

Acupuncture for Spiritual Growth

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Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) was intertwined with wisdom. It was holistic medicine at its finest, believing in the mind/body connection. It utilized all aspects of wisdom, combining healing on many aspects from spiritual, mental, physical and emotional. Practitioners today, mainly focus on the physical and emotional symptomatology and forget the spiritual, mental and other transformative treatments that are available to our patients.

During [1911-1949], *Sun Yatsen*, the new president of China, commanded the country to forget about the unscientific methods of Chinese medicine, and focus only on Western medicine. Seven years later, in 1919, the Ministry of Education issued regulations on medical instructions. Public and private schools of Western medicine were established. A few months later, the government prohibited physicians from practicing TCM. Additionally, it was forbidden to establish a Chinese medical school or open a TCM hospital.

The prohibition of TCM in China represented an opportunity for the rest of the world; practitioners fleeing China created a diaspora community, spreading their wisdom and a traditional pedagogy practiced by the most honored former teachers. These teaching methods are no longer taught in mainstream China, but only among the generations that learned from the diaspora community.

Based on my experience while studying in China, today, Chinese medicine taught at hospitals and universities has taken on a very Western feel. The doctors listen to the physical symptoms of the patient only and are not interested or aware of the holistic viewpoint whereupon the spiritual, mental and emotional aspects are also considered in the treatment plan.

The following two treatments are an example of commonly used TCM practices that were used prior to the Cultural Revolution. These treatments are not directly related to physical symptoms that might have originally brought the patient in to your clinic.

The concept of Demonology and disincarnate spirits dates back to the *Shang* dynasty, and was a major branch of Chinese medicine that evolved with the rest of Chinese medicine. The concept that one might become possessed might be too much for the average person to think about.

It brings up thoughts of demons, or past lives, or karma - ideas that many people in the West do not think are real. Nevertheless, if someone is not in full possession of their body, a variety of issues might come up that cannot be resolved any other way than to specifically treat that person for possession. This treatment is especially important if someone has experienced a shock or trauma or suffered severe emotional, physical or mental abuse or witnessed it. One can also be vulnerable to possession after being subjected to extreme weather, or even witnessing something traumatic. Both *Sun Simiao* and *Li Shizhen* wrote about treating possession with herbs and acupuncture.

When diagnosing possession there are several things to look for. When a patient is so fixed on one form of emotional expression, or if they have a fascination with themselves, their thoughts/desires or feelings has thoroughly obscured their heart's light, then this is called being possessed

internally, and must be treated with the Internal Dragons treatment. One might have a hard time manifesting something they have been planning for, or continuously cycling through the same issues with no resolution such as inviting drama into their lives.

Further ways to diagnose this is in the pulse, and with verbal/social cues. The pulse might be erratic in all aspects, or there may be a "jumping bean" pulse that floats in one or more area. A patient's language might provide cues as they state, "I don't feel like myself." When a practitioner has a hard time making and sustaining eye contact with their patient, this is also a cue that the patient might be possessed. Long-term consequences of not being treated for possession can include mental illness such as depression, schizophrenia, or inability to heal from traumas.

When an external pathogen has clouded the natural expression of a patient's being, then they must be treated with the External Dragons treatment. In these cases, it is someone who has lost a sense of self, or it seems as though their original nature is very far away, and you cannot seem to reach them as there is too much "darkness." The practitioner might feel as though they cannot make contact with any sane or clear influences with the patient. Many times this manifests as a patient unconsciously inviting people to take advantage of them, or having weak boundaries or an inability to express those boundaries.

To treat this, one must start with a specific treatment, and can choose to add one or more of the thirteen Ghost Points. For an Internal Dragon treatment, it is the most sensitive point on or between CV-14 and CV-15, Stomach 25, Stomach 32, and Stomach 41. For an External Dragon treatment, one must treat Du 20, Ub 11, 23 and 61. Needles are inserted from top to bottom, right to left, and with a slight counterclockwise rotation until *qi* is felt. A practitioner can treat for both Internal and External dragons in the same treatment if the patient is strong enough.

At other times, it is worthwhile to look at the reasons why random pain might be visited upon certain parts of the body. Recently, I had a female patient, age 28, who had terrible pain with a sensation of heat in her left hand between *Yu Ji Lung* 10 and *Tongli* Heart 5. Otherwise healthy, she had no previous injuries, and no recollection of how she might have gotten this pain. Before I needled these points, it occurred to me that they both represent speaking, self-expression or lack of speaking one's mind. *Tongli* is common to use with a sore throat, sudden voice loss, or aphasia with a stiff tongue. Most acupuncturists are familiar with the usefulness of needling or bleeding *Yu Ji* when one gets laryngitis, tonsillitis or strep throat - all can be considered manifestations of not being able to express oneself clearly, or speaking up to tell your "truth" which might also be considered "plumb pit *qi*."

In this particular case, as I needled these points in her hand, we spent some time conversing about where she might feel stuck in her communication with someone she cares about. She revealed about her recent struggle communicating with her boyfriend of three years. After the treatment, her pain went away, and I wonder if it was the needles, or the simple knowledge of what the points represent and the conversation we had that made it so. Regardless, several days later, she let me know that her communications with her boyfriend had improved and they were both much happier.

My favorite writer about this topic, Lonny Jarrett, wrote a series of books. Most of my transformative treatments come from the ideas pondered in his books, and when a certain acupuncture point resonates with someone, or they have phantom pain (as in my example above), I look to see which acupuncture point it is, and might read to the patient the information from Mr. Jarrett's book, *The Clinical Practice of Chinese Medicine*. Other beneficial treatments might come from utilizing Ghost Points and the Eight Extraordinary Vessels.

Overall, there are so many treatments available to us that provide transformation for our patients. I

hope you all have fun exploring the spiritual side of acupuncture - patients and practitioners alike.

References

1. *The Clinical Practice of Chinese Medicine*, Lonny Jarrett

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