

# Chinese Health Culture in the Studies of Macao's Contemporary Sinology

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper will focus on the intersection of knowledge systems in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century China, with emphasis on the case of the Macao Special Administrative Region. It discusses the philosophy of health in which emotional intelligence plays a key role. The relationship between Sinology and Traditional Chinese Medicine in Macao's history and contemporary times will be analysed by studying the works by Luís Gonzaga Gomes, Leonel Barros, Cecília Jorge and Beltrão Coelho. The paper will conclude with the presentation of the contribution of this territory to the construction of a philosophy of health applied to education in partnership with the Chinese silk road of health.

**KEYWORDS:** Macao; Traditional Chinese Medicine; History; Contemporaneity.

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## 1. THE INTERSECTION OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

A recently published intriguing book by Maria Burguete and Jean-Patrick Connerade, *Conhecimento e Sociedade através da Ciência Humana e Universidades*, includes a presentation for the creation of a course in a higher education institution.<sup>1</sup> Maria Burguete designed the course, which covers the History of Sciences and the cross-creativity of different domains of knowledge, including not only the pure sciences but also humanities, medical sciences, arts, and, last but not least, philosophy, the 'mother of all sciences'. The author challenges us to think from a new paradigm perspective, I quote from her summary:

*It provides a unified perspective for all the disciplines in the Humanities (including Arts), Social and Medical Sciences, leading to [...] the most interesting and important discipline of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>2</sup>*

Its adoption will depend on two key components: the capacity of adaptation to the changing circumstances and the understanding of the significant shift in modern society towards a knowledge society.

This adaptability will depend on how each aspirant to the new paradigm's cognitive, emotional, and temperamental inclinations develops, where creative adaptation, the capacity of knowledge

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Fig. 1: A scene of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Chinese Pharmacy, 2023. Photo by Lou Heng Ian, Natalie.

acquisition, social responsibility, as well as multidisciplinary integration, will be at play.

The major subject of the current study is the intersection of philosophy and well-being in Macao's Sinology, which focuses on a new ethical and aesthetic path. As it has always been the case in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), where interdisciplinarity has never ceased to rule, health is now perceived and articulated philosophically.

## 2. PHILOSOPHY FOR HEALTH

While examining the connection between Chinese philosophy and health culture, “Evidência da Medicina Tradicional na Saúde Humana” by Ana Varela and José Faro should be emphasised. According to the authors, TCM is a scientific and humanistic culture: ‘It is not a simple natural science, nor a simple humanistic science, but a synthesis of the two.’<sup>3</sup> This idea is largely due to the harmonic fusion of the two philosophical disciplines, each of which plays a crucial role.

TCM is relevant to a philosophical conception that must be presented and analysed carefully so that this type of science with Chinese characteristics can be understood by westerners. In a conscious interdisciplinary action, the crossing of knowledge that constructs a new type with clear multidisciplinary features may be born. As the authors rightly note,

the holistic and personalised approach in TCM gives rise to a medical practice which is different from the Western medical practice. This development has led to a gap and a separation from the human sciences and culture, as well as a great deal of ‘funnelled expertise’<sup>4</sup>. On the other hand, TCM develops firmly an anchor in philosophy, basing its theoretical system on ‘three main theories: the theory of monism, or primal *qi* 氣 [qì]; The theory of *Yin-Yang*; and the theory of Five Phases’<sup>5</sup> to conclude that the microcosm and the macrocosm are thus inextricably linked. Regardless of the unexplained philosophical positions adopted by the authors, who define *qi* as energy<sup>6</sup> and the Five Elements 五行 [wǔxíng] as five dynamisms or phases, the essential basis of Chinese philosophy, including the philosophy of health, has been correctly identified, as well as the cognitive operations on the ground of scientific thought, which are defined by excluding an Aristotelian formalism<sup>7</sup>. Since they are dialectical, in constant transformation and interaction, interpreted by mature thinking, integrated into a holistic paradigm and developed in a type of ‘differential diagnosis that is the base of the therapeutic strategy in acupuncture, herbal medicine, *tuina* massage, diet, therapeutic *chi kung* and *tai chi*, and lifestyle counselling’<sup>8</sup>.

From what has been said, we can infer that this kind of scientific knowledge is dependent on philosophy because it offers effective existential diagnoses and treatments, which we can refer to as wisdom. This wisdom encourages people to adopt a particular lifestyle that has significant repercussions for those who follow it.

## 3. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

For the understanding of Chinese philosophy, as well as the related TCM, it is essential to grasp that more than intellectual or discursive intelligence, the notion of Heart, in a possible translation, the ‘heart-mind’, has always been valued in China. We could give the present translation of ‘Emotional Intelligence’, a

MEDICINA TRADICIONAL CHINESA

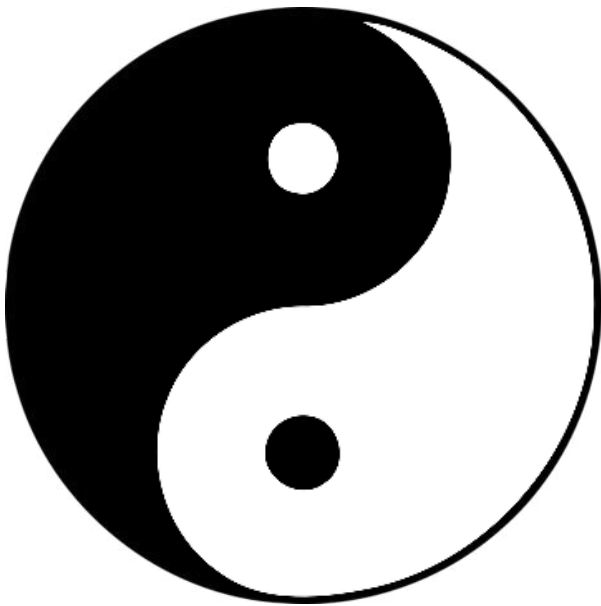


Fig. 2: *Taiji* (太極), the supreme ultimate. Source: <https://pixabay.com/vectors/yang-yin-chinese-religious-38737/>

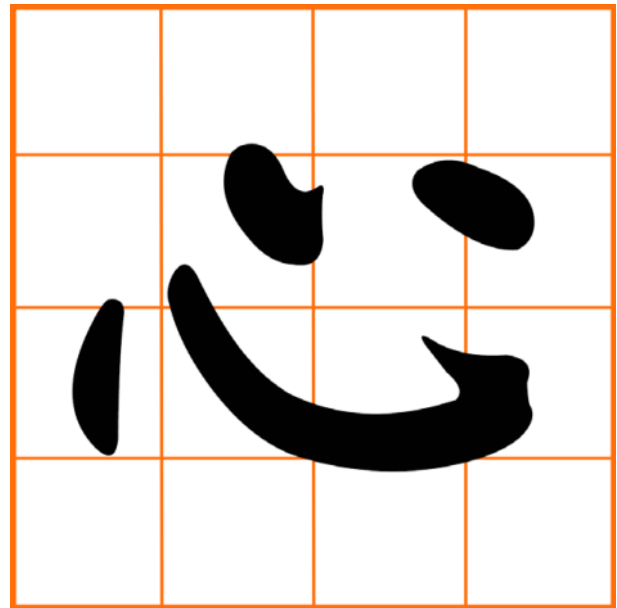


Fig. 3: *Xin* (心), the “heart-mind” that commands emotional intelligence. Image by Lou Heng lan, Natalie.

concept that has been discovered and worked out in the West as has been pointed out by Matilde Saldanha de Matos in her article “Inteligência Emocional — Prioridades de Uma Sociedade em Mudança”. On the one hand, the author argues that what distinguishes human beings from robots is precisely this affective intelligence in an era of artificial intelligence; on the other hand, experience in society has shown us that the most successful people are not those with greater intellectual capacities, but those who are aware of their emotions and are sensitive to those of others, using them to the benefit of communication.

Thus, a high intelligence quotient (IQ) is less socially relevant than a high emotional quotient (EQ). According to the data provided by Matilde Matos, ‘EQ represents 80% of what is needed for a person to become successful, against the other 20% that is given to IQ’.

Moreover, according to Goleman’s Model, the full realisation of emotional intelligence also depends on the operation of five domains: 1) self-awareness;

2) self-regulation; 3) social skill; 4) empathic recognition and 5) motivation<sup>10</sup>. Needless to add that all these domains will develop basing on attention and care for impulses, emotions, feelings and values that arise.

From the Chinese point of view, emotional intelligence is not only the art of translating emotions but rather the very core of traditional philosophical thought, bringing together various philosophical paths, since it is in the ‘heart-mind’ that all cognitive processes and communications will develop, in the diverse fields of knowledge, including TCM with its preventive and curative methods and its vocation for mapping out an existential philosophy or lifestyle which engages all those concerned.

Emotions arise spontaneously, as the Taoists defend, and are rooted in the heart. Knowing how to read them will be the basis for the success of the wise man, as is pointed out in the proverbial story told by Zhuangzi 莊子, the second greatest Taoist philosopher, as well as by Liezi 列子. In the story ‘Three in the morning, four in the evening 朝三暮四

## TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

[zhāosān mùsì]<sup>11</sup>, a monkey keeper used to feed the animals very well because he loved them very much. As time went by and the monkeys grew more and more, the owner was out of money. Cuts in rations were necessary, which left the animals dissatisfied. By then, the owner proposed to give them three chestnuts in the morning and four in the evening. Faced with their reactions, he negotiated the opposite, giving four nuts in the morning and three at supper. The proposal was received enthusiastically. In practical terms, the owner had a high emotional quotient or a developed emotional intelligence because he could understand what the monkeys wished.

Emotions are the heart that is Buddha in the Buddhist way, which, through meditations and silent reading of affections compassionately, approaches all beings in need of help. It is also in feelings and emotions that the main Confucian and Neo-Confucian virtues of Benevolence 仁 [rén] and Filial Piety 孝 [xiào] are rooted, for those who do not care for their neighbours or those who do not love their relatives naturally place themselves at the margins of the community, of which the family is the milestone.

#### 4. SINOLOGY AND MEDICINE IN MACAO'S HISTORY

There is an actual history of medicine in Macao as well as a mythological one. Let us start with the imaginary one. Among the Eight Immortals, *Baxian* 八仙 [bāxiān], we know that there is one especially devoted to medicine and to helping the poor. He is Li Tieguai 李鐵拐 [Lǐ Tiěguǎi], which literally means 'iron crutch'. He lived during the Tang dynasty and reportedly acquired the path of immortality from Laozi 老子. After becoming a Taoist master, he embarked on many spiritual journeys, leaving his body behind. On a seven-day journey to the Mount Hua for a meeting of immortals, he stayed longer than planned, so his disciple was thinking that he would not return and burned his body which was tall and handsome.

When he returned, as he had to continue on his path to immortality, he had no choice but to choose the body of a beggar to live in. From then on, he had an ugly, defective body and a ragged appearance. His symbols are the crutch of the dead, which was made of bamboo and later changed into an iron one, as well as the gourd where he made the immortality pills to save people. This travelling doctor represents the beggars<sup>12</sup>.

Is there any temple specially dedicated to the Eight Immortals in Macao? No, there is not, yet they are never forgotten, as Leonel Barros declares in "Templos, Lendas e Rituais — Macau", because there is a belief that they live among the stars, more precisely in the constellation of Big Dipper at the feet of Jade Emperor 玉皇大帝 [yùhuáng dàdì], therefore 'the fishing junks masts display flags stamped with seven stars in honour of the Goddess A-Ma'<sup>13</sup>.

Also, the God of Longevity, *Shou Xingong* 壽星公 [shòuxīnggōng], is much venerated in Macao. According to Leonel Barros, he appears to be related to the terrapin and the turtle<sup>14</sup>. More often we find him, as Cecília Jorge explains in her book *Deuses e Divindades*, belonging to the group of the three-star deities. Leonel Barros adds, he is the spirit of the polar star or the middle constellation, 'one of the most popular deities in religious pictorial representations among the Chinese from the Macao region'.<sup>15</sup>

The deity, which occupies such an important place in the mind of the Chinese and many people in Macao, has a relevant symbology, not limited to the praise of the long-lived amphibian. The polar star spirit sometimes is portrayed with a huge and high forehead where he stores the vital energy *qi*<sup>16</sup>, with a peach of longevity in his hand and he is attended by one or more children, who ensure the perpetuation of the lifeline, and sometimes by bats of prosperity, since longevity is not only connected to fertility but also dignity, which is why the three stars deities usually form a group, where besides the bat representing

## MEDICINA TRADICIONAL CHINESA



Fig. 4: The God of Longevity (壽星公 *shouxingong*), Qing dynasty, Kangxi period (1662–1722). Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

prosperity, we can also observe the deer 鹿 [lù], a symbol of perfect homophony of dignity 祿 [lù], an important dimension of positions and honours, which cannot be reduced to material wealth.

The deer forms part of an interesting medical symbolism. From the point of view of traditional Chinese pharmacopoeia, it offers the possibility of manufacturing a tonic from his antlers to increase male potency. It can be found in popular Chinese pharmacies.

The medical symbolism contains a rich source of ancestral wisdom, transmitted by the pharmaceutical or ‘China Master’ in teas good for all kinds of ailments, very bitter syrups, oils effective in combatting rheumatism, dizziness, and muscular pain, powders that relieve itches, ointments, and balms, where

the prescriptions are kept as top secret, as explained by Leonel Barros in *Tradições Populares — Macau*: ‘every receipt prescribed today is handed down from generation to generation and remains as secret as the famous formula of Coca-Cola’<sup>17</sup>.

One of the most interesting examples of a TCM prescription is reported by Luís Gonzaga Gomes in *Curiosidades de Macau Antiga*, which we read in the second edition of the book published in 1996, but the first edition dates back to 1952.

In this work, we learned that on the inauguration date of the Hospital Kiang Wu in 1873, founded for the benefit of the underprivileged Chinese community, which had doctors specialised both in Western medicine and TCM, Gonzaga Gomes mentions, for example, it had the collaboration of the father of the Republic of China — Dr. Sun Yat-sen when he was in Macao, where he performed several operations by using Western medicine, in which he graduated.

The author of *Curiosidades de Macau Antiga* also presents an excellent TCM prescription for ophthalmological use in the chapter entitled the ophthalmologist Ung-Tch’òng-Sèak, who in pinyin is called Wu Songshi 吳松石 [Wú Sōngshí], also known by the nickname of Postman Tch’òng or Sōng, since that was his profession before he became a well-known ophthalmologist in Macao.

The postman’s luck changed after delivering a letter at Portas do Cerco. As the weather was too hot, after having his job done, he decided to go for a walk in the no-man’s land, where he accidentally found a prescription that would make him famous. The prescription was written in a piece of paper hidden between the teeth of a skull, which he took pity on and decided to bury because he saw it was abandoned lying there out in the open.

Now, as kindness pays off, he found a formula that would bring him peace and a good life. He had an office set up in the old Rua do Mastro (nowadays

## TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

named Rua de Camilo Pessanha), and he even received a mortar of the finest porcelain while he was preparing a grave to bury the skull, according to Gonzaga Gomes:

*The elements he needed to acquire for an experiment were: pearl, agate, coralline, phoenix saliva, jade, unicorn nail, the seeds of the flower of the tree of long life and the stamens of the flower of immortality. To these ingredients should be added the earth covering the corpses, which due to the diversity of its five colours would make the ointment more attractive. The last characters of the prescription recommended that all these elements should be pulverised in a mortar of delicate porcelain[...]*<sup>18</sup>

Let us now move from the magical sphere to that of reality, while maintaining respect for the significant amount we do not know in the scientific field and for the mysterious dimension that can contribute so much to the enlargement of our mental world, helping with physical cures.

As noted by Cecília Jorge and Beltrão Coelho in *Medicina Chinesa, Em Busca do Equilíbrio Perdido*, health is one of the major concerns in both Mainland China and the Macao Special Administrative Region:

*Health, physical well-being and perhaps longevity (which the ancient generically referred to as immortality) are concerns present in all the spiritual and social life of the Chinese.*<sup>19</sup>

To ensure physical and spiritual well-being, they developed an extraordinary attention to dietetics and herbology, a preventive and therapeutic method involving nutritions and balance of oxygen in the body, linked to the philosophical notion of *qi* or vital breath and vital energy<sup>20</sup>, and also of Primordial

Energy, or *yuanqi* 元氣 [yuánqì]. Therefore, more than working on the muscles, Eastern gymnastics aims to establish a deep relationship with the vital breath, which guarantees an interconnection between the individual microcosmic level and the general macrocosmic dimension. Gymnastics appeared as *qigong* 氣功 [qìgōng], a nomenclature that can be translated as the 'cultivation of vital breath', developed in natural space, having emerged in the mountains in close connection with the meditation of human in search for immortality, and later with the Buddhists and Taoist Masters.

Moreover, Cecília Jorge and Beltrão Coelho inform us that it is quite possible that meditation was perfected during the sixth century and is related to the Indian Buddhist monk Bodhidharma or Da Mo 達摩, the father of the Chinese and Japanese Zen Buddhism, which means 'meditation'. It was only much later that the *Taiji* 太極 [tàijí] or *Taijiquan* 太極拳 [tàijíquán] would appear in the modern age as a gymnastics which in Macao is called T'ai Kek Kun, an expression may be translated as 'immeasurable greatness'<sup>21</sup>, T'ai Kek in Macao led to the development of five major styles<sup>22</sup>.

More recently, from the 1920s onwards, of a style that synthesis all others, the *yi quan* 意拳 [yìquán]<sup>23</sup>, created by Wang Xiangzhai 王鄉齋, who lived between 1885 and 1963, where one seeks to reconcile gymnastics and fighting in isolated movements, alternating tension and relaxation of the body, deep concentration and breath control, providing an excellent counterpoint to sedentary and monotonous city lives.<sup>24</sup>

From my point of view, the most important thing to remember is that these arts transmitted from generation to generation undergo adaptations, leading to the development of a style that fits the practitioners<sup>25</sup>, to obtain a balance for everyone in society that includes many random and repressing factors, where people have little freedom of action, and the freedom they have is to be directed to the search of a healthy life, which seems more within the reach of



## MEDICINA TRADICIONAL CHINESA

each being responsible for his/her destiny, thus being able to choose the type (and the style) of respiratory gymnastics to exercise, the diet to follow and the preventive prescriptions for diseases and illnesses that will put them on the path to a long life and possible immortality. A healthy lifestyle also helps people age more slowly, which is obviously quite appealing to people who are getting older. It helps middle-aged and older people on their paths of physical and spiritual improvement, in addition to acquiring, as an advantage of no less value, the filling of a culture void, caused by the loss of traditional philosophical references. This phenomenon is not exclusive to China, but has global dimensions, and may well contribute to explaining the most recent choice, which has generated great unanimity, to focus on the theme of global health, a direction that was already taken before the COVID-19 pandemic broke out: today the main concerns seem to be for our health along with that of the planet.

Chinese existential wisdom passed down over the centuries in its traditional medicine. It now seems to respond better to the worries not only of the Chinese but of a large part of humanity, which sees in the philosophical principles engaged in this tradition (as well as other oriental traditions) the answer to overcoming the global, environmental and individual crisis.

Thus, the holistic view and the search for a symbiosis between human and nature, the key to the success of TCM in preventive perspective, could become an effective promise in terms of health — replacing the dehumanised practice of Western atomistic and analytical medicine which focused too much on the laboratory and artificial biochemistry — for an attempt to return to mother earth and the herbal medicine. Alternatively, both Eastern and Western medicine may be combined innovatively. We already know that in Chinese hospitals, such as Kiang Wu Hospital in Macao, we find doctors practising both kinds of medicine. What some may not be

aware of is that, according to the data collected by Cecília Jorge and Beltrão Coelho<sup>26</sup>, since 1979, the World Health Organisation (WHO), in partnership with scientists from The Chinese University of Hong Kong, have been carrying out constant research into the Chinese Pharmacopoeia to develop new medical products of mineral and animal origin, and have also created a database in English with treatises resulting from traditional Chinese wisdom.

What possibly captivates the most, concerning this *Tao* of Traditional Chinese Medicine, is the fact that its philosophical principles go far beyond the scientific sphere and can be followed in daily life by all those who wish to keep healthy through the practice of a balanced diet, physical exercise, and meditation, never losing sight of the key body equilibrium of a healthy mind.

The fundamental of this is something that does not seem too difficult to accomplish, namely attention to the vital breath via respiration as well as concentration on the balance of our two basic energies: *yang* 陽 [yáng], which is positive, masculine and warm, and *yin* 陰 [yīn] which is negative, feminine and cold. Additionally, the relationship between the five dynamic phases of our organism and the cosmos lets us recall the core elements: Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water.

Achieving harmony between them, which relies on the equilibrium of cosmic energies through a balanced diet and gymnastics, without forgetting to pay attention to the rhythms of nature and their relationship to each of us in terms of rest and activity, is undoubtedly the best beginning to start the journey to longevity with the help of *qi*, or vital energy, the *jing* 精 [jīng], the essence inherited from our parents, residing in the kidneys, although there is also an acquired *jing*, which enters the blood via food, being fundamental in terms of sexual, reproductive and developmental capacity in addition to do *shen* 神 [shén], the materialised spirit, regulator of

## TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE



Fig. 5a: Qi (氣), the vital breath. Image by Lou Heng Ian, Natalie.

intellectual capacities, when it fails we lose cognitive power and zest for life. It is these three treasures and the way we deal with them that will determine our lifeline.

Although they are not observable in the form of laboratory data, we understand their importance well from an intuitive and existential point of view, since we owe a lot to the way we deal with our vital energy, heredity and this materialised spirit in the body, which is always with us in sickness and in health. In short, today we can count those who do not consider prevention is better than cure. But this is only possible for a person pursuing a Western lifestyle, if there is a change of perspective regarding the way of life we have been practising, reversing course and returning to our own body and nature, towards the empirical and intuitive world we have moved away from.

## 5. HEALTH SINOLOGY IN CONTEMPORARY MACAO

In “A Integração da Medicina Tradicional Chinesa nas Políticas Públicas Portuguesas no Quadro das Relações Portugal China” by Melissa Tita, Carlos Jalali and Teresa Carvalho, Traditional Chinese Medicine is presented as a ‘millenary treasure’<sup>27</sup> and ‘soft power’ with an important part to play in transcultural and intercultural dialogue, which is why it has entered diplomatic agendas and government programmes as a measured strategy to convey the

values of Chinese civilisation and culture throughout the world, via a new political proposal, the flagship of the government of President Xi Jinping, leading China since 2013, epitomised in the motto ‘One Belt, One Road’ (OBOR). These bring together an ideology, which encompasses such principles as globalisation, society of knowledge and network transmission. It is conveyed by the New Silk Road and at the end of the pandemic period, a new principle of ecological socialism was added. All these ideas pass through the New Maritime and Land Silk Road, as well as the current Macao Platform, which transformed into a bridge between China and the Portuguese-speaking Countries, as pointed out by the President of the International Institute of Macau (IIM) — Dr. Jorge Rangel, in his article “Macao — Uma Reinterpretação do Legado Luso, Vinte Anos após a Transição”. The author refers to Macao’s historical tradition as a trading post with the Portuguese-speaking world and also to the creation by China of the Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries in Macao in 2003, along with the recognition of the Historic Centre of Macao by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2005 and the more recent creation of the Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area, which consists of nine cities in the Pearl River Delta as well as the two Special Administrative Regions of Macao and Hong Kong. According to Rangel’s remark:

*It was the Portuguese Legacy, cultural and human, that to a large extent justified the creation of China’s second Special Administrative Region with the characteristics it has.*<sup>28</sup>

Resulting from this legacy, in the accurate words of the IIM President confirming what we have just seen, is the possibility of a ‘multifaceted cooperation’<sup>29</sup>. We



## MEDICINA TRADICIONAL CHINESA

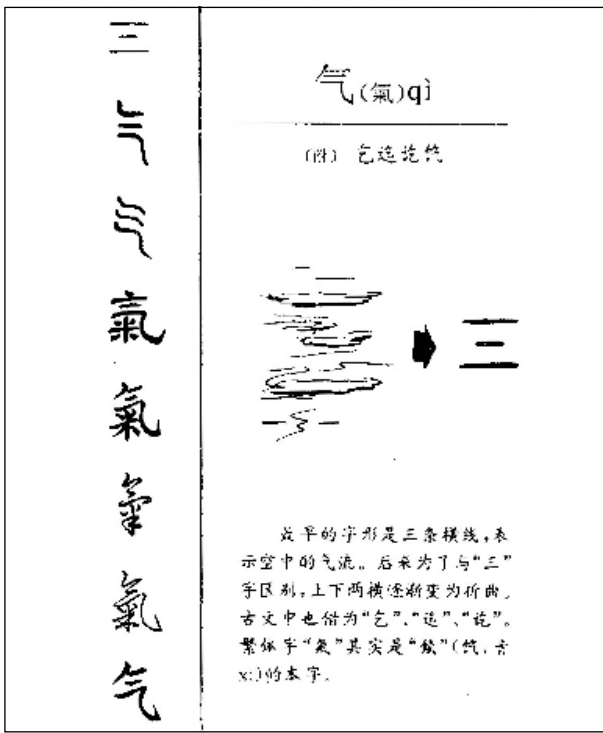


Fig. 5b: Qi (氣), the vital breath etymology. Source: <https://www.yw11.com/zidian/10954/>

know that this multifaceted cooperation, supported by China's strong 'soft power' is one of the strategies favoured by Xi Jinping's presidency, which is the reason why Macao has come to occupy a prominent place as a cultural platform, where the values of various civilisations flow in and out, and become an anchorage, and a vessel for the traditional arts, sciences, philosophies and other cultural dimensions of China.

As Tita, Jalali and Carvalho remind us, the expansion of a culture and its way of life, as previously indicated, that are different, for instance, in terms of medicine, from Western scientific methods, constitutes the extension of Chinese soft power in a concrete way. Consequently, it is clear that there is much for the West to gain from a cultural exchange at the level of TCM, specifically with regards to certain procedures like acupuncture, herbal medicine, *tuina* massage, Chinese dietetics, *Taijiquan*, and *qigong*.

For instance, Li Ying from the Physical Educational Department of Dalian Foreign Language University tells us in "A Study on the Overseas Development of Health Qigong Culture under the Background of 'One Belt and One Road' Strategy" that the latter physical practice with preventive purposes, which is part of the strategy, has experienced rapid international development since the establishment of the International Health Qigong Federation (IHQF) in 2012, with over 32 countries and regions joining and establishing local associations, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Canada, Germany, France, Brazil, Japan.<sup>30</sup> Li also highlights the significance of the health *qigong* culture in popularising *qigong* as an international sports culture<sup>31</sup>. While the age group of 45 to 65, in particular among women, continued to be the most receptive<sup>32</sup>, it is not surprising, as Li also noted, that health issues tend to increase as people age. However, this does not diminish the value of health *qigong* culture as an excellent bridge between China and Western countries. It is hoped that health and sports can become popular among young people in other cultures. Martial arts, for example, has been rather attractive to Western youth.

Li adds that local associations in Western countries should develop written materials in their native language in order to make health *qigong* culture a success in their own countries. Otherwise, there is no possibility of advance development, and it will be restricted to basic techniques without the necessary theoretical framework to fully understand them. Finally, the author concludes his article with a strong defence of *qigong* that could contribute a lot in international terms to China's image<sup>33</sup>. Li claims that it functions on two levels — the sporting and the cultural fronts — and is a great platform for learning about and exchanging ideas with Western nations:

*If Acupuncture, Opera, Kung fu, Confucius and Chinese wine are the 'five faces' of Chinese*

## TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

*culture, the Health Qigong, in accordance with the health trend, could be the 'sixth face' of the Chinese culture to the world. The reason is that no matter how different countries are in politics, economy and culture, the pursuit of health is the common goal.*<sup>34</sup>

Back to OBOR, it can contribute a lot to the elevation and affirmation of China as a great power not only in economic terms, but also culturally, in the international scenario, where Macao has a pivotal role to play, and specifically as a cultural connection for the transmission of TCM between Portugal and China.

The construction of the Traditional Chinese Medicine Science and Industrial Park in 2011 to foster cooperation between Guangdong and Macao is a noteworthy example of the popularity of TCM in Macao<sup>35</sup>.

Tita, Jalali, and Carvalho summarise the reasons for building this Park as follows: 'the purposes of the industrial park from its creation to the present day, concentrate around the construction of an International Quality Control Base for Traditional Chinese Medicine and an "International Health Industry Exchange Platform"<sup>36</sup>. The authors conclude, supported by solid biographical references, with praise for Macao's health system, which they consider to be among the most developed ones in Asia<sup>37</sup>. Along with the development of TCM in the territory, it has already made a significant impact on Macao's economy and the territory's perception of this Chinese cultural practice that has been called TCM Renaissance<sup>38</sup> with expansion and development through some of Macao's most important institutions, such as the Faculty of Traditional Chinese Medicine at the Macau University of Science and Technology. The institute was established in 2000 and offers bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees in TCM. It is a strong support to the State Key Laboratory of Quality Research in Chinese Medicine (SKL-QRCM)<sup>39</sup>, for instance in

the verification of plants used in TCM. The World Health Organisation (WHO) Collaborating Center for Traditional Chinese Medicine was established in 2015 with support from the WHO and China, and is noteworthy for its dissemination and promotion of TCM. As a result, Macao has not only established itself as the verifier of TCM but also actively participates in scientific research in this area with the unwavering support of the WHO, the SAR government of Macao, and the central government of Beijing<sup>40</sup>.

### CONCLUSION: A CONTRIBUTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF HEALTH

Nowadays, as Anabela Rodrigues Santiago notes in "A Rota da Seda da Saúde e o seu Papel no Âmbito da Governança Global em Saúde", health care is China's top priority as it strives to become a great scientific power. In fact, President Xi Jinping established the Silk Road to Health in 2015, and made it part of the OBOR policy which is based on the motto of the 'Chinese Dream' that was reiterated in 2017<sup>41</sup>.

Contemporarily, China keeps an eye on the health of its people and has even designed the Healthy China 2030 plan, which was launched in 2016 with specific work plans until 2030<sup>42</sup>, including the quest to foster healthy living among the population, paying special attention to health services, security, industry, policies and supports and the development of universal health care, in addition to primary care, promotion of health insurance, regulation of essential medicines and implementation of reforms in public hospitals.

However, it should be remembered that this special attention to health by Mainland China and Macao is not different from what is happening in the rest of our globalised world. The world's attention focuses on international scientific cooperation, as the WHO has been emphasising, as well as on health-related industries, the production of vaccines and medication, food safety, and developing complementary relations between

## MEDICINA TRADICIONAL CHINESA

Western Medicine and Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Today, global care is directed towards health, making it a part of all policies, transforming politicians and national governments into instruments in the service of a more ecological and healthier order. People then refer to global health governance, which presupposes mechanisms that go beyond national spheres, implying international solutions taken in a network and calling for an interdisciplinary approach, which commits multiple sectors at national and global levels, including and prioritising health in people's main social dimensions: economic, educational, medical in stricto sensu, housing and socio-community.

In this sense, we only distance ourselves from

the ancient history of Chinese emperors seeking immortality, because we extend the concern with longevity and immortality of the imperial court and privileged literate mandarins to all social strata of China and the rest of the world.

It is only fair that we desire to live longer and better and that this privilege should not belong exclusively to the upper realms of our society. Thus, a better world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century naturally implies greater equity in the distribution of health care, in Chinese and global health routes, that blends dream and reality, committing all those who wish and compromise to travel through it from Mainland China to Macao, across Africa, the West and around the world. **RC**

## NOTES

- 1 This is a course in development as referred to at an event that took place on 28–30 October 2019 at Nova School of Business and Economics, which organised the VII International Science Matters Conference.
- 2 Maria Burguete, “Science Matters: Um Mundo em Mudança,” in *Conhecimento e Sociedade através da Ciência Humana e Universidades*, eds. Maria Burguete and Jean-Patrick Connerade (Lisbon: Instituto de Investigação Científica Bento da Rocha Cabral and Scimat, 2021), 38.
- 3 Ana Varela and José Faro, “Evidência da Medicina Tradicional na Saúde Humana,” in *Conhecimento e Sociedade através da Ciência Humana e Universidades*, ed. Maria Burguete and Jean-Patrick Connerade (Lisbon: Instituto de Investigação Científica Bento da Rocha Cabral e Scimat, 2021), 225.
- 4 Varela and Faro, “Evidência,” 230.
- 5 Varela and Faro, “Evidência,” 237.
- 6 Varela and Faro, “Evidência,” 237.
- 7 Varela and Faro, “Evidência,” 238.
- 8 Varela and Faro, “Evidência,” 239.
- 9 Matilde Saldanha de Matos, “Inteligência Emocional — Prioridades de uma sociedade em Mudança,” in *Conhecimento e Sociedade através da Ciência Humana e Universidades*, eds. Maria Burguete and Jean-Patrick Connerade (Lisbon: Instituto de Investigação Científica Bento da Rocha Cabral e Scimat, 2021), 254.
- 10 Matos, “Inteligência Emocional,” 252.
- 11 A possible correspondence for this Chinese proverb in the positive version will be ‘as you like it’, but in a more current and negative version, it means being someone who is always changing his mind. Cf. *Proverbes Chinois Annotés* (Beijing: Editions en Langues Étrangères, 1984), 85.
- 12 Cf. T. C. Lai, *The Eight Immortals* (Hong Kong: Swindon Book Company, 1972), 21–23.
- 13 Leonel Barros, *Templos, Lendas e Rituais: Macau* (Macao: Associação Promotora da Instrução dos Macaenses, 2003), 84.
- 14 Barros, *Templos, Lendas e Rituais*, 88.
- 15 Cecília Jorge and Beltrão Coelho, *Medicina Chinesa, Em Busca do Equilíbrio Perdido* (Macao: Instituto Cultural de Macau, Círculo de Leitores, 1988), 134.
- 16 Jorge and Coelho, *Medicina Chinesa*, 134.
- 17 Leonel Barros, *Tradições Populares: Macau* (Macao: Associação Promotora da Instrução dos Macaenses, 2004), 33–34.
- 18 Luís Gonzaga Gomes, *Curiosidades de Macau Antiga* (Macao: Instituto Cultural de Macau, 1996), 168.
- 19 Jorge and Coelho, *Medicina Chinesa*, 133.
- 20 Cf. Jorge and Coelho, *Medicina Chinesa*, 49. ‘Qi is the matter that is in the process of becoming essence or the energy that is approaching materialisation’.
- 21 Jorge and Coelho, *Medicina Chinesa*, 136.
- 22 Jorge and Coelho, *Medicina Chinesa*, 138.
- 23 Jorge and Coelho, *Medicina Chinesa*, 152.
- 24 The aims of various types of breathing gymnastics are distinct from *Kung-fu Gongfu*, translated as the ‘art of the fist’, or according to the generic term in Chinese, martial arts. Jorge and Coelho, *Medicina Chinesa*, 145.
- 25 Jorge and Coelho, *Medicina Chinesa*, 137.
- 26 Jorge and Coelho, *Medicina Chinesa*, 40.
- 27 Melissa Tita, Carlos Jalali and Teresa Carvalho, “A Integração da Medicina Tradicional Chinesa nas Políticas Públicas

## TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

- Portuguesas no Quadro das Relações Portugal China,” in *Diálogos Interculturais Portugal-China 2*, Vol. 1, *Rotas e Raízes de um diálogo distante*, eds. Carlos Morais et al (Macao: Instituto Internacional de Macau e Instituto Confúcio da Universidade de Aveiro, 2021), 233.
- 28 Jorge A. H. Rangel, “Macau — Uma Reinterpretação do Legado Luso, Vinte Anos após a Transição,” in *Diálogos Interculturais Portugal-China 2*, Vol. 1, *Rotas e Raízes de um diálogo distante*, eds. Carlos Morais et al (Macao: Instituto Internacional de Macau e Instituto Confúcio da Universidade de Aveiro, 2021), 98.
- 29 Rangel, “Macau — Uma Reinterpretação,” 102.
- 30 Li Ying, “A Study on the Overseas Development of Health Qigong Culture under the Background of ‘One Belt and One Road’ Strategy,” in *Diálogos Interculturais Portugal-China 2*, Vol. 1, *Rotas e Raízes de um diálogo distante*, eds. Carlos Morais et al (Macao: Instituto Internacional de Macau e Instituto Confúcio da Universidade de Aveiro, 2021), 250.
- 31 Li, “A Study on the Overseas Development of Health Qigong Culture,” 250.
- 32 Li, “A Study on the Overseas Development of Health Qigong Culture,” 251.
- 33 Li, “A Study on the Overseas Development of Health Qigong Culture,” 253.
- 34 Li, “A Study on the Overseas Development of Health Qigong Culture,” 253.
- 35 Tita, Jalali and Carvalho, “A Integração,” 238.
- 36 Tita, Jalali and Carvalho, “A Integração,” 238.
- 37 At the time of the article’s elaboration, based on data in 2017, Macao had five hospitals and 708 primary care units, of which 194 provide TCM treatment. Tita, Jalali and Carvalho, “A Integração,” 239.
- 38 Tita, Jalali and Carvalho, “A Integração,” 239.
- 39 Tita, Jalali and Carvalho, “A Integração,” 239.
- 40 Tita, Jalali and Carvalho, “A Integração,” 240.
- 41 Anabela Rodrigues Santiago, “A Rota da Seda da Saúde e o seu Papel no Âmbito da Governança Global em Saúde,” *Rotas a Oriente: Revista de Estudos Sino-Portugueses*, no. 1 (Oct. 2021): 114.
- 42 Santiago, “A Rota da Seda da Saúde,” 111.

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