

Winter 2024

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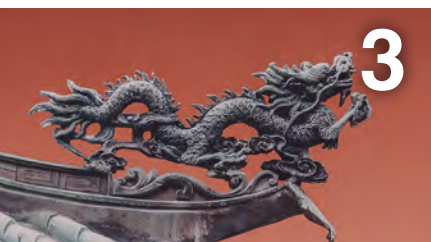
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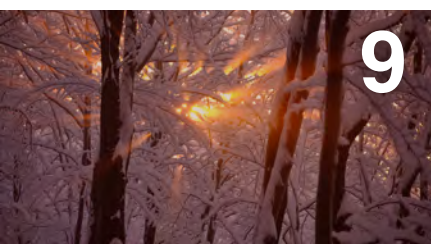


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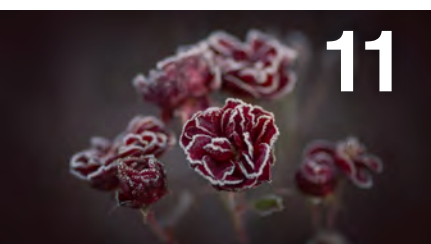
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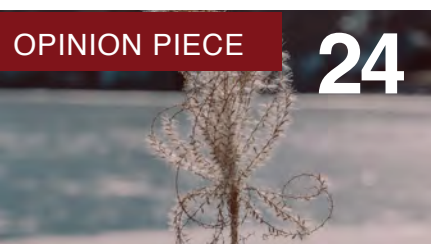
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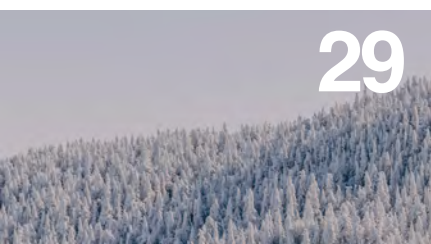
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2024 - Jiǎ Chén 甲辰

Wood Dragon Chinese Astrology Outlook Musings

PHOTO: Annie Spratt for Unsplash.com

by **Sonia F. Tan**, DAOM, R.Ac, R.TCM.P,
Certified Astrology and Feng Shui Practitioner,
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It's time to grab your cup of tea and dive into another annual outlook of the upcoming year through the Chinese metaphysical lens. What are the Heavens trying to signal to us about where we are heading and what our purpose is? What is in store for the world? Put your feet up, pull up your socks, and let's take a sip.

(This article is a shorter version compared with postings coming later that will be shared on other platforms and via other providers. Look for the expanded version coming later this month.)

I mentioned in [last year's Water Rabbit outlook](#) that it was a year of subtle and intuitive change, if you could listen, learn, and make that movement. It may have come with anguish or overthinking, or it may have been liberating. That depends on your personal Bā Zì 八字 Birth Chart. One reason I still write these outlooks every year is to remind you that ascertaining one's energy by one animal sign, or one year pillar, is misguided. If you do that, you only have one-eighth or one-quarter of your entire Bā Zì 八字 Birth Chart—and therefore, only some of your “constitutional energetic DNA.” Chinese astrology and your “fate” are determined by your entire chart—year, month, day, and time pillars—which interact with the current year, your 10-year fate cycle, Feng Shui cycles and human relationships, with the month and day pillars having the most influence. An annual astrological outlook is pretty general. Please keep

Continued...

this in mind as you read about the Wǔ Xíng 五行 Five (5) phase / interactions/ behaviours / elements / energetics and the animal energies.

Why does astrology matter (even just a bit)? I always like to restate this.

*Simplistically,
chronobiology and
circadian rhythms look at
how time and light affect
health. Astrology is one of
the Chinese metaphysical
ways of looking at the
energy of time, light, and
other sensory phenomena,
and seeing how they affect
our human health, nature's
energy cycles and the
world's health as a whole.*

As Chinese metaphysicians, we also use tools such as Flying Star Feng Shui, Qi Men, and the Yi Jing, together with the Ba Zi. Despite the potential shortcomings inherent in taking something complicated and speaking about it in simple terms, I appreciate that people like to have a general idea,

like to be prepared, and like to be provided with context and understanding of their path. So, while I will give a general synopsis, keep in mind again, your personal path may be different, depending on your “energetic DNA,” or your complete Bā Zì 八字 Birth Chart. Globally, my perspective on the general 2024 Wood Dragon trends will be based mostly on both the Ba Zi and Flying Star Feng Shui. Let's dive in!

This looks to be a bold, pushy, impatient, justice- and peace-creating, yet grounding and creative year. Wait, that sounds like a contradiction, right? Yes, I did mean to say all of those together. This year of the Jiǎ Chén 甲辰 Wood Dragon in 2024 begins on February 4 in the solar calendar (the true astrological date) and on February 10 in the Lunar calendar (the more commonly celebrated date). Big and bold is Yang Wood. It stands tall like a tree, reaching and growing high, yearning for movement, growth, vision and change for the betterment of society. It must be able to see, and visualize well, thus making it one of the best planners of all the Wǔ Xíng 五行 Five phases or interactions. Yang Wood also comes with a quickness and moves quite fast like a lightning strike, which also means attention to detail is a weakness. Visionaries and visual artists are often Yang Wood selves. These are people who fight for justice and righteousness in the world to make it a better place. This is a key to understanding the year—impulsive, moving, bold and aggressive at times. If Wood is in excess, it gets frustrated and angry. If Wood is balanced, they are kind and benevolent saviours. With this coming year



PHOTO: Ales Krivec for Unsplash.com

being a bold approach to implementing change, that could be just the push you need. Or it could be too pushy for your chart and feel like overload. If you didn't listen before to my hints on what Wood wants to help move you toward, you'd better listen now. It should be heard clearly. Sometimes, let's be honest, with the directness of Yang Wood, it's more like a shove or slap. The key is listening to the message and then knowing what to do with that information. Knowing what your personal helpful phases are is one way to navigate the energetics of the year to amplify the good or minimize the bad.

In this year, we couple the Heaven's descent of Yang Wood with the Earthly Branch of Chen, aka the Dragon. Dragon is a Yang Earth as its core self, with a little bit of Yin Wood and a little bit of Yin Water. Dragon is a very tolerant and hardy sign, with the Yang Earth in its constitution acting like a mountain. It's trustworthy, solid, reliable, and grounded. The Yin Wood in it motivates it to create growth and kindness in the world, and the Water is an intuitive and wise sensitivity that guides its decision-making. Dragons are comfortable with being in a position of leadership and control, with the inherent controlling dynamics within it. The bit of Yin Wood roots and makes the Yang Wood of this year even stronger.

Repeat: really strong Wood energy this year! There is a whole lot of doing this year!

Dragons are hardy, but the Earth in it is about routine, unchanging ways, and that is one of the reasons why it may keep sabotaging itself instead of learning and moving on—which it does like to do but can find challenging. Being an Earth sign, and one of the four animal signs that are earth signs, it is both a transition time and an “ending” time. Some call the Earth animal signs graveyard animals, but as depressing as those sounds, it is about bringing things to an end or reaching the end of a cycle and preparing to begin a new cycle. We return to the Earth as we die. The Earth compounds and processes to transform and release nutrients to then create a sprout from the ground as we grow new life again. While Earth signs are attuned to people and stable relations, Earth, especially the Dragon, sometimes has a twist in the Purple Stars Chinese Astrology (zǐwēidǒushù 紫微斗数; 紫微斗數), where one may feel some loss or solitude this year. Keep in mind, this is meant for you to learn how to live in peace with that solitude, and then evolve into a new version of yourself.

One other important note about the Dragon is that it is a myth—let me say that again, a MYTH—that Dragons are the luckiest sign in the Chinese astrology charts. What is your definition of lucky? Survival? Financial wealth? Opportunities? Leadership?

Each of the five phases in either the “weak/deficient” or “strong/excessive” form can generate wealth. Keep that in mind and chuck that myth out the door!



PHOTO: Alisa Anton for Unsplash.com

So, we've looked at the Heavenly Stem and Earthly Branch on its own, but truly, one needs to look at it as a pillar. Yang Wood the tree is on top of the Mountain of the Dragon with a little vine and river running around the mountain. It's beautiful at the outset... but let's look deeper. My fellow practitioners know that in the Wǔ Xíng 五行 Five phase/interaction law, Wood controls Earth. This tree is, and will break down earth, destabilizing it as it grows. Globally, we may see instability—literally, too, in the form of more earthquakes than normal. We may see arguments, anger, conflict, controlling back and forth, and impatience. Wood's anger and impatience is trying to break through a stubborn and immovable mountainous Earth, and that causes conflict. Earth will fight back by trying to pile on more mountainous walls and boulders, to maintain its status quo. But this is a year meant for change...eventually. The first half of the year will start off with impulsive and temperamental Fire, Wood aggression, arguments, and conflict. Sick of waiting, impatience may take hold and impact decisions. While Wood can be a motivating force, ask yourself: is this the right thing to do or the right way to be? You'll know, based on the outcome of your actions if it is, and if it wasn't or impulsive, you'll get a chance this year to re-organize yourself and your life. It's best if you can hold space and fill it with a dash of Fire's love and compassion (the bridge between the two phases that diverts any conflict) and Earth's patience and time to think things through.

Thankfully, with the Wood in the Dragon, benevolence and peace will eventually come around in the second half of the year. As we head into the fall in the Northern Hemisphere, the economy should feel a more stable shift and lift as the world steadies and finds more peace. It's worth noting that in this year,

a year that we end off with Earth, it would be wise to clear out things from the past as we prepare for the future.

Moreover, ensure you have the tools this year that bring about stability and peace within you.

If there was a windstorm around you, what is it that you do or need to do to create groundedness, peace within, and a protective Wèi-Defensive Qì bubble or a Jade curtain around you? These tools are important to learn this year as we transition in an Earth year, and from one cycle to another.

Speaking of cycles, in 2024 while it is a 3-Wood star year (still action oriented), at the Solar start of February 4, 2024, we begin a new 20-year Flying Star Feng Shui cycle of the Age of 9 Fire/Li. The Age of 9 is a time of Fire and the Young Woman. While this is not a Feng Shui article, I mention this so you can take note we are entering into a time of a big shift, a new era, a new age. Look at how technology and social media has already changed how we live, learn, and connect with the rest of the world the past 20 years. Expect more of that and a momentous change to our way of living and being, especially in 2025 and beyond. And with that, I'm reminding you to use your tools to stay grounded with all that Fire flickering and flaring. Remember, Fire creates joy, invention, inspiration, love, and motivation, yet it is also temperamental, moody, and inattentive, and prone to burnout and Shen disruption. Even though I make a small mention of this Age of 9, Fire and the new 20-year cycle here, this is a significant event that kicks off this year to the change and transformation it will bring. Be compassionate, flexible, and tolerant, and may you have a smooth flight!



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Fellow Chinese medicine practitioners, as you know, (Yang) Wood is associated with the Wood organ channels of the Liver and Gallbladder. More specifically, this is the Gallbladder organ channel system. That may mean if Yang Wood is not good for a person or creates excessive Wood, then more migraines and headaches may come about as an example. Or we may have more mood disturbance, trouble sleeping, and body temperature regulation problems, since 20 of the 44 acupoints of the Gallbladder Foot Shaoyang organ channel system are on the head making the Gallbladder in Channel theory (the original way acupuncture is practiced) an important mood/head/Shen regulator for the body, mind, and spirit. Hang on, we also have Earth present and impacted this year! While this may be good for those who have a truly weak Earth system, remember this Earth is being controlled by Wood. Hence you may still see digestive problems rise this year. Offset this Wood-Earth controlling cycle with the Wǔ Xíng 五行 Five-phase law of the Tōng Guān 通關 (simp. 通关), the gate to pass or the bridge to smooth out the conflict. In this case, I mentioned the Tōng Guān 通關 (simp. 通关) earlier in this article. It is Huǒ-Fire 火. Fire globally, when we are dealing with a Wood-Earth conflict, would be infusing love, compassion, joy and connection. Love & empathy will help save the day!

Finally, I'll end with something I think is one of the most useful things about Chinese astrology. That is, understanding people better, and how to interact better with your patient/partner/child/friend/sibling/colleague. After all, this is partly an Earth year which is related to the human factor. Think for a moment. How would things change for you if you knew that your partner's Rì Yuán-Day Master 日元 (core constitutional self) is a Wood self? Wood self people tend to move or tense up quickly if they are stagnant in body and mind, they need a vision or plan, and they get things done fast (sometimes too fast). They asked you what they could do to help with their health outcomes. And you said to them, don't eat this and that, and meditate. Asking a strong/excessive Wood person to sit still for a long



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time is laughable to all of us professional Chinese astrologers! Are you laughing with me?!? Instead, they need output, motivation, and purpose to create and control. They need Fire and Earth phases. To help them transform and utilize their energy, give them an inspiring task to do. Most importantly, I'm encouraging you to remember that the year of one's birth has the least impact on someone's personality and destiny. Like Western astrology, the Month pillar is very important; in Chinese astrology, the Day pillar is most important.

As I wrap up and leave you with the dregs of your tea, I'd like you to remember these things. It's a bold year. Conflict and impatience may arise; however, Wood is about growth, learning and benevolence, and Earth is about grounded stabilization. Enlightenment, vision, and peace will come about

and along the way in the midst of the destabilization. Infuse Fire's love, compassion, joy, and warmth to bridge the gap of conflict. Find your own tools to ground and replenish yourself, your strength within and your Wèi-Defensive Qì globe around you. Know your helpful elements/phases and know yourself and others to bring about compassion. Transform and move past your past. Bring those things to an end and prepare for the new era of light and inspiration we are flying into for the next 20 years. Be a part of continued benevolent change collectively by amplifying the good and the positive force of the Dragon's drive to ground, survive and thrive into a kind and grounded world.

May you have good Qì flow, and many blessings to you all!

- Dr. Sonia F. Tan



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sonia F. Tan

R.Ac, R.TCM.P, DAOM (degree), BA, BA(H), Certified Astrology and Feng Shui Practitioner, Doctor of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine (DAOM degree)

Sonia Tan is a Canadian born of Chinese descent, and a second-generation Chinese Metaphysician, following in the footsteps of her grandfather, the late Woon-Yew Tan. She is certified and practices in the fields of Traditional & Classical Chinese Medicine (TCM & CCM) and Acupuncture, Balance Acupuncture, Chinese Astrology, Chinese Face Reading, and Classical Feng Shui. A Doctor of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (a degree specializing in Integrative Medicine-Healthy

Aging & Longevity), a Registered Acupuncturist and Registered TCM Practitioner, Sonia is also a direct and first graduating class disciple of the late Grandmaster Dr. Richard Teh-Fu Tan. His most advanced level courses, after all Balance Method levels, were first completed by a group of 16 senior students. Sonia was among those 16. Sonia Tan is the Founder & Clinic Director of the award-winning Red Tree Wellness Inc, and the Founder & Principal of the Tan Academy of Balance Inc.

Sonia Tan has been a Certified Feng Shui and Astrology practitioner since 2011. Sonia explored the fields of Chinese Metaphysics, External & Internal Martial Arts from a young age to find guidance on the challenges in her life. She discovered an abundance of wisdom and enlightenment of body, mind, and spirit. In keeping with the spirit of Chinese Metaphysics, Sonia is happy to continue to help guide people in the ebbs and flows of life, with the wisdom of the Chinese, and the knowledge of nature and the Heavens.

Introducing MRM's New Volunteer Editor Panel Members

PHOTO: Kristjan Kotar for Unsplash.com

In November 2023, Medicinal Roots Magazine welcomed three new members to its volunteer editorial panel. Members of this panel are integral to each issue as they are responsible for working with authors to improve the clarity, coherence, consistency, and correctness of every submission we receive for publication.

MRM asked each new member to answer the following question:

What inspired you to be part of MRM's volunteer editorial panel?

Get to know our new editors better by reading their responses to this question.

Care Motika

My inspiration to join the editorial panel came from my love of the magazine and the field

of Chinese Medicine. It was an important opportunity to support the Medicinal Roots mission and the community they have built. Furthermore, the value of Chinese medicine can provide a way for people to feel informed and interconnected in this time of great uncertainty.

- Care Motika



Continued...

Antonella Turchiaro

I was inspired to join MRM's volunteer editorial panel for various reasons. MRM provides practitioners with a platform that contributes to our continuous learning and professional growth. It offers a balance of historical TCM foundations, while embracing the modern advancements that help to streamline its application. Being part of the MRM volunteer editorial panel provides the opportunity to engage with diverse perspectives on TCM, all while actively supporting both its deepening understanding of foundations and fundamental principles. My enthusiasm and passion for TCM is my driving force in helping MRM contribute to the circulation of informative TCM content.

I am very excited to be part of the team!

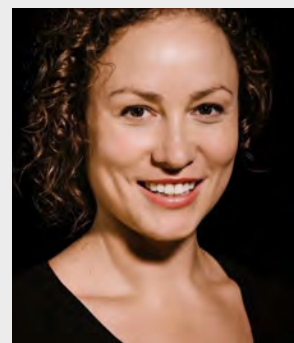
- Antonella Turchiaro



Dayna Tietzen

I completed my education in Toronto, started my practice in BC, and have since returned to Ontario. Having experienced the variations in our profession between provinces, I believe it is crucial to broaden our conversations beyond our immediate communities. This enables us to continually learn from one another and collectively advance TCM. Working with MRM allows me to actively contribute to that shared value.

- Dayna Tietzen



*Thank you, and welcome
to the Medicinal Roots
Magazine team!*

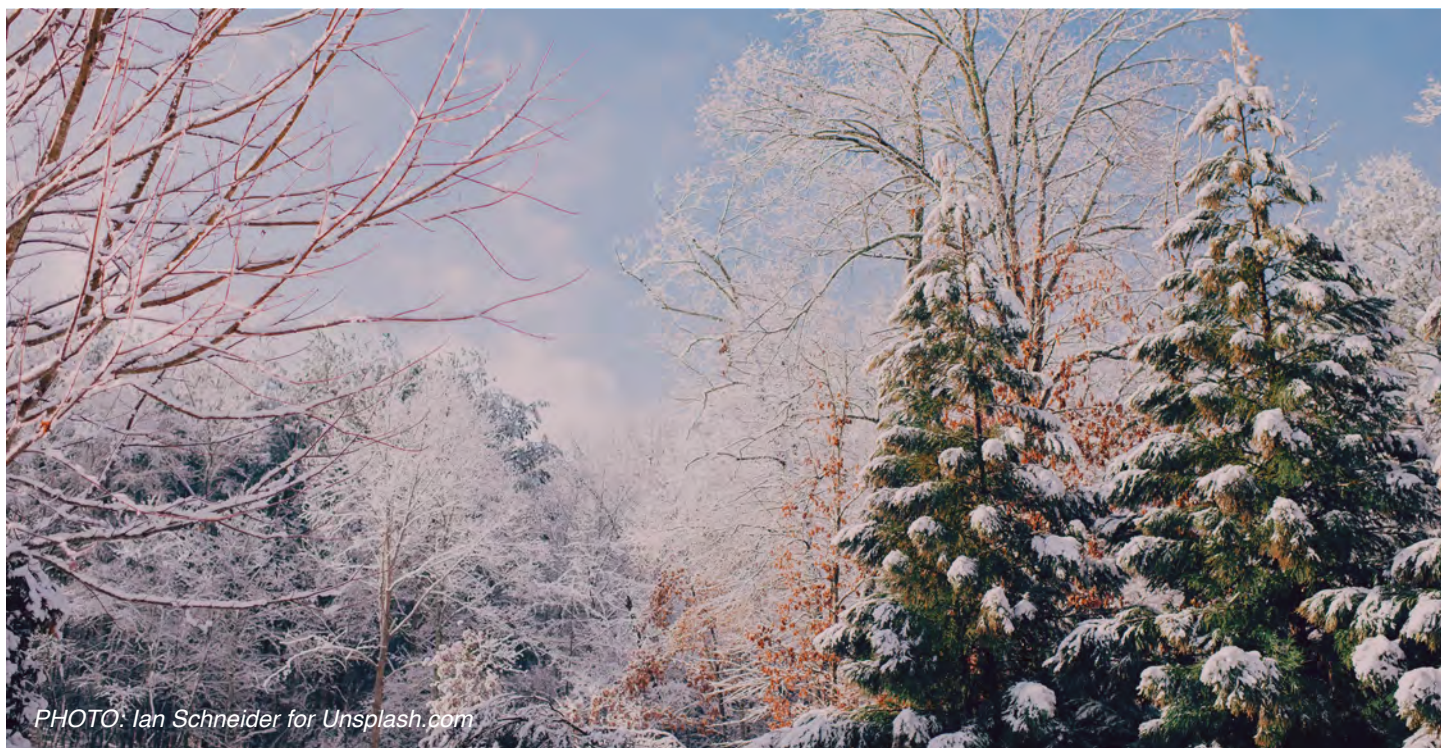


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Fall and Winter Planting of Chinese Medicinal Herbs

PHOTO: Matt Palmer for Unsplash.com

by **Dr. Lily Chunling Liu, Ph.D., M.Sc.**

The ideal time for planting various plants depends on plant species, local climate and specific growing conditions.

While many plants are traditionally planted in spring, some plant species thrive when planting in fall and winter. There are several benefits associated with fall and winter planting:

1. Promoting Root Growth:

In winter, plants undergo a dormant phase where energy is redirected towards root development rather than above-ground growth. This redirection of energy allows the plant to establish its root system before the active growing phase. Early root establishment provides a strong foundation for the plant, enhancing its ability to absorb water and nutrients from the soil.

2. Less Stress of Water:

Cooler temperatures reduce transpiration rates. Plants experience less water stress with reduced water requirements. Cool temperatures often result in higher soil moisture retention. Planting during fall and winter ensures that newly established plants have access to sufficient moisture, promoting their survival and early growth.

3. Adaptation to Winter Conditions:

Fall and winter planting allows plants to take advantage of the unique conditions and adapt to the cold, ensuring their ability to thrive when temperatures rise. Fall and winter planted plants have more time to acclimate to the soil and weather conditions before the onset of the growing season, which can lead to healthier and more resilient plants.

4. Extended Growing Seasons:

Planting in fall and winter extends the growing season for plants that are capable of sustained growth during winter. Plants have a longer period to photosynthesize and accumulate resources, resulting in strong growth when spring arrives.

5. Reduced Pests and Diseases:

Many pests and diseases are less active in fall and winter, providing a more favorable environment for young plants to establish without constant threat.

Certain plants' suitability for fall and winter planting is governed by diverse physiological and environmental mechanisms. Plants adapted to cool-season growth have evolved resilient mechanisms to withstand colder temperatures. Planting in fall and winter aligns with their natural growth cycle, capitalizing on their ability to flourish in cooler conditions. For some plants, seed dormancy and germination are temperature-dependent. Cold temperatures break seed dormancy, priming them for sprouting under favorable conditions. Opting for fall and winter planting ensures seeds undergo the necessary chilling period, fostering uniform and successful germination when temperatures become warm.

Cultivating specific Chinese medicinal plants during the fall and winter seasons proves to be a strategic and beneficial approach. Planting during these seasons not only promotes optimal growth but also enhances yields and survival rates. By taking advantage of the distinctive traits of medicinal herbs, cultivators can unlock the full potential of these plants for health and therapeutic applications.



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Here are some examples of Chinese medicinal herbs suitable for fall and winter planting.

1. Astragalus (*Astragalus membranaceus*, 黄芪, *Huang Qi*)

Astragalus membranaceus, a staple in Chinese medicine, is valued for its ability to invigorate Qi and facilitate tissue regeneration, aiding in wound healing. It is commonly employed for conditions such as fatigue with spontaneous sweating, persistent diarrhea, rectal and uterine prolapse, chronic kidney inflammation, body weakness accompanied by edema, as well as chronic ulcers and non-healing wounds.

Astragalus membranaceus, a perennial herb, thrives in sunny and cool environments, displaying robust cold tolerance in winter. However, it is averse to heat and waterlogged conditions, with high temperatures inhibiting germination and growth. The seeds of *Astragalus membranaceus* possess a pectin layer, and their extremely hard seed coat hinders water absorption, resulting in a low seedling emergence rate. Pre-treatment is usually necessary for seed germination, except when sowing in winter, where no specific treatment is required. It's advisable to sow *Astragalus membranaceus* before the soil freezes.



Astragalus (*Astragalus membranaceus*, 黄芪, *Huang Qi*)

2. Licorice (*Glycyrrhiza uralensis*, 甘草, *Gan Cao*)

Glycyrrhiza uralensis stands out as one of the frequently utilized Chinese medicinal herbs in clinical applications. It possesses a neutral nature, a sweet taste, and aligns with the twelve meridians, making it a valuable herbal remedy for body tonification. Raw licorice demonstrates the ability to clear heat, detoxify, moisten the lungs, alleviate coughs, and harmonize the properties of various medicines. Processed licorice, on the other hand, excels in tonifying the spleen and supplementing Qi.

As a perennial herb, *Glycyrrhiza uralensis* showcases notable resilience to cold temperatures. It thrives even in chilly winters marked by significant temperature fluctuations between day and night. Licorice propagation involves both seeds and rhizomes. During autumn, the recommended approach is to select small rhizomes, cut them into 4-5-inch segments, each containing 2-3 buds, and ensure thorough watering after planting.

3. Balloon flower (*Platycodon grandiflorus*, 桔梗, *Jie Geng*)

The roots of *Platycodon grandiflorus* find application in Chinese medicine, where they have been traditionally used to address coughs, sore throats from external pathogenic factors, lung abscess, chest and rib pain, and dysentery with abdominal discomfort.



Balloon flower (*Platycodon grandiflorus*, 桔梗, *Jie Geng*)

Platycodon grandiflorus, adorned with dark blue or dark purple-white flowers, stands as a resilient perennial herb with remarkable cold resistance. The seedlings exhibit a high tolerance, enduring temperatures as low as -21°C. For optimal cultivation, it is advisable to sow the seeds in fall and winter, leveraging several advantages such as consistent seedling emergence, eliminating the need for grass covering, and efficient moisture retention. The recommended method involves evenly sowing Platycodon grandiflorus seeds on leveled and finely raked land during the fall and winter. These seeds benefit from moisture provided by winter rain and snow, ensuring adequate water absorption and moisture retention. With the rise in spring temperatures, Balloon flower seeds will promptly sprout.

4. *Bupleurum* (*Bupleurum chinense*, 柴胡, *Chai Hu*)

Bupleurum chinense boasts diverse functions, including antipyretic, sedative, analgesic, antitussive, anti-inflammatory, hepatoprotective, choleric, antibacterial, antiviral, hypolipidemic, and anti-ulcer properties. Traditionally used in Chinese medicine, it has been applied to address conditions such as colds, coughs, hepatitis, and hyperlipidemia.



Bupleurum (*Bupleurum chinense*, 柴胡, *Chai Hu*)

Cultivation of *Bupleurum chinense* primarily involves seed propagation. The seeds have a strong outer coat. When planting *Bupleurum chinense* seeds in winter, the extended exposure of these seeds' sturdy coats to snow and rain during the winter weathering process facilitates the emergence of *Bupleurum chinense* seedlings.

5. *American silvertop* (*Glehnia littoralis*, 北沙参, *Bei Sha Shen*)

Glehnia littoralis, a perennial herb, is valued in Chinese medicine, utilizes its roots for medicinal purposes. It serves to nourish yin, clear the lungs, benefit the stomach, and generate fluids. This herb is employed in addressing conditions like dry cough caused by lung heat, cough with sputum and blood due to overexertion, and thirst resulting from fluid depletion in febrile diseases.

Concerning *Glehnia littoralis* seeds, their optimal planting time is in winter due to their sensitivity to temperature changes. These seeds undergo dormancy and are less likely to sprout under consistent temperatures. The cold temperatures effectively break the dormancy of *Glehnia littoralis* seeds, and subsequent exposure to warmer temperatures facilitates their successful emergence.



American silvertop (*Glehnia littoralis*, 北沙参, *Bei Sha Shen*)

6. Peppermint (*Mentha canadensis*, 薄荷, Bo He)

Mentha canadensis, utilized in its entirety for medicinal purposes, possesses properties that disperse wind, clear heat, repel filth, and detoxify. Traditionally, it has been employed to address external wind-heat conditions, headaches, red eyes, sore throat, stomach bloating, mouth ulcers, toothaches, skin sores, and itching rashes.

Mentha canadensis is commonly propagated through methods such as rhizome propagation, cutting propagation, and seed propagation. The ideal period for rhizome propagation and transplanting is from late October to March of the following year, with a preference for autumn and winter. During planting, rhizomes are excavated, and robust, disease-free segments with short internodes are selected. These segments, measuring 6-10 cm in length, are then planted in trenches. The roots are arranged diagonally in the trench with a spacing of 18-20 cm, covered with fine soil, firmly trampled, and watered.



Red sage (*Salvia miltiorrhiza*, 丹参, Dan Shen)

7. Tree peony (*Paeonia suffruticosa*, 牡丹, Mu Dan)

The dried root bark of the *Paeonia suffruticosa* finds application in traditional Chinese medicine, where it serves to clear heat, cool blood, promote blood circulation, and dispel stasis. This remedy has been traditionally used for various conditions, including eruptive rashes, vomiting or nosebleeds, night heat and morning coolness, bone-steaming, painful menstruation with blood stasis, abscesses, swellings, toxic sores, as well as pain from falls or blows.

While the *Paeonia suffruticosa* is resilient in cold weather, it exhibits sensitivity to heat. It thrives in sunlight but avoids excessive warmth, with a preference for sandy and soft soil, while steering clear of sticky and hard soil. There's a well-known saying: "Plant peonies in early spring, and they will not bloom until you are old." For the optimal transplantation of peony seedlings, late autumn prove to be the ideal periods. Notably, peony seedlings demonstrate remarkable endurance and thrive when planted in fall, achieving 96% survival rate during this season.

8. Red sage (*Salvia miltiorrhiza*, 丹参, Dan Shen)

Salvia miltiorrhiza, a perennial herb characterized by its thick and red roots, utilizes the dried root and rhizome in traditional Chinese medicine for dispersing stasis, relieving pain, promoting blood circulation, regulating menstruation, clearing away the heart fire. Its applications cover a spectrum from irregular and painful menstruation to conditions involving accumulation and blockage causing sharp pain in the chest and abdomen, hot and painful syndrome, swollen and painful sores and ulcers, restlessness, insomnia due to heart discomfort, as well as liver and spleen enlargement and angina.

Two predominant methods for planting *Salvia miltiorrhiza* are root and seed propagations. In recent years, seedling transplanting has gained preference over root segment planting. Research suggests that planting in autumn and winter can enhance yields by approximately 20-30% compared to spring planting.

Fall and winter planting success depends on selecting suitable species and adhering to recommended planting guidelines. A thorough understanding of these chosen plants is imperative for making informed decisions that optimize their chances of successful establishment during winter. Key considerations include your specific climate, soil conditions, and the unique requirements of each plant.

- Dr. Lily Chunling Liu

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秋冬種植中藥材 劉春玲

種植各種植物的理想時間取決於植物種類、當地氣候和特定的生長條件。雖然許多植物傳統上是在春季種植的，但有些植物更適合在秋季和冬季種植。秋季和冬季種植有以下幾個好處：

1. 促進根系生長：

在冬季植物經歷休眠階段，能量被重新引導到根系發展而不是地上部的

生長。這種能量的重新分配使植物能夠在生長活躍階段之前建立其根系系統。較早的根系建立為植物提供了堅實的基礎，增強了其從土壤中吸收水分和營養的能力。

2. 減輕水分壓力：

較低的溫度降低了蒸騰速率，植物的水分需求減少。較低的溫度通常導致土壤濕度較高。在秋季和冬季新種植的植物能夠獲得足夠的水分，促進其早期生長。

3. 適應寒冷條件：

秋季和冬季的種植使植物能夠適應寒冷，確保它們在溫度上升時能夠茁壯成長。在生長季節開始之前，秋季和冬季種植的植物有更多的時間適應土壤和天氣條件，這可以培養更健康 and 更有適應能力的植物。

4. 延長生長季節：

秋季和冬季種植 延長了植物的生長季節。植物有更長的時間進行光合作用和累積資源，使得春季到來時生長更為強勁。

5. 減少害蟲和疾病的感染：

在秋季和冬季，許多害蟲和病菌活動較少，在沒有病蟲害威脅的環境下更有利年幼的植物生長。

適應寒冷季節生長的植物已經演變出耐受較低溫度的功能。在秋季和冬季種植符合它們的自然生長週期。對另一些植物來說，種子的休眠和萌發是依賴溫度的。低溫打破了種子的休眠，為它們在有利條件下發芽做好了準備，有助於在溫度升高時實現均勻而成功的發芽。

在秋季和冬季種植某些特定的中草藥植物被證明是一種策略性且有益的方法。在這些季節種植不僅促進了最佳的生長，還提高了產量和存活率。充分利用植物的獨特特性，發揮這些植物藥用方面的潛力。以下是一些適合在秋季和冬季種植的中草藥植物的例子。

1. 黃芪 (*Astragalus membranaceus*, 黃芪, Huang Qi)

黃芪 (*Astragalus membranaceus*) 是一種常用中藥，其根乾燥後供藥用。有補氣固表、利尿、排膿、生肌等療效。它通常用於治氣短、虛脫、心悸、自汗、體虛浮腫、慢性腎炎、脫水、久瀉、直腸和子宮脫垂、體弱伴有水腫，以及慢性潰瘍和不癒合的傷口等症狀。

黃芪 (*Astragalus membranaceus*) 是一種多年生草本植物，喜歡陽光充足、涼爽的環境，在冬季展現強大的耐寒能力。然而，它怕熱又怕澇，高溫會抑制其發芽和生長。黃芪的種子具有果膠層，其極硬的種皮阻礙了水分吸收，導致幼苗出苗率較低。通常需要對種子進行預處理。在冬季播種，種子不需要特別處理。建議在土壤結冰前播種黃芪。

2. 甘草 (*Glycyrrhiza uralensis*, 甘草, Gan Cao)

甘草 (*Glycyrrhiza uralensis*) 是臨床應用中常用的中草藥之一。它性平，味甘，與十二經脈相契合，是一種有價值的草本補藥。生甘草具有清熱解毒、潤肺止咳、調性和各種藥物屬性的能力。另一方面，炙甘草在補脾益氣方面表現出色。

作為一種多年生草本植物，甘草 (*Glycyrrhiza uralensis*) 表現出對寒冷溫度的顯著適應能力。甚至在寒冷的冬季溫差較大的情況下也能茁壯成長。甘草的繁殖有種子和根莖兩種方法。在秋季，建議選擇根莖繁殖，將根莖切成4-5英寸的段，每段含有2-3個芽，種植後充分澆水。

3. 桔梗 (*Platycodon grandiflorus*, 桔梗, Jie Geng)

桔梗的根在中醫中被廣泛應用，傳統上被用於治療因外邪引起的咳嗽、喉嚨痛、肺膿腫、胸痛、肋骨疼痛以及腹部不適的症狀。

桔梗 (*Platycodon grandiflorus*) 有深藍或深紫色花朵，是一種多年生草本植物，對寒冷有顯著的抗性。幼苗表現出很高的耐寒性，能夠承受低至零下21°C的溫度。在秋季和冬季播種可獲得最佳的栽培效果，如一致的幼苗出苗、無需草覆蓋和高效保濕。秋季和冬季種植方法是在平整和精細耙過的土地上均勻播種桔梗種子。這些種子受益於冬季雨雪提供的濕潤，確保足夠的吸水和保濕。隨著春季溫度的升高，桔梗的種子將迅速發芽。

4. 柴胡 (*Bupleurum chinense*, 柴胡, Chai Hu)

柴胡 (*Bupleurum chinense*) 具有多種功能，包括退燒、鎮靜、止痛、止咳、抗發炎、保肝、解毒、利膽、抗菌、抗病毒、降血脂和抗潰瘍等。在中醫傳統上，它被用於治療感冒、咳嗽、肝炎和高血脂等症狀。

柴胡 (*Bupleurum chinense*) 的種植主要用種子繁殖。柴胡種子有堅固的外皮，在冬季播種的時候，這些堅固的外皮在冬季長時間暴露於雪雨中風化，有助於柴胡幼苗的出苗。

5. 北沙參 (*Glehnia littoralis*, 北沙參, Bei Sha Shen)

北沙參 (*Glehnia littoralis*) 是一種多年生草本植物，其根部用於藥用，在中醫中有重要的作用。它具有滋陰、清肺、益胃、生津的作用。用於治療因肺熱引起的乾咳、過度勞累引起的咳痰帶血、熱性病所致的口渴等症狀。

由於北沙參的種子對溫度變化的敏感性，其最佳播種時間是在冬季。寒冷的溫度有效地打破了北沙參種子的休眠，隨後溫暖的溫度有助於它們成功出苗。

6. 薄荷 (*Mentha canadensis*, 薄荷, Bo He)

薄荷 (*Mentha canadensis*) 全株用於藥用，具有驅散風、清熱、排毒的性質。在傳統上，它被用於治療外風熱症、頭痛、紅眼、喉嚨痛、胃脹、口腔潰瘍、牙痛、皮膚潰瘍和搔癢等症狀。

薄荷 (*Mentha canadensis*) 通常透過根莖、分株和種子等方法繁殖。根莖繁殖和移植的最佳時期是從10月底到隔年3月，首選秋季和冬季。在種植時，將根莖挖出，選擇健壯、無病害的段，每段長6–10厘米，然後種植在溝中。根部在溝中呈對角排列，間距18–20厘米，覆蓋細土，踩實，澆水。

7. 牡丹 (*Paeonia suffruticosa*, 牡丹, Mu Dan)

牡丹 (*Paeonia suffruticosa*) 的乾燥根皮用於中藥中，其作用包括清熱、涼血、促進血液循環和化淤。傳統上用於治療包括皮疹，嘔吐，鼻血，夜間發熱，早晨畏寒，骨骼灼熱，經血經痛，膿腫，腫脹，毒瘡以及跌打傷痛等各種症狀。

牡丹樹對寒冷天氣有很強的適應能力，喜歡陽光，但對熱卻較為敏感，避免過度的炎熱。

偏好沙質和鬆軟的土壤，避免黏土和硬土。有一句諺語說：早春種牡丹，到老不開花。晚秋被證明是牡丹幼苗的最佳移植時期。牡丹幼苗表現出卓越的耐受性，在秋季種植可達到96%的存活率。

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PHOTO: Adam Chang for Unsplash.com

8. 丹參 (Salvia miltiorrhiza, 丹參, Dan Shen)

丹參 (Salvia miltiorrhiza) 是一種多年生草本植物，根部厚實呈紅色，其乾燥的根和根莖在中醫中被用於散淤、止痛、促進血液循環、調節月經、清除心火。其應用範圍涵蓋了月經不規則，經痛，累積和阻塞引起胸腹劇痛，熱痛綜合症，腫痛性潰瘍，煩躁不安，失眠，以及肝脾腫大和心絞痛等症狀。

種植丹參的兩種主要方法是根莖繁殖和種子繁殖。研究表明，與春季植栽相比，秋季和冬季植栽可以提高產量約20–30%。

秋冬季節的種植成功取決於選擇合適的植物種類，並遵循合理的種植方法。了解所選的植物，優化它們在秋冬季節種植至關重要。考慮的關鍵因素包括：特定的氣候、土壤條件以及每種植物的獨特要求。

- Dr. Lily Chunling Liu

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Dr. Lily Chunling Liu
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Dr. Lily Chunling Liu is a Professor, Writer, and Specialist in Chinese herbal medicine. Her research primarily focuses on the cultivation of medicinal plants, the utilization of herbal medicine to enhance overall well-being, and the planning of medicinal gardens and farms.

Lily's contributions to the field are showcased in various publications and workshops in Canada, and her extensive research, including monographs, books, and research papers has been widely disseminated in China, highlighting her expertise in Chinese medicinal plants.

Lily holds a Ph.D. in Chinese Botanical Medicine and previously served as an Associate Professor at the Guangzhou University of Traditional Chinese Medicine in China. She also received a M.Sc. from the University of British Columbia in Canada. Currently, she is a faculty member in the School of Horticulture at Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

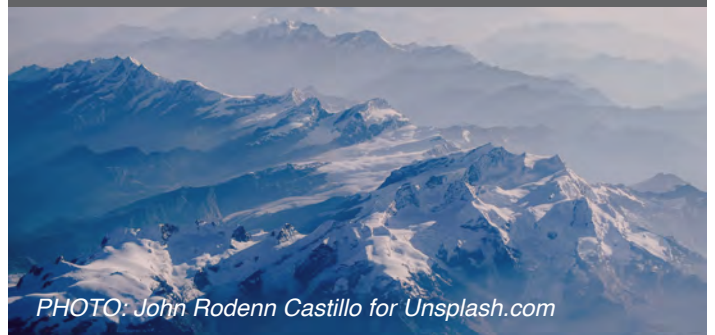


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CARB-TCMP Winter Update

Jennifer Bertrand
Executive Director, CARB-TCMPA

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The Canadian Alliance of Regulatory Bodies of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists (CARB-TCMPA) recently completed the administration of the October 2023 Pan-Canadian Examinations (PCE) for Acupuncturists, TCM Practitioners, and TCM Herbalists. The results of the **October 2023 examinations** will be available on our website as of December 15, 2023.

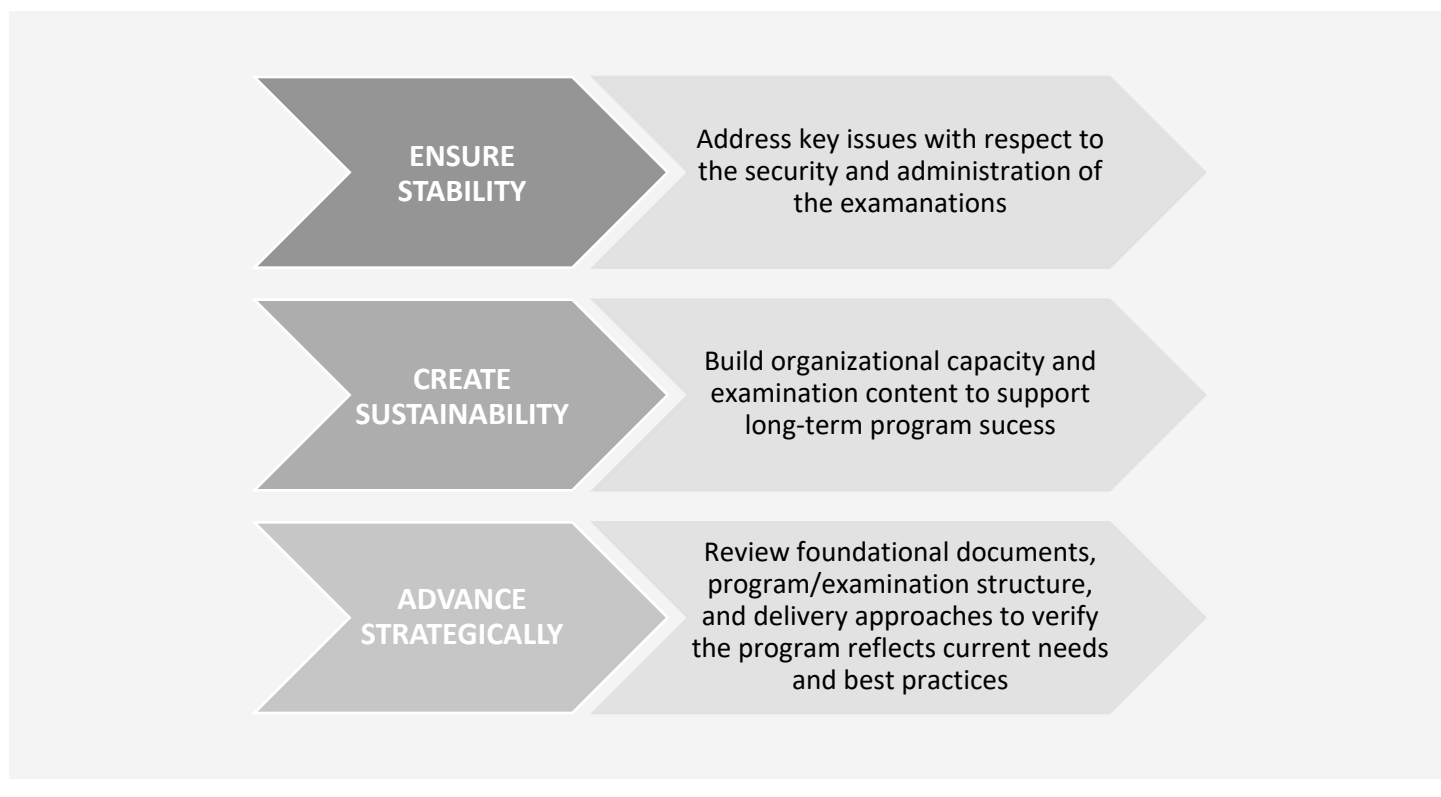
A total of 369 candidates wrote the examinations. The TCM Practitioners and TCM Herbalists exams were administered the week of October 2, 2023, and the Acupuncturists exam was administered the week of October 23, 2023.

Examination	Candidates	Pass Rate
Acupuncturists	219	77%
TCM Practitioners	103	79%
TCM Herbalists	47	91%

CARB-TCMPA has also completed an evaluation of the PCE Program, which was conducted over the summer of 2023. We are grateful for the stakeholders who came together to support this evaluation process, including our internal stakeholders—the TCM/A regulatory bodies, CARB-TCMPA Board of Directors, PCE Steering Committee, Examinations Committee, Chinese Examinations Committee, and Appeals and Accommodations Committee—and our external stakeholders, including practitioners, TCM/A schools and associations, examination service providers, and colleagues in the healthcare, regulatory, and high-stakes examinations communities.

The PCE Program Evaluation findings verified stakeholder interest in the continuation of a strong national examination program for the

TCM/A profession in Canada. The evaluation recommendations are organized into the following roadmap to support the ongoing success of the program moving forward:



To achieve these aims, CARB-TCMPA's implementation plan includes the following key activities:

1. Conducting forensic data analysis of examination results and online monitoring to support the security and integrity of the examinations.
2. Onboarding a new psychometric services provider early in 2024 and working with the new provider to streamline the examination program.
3. Hiring a new internal staff position for CARB-TCMPA to support examination management and the long-term sustainability of the program.
4. Conducting additional item and exam form development to reduce the risk of item exposure.
5. Scheduling a wide-scale competency validation study to assess whether changes to the competency profile and examination blueprint are required.
6. Exploring program changes, such as delivery methodologies, incorporating a practical assessment, streamlining the translation process, evaluating the program's governance structure, enhancing program performance monitoring, and reviewing all examination policies and procedures.
7. And lastly, developing a program communication and stakeholder engagement plan to ensure open, frequent, and transparent communication about the examination program.

We look forward to continuing this important work in the new year as we build on the strong foundation already established for the Pan-Canadian Examinations.

In the meantime, we wish all of our stakeholders a happy, healthy, peaceful, and prosperous holiday season!

- Jennifer Bertrand



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

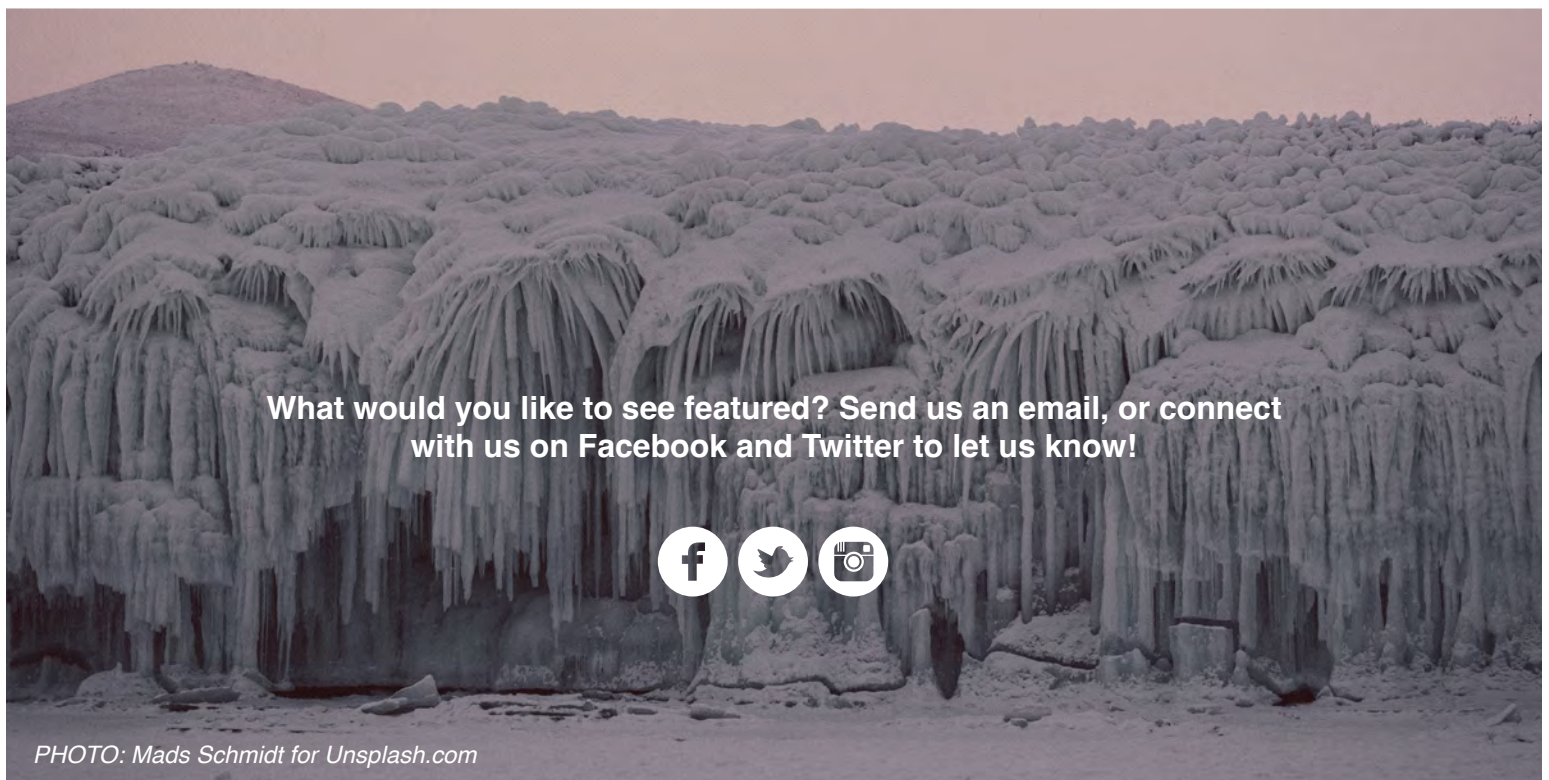
Jennifer Bertrand,
MA, CAE, ACC

Jennifer is the Executive Director of The Canadian Alliance of Regulatory Bodies of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists (CARB-TCMPA).

CARB-TCMPA is the national forum and voice of provincial regulatory authorities that are established by their respective provincial legislation. Through collaborative activities, CARB-TCMPA promotes quality practice and labour mobility across Canada. For more information about CARB-TCMPA, visit: carb-tcmpa.org



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Modern Medicine:

Acupuncture, Doppelgängers, and the Contemporary Existential Dilemma

By Russell Brown, L. Ac.

PHOTO: Ibuki Tsubo for Unsplash.com

In January of 2020, with the impending American election in mind, I wrote an article for this very magazine about how I imagined “2020 might be a challenging year” and how it might require us to flex new clinical muscles and shift perspective.

I titled the article “[Acupuncture 2020: Rising to the Challenge of the World on Fire.](#)” In January of 2020!

This was either a bit of prescient genius or completely moronic dumb luck, depending on how much credit you give me. I, like everyone else, had no idea what was coming.

Four years later, here we are. On the precipice of what will surely be another agonizing American election year, and four years after the bang of the pandemic, wherein the U.S. Surgeon General issued a medical advisory about the public health crisis of loneliness and disconnection. All amidst more political upheaval, mostly portending the rise of global fascism, the least of which is a series of truly wrenching massacres and impending war whose divisiveness is pulling apart what little cohesion was left of the world. The center is not holding.

And yet we are still asked to do our work; to make pain better. To put our fingers on the pulse of our

patients; to diagnose disease, and then to help people feel well, a concept which at this point feels entirely archaic or fanciful. What has become clear over these last years is that the disease which needs treating is all of it—the capitalism, the sexism, the racism, the imperialism, the digital existence of manufactured reality, the relentless onslaught of demoralizing bad news. The pain is this modern life. So, the question which I have grappled with for decades feels more dire than ever: does acupuncture still matter? What is acupuncture's place in this world—in 2024—whose institutions are more fragile and rotted than we could have even imagined a few years ago? Of course ameliorating pain, even on the smallest level, is helpful, but of all the modalities, of all the systems of health, why acupuncture, now? I think about it all the time. I hope you do, too.

I am happy to report that having practiced and taught through these turbulent years, I am more convinced than ever that acupuncture, and its foundational principles, are medicine for the existential wobbliness of our times.

But only recently have I come to understand their fundamental significance is beyond just mere painkiller.

Social activist Naomi Klein released a terrific book last year called *Doppelgänger* whose title refers to the mythological, literary, and psychoanalytic concept of the “mirror duplicate self”; an inverted anti-self which represents one's hidden, rejected, and repressed parts. Klein's book dismantles doppelgänger stories like *Jekyll & Hyde*, Jordan Peele's *Us*, *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*, and applies their themes to digital

existence and global politics. All the great writers (Shakespeare, Taylor Swift—yes, I said it—Le Guin, Butler, and Poe) feature them: a protagonist who is, without warning, confronted by a distorted twin, the same but opposite, causing her to re-evaluate what she knew to be true. The double produces a menacing panic and vertigo (à la Hitchcock's film about the subject), but simultaneously offers a new perspective and reckoning both for the protagonist and reality itself.

Freud speculated that the figure of the doppelgänger recurs in culture because the idea of duplicate selves stands in for the vast potentialities that our lives hold, and all the possibilities to which our imaginations still cling and hope to remember or integrate. The appearance of one's doppelgänger, Klein suggests, “means that something important is being ignored or denied....and that further danger awaits if the warning is not heeded.”

I have come to see that in addition to treating modern anxiety, acupuncture—the philosophy and perspective we commonly refer to as “Chinese Medicine”—functions as the doppelgänger to the disease of modern life.

Regardless of specialty or school of training, all acupuncture holds an upside-down mirror to the inescapable tenor of modernity and is fundamentally a critique of contemporary existence: the sheer act of “pinning someone down” in silence, stillness, and rest is a commentary on the normalization of stress and exhaustion.

Acupuncturists are an argument against the manufactured, capitalist expectation that every nanosecond be productive, self-improving, and profitable. We are a denunciation of the culture that has assigned productivity, velocity, and utility as the only commodities of worth. We are a reminder that there was a time before we all held mini-computers with all the known information in the world three inches from our faces, and then wonder why we can't sleep.

As with all doppelgänger, our presence represents potentiality; a parallel but countervailing viewpoint to how deranged and sick the modern world has become:

- Where the dominant attention economy trades in distraction, numbness and disassociation, acupuncture demands presence and embodiment and reframes them as purposive and foundational to health.
- Where grind culture views “rest” as the exclusive domain of the lazy, useless, and unsuccessful, acupuncturists deem it necessary, meaningful, and not a litmus test for one’s humanity.
- Where capitalism views sickness as a temporary aberration, relegating care to short-term imposition or extraneous work awaiting completion, we recognize the reality of chronic illness and the aging process, acknowledging that care is never “done”.
- Where conventional medicine views health as something exogenously and efficiently performed on or injected into you, we frame healing as self-generated, paced, and personal.
- Where modernity can only recognize the limiting framework of anthropocentrism and human cycles of time, we embrace the non-human passing of time which includes the totemic intelligence of seasons, plants, and the Earth itself.
- Where modernity prioritizes information, certainty, and didacticism, we prioritize mystery, unknowing, and awe. Acupuncture, like poetry and dreams, is a reminder that things don’t need to be understood to be felt.

Klein concludes that doppelgänger narratives typically resolve only when the protagonist surrenders to and embraces her double, shedding



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the separateness between them, finally seeing herself clearly. “What began as a form of self-defense becomes a form of self-release,” she says. Recognizing our double existence – even with a distorted, vertiginous twin – can quench our deep desire to connect, to enmesh into others, and to feel the edges of the self dissolve.

And what do we do, as acupuncturists? Precisely this. The act of piercing the skin with a needle is about breaking through the imagined boundary between what is outside you and what is inside you: creating a channel between what you think you are to everything you think you aren’t.

Acupuncture is a metaphor for unification, interconnectedness and wholeness.

It is suturing together self and other; that's why it's done with a needle. By poking holes through skin,

acupuncture denounces the impermeability of the barrier we all believe is holding us apart in our individual separateness. Acupuncture says: “there is no you, and there is no me. There is no wall between us. We are all one thing: the curiosity of the universe, given life.”

Acupuncture’s implicit goal for our patients is the same as the doppelgängers’: to resolve the disconnection most of us have adopted as our corroded default setting and experience oneself as an undifferentiated part of the interdependent universe without disassociating from it. To fall back into the tide of unmediated kinship and shared fate with each other and all living things.

For my patients who are entrenched in capitalism, white supremacy, and the myth of individualism, the perspective of Chinese Medicine can be destabilizing and threatening, like all doppelgänger nightmares. And for them, I am glad. I hope it tears their reality apart. They need more than medicine.



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They need new eyes. They need to see themselves through a distorting mirror. For what ails them, the only earnest healing must be foundationally anti-capitalist, matriarchal, non-Caucasian, and predate the Age of Reason. This is why acupuncture matters today.

I think about the hopeful and open-hearted version of me who wrote that essay four years ago. I don't totally recognize him. The person who writes this one is different: he is pissed, humorless, isolated, nihilistic, and despairing. A doppelgänger took the old one's place. I am fled down by another me.

The years of grief and compartmentalizing horrors—the least of which was patients being openly homophobic on the table while I tended to their pain—bore someone new who gave up on poetry and depth, who insists that words are meaningless (even now he is shouting that I should put down the computer and go back to doom-scrolling on my phone.) He doesn't believe healing pain is real and secretly thinks Instagram dopamine is the only real anodyne. When he puts his finger on his patients' pulses, his diagnosis is always the same: "Nothing matters; acupuncture won't help; everything is devolving." I feel the vertigo. Maybe you have, too.

But on some quiet nights, I choose not to fight him. I take Klein's advice: I soften to his rage and hopelessness. I break the skin between us and let him in. I recall why he is here: to reflect me back, that I may see myself clearly again. His distorted mirror re-members me: it sews me back to my softness. He is here to break my disconnection, not concretize it. I exhale. I need acupuncture like everyone else.

The last years have been hard, I worry about the next four. Klein is hopeful: "The known world is crumbling. It needed to crash. Now, in the rubble, we can make something more reliable, more worthy of our trust, more able to survive the coming shocks."

We can't go back. So we will need new eyes to keep going forward. We will need the counter-vision our medicine maintains for this world. I love being an acupuncturist right now, in 2024. I am so proud to hold our upside-down mirror toward the impending darkness for my patients; to grip it with both hands and watch as its refracting light radiates out in every direction.

- *Russell Brown*



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

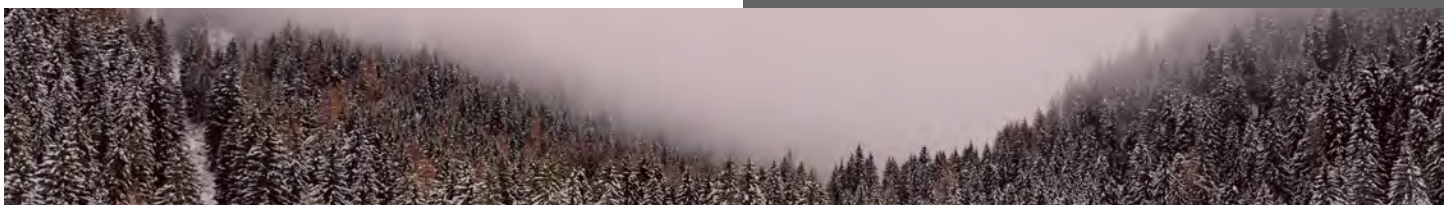
Russell Brown, L. Ac.

Russell graduated from the University of California, Berkeley and worked in feature film development before receiving his acupuncture license in 2007.

He opened Poke Acupuncture in Los Angeles in 2009. Russell has operated pro-bono acupuncture clinics for the HIV/AIDS community at the Immune Enhancement Project in San Francisco and Being Alive in L.A., and was the in-house acupuncturist for the Alexandria House, a transitional home for women also in L.A.

He was a columnist for the feminist newsletter Lenny Letter and wrote a book on meditation titled *Maya Angelou's Meditation 1814*.

Website: pokeacupuncture.com



BC ATCMA Update

All Eyes on BC Regulation in 2024

PHOTO: Nicolas Cool for Unsplash.com

by **Suzanne Williams,**
Executive Director, ATCMA

Welcome to 2024! As we forge ahead into the New Year, our attention is drawn to June 28, when a pivotal event unfolds:

the amalgamation of our regulator, the College of TCM and Acupuncture Practitioners of British Columbia (CTCMA), with three other professional regulators (Chiropractors, Naturopathic Doctors, and Registered Massage Therapists).

This amalgamation will result in a unified regulatory college. Additionally, we are anticipating the implementation of new legislation, the Health

Professions and Occupations Act (HPOA), significantly reshaping the governance and disciplinary structure of health professions in our province.

Although these developments directly impact BC registrants, they hold relevance for readers in other jurisdictions.

Insights from one geographical area often echo or influence changes elsewhere.

As of the time of writing in December 2023, we are primarily in a holding pattern as we await substantial updates and notable action from the Ministry of Health (MOH). However, during this interim period,

we maintain ongoing communication with the CTCMA, the MOH, fellow professional associations, and our practitioner community.

Understanding that amalgamation and the HPOA may raise concerns that are not yet thoroughly grasped by most practitioners, we acknowledge this lack of clarity. While the MOH hosts a FAQ section on the regulatory website, it does not comprehensively address all queries. We at the British Columbia Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists (ATCMA) and our counterparts in other health profession associations have numerous questions. Collaboratively, we strive to seek answers. Here is an outline summarizing what we know about amalgamation and the status of the HPOA, vs. what we seek to understand further.

AMALGAMATION

The Minister of Health has set June 28, 2024, as the deadline for merging the remaining regulatory colleges. What does this entail? At a minimum, each new college will have: a new legal name (more details forthcoming); consolidated finances; unified bylaws; a singular chief executive; and a unified board of directors. It does not mean that amalgamation will be complete, or that that we will not have anyone working in profession-specific roles at the regulatory level. There's substantial groundwork ahead! Amalgamation involves more than mere consolidation of bylaws and boards; it requires a phased transition in software and daily regulatory practices.

Post-amalgamation, representation of TCM and Acupuncture within the new college is expected to continue, albeit with a closer collaboration among the three other professions. Given that amalgamation is being carried out under the current Health Professions Act, quality assurance, inquiry, and discipline processes will initially remain unchanged. On and immediately following June 28, 2024, registrants may not see substantial changes in their daily interactions with the CTCMA.

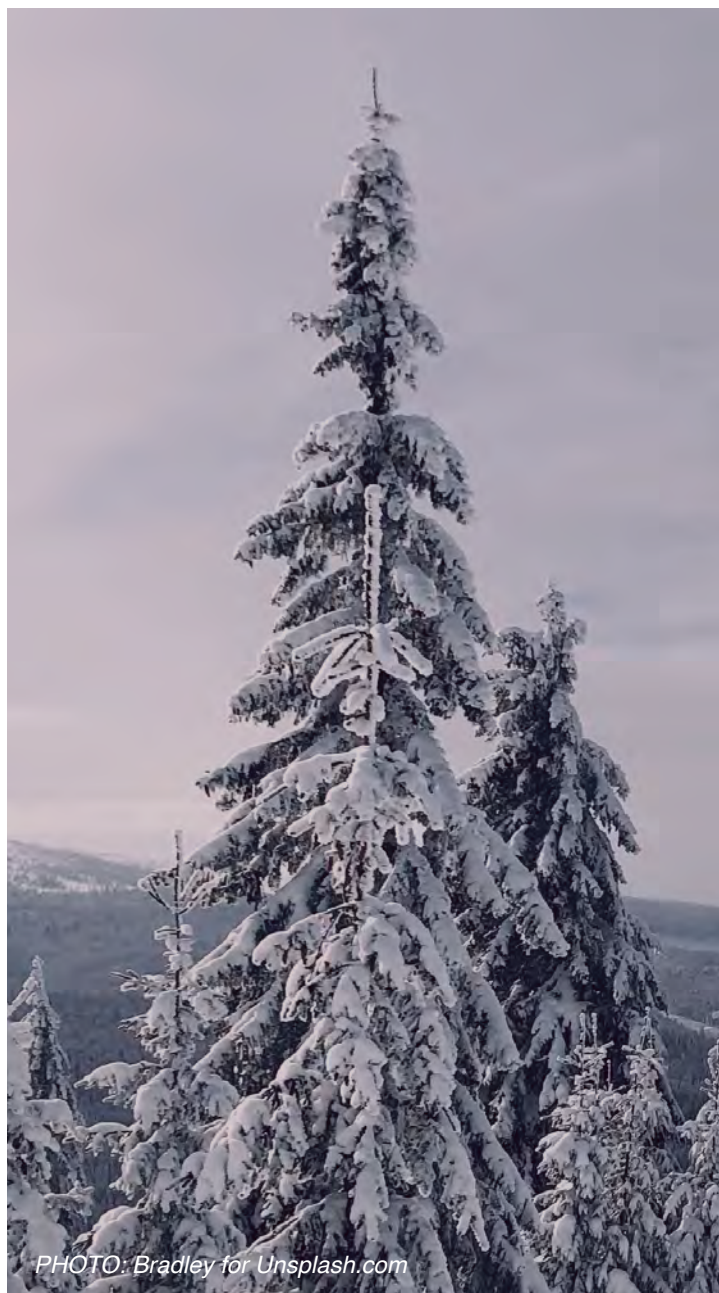


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Following amalgamation, expect a fresh set of College bylaws and a new name. Moreover, a higher tier of management senior to profession-specific executives will emerge. Registrants will continue registering with the CTCMA until March 2024, and licenses will be valid until March 2025. For the time being, complaints, disciplinary procedures, and quality assurance practices will remain the same. Scheduled exams, including the Pan Canadian and Dr. TCM exams, will proceed until April 2025. This includes the Dr. TMC retake exam preceding the official June amalgamation deadline next year.

Currently, the amalgamation progress is relatively slow. Allan Seckel, KC, appointed by the MOH to oversee this process, heads a team compiling information from the colleges. Future steps, such as merging the bylaws of each college, remain undefined. While some aspects will be straightforward, others might require considerable time due to the governance intricacies involved. The ATCMA is seeking confirmation on the incorporation of practice standards into the bylaws. We understand that the individual regulation documents for each profession will persist post-amalgamation, outlining the scope of practice for each profession. Updated regulations from the MOH are expected soon, but we have not been given a timeline and the nature of these revisions remains unknown. They could range from a mere name change to modifications in restricted activities or scope of practice. While existing scopes of practice are expected to continue, we have ongoing concerns about the review and modernization of the Traditional Chinese Medicine

Practitioners and Acupuncturists (TCMPA) scope of practice, an issue we continuously emphasize to the MOH.

Readers based in BC may have received communication from the CTCMA regarding the MOH's request for feedback on the proposed name for the new college: the College of Complementary Health Professions of BC. The ATCMA is advocating for a name that is more modern and more aligned with the nature of TCMPA work: the College of Integrative Health Professionals of BC.

If you're reading this before January 12, 2024, your input on the proposed name to the MOH is critical.

The ATCMA has a letter template that you can use to save you time and help send a consistent and clear message to the MOH. Please visit our website or email us if you have not received it in our latest newsletter.

HPOA

Similar to amalgamation, progress on the HPOA's implementation remains sluggish, though this is not necessarily a negative as all health professions have a long list of questions on the new legislation. MOH officials (not politicians) anticipate implementation after the provincial election later this year. As amalgamation aligns with the current HPA, further changes will be required when the HPOA is in effect.



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The delay in implementation is primarily due to the balancing of many moving parts as new infrastructure and processes are established. For instance, the Superintendent's office must be established, but it cannot take much action until the HPOA is in place, because it needs to have something to govern.

A hiring notice for the superintendent is expected "soon", and we continue to check the status of hiring. However, lingering uncertainties persist regarding the appointment process – whether it's as a government employee through conventional channels or via a crown agency appointment, which raises concerns about potential political influence. Clarity on the superintendent's powers and operational framework under the HPOA is sorely lacking, and we continue to seek explanations of how this new office will work once it is established.

Complete establishment of Boards of Directors at each college is also a prerequisite for full HPOA implementation. These Boards, in conjunction with the superintendent, have the authority to enforce practice standards and bylaws. It's anticipated that TCM and acupuncture will secure representation on the new college's Board of Directors, despite not being elected by registrants. The number of profession-specific seats on the future Board should assure equitable representation for each of the four professions.

CONCLUSION

The landscape of amalgamation and the HPOA is complex, so we continue to have more questions than answers. In our regular meetings with the Coalition of Health Profession Associations, the need for detailed information on HPOA timing and implementation processes is unanimously recognized. If you have concerns or queries regarding amalgamation or the HPOA, reach out to us! Misinformation is circulating within the practitioner community, and we aim to provide the most current, accurate information available. Additionally, the CTCMA remains a reliable resource, and we maintain ongoing communication to stay updated. Expect an update from the CTCMA

in the New Year, reflecting their collaboration with other members of our new College and the BC Health Regulators (BCHR).

In essence, the interconnectedness and intricacies of amalgamation and the HPOA underscore their complexity. The ATCMA is steadfast in monitoring all developments, advocating tirelessly on behalf of our members and colleagues to ensure our collective voice resonates. Join us today to ensure your voice is amplified!

-Suzanne Williams



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Suzanne is the Executive Director of the BC Association of TCM and Acupuncture Practitioners (ATCMA). She is an active practising Acupuncturist and TCM Practitioner in Vancouver, B.C. Suzanne graduated from TCICTCM and was in the first Cohort of Balance System Acupuncture students at Langara College. Suzanne shares her love of Balance System Acupuncture with practitioners as a certified Instructor with the Tan Academy of Balance. Having studied and worked in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China for over 12 years, Suzanne speaks and reads Mandarin Chinese. She draws on her career in business market research and consulting in China and Canada to advocate for the TCM and Acupuncture profession in British Columbia.

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