170
 fasting, 173–175
 herbs, 115–116
 liver health, 120
 raw foods, 168–169
 regenerative fasting, 21–22
 rejuvenation retreats, 144–145
 sugar, 171
 transitioning to healthy, 172–173
 without suppression, 171–172
 digestion
 blood health, 82–83
 fasting and, 173–174
 regenerative fasting, 21–22
 spleen and stomach health, 126–128
 spleen and stomach school, 83–85
 disciplined diet, 172–173
 disease
 blood volume and, 67–68
 finding and treating imbalances,
 116–118
 importance of rest, 36
 qi and, 26
 rejuvenation in pleasure dome, 135–137
 sleep and, 153
 slowing speed of degeneration, 26
 true healing, 105–106
 disposition, 13–14
 distant healing, 15
 Divine transmission, 141–143. *see also*
 transmission schools
 Dossey, Dr. Larry, 13–14
 Dracula, 65
 dreamtime, 12
 drinking
 fasting. *see* fasting
 hydration and sleep, 154
 minimizing toxicity, 31–32
 drugs
 death and, 157–158
 sleep and, 153–154
 drying foods, 169–170
 dying. *see* death
- E
- Eastern teachings
 ancient practice of breath control,
 94–95
 art of bodily rejuvenation, xv–xviii
 author on, xii–xiii
 meditation and health, 97–98
 self-healing, 101
Easy Death (Adi Da Samraj), 161, 165
 eating. *see also* diet; food taking
 blood health and diet, 79–82
 blood health and sugar, 78–79
 eliminating toxins, 31, 33
 regenerative fasting, 21–22
 ecstasy, 136–137
 education, 184–185
 ejaculation, 56–58
 elimination
 with raw food, 169
 regenerative fasting, 21–22
 elixirs. *see* herbal formulas
 emotions
 blood as etheric, 74
 fasting and, 174
 fighting stagnation, 34
 health and, 37–44
 heart health, 124–125
 liver health, 120
 lung health, 130
 reaction to death, 158–161
 spleen and stomach school, 84
 transforming sexuality through, 60–63
 endocrine system
 alternative therapies, 177
 elixirs, 106–107

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

(*endocrine system continued*)

- fasting and, [174](#)
- fuel, [107–109](#)
- hormones, [109–111](#)
- rejuvenation retreats, [148–149](#)
- soma and, [8](#)
- transformative sexuality, [62–63](#)
- true healing, [105–106](#)
- unlocking secret spring, [101–105](#)
- enemas, [175](#)
- energies, subtle. *see* subtle energies
- energy conservation
 - cooked foods, [169–170](#)
 - emotions and health, [37–44](#)
 - fighting stagnation, [33–35](#)
 - raw food, [168–169](#)
 - rest, [36](#)
 - slowing speed of degeneration, [25–27](#)
 - through conscious exercise. *see* conscious exercise
 - toxic environments, [28–33](#)
- enlightenment and breath, [95](#)
- The Enlightenment of the Whole Body* (Adi Da Samraj), [72](#)
- environment
 - plant and humans, [113–115](#)
 - toxicity, [28–33](#)
- enzymes in raw food, [168–169](#)
- eroticism, [60–63](#)
- esoteric anatomy, [73–75](#)
- essences, [56–58](#)
- The Essene Gospel of Peace*
 - on faith, [10–11](#)
 - on fasting, [21](#)
- estrogen, [110](#)
- eternal life, [4–7](#)
- etheric
 - as blood, [73–75](#)
 - breath and, [89, 95](#)
 - liver and, [120](#)
 - serving death process, [163–164](#)
- exercise, conscious. *see* conscious exercise
- exhalation
 - conscious exercise, [47–48](#)
 - deep-feeling breathing, [92–96](#)
 - lung health, [129](#)
- F
- faith, [11–14](#)
- fasting
 - ancient regenerative secrets, [21–23](#)
 - balanced diet, [173–175](#)
 - retreat and, [144](#)
- fear
 - death and, [156](#)
 - deep-feeling breathing, [92](#)
 - effect on health, [37–39](#)
 - liver health, [120–121](#)
- vs. true faith, [13](#)
- feeling
 - balancing retreat, [147–148](#)
 - breathing, [92–96](#)
 - conscious exercise and, [46–49](#)
 - restoring, [90–91](#)
 - serving death process, [164](#)
 - transforming sexuality through, [60–63](#)
- female cycles, [76–77](#)
- female ejaculation, [56–58](#)
- female polarization, [59](#)
- filtering water, [31–32](#)
- First Grade of practice, [xxi](#)
- fish, [170](#)
- Fitzgerald, Randall, [28](#)
- flesh foods
 - balanced diet, [170](#)
 - blood volume and, [70](#)
- flour, [80](#)
- flu, [129](#)
- Fly Agaric, [6](#)
- Food of the Gods* (McKenna), [78](#)
- food taking. *see also* diet
 - blood health and diet, [79–82](#)
 - blood health and sugar, [78–79](#)
 - blood volume, [68–70](#)
 - eliminating toxins, [31, 33](#)
 - regenerative fasting, [21–22](#)
 - three grades of practice, [xix–xx](#)
- foods
 - cooked, [169–170](#)
 - heart health, [125](#)
 - kidney health, [133](#)
 - liver health, [122](#)
 - lung health, [131](#)
 - minimizing toxicity, [31](#)
 - raw, [168–169](#)
 - spleen and stomach health, [128](#)
- fountain of youth
 - search for soma, [4–7](#)
 - soma revealed, [7–8](#)
- free radicals, [75](#)
- fruits, [171](#)
- frustration, [42–43](#)
- fuel, endocrine system, [107–109](#)
- G
- Gawler, Ian, [20](#)
- ginseng, [27](#)
- ginsenosides, [27](#)
- glands
 - converting orgasm, [56–58](#)
 - endocrine system, [101](#)
 - transformative sexuality, [62–63](#)
- global warming, [138](#)
- Goethe, [65](#)
- Gore, Al, [138](#)
- Gottlieb, Bill, [ix–x](#)

Index

- green cosmetics, [32](#)
- green household cleansers, [32](#)
- greens, raw organic
 - improving blood volume with, [69–70](#)
 - minimizing toxicity, [33](#)
- grief and death, [164](#)
- gynecology
 - blood and digestion, [83](#)
 - menstrual cycle health, [76–77](#)
- H
- Hampton, Charles, [161](#)
- haole, [17](#)
- happiness
 - heart health, [124–125](#)
 - rejuvenation in pleasure dome, [136–137](#)
- harmony
 - of Christian monasticism, [9–10](#)
 - fighting stagnation, [35](#)
 - nervous system, [88–91](#)
 - in Taoism, [xvii](#)
 - through conscious exercise. *see* conscious exercise
 - through fasting, [22](#)
 - true healing, [105–106](#)
- Harvey, William, [72](#)
- Hatha Yoga
 - conscious exercise, [48–49](#)
 - rolling on the rug exercise, [91](#)
- Hawaiian prayer, [16–17](#)
- head opening, [51](#)
- healing
 - endocrine system, [105–106](#)
 - how to pray, [18](#)
 - miracles of Tapasviji Maharaj, [2–4](#)
 - power of prayer, [15](#)
 - properties of plants, [113–115](#)
 - sanctuary, [138–140](#)
- Healing Pose, [54–55](#)
- The Healing Power of Faith* (Oursler), [102](#)
- healing spring, [1–8](#)
- Healing Words* (Dossey), [13](#)
- health
 - art of bodily rejuvenation, [xvi–xviii](#)
 - of the blood. *see* blood
 - effect of emotions on, [37–44](#)
- heart
 - blood health, [71–73](#)
 - communion in life and death, [166](#)
 - effect of sorrow on, [40](#)
 - organ restoration, [123–125](#)
 - purification on retreat, [145–146](#)
 - regulation by nervous system, [89](#)
 - slowing rate, [93](#)
- heart disease
 - anger and, [43](#)
 - healing power of prayer, [15](#)
- heat
 - anger and, [42](#)
 - cooked foods, [169–170](#)
 - digestion and, [83](#)
 - generated by stress, [90](#)
 - healing sanctuary, [138](#)
 - raw food and, [169](#)
 - spleen and stomach health, [85](#)
- herbal formulas
 - blood volume, [70](#)
 - endocrine elixirs, [106–109](#)
 - heart health, [125](#)
 - kidney health, [134](#)
 - liver, [122](#)
 - lung health, [131](#)
 - menstrual cycle, [76–77](#)
 - organ restoration, [115–116](#)
 - rejuvenation retreats and, [149](#)
 - serving death process, [163](#)
 - sleep, [155](#)
 - spleen and stomach health, [128](#)
 - spleen and stomach school, [84–85](#)
- holistic wisdom, [11–12](#)
- hormones
 - converting orgasm, [56–58](#)
 - decline of, [118](#)
 - endocrine system, [109–111](#)
 - menstrual cycle, [76–77](#)
 - qi and, [26](#)
 - soma and, [8](#)
- hospice, [164](#)
- household cleansers, [32](#)
- human growth and death, [161–163](#)
- The Hundred-Year Lie* (Fitzgerald), [28](#)
- Huxley, Aldous, [8](#)
- hydration and sleep, [154](#)
- hygiene, [28](#)
- hypothalamus, [89](#)
- I
- illness. *see* disease
- imbalances, [116–118](#)
- immortality, [4–7](#)
- immunity
 - endocrine elixirs, [107](#)
 - raw food and, [168](#)
- impure blood, [75](#)
- indigenous Australians, [12](#)
- inflammation
 - caused by sugar, [171](#)
 - diet and, [80](#)
 - impure blood, [75](#)
 - liver health, [120](#)
 - lung health, [129](#)
- inhalation
 - conscious exercise, [47–48](#)
 - deep-feeling breathing, [92–96](#)
 - lung health, [129](#)

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

- inhibitions, 60–61
- insomnia, 153–155
- instinctual phase of retreat, 147–148
- internal nature of soma, 7–8
- intimacy
 - as healing sanctuary, 139–140
 - transforming sexuality through feeling, 60–63
- invocation, 141–142
- J
- Japanese art of Seiki-Jutsu, 13
- Jesus Christ
 - The Essene Gospel of Peace*, 10
 - healing power of prayer, 16
- junk foods, 171–172
- K
- kaya kalpa
 - defined, 2, 4
 - endocrine elixirs, 108
- Kegel exercises
 - converting orgasm, 58
 - defined, 52–53
- kidneys
 - effect of fear on, 38–39
 - organ restoration, 132–134
 - sleep and, 154
 - spleen and stomach health, 85
 - tonics, 107
 - treating sorrow, 41
- Kriya Yoga, 94
- Kubler-Ross, Elizabeth, 158–159
- kumbak, 94–95
- L
- laying on of hands
 - defined, xv
 - healing power of prayer, 16–17
 - Judith's story, 19–20
- learning the body, 9–10
- letting go
 - fasting as, 174
 - of inhibitions, 60–61
 - of sorrow, 40–41
- Li Dong-Yuan, 83–85, 126
- liberation
 - communion in life and death, 166
 - sexual, 62
- life and death, 156
- life support, 164
- life-expectancy, 28
- Light
 - communion in life and death, 166
 - death and, 161–163
 - Healing Pose, 54–55
 - heart and, 72
 - laying on of hands, 19–20
 - magnification through prayer, 14–20
 - rejuvenation in pleasure dome, 136
 - transmission of saints, 141–143
 - true faith and, 13
- liquid fasting. *see* fasting
- Litchfield, Paul, 141–142
- liver
 - blood and digestion, 82–83
 - health effects of anger, 42–43
 - organ restoration, 119–122
 - purification on retreat, 145–146
 - sleep and, 154
 - spleen and stomach school, 84
 - sugar and, 171
 - transformative sexuality, 62–63
- longevity
 - deep-feeling breathing and, 93
 - happiness and, 137
 - lengthening of, 28–29
 - miracles of, 1–8
- Lourdes, 102–104
- love
 - as healing sanctuary, 139–140
 - nervous system health and, 99–100
 - rejuvenation in pleasure dome, 137
 - serving death process, 163–164
 - spleen and stomach health, 127
- lovemaking
 - converting orgasm, 56–58
 - transforming through feeling, 60–63
- lungs
 - air pollution, 32
 - effect of sorrow on, 40–41
 - organ restoration, 129–131
 - regulation by nervous system, 89
- M
- male ejaculation, 56–58
- male polarization, 59
- man root, 27
- mana, 17
- massage
 - rejuvenation retreats and, 149
 - spleen and stomach health, 127
- McKenna, Terence, 78–79
- meat
 - balanced diet, 170
 - blood volume and, 70
- medical industry
 - death and, 157–158
 - diagnostic tools, 116–117
 - hormonal balance and, 110
- medicine
 - heart, 125
 - herbs as, 115–116
 - kidney health, 134
 - liver, 122
 - lung, 131

- minimizing toxicity, [32–33](#)
 - serving death process, [163](#)
 - spleen and stomach, [128](#)
 - TCM. *see* TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine)
- meditation
 - endocrine elixirs and, [108](#)
 - heart health, [124–125](#)
 - nervous system health and, [97–98](#)
 - sleep and, [152](#)
 - spleen and stomach health, [127](#)
- men
 - blood treatment, [76–77](#)
 - endocrine elixir, [109](#)
- menopause, [111](#)
- menstrual cycle, [76–77](#)
- meridians, [33](#)
- military service, author's, [87](#)
- mind and sexuality, [60](#)
- miracles
 - endocrine shifts and, [102–104](#)
 - kaya kalpa, [2–4](#)
- modern society
 - ancient art of bodily rejuvenation and, [xviii](#)
 - consequences of, [29–30](#)
 - harmonizing nervous system, [88–89](#)
 - healing sanctuary, [138](#)
 - heart health, [123](#)
 - hormonal balance, [110](#)
 - importance of rest, [36](#)
 - true faith and, [11–12](#)
- Mokshananda, Swami, [94](#)
- monastic Christianity, [9–10](#)
- mortality. *see* death
- Mountain of Attention Sanctuary, [136](#)
- mouth and breath control, [94](#)
- mukomor, [7](#)
- Murthy, T.S. Anantha, [2, 4](#)

- N
- napping, [155](#)
- natural energies, [xvi](#). *see also* energy conservation
- natural organ restoration. *see* organ restoration
- natural process of death, [161–163](#)
- nervous system
 - alternative therapies, [177](#)
 - balancing retreat, [147–148](#)
 - deep-feeling breathing, [92–96](#)
 - fasting and, [174](#)
 - harmonizing, [88–91](#)
 - meditation and health, [97–98](#)
 - overview, [86–88](#)
 - power of love, [99–100](#)
 - regeneration through sleep, [153–154](#)
 - rejuvenating with acupuncture and Network Chiropractic, [179–180](#)
- Network Chiropractic, [179–180](#)
- nutrition. *see* diet

- O
- obstructions
 - emotions as, [44](#)
 - releasing through Healing Pose, [54–55](#)
- open bottom, [51](#)
- organ restoration
 - finding and treating imbalances, [116–118](#)
 - heart, [123–125](#)
 - herbs, [115–116](#)
 - kidneys, [132–134](#)
 - liver, [119–122](#)
 - lungs, [129–131](#)
 - power of plants, [113–115](#)
 - spleen and stomach, [126–128](#)
- organic foods
 - blood volume and, [68–70](#)
 - minimizing toxicity, [31](#)
 - raw organic greens, [33](#)
- orgasm, converting, [56–58](#)
- Osumi, Ikuko, [13](#)
- Oursler, Will, [102](#)
- ovaries, [76](#)
- oxygen, [92–93](#)

- P
- pain and death, [164](#)
- Paramahansa Yogananda, [93](#)
- parasympathetic nervous system, [89](#)
- passing on. *see* death
- patient mentality, [101](#)
- patterns
 - health effects of emotional, [44](#)
 - transforming sexual, [60–63](#)
- peace, passing in, [165](#)
- Pearsall, Paul, [135](#)
- pelvic floor muscles, [52–53](#)
- periods, [76–77](#)
- pharmaceuticals
 - anti-depressants, [157–158](#)
 - reaction to death, [160](#)
 - sleeping aids, [153–154](#)
- phlegm, [130](#)
- physical body
 - conscious exercise of. *see* conscious exercise
 - effect of emotions on, [37–44](#)
 - serving death process, [164](#)
- physiology of modern society, [12](#)
- pineal glands, [62–63](#)
- Pinellia Combination, [115](#)
- pituitary glands, [62–63](#)
- placebos, anti-depressants as, [157](#)
- plants, power of, [113–115](#). *see also* herbal formulas

- plastic bottles, [32](#)
 - pleasure
 - converting orgasm, [56–58](#)
 - rejuvenation and. *see* rejuvenation in pleasure dome
 - transforming sexuality through feeling, [60–63](#)
 - The Pleasure Prescription* (Pearsall), [135](#)
 - PLoS Magazine*, [157](#)
 - polarization
 - global warming, [138](#)
 - regenerative effect of, [59](#)
 - Pollen, Michael, [113](#)
 - pollution
 - death and, [156](#)
 - minimizing toxicity, [32](#)
 - post-menopausal hormone replacement, [111](#)
 - poultry, [170](#)
 - practices, [184–185](#)
 - prana, [xvi](#)
 - pranayama, [94–95](#)
 - prayer
 - ancient regenerative secrets, [14–20](#)
 - transmission of saints, [141–143](#)
 - preparing for death, [161–163](#)
 - processed foods
 - blood volume and, [69](#)
 - minimizing toxicity, [31](#)
 - production, blood, [66–70](#)
 - progesterone, [111](#)
 - protein, [80–81](#), [170](#)
 - psychic healing, [13](#)
 - pulse diagnosis
 - defined, [xii](#)
 - finding and treating imbalances, [117](#)
 - laying on of hands and, [xv](#)
 - purification
 - alternative therapies, [177](#)
 - blood, [65–66](#)
 - raw diet, [168](#)
 - on rejuvenation retreat, [145–146](#)
 - through fasting, [21–23](#), [173–175](#)
- Q**
- qi
 - acupuncture and Network Chiropractic, [179–180](#)
 - anger and, [42](#)
 - defined, [xvi](#)
 - emotions as obstructive, [44](#)
 - fear and, [38](#)
 - fighting stagnation, [33–35](#)
 - laying on of hands, [16–17](#)
 - magnifying through conscious exercise. *see* conscious exercise
 - rich foods, [80–81](#)
 - slowing speed of degeneration, [25–27](#)
 - sorrow and, [40](#)
 - true healing, [105](#)
 - Qi Gong
 - conscious exercise, [48–49](#)
 - defined, [xx](#)
 - importance of teachers, [50](#)
 - liver health, [121](#)
- R**
- Rama, Swami, [93](#)
 - raw food
 - balance, [168–169](#)
 - kicking sugar habit, [80–81](#)
 - raw organic greens
 - improving blood volume with, [69–70](#)
 - minimizing toxicity, [33](#)
 - reactive emotions
 - deep-feeling breathing, [92](#)
 - effect on health, [37–44](#)
 - heart health, [124](#)
 - liver health, [120](#)
 - stages of death, [158–161](#)
 - reality
 - anti-depressants and, [157–158](#)
 - fear and, [37](#)
 - true faith and, [11](#), [13](#)
 - reception in conscious exercise, [47–48](#)
 - regeneration
 - alternative therapies, [177](#)
 - ancient secrets. *see* ancient regenerative secrets
 - blood health. *see* blood
 - death as time of, [161](#)
 - emotions and health, [37–44](#)
 - fighting stagnation, [33–35](#)
 - heart, [125](#)
 - liver, [122](#)
 - lung, [131](#)
 - power of love, [99](#)
 - power of plants, [113–115](#)
 - rest, [36](#)
 - search for soma, [4–7](#)
 - slowing speed of degeneration, [25–27](#)
 - soma revealed, [7–8](#)
 - spleen and stomach, [128](#)
 - toxic environments, [28–33](#)
 - regenerative fasting. *see* fasting
 - rejuvenation
 - with acupuncture and Network Chiropractic, [179–180](#)
 - alternative therapies, [177](#)
 - ancient art of, [xv–xviii](#)
 - author's path, [xii–xiv](#)
 - full bodily circuit, [51–55](#)
 - Gottlieb on, [ix–x](#)
 - resources, [181–183](#)
 - sexual, [55](#)
 - rejuvenation in pleasure dome
 - healing sanctuary, [138–140](#)

Index

- overview, 135–137
- retreats, 144–149
- transmission of saints, 141–143
- relationships
 - as healing sanctuary, 139–140
 - plant and humans, 113
 - sexuality and. *see* sexuality
 - teacher-student, 50
- relaxation
 - conscious exercise, 47–48
 - deep-feeling breathing, 92–96
 - rejuvenation retreats, 144–149
 - spleen and stomach health, 127
 - treating fear, 38
- release
 - conscious exercise, 47–48
 - converting orgasm, 56–58
 - liver health, 121
 - of sorrow, 40–41
- religion
 - Christianity. *see* Christianity
 - importance of teachers in conscious exercise, 50
 - regenerative practice of faith, 11–14
 - spirituality. *see* spirituality
- reproduction
 - decline of hormones, 118
 - sexual rejuvenation, 55
- resources, 181–183
- respiration, 92–96
- responsibility
 - serving death process, 163
 - treating anger, 42
- rest
 - harmonizing nervous system, 90
 - healing sanctuary, 138–140
 - importance of, 36
 - improving blood volume with, 70
 - regeneration through sleep, 151–155
 - rejuvenation retreats, 144–149
- restoring organs. *see* organ restoration
- retreat
 - death as, 156
 - fasting as, 175
 - importance of rest, 36
 - rejuvenation in pleasure dome, 144–149
 - sleep as, 151–152
- Rig Veda*, 5–6
- right living
 - Christian monasticism, 9–10
 - three grades of practice, xix–xxi
- right side of the heart, 72
- Ritchie, Malcolm, 13
- rolling on the rug exercise, 91
- S
- sadness. *see* sorrow
- Sai Baba, Sathya, 141–142
- Saint-Exupery, 71
- saints, transmission, 141–143
- salt, 85
- sanctuary, 138–140
- Sathya Sai Baba, 141–142
- schools, transmission. *see* transmission schools
- science
 - consequences of progress, 29–30
 - meditation and health, 97–98
- Second Grade of practice
 - death and, 161
 - deep-feeling breathing, 93
 - defined, xx
 - effect of fear on health, 37
 - endocrine elixirs, 108
 - forgetting of, 12
 - sleep and, 151
 - true prayer, 14–20
- The Secret Essentials for Combating Senility in China Through Various Dynasties* (De-Xin), 67
- secret spring of endocrine system. *see* endocrine system
- secrets, ancient regenerative. *see* ancient regenerative secrets
- Seiki-Jutsu, 13
- senility and blood volume, 67–68
- senses, 88–89
- service
 - death process in others, 163–166
 - liver health, 121
- sexuality
 - converting orgasm, 56–58
 - polarization, 59
 - rejuvenation, 55
 - on retreat, 146
 - transforming through feeling, 60–63
- Shakti, 59
- The Shamanic Healer* (Ritchie and Osumi), 13
- shamans, 142–143
- Shiva, 59
- shortage, blood, 66–67
- Si Wu Tang
 - improving blood volume with, 70
 - menstrual cycle health, 76–77
- sickness. *see* disease
- Singh, Krishna, 1
- skin care, 32
- sleep
 - importance of, 36
 - kidney health, 133
 - regeneration through, 151–155
- smile of happiness, 124–125
- social changes and life expectancy, 28–29
- soma
 - awakening with nervous system balance. *see* nervous system
 - revealed, 7–8
 - search for, 4–7

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

- Soma: The Divine Mushroom of Immortality* (Wasson), 6
- sorrow
 deep-feeling breathing, 92
 effect on health, 39–41
 lung health, 130
 reaction to death, 160
- soul, 72
- sperm, 56–58
- spirituality
 ancient practice of breath control, 94–95
 author's path, xi–xv
 death and, 161–163
 heart and, 71–72
 passing in peace, 165–166
 transmission of saints, 141–143
- spleen
 blood and digestion, 82–83
 blood health, 83–85
 death and anger, 160
 effect of sorrow on, 40–41
 organ restoration, 126–128
 sugar addiction, 79
- stages of death, 159–161
- stagnation
 acupuncture and Network Chiropractic, 179–180
 converting orgasm, 56
 fighting, 33–35
- Steiner, Rudolf, 74
- stimuli
 harmonizing nervous system, 88–89
 regeneration through sleep, 153–154
- Stoker, Bram, 65
- stomach
 blood and digestion, 82–83
 health effects of anger, 42
 organ restoration, 126–128
- stress
 accepting death, 157–158
 digestion and, 83
 harmonizing nervous system, 90–91
 importance of rest, 36
 liver health, 120
 meditation and, 98
 release through conscious exercise, 46–47
 releasing on retreat, 144–149
 sleep and, 153
 spleen and stomach health, 126–127
 transforming sexuality through feeling, 60–61
- study
 death process, 162–163
 resources, 181–183
- subtle energies
 blood as etheric, 73–75
- conserving, *see* energy conservation
 in heart, 71–72
 regenerative fasting, 21–23
 sensitivity through conscious exercise, 48–49
 true faith and, 13
- sugar
 balanced diet, 171
 blood health, 78–79
 kicking habit, 79–82
- supplements, 32–33
- suppression
 diet without, 171–172
 vs. pleasure dome, 137
- Swami Mokshananda, 94
- Swami Rama, 93
- Swami Vivekananda
 spleen and stomach health, 87–88
- Swami Vivekananda
 regenerative power of love, 99
 transmission of saints, 142
- sweeteners, 79–82
- sympathetic nervous system, 89–90
- synthetic chemicals, 29–30
- T
- Tantra, 59
- The Tao of Sexology* (Chang), 55
- Taoism
 on brown rice, 170
 communion in life and death, 166
 Druda on, xvii–xviii
 Gottlieb on, ix
 polarization in, 59
 three grades of practice, xix–xxi
- Tapasviji Maharaj
 ancient art of bodily rejuvenation, 1–4
 endocrine elixirs, 108
 regeneration through sleep, 149
 rejuvenation retreats, 144
- Targ, Dr. Elizabeth, 15
- TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine)
 acupuncture, 179–180
 blood and digestion, 82–83
 blood volume, 66–68
 defined, xiv
 fighting stagnation, 33–35
 health effects of sorrow, 40
 on heart, 71
 heart health, 124
 hormonal balance, 109–111
 law of aging, 132
 polarization in, 59
 regeneration through sleep, 154
 Si Wu Tang, 76–77
 spleen and stomach school, 83–85
- teachers
 communion in life and death, 166

Index

- healing transmission of, 141–143
 - importance of, [50](#)
 - meditation and health, 97
 - teachings, Eastern. *see* Eastern teachings
 - terminology, xix–xxi
 - therapies
 - accepting death, 158
 - alternative for regeneration, [177](#)
 - Third Grade of practice
 - Christian monasticism, 9–10
 - defined, xix–xx
 - diet as foundation, [69](#)
 - ginseng use, 27
 - three grades of practice, xix–xxi
 - three-part process of regeneration, [177](#)
 - tonics. *see* herbal formulas
 - tonification, kidney, 133–134
 - touch
 - acupuncture and Network Chiropractic, 179–180
 - healing power of prayer, 16–17
 - laying on of hands, xv, 16–17
 - spleen and stomach health, [84](#)
 - toxins
 - in blood, 75
 - blood and digestion, [83](#)
 - cooked foods, 169–170
 - diet without suppression, 171–172
 - environmental, 28–33
 - heart, 123–125
 - importance of rest, [36](#)
 - kidneys, 132–134
 - liver, 119–122
 - lungs, 129–131
 - purification therapies, [177](#)
 - purification through fasting, 173–175
 - qi and, 26–27
 - raw food, [168](#)
 - regenerative fasting, 21–23
 - spleen and stomach, 126–128
 - sugar as, [171](#)
 - Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). *see* TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine)
 - The Transition Called Death* (Hampton), [161](#)
 - transitioning to healthy diet, 172–173
 - transmission schools
 - conscious exercise, 48–49
 - death and, [162](#)
 - Healing Pose, 54–55
 - importance of teachers, [50](#)
 - meditation and health, 97
 - passing in peace, [165](#)
 - rejuvenation in pleasure dome, 136–137, 141–143
 - of true prayer, [14](#), 16
 - treatments
 - for anger, 42–43
 - for fear, 38–39
 - for imbalances, 116–118
 - for insomnia, 153–155
 - regeneration therapies, [177](#)
 - for sorrow, 40–41
 - true faith, 11–14
 - true prayer, 14–20
 - Trungpa, Chogyam, 99–100, 144, 184–185
 - tumors and hormones, [110](#)
 - Type 2 diabetes, 78–79
- U
- unhappiness, 137
 - Upanishads*, 37
 - urine-drinking, 6–7
- V
- van Hoestenbergh, Dr., [104](#)
 - Vedas*, [5](#)
 - viruses and lung health, 129–130
 - vitamins, 32–33
 - Vivekananda, Swami
 - power of love, [99](#)
 - spleen and stomach health, 87–88
 - transmission of saints, 142
 - volume, blood, 66–70
 - vulnerability, 99–100
- W
- waking up, 151
 - warm room exercise, [91](#)
 - warming foods, 169–170
 - warming kidneys, 38–39
 - Wasson, R. Gordon, 6–7
 - water
 - of Lourdes, 102–104
 - minimizing toxicity, 31–32
 - weakness and fear, 37–38
 - wei qi, 129–130
 - Western culture
 - diagnostic tools, 116–117
 - diet, [80](#)
 - importance of rest, [36](#)
 - meditation and health, 97–98
 - vs. regenerative practice of faith, 11–13
 - wine, 119
 - wisdom, holistic, 11–12
 - women
 - ejaculation, 56–58
 - endocrine elixir, 109
 - menstrual cycle health, 76–77
 - polarization, [59](#)
 - working out vs. conscious exercise, 45–46
- X
- xue, 105
- Y
- Yan De-Xin, 67–68

THE TAO OF REJUVENATION

yang

- healing sanctuary, [138](#)
- kidney health, [132–133](#)
- raw food and, [169](#)
- regeneration through sleep, [154](#)
- regenerative effect of polarization, [59](#)

Yang Shou-zhong, [49](#)

Yellow Emperor's Classic, [71](#)

yin

- as blood, [76–77](#)
- invocation, [141](#)
- kidney health, [132–133](#)
- pleasure dome, [138](#)
- raw food as, [169](#)
- regenerative effect of polarization, [59](#)
- rejuvenation retreats, [144–149](#)

yoga

- ancient practice of breath control,
[94–95](#)
- conscious exercise, [48–49](#)
- rolling on the rug exercise, [91](#)

Yogananda, Paramahansa, [93](#)

Yogeshwaranand, Swami Saraswati, [71–72](#)

yogic meditation. *see also* meditation

defined, [xi–xii](#)

of Tapasviji Maharaj, [1–2](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Angelo Druda practices Oriental Medicine in Cobb, California. He is the founder of Traditional Botanical Medicine, a member of the Australian Natural Therapist Association, the Health and Sexuality Editor for DharmaCafé.com, and a student and devotee of Ruchira Avatar Adi Da Samraj.

No matter what your experience or stage of life, a few hours a week of study and practice can do you a world of good. Anyone can find something of benefit in the rejuvenative teachings of the great healing traditions. You just have to want to feel better.

—**ANGELO DRUDA**
from the Introduction

“I thoroughly enjoyed reading *The Tao of Rejuvenation* and strongly recommend it to anyone in search of better health, rejuvenation, and the spiritual joy of being alive. Angelo Druda uniquely weaves different traditions—Taoist, early Christian, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), and modern spirituality—into a text that is both practical and sublime. It is a pleasure to see TCM so simply explained and infused with a spiritual wisdom often lacking in standard TCM texts. While Druda frequently touches the ineffable, he always grounds it in the body. Angelo brings an uncommon wisdom to the seemingly common events of life, such as eating, sleeping, sex, love, and, ultimately, death. The accompanying tables provide an easy reference to access the appropriate foods, herbs, and conscious techniques for healing and rejuvenation. I found that even reading the text was relaxing, hopeful, and enriching of my ‘yin.’”

—**SIDNEY KURN, MD**
author of *Integrated Medicine for Neurological Disorders*

“Druda’s book presents simple, reliable, time-tested habits—what he explains as the Taoist ‘Third Grade’ practices of ‘right living’—for enjoying a long and healthy life.”

—**BILL GOTTLIEB**
author of *Alternative Cures* and *Breakthroughs in Drug-Free Healing*
and former Editor in Chief, Prevention Magazine Health Books and Rodale Books

“*The Tao of Rejuvenation* is a godsend for everyone who wants to live a long and healthy life. Druda brilliantly explains how longevity depends upon the body’s ability to rejuvenate itself and then gives us the practical techniques that are vital to maintaining our health and well-being. His book serves our natural evolution towards real and lasting happiness—the fundamental desire of every soul.”

—**SCOTT TREADWAY, PhD**
author of *Ayurveda and Immortality*

“Angelo Druda’s insightful and elegantly written book offers practical advice that can open your eyes and your mind to your capacity for self-regeneration. Awaken these wondrous pathways and enjoy a longer and healthier life.”

—**RANDALL FITZGERALD**
author of *The Hundred-Year Lie*



DharmaCafé Books
Cobb, California
www.dharmacafe.com



North Atlantic Books
Berkeley, California
www.northatlanticbooks.com

Health/Longevity

US \$16.95 / \$18.95 CAN

ISBN 978-1-55643-775-5



9 781556 437755

