

Cultivating the Ayurvedic Profession

In 1995 The California College of Ayurveda^{i[1]} (CCA) opened its doors with the commitment to provide the finest Ayurvedic education available in the United States and in fact, to provide Ayurvedic education on par with our colleagues in India. Today, nearly two years later, this goal has become a reality.

Ayurveda is the traditional medicine of India. Translated from the Sanskrit, Ayurveda means the knowledge or wisdom of life. While a medical science, its scope enters into the realms of the spirit and the transformation of consciousness. Ayurveda's fundamental philosophy is that disease is the end result of living out of harmony with our environment and in order to re-establish optimal health, we must discover where we are living out of harmony and then adopt a life style which brings us back into harmony. This simple philosophy takes the individual onto a journey which goes deep inside of one's nature.

Utilizing methods of care such as Pancha Karma^{i[2]} (detoxification), proper diet, yoga, meditation, herbalism, aroma therapy, color therapy, sound therapy and lifestyle analysis, Ayurveda guides the individual back onto their path toward optimal health. We relate to our environment through our five senses. When we have harmonious relationships, our bodies and minds are healthy and stable. However, when we indulge our senses in disharmonious ways our bodies suffer and disease is the end result. We make choices every day, our health is the end result of these choices. While the benefits of a proper diet are well known, we also make choices of how to use our other senses. For instance, each day with our sense of vision, we can either choose to look upon beauty or upon violence. Simply surrounding ourselves with flowers aids our healing process and strengthens the body and mind. Gazing at nature's gifts brings harmonious energy into our body. Looking at violence on television, movies or in real life causes our minds to become toxic. Because of the mind-body relationship, our bodies follow by becoming ill. We also see this happen when we sit in front of a computer for long hours or get lost in the concrete jungle of the city. Spending time in nature aids our body's healing process. As important as vision is, all of our senses are equally important. Taste, touch, sight, sound and smell bring energy into our bodies. If we take in harmonious energy, health is the end result. In Ayurveda we recognize that everyone is an individual and has a unique constitution^{i[3]}. This constitution determines what is harmonious for you and what is disharmonious. Not everything is right for everyone and everything is right for someone! Hence, Ayurveda is a path of self knowledge which guides harmonious action.

Becoming popular in the 1980's, interest in Ayurveda has grown steadily leading to the formation of the first formal Ayurvedic colleges in this country. Approved by the State of California, The California College of Ayurveda is the first state-approved college^{i[4]} for the study of Ayurvedic medicine in the country. Committed to excellence, the CCA offers a two-year training program which combines classroom education and independent study culminating in a six-month clinical internship, either in the student's own community or at CCA's clinic, the Center For Optimal Health .

The College attracts a diverse body of students from around the world. Considered the first clinically-oriented program of study to exist outside of India, the CCA program has been approved for its authenticity and comprehensive approach through Ayurved/Shikshan Mandal, a government-authorized accrediting agency in India. This acknowledgment allows these graduates to perform an additional internship in India if they desire.

Dr. David Frawley, the Director of the American Institute of Vedic Studies in New Mexico and author of Ayurvedic Healing and the Yoga of Herbs , states: "The CCA is the finest Ayurvedic educational institution in the United States. At a time when Ayurveda is growing rapidly, the CCA sets the standard for educational quality. Their program of study and internship have brought Ayurvedic education to a whole new level in the West. They are truly leaders within the profession."

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At a time when so many are taking a second look at how we approach health care in the United States, the role of Ayurveda should not be underestimated. The CCA, in conjunction with other leaders in the Ayurvedic profession such as Dr. Deepak Chopra, are challenging the way ordinary people view their bodies, their health, and the cause of disease. As we establish an independent Ayurvedic profession in this country, the impact that we will make will change the course of health care forever.

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