



HEALING FROM A BUDDHIST POINT OF VIEW

by

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HEALING AS LOOKED FROM BUDDHISTIC POINTS OF VIEW

Recently much attention has been paid to healing power of the mind and body. 'TIME magazine of June 24, 1994 issue had a cover story entitled "FAITH AND HEALING" of which the subtitle is "Can spirituality promote health? Doctors are finding some surprising evidence".

The story indicates that more and more people in the United States find spirituality and faith to be important in curing numerous diseases. Now it is reported that many US medical schools have courses on holistic medicine and doctors are studying the connection between healing and spirituality.

In fact the results of telephone poll of 1,004 adult Americans taken for TIME/CNN on June 12-13, 1995 have been introduced in the article. The results are really surprising even for us, Orientals, who tend to believe in and rely upon alternative medicine such as acupuncture, moxa cautery, finger-pressure therapy, Yoga, meditation, and sometimes prayer to get rid of curses.

The polls show that 82% of doctors believe in the healing power of personal prayer. 72% of doctors believe that prayer for someone else can help cure their illness. Furthermore, they believe that god sometimes intervenes to cure people who have serious illness.

These opinions seem to come from Christian doctors who themselves believe in the presence and power of the God.

Therefore the mechanisms of healing power of prayer may be considered due to the power of the God.

The story of the later section introduced Dr. Deepak Chopra, an Indian spiritual healer, who is a graduate of the medical school of the University of Pennsylvania and now practicing internal medicine in Hollywood, Florida. His book "Quantum Healing" has been one of best seller books in USA. Chopra gave lectures all over in USA and his lectures were full of audiences.

The story of TIME introduced cases of people who believe in healing powers of Christian faith and Indian medicine and practice to acquire them. After reading the article of TIME and some books such as SPONTANEOUS HEALING by Andrew Weil and Larry Dossey and BRAIN LONGEVITY by D.S. Khaksa, I felt that they did not give right explanations of Buddhism and the soul- body relationship

In this article, I would like to describe Japanese attitudes toward healing which I think is influenced by the Buddhist philosophy and ideology.

1) How Buddhism thinks of the mind.

Shakamuni was worried about the death of life and the cessation of man's existence. He thought that everything would be meaningless if one can not solve the question of life and death and if there is any eternal existence.

According to his ideas, human beings have 8 sources of sufferings which accompany as long as they live. They are; pains accompanying birth, aging, disease, and death. They are inevitable as long as humans exist in this world. There are 4 other sufferings, mainly psychological. They are; sufferings to have to live with people they do not like; sufferings to have to depart from people whom humans love; sufferings because humans can not obtain everything they want to have; sufferings to have to work and tolerate in order to survive. These sufferings may be avoided if one can have correct ways of thinking and feeling, thus peace in mind.

He did every training used in India to get serenity and tortured himself in order to get himself rid of all the emotions and desires which would cause unhappiness in life.

First, he tried meditation and learned how not to think or feel anything so that he may not have any fear of death, anger, depression or emotion. He thought, however, that such trials may bring human beings to the same condition as sleep, loss of consciousness, which may be brought about by drinking alcohol or taking some hallucinating drugs. What meanings of the cessation of thinking or feelings. Human beings may obtain such conditions by death. So what meanings there would be to live, if humans want to be the same as dead persons.

He abandoned such traditional trainings and kept thinking about the existence in the universe. One morning, Shakamuni got enlightenment by looking at the Venus in the mooring sky. I understand followings were the essence of his enlightenment, satori.

He exclaimed " How strange it is. When I got satori

(enlightenment), I found that everything in the universe was already in the state of satori. Humans and every animal and plant had already satori. The reason why we can not understand this truth is that humans have illusions which distort feelings and thinkings and prevent them from getting true enlightenment' He thought that our conventional mind is not true mind. Such mind is something like vapor or methane gas, which do not have any concrete existence. The true mind exists very deep in consciousness and one can reach such true mind if one's conventional thinking and feelings expire. Then, some external stimulus awakens true mind and give one satori, or enlightenment.

His declaration that we are the same not only in mind but every aspect of existence is the basis of philosophy which Japanese masters of alternative medicines or new religions rely upon. Another aspect which Shakamuni found about the true mind is that the true mind will never cease to exist or even was not born. The true mind has had existed from the beginning of the universe and continues to exist as long as the universe exists. The true mind has the same dimension as the universe itself. In fact one Zen master, Eisai of Kamakura era, said that the mind was higher than the heaven and deeper than the sea.

The most important point in the Buddhist philosophy is that this is not empty philosophy in Western sense, but everybody gets this idea if one gets satori. Since our mind is as great as Buddha's, one can get this truth when one gets satori.

(2) The brain and mind

How Buddhistic mind is related the structure of the brain.

According to a Chinese monk named Goho(530-561), the mind was divided or classified in 8 parts, and 4 layers. The external stimulus is perceived in 5 senses called 5th "Shiki".(Shiki may be expressed as sense) They are vision, hearing, taste, touch and smell, which are located in the cerebral cortex in the present physiology. The informations received by 5 Shiki are organized and judged by 6th "Shiki" which may correspond to association fields in the present physiology. This "Shiki" is also called as Manashiki. The informations organized this way are sent to 7th "Shiki" which judges such information according to the emotion,

desire, and instinct. For instance, the image of a human given from 6th "Shiki" to 7th "Shiki" gives the mind whether this person is good or bad by emotional feeling. 7th "Shiki" not only receives informations from 6th "Shiki" but also sends informations from the true mind, 8th "Shiki" to 6th "Shiki". 7th "shiki", however, distorts the informations from 8th "Shiki" because 7th "Shiki"'s functions are influenced by emotion, love, hatred, so on, so that the informations given or received by 7th "Shiki" are distorted. 7th "Shiki" is also called Densohshiki, which means a messenger sense.

8th "Shiki" is called as Arayashiki, which means the storage sense, because this sense has all the knowledges not only of the present existence but also the past lives. 8th "Shiki" produces the pure and clear thought, which is usually not recognized by the conventional mind because such pure thought is always distorted by 7th sense. However, if the functions of 6 and 7th senses are calmed down, the external stimulus passes through 6 and 7th senses and reaches the true mind of 8th sense. At this time, one recognizes the existence of the true mind, which is called satori.

(3) The alternative medicines in Japan.

People use moxa cures, acupuncture, finger pressure therapy (Shiatsu), all of which have been imported from China at some time of the history.

I would like to explain the unique techniques probably originated in Japan. One is Tekazashi, use of hand power. Masters hang the palm over the sick site. The distance between the palm and the skin is about several centimeters. The patients express the alleviation of the pain and uncomforness by this techniques. The method of internal meditation, Naikan-no- hou may have been imported from China too. It became very famous because the genius monk of Zen, Hakuin in Edo era, claimed that he cured the serious illness of tuberculosis and depression by this method. He wrote a book entitled Yasen-kan-na.

Since the techniques and philosophy behind the practice are very unique and typically Japanese in my opinions. I spend most of the space of this article to introduce this method and a person who made the method very popular in Japan.

Hakuin was born in 1685 at Hara, Shizuoka prefecture, Japan. The reason why Hakuin was so famous and important in the history of Zen buddhism in Japan is that he was said to have experinced the highest satori in the history of Japan. He then devised a new methodology to reach satori.

It has been said that 24 sects of Zen were introduced to Japan from 12th century to 14th century. In Zen, the master must certify the degree of satori, and if the student obtained the same degree of satori as the master has, then the master gives a certificate of satori to the student. The reason why the certificate is so important is that the degree of the master's satori must be the same as that of Buddha, thus the highest. If then no student reached this degree of satori, The stream of that Zen sect expired, and the sect ceased to exist. Of course the sect can exist in formality, but there is no spiritual meaning in this sect and no student gathers in this sect to practice Zen and to experience satori. In fact there were only two sects remaining at the time of the birth of Hakuin. One was imported to Japan and the essence was transferred to Daitou-kokushi. This is the stream which remains now. All the other sects lost the meaning of spiritual existence.

When he was a boy, he heard of the situations of the hell, into which humans may fall if his behaviors and acts were judged wrong after death. The torture and pains in the hell seemed intolerable for him. He wanted not to fall into the hell. In order to achieve this objective, he thought that he should be a Buddhistic monk and to practice. One day, he watched a drama at the village fair. A monk of Nichiren sect, Nisshin, propagates a principle of Nichiren-sect. This sect relies on one of the Buddhistic bible called Kan-non-kyo. According to the teachings, persons who firmly believe in Kan-non, which is one of Buddhas, then he will not be burned in the fire, not drown in sea, and the sword will be fragmented even if the enemy wanted to kill him by using the sword. The drama depicted Nisshin's life and showed that he was not injured when boiling oil was poured over him by people against the propagation his belief.

He was really impressed by this story and from the day he kept reading the bible, Kan-non-kyo from the morning till falling into

sleep. Then one day he put the heated iron bar on his thigh, believing that the prayer would prevent him from being burned. The results were miserable. His thigh was completely burned. He thought that his practice of Buddhism was not good enough, and became a Zen monk. His practice of Zen was so ardent that one day he got satori by hearing the sound of the bell of a temple far away. He believed that no one in the past 500 years got satori as high as he obtained.

He became, however, very sick, probably at the late stage of tuberculosis. He met one day with a monk, who taught him Naikan-no-ho, which may be translated as internal mediation. One sits like in Zen practice. He imagines that a hypothetical fruit called nanso is placed on the top of the head. The fruit is like an apple, but tastes and smells excellent. The fruit melts soon by the body temperature and the fluid gradually goes down through blood vessels. Finally the fluid flows out of the body at the tip of the toes. One must repeat the same imagination from the beginning and repeat again. Then one must be filled with this beautiful fluid and sick parts are washed away. Hakuin said that there will be no disease which can not be cured by the techniques. He then devised new techniques for getting satori. Many students gathered in his temple. Many got the highest degree of satori and became masters of the other Zen sects which already lost the stream. Now all the Zen sects in Japan had the masters who inherited satori from the masters of Hakuin's students.

The another technique is Kikou, which has also been imported from China. Japanese kikou is somewhat different from Chinese counter part in being united with Zen practice. During Zazen (sitting in Zen practice), one breathes very slowly from the nose. At that time one must feel that the essence of the universe pours in the body and washes the sick part of which the ailed components are blown out with air. Since our mind is the part of the universe and our mind is the same as that of the Buddha, our mind must have a healing ability and our body must be healed by the techniques.

In order to understand kikou, I must explain "Ki". Ki is defined in various ways. Ki is a kind of spiritual existence and exists all over the universe. Ki fills the space. A Chinese philosopher and taoist,

Moushi, said that Ki can be explained by the analogy of the train. Ki is the locomotive with engines. Without Ki, nothing is accomplished and everything loses a power of life.

Since we are surrounded by Ki, we should incorporate Ki by respiration. Ki is inhaled by breathing. We can concentrate Ki by paying our attention to some part of the body and changing the posture.

In kikou, people change postures together with optimal breathing which helps to fill the body with Ki.

There are two kinds of Kikou. The one I explained above is nai-kikou, internal kinou. The other is gai-kikou, external kikou, which sometimes looks like telepathy. The master is said to be able to emit and dissipate the power of Ki which is poured into the body and cures the sick part.

I feel sorry that I can not explain more about Kikou.

The other methods unique in Japan may be listed below.

1) Nishi's therapy

This technique was originally invented by Mr. Nishi about 70 years ago according to whom the skin, nutrition, extremities, and the soul comprise 4 main ways for keeping health. If there is a distortion in one of these 4 components, many diseases occur. He thought that the blood circulates in the body not because of the pumping power of the heart but sucking power of the capillaries. He recommended following practices. (a) One must sleep on the hard and flat bed with thin blankets to cover the body. This corrects the spine. This practice enlarges the chest cavity and removes the unnecessary pressure from the kidney. (b) Use of the hard pillow. The pillow made of wood or china should be used. One must press the third and fourth cervical vertebrae to be corrected. (c) a goldfish movement. One lies on one's back with legs stretched. Both hands are folded under the neck and shake body like a goldfish. This technique corrects the spine. (d) Lie on one's back and hold both hands and legs upright, and vibrate. Try 2 or 3 times a day for 1 min. (e) Gasshou and gasseki movement(press palms and soles together). Lie on one's back and press palms in front of the breast. Press fingers and relax. Then rotate palms. Then press the soles of both legs and move legs forward and

backward about 10 times. (f) stay upright. and press the soles of both legs together. Then move the body right and left gently. The purposes of the practices to correct the spine in a right position and stimulate the movement of blood through capillaries.

2) Fast cure invented by Koda. Dr.Koda graduated from the medical school but suffered by chronic enterogastritis and hepatitis. He turned to Noshi's therapy and started to use a fast therapy. The menu is as follows. No breakfast. Lunch is mainly vegetable juice (250g of spinach or other vegetables)or roots of radish or yam (250g)and unpolished rice (70g) and salt (5g). The supper is the same as lunch. Koda claims that this therapy reduces the growth of tumors.

3) a thermotherapy using loquat

Place the leaves of loquat on the skin under which sick portion is located. Place burning moxa on the leaf. Therapists claim that the effects are due to ultra infrared rays emitted from the heated leaves of loquat.

(4)Herbal medicine in Japan

In China, natural substances have been used medically for thousands of years. Traditional Chinese medicine, including herbalism, began to be imported into Japan from about the 5th century AD., and a few modifications it has been incorporated into the system operated by Japanese healers. Interestingly, the diseases for which the use of specific herbs has been recommended and prescribed in Japan are different from those recommended in China now.

Medical diagnosis is based upon the yin/yang balance as well as the functioning of the internal organs and systems, the patient's psychological state, diet, and life style. Each of these factors will be considered in relation to the nature of the diseases or disorder involved, and its degree and speed of progression.

Herbs are classified in a number of ways. The nature of each is said to be cold, cool, hot, warm or neutral. This is the chi or energy value of the herb and is used to balance excess or deficiencies in the disharmony that constitutes the illness.

The herb's taste and smell are also evaluated as sour, bitter, sweet, pungent or salty (tasteless or astringent). These characteristics are linked to special affinities with different organs

or body systems and the related emotions that may be involved in disease. The herbalists prescribes a mixture of herbs and tells the patient how to prepare and use them. Table1 shows the constituents and therapeutic effects of some important herbs. Note that the effects expected are different in Chines and Japanese herbal medicine.

(4) Conclusion

There are many unique healing techniques in Japan other than those introduced above. I think, however, that most of the techniques rely on the basic assumptions that our mind has the same characteristics and power as that of Buddha, and that our mind has the same dimension as the universe. Our body, which is made by the component of the universe, must be free from any disease, since there is no ailment in the universe composed of the components which made the body of Buddha. The reason why we become sick is that our mind is controlled by a messenger mind which distorts the functions of the body. If we think and feel properly and behaves as Buddha thought, all the illness will disappear.

Oriental herbal constituents and their therapeutic effects	
Constituent	therapeutic effects
ANGELICA AND PAEONIA(W)	infertility
Dang gui shao yao san(C)	endometriosis
Tokishakuyakusan(J)	hysteria
BUPLEURUM AND CINNAMON(W)	common cold , influenza
Chi hu gui zhi tang(C)	peptic ulcer
Saikokeishito(J)	
BUPLEURUM AND PAEONIA(W)	menstrual disorder
Jia wei xiao yao san	anemia
Kamishoyo-san(J)	nervous disorder
CINNAMON AND HOELEN(W)	menstrual disorder
Gui shi fu ling wan(C)	menopausal problems
Keishibukuryo-gan(J)	
GINSENG AND DANG GUI(W)	malignant tumors
Shi kuan dau tang(C)	autoimmune disease and tuberculosis
Juzentaiho-to(J)	
HOELEN FIVE(W)	edema
Wu ling san(C)	motion sickness
Gorei-san	hangover
MINOR BUPLEURUM(W)	chronic hepatitis
Xiao chai hu tang(C)	liver cirrhosis
Shosaiko-to	bronchitis
PUERARIA(W)	common cold
Ge gen tang(C)	tonsillitis
kakkon-to(J)	stiffness in the shoulder

These are the herbal combinations

W:Western herbs. C: Chinese equivalent. J:Japanese equivalent

ORIENTAL HERBAL CONSTITUENTS	
GINGER RHIZOME(W)	antipyretic, cough suppressant
Shen jiang(C)	
Shokyo(J)	
GINSENG ROOT(W)	mildly stimulant
Ren shen(C)	gastrointestinal soother
Ningin(J)	mildly antidepressant
HARE'S EAR ROOT(W)	antiallergic
Chai hu(C)	antibiotic
Saiko(J)	mildly anti-inflammatory
LICORICE ROOT(W)	sedative
Gan xao(C)	reduces muscular spasm
Kanzo(J)	anti-inflammatory