

Fall 2022 Arts of Asia Lecture Series  
Forging New Connections: Asia in the First Millennium of the Common Era  
Sponsored by the *Society for Asian Art*

**Ayurveda and Yoga in Buddhist Medieval China:  
Two Case Studies of Globalization in the Premodern World**

Dominic Steavu, UCSB  
November 4, 2022

**Key Concepts**

Nourishing Life 養生

☞ Bedchamber Arts 房中術

☞ Prescriptions 方 for curing 療 “physiological dysfunctions”

Spellbinding 祝詛 /Witchcraft 巫蠱

☞ Way of Seduction 媚道

☞ Prescriptions 方 for charming 禁 with respect to “affective asymmetries”

Eight disciplines/divisions of Indian Āyurvedic medicine (Skt. *āstāṅgāyurveda*; Ch. 八術)

☞ Ayurvedic potency therapy (*vājīkarana*)

☞ Medicalization of “affective asymmetries”

Silk Roads; trade routes but also Buddhist pilgrimage routes ensuring the exchange and circulation of knowledge across Asia, the Middle East, and Europe

*Daoyin* 導引 or “Guiding [breath] and Stretching [the body],” alt. “Guiding and Stretching”; Also mistakenly referred to as “Daoist calisthenics,” “Daoist Yoga,” “Chinese Yoga.”

*Āsana*, yogic posture (usually static)

*Thrul khor*, or “Tibetan Yoga”; in full *Tsa lung trul khor* ཅ་རྒྱུང་འབྲུག་འཁོར་ “magical movement instrument, channels and inner breath currents”

**People and Texts**

Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (trad. 581–682); illustrious physician, Daoist and Buddhist enthusiast

☞ *Essential Recipes for Urgent Need Worth a Thousand Cash* 備急千金要方 (652 CE)

*Methods from the Heart of Medicine* 醫心方 (10<sup>th</sup> cent.); Japanese medical summa based on medieval Chinese sources

Pehr Henrik Ling (1776–1839), creator of Swedish Gymnastics

☞ inspired by Pierre-Martial Cibot’s (1727–1780) “Notice du cong-fu des bonzes Tao-sée,” (1779) an illustrated account of Chinese *daoyin*

*Method of the Eight-Section Silk Brocade* 八段錦法 (14<sup>th</sup> cent.); Seminal early-modern Chinese *daoyin* manual and basis for Pierre-Martial Cibot’s account.

The “Daoyin chart” 導引圖 (168 BCE); early Chinese source on *daoyin*.

18 postures of the Indian 天竺 brahmanic 婆羅門 “Massage Method,” 按摩法 from the *Essential Recipes for Urgent Need Worth a Thousand Cash* 備急千金要方 (652 CE)

Zhi Daolin 支道林 also known as Zhi Dun 支盾 (314-336); Buddhist monk linked to Daoism, foreign community, and *daoyin*.

Wang Zhongqiu 王仲丘 (581-682); physician

📖 *Collected Records on Conserving Life* 攝生纂錄

📖 12 postures on “Brahmanic Guiding and Stretching” 婆羅門導引

Padma Lingpa འཕྲུལ་ལྷོ་པ་ (1450–1521); Bhutanese saint and master of the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism.

📖 *Compendium of Samantabhadra’s Intent (Rdzogs chen kun bzang dgongs ’dus)* (15<sup>th</sup> Cent)

### Suggested Readings (in English, arranged alphabetically)

Alter, Joseph (2004). *Yoga in Modern India: The Body Between Science and Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Baker, Ian (2019). *Tibetan Yoga: Principles and Practices*. Rochester VT: Inner Traditions.

Chen Ming (2007). “The Transmission of Foreign Medicine via the Silk Road in Medieval China: A Case Study of Haiyao Bencao.” *Asian Medicine* 3(2): 241–264.

Harper, Donald (1998), *Early Chinese Medical Literature: The Mawangdui Medical Manuscripts*. London and New York: Kegan Paul International.

Lo, Vivienne and Christopher Cullen, eds. (2004), *Medieval Chinese Medicine: The Dunhuang Medical Manuscripts*, New York: Routledge, pp. 165-175.

Mallinson, James and Mark Singleton (2017). *Roots of Yoga*. London. Penguin Books.

Salguero, C. Pierce. 2014. *Translating Buddhist Medicine in Medieval China*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Singleton, Mark (2010). *Yoga Body: The Origins of Modern Posture Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Steavu, Dominic (2017) “Buddhist Medicine and the Affairs of the Heart: Imprints of Āyurvedic Potency Therapy (*Vājīkarana*) in Medieval Chinese Sources” submitted to *East Asian Technology and Medicine* 45: 9–48.

Steavu, Dominic (forthcoming 2022). “Is There Such a Thing as Chinese Yoga? Indian Postural Therapies in Medieval China.” *Journal of Yoga Studies* 5: approx. 38 pp.

Van Gulik, Robert (2003 [1961]), *Sexual Life in Ancient China: A Preliminary Survey of Chinese Sex and Society from ca. 1500 BC till 1644 AD*, Leiden: Brill.

Zysk, Kenneth (2004), “Potency Therapy in Classical Indian Medicine,” *Asian Medicine* 12.1: 101-118.