

FABLE

STYLE

40 PAGES OF
FASHION FOR
MEN & WOMEN

WIT

JULIE BURCHILL
IS ANGRY...
WITH US

DESIRE

WHY CHANDELIERS
ARE THE NEW SEX

LOVE

BRINGING UP
BABY THE
QUEER WAY

BEAUTY

PERFECT TEETH
HEAVENLY SCENTS
CHILLED SOULS

FANTASY

HAS TODD SOLONDZ
FOUND HAPPINESS?

In the Beginning

THERE WAS... ALEXANDER MCQUEEN, ISAAC JULIEN, BEVERLEY KNIGHT, ROLAND MOURET, SARAH WATERS,
MIRANDA SAWYER, DIANA VREELAND, PAUL MAGRS, ZOË WANAMAKER, MARC NEWSON



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W e think we've got it all figured out, us moderns. Our lives in the West are mapped out for us long before we are even born – school, houses, cars, friends and families – nuclear, extended or disco. And as long as everything is going fine, we're fine. But what happens when things get out of whack? What do you do when the demons of modern living start nipping at your soul, leaving you twisting in your bed sheets at 3am, wrestling with pains you just can't shift, hacking out lung-scraping coughs that never end, sweating through injuries that don't get better, and that horrible falling feeling of spinning out of control?

We have ways and means in the empirical West for curing our ills – happy tablets, painkillers, antibiotics and therapy. But now people are increasingly looking a little further afield – beyond methodologies that began in the 18th century, towards an Eastern system of healing that is at least 8,000 years old.

Robert Ogilvie has the strong, centred elegance of the truly well. This ice crystal blue-eyed forty-something is one of the country's leading lights in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and his treatments are the talk of London town. From his cosy Ladbrooke Grove offices the 80s fashion/pop photographer turned healer provides a haven where a heavy roster of clients (yes, some are famous, but that's not what this guy is about) can come and find relief from their ills. Testimonials to this man's skills with the needles are legion, but there are many ways TCM can restore your balance – not just acupuncture and those funny jars of twisty roots gathering dust in shop windows in Chinatown. As Ogilvie puts it: "The Chinese would say that there is a wheel, and herbs and acupuncture are spokes in the wheel. Holistic in the truest sense, Chinese medicine provides a discipline for almost every area. That includes diet and nutritional therapy, meditation, martial arts, tai chi, chi gung (a slower form of tai chi), acupuncture, herbs, feng shui and even astrology." Whatever it is you need to move on up, Robert Ogilvie can help.

TCM is about keeping the body in balance, and this is usually down to finding the connections between an emotional blockage and a physical symptom. The first session begins with a two-hour sit-down where Ogilvie goes through everything that is going on in the person's life. "It's a constant communication with the person's energy and you're always looking at where they're stuck – where there is work to be done. Someone may have a problem with, say, their liver or kidneys and from looking



THE SOUL MECHANIC

Robert Ogilvie brings ancient Chinese wisdom to thoroughly modern problems

Words by Michelle Olley

at the tongue and the pulse and the dietary patterns you can spot those imbalances way before a person gets really ill or develops any symptoms, and try to fix it. After that the patient will visit every few months to make sure nothing is going wrong and to talk about where they are at the moment. In a sense you are endlessly tuning the engine with acupuncture."

TCM doesn't just treat physical symptoms. There are sick behaviours that can benefit from a little chi tuning too. Moving chi (energy) is at the heart of the treatment. "Where the patient is stuck is where they should be growing," says Ogilvie. "People get uncomfortable on the cutting edge of their comfort zone. The comfort zone is the point at which you start to grow, that's the point at which it starts feeling difficult, when people retreat into their addictions and their patterns. As soon as they become challenged, and no matter how much they decide they are going to change, they always go back to what they know, which can be their addictions to food or sex through to drugs, exercise, violence, whatever. I'll take them from where they are stuck to where they can move. But really getting well is about becoming empowered, taking responsibility for where you are, how you got there and what you'll need to do to move on, and that can be made manifest in any area of your life."

So does it hurt, all this unblocking? "Every really good practitioner I've ever been to, their needles really hurt but it's not a prick pain. Acupuncture needles have the dimension of hairs; you could get one of my needles up the end of an injection needle. But when you're in there looking for the chi and the chi moves, then you get a sensation, that could be a bruise or a dull ache or it could be shooting electricity."

There are occasions when Ogilvie needs to refer his patients to conventional medicine – perhaps a brain tumour or an ectopic pregnancy, say – but it is usually when state doctors are not able to ease the pain that the soul mechanic steps in. This is a healing approach that treats the whole person, body and soul, and takes into account that illness can and has been culturally defined. So issues around sexuality can be part of a person's illness. As he succinctly puts it: "People have to feel free and happy about who they are. Any aspect of yourself that you repress is a dis-ease that leads to disease. It's simple really." Robert Ogilvie can be reached on 020-8969 5262. The British Acupuncture Council can put you in touch with a qualified Chinese Medicine practitioner in your area: 63 Jeddou Road, London, W12 9HQ 020-8735 0400 info@acupuncture.org.uk.