

# The Road to Dr. Wu

December, 2000

It has taken over a year to travel this road, but finally we have arrived at the well-spring, the place where Mihdi 'Joon' has found the healing he needs through the kindness, skill, and dedication of Dr. Baolin Wu, a Taoist Master, and a Master of the Oriental Medical Arts: Qigong, Acupuncture, Tui Na (massage), herbal preparations, and martial arts.

My son Mihdi 'Joon' Brock suffers from a rare condition that Western medicine describes as progressive kyphoscoliosis. He was born over 4 years ago with a blocked aorta beginning at his heart, and his life to date has been a journey for survival. Although he underwent major heart surgery at 5 months of age, his heart was permanently enlarged with his skeletal structure forming and curving to accommodate it. Just over a year ago, follow-up x-rays and medical examinations by Western doctors revealed the extreme nature of the curvature of his spine, and the fact that it had increased dramatically over the previous 10 months. Any excitement that was felt because he was now walking was severely tempered by the realization that increased activity would likely put even more stress on his body, and his spine in particular. Having a background in Oriental medical studies, and because Western medicine had no treatments to offer at that time except for extreme surgery which wasn't being recommended by the specialists, I resolved to take Mihdi and search for other ways and means to save his life.



Dr. Richard Clattenberg,  
Mihdi's Pediatrician



Dr. Yeshi Dhonden throughout this time.

We traveled back and forth, criss-crossing North America several times, searching for a solution, and we encountered a number of treatment protocols that have supported his health. He has undergone two, twenty-day rounds of hyperbaric oxygen treatments in Vancouver, British Columbia.

For the last year he has been a patient of the eminent physician Dr. Yeshi Dhonden, former physician to the Dalai Lama, and has downed Dr. Dhonden's Tibetan herbal prescriptions three to four times a day



Sifu Share K. Lew

During this period, we also traveled to San Diego to consult with Sifu Share K. Lew, a Taoist priest and Qigong Master. As an orphaned boy, Sifu Lew was taken in by a wandering monk from the Wong Lung (Yellow Dragon) Monastery, a Taoist temple on Luo Fu Shan Mountain in southern China famous for its medical healing traditions as well as kung fu. Sifu Lew

treated Mihdi with Qigong. Thanks to all of these treatments Mihdi has grown, is now talking, and has survived a few very serious, to the point of being life-threatening, lung infections over this past year.

Then, in September of 2000, almost a year after the previous segment of our journey began, Mihdi underwent the next follow-up series of x-ray, ultrasound, and MRI diagnostics. We were alarmed to learn from the results that the curvature of his spine had increased by 2 degrees per month during the previous eleven months. While he had grown 3-1/2 inches and added nearly 3 pounds to his frail little body during this same period, this growth and the accompanying increased activity of being a toddler had only served to aggravate the increase in the curvature.

Our fears and concerns only grew as we consulted with Dr. John Emans, pediatric orthopedic surgeon at Boston Children's Hospital, about the results of these tests. He described the only treatment protocol available in Western medicine for Mihdi's condition. This entailed a surgical procedure during which expandable titanium rods would be buried between the muscles and the skin on either side of Mihdi's spine



Mom (Claire) and Mihdi with Dr. John Emans

with the rods being screwed into the sacrum, and attached to the upper ribs with hooks; it is possible that some of the spinous processes would have to be removed in order for the two rods to be connected. Dr. Emans explained that infections occur, rods break, screws undo, hooks loosen. It would be necessary for a body brace to be worn to help prevent such things happening from excessive movement; however, even with the brace, these can occur. Any surgical procedures necessary to repair such mishaps would be over and above the surgeries that would already have been

scheduled for every six months in order to extend the rods to accommodate Mihdi's growth. This could conceivably amount to a surgical procedure as frequently as once every other month.

Dr. Emans went on to explain that ideally this treatment protocol should continue until Mihdi's bones ossify somewhere in the vicinity of ages 18 to 21. He quickly pointed out that we would probably be begging him to cease these procedures long before that, likely around ages 7 or 8, at which time his spine would be fused. He believed the fusion would be necessary sooner or later with permanent rods inserted to stabilize the spine. This would result in severely limited mobility for Mihdi, and lifelong disability. Dr. Emans stated that if the curvature continued to progress at its current rate that it would be necessary to perform the surgery within the next 4 to 6 months as this protocol is not effective beyond 90degrees of curvature.

Besides the extreme "S"-shaped curvature of the spine, it is also twisted or torqued to the front which threatens to diminish his lung capacity. It was feared by Western doctors that Mihdi would never live to see his teenage years and would suffer a slow and painful death from respiratory failure if we did not intervene.

I had watched my mother die over a nine-month period as her lungs slowly and irreversibly filled with fluid. I will never forget the days of sitting at her side and holding my breath as the periods grew longer and longer between one breath and the next. It was always a relief to hear her breath, and then the fear set in again that the next breath might not come. I did not want to see my little baby go through this. And on top of

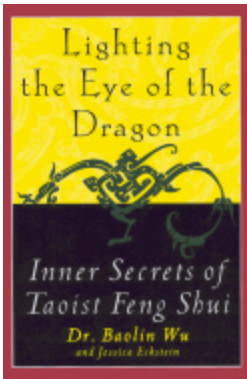
all of this, renal ultrasound had shown that Mihdi only has one kidney. So with all of these burdensome thoughts on my mind including thoughts of the psychological trauma that this treatment plan would mean for our beautiful little baby, I told Dr. Emans of my experience with Oriental medicine, and that I saw it as a modality of medicine that needed to be pursued before resorting to surgery if we should decide to choose that option. On that note, I once again took my little boy in search of where the best place would be to treat his condition.

Once again I got in touch with Sifu Share K. Lew in San Diego to consult with him as to the next step to take. Sifu referred me to Bai Yun Guan (White Cloud Temple) in Beijing, China, and said that maybe they could direct me to someone who could help. I put this out to Mihdi's supporters who were assisting in the research, and received an email one day soon thereafter from Raven Cloudwalker in British Columbia, Canada who was very excited about who and what she had found. The day before she had been browsing in a local bookstore when one particular book, *Lighting the Eye of the Dragon*, by one Dr. Baolin Wu literally fell off of the shelf into her hands. As she read the back cover learning that Dr. Wu, who was living in Santa Monica, CA, had been raised at the White Cloud Temple, she felt certain that this was someone we needed to contact; perhaps this was even the person who could treat Mihdi.



Bai Yun Guan (White Cloud Temple)

Just at this juncture I had decided that Mihdi and I would travel to China to the monastery, and the preparations of the necessary documents for the journey began. At the same time, Dr. Wu was contacted and directed to Mihdi's website where he could read Mihdi's story and access his medical records which included MRI, CT scans, x-rays and reports from the various Western doctors. After viewing the site, Dr. Wu's office called to ask if he might examine Mihdi prior to our departure for Beijing. I thought that this would be a great idea as he might be able to smooth the way for us, so an appointment was arranged for the 18th of November at 2:00 p.m. Also we thought it would be appropriate to get a letter of referral to the Abbott of the monastery and possibly some recommendations on accommodations in the area from Dr. Wu. On November 18, 2000, we showed up in Dr. Wu's office in Santa Monica, and he examined my baby son. After a thorough history and examination, he told me that the only person he knew who could handle this condition was no longer at the monastery; he also said that he felt that he could treat Mihdi if I would like.



I was somewhat skeptical and called Sifu Lew to see if and what he knew of Dr. Wu. He referred me to one of his students who lives in Los Angeles, Bruce Baptie. I called on Bruce and he introduced me to another esteemed doctor of Oriental medicine. When I asked this latter man what his opinion of Dr. Wu and his work was, he told me to listen to my heart. The following Tuesday, Bruce and I were to have lunch, but as I was running late, I realized that there was not enough time prior to seeing Dr. Wu, so I invited him along to Dr. Wu's office so that we could go to lunch afterwards. Bruce who is also a practitioner of Oriental medicine

was allowed into the treatment room with Mihdi and I. Being with Bruce was like being with a long lost brother, and he took to Mihdi as if he were his nephew. Having been a student of Sifu Lew for over twenty years, Bruce is very knowledgeable and highly sensitive; over lunch he told me that on an intuitive basis, he felt that Dr. Wu was the person for Mihdi. My heart had been telling me this as well, and his statement served as a confirmation.

As well, Dr. Wu, along with several other people, mentioned that Beijing was very cold at this time of year, and because coal was burned for heat, the city's pollution would be more than likely too much for Mihdi. It just so happened that Mihdi had developed a lung infection while flying to Los Angeles, and his condition was worsening rapidly. Within three days Dr. Wu had resolved the condition. This only served as a further indicator that we should give him an opportunity to treat Mihdi for a while longer.

Then, as I watched and participated in the treatments for my son, I noticed dramatic changes in Mihdi's qi level and his spirit. Before long, miraculous physical changes began occurring. Mihdi had developed a humpback on his right side which was continuing to increase in size prior to starting treatments with Dr. Wu. Dr. Wu used Qigong in the initial phase of his treatment of Mihdi, and then added acupuncture and Tui Na (Chinese medical massage) it appears. Now the hump has all but disappeared, as has the gallop he used to have instead of a normal run.

We are now nearly a month into treatment under Dr. Wu, and what I am seeing is nearly unbelievable. Having read Dr. Wu's story of having leukemia at age 4 and being put into the White Cloud Temple, I sense that Dr. Wu sees some of himself in my son, and the degree of heart and care he is putting into treating Mihdi seems to be taking a lot of energy. On most occasions, if not all, it looks as if it would be appropriate for him to wipe his brow with a, "Whew! That was work!"

Dr. Wu has prescribed that Mihdi lie on a hard surface with a thin buckwheat pillow under his head. I remembered my brother saying to me when I was very young that I would never ask anyone else to do something that I wouldn't do myself. So, with that, I decided it wasn't enough to just take my son to sources of treatment; I would submit to them myself. I, therefore, began sleeping on the plywood that covered the entire bed as well. It was very interesting because my son never seemed to notice the difference, and fell asleep and slept comfortably, if not more comfortably than on the soft mattress while I found it very difficult to sleep at all with only a sheet covering the ½" plywood. I remember clearly trying to find a comfortable position. We went back to Dr. Wu's office with me proclaiming proudly that we were both sleeping on the board only for him to say, "Make sure that he sleeps on his back." With that, my thought was, "Will I ever get any sleep at all?"



Dr. Baolin Wu

We have moved to three different hotels during our stay so far. In the most recent, we've been without the hard sleeping surface for 6 nights now, and I am afraid that today Dr. Wu, without having been told that we were not sleeping on the boards, said that Mihdi needs to be sleeping on them. Dr. Wu continues to amaze me with what seems to border on clairvoyance. With Qigong, acupuncture, Tui Na and

herbs, Mihdi is experiencing dramatic, miraculous changes – his hump has nearly gone; he runs instead of galloping lopsidedly; he can jump off the ground with two feet together now; his “lazy” eye opens completely now; his spirit has changed immensely as well as his strength, and he is talking with much more clarity.

Mihdi continues with these treatments with Dr. Wu, and will probably need to do so for a year or more. Dr. Wu acknowledges that if Mihdi were able to learn Qigong and Tai-Chi from him, that these would improve his overall condition and support him living optimally with his deficiencies. It is our hope and desire to employ concerted effort to facilitate this until Mihdi is self-sufficient. I feel as if we were guided here, and prevented from leaving in order to recognize that what we were looking for in Beijing was right here in Santa Monica. In light of what I have discovered about the cost of living in Santa Monica, Beijing seems to be a much more economical alternative except that the expertise we are seeking from the White Cloud Temple is embodied in Dr. Baolin Wu here in Santa Monica. Although this treatment protocol is still underway, it feels appropriate to express to Dr. Wu my heartfelt gratitude and my anxious anticipation of the resolution to my baby’s condition.

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