



BOARD MEMBER INTROSPECTIVE Dan Kenner, Ph.D., L.Ac.

By Scott C. Tips

Thomas Macaulay, the oft-quoted 19th-Century English parliamentarian and historian, once wrote, “The highest intellects, like the tops of mountains, are the first to catch and reflect the dawn.” NHF Board of Governors member Dan Kenner is one of those intellects, reflecting the dawn of a new era as individuals become increasingly aware of natural health, and we are fortunate to count him as one of us.

### **From Plants to Rock, and Back Again**

Although born in Memphis, Tennessee, Dan grew up in Little Rock, Arkansas. While growing up there, and beginning at an unusually early age, Dan evidenced a strong interest in plant medicine, poisonous plants, hallucinogens, ethnobotany, and mycology and he read avidly and extensively on all of those subjects. However, he pretty much forgot about this interest when he decided to become a rock-guitar hero as a teenager. The rock-hero crown did not rest easily on his head, though, as Dan was soon to find out.

High school inevitably led to college and Dan attended Southwestern College (now Rhodes College) in Memphis. His junior year with Southwestern was then spent abroad in southern France (Aix-en-Provence), where he studied French in particular and European life in general. But it was after college that Dan decided to study natural medicine and became enthralled with homeopathy. He went “back to the land” and lived in rural Maryland, growing organic vegetables and reading about natural medicine – especially herbal medicine. Still, Dan’s eyes were on the horizon and life in distant lands.

### **Found in Translation**

Deciding to study Oriental Medicine, Dan then cast about for the right location to study this field. He had heard about an excellent school in Japan that taught Oriental Medicine but of course other countries had excellent schools as well. However, since he was already eager to study in Japan and learn Japanese and since, in those years, it was politically impossible for Americans to study in China, Japan seemed like a logical choice. Besides, Japan, being more “Western,” was actually a better location anyway because it was the land of stomach ulcers and high blood pressure while China was the land of malaria and schistosomiasis (both parasitic diseases). Those more “Western” diseases were the medical areas of practice that would prove most practical for Dan’s career.

So it was that in 1976 Dan went to Japan to train in Oriental Medicine. Dan was determined to study Oriental Medicine in an oriental language and did so, graduating from the Meiji College of Oriental Medicine in 1979. He then trained in internships at Osaka Medical University Pain Clinic and Kinki University Medical Training Hospital, both in the Osaka area. At Kinki University, Dan translated some of the research of Dr. Shigeru Arichi on using traditional botanical medicine for the treatment of hepatitis

and for the side effects of steroid withdrawal, which were then sent to UCLA in a “sister school” arrangement. In Japan, the National Licensing Exam for Oriental Medicine is in Japanese; and Dan was one of the first foreigners to ever be licensed by the Japanese government. After the medical internships, Dan trained in a busy private clinic in downtown Osaka for two more years before returning to the United States.

### **Home Again, But Not for Long**

Curious about how clinicians treated health problems in other countries, Dan –with his practical working knowledge of French and German – trained in Europe for several weeks at a time during the years following his return from Japan. As Dan said about those years, “If there was a guiding principle, it was the quest for inexpensive and effective treatment without using toxic, synthetic substances.” In his quest, he became acquainted with doctors who never used antibiotics to treat infections, doctors who never used conventional chemotherapy or radiation for cancer treatment, and doctors who had successful protocols for intractable diseases like multiple sclerosis.

Throughout these years, Dan became increasingly familiar with German Biological Medicine and French phytoaromatherapy and gradually integrated both into his private practice in Santa Rosa, California. In fact, his early study of French phytoaromatherapy led to his first published book *Botanical Medicine: A European Professional Perspective* (Paradigm, 1994).

### **Knowledgeable Consultant**

But writing was not Dan’s only strength. In 1998, he began consulting work, writing, teaching, practitioner training, and lecturing internationally (in Germany, Japan, China, the Netherlands, U.S.) while continuing his clinical work part-time. Having already consulted nationally for various clients, including for Warner Communications as its acupuncture consultant for the 1990 film *Hard to Kill*, starring Steven Seagal and Kelly LeBrock as well as for Kaiser Permanente in developing an acupuncture-based chronic-pain program, consulting came naturally. For Kaiser, Dan initiated a research project on using acupuncture to augment the local Kaiser tobacco-cessation program. By the end of the 1990s, though, Dan had expanded his consulting practice globally.

Dan’s consulting not only has global reach but substantive breadth as well. He has consulted with clinics and spas who want to integrate alternative health care into their offerings in the U.S. and Europe and also consulted in product development for companies who produce natural medicines. Not surprisingly then – given his depth of knowledge and skills in Oriental Medicine and other natural practices – Dan’s consulting profile spans the wide range, including product development, product registration, product research protocols for marketplace development, liability protection, educational program development and collaborative planning to open the door to alternative medical services, and clinical program development.

### **Teacher**

Having been licensed in Oriental Medicine in Japan; become a California Licensed Acupuncturist; achieved National Certification in Acupuncture based upon documented education and experience; been designated as an Official Examiner by the State of California for its acupuncture-licensing examinations as well as an Official Examiner by the National Committee for the Certification of Acupuncturists; become a Board Member of the Meiji College of Oriental Medicine, in Berkeley, California; been a

Founding Member of the Society for Acupuncture Research; and having received a Ph.D. in Naturopathic Medical Science, Dan is well qualified as a teacher in all of these fields.

He has given numerous lectures and training seminars for continuing education for acupuncture and nursing at Sonoma State University (California), Northwest College of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (Seattle), the New England School of Acupuncture (Massachusetts), the Anglo-Dutch Institute for Oriental Medicine (Amsterdam, Holland) and at the University of California, Berkeley School of Public Health. Dan's various conference lectures are far too numerous to note here. And just recently, Dan gave a speech at the prestigious Commonwealth Club in San Francisco, California, an uncommon honor.

### **And Prolific Writer**

Despite his crowded schedule, Dan made time for writing too. He has numerous published articles to his credit – in such esteemed publications as the *American Journal of Acupuncture*, *Frontier Perspectives*, *Holistic Primary Care*, *North American Journal of Oriental Medicine*, *Townsend Letter for Doctors*, and *USC School of Pharmacy Continuing Education Series* – as well as chapters written for anthologies. He has also translated books and articles from Japanese and French into English for publication in the United States. Not one to waste a minute, Dan then managed to squeeze in time to research, write, and get published another book, *Treatment of Infections Without Antibiotics* (Holodigm, 2007).

Yet there was still more to do, so Dan served for many years on the Editorial Board of *Clinical Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine*, a peer-review journal published by Harcourt-Brace. His stint there ended in 2005.

### **Yet Another Dawn, Another Project**

Dan's current activities quite naturally fill his life. His publication projects include a book entitled *AHCC – Research and Commentary*, which will be a compendium of scientific research on the Japanese fermented-mushroom product for immune protection in cancer patients, as well as another book called *Whole-Body Healing for Cancer Recovery: Seven Steps to Support Treatment, Boost Immunity, and Build Better Health*. Importantly, he is also developing a video-documentary series, *Alternative Medical Breakthroughs from Around the World*.

Despite the pressed pace, Dan can sometimes be found in the rustic backyard of his remote Northern California home, sipping a cold English Newcastle Ale and enjoying the Thoreau-like natural beauty around him. Mockingbirds and Jays flit around, while squirrels nuzzle busily for food. The wind dies down enough so that one can easily hear Dan's soft words of insight born of experience and learning. "Change," he intoned to me at one such time, "is driven by public demand. I have personally seen in the U.S., France, and Japan how public demand for natural medicine and alternative healthcare services has expanded the medical marketplace." The wind picks up and interrupts us again, but Dan continues. "I believe that this video project on alternative medical breakthroughs will have a transforming effect because when people become aware of what is potentially available in natural health care, it will inevitably stimulate public demand for change – a change for the better." What can one say in return except, "I'll drink to that"?