

Revisiting regimens from a philosophical perspective

Bàn lại về Dưỡng sinh theo góc độ Triết học

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Abstract: Various health-preserving regimens have been developed to protect and enhance well-being, improve physical condition, and manage chronic diseases. In particular, following the COVID-19 pandemic, health care has received increasing attention. However, the surge in wellness advice has also led to numerous debates and misconceptions. This article, based on scientific advancements and modern medicine, reanalyzed three classic books – Dao De Jing, Zhuangzi (Nan Hua Jing) and Huang Di Nei Jing – Suwen – to reinforce the foundation of health preservation through the dual perspectives of Taoist (Daoist) philosophy and traditional medicine. The study aims to redefine the core principles of health-preserving regimens, highlight key considerations in their practice, and distinguish between spiritual cultivation and medical practice. Using the example of the Oshawa macrobiotic diet, the article underscores the risks of rigidly following any health regimen without thorough understanding, warning that such an approach may ultimately be detrimental rather than beneficial.

Keywords: *Balance yin and enclose yang; Follow nature; Hold the one; Regimens*

Tóm tắt: Nhiều xu hướng dưỡng sinh được phát triển nhằm bảo vệ, nâng cao sức khỏe và cải thiện hình thể để kiểm soát bệnh mạn tính. Đặc biệt, sau đại dịch COVID-19, vấn đề chăm sóc sức khỏe lại càng được quan tâm, nhưng sự bùng nổ của các lời khuyên dưỡng sinh đi kèm với nhiều tranh luận và nhầm lẫn. Bài viết dựa trên các thành tựu khoa học và Y học hiện đại phân tích lại ba tác phẩm kinh điển là “Đạo Đức Kinh”, “Nam Hoa Kinh” và “Hoàng Đế Nội Kinh - Tố Vấn” để củng cố nền tảng của dưỡng sinh trên hai trường phái, Đạo học và Y học cổ truyền, nhằm xác định lại cốt lõi của dưỡng sinh, các chú ý khi thực hành dưỡng sinh, đồng thời phân biệt giữa thực hành tâm linh học và thực hành Y học. Thông qua ví dụ về thực dưỡng Oshawa, bài viết nhắc nhở việc thực hành bất kỳ phương pháp dưỡng sinh nào mà chưa hiểu rõ và rập khuôn đều sẽ dẫn đến “lợi bất cập hại”.

Từ khóa: *Âm bình Dương bí; Dưỡng sinh; Ôm cái một; Thuận theo tự nhiên*

1. Introduction

Maintaining good health is a fundamental requirement in Maslow's hierarchy of needs [1, 2]. However, people often prioritize higher-level needs while neglecting the sustainability of basic ones, including health preservation. As the prevalence of chronic diseases continues to rise within the social disease model [3], individuals increasingly seek regimen-based approaches to protect their health, treat diseases, prolong lifespan, prevent aging, and preserve beauty. The COVID-19 pandemic served as a stark reminder that diseases progression

might be exacerbated by systemic imbalances, as demonstrated by the cytokine storm, a key factor leading to severe illness and mortality [4]. Adopting a health-preserving lifestyle aligns with the broader concept of sustainable living, which has gained significant attention in contemporary society as a means to foster long-term well-being [5]. As more and more regimen trends are introduced online, accompanied by debates surrounding their efficacy, this article aims to analyze the core principles of health regimens from the perspectives of Taoism and Traditional Chinese

Medicine (TCM). Additionally, it highlights key considerations for regimen practice to assist individuals in making informed and balanced.

The Taoist approach to health regimens is examined through “Dao De Jing” (Đạo Đức Kinh) 道德經 and “Nan Hua Jing” (Nam Hoa Kinh) 南華經, while the Traditional Chinese Medicine perspective is derived from “Huang Di Nei Jing” (Hoàng Đế Nội Kinh) 皇帝內經.

A crucial clarification is that the discussion on Taoism in this article does not pertain to religious aspects involving deities, spirits, or supernatural elements. Instead, it focuses on Taoism as a philosophy grounded in the natural order of the universe, offering principles that individuals can comprehend, adopt, and apply in their daily lives. According to Dao De Jing and Nan Hua Jing, the ancient Taoism thought emphasizes the unity of all things within “the One”, rather than a strict dichotomy between yin and yang. This perspective encourages an inductive approach to understanding health rather than a purely deductive one.

2. Definition of Regimens

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, regimen is defined as “the practice of maintaining the body based on Traditional Chinese Medicine theories, aiming to gain health, prevent diseases, and prolong lifespan” (養生, 是指在中醫理論指導下, 通過保養身體以達到強身、防病和延壽的目的). The key principle of regimen is “preventing disease before it occurs” (養生的要訣是「未病先防」) [6]. In English, regimen is defined as “any set of rules about food and exercise that someone follows, especially to improve their health” [7]. In Vietnam, Doctor Van-

Huong Nguyen, the first doctor to promote regimen in the country, did not provide a specific definition of regimen but summarized it as not a singular practice but a combination of multiple activities aimed at improving health. These activities include eating wisely, breathing scientifically, calming the mind, exercising, practicing massage and Yoga, balancing work and rest, maintaining hygiene, and living a meaningful life [8]. Therefore, any regimen system requires a consistent guiding ideology that motivates and sustains the practice.

3. The differences between Taoism and Taoist philosophy

A common sense of Taoism in Vietnam is on the spiritual practices such as wind and water (phong thủy) 風水, discussing numbers and fate (luận số mệnh) 論數命, cultivating immortality (tu tiên) 修仙, incantation (bùa chú) 符咒, exorcism (trừ tà), and worshipping gods and saints (thờ thần thánh). However, these belong to the religious Taoism schools that developed during the 12th-century Song Dynasty. Religious Taoism consists of five main schools including Zheng-Yi Dao (Chính Nhất Đạo 正一道) by Zhang Dao-Ling (Trương Đạo Lăng 張道陵) in 1276, Quan-Zhen Dao (Toàn Chân Đạo 全真) which includes the Southern Sect founded by Bo-Duan Zhang (Trương Bá Đuan 張伯端) in 1075 and the Northern Sect established by Zhong-Yang Wang in 1167, Zhen-Da Dao (Chân Đại Đạo 真大道) founded by De-Ren Liu (Lưu Đức Nhân 劉德仁) in 1142, Tai-Yi Dao (Thái Nhất Đạo 太一道) by Bao-Zhen Xiao (Tiêu Bão Trân 蕭抱珍) in 1140, and Jing-Ming Dao (Tĩnh Minh Đạo 淨明道) by Ming-Zhong Jing (Tĩnh Minh

Trung 淨明忠) around 1131. Among these, only Quan-Zhen Dao, or the school of Dan-Ding (phái Đan đỉnh 丹鼎派), focuses on cultivating immortality. Its followers are urged to regulate diets, moderate desires, exercise to strengthen the body, and cleanse the mind, aiming to prolong lifespan “不娶妻室, 不茹葷腥, 以清修煉養為主要宗教生活內容”. The Zhen-Da Dao seeks to find the divine truth. The other three schools, Zheng-Yi, Tai-Yi, and Jing-Ming, focus intensely on incantation and exorcism [9]. Taoism philosophy in Vietnam is a school of thought that includes the ideology of Laozi (Lão Tử, 老子), Zhuangzi (Trang Tử, 莊子) and Taoism as discussed in the Dao De Jing [10] and “Nan Hua Jing” [11]. The objectives of Laozi and Zhuangzi share similarities with those of Confucianism (Nho gia) 儒家, Mohism (Mặc gia) 墨家, and Legalism (Pháp gia) 法家. These schools all aim to explain societal chaos, propose ideal social models, and recommend paths toward their realization. However, Taoism philosophers did not study human behaviors but instead examined the mind, turning inward to contemplate the complex nature of reality. As the Quan-Zhen School has developed within the course of “Unification of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism” 儒、釋、道三教合一, Taoism adopted some points of view from other schools, fulfill the methodology and improve spiritual practices, making Taoism become an open and direct ideology. Taoism theories contain several metaphysical features, such as the unification of all in a whole and that all things are equal (in The Adjustment of Controversies, Tề Vật Luận, 齊物論), the terms “void”

(emptiness, vô, 無) and “appearance” (color, sắc, 色) (in The Full Understanding of Life, Đạt Sinh, 達生). Some points of view are similar to those of spiritualism, such as that the mind is bound to the body but not a part of the body (Nan Hua Jing), and some are similar to quantum physics, such as the relativity of time and space (in Enjoyment in Untroubled Ease, Tiêu Dao Du, 逍遙遊) [11]. In “The Way of Zen”, Alan Watts wrote that “Taoism concerns itself with unconventional knowledge, with the understanding of life directly, instead of in the abstract, linear terms of representational thinking. Taoism is a way of liberation, which never comes by means of revolution ... To be free from convention is not to spurn it but not to be deceived by it. It is to be able to use it as an instrument instead of being used by it” [12]. It is necessary to distinguish that Taoism philosophy is a way of thinking that is not dominated by subjective experience and perception and is not a religious school as often presented in movies and other cultural products.

4. “Embrace the One” is the key to fulfill the mind in Taoism

“Embrace the One” is mentioned in Chapter 10 of Dao De Jing: “Can we make the free and attached soul embrace the one without separation?” 載營魄抱一, 能無離乎?. “The One” is a term used in Taoism, meaning the presence of Dao in nature. “The One” is also mentioned in Chapter 42: “The Dao produced One, One produced Two, Two, Two produced Three, Three produced All” 道生一, 一生二, 二生三, 三生萬物. [10]. For a long time, “the One” was underestimated because this phrase was commonly

explained as “The Dao produced the Devine Wholeness, Wholeness produced Two Polarities, Two Polarities produced Four Forms, and Four Forms produced All things” [13]. Studying the Book of Changings (Yi Jing, Kinh Dịch, 易經) [13] and the Kabbalistic Tree of Life (cây sự sống) of Theology [14], the systems which are used in discussion life and nature applied numbers and symbols to symbolize values and terms. The common point of these two systems is that the “One” and “Keter” both symbolize Wholeness. The emergence of the Two expresses the separation, and the Three is the interaction of polarities and producing new things [13]. In the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, “Hokhmah” symbolizes the deduction, and “Binah” symbolizes the induction [14]. The similarity between these systems and the rustic manner of ancient books suggests that the One, Two, and Three can mean themselves directly. Therefore, “embrace the one” 抱一 in Taoism can be simply comprehended as keeping the unification of all things and events out from the subjective knowledge and senses of separation. This is also the reason why Taoism promotes the theories of “equal all things” (tề vật, vạn vật bình đẳng, 齊物) because in consciousness, each person and creature has their perspective, experience, and concept of happiness and suffering, right and wrong, and they are all born from the same source [11].

4.1. Yin Yang and “The One”

“The Theory on the Correspondence of Yin and Yang” (Âm Dương ứng tượng đại luận, 陰陽應象大論) in Huang Di Nei Jing explained that “The Heaven accumulates Yang, the Earth

accumulates Yin 故清陽為天, 濁陰為地; Yin is quiet, Yang is impetuous 陰靜陽躁” [15]. Analyzing Chinese characters, Yang 易 means shining in the sunshine, and Yin 陰 means hidden in the shadow. Things that have those properties are divided into Yang 陽 và Yin 陰. As Heaven accumulates Yang, it is bright, warm, and impetuous; it provides energy and makes things present themselves. As Earth accumulates Yin, it is cool at night, and things hide themselves. The Earth is quiet and immobile; it provides nutrients that things metabolite and grow. Yang is impetuous and invisible; it is the power and divine material in the cosmos; we know that it exists but cannot sense it. For example, previously, people only realized the materialized entities, but nowadays, the existence of molecules, atoms, nuclei, electric particles, and Higgs particle, etc., have been discovered. Maybe someday, smaller and smaller materials will be discovered, but we can realize the existence of Yang as data and electric particles (electrons, protons, and ions) form a programmed world. Without them, codes are meaningless, and no virtual world is produced. A similar phenomenon exists in nature; an entity must possess a basement, or a core, on which Yang is accumulated and materialized, like codings of a virtual entity. That core is called Yin; macroscopic ones are bones and organs, microscopic ones are hereditary materials, and quantum ones are linkages among atoms and particles. As it cannot be explained correctly, it is called “nature”, and as the greater and smaller are unknown, it is called “the Dao” or “Infinite Creator”. The Dao produced the void, which is also the Divine Mother (Huyền tần 玄牝) and

The One. The One produced Yin and Yang, or the Two, dividing reality into Heaven and Earth, defining light and dark. Yin and Yang meet and interact to create things and events, which is the Three. The Yang is attracted and accumulated on the Yin, so-called “All things carry the Yin and embrace the Yang, the resonance is harmony” 萬物負陰而抱陽，沖氣以為和 (Dao De Jing, Chapter 42) [10].

As Yang is the source of changes, it is said to produce, as Yin is the storage of Yang, it is said to raise 陽生陰長. As Yang is the energy for all activities, it is said to metabolize qi; as Yin is the basement of creation, it is called to materialize 陽化氣，陰成形. When Yang prevails, interactions take particles and resources away and convert, so it is called to kill, to erode; when Yin prevails, things tend to shut down, so it is called to store up 陽殺陰藏 [15]. In Chapter 1, Dao De Jing, the statement “Emptiness is named for the root of Heaven and Earth, Existence is named for mother of all things” [10] mentioned the quantum and material level of existence. ‘Emptiness’ is named for the quantum level of existence, for all that exists but is imperceptible. Although they are too small to be perceived, they exist everywhere and are the basis of every entity and event, so they are called the “root of Heaven and Earth”. ‘Existence’ is named for the material level of existence, for all that is perceptible. Things are identified through description and distinction. Following the development of civilizations and techniques, more principles are discovered, more things are invented, and more entities are defined and named. As a result, ‘existence’ through recognition and distinction is called “mother of all

things” 無名天地之始，有名萬物之母. Therefore, if the cosmos is considered a tremendous imperceptible ocean in which Yang-qi is the water, then every level of existence is considered a biosphere. All entities in each mode interact and harmonize, but if a biosphere exists, there will be others, higher and lower. The issue is human is stuck in a limitation of recognition that we cannot identify their existence.

Hence, the terminologies “the One” and “Divine Mother” are about the common quantum creation of all things and events. So, to maintain the “embracing the one” perspective, it is necessary to practice opening the mind or changing points of view to gain multi-perspective perception instead of embracing an artificial conventional system of validity and beauty. Also, in Chapter 1, Dao De Jing, Laozi wrote, “embrace the emptiness to see the mystical” 常無欲以觀其妙, which meant ‘to observe the harmonizing of all things’. While “embrace the existence to see the distinction” 常有欲以觀其微 meant ‘to observe things in isolation. As people tend to define the existence of things, they distinguish good from evil, beautiful from ugly, useful from useless, etc., and compete to reach perfection. When these competitions become out of control, the harmonizing of all is damaged, ecosystems are eroded, and the existence is not sustainable.

4.2. “Embracing the One” is the key to fulfill the mind in Taoism

The Taoism ideology on regimen is embracing the One, restoring rusticity, and following nature.

In Chapter 7, Dao De Jing, the key of everlasting is discussed as “Heaven and Earth are everlasting because they do

not live for themselves” 天地所以能長且久者，以其不自生，故能長生... Hence, the sage leaves himself behind to be in front and treats himself as foreign to preserve 是以聖人，後其身而身先，外其身而身存” [10]. The ideology of Laozi is providing services to others to benefit self, work in passion not desire, wish but not expect, preserve the environment to preserve self. However, “not living for self” does not mean forgetting self but respecting the unification of all and maintaining harmony, regardless of mine and yours, acceptance and discrimination, usefulness and uselessness. As a result, one who wants to preserve oneself must respect others, be thankful for receiving, and save resources by using them effectively.

Chapter 10 told how to nurture the mind by embracing the one not to be separated 載營魄抱一，能無離乎？，breathing softly like the newborns 專氣致柔，能如嬰兒乎？，and cleansing unreliable view leaving no flaw 滌除玄覽，能無疵乎？”. Some people related these practices to meditation, as they mentioned cleansing views and controlling breath [10]. The principles are that understanding the unification of all and letting go of prejudices protects the mind from being bothered by thought, and breathing softly helps calm the heart. Because the heart is the home of the mind and the royal flame that empowers and regulates organs. When the royal flame has nurturing properties, the body and organs are harmonized and nurtured. This idea is developed up to Chapter 14. Ideas such as “the five colors make eyes blind, the five sounds make ears deaf, the five flavors make tongue numb, hunting habit makes the heart go crazy” 五色令人目盲，五音

令人耳聾，五味令人口爽，馳騁田獵，令人心發狂” warn people not to pursue material desires, flashy appearance, and killing hobbies.

The wisdom that Taoism pursues is the comprehension of knowing over the limitation of the five senses: “The invisible is called Yi, the inaudible is called Xi, the uncatchable is called Wei; these three cannot be defined as they blende together” 視之不見，名曰夷，聽之不聞，名曰希，搏之不得，名曰微。此三者不可致詰，故混而為一. Because the Dao is imperceptible, such wisdom can be studied through the inner nature of things. As a result, Taoism respects the practical use of things. “Hence, the sage seeks to satisfy the belly, not the eyes” 是以聖人為腹不為目”. It also noticed that “The existence is to gain, but the emptiness is to use” 有之以為利，無之以為用” figuring both the existence and the emptiness are valuable [10].

5. Regimen from a Taoism perspective

Discussions on regimen dated back to the Era of Hundred School of Thought (Bách gia chư tử, 諸子百家) in Taoism are mentioned in Dao De Jing [10] and Nan Hua Jing [11]. The Taoism regimen focuses on following the divine nature, living effortlessly in divine rules, and cleansing the mind.

5.1. Nurturing the mind

Dao De Jing Chapter 56 mentioned the “profound unification” of a man who knows Dao, as “Keep the mouth shut, close the portals, blunt the sharp, unravel the tangle, attemper the brightness, harmonize with dust” 塞其兌，閉其門，挫其銳，解其紛，和其光，同其塵，是謂玄同. Firstly, as everyone has their own way, “a leading

way is not a common way” 道可道，非常道，one who knows Dao will not waste his words to explain his way or lecture about a standard way. Secondly, because the great sound is unheard, the great shape is invisible 大音希聲，大象無形，relying on the five senses or abusing words to sharpen prejudices will narrow vision and induce faw. It would be better to blend oneself with others and consider oneself a tiny particle in nature to gain harmony and insights into the rules, aspects, and nature of Dao.

When the tangle of discrimination is unraveled, that any entity is familiar or strange, beneficial or harmful, expensive or cheap does not interfere with discernment, so it is meant to be the most pricey in the world” 不可得而親，不可得而疏，不可得而利，不可得而害，不可得而貴，不可得而賤，故為天下貴[10]. The core of regimens in the Taoism perspective is nurturing the mind by opening vision, harmonizing with the nature of all things, cleansing prejudices, practicing “profound unification,” and staying mindful of thoughts of discrimination. Because those who know Dao are not affected by familiarity, benefit, and expensiveness, they are hardly controlled by anyone. Therefore, they are considered useless. This uselessness is not incapable of doing anything.

5.2. Nurturing the body

Dao De Jing Chapter 55 described “the one rich in virtue is like the newborn” 含德之厚，比於赤子，“bones and muscles are weak but able to hold tight” 骨弱筋柔而握固，“without knowing about on sexual intercourse, jing qi is still full” 未知牝牡之合而媵作，精之至也，“despite crying all day, voice is

not hoarse” 終日號而不嘎，“this is the complete harmony” 和之至也. “Knowing the harmony is ordinary; knowing the ordinary is wisdom. Benefitting life is felicity, that the heart can control qi is called healthy” 知和曰常，知常曰明。益生曰祥，心使氣曰強 [10]. When qi is complete, even weak bones and muscles can produce strong force; without wasting such as thinking of sex, jing qi are full. In harmony with nature, emotions are expressed naturally, and qi is not damaged (voice is not hoarse). When jing qi is full, the body is empowered and nurtured by circulation, that is called healthy. In Laozi’s perspective, nurturing the body is by letting the body harmonize with nature and saving jing qi by moderating desires.

Similarly, “The Essence of Nourishing the Life” emphasizes the importance of following nature, working effortlessly by choosing easy ways, and becoming useless: “My life is limited, but knowledge is limitless; using the limited to pursue the limitless is dangerous” 吾生也有涯，而知也無涯；以有涯隨無涯，殆已！ [11]. The uselessness mentioned by Zhuangzi is the one mentioned above; it means impossible to be used, not incapability to work. “Choosing easy ways” does not mean irresponsibility; it means finding the most effective way to work based on comprehension. “Following nature” means letting things as they are, not pretending to express a nice, good, flashy appearance based on conventional standards.

“The Full Understanding of Life” by Nan Hua Jing explains the Taoism regimen in detail. [11] At first, the chapter reminded the necessity to moderate desires. “Ones who

understand life do not expect what does not belong to them; ones who understand fate do not desire to know what they do not know how to” 達生之情者，不務生之所無以為；達命之情者，不務知之所無奈何。

Secondly, the desire for material wealth is not necessary to nurture life; caring for the body too much is not, either. “Though nourishing body first needs materials, there are still ones rich in materials but are not healthy; though having life must not leave the body, there are still ones that live and die for it 養形必先之以物，物有餘而形不養者有之矣；有生必先無離形，形不離而生亡者有之矣。 “nourishing the body is truly not enough to maintain life, living in the world is not that simple” 養形果不足以存生，則世奚足為哉！

“The Essence of Nourishing the Life” prefers purifying to nourishing the body as the motivation of living: “Ones whose bodies restore totally purified are unified with the Heaven” 夫形全精復，與天為一。 When the body is purified, its capacity to withstand stresses, adapt to changes, and self-regulate will increase: “The body that is purified and undamaged is called adaptable; if more and more purified will return close to the Heaven” 形精不虧是謂能移；精而又精，反以相天

The problem is why people can not let go of desires, and they keep discriminating between the good and the bad, the useful and the useless, and preferring something to another. “Normally, which have shapes, forms, sounds, and colors are called things. Why are they far different from the others?” 凡有貌象聲色者，皆物也，物與物何以相遠？ “The Full Understanding of Life” explains it is

because of their appearances 是色而已。 The issue is that appearances are not the origin of things but are determined by the human mind: “Things are created without shape and stopped without division” 則物之造乎不形，而止乎無所化。 Hence, it would be better not to disrupt the harmony of all things: “Ones who understand this thoroughly will let things be where they belong” 夫得是而窮之者，物焉得而止焉！ Ones who understand the nature of things will “prefer the austerity, continuously adhering to the rules, move between the end and start of all things” 彼將處乎不淫之度，而藏乎無端之紀，遊乎萬物之所終始。 “Continuously adhering to the rules” means respecting nature and all things by “unifying by properties, nourishing the qi, harmonizing with the divine virtue, and understanding the creation of things” 壹其性，養其氣，合其德，以通乎物之所造。 Rules followed by those who know Dao are not artificial laws or religious rules but divine virtue acknowledged by opening inner divine nature. This can be done by not opening human nature, which is empowered by discrimination and desires for individual benefit and materials. “It is not the Heaven by opening human nature but the Heaven by opening divine nature; opening divine nature produce virtue, opening human nature produce robbery” 不開人之天，而開天之天，開天者德生，開人者賊生。 Respect nature but not forget the self; the natural virtue is for everything to live, develop, and cleanse itself. “Don’t hate nature and don’t neglect humans; hence, citizens can live in the true nature.” 不厭其天，不忽於人，民幾乎以其真。 As a result, the book criticized both self-benefitting and excessive giving habits. “Don’t keep

intaking and store up, and don't keep pushing outward to shine, should be like a dried tree standing in the center" 無入而藏，無出而陽，柴立其中央。

Besides, "Ones who nourish life cleverly are like shepherds, observing behind and whipping" 『善養生者，若牧羊然，視其後者而鞭之。』. This statement describes the role of practitioners to the mind-body complex. Whipping symbolizes two aspects of mental catalysts: redirecting the way and forging capability and integrity. Ones who cleverly nourish life are not caregivers focusing on satisfying the body or bosses who strictly direct the attached mind the way to go regardless of sufferance and trauma but observers who let it discover its way but sometimes redirect it to the target. Nourishing life means not wasting health or jing qi but also not being lazy. This aspect is similar to the exercising principle: practice till reaching the limit but not getting injuries.

These contents are summarized as the "cleansing mind, moderate desires, preserve true nature, and recover rusticity" practice in Taoism. Cleansing the mind is cleansing prejudices by moderating emotions and opening vision. Moderating desires is by knowing 'enough' because wealth and satisfaction are not enough to nourish and forge a healthy life. Preserving true nature is through understanding that all things are unified into The One and becoming humble to harmonize with all things. Recovering rusticity is by letting things as they are, expressing emotions naturally, and daring to do things you are urged and willing to do. Either being arrogant or self-deprecating, over-storing or over-giving will induce imbalances and stress, leading to traumas and disorders. Hence, one must

practice holding a neutral stance and letting go of emotions, not being affected by things and events outside; this practice is similar to meditation.

6. The Metabolism of Jing and Qi from the Perspective of Traditional Medicine

The soonest Traditional Chinese Medicine documentary mentioning regimen is "Huang Di Nei Jing, Suwen" (Hoàng Đế Nội Kinh, Tố Vấn, 皇帝內經，素問) [15]. This content is scattered throughout several chapters. The basis is in "The Discussion on Ancient Divine Truth" (Thượng cổ thiên chân luận, 上古天真論) and other chapters provide supportive knowledge on physiology and pathology. According to Traditional Medicine, the body consists of five materials: qi (energy), xue (blood), jing (essence), jin (exocrine fluid), and ye (body fluid). For the regimen, qi and jing are mentioned the most.

6.1. Metabolism of Qi and Jing

In "The Theory on the Correspondence of Yin and Yang," it is stated that "Yang is for qi, Yin is for flavor." 陽為氣。陰為味。The qi of foods and drinks belongs to Yang, while the flavor belongs to Yin. What constitutes the qi of foods and drinks? Referring to the later sentence, "mild qi induces expression; strong qi induces fever," 氣薄則發泄，厚則發熱, the qi of foods and drinks shares similar properties with essential oils and pungent agents, which are commonly found in diaphoretics, cold-dispersing drugs, qi-regulating drugs, blood-invigorating drugs, and dampness-dispelling drugs. When consumed in small amounts, these agents can induce a blush and stimulate heartbeats, digestion, sweating, and neural activities. In larger doses, they

can accelerate metabolism and raise the body's temperature [16]. Moreover, when preparing decoctions with qi-abundant drugs, it is advised to cook them over a strong flame for a short period to prevent qi loss due to heat [17]. This leads authors to define the qi of foods and drinks as their aromas [17]. However, the cooking process is similar for flavonoids and phenols, which demonstrate strong and rapid activities and are easily damaged by heat. Thus, the qi of foods and drinks may encompass more than just essential oils and pungent agents; it may also include factors that possess expressive or Yang properties. Consequently, the qi of foods and drinks, when entering meridians and reaching organs, will stimulate jing and release stored qi, resulting in the expression of this qi and its related activities. In contrast, flavors represent substances that can be metabolized and stored within the body. This explanation effectively clarifies why pungency matters in both the qi and the flavors of foods and drinks.

The flavor depends on the body; the body depends on qi; qi depends on jing, and jing depends on metabolism. 味歸形。形歸氣。氣歸精。精歸化。Jing consumes qi; the body consumes flavors; metabolism produces jing, and qi forms the body. 精食氣。形食味。化生精。氣生形。[15]. The flavors of foods and drinks must be metabolized by the body to become jing, so they rely on the body. Besides, a portion of flavors is used to nourish the body, meaning they are consumed by it. After being digested and absorbed, qi and flavors from foods and drinks are used and saved by the body, then cleansed and synthesized into condensed essence, so-called jing 精 in Chinese. Jing is stored in five mystical organs named

zang (storage, 臟). The efficiency of jing synthesis is related to metabolism in the body, the quality of the foods and drinks, the activities and metabolism of the body, and the original jing and qi (nguyên tinh, nguyên khí, 元精, 元氣). In summary, the body is nourished and empowered by qi, both from jing and foods and drinks. Qi is stored as jing. Jing is synthesized from qi through metabolism. The reciprocal nourishing relationship between jing and the body leads to the phenomenon that every disorder in the body induces related disorders in the synthesis, storage, and extraction of jing and vice versa.

6.2. The importance of a balanced diet

“Flavors harm the body, qi damages jing. Jing transforms into qi, qi is damaged by flavors” 味傷形。氣傷精。精化為氣。氣傷于味。[15] This statement completes the aforementioned one. Qi is stored as jing and can be released from jing when stimulated. The qi released from jing is human qi; it is pure and provides the activity of the organ releasing it. As the body and jing have a reciprocal relationship, it is necessary to practice a balanced lifestyle. “Strong flavors will be expressed; mild ones are fluently transported.” 味厚則泄，薄則通。Because flavors belong to yin and are partially used and saved in the body, excessively consuming flavors induces accumulation in the body and stimulates related tissues; simultaneously, it induces obstruction in the digestive system and other organs. According to “The Theory on the Correspondence of Yin and Yang,” sour damages tendons 酸傷筋, bitter damages qi 苦傷氣, sweet damages muscles 甘傷肉,

pungent damages skin and hair 辛傷皮毛, salty damages xue. Moreover, the chapter “Life Force in Coordination with the Heaven” (Sinh khí thông thiên luận, 生氣通天論) states that “The production of Yin originates from five flavors, the five mansions of yin are harmed by five flavors” 陰之所生, 本在五味, 陰之五宮, 傷在五味。

Foods and drinks provide nutrition to be synthesized into jing. Each flavor nourishes and empowers a relative zang. As stated in “The Theory on the Correspondence of Yin and Yang,” sour nourishes liver 酸生肝, bitter nourishes heart 苦生心, sweet nourishes pancreas 甘生脾, pungent nourishes lung 辛生肺, and salty nourish kidney 鹹生腎 [15]. Therefore, imbalances in consumed flavors stimulate imbalances in the activities of the five zangs and damage them. These two aspects indicate that harmful habits such as consuming strong flavors, eating too much nutrient or too little, preferring a flavor to the others, or rejecting to eat a flavor can damage both body and jing. So, controlling and balancing diet is very important.

7. Regimen in Traditional Medicine

Like Taoism, Traditional Medicine also recommends following nature. For example, “The Discussion on Ancient Divine Truth” emphasizes the importance of saving jing qi. “The ancient people knew Dao, mimicked Yin and Yang, harmonized with numerology, moderated diet, lived in routines, were not overworked, hence were able to preserve body and mind” 上古之人, 其知道者, 法於陰陽, 和於術數, 食飲有節, 起居有常, 不妄作勞, 故能形與神俱. For example, the chapter “The Discussion on Regulating Mind According to Four

Seasons” recommends a lifestyle harmonizing with the changes of the four seasons. Be generous and refreshing in Spring; benefit life, give, and reward; avoid killing, competing, and punishing 以使志生, 生而勿殺, 予而勿奪, 賞而勿罰. Stay ease in Summer, avoid anger, let qi express well, let beloved go out, help maturity 使志無怒, 使華英成秀, 使氣得泄, 若所愛在外, 此夏氣之應養長之道也. Stay calm in Autumn, save the mind, stay away from outside distractions, and let qi of lung clean the body 使志安寧, 收斂神氣, 使秋氣平, 無外其志, 使肺氣清. Stay hidden in Winter, hide mind and body, use outside Yang sources, stay away from cold and seek warm, act as if everything is fulfilled 必待日光, 使志若伏若匿, 若有私意, 若已有得, 去寒就溫, 無泄皮膚使氣亟奪. [15]

7.1. Nourishing Qi to prevent acquired diseases

The chapter “Life Force in Coordination with the Heaven” includes many statements on nourishing Yin and Yang to prevent disease. This chapter discusses only ones about nourishing Yang:

“Human Yang is like Heaven and the Sun. As Heaven is non-stop active, the Sun keeps shining 陽氣者若天與日, 故天運當以日光明. Yang is from the top, defending outside 陽因而上, 衛外者也. The essence of Yang nurtures the mind; the gentleness nourishes tendons. If its opening and closing meet obstacles, cold from outside will follow. 陽氣者, 精則養神, 柔則養筋. 開闔不得, 寒氣從之. [15] Human Yang qi relies on the Yang qi of Heaven and Earth (natural Yang qi) to develop and function. As it belongs to Yang, it is

from the upper part of the body. The circulation of qi in the body is motivated by the heart, and qi from activities of the mind is produced in the head. Qi is transported through meridians, which are under the skin in the outer parts of the body. Qi plays the role of the driving force for metabolism, activities of organs, and movements of the body; it also motivates the circulation of itself and blood and participates in immune responses. As the mind is the portal and communicator to Heaven, it is nurtured by the essence of qi; hence, the less pure and gentler portion is used to nourish the body and muscles. The statement asserts that thanks to qi, people can resist outside pathogens, such as wind, cold, heat, dryness, and dampness. Nowadays, Anatomy and Physiology assert that the blood to nurture the head, brain, and mind comes from the heart through the carotid arteries, which are the closest branches of the aorta to the heart. The blood is cleaned by the liver and lungs and is full of nutrients, which partially fits “the essence of qi”. [16, 17]. Moreover, the mechanism to resist cold is closing skin pores and trembling [17]. These issues somehow relate to the aforementioned statement that qi nourishes the mind and muscles and helps resist cold. However, there still be many activities that may relate to the activities of qi, which will be discussed in another topic.

“Human Yang qi is mainly in the outer parts of the body. Qi is produced at dawn, peaking at midday, weakened in the late afternoon, and portals are closed then.” 一日而主外，平旦人氣生，日中而陽氣隆，日西而陽氣已虛，氣門乃閉。“So, go into hiding in the evening, don’t exercise too hard, and don’t be exposed to fog and dew.” 是故暮而收拒，無擾筋骨，無見霧露

[15]. These sentences describe the relationship between human qi and the natural qi. Because qi is used to nurture the mind and body, nourishing qi requires effectively utilizing the mind and body. The best time to nourish qi is when natural Yang qi is expressed, from dawn to midday, with the assistance of natural qi. In contrast, expressing self in the afternoon, overworking, and exposure to harmful conditions are wastes of qi.

“In fatigue, Yang qi expands, depletes jing and shuts down storing” 陽氣者，煩勞則張，精絕辟積。 “In fury, qi in the body is depleted, so blood is accumulated in the upper part.” 陽氣者，大怒則形氣絕，而血菀於上”

[15]. Qi belongs to Yang, and jing belongs to Yin. Qi can fluently open and close because it can be transformed between active qi and stored as jing. During hard work, jing is gradually depleted to produce qi. When the original jing is exhausted, the synthesis of jing will be shut down. In a fury, the mind keeps thinking and depletes qi, so the heart has to push qi xue upward to nourish the mind and uptake qi from the body. During this process, Yang qi expands and is released outward. Besides, lacking of qi in the body prevents skin pore closure, then qi leaking and occupation of pathogens aggravates the exhaustion of qi. As there is not enough qi, and Yang qi expands, the blood circulation is obstructed, and blood accumulates in the upper parts of the body. This issue is similar to the Taoism perspective on the regimen that cleaning the heart is essential. This statement also confirmed that nourishing qi not only assures protection from outside pathogens but also helps preserve jing. Hence, those who want to nourish jing must also

nourish qi; consuming tonifying and detoxifying products is not enough. The way to nourish Yang is summarized in the statement, “The qi of blue Heaven is cleansed and calm, its will is regulated; following that will enclose Yang. Although pathogens exist, they cannot do any harm.” 蒼天之氣清淨，則志意治，順之則陽氣固，雖有賊邪，弗能害也。 As a result, “The Discussion on Regulating Mind According to Four Seasons” was established. [15].

7.2. Balancing Yin and Yang to prevent inner diseases

The chapter “Life Force in Coordination with the Heaven” states that “Yin stores jing but responds immediately, Yang must be closed strictly to defend outside.” 陰者，藏精而起亟也，陽者，衛外而為固也。 “Normally, that Yin is balanced and Yang is closed strictly is important. Disharmony between them is like there is Spring but not Autumn or there is Winter but not Summer” 凡陰陽之要，陽密乃固，兩者不和，若春無秋，若冬無夏， “If Yang is strong but not strict, jing will be depleted” 故陽強不能密，陰氣乃絕， “If Yin is balanced and Yang is closed strictly, the mind will be regulated. If Yin and Yang cannot agree with each other, jing qi will be depleted” 陰平陽秘，精神乃治，陰陽離決，精氣乃絕 [15]. It was stated in the previous section that nourishing Yang helps preserve Yin, and when Yang is superior to Yin, such as in a fury, both Yin jing and Yang qi will be exhausted. In this statement, Yin reinforces Yang. The problem is that jing synthesis will be shut down if qi is exhausted. So if Yin is superior to Yang, jing conversion to qi will be too slow or not enough; Yang qi will not be strict and will be depleted. This then stimulates the

conversion of jing to qi and aggravates the depletion of both jing and qi. Therefore, balancing Yin and Yang is very important; this helps maintain their harmony, nourish jing qi and the body, and nurture and stabilize the mind. Moreover, this aspect is confirmed by the transformation of acquired diseases into inner ones, such as the description in “The Theory on the Correspondence of Yin and Yang”: “Getting cold in the Winter will lead to fever in Spring; injury by wind in Spring leads to diarrhea in Summer; injury by heat in Summer leads to counterflows of qi in Autumn, injury by dampness in Autumn leads to wet cough in Winter” 冬傷於寒，春必溫病；春傷於風，夏生飧泄；夏傷於暑，秋必痲瘧；秋傷於濕，徠生欬嗽。 [15].

Although the core of the regimen in Traditional Medicine is nourishing the body by nurturing jing qi and balancing Yin Yang, the practicing method is quite similar to the method in Taoism. Balancing emotions is close to cleansing the mind, nourishing jing qi by following and harmonizing with nature, and balancing Yin Yang and Five Elements is like holding in the center. The seven regimen methods taught by Tue Tinh: “close jing, nourish qi, save mind, cleanse heart, moderate desire, preserve true nature, forge the body (Bế tinh, dưỡng khí, tồn thân; Thanh tâm, quả dục, thủ chân, luyện hình) also agrees with these perspectives.

8. Taoism, Traditional Medicine, and Spiritualism

There are two terminologies meaning “tâm linh học” 心靈學, “spiritualism” meaning “the belief that living people can communicate with people who have died”, and “parapsychology” meaning “the study of mental abilities, such as

knowing the future or telepathy, that seem to go against or be outside the known laws of nature and science”; there is another one not yet accepted is “psychicism” meaning “the belief in a universal soul; the attributing of souls to inanimate objects or phenomena” [7]. In general, all schools of spiritualism, including religions, agree that the mind (tinh thần, 精神, 神) has metaphysical abilities that can cross the limitation of physical experience and that the mind is an entity existing parallel with the physical body (hình thể, 形體, 軀體) [18]. In some schools, the mind is considered immortal, still existing after death and having experience in another world, then it is called “soul” or “spirit” (linh hồn, 靈魂) [18]. Eastern Asia cultures also accept the existence of the soul (hồn, 魂), but meaning a portion of jing qi that can leave the body, different from the attached mind (phách, 魄), which cannot leave the body. As the soul is relatively free, it may be the driver of some mystical activities such as innovative thinking, intuition, sensing harmony, manipulating destiny, etc. In contrast, the attached mind may relate to material-attached functions such as emotions, reflexes, physiological functions, conscious, subconscious, routines, and conventional thinking. Therefore, the objectives of spiritualism are not supernatural entities and magics, such as ghosts, devils, angels, etc., but the soul and unconventional cognition, abilities, and behaviors of human beings. Taoism agrees with the existence of the mind and will after death: “Died but not perish is longevity” 死而不亡者壽 and studies the mind as an entity co-existing but not unified with the body, so it is a school of spiritualism. Traditional Medicine

studies the body and the attached mind, it is not a school of spiritualism.

9. The interaction between spiritualism and traditional medicine

Recently, some spiritualism movements emphasize the awakening of the crystalline body (tinh thể, 晶體) or light body (cơ thể ánh sáng, 光體) [19]. The word “jing” 晶 in crystalline body means transparent, shiny, and also means chemical crystals. “Jing” 精 in Traditional Medicine means essence, a kind of purified and condensed material. Although these words differ, the synthesis of crystals and essences is quite similar through purification, condensation, and conversion. The spiritualism movements and spirit healing trends thus utilize some traditional medicine practices such as Yoga, meditation, healthy lifestyle, and macrobiotics. [19].

10. The demand for regimen practice in Vietnam

Regimen movements have developed since the XX century. They can rely on Western Medicine, such as limiting sugar, salt, and lipid intake to prevent cardiac diseases, or Traditional Medicine, such as practicing Taichi and Yoga. One aspect of regimens is changing lifestyle, which is also an aspect of sustainable consumption [5, 20]. A sociological study conducted in Hanoi expressed that middle-class Vietnamese people had already been interested in and willing to practice sustainable consumption. Main motivations for such practices are for future generations (80%), health reasons (76%), and protecting the environment (74%). However, people still preferred using motorbikes (70%) and plastic bags for their convenience due to lacking infrastructure for sustainable

alternatives [20]. Different from studies in other countries, demographic factors such as age, education, and income did not interfere with the sustainable choices of the Vietnamese [5], indicating that the willingness of Vietnamese to practice sustainable lifestyles related to individual consciousness, which is interfered by communities and medias more than by income and education. Relating to health, the Vietnamese were mostly interested in the quality of foods (80%), such as freshness, prior to the health benefits (60%) and price (46%). [20] Besides, citizens had a certain interest in consuming environment-friendly products such as organic foods, mostly among women over 45 and young men. Limited income is the most important factor limiting the interest in organic products [21]. Demanding on improving lifestyles were also supported by the growing understanding of citizens, improved income, and scientific evidence that changing lifestyles actually reduced risks and deaths in cardiovascular diseases [22], diabetes [23], and colorectal cancer [24].

Exercise and bodybuilding are also a criterion for a healthy lifestyle. [23, 24] In Traditional Medicine, Tai Chi and Yoga are the most popular exercise practices in Vietnam, developed since the 2000s. Taichi is a school of martial arts based on the Taoism ideology that was converted and developed as a Traditional Chinese Medicine practice. Practicing Tai Chi helps improve sleep and cognitive performance [25], mental health [26], and blood pressure [27] in the elderly. Similarly, Aryurvedic Yoga practice also shows effectiveness in improving respiratory function [28], mobility [29, 30], blood pressure [31, 32], mental health [29], and general health [6, 29] in the elderly. Besides,

other sports and exercises, such as volleyball, basketball, soccer, jogging, gymnastics, swimming, martial arts, etc., are also popular with all ages.

Another aspect of regimens is living meaningfully and passionately [8]. Taoism theories recommend embracing the One, practicing “no effort” working, being like fish in water, and aiming to understand the harmony of all and the meaning of life. Therefore, those who know Dao will no longer suffer and worry about existence and its meaning [10, 11]. The aspect of “meaningful existence” is also mentioned in Existentialism (Chủ nghĩa hiện sinh), where philosophers emphasize the freedom, joy, and value of experiences. They encourage freedom to experience and learn new things, establish and improve world view, expand capability, stimulate development, and provide value to society. [33]. In addition, macrobiotics and other services, such as massage, herbal baths, aromatherapies, saunas, spiritual healing, etc., have been introduced in Vietnam but have not yet been studied for scale and effectiveness.

11. Notifications in regimen practice, an example of Oshawa macrobiotics

Doctor Van-Huong Nguyen emphasized that practicing regimens required experience and understanding of methodology, theories, and techniques [8]. Understanding theories helps prevent injuries, assure effectiveness, creatively modify applications, instruct others, and strengthen trust and patience [8].

An example of this issue is Oshawa’s macrobiotics. The impression of citizens with this practice is through stories on the menu 7 (cereal only) circulated in the Buddhism community [34, 35]. However, this is more likely a macrobiotic ideology than a fasting diet

system. It was designed into a diet-moderating model, gradually decreasing food consumption, starting from meat and desserts (menus -3 to 2) and ending at cereal only (menu 7). [34, 36]. Among these, the menus 1 to 3 are recommended for healthy people and those with mild diseases, while the 6 and 7 are for people with serious diseases [34]. These recommendations are against the ideologies of Western Medicine and Traditional Medicine, in which people with serious diseases need enough nutrition to recover, and eating meat is recommended. [37]. The principle of this method is supplying just enough energy for activities, limiting toxin and extra nutrient intake so that the body can remove toxins, replace blood, and restore cleanliness; while for people eating menus -3 to 3 is selection of foods to balance Yin and Yang [34, 36].

At first glance, Oshawa's macrobiotics seem similar to Traditional Medicine as they also aim to balance Yin and Yang, but indeed, it is quite different. Firstly, the discrimination of Yin and Yang is opposite to that of Traditional Medicine [34-36] but this does not impact on practice because it is just a difference of perspective. Traditional Medicine determines the Sun is Yang, while Oshawa claims the Earth is Yang. Secondly, Oshawa's macrobiotics prioritizes eliminating toxins whenever the patient can withstand the tiredness, while Traditional Medicine prioritizes supporting the patient's self-healing ability over removing pathogens. This ideology of Oshawa's macrobiotics is similar to that of Taoist Dan Ding schools that also prioritizes purifying the body to get longevity: "With just a trace of Yang, the human can not die; with just a trace of Yin, the human can

not be saint" 一毫陽氣不盡不死，一毫陰氣不盡不仙。 [9, 38] It also fits the principle of treating "excess" syndrome (chúng thực, 實症) in Traditional Medicine [39]. Besides, Oshawa encouraged praying to strengthen belief and recommended a particular diet for each symptom or disease, according to the Yin Yang properties of the objective and materials [36]. This indicates that applying menus 6 and 7 is a kind of Shamanic medicine practice while applying menus 1 to 3 is partly Traditional Medicine practice. This is why this practice is still in doubt and mainly spread in some Christian and Buddhist communities.

Some reasons raising doubts about Oshawa's macrobiotics in Vietnam are quite common among spiritual and traditional medicine-based regimens. In the Buddhist community, there is a popular book written by Monk Thich Tue Hai [35], which focuses on an option of Menu 7 using brown rice, sesame, and salt. However, when practitioners directly change their diet, there are many adverse effects, mainly because of indigestion and malnutrition. To solve this issue, the Monk adapts traditional medicine formulas as "subordinate formulas". Many people think that they just need to patiently maintain the diet for a few months without knowing about these formulas; hence, they let disorders become so serious that they have to quit. This is the first reason: lack of misunderstanding. Secondly, when applying menus 6 and 7, practitioners must withstand malnutrition at the beginning. The "fatigue" cases in the chapter "Rebirth stories" were not actually cases of jing qi exhaustion, so they could overcome adverse effects with some additional supports [34]. But in seriously

exhausted cases, directly changing to menu 7 is absolutely harmful; it would be better to gradually change the diet from the lower to the higher menus. This is the second reason: requirements for recognizing limits and applying creatively. The third reason is that because Oshawa's macrobiotics is a kind of spiritual and traditional medicinal practice, it lacks scientific evidence. In fact, achievements in metabolomics, genomics, and molecular pharmacology show that consuming different drugs and foods induces or reduces expressions of relative targeted genes and proteins [40]. This clarifies the effects of foods and drugs on the body, cells, molecules, and microbiota and explains the medicinal values of foods. For example, pharmacokinetic studies show that when drugs change microbiota compositions, they also affect the expression of relative ligand-binding proteins and extracellular channels, induce absorption, transportation, and removal of co-administrated drugs and metabolites [41]. Changes in microbiota can even induce or reduce the expression of genes and proteins with anti-inflammatory effects, thus altering the development of relative chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, asthma, and even cancer, etc. [42]. Even moderating food consumption has particular medicinal value. In cases where heat-resolving drugs can not inhibit tumor growth, low nutrient supply in the acidic tumor microenvironment induces oxidative stress and apoptosis. [43, 44]

This article does not aim to encourage the Oshawa's macrobiotics, but to explain that spiritual and traditional medicine-based practices have certain scientific evidence. Nowadays, the development of

information technology and biomedicines allows studying on effects of these practices. However, practicing regimens have some notifications. Firstly, practitioners must determine purposes and individual status to modify practicing methods. For example, if practitioners do not aim to develop conscious gifts or mystical understandings (thần thông, 神通) or to get enlightenment and longevity, it is not necessary to maintain Oshawa's menu 7 diet. Secondly, practitioners must find and read relative documentaries to understand deeply the regimen. Do not blindly practice without discernment and understanding, or will waste time and health for no benefit. For example, those applying Oshawa's menu 7 must not eat till full but consume enough nutrients and energy. Because the diet lacks vegetables and proteins, consuming too much carbohydrate will induce disorders, leading to chronic disease. Thirdly, practitioners must remind themselves that regimens are systems of practice, including improving belief and worldview.

Through this example, this article emphasizes that notifications summarized by Doctor Van-Huong Nguyen are also valuable in practicing other regimens and life-nourishing methods, such as regulating diet, exercising, meditation, music therapy, aromatherapy, etc. These notifications include: 1. Understand deeply and apply creatively; 2. Be patient and passionate; 3. Manage time; 4. Try not to suffer from practicing difficult moves [8]. Besides, being aware of nourishing the mind is necessary, too, not only to strengthen patience and passion but also to maintain the right way. Because "the heart is the master organ, from which

mind expresses” 心者，君主之官也，神明出焉。If the master shines, the following are peaceful, nourishing life based on this will prolong lifespan. 主明則下安，以此養生則壽。If the master does not shine, twelve organs will be in danger, meridians will be obstructed, and the body will be damaged; nourishing life based on that will harm. 主不明則十二官危，使道閉塞而不通，形乃大傷，以此養生則殃。(The secret classics of Linglan, Suwen, Huang Di Nei Jing) [15].

12. Conclusion

The essence of regimens in Taoism and traditional medicine lies in cleansing the mind and harmonizing with nature. Cleansing the mind involves eliminating prejudices and desires to stabilize emotions and free consciousness from conventional thinking and discrimination. Harmonizing with nature aims to comprehend the divine unification of all, maintain balance, leverage understanding to perform tasks effortlessly, and restore a connection to simplicity. Practicing these principles helps preserve qing and qi, nourish Yin and Yang, balance the organs, and prevent disease. According to Traditional Medicine, nourishing life strives to balance Yin while keeping Yang closely aligned. Therefore, a regimen cannot be a solitary practice but rather a collection of actions and principles. Regardless of methods and techniques, regimens require a balanced combination of building the body, cleansing the mind, and changing lifestyles. This requires a deep understanding of the methods and techniques and the ability to modify techniques creatively.

Not all regimens are based on Western medicine or traditional medicine; they can be differentiated by their research subjects. Recently, there has not been sufficient evidence to separate spiritual healing from psychological healing, so this topic has not yet been addressed.

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