

Death by Food

review by Irene Alleger

The China Study, by T. Colin Campbell, PhD with Thomas M. Campbell II
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Linus Pauling (and Rath) presented research some 15 years ago that showed that the root cause of heart disease is a vitamin C deficiency. Since then, there have been a number of researchers studying the connection between disease and nutrition. One of these, Dr. T. Colin Campbell, a biochemist, began his early life as a meat-loving dairy farmer and, later, an "establishment" scientist. Yet, 40 years of nutritional research, culminating in *The China Study*, clearly proves that *too much protein* from meat and dairy is a basic cause of degenerative disease.

Beginning with an investigation of liver cancer in Filipino children and their consumption of a mold toxin, aflatoxin, Campbell also conducted a study of dietary factors affecting bone density and osteoporosis in 800 women in China; a study of biomarkers that characterize the emergence of breast cancer; and, finally, *The China Study*, a nationwide, comprehensive study of dietary and lifestyle factors associated with disease mortality in 170 villages in China. In addition, Campbell maintained a 27-year laboratory research program in experimental animal studies (almost always with lab mice). These exceptionally diverse studies are all largely empirical:

"Through all of this, I have come to see that the benefits produced by eating a plant-based diet are far more diverse and impressive than any drug or surgery used in medical practice... additionally, impressive evidence now exists to show that advanced heart disease, relatively advanced cancers of certain types, diabetes, and a few other degenerative diseases *can be reversed by diet.*" [emphasis added]

One would expect that this news would be front-page headlines, proof that our diet is the primary factor in health and disease. Who would want to bury or ignore this research? Well, for starters, how about two of the biggest corporate businesses in the Western world: food processors and pharmaceutical drug makers? Every ad for processed food these days is followed by an ad for a new drug (to treat nutritionally caused disease). Commercial hype is nothing new in the US. What is new is the cynicism and disregard for human life by corporate leaders without consciences. Dr. Campbell, as an "insider" for many years, had many grants from the National Institutes for Health and other government agencies, and he reveals unethical behavior by institutions – the American Cancer Society, for example. His personal experiences and observations leave one with even less confidence in government's role in health.

Campbell writes that our cultural bias of considering red meat and dairy as "healthy" foods is killing us by the millions. His extensive knowledge of the science of nutrition is evident on every page, and the plethora of data is cushioned between historical and autobiographical (all interesting) material, making *The China Study* a pleasure to read.

Animal-based foods, meat and casein from dairy, were shown in one research project to "promote breast cancer in rats dosed with two experimental carcinogens." The results of many other studies as well showed nutrition to be far more important in controlling cancer promotion than the dose of the initiating carcinogen. Most of *The China Study* describes the various research leading up to and including the China project. Campbell's conclusion: almost all of us in the United States will die of diseases of affluence. Death by food.

Specific data on heart disease, diabetes, and cancer are in separate chapters. These are convincing in themselves, but what really convinces one is the breadth of the evidence. Campbell's approach to nutrition gives the widest possible picture, which is exactly what is needed to clear away all the dietary misinformation and confusion. The author does not have much interest in supplements. He is looking at the bigger picture, the one that included *all* modern diseases: the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The problem with supplements is that people think they can continue to eat their customary foods if they pop a few supplements. The left-brain penchant for analysis has steered Western science toward the minute and away from the whole.

Here are some of Dr. Campbell's principles:

- There are virtually no nutrients in animal-based foods that are not better provided by plants.
- Nutrition can substantially control the adverse effects of noxious chemicals.
- The same nutrition that prevents disease in its early stages (before diagnosis) can also halt or reverse disease in its later stages (after diagnosis).
- Nutrition that is beneficial for one chronic disease creates health in all areas. All parts are interconnected.

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