

**Mini Review***Copyright © All rights are reserved by Liou Chin Ping*

# Ch'i Perspective of Illness and Healing

**Liou Chin Ping\****Holistic Education Center, Fu Jen Catholic University, Taiwan***\*Corresponding author:** Liou Chin Ping, Holistic Education Center, Fu Jen Catholic University, Taiwan.**Received Date:** November 04, 2019**Published Date:** December 18, 2019**Abstract**

In the last few decades, mental health professionals have made efforts to incorporate the idea of ch'i into their healing practice. I will provide here a brief overview of three ch'i-related healing modalities as examples which include ch'i-self psychology proposed by Lee CT [1] yi-shu: the art of living, developed by Gong [2], and the integrative body-mind-spirit (I-BMS) developed by Lee Ng, Leung and Chan [3].

**Ch'i self-psychology**

Lee CT [1], the proponent of ch'i-self psychology, posited that illness in body, mind, and spirit is caused by the imbalance of ch'i. On the physical dimension, he believed that the imbalance of ch'i can have a negative impact on the cardiovascular, bones and skeletal, muscular, and endocrine system. The imbalance refers to the quantity of ch'i one has, the balance between yin-ch'i and yang-ch'i, and the flow of ch'i. On the psychological dimension, Lee proposed that the imbalance of ch'i may reduce one's mental and emotional ability and produce symptoms such as decreased attention span, productivity, reduced productivity and creativity, and emotional imbalance. On the spiritual dimension, Lee believes that when the ch'i the individuals have is too low in its density, they may be able to commune with other spiritual beings composed of different kind of ch'i or energy. These individuals might experience themselves as being with extraordinary human ability or mysterious power. This may lead them further to a reduced stability, lack of self-control, and even to a possessed state.

Lee called his healing modality 'ch'i-tsai healing.' The term 'tsai' refers to both 'presence' and 'stabilizing.' Lee explained that his healing method works toward recovery of ch'i. The ch'i-tsai therapist should know how to diagnose the quantity and balance of ch'i in the patient; how to recover their patient's ch'i, and how to teach their patient ch'i-related practices.

The ch'i-tsai healing includes diagnosis of the state of ch'i and ch'i therapy two procedures. Lee assumed that the state of ch'i in the human body can be detected by the hands of a trained ch'i-

tsai therapist. The imbalanced states of ch'i are such as uneven distribution, leakage, scattered, solidified, sick, collapsed energy, and so on Lee CT [1]. Ch'i-therapy includes external ch'i emission and ch'i-related practices instruction. It aims at helping patients recover their balance of ch'i in the body.

**Yi shu: The Art of Living**

Yi shu is a healing modality proposed by [2]. Yi means change; and shu, the way or the art. Hence, taking these two characters together, yi shu means the art of living with change. This healing modality mainly developed from the yin-yang-wu- hsing theory in the traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). It emphasizes the interconnectedness among human beings, social systems, and the natural environment. It assumes that essence, ch'i, and spirit are the three major components of the human person.

In yi shu, being healthy means an individual is in a state of harmony and balance. By contrast, when people are ill; their intrapersonal components such as internal organs, essence, ch'i, and spirit, and relationships with self, others and the environment will be in a disharmonious and imbalanced state. It is assumed that emotion is the cause of all diseases. Emotion can be induced by inner mental image or by outer stimuli such as interpersonal relationships, social phenomena, or natural environment; and may have an impact on the function of internal organs, hormone secretion, and ch'i-flow. It is believed that the five evolving phases each has its corresponding emotion. For example, lung corresponds to anxiety and sadness; liver, anger; spleen, worry, heart, joy and

surprise; and kidney, fear. The emotions can also affect the flow of ch'i. For example, joy eases; anger increases; sadness scatters, fear reduces, worry and inflexibility stagnates the flow of ch'i.

The goal of healing is to help individuals break ch'i blockages, reach a state of harmony and balance, and achieve authenticity in their relationships with self, others, and the environment. Yi shu emphasizes healing the whole person through dealing with emotions. The therapeutic procedure includes diagnosis a creative process of healing. The diagnosis is conducted through interrogation enquiry, feeling the pulse, or observation of the complexion; and healing, through CRE, creative art, psychodrama, and herbal medicine. It is assumed that this procedure may help clients release their negative emotions, promote flow of ch'i and blood, and regain harmony and balance among the various systems in the physical body.

### The Integrative Body-Mind-Spirit (I-BMS)

I-BMS is another ch'i-related healing modality which was proposed by Lee Ng, Leung and Chan [3] for the social work profession. I-BMS was developed based on the yin-yang perspective, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Taoism, and Buddhism philosophies. The following review will focus on how ch'i is understood in their study. Lee CT [1], yi-shu: the art of living, developed by Gong [2], and the integrative body-mind-spirit (I-BMS) developed by Lee Ng, Leung and Chan [3].

The characteristics of yin ch'i and yang ch'i as understood by Lee Ng, Leung and Chan [3] include connectedness; relativism; mutuality and interdependence; constant change; dynamic equilibrium; the centrality of balance and harmony; and the attainment of balance in movement. Lee Ng, Leung and Chan [3] believed that a problem occurs because something has disrupted the dynamic balance of the system. A system that is out of balance will inevitably become stagnant and disconnected. It will overemphasize one single-dimensional aspect of any phenomenon, character, behavior, perception, thought pattern, sensation, or mood, etc. without recognizing the complementary existence of other aspects. As a result, there will be a disconnection in that particular aspect of human experience and this disconnection will then manifest itself as one or many different problems.

Lee Ng, Leung and Chan [3] contended that all things are interconnected and that the relationship between yin and yang is mutually dependent. They suggest that therapists should not only focus on how to get rid of the symptoms; on the contrary, they should also look at the strengths, potentials, and capabilities in the client and the system. All aspects of a person or an experience should be treated as parts of the dynamic balance within the whole. They argue that change only occurs when one notices that the dynamic balance within the self and between the self and the world is broken. Change is a process of moving toward a new balance.

They conceptualize client change based on the abovementioned philosophical orientations, including such elements as change is the rule, mindfulness, acceptance and go with the flow, healing from within and compassion. They emphasize that healing abilities are

inherent and need to be recognized and developed. They suggest the use of the mindfulness practice, ch'i-kung exercise, massage, body-scan meditation, and small-group discussion to cultivate attitudes of acceptance and compassion. They believe that this may enhance body-mind-spirit connection, restore the equilibrium and the systems' self-healing capacity.

Moreover, this is the only healing modality among the three, which emphasizes the importance of the therapists' self-care. Lee Ng, Leung and Chan [3] argued that 'the 'self' of the therapist is inseparable with how she or he relates to clients and families, how she or he understands a client's situation and makes clinical judgement in assessment and treatment, what she or he views as effective treatment, and what she or he does in a session' [3]. Therefore, they suggested that to become authentic and effective healthcare providers, therapists should find ways to nurture their own body-mind-spirit well-being.

### Summary

The three healing modalities as examined above show the efforts the health care professionals made to incorporate the concept of ch'i into their practice. They all claim their understandings of ch'i to be based on the Chinese philosophies such as Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, TCM or the theory of ying-yang-wu-hsing. They believe that human person as a whole involving body, mind, and spirit; and these three dimensions are interconnected and unified by ch'i.

However, the concept of ch'i emphasized by each of them is slightly different. In ch'i-self psychology, ch'i is conceptualized as something biological, quantifiable, measurable, connected to the supernatural beings [1]. It is believed that ch'i can be replenished, made it flow harmoniously or distributed evenly by the therapist through external ch'i therapy. By contrast, yi shu underlines relations between ch'i and emotions and the connection of this with the internal organs. It emphasizes healing the whole person through dealing with negative emotions and ch'i and takes into account both the equilibrium within the human body and harmonious and balanced relationships with self, others, social systems, and natural environment [2]. On the other hand, the I-BMS tends to regard ch'i as a metaphysical idea and underline the importance of the equilibrium and interconnectedness with the self, others, and the environment.

### Acknowledgment

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### Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

### References

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