

## THE PERENNIAL MEDICINE

By Thea Elijah

I'd like to speak now about what I call the Perennial Medicine. The Perennial Medicine is not a specific healing modality per se, like acupuncture or osteopathy; rather it is a significant set of values, beliefs and assumptions about healing: what it means and how it happens. It's important to talk about this because medicine always reflects cosmology, i.e. the values, beliefs and assumptions that a culture holds about the nature of life, the universe, and being human. These basic beliefs and assumptions, which are inherent in any culture's medicine, include that culture's answers to questions like, What is the highest good? Because how can we define health without this standard? and certainly, this can vary a great deal from culture to culture. Questions like, What is the causative power or agency of change — in other words, what has the power to make us get ill, and conversely the power to make us get well? E.g. biomolecular reactions, planetary misalignment, demons, the wrath of the ancestors – what is the causative power or agency of change?

These are very important assumptions that are built into the medicine, and they may not be shared from culture to culture. Deep questions are inherent in a medicine; even questions like, What is the meaning of life? Why are we here, what are we doing here, and what happens next, after this life? All of this is inherent in a culture's cosmology, which in turn informs its medicine.

Luckily, a healer does not have to be a philosopher, but every healer is a living, practicing embodiment of her/his culture's deepest philosophical principles. You do not have to have thought out for yourself, "well, because I am doing this, it means that I believe that the meaning of life is *this*." But this underlying belief system is, in fact, what you are acting from. The healer embodies the deepest philosophical principles and cosmological orientations of the culture, even without thinking about it.

Thus as healers, in any culture, we do what we do on 2 levels. We do what we do on the level of being embodiments of very deep cosmological principles. And we also do what we do on the level of overt methodology: prescribing herbs, sticking in needles; we order the CAT scan, we remove the tumor, or we wave rattles and beat drums. We place crystals on charkas, prescribe anti-seizure medication or do surgery— we do whatever it is that we do, on the level of overt methodology—the level of all of the physical, technical aspects of our healing art.

We do need to be well-trained and very skillful in these outer, more overt aspects of our methodology, but that is only half of what we are and what we do. The other half of what we do is cosmological embodiment; and that is what empowers the methodology that we use.

It is certainly possible to find many excellent healers who help a great many people without ever having thought about the cosmological implications of what they're doing, and this is fine. Implicitly and unconsciously, the healer draws upon her cultural background, and the philosophy and cosmology that she grew up in, as an orientation for her work. No explicit awareness is necessary because of this congruence between the implicit beliefs and cosmological orientation of the healer and the underlying methodology of the medicine. It is actually not necessary or important at all—except in one situation: When the culture of the healer and the cosmological orientation of the modality don't match. Suddenly there is a need to state explicitly things that never needed to be stated explicitly before, in order to create more congruence, and more effective usage of the modality.

I began thinking about all of this after a faculty meeting at the Academy for Five Element Acupuncture in which we were trying to put into words what it is that we hold so precious in the 5 Element tradition, and consider so vital, so unique, and worth protecting at any cost. Particularly this line of thought came up when contrasting the 5 Element tradition and its gifts with the more modern, post-Cultural Revolution TCM tradition and its gifts. We were focusing on the question of, how do we preserve the gifts of our tradition, and what are they, anyway? If the 5 Element tradition is more than just a series of protocols, which we are not always able to agree on anyway, then what is this tradition actually about?

At that time, what I came up with was this statement:

Health that has been restored due to the cultivation of virtue is not the same as health that has been restored simply due to the dispelling of illness.

The physical manifestations of health may appear to be the same, but on the level of the spirit, the difference is incalculable.

When we focus solely on dispelling illness in order to restore health, a priceless opportunity for the spirit is lost.

When our healing strategy has as its aim the evocation of the client's own original nature as its catalyst for the transformation of body mind and spirit, the results are profound for both practitioner and client.

The client experiences healing as a transformation that occurs from within; and the practitioner is also transformed through the continuous practice of aligning with The Most High in ourselves for the sake of our client.

Through the cultivation of virtue in both practitioner and client, illness is dispelled and health is restored.

This is a radically different stance from what modern medicine, in the West, is thinking and doing. It's day and night. Black and white. It's not just a very different emphasis; it's a whole other orientation towards health. To cultivate virtue, and on the path to virtue illness falls away; versus, let's get rid of this, and let's get rid of that, and let's fix the broken thing. From this contrast came the realization that there are two different kinds of medicine. I now was no longer thinking just about 5-element acupuncture versus TCM, nor about acupuncture versus Western medicine, nor ancient versus modern; all of those categories went away and I realized, there are two different categories of medicine.

## **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COSMOLOGY VS. MODALITY**

The most significant aspect of any system of medicine is not the technicalities of how the healing is implemented,

but whether that system of medicine orients itself in relation to a central model of perfection,

which constitutes both the goal and the agency of healing,

or whether it orients itself in relation to the dispelling of illness and the avoidance of death.

At this point a great many different modalities suddenly didn't seem so different from one another any more. They were either about working from and moving towards this central perfection--this ideal, this model of virtue--or they were simply about not dying, not being sick. From this perspective I therefore realized that 5 E acupuncture is in fact NOT unique! It is not unique at all. It is one of many traditional medicines that orients itself in relationship to virtue rather than avoidance of illness and death.

## **THE PERENNIAL MEDICINE**

Throughout history, until recently, most civilizations have had healing systems that are based around bringing the client into greater and greater alignment with a central notion of perfection. This is the common place; this has been the common place for virtually all peoples on the planet, all over the globe, until modern times.

And every culture, every civilization until modern times has also had a basic cosmology—basic beliefs and assumptions about the nature of life and the nature of being human—that has had more in common than different when we look underneath the skin. What I mean by that is – look around this room at each other. There's nobody in this room that you'd mistake for anyone else in the room. You all look pretty different. People have got really different skin, different noses, different hair, different body shapes, right?

However, everyone in this room has the exact same bone structure. You have the same number of bones, hooked up to each other in basically the same way. You have the same organs, pretty much in the same place, doing pretty much the same thing. You all have noses, basically in the same place. Your eyes are different color but we all have eyes. Same with the hair, the skin. We have a lot more in common than we have different. The differences are pretty minor compared to what is exactly the same in all of us.

This is what I'm talking about when I refer to the similarity of cosmology between pretty much every culture and civilization on this planet until modern times. There are people these days who are speaking, studying, writing about this in terms of something called the Perennial Philosophy, the common bones, and common organ systems of cosmology that transcend culture and keep appearing over and over and over again.

The main topic of this talk today is that if there is a Perennial Philosophy, and medicine of necessity reflects cosmology, then there must also be perennial medicine, a medicine that is The Medicine, with the same bones, the same organs, the same similarities of inner structure.

Let me talk a little bit about the Perennial Philosophy, and these cosmological basic bones and organs that appear over and over again in different cultures.

### **1) A Supreme Reality, Hologram, Transcendent Consciousness, God, Tao exists.**

One: is that there is a supreme reality. A unity. A oneness. A hologram if you will. A transcendent reality. The first tenet of the Perennial philosophy is simply that this exists. You can call it Tao. You can call it God. You can say Allah. You can say Jah. You can say Brahmin. You can call it whatever you want to call it, but the first tenet of the Perennial philosophy is that this transcendent unity IS. This is a fundamental tenet of the perennial philosophy and therefore of perennial medicine and (I will note) NOT of modern medicine.

### **2) Manifestation is a continuous outpouring from this source.**

The second tenet of the perennial philosophy is that all manifestation is a direct, continuous outpouring from this source, from this oneness. Everything that shows up is showing up out of the unity; there is nowhere else for it to come from, and it is not separate from, as it arises up from Tao. It is the breath of the Creator. It's in every major religion, every major philosophy: manifestation is a continuous outpouring from this Unity, from this transcendent reality. There is this oneness and everything that is showing up is showing up out of the oneness.

### **3) It is also returning to this source, and at one with source, like waves rising and returning to the ocean.**

Everything is like waves coming up out of the ocean of Tao and then falling back into the ocean of Tao; rising and then returning to its source. I'm assuming you know some things about other religions, other philosophies; this should be sounding familiar from a number of different systems. There's this rising up out of the void, and returning to the void without ever really having left. And we appear to be separate, like separate waves, (but the waves never really are separate from the source, they just seem separate), and then go back into the source again, without ever having disconnected at any point.

**4) Therefore YOU are not separate nor of a different substance or nature than this source.**

Every being in this room, every one of us, is a wave that has emerged, that is, in this moment, a wave emerging from that ocean, and *is not separate* during that whole the whole time of arising from this ocean and returning back into this ocean (nor is anyone else you're hanging out with). Take a moment just to feel that. I am a wave coming out of an ocean and I'm not separate from that ocean. And there are these other waves here, brother and sister waves in the same ocean here next to me. And we are all arising out of the same ocean together. It's a different orientation. Already, think, how different would it be to be in the treatment room feeling this, thinking this. This is a Chinese fundamental assumption. This is a fundamental assumption of the Perennial Medicine, of the Perennial philosophy (and not of modern medicine, nor of modern philosophy). Each of us is not separate nor different in substance or nature or source.

Imagine how different it is to be with the client from this orientation. There's a different feeling in the room when we're in this understanding, and it's very different than what modern medicine assumes. "You're over there. I'm over here. We're separate. That'll be sixty bucks."

**5) Something is getting in the way of directly perceiving this.**

Even in that little demo, when we really went into it, there is the sense that yes, although we are tuning into being waves in the same ocean and not really separate, we're only partially aware of it. We're not completely living from the deep knowing that we are at one with Source and that there is no separation between us. Something gets in the way of directly perceiving this, and completely living from that reality.

Again, this should be sounding familiar from many different religions, different philosophies. Something is getting in the way of directly experiencing this sense of being completely at one with (not separate from, not different from) Source, unity, oneness. Different manifestations of the perennial philosophy speak about this differently: we are in a fallen state, we are living in a state of sin, we have lost the Tao, we have fallen from Paradise... All of these have a different way of saying: we're not getting it, we're not living in the real reality; we're not perceiving the unity.

**6) There is a way to return to, and live from, the direct experience of union with source.**

Otherwise known as: the Good News. A fundamental tenet of every philosophy and every religion until modern times, is: there is a way to return to and to live from the direct experience of union with Source. I find this very heartening, that in every philosophy and in every religion, none of them say "Yeah, you're stuck with that, sorry. Gotta live that way. LOSER!" In every culture and every civilization on the planet, through all of time, until recently, you are not doomed to the illusion of separation. Every single one says there is a way, it is never too late; you can do this.

**7) To the extent that you achieve this while you are alive, you will be glad that you did after you die.**

This also is conceived of in many different ways, but again, they all boil down to the same thing. It may be that the reason why you'll be glad that you came into unity, or glad of the extent to which you came into the realization of unity during your life, is because when you die you won't have to be reborn as a squid or you'll go to heaven versus hell, or you won't have to go 500 more times around the wheel of Karma, whatever it is in your particular culture. But always, there is the sense, in all of the philosophies, that the extent to which you achieve realization of unity within your lifetime, you will be glad that you did when you die.

This is very important for the medicine as well, because it's a whole orientation towards why we live, and what is health, and what is it that we are actually aiming for. Just not to die for a little bit longer? Or to make ready for what state we will be in when we die (which gives us a lot more to do, in a way, in terms of health while we're living).

**8) Health is simultaneously a manifestation of progress towards a state of identity, or union, with an ideal state which is both individually human microcosm) and universal (macrocosm).**

OK that is a twister of an idea; let me try to spell it out more clearly.

Another tenet of the Perennial philosophy is that this progress towards a state of union with Source is equally an individual human state of perfection, i.e. that we can come into a human state of perfection (union with Source), and it is also a Universal perfection. We're saying that unity is a macrocosm/microcosm thing, a fractal. In all of the perennial philosophies, there is a human perfection and equally a cosmic perfection, and health lies in not just making yourself healthy within yourself, it's how my perfection and the universal perfection come into perfect relationship. I am a small universe. The meridians on my body – each person recapitulates the unity. There's a fractal recapitulation of the macrocosm and the microcosm. The perfection of the universe, the shape of the

universe, the nature of the universe in balance is also the perfection and the shape and the nature of myself in balance. And, there's a relationship between us.

This is very different from modern medicine, which assumes that health is something that can be achieved by individual units as opposed by health being, in part what's going on in your internal balance, but equally much, how are you interacting with the universe? It's springtime! Are you taking that into account? It's war time, it's peace time. There's this way in which it's absurd, in any perennial philosophy medicine, to think that health could be an individual matter. It is a Cosmological matter, and it is an Ecological matter. Directly, health is a matter of ecology, within you, around you, and how you fit into the unfolding movement of the cosmos.

In a sense it's a very activist orientation. This is, in acupuncture, what horary points are all about. Are you in alignment with the cosmos, or are you walking around like some kind of supposedly individual unit? Nonsense, you aren't. There is no health for you, except in finding your place in the dance of the cosmos. It's springtime, it's this era, it's this dynasty. This is part of health. Health is a cosmological matter, not just an individual matter, and it is an ecological matter, the relationship between the individual and the cosmos.

**9) At the heart of the Perennial Philosophy, there is always an indescribably ultimacy, and a describable penultimacy—in terms of qualities, attributes e.g. 5 Elements, 99 Names, Directions of Medicine Wheel**

The Source, Tao, God, whatever you want to call that unity, is ultimately indescribable. It can be directly apprehended—potentially by anyone—but cannot be defined. “The Tao that can be spoken is not the eternal Tao.” That's what I mean by, “there is an indescribably ultimacy at the heart of every perennial philosophy.” And there is a describable ‘next step down,’ a describable pen-ultimacy in terms of qualities and attributes.

For example, the Tao is unspeakable, but we've got these 5 elements that we can talk about. The 5 elements are clearly not things—nobody thinks they are things; they are qualities. In Islamic healing, Allah is the unspeakable, the One, but we have the 99 names of God, which are the qualities: The Generous, The Splendorous, The Compassionate, The Strong. The Great Spirit is apprehendable but unspeakable, and then we've got this Medicine Wheel with its 4 directions which are primary qualitative distinctions. Nobody thinks the North is a thing; the North is a quality that's very different from the South, which is a different quality of energy, East, West]. Same with the animals power spirits. They're not things; it's not “a Bear,” it's the quality of Bear-ness, which is one of the ways that source moves into manifestation. All of these are pen-ultimacies, qualities and attributes that arise up out of the unity, and are bits of the unity, but they're the next step down from the unity so that we're able to speak about them.

The unity is like the pure white light and then the pen-ultimacy is like the prism where

There is this breaking out into color. These are the first notes, the pure notes, the primary colors that come out of the white light. Different systems have different ways of dividing and categorizing what the qualities are as they come out of indescribability into describability. Here is where the philosophies diverge, and the medicines diverge, but they are nevertheless structured in the same way: every system has an indescribably ultimacy and a describable pen-ultimacy, which is described in terms of qualities and attributes.

The overt cosmology is taken from this second level: the medicine wheel, the 5 elements, the 99 names, etc. The medicine is also taken from this second level, this penultimate level, **because it's the thing that you can talk about.** It's the deepest, most close to the source thing that we can talk about. It's the thing that you can teach to someone else, and (and this is very important!) it is the thing that if you're not currently in a state of attainment, you can work with. (If you are in a state of complete God-realization or total unity with the Tao, you don't need a modality. You **are** the healing. If, however, you just believe there is such a thing as God-realization or enlightenment, or perfection as it lives in human form, and you haven't personally attained it yet, you get a job as a healer, generally in some alternative healing modality.)

Because of this penultimate level, which gives rise to the modalities, I can be a healer without being a fully realized being myself. I can work with the map, and I can tell from this map that you need to go west; you need a little more Water, or I can tell that your North is shaky or your Metal is out of balance, or that you need Eagle medicine versus Bear medicine. This second level gives us the opportunity to do something for our clients to help them on their way to health, without our having to be Enlightened already.

I think this is important, and I mention and belabor it in part because I've heard some healers say that you can't take somebody to someplace you've never been, and you can't help someone to progress further than you've progressed. Thank goodness, I have found this not to be so. Thank goodness that nobody's got to wait for me to attain for their healing to come through! If you've got a map and a compass then you know that health is that way! Even if you are not there yourself, you can stand there pointing the way. That is the power of the penultimate, the power of the map.

So there's an up side and a down side to it. The up side is: you don't have to be enlightened yet to be able to use a map and a compass and say, "Health is this way." And, of course, the shortcoming of the not-quite-ultimate is that it's not quite ultimate and eventually everybody, every one of us, is going to have to go beyond the map to get there. The map too will be gone when we return to Source, but in the meanwhile it's very, very helpful.

Nobody's got to wait for me to get it together for their health, for their virtue, for their evolution to happen. If you've got a map and a compass and you know that health is that way, you can stand there and be a noble pointer for your client even if you're not

there yourself. So that's the power of the pen-ultimate is the power of the map. The upside of the pen-ultimate is you can use your map and compass and say health is this way and of course, the shortcoming of the pen-ultimate is that it's not ultimate and that everybody, everyone of us is going to have to go beyond the map someday, in order to enter the unity. The map too will be gone when we return to Source, but up until that moment it's very useful.

This is an overall sketch of what I mean when I talk about the perennial philosophy, and therefore when I speak of perennial medicines, whether it's working with the medicine wheel, or it's Ayurveda, or it's Chinese medicine, or it's Unani medicine, or whether it's any of the many, many different perennial healing traditions. They all share these fundamental belief structures and assumptions which are profoundly different than the belief structures and assumptions that I assume that everybody in this room has grown up with. This is important to note: that we are working with a medicine that assumes that we assume things that we generally do not in fact go around assuming. This is why we need to have these conversations and discuss explicitly how we can make the shift into congruence with the medicine that we're practicing so as to be able to access the full power of the perennial medicine healing modalities.

## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PERENNIAL AND ANNUAL MEDICINE

### **1) Annual vs. Perennial paradigms**

I've spoken a little bit now about the Perennial philosophy and some of the basic tenets of the perennial philosophy, I'd like to speak a little bit about how this impacts medicine and talk about what therefore are some of the tenants of the Perennial Medicine, and I'm going to do that by contrasting it with what I've been calling the Annual Medicine (you'll see why I think it's a fitting name for modern Western medicine).

One of the things that is true about the Perennial medicines is that they are based on deep principles, the refining of which goes on for the rest of eternity, but nothing becomes negated. We never say, "Whoa! Suddenly there's a 6th Element!" or, "No, the Water element isn't true after all." It's more like the working out of details. There is progress in the medicine. It does evolve, but in a very different way than Annual medicine evolves. Annual medicine, in some ways, is a progression of continuous Copernican revolutions, paradigm overturning previous paradigm. At its best, that's part of what is dynamic, exciting and honest about it.

Every year, there's a new antibiotic; maybe sooner, there's a new disease, there's a new this and a new that being discovered, or now proven to be untrue. Now you can eat eggs. It's fine. Now, they have studies that show that actually, diet has nothing to do with cholesterol. Now, flip, flop – and there is progress, but it's usually progress by overturn of the previous. Things move very very fast. You can expect that in a year, everything's different in the field of medicine, let alone 5 years, let alone 10 years.

Evolution of the paradigm is not an expectation in the Perennial Medicine. Refinement of the paradigm is an expectation, as you personally evolve as a practitioner. But to be a good practitioner of a Perennial Medicine modality, you don't have to subscribe to a trade journal to keep up with the changes and latest discoveries in your field. The field is just not changing that much. How *you* practice changes. And ultimately how you practice will change the field. But unlike Annual Medicine, there's really nothing happening recently that you have to keep up with or be left behind.

In the Annual medicine, the best practitioners are the ones who are most up to date. In the Perennial Medicines, the best practitioners are the ones who have been doing pretty much the same thing for the longest, so they've had a chance to refine their skills and perceptions to a high level. In the Perennial Medicines, there's a recurrence of deep principles and yes of course the medicine is evolving, the medicine is changing. If you look at the history of Chinese medicine, a lot has gone on. And a lot of ideas and a lot of viewpoints, different ones, are in there. But there isn't this sense of rapid overturn of previous paradigm. There's a sense more of a river that has covered a great deal of territory: sometimes branching, sometimes coming back together.

**2) All of the forms of Perennial medicine are designed to work with the continuous arising of manifestation from source.**

**Annual medicine works with that which is already in creation.**

In perennial medicine, we draw upon the power of the Creator to change the creation, whether we conceive of the Creator as God or Tao, using the power that is ceaselessly preceding material manifestation. (Do your best to feel what I'm saying as I say it because I'm doing my best to transmit. And if you don't get the exact words but you get the feeling, that's what will put you in really good stead.) We are coming into creation right now. Right now. And now. And now. And now. There is a power in that. The Tao is giving us forth now; Creation happens now. It didn't happen then. Creation is happening now. And so we tap into that source.

When we stick a needle in Kidney three, what are we doing, and why does the client change instantaneously? They change instantaneously! From a measurable level, their hormonal balance changes. The hot flashes may stop. Their love life may become totally less confusing or nerve-wracking.

This is because between the last quantum-nothing-moment (the moment of rising up and falling back into the flux of chaos) and this quantum-nothing-moment, between the last coming up from source into manifestation and falling back into the void and coming forth again, we've stuck a needle in Kidney 3 and this draws the wave forth from the ocean differently like a wind drawing forth the wave to come back up out of the unity differently this time.

We will talk a little bit later on a practical level about how exactly that works (it works by means of something called resonance), but I wanted to mention to you that you're doing it already. It's already happening. This is not just philosophy; this is practical application of how the Tao continuously gives rise to manifestation. This is what all the forms of

perennial medicine, whether you're working with the medicine wheel or 99 names with or with the Elements, are working with.

We are working with the power of 'coming into creation now.' And between this moment and the next moment, we could come into creation differently. This is a very different power, a different agency of change than within the Annual medicine, which works with a series of mechanical or chemical interventions. Which—notice, as we start talking about mechanical and chemical interventions—do you notice your own body and your consciousness shifting? Add chemicals to change the hormonal balance; use a knife to cut out the tumor. Prescribe Prozac. Order electroshock. Is the room changing—is your body changing—do you begin to feel more dense, more solid, more like a thing—a created thing, a rock, an object? Certainly not a wave that's coming into being right this moment. Here I am, clunk. Now we can look around the room and see all these – look around – look at all these clunky chunks that you're sitting here with. All these thing-chunks. All these meat-chunks with eyes looking out at you. It's a very different feeling in the room, a very different feeling in your body, a very different consciousness. This is very different than: it is the Tao which heals; and that which gives birth to manifestation is giving birth to it RIGHT NOW as it rises and falls back.

**3) In Perennial medicine, the agency of healing is the central perfection e.g. it is the Tao that heals, it is God that heals** (depending on whether you're in a theistic or non theistic paradigm, which are nevertheless ultimately the same; it doesn't matter which. It comes down to the same thing). **And it is through alignment with this central source that the practitioner is able to help the client align, and thus heal.**

Perennial medicine is practiced from the direct perception of the hologram, the direct perception of the arising from the Unity--- or at least the faith that you would have a direct perception of the hologram if you were having a better day. That does work as well. We're able to go deeper some days than others and that's fine. How do we work within a holographic unity, how do we step into this very different place where we are aligning ourselves with an efficacy – a power or agency of change – that is directly related to the state *that we personally are in* as we step into the treatment room? How do we train ourselves to be more directly aware that we are God's exhale, we are the Tao's outpouring, we rise from the void every moment and go back to the void again, so that we can more effectively use non-mechanical means to help the wave pattern of someone's existence to arise from the ocean of Tao differently?

Because of the way we live, all of this can be very hard to keep in mind from moment to moment -- and it's even harder to keep in body, which is where it becomes practical. So having mentioned all these concepts I also want to ground it by taking a moment to give all of us a chance to check into "oh, what do I do inside myself, where do I go to be more in touch with the awareness that each manifestation right now is coming out of the

void; that these are waves on the ocean; that the waves could come differently out of the ocean?" How does your body feel right now as you sink into that paradigm? What does that feel like? Remember it, because you're going to need to re-find it again to make a new habit out of it.

I often think that one of the most important questions for any practitioner in this medicine is, "What are my practices to cultivate this way of being, to come back to it and to deepen it? Because this is the source of the paradigm's efficacy. Give it a try sometime when you're in clinic, what it feels like to needle from this place. It's very different to needle Kidney 3 when you're a *thing* – picking up a needle *thing*, to do something to another *thing*. It's very very different than doing it from within the paradigm that it was meant to be practiced in: knowing oneself as wave coming from the ocean, knowing needle as wave coming forth from the ocean, and client as wave coming from the ocean same ocean. Do not take my word for it. Try this. See how incredibly different it is – how powerful. It's not how hard you hit that point. It's from how deeply within the paradigm. How truly you hit the note. We'll speak more about that.

In the Annual medicine paradigm, everything's biochemical and this is all that there is, these chunks, these lumps, these people and we just do things here in the creation and one thing affects another and you can get something done. You pick it up and you move it. And it's all pretty permanent to be separate until you die. Does your body feel different now? Does the room feel different now? There's a real shift to where we're living here in what I call the K-mart mentality. Life among the things.

And then shifting back again, because this is going to have to become a real habit, in order to access the full power of the perennial medicine. It's a real biochemical shift, isn't it? Your nervous system is different, your endocrine system is different, your consciousness is different, and as you learn to dwell here, your senses start functioning differently as well.

This to me is a very important thing. It's not just mental, it is not just a mind paradigm. Where do you go in your body? What do you do in order to remember, in order to be in touch with the direct awareness that all manifestation, including yourself, including myself, is a wave rising out of the ocean. What's happening right now is waves rising out of the ocean, and they could come out of the ocean differently. If we don't know that between this appearance and disappearance into Tao and the next appearance and disappearance into Tao the whole world could change, then we miss the opportunity. If we think that matter is permanent and manifestation just is, and the only way to change things is to clunk them against each other, we are missing all that could happen between this breath and the next. That would be missing a lot. You could spend a lot of time jabbing Kidney 3 without tapping into that source, that power that could allow your client on that table to open her eyes and say, "I feel completely changed." and never want another cigarette and not have arthritis nor headaches nor confusion in her love

life. This is the power that we access when we are working in the paradigm of the perennial philosophy and the perennial medicine.

To me one of the most important questions for any practitioner is, "What do I do, daily in my life, to remember the habit of staying in the state where I can access the hologram?" Because how different will our treatments be, when we're in this place where we know that all we're doing is helping people come into existence, manifest straight from the source in greater alignment with source.

**4) Annual medicine is about raising the quality of life, and avoiding death.  
Perennial medicine is about raising the quality of life, and preparing for death.**

Another very important difference between the perennial medicine and the Annual medicine is the whole issue of death, i.e. the issue of what happens when you die. In Annual medicine, in modern medicine, anything that happens after you die is not figured into the treatment plan by your doctor; basically in Annual medicine, when you die, it's the end of the doctor's responsibility. They're not thinking about it beforehand; they're not thinking about it after. We just try to prevent it; that's all. There's nothing about it that's applicable to your life.

It is not possible to understand Chinese medicine or any of the perennial medicines in these terms; they cease to make sense. All of the perennial medicines cease to make any kind of sense, if death is the end. This is not how they are conceived of; this is not the basic fundamental assumption that runs through the entire medicine. Yes, clearly, death is the end of something; it does appear to be a highly significant shift, but in the perennial medicines it's not about avoiding death. It's about dying well, dying in the right condition. And it does appear that dying well and dying in the right condition takes longer, so you end up living longer as you come more and more into alignment with Right Death. Preparing for a good death is very good for your health. This orientation, that it's not about avoiding death but preparing for the best possible death, i.e. for dying in the best possible state, has profound orientational effect on how we practice with clients who do not have life-threatening or terminal illnesses—who have problems with emotional hangnails, or who are in despair b/ c their lipstick color was discontinued by the company (this is an actual person that I'm thinking of from my practice). All of this comes directly into the treatment room: how do I help this person to be in the best possible state to die well? All of a sudden I have a lot more of a sense of orientation of what it is that this medicine has to offer my lipstick friend, if we think that what we're mainly here to do for someone is help them prepare to die in the best possible shape to move through death, to whatever comes next, in greatest possible alignment with the source.

Now I'd like to talk a bit about the continuum between the Annual and perennial medicine because I've been talking about it as though it's black and white, and frankly it isn't.

I talk about it that way in order to make my point, and then I'm ready to back off from that a little bit and say, I see basically four levels along the continuum being practiced.

## THE CONTINUUM BETWEEN ANNUAL AND PERENNIAL MEDICINE

### **1) Annual Medicine: Using a substance to affect a substance**

The first level is using a substance to affect a substance (versus using a quality to affect a substance). This is basic straightforward Annual medicine, practicing on the level of working with that which is already in creation.

Is this part of Chinese medicine? Of course it is. Hua-to did surgery; also bone setting. There are times when that's what you want to do: use a substance to affect a substance, e.g. you want to set the bone. You want to make a mechanical intervention right now, and do it well. We can do some very, very fine work on the level of Annual medicine. The Five Element is not particularly designed to work on that level, but there are other aspects of Chinese medicine that are more designed for it.

I know that I myself, and there may be many others in this room, would not be alive without mechanical or chemical interventions at certain moments. This is not to downplay the power, the efficacy, and at times the perfect beauty of working in the Annual medicine paradigm of using a substance to affect a substance. Stitch 'em up! If somebody has a splinter, take it out. Use nutritional supplements brilliantly to shift a biochemical imbalance. There are many things to do here on the level of the creation affecting the creation, but know that that's what you're doing, and choose to do it as appropriate. When it's done beautifully it's done in such a way that rectifies something in the creation so that more from pre-creation can come into it.

### **2) Magicians— Tapping into the waves' source for the sake of manipulating the creation.**

**Who's in charge? What's it all for? (and where will you be stranded when you die?)**

Here we know that there's this appearance of a physical reality, but there's also something else that precedes this physical reality and gives rise to this physical reality. As a magician, I'm standing here among the waves, among the manifestations, and my basic loyalty is to the creation, to the manifestation, and most particularly my loyalty is to how I'd like it to turn out here in the manifestation, but I'm going to tap into something that is pre-creation in order to change the manifestation to my will. Personal will is very important to practicing on the second level, the level of the magicians.

















