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■ Editors

Steven Clavey
Bettina Brill
Michael Ellis
Chris Flanagan

■ Contact

✉ email
editors@thelantern.com.au
✉ snail mail
The Lantern
160 Elgin St, Carlton
Australia 3053
✉ website
thelantern.com.au

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More heartfelt advice from

Introduction and translation by Lorraine Wilcox

The following three short essays, from Volume 1 of *The Book of Biānquè's Heart-Mind* by Dòu Cǎi,¹ lay out Dòu's philosophy of warm supplementation² using moxibustion and herbs. In the first he describes yang as leading towards life and yin towards death, giving evidence for this theory. He then lists four of his favourite moxibustion points and two elixirs. Dòu favoured Daoist elixirs made of minerals—formulas most of us would not dare to use today. The second essay focuses on moxibustion. He often prescribed hundreds of cones of moxibustion for a point. This section contains a historical anecdote (perhaps greatly exaggerated) and a personal story about restoring his own health as he aged. He also gave a protocol for nourishing life with moxibustion that increases progressively with age. The third essay emphasises the need for heavy moxibustion in serious disease. In this passage, he claims Zhāng Zhòngjǐng and Sūn Sīmǎo slandered moxibustion! I suppose since he felt that he was channelling Biānquè,³ he had every right to criticise later doctors. Dòu argues that using hundreds of cones of moxibustion would not harm a living person. His position is rather extreme, so practitioners today should not blindly follow this advice. One mitigating factor not explicitly stated is that a dose of hundreds of cones would usually be done in sessions; for example, 10 cones a day for 50 days totals 500 cones.⁴ Dòu also mentioned his anaesthetic formula in the third essay. It was recommended for wealthy patients so sensitive that heavy moxibustion could not be performed otherwise.

1. 竇材《扁鵲心書》 *Biānquè Xīn Shū*, published in 1146. Dòu Cǎi's approximate dates are 1076–1146 CE..

2. The school of warm supplementation (溫補) is usually dated to the Míng dynasty, with doctors such as 薛己 Xuē Jǐ and 張介賓 Zhāng Jièbīn. However, Dòu Cǎi is clearly a forerunner of this school of thought.

3. See "One should understand the channels", *The Lantern*, January 2021.

4. I have been nourishing life with moxibustion for more than a decade. Twice a year, at the beginning of spring and the beginning of autumn (as calculated in the Chinese calendar), I apply 100 to 300 cones of moxa below my umbilicus. I burn 10 to 30 grain-of-rice size cones a day for 10 days at those times, adding up to 100-300 cones. I feel this practice is beneficial since I am getting older and tend to be somewhat cold and deficient, but it may not be appropriate for everyone.



The Lantern is a journal of Chinese medicine and its related fields with an emphasis on the traditional view and its relevance to clinic. Our aim is to encourage access to the vast resources in this tradition of preserving and restoring health, whether via translations of works of past centuries or observations from our own generation working with these techniques. The techniques are many, but the traditional perspective of the human as an integral part, indeed a reflection, of the social, meteorological and cosmic matrix remains one. We wish to foster that view.

Dou Cai



《須識扶陽》

One must know how to support yang

道家以消盡陰翳，煉就純陽方，得轉凡成聖，霞舉飛昇。故云：

Daoists use formulas to completely eliminate yin screens and to refine themselves toward pure yang. They do this to shift the ordinary into sageliness and soar upward into the rosy clouds. Thus, it is said:

陽精若壯千年壽，
陰氣如強必斃傷。

If yang essence is robust, the lifespan is a thousand years;

If yin qi is strong, it will kill and wound.

又云：

It is also said:

陰氣未消終是死，
陽精若在必長生。

If yin qi never disperses, the end is death;

If yang essence exists, there will be long life.

故為醫者，要知保扶陽氣為本。

Therefore, it is important for a doctor to know how to preserve and support yang qi as the root.

人至晚年，陽氣衰，故手足不煖，下元虛憊，動作艱難。蓋人有一息氣在則不死，氣者陽所生也，故陽氣盡必死。

When people reach old age, yang qi is debilitated so their hands and feet are not

warm, the lower origin is deficient and exhausted, and activity becomes difficult. It seems that if people have one breath of qi remaining, they will not die. Qi is what engenders yang. Therefore, when yang qi is exhausted, the person will die.

人于無病時，常灸關元、氣海、命關、中脘，更服保元丹、保命延壽丹，雖未得長生，亦可保百年長壽矣。

Someone who is not ill should often apply moxibustion to *Guānyuán* REN-4, *Qìhǎi* REN-6, *Mìngguān* SP-17⁵ and *Zhōngwǎn* REN-12. In addition, they should take *Bǎoyuán Dān* (Origin-Preserving Elixir) or *Bǎomìng Yánshòu Dān* (Life-Preserving Longevity-Extending Elixir). Although they may never obtain [an extremely] long life, they can still ensure a lifespan of 100 years.

《住世之法》

Method of living in the world

紹興間劉武軍中步卒王超者，本太原人，後入重湖為盜，曾遇異人，授以黃白住世之法，年至九十，精彩腴潤。辛卯年間，岳陽民家，多受其害，能日淫十女不衰。後被擒，臨刑，監官問：汝有異術，信乎？曰：無也，惟火力耳。每夏秋之交，即灼關元千炷，久久不畏寒暑，累日不饑。至今臍下一塊，如火之煖。豈不聞土成磚，木成炭，千年不朽？皆火之力也。

5. 命關 *Mìngguān* is Dou Cai's special name for SP-17, usually called 食竅 *Shídòu* (Food Hole). This point is discussed in detail later in the book.

■ Lorraine Wilcox is a practitioner of Chinese medicine who lives in Los Angeles. She translates ancient Chinese medical books and experiments with making herbal formulas from these old texts. Her translations are published by The Chinese Medicine Database.

■ Lorraine thanks Jerome Jiang for translation help in a few tricky places.

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Haven't you heard,
earth is made into
bricks and wood is
made into charcoal
that does not decay
for a thousand years?
This is all due to the
power of fire.

死後，形官令剖其腹之煖處。得一塊非肉非骨，凝然如石，即艾火之効耳。

During the Shàoxīng era (1131-1162), there was a foot soldier named Wáng Chāo under General Liú Wǔ. He was originally from Tàiyuán.⁶ Later, he entered the Zhònghú⁷ region as a bandit. There, he met an extraordinary person who instructed him in a “yellow and white method for living in the world”. When he was at least 90 years old, his complexion was still brilliant, oily, and moist. In the *xīn mǎo* year,⁸ he caused a lot of trouble for the people of Yuèyáng,⁹ having illicit sex with 10 women in a day¹⁰ without exhausting himself. Later, he was captured alive. Before they executed him, a prison official asked: “Do you have some extraordinary technique?” He said: “No, only the power of fire. Each juncture of summer and autumn, I burn a thousand cones of moxibustion on *Guānyuán* REN-4. For quite a while, I have not feared cold or summerheat and I do not feel hunger for days at a time. Even now, there is a place below my umbilicus with the warmth of fire. Haven't you heard, earth is made into bricks and wood is made into charcoal that does not decay for a thousand years? This is all due to the power of fire.” After his death, the executioner cut open the warm place in his abdomen and found something that was neither flesh nor bone but as hard as rock. This was the effect of mugwort fire.

故《素問》云：年四十，陽氣衰而起居乏，五十體重耳目不聰明矣，六十陽氣大衰，陰痿九竅不利，上實下虛，涕泣皆出矣。夫人之真元，乃一身之主宰。真氣壯則人強；真氣虛則人病；真氣脫則人死。

6. Tàiyuán is in present day Shānxī province.

7. Since Wáng deserted the army, he could not go back to normal civilian life. Zhònghú is another name for 洞庭湖 Dòngtíng Lake, in present day Húnán province. This lake is the original site of the dragon boat races. A dragon king is said to live under the lake. There was a Daoist retreat on an island in the lake, and the region was a famous destination for its scenery during the Sòng dynasty.

8. The first *xīn mǎo* year after this story began is 1171, but that is after this book was written (1146). The previous *xīn mǎo* year was 1111, before the story began. Either the year of Wáng's capture was not *xīn mǎo* or the story was inserted later, or the whole book was written and published later and attributed back to Dòu Cǎi.

9. Yuèyáng is a city on Zhònghú Lake.

10. This probably means rape.

Thus, the *Sùwèn* says,¹¹ “At 40 years of age, yang qi is debilitated and one finds the activities of daily life exhausting. At 50, the body is heavy and the ears and eyes are not bright. At 60, yang qi is greatly debilitated, so there is impotence and the nine orifices are inhibited. There is excess above and deficiency below, and snivel and tears are both discharged.” A person's true origin oversees the whole body. When true qi is robust, the person is strong. When true qi is deficient, the person sickens. When true qi deserts, the person dies.

保命之法，灼艾第一，丹藥第二，附子第三。人至三十，可三年一灸臍下三百壯；五十，可二年一灸臍下三百壯；六十，可一年一灸臍下三百壯。令人長生不老。

Burning mugwort is the first method of preserving life; elixir medicinals are the second, and *Fù Zǐ* (Aconiti Radix Lateralis) is the third. When a person reaches 30, he can apply 300 cones of moxibustion below the umbilicus every three years. At 50, he can apply 300 cones of moxibustion below the umbilicus every two years. At 60, he can apply 300 cones of moxibustion below the umbilicus every year. It allows people to live long without becoming old.

余五十時，常灸關元五百壯，即服保命丹、延壽丹，漸至身體輕健，羨進飲食。六十三時，因憂怒，忽見死脈于左手寸部，十九動而一止，乃灸關元、命門各五百壯，五十日後死脈不復見矣。每年常加此灸，遂得老年健康。乃為歌曰：

When I was 50 (around 1126 CE), I often applied 500 cones of moxibustion to *Guānyuán* REN-4 and took *Bǎoyuán Dǎn* (Origin-Preserving Elixir) and *Bǎomìng Yánshòu Dǎn* (Life-Preserving Longevity-Extending Elixir). I gradually lightened and strengthened my body and looked forward to eating and drinking. Because of anxiety and anger, at the age of 63 (around 1139 CE) I suddenly found a death pulse at my left *cùn* position: 19 beats then one skipped beat. I then applied 500 cones of moxibustion each to *Guānyuán* REN-4 and *Mìngmén* DU-4. After 50 days, the death pulse never returned.¹² Each year I constantly add to this

11. From 素問·陰陽應象大論篇第五 *Sùwèn*, chapter 5.

12. This implies the author did 10 cones a day for 50 days to make 500 cones of moxibustion. It was not all

moxibustion and so I have attained health in my old age. The song says:

一年辛苦惟三百，
灸取關元功力多，
健體輕身無病患，
彭錢壽算更如何。

For a year's worth of hardships, a mere 300 [cones] of moxibustion on *Guānyuán* REN-4 is highly effective.

It strengthens and lightens a body so there is no disease,

How about counting up more longevity than Péng Jiān!¹³

《大病宜灸》

One should use moxibustion in serious disease

醫之治病用灸，如做飯用薪。今人不能治大病，良由不知針艾故也。世有百餘種大

done in one session.

13. 彭錢 Péng Jiān refers to 彭祖 Péngzǔ, who was said to have lived more than 800 years.

病，不用灸艾、丹藥，如何救得性命，却得病回？如傷寒、疽瘡、勞瘵、中風、腫脹、泄瀉、久痢、喉痹、小兒急慢驚風、痘疹黑陷等證。若灸遲，真氣已脫，雖灸亦無用矣。若能早灸，自然陽氣不絕，性命監牢。

A doctor using moxibustion to treat disease is like using fuel to cook a meal. Modern people cannot treat serious disease very well because they do not know how to use needles and mugwort. The world has over a hundred types of serious disease. If one does not use mugwort moxibustion and elixir medicinals, how can they help maintain life or force the disease into recovery?! There are illnesses such as cold damage, abscesses and sores, taxation and consumption, windstroke, swelling and distention, diarrhea, chronic dysentery, throat bî, acute or chronic pediatric fright wind, and poxes and rashes that are black and sunken. If moxibustion is given too late, true qì will have deserted already so even if moxibustion is applied, it

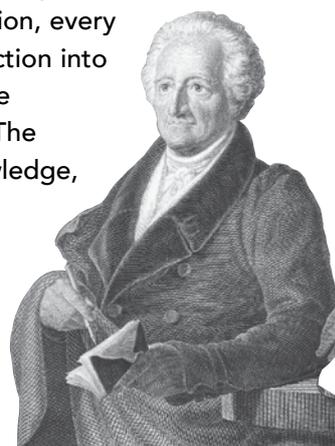
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If one does not use mugwort moxibustion and elixir medicinals, how can they help maintain life or force the disease into recovery?

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An extremely odd demand is often set forth but never met, even by those who make it: that is, that empirical data should be presented without theoretical context, leaving the reader, the student, to his own devices in judging it. This demand seems odd because it is useless simply to look at something. Every act of looking turns into observation, every act of observation into reflection, every act of reflection into the making of associations; thus it is evident that we theorise every time we look carefully at the world. The ability to do this with clarity of mind, with self-knowledge, in a free way, and (if I may venture to put it so) with irony, is a skill we will need in order to avoid the pitfalls of abstraction and attain the results we desire, results that can find a living and practical application.

– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe



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I have observed that from ancient times up until today, there was never a case of damage to the sinews and bones or death from moxibustion.

will be useless. If moxibustion can be applied in the early stages, yang qi will not expire on its own, so life is kept firm and fast.

又世俗用灸，不過三五十壯，殊不知去小疾則愈，駐命根則難，故《銅人針灸圖經》云：「凡大病宜灸臍下五百壯，補接真氣。」即此法也。若去風邪四肢小疾，不過三、五、七壯而已。

It is also a common custom to use no more than 30 or 50 cones of moxibustion. People hardly know how to eliminate minor disease and bring about recovery, so retaining the root of life is difficult for them. Thus, the *Tóng rén Zhēnjiǔ Tújīng* (Illustrated Classic of Acupuncture-Moxibustion as Found on the Bronze Model)¹⁴ says, “Generally in major disease, one should apply 500 cones of moxibustion below the umbilicus to supplement and receive true qi.” It means this method. When eliminating minor disease such as wind evils in the four limbs, this will recover with only three, five or seven cones.

仲景毀灸法云：「火氣雖微，內攻有力，焦骨傷筋，血難復也。」余觀亘古迄今，何嘗有灸傷筋骨而死者，彼蓋不知灸法之妙故爾。

Zhang Zhongjing slandered moxibustion, saying: “Even if fire qi is quite small, its internal attack is powerful. It scorches the bones, damages the sinews, and blood has difficulty recovering.”¹⁵ I have observed that from ancient times up until today, there was never a case of damage to the sinews and bones or death from moxibustion! The reason he said that must be that he did not know the marvels of moxibustion.

孫思邈早年亦毀灸法，逮晚年方信，乃曰：火灸，大有奇功。昔曹操患頭風，華佗針之，應手而愈，後陀死復發。若于針處灸五十壯，不再發。

Sun Simiao also slandered moxibustion in his early years. He only gave credence to it when he reached his later years and said

14. The Bronze Man was published in 1026. However, the sentence is not found in the received edition. It suggested up to 300 cones of moxibustion for some points on the lower abdomen.

15. This is from line 116 of *Shānghán Lùn*. However, it is out of context as the line refers to specific conditions. Nevertheless, Zhang Zhongjing was not a big fan of moxibustion.

that fire moxibustion has quite outstanding results. In ancient times, Cáo Cāo suffered head wind and Huá Tuó needled him. He recovered without a hitch. After Huá Tuó died, Cáo Cāo relapsed. If Huá Tuó had applied 50 cones of moxibustion on the acupuncture site, Cáo Cāo would never have relapsed.

或曰：人之皮肉最嫩，五百之壯，豈不焦枯皮肉乎？曰：否，已死之人，灸二三十壯，其肉便焦，無血榮養故也。若真氣未脫之人，自然氣血流行，榮衛環繞，雖灸千壯，何焦爛之有哉。故治病必先別其死生，若真氣已脫，雖灸亦無用矣。

Someone might say: A person's skin and flesh are quite tender; wouldn't 500 cones scorch the skin and wither the flesh?! I say it does not. On dead people, 20 or 30 cones of moxibustion will scorch the flesh since it lacks the support of blood. If true qi has not deserted a person, qi and blood flow naturally and *yīng* and *wèi* circulate. Even if a thousand cones of moxibustion are applied, how can it scorch and putrify?!¹⁶ Thus, to treat disease one must first differentiate the dead and the living. If true qi has already deserted, it is useless to apply moxibustion.

惟是膏粱之人，不能忍耐痛楚，當服睡聖散，即昏不知痛。其睡聖散余自用灸膝神效，放心服之，斷不誤人。

Only *gāoliáng* people¹⁷ cannot endure the pain and suffering [of heavy moxibustion]. They should take *Shuìshèng Sǎn* (Sleeping Sage Powder)¹⁸ so that they swoon and don't feel the pain. I myself use *Shuìshèng Sǎn* for moxibustion on the knees with divine effects. Be confident in taking it as it absolutely will not harm people.

16. Certainly, if skillfully applied and broken into multiple sessions, a heavy dose of moxibustion is appropriate in many cases. However, Dòu Cǎi's enthusiasm for moxibustion is a bit extreme. Appropriate caution must be used.

17. 膏粱 *gāoliáng* refers to fatty meats and refined grains, food available only to the wealthy at that time. The *Língshū*, Chapter 5 tells us that people with that type of diet have soft and fragile bodies. Therefore, they are quite sensitive and cannot endure the pain of heavy moxibustion.

18. The recipe for *Shuìshèng Sǎn* is given in the section of this book called Divine Formulas. It consists of datura flower and cannabis flower. Datura is dangerous to work with since an overdose can easily be fatal. The flowers are less toxic than the seeds. Nevertheless, even though this formula is interesting, it should not be used today.