



EDUCATION & SEMINARS

## Symposium on Journey to Success

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Have you ever said to yourself, "Wow, I really got something out of that," at the end of a symposium? I just returned home from such an event. In early October 2009, the Institute of Classical Five Element Acupuncture hosted an international symposium, "Continuing the Journey." The aim was to bring together practitioners of the Five-Element acupuncture system. Presenters brought more than 200 years of collected acupuncture experience to share with those in attendance, who came from throughout the United States, Canada and Australia.

The most notable aspect of this conference was that it was highly experiential in nature. While there were occasional lectures, most presentations had active or group work components. The crowd favorite was Pat Gorman's presentation of "Roots and Branches: Five-Element *Qi Gong*." By the end of the session, practitioners were performing the movements with drums, rattles, ribbons and a great deal of enthusiasm.

Another favorite was Merry Gerard's discussion on using the spirit of a point to create treatment plans. The discussion of using Conception Vessel (*Ren*), Governing Vessel (*Du*), the Outer Bladder channel on the back, and the Upper Kidney channel points to aid patients was both lively and inspiring. Special attention was given to how to combine various points to give patients the boost needed to overcome various problems. For example, Conception Vessel (*Ren*) 6, Sea of *Qi*, and Conception Vessel (*Ren*) 8, Spirit Deficiency, can give a needed boost to body, mind and spirit in a patient.

Dirk Hein, former chair of the Acupuncture Advisory Committee for Washington State, and founder and director of the [Wu Hsing Tao School](#) in Seattle provided a look at methods the practitioner can use "to become an instrument of the medicine." His focus was on leaving one's ego and agenda at the door in order to build a professional clinical relationship with the patient that will help one learn precisely what it is the patient needs.

There were, of course, technical clinical skill-building sessions. Niki Bilton, Academic Dean of [Onigara College of Acupuncture and Moxibustion](#), made clear the conference theme during her presentation on the four examination skills and 10 classical questions. In addition to discussing the relationship between the Classical Five-Element system as taught by [JR Worsley](#) and modern and classical texts, she underscored the ability of the practitioner to treat the patient holistically. She said, "We are able to treat any physical condition, any mental distress and any spiritual crisis, if we are able to see the whole picture."

Although Five-Element acupuncture is not a symptom-based medicine, there was a great deal of attention paid to the practitioner's ability to understand the patient's symptoms and pathologies and how those relate to health. David Goodell gave a rousing session on nonverbal communication and building rapport with patients. Dividing participants into small practice groups, he helped

practitioners understand how best to approach patients, and read and respond to nonverbal cues. While Neil Gumenick underscored that one creates treatment plans based on a patient's causative factor, this does not preclude addressing a patient's pathology or symptoms. Sometimes it's knowing what the patient needs goes beyond addressing a simple list of complaints. The practitioner understands what the patient requires through conversation, nonverbal communication, diagnosis of the causative factor, clearing energetic blocks and imbalances, and rapport with the patient.

There was a wonderful feeling of unity and open-heartedness in the room. A practitioner commented that she was impressed by the gratitude for JR Worsley and his teachings, and that the longer clinicians had been in practice, the more humble they seemed. The weekend was fun, inspiring and informative. Check [www.5elements.com](http://www.5elements.com) early in 2010 for next year's symposium details.

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