

Unit 1: Bee Therapy

Narrator: Today in parts of Asia, people from all walks of life are choosing to be by bees—often dozens of times in one sitting. Hso-rong Chen is battling , a disease which slowly causes the body's nerves to deteriorate.

Hso-rong Chen, Patient: For six months I was bedridden. I could not . I would have of tingling and numbness in my hands. It was excruciating pain.

Narrator: Then Hso-rong heard about bee-sting . For help, she turned to Mr. Cheng-yi Chen, Bee-Sting Therapy Master—a trained master who has practiced bee-sting therapy for 12 years. Every week, Mr. Chen and his treat 200 patients and sacrifice 6,000 honeybees. The results, he says, can be .

Mr. Cheng-yi Chen, Bee-Sting Therapy Master: After 600 bees, you will look 5 years younger than your contemporaries.

Narrator: But can bee stings really help Hso-rong fight multiple sclerosis? She began an intensive course of therapy, receiving over 200 stings a week for months on end. Honeybees only sting once, and they die soon after. But even from the bee, the stinger continues to inject venom into its victim. The body responds with a flood of histamines and white blood cells. And soon the area becomes hot, red, and itchy.

Hso-rong Chen: He gives me one sting. I don't even have time to feel the pain before he stings me again. And the pain lasts for 1 hour.

Narrator: Many think it is based on the 5,000-year-old practice of acupuncture—a proven treatment for pain. Although today

Mr. Chen sees bee acupuncture as a labor of love, even he once considered it taboo. In fact, like most of us, he was afraid of bees. Thirty years ago, Mr. Chen was an for a company. Then his wife began to suffer from arthritic pains so severe she couldn't cook or even stand up straight. Western medicines didn't do much good. But when she told her husband she wanted to get stung by bees, he thought the idea was .

Mr. Cheng-yi Chen: Naturally, as an educated man, I was against it. We just did not understand bees.

Narrator: But Mr. Chen completely changed his mind when he saw his wife's sudden improvement.

Mr. Cheng-yi Chen: After 3 months, her red blood cell count increased. Her headache disappeared. I was so surprised, I decided to dive into this treatment and collect all the information that I could.

Narrator: Mr. Chen vowed to devote his life to bringing bee-sting therapy to others. After 6 months of bee-sting therapy, Hso-rong Chen has seen a dramatic change. She insists the therapy has relieved her multiple sclerosis and given her a new lease on life. While most Western-trained doctors would likely say her illness is in remission, Hso-rong is convinced the stings have helped her walk again. It will take years of study before we'll know whether bee stings can arthritis or multiple sclerosis or even the common cold. But whether Hso-rong's recovery is in her head or her hands and feet, for the first time in more than a year, she feels she can resume living. A therapy most of us would find taboo is allowing her to face the future with renewed hope.