



ACUPUNCTURE

for Body, Mind and Spirit

Peter Mole

ACUPUNCTURE

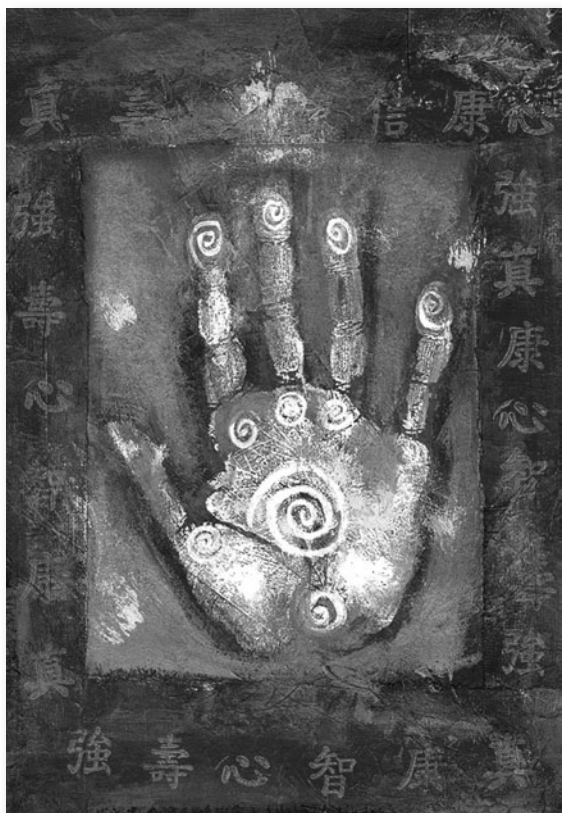
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Preface

This book is intended to be a source of information on the subject of acupuncture to patients, prospective patients, prospective students and lay-people in general. It is **not** intended to be a sort of ‘home doctor’ that the reader can consult in order to make an acupuncture diagnosis of her own or others’ symptoms. One of the intentions of the book is to show that acupuncture has a complex and intricate diagnostic method which takes a practitioner many years in which to become adept. If the book serves to show that acupuncture offers a radically different approach to Western medicine and that symptoms can rarely be seen out of context of the person as a whole, then it will have gone some way to fulfilling its purpose.

This edition is a revised version of a book I wrote in 1991, called *Acupuncture: Energy Balancing for Body, Mind and Spirit*. The first publisher went bankrupt and the second lost interest in its Complementary Medicine catalogue. I am greatly indebted to How To Books for this edition.

I decided to resolve the problem of whether to use the masculine or feminine pronoun throughout the book by using them alternately in each chapter. Unfortunately the book has seven chapters and, decided by the toss of a coin, this has meant that the masculine pronoun has been used in one more chapter than the feminine.

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I would like to thank all the people who by their lectures, books, friendship and example have contributed to my education in the art and science of acupuncture. In particular my first teacher J.R. Worsley, whose inspiring use of acupuncture to treat the person's mind and spirit has profoundly influenced me; Allegra Wint, my companion and fellow-acupuncturist since my early days in practice; Angie and John Hicks, Giovanni Maciocia, Claude Larre and Elizabeth Rochat de la Vallée.

I would also like to thank all the people who have been kind enough to read sections of this book and who, by their comments and suggestions, have helped to clarify my thinking and writing: Rebecca Avern, Amanda Thurston, Margaret Mole, Ken Shifrin, Alan Hext and Freda Wint. Mark Bovey was very helpful with his knowledge of acupuncture research. And special thanks to Mary Cavanagh, without whom this edition of the book would never have been published.

Finally I would like to dedicate this book to my wife, Rebecca Avern, and my four children; Guy, Toby, Jessica and Alatheia, in the hope that one day they will read this book and gain some understanding of the nature of their father's work and why he stopped playing with them sometimes.

Peter Mole

1

WHAT IS TRADITIONAL ACUPUNCTURE? HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM WESTERN MEDICINE?

Acupuncture is one of the principal components (along with herbalism, massage and other therapies) of an age-old system of medicine known as Chinese medicine. (Throughout this book the term Chinese medicine is used to mean the theory of medicine which originated in China in antiquity and has formed the theoretical basis of the medical systems which developed in China and its neighbours, such as Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam). This is one of the very few traditional medical systems which continues to hold its own in the face of the dominance of the Western medical model. Based on ancient texts, it has been the subject of continuous study, assessment and clinical experience over thousands of years, treating many millions of patients.

Any person who professes to practise acupuncture without having studied Chinese medical theory, and who maintains that it can be used as an adjunct to Western medicine, has

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failed to grasp its essence. It is hard to know whether to laugh or cry over the recent trend of doctors who set themselves up as acupuncturists after courses lasting only a couple of weekends. It is analogous to a lay-person practising surgery without having studied anatomy and physiology. (So, wherever the terms ‘acupuncturist’ or ‘acupuncture practitioner’ appear in this book it refers to somebody who has undertaken a lengthy study of acupuncture, based on the principles of Chinese medicine).

Traditional acupuncture, hitherto practised extensively throughout the Orient, is now growing rapidly in popularity throughout the rest of the world. It is based on a detailed and subtle diagnosis of an individual’s particular needs. No two patients are ever treated identically even if, to the untrained observer, their symptoms appear virtually the same. As the great seventeenth century physician, Xu Dachun, put it:

Illnesses may be identical, but the people who have them are different.

When Western medicine first came to the East, the traditional physicians were amazed that the doctors gave exactly the same remedies to all their patients suffering from the same symptoms. They made no attempt to diagnose each individual’s underlying state of health, or even the cause of the complaint. Chuang Tse (fourth century BC), a leading Daoist thinker wrote:

Natures differ, and needs with them. Hence the wise men of old did not lay down one measure for all.

A HOLISTIC THERAPY

In a medical context, the word ‘holistic’ (from the Greek word *holos* meaning whole) means treating the patient **as a whole**, rather than treating the symptoms out of context of the human being who has the symptoms. Sickness is not understood in terms of the pathology of isolated organs, as though they were merely cogs in a machine, but rather as the dysfunction of a normally harmonious, complete living entity.

Chinese medicine never considered the mind and body as separate from each other, as Western medicine has for the last two centuries. This may sound like a cliché, but it gives the two systems a fundamentally different philosophical basis that permeates to the core of their theories and practice. The belief that the human body is little more than an extremely sophisticated machine has led, in the West, to many extraordinary advances; for example the remarkable developments in surgery and drug therapy. Much of the current disaffection with modern medicine amongst patients, however, stems from the limitations of this approach. It fails to recognise that the mind and spirit have an extremely powerful effect upon the body and that the human body is more than the sum of its chemistry and mechanics.

All systems of medicine can be practised more or less holistically, depending on the wisdom of the physician. What is remarkable about Chinese medicine is that it places diagnosis of the **person** at the core of its diagnostic process. It also regards much of chronic disease to be a manifestation of that individual’s particular weaknesses. In Chinese medicine the underlying imbalances are known as *ben* and the symptoms as *biao*: the Chinese characters literally meaning root and manifestation.



ben



biao

When acupuncture treatment is directed at these long-standing weaknesses or ‘imbalances’, the patient is often amazed to find that not only is his main complaint improving, but many secondary complaints are also responding. This contrasts significantly with the effect of many of modern drugs which, because of their side-effects, create secondary complaints rather than general improvement.

This improvement in the patient’s well-being as a whole is one of the main reasons that patients in the West have been flocking to acupuncturists over the last few decades. Their holistic acupuncture treatment is in marked contrast to the treatment they receive from the gamut of specialists they are accustomed to seeing, as they trawl round the various out-patient departments of our hospitals. It is indicative of the nature of acupuncture that none of its leading colleges grant qualifications in any speciality. Acupuncturists have always specialised in treating human beings, not illnesses.

What an acupuncturist is searching for when he sees a patient are the ‘patterns of disharmony’ that have caused the problematic symptoms. For example, if a Western doctor and an acupuncturist were both to examine a patient with difficulty in breathing, the doctor might diagnose asthma and the acupuncturist might diagnose a deficiency in the ‘energy’ of the lung. It is not that one is correct and the other incorrect. It is just that they both see the symptom through the perception of their own very different medical models.

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Acupuncture has recently become famous for its ability to treat pain, but historically it has always been used to treat the entire spectrum of disease. A patient may come to the acupuncturist with any symptom at all, whether primarily psychological (for example, depression or anxiety) or any one of the huge number of possible physical complaints. The acupuncturist's response is always the same – to diagnose the pattern of disharmony of that unique individual before deciding on the relevant treatment.

People often ask if acupuncture is appropriate for this symptom or that symptom and the answer is essentially always the same: if the practitioner is able to make an accurate diagnosis of the pattern of disharmony, then acupuncture will improve the healthy functioning, the 'well-being', of the patient. Sometimes this means that the symptoms will be completely cured and sometimes the disease process has advanced too far for that to be possible. In these cases acupuncture can enhance the person's state of health to the extent that the symptoms are diminished in intensity, frequency and/or duration.

People also often ask if acupuncture can help in so-called 'incurable' disease. There are many recorded instances of people recovering from 'incurable' illnesses, whether through the medium of acupuncture, Western medicine, prayer or many other forms of healing. Usually, however, the acupuncturist can only improve the quality of life for the patient, physically, mentally and spiritually. As the poet John Milton observed:

It is not miserable to be blind; it is miserable to be incapable of enduring blindness.

The great physician, Sir William Osler (1849–1919), said:

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Don't tell me what type of disease the patient has, tell me what type of patient has the disease.

In the case of a chronic symptom, the acupuncturist would agree with that view. Treatment is primarily focused on the deep-seated **cause** of a chronic illness. In acute conditions, the acupuncturist may well first concentrate on the symptoms and treat the underlying weakness secondarily.

I have seen people by the roadside in developing countries pleading for aspirin; for them it is a wonder drug. It is, for example, in many ways an excellent remedy for the acute condition of having a headache. What it does not treat, however, is the chronic condition of having headaches. While one is extremely grateful for symptomatic relief, such as that provided by the aspirin, one of the fundamental priorities of acupuncture is always to attempt to enhance the underlying health of the patient.

Western medicine is now very popular with patients throughout the East for its efficacy in treating acute symptoms, but often they will use traditional medicine to treat their chronic symptoms. **It is in the treatment of long-standing chronic disease that acupuncture has most to offer the patient in the West.** As it says in the *Nei Jing*, (second century BC: the principal Classic of Chinese Medicine):

Even if a disease is of long duration it can be cured; those who say it cannot be cured do not know acupuncture properly.

It must be said that there are obviously situations where it is not appropriate to treat holistically, for example, severe infections, or for symptoms caused by physical injury,

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emergency situations, etc. If I were to be in a serious car crash then I would have no wish to be taken in the first instance to an acupuncturist. Although there is a long tradition of using acupuncture as first-aid, there is no doubt that in cases of serious physical injury Western medicine is the preferred therapy. After the emergency has been dealt with, however, acupuncture is extremely valuable for its ability to help the person to recover from the effect of the shock and trauma.

The same is true for severe infections. Antibiotics can be life-savers in some situations and can be much more effective than acupuncture. Helping the person recover after the height of the infection has been passed, however, is a role for which acupuncture is very well suited.

THE PRINCIPLES OF RESTORING HEALTH THROUGH ACUPUNCTURE

Human beings have extraordinary powers of recovery. If they did not then each fever, each emotional trauma, each stress or injury would leave the person a physical or emotional wreck. The natural disposition of the body, mind and spirit is to gravitate back towards a state of equilibrium. This is known as homoeostasis. **The aim of the acupuncturist is to assist these homoeostatic functions.** The elimination of symptoms may often be an important immediate goal of treatment, but it is not its fundamental or ultimate goal.

It is common for patients to report after a number of treatments that they now feel as they used to before a certain event or period of their life which undermined their health. Many people have a sense of themselves in which they know that they are not achieving their full potential in terms of

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physical, mental or spiritual vitality. It is essential that the practitioner has a sense of how the patient **could** be when he is restored to a state of health – to recognise what is an appropriate level of vitality and health, bearing in mind the individual's age, constitution and circumstances.

The principle of the doctor striving to restore healthy function rather than endeavouring to 'fight' illness is an well-established, if currently unfashionable, one in Western medicine. It seems to have particularly died out in the English-speaking medical profession. It still, however, holds a great deal of sway in continental Europe. In France the concept of strengthening the individual's '*terrain*', or underlying state of health, is still very much in vogue. In Germany, for example, antibiotics are prescribed approximately half as often as they are in the UK, where doctors prescribe them considerably less often than their counterparts in the USA.

The fundamental difference is that many doctors in continental Europe still concentrate much of their treatment on enhancing the patient's own powers of recovery. Hydrotherapy, in various forms, is commonly prescribed by doctors to help the patient throw off an infection and this is funded by most of the German health insurance schemes. About one-fifth of German doctors practise either homoeopathic, anthroposophic or herbal medicine. These, as well as vitamin therapy, are frequently used to help restore health.

Many patients consult acupuncture practitioners for very severe illnesses that there is little or no realistic chance of 'curing'. But the patients report such a functional improvement in various ways that acupuncture treatment is

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hugely beneficial to them. Vitality is often enhanced; pain diminished, sleep improved and many other aspects of the patient's well-being respond to their acupuncture treatment.

The College of Integrated Chinese Medicine in Reading has a busy student clinic. Over a period of time, it carried out an audit and outcome study on the patients seen. 495 patients took part.

Musculo-skeletal problems were the main complaint for 30% of the patients but, perhaps surprisingly, the second most common category was psychological problems, with 19%.

Over 80% of the patients had had their main complaint for over a year and nearly a quarter had had it for over 15 years.

Despite the chronic nature of their complaints, over 80% of the patients taking part reported at least a moderate improvement in their main complaint. Over half of the patients reported a major improvement or full recovery.

Interestingly, when acupuncture is used as a holistic therapy, as it is in the college, 88% said that they felt either a large or a moderate improvement in their 'general health'. Perhaps because of this and because patients usually come 'by word of mouth', 41% of the patients wanted acupuncture to help with energy levels, their feeling of well-being, their emotional state or other more general factors

(The report on the study was published in the European Journal of Oriental Medicine, Vol 5, No. 4, 2007.)

A FORM OF PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

The ability of acupuncture to promote healthy functioning means that it is often used as an effective form of preventive

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medicine. Preventive medicine in the West is predominantly limited by the fact that, even when a diagnostic test does discern dysfunction before symptoms have arisen, treatment is usually merely the reduction of illness-producing factors, such as poor diet, lack of exercise or excessive stress. Virtually nothing can ever be done to improve the function of the ailing organ or system itself. A famous passage in the *Nei Jing* states one of the fundamental axioms of acupuncture:

When medicinal therapy is initiated only after someone has fallen ill, when there is an attempt to restore order only after unrest has broken out, it is as though someone has waited to dig a well until he is already weak from thirst, or as if someone begins to forge a spear when the battle is already underway. Is this not too late?

It is obvious that serious organic diseases, such as cardiac failure, diabetes or cancer do not arise overnight. They are always preceded by a breakdown in healthy function which has eventually led to the disease reaching the organic stage. This, in the opinion of Chinese medicine, represents an advanced stage of a disease. This is also true for the majority of less severe, but chronic, illnesses from which most people suffer. **A skilful acupuncturist, using traditional methods of diagnosis, can often detect and treat disorders in an individual's healthy functioning long before they develop into symptoms discernible either to the person or to the diagnostic procedures of Western medicine.**

In the early years of acupuncture in the West, nearly all the patients who were prepared to try this unfamiliar therapy were already suffering from the advanced stages of their

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illnesses and were coming to acupuncture as a last resort. Many people in recent years, however, having heard of acupuncture's use as preventive medicine, have been consulting acupuncture practitioners at much earlier stages in the disease process. This enables them to maintain and improve their level of health, rather than beginning '*to forge a spear when the battle is already underway*'.

Not only does the use of acupuncture help to prevent the onset of illnesses induced by the person's own energetic imbalances, but it also enhances the person's resistance to infectious disease. Western medicine has no satisfactory explanation for why, given that we are constantly exposed to bacteria and viruses, our immune systems are intermittently ineffective. The view of Chinese medicine is that the occurrence of disease is due to the struggle between the infective agent and the person's 'energy' or 'vital-force'. If the individual's state of health is excellent then it is very difficult for an infection to overcome the body's natural defences.

It is true, however, that Chinese medicine was never very effective against the appalling epidemics that have ravaged China, and the rest of the East, until modern times. It is an extraordinary irony that these countries, which developed such a refined system of internal medicine, had never managed to ensure such essential public health measures as clean water or efficient waste disposal. For many patients in the West, however, no longer prey to typhoid, cholera and bubonic plague, acupuncture has been extremely successful in helping to build up their resistance to such infections as cystitis, bronchitis, pneumonia, colds, and the like.

WHAT IS THE ACUPUNCTURIST'S VIEW OF HEALTH?

It is quite common for an individual to go for a medical check-up, and after a number of investigations, to be told that they are in 'perfect shape' or 'A1'. For the traditional acupuncturist, however, there is no real concept of 'perfect health'. Perhaps the closest a human being ever comes to that state is as a very young baby, but even then there are probably already slight imbalances which are either inherited, acquired in the womb or due to birth trauma. For the rest of us too much water has flowed under the bridge in the form of illness, trauma and stress, for there not to be imbalances discernible to the acupuncturist. **The health of the individual depends on the severity of the imbalances: we are all unhealthy, it is purely a question of degree.**

Fortunately for many people this does not necessarily mean that they have physical symptoms that ail them. To the acupuncturist, however, health is not judged by physical health alone. Assessment of the person's spirit, mind and emotions are of prime importance.

The *Huainanzi* (second century BC), one of the Classics of ancient Chinese scientific thought, put it like this:

What is it that gives man clear vision and fine hearing, a straight body whose parts flex and stretch easily? What allows him to distinguish black and white through observation, beautiful and ugly through consideration, and, through appreciation, the similar and the different, the things that are appropriate and those that are not? It is the abundance of the energy and the activity of the spirit.

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For the Chinese, their legendary quest for longevity was not a search for an inordinate extension of their life-span. As the sinologist Claude Larre put it, it was:

the pursuit of the perfect working of a being who, according to his nature, completes the measure of his destiny and dies in his own time.

WHAT IS QI?

The concept of *qi* (formerly spelt *ch'i*, pronounced 'chee') lies at the very heart of acupuncture. For those of us who have been brought up in the West, taking on board the notion of *qi* is the conceptual leap that we have to make in order to understand Chinese medicine. This conceptual leap for the Westerner, unused to the notion of *qi*, becomes a smaller step once one considers the implications of some of the discoveries of modern particle physics. Albert Einstein proved that energy and matter, previously thought to be entirely different in nature, are in fact inherently the same. This is summarised by the famous equation $E = mc^2$, deduced from his Special Theory of Relativity. This is why some authorities have translated *qi* as 'matter-energy' to try to convey to sceptical Western scientists that the concept of *qi* is not as 'unscientific' as it first appears. It has been said that it took 200 years for Western medicine to assimilate the implications of Newtonian physics. It may take another 200 years until it develops to the extent that it can incorporate many of the conceptual advances of Einsteinian physics.

氣

qi

Unless one can accept the validity of the existence of *qi*, then acupuncture, not to mention *Tai Ji Quan*, the oriental martial arts, yoga and many other Eastern practices, will

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remain a mystery. For people who have grown up in the East, the concept of *qi* forms an integral part of their view of the human being. In different countries it has different names and is perceived slightly differently. In Japan it is called *Ki*; in India it is known as *Prana*; in Tibet, *Rlun*.

What the peoples of all these countries are referring to is the idea that living matter contains ‘energy’. Many people have tried to translate *qi* in other ways that more literally describe what it means to the Chinese. ‘Life force’, ‘vital force’, ‘matter-energy’, ‘breaths’ and many other expressions have been put forward by different translators to attempt to convey into English a concept that barely exists in our thought and culture.

Qi is simply that which makes us alive. At our death it leaves us to return to the ‘Great Void’. Wang Chong (AD 27–97) said;

Qi produces the human body just as water becomes ice. As water freezes into ice, so qi coagulates to form the human body. When ice melts, it becomes water. When a person dies, he or she becomes spirit again. It is called spirit, just as melted ice changes its name to water.

Chinese medicine is founded upon the study and observation of *qi*: its flow, rhythms, cycles, changes, movement and balance. All traditional acupuncturists strive to deepen their understanding of the nature of the patient’s *qi* in order to determine how best they can use their skill to bring him back to a more harmonious state of health.

Chinese medicine places great emphasis on the relationship between human beings and their environment.

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Profound but subtle changes take place in our *qi* with changes in the weather and the cycle of the seasons. People often feel lethargic in humid weather or restless when it is windy. Many people find themselves slightly melancholic in the autumn and unusually dynamic in the spring.

Qi is not only present in all living matter, but is present throughout the universe. In the *Nei Jing* it says:

The union of the Heaven and the Earth is called the human being.

This idea is reflected daily in our lives through our constant physical need to replenish our *qi* from the air that we breathe and the food that we eat. This, combined with the *qi* we inherit from our parents, forms the basis of our energetic constitution. Illness is seen as a dysfunction of *qi* and acupuncture is a time-honoured method of regulating and enhancing a person's energetic system.

For example, a patient may complain to his doctor of lethargy and the conscientious physician will attempt to ascertain if there is any pathology, for example glandular fever, anaemia, etc. There is, however, very often no discernible pathological cause and the patient is probably sent away without treatment or possibly diagnosed as suffering from depression. To the acupuncturist, the patient is suffering from a dysfunction of his *qi*. He seeks to diagnose and treat the *qi*, the energetic cause of the patient's lethargy.

All interventions from any system of medicine indirectly affect a patient's *qi*. One of acupuncture's strengths is its ability to affect an individual's *qi* directly and powerfully. Only when the acupuncturist has completed his diagnosis and has reached a firm conclusion as to the condition of the

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patient's energetic balance, will he consider making a therapeutic intervention in the *qi* of the patient. Any person who uses acupuncture and treats without having made a diagnosis of that particular person's energetic imbalances (except in the case of emergency first-aid) has violated one of the fundamental principles of Chinese medicine.

This, regrettably, is becoming more common in the West as some people try to practise this intricate system of medicine without even studying its basic principles, let alone its subtleties. For the first time in history, modern technology has developed machines, now on sale to the general public, that have made the job of the incompetent considerably easier. By detecting areas of high electrical conductivity relative to nearby tissues, these machines reveal where the acupuncture points are. The accompanying leaflet tells the customer how to use the same machine to treat particular points for particular symptoms, according to a Western medical model of symptoms. One can hardly be surprised if the therapeutic results are less than impressive. One suspects that the ancient Chinese practitioners must be whirling in their graves.

HOW DOES AN ACUPUNCTURIST TREAT SOMEONE'S QI?

The means whereby man is created, the means whereby disease occurs, the means whereby man is cured, whereby disease arises: the twelve channels are the basis of all theory and treatment. Nei Jing

The crucial breakthrough that enabled the Chinese to develop the practice of acupuncture was the discovery of 'points' on

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the body at which they could affect the *qi* of the individual. This happened at least 2,500 years ago and archaeological evidence suggests that it may have been considerably earlier. The belief that acupuncture was discovered by soldiers noticing that their symptoms improved when they were wounded in various spots (a view seemingly commonly held amongst newspaper cartoonists) has never been taken seriously by acupuncturists. Many of the points are tender on palpation and it is probable that most were discovered by early physicians exploring their patients' bodies for painful sites.

An example of one these points is a point on the breast-bone on a level mid-way between the nipples on a man. (On a woman you will need to assess this spot somewhat by eye). If the *qi* in the person's chest is weak, then this point will often be painful if pressed. This was well known to doctors in this country until quite recently and certainly there are few smokers who can press this point without some discomfort.

Many women, especially those who suffer from a degree of hormonal imbalance, will find that an acupuncture point, situated just below their knee on the inside of their leg, is painful to touch. Interestingly this point is rarely tender on a man.

The other way in which the points, and the pathways between them, may have been discovered is through certain adepts focusing their attention during meditation on extremely subtle sensations in their bodies. This is much as some Indians did when they discovered the *chakras* of Hatha Yoga. Certainly many patients become aware of a sensation along the channel pathways when they have acupuncture treatment.

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Although they are now detectable by electronic machines, the student of acupuncture has traditionally spent a considerable portion of his time learning to locate the exact position of the approximately 365 points on the channels. The points are very small (about 2.5 mm in diameter) and for the full effect of intervention to be realised it is necessary to be extremely precise in their location. Many of the most commonly-used points are located on the limbs, below the elbow and the knee, and much of the treatment will take place on these points regardless of the location of the symptom.

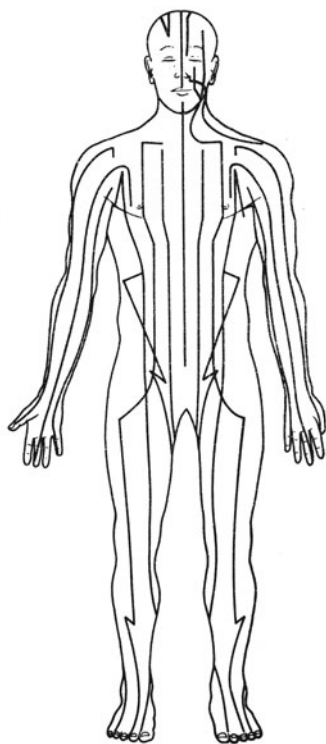


Figure 1. Front view of the body: the channel pathways

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These pathways of *qi* running throughout the body are known as channels or meridians. Each channel is linked with a particular organ and is responsible for many functions in our bodies, minds and spirits. The channels can be compared to the major blood vessels in the sense that they constitute the main ‘arteries’ of *qi* in the body. But just as tiny capillaries carry blood to every cell in the body, so also there are tiny channels to transport *qi* to every cell. Without *qi* and blood a cell will die. In modern times hundreds of ‘new’ points have been discovered on these smaller channels and many of these are used for local symptomatic relief.

When the acupuncturist inserts a fine needle into one of the acupuncture points of the body, he influences the *qi* according to the nature of that particular point and the needle technique used. Treating any point will have an effect, if only very slight, upon the patient’s entire body, mind and spirit. But by choosing certain points and using particular techniques, the practitioner can direct his treatment towards a specific level. There are many situations when it is appropriate to orient the treatment exclusively to the physical level. But there are also times when a person, whether he is presenting physical or psychological symptoms, needs treatment at a deeper level if the cause of the condition is to be affected. The *Nei Jing* makes the point in this way:

Nowadays vitality and energy are considered the foundation of life; in order to keep them flourishing they must be protected and the life-giving force must rule. When this force does not support life, its foundation will dissolve, and how can a disease be cured when there is no spiritual energy in the body?

WHAT DO ACUPUNCTURISTS MEAN BY BODY/MIND/SPIRIT?

The expression Body/Mind/Spirit has become the phrase most commonly used in the natural medicines to describe the different levels of the human being. I use it here because of its familiarity and because it expresses reasonably accurately the Oriental view, although it never appears in exactly this form in any of the Classics of Chinese medicine.

What do we mean by body?

This, of course, is the least ambiguous of the three levels. When most people in the West think about their health, they almost exclusively think about their physical health. Acupuncture has become well-known in the West for its effectiveness in treating a wide range of physical complaints, perhaps above all for its efficacy in reducing or eliminating pain. (See Chapter 6 for a list of conditions commonly treated with acupuncture.)

Many people find it hard to believe that acupuncture works any better than a placebo. They think that the long history of the use of acupuncture is not sufficiently persuasive and need the evidence of modern research trials in order to be convinced. In the twentieth century it was not unreasonable for these people to be sceptical.

But in recent years high quality research has been carried out into the effects of acupuncture on certain physical conditions. It is high quality research in the terms of Western medicine, albeit the acupuncture used is usually rather simple and formulaic. All the same, for the first time there is no longer any doubt as to whether acupuncture ‘works’.

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For example, in 2003 a large-scale, randomised, controlled trial on headaches was carried out in GPs' practices in England and Wales. Over 400 patients took part and those who received acupuncture had on average 22 fewer days of headache a year, used less medication, had fewer visits to GPs and fewer days off sick than those who received 'usual care' (see: www.ncchta.org/execsumm/summ848.htm).

A huge trial on 3,633 patients was carried out in Germany on the effect of acupuncture treatment on patients suffering from arthritis of the knee and/or hip. The patients receiving acupuncture treatment fared substantially better than those who didn't and this improvement was still evident after six months (see: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=pubmedandcmd=Retrieveanddopt=AbstractPlusandlist_uids=16600232andquery_hl=4anditool=pubmed_docsum).

Another large study of arthritis in the knee was carried out in the US where some patients received acupuncture treatment and some received 'sham' acupuncture, i.e. they were needled in places which are not regarded as being on acupuncture points. The patients who received acupuncture reported considerably better results than the ones who had as many needles but not into acupuncture points (see: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=pubmedandcmd=Retrieveanddopt=AbstractPlusandlist_uids=15611487andquery_hl=1anditool=pubmed_docsum).

Giving acupuncture treatment to women undergoing IVF on the day of the embryo transfer substantially improved the likelihood of the woman becoming pregnant compared to women who did not receive any acupuncture (see: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=pubmedandcmd=Retrieveanddopt=AbstractPlusandlist_uids=16600232andquery_hl=4anditool=pubmed_docsum).

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Research of this quality is still relatively new and there are many illnesses that have not yet been adequately investigated. But the principle is now established. However strange it may seem, acupuncture **definitely** works. Nobody with an open mind can claim any more that acupuncture only works because the patient believes that it does.

If you would like to know more about research into acupuncture go to <http://acupunctureresearch.org.uk>.

What do we mean by mind?

By ‘mind’ we mean the cognitive faculty and the ability to think. What some call the ‘monkey mind’, because it is constantly jumping around. The everyday thought of the everyday mind.

The phrase ‘mentally ill’ is legitimately used in Western Medicine to describe problems in sense perception, personality, emotions or behaviour. This is a far wider definition than is meant by the word ‘mental’ in this context. Many people in psychiatric hospitals have extremely astute and able minds. In the language of Chinese medicine it is their spirits that are in distress.

In the context of acupuncture, symptoms on the mental level include a person being obsessed, forgetful, indecisive, unable to concentrate, disorganised, muddled, vague, inarticulate, dyslexic, etc.

Although the Chinese acknowledge the supreme importance of the brain in the functioning of the mind, they also consider the mind to be an aspect of the person’s *qi*. Just as *qi* is present in every cell in the body, so also is the person’s mind and spirit.

What do we mean by spirit?

This is a difficult topic, partly because many people already have a firm view of what the word means to them. This one word also has so many different meanings in the English language. The *Oxford English Dictionary* lists 34 separate meanings, but the one that is closest to its meaning in Chinese medicine is ‘*the animating or vital principle in man*’. Cicero called it ‘*the true self, not that physical figure which can be pointed out by your finger*’. When the novelist Thackeray described one of his characters as ‘*saddened and humbled in spirit*’ he was describing the very deepest essence in a person.

神

shen –
spirit

In the *Nei Jing*, Qi Bo the acupuncture master says:

What is the spirit? The spirit cannot be heard with the ear. The eye must be brilliant of perception and the heart must be open and attentive, and then the spirit is suddenly revealed through one's own consciousness. It cannot be expressed through the mouth; only the heart can express all that can be looked on. If one pays close attention one may suddenly know it but one can just as suddenly lose this knowledge. But the spirit becomes clear to man as though the wind has blown away the cloud.

The acupuncturist's ability to perceive the nature of the imbalances in a person's spirit is one of the practitioner's key skills.

Often people equate ‘spirit’ with the spiritual and religious sides of the person. The word ‘spirit’, however, encompasses many other aspects of being. Religion, mysticism and spiritual awareness emanate from the human spirit. But, in

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the framework of Chinese medicine, so also does the desire to look at a radiant sunset or to listen to uplifting music. When we wake up and experience the joy of seeing a beautiful day dawning, it is our spirit that is touched by that experience.

THE EMOTIONS

Chinese medicine considers that the emotions emanate from a person's spirit. They constitute the 'internal causes of disease'. When they become extreme or prolonged, they create imbalances in the healthy functioning of the person's *qi*. If the *qi* of one's spirit is no longer healthy and vital then the imbalance may spread and manifest symptoms on any level of body, mind or spirit. This is an extremely common cause of chronic illness. The *Nei Jing* states:

*In order to make acupuncture thorough and effective,
one must first cure the spirit.*

The English language has a variety of words to describe the states which arise when one's spirit becomes distressed: despairing, apathetic, paranoid, cut-off, insecure, desperate, depressed, anxious, vulnerable, resigned, bitter, self-centred, lacking self-esteem, etc. These are powerful words, but they describe how many people feel for much of their lives. As Cicero observed long before the advent of modern life-styles and modern neuroses:

*Diseases of the soul are more dangerous and more
numerous than those of the body.*

Or, as Henry David Thoreau put it:

The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.

情

qing –
emotion

I — What is traditional acupuncture?

One of the great advantages of this system of medicine is that it enables the practitioner to help a fearful person, a grief-stricken person, a resentful person or a person who rarely feels joyful. Sometimes the acupuncturist strives to free the individual from being dominated by a particular emotion. Sometimes the patient is impoverished by the lack of an emotion.

The Chinese regard the health of the person's spirit as crucial to his health and his chances of recovery. A practitioner can often see many people with similar symptoms, but they are reacting very differently. One may be at the end of his tether while another remains inwardly calm. As the *Nei Jing* says:

When the spirit is peaceful, suffering is minute.

Patients often come to acupuncture complaining of physical symptoms. Many have the experience of acupuncture bringing about an improvement in how they feel in themselves and it is then striking how often they regard their sense of well-being to be their main priority.

There is an increasing recognition that physical symptoms are integrally related to the state of health of one's mind and spirit. This is one of the great lessons that the West can learn from the East. Any comprehensive system of medicine must strive to be a therapy that treats the heart of the individual's illness. Unless a system of medicine has a clear vision of how the body, mind and spirit interact with each other, then it is doomed to be forever limited to a therapy of symptomatic relief.

2

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF CHINESE MEDICINE. THE DAO, YIN/YANG AND THE FIVE ELEMENTS

THE DAO

The *Nei Jing*, the most important treatise on acupuncture, was written sometime around 200BC. In the form of a dialogue, it harks back to ‘*ancient times*’ when, according to the Yellow Emperor, people enjoyed better health and greater longevity. The Yellow Emperor asks the acupuncture Master, Qi Bo :

Is this because the world changes from generation to generation? Or is it that mankind is becoming negligent of the laws of nature?

Qi Bo answered:

In ancient times those people who understood the Dao patterned themselves on yin and yang.

Long before the *Nei Jing*, the Chinese had evolved the

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philosophy of the *Dao*. *Dao* is untranslatable but it is best rendered as the ‘way’ or ‘way of life’. To live in harmony with the *Dao* was regarded as essential if the human being was to realise her full potential during her time on Earth. Qi Bo continued:

There was temperance in eating and drinking. Their hours of rising and retiring were regular and not disorderly and wild. By these means the ancients kept their bodies united with their souls, so as to fulfil their allotted span completely, measuring unto a hundred years before they passed away. Nowadays people are not like this; they use wine as beverage and they adopt recklessness as usual behaviour. They enter the chamber of love in an intoxicated condition; their passions exhaust their vital forces ... they do not know how to find contentment within themselves; they are not skilled in the control of their spirits ... For these reasons they reach only one half of the hundred years and then they degenerate.

If this was so in 200BC it is probably best not to think what Qi Bo would make of our life-styles in the twenty-first century!

We each have to discover our own path to finding ‘contentment in ourselves’. Neither Chinese medicine nor Chinese philosophy offers any universal answer to this central mystery of the human condition. They both stress, however, the importance of living in harmony with the *Dao* and the necessity of living in accordance with nature. No system of medicine in the world can ever fully compensate for the distress in body, mind and spirit that is the inevitable result when a person’s life strays too far from the *Dao*. The

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role of the acupuncturist is to help to restore patients' health and enable them to live a little closer to the *Dao*.

How can we, with our modern life-styles, live more in tune with the *Dao* in order to maintain better health? It is a widely held belief amongst the Chinese that people should balance activity with rest, excitement with reflection, that we should conserve our energy in the autumn and winter to balance increased activity in spring and summer. Acupuncturists see many patients whose health has suffered because of their failure to balance these aspects of their lives. One sees workaholics who scarcely rest, whether they are ambitious businessmen or housewives. Children become ill because they study hard for their exams and then 'relax' in front of the television, thereby failing to balance the mental strain with the physical activity which is so essential for children. Many people suffer ill-health when they retire from their jobs and then do not find satisfying activities to replace their former employment.

In order to further their understanding of the *Dao*, the Chinese developed two concepts which together form the basis of Chinese medical theory; *yin/yang* and the Five Elements. Both these ideas pervade Chinese thought, not just in medicine, but also in politics, science, art and religion. They are metaphors to describe how phenomena in nature function in relation to each other. The Chinese observed that in nature there is constant change, and their finest physicians created a system of medicine that explained how these patterns of change could become imbalanced and produce illness in a human being. The truths expressed in these concepts are universal. They apply equally to patients in the East and West and are as valid today as they were over 2,000 years ago.

YIN/YANG

The *Nei Jing* says:

If yin and yang are not in harmony, it is as though there were no autumn opposite the spring, no winter opposite the summer. When yin and yang part from each other, the strength of life wilts and the breath of life is extinguished.

In *yin/yang* theory all phenomena are viewed as consisting of varying degrees of *yin* and *yang*. *Yin* and *yang* are not substances, but are an expression of the two poles of a fundamental duality that exists in nature.

The Chinese ideograms for *yin* and *yang* depict the dark and sunny sides of a hill. *Yin* and *yang* are constantly in transition; just as in nature day and night constantly change into one another. Night is predominantly *yin*, day predominantly *yang*.

If you think about a 24-hour cycle, you can get some sense of how the *yin/yang* balance changes as the day progresses. At dawn *yin/yang* are in equilibrium. *Yang* then starts increasingly to predominate until the period of maximum *yang* at the height of the day. *Yang* then declines until equilibrium is again reached at dusk and continues to decline until the period of maximum *yin* is reached in the depths of the night. This dynamic is also affected by the balance of day and night according to the changing *yin/yang* nature of the seasons. Winter is predominantly *yin*, summer predominantly *yang*. However even on mid-summer's day there is a short period of darkness; an interval of *yin* within the *yang*.

By extension, rest corresponds to *yin*, activity corresponds to *yang*. Mid-winter is the period of greatest rest in nature,

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mid-summer the period of maximum activity. *Yang* also constantly changes into *yin*, summer turns to winter, day becomes night, activity must be followed by rest. The famous *Tai Ji* symbol illustrates how *yin* and *yang* comprise the whole of creation, how they flow into one another and how there is always *yin* within *yang*, *yang* within *yin*.



Figure 2. *Yin* and *yang* symbol

The following is a list of correspondences of phenomena in nature according to their *yin/yang* nature:

YANG	YIN
Light	Darkness
Activity	Rest
Heaven	Earth
Energy	Matter
Expansion	Contraction
Rising	Descending
Male	Female
Fire	Water

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In the Classic known as the *Liu Tzu* it says:

When the yang has reached its highest point the yin begins to rise, and when the yin has reached its greatest altitude it begins to decline, and when the moon has waxed to its full it begins to wane. This is the changeless Dao of Heaven. After the year's fullness follows decay, and the keenest joy is followed by sadness. This is the changeless condition of Man.

HOW DOES THE THEORY OF YIN/YANG APPLY TO ACUPUNCTURE?

According to the *Nei Jing* one of the principal tasks of the acupuncturist is to:

observe the relationship between yin and yang carefully, and to make adjustments to bring about equilibrium.

In order to do this she must assess various factors in her diagnosis of a person's *qi*, according to their *yin/yang* nature. The following are a few examples:

YANG	YIN
Fire	Water
Heat	Cold
Dry	Wet
Hyper-active	Hypo-active

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Fire/Water

The juxtaposition of Fire and Water may seem strange unless one bears in mind that Fire represents the flame that keeps alive and stokes all metabolic processes. Our bodies need to be kept constantly within a degree or two of 36–37° Celsius in order to function at their best.

Water constitutes over 75% of the human body and is essential to moisten and cool the body's physiological functions, to balance the warming action of the Fire. If this balance becomes disturbed then the body's functioning is inevitably affected. If the Fire becomes weak then the water will start to be in excess and the body's metabolism will become unable to carry out the many functions necessary to ensure health.

If the water becomes deficient then the Fire will start to rage out of control. The phrase 'Gung-Ho' entered the English language from Chinese medicine where it is used to describe somebody when the Fire of her liver (*Gan* = Liver; *Ho* = Fire) is in excess, leading to a red face, quick temper and generally a 'Gung-Ho' attitude to life!

Heat/Cold

An acupuncturist can learn about the *yin/yang* nature of a person from whether she feels the cold excessively, finds hot weather difficult to deal with or copes well with either extreme. Acupuncturists see many patients who are always trying to keep themselves warm, snuggling up to fires, cuddling hot-water bottles and dreaming of holidays in the sun. These people are basically deficient in *yang* and part of their treatment will concentrate on strengthening and warming the more *yang* aspects of their *qi*.

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Moxibustion, which involves smouldering small quantities of a herb on acupuncture points, is often used for this purpose.

Many people find hot weather difficult to deal with. This is common in all age groups, but is especially common in the elderly. These people have some *yin* deficiency. Feeling hot in the night is also a common symptom of *yin* deficiency.

Some people are strongly *yang* deficient; some are strongly *yin* deficient. Some have more subtle imbalances.

It is also possible to apply the criterion of Heat/Cold to specific symptoms. For example, many painful joints, often given names such as arthritis, rheumatism or lumbago in the West, feel cold to the touch. The area feels less painful after a hot bath or other forms of heat are applied. Many, however, are unaffected or made even more painful by heat. For the acupuncturist it is obvious that this is a different syndrome and will require different treatment.

When too much heat is present in a particular area or function of the body there will be a tendency for the person to have symptoms. If there is too much heat in the bladder then the person will tend to have scanty and dark urination. If the heat is more severe then there is a burning sensation when urinating. Too much heat in the lungs gives a dry cough. Constipation, heartburn, heavy periods, a red complexion, a red tongue and in acute cases, fever are other signs and symptoms.

Conversely if there is too much cold in particular organs, the person will be prone to signs and symptoms such as profuse pale urination, loose stools, a pale face and a pale tongue.

Dry/Wet

Dry eyes, dry skin, dry stools, a dry cough and any other symptoms of dryness all indicate an excess of *yang* in the body. Swollen ankles, excessive sweating, frequent urination, a runny nose or any other symptoms of excess wetness indicate an excess of *yin* in the body.

Hyperactive/Hypoactive

If the person has a tendency towards restlessness, insomnia, rapid speech and movements or emotional volatility then their *yang* is probably slightly overwhelming their *yin*. Many people find it hard not to live in a permanent state of mild anxiety, a slight agitation. Even when they would like to relax or fall asleep they find it hard to settle. Particular functions in the body can become strained and agitated.

If the person tends towards lethargy, sleepiness, slow speech and movements or an unemotional phlegmatic temperament then their *yin* is predominantly in excess. Certain functions in the body become sluggish and lacking in vitality.

For example a rapid heart beat probably indicates excess *yang* of the Heart, whereas a slow heartbeat may indicate excess *yin* of the Heart.

THE FOUR VARIETIES OF YIN/YANG IMBALANCE

Yin and *yang* are in a constant state of change, but in good health a balance is always maintained. Ill-health only results when one side starts to ‘consume’ the other. The *Nei Jing* states:

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Yin in excess makes yang suffer; yang in excess makes yin suffer. A preponderance of yang leads to heat manifestations; a preponderance of yin brings on cold.

The following diagrams show in a very simplified form the 4 basic types of *yin/yang* imbalance:

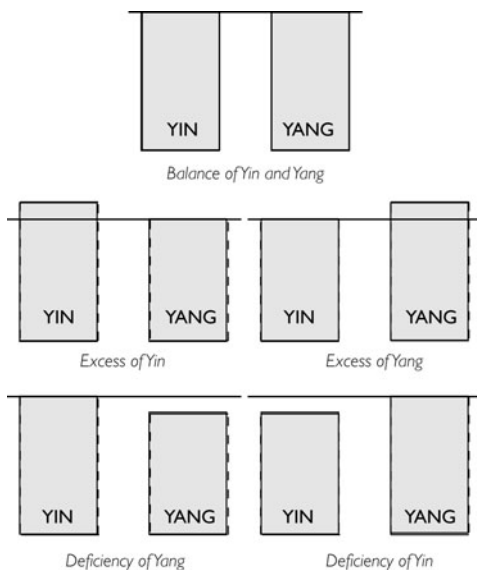


Figure 3. The four basic types of *yin/yang* imbalance

These four varieties of imbalance require radically different treatments. These will also be determined by many other factors, not least by consideration of the other fundamental axiom of Chinese medicine: the Five Elements.

THE FIVE ELEMENTS

In the *Nei Jing* the master practitioner Qi Bo expressed the theory in this way:

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The Five Elements are Metal, Water, Wood, Fire and Earth. They alternate in succession between a position of pre-eminence and one of insignificance. This transformation provides us with an understanding of life and death, an insight into creation and decay ... and the times when an illness is minor or serious.

The theory of the Five Elements is probably not as old as *yin/yang*, although it was certainly in existence by 500BC. Each Element is associated with a particular season: Water with winter, Wood with spring, Fire with summer, Earth with late summer and Metal with autumn. **Each Element describes a different quality in the human being, just as each season brings a different quality to the entire natural world.** Spring (Wood) and summer (Fire) are predominantly *yang*. Autumn (Metal) and winter (Water) are predominantly *yin*. 'Late summer' (Earth), that is approximately August and September in Britain, is the period when the annual cycle pauses, balanced between the active, growing, *yang* phase of the year and the declining, resting, *yin* phase.

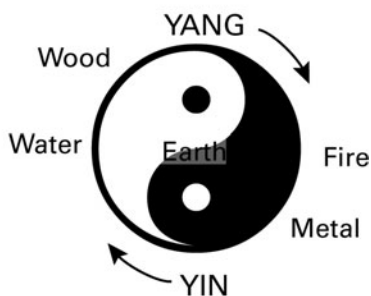


Figure 4. Yin and yang and the Five Elements

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The Five Elements (sometimes translated as the five Phases) are often depicted in the following form in order to show the nature of their inter-relationships. Each Element is generated by one and generates another, just as spring requires the resting period of winter in order to come into being and it, by virtue of creating an explosion of growth, enables summer to arrive.

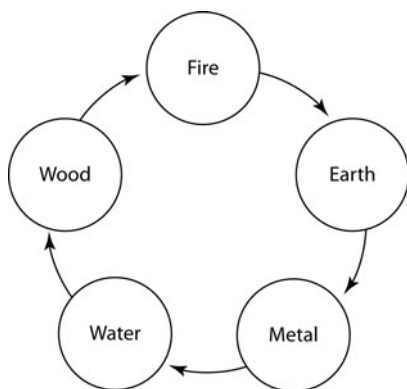


Figure 5. The generating sequence of the Five Elements

How does the theory of the Five Elements apply to acupuncture?

Essential to the theory of the Five Elements is the concept that when any of the Elements become distressed, it will lead to some degree of imbalance in the *qi* in body, mind or spirit. The degree of imbalance within the Five Elements may be slight or may be the cause of severe illness, physical and/or psychological.

Most patients visit an acupuncturist with symptoms stemming from various Elements. The practitioner has to make a diagnosis of the condition of each of the Elements in

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order to understand the disharmony in the balance between them. This is essential in order to perceive which Element is primarily in distress and which are now struggling due to the initial imbalance. Practitioners who focus much of their diagnosis and treatment on the person's spirit will always try to perceive how the Elements are reflected in the person's character and life.

In diagnosis of the Five Elements the ability of the practitioner to perceive and assess the emotional nature of the person is crucial, This diagnosis is focused on the key emotions of anger, joy, sympathy, grief and fear. Perceiving which emotions have become inappropriate, too intense for the situation or conversely too suppressed, enables the practitioner to discern where the hub of the imbalance in the person's spirit lies.

In the Chinese medical texts there is a great deal of theory to explain how the Five Elements interact and influence each other. Once there is any degree of imbalance in any Element then some disturbance will occur throughout the entire cycle. The natural process of beginning, growth and flowering, harvest and then storage cannot be fulfilled. Just as the farmer will not see an abundant harvest in the summer if the spring was too cold, too dry or too windy, so also the individual will not have a healthy Fire Element if the Wood Element has become distressed.

What follows is a brief description of some of the characteristics of the Five Elements. There are examples of just a few of the many ways in which dysfunction of an Element may manifest itself in the temperament of the person.

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Wood

Wood is the Element associated with spring; the season of dynamic growth and activity. **It is responsible for initiating change, guiding our development and granting us our ability to mature.**



*mu –
wood*

When the Wood Element has become weak, the person is often unable to generate the changes necessary to make the circumstances of her life more satisfying and rewarding. Thus, many people's lives become barren and a source of regret and frustration.

The Wood Element also gives us the ability to assert who we are to the rest of the world. A child draws upon this Element as she grows up and asserts her own uniqueness in relation to her parents. A common way for the Wood Element to become imbalanced is when parents overly repress the assertive sides of their child's character. This makes it extremely difficult for the child to grow into full adulthood, relatively free from the shadows of her parents' personalities. At the opposite end of the spectrum, however, it is just as destructive to a child's Wood for parents to fail to set limits to the assertive demands of a child, thus creating a tyrant instead.

One expects to see a person with a healthy Wood Element develop and 'grow' in herself in harmony with the passing of the years. Just as one can sometimes say that a child is 'young for her age', in the sense that she has not matured alongside her peers, one also sees adults who have not asserted their individuality and achieved maturity in themselves.

Anger is the emotion associated with Wood. Disharmony in the Wood Element itself, and in its

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relationship to the other Elements, can result in a person becoming inappropriately angry. They easily tend to be irritable and do not suffer fools gladly.

At the other end of the spectrum, some people with an imbalance in Wood become un-assertive and spend much of their lives feeling mildly frustrated. They are unwilling to provoke any situation which might produce conflict. How we respond in a situation when anger arises in us is shaped by the health of our Wood Element. This is dependent on the long-term strength of the Element and on the vitality of its *qi* at that particular time.

Many people, whether in the realm of career, marriage or family, ‘lose their way’ at some stage of their lives. They find themselves in a situation where their creative and assertive aspects cannot find expression. Their lives stagnate rather than evolve in response to their own changing needs. Frustration, irritability, resentment and despondency are commonly the result.

This is the cause of so much suffering that it often results in the person generating a physical symptom. Anger is said to make the *qi* ‘rise’ and symptoms in the head such as some kinds of headaches, and dizziness, can easily start if the person is internally angry over a period of time. Repressed anger can also make the *qi* ‘stagnate’, which produces very different kinds of symptoms. Gynaecological problems are common, as are digestive ones.

Fire

The predominantly *yang* Element of Fire is linked to the season of summer; the time for flowering, warmth and abundance in nature. Whereas the Wood Element



huo – fire

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is largely concerned with the qualities in ourselves that we need in order to assert our individuality, the Fire Element is mainly responsible for the qualities we draw upon to relate to and bond with other people.

Loneliness has always been a feature of many people's lives. It certainly continues to be so. However many people they know and however much time they spend socialising, many people still find themselves feeling 'lonely in a crowd', longing for an intimacy that eludes them.

As the psychiatrist Erich Fromm said:

*Many people think that the problem of love is the problem of an **object**, not the problem of a **faculty**. People think that to love is simple, but that to find the right object to love – or to be loved by – is difficult.*

For many of our patients their Fire Element has become weakened in such a way that they have become unable to fully give and receive love. They are often living in loveless marriages or isolated singleness.

The reasons for this usually go back to childhood when many children start to close their hearts in reaction to feeling unloved. Nothing is more devastating to an individual's Fire Element than the experience of being rejected or unwanted. Many children lose vitality in their Fire Element if they **feel** themselves to be unloved, irrespective of how much their parents adore them. For example, when a younger sibling enters the family and ousts the elder child from their position of being the sole recipient of their parents' affection.

The Fire Element is responsible for giving us our sparkle, our joy, our warmth. When someone's Fire is low they often radiate little true joy in their voices, their

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demeanour, their work and their relationships. After receiving treatment on the Fire Element, many patients feel their capacity for joy returning to closer to its full potential.

Joy is an emotion predominantly shared with others. Some people with imbalances in their Fire Element often try to stimulate jollity in social situations. This is in contrast to the rather joyless state that they are often in when they are alone. 'The tears of the clown' may be a cliché, but it symbolises the emptiness many people feel behind their jolly facade.

Some people with imbalance in the Fire Element, however, are extremely joyful people. Chinese medicine has always regarded being excessively joyful as being just as imbalanced as being lacking in joy. It may be an 'imbalance' to the acupuncturist, but the other side of the coin is that many people with imbalances in Fire have a wonderful ability to be joyful and to bring joy to other people when a situation draws out their sparkle and warmth.

Earth

The Element Earth, balanced in terms of *yin/yang*, is associated with late summer. This is the season of harvest, when the time of flowering is over but nature has not yet started its phase of decline.



tu –
earth

It is responsible for giving the individual stability, the ability to adjust to differing circumstances and to cope, whatever the difficulties. A person with a strong and stable Earth Element will manage to remain relatively composed in situations that would make another person feel insecure. **When the Earth Element is in distress the practitioner frequently discerns an internal insecurity that manifests itself as worry, pre-occupation and, in extreme cases,**

obsessional thoughts or behaviour.

An imbalance in Earth will often drive the person to look to other people for support, understanding or sympathy. There is, of course, a part of all of us that wants and needs to feel that other people care about what is happening to us. The acupuncturist will try to discern whether this need has become excessive. Alternatively some people close themselves off from other people to such an extent that they can no longer truly give or receive sympathy.

When the Earth Element is unstable, the person's feelings of sympathy towards others may become excessive. She may find herself being overwhelmed by feelings brought on by watching the news on television or worrying excessively about situations affecting family or friends over which she has no control.

The Earth Element is also inextricably linked with nourishment, in spirit and mind as well as body. We are all born with a store of *qi* but it must constantly be replenished by food and water from the Earth as well as air from the Heavens. Many people consult acupuncturists when they have trouble receiving nourishment, whether physically with symptoms like indigestion or poor appetite, or when they have become disturbed about food at deeper levels within themselves. This can manifest as a tendency towards anorexia or perhaps eating excessively to try to satisfy an emotional part of themselves which is not being nourished in any other way.

In childhood the main source of this nourishment and nurturing is one's mother. When a person does not receive enough of this quality of nurturing in her life, it is hard for her to have a really healthy Earth Element as an adult.

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Difficulties in one's relationship with one's mother are a common cause of dysfunction in this Element, whether from not receiving enough mothering or in some cases from receiving too much, i.e. 'smothering'. The practitioner, however, will always bear in mind the whole picture of the person and not leap to facile diagnoses based on one aspect of a patient's life.

The home is also an extremely important source of stability for most people. In some people the Earth Element is imbalanced in such a way as to make them excessively dependent upon their home for a feeling of security, in extreme instances being reluctant to go outside the front door. Minor symptoms often occur when people travel and leave the security of their home behind them. So many people experience disruption in their sleep, menstruation, digestion or bowels when they travel that the often-heard justification of 'a change in the drinking water' is not a sufficient explanation.

The task of the acupuncturist may be to strengthen the patient's Earth Element in order to liberate the person from needing to look excessively to outside sources for her own internal nourishment and security. That could be home, family, career status or the oral comforts of food or cigarettes.

Metal

Whereas Earth is associated with receiving *qi* in the form of nourishment from food, Metal is the Element responsible for receiving *qi* from the Heavens. Breathing accesses this source of vitality. We can only survive a few minutes without receiving this form of *qi*.



jin –
metal

In common with many other cultures the Chinese associate

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Heavenly energies with a male or *yang* figure (God the father), whereas the Earth is perceived as a female or *yin* force (Mother Earth).

When someone's relationship with their father, or in some cases father figures, has been problematic, the Metal Element often becomes afflicted. Few patients, when asked, say that as a child they felt as close to their fathers as to their mothers. Although most children spend less time with their father than their mother, there is no reason why the quality of time spent together should not enable a satisfying bond to be formed and developed. Many people, however, express the feeling that their father was more distant, more remote than their mother and often feel a sense of loss that the relationship was not closer or warmer. This will not necessarily lead to dysfunction in the Metal Element, but when this feeling is strong then it is often indicated.

The Metal Element is linked with the season of autumn; a time of decline when nature withdraws into itself. The emotion associated with Metal is commonly translated from the Chinese as grief. For us the word grief is inextricably linked with feelings of sadness after the death of someone we care for. But feelings such as sadness, melancholy, sense of loss, longing, disappointment and regret also stem from the Metal Element.

These feelings become excessive or inappropriate when someone's Metal is out of balance with the other Elements. They are commonly experienced mildly during the season of autumn.

The overt expression of grief is far more repressed in Britain, where the 'stiff upper lip' is so valued, than in many other cultures. For example, it is unusual for people to weep

Acupuncture for body, mind and spirit

publicly at funerals and it is rare for a person to cry with another person without feeling obliged to offer an apology. One can, however, often detect a sense of loss or melancholy in a person which she will only express to another person when a very intimate rapport exists. As ever, it is often the eyes that reveal the painful feelings that the person carries inside.

The price paid for denying the expression of this range of emotions is often an inner deadness, a cut-offness or a melancholy depression.

It should be remembered that Metal is predominantly *yin* and therefore its expression is bound to be less visible, less on the surface than the more *yang* Elements of Wood, Fire and Earth.

It is responsible for bringing richness and quality to one's inner life. When this function is weakened the person often finds that her experience of all manner of situations is not satisfying, either in work, socially or in time spent alone. Cynicism, boredom and apathy are the inevitable corollary when life loses its richness. Feelings of inadequacy, guilt, lack of self-worth and an excessively self-critical attitude are common complaints of patients with imbalance in the Metal Element. The acupuncturist in these instances will address much of the treatment to bringing this Element back into harmony with the other Elements.

Water

This is the most *yin* Element and often the most difficult to perceive. Its role in the spirit of the person is often the least overt. In winter the life-force of nature is at its most latent; the *qi* in a seed is fully



shui – water

2 – The philosophical basis of Chinese medicine

present but waiting for the arrival of spring to move into a more *yang*, active stage.

Water is responsible for our will, our drive, our ability to realise our potential. It is described as ‘the foundation of all *yin* and *yang* energies’ and it is this quality of being the foundation for the other phases in the cycle of the Five Elements which characterises this Element.

There are many people who run on ‘nervous energy’ when they lack the reserves which should be available to them from a strong Water Element. These people often achieve a great deal as the deficiency in the *yin* of their Water gives them a restless, hyper-active quality. Many workaholics, entrepreneurs and politicians have this imbalance. People who are deficient in the *yang* of their Water tend to be lacking in drive, ambition and vitality. When Water is healthy then the person is neither ‘driven’ nor lacking in ambition.

Water is also the origin of our congenital ‘Essence’ (*jing*) which determines our basic constitution. It is often described as a ‘treasure’ as Chinese physicians were only too well aware that the difference in treating someone with a weak constitution and someone with a strong one is colossal. *Jing* gives the person the ability and momentum to develop from a fertilised egg through the stages of being an embryo, baby, child, adolescent and adult. Although it is hard to bring about a complete cure when a person’s constitutional health is weak, acupuncture can still be extremely effective.

If the Water Element is imbalanced then fear is the emotion that becomes excessive or inappropriate. There are times when anxiety, suspiciousness, even paranoia may be justified. After all, ‘just because you are paranoid doesn’t mean they are not out to get you’!

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But many people have become chronically fearful and anxious in situations that do not truly warrant it. This is often hard to detect as most people are loath to reveal their fear to other people.

Often it can be detected most easily in the person's eyes or in their body movements. Many people try to still their bodies in order to suppress the intensity of their anxiety, whereas others find it hard to keep their eyes and body still when they are nervous. The acupuncturist must gain some understanding of the nature of a patient's fear if she is to make a diagnosis of the health of the Water Element.

The other side of the coin of fear is excitement and courage. Some people love to put themselves in situations where they become adrenalised. It makes them feel more alive, more vital. Fun-fairs, horror movies, driving too fast or even participating in dangerous activities such as parachuting and rock-climbing are all enjoyed by people who, because of the nature of their Water Element, like to stimulate their levels of excitation. Equally these activities are loathed by people whose levels of excitation are quite high enough already!

These brief outlines of *yin/yang* and the Five Elements can only give a flavour of the subtlety of perception afforded by these concepts to the acupuncturist. Diagnosis of the balance of *yin/yang* and the Five Elements is crucial to the acupuncturist's understanding of the person. Together these two theories form the theoretical basis of acupuncture. In order to make the diagnosis more specific the practitioner must also examine the condition of the twelve Organs.

3

THE TWELVE ORGANS AND CHANNELS

The Chinese discovered that each of the 12 channels, the pathways of *qi*, is linked to a particular organ. Their concept of an organ, however, incorporates much more than simply the physical structure. In Chinese medicine an organ is not defined by its structure and location; it is defined by its function. Not by what it is; but by what it does. The Heart, for example, is considered by an acupuncturist to control the entire cardio-vascular system. It is striking that the *Nei Jing* discussed the circulation of blood in the body over 1,700 years before William Harvey's celebrated discovery in 1624.

The Lungs are considered to be responsible for the whole process of breathing, from the nose down through the trachea to the organ of the lungs themselves. Even if an organ is removed, such as the gall bladder or spleen, the functioning of the channel/organ still continues. (Throughout this book when an organ – or further on in the book some other terms – is being referred to in the context of Chinese medicine the word will begin with a capital letter.)

Apart from its physical functions, each organ is endowed

Acupuncture for body, mind and spirit

with attributes of the mind and spirit. The *Nei Jing* compares each organ to an 'official' in a Court with each one fulfilling specific functions. One 'is like the minister of the monarch' another 'has the functions of a military leader'. 'These 12 officials should not fail to assist each other' for once one of the 'officials' begins to perform his duties less than adequately then the other 'officials' will inevitably be affected and symptoms will occur in body, mind or spirit.

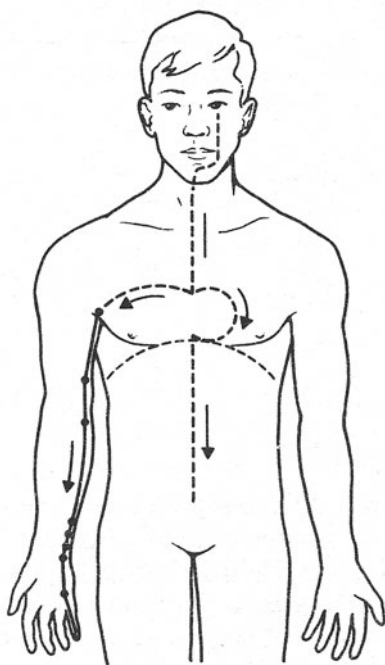


Figure 6. The Heart channel

Acupuncture works by enhancing the *qi* of a channel so

3 — The Twelve Organs and channels

that it can carry out its functions to its maximum potential. This improvement is usually sufficient to, at least, significantly diminish whatever symptoms have arisen. Often it means that the person no longer has the symptom.

Each channel can only be treated where it runs close to the surface of the skin and this is the pathway that is shown on the accompanying diagram. It also has a deep pathway that travels into the torso and passes through its associated organ.

Each channel has acupuncture points along its pathway, the longest having 67 points, the shortest just nine. Each point has a name. Some names describe the point's location; some allude to a quality that treatment of that point can bring to that Organ.

There is much theory to describe the specific functions of each channel and its associated Organ, but I am going to concentrate on some of the ways that dysfunction of each Organ is commonly seen. A diagnosis cannot be reached by the simple consideration of symptomatic indications of the Organs alone: other diagnostic criteria must always be considered (see Chapter 5).

Each of the Five Elements has two Organs attributed to it, with the exception of the Fire Element which is responsible for four Organs. The Organs in each Element are closely linked and in practice they are often treated together.

<i>Wood</i>	Liver	Gall Bladder
<i>Fire</i>	Heart Heart Protector	Small Intestine Triple Burner
<i>Earth</i>	Spleen	Stomach
<i>Metal</i>	Lungs	Large Intestine
<i>Water</i>	Kidneys	Bladder

THE ORGANS OF THE WOOD ELEMENT

Liver

Body

肝

gan –
Liver

When the Liver channel starts to malfunction, digestive disorders are very common. Indigestion, nausea, flatulence and other kinds of digestive troubles can be successfully treated by enhancing the functioning of this channel. This is particularly so when the symptoms are brought on by eating when tense or by eating foods which the Liver finds hard to deal with such as rich, fatty foods.

Many other symptoms, such as headaches and arthritis, can be exacerbated by straining the Liver with excessive consumption of alcohol, chocolate, drugs, cheese, and citrus fruits, to name but a few of the common culprits. For some people with imbalanced Liver Organs ‘excessive’ can sometimes mean a tiny amount by other people’s standards.

The Liver is one of the most important Organs associated with menstruation and many types of menstrual problems stem from distress in this Organ. Irregular and painful periods, fluid retention and pre-menstrual tension can all derive from problems with this Organ. Anger is the emotion associated with the Wood Element, so irritability prior to a period is common when this Organ is involved.

The Liver has particular responsibility for the functioning of the eyes. If the complaint is either blurred vision, ‘floaters’ in front of the eyes, dry, sore, tired, or red eyes or any other kind of eye problem, then the acupuncturist will suspect the Liver of being the origin of the trouble.

Mind and spirit

The Liver Organ ‘holds the office of General in the armed forces. Assessment of circumstances and conception of plans stem from it.’ Its role, as befits an Organ of the Wood Element, is to initiate action. It is responsible for planning and organising and the practitioner will attempt to assess these mental faculties. This is partly because they may be deleteriously affecting the patient’s life and partly in order to shed light on the condition of this Organ.

Some people are extremely disorganised, whereas others have everything rigidly planned down to the last detail. An excessive tendency either way is regarded as imbalanced and some people report that they become more efficient after acupuncture treatment on this Organ. Certainly the intense pressure of life today, cramming far more into each day than ever before, places a great strain on the mental aspects of this Organ.

In one’s spirit this Organ is responsible for giving us our sense of direction, purpose and hope for the future. A practitioner, who is adept at diagnosing and treating at this level, is able to enhance these aspects of the human spirit through the use of acupuncture.

Point names on this channel include ‘Gate of Hope’, ‘Spiritual Soul Door’ and ‘Supreme Rushing’.

Gall Bladder

Body

This Organ has manifold functions to perform and, like the Liver, its dysfunction commonly results in problems with digestion, menstruation and the eyes.

膽

dan –
Gall Bladder

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Its pathway runs from the temples, over the head, down the side of the torso and ends on the feet. Headaches, painful shoulders, arthritic hips and aching knees are frequently the result of distress along the path of the Gall Bladder channel. Co-ordination is also the province of this Organ and it is noticeable that many women with afflicted Gall Bladders become clumsy and accident-prone around the time of their periods.

The Gall Bladder, along with the Liver, is largely responsible for the condition of muscles, ligaments and tendons. Many people find that, under the stress of their busy lives, their muscle tone becomes increasingly tight. As a consequence, they experience stiff necks, tense shoulders or an aching lower back. Many ‘slipped discs’ and dislocations of the spine and neck are caused by the musculature becoming unable to respond effectively to the strains imposed upon it in daily life.

Mind and spirit

‘The Gall Bladder is responsible for what is just and exact. Determination and decision stem from it.’ Indecision, confusion, muddle and poor judgement are the result of dysfunction in this Organ. These states are particularly evident in people who have strained this organ by smoking cannabis over a long period of time. Cannabis has little effect on the physical level, but often saps decisiveness, assertiveness, initiative and clarity in the mind and spirit.

The Chinese talk of someone having a ‘small’ Gall Bladder when he lacks the personal courage to assert himself and make the decisions that are necessary in his life. The philosopher William James recognised this syndrome when

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he observed ‘There is no more miserable human being than one in whom nothing is habitual but indecision’.

Points on this channel include ‘Bright and Clear’, ‘Eye Window’ and ‘Sun and Moon’.

Catherine was a woman in her 30s complaining of migraines which were linked to her menstrual cycle. She had suffered from these since puberty but they had become worse since the birth of her children. She had several diagnostic indications, including accident-proneness, irritability, alcohol intolerance and being very disorganised. All of these indications pointed to the principal problem being in her Gall Bladder and Liver Organs. She also spoke with some feeling of the fact that as a child and teenager her mother made all her decisions for her and that if it was at all possible she still preferred to let her husband make all decisions, important or trivial.

THE ORGANS OF THE FIRE ELEMENT

Heart

Body



xin –
Heart

The Heart is spoken of in the Classics as ‘the root of life’, ‘the Grand Master’ of the other organs and as the Organ who ‘holds the office of Lord and Sovereign. The radiance of the spirits stems from it.’ Some Japanese acupuncturists regard the functioning of this Organ as so subtle and so powerful that they prefer not to treat it.

One of its main roles in the body is to ‘govern’ the Blood and the entire functioning of the vascular system. As you might now have come to expect, the Chinese and the Western perceptions of what ‘blood’ is and does are somewhat

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different. To the acupuncturist, Blood is a form of *qi*, albeit a dense and material (*yin*) one. It is created from the *qi* we receive from our intake of food and air and its main functions are to nourish and moisten the body. Our flesh is made from Blood. When a woman grows a foetus in her womb, the foetus is nourished by the mother's Blood. The Liver is also very important in the storing of Blood but the Heart is the Organ that 'governs' Blood.

It is not uncommon for patients complaining of heart dysfunction, such as palpitations or arrhythmia, to be told by their doctor after an ECG and other tests that their heart is 100% sound. Sometimes this has even been said immediately prior to a major heart attack. How can this be? To the acupuncturist it is obvious that the Heart *qi* is in distress in a way that is not discernible to Western diagnosis.

Severe heart symptoms, e.g. angina, breathlessness and heart attacks, can also be treated on this channel. The pathway of the channel runs from the heart down to the little finger and pain along the pathway is often felt when someone suffers from angina.

The Heart also has a particular connection with the tongue and the ability to speak. Various speech defects such as stuttering or even just tripping over one's words can often be treated successfully on this channel.

As with all the other Organs, it is very common for an acupuncturist to diagnose dysfunction in the Heart Organ without the physical organ of the heart being involved. There will be symptoms, to some degree or another, but they may be only in the mind or spirit or in another aspect of the physical functioning of the Heart Organ.

Mind and spirit

When Heart Blood deficiency primarily affects the body it often manifests as an awareness of the heart when at rest. But it more often affects the mind and spirit and they easily become what Chinese medicine calls ‘unrooted’. The person often has trouble getting off to sleep, as the mind can’t settle sufficiently. Once asleep the person often has no trouble staying asleep, whereas, if the insomnia is due to other reasons, then waking in the night is a more common pattern. Heart Blood deficiency can often manifest as being inappropriately anxious, easily startled, or rather absent-minded. ‘Now, where did I put those keys?’ is one cry of the person with Blood deficiency.

This Organ is so crucial to the overall functioning of the person’s well-being that distress in the mind and spirit of the Heart is particularly devastating. Joy is the emotion associated with this Fire Organ and when it is seriously imbalanced, hysteria, manic behaviour and feeling ‘out of control’ can result, as well as depression, insomnia and mental confusion.

People often feel panicky and commonly have a sense of being ‘out of control’ in some way that they find difficult to articulate.

Points on this channel include ‘Little Rushing In’, ‘Spirit Path’ and ‘Utmost Source’.

Margaret was a patient who had had a fairly serious car crash several days previously. She was now suffering delayed symptoms from the shock. She was bursting into tears without any provocation, feeling alternately hot and cold, depressed and her mind was so confused that she was barely able to complete a sentence. Acupuncture treatment on one

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point on the Heart channel (Spirit Gate) restored her to her normal self by the time she left the clinic.

Heart Protector

Body

This Organ is sometimes known as the Heart-governor or the Pericardium. Its physical functions are very similar to those of the Heart.

In fact many symptoms associated with the heart in Western terms are treated more effectively here than on the Heart channel itself. The pericardium, the fibrous sheath that surrounds the heart, is governed by this Organ and the circulation of the blood is also largely dependent upon its health.

As the ‘Protector of the Heart’ one of its jobs is to bear the brunt of any effects of heat upon the Heart. When a person has a fever, the Heart Protector has to work hard. This depletes it, so treatment upon this channel is often effective after a fever if the person is experiencing difficulty in recovering his former vitality.

Mind and spirit

This Organ is said in the *Nei Jing* to ‘guide the subjects in their joys and pleasures’. It controls the person’s ability to open and close his ‘heart’ according to the needs of the situation. Just as this Organ protects the Heart physically, it also protects it emotionally. It gives a person the necessary resilience to suffer the inevitable ‘slings and arrows’ of life. Some people with damaged Heart Protectors have closed their Hearts to such an extent as to make it virtually impossible for them to enjoy an intimate relationship. In the

心包

xin bao –
Heart Protector

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absence of strong Heart protection they keep people at a distance in order to avoid the possible pain of rejection, the experience of which can be so devastating to one's Heart.

But just as there are situations when one needs to have the ability to open one's heart in order to give and receive love and closeness, there are also times when it is appropriate to keep one's heart protected. Some people are inclined to be over-sensitive in non-intimate situations. For example, a person who is inclined to 'wear his heart on his sleeve' often takes it personally if an acquaintance is somewhat abrupt or short, whereas in fact the acquaintance is probably worried about something, or just hung-over!

'Relationships' are one of the pre-occupations of our times and, increasingly, people are realising that the problems they experience in forming or maintaining satisfying relationships are due to their own emotional make-up. Good psychotherapy and traditional acupuncture are the most effective therapies I know for bringing about changes in this area.

The physical aspects of sexuality are largely determined by the Kidney Organ, but the psychological aspects are predominantly affected by the health of the Heart and the Heart Protector. Sexuality is inextricably linked with intimacy, warmth and love and these qualities are largely determined by the health of this Organ. If a person, because of his excessive vulnerability, becomes withdrawn into himself, then his sexuality may become troubled and a source of discontent, rather than a source of happiness and fulfilment.

Points on this channel include the 'Palace of Weariness', 'Heavenly Spring' and the 'Intermediary'.

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Robert was a high-powered computer programmer in his late 20s whose main complaint was asthma. He was a good-looking, intelligent and delightful man and potentially a very eligible partner for someone. He had been mildly asthmatic since his teens but it had become significantly worse over the previous five years.

From his case history it emerged that around that time he had been extremely hurt when his girlfriend had ended their relationship. Since that time he had not had any further sexual relationships and admitted that he did not feel 'strong' enough to enter another relationship. Supported by other diagnostic evidence, treatment was focused on the Heart Protector. His asthma improved greatly and within a few weeks he initiated a new relationship; a development that he attributed to the changes he felt in himself from his acupuncture treatment.

Small Intestine

Body

Dysfunction of this Organ can cause physical symptoms in many different forms. The pathway of the channel starts on the little finger, runs up the arm, over the shoulder and ends just in front of the ear. Many kinds of musculo-skeletal pain such as frozen shoulder, stiff neck and tennis elbow can be treated successfully on this channel. Digestive problems, hearing difficulties, tinnitus and urinary symptoms, amongst many others are often caused by imbalance of this Organ.

Mind and spirit

Physically the small intestine is responsible for extracting what the body needs and passing on to the large intestine what is not needed. It is 'responsible for receiving and making things thrive'. In the mind and spirit it performs the

小腸

xiao chang –
Small Intestine

3 — The Twelve Organs and channels

same function. This Organ is largely responsible for the crucial decisions about what really matters to us, what is pure and what is impure, what our priorities are. When this function is not working well then often the person becomes stuck in ambivalence; unable to commit himself to a career, relationship or any course of action that could be nourishing for him. The person often lacks discernment and discrimination. He tends either to be overly critical and cynical or, at the other extreme, to be naïve and gullible.

Points on this channel include ‘Nourishing the Old’, ‘Listening Palace’ and ‘Grasping the Wind’.

Triple Burner

Body

This Organ, sometimes known as the Three Heater, has no physical organ with which it is associated, but its role is largely to support the functioning of all the other 11 Organs. It has three separate ‘Burners’; the Upper which is located in the chest, the Middle which lies between the diaphragm and the navel and the Lower which is situated in the lower abdomen. These three areas should all be the same temperature to the touch. If one Burner is significantly warmer or cooler than the others then it signifies an imbalance in the functioning of the Triple Burner and possibly therefore of the organs situated in that area of the body.

三焦

san jiao —
Triple Burner

The Triple Burner is essential to balance the Fire and Water, the *yang* and the *yin*, in the body. It ‘is responsible for the opening up of passages and irrigation’ and plays an important role in assisting other Organs to control the

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distribution of fluids. It also acts as a thermostat in the body, regulating our body temperature as the temperature outside changes. If *yin* is deficient, the body will start to overheat in some area and dry up some of the necessary fluids. If *yang* is deficient, parts of the body will become too cold and sluggish, with a consequent increase in fluids. This Organ is therefore of crucial importance in the treatment of fevers and chills and also when someone loses the warmth of his body when he becomes ill or tired.

Mind and spirit

This Organ is important for its role of regulating the stability of the Fire Element. The person is inclined to be excessively volatile or extraordinarily phlegmatic if this Organ is imbalanced. It also plays a part in our relationships with other people, but in a far less intimate way than the Heart Protector. One's ability to deal with non-intimate contact, such as in groups of people, is partly dependent on the Triple Burner. This explains why some people are so adept at being the life and soul of the party yet find one-to-one relationships problematical, whereas other people maintain very loving intimate relationships but are ill at ease in a room full of people.

Points on this channel include 'Branch Ditch', 'Heavenly Well' and 'Assembly of Ancestors'.

Jennifer suffers from multiple sclerosis which has always been far more limiting during either hot or cold weather. Although she still has the illness, treatment primarily on her Triple Burner has improved the quality of her life a great deal and has mitigated the devastating effects of extremes of heat and cold.

THE ORGANS OF THE EARTH ELEMENT

Spleen

Body

脾

pi –
Spleen

The Spleen Organ encompasses a far wider range of functions than those performed by the spleen organ in terms of Western physiology. It is closely linked to the Stomach and assists in the transformation of food and drink into *qi* and Blood. It also distributes *qi* around the body, so poor circulation and heavy-feeling limbs are often the result of Spleen dysfunction. It is noticeable that, in general, women are more prone to cold extremities than men. This is because menstruation is partly dependent upon the Spleen for its healthy functioning and this places more of a strain on this Organ in women than in men. Interestingly several points on this channel are commonly tender to the touch on women.

One of the functions of the Spleen is to hold the Blood in the blood vessels. If the Spleen starts to struggle with this task, a woman will often have heavy periods or may bleed at the wrong time in the cycle. The person may bruise easily.

The Spleen has such a wide range of functions to perform that a huge variety of physical symptoms can arise when it becomes imbalanced. Fatigue, obesity, digestive problems, diarrhoea and prolapses are some of the most frequently seen.

Mind and spirit

Thoughts, ideas and opinions are largely dependent upon the Spleen for their creation and resolution. The tendency when one's Spleen is imbalanced is for one's thoughts to go round and round over the same ground or, as the Chinese rather sweetly put it, to 'think too much'. Worry is the bane of many

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people's lives, preventing them from sleeping well and unnecessarily occupying much of their waking thoughts. At worst, imbalance of the Spleen can lead to pre-occupation, obsessions and compulsive behaviour. As the Marquess of Halifax, the politician and man-of-letters, said:

A man may dwell so long upon a thought that it may take him prisoner.

Points upon the Spleen channel include 'Earth Motivator', 'Encircling Glory' and 'Sea of Blood'.

Stomach

Body



wei –
Stomach

This Organ forms the first part of the process of receiving food and drink into our bodies and transforming it into *qi*. It is responsible for the entire food pathway from the saliva in our mouths, down through the oesophagus and into the stomach and duodenum. Along with the Spleen it is 'responsible for the storehouses and granaries', regarded as one of the most important officials in a country stalked by famine throughout history. 'Have you eaten today?' is a common greeting in China and this phrase reflects a still-evident Chinese concern about food and the state of their digestion.

The Stomach must 'rot and ripen' the food and drink and this, along with the functioning of the Spleen, determines the condition of one's digestive metabolism. People with the largest appetites are sometimes as thin as rakes and conversely some people seem to put on weight just by 'looking at food'.

When this rotting and ripening function does not work

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well, the Stomach *qi* can ‘rebel upwards’. This creates symptoms such as heartburn, indigestion, and belching. A general lack of vitality is often the result of a deficiency of Stomach *qi*.

Mind and spirit

So many people in our society have some difficulties in their attitude towards food. Media and peer pressure to be thin often conflicts with the abundant availability of foods almost guaranteed to make one fat. This makes it very hard for many people to maintain a healthy attitude to food. Comfort-eating, bingeing, poor appetite and a general pre-occupation with food are very common and often respond well to treatment on this Organ.

The ability to assimilate new ideas, concentrate and absorb information is also the province of this Organ. If while reading a page of a book you realise nothing has gone in, then your Stomach Organ is probably not at its best!

Points on this channel include ‘Abundant Splendour’, ‘Heavenly Pivot’ and ‘People Welcome’.

Anna is a university lecturer in her mid 50s who came for acupuncture treatment primarily for her arthritic knees. The case history also revealed menopausal problems such as hot flushes and excessive mood swings, a stomach ulcer, insomnia, a tendency to eat too much, feelings of tiredness and cold extremities. Her mind was exceptionally creative, but she reported that she found it hard to ‘switch it off’ and generally found it difficult to relax. Treatment, primarily centred on her Spleen and Stomach channels, brought about an improvement in all her symptoms. She still comes for treatment once or twice a year to prevent any form of relapse and also to prevent the onset of any new symptoms that might arise from her stressful job and family life.

THE ORGANS OF THE METAL ELEMENT

Lungs

肺

Body

fei –
Lung

The Lungs ‘govern the breaths’ and they are commonly treated when a person suffers from symptoms such as asthma, emphysema, bronchitis or other lung problems. They are also largely responsible for the production of ‘Defensive *qi*’ which protects us from external climatic factors, such as wind and damp, to which the Lungs are especially vulnerable. Some people get many more colds than others. Treatment on this Organ is often effective at reducing a person’s susceptibility to infections of the sinuses, throat and chest.

When the Lungs become ill the problem is often largely to do with an imbalance in the fluids. If the person has a ‘dry’ cough with no phlegm, then the practitioner will treat him very differently from someone who is coughing up lots of phlegm. Practitioners are usually very interested in the exact colour of the phlegm! Yellow or green signifies that heat is present. Colourless or white indicates cold.

The Lungs also largely govern the condition of the skin. The link between skin and lung problems is well known to Western medicine. For example, it is common to see children develop asthma if they use suppressive treatments, such as hydrocortisone cream, for their eczema. The Lungs play a crucial role in the regulation of fluids in the body and when they malfunction, dry or wet skin, oedema, abnormality of perspiration or excessive phlegm are frequently the result.

Mind and spirit

The Lungs ‘hold the office of Minister and Chancellor’ and they work directly under the control of the Heart, the Emperor. Their role is to receive the ‘Heavenly *qi*’ and to provide inspiration and a sense of meaning to one’s life.

When this Organ becomes imbalanced, there is a common tendency for a person to become cut-off from new ideas, people and the experiences of life in general. Boredom, apathy, and a feeling that life is passing one by are the inevitable consequence of being unable to let in and ‘receive’ the richness of human experience. This is sometimes accompanied by a desperate need to enjoy some form of quality, some sense of meaning in one’s existence.

This may manifest as a search for ‘someone who has all the answers’, such as a father-figure, a role-model or a guru who will supposedly reveal to the person a depth of wisdom and experience previously unavailable to him.

For other people it shows in more mundane ways. Being ‘successful’, driving an expensive car, eating in high-class restaurants, or marrying a partner who will supposedly enhance one’s prestige, are just a few of the ways that people attempt to compensate for the inner feeling that their lives lack a sense of fulfilment and purpose. As it says in the great Classic of Chinese thought, the *Huainanzi*:

Instead of bringing joy from inside to outside we have tried to bring rejoicing from outside to inside. The music rings out and we are full of joy but when the tune ends we are distressed.

Points on this channel include ‘Very Great Abyss’, ‘Heavenly Palace’ and ‘Cloud Gate’.

Large Intestine

大腸

da chang –
Large Intestine

Body

The Large Intestine is responsible for the elimination of waste from the body. It may not be a glamorous job, but it is essential to the healthy functioning of the body. Waste matter is primarily excreted through the bowel and symptoms such as constipation, diarrhoea, lower abdominal pain and flatulence are obviously common when this Organ becomes imbalanced.

The Large Intestine also discharges waste material through the skin. Spots, blocked pores and greasy skin can all result when it malfunctions. Problems of the throat and nose such as catarrh, sinus trouble and an impaired sense of smell may also arise.

The channel starts on the hand, runs up the arm and shoulder, around the mouth and ends by the nose. Because the pathway goes around the jaw, it is particularly effective when relief from toothache is required.

Mind and spirit

The Large Intestine is closely linked to the Lungs and when one starts to malfunction then inevitably it affects the other. When dysfunction of the Large Intestine predominates, the tendency is for the person to be ‘cut-off’, not because he can’t receive but because he can’t ‘let go’. Resentment, regret, guilt, an inability to forgive and bitterness frequently result and can poison the ability to ‘generate evolution and change’, which is the role of the Large Intestine.

Once this function becomes impaired then much of the person’s experience becomes tainted. It becomes so much

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easier to see peoples' weaknesses rather than their strengths, and that the glass is half-empty rather than half-full. Cynicism is the almost inevitable corollary. Often the person finds himself in that sad state of being, as Oscar Wilde put it:

a man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.

Points on this channel include 'Warm Current', 'Welcome Fragrance' and 'Heavenly Vessel'.

Simon is a teacher in his late 20s who came to acupuncture to help him to stop catching so many coughs and colds. Several times a year these would lead to bronchitis. He had suffered from bouts of suicidal depression since his adolescence, but felt that his depressions and his chest complaint had been more severe since the death of his dearly-loved father when he was 21. Otherwise he was in good health, but suffered from acne despite having a good diet.

He enjoyed his work and felt that he 'should have everything to live for' but felt stuck in his sadness for reasons that he did not understand. Treatment on both the Organs of the Metal Element brought about improvement in all his symptoms and he now comes to acupuncture only if he starts to lose his sense of well-being or occasionally if he happens to develop an acute physical symptom.

THE ORGANS OF THE WATER ELEMENT

Kidneys

Body

The Kidneys are the 'foundation of the *yin* and *yang*' and they give us our foundation by storing the *jing*,

腎

shen –
Kidney

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the congenital essence which we inherit from the sperm of our father and the ovum of our mother. It determines our constitutional make-up, strength and vitality. As *jing* is inherited it can never be quantitatively increased, but it can be enhanced by acupuncture, herbs and exercises such as *Tai Ji Quan* and *Qi Gong*.

Jing is responsible for the growth and development of the person, providing the basis for our transition from embryo through birth, childhood, adulthood and old age. If a person inherits a *jing* deficiency he will have poor constitutional health and may suffer from specific problems caused by *jing* deficiency, such as retarded growth, premature ageing or weakness of sexual activity.

I will try to show how the nature of the *yin/yang* balance of the Kidney Organ affects the way that the Organ exhibits its disharmony. The Kidneys play a major role in the control of fluids in the body, their *yin* nature balancing the *yang* influence of the Organs of the Fire Element. If they malfunction, the balance between Fire and Water will inevitably be lost and any symptom which involves an excess or a deficiency of fluids may result. If the *yin* of the Kidneys is deficient, then the person will tend to 'dry up' and tend to have symptoms such as dark, scanty urine, constipation, a dry mouth at night and night sweats. If the *yang* of the Kidneys is deficient the person will tend to have abundant clear urine, oedema and loose stools.

The condition of the bones and bone marrow is largely dependent on the Kidneys. Brittle and soft bones as well as poor teeth are commonly seen when this Organ is in poor condition.

Apart from the symptoms mentioned above, malfunction

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of the Kidneys can cause a diverse range of symptoms, such as back pain and certain kinds of asthma, and it is frequently the origin of problems with the ears and nervous system.

Mind and spirit

‘The Kidneys are responsible for the creation of power. Skill and ability stem from them.’ They provide us with our will power, our ambition, our drive. If the *yang* of the Kidneys is deficient then the individual will be inclined to be somewhat overwhelmed by his fear (the emotion associated with the Water Element) and this will erode his motivation and will. People deficient in Kidney *yang* are inclined to hide their fear behind a superficially calm exterior and this often gives the impression of internal peace, which unfortunately is truly not the case.

If the *yin* of the Kidneys is weak then the person is inclined to be restless, driven by his will and always striving to conquer fresh challenges. His ambition may be excessive but this is the kind of person to have with you in an emergency for he always seems to have reserves to draw upon. His mind is always on the go and his difficulty is knowing how to relax rather than how to motivate himself. Meditation and relaxation exercises are excellent in order to slow the person down if one can get him relaxed enough in the first place!

If the *yang* of the Kidneys is deficient the person tends to be lacking in drive, in ‘get up and go’. They generally prefer to avoid physical activity and would generally prefer to be lying about on the sofa than decorating the spare room.

Points on this channel include ‘Ambition Room’, ‘Spirit Storehouse’ and ‘Bubbling Spring’.

Bladder

Body

膀胱

pang guang – Bladder

The Bladder channel has the longest pathway in the body, starting in the corner of the eye and then running over the head, passing twice down the back and then running down the back of the leg to the little toe. Symptoms along its pathway are common, including headaches, many kinds of back pain, sciatica and painful knees.

Its main function is to control the distribution of fluids in the body or as the *Nei Jing* says, ‘it stores the overflow’. Its function is therefore closely linked to the Kidneys and their symptoms are similar. Cystitis, incontinence, bed-wetting and other problems where there is an excess or lack of fluid are often treated on this channel.

Mind and spirit

This Organ plays a crucial role in storing our reserves of energy; physical, mental and spiritual. When circumstances such as tiredness or particularly stressful situations force us to draw upon our inner resources, it is this Organ that holds the necessary reserves. Some people seem to drain their reserves continually, always running on nervous energy, hardly sleeping or deliberately creating stressful situations or melodramas as a way of making the adrenaline pump and making themselves feel more alive.

This Organ is also responsible for the flow of thoughts. When you see a person ‘drying up’ when he attempts to speak in public, or someone’s mind constantly jumping ahead of itself or yourself, then you are probably in the presence of someone whose Bladder Organ is not all it could be!

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Points on this channel include ‘Eyes Bright’, ‘Penetrating the Valley’ and ‘Uniting Yang’.

Stephen is a local farmer who has branched out into various activities such as property development and a thriving farm shop. His main complaint was that he was excessively irritable, particularly with his family. Superficially this would point to an imbalance in the Wood Element, but it soon became apparent that anxiety and fearfulness, although more hidden, were much more predominant. He was beside himself with fear if the family were even a few minutes late back in the car and he endlessly created catastrophic scenarios about his business schemes. He perspired extremely freely and could hardly lie still on the treatment couch. He will always be a fearful person, that is his basic temperament, but acupuncture treatment on his Water Element has made him far less so and a great deal less irritable.

THE ‘CURIOUS’ ORGANS

The 12 Organs also control the condition of the ‘curious’ organs: the Uterus (the ‘precious envelope of life’), Brain, Bone Marrow, Bones and Blood Vessels. Dysfunction of any of these organs is treated on the 12 Organs as well as the two other channels in the body, the Conception and Governor Vessels, the reservoirs of *yin* and *yang qi*.

Once any of our Organs or ‘curious’ organs becomes over- or under-active then, in time, some degree of ill-health must result. What causes the Organs to malfunction is the subject of the next chapter.

4

THE CAUSES OF DISEASE

Western and Chinese medicine have radically different views about why we become ill. In Western medicine, for example, the notion that the emotional life of the person plays a significant role in a person's physical health is still a controversial hypothesis. Because so little is as yet understood about the complex physiological mechanisms operating, physicians in the West have often denied that physical illnesses frequently have a psychological basis. The word 'psychosomatic' has always had pejorative overtones, implying that the patient could get better if only she tried hard enough.

'Stress', however, has become a fashionable word in recent times to explain the cause of all manner of illnesses. It is a strange paradox that although nowadays GPs often cite stress as the cause of a person's complaint, the main medical textbooks do not even list it in their sections on the causes of disease. In Chinese medicine, however, the links between body, mind and spirit have always been recognised and indeed lie at the heart of the system.

Also at the core of the Chinese view of disease causation is the concept of 'invasion' by climatic forces. This is similar to the age-old notion of catching a chill from being exposed

to an extreme climate. The common cold, for example, is described as an ‘Invasion of Wind and Cold’. Attacks on the body by climatic forces are regarded as a common cause of many illnesses which can often be treated successfully with acupuncture.

Fundamental to the notion of invasion by climatic forces is that they can only get a grip if there is an underlying weakness in the person’s *qi*. Chinese practitioners have been fascinated by the energetic differences between the people who became ill during epidemics and those who managed to resist the infection. Much of the emphasis of the physicians lay in building up patients’ *qi* in order to resist the infection or minimise its effects.

One of the fundamental differences between Western and Chinese medicine is that, in this context, acupuncturists make little distinction between cause and effect. If the person exhibits the signs and symptoms of ‘Invasion by Wind-Cold’ it does not matter if she is convinced that she has not caught a chill, nor if a Western doctor diagnoses a streptococcal infection. The diagnosis of ‘Invasion of Wind-Cold’ remains the same because it is a description of the symptoms as well as an explanation of the cause.

Even in the case of a cause of disease unknown to the ancients, such as radiation sickness, it has been studied and incorporated into the framework of Chinese medicine. After the atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, acupuncture and moxibustion were found to be effective treatments for thousands of people.

The Chinese formulated three main categories of disease causation: Miscellaneous, External and Internal. The

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miscellaneous causes are predominantly concerned with lifestyle. **Issues with diet, exercise, sex, and injuries are examples of miscellaneous causes of disease. The external causes are climatic and primarily affect the body. The internal are emotional and affect the mind and spirit in the first instance.**

THE EXTERNAL CAUSES OF DISEASE

Wind



feng – wind

Apparently there are winds that blow out of Central Asia across the plains of China that make the Mistral seem like a pleasant breeze. Certainly the Chinese are often at pains not to become exposed to the wind. An early Classic expressed this preventive measure as:

The sages of ancient times avoided the evil wind as one would arrows and stones.

Some people love the wind and find it stimulating and pleasant. Some have no strong feelings one way or another. Others dislike the wind because it makes them tense or irritable. Wind particularly affects the Wood Element; anger is the emotion that is liable to arise when this Element is strained. In France the Mistral blowing is even given as grounds for clemency in certain court cases. Strong wind makes many people restless or gives them physical symptoms such as headaches or earaches. School teachers are often well aware of how much harder it is to maintain discipline on windy days.

Even draughts and air-conditioning can produce symptoms in someone whose *qi* is weak at the time. Bell's Palsy is a

good example of an illness that sometimes arises after the person has been exposed to the wind. Wind enters the body through the pores of the skin. This is why one should be at pains to avoid draughts or wind after a hot bath when the pores of the skin are open.

Noise is also regarded as a form of Wind. It is noticeable that a person suffering from a headache caused by dysfunction in the Liver and Gall Bladder Organs is often extremely sensitive to noise. This is a familiar experience for people suffering hang-overs from over-taxing their Liver the previous night!

Wind is a *yang* force that ‘injures *yin*’ and often produces a sudden onset of symptoms, usually in the Lungs in the first instance. The common cold, characterised by a runny nose and lack of a fever is a combination of Wind and Cold. Influenza and other conditions distinguished by fever, perspiration and thick yellow/green sputum are a combination of Wind and Heat.

When Wind becomes present more deeply in the body it particularly affects the Liver and Gall Bladder and often causes tremors, stiffness, itching or pains that move around from place to place in the body.

Heat

Heat is also predominantly *yang* and produces symptoms of redness, sweating, fever, scanty urine and thirst. Sunstroke is an obvious example of an ‘invasion of Heat’, but one can be invaded by Heat in far less dramatic ways. It is noticeable, for instance, that there is often an outbreak of ‘flu when there is an unseasonably warm spell in winter.



shu – heat

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Heat can also invade the body very easily from food, drink and drugs. Certain foods are very 'heating', especially spicy foods and red meat. Any form of stimulant is especially heating. Coffee can be so agitating that many people find it hard to sleep after drinking it. Alcohol, especially spirits and red wine, often produce a red complexion in people who drink too much over too long a time. Stimulant drugs are also very heating, especially cocaine, 'speed' and ecstasy, but some prescribed drugs are also very 'hot'.

When Heat has invaded, the whole body or portions of it may feel or appear hot. The practitioner will pay close attention to any abnormalities in temperature in any area of the body that is producing symptoms.

Blood quite easily gets too hot. Skin complaints which are red and/or feel hot are due to heat in the Blood.

If Heat affects the mind and spirit it leads in mild cases to emotional distress. The person easily becomes anxious or panicky. Sleep can become erratic. In more extreme cases it can lead to manic behaviour: for example the delirium that accompanies high fevers or the aggressive behaviour of some 'skid-row' alcoholics.

Cold

Cold (as one might imagine) is the opposite of Heat. The weather does not have to be exceptionally cold to create an invasion of Cold. A cool breeze on a summer's evening can generate a Cold condition, especially if one is still dressed for the heat of the day.

寒

han – cold

Cold is *yin* and leads to an increase of fluids, for example the extraordinary amount of phlegm that one can produce

during the acute phase of the common cold. Parts of the body may feel cold, either localised, or over a wider area. For example, Cold is a common cause of menstrual pain. If any pain gets significantly better when heat is applied to it then cold is always present. For some women putting a hot water bottle on their abdomen makes a significant difference to their period pains. For others it makes no difference at all. The use of moxibustion is especially effective in the treatment of Cold conditions.

One's predisposition to succumbing to an invasion of Heat or Cold is largely determined by one's underlying deficiency in either *yin* or *yang*. People who are chronically *yang* deficient are generally prone to Cold conditions and those who are *yin* deficient are frequently susceptible to fevers and other Heat symptoms.

Dampness

The concept of climatic Dampness can refer to the situation of living or working in damp surroundings. This can mean living in a damp house or near a body of water. I once spent a winter in a very damp house and coughed constantly during the time I lived there.



shi –
dampness

It can also mean the climatic condition of humidity. Few people thrive in a muggy oppressive climate, but some people find it almost intolerable. This is due to weakness in the Spleen and Stomach. Subtle feelings in many people's bodies give notice of an approaching thunderstorm: a minority will get symptoms such as a headache or an increase in arthritic pain.

Dampness is *yin* and tends to produce an excess of fluids especially in the lower half of the body. Oedema of the legs,

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fluid retention in the abdomen, vaginal discharges and various urinary and bowel symptoms are frequently experienced by people suffering from Dampness. It is usually seen only in people with some weakness in their Spleen, so it often increases a person's feelings of tiredness and particularly feelings of heaviness in the legs or head.

Dryness

Dryness is the least commonly-seen of the external causes of disease, especially in a damp country like Britain. For people living in very dry climates it is obviously a very different matter. People who live in desert or semi-desert areas are especially prone to dry illnesses of the lungs.

燥

zao –
dryness

In fact in Britain 'invasion by dryness' is probably as commonly caused by central-heating as by excessively dry weather. Dryness is predominantly *yang* and causes symptoms such as dry throat, dry skin, constipation and thirst.

FOUR KINDS OF PAIN

Much musculo-skeletal pain, usually given names like arthritis, rheumatism and fibro- or poly-myalgia, is caused by 'invasions' of these external causes of disease. Acupuncture is now used all over the world in the treatment of pain, regrettably often by therapists and doctors who have not studied Chinese medicine. A traditional acupuncturist will always make a diagnosis of the underlying weakness as well as assessing which of the external causes has invaded the body and 'blocked' the flow of *qi* and Blood through the area.

This is known as *Bi* (obstruction) syndrome and includes symptoms such as arthritis, rheumatism, back pain, neuralgia, bursitis and tennis elbow.

Bi syndrome can be divided into four categories although two or even three are often seen together. In order to discriminate between them the acupuncturist will also need to consider other diagnostic criteria, such as the pulse and the tongue, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

1. Wind Bi

Sore, painful joints which are widespread in the body. The pain often moves from one area to another for no discernible reason. In an acute form it is often accompanied by fever and chills.

2. Damp Bi

The joints are achy, stiff, heavy and often swollen. The pain is fixed in certain joints and is generally dull in nature. People suffering from Damp *Bi* often experience more discomfort in humid and wet weather. Damp conditions such as baths, swimming-pools or washing up can also exacerbate Damp *Bi*.

3. Cold Bi

The joints are cold to the touch and are greatly improved with heat and aggravated by cold. The pain is severe and fixed and is usually worse with movement.

4. Heat Bi

The joints are red, swollen, hot and sensitive to the touch. Hot baths only serve to make the pain worse and there is a

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tendency for the person's mouth to be dry and her urine to be dark and scanty.

MISCELLANEOUS CAUSES

Diet

Chinese medicine regards diet as an extremely important cause of illness. Apart from the obvious dietary causes such as eating too much, too little or the wrong things, Chinese medicine also developed a classification of foods according to their effect upon the person's *qi*. If one is suffering from a Heat syndrome one should avoid 'hot' substances such as spices, red meats, garlic, ginger, coffee or alcohol. Garlic, ginger, cayenne and cinnamon are all used, however, in Chinese herbal medicine to dispel Cold conditions.

Cold foods such as ice cream, chilled drinks, salads, fruit and yoghurt should be eaten only moderately by people who tend to Cold conditions and definitely avoided during acute Cold illnesses.

Certain foods produce Damp and should be avoided if a Damp condition is present. All dairy products, fried and rich food, fatty meats, peanuts and ice cream create phlegm and exacerbate Damp wherever it is situated in the body.

Sex

The Chinese tend to worry about having too much sex, which seems to be the opposite of what many people worry about in this West. It is regarded as a cause of disease for the reason that ejaculation for a man and, to a lesser extent, orgasm for a woman is held to deplete the Kidney *jing*. Many men with

weak Kidney *qi* experience feelings of tiredness after sex and it is definitely men who take the notion of ‘excess sex’ most seriously in the East. Too many childbirths in too short a time can deplete a woman’s *jing* in much the same way. The *Classic of the Simple Girl* (Sui dynasty 581–618) gives the following recommendations for the maximum frequency of ejaculation for men:

AGE	IN GOOD HEALTH	AVERAGE HEALTH
15–20	Twice a day	Once a day
30	Once a day	Every other day
40	Every 3 days	Every 4 days
50	Every 5 days	Every 10 days
60	Every 10 days	Every 20 days
70	Every 30 days	Never

This is obviously only a broad guideline and I am sure it should not be taken *too* seriously. Although the *Classic of the Simple Girl* also gives guidelines about what the minimum frequency of ejaculation should be according to age (at 20 every 4 days; at 40 every 16 days; at 60 every 30 days) this issue is seemingly not discussed in modern China. This is consistent with the lack of emphasis in contemporary China placed upon the internal causes of disease, the emotions.

THE INTERNAL CAUSES OF DISEASE

All people have emotions. They are part of what makes us human. As expressed in Ecclesiastes

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven; ... a time to weep and a time to laugh: a time to mourn and a time to dance.

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How do the emotions cause illness in one's body? It can be most clearly seen in the example of an acute situation. If, for example, you become acutely frightened your body immediately produces a huge surge of adrenaline. The effects of increased adrenaline production upon the body have been extensively studied by physiologists. It is well known that there will be an increase in perspiration, heart rate, urination, circulation of blood to the muscles, etc. In short, it prepares the body for physical action. Different people will react differently; one becomes soaked in sweat whereas another is more aware of the increase in her heart rate, but overall the physiological effects are similar. The emotion of fear has pervaded the person's spirit and this has been bio-chemically manifested in the body. Other emotions also have profound effects upon the body, which you can feel in yourself if you experience any emotion intensely enough.

When the fear-provoking situation has passed, the person's mind and spirit will settle. The body will calm down and physical function will return to normal. This is the homoeostatic mechanism; the way of nature. For many people, however, fear-provoking situations have been so intense or so frequent that they have been unable to return to their normal physical function. Imbalances in the person's *qi* develop. The effects on the body become chronic. In time, illness arises.

Usually small children most closely embody the Chinese notion of emotional health. The easy transition from an emotion such as sadness or fear to suddenly laughing and shouting is often achieved in a way that is impossible for adults. This emotional freedom is accompanied by a vitality of spirit that makes small children so enriching and enjoyable to be with.

But as Wordsworth pointed out, ‘the shades of the prison-house begin to close around the growing boy’. Even in a small child one can usually perceive that certain emotions are more powerful and intense than others. The child loses inner vitality as her *qi* becomes imbalanced. Either *yin* or *yang* will start to predominate. One or more of the Five Elements will lose balance with the others. **It is the development of one’s temperament which creates long-term constitutional imbalances in a person’s *qi*.** These imbalances cause one to become, for example, a fearful person, a person chronically lacking joy, irritable unnecessarily or inexplicably morose.

The practitioner must discern the nature of the constitutional imbalances if she is to treat many chronic symptoms at their true origin.

What is very difficult to determine is whether constitutional *qi* imbalances are primarily inherited or predominantly acquired in childhood. The ‘nature versus nurture’ debate will continue wherever people study humanity, whether they are psychologists, educationalists, acupuncturists or anyone interested in the formation of character. The debate is probably irresolvable, but in a sense makes little clinical difference to the acupuncturist. The key task is to diagnose the nature of the person’s imbalances and to assist her to achieve a better state of health. The fact that they may be inherited does not mean that they cannot be successfully treated.

In the short term, acute and intense emotional upheaval may bring about a temporary disequilibrium in a person’s *qi*. Usually one rapidly returns to feeling as one did before the emotions arose. But some people never recover their former well-being after a major upset in their life. The death of a

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spouse is a classic situation when one can sometimes see a person lose the very will to live. For example, the playwright Dennis Potter died days after his wife, as did the former Prime Minister, Jim Callaghan.

One can also see people's health deteriorate as a result of failing to come to terms with stressful situations in their life such as divorce, redundancy, failure in exams or unresolved conflict with somebody close. Each patient has her personal history which has formed her unique personality and created imbalances in the Five Elements and *yin/yang*.

In the context of the causes of illness, Chinese medicine narrowed the vast range of human emotions down to seven, but they should not be interpreted too restrictively. Many other emotions could be included under each broad heading; for example irritation, frustration, resentment, fury and bitterness would all come under the heading of anger as a cause of illness.

Certain emotions are inclined to affect particular Elements and Organs, but it is worth bearing in mind that people by no means always respond to situations as one might expect. For example, the emotion of grief is not always the predominant response to the death of a loved one. Profound lack of joy, the need for sympathy and even anger are sometimes felt far more intensely, depending on the long-term imbalances of the person and the nature of her relationship to the deceased.

The following table shows which Elements are primarily affected by each emotion.

Anger	Wood
Joy	Fire
Worry/Pensiveness	Earth
Sadness	Metal/Fire
Fear	Water
Shock	Water/Fire

Diet, climatic factors, too much (or too little) sex, congenital abnormalities, injury, lack of exercise, exhaustion and various other causes can all be important factors in a person's health, but one's well-being in mind and spirit is probably the most important. Henri Amiel, the Swiss philosopher, expressed what many people feel to be true:

Happiness gives us the energy which is the basis of health.

Anger

Excessive or unresolved anger is particularly injurious to the Liver and the Wood Element. The *Nan Jing*, one of the Classics of Chinese medicine (approximately AD100), states:



nu –
anger

When anger rises to the head and does not descend, the Liver is injured.

Headaches are a common symptom brought on by someone becoming angry or, even more commonly, feeling angry but not expressing or resolving it (i.e. the anger 'not descending').

Many of us have difficulties with anger. Some people explode, some feel frightened by the potential of their anger, some can rarely express or even feel their own anger.

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Aristotle has probably described the problem better than anybody else:

It is easy to fly into a passion – anybody can do that – but to be angry with the right person to the right extent and at the right time and with the right object and in the right way – that is not easy, and it is not everyone who can do it.

Anger is our attempt to change a situation that we do not like or that we find unbearable. Failure to assert our needs leads to resignation, resentment, frustration or bitterness to some degree or another. Chinese medicine regards prolonged or unresolved anger as probably the most destructive emotion to our health and this view is echoed by many westerners who work in the area of psychosomatic health and illness.

Although in this context I have been describing anger as a *cause* of disharmony, the emotion can also be brought on as a result of internal disharmony. The effect of alcohol on the liver is notorious for intensifying some people's anger, while some people drink or take other drugs, such as cannabis, to suppress their feelings of frustration and irritability. People who have especial difficulty with anger are particularly advised to avoid excessive consumption of substances which are toxic to the liver such as alcohol, any drugs and, to a lesser extent, chocolate or rich fatty foods.

Joy

It may seem incongruous to list such a pleasant emotion as joy as a cause of disease. But both an excess of joy and a dearth are detrimental to the Fire Element and, in particular, the Heart. It has been noticeable in recent years that many of the most famous



xi –
elation

British comedians – people whose jollity is infectious enough to make millions laugh with them – have died from heart trouble. Many people strive to be constantly jolly as though ‘having a good time’ were the be-all and end-all of social intercourse. This places a strain on the Organs of the Fire Element. Jean-Paul Richter, the German satirist, was perceptive enough to write:

No-one is more profoundly sad than he who laughs too much.

Joy is a social emotion. One may be content and happy on one’s own, but laughter and joy are usually most evident in the company of other people. Loneliness and isolation can erode a person’s joyfulness in such a way as to be deleterious to health. Conversely when a person forms a relationship which brings joy and love into her life, it often reveals the difference that the polarity of unhappiness and happiness can make to a person’s health.

Worry

Worry is frequently the result of dysfunction in the Earth Element and yet it can also be the cause of distress to that Element. Worry can gain a hold in someone’s mind; going over the same thoughts over and over again, in such a way as to become damaging to health. Some people almost boast that if they have nothing to worry about they will find something. One of the commentators on the *I Jing*, the ancient Chinese Classic of wisdom and divination, summed up this syndrome when he wrote:

All thinking that goes beyond the present situation only serves to make the heart sore.



si – over-
thinking

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Over long periods of time or in acute cases, worry can progress to pre-occupation or obsession. Some people become so wrapped up in their thoughts that they find it hard to sleep, to concentrate or to be spontaneous with other people. They become increasingly withdrawn as they retreat into the private world of their own thoughts and concerns. One can see this happen frequently in people whose work requires a great deal of thought, or in people who become overwhelmed by their troubles. Worry can lead to depression and anxiety; at worst, mental illness.

Stomach ulcers (the Stomach is one of the Organs of the Earth Element) are considered in the West to occur commonly amongst people who are prone to worry. Acupuncturists regard ulcers as well as hundreds of other physical symptoms as being often caused by worry. Martin Luther clearly understood the deleterious effects of worry when he wrote:

Heavy thoughts bring on physical maladies; when the soul is oppressed so is the body.

Sadness

Although Western medicine has no understanding of the physiological mechanisms involved, the fact that intense grief can shatter a person's health is well-known in all cultures. It is entirely natural to grieve over the death of someone one loves, but after a time it is essential to one's well-being that the sense of loss should diminish in intensity. Some people still feel the loss of someone as keenly years afterwards as they did in the first few weeks and months. This may be evident to the outsider, as the person may still be overtly grief-stricken. However, it is probably more deleterious if a person fails to express the

悲

bei –
sadness

emotion. A Turkish proverb says *‘She who conceals her grief has no remedy for it’*. It is certainly common for physical illness to arise when a person is unable to express or come to terms with her grief.

Sadness sits heavily on many people. A sense of loss, disappointment, regret and melancholy are forms of sadness which can permeate a person’s spirit. These are not emotions that are freely displayed to others, but if the practitioner achieves an intimate rapport with the patient it may become apparent that sadness has caused dysfunction in the Metal Element.

Sadness can also easily affect the Fire Element. There are certainly few experiences to match the pain of unrequited love and feelings of loneliness and rejection particularly affect the Heart Protector. If this Organ becomes depleted and unable to do its job sufficiently well, then the Heart will also suffer.

Fear/shock

Fear predominantly affects the Water Element; the Kidneys and Bladder. Earlier in the chapter I described how fear affects the body: adrenaline production increases, muscle tone tightens, heart rate and perspiration increase. Bed-wetting amongst children is often an example of a symptom provoked by fearfulness. The escalating spiral of fear leading to tension and pain in childbirth is now receiving much attention.



kong –
fear

A sudden fright is very unsettling and can sometimes leave its mark upon a person’s Heart or Kidneys, but chronic anxiety is usually far more destructive. Anxiety and fearfulness are extraordinarily unpleasant states as they can

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permeate nearly all the situations of a person's life, from waking through to sleeping. A Japanese proverb states '*Every little yielding to anxiety is a step away from the natural heart of man*', but there often seems to be little an individual can do to overcome these feelings.

驚馬

jing – fright

Fearfulness, like the other emotions, is an aspect of one's spirit and cannot usually be rationalised away by one's mind. For example, in the case of someone who is phobic about spiders it does not matter how often she tells herself that spiders cannot actually harm her; the fear remains just as intense. The feeling of being like a rabbit caught in the headlights, trapped in the dilemma of fight or flight, is played out in subtle ways by millions of people countless times a day.

Fear has a positive side: we all need to exercise caution in the world. Aeschylus wrote:

There are times when fear is good. It must keep its watchful place at the heart's controls.

The more *yang*, outgoing, extrovert emotions of anger and joy need to be balanced by the more *yin*, personal, introvert emotions of sadness and fear in order for a person to balance the *yin* and the *yang* inside herself.

CONCLUSION

Hua Shou, one of the many commentators on the *Nan Jing*, wrote in 1361:

'Grief, thoughts, rage, anger, drinking and eating, movement and exertion cause harm if they are

developed excessively. Of course, man cannot get along without grief, thoughts, rage, anger, food and drink, movement and exertion. If the development of these states remains in a medium range, how could they result in injuries? However, in case of excess, harm to man is inevitable. Hence those who are well versed in nourishing their life avoid extremes and exaggerations. They adapt themselves to the mean, and that is sufficient.'

The Chinese concept of following the 'Middle Way', avoiding extremes, is fundamental to their view of avoiding illness and promoting longevity. **At the heart of their system of medicine lies the realisation that imbalance of an individual's emotions usually leads to imbalance of physical functioning.** Sadly, this truth has almost become lost in the scientific revolution in Western medicine which has taken place over the last century. Yet it has been well known to perceptive observers of the human condition in all cultures, and at all times. Charles Peguy, the French man of letters, maintained:

When a man lies dying, he does not die from the illness alone. He dies from his whole life.

5

HOW DOES AN ACUPUNCTURIST MAKE A DIAGNOSIS AND DECIDE ON A TREATMENT?

Over thousands of years, the Chinese, and subsequently the other nations of the Orient, developed sophisticated forms of diagnosis which gave them great insight into the nature of the patient's energetic disharmony. Some methods of diagnosis are most useful in assessing specific conditions, some for gaining insight into the nature of the person as a whole. It is the diagnostic skills of the practitioner and his ability to discern accurately both the underlying and the temporary imbalances that largely distinguishes the master from the novice.

Before the invention of blood tests, X-rays, ECGs and the other modern diagnostic techniques of Western medicine, practitioners of all forms of traditional medicine had to rely on external manifestations in order to understand the nature of the patient's illness. Hippocrates, writing in Greece at around the same time as the writers of the *Nei Jing*, stated:

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In the medical arts there exists no certainty except in the physical senses.

The acupuncturist must work constantly to develop his ability to ‘look, hear, touch and smell’, for all the diagnostic information he needs is discernible to the senses, if only he has sufficient sensitivity. The acupuncturist using his diagnostic methods can discern a great deal that remains unseen by the most sophisticated techniques of Western medicine.

What is extraordinary about Chinese medicine is that its diagnostic and therapeutic methods are so effective that, despite the introduction of modern scientific medicine, it continues to enjoy widespread support throughout the East. This is in almost total contrast to the West where the state of medicine prior to the nineteenth century was such that, with the exception of some herbal remedies, it has been completely superseded.

Although the basic principles of diagnosis laid down in the Classics of Chinese medicine have remained unchanged, many varied styles of acupuncture have developed over the centuries and throughout the many cultures of the Orient and the West. Since the Communist regime came to power in China in 1949, there has been a concerted attempt to standardise the teaching of acupuncture. This standardised system is known as Traditional Chinese Medicine, or TCM, and it has now spread throughout the world.

Other styles, giving emphasis to aspects of Chinese medicine which are not stressed in contemporary China, place different importance upon certain diagnostic and treatment techniques. Practitioners, according to their training, preferences and aptitude, often concentrate on some

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methods and are relatively unconcerned about others. Few practitioners, for example, are masters of the traditional form of diagnosis by smell. Whereas all traditional acupuncturists place emphasis on pulse diagnosis, for it is central to all traditions of Chinese medicine.

No single item of diagnostic information can ever be considered in isolation, for it is fundamental to the nature of Chinese medicine to see the patient as a whole. The acupuncturist must make a synthesis of a mass of diagnostic information in order to decide which Organs are primarily in distress, what the nature of the disharmony is and how it affects the other Organs. In this chapter, I will attempt to give some idea of how an acupuncturist uses the different components of Chinese medical diagnosis in order to assess the balance of *yin/yang*, the Five Elements and the 12 Organs.

PULSES

Diagnosis of the pulse is regarded as so important that one of the phrases used to describe seeing a physician in China is going to 'have my pulses felt'. In olden times many women would not allow themselves to be physically examined or even seen by a doctor and instead would proffer their wrist through a curtain so that the physician could make a diagnosis solely using pulse diagnosis.

The *Nei Jing* states:

The feeling of the pulse is the most important medium of diagnosis. Nothing surpasses the examination of the pulse, for with it errors cannot be committed.

This is not literally true, however, as to master Chinese

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pulse diagnosis is a lifetime's work. What the *Nei Jing* means is that if the acupuncturist has the ability to interpret the pulse accurately then he will be able to discern the true state of health of each of the 12 Organs.

To do this, considerable experience is required as well as a total concentration of awareness. The Japanese acupuncturist Yanagiya described it thus:

Focus your attention to your finger tips. Do not speak, do not look, do not listen, do not smell and do not think. This is the key principle of pulse diagnosis.

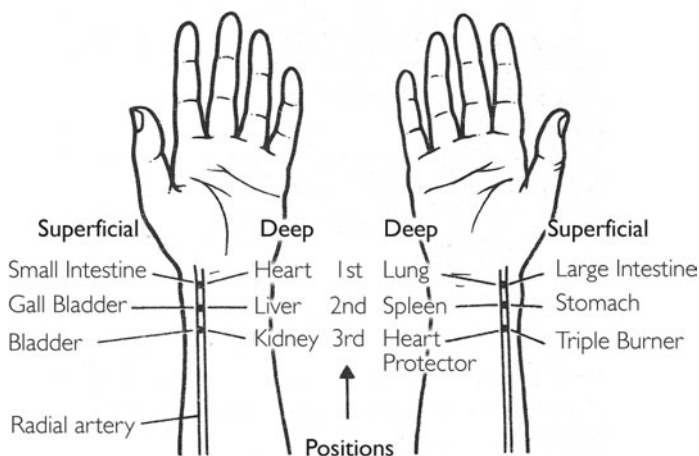


Figure 7. Pulse positions

Chinese pulse diagnosis can hardly be compared to the examination of the pulse in Western medicine, which is predominantly concerned only with the speed of the pulse. However, Galen of Pargamum, along with Hippocrates, one of the founding fathers of Western medicine, placed such an emphasis on subtle pulse diagnosis that he wrote 18 works on the subject and described over 100 different pulse qualities.

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The acupuncturist must feel the pulse of the radial artery in six different positions (three on each wrist) and at two different pressures in order to be able to feel the pulse of each of the 12 Organs. To the skilled pulse-taker, this reveals which Organs are relatively healthy and which are imbalanced to such a degree as to be the cause of symptoms for the person.

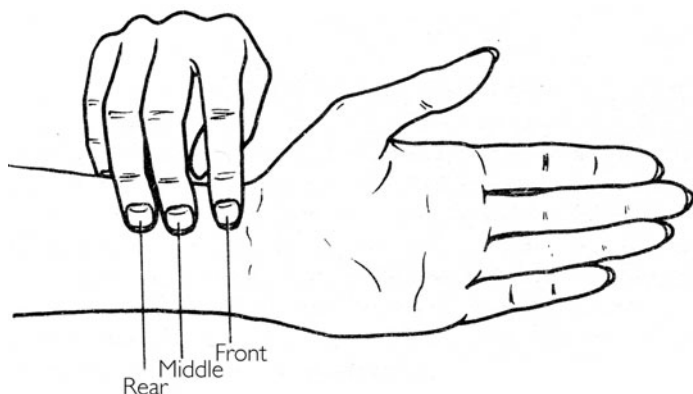


Figure 8. Pulse diagnosis

The Classics describe 28 different qualities which arise in isolation or in combination when an Organ malfunctions. These may be present on just one of the 12 pulses or may be on all 12. To give some examples:

Empty This pulse feels soft and weak and signifies a weakness in the person's *qi*.

Full This pulse feels big, strong and hard and denotes an excess of *qi*.

Floating This pulse is distinguishable with light pressure. It usually signifies an invasion of an external cause of disease such as Wind, Heat or Cold or it can indicate a deficiency of *yin*.

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- Rapid* This pulse has more than five beats to the person's breath. It always indicates the presence of Heat. If the pulse is also Empty it means there is a deficiency of *yin*; if the pulse is Full it signifies an excess of *yang*. This tallies with Western diagnosis where a rapid pulse is used to diagnose a fever.
- Slow* This pulse has fewer than four beats to the person's breath and (unless the person is an athlete or on certain kinds of medication) denotes a Cold condition. If Empty as well it indicates a deficiency of *yang*; if Full an excess of *yin*.
- Slippery* Described as like a 'pearl spinning in a dish'. Usually indicates Damp or Phlegm, but it can signify pregnancy.

Other qualities include 'Wiry', 'Intermittent', 'Deep', 'Tight', 'Hollow', 'Knotted' and 16 others. As they are often present in combination you may have some idea why pulse diagnosis is regarded as such an extraordinarily difficult skill to master.

TONGUE

Pulse and tongue diagnosis constitute the 'two pillars' of Oriental diagnosis. In China many teaching establishments have astonishing collections of photographic slides of people's tongues; the more bizarre of which almost defy belief. A great deal of reliable diagnostic information can be gleaned from the tongue as it affords an opportunity to see a part of the inside of the body which otherwise is hidden from the acupuncturist's gaze. Many younger patients in the West are somewhat embarrassed about showing their tongue,

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whereas older patients well remember the time when the doctors would examine their tongue as a routine part of their diagnostic procedure. This has largely fallen out of fashion in Western medicine in line with the decline in emphasis upon examining the appearance of the patient.

In good health the tongue should be pink, moist and with little or no coating. The acupuncturist will examine the tongue for various abnormalities, a few examples of which are listed below.

Colour

Several colours other than pink are possible, but most commonly one sees either a red tongue (or parts of the tongue) which signifies the presence of heat (deficiency of *yin* or excess of *yang*) or a pale tongue which usually signifies the presence of cold (deficiency of *yang* or excess of *yin*). A pale tongue can also be caused by deficiency of Blood, which tallies with the Western inclusion of a pale tongue as one of the signs of anaemia.

Area

Various areas of the tongue reflect the state of the internal organs. The following diagram shows the correspondence of the organs to areas of the tongue:

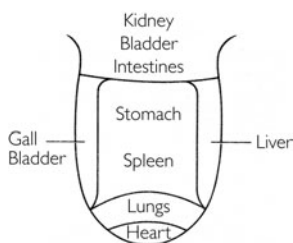


Figure 9. Correspondence of the Organs to areas of the tongue

5 — How does an acupuncturist make a diagnosis?

Shape

A swollen tongue (often characterised by tooth-marks on the sides) indicates Dampness or an excess of fluids in the body. A thin tongue indicates that the body fluids are being ‘burnt-up’ by the excess heat caused by a *yin* deficiency. Other shapes are sometimes seen, but less frequently.

Coating

The Chinese word for tongue coating can best be translated as ‘moss’ or ‘fur’. It was predominantly the coating on the tongue that the Western doctor used to examine, particularly in the treatment of infection. A tongue coating shows an excess condition: a white coating indicates an excess of Cold – a yellow coating indicates an excess of Heat. This can frequently be seen when there is fever present – try looking at your tongue next time you have the misfortune to have a fever. Cigarette smoking also commonly produces a yellow tongue coating so, if a yellow coating is present, the acupuncturist will need to enquire whether the patient smokes. Some sweets, soft drinks and fruits can all stain the tongue, so the acupuncturist has to keep on his toes! The other common tongue coat is one that is sticky or greasy and this indicates the presence of Dampness or Phlegm.

SPIRIT

The practitioner’s assessment of the person’s spirit is crucial to his whole understanding of the nature of the person’s illness. Chinese physicians have always placed great importance on looking into the patient’s eyes to attempt to get a sense of the health and nature of the patient’s spirit.

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Sometimes the ‘lights are on but nobody is at home’. Often the eyes show sadness, fear or anger deep in the person’s spirit.

As the *Nei Jing* says:

If there is spirit the person thrives, if there is no spirit the person dies.

If the spirit does not ‘thrive’, then treatment must revitalise the spirit in order to bring about a lasting and profound change in chronic symptoms, whether they are present in the body, mind or spirit. To determine the vitality of the person’s spirit the practitioner must gain a rapport with the patient that transcends the normal social interchange of practitioner/patient relationships. Only when one has, however briefly, contacted the essence which lies behind the ‘mask’ that a person displays to the world, can one truly make an assessment of whether the spirit ‘thrives’.

EMOTION

Although emotions are constantly changing, diagnosis of which emotions are inappropriate, excessive or conspicuous by their absence, is crucial to the practitioner’s understanding of the patient’s constitutional imbalances. One must obviously use great sensitivity to perceive the emotional temperament of the person clearly. His true nature may well be very different from the characteristics he is prepared to let other people see. De Tocqueville, the great French historian, wrote about one of the emotions:

I have always thought it rather interesting to follow the involuntary movements of fear in clever people. Fools

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coarsely display their cowardice in all its nakedness, but the others are able to cover it with a veil so delicate, so daintily woven with small plausible lies, that there is some pleasure to be found in contemplating this ingenious work of the human intelligence.

In the short term also, people have phases of becoming irritable, anxious, lacking in joyfulness, melancholy or being more worried than usual, and these may coincide with deterioration in their physical health or their sense of well-being. Assessing which emotion has become temporarily imbalanced can be a vital diagnostic clue in determining which Organ is in distress. For example, if a person has been very sad since hearing some bad news, it gives the practitioner a clue that the Fire and/or Metal Elements have been imbalanced since the event. If a patient starts a phase of headaches, the practitioner needs to know which cause of disease is responsible. If the headaches came on after an argument, which has left the patient seething, then an imbalance in the Organs of the Wood Element is indicated.

COLOUR

Certain colours in the face will change whenever there is an imbalance of *qi*. These are hues that can be seen predominantly on the temples or around the mouth. Each person has a hue. In some people it is quite marked. In most cases only practitioners who have specialised in this form of diagnosis can discern the colour or combination of colours that indicate the underlying imbalances.

In acute cases, however, even lay-people can sometimes see the colours that signify severe disharmony of the *qi*. The

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ashen colour which is common in the event of a heart-attack is the same as the 'lack of red' that indicates an imbalance in the Fire Element. The yellow colour that is often noted when somebody feels nauseous is the associated colour of the Earth Element and the Stomach Organ. These are just two examples of situations where the early Chinese physicians used their powers of observation to gain insight into the internal functioning of the body. Based upon these perceptions, they formulated their system of medicine.

SOUND

It was also observed that people develop particular tones of voice which reflect underlying energetic imbalances. These may or may not be present in the person's normal voice, but will usually become marked when the person becomes somewhat 'charged' with emotion. It is, for example, quite normal for a person's voice to have a slight quality of weeping when he is talking about a situation which has induced sadness. But if you listen closely you can hear that people sometimes have tones in their voices which are not congruent with the emotion they are expressing. They may, for example, have a quality of shouting in their voice when they are being sympathetic or they may laugh when they are describing a situation which has brought them great pain. The inappropriate tone in the voice can give an indication of which Element is primarily in distress.

ODOUR

Many people know and can recognise their own distinctive odour or that of close family members. Many elderly or

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severely ill people have strong odours. Each person's odour can be classified according to its correspondence with one or more of the Five Elements. This, like the colour, often changes or becomes more marked when the person becomes acutely ill. The scorched smell of a person with a high fever can be overpowering and TB is an example of an illness that is renowned for giving the person a distinctive odour.

All the forms of diagnosis given above depend entirely on the subjective perceptions of the practitioner. Once the practitioner starts asking the patient questions then, inevitably, the diagnostic information is filtered through the patient's perception. If the practitioner is capable of really accurate pulse diagnosis, tongue diagnosis, etc. then there should be little need to ask the patient many questions.

TASTE

Although less reliable than some of the other diagnostic indications, the taste preferences and dislikes of the person may yield information about the balance of the Five Elements. For example, dysfunction of the Earth Element often predisposes a person to like or dislike the sweet taste. The sweet cravings experienced by many women before menstruation are due to a temporary disequilibrium in their Earth Element. I had a patient who used to eat vinegar-soaked bread before she went down with a migraine; the craving for the sour taste being a consequence of the imbalance in her Wood Element. After a course of acupuncture treatment it is common for a person's strong likes or dislikes for certain tastes to lessen considerably.

SEASON

An affinity with or dislike for a particular season can also be an indication of imbalance. Some symptoms may only be present at certain times of the year and many people experience profound changes in their sense of well-being during the different seasons. **This is a consequence of the changes in the energetic nature of the macrocosm of Nature, both in terms of *yin/yang* and the Five Elements. This is subtly reflected in the microcosm of the human being.**

In reasonable health, the person will experience only subtle changes in himself and will be able to enjoy and appreciate each season in turn. In poor health, symptoms such as excessive melancholy in the autumn, chest complaints in the winter or lethargy in the summer may arise.

CLIMATE

Improvement or deterioration in symptoms according to the climate may also provide a clue as to the nature of the imbalance. As outlined in the previous chapter, the climatic forces can be both causes of illness and beneficial influences upon a person's health. For example, let's consider two different people with imbalances in their Fire Element: one, with a deficiency in *yin qi*, will probably feel less well in hot weather, whereas the other, deficient in *yang qi*, will dislike the cold and look forward to the coming of warmer weather in order to see an improvement in his symptoms.

The following chart gives the correspondences for the above diagnostic indications with their associated Elements.

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	Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
Emotion	Anger	Joy	Sympathy /Worry	Grief	Fear
Colour	Green	Red	Yellow	White	Blue/ Black
Sound	Shout	Laugh	Sing	Weep	Groan
Odour	Rancid	Scorched	Fragrant	Rotten	Putrid
Taste	Sour	Bitter	Sweet	Pungent	Salty
Season	Spring	Summer	Late Summer	Autumn	Winter
Climate	Windy	Hot	Humid/ Damp	Dry	Cold
Organs	Liver Gall Bladder	Heart Small Intestine Heart Protector Triple Burner	Spleen Stomach	Lungs Large Intestines	Kidneys Bladder

SYMPTOMS

By enquiring about the nature of the symptoms, the practitioner may be able to determine which Organs are causing problems for the patient. If the patient has a firm diagnosis of gall-stones, based on X-rays, then obviously the Gall Bladder Organ must be in some distress. This does not necessarily mean that treatment should be concentrated on this Organ. The Gall Bladder may only be in trouble because another Organ is malfunctioning. Only when the symptom is considered along with the pulse, tongue and other diagnostic indications can the practitioner reach a conclusion concerning the origin of the illness.

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Symptoms often cannot be attributed to an Organ as easily as gall-stones can to the Gall Bladder. Most can be the result of dysfunction of several of the Organs. Depression, for example, has a totally different quality according to which Organs are responsible. Some people are depressed and anxious, some are excessively melancholic, and many are depressed largely because of repressed anger.

Headaches and migraines also vary a great deal depending on which Organ is responsible. Factors such as the location and type of pain, what brings them on (kinds of food or drink, climatic factors, bright lights, etc.), what time of day they are at their worst, and many other diagnostic criteria need to be considered before the acupuncturist can begin a course of treatment to cure the condition completely.

An Organ may also reveal itself as malfunctioning by 'symptoms' that are not even regarded as such by the patient. The practitioner may realise that the patient is extremely indecisive and this can be a clue to the fact that the Gall Bladder Organ is causing difficulties. Even though the presenting symptoms are physical, after some treatments the patient may well notice a change in his ability to make decisions, as well as in the main complaint. Often he will comment 'I thought that was just the way I was', as he now begins to realise that his indecisiveness was part and parcel of his unique imbalance and that the body and mind are not as separate from each other as he may have previously thought.

TWENTY-FOUR HOUR CYCLE OF QI

Each Organ has a time of day during which its *qi* is at its strongest, and conversely a time when it is at its weakest.

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This explains why many people are aware that they have times of day when they are at their best and times when they lack vitality. A patient will often describe himself as a ‘morning person’ or a ‘night owl’. This is a good example of a syndrome that is of no interest to the Western-trained doctor but can yield valuable diagnostic clues to an acupuncturist.

The following diagram shows the time of day when each channel is at its strongest. These times are based on time according to the sun (i.e. the sun being most directly overhead at midday) and vary if there are any seasonal changes in the clock, such as during British Summer Time.

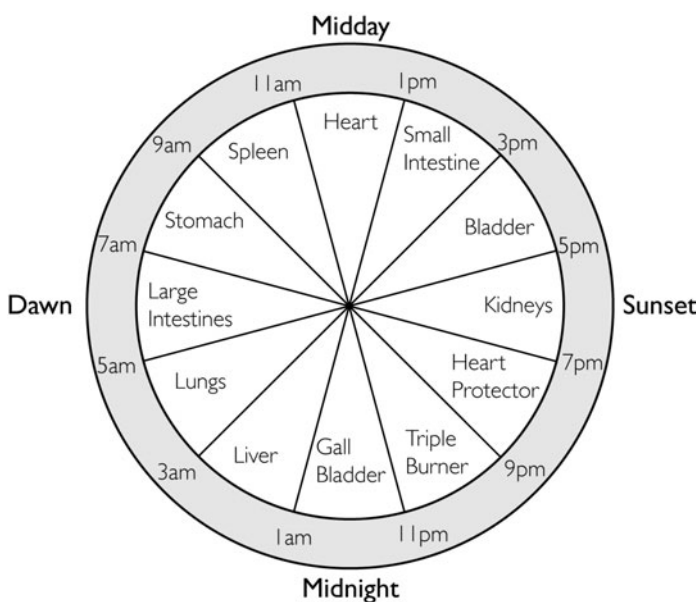


Figure 10. The 24 hour cycle of Qi

I will give the Liver as an example of how one can see the functioning of one of the Organs change according to the time of day. In the early hours of the morning, especially

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between 1am and 3am, this Organ is at its strongest. Because of this, a person whose Liver is prone to hyper-function may have trouble getting to sleep, or remaining asleep, around this time of night. This is compounded by the fact that Blood is said to return to the Liver when the person lies down. It is therefore quite common for someone to feel very sleepy when sitting downstairs but to be unable to sleep when he lies down in bed.

One of the main functions of the Liver is to plan and organise, so what often happens is that a person lies awake planning and organising the next day, unable to ‘switch off’ his mind. The tendency to be kept awake by the hyper-functioning of the Liver and therefore to become a ‘night person’ is particularly common amongst drug users who abuse their Livers. Many other people, however, suffer from insomnia caused by this Organ, whether on an occasional basis after straining it by eating rich, fatty foods in the evenings or, in more chronic cases, due to a long-term imbalance.

The time of day when this Organ is at its weakest is in the early afternoon, especially between 1pm and 3pm. It is noticeable that most people’s tolerance of alcohol is much less at lunch-time than it is in the evening. Even a ‘heavy’ lunch with rich foods will often make a person sleepy in the afternoon. This syndrome is most marked in someone whose Liver tends to be weak, whereas the person who is kept awake at night will probably have an over-active Liver. By questioning a patient about his best and worst times of day – both in terms of how he feels in himself and also when any physical symptoms come on or are at their worst – the acupuncturist can obtain much useful information about the condition of the Organs.

TOUCH

Touch is another of the major diagnostic techniques used by acupuncturists to discern malfunctioning of the Organs. Touch, as a diagnostic tool, is particularly highly developed in Japan where acupuncture has often been closely associated with massage. Japanese society in the late nineteenth century was at the height of its 'West is best' phase and in 1895 the practice of acupuncture was banned by practitioners who were not also doctors of Western medicine. There was, however, a long tradition of blind acupuncturists and masseurs in Japan and an exemption was granted for practitioners who were blind. Until the legislation was repealed in 1947, the practice of acupuncture based on traditional theories was carried out almost entirely by the blind, and even now many Japanese acupuncturists are blind.

This has led to the development of styles of acupuncture which use touch to a greater degree than anywhere else in the world. The practitioner may feel along the pathway of the channel to see if there are any tender points or abnormalities of temperature. These may indicate a blockage along the pathway which can be remedied with the insertion of needles at particular points. Various areas of the body can be examined to assess the balance of heat and cold, dryness and moisture in the skin and underlying tissues. The Japanese make great use of a technique which involves palpating the abdomen in various positions to ascertain where there is tenderness or excessive hardness or softness of muscle tone.

HOW DOES THE ACUPUNCTURIST PLAN A COURSE OF TREATMENT?

Having accumulated all the information necessary to make his diagnosis, the practitioner must then decide upon the appropriate treatment strategy. Which Organs are in distress? What is the nature of their distress? Which Organs are responsible for the long-term imbalances in the person's constitution? Which are at the root of the patient's current illness and which will respond when the underlying imbalance is treated? Should one treat the underlying imbalance on its own or are there acute symptoms, for example caused by an invasion of Heat, Cold, Wind, Damp or Dryness, which need to be treated first? Are the Organs in excess or deficiency? Would warming the meridian with moxibustion be appropriate?

By combining the diagnostic techniques outlined in this chapter all these questions can be answered.

The acupuncturist will also constantly refer to the diagnostic techniques given here in order to evaluate improvement in the patient. Even if the symptoms are improving, the practitioner will not be satisfied unless he can discern a significant improvement in the pulse, tongue and the other diagnostic indications. They are the windows through which the acupuncturist can gain insight into the balance of the individual's *qi*. If these are not responding to treatment, the energetic cause of the person's illness still remains. Symptomatic improvement will only be short-lived. When the patient's symptoms are better, and this is combined with clear evidence of energetic change, then both patient and practitioner can be assured that the treatment has reached to the very core of the illness.

6

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT

WOULD ACUPUNCTURE BE SUITABLE FOR ME?

Traditionally acupuncture has been used to treat almost the entire spectrum of illness; acute and chronic, physical and psychological. The following conditions (using Western medical terminology) are amongst the most commonly seen by acupuncturists in the West:

Diseases of the circulatory system

Angina. Atherosclerosis. Chronic heart failure. High blood pressure. Palpitations. Poor circulation.

Diseases of the respiratory system

Asthma. Chronic breathlessness. Chronic bronchitis. Hay fever. Susceptibility to coughs and colds.

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Diseases of the digestive system

Colitis. Constipation. Diarrhoea. Irritable Bowel Syndrome. Indigestion. Stomach ulcers.

Diseases of the urinary and reproductive systems

Cystitis. Impotence. Incontinence. Infertility. Irregular periods. Heavy or light periods. Painful periods. Morning sickness. Pre-menstrual tension. Difficulties with the menopause. Prostatitis.

Diseases of the skin

Acne. Eczema. Psoriasis.

Neurological and musculo-skeletal diseases

Arthritis. Back Pain. Bell's Palsy. Epilepsy. Headaches. Migraines. Multiple Sclerosis. Neuralgia. Rheumatism. Sciatica. Sports injuries. Stiff neck. Strokes. Tinnitus.

Acute infections

Bronchitis. Common cold. Food poisoning. Hepatitis. Influenza. Sinusitis. Ear infections.

Mental and emotional syndromes

Anxiety. Depression. Eating disorders. Excessive dreaming. Insomnia. Irritability. Panic attacks.

This is not intended to be a definitive list. If you think that your own condition is not covered by any of the above categories you can contact a properly qualified acupuncturist and ask if she thinks acupuncture would be appropriate.

6 — What to expect from acupuncture treatment

Nearly all patients who come for acupuncture in the West have already consulted a Western trained physician for their condition. If they have not, the acupuncturist may possibly ask them to see their doctor. Acupuncturists do not regard their therapy as inevitably the single most appropriate treatment for each patient. They may sometimes refer a patient to another discipline such as Western medicine, chiropractic or psychotherapy, either as an adjunct to acupuncture or as an alternative.

WHAT IF I AM ALREADY RECEIVING TREATMENT FOR MY CONDITION?

It is very rare for any form of treatment to be so incompatible with acupuncture as to make treatment inadvisable. Occasionally it is desirable for the intensive treatment of an acute condition to be completed, e.g. a course of antibiotics or chemotherapy, before beginning acupuncture treatment. If you are taking prescribed medication for your condition you should normally inform your doctor that you are receiving acupuncture treatment. In many instances it will be possible to reduce or entirely eliminate your need for medication and it is to be hoped that your doctor will be only too happy to be kept in touch and consulted during this process.

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS WHEN I VISIT AN ACUPUNCTURIST?

As in any other system of medicine, on the first visit the practitioner will gather the information necessary to make an accurate diagnosis. If the practitioner takes a holistic approach to the person's illness she will probably allow

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considerably longer than a normal treatment time for the initial consultation.

Once the acupuncturist has reached a diagnosis and decided upon the appropriate treatment, she will insert acupuncture needles into various acupuncture points. The number and location will depend on the treatment strategy; the practitioner may use just one or two points in a treatment, sometimes she may prefer to use many more points. There are 365 points on the main channels, but there are also several hundred 'extra' points which are sometimes used.

If the practitioner is treating a problem of the musculo-skeletal system such as a sports injury, a painful knee or a frozen shoulder then she will insert needles at, or close to, the site of the pain. This is not the case, however, if the patient's problem is more internal and the practitioner is attempting to bring about a change in the person's underlying energetic balance. There is usually no apparent correlation between the site of the symptom and the location of the points used. The choice of points is determined by the pathway of the channels that the acupuncturist has decided lie at the heart of the imbalance. The most commonly-used points are located on the limbs, between the elbow and finger-tips and below the knee. 'Local' points are used most commonly and effectively in the treatment of pain.

The practitioner will manipulate the needles as she inserts them. They may be left in for some minutes or removed almost immediately depending on the effect the practitioner wishes to achieve upon the patient's *qi*. The depth of insertion, usually a few millimetres, varies according to the point's location on the body. Unlike an injection with a hypodermic needle or pricking oneself with a sewing needle,

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acupuncture seldom draws any blood owing to the extreme fineness of the needles used.



Figure 11. Using acupuncture needles

Will I feel the needles?

Acupuncture needles are so fine that the prick of the needle as it goes through the skin is barely felt. When the needle reaches the required depth and touches the flow of *qi* in the channel, a very remarkable thing happens. *‘When the qi is obtained, it is like a fish that has taken the bait’* and *‘When the qi arrives it is like a flock of birds or the breeze in the waving millet’* are classical descriptions of the experience felt simultaneously by the patient and, less strongly, by the practitioner.

This is a distinctive sensation which is often described as a dull ache or a tingling and can sometimes be felt along the pathway of the channel. This sensation is known as *‘de qi’* and indicates to both practitioner and patient that the point has been accurately located. The sensation only lasts for a second or two, even if the needles are left in for some time.

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Many patients comment that having needles was nothing like as bad as they had imagined. As evidence that it is not too disagreeable, it is striking that almost all acupuncturists receive treatment themselves!

Is there any possibility of infection from the needles?

Properly trained acupuncturists are absolutely meticulous concerning the sterility of their needles and the method of insertion. All acupuncture colleges stress the importance of this aspect of the acupuncturist's practice. **All practitioners use single-use disposable needles.**

Will any other therapies be used?

The acupuncturist may well use other traditional techniques apart from needling. The following is a brief outline of the most commonly-used techniques.

Moxibustion

The Chinese term for acupuncture is comprised of two ideograms; *Zhen* and *Jiu*. *Zhen* represents 'metal that bites', meaning the needles; *Jiu* represents fire, meaning moxibustion. The two therapies have been practised together for millennia, especially in the cold regions of Northern China, Korea and Japan. The English word is derived from the Japanese *moe kusa*, which means 'burning herb'.

In the procedure of moxibustion, a small cone of the dried and powdered leaves of the herb *Artemesia Vulgaris Latiflora* is placed on the acupuncture point. It is then lit and allowed to smoulder slowly until the patient feels her skin become warm. It is then removed. This is repeated several times on

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each point. Most patients find that this gives them a pleasant warm sensation.

Moxibustion is used to warm the patient's *qi*. This is particularly indicated if the person is deficient in *yang*, the aspect of *yin/yang* responsible for warmth. The fact that many people's bodies are always cold to the touch or that they themselves feel the cold excessively is another example of a valuable diagnostic clue in Chinese medicine which (except in one or two specific instances) is of no interest or use to a practitioner of Western medicine.

Moxibustion warms the *qi* so that not only is it beneficial to the patient's symptoms and general health, but it is also common for patients to comment that they no longer feel the cold so acutely. Moxibustion is used more freely in winter than in summer. This is the time of year when people need warming most and when they are most prone to Cold-related illnesses. Moxibustion is obviously rarely used on patients who are predominantly *yin* deficient, who barely feel the cold and tend to find hot weather difficult to deal with.

Moxibustion can also be applied over an area of the body which has become cold; such as a 'frozen' shoulder the lower back or the lower abdomen (as is commonly found in women suffering from gynaecological problems). There are various methods for warming an area with moxibustion, the most common being a 'moxa stick' which is rather like a large cigar. This is lit and passed backwards and forwards over the skin, just close enough to give a comfortable heat. The acupuncturist will often give a moxa stick to the patient to take home with her so that she can continue the treatment

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Figure 12. Moxibustion techniques

herself on a regular basis. This technique is also extremely effective in the treatment of earache and the early stages of ear infections. The prescription of antibiotics for children's ear infections could be drastically reduced if parents were informed about this method of treatment.

It is also commonly used to treat an acupuncture point on

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the little toe in situations where the foetus needs to be turned in the womb. The use of moxibustion on this point is now common in many countries as it has an extraordinary reputation for turning the foetus. One never knows, of course, whether the foetus would have turned of her own volition. The number of times that I have used this treatment and the foetus has moved into the right position soon afterwards has seemingly been far too often to be coincidence.

Two American physicians carried out a clinical research trial into this use of moxibustion in a large hospital in China. The results showed that those mothers who used the technique had far more chance of the foetus turning than those who didn't (*Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1998 Nov 11; 280(18):1580–4).

Herbs

Herbs have always played a major part in the health care of the countries of the Orient and in their communities in Western countries. Until recently Chinese herbalism was rarely practised by Western acupuncturists as it was very hard to obtain supplies and there were few teachers to pass on their knowledge.

These days there are more and more Chinese herb shops opening up to cater for patients outside the Chinese community. The standard of English of the practitioners is much improved compared with a few years ago, and they are increasingly able to offer appropriate herbal treatments to customers.

Diagnosis in herbal medicine is based upon the same principles as for acupuncture, with more emphasis on *yin/yang* than on the Five Elements. Some acupuncturists

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now use Oriental herbs to supplement their acupuncture treatment, often using herbal remedies for a specific symptom, such as to help clear an invasion of an external climatic factor or to build up the patient's *qi* or Blood.

Cupping

Cupping is an ancient technique found in many cultures. It was widely used by the Greeks, the Romans and the Native Americans. It is still used in many Mediterranean cultures and in the Arab world. There were scenes showing cupping being used in the films *Jean de Florette* set in Provence in the 1930s and *Zorba the Greek*, set in the late 1950s.

Cupping utilises vacuum suction within glass cups or bamboo jars to disperse localised congestion such as that caused by Wind, Cold or Dampness. A lighted taper is placed in the cup for just a moment in order to create a vacuum. The taper is then withdrawn and the cup is quickly placed upon the skin. Some practitioners use modern equipment that uses a pump to create the vacuum.

The vacuum holds it on and a sucking sensation is felt by the patient. It is not at all unpleasant and is most commonly employed on the back, usually for the treatment of conditions such as the common cold, asthma and backache. It can also be used in the treatment of joint pains and muscular injury.

Massage

Massage (acupressure) is sometimes used on acupuncture points in situations when it is difficult to use needles or moxibustion. It is not as powerful as using needles but it can still be highly effective. Small children sometimes have points massaged rather than needled. Sometimes in

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emergency situations, for example a traffic accident or a sports injury, needles may not be immediately available and the acupuncturist may use massage as first-aid.

There are also traditional Oriental methods of massage, which are mainly used for musculo-skeletal problems. Japanese techniques are usually called *Shiatsu*. Chinese techniques are called *Tui Na*.

Counselling

Chinese medicine has always placed great emphasis on eradicating, if possible, the cause of a person's illness. Advising a patient on aspects of her life-style, which the acupuncturist considers are detrimental to her health, is regarded as extremely important. This could involve discussion about a more appropriate diet, exercise, the skilful avoidance of excessive stress, or how to become less overwhelmed by the various 'internal causes' of illness, the emotions. Traditionally *Tai Ji Juan*, *Qi Gong* and meditation have often been prescribed by practitioners to help to harmonise the individual's *qi*.

A patient's readiness to make changes in her life-style can make or break the success of the treatment. It is considerably harder, for example, for the acupuncturist to improve the condition of the Liver Organ if the patient continues to place a strain on it by drinking too much alcohol, repressing her anger or overloading her planning and organising faculty through overwork. If the patient is prepared to make a commitment to do all she can to reduce certain stresses in her lifestyle, it can enhance her understanding of the fact that she may have a major part to play in the process of returning to, and maintaining, a better state of health.

WILL ACUPUNCTURE HELP ME ONLY IF I BELIEVE IN IT?

Acupuncture is no different from Western medicine in this respect. Seneca, the first century Roman philosopher, said '*It is part of the cure to wish to be cured*' and all systems of medicine, even surgery, tend to be more effective if the patient has confidence in the treatment and in the practitioner carrying it out. Some patients, however, seek acupuncture treatment out of desperation and are deeply sceptical about its efficacy. Many of these have been amazed at the results. Believing in acupuncture may be of some help, but is definitely not essential.

HOW LONG WILL A COURSE OF TREATMENT LAST?

This will be determined by many factors; whether the illness is chronic or acute, whether the person's constitutional *qi* is relatively healthy, how severe the imbalances are, how accurate a diagnosis the acupuncturist has made and whether there are currently any factors in the patient's life which are exacerbating her illness. Treatment may be frequent if the symptoms are acute, but if the illness is chronic it is usual for the patient to start coming for treatment weekly. This phase continues until the symptoms have significantly improved and the practitioner is assured, through assessment of the pulse, tongue and other criteria, that the underlying *qi* imbalances are markedly less severe.

Once the patient starts to improve, the frequency of the treatments diminishes. Generally one expects the patient to show some improvement within the first three or four

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treatments, although it may well take longer if the illness is severe or if it has been present for a long time.

When the patient is markedly better, the acupuncturist traditionally sees the patient at the start of each season. It is analogous to going to see a dentist. If you had never been to a dentist until a dental problem developed in adulthood, the dentist would probably have to carry out several treatments in order to restore the teeth and gums to reasonable health. She might advise you how to look after your teeth and gums better in the future. After this, the dentist cannot guarantee that no further symptoms will ever develop, but will ask you to come in for regular check-ups and will probably be able to forestall any serious trouble in the future.

Just as the dentist will often look at your mouth and not do anything, the acupuncturist will question you, take your pulses and may sometimes decide that it is inappropriate to treat you at that time. Another time the dentist may choose to do a small filling rather than wait for a larger hole to develop. Similarly the acupuncturist may decide to intervene with a subtle treatment designed to stop an imbalance becoming more severe. **The acupuncturist's ability to diagnose and treat dysfunction long before symptoms arise, makes acupuncture an extraordinarily effective form of preventive medicine.**

WILL I FEEL DIFFERENT IMMEDIATELY AFTER A TREATMENT?

After treatment it is quite common for the patient to feel energised and vital, but it is probably more common to feel rather relaxed and drowsy. This is because the body needs

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some time to adjust to the changes that have been brought about by the treatment. The acupuncturist will be able to feel on the pulses that a change has taken place at the time of the treatment, but often the patient will not be aware of any improvement for a day or two.

If the patient is suffering from an acute symptom, such as a headache, however, it is common for an improvement to be felt at the time of the treatment. As the *Nei Jing* puts it:

When the evil is a recent guest in the body it does not have a fixed abode and can be expelled.

CAN ACUPUNCTURE BE USED ON SMALL CHILDREN?

Diagnosis in small children is usually more difficult than in adults and newly-qualified acupuncturists are usually advised not to treat small children. Experienced practitioners, however, frequently treat small children and often find that they respond more readily than adults. Sometimes it is necessary to use massage, moxibustion or other techniques rather than needling. It is a great pleasure for many acupuncturists to treat children as it means that the practitioner can treat the imbalances at an early stage and thereby prevent them becoming more severe and causing symptoms later.

CAN ACUPUNCTURE BE USED ON ANIMALS?

In the East, acupuncture has traditionally been used to treat all manner of animals. Treatment is obviously symptomatic rather than holistic! There are increasing numbers of

veterinary practitioners in the West who are using acupuncture and in the UK it has received a great deal of publicity after the successful treatment of certain famous race horses. The long history of the effective use of acupuncture on animals is a powerful argument against the still occasionally-encountered view that acupuncture is effective primarily purely because of the placebo effect.

CAN I HAVE ACUPUNCTURE ANALGESIA FOR A SURGICAL OPERATION?

Although there is a long history of acupuncture being used for the relief of pain, acupuncture analgesia was not used in a surgical operation until 1958 in Shanghai. Its use is now widespread throughout China. It was this modern use of electro-acupuncture that initially attracted the attention of the doctors attending President Nixon during his visit to China in 1972. Prior to this, Western doctors had been inclined to dismiss the results of acupuncture as being due to the placebo effect. That view could not be maintained in the face of patients smiling and talking during major surgery, with just a few needles inducing the analgesia.

Much research was then carried out to try and discover what physiological effects the acupuncture analgesia was producing. After some time, this concentrated upon the increase in endorphins (morphine-like substances in the brain) and neuro-peptides. Various neurological changes were also discovered to occur during acupuncture analgesia. This work both gave acupuncture analgesia scientific validity and also expanded the knowledge of physiologists concerning how we feel pain and how the sensation of pain can be blocked. It also had the tendency, however, of making

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many doctors, and others, think that acupuncture was primarily a method of pain relief rather a system of medicine traditionally used to treat a broad range of illnesses.

Acupuncture for pain relief has carved out a small niche for itself within Western medicine, treating out-patients in some hospital pain clinics. Results have often not been as good as they could have been, largely due to the lack of adequate training on the part of the doctors involved.

Acupuncture analgesia during surgical operations has never become popular in the West and one would probably find it very difficult to find anybody prepared to administer it. There are a number of reasons for this: very few acupuncturists work in hospitals and therefore have had no opportunity to try it out; most Westerners are not as stoical as most Chinese patients and would much rather be unconscious during an operation; it does not produce the muscle relaxation necessary for many operations; it is not as reliable as modern methods of chemical analgesia and few anaesthetists are strongly motivated to explore an unfamiliar technique when their present methods are generally successful.

There are, however, significant advantages to acupuncture analgesia: there are fewer post-operative complications such as bleeding, nausea and respiratory difficulty; there is no suppression of the immune system as there is with chemical methods of analgesia; the recovery rate is quicker and it is suitable for poor anaesthetic risks, such as the elderly.

It will be interesting to see if this cheap and simple method of analgesia ultimately finds a place in either the high-tech hospitals of the West or the more poorly-funded hospitals of developing countries.

CAN ACUPUNCTURE BE USED DURING PREGNANCY?

The changes that take place in a person's *qi* during pregnancy are so profound that again newly-qualified practitioners are advised not to treat during pregnancy. An experienced practitioner will usually treat during pregnancy only if the expectant mother is decidedly unwell and the diagnosis is relatively straightforward.

Acupuncture is often used to help induce labour when the baby is overdue.

CAN ACUPUNCTURE BE USED DURING CHILDBIRTH?

Acupuncture analgesia is occasionally used for the relief of pain during childbirth. However, in order to achieve full pain relief the needles are usually connected to an electronic machine and it is therefore necessary for the mother to keep fairly still. Understandably many mothers wish to have a more 'active' birth and in recent times many acupuncturists have been attending births in order to help facilitate the labour in several different ways. For example, acupuncture can be used throughout labour to lessen significantly the pain when it reaches its crescendos, to re-start the contractions if they stop for any reason or to draw upon the mother's reserves of energy if she feels that she just cannot go on any longer. The judicious use of acupuncture at crucial stages in labour can transform a woman's experience of childbirth and this could therefore play a crucial role in restoring the confidence of many women to choose to have a natural, rather than a high-tech, childbirth.

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Acupuncture, and also moxibustion, is also extremely effective immediately after the birth, reducing the likelihood of post-natal depression and restoring the mother's energy and vitality.

CAN ACUPUNCTURE HELP ME GIVE UP TOBACCO, ALCOHOL, DRUGS OR OVER-EATING?

There are usually three reasons why a person finds it difficult to give up a substance which she knows is injurious to her health. First there is the incontrovertible fact that some substances are chemically addictive for certain people. The most common of these are tobacco, alcohol, certain drugs (prescribed or not) and less seriously, coffee and chocolate. Many people can take or leave a substance such as alcohol – but in others it sets up a chemical dependence that is immensely hard to break.

Acupuncture can be extremely effective at reducing the intensity of the chemical dependence. Much clinical and research work has been carried out on this modern use of acupuncture in different clinics throughout the world, most notably at the Lincoln Hospital, New York. For this purpose acupuncturists predominantly use particular points on the ear. Small studs are sometimes left in position which the person can press if the craving becomes intense. The studs are changed periodically to avoid the possibility of a local infection.

The second reason is the psychological dependency upon the substance. People overeat, not because there is any chemical dependency, but because it goes a small way

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towards filling a psychological need. It is often a source of comfort or a small reward, just as a stiff drink is often the ‘reward’ people give themselves after a hard day’s work or after they have finally got the children to bed.

The use of these substances to suppress emotions is also common. People often crave the soothing qualities of a cigarette when they are nervous and unsure of themselves in company. The progression from frustration to irritability or despondency to alcohol or other drugs is also widespread.

It should always be remembered that however pleasing the effect in the short-term, in the long-term alcohol and drugs further strain the Liver and Gall Bladder, the Organs most closely associated with a tendency to frustration and irritability. Thus the cycle perpetuates itself – irritability and despondency lead to alcohol and drugs and they, in turn, lead to more irritability and despondency.

Acupuncture aimed at treating the whole person can also be highly effective in reducing the psychological dependency. It often needs to be supported, however, by awareness in the individual of her own psychological patterns in relation to the substance. A degree of willpower is usually also required, so as not to retreat into her habitual modes of behaviour. Finding a less harmful alternative may be helpful if the person continues to feel the need of some ‘support’ in times of stress.

Thirdly, the person may lack the will to suffer some discomfort during the withdrawal phase, and, perhaps more commonly, a commitment to change her life-style after giving up. Many heroin addicts, smokers and alcoholics periodically give up their addictions, but continue to spend much of their social life with people who still not only

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maintain their own addictions but also justify them to themselves and others. It is little wonder that many people revert to their addictions when a new supply is only an arm's length away. In extreme cases, such as heroin or alcohol addiction, it is sometimes best for the person to enter a hospital, clinic or therapeutic community for a period of time in order to remove herself from temptation. Even in less extreme cases, the practitioner may need to counsel the patient about her life-style and encourage her to consider seriously what changes she may need to make in order to minimise the possibility of reverting to her addiction.

CAN ACUPUNCTURE HELP ME LOSE WEIGHT?

If the cause of the excess weight is due to overeating, acupuncture may well be able to help in the ways outlined in the previous section. Many people, however, put on weight despite eating very little. This may be due to lack of physical exercise, but it may also be due to a failure of the metabolism to utilise efficiently the food that it receives. Acupuncture is often effective in making the metabolism more efficient and many patients lose weight during the course of treatment if they are overweight, just as many patients put on weight if their bodies are too thin.

CAN ACUPUNCTURE HELP ME LOOK YOUNGER?

In recent years a new form of acupuncture has been developed in the USA. It is usually called 'facial revitalisation acupuncture' and its goal is to help the person have a more youthful looking face and/or neck. Very fine

needles are usually used or sometimes little pads which are connected to a low voltage electric current. In some situations the intention is to tighten muscles that have become flaccid. In others it is to relax the skin, especially around the eyes and mouth, so that the person has fewer wrinkles.

It certainly works in the short term, but in order to bring about any significant change in the longer term a lengthy course of treatment seems to be needed. I am yet to be convinced of its efficacy over the longer term, but it is not a field in which I have much experience.

HOW CAN I TRAIN TO BE AN ACUPUNCTURE PRACTITIONER?

There are now a number of colleges and university courses in the UK. The British Acupuncture Council has set up a body called the British Acupuncture Accreditation Board to accredit colleges of acupuncture; it keeps a directory of accredited colleges on www.acupuncture.org.uk. Be sure to only attend one of these courses.

All the accredited colleges now also offer a university degree, usually a BSc Hons. Some offer courses that follow the usual pattern of being on several weekdays in a three term system. Some, especially those that concentrate on training mature students, run courses at weekends. This enables students to maintain their full-time job and change career by studying in their spare time. It is obviously demanding to maintain full-time work and do a university degree at the same time, but many people who have been committed to becoming acupuncture practitioners have achieved this over the last few decades.

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The curriculum of some courses is exclusively based on the style of acupuncture practised in China today, known as TCM. Others concentrate on the Five Element style, which is not emphasised in TCM. The college in Reading, of which I am the dean, teaches students an integration of the two styles.

HOW CAN I FIND A WELL-QUALIFIED TRADITIONAL ACUPUNCTURIST?

There is an old Japanese proverb that says ‘Better go without medicine than see an unskilful physician’.

In Britain the British Acupuncture Council is the main body that represents practitioners who have undertaken a serious study of Chinese medicine. Practitioners are bound by its Code of Ethics and Code of Practice and are covered by Professional Indemnity insurance, tel: 020 8735 0400 or visit www.acupuncture.org.uk.

Appendix B provides a list of organisations in various countries which distribute registers of acupuncturists. I am not in a position to vouch for the entry requirements of the different bodies, however. Some may have relatively low standards and some may be organisations for practitioners who practise acupuncture, but not acupuncture based on the principles of traditional Chinese medicine.

Any of these organisations will put you in touch with a practitioner close to where you live. If you find an acupuncturist by word-of-mouth be sure to enquire about her qualifications and membership of a professional organisation.

The practice of acupuncture which takes into account the whole person has always been time-consuming and difficult.

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It has predominantly been the preserve of an elite, a ‘high’ form of acupuncture largely unavailable to the masses. The majority of the population have historically relied on the ‘folk-medicine’ traditions of Chinese medicine, based upon the same principles but practised in a more rudimentary way.

Nearly all practitioners of traditional acupuncture in the West are in private practice and therefore have to charge patients for their services. Largely because of the very positive research results published in recent years there has been a marked change in the attitude of the National Health Service in the UK. Increasingly there are opportunities opening up for practitioners within the National Health Service although there is still a long way to go before acupuncture finds a substantial role.

In the UK and other countries, however, increasing numbers of private health insurance companies are happy to meet the cost of acupuncture treatment. This is partly as a response to consumer pressure and partly because they are increasingly realising that it can save them substantial sums in hospital bills. Most acupuncturists have no wish to turn away any patient on financial grounds and are prepared to reduce their charges for patients who are genuinely unable to pay the full fee.

It is important to remember that being a Western-trained doctor, physiotherapist, nurse or chiropractor is no qualification for the practice of acupuncture. Some have undergone excellent training, but many more have learnt all they know from books and extremely short courses. Be sure to check thoroughly the **acupuncture** qualifications of any practitioner you consult.

Furthermore even where the acupuncturist is well-

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qualified it is still crucial that you find a practitioner with whom you have good rapport and in whom you have full confidence. When you find a suitable practitioner you will have gained access to a system of medicine that is subtle, powerful and effective.

ACUPUNCTURE: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

It is apparent from archaeological evidence that acupuncture has been practised, in some shape or form, for at least 3,000 years. Over this extraordinary length of time the practice of acupuncture has been through a great many changes.

During the first 1,000 or more years it is probable that it was relatively unsophisticated. It predominantly relied on stone, bone and bamboo needles and still regarded possession by evil spirits as the sole cause of disease. By approximately 200BC, however, Chinese physicians, in the earliest texts that have survived, were referring to 'earlier classics' and 'ancient masters' and had already developed the fundamental principles of Chinese medicine that have remained unchanged to this day.

This era in the development of Chinese medicine coincided with the dawning of modern civilisation throughout the world. This was the era of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras, Zoroaster, the Buddha, Confucius and Lao-Tse. The great Classics of Chinese Medicine, the *Nei*

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Jing (c. 200BC) and the *Nan Jing* (c. AD100), made no references to magical or religious procedures and they remain essential reading for the student of acupuncture to this day.

Since that time many acupuncturists have written books in order to convey their own knowledge and wisdom. One the most famous of these was Wang WeiYi (around AD1026) who wrote the *Classic of the Bronze Man*, which contained descriptions of 657 points on the human body. Commissioned by the Emperor, he also supervised the casting of various bronze statues upon which the channels were engraved and the points located by small holes. The first two statues were placed in the Emperor's palace and the Imperial Academy of Medicine in Beijing and these became the source of the greatest authority for the location of points up until recent times. Before students took their examinations the statues were coated with wax and the interior filled with water. The students had to needle the figure and release streams of fluid from the points in order to pass.

Despite universal acceptance of the fundamental principles, one should not get the impression that the actual practice of acupuncture has ever been standardised throughout the East. It has been predominantly taught from father to son, master to apprentice, and practitioners have always evolved their own individual styles. Until recent times, communication throughout China and the East was difficult, hazardous and slow. Each area, each village even, developed its own style and emphasis. For example, acupuncturists in Japan have always favoured the use of moxibustion and very delicate needle techniques, whereas in Southern China moxibustion is seldom used and the needling is considerably more brusque!

THE IMPACT OF THE WEST ON CHINESE MEDICINE

The introduction of Western medicine into the countries of the East coincided with the era when, for the first time, the people of these countries were forced to acknowledge the overall technological superiority of other cultures over their own. For example, although there are records of surgery being carried out in China over 1,000 years ago, it had almost completely disappeared until the arrival of Christian missionaries in the nineteenth century. The impact on Chinese society was electrifying. It is hard for us to imagine how devastating this realisation was to the Chinese, a people who had always been supremely confident that their culture far surpassed any other on Earth and whose word for foreigners literally translates as ‘foreign devils’.

There were movements throughout the nineteenth century in all the countries of the East to adopt the technologies and scientific values of the West. In medicine it meant that traditional concepts and practices came under heavy attack. With the fall of the Manchu dynasty in 1911 and the birth of the new republic, the reaction against traditional values and beliefs became even more powerful. In 1914 the Minister of Education declared ‘I have decided to abolish Chinese medicine and to use no more Chinese remedies as well’.

Chinese medicine was forced increasingly onto the defensive when Chiang Kai-Shek took power and the ‘West is best’ era reached its height. Financial support for the teaching of Chinese medicine was completely withdrawn. Nevertheless acupuncture, predominantly in a simple folk-medicine form, continued to be extensively practised throughout the whole of China. The advent of the communist

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regime in China, however, initiated great changes in the study and practice of Chinese medicine. At first it was dismissed by the leading thinkers as being out of tune with the supposedly 'scientific' principles of Marxism. The teaching and practice of traditional Chinese medicine were not supported by the government in Beijing.

The goal of having Western medicine available for the entire population of China was of course impossible to realise in the short term. By 1954, however, Chinese medicine was no longer being described as 'feudal medicine' but as the 'medical legacy of the motherland' and its practice was rapidly incorporated into the Chinese health-care system. Funding was made available for clinics, hospitals and colleges. In 1958 Mao declared Chinese medicine 'a great treasure-house' and he himself frequently used it in order to maintain vitality into his old age. This is also apparently common practice amongst the current political leaders.

The pressing need to provide a system of health care for every member of its enormous population has meant that clear, speedy and direct diagnosis and treatment has largely replaced the complex task of making an individual diagnosis, unique to each sufferer. The practice of acupuncture in China has consequently been simplified and systematised in such a way as to make it possible to use it as a system of mass-medicine.

The political climate has meant also that the theories of Chinese medicine have been adjusted in order to be more in keeping with the spirit of the age. The theory of *yin/yang*, always the primary principle of herbalism, has also become pre-eminent in acupuncture. *Yin/yang* partly found theoretical favour in the 1950s because, according to Maoist thinking, it

is ‘a rudimentary dialectic’, whereas the Five Elements, with its greater emphasis on the ‘spirit’ of each Element, ‘inevitably leads those who utilise it to sink into idealism and metaphysics’. Subtle acupuncture, emphasising diagnosis and treatment based on the Five Elements, is therefore more widely practised now in Japan, Korea, Taiwan and the countries of the West than it is in China itself.

There are also many cultural differences in the practice of medicine between the East and West. One of the major differences is in the perception of the nature of psychological symptoms. The Chinese family organisation, imbued with Confucian ethics, places great emphasis on self-control and social decorum. This is commonly regarded as the reason for the low incidence of alcoholism, with its tendency to loosen inhibitions. Few people will admit psychological problems to a non-family member for fear of losing face and of creating difficulties in arranging future marriages, either for themselves or other family members. Western forms of psychotherapy and counselling, when they have been tried, have been notoriously unsuccessful amongst the people of the East.

The introduction of Chinese medicine to the West has inevitably brought about great changes in the way that it is practised and perceived. Practitioners and patients in the East are steeped in the vocabulary and principles of Chinese medicine in a way that Western patients will never be. Acupuncturists frequently find themselves in the position of having to educate their patients in the concepts of Chinese medicine before they can carry on any meaningful dialogue about the diagnosis or intended treatment.

Both patients and practitioners in the West have been

raised, consciously and unconsciously, on the ideas and world-view of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, Aristotelian logic, classical physics, Cartesian dualism, Freudian insights and many other influences totally alien to traditional Chinese ways of thinking. One can already see the practice of Chinese medicine changing as it makes its transition to the West. The most obvious change is an increasing focus on psychological issues and emotional causes for physical complaints.

THE IMPACT OF WESTERN MEDICINE UPON CHINESE MEDICINE

Western medicine has certainly posed the greatest conceptual challenge to the principles of Chinese medicine that it has ever had to face. Ted Kaptchuk, an eminent practitioner of Chinese medicine, has written:

No honest Chinese physician can fail to be awed by the achievements of Western medicine, by the ease with which a drug such as streptomycin, or a technique such as open heart surgery, can penetrate to the core of disorders that Chinese medicine finds complex and intractable.

There are few who doubt that Western medicine is superior to Chinese medicine in many cases; particularly those where surgery is effective or where powerful treatment is required in acute situations.

What this has meant is that throughout the East both systems of medicine are practised alongside each other. The patient is free to choose whichever she prefers; often resorting to the other if the first system tried is unsuccessful. Chinese medicine remains immensely popular throughout the

East. Hundreds of millions of people have used both systems of medicine and now choose to consult either a Western doctor or a practitioner of Chinese medicine, depending on the situation.

In China they have adopted the policy of the ‘three roads’; Western medicine, Chinese medicine and a combination of the two, so-called ‘new acupuncture’. This third ‘road’ has led many Chinese doctors, trained in both systems, to attempt to fit the practice of Chinese medicine into the conceptual framework of Western medicine. There is usually no place for *yin/yang*, the Five Elements or even the concept of *qi* in the ‘new acupuncture’. This has led to the quality of the acupuncture being hopelessly compromised as attempts have been made to use it with the symptomatic approach of Western medicine. This is especially true of many of the research studies into acupuncture.

RESEARCH INTO ACUPUNCTURE

One of the challenges for acupuncture in modern times has been to prove that it truly is effective. A great deal of research has been carried out in China and Japan but, until recently, much of it has not satisfied the criteria of the Western scientific method. A major stumbling block has been that the Chinese will not normally use a control group (receiving placebo treatment in ‘sham’ acupuncture points) in the firm belief that it is unethical to deprive a patient of treatment which experience has shown to be effective. Despite this, in 1979 the World Health Organisation completed a thorough investigation into the efficacy of acupuncture and concluded:

The sheer weight of evidence demands that

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acupuncture must be taken seriously as a clinical procedure of considerable value.

Another problem concerning research into acupuncture is that diagnosis and treatment in traditional acupuncture can only be made by integrating a great many variables, such as pulse, tongue, tone of voice, colour of the face, etc. The nature and method of scientific research, however, is to control and eliminate variables. Two patients with an identical diagnosis and treatment strategy in Western medicine will receive in traditional acupuncture a totally different diagnosis and treatment from each other. Much of the Chinese research has been carried out by doctors who conduct research using acupuncture as though as it was primarily a form of symptomatic treatment. **To conduct a research trial which classifies an individual's illness according to a Western classification, and then treats each sufferer with an identical treatment, is in direct conflict with the basic tenets of Chinese medicine.** Many trials have been carried out using a particular point to treat a specific symptom, using research methodologies designed to test drugs. For example, much research has been carried out on the use of the point *Neiguan*, the point on the inside of the fore-arm that is pressed by travel-sickness bands. There is now considerable evidence of its anti-nausea efficacy after chemotherapy, operations, during pregnancy and travelling. This research promotes the use of the point to the benefit of a great many people, but it gives a totally false impression of the scope and nature of acupuncture.

Even when a compromise is reached between the criteria of the researcher and the acupuncturist, support for research in the West is often not forthcoming. I was a co-author of a

small trial carried out in 1986 at the Churchill Hospital, Oxford using acupuncture to treat patients suffering from chronic breathlessness, a particularly intractable symptom. The practitioner treated one group of patients, making individual diagnoses and giving individual treatments over a two-week period. The patients in the other group received exactly the same number of needles, but not in acupuncture points. The patients in the group receiving acupuncture showed significant improvement in terms of their subjective experience of their breathlessness, and in their ability to walk a greater distance than previously over a six minute period. The results of the trial were published in *The Lancet* (20/12/86) and received a great deal of attention. Subsequent efforts, however, to find funding for a larger study were unsuccessful.

In fact, the trial fuelled the misgivings of many acupuncturists concerning the value of such research. Most acupuncturists are in private practice, with no access to the facilities or funding necessary to conduct a research trial. Rightly or wrongly, they tend to concentrate on their own practice and prefer to let the extraordinary history of acupuncture speak for itself and to let their patients bear testimony to its efficacy. Each piece of research published in the medical journals seems merely to increase the number of doctors signing up for very short courses in acupuncture.

Apart from researching *whether* it works, some research is also being carried out into *how* it works. Scientists in many countries are attempting to discover what physiological mechanisms are brought into play when acupuncture is administered. Most research has concentrated on acupuncture's analgesic effect; much less into its curative

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effects. Experiments on animals and people have shown that three main areas are involved: neurological, hormonal and bioelectric. Although many research experiments have shown that acupuncture is partially mediated through these systems, it is obvious that other mechanisms are also involved. Many researchers in this field think that when more is understood about the electro-magnetic properties of the body, it will be this area that will yield the most understanding about the curative effects of acupuncture. It seems that we must await further scientific discoveries before enough is known about the mechanisms of acupuncture for it to find a place in the body of accepted scientific knowledge.

IS ACUPUNCTURE A SCIENCE OR AN ART?

The science of acupuncture is based upon detailed observation of how people change when they become ill. Diagnostic signs have been identified, co-ordinated, systematised and tested over millennia, in order to evolve a rational, internally consistent system. Where Chinese medicine differs from Western medicine is that whereas Western medicine has been linear in its development, Chinese medicine has been cumulative. In the West what was previously thought to be true has often been superseded by new scientific discoveries. In the East the theories of *yin/yang* and the Five Elements have provided insights into the laws of nature that continue to underpin clinical practice. What is astonishing is that at the dawn of its civilisation the Chinese physicians discovered truths about the energetic nature of man that have proved empirically successful with many millions of patients and intellectually satisfying to the keenest minds of the East. In using this system of medicine, present-

day acupuncturists are these physicians' humble and grateful inheritors.

The art of acupuncture depends upon the sensitivity and intuition of the practitioner. Albert Schweitzer, the medical missionary and theologian, wrote:

It is our duty to remember at all times and anew that medicine is not only a science, but also the art of letting our own individuality interact with the individuality of the patient.

The choice and number of points, the quality of needle technique and the practitioner's ability to make rapport with a person's spirit are crucial factors in determining the success of the treatment. For this reason it is essential that one consults a practitioner who possesses both a thorough grasp of the scientific method of acupuncture and the sensibility to practise it as an art.

THE FUTURE OF CHINESE MEDICINE IN THE WEST

It is to be hoped that the future of Chinese medicine in the West will be one of progressive growth and acceptance as more people have the opportunity to judge its benefits for themselves. The strengths of Chinese medicine complement the weaknesses of Western medicine so elegantly that it is probable that patients will increasingly consult practitioners of both systems in their efforts to find an effective therapy. Neither system possesses all the answers. Far from it.

Western medicine has many strengths which are well known to us. Its major weaknesses stem from the impersonal

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way in which it is frequently practised, its separation of body, mind and spirit and its reliance upon symptomatic treatments to counteract the biochemical consequences of illness.

If one's *qi* is imbalanced in such a way that some of one's symptoms are at the level of mind and spirit, so that one no longer has a feeling of overall well-being, then Western medicine has very few treatments to offer. Unless the doctor finds some pathological cause, there is only a narrow range of drugs from which to prescribe. These are chiefly the anti-depressants. These are sometimes effective in reducing the worst of the symptoms but, because of the side-effects, most people who take them feel far from well and are aware that the drugs are merely overlaying the root of the problems. Acupuncture's efficacy in improving a person's feeling of well-being is one of its greatest strengths. As the *Nei Jing* states:

If the body is healthy and the mind suffers, illnesses arise in the channels. Moxibustion and needles are the proper treatment.

Westerners are fortunate in being able to receive high-quality Western medicine when it offers the optimum treatment for their condition. Many patients in the West, however, are increasingly searching for a system of preventive medicine which can effectively enhance healthy function. They want to consult a practitioner who possesses the means to assist the natural homoeostatic processes. There are times to 'fight illness' from outside and there are times to use a powerful therapy to strengthen the healthy functioning of the body in order to cure the illness from within. As Albert Schweitzer wrote:

Each patient carries his own doctor inside him. They

come to us not knowing that truth. We are at our best when we give the doctor who resides within each patient a chance to go to work.

Chinese medicine's vision of the human being as an integral part of his environment, a microcosm of the macrocosm of nature, strikes a deep chord with many people disenchanted with the materialist viewpoint of Western science and medicine. They are increasingly looking for a system of medicine that acknowledges that the human being is much, much more than just an extraordinarily sophisticated bio-chemical and mechanical machine. The human being's destiny is to stand 'between Heaven and Earth': to be comprised of both spirit and flesh. Traditional acupuncture is based upon this truth and it offers a means to heal the ills of both.

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APPENDIX A

If you would like to read more on acupuncture and Chinese medicine you might like to try some of the following. Note that some of these titles are now out of print: you may be able to find copies in second-hand book stores.

A Guide to Acupuncture by Peter Firebrace and Sandra Hill. Constable and Robinson, 1994. ISBN 978-0094722705

The Acupuncture Handbook by Angela Hicks. Piatkus Books, 2005. ISBN 978-0749924720

Between Heaven and Earth by Harriet Beinfeld and Ephrem Korngold. Ballantine Books, 1992. ISBN 978-0345379740

Healing your Emotions – Discover your Five Element Type and Change your Life by Angela and John Hicks. HarperCollins, 1999. ISBN 978-0722537282

Chinese Medicine: The Web that has no Weaver by Ted Kaptchuk. Rider and Company, 2000. ISBN 978-0712602815

The second half of the book is more for practitioners than non-practitioners.

Tao Te Ching by Lao-Tse.

The great classic of Daoism. There are numerous translations: everybody has their own favourite; mine is the Richard Wilhelm edition.

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The following books are written for students and practitioners. Large parts of them therefore are too detailed for non-students. But if you want to read more deeply:

The Foundations of Chinese Medicine by Giovanni Maciocia. Churchill Livingstone, 2005. ISBN 978-0443074899

An excellent textbook on the fundamentals of Chinese Medicine.

Five Element Constitutional Acupuncture by Angie Hicks, John Hicks and Peter Mole. Churchill Livingstone, 2004. ISBN 978-0443071706

Much more detail on the Five Element approach and how to diagnose a person's predominant constitutional imbalance.

The Handbook of Five Element Practice by Nora Franglen. School of Five Element Acupuncture, 2004. ISBN 978-0954679309

APPENDIX B

This is an address list of professional organisations of acupuncturists in various countries. Some contact details may be out of date by the time you read this book, so it would be advisable to check on them before making contact.

Apart from in the UK I am not in a position to vouch for the educational standards required to enter any organisation. It is certain that many members of these organisations have not undertaken a serious study of Chinese medicine.

UK

BRITISH ACUPUNCTURE COUNCIL

63 Jeddo Road, W12 9HQ

Tel: 020 8735 0400

www.acupuncture.org.uk

email info@acupuncture.org.uk

Pan European Organisation For European Acupuncture Associations

PEFOTS

Geldersekade 87 A

1011 EL Amsterdam

The Netherlands

Tel: +31 20 6892468

Fax: +31 20 6892547

Email: info@pefots.com

www.pefots.com

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AUSTRALIA

Australian Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Association

PO Box 1635

Coorparoo DC

Queensland 4151

Tel: +61 7 3324 2599

Fax: +61 7 3394 2399

Email: aacma@acupuncture.org.au

www.acupuncture.org.au

Australian Traditional Medicine Society

PO Box 1027, Meadowbank

New South Wales 2114

Tel: +61 2 9809 6800

Fax: +61 2 9809 7570

Email: info@atms.com.au

www.atms.com.au

Acupuncture Association of Victoria

PO Box 471

Doncaster, Victoria 3127

Tel: 0500 511 777

AUSTRIA

Österreichische Gesellschaft für Akupunktur (ÖGA)

Kaiserin Elisabeth Spital

Huglgasse 1-3

A-1150 Wien

Tel: +43 1 98104 7001

Fax: +43 1 98104 5759

www.akupunktur.at

Email: aku@kes.magwien.gv.at

Austrian Association of Acupuncture

President: Prof. Dr. Helmut Nissel

Email: helmut.nissel@akupunktur.at

BRAZIL

A.B.A.-Brazilian Association of Acupuncture

R. Guarara,

242 – J. Paulista

São Paulo

Tel: +55 11 885 0524

Email: orley.dulcetti@mandic.com.br

Dr. Marcus Vinicius Ferreira M.D.

Rua Visconde de Piraja 414 sala 702

22410-002 Ipanema

Rio de Janeiro

Tel: +55 21 247 2480

Email: vinifer@ibm.net

BULGARIA

Bulgarian Association of Acupuncture

PO Box 33

1463 Sofia

Tel: +359 2 542-981

BELORUSSIA

Acupuncture Association Byelorussian

Ministry of Health

Masherova Street, 47/1-170

220035 Minsk

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CANADA

Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture Association of Canada

154 Wellington Street

London, Ontario N6B 2K8

Tel: +1 519 642 1970

Fax: +1 519 642 2932

Email: icma@webgate.net

Ordre D'Acupuncteurs Du Quebec

1001 Boulevard de Maisonneuve Est,

Bureau 585, Montreal

Quebec H2L 4P9

Tel: +1 514 523 2882

Fax: +1 514 523 9669

Email: info@ordredesacupuncteurs.qc.ca

DENMARK

Dansk Selskab for Akupunktur

Gammel Kongevej 80

1850 Frederiksberg C

Tel: +45 31 212112

ESTONIA

Estonian Association of Acupuncture and Traditional

Chinese Medicine

Tallinna Keskhaigla

Ravi 18

10138 Tallinn

Tel: +372 6 207225

Fax: +372 6 207002

Email: d.trisong@neti.ee

FINLAND

The National Research and Development Centre for
Welfare and Health

Siltasaaren 18A

PO Box 220

FIN-00531 Helsinki

Tel: +358 900 531

FRANCE

Association Française D'Acupuncture

7 rue Marius Reinaud

13100 Aix-en-Provence

Tel: +33 1 42 52 59 07

Fax: +33 1 43 20 54 46

www.acupuncture-france.com

Fédération National de Médecine Traditionnelle Chinoise

7, rue Louis Prével

06000 Nice

Tel : +33 870 304 870

Fax : +33 4 93 82 31 39

www.fnmtc.fr

Société d'Acupuncture d'Aquitaine

www.acupuncture-aquitaine.org

GERMANY

Deutsche Ärztesgesellschaft für Akupunktur (DÄGfA)

Würmtalstr. 54

81375 München

Tel: +49 89 7 10 05-11

Fax: +49 89 7 10 05-25

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German Research Institute of Chinese Medicine
Silberbachstrasse 10
79100 Freiburg im Breisgau

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Akupunktur und Neuraltherapie
(DGfAN) (German Society for Acupuncture and
Neuraltherapy)
Mühlweg 11, 07368 Ebersdorf
Tel: +49 3 66 51 5 50 75
Fax: +49 3 66 51 5 50 74

Arbeitsgemeinschaft fuer klassische Akupunktur and
Traditionelle Chinesische Medizin e.v.
Drakestr. 40, 12205 Berlin
Tel: +49 69 53 05 66 30
Fax: +49 69 53 05 43 61
Email: below@agtcm.de
www.agtcm.de

INDIA

Council of Alternative Systems of Medicines
3 Canal Street
Calcutta 700 014
Tel: +91 33 4718394/2465037
Fax: +91 33 4712164

IRELAND

Professional Register of Traditional Chinese Medicine
ICTCM Hse, Merchants Rd Dub 3
Co. Dublin
Tel: +353 1 8559000
www.chinesemedicine.ie

ITALY

Research Institute of Clinical Homeopathy, Acupuncture
and Psychotherapy

Via Sabotino 2

00195 Roma

Società Italiana di Agopuntura

Via Solari, 52

20144 Milano

Tel +39 2 48714047

Fax +39 2 48713999

E-mail: s.i.a.@tin.it

JAPAN

Japan Society of Acupuncture and Moxibustion

3-44-14 Minami Otsuka Toshima-Ku

Tokyo 170-0005

Tel: +81 3 3985 6188

Fax: +81 3 3985 6188

Email: jimu@jsam.jp

www.jimu@jsam.jp

Japan Society for Oriental Medicine

Kokusai-Hamamatsucho Bldg. 6F

1-9-18 Kaigan,

Minato-ku

Tokyo 105-0022, Japan

E-mail: office@jsom.or.jp

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NETHERLANDS

Zhong

Dutch Association for Traditional Chinese Medicine

Agro Businesspark 70

6708 PW Wageningen

Tel: +31 7 479 740

info@zhong.nl

www.zhong.nl

Nederlandse Artsen Acupunctuur Vereniging

Secretariaat

Postbus 8003

6440 HA Brunssum

Tel: +31 45 5626339

Email: info@naav.nl

www.acupunctuur.com

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand Register of Acupuncture

PO Box 9950

Wellington 6001

Tel: +64 4 476 4866

www.acupuncture.org.nz

NORWAY

Norsk akupunkturforening

Kongensgate 12

0153 Oslo

Tel: +47 2241 7888

www.akupunktur.no

PORTUGAL

Sociedade Portuguesa Médica de Acupunctura
Secção Regional do Centro da Ordem dos Médicos
Avenida D. Afonso Henriques, 39
3000-011 Coimbra
Tel: +351 239 792 920
Fax: +351 239 702 788
www.spma.pt

SINGAPORE

Singapore High Commission
Director of Traditional Chinese Medicine
Ministry of Health, College of Medicine Building
16 College Road
Singapore 169854
Tel: +65 223 7777
www.sgdi.gov.sg

SOUTH AFRICA

National Association for Chinese Medicine and
Acupuncture of S.A.(NACMASA)
P O Box 1366
Sea Point 8060
Tel: +27 21 697 0611/3
or +27 21 696 9484
Fax: +27 21 696 9398
Email: nacmasa@e-chinesemedicine.co.za

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SPAIN

Practitioners Register

Fundacion Europa de Medicina Tradicional China

Av. de Madrid

168 -170, Entlo A

Barcelona 08028

Tel: +34 902 106 776

Fax: +34 933 39 52 66

Email: mtc@mtc.com and pr@mtc.es

www.mtc.es

SWITZERLAND

Assoziation Schweizer Ärztgesellschaften für Akupunktur
und chinesische Medizin (ASA)

<http://www.akupunktur-tcm.ch/>

Schweizerische Ärztgesellschaft für Akupunktur –
Chinesische Medizin (SAGA-TCM)

<http://www.saga-tcm.ch>

USA

Council of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine

3909 National Drive

Suite 125

Burtonsville, MD 20866

Tel: +1 301 476 7790

Fax: +1 301 476 7792

<http://acu-well.com>

National Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Alliance
14637 Starr Road S.E.
Olalla, WA 98359
Tel: +1 253 851 6896
Fax: +1 253 851 6883

National Commission for the Certification of
Acupuncturists (NCCAOM)
76 South Laura Street
Suite 1290
Jacksonville, FL 32202
Tel: +1 904 598 1005
Fax: +1 904 598 5001
www.nccaom.org

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