

Select Readings, Second Edition Upper-Intermediate, Final

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

Traditional Chinese Medicine

In a world that relies so heavily on technology and modern science every day, many people have begun to take a step back. More and more, people are questioning the benefits of Western medication and treatments. In an attempt to return to a more natural, holistic¹ form of treatment for disease and ailments, many people are turning to TCM, or traditional Chinese medicine.

What is TCM?

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) is an ancient medical system that takes a deep understanding of the laws and patterns of nature and applies them to the human body. Many people mistakenly derive their understanding of TCM from acupuncture². However, acupuncture is only one form of treatment in the comprehensive world practice of TCM. Acupuncture, acupressure (similar to acupuncture but done with pressure instead of needles), *qigong* (a unique form of stretching and breathing techniques), herbal medicine, Chinese psychology, mental health therapy, and special healing foods are all considered important forms of treatment in traditional Chinese medicine.

Traditional Chinese medicine is a complete medical system. TCM takes the position that to cure ourselves of illness, we need to find the root of the problem. In other words, if we only treat the symptom, as is often the case in Western medicine, the problem will usually keep recurring.

At the core of traditional Chinese medicine is the concept that the body has the power to cure itself if the proper techniques are utilized. This belief is based on the fundamental idea that everything in the universe is made of energy, and that this energy must flow freely throughout our bodies.

The Concepts of TCM

Traditional Chinese medicine has been around for some 3,000 years. No other system of medicine rivals it in antiquity besides India's *ayurveda*. In TCM, it is thought that everything in the universe, including our health, is connected, and thus, our physical bodies are both a part of, and connected to, nature. As such, TCM incorporates the Chinese concept of the five elements of nature (wood, fire, earth, metal, and water) and the concept of *yin-yang* (the idea that opposites are connected to and depend on each other). The ancient Chinese observed nature's own cycles and changes to develop the concepts that would eventually become the basis for TCM.

TCM in the West

¹ **holistic** looking at the whole, not just the parts that make up the whole

² **acupuncture** treatment done by inserting needles into special points on the body to repair the flow of energy between these points

Though practiced in China for thousands of years, the conceptual basis of traditional Chinese medicine is often difficult and even mysterious for many Westerners to accept. Compounding this, of course, is the fact that when Western culture refers to traditional Chinese medicine, it is often only referring to the practice of acupuncture. However, as mentioned previously, TCM includes far more than acupuncture, and in fact, acupuncture is only a small aspect of TCM. TCM is extremely complex, and a fully trained doctor will be skilled in far more than acupuncture.

Treatments and Benefits

In traditional Chinese medicine, each person may be treated differently for similar problems. Treatment is personalized. Unlike the Western approach to diagnosing and treating illness, TCM focuses more on the pattern of the symptoms involved, not just what the individual symptoms are. TCM looks at the whole person and what's happening in his/her whole life. In treating the body, TCM practitioners focus on harmonizing the entire body.

Traditional Chinese medicine is reported to offer a wide variety of benefits. Reputed to have the ability to improve general health, TCM is usually less costly than Western medicine, and is not dependent on pharmaceutical³ products, which often cause side effects and may even require the use of additional medications.

1. The word symptom in paragraph 3 is closest in meaning to
 - A. indicator of a problem
 - B. cause of a problem
 - C. ingredient of a problem
 - D. misfortune of a problem

2. Which of the following can be inferred from paragraph 2?
 - A. TCM is the only natural form of medicine currently practiced in the world.
 - B. TCM is the only form of medicine that uses special healing foods in its practice.
 - C. TCM is only one of a variety of effective forms of treatments in the world.
 - D. If TCM is equated only with acupuncture, its effectiveness cannot be fully appreciated.

3. The word antiquity in paragraph 5 is closest in meaning to
 - A. importance
 - B. oldness
 - C. seriousness
 - D. credibility

4. All of the statements about traditional Chinese medicine are supported by the reading EXCEPT
 - A. It has been developed and practiced for 3,000 years.
 - B. It carries the idea that everything in the universe and nature are connected.

³ **pharmaceutical** created for use as a medicinal drug

- C. It has been widely accepted as an effective system in the West.
 - D. Treating only the symptoms of an illness may not prevent it from recurring.
5. Which of the following can be inferred from paragraph 5?
- A. Traditional Chinese medicine is connected to *ayurveda*.
 - B. *Ayurveda* is another ancient medical system.
 - C. Traditional Chinese medicine uses only natural medicines.
 - D. The concept of *yin-yang* was invented for traditional Chinese medicine.
6. Each of the following things is true about traditional Chinese medicine EXCEPT
- A. it looks at the root of the problem, rather than just its symptoms.
 - B. it believes the body can heal itself, if given the correct treatment.
 - C. it looks at the whole person, not just the affected area.
 - D. it requires more energy to deliver treatments than other types of practices do.
7. The word *compounding* in paragraph 6 is closest in meaning to
- A. striking
 - B. differing
 - C. expecting
 - D. complicating
8. In paragraph 6, in the phrase “it is often only referring to,” the word “it” refers to
- A. the traditional basis
 - B. Traditional Chinese medicine
 - C. Western culture
 - D. acupuncture
9. The word *harmonizing* in paragraph 7 is closest in meaning to
- A. balancing
 - B. disputing
 - C. agreeing
 - D. conflicting
10. Which of the following can be inferred from paragraph 7?
- A. People who believe in TCM do not seek help from Western medicine.
 - B. Western medicine does not offer personalized treatments.
 - C. TCM is more interested in individual symptoms than in patterns of symptoms.
 - D. Even if people have the same symptoms, they may get different treatments.
11. All of the following are mentioned as benefits of traditional Chinese medicine EXCEPT
- A. it is not dependent on Western pharmaceutical products.
 - B. its treatments do not deliver any side effects.

- C. it often costs less than Western medicine.
 - D. it can improve general health.
12. Which of the following statements is probably closest to the author's beliefs?
- A. TCM is an effective medical system, though it is not given enough credit in the West.
 - B. TCM is not as popular in the West because it does not make use of pharmaceutical products.
 - C. Acupuncture is the most effective part of TCM, and that's why it is the most widely known.
 - D. Western medicine is more effective than TCM when it focuses on treating the symptoms.
13. The author's purpose in writing this article is primarily to
- A. introduce the philosophy and practice of traditional Chinese medicine.
 - B. explain why many people are abandoning Western medicine.
 - C. describe how a person becomes certified in traditional Chinese medicine.
 - D. point out how the body is connected to nature and the universe.
14. All of the following form part of the conceptual basis of TCM EXCEPT
- A. *ayurveda*.
 - B. the five elements of nature.
 - C. *yin-yang*.
 - D. natural cycles and changes.
15. The overall tone of this reading is
- A. serious and technical.
 - B. narrative and personal.
 - C. light and informative.
 - D. entertaining and silly.