

Intestinal Distress and the Gentle Healing Power of Chi Nei Tsang

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The Intestines and Emotional Digestion

Chi Nei Tsang, the art of manually inducing global body healing from the abdomen, is a practice coming originally from old Taoist Monastic tradition. It is a return to listening to the nature of the human body. Old Master Muy, the teacher of Master Manta Chia who brought Chi Nei Tsang in the West and from whom I learned Chi Nei Tsang, didn't know conventional anatomy or biology, but knew nature very well: plants, herbs, animals, their characteristic vital energies, and what animate them. His fingers were in constant attention, listening to the vital energy inside the tissues of internal organs. According to Master Chia, he didn't know if the liver was on the right or the left, or what was the endocrine responses of the pancreas or the adrenals... All this didn't have any importance to him. He said, himself, that he couldn't explain why and how Chi Nei Tsang worked. All he could do was to demonstrate its healing power! And, indeed, everyone of his patients were returning back home in much better health, often pushing themselves the wheelchair they came in.

Chi Nei Tsang today retains the traditional, holistic, Taoist approach. Even though practitioners are trained to work almost exclusively on the abdomen, the applied techniques on the internal organs have a general repercussion on the entire body. This incures not only at the metabolic and structural levels but also at the mental, emotional and spiritual levels. I have been practicing and teaching this abdominal work since the 1980s. My book, *“Five Elements, Six Conditions for Healing”* describes how the work on the intestines drives often clients into a deep, active slumber full of dreams, or, on the contrary, triggers sometimes spectacular cathartic emotional reactions¹.

...“During my practice of Chi Nei Tsang, my clients regularly tell me how their treatments allow them to make major breakthroughs in their emotional life, and how their physical health improvement brings corresponding mental and emotional transformations. Some of them are amazed at how much their behavior and personality change during the brief period of time that they have experienced Chi Nei Tsang compared to the length of treatment typically required with psychotherapy.”...

The book also describes how internal organs, literally, “digest” emotions. In my opinion, emotions, being irrational, don't get resolved at the mental level. Instead, they get digested when we have the will, the power, the support system, the maturity and the mental capacity to evolve from them. This allows us to overcome our emotions in order not to be negatively affected by them. To this effect, it is beneficial to be guided by an external touch that help us recognize and validate feelings. This

¹ Gilles Marin *Five Elements, Six Conditions for Healing* 2006` -

increases the psychological and physiological impacts that the emotions have upon the physical body. Only once awareness of the physical connection is firmly established can the emotional charges enter into a processes of transformation. They get naturally digested and feed our soul, the receptacle of our emotional identity, which gives us what we call maturity.

For this process of emotional digestion the body needs more than just a brain, which can only establish sensory and cognitive connections. All our brain can do is to get us to observe facts. To manifest emotional digestion we need a whole system digesting emotions the same way we digest food by retaining what we need to feed ourselves and to eliminate what we don't need to relieve ourselves. Emotions, at the visceral level, manifest as energetical charges. Tissues and organs act like electronic components, like living resistances, diodes and transistors. But being alive, unlike electronic parts, tissues and organs have the capacity of choice of reaction. These choices are determined according to the natural function of these tissues and organs expressing the particularity of each emotion. For example, emotional rumination often manifests as an involuntary contractions of the jaws with teeth grinding at night, or difficulty "swallowing" emotions as constriction in the throat. Trouble digesting one's own emotions in general appears as different chronic zones of tension, inflammation, and spastic areas along the intestines and along the whole digestive tract. These patterns of contraction can prevent digestion of both food and emotions with the accompanying feeling of being mentally "stuck".

Emotional Digestion, Intestines and Dreamtime

The colon, our large intestine, is the internal organ with the most nerve connections in the body besides the brain. Studies by Dr. Michael Guershon, of the university of Colombia, performed since the 1980s, found that the enteric nervous system, the nervous system of the intestines with its complex plexuses, establishes what he called a second brain in our body completely independent of any control from the central nervous system. According to Dr. Guershon, these nerve connections can't only exist for the sole purpose of intestinal elimination². During treatments, Chi Nei Tsang practitioners often see their clients falling heavily asleep even though their fingers are deeply sunken into their abdomen. After listening to their testimonies, after they have woken up, it became quite obvious to them and their practitioners that the intrinsic movement of the intestines directly correlates to dreaming and oneiric life in general. Or, at least, to this part of oneiric life attached to pure emotional experience. Dreams have the power to naturally distillate emotional charges while protecting the person's consciousness. In dreams, emotions can be experienced at the maximum of their intensity. This is practically difficult and often impossible to do while awake because the inhibiting effect of rational thinking would prevent it or, at least, restrict it greatly. For Chi Nei Tsang practitioners, healing work on the intestines became a door to access consciousness. It is an opening toward a more precise comprehension of mental phenomena while guided

² Michael Guershon – *The Second Brain* - 1999

by the ancient Taoist knowledge that considers human intelligence as an extension of the general intelligence of the whole of nature.

According to the Taoists of ancient China, life is directed by the five intelligences or the five elemental forces that compose existence. These intelligent forces explain the reasons behind the nature and the behavior of each element, including the whole periodic table. These five intelligences constitute what we call in the West, consciousness: Mental intelligence or rational thinking (Hun), bodily intelligence or cleverness (Yi), emotional intelligence or maturity (Po), ancestral memory or instinct (Zhi), and spiritual intelligence or guiding intuition (Shen). As we know, in the West, any level of intelligence needs a brain to manifest itself. But for the traditionalist Chinese the brain is not an organ proper but a central system of connecting nerves. At the most it is considered as a connective bridge like a switchboard in between levels of consciousness. The brain itself cannot create intelligence. It can only repeat the information stored into memory or to follow an induced program like education and conditioning. It is the vital force of the intelligences that are responsible for the development of the brain. We first exist as energy and information and then we manifest physically.

From this perspective we need to use a completely different paradigm than the one used in conventional medical science. It become also crucial to completely differentiate thoughts from emotions. We don't "think" emotions, we "feel" them. Emotions, means that we are literally "moved", set into motion, from the inside. Language holds a wisdom that we often don't understand but that has a good reason to exist. Where are these feelings coming from? They are coming from the visceral level. The visceral body responds to emotional sensations much more rapidly than our mind does. There is already a delay between a feeling and its emotional interpretation. But, even before becoming a feeling, a sensation has to manifest itself very precisely inside very specific parts of our organism. The propagation of these sensations, at the physical level, is immediate and global in the whole body. It is way too fast for the nervous system. It is the result of spontaneous chemical operations directed by the endocrine system. This gives instantaneous responses which are then extended to the nervous system. Then, the nervous system takes the time it needs to connect, transmit, and react along long and complex pathways crossing numerous gates of nervous networks before it can let us know "how we feel".

Emotional digestion is just as natural of a phenomenon as breathing or digesting food. Like breath or digestion, it usually remains non-conscious. However, if we pay attention to our breathing we won't be able not to improve it, and being conscious of our digestion allows us to improve our diet. Similar to breathing and digesting, our consciousness is able to aid the performance of emotional digestion. But this is done through the body's intelligence, which does not require thinking. This is why we don't need to be intelligent to heal.

Chi Nei Tsang's characteristic touch facilitates the performance of emotional digestion. It establishes a physical connection not only with the organs but also at the tissue and cellular levels, with the body's intelligence. Thus, Chi Nei Tsang practitioners have to be educated and trained so their way of touching is able to transmit the quality of energy and the information (Chi) necessary to calm down intestines in crises. This transmission through their hands must carry the healing and supportive attitude of emotional validation and peacefulness.

The Chi Nei Tsang Healing Touch

The intention behind the Chi Nei Tsang healing touch is not to fix or even to force to relax. It is most important for The Chi Nei Tsang practitioner to embrace completely the holistic approach within the healing paradigm rather than to stay invested inside the conventional allopathic medical perspective which has become too mechanical, offensive, defensive, vindictive and violent. The use of softness and gentleness of the holistic approach, however, does not exclude the use of force. It is the abuse of force that creates violence. The power of the healing touch has to fit its needs and requires a rigorous training such as in martial arts to develop the Chi and the power to extend it beyond the limits of muscle capacity. It is this extension of Chi in the body that carries the healing power the same way that, in martial arts, it carries destruction.

There Are No Miracles. The Only Miracle Is Life Itself. Life Is Miraculous!

"This is a miracle!" This is often what I hear at the end of a treatment when I ask my clients to touch their own abdomen and to check if they notice any change. Especially in cases of spasms - when emotional charges that don't believe in past or future but live in a constant present - just never let go. It could have been a spasm in the bile duct blocking the gallbladder, the duodenum twisting the solar plexus into a knot, or intestinal spasms following accidents, colitis, or surgical interventions. In any case, the feeling of relief following visceral decontraction is so great, especially if such spasms have been there for sometimes weeks, month and years, that it is felt like a miracle. These extraordinary results tend to become quite ordinary and common for the Chi Nei Tsang practitioner who learns to use Chi instead of muscles. Combined with the power of gentleness, the CNT touch pacifies someone rather than fights against a disease.

From the holistic perspective there are good reasons for all diseases. Diseases are always coming from a healthy reaction to an unhealthy situation. So we don't fight diseases with Chi Nei Tsang. Instead we do everything we can to make the person stronger and avoid everything that would make her or him weaker. We are strengthening the general health of this person to allow him or her to overcome the disease by outgrowing it and chasing it out of the body. The disease then becomes the means to be used to heal, grow, evolve, and change in order to overcome the pathological conditions that gives rises to all the sources of suffering.

For more info on CNT treatments and classes, visit www.chineitsang.com, email administration@chineitsang.com or call (510) 848-9558.