

South China Morning Post

HONG KONG - June 11, 2001

Hong Kong prepares to welcome an Indian therapist at the top of his profession, reports Catharine O'Brien

NARENDRA METHA IS THE GURU of Indian head massage, Blind since the age of one, he possesses a heightened sense of touch that he uses to its utmost during this unique type of massage.

Based on the ancient Ayurvedic healing system, Indian head massage has been used in the Indian sub-continent for thousands of years to banish headaches, muscle tension, eye strain and a host of other problems. Walk the streets of Bombay from the barber to the beach, and you'll see traditional head and neck massage being carried out on everyone aged from two to 72. The technique is still used by Indian women who believe regular head massage with natural vegetable oils keeps their long hair strong and shiny

"As a child in India my mother and the local barber used to massage my head on a regular basis". Says Mehta. Eager to pursue the massage tradition, he moved England in the 1970's and qualified as an osteopath, reme-



dial therapist, reflexologist and masseur. But he still felt something was lacking.

"The one drawback of most massage treatments was that they rarely focused on the head, neck and scalp," he said. So after researching head massage back in India, Mehta developed his own unique form of champissage (Indian head massage) combining the best of the traditional form of champi (head massage) with his experience as a practising therapist.

Mehta's Indian champissage goes beyond a simple head massage. It combines physical massage with a more subtle form of massage that affects a person's

energy centres (or chakras). By bringing the energy of the whole body back into balance the effect is powerful. Mehta has received worldwide acclaim as the founder of the Indian Champissage as it's known in the West. Advocates swear that 30 minutes therapy per week makes life brighter and better.

According to practitioner's the body's subtle energy passes through seven chakras as it flows from the base of the trunk to the crown of the head. Each chakra acts at both a physical and a psychological level and a dysfunction in any one of them results in knock-on effects culminating in stress and tension in the higher chakras of the back, shoulders, neck, head and face.

Mehta says that by physically massaging these energy centers, it relieves muscle tension, improves lymphatic drainage and scalp circulation, while also inducing wonderful feeling of peace and calm. "Sometimes when you help to rebalance the energy, for instance in the throat chakra, there can be a sudden release of emotion. This is because that that chakra not only governs the thyroid gland, but also influences powers of communication and the ability to express feelings," he says.

Energy imbalance can be triggered by poor posture, bad diet, pollution and a hectic lifestyle as well as emotional upsets. It can present as a stiff neck, eye strain and, in some people, hair loss (increasingly common in

women). Champissage, with its firm yet gently rhythm, helps unknot blockages, relieve tension and rebalance the body's energy, leaving the recipient energised and better able to cope with pressure.

Besides its psychological benefits, Indian head massage can help keep hair looking and feeling its best. When circulation is below par the hair tends to grow weak, brittle and dull.

These days the most common cause of poor blood flow is stress-generated muscles tension, which squeezes the capillaries and interferes