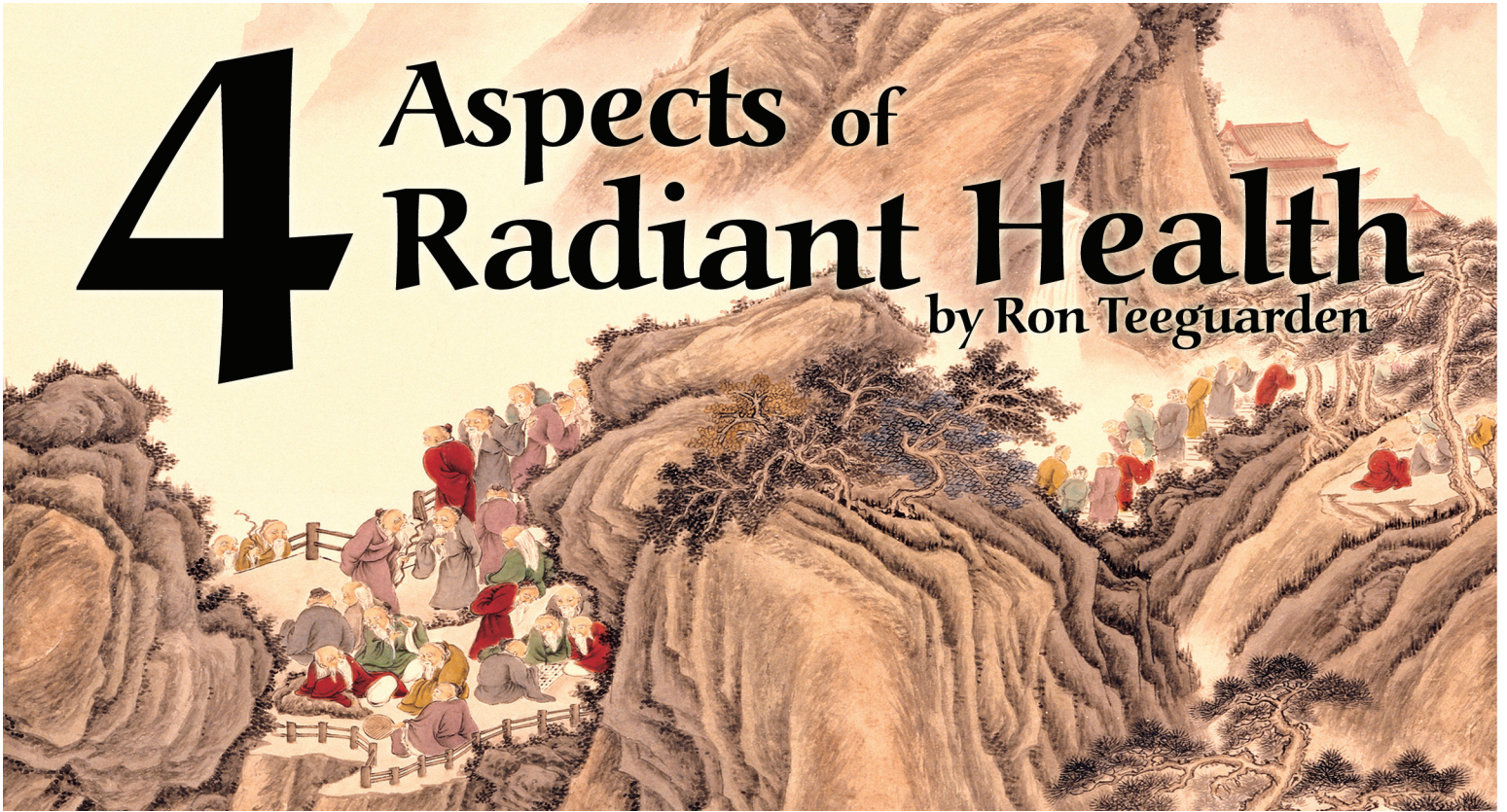


4 Aspects of Radiant Health

by Ron Teeguarden



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We all want to live our lives fully, successfully, healthfully and happily. In the Orient, these attainments are cumulatively called “radiant health.” The Chinese TONIC HERBS have always held a very special place in

Asian culture because these very special natural substances have been associated with the highest qualities of living. They are associated with the ideals of long life, glowing health, physical vitality, slow aging, happiness, wisdom, adaptability, sexual vigor and response, mental acuity and clear intuition, love and compassion, and harmonious relations with Nature and with one’s fellow human beings.

Thus the ultimate purpose of consuming Chinese TONIC HERBS and of applying the principles of the Daoist art of radiant health is not so much to eradicate disease, as it is to achieve these ideal goals of living. By reaching these goals, one can be said to have attained true “radiant health.” Though there are many factors that distinguish Chinese herbal theory from other forms of healthcare, perhaps the most powerful distinguishing characteristic is the fact that Chinese herbalism is founded on the principle that health promotion is fundamental to any health care program.

Radiant health has been further defined in China as “health beyond danger.” Radiant health is dependent upon one’s ability to adapt appropriately to all the stresses that one encounters in the course of one’s life. The TONIC herbs provide “adaptive energy” which helps us handle stress much more eas-

ily. Adaptability is the measure of our life. Without adaptability we are vulnerable to the onslaughts of nature and mankind. A high degree of adaptability allows us to live life fully and safely. It is possible to develop a very high degree of adaptability to the many changes and stresses that constantly take place in our lives. And by overcoming stressful circumstances and passing through changes successfully, we grow as human beings and we enjoy life much more fully.

1. Adaptability

The ability to adapt to the stresses of life is fundamental to life itself. Adaptability is the root of evolution and is the secret to biological success. The more adaptable one is, the more flexibility and resiliency one will show in one’s life. Adaptability is inherent in all living creatures, and human beings are one of the most adaptive creatures on earth.

Human beings have been able to adapt to virtually every climate on the earth. There are humans living in the most inhospitable climates: the hottest, driest deserts; the hottest, dampest jungles; the coldest, most barren tundra, etc. But mankind is now creating a new, often artificial world that is in many ways a new challenge to the adaptive capacities of the people living in these environments. Not only is the well being of every individual now at stake, but the very survival of mankind and the majority of species on earth are at risk due to extreme changes that are taking place in the ecosystem

as a result of Man's aggressive technological "advancement."

It is not quite clear whether or not people are under more or less stress than they were in the past. The stresses of poverty, enormous seasonal weather changes (without heating, insulation or air conditioning), the hard work of acquiring food, war, pestilence, etc. have always been stressful. Many of the stresses that our forefathers had to bare have been lessened by modern invention. What would we do without electricity, the modern toilet, the automobile, the telephone, the modern printing press, modern heating systems, grocery stores, etc.? On the other hand, life is so full of trivial pursuits and is so fast paced that new stresses have arisen and Mankind is being forced to adapt in new ways. Will we be able to adapt to the widening Ozone holes in the Stratosphere? Will we be able to adapt to the carcinogens in our water, food and air? Will we be able to adapt to artificial food? Will we be able to adapt to the constant bombardment of various forms of radiation? Will we be able to adapt, in the long run, to the pace of modern living?

Obviously, it is better to avoid stress in the first place, or at least to submit ourselves to a minimum. Actually, life itself is innately stressful. Virtually any rapid change in one's environment can be defined as a biological stress. Anything that causes the body to have to make a rapid adjustment so as to maintain its integrity is a "stress factor." Thus something so simple as a change from daytime warmth to nighttime cold challenges the body's ability to adapt. A healthy person, of course, adapts easily to a wide range of "normal" stress factors. But if for some reason, we lose some of our ability to adapt, we become ill, or at least ill-at-ease. And it is important to remember that an over-reaction is just as severe as an under-reaction. One must adapt exactly according to the degree of change to be considered optimally adaptive.

If for some reason we lose the ability to adjust appropriately, sooner or later we fall prey to the forces of nature. In a desperate attempt to regain homeostasis, our bodies rely on back-up methods of regaining balance. If these too are insufficient, severe symptoms arise, followed by death.

As the great endocrinologist Hans Selye, MD has pointed out in his book, *Stress*:

Adaptability is probably the most distinctive characteristic of life. In maintaining the independence and individuality of natural units, none of the great forces on inanimate matter are as successful as that alertness and adaptability to change which we designate as life—and the loss of which is death. Indeed there is perhaps even a certain parallelism between the degree of aliveness and the extent of adaptability in every animal and—man.

Selye postulated that there is some sort of intrinsic energy with which a person is born. He presented compelling evidence that it can be used slowly or quickly, but when it is all gone, we die. Adaptability is the very measure by which an Oriental master would judge the true health of an individual. The more adaptive an individual, the more vigor with which one can meet the challenges of life, the greater that person's degree of health. The Daoist sages of China have taught that we are all born with an intrinsic energy which determines one's fundamental, constitutional strength. It is called Jing (Primal Essence). Jing is said to determine our potential life expectancy as well as the vitality of our life while we are living it.

Oriental sages say that it is easy to abuse and thus dissipate this Primal Essence with which we are born. As we lose this energy, we stiffen and lose our ability to change, to heal and to regenerate. We cannot adapt easily or appropriately, so we easily become unbalanced, polluted and stagnant, and dangerously susceptible to attack by microbial invaders and other environmental factors. Selye has supported this principle of an original, apparently limited energy by demonstrating scientifically that stress of any sort can be adjusted to for a while, but eventually the stress response mechanism exhausts itself and death ensues.

Long ago the Chinese sages knew this. They investigated the natural world, and over many centuries they discovered and developed means of enhancing this Primal Essence by working with natural laws rather than against them. The oldest philosophical teaching of China, Daoism, is a philosophy of flowing with Nature's changes, constantly harmonizing, always maintaining balance so as to avoid the stress of extremes. Nature itself presents enough difficulties. Why add more stress by bringing it upon ourselves? By knowing when you have gone far enough and by knowing when you have had enough, you will lead a less stressful, less draining life. Additionally, by living close to Nature and by changing gracefully with the changes in the environment, one can avoid calamity, and slow down aging according to the Orient's greatest masters.

But aside from simply avoiding stress, the sages found it possible to replenish our reserves of Jing. It is obviously impossible to avoid stress entirely. Anything that taxes our system drains us of some of our Jing. Thus, to promote our health, we must nurture our essential energy. Techniques were established which could do exactly this, and have been passed along from one generation to the next for millennia. These health arts for replacing spent Jing—or beyond that, building the reserves—are the greatest health secrets of the East.

An ability to adjust optimally to the changes in our environment, frees us to experience many circumstances without fear and we can therefore enjoy the fruits of life more fully. Chinese TONIC HERBALISM is entirely rooted in this concept. It is the primary means in the Orient for replenishing or enhancing energy and for preserving harmonious balance in the human body.

"Radiant health" is the highest level of health to which a person can attain, and is defined as "health beyond dan-



ger.” In other words, the person is so internally strong and adaptive as to be able to adapt to virtually all normal stresses, as well as many extreme stresses, and is thus capable of overcoming most serious danger. The tonic herbs can help a person to increase their adaptability and to attain “radiant health.” These great natural substances, when used regularly, can eventually lead to abundant energy which in turn leads to vastly widened physiological, anatomical and psychic flexibility. These substances have been used by Daoists for many centuries and are the basis of all the herbal arts that have evolved in the Orient.

An herb which enhances adaptability is called an adaptogenic herb. This is a modern scientific term for an agent that provides nutrients which help the body and psyche adjust to changes in the environment and reduce the risk of danger due to stress. Virtually all the TONIC HERBS have adaptogenic qualities. However, some are extremely potent adaptogenic agents. When we are consuming these adaptogenic agents regularly, we are less likely to have to tap into our Jing reserves, and thus the adaptogenic herbs are highly protective and have life lengthening characteristics.

It is interesting to note that only herbs have this adaptogenic quality. Man has not yet been able to invent or synthesize an adaptogenic agent. The chemical and energetic sophistication of these herbal substances is far beyond anything that science can conceive of duplicating. Yet God has created a good number of them which we can easily consume.

2. Balance

One of the greatest Daoist masters, Zhuang Zi, once

said that “When the shoe fits the foot is forgotten, and when the belt fits the belly is forgotten.” This is a very profound thought. It reflects the notion that when one has achieved balance one can be at peace and contentment is achieved. Life and health are sustained by maintaining balance, even as the environment changes. Whenever there is imbalance, there will be discomfort. On the other hand, the state of being known as “well being” is really a state in which everything is in balance—a state of harmony exists in all aspects of one’s life. And it is a state that is genuinely attainable, though it may take practice, depth of understanding and wisdom to attain and maintain it.

Oriental sages have always taught that moderation is the key to health, happiness, and longevity. There is no question that we have to work at being in balance when we live in a modern society. It is easier to fall out of balance than to remain in balance. There are many aspects of our lives that need to be watched and maintained in order to remain truly healthy: our diet, elimination, exercise, love life, work life, meditation, sleep, etc. Doing anything to an extreme is contrary to this basic premise of maintaining balance. If we eat too much we will pay for it sooner or later; if we eat too little we will likewise suffer. If we exercise too much we become sore or injured—it could even shorten our life; if we exercise too little we will suffer many disorders that will likewise cause us to suffer and shorten our life. Moderation in all things is the key to attaining a true state of well being. One must learn to keep the concepts of balance and moderation in mind at all times so that one’s whole life can be brought into balance.

One’s life is brought into balance by bringing the details of one’s life into balance. This is accomplished by realizing that an extreme high is always countered by an

equally drastic low. By moderating one's highs, one can moderate one's lows. By moderating one's desires and by moderating one's habits, it is possible to attain a dynamic balance in all aspects of one's life that leads to the state of genuine well being, which is a state of comfort and satisfaction. Certainly, I am not advocating a life of boring, non-adventurous living. It is possible to do everything one wants to do—just maintain your balance at all times.

Actually, this is one of the areas of the TONIC HERBS' greatest usefulness. More vitality, more adaptability and deeper reserves allow a person to live a much more dynamic life than one would be able to experience if energy was in short supply. Moderation and balance are different things to different people. What is moderate for one person may be extreme for another. The levels of available energy, adaptability and deep energy reserves are the determining factors.

An acute awareness of balance is the source of true wisdom. There are those who come to understand the principle of balance at a young age, and it is these who establish their health for a long lifetime. Those who wait to establish balance in their lives generally come to suffer a number of serious ailments which lead them to seek a way to overcome their problems. By consuming the TONIC HERBS, one can help achieve balance in all aspects of one's life at virtually any age.

Chinese TONIC HERBALISM is specifically and directly aimed at helping a person become more balanced and at helping to maintain balance by enhancing adaptability. This is accomplished in many ways. It is accomplished by improving the ability of each of the organs to function optimally and harmoniously as a unified system. The TONIC HERBS strengthen the ability of the body to produce energy, to defend itself, to cleanse itself and to rejuvenate itself. It is also done by relaxing tense muscles that are contracted due to excessive energy supplies to that muscle or muscle group, and conversely to stimulate and tonify weak muscles.

A person must maintain a proper balance of Yin Jing and Yang Jing. A proper balance of Qi and Blood is also essential. And the Psychic energies must always be kept balanced, and this is aided by the consumption of Shen tonics. Everybody should endeavor to establish and maintain a proper balance of the various Treasures. If a person feels that they are lacking in Yin Jing or Yang Jing, these should be specifically attended to. Likewise a deficiency of Qi or Blood must be addressed by supplementing these Treasures. And if the emotions are out of balance, Shen tonics should be used in greater quantities.

It must always remain clear to a Chinese TONIC HERBAL practitioner that balance is absolutely central to every action we ever take and to the results we hope to achieve. This balance is of a dynamic nature, governed by the principles of Yin and Yang. The practitioner of this great art must seek to establish and maintain a dynamic balance in their own lives so that they reflect the principles of balance at all times and under all circumstances. One who endeavors to follow the Way of Yin and Yang in their own life will develop the power and subtlety to practice these

sublime arts as they are meant to be practiced and amazing results will be obtained. Radiant Health will be the inevitable result. Also, those who follow the Way of Yin and Yang in their own lives and have attained a degree of Radiant Health will be able to lead many others by pure example.

3. Inner Power

The Three Treasures

In order to live life successfully, we need inner power. This inner power encompasses our entire energy system, from our deepest instinctual roots, to our intellectual power, to our moral power, and life force on every level.

Traditionally in Asia, there are said to be three primary types of energy in the human body, and the same is true throughout nature. These three energy categories are known as "the Three Treasures," Jing, Qi (pronounced chee) and Shen. These energies are called "treasures" because they are the very basis of our life. As the great Chinese Daoist master known as Ancestor Lu said:

"The human body is only Jing, Qi and Shen. These are the three treasures. These three treasures are complete as a human being. In order to attain true health and happiness, you must value the three treasures. Without the three treasures you cannot live long, and deep attainment cannot be reached in a lifetime. The three treasures must not be wasted. They must be nourished and protected as one's life."

Jing, the First Treasure

The first "treasure" is known as Jing. Jing is generally translated as Regenerative Essence, or simply as Essence. Jing energy is fundamental to life. It is the deepest source of energy in the body and is associated with our genetics. Jing is also our long term energy and may be thought of as our reserves of life force. In Asia, Jing is associated with regeneration, longevity, youthfulness, deep long-term vitality, mental energy, the source of power for the reproductive system and for optimal functioning of the immune system. Jing energy also supports our skeletal system, renal functions and our ability to hear. Jing is believed to govern our courage and is the power behind our will.

Jing energy is depleted by living itself, but most especially by stress, excessive behavior, and overwork. Jing energy can be re-acquired and replenished through the consumption of certain rare herbs which contain this treasure.

Jing herbs are divided into two categories: Yin and Yang TONICS. Sophisticated formulations have been developed over the centuries that build Yin and Yang energy and these are created by



blending Yin herbs and Yang herbs in one's diet. The secret of rejuvenation and in maintaining our health lies in rebuilding the right balance of Yin and Yang.

Yin herbs are deeply nourishing. They replenish spent Jing and build reserves that are stored in the body for future use. They are famed for their long term regenerative qualities. They are generally moistening and are believed to be youth preserving.

Yang herbs are deeply empowering. They rekindle the fire of life where it has been spent and invigorate vigor at the deepest levels. They are famed for their rejuvenative, deeply invigorating qualities.

Qi, the Second Treasure

The second treasure is known as Qi (pronounced Chee). Qi is translated as vitality. Qi is the energy of life that we acquire through breathing and eating and manifests as our day to day vitality. Qi TONICS are also divided into two categories: Qi (Energy) TONICS and Xue (Blood) TONICS (Xue is pronounced Shway). These Qi and Xue TONICS are important in the maintenance of day-to-day health and vitality, our resistance to disease and our ability to cope with stress.

Qi TONICS fortify the digestive, respiratory and immune functions and are necessary for true health. Qi TONICS also help build muscle and develop muscular strength. Xue TONICS help build blood and nourish all the tissues of the body.

It is said that "men are governed by Qi and women are governed by Blood. This means that men generally benefit by consuming more Qi tonics while women generally benefit by consuming more Xue tonics. This does not mean that men do not need Blood and women do not need Qi. It is simply a matter of natural balance. Everybody should consume some amount of Qi and Xue tonics regularly according to need.



Shen, the Third Treasure

The third treasure is called Shen. Shen is the energy of consciousness and awareness. Though there is no precise translation for Shen, it is often translated as "Spirit." Shen is the vitality and stability of the mind and of the human spirit. A person with strong Shen is one who is calm and at peace, strong minded, aware, clear, centered, deeply intelligent and profoundly happy.

A person who is kind, generous and giving and who has a big heart is said to have a lot of Shen. Certain herbs have been found through the centuries to enhance this Shen energy. Shen TONICS generally have a mild calming quality. When combined into a dietary program that is taken daily, Shen TONIC formulation will have profound effects on our state of mind and body.

A simple, traditional analogy by which one can understand the Three Treasures concept is to think of life being like a candle.

The material of the candle itself, the wax and the wick form the innate substance, or essence, of the candle. Depending on the quality of the wax and the size of the candle, the candle can be expected to have a certain life expectancy. Thus the candle itself is analogous to Jing.

The flame is the actual activity of the

candle. The flame is energy manifested. It provides the source of light. However, it eventually consumes the candle. The flame is analogous to Qi.

The light given off by the flame is the ultimate purpose of the candle. A larger candle, and thus a larger flame,



The Candle Analogy

will give off greater light. The light given off by the candle is analogous to Shen, which is the spirit of the candle.

Our life is like that of a candle. Genetically we are given certain regenerative power, but when our Jing is used up we die. The purpose of taking Chinese TONIC HERBS is to replenish the Jing, Qi, and Shen.

The Will

The Will is virtually the fourth Treasure of the Daoist art of Radiant Health. To succeed in life in any endeavor requires some degree of will power. Generally, the stronger a person's will, the greater the chances of success. Great success generally requires enormous Will. Many people start on a project, but fail to complete the process because of a failing of the Will. It takes will power to break old habits and it takes will power to build new habits. It also takes some degree of wisdom

(Shen) to pursue the correct goals and to avoid temptations that distract us from our higher goals and which can do actual harm. Furthermore, it takes energy (Jing and Qi) to work our way through obstacles and tough times.

Herbal masters through the ages have discovered that by combining the SUPERIOR HERBS in a certain way, based on Three Treasures principles, it is possible to strengthen Will. Such an herbal combination will stabilize Shen, so that the person can have the clarity to make correct decisions, while improving energy and the flow of energy in the body. Will power requires the addition of Yang Jing Treasure, because that is the source of true human power.

4. Protection

Without protection we are lost. We live in a world full of pollution, stress, potentially harmful microbes and toxins of all sorts. No matter how careful we are, most of us are exposed to, and absorb, a certain amount of these dangerous agents daily. The wisdom of the East teaches that we need protection from these hazardous forces. Certain SUPERIOR HERBS gained their reputations based on their ability to help protect us from these dangers.

Remember, the concept of Radiant Health is based on the idea of "freedom from danger." Many people who are interested in health focus their attention on cleansing the body of toxins and waste. This is a fine concept, if approached appropriately and wisely, in conjunction with the wisdom to build the Three Treasures. However, in general, the Three Treasures system encompasses both the tonifying and cleansing concepts. According to Chinese theory, when all of the tissues and systems of the body are functioning properly, the body is very capable of cleansing itself constantly. If a person who has been consuming the tonic herbs consumes a toxin or is exposed to radiation, a toxin or a dangerous microbe, the body reacts swiftly and efficiently to eliminate the noxious intruder. If on the other hand, the person is not function-



ing optimally, the toxin or microbe can easily lodge itself in the body, resulting in severe illness and perhaps death.

This is the first secret of protection. Strengthen the body so that there is no room for disease. C.S. Cheung, MD, C.A., a famous Chinese medical scholar, said:

The improvement or the curing of illness chiefly depends on the ability of an organism to resist disease from within. The basic point of view of Traditional Chinese Medicine in treatment is known as "Assist the positive, eliminate the noxious". Positive represents the function of regulation, defense and adaptation of the organism; noxious represents all the disadvantage factors that hinder the development of the normal organism or that lead to sickness. Thus, the therapeutic methods are "assisting the positive and eliminating the noxious;" however, generally, assisting the positive is primary.

If assisting the positive is primary even after a person has contracted a disease or been exposed to the toxins of this world, how much better is it assist the positive pre-emptively so that toxins and disease cannot enter the body. Better than curing illness after it has occurred is to generate Radiant Health so that the "positive" functions of "regulation, defense and adaptation" are in place prior to exposure and attack. Many of the tonic herbs have been shown to have powerful protective, detoxifying, anti-microbial, antioxidant, free-radical-scavenging activities. Most of them have been demonstrated to have potent immune "modulating" properties. Immune modulators have dual-direction activity. They can strengthen the immune functions that are weak and suppress immune functions that are excessive,

such as those that occur in auto immune disorders such as allergies, arthritis, lupus, etc. The key point here is that by helping the body to function optimally, we can ward off a multitude of dangers that others less fortunate may not have the capacity to fight off.

The great SUPERIOR HERBS like Ganoderma (Reishi), Ginseng, Gynostemma, Astragalus, Epimedium, Schizandra, Salvia and many others have been shown to have potent protective qualities, at many different levels, including immune modulation. These herbs will gently yet powerfully cleanse the body while building up the body's ability to keep it clean and safe in the future. Is it necessary to specifically cleanse the body with Inferior Herbs from time to time? Perhaps, in our modern world. And perhaps if the body is already toxic or diseased to a point where the Inferior Herbs are required. But the reality is that occasional cleansing, even if done vigorously, is Inferior Medicine when compared to the Superior approach of strengthening the body's ability to keep itself clean at all times. People who expose themselves to poisons and then hope that cleansing teas and diets will purify them are pursuing a dangerous and foolish path. Those who pursue the Superior Herb path to Radiant Health have taken the path to true life wisdom.