

## Discovering The Yogis Secret - Facing the cold

by Mayne R. Coe

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Travelers to the high Himalays of India and Tibet have brought back inceredible tales of yogis who, in sub breezing temperatures, can raise their body heat to melt the snow.

As Dingle watched these heavy blankets were reimmersed in the cold water of the lake, through a hole chopped in the ice. And the blankets which should have been frozen stiff within minutes, accordmg to Dingle, were quickly dried by the heat of the lamas' bodies. He was informed that one lama had been doing this for two days without recess and he saw that this man had melted the snow to a distance of 10 feet around him. Yet their bodies were at the normal temperature of 98.60 Fahrenheit. Madame Alexandra DavidNeel, in her book Magic and Masters in Tibet, tells of witnessing similar feats and mentions her own attempt. She tells of how the neophyte must practice breathing exercises, self-hypnosis, how he visualizes fire originating in the region of his solar plexus and gradually extending to all parts of his body. But she also states that the method of generating "tumo," as this mysterious heat is called, is a closely kept secret and cannot be learned unless one is personally trained by an adept.

F. Yeats-Brown mentions these practices in La~er at LaTge. Vincent Gaddis, in his book Mysterious FiTes and Light:, refers to the abnormal heat produced by some saints and yogis.

Well, the thing plagued me. If it was true, I figured there had to be an explanation and surely by now science had enough facts on hand to explain it. I made my first approach to the problem shortly after I had moved from Florida to an apartment in Georgetown in the District of Columbia. It was summertime and I had bought a cake of ice in order to cool something or other. Deciding to see what

it felt like to contact something really cold, I donned my s'wim triinks and proceeded to sit on the ice. It was unbearable. I got off that cake of ice in a hurry, feeling the problem probably was insoluble.

That winter, however, I tried again. In February, 1966, I put on my swim trunks, opened the windows in the basement and cooled the room to the outside temperature which was somewhere between -12~ and 2()o Fahrenheit. I had concluded "tumo" must be a dormant flatural body function which operates only with all the clothes off and that we have weakened our ability to withstand cold by wearing clothes. We wear heavv clothes in cold weather because heat is

conducted away from our bodies faster than we can produce it. Of course, it was not a question of temperature alone; the wind velocity also would de

Sitting cross-legged on a folded woolen blanket I got colder and colder. It helps keep in body heat hold the legs and arms close, making them part of a larger mass and exposing less skin surface to the cold. The blanket or all skin you sit on also keeps considerable part of the body surface warm. I tried to visualize as suggested by Alexandra David-Neel but all I could think of was that I was the

worst I had ever been. It was - . I tried deep breathing. I tried rubbing my hands over my face. I tried jumping up and My nose and ears hurt. fingers and toes felt as if they were freezing stiff. My body was

covered with goose pimples. I shivered and shook. How I stuck out for an hour I'll never know.

Afterwards the last I just felt sort numb all over. I kept telling myself I wasn't really freezing because that perhaps if I kept it up enough, visualizing fire, the "tumo" would rise, But the bone-cold drove out all other

The painful, freezing cold and the urge to avoid it led to a wild, primitive feeling. It was like sitting on the edge of death.

But I was determined. Apparently I was in excellent health and should be able to survive the ordeal. Cold, icy-cold, I kept thinking. The pit of my stomach stayed warm and I folded my hands below it and hunched over, letting my breath warm my chest and stomach what feeble bit it could. With heat you reach a point where, with an increase, you can feel no hotter; so with cold, as it lowers, you reach a point where you can feel no colder. My mind was concentrated on only one thing, the cold, and I was reminded that someone once said, "Nothing so concentrates the mind as a hanging." After an hour of this I hurried into a warm room. Shortly I experienced a feeling of great elation followed by tremendous wellbeing. I didn't sleep much that night; I wasn't tired. For two days afterward I experienced great mental acuity, increased vitality and my sharpness of sight (I wear glasses when I read) became almost normal for two days! There must have been great gland stimulation.

I still didn't have the secret; yet no cold, sore throat, flu or pneumonia resulted. I felt great.

Perhaps if I continue, I thought, I can gradually build up resistance as a natural mechanism.

The yogis claim that once "tumo" is fully aroused cold temperatures never will bother you again - as long as you don't wear heavy garments. They are able to stay in caves at altitudes up to 18,000 feet in the mountains all winter long. The temperatures drop to 400 below zero but they live without fires, naked or clothed in thin cotton garments, once they have aroused "tumo." I tried sitting outside, semi-nude, in the snow on a mat at 300, then at 200 and then at 150 that winter but I couldn't stand it comfortably for more than 10 minutes at one time. The following winter I had a similar lack of success although I was learning the effects of cold on the body and what I could stand. The third winter I had

moved to an apartment where I could sit on the roof at night without anyone knowing it. I spent more nights practicing. I increased the amount of animal protein and unsaturated oils and fat in my diet; I put on weight. I sat on a folded woolen blanket on the roof, completely nude, my legs crossed and my hands held below my stomach. The hair on my head was ice cold but my body remained warm to the touch. For some reason, I felt the cold at my fingernails and toenails. I

found that I could stay out longer when the wind was not blowing hard and that the lower the temperature the less the wind was apt to blow; that I could stand a 20-mile-an-hour wind at 300 F. for half an hour or I could stand a five-mile-an-hour wind at 50 for a similar length of time. I gradually increased my ability to endure the cold to one hour at 100 F. when the wind wasn't blowing. Incidentally, all this practice was done late at night when temperatures reach their lowest. Once when I was sitting on roof naked at 50 degrees a cold wind, perhaps at 30 mph, suddenly sprang up and struck me. At once something like an explosion hit the pit of my stomach and waves of internal heat ~wed throughout my body. Like a chain reaction in a then clear reactor it filled every part of my body. It was most pleasant and I knew if it continued I could stand any temperatures yogis could stand. This was a tumo, no doubt about it, and had taken a sudden cold shock produce it. It would have been impossible to experience it if had been covered by clothing. But then the gusts died down the excess heat, to my pointment, died with it. I knew then that it must be a chemical thing, that hormones must have been released, perhaps from my adrenals or liver, since the flareup started in this region. They had acted as catalysts, increasing to a great degree the oxidation of the fat and sugar in my body, releasing far more heat than normal, I theorized.

But try as I did the rest of that winter, I was unable to repeat this flare-up of body heat. It remained a baffling mystery; yet it seemed to me that the secret must be a simple one. I had made some progress, of course. I no longer suffered as I had the first time I exposed myself to subfreezing temperatures. I had become acclimated to the extent that I actually felt colder with my clothes on, walling two blocks from my car home on a cold night, than when I sat nude, completely exposed to the climate. This seems strange, but it is true. I came to believe that the yogi breathing exercises are not too important at the Washington, D.C., altitude, whereas in the high Himalayas where there is only half as much oxygen in the atmosphere, they become necessary to promote heat from oxidation of fats and sugars in the body. For these experiments, it seemed that you need only be strong and in good health. Diet is important. You must feel full of energy. It is hard to combat cold when you're tired and hungry. At high altitudes the red blood cell count may rise to 9,000,000 in order to capture enough oxygen for the body. My red blood cell count checked out at 5,300,000 which is quite high for low altitudes.

I studied books on polar expeditions, life in the far north, the conquests of Everest, Annapurna, without finding a clue. I learned from one member of the American expedition that conquered Mount Everest in 1963 that many of their Sherpa porters owned no shoes and walked through the snow in their bare feet, the soles of which were covered with thick caluses. I learned of the dangers of wetting the body at subfreezing temperatures, particularly in high winds, of how parts of the body can become frostbitten or even frozen without warning. I learned you can lose your nose and ears through frostbite; that if your cheeks get wet and then freeze they can drop away, a mass of dead flesh. All this frightened me but I cautiously continued my exposures to the cold. I was always greatly exhilarated afterwards. It was a great tonic. I confided to my father, a retired chemist living in Florida, what I was doing and he encouraged me to continue carefully with my experiments. I didn't dare confide in my friends; they might have hustled me off to the nearest looney bin. I was constantly fearful that someone might report a prowler on the roof and the cops would find me naked, sitting up there. I began to doubt that success was possible but I was stubborn; I wouldn't give up. A few days before Christmas, 1968, I suddenly recalled some-

thing I had read years ago while working as an organic chemist for the United States Department of Agriculture in the wool division. Wool is a great insulator of heat and cold even when wet. I decided to wrap an ice-cold wet woolen blanket around me that night, while sitting nude on my folded woolen blanket on the roof. The idea was disturbing but it might hold a clue and if it was unbearable I could throw it off and dash inside. I was torn between intense fear of the awful chill my body would be subjected to and the possibility of making a new scientific discovery. Setting the alarm for 4:00 A.M. I got up at that time, soaked a rather thick army blanket in a bathtub of cold water and carried it up to the roof. The thermometer there stood at 200 F. I

took off my wool coat and sat down naked on my folded dry blanket. Then I drew the freezing wet blanket around me. Only for a moment did the blanket feel cold. The wind was coming in gusts of around 20 mph and pulled at the blanket but I became warm as toast after a few moments inside. It was unbelievable. I didn't really understand it and it was a great surprise and relief to me. The

blanket gradually dried by the heat of my body and the outer dry air and wind. The blanket steamed and my breath made mist as I breathed. It was fantastic. After 20 minutes of this I quit and went inside. I was perfectly warm. I realized that at altitudes of 15,000 feet or so the air is extremely dry, the atmospheric pressure is lower and the blankets must dry more rapidly.

Furthermore, since the air is thinner less heat is conducted away into the atmosphere. During my exposure to the cold I was

aware that my pores shut up tight, holding some of the body heat, but this wasn't the case all of the time under the blanket; I was too warm. I didn't understand the warmth.

The blanket froze to the roof around me. The water that drained away on the roof's slightly downward slope made a frozen track. The water that remained in the metal pan in which I had carried the blanket up to the roof I found frozen solid after 20 minutes. I tried this with similar results for two more nights but dried only one wet blanket on my body each night. I decided to dry the blanket three times. The first time I wet it in the tub and the next two times I wet it with buckets of water I had lugged to the roof. I was naked but comfortable in the night air as I did so. I dried three blankets each night for three nights with temperatures near 200 F. and winds between 10 and 20 mph but I learned nothing about the cause of the heat.

Then it dawned on me that I actually was goading my body to more and more heat production with

the chill wet blankets on my skin. My pores were alternately closing and opening as I was chilled and then warmed by the flush of my skin and the insulating properties of the wet wool which confined the heat to my body and the air inside the blanket surrounding me. I knew I had the answer.

I had gone about the whole thing backwards. Instead of exposing the body nude to the air for extended periods of time to generate the mystical tumo you shock the body into heat production. The ice-cold blankets shock the body to a warm glow and don't conduct the heat away as outside air or immersion in water would. It is quite easy to sit this way for an extended time at a very low temperature. I had succeeded in stimulating my metabolism in this way. One night when the temperature dropped to 180 I applied the freezing wet blanket eight times to my naked body. I rewet the blanket at 1-minute intervals over a period of two hours. I noticed that my respiration

automatically became very deep, which meant my body was demanding more oxygen to maintain my body heat at normal temperature. I became warm as toast and remained delightfully warm, naked in the freezing air each time I resoaked the blankets. The roof was covered with ice from all the water but not within the area covered by the blanket. Later I tried it in the snow and the snow melted under

me. My body felt as if it were at fever heat under the blanket but it was most pleasant. I had generated the mystical heat at last and it stayed with me when the blankets were removed after drying.

One peculiar thing I noticed during all this - the odor of nitrogen oxides such as accompanies electric spark discharges was present when I removed the dried blankets. I also saw a blue electric spark about two inches long jump from my hand to the tin roof when I threw off my wool coat after seating myself crosslegged. It shocked me considerably. This seemed to show the drying woolen blankets generated a charge of static electricity on my body surface. As far as I can see it has nothing to do

with the heat generation within the body but it heightens the mystery of the whole thing.

My temperature, taken orally, dropped about two degrees Fahrenheit when I applied the wet blanket but dropped less each time the wet blanket was applied and rose to a normal 98.60 within a few minutes. The lowest atmospheric temperature at which I tried this was 100 F. Of course, the blankets didn't get as dry as they would have in the extremely dry atmosphere of 16,000 feet but they were well on the way. Except for the monotony and the fact that I became tired I could have continued this all night long. I no longer felt the cold! I was able to sit naked afterwards for an hour and continue to feel warm! I decided that when the cold air hit my naked body I received heat energy from the glycogen, a sugar, stored in my liver. My pores closed immediately and glycogen poured into my system keeping my body at normal temperature as it was oxidized.

Another night I sat with the same blanket, dry, wrapped around me. It did in the beginning shield me from the cold, although not too well, but there was no stimulation, no warm glow. I got colder and colder. Since under the wet blanket I had felt warm and comfortable with a delightful glow remaining each time the wet blanket was removed I feel this tends to prove that it is the repeated cold shocks that arouse the tumor. Of course, the wet blanket is also less porous and keeps the heat in and the cold air out better. I am well aware that hypnotized subjects, directed by a hypnotist, can lower or raise their body temperatures. Krafft-Ebbmg and Eichelberg demonstrated this years ago. Achieving it through self-hypnosis is another matter. I couldn't do it and found it unnecessary. Still, the yogis, with a lot of practice, may be able to use hypnosis to keep warm although I am inclined to believe that they go one step further and call on the last line of the body's defense against the cold, a steady and more than normal outpouring of hormones.

This has been a great adventure for me, pitting scientific knowledge against the accumulated wisdom of the ancients. And I believe I have solved one of the great mysteries of the Far East and am none the worse for it. No harm comes to you if you use nature's forces correctly.