

The Practice of Traditional Western Herbalism:

The Ancient and Holistic Approach Taught by Galen and Culpeper

Culpeper's "A Key to Galen's Art of Physick" (1652) teaches us how to take a case history in the traditional, natural, and holistic manner. First determine the tissue state (hot, cold, damp, dry, tense, relaxed), then the organ system, then the direction or action of the disease (thin, thick, up, down, in, out). In addition we can adopt two more methods: constitution (vata, pitta, kapha, or thin, medium, thick), and specificity (herb matches symptom or condition very specifically).

The Six Tissue States

The "Forgotten Energetics of Western Herbalism"

Built into our system of herbalism is a forgotten system of energetics based on the tissue state (excited, depressed, atrophic, stagnant, tense, relaxed). This system unites the teachings of the ancient Greeks, who had four qualities (hot, cold, dry, damp) and two tissue states (tense, relaxed), with modern concepts of tissue tone to produce a tremendously insightful approach to Western herbal practice. A heritage gift of the physiomedical school.

Holistic Evaluation: Pulse, Tongue, and Complexion

Hands-on study of the pulse, tongue, and complexion (or face and skin) to provide holistic evaluation of the sick. Some theory, but we will try to keep these classes practical so students can return home and put these methods into practice. Students may want to read Ted Kaptchuk, *The Web That Has No Weaver*, to familiarize themselves with TCM theory before arrival.

Southern Blood Medicine

The only system of energetic medicine known to have originated in North America, specifically in the Southern USA, this method analyses the location (high, low), viscosity (thick, thin), speed (fast, slow), cleanliness (good, bad), and temperature (hot, cold) of the blood. It monitors long term, slow, chronic changes, especially in maturing adults, and is therefore similar to biomedical testing of blood and blood pressure in aging. It adds unimagined depth to Chinese or other pulse diagnosis. This includes a short discourse on cupping and bleeding, ancient treatments of the blood.

Constitutional Evaluation: Vata, Pitta, Kapha

A brief discussion of the three Ayurvedic constitutional types so useful in medicine (thin, medium, thick; or vata, pitta, kapha; or ectomorph, mesomorph, endomorph; or asthenic, pyknic, sthenic). Relation of the three constitutions to organ systems.

Nature Wisdom

The ancient experience of human life as a part of the greater life of Nature is called *participation mystique* by modern anthropologists. We too can experience this closeness and belongingness to Nature. Our links are through emotions and the intuition. The latter helps us think in patterns of identity which are built into Nature. Intuition is the function within us that 'sees the whole picture.' Nature Wisdom becomes a basis for the practice of herbal medicine on a holistic, natural, and traditional foundation. We will practice in the world's best lab: Nature herself.

The Doctrine of Signatures

Learning to see the patterns implicit in Nature and healing plants not only improves therapeutic insight but, according to Rudolf Steiner, develops the intuition and with it spiritual identity. This method represents the application of Nature Wisdom in traditional medicine and constitutes a complete pharmacological-therapeutic system.

Animal Medicines, Medicine Plants

The organizing principle of American Indian medicine are the animals, which provide constitutional types for individual humans and plants. Animal or 'spirit' signatures are especially powerful.

The Medicine Wheel

The circle of wholeness, the four directions or elements, and the fifth element, teach us about human nature and Nature. The basis of the four qualities of the Greeks and the six tissue states. The four functions of Jung (thinking, feeling, intuition, sensation).

Palpitation

This is the medical art to feel the health or ill health of internal organs from the outside of the body. Indispensable for the clinical herbalist. In this hands-on section, we will also locate all inner organs on our own and another person's body.

Growing and Harvesting Herbs by Bio-Dynamic Principles

Folk wisdom of the country people still talks of the knowledge of how the sap rises and falls in the plants, and how the life force circulates within them under the influence of the sun, moon, and planets. Harvesting the plant at the ideal moment gives rise to much more potent medicine, with a much longer shelf life.

Plant Metamorphosis

To understand the genius of a plant as a healer, we need to understand its place within its own botanical family, and all of botany. It is the specific form and shape that sets it apart from the other plants that marks it for its therapeutic value.