

## Healing Mother Earth

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The *Nei Jing Su Wen* opens with *Huang Di* asking Taoist sage Qibo: "I am told the people in ancient times could all survive to more than one hundred years old, and they appeared to be quite healthy and strong in actions, but people at the present time are different..."

Traditional Chinese Medicine is connected to a rich legacy of wisdom from ancient masters. The "spirit line" which connects us to the *Nei Jing Su Wen* ultimately connects us to Tao, to nature. The term spirit line first came into my consciousness in Tai Lahans wonderful book "*Integrating Conventional and Chinese Medicine in Cancer Care, a Clinical Guide*." The Navajo weaver includes a line in her woolen rug which connects her to the Holy People, to the universe. In this way, the rug is alive and Navajo culture endures. When Qibo answers *Huang Di's* question, it is clear that the spirit line which connects us to Tao is the key to our health and longevity: "Those who knew the way of keeping good health in ancient times always kept their behavior in daily life in accordance with nature..."

Today the corporate energy which increasingly dominates human culture on our planet is totally disconnected from the Earth. Like the dark lord of Harry Potter fame, this insatiable monster employs technology like black magic to feed its ever growing need for power and money. The BP oil spill is one horrific example of the consequence of this greed. But, it is also an artifact of the reality of having seven billion people on the planet, most of whom are aspiring to use more energy to improve their standard of living. The result is a toxic heat pathogen which is destroying the capacity of the earth to provide clean water, fresh air and safe, nutritious food for us.

In a very real sense, the toxic heat infecting the Earth is connected with the toxic heat pathogen of human and animal cancers. Cancer is truly the plague of the 21st century. In 1958, when Dr. Max Gerson published "*A Cancer Therapy, Results of Fifty Cases*" one out of 6 people were dying of cancer. In 2005, when Charlotte Gerson published her most recent book, the cancer rate had risen to 40 to 50 percent. Dr. Max Gerson predicted that if we did not alter our persistence on what he called a modern way of living, that the cancer rate would reach 100 percent. It is clear that Dr. Gerson was connected to the spirit line of Tao, of the Earth. But who was listening?

The January 2011 issue of *National Geographic* features an article on world population. Author Robert Kunzig takes the optimistic view that the planet can easily sustain the current 7 billion humans, but even the 9 billion projected by the middle of this century. Only in passing does Kunzig mention global warming, as if it were another topic, not connected with human demographics. He does report that in China government policies have resulted in lower birth rates. But, as he so appropriately concludes lower birth rates in many poor countries is linked to improved standards of living.

Those of us currently enjoying the lush benefits of life in America, will face the reality that in order to maintain world peace and heal the earth, we must lower our standards of living. That is the ultimate consequence of sharing the planet with so many humans. Even among the Spartan Amish, population increase has resulted in changes in lifestyle. Most young Amish couples can no longer

afford to farm, but turn instead to furniture making and other crafts. Despite their awareness of the need to live in harmony with the Earth, under this change they have turned to chain saws, tractors, diesel engines and other petroleum-based sources of energy.

In the last episode of the Planet Earth series, environmentalists take the viewer on a realistic journey of the consequences of human overpopulation. Many forms of wildlife exist solely because of vigilant guarding by World Wildlife funded workers. Some have not been as fortunate. An entire species of Siberian antelope numbering in the millions is now extinct. They were killed to provide food for the growing human population.

That episode also highlighted the efforts of thousands of good people around the Earth who are working to provide solutions to our environmental imbalances. When we connect with them as acupuncturists and Doctors of Oriental Medicine, the spirit line of healing the earth becomes stronger. This is not only good news for elephants, it is good news for all of us. As Tai Lahans observes, the role of modern practitioners of Chinese Medicine include: sage, counselor, physician, environmentalist and community-oriented political activist.

Although some of our patients may not seem concerned with the fate of the polar bear, wolf, tiger, frog or tropical forest and while they may not "believe" in global warming, I believe it is our responsibility to help them see the spirit line which connects them to the Earth. Killing sharks for their fins somehow disrupts the fragile web of life in coral reefs. Human sewerage then causes an overgrowth of algae which kill shellfish. Weaving environmental awareness into food therapy is one way of educating people. When you consider the footage of fish eating pearls of oil and surfactant in the gulf, and the connection between human waste and shellfish, somehow food from the sea seems less appealing! Even salmon from the pristine waters of Alaska spend the majority of their lives in the contaminated oceans of our planet.

Needless to say, one of the most poignant actions we can take is to follow a taoist model of living in harmony with the earth. Here are some examples of things we do in our clinic, perhaps they will inspire you to even more creative and effective means of healing our earth:

#### EDUCATE

Write articles describing the connection between pollution and health. In time, your patients will respect you for helping the community attain better health.

Join environmental groups. Some offer brightly colored periodicals and newsletters, which will provide reading material for your patient waiting room. Hanging pictures of endangered animals and beautiful places on earth from calendars and magazines helps patients connect with the spirit line of Tao.

We also purchased holiday cards from Defenders of Wildlife this year. In these cards were a letter describing some the improvements we have made for patients and commentary on the state of the planet and its connectedness to health.

#### RECYCLE

Our clinic has a beautiful picture of a Chinese boat on the Yellow river. Below is a caption which tells patients that we only use recycled paper products, where possible. It also describes how we recycle plastic and paper in the clinic. Then there is a brief line describing the connectedness of recycling and health.

My staff carefully folds the table paper and puts into our paper recycling along with used office

paper, envelopes, junk mail, etc. We also have a visible container for plastic recycling. In each treatment room is an attractive wicker basket with a plastic bag liner. Into it go all the insertion tubes. Can you imagine how many insertion tubes we could recycle every month as a group!

## MODEL

Most of us live in or near the communities in which we practice. Our patients see us shopping. They see us buying organic food and they also see those of us who buy cookies and ice cream. They also noticed the baskets and bags we bring to the store. Some of the environmental groups provide very attractive bags with pictures of animals which act as ambassadors for environmental awareness. My patients noticed that I recently replaced my 15-year-old van with a smaller vehicle. This opens the way for a friendly comment on using less fuel for the sake of our planet.

## PURCHASE RESPONSIBLY

I am proud to tell my patients that the herbs I give them are not only effective but also safe and clean.

## TAKE A STANCE

In light of the world overpopulation crisis, I have chosen not to treat infertility. I tell my patients why I have taken this course. I also tell them that they must make their own decisions. If they need help, I refer them to a wonderful colleague who is effective in this special aspect of our medicine.

I do treat pregnant patients, induce labor and treat children. I love children. But I am not optimistic about the future of children born today. Will they live to see the day when polar bears are extinct and the cancer rate is 100? Hopefully not.

In Yoga it is said we are living in the age of the Kali Yuga, the great evil. In this age only 25 percent of what we see and hear is true. May we be a part of that 25 percent by helping the people of our planet connect with the spirit line of Tao.

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