

**Ancient Chinese Secrets:  
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Q: What happened to the Shellsburg man who went to China for therapy after his stroke?

A: John Yock, 61, of Shellsburg, has improved greatly since his time in China, both he and his wife, Elaine, said. Intending to stay three months, the couple ended up spending five months in China after John suffered a second stroke shortly after they arrived in September 2006.

Doctors at the First Teaching Hospital of Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine used acupuncture, massage, "cupping" and Chinese herbal remedies to help John recover use of his left arm and his speech.

In cupping therapy, suction is created in glass cups placed on the patient's back to draw blood to the surface. The technique is said to remove toxins from the body.

A group of 15 patients and their caregivers made the trip as part of The China Connection, an organization started by Ruth Lycke of Marshalltown.

Lycke recovered from her own stroke at the same hospital in China and has since organized trips to help other stroke victims.

Elaine Yock said the couple will be consultants for The China Connection, and eventually travel back to China with other Americans. John Yock continues to undergo therapy in Cedar Rapids for both his speech and physical improvement.

He said he enjoys fishing again and is relearning how to read. A former engineer, Yock suffered from aphasia - a difficulty in using or understanding words - after his stroke in 2002.

Speech improvements are obvious compared to the period before his therapy in China. He answers the phone and can carry on conversations, while in the past, his wife acted as interpreter in trying to convey his thoughts. The use of his left arm also has improved. Previously, Yock's hand was "locked" and unable to move.

Doctors in China used herbal soaks and massage to relax the muscles and improve movement. He can now lift his arm over his head. Yock is still frustrated that he cannot get his driver's license but is otherwise happy with his progress.

"Slowly but surely, it's steady improvement," he said.