

## Editorial

---

# Ayurveda is Embraced by eCAM

**Edwin L. Cooper**

Laboratory of Comparative Neuroimmunology, Department of Neurobiology, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, University of California, Los Angeles California 90095-1763, USA

---

When eCAM was born, Patty Willis our Founding International Administrator and I discussed the merits of having artistic covers to add some zest to the hard copies, once published. And so living in Japan and having a deep knowledge and appreciation for Japanese culture, Patty chose a woodblock print by Hiroshige of travelers on a bridge that reflects our hope that “CAM will bridge cultures as well as CAM and modern biomedicine”. Not only was the image handsome, it portrayed the kind of message that we saw in it and the symbolism for CAM that it embodied. There was the bridge and someone crossing it seemingly from the right to the left as if going from the west to the east, crossing the Pacific Ocean. Indeed the symbolism seemed palpable: western medicine was reaching out, crossing the Pacific to land on the shores of Asia, perhaps the better known source or root of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM): TCM (China) Kampo (Japan) indeed ancient practices considered by some to be the oldest systems of integrative medicine.

After more travels, lecturing and meeting with a firm aim of penetrating still further, internally into Asia, we wanted to provide a more vital force by meeting with Editorial Board Members in other countries and regions. We wished to broaden the understanding of integrative medicine (CAM) and to provide another view of the discipline as seen through the imagery of art. Finishing volumes one and two with the Japanese image we embraced one from Korea for volumes 3 and 4. This cover is a Korean screen (artist unknown, from the 18th century Cho-Sun Dynasty) that pictures twelve

presentations of long life, including the sun, moon, and clouds, mountain, bamboo, pine tree, rocks, turtles, cranes, deer, water, and a mushroom (*Ganoderma*). This cover symbolizes the strong connection in Korean culture between nature and healing. For the International Congress of European Traditional Medicine (Vinci Italy, October 4–6, 2007) we reproduced the “Star of Bethlehem” by permission from The Royal Collection, copyright 2006, Her majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The concept of nature is fundamental to Leonardo’s art. He was continuously searching for all aspects of truth in nature, studying and trying to understand every particular of life.

Now we are at another crossroads that began to take shape during my invited participation in the 2nd World Congress of Ayurveda convened in Pune, India, November 2006. My eyes were opened and thoughts and strategies exploded. During that visit, I experienced a wealth of enthusiasm from participants in the workshop and vowed then to take the next opportunity to focus on Ayurveda not abandoning TCM, nor Kampo nor Traditional Arabic and Islamic Medicine (TAIM) but enlarging the scope and breadth of integrative medicine—learning that each practice was culturally fashioned but remained essentially an approach to managing the business of living with respect to quality of life (QOL). Being in India stimulated the appointment of another round of editorial board members. There was an additional stimulus afforded by the opening address at the congress, presented by Dr. Raghunath Anant Mashelkar who is the former Director General of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), a chain of 38 publicly funded industrial R&D institutions in India. His speech was so captivating that two Editorial Board Members (Bhushan Padwardhan and Alex Hankey) urged me to mount the stage immediately and announce to the huge audience of delegates that I would

---

For reprints and all correspondence: Edwin L. Cooper, *Ph D, Sc D*, Distinguished Professor, Laboratory of Comparative Neuroimmunology, Department of Neurobiology, David Geffen School Of Medicine at UCLA, University of California, Los Angeles California 90095-1763, USA. Tel: (310) 825-9567; Fax: (310) 825-2224; E-mail: [ecam@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:ecam@mednet.ucla.edu)

© 2008 The Author(s).

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/2.0/uk/>) which permits unrestricted non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

publish the lecture—a declaration greeted by cheers of approval. His lecture series will be found from the next issue of the journal.

Dr. Mashelkar is only the third Indian engineer to have been elected as Fellow of Royal Society (FRS), London in the twentieth century. He was elected Foreign Associate of United States National Academy of Sciences in 2005, only the 8th Indian since 1863 to be selected. He was elected Foreign Fellow of US National Academy of Engineering (2003), Fellow of Royal Academy of Engineering, UK (1996), and Fellow of World Academy of Art & Science, USA (2000). Twenty-six universities have honoured him with honorary doctorates, which include University of London, University of Salford, University of Pretoria, University of Wisconsin-Madison and Delhi University.

Thus with this continued straddling across the Pacific, penetration into the extreme coast of Asia and moving internally finally reaching India, we open volume 5 with a tribute, to the findings of investigators using the Ayurvedic approach. Then what is Ayurveda? **Ayurveda** (Devanagari: or **Ayurvedic medicine** is an ancient system of health care that is native to the Indian subcontinent. It is presently in daily use by millions of people in India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, and it was a major influence on babies and the development of Unani, Chinese and Tibetan Medicine. The word “Ayurveda” is a tatpurusha compound of the word *āyus* meaning “life”, “life principle”, or “long life” and the word *veda*, which refers to a system of “knowledge”. Thus “Ayurveda” roughly translates as the “knowledge of life”, or “knowledge of a long life”. According to Charaka Samhita, “life” itself is defined as the “combination of the body, sense organs, mind and soul, the factor responsible for preventing decay and death, which sustains the body over time, and guides the processes of rebirth”. According to this perspective, Ayurveda is concerned with measures to protect “ayus”, which includes healthy living along with

therapeutic measures that relate to physical, mental, social and spiritual harmony.

Briefly, just to give some examples, there are wealth of papers from the Ayurvedic School that have appeared on the pages of *eCAM*. One of the most significant publications was the meeting report of the congress in Pune where the first real overtures to Ayurveda occurred (1). One other was similarly significant since it compared Ayurveda and TCM with other practices, notably the first ever held in the Middle East (2). There have been significant reviews (3) and a unique lecture (4). With respect to evidenced-based approaches, readers are referred to the following papers (5,6,7). To celebrate volume 5 and to salute the Ayurvedic system in India we present a new cover borrowed with permission from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA).

## References

1. Joglekar VP. Scientific publications: methods and skills workshop 2006. *Evid Based Complement Altern Med* 2008;5:115–116.
2. Azaizeh H, Saad B, Khalil K, Said O. The State of the art of traditional arab herbal medicine in the eastern region of the mediterranean: a review. *Evid Based Complement Altern Med* 2006;3:229–235.
3. Patwardhan B, Warude D, Pushpangadan P, Bhatt N. Ayurveda and traditional chinese medicine: a comparative overview. *Evid Based Complement Altern Med* 2005;2:465–473.
4. Hankey A. CAM modalities can stimulate advances in theoretical biology. *Evid Based Complement Altern Med* 2005;2:5–12.
5. Tripathi YB, Singh BK, Pandey RS, Kumar M. BHUx: a patent polyherbal formulation to prevent atherosclerosis. *Evid Based Complement Altern Med* 2005;2:217–221.
6. Jagetia GC, Rao SK. Evaluation of cytotoxic effects of dichloromethane extract of guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia* Miers ex Hook F & THOMS) on cultured HeLa cells. *Evid Based Complement Altern Med* 2006;3:267–272.
7. Aalinkeel R, Hu Z, Nair BB, Sykes DE, Reynolds JL, Mahajan SD, Schwartz SA. Genomic analysis highlights the role of the JAK-STAT signaling in the anti-proliferative effects of dietary flavonoid—‘Ashwagandha’ in prostate cancer cells. *Evid Based Complement Altern Med*. Advance Access published on January 10, 2008, doi:10.1093/ecam/nem184.