

**Part of the Introduction Chapter to the Book Written By  
Graham Player Ph.D.  
'Everybody's Health – Time to Reap the Benefits of East and  
West'**

Hai Feng Publishing, 1992  
By Graham Player Ph.D.

There is a growing demand worldwide for greater knowledge of Eastern traditional philosophies and their practices of health and healing. The need to develop and preserve this knowledge has become urgent, so much so that the need for traditional studies forms part of the policies and concerns of the World Health Organization.

Western medical science and practice have provided major advances to contemporary society, and continue to be the prime health care delivery system throughout the developed world. However there is growing public interest in, and demand for, complementary therapies to Western orthodox medicine, particularly for the treatment of chronic disease and ongoing health maintenance. A recent survey in the United Kingdom revealed that 80% of those questioned requested alternative therapies be included in the National Health Service.

This situation has arisen due to increasing community concerns over the efficacy and safety of some modern drugs and other procedures, the apparent inadequacy of advancement in the key areas of chronic illness, the soaring costs of increasingly complex technology, and the feeling that medical treatment is becoming less human and out of reach for all but the wealthy nations. It is also apparent that modern scientific medicine, despite its comprehensive reservoir of knowledge, enormous financial resources, economic expense to the community, and omnipotent drug treatments, has failed to meet the advancing expectations of society.

At the forefront of the search for complementary therapies is Chinese traditional healing. Although some aspects of acupuncture are accepted by Western orthodox medicine, Chinese medicine in general is considered only in terms of its Western counterpart. The underlying principles of this traditional therapy are not understood by orthodox medicine, apart from some specific groups of practitioners.

The demand for greater knowledge and use of Chinese traditional health and healing practices, and its philosophies continues to increase throughout the world. It is necessary that acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine be more accessible to Western science for further research and studies, and to recognize and include this therapy as a complement to optimum community health care programs throughout the world. It is well known that traditional Chinese medicine has continued to serve and support one-quarter of the world's population for more than two millennia. In most, if not all, contemporary Western societies traditional Chinese medicine has found growing support, acceptance and favor throughout the community. This has been due mainly to its apparent and alleged benefits and efficacy as a therapeutic modality.

In defiance of objections raised by some Western Medical Associations and their apparent lack of support or recognition of traditional Chinese medicine, a growing number of their own members today practice acupuncture. This is an endorsement of the efficacy of acupuncture, and its community demand and acceptance.

Given the confused status of traditional Chinese medicine in many Western societies and the lobbying for its control from various associations with vested interests, it is inevitable that further controversy and investigations will eventuate. A major part of, and indeed the impetus, of these investigations and clarification should logically be accepted by China and Hong Kong whose very cultural foundation and history will be laid open to world-wide examination and judgment. To remain apathetic, silent and complacent about an obvious and inevitable movement throughout the Western world would not be sensible.

Clearly it is time that the position was clarified, and adequate investigations undertaken to establish the role of traditional Chinese medicine in contemporary society. In the minds of people who have studied the subject, and patients who have received benefits, there is no doubt that traditional Chinese medicine is effective. As medical research is largely commerce-driven, funds made available for research into traditional therapies are miniscule compared to that of drug therapies. In the past many investigations into traditional Chinese medicine have been improper and incomplete, due in particular to lack of funds, cultural differences and ignorance. However published findings, usually not supportive of traditional Chinese medicine, have generally been accepted by default as authoritative and thorough.

Apart from funding, there is the question of research standards. For Western scientists to accept research results experiments have to follow carefully planned procedures, which eliminate all but the effects that are to be observed. Unfortunately the country where much research has been done – China – is not strong in the exacting culture of Western science. Whilst this may not matter to those who understand and use the therapies, it does mean that the orthodox medical scientist will not accept them. Thus, these therapies are denied to the countries in which Western medicine is the established lore.

I hope that my small contribution, through the information and ideas I have delivered to you in this book, serves to encourage and accelerate the continued development of optimum health care delivery systems throughout the world for the benefit of mankind.