

***Rabid dogs in the east: behind the patient's back***

**by Bruce S. Vaughan, DC**

***New York: Writer's Showcase, 2003***

***Paperback, 194 pages, US\$16.00 (plus S&H and tax)***

***ISBN 0-595-26764-5***

Dr. Bruce Vaughan, former president of the World Federation of Chiropractic, has written a first-person account of chiropractors' struggle for survival, legitimacy and licensure in the former British Crown Colony of Hong Kong. A graduate of the Palmer College of Chiropractic in 1966, he has practiced in this capitalist outpost in China ever since. The founding president of the then three-man Hong Kong Chiropractic Association, his career has involved a continuing confrontation with an entrenched, multi-tentacled bureaucracy dominated by political medicine. For those who know about chiropractors' quest for licensure in the United States, the thrusts and parries will be all too familiar: disputes over title (should chiropractors be called "doctors"?), resistance to referral, the arrogance of medical gatekeepers, social ostracism and the insult of boldface lies, confrontation in person and in print, arrests on various dubious charges, and endless political lobbying for legal recognition.

The opening chapter recounts the legislative session wherein the colony's chiropractors finally secured legal recognition, this after decades of opposition from an entrenched allopathic establishment. The account then backtracks to earlier times: Vaughan's youth (he's lived in England, South America and elsewhere), first encounter with chiropractic, his training at Davenport, Iowa, and his return to Hong Kong to establish his practice and the small, local professional society. Dr. Vaughan's practice-building coincided with his early political education. There were peaks and valleys, some the result of the colony's crises and tribulations and others the product of a medical domination of health care that in some respects more closely mimicked the American than the British experience. However, the flavor is ultimately unique, as is

Hong Kong, and the young chiropractor's crusade embedded him in various elements of the culture: government and its bureaucracies, the media, local merchants and the courts. As has so often been the case in chirohistory, patience and perseverance would pay off, although this is not so clear to the swimmer struggling upstream.

The influence of international organizations and events is related in sections dealing with the New Zealand Commission of Inquiry, the flicker of free speech in Peking's Tienanmen Square, the World Federation of Chiropractic's visit to Hong Kong, and the transfer of authority over the colony from Britain to China. Vaughan skillfully pulls this all together, and helps us to understand how the individual threads weave through the broader tapestry. As he suggests, the chiropractors' experience in Hong Kong offers an "accelerated version" of the profession's journey through the last century: a microcosm of the broader chiropractic yarn.

What may come as a surprise to insular American DCs is that much of this saga unfolds after 1974, when Louisiana became the last state to authorize the practice of chiropractic. What makes this book special is Bruce Vaughan's skill as a raconteur. Written in a very reader-friendly style, Dr. Vaughan tells us enough about himself to make his professional crusade vivid and understandable. He spices the text with anecdotes and perspectives that carry the reader along willingly through drudgery and crisis. Vaughan balances the frustration inherent in this tale with a frequently dry and subtle humor that hints at his British roots.

The book is interesting also for the glimpses it offers of Hong Kong and its evolution during the past 35 years. Chiropractors and historians will value this work for its detail and documentation of the quest for legitimacy in this little bit of England in Asia. Offered in paperback at very modest price, one can't go wrong: a good read.

Joseph C. Keating, Jr., PhD  
Phoenix, Arizona

***Your Child's Best Shot:  
A Parent's Guide to Vaccination***  
**Ronald Gold, MD, MPH Second Edition**  
**Canadian Pediatric Society, 2002**  
**Softcover, 334 pages, \$19.95**  
**ISBN 0-9682409-6-8 (English)**  
**ISBN 0-9682409-7-6 (French)**

Your Child's Best Shot acknowledges very quickly, in its introduction in fact, that there is a "wealth of misinformation" out there on the topic of vaccines. It sets about to help dispel many of the myths and, in many ways, it seems to be one of the most fair and balanced books I've managed to encounter on the subject.

Granted, it's from the Canadian Pediatric Society – don't expect it to be anti-vaccine in any way. You can expect it, however, to be fair and balanced, more than I had expected before reading it.

It's organized well, and infinitely readable. It is, as it admits, "written for parents, not for doctors and scientists," and some will find it simplistic and perhaps a bit too basic, but it does cover the most important points, and leaves out very little.

The first chapter does a fair job of making the complex immune system understandable to even the most uninitiated of readers. Chapter Two then discusses the surveillance systems in place to monitor the safety and efficacy of vaccines.

The next thirteen chapters deal with each of the major diseases for which we currently have effective and safe

vaccines. The chapters handle, in order, the history of the diseases, the effect of vaccines on it, the offending agent itself including its mode of spread, complications of illness, diagnosis and treatment. It then discusses the vaccine including how it's made, how it is available, how it's given and the recommended schedule. Possible side effects and even contraindications are also covered.

To round out the book there are chapters on recommended vaccines for travel, available sources of more information and fact sheets on the different diseases and illnesses.

I, again, was surprised with the author's candour, and his willingness to bare even the more rare and virtually unheard of possible side effects of some of the vaccines. While many chiropractors are sure to take offense to the fact that the book is not anti-vaccine, it does, in my opinion, present a fair and balanced case for why vaccines are, as in the words of the Canadian Chiropractic Association's policy statement, "a cost-effective and clinically efficient public health preventative procedure for certain viral and microbial diseases, as demonstrated by the scientific community."<sup>1</sup>

Randy J. Ferrance, DC, MD

## Reference

- 1 Adopted 1991: Education & Research Committee, Report from the 1989 statement; Board of Directors, The Canadian Chiropractic Association.