

REPORT – My Visit to China – by Sue Hinds

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The visit to China was an opportunity to experience the integration of western and eastern medicine in practice.

There was no problem with philosophy

I was privileged to study with a practitioner of experience who had originally had 15 years of undergraduate training in equal amounts of both western and traditional Chinese herbal medicine and acupuncture.



Dr Gu headed the department of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) at the second affiliated hospital of TCM on the east side of down town NANJING while across the road was the modern and very western other wing. He was one of several supervisors of international students for the Nanjing University of TCM who sponsored the visit of 14 post graduate acupuncture students from NZ. Under the guidance of Dr Joan Campbell we travellers completed the total emersion part of our training.

Dr Gu saw inpatients on the wards and followed up at the outpatient clinic where clients lined the hall each morning from 8am waiting patiently with family, bicycle and food for their turn -no appointment necessary. They were seamlessly transferred by these relatives from one side of the street to the other according to condition, investigation and difficulty.

In the "random chaos" of the huge open acupuncture treatment room small miracles occurred regularly. We saw the lame get up and walk, hypertonic stroke hands open, insomniacs sleep and the emaciated eat.

Dr Gu would be as likely to order blood tests and a CT scan (for \$30US the results would be in his hand within half an hour) treat appropriately from TCM diagnosis - acupuncture and traditional Chinese herbs (boiled up in the hospital pharmacy) as to take blood pressure and prescribe western drugs.

The discussion of conditions and sociality of the experience was as much part of the treatment as the needles and cupping

We saw extensive use of cupping for the first 10-15mins of acupuncture to intensify the acupuncture effect. The heat retained with the glass or bamboo cups used in conjunction with electric lamps was seen as tonifying. Treatments were usually given daily for 10 days and needles retained for 30-40 minutes each session. There would be a two week break and further sessions prescribed if necessary.

The results were visible especially to those of us who could not speak one word of the 26 something local Chinese dialects.

Improvements in function, range, ease of movement and swelling were noted without other interventions such as exercise programs, splinting or manual therapy while patients continued with their daily routines of life

Dr Gu, when questioned on details and rationale of point selection said:

- TCM diagnosis according to differentiation (of patterns) first, local then distal points were selected.

-Treatment was invariably symmetrical even for one sided affects.

- It comes from experience.

He was also heard to say that he **'treated from the heart'**.

To try and summarise our experience:

We were exquisitely grilled on our needling technique (-no introducers).

We practiced solicitously aching for the praise of a good word.

We learnt simple things well - from hands on experience, humbly and sometimes with difficulty, but always delightfully.



"random chaos"