

UNIVERSE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSE TAI CHI WU SHU SOCIETY

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LOOKING AFTER THE KIDNEYS

Professor Cheng Man-Ching, the famous tai qi and Chinese medicine practitioner, recommended lots of personal work including self-massage. In the recollection of one of his students, Wolfe Lowenthal, writing in *There are no Secrets*¹, he said that if you had no other time during a day, you should prioritise massage of the kidneys since qi (chi) arises from the kidneys. With the practice of qigong and tai qi, we would like to work toward all our body systems, but in particular the kidneys and bone marrow working as efficiently as possible. As with all of the organs, the kidneys carry out a phenomenal amount of complex operations within the body. Below, some of that work is explained along with a link between the kidneys and the bone marrow...

The following article from the Summer 2008 edition, is reproduced, in part, with kind permission of *The Donor*, the magazine published by The National Blood Service²:

"...When you give blood you lose red cells and the body needs to make more to replace them. Special cells in the kidneys, called peritubular cells, sense that the level of oxygen in the blood has decreased (due to the loss of red cells) and start secreting a protein called erythropoietin. This passes through the blood stream until it reaches the bone marrow (the soft fatty tissue inside the bone cavities). The bone marrow produces stem cells, the building blocks that the body uses to make the different blood cells – red cells, white cells and platelets. The erythropoietin sends a message to the stem cells telling more of them to develop into red blood cells, rather than white cells or platelets. Your body makes about two million new red cells every second, so it doesn't take long to build up stores of them again.

What about your white cells and platelets? A number of other messenger proteins also stimulate the production of these cells in the bone marrow, and over the next few days levels return to normal.

Why wait?

So why wait 16 weeks between whole blood donations? Well, unlike white cells and platelets, it takes several weeks for all the red cells to be replaced. There's an important link between your red cells and your health because it's these cells, or rather the red-coloured haemoglobin they contain, that take oxygen around your body..."

Through the practice of tai qi and qigong, one of our aims as practitioners is to first achieve and recognise a surface level of relaxation. Then, through continued practice we can enable that surface level of relaxation to penetrate deeper into the organs and then into the very bone marrow itself. We would postulate that if we are truly relaxed, the kidneys and bone marrow can work most efficiently. If our blood is healthy so are we, and Chinese medicine would agree that transport of vital energy (or qi) would also be healthy. This would go some way to explaining some of the increased and healthy longevity of some tai qi practitioners. With continued practice, hopefully, that could be any one of us. And, of course, not neglecting drinking enough fluid.

If you have further information on health matters, please write it up here or contact me. Thank you.

Paul Maslowski

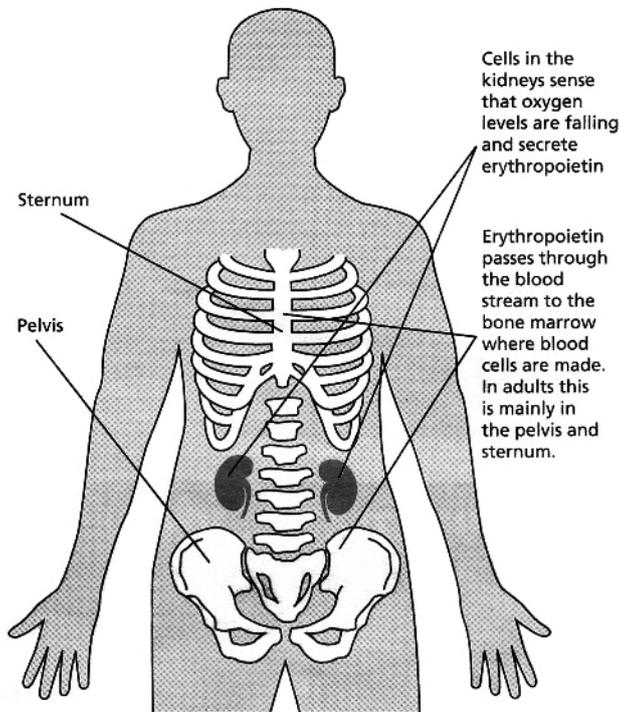


Image courtesy of Tim Arundel in *The Donor*, Summer 2008

1 Wolfe Lowenthal, *There are no Secrets*, published by North Atlantic Books, ISBN-13: 978-1556431128
2 The National Blood Service (NBS) is available on <http://www.blood.co.uk>



EVENTS FOR 2009

TRAINING DAYS

Saturday 7 February 2.00 pm - 9.00 pm

Training day open to all students looking at all forms, and celebrating Chinese New Year
Wollaton Park Community Centre, Harrow Road, Nottingham NG8 1FG

Saturday 16 May 10.30 am - 3.30 pm

Training Day open to all students looking at all forms
(Including barbecue 5.00pm, weather permitting)
Elvaston Castle Country Park, Derbyshire

Saturday 4 - Sunday 5 July

Training week end open to all students looking at all forms
Butterton Village Hall, Staffordshire

Saturday 21 November 2.00 pm - 6.00 pm

Training day open to all students concentrating on the 24 posture form
Wollaton Park Community Centre, Harrow Road, Nottingham NG8 1FG

All students are encouraged to attend

COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND INSTRUCTORS TRAINING SESSIONS

Saturday 7 February

Meeting 10.30 am - 1.00 pm 6 Graham Street, Nottingham

Saturday 18 April

Meeting 10.30 am - 1.00 pm 117 Leicester Road, Glen Parva, Leicester
Training session 2.00 pm - 5.00 pm Glen Parva Memorial Hall, Dorothy Avenue, Leicester

Saturday 19 September

Meeting 10.30 am - 1.00 pm 6 Graham Street, Nottingham
Training session 2.00 pm - 5.00 pm Nottingham venue to be arranged

Saturday 21 November

Meeting 10.30 am - 1.00 pm 6 Graham Street, Nottingham

All Committee members and Instructors are encouraged to attend

Newsletter 2009 Please let editor Ken Twist have any items for inclusion by 4 July 2009

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