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# Macrobiotics Beyond Food

## Beginning Series, Part 6

Julia Ferré

Okay, I admit it—this series is more than a way to spell out why macrobiotics is other than diet. Sure, these six installments offer answers to questions about macrobiotics and hopefully enlighten and inform. However, one of my goals is to share my love of great macrobiotic books.

This installment includes books that couldn't be limited to one classification. These books reinforce the idea that macrobiotics embraces topics that are fun and interesting. They are about more than diet, healing, and George Ohsawa. Don't get me wrong—I love macrobiotic foods; I need healing info; and I worship George Ohsawa (just kidding! but he is inspirational). Nevertheless, just wait until you read about these other great books.

### BEGINNING

The first installment of this series stated a question that a person new or unfamiliar to macrobiotics might pose, "What can macrobiotics do for you?" The article elaborated on the benefits of a macrobiotic lifestyle and diet and recommended books for anyone new to the practice. Just a few books were included; the following



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one was omitted for no other reason than space restrictions. It is a beginner's book, has been in print a long time, and has helped many people learn about macrobiotics.

*Making the Transition to a Macrobiotic Diet*, Carolyn Heidenry

This gentle book introduces macrobiotics as a natural way of health. While there are no recipes, there is plenty of information on how

to adjust to a new lifestyle. Every chapter contains practical suggestions on what to eat, what to avoid, and how to proceed.

### Focus on Food

Many books introduce macrobiotics, but perhaps none are as popular as cookbooks. In the second and third articles of the beginner's series, all the books focused on food. The question in series two asked, "What is macrobiotics?" and featured cookbooks. Series three discussed nutrition and recommended books that delve into greater detail. The following three books could have been included in either of those articles. However, take a closer look. Each offers something extra.

*Modern-Day Macrobiotics*, Simon Brown

There is no other way to describe this book other than gorgeous. Colorful and graphically satisfying, it is pleasing enough to reside on any coffee table. Yet, there is more than glitz here, every page offers a visual such as charts, sidebars, descriptions, or photos. It provides all the information you'd expect from a how-to book ranging from the principles of

macrobiotics, to acid and alkaline and potassium- and sodium-rich foods, to recipes, to menus, to healing and detoxing. In addition, this is the first macrobiotic book I have reviewed that includes the glycemic index with accompanying food numbers. There are 160 pages, with 40 pages of recipes—many featured in full color photos. Beautiful!

*Eat Me Now!* Melanie Brown Waxman

*Eat Me Now!* is a new book, published in 2008, which only recently arrived in our office. This book fulfills many needs. First, it contains recipes, a lot of them, and especially ones that are quick and easy to prepare. It also covers basic information on macrobiotics—protein, yin and yang, five-element theory, simple remedies, and many other topics. However, the reason I really love this book is that Melanie has suggestions for college students, such as how to eat well at school, recipes that can be made in small quantity, and fun advice such as simple Feng Shui for the dorm. If you were at camp this year, you know we were eagerly awaiting this book—now it is here and available for all your kids heading off to college. Also worth mentioning is that Melanie has authored a number of other books and her expertise covers quite a range. What else would you expect from a mother of seven—her advice is practical and down to earth. When I get a chance to review her other books, I will.

*Energetics of Food*, Steve Gagné

*Energetics of Food* is one book that many authors cite as a reference in their bibliographies. It is more than a book on the nutrition of food; rather it is a book on the nature of food. Food has energy, which means food has innate qualities that characterize it. Environment and direction of growth are two qualities that affect food; that is, where a food grows and how a food grows determine its energy.

Other qualities include its nature, or whether the food is vegetal or animal. Gagné elaborates on animal foods, dairy foods, seafoods, plants, beans, mushrooms, and almost anything you can think of to eat. Other chapters discuss cooking, food preparation, and various diets—from vegan to carnivore. This in-depth book expounds on all aspects of the relationship between humans and food. At 589 pages, it is educational and entertaining and contains zero recipes. In 2006, the author revised the book and added about 30 percent new information.

## HEALTH AND HEALING

The fourth installment of this be-

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*“Make your macrobiotic practice work for you. Cook and eat healthy foods...everyday. Install order and rhythm in your daily life.”*

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giner’s series addressed a question that many ask: “Does macrobiotics heal disease?” Many titles in our catalog provide answers to this question; however, I kept the discussion to diet and healing. Here are four additional titles that revolve around healing, in particular bodywork and diagnosis.

*Do-In Way*, Michio Kushi

Do-In means “self-massage” and this book is devoted primarily to bodywork. The do-in exercises are divided into different types. Some massage particular muscles, stimulate meridians, and focus on acupuncture points. Other exercises are similar to yoga asanas that stretch the limbs and coordinate with the breath. This book is more than just exercises though; it

includes teachings such as the order of the universe and the five-element theory. This book is one of the few currently in print by Michio Kushi on topics other than diet, and introduces the range of Michio Kushi’s teachings.

*Your Body Never Lies*, Michio Kushi

The subtitle of this book, “The Complete Book of Oriental Diagnosis” is aptly titled, for the book reads like an encyclopedia of diagnosis. There are charts, lists, and drawings of hand, feet, forehead, eyes, skin, including definitions of colors, shapes, ridges, bumps, and what they all signify. Also included is an explanation of yin and yang, the order of the universe, and the five transformations.

*Your Face Never Lies*, Michio Kushi

This book is an earlier publication than the previous title. While smaller in scope, it does contain adequate summaries of how to read various areas of the face and body, such as eyes, ears, and hands. It also contains some information the other book lacks, such as handwriting analysis and how to read the pulses.

*Reading the Body*, Wataru Ohashi

This third book in our catalog that describes oriental diagnosis is written by Ohashi, a counselor and practitioner who utilizes diagnosis, shiatsu massage, and compassionate listening in his work. This book is about learning to read “body language;” that is, how to read the hands, feet, skin, face, and how to diagnose and interpret the signs of tightness, stress, posture, lines, colors, and more that mark a body. However, this book is more than interpreting these bodily signs as disease; rather Ohashi uses diagnosis as a way to see people, their characters, and ultimately their humanity. This book is a wonderful book on how to use diagnosis to cherish the marvels and complexities of the human body. Also included is a chapter on the five transformations.

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## PHILOSOPHY MATTERS

The fifth article of the beginner's series was devoted to philosophy and specifically the works of George Ohsawa. These titles also feature philosophy and are worth reading.

*Hip Chick's Guide to Macrobiotics*, Jessica Porter

*Hip Chick's Guide to Macrobiotics* is a popular book; many people recommend it as a good read and an entertaining way to study Ohsawa's philosophy. True—the twelve theorems are covered in detail, and the author lightens the subject with humor and stories. However, the charm of the book lies in that it is energetic; the writing leaves you smiling and happy—and—due to the simple reason that sex is included—sex, as in a chapter on “The Yin and Yang of Love,” or funny anecdotes about the author's romantic life, or innuendoes that grace the pages. This book examines philosophy by honoring the rhythms of nature. As a bonus, recipes are included!

*Learning from Salmon*, Herman Aihara

*Learning from Salmon* is a book of writings by Herman Aihara. All the essays were published in *The Macrobiotic*, former name of *Macrobiotics Today*, and each piece contains gems of wisdom. This book is the essence of Herman Aihara's teachings—a philosophy that includes contemplation about relationships, religion, food, and the deeper meanings of life. Most of the articles date from the 1970s but most are timeless. Herman's discussions of forgiveness and marriage, transmuting dislike to like, of jitsu and so (front and back) are timeless philosophical treatises that are just as relevant today as when written. *Learning from Salmon* has been available as a study guide for many years; the George Ohsawa Macrobiotic Foundation is pleased to

be offering it again in book form (see page 29).

## WOMEN'S STUDIES

Okay, I confess, I didn't cover all the titles in our catalog and due to space limitations won't be able to. However, these two deserve inclusion because they are so practical for women.

*Embracing Menopause Naturally*, Gabriele Kushi

*Embracing Menopause Naturally* is a book on how to experience menopause in a comfortable way. The book contains three areas of information spread throughout the book in a layout of portraits. In the educational section of the book, the author discusses menopause, hormones, hot flashes, and diseases associated with menopause; then continues with information on how macrobiotics can benefit women so the transition is easy. The how-to section of the book provides recipes from soups to desserts. The inspirational part of the book flows from cover to cover through the personal stories. Gabriele Kushi includes photos and accounts of 21 women from a variety of cultures and backgrounds. Each woman talks about her own experience with menopause; some have physical changes; others share emotional and spiritual issues. This is a wonderful book celebrating women and offering guidance for this important time in women's lives.

*Macrobiotic Pregnancy*, Alice Feinberg

This is an old book, first published in 1973. It fills a need, though, just as relevant today as back then, providing straightforward information about pregnancy and care of the newborn for women who follow a macrobiotic lifestyle. I consulted this book for each of my pregnancies and, at the time, appreciated the simple explanations of labor, growth of the fetus, and changes for the mother dur-

ing pregnancy. I still appreciate that this book is available, as it lists nutrition, simple remedies, and suggestions for a healthy pregnancy. While most of the information is standard, some is outdated, in particular the lists of recommended books and the nutritional sources of vitamin B<sub>12</sub>. (The author includes scant sources in seaweeds, whole grains, and miso alongside more-abundant sources in eggs, yogurt, and animal foods. The possible need for supplementation is not mentioned.) Nevertheless, this book remains a classic reference for macrobiotic pregnancy.

## MY TWO CENTS

So dear reader, this concludes the beginning series and the review of the books listed in the George Ohsawa Macrobiotic Foundation catalog. I would like to finish with a few bits of advice.

One. Keep reading and studying. There are many more books out there and plenty of subjects to inspire you from Feng Shui to Traditional Chinese Medicine to esoteric spiritual studies.

Two. Make your macrobiotic practice work for you. Cook and eat healthy foods—as healthy as possible—everyday. Install order and rhythm to your life.

Three. Be aware of the need for both practice and theory. To paraphrase George Ohsawa: both are needed and one without the other is dangerous. Practice without theory has no direction; theory without practice is just words.

Four. Foster joy. Macrobiotics literally means, “great life.” In the end—be happy. Enjoy life to the fullest!

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*Julia Ferré is author of Basic Macrobiotic Cooking: 20th Anniversary Edition. Her new book, French Meadows Cookbook, is available from gomf@earthlink.net.*