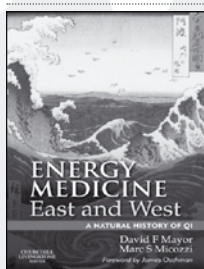


# Reviews



**ENERGY MEDICINE EAST AND WEST**  
 Edited by David Mayor and Marc S. Micozzi, Churchill Livingstone, Softback, 393 pages, £31.99

I'm not complaining, but I have to say this has been quite a tough book to review. For a start it has a fair amount of *gravitas* (0.7 kg to be precise), weighty with the ink and thoughts of a whole bunch of interesting minds. Such a substantial contribution to our literature demands close examination, although encompassing a book with the diversity of *Energy Medicine East and West (EMEW)* in few words is some task.

*EMEW* consists of 25 chapters contributed by 30 authors under the

editorial hand of David Mayor (author of another heavyweight Elsevier title – *Electroacupuncture*) and the prolific US author Professor Marc S. Micozzi. Each of the contributors presents a completely different angle on the great big question-mark that we sum up in the word *qi*. Part of my solution to the problem of giving *JCM* readers a sense of the substantial compass of this work is to set down a few keywords that describe each chapter, as follows (see table below).

This may be *reductio ad absurdum*, but it serves to provide you with an overview of the content of *EMEW* and the varied interests of the contributors. Knowing this book was in the pipeline I was expecting to see the usual suspects brought into play and it was therefore refreshing to find that the majority of contributors were unknown to me. I guess this is a measure of my ignorance

and failure to keep up as, on reading the book, I find there are even more smart cookies in our little pond (cookies in our pond?) than I had previously imagined.

Stylistically the tone is variable – most chapters are moderately academic without being bone-crushingly so. One way to measure this is by reference to references: a few contributors give only a handful whilst others provide a megalist of sources. David Mayor's chapter wins, giving an impressive 261 sources for his 22-page contribution.

As my summary above shows, *EMEW* covers a lot of ground – the subject matter and the great diversity of contributor knowledge combine to create a veritable *smorgasbord* of material. The appeal of individual chapters will surely vary according to each reader's own personal beliefs and style of thinking. Studying and practising Oriental medicine,

## Section

1) Qi in ethnomedicine

2) Qi in Chinese medicine

3) Qi: experiment & research

4) Qi: contemporary practice

5) Clinical practicalities

## Contributor

Nancy Chen  
 Chris Taylor  
 David Mayor  
 John L. Stump  
 Kevin Ergil, Marc Micozzi  
 Gideon Enz  
 Amy L. Ai  
 F. David Peat  
 Cyril W. Smith  
 Christopher Low  
 H. Amri, M.S. Abu-Asab  
 J.A. Ives, W.B. Jonas  
 Claire M. Cassidy  
 Tim Newman  
 Gabriel Stux  
 Patrizia Stefanini  
 Darren Starwynn  
 Phil Mollon  
 Franklin Sills  
 May Loo  
 Galantino, Muscatello  
 Eric Lescowitz  
 C. McMakin, P.H. Fraser  
 Alan Watkins  
 D. Mayor, M.S. Micozzi

## Keywords

Asian medicine, overview  
 Rwandan sorcery, fluid flow and blockage  
 Qi as experienced, culture East and West  
 Process versus structure, qi theories East and West  
 Tuina, types of qi, historical roots  
 Qi in martial arts, qigong and taiji  
 Qigong, biomedicine, ontology, epistemology  
 Quantum potential, super-implicate order  
 Frequencies, coherence, fractals, qi imprints  
 External qi, intention, chaos, healing  
 Physiology, cellular, synthesis of qi and li, Krebs  
 Healing touch, biophotons, biofield, quantum  
 Practitioners' views, sensing qi, metaparadigms  
 Zero balancing, interpersonal qi dynamics  
 Chakras, 3<sup>rd</sup> eye & TCM, wuxing, breathing  
 Shiatsu, science, meridian network, space-time  
 Subtle energy fields, crystals, micro-currents  
 Muscle testing, thought field, qi psychology  
 Craniosacral, human ordering matrix, rhythmic qi  
 Traditional paediatric physiology & pathology  
 Qigong, taiji, psycho-neuro-immunology, HIV  
 Qi & therapeutic touch in neurologic conditions  
 Qi in fibromyalgia and CFS, body-field  
 Qi and cardiology, heart rate variability  
 Epilogue, review of book content

we each acquire our own take on traditional doctrine and come to hold beliefs and personal prejudices that can diverge significantly from those of our colleagues. My guess is that some readers will love some parts and reject others but inevitably, in the process, get exposed to some interesting ideas and new ways of understanding qi. Sometimes a perverse pleasure can be found in having our personal set ways of thinking stretched a little - in my case it was some of the research on healing that expanded my mental boundaries.

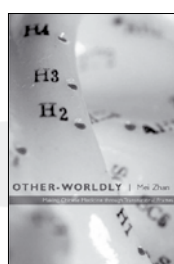
As the bloom of youth now begins to fade, I find myself irritated by the desire to invoke quantum physics and Einstein in support of all things complementary and alternative. With respect, we are not practising acupuncture at the speed of light, in neutron stars or on Schrödinger's cat, so much of what is written in this area is plain nonsense. It was therefore refreshing - and an eye-opener to me - to read some sensible, measured and articulate discussions from quantum-minded *EMEW* contributors such as F. David Peat.

Another highpoint for me was the chapter by Ives and Jonas who report some of their laboratory studies on healing. They describe their experiments that provide compelling (and scientifically baffling) evidence for a healer's ability to alter calcium ion influx into human T lymphocytes. They found that the effect of the healers' hands lingered on the lab bench for a while after he had left the building, and that the effect worked over distances of a few feet but did not work over long distances. They also report results of systematic reviews of healing therapies such as Reiki, and briefly describe their studies measuring photon emissions from human subjects. This is pretty weird science conducted by people who don't themselves appear to be especially weird - in fact they seem pretty level-headed and science-savvy. Interesting stuff.

By the end of the book it dawned on me that something was missing. A truism in Chinese and oriental medicine is that, to gain true understanding, we should first study the source texts. All that follows,

through the explorations of generation after generation is refinement, ornament and often obfuscation that, although useful, tends to obscure the purity of the original idea. If ever there was an iconic example of this it must surely be the concept of qi. If ever there was a topic in Oriental medicine that requires a careful appraisal of the origins of the concept of qi in *Zhanguo* (Warring States Period) China and its root meanings amongst the *shi-scholars*, the Daoists and cloud-watchers of that time, it is this. So whilst the editors of *EMEW* are to be congratulated for gathering together the thoughts of some great contributors from around the world, I can think of one or two more (such as Oxford's Elizabeth Hsu) who might have added illuminating insights on the original meaning of the concept of qi. However, when one looks at how much interesting stuff has been packed into this book, it not a fatal flaw. Mayor and Micozzi's *EMEW* provides us with some wonderfully diverse writings on qi from multiple perspectives and from some fine thinkers. I am not aware of any other text that fills this fascinating and much-needed niche.

Charles Buck



OTHERWORLDLY:  
MAKING CHINESE  
MEDICINE THROUGH  
TRANSNATIONAL  
FRAMES

by Mei Zhan, Duke  
University Press,  
Softback, 256 pages,  
£14.99

This text brings analysis from medical anthropology and history together with discourses on globalisation and the growing field of science studies to attempt to reframe Chinese medicine in a global context. Professor Zhan draws on ten years of fieldwork and interviews from China and the USA - principally focusing on Shanghai and the San Francisco bay area - to evidence and analyse her emergent points about the nature of Chinese medicine.

In the first part the author sets out the historical context and changing political emphasis of Chinese medicine's spread from China from the 1960's onward, when it was presented to the world by the Chinese establishment as a medicine for the rural poor in Africa - a process clearly linked to the Maoist reforms of the period that aimed to improve the lot of the 'peasant'. Acupuncture in particular was a key part of Chinese relations with Africa in the 1960's, at which time the majority of foreign students in China were African. Today the overwhelming majority of foreign students studying in China are Caucasian, and the African presence at international conferences of Chinese medicine tends to be very small. This demonstrates a shift in how Chinese medicine was presented to the world, which had more to do with changing international relations than any clinical considerations. As dialogue with the West opened up in the 1970's and even more so in the 1990's, the way Chinese medicine was presented changed to meet the needs and desires of the West - that is, as a preventative and lifestyle medicine in the USA and Western Europe.

The author then examines how the clinical knowledge and authority of Chinese medicine has been reconfigured in relation to science and biomedicine - involving, for example, a shift from classical texts towards research, and from experienced individual mentors to state universities. The author describes the commonplace integration of biomedical science with Chinese medicine in China and documents the various critiques of science itself in Western countries. She includes a fascinating section on the role of 'clinical miracles' in the legitimisation of Chinese medicine - that is, as biomedicine continues to increase its domination of healthcare in China and the West, emphasis has shifted amongst patients and practitioners to focus on the anecdotal 'miracle', where Chinese medicine is declared to heal a condition previously pronounced as incurable by biomedical doctors. Zhan shows that even as Chinese medicine lays claim to the miraculous, this is still in reaction to the biomedical mainstream, with

the 'miracle' defined and legitimised in biomedical terms.

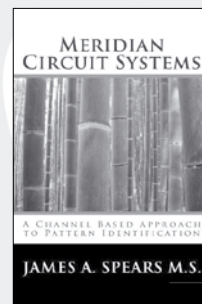
There follows a section examining discourses of East and West, culture and science, and tradition and modernity by looking at gender and kinship ties in the historical transmission of Chinese medical knowledge. In a highly thought-provoking series of interviews and personal histories the author initially refutes the prevailing view that women have had a less significant role in traditional medicine than men, providing evidence from the personal histories of her interviewees that suggests that women were indeed involved, but much less written about. She also describes how, as Chinese medicine became more state-organised and society more egalitarian under Communism, herbal medicine came to be seen as a male 'intellectual' pursuit with acupuncture viewed as more female and 'tactile' (an interesting perspective given the gender demographics of practitioners in the West).

Finally the author examines the role of locality in understandings of China, Chinese culture and Chinese medicine. Again and again she makes the point that things are not as simple as often presented, that 'East and West, China and America, and past and future are not fixed and easily identifiable nodes within circuits of globalisation but rather are shifting and uneven spatiotemporal imaginaries produced and refigured through particular translocal encounters'. Zhan's use of Heidegger's term 'worlding' - the key to her thesis - acknowledges 'the enmeshment of thing and world'. That is, Chinese medicine does not exist outside of the world, it has relationships with other things (and ideas) and with the people who practice or study it. Zhan uses the term to examine how definitions and examples of Chinese medicine in practice adapt and alter with time and place. She consistently avoids creating dichotomies of the type 'Chinese medicine is like ... whereas Western biomedicine is like ...', but instead she focuses on reshaping our understanding of the nature of Chinese and Western medicine in terms of complex discourses and multiple viewpoints.

This text gives many useful perspectives on how dialogue with biomedicine might be approached, including how specific doctors in Shanghai incorporate biomedical tests and procedures in their Chinese medical practice, how Chinese medicine can be considered a science, and how this might be effectively communicated to sceptical doctors. There are also useful discussions on the nature of science and medicine, and how they too are 'worlded' as changing and discursive entities influenced by global political and cultural factors. This kind of critique may be contentious in the scientific community, but usefully contributes to the understanding of how research into medicine is conducted, positioned and justified to the wider world.

This is an intellectually demanding book. Some might suggest that such academic texts have little relevance to clinical practice. For practitioners books such as this can elucidate our understanding of where our medicine comes from and where it might be going. Such knowledge helps one make better critical judgments about the veracity of our sources, and more informed reflections on the contexts of our practice - whether in a private clinic, multi-bed clinic, hospice or research project. The historical perspective gives the practitioner tools with which to avoid categorical mistakes, such as equating a specific biomedical disease with a particular Chinese medical pattern of disharmony. It also offers examples of how practitioners have positioned and marketed their businesses through the changing contexts of globalisation in recent years - food for thought on how one might develop clinically and entrepreneurially.

*Duncan McGeachie*



**MERIDIAN CIRCUIT SYSTEMS – A CHANNEL BASED APPROACH TO PATTERN IDENTIFICATION**  
by James A Spears,  
Integrative Healing  
Press, Softback, 183  
pages, £29.99

Acupuncture, at least as taught in the modern West, tends to focus predominantly on the zangfu. Whilst this way of treating has been tried and tested in modern China, it is arguably incomplete, given that it does not fully integrate the concept of the channel system. In *Meridian Circuit Systems [MCS]* James Spears adds to the existing body of meridian-style acupuncture knowledge published by authors such as Master Tung, Wei Chei Young, Richard Tan and Shudo Denmei, amongst others. Meridian-style acupuncture views the clinical encounter through the lens of the channels, with channel findings differentiated in the light of the liu jing (six divisions), wu xing (five elements) and ba gang (eight principles). This text sets out to guide practitioners through the multitude of network relationships involved in this method and attempts to explain how to treat complicated diseases with minimal needling.

To set the scene the author notes some of the historical roots of meridian-style acupuncture, although the classical references provided are left hazy. We are then led through the basics of Richard Tan's 'Balance Method', in which matrices of interrelated channels are employed to reciprocally regulate each other in order to restore homeostasis and promote healing. MCS attempts to provide a deeper exposition than that provided by Tan in his book *Acupuncture 1,2,3*, although it is frequently let down by the clarity of the explanation, and is much less comprehensive than a text such as Wang and Robertson's *Applied Channel Theory in Chinese Medicine*. It is also hampered by the lack of good quality diagrams, which may make some of the

content challenging to those not already familiar with Richard Tan's methods. The explanations of mirroring (matching locations on corresponding limbs), imaging (matching areas of the abdomen with corresponding areas on the limbs) and contralateral needling are muddled, and whilst the concept of reverse-imaging is mentioned briefly in a case history later in the book, no earlier explanation is given. Master Tung's methods are also name-checked throughout the book and although a number of points are listed, in almost all cases the location is either not provided or left vague - rendering the information unhelpful without referring to another text.

The bulk of the book, in which the Balance Method combinations are discussed under the headings of the liu jing, raises some interesting ideas regarding channel combinations and point selection that stimulated me to revisit some of my own cases with a fresh perspective. Practitioners coming to this book from a TCM background will be particularly interested in chapter four, which explains how to integrate this method with a more traditional pattern-based diagnosis. The final sections provide case studies and revisit theoretical concepts, and although some of the theoretical reasoning seems at times tenuous, less commonly-used aspects of classical theory are brought up

that can only help readers improve their clinical flexibility.

Readers may find this text lacking coherence in places. This is unfortunate as our profession would benefit from an increased understanding of how classical channel theory works in acupuncture practice. That said, those already practising meridian-style acupuncture will certainly find some gems here that make them re-evaluate what they do, whilst those unfamiliar with this form of acupuncture will find something new to inspire their practice.

*James Unsworth*

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