

Five times a year, Acem Meditation eNews gives you an update on activities, publications and developments in Acem International School of Meditation. The eNews also brings articles on meditation for Acem meditators and others with an interest in meditation.

Content in this issue: *In charge of her own life* *Review of meditation research*

Inga's struggle for a good life

Since childhood, Inga Cheng had known that in order to get where she wanted, she needed to deal with her own personality as well as external forces. This helped her keep up her motivation when some of her early meditation experiences were less pleasant than expected. And her perseverance paid off.

She has come a long way. At 59, Inga is now a senior lecturer at the prestigious Chunghwa Telecom Training Center outside Taipei, Taiwan. She is happily married and the proud mother of three daughters, who never cease to surprise her with their intelligence and social skills. "Can these really be my children?" she asks with a characteristic self-deprecating laugh. She has been practising Acem Meditation for more than twenty years.

Disharmony

Inga's life hasn't always been idyllic, and reminiscences of her childhood bring tears to her eyes. She was born in rural Taiwan as the oldest of six children in a poor family that was prone to conflict. When she was 12, she moved on her own to the city to attend school, taking with her a sense of inferiority and a belief that all the city kids were much brighter than she was. She learned early on to work hard to achieve her aims, and did indeed become the pride of her family, with the highest education (a master's in management) and the most prestigious professional position of all the brothers and sisters. Success, however, came at a price.

"I became a very nervous person. I often had breathing difficulties, headaches, and sometimes even bleeding ulcers. Medicine did not help me. I



Inga Cheng learned Acem Meditation in 1986 and was one of the founding members when Acem Taiwan was formally established later the same year. She has brought Acem Meditation into the curriculum at Chunghwa Telecom Training Center, where courses have attracted hundreds of participants every year.

knew I had to find a way out of my problems, and that it would have to involve personality issues. I heard about Acem Meditation when an instructor from Europe came to my workplace to give a lecture. He was very young and spoke in what to him was a foreign language, but still did not seem to be afraid of standing in front of so many people, in sharp contrast to my own anxiety. I wanted to make better use of my own abilities, and I hoped meditation would help. Unlike methods I had heard about before, this technique did not require you to sit in difficult postures or to get rid of all thoughts, and this suited me well.”

Cure

Inga meditated every day, but it took a while for her to experience beneficial effects. For a month or so she felt weak and uncomfortable – the opposite of what she was looking for. But she believed that meditation would help her in the long run, and that her initial resistance was part of a long-term beneficial process. And after some time she discovered that her physical ailments had indeed gone away. She was no longer seriously troubled by headaches or breathing problems, and she no longer required hospital treatment for bleeding ulcers. Most importantly, her personality also changed. She became less nervous, more emotionally stable and less prone to indecisiveness and ambivalence. Her ambitions were still there, but they no longer made her tense and anxious.

So why did she continue to meditate, if her basic problems had been solved?

Self and others

”To me meditation was not only about getting rid of these symptoms. I wanted to get further in my life. Meditation helped me to become a better teacher. I no longer lost track whenever a student asked me a question. I began to communicate better, and could sense that the students liked me better too.” This was probably one of the reasons why she was handpicked as one of the new administrative leaders of the training centre a few years later. In spite of opposition from the old guard, some of whom were jealous of her position, and in spite of her own lack of leadership experience, she managed

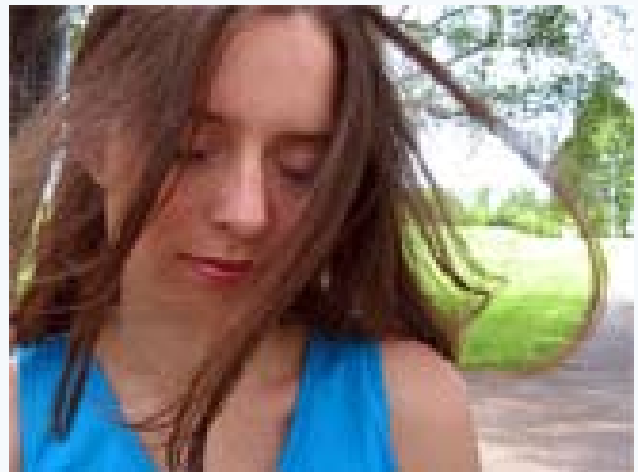
to restructure the entire educational programme.

Meditation also improved her relationships with her daughters. At some point it dawned on her that her need to control everything they did was not only a source of frustration for both parties, but also detrimental to the daughters’ development. She managed to give them more freedom and trust, and this yielded good results.

Later, meditation would help to increase her self-understanding and self-confidence. ”I used to blame myself for so many things, and this had become an obstacle in my work. Now I realised I was not so bad as I thought, and could assess my own strengths and weaknesses more clearly. I also became more sensitive towards others, even if my new assertiveness could sometimes make me a little pushy and stubborn.”

Acem Meditation gave Inga a sense of being in charge of her own life, instead of being pushed in all directions by other people.

Easy to learn



At beginner’s courses in Acem Meditation, trained instructors with long experience will teach you how to use one of the best tools available for effective stress management and personal development. For more than 40 years, Acem has developed its own psychology of meditation, and no religion or mysticism is involved.

Visit acem.com for more info.



Review of meditation research

In a recent large-scale American review of meditation research, Acem Meditation is referred to 31 times, and seven studies on Acem Meditation are evaluated.

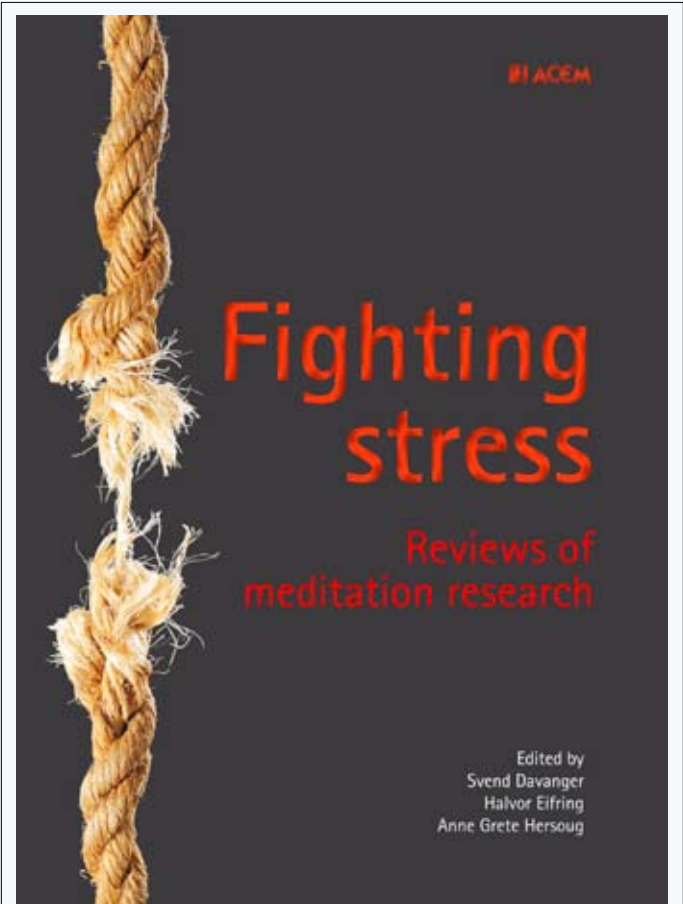
The 500-page evidence-based review, *Meditation Practices for Health: State of the Research* by Ospina et al. (2007), was put together by independent researchers at the behest of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Most of the studies are on high blood pressure, cardiovascular diseases and drug abuse. The review concludes that meditation has a positive effect on high blood pressure and other problems. The complete report is available on the internet.

The Norwegian medical doctor and researcher, Erik E. Solberg, a specialist in internal medicine, cardiology and sports medicine, has eight publications in the reference list. His Ph.D. thesis from 2004 is primarily devoted to the psychophysiological effects of Acem Meditation.

Dr Solberg summarises his thesis in the recent Acem book *Fighting Stress: Reviews of Meditation Research*. This book also includes reviews of other meditation research in a format which is accessible to the general reader.

Download the review:

<http://www.ahrq.gov/downloads/pub/evidence/pdf/meditation/medit.pdf>



Fighting Stress – Reviews of meditation research

Edited by Svend Davanger, Halvor Eifring & Anne Grete Hersoug

A must read for everyone who wants an update on what science knows about meditation today.

In modern society, meditation and yoga are among the most widely used remedies for stress. In this book, researchers and healthcare professionals with personal experience of Acem Meditation present reviews of current meditation research. Some of the articles focus explicitly on Acem Meditation, while others have a broad, general scope. The book provides accessible information on what scientific studies can tell us about the effects of meditating. 192 pages

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