

# Notes From Aculand

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## To your physical, mental, and spiritual health!

by Karen Johnson L.Ac., R.N.

### A Brief History of Acupuncture

Acupuncture is more than 5,000 years old, and it was not just practiced in China. The Egyptians talked about vessels that resembled the 12 meridians in 1550 B.C. in their medical treatises called the *Papyrus Ebera*. The South African Bantu tribesman scratched parts of their bodies to cure disease. The Arabs cauterized their ears with hot metal probes. The Eskimos used sharp stones for simple acupuncture. Brazilian cannibals shot tiny arrows with blow pipes to diseased parts of their bodies to cure disease.

Primitive sharp stones and bamboo were later replaced by fish bones, bamboo clips, and various shapes of needles made of metal. Today, very fine hair-thin needles are used. With advanced technology and precision instruments, these needles are placed at specific points of the body with little or no discomfort. When stones and arrows were the only tools of war, warriors wounded in war found that some diseases that affected them for many years were now gone.

The first book of acupuncture was the *NEI CHING SU WEN* written about 200 B.C. It had two parts: the *SU WEN* and *LING SHU*. Those therapies described Chinese medical thinking, which was geared to restore disturbed balances and harmonies of the body. The *SHI CHI* was written about a doctor, Pien Chiieh, who lived around 500 B.C. In it, the doctor describes pulse diagnosis. The "Nei Ching" is a classic called *The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine*. It was a collection of books on medicine



and medical writings. In it, the emperor talks with Qi Bo, a court doctor, about the relationship between man and nature, the elements, causes and cures for disease, the importance of yin yang balance, acupuncture, and moxibustion.

Also during the third century B.C., two famous medical books were



written by Chang Chi: *Various Kinds Of Fevers (SHANG HAN LUN)* and a short version of the *Golden Shrine (Chin Kui Yao Lieh)*. Around 700 A.D., the first medical school was set up in Salerno, and 300 doctors were instructed in acupuncture and massage.

Acupuncture flourished in China until 1932, when Chang Khi Chek took power. He brought western medicine to China, and acupuncture was banned in the cities. When Mao Tse Tung took over in 1945 and Chang escaped to the island of Formosa (now Taiwan), the doors to China were closed to the west, and acupuncture again was restored as the method of healing in a country devoid of antibiotics and western medical thinking.

In 1972, President Nixon opened the doors to China. A *New York Times* journalist, James Reston was in China at the time and had an emergency appendectomy with acupuncture used as the anesthetic.

This brought great notoriety to acupuncture and renewed interest in this form of treatment. Seeing brain surgery performed with acupuncture drew big headlines.

Europe was introduced to

acupuncture from French Indochina (now Vietnam). The French sparked interest with the works of Dr. Nogier, who from 1951 to 1996, produced a great deal of research on ear acupuncture which today is used

as the basis of treatment for addictions, and compliments oriental body acupuncture. This pioneer died in 1996, and his works are now being published for the first time in English.

## ACUPUNCTURE TODAY...

China and Taiwan today play a leading role in developing traditional Chinese medicine. In these countries, there are about 232,000 traditional Chinese medical doctors and 50 institutes training 30,000 traditional Chinese medical doctors annually. Korea has developed very effective hand



acupuncture which compliments other acupuncture modalities. Since the end of the Cold War, Russia has released research that has contributed to sonic and reflexology treatments today.

Japan has junior colleges of acupuncture. There are 8500 Japanese doctors in the Oriental Medical Association developing methodology in acupuncture to compliment western medicine.

In America there are about 8000 acupuncturists, 16 acupuncture schools, and 2 medical schools teaching acupuncture. UCLA medical school has been teaching acupuncture to physicians under the leadership of Dr. Joseph Helms. In some states, only doctors can perform acupuncture. In most states, acupuncture is performed by licensed acupuncturists and other

licensed health care professionals.

The American Academy Of Medical Acupuncture (AAMA), based in California, has a membership of nearly 1000 physicians all over the country. All physicians who are members must have been previously accredited by formal training and certification. About 25% of these physicians work in pain centers in the U.S.

In Europe, oriental medical research is active and quite advanced. Spain has an acupuncture school called Golden Clover. Germany, Austria, and Italy all have strong and active acupuncture centers. England has no organized acupuncture medical activity, but there is a British Medical Acupuncture society which is quite active. France has pioneered ear acupuncture through its famous center in Lyons under the leadership of the late Dr. Nogier.

As you see, acupuncture is practiced worldwide. In the United States, more and more practitioners are now developing knowledge and new skills in acupuncture. Many are incorporating all the modalities from the various countries, using hand, ear, Chinese, Japanese, and scalp acupuncture along with Russian reflexology, and adapting these techniques to modern times with use of modern technology to produce what is now called American Acupuncture.

In 1996 in America, needles were removed from the "investigative" category to "accepted medical instruments". Being investigative

allowed insurance companies to deny payment for medical acupuncture treatment. There is a bill before Congress with 12 sponsors to allow Medicare to pay for acupuncture treatments. The National Institutes of Health has formed a department of Alternative Health care to provide needed research funding in alternative avenues of medical care.

Times are changing. American Acupuncture is alive and well!

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***And here are some responses from modern patients to the question, "What has surprised you the most about acupuncture?"***

*That I'm coming to it! MH*

*The ability to regulate me, take the edge off, keep me calmer... that's important. JC*

*That it seems to work! BW*

*That the needles don't stay in... sometimes they come right out! KW*

*How few needles you use...I thought there would be needles stuck all over the place. BL*

*That you can feel the energy go right to the place it's needed... like something is being mobilized to do the right job, all with a pin prick! VS*

*That you can tell the difference after you have had a treatment, even during the treatment you can tell something is happening. You get immediate results. KW*

*The immediate results. RS*