

ACUPUNCTURE

FROM A BIBLICAL
PERSPECTIVE

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ACUPUNCTURE FOR THE CHRISTIAN MARTIAL ARTIST

By John R. Himes

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Introduction

Recently our family went on a wonderful outing. Our son Paul is home from Bible College for the summer, and my wife wanted us to do something special, so she saved her yen from teaching English and we were on our way. We signed up with “HAT” (Hokkaido Adventure Tour) for a three-hour rafting trip on the Sorachi Kawa (Sky Land River). After staying at Tomamu Tower Resort for half price (we know a member), we got up early in the morning and met our guide and fellow rafters. What a great time we had in the cold, clear, mountain waters of the unspoiled Sorachi River.

After the outing, we headed back on the two and one half hour trip home, on the way passing through the picturesque town of Furano. We stopped for a break at the “Merchandise Center” where we enjoyed a cool soda and a relaxing break. (Ever had a melon soda?) While in the souvenir shop, I happened on a little treasure for just a few hundred yen. It was a small stick slightly larger than your index finger with a rounded point, with a little green chart for the “tsubo” (acupuncture points) on the feet included.

We arrived home that night tired but happy. We had conquered the rapids of Sorachi River, jumped into the water from a 20-foot cliff, seen more of the great natural beauty of our island of Hokkaido, Japan, and oh yes, stopped at our favorite “soft ice cream” place in the scenic town of Biei. I love their “espresso float!”

As we relaxed at home I got out my little stick and chart and went to work on my wife's foot. Sure enough, the “tiredness point” was a little tender and sore, so I worked it over with my stick. According to famed British acupuncturist Felix Mann, “In all diseases, whether physical or mental, there are tender areas at certain points on the surface of the body, which disappear when the illness is cured. These are the so-called acupuncture points.” (Acupuncture, the Chinese Art of Healing and How it Works Scientifically, revised edition, by Felix Mann. New York: Vintage Books, 1971, p. 27.) I'm not sure I cured anything that day, but my wife loved it!

The truth is that Asia is saturated with the ancient Chinese art of acupuncture. There are many acupuncture clinics in our town. Many stores have products based on acupuncture, such as the little stick massager already mentioned. You can also buy slippers with bumps based on the points of acupuncture which massage your feet as you walked.

Here is where our questions as Christian martial artists begin. America and the rest of the western nations are now full of Asian ideas and practices: yoga, chi kung (qi gong-breath or “chi” training), Tai Chi Ch'uan, meditation, etc. Is acupuncture a New Age type of practice to be avoided, or is it a genuine healing art that we may take advantage of or even learn to use? Is it based on mistaken philosophies and theories or is it scientifically provable? Can a martial artist use the knowledge of acupuncture to enhance his martial art and self-defense skills? We will try to answer these questions.

Definition

According to the Encarta 98 digital encyclopedia, acupuncture is an “ancient Chinese medical procedure involving insertion and manipulation of needles at more than 360 points in the human body. Applied to relieve pain during surgery or in rheumatic conditions, and to treat many other illnesses, acupuncture is used today in most hospitals in China and by some private practitioners in Japan and elsewhere, including the United States.” Acupuncture, Microsoft® Encarta® 98 Encyclopedia. © 1993-1997 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.) This is the common westerner's perception of the art, but does not tell the whole story.

A much more concise definition is given by Peter Eckman, who wrote, “Acupuncture is the practice of inserting needles into the body to activate a change in its state of functioning.” (In the Footsteps of the Yellow Emperor, by Peter Eckman. San Francisco: Cypress Book Co., 1996, p. xi.) Eckman goes on to distinguish between the analgesic (pain relief) acupuncture currently common in the People's Republic of China and the “traditional acupuncture” practiced around the world as a complete system of medicine.

Felix Mann describes it more from the practical viewpoint: “Acupuncture is an ancient Chinese system of medicine in the practice of which a fine needle pierces the skin to a depth of a few millimeters and is then withdrawn. The only thing of real importance in the study of acupuncture is to know at what point to pierce the skin in relation to which disease.” (Mann, p. 1)

Even this does not tell the whole story, though. There are other healing arts that use the same principles as acupuncture but a different method. The most important of these is called in English “moxabustion.” It is actually a companion art to acupuncture and is practiced by most acupuncturists. Here in Japan when you see a sign for an acupuncturist, it almost always has two Chinese characters: the one for needle and the one for moxabustion.

As Jon Sandifer describes moxabustion, “Instead of the practitioner using a needle on the point they would apply heat close to the skin or in some cases actually on the skin at the point. Moxa itself comes from an herb (mugwort) which is commonly available in China as it is indeed in Europe.” (Acupressure, by Jon Sandifer. Rockport, MA: Element, 1997, p. 4.) Sandifer then describes the various methods of applying the heat: a small cone of the herb lighted on the point, a tube of mugwort lighted and held over the skin and a stick made of moxa which is lighted and held close to the skin.

There is also a Japanese healing art based on the principles of acupuncture called “shiatsu,” meaning literally, “finger pressure.” The English word is “acupressure.” According to one shiatsu Internet website, “The originator of Shiatsu therapy was a young boy named Tokujiro Namikoshi. He was born on November 3, 1905 on the Japanese Island of Shikoku. When Namikoshi was seven years old he and his family moved from the warm Southern climate to a more harsh one on the northern Island of Hokkaido. Once there, Namikoshi's mother began suffering from what is known today as rheumatoid arthritis in her joints. To alleviate the growing pain and in the absence of a village doctor Namikoshi began stroking and pressing the afflicted parts of her body. This reduced the mother's pain and allowed Namikoshi's hands to develop a sensitivity to the stiffness, temperature and skin condition of the body. Soon the young therapist realized the greatest healing benefit was achieved when he pressed the body 80% of the time and rubbed it 20%. In time he cured his mother's condition.’ (‘Shiatsu Academy of Tokyo,’ at www.artofshiatsu.com/history.html accessed 6/24/2001.)

Let's sum it up. Acupuncture is an ancient Chinese medical art which seeks to heal through the insertion of needles into the patient at different points on the body. These points are on lines called “meridians” which correspond to different internal organs. The points each have different effects on different illnesses. In the West as well as Asia, the art of acupuncture is highly developed, and it may take a specialist as long as three years to be properly trained.

History

According to Chinese legend, the inventor of acupuncture was Huang Ti, the “Yellow Emperor,” who is said to have reigned from 2697 to 2595 BC. He is supposed to have been a great genius who invented many things. Supposedly, he wrote a book called the Nei Ching which described how to do acupuncture, but since the book was not extant until the end of the Chou Dynasty (1100 to 250 BC), we can safely say that he was not the author of it.

Indeed, as far as can be learned, the Chinese did not have a great civilization until much after Huang Ti. For example, Chinese writing cannot be proven to exist until much after Huang Ti's time. There is, of course, archaeological evidence of civilization in China for thousands of years before Christ, but it cannot have been much of a civilization without writing. Indeed, one would think that if the Chinese had a great civilization before 1000 BC, the Bible, perhaps the most ancient and comprehensive book of history in existence, would speak of it. However, the Bible never talks about China unless it is the Sinim of Isaiah 49: 12, which says, “Behold, these will come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.” There is considerable difference among Biblical scholars here, with some saying it is China and others saying it is Aswan, in the south of Egypt.

Who, then, was Huang Ti? One scholar has speculated that the Chinese patriarchs, possibly including Huang Ti, were actually Middle Eastern historical figures. (See *The Chinese Pa Kua*, by Ong Hean- Tatt. Malaysia: Pelanduk Publications, 1991, p. 293.) This is entirely possible, since China's provable written history goes can go back no

further than its writing system, which barely goes back to the 15th century BC, when the nation of Israel already had a writing system.

Israel also had an around codified legal system given by God in around 1440 BC. At that time, Chinese writing consisted of no more than divination records on tortoise shells! Again, according to the Bible, all civilization started in the Middle East, since that was where the Garden of Eden was. (Gen. 2:10-14)

Therefore, since much of early Chinese history is very uncertain, we do not know if Huang Ti was truly the inventor of Chinese acupuncture. What can be proven about acupuncture is that it is very ancient. In China itself, "The oldest records of acupuncture (acus = needle, punctura = puncture) are to be found on bone etchings of 1600 B. C. The first book of acupuncture, which contains a wealth of detail, is the Hungdi Neiging Suwen written about 200 B. C. It is one of the earliest treatises in Chinese on any subject." (Mann, p. 1.)

The rest of Asia also has practiced acupuncture since ancient times. "Archeological relics including stone and bone needles putatively dated to 3000 B. C. were excavated in Korea in 1929 and are now in their National Museum. In 1963, Chinese archeologists discovered ground 'bian stone' needles at a Neolithic site in Inner Mongolia (Toudaowa) which they estimate to be between 4000 and 10,000 years old." (Eckman, p. 38.)

Interestingly enough, something similar to acupuncture has developed in various other cultures around the world. "Thus some Arabs will cauterize part of the ear with a red-hot poker in treating sciatica, while among the Bantus of South Mrica certain healers will scratch small circumscribed areas of the skin and then rub various herbs into them." (Mann, p. 33.) Again, some Eskimos use sharp stones in an acupuncture-like art, and mediaeval doctors in Europe often cauterized in a simple form of acupuncture. (Mann, p. 2.)

In various countries around the world, animal handlers have used sharply pointed objects to produce a reaction in their charges. In India, the elephant trainer uses a prod on dozens of predetermined points on the elephant's body to produce various responses. (Mann, pp. 32-33.) In the Bible itself the ox goad is mentioned when the Lord Jesus says to Paul in Acts 9:5, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." That the goad was common in ancient Israel can be seen in 1 Samuel 13:21 where it says, "Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulter, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads."

The truth is, some of the oldest evidence of the existence of acupuncture is not from China but from Egypt! "The papyrus Ebers of 1550 B. C. is the most important of the ancient Egyptian medical treatises. It refers to a book on the subject of vessels which could correspond to the 12 meridians of acupuncture. These vessels could not refer to the arteries, veins or nerves of the four limbs of the human body." (Mann, pp. 2-3.)

What is certain about the time in which acupuncture was invented is that it was a time of monotheism in China. “Shang (1400-1122 BC) archaeological relics and early Western Chou (1122-771 BC) documents show that the only deity worshipped was Shang- Ti, the Supreme God.” (Ong Hean-Tatt, p. 293.) This has enormous significance in discussing the Taoist theories of acupuncture, which will be discussed next.

Theory

What makes acupuncture work, if indeed it does? The usual explanation of acupuncture is generally based on the theories of Taoism, an ancient Chinese philosophy said to be invented in the 4th century B. C. and expressed most eloquently by a man named Lao Tzu who lived in the 3rd century B. C. (There is also an idolatrous religious version of Taoism.)

We will not take time to thoroughly delineate Taoism. Suffice it to say that the word “tao” means “way” so Taoism is the philosophy of the way. In the context of Taoism, this means the “way” of the universe, an amorphous force to which we must attune ourselves in order to live in peace and harmony. As Christians, we must remember that Christ is our Way, and so reject the primary concept of Taoism. Indeed, in both the Chinese and Japanese Bibles, the Chinese character used when Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life” (John 14: 6), is the same one used for the way of Taoism.

There are three complementary Taoist theories commonly used by acupuncturists to understand their art. The first is the concept of “yin and yang.” Yin and yang are said to be opposites: dark and light, male and female, etc. “The strict meanings of the terms Yin and Yang are surprisingly simple: Yin depicts the shady side and Yang the sunny side of a hill. By implication, all that is cold, dark, wet and inactive exhibits Yin qualities, while all that is ht, bright, dry and active expresses Yang qualities. In a state of health, Yin and Yang ebb and flow harmoniously and continuously keep each other and themselves in balance.” (Eckman, p. 11)

In acupuncture, the goal is often to restore the balance between yin and yang. This is not an unscientific idea. As one book points out, “In the West today, the autonomous nervous system with its two opposing-balancing forces is generally known and recognized, and it serves excellently to demonstrate the relationship between the concepts of East and West. It is for this reason that we introduce the theory of Yin and Yang.” (Wallnofer and Rottauscher, p. vii) Dr. Mike McClure has done an excellent job of discussing the yin/yang theory for Christians in his GMAU pamphlet, Yin and Yang for the Christian Martial Artist.

Secondly, there is the theory of the five elements. According to this, the universe is made up of wood, fire, earth, metal and water. Each of these elements is said to react differently to the others, and a complex relationship is said to exist. In acupuncture, this theory is used to explain how the organs of the body are related to and interact with each other. In the martial arts, the theory is most prominent in the Hsing I style of internal kung fu.

The five elements theory may be the least valid of all concepts in Taoism. Modern science, accepted in both the West and Asia, has shown us that the world is far more complex than this theory suggests. For example, the ancients had no concept of what fire was. As we know now, fire is actually a chemical reaction, the combustion of the materials being burned. While there is a relationship between fire and wood when wood burns, it is hard to imagine this being a help to the acupuncturist, who is dealing with the human body with its nervous system and other systems.

Even some of the advocates of Taoism are not too sure of the five elements theory anymore. One kung fu master wrote, "As one can see, trying to fit the five directions into the pattern of the five elements can be ... frustrating and unsatisfactory It may very well be that the masters of old did not ever intend these philosophical explanations to be taken literally." (Tai Chi Theory and Martial Power, by Yang Jwing-Ming. Jamaica Plain, Mass. YMAA Publication Center, 1986, p. 17.)

The third theory we will discuss is the theory of "ch' i" ("qi" in Pinyin Romanization, "ki" in Japanese), the same ch'i/ki known to martial artists the world over as a kind of inner power. Ch'i is said to be a substance that permeates the universe and our bodies, and is either ingested in our food or inhaled in our air. The word in Chinese normally means simply "breath," but in Taoism it is a substance necessary to both physical and mental health and energy.

In acupuncture, ch'i is said to circulate in meridians (lines) throughout the body corresponding to various internal organs. The insertion of needles in the designated points on these meridians is said to regulate the flow of ch'i, and thus heal various diseases and conditions which have occurred as the result of the disruption of the flow of ch'i, for whatever reason.

Now let's examine how the theory of ch'i came to be. To their credit, Chinese doctors were the first to discover the circulation of blood in the body. According to one source, "The Chinese doctors must have been as perplexed by the blood vessels as the ancient Greek physicians were For when they came upon them in their autopsies ..., and they cut into one of them, they must have found blood in it sometimes, but more frequently air. The wall of an artery is elastic and keeps the shape of the vessel intact, even when it is empty. Since throughout the ancient world of East and West, the pneuma-air, breath-was an incomprehensible something ..., it was only natural to assume that it was this pneuma that escaped from the dissected artery. This explains why some medical texts claim that blood emanates from certain acupuncture points, while pneuma, Ch'i, is released from others." (Chinese Folk Medicine and Acupuncture, by Heinrich Wallnofer and Anna von Rottauscher. New York: Bell Publishing Co., 1965, pp. 92-93.)

It is obvious, then, that the Taoist theory of ch'i is flawed because of early misconceptions in the research of Taoist doctors. Because of these facts, it is difficult to accept the concept that a universal energy substance called ch'i flows through the body and can be regulated by acupuncture. However, there are other substances in the body which do flow and may be affected by acupuncture. For example, endorphin, a chemical

which helps the nervous system controls our feeling of pain, has been proven to be released by acupuncture. (“Needles and Nerves,” by Catherine Dold. Discover, Sept. 1998, p. 60.)

Another substance that circulates in the body that may be affected by acupuncture is something called neuropeptides. According to a Time Magazine article by Melissa Ludtke (March 12, 1990, “Can the Mind Help Cure Disease?”), “In laboratories around the world, medical researchers are exploring the mind-body connection, separating myth from reality, intuition from fact, belief from science. Much of this work centers on the actions of neuropeptides, molecular messengers that travel through the body linking the nervous, immune and endocrine systems. In the 1970's neuropharmacologist Candace Pert at the U. S. National Institute of Mental Health found that these peptides bind to receptors on a cell, beginning a cascade of biomedical effects, including protein synthesis and cell division. 'It's like ringing a doorbell. All kinds of reactions happen inside' says Pert. 'The whole metabolism of a cell can be altered.' Because their activity fluctuates with emotional states of mind, Pert refers to these peptides as 'the biochemical units of emotion.' Exhilaration triggers neuropeptides; depression sets off others.”

So which came first, the chicken or the egg? As we have seen, acupuncture existed long before Taoism with its theories of yin and yang, the five elements and ch'i circulation. It is obvious that Taoism adapted or invented theories to explain acupuncture, which was already a successful medical treatment in ancient China. The truth is, as we have seen, that acupuncture was developed by people who believed in one true God, not the Taoist system of belief. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that modern scientific research is more and more confirming acupuncture as a valid system of treatment since the modern scientific method was originally based on Christian thinking.

There are several modern theories as to how and why acupuncture works like it does. One is the neurological theory. The speed of the effectiveness of acupuncture rules out the blood and lymphatic systems, and points to the nervous system as the mechanism through which it heals. (Mann, p. 5.) There is ongoing medical research to show how acupuncture affects the nervous system.

As we have seen, modern medical science is in the process of proving the effectiveness of acupuncture. Therefore, it is my belief that we, as Christian martial artists, should have no trepidation about acupuncture. It is one of the very few ancient systems of medicine that has lasted all the way into the 21st century! It would be a mistake to throw it out as a useless practice simply because it is ancient or Asian.

In Asia, where I live as a Baptist missionary to Japan, acupuncture lives side by side with modern western medicine. “To this day, millions of people in China and Japan are being treated by native Chinese medical methods-methods that are often less successful, but at the right times probably more successful, than ours.” (Wallnofer and Rottauscher, p. vii.) Western and Eastern medicine exists side by side in Asia, often in the same clinic!

I have received treatment for tendonitis and adhesive capsulitis (“frozen shoulder”) at a modern, Western-style clinic here in Japan. In the rehabilitation process, I was given both laser treatments and massages of my shoulder done partly with shiatsu (acupressure). When I asked my rehabilitation therapist, Mr. Kato, about his training, it turned out that he is a fully accredited acupuncturist. He was trained for three years at a school in Sapporo City, where he learned acupuncture along with shiatsu and other massage methods.

My doctor, Dr. Yamashita, believes in using what works, whatever its source. If you went to Dr. Yamashita with a broken leg, no doubt he might use strictly Western methods, or he might even recommend acupuncture for the pain. We would do well to realize with him that God has given many different tools to us for our good.

Modern medical science is showing more and more that acupuncture is an effective method of treatment. In fact, “In 1996, the U. S. Food and Drug Administration reclassified acupuncture needles and substantially equivalent devices from class III (premarket approval, investigational use) to class II (special controls), which includes medical devices for general use such as scalpels and syringes. Hundreds of randomized controlled trials on acupuncture have been published. Positive results of acupuncture were demonstrated in a variety of conditions such as renal colic, migraine, osteoarthritis, Ranaud's syndrome, stroke, and low sperm quality.” (Clinical Acupuncture Scientific Basis, ed. By Gabriel Stux and Richard Hammerschlag. Berlin: Springer, 2001, p. 69.)

Implications

Now we come to the part most interesting to the Christian martial artist. We will answer the question, what value does acupuncture have for the martial artist? There are two parts to the answer. The first part will discuss the healing implications of acupuncture and the second the fighting implications.

First of all, think of acupuncture as a healing art. Every martial artist should not only know how to hurt but something about how to heal. “Traditional Chinese medicine and the martial arts have been synonymous throughout the ages. In a bygone era, the martial art master was also a master of the healing arts. He had to be. The training of the martial artist was vigorous. It was often violent.” (“Acupuncture, Pressure Points and the Martial Artist,” by Dr. Pier Tsui-Po and Joshua D. Wilson. Inside Kung Fu, September 2000, p. 90.) (Note: traditional medicine in Japan is based on traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture and “kanpo,” which means literally the “Chinese method” of herbalism.)

To help you get a start in this area, I will add to the end of this pamphlet a translation of the chart of the acupressure points on the bottom of the feet. This is a public domain chart with no copyright, so I am happy to make it available. The points should be either massaged with the thumb for quite a length of time (at least five to ten minutes) or massaged with a dowel with a rounded end the diameter of a typical marble.

Now concerning the more deadly side of acupuncture, in the early days of the Asian martial arts in the West, only the martial arts of Japan and Korea were divulged to non-

Asians. The Chinese were very reticent about sharing their art with Americans and other westerners. My own training at Tennessee Temple College (later a university) in the early 1970's was in White Dragon Kung Fu, one of the first Chinese styles to open its doors to non-Asians.

Even in those days we heard rumors of a “death touch” and a mysterious art of attacking vital points called “dim mak” or “Tien Hsueh.” Throughout the 1970's and 1980's more and more Chinese styles were taught in America, and gradually more was learned about such matters. Even Bruce Lee had something about this in his famous book, *The Tao of Jeet Kune Do*. (Burbank, CA: Ohara Publications, 1975, pp. 40-41.) However, his information is in Chinese, unfortunately for the martial artist who is illiterate in that language.

Other than that, the first mention I know of acupuncture in a martial arts book is, surprisingly, in a jujutsu manual from about 1976: “Shinkei Atemi (nerves pressure) involves the striking of the nerve centers of the body. It utilizes the principle of Chinese acupuncture. The areas of attack are: the meridians or nerve lines, under muscles or between muscles and bones, between bones or under bones.” (Maranatha Baptist Bible College Martial Arts Training Program, Featuring Shiho Karano JuJutsu, by Max N. Andrews, Jr., n. d.)

In those early days of the 1950's through the 1970's, the common approach was to delineate targets on the body corresponding to vital organs or joints. This approach was often taught through charts which could be purchased from martial arts supply companies, though occasionally a book would include such a chart. This was the approach of the Korean and Japanese martial arts. (For an early example of this see *Manual of Judo* by E. I. Harrison. New York: Sterling Publishing Co., 1952, p. 164. My copy is the fourth printing from 1967.) Serge Mol shows a chart of this approach from as far back as the Edo Period (1603 -1867) in Japanese history. (*Classical Fighting Arts of Japan: A Complete Guide to Koryu Jujutsu*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2001, p. 23.)

The pinnacle of this approach was reached with a magnificent book called *The Medical Implications of Karate Blows*, by Brian Adams (New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1969.), a kenpo black belt. A more recent example of the approach, one still in print, is *Dragons Touch*, by Hei Long. (Boulder, Colorado: Paladin Press, 1983. This is ostensibly a book on kung fu, but the approach seems more Japanese.)

Chris Casey described this historical development: “The dark subject of Tien-Hsueh (Chinese for death or lethal hitting) enjoyed popularity wherever Asian Martial Arts were practiced. Initially, 'death blows' were taught by lecturing the student on the location of critical nerve centers, e. g., solar plexus, temple, etc. combined with hand conditioning, e. g., brick and board breaking. With the publicity of acupuncture, nerve centers became more precisely depicted. Tien-Hsueh advocates believed that they could memorize the vital points and hit them as the openings during fighting became available. Some of the enthusiasm diminished as putative Tien-Hsueh exponents tried to decide which of the 365 nerve centers best served their aims. Publicly, this is about where we are today.” (The

Boxing, by Chris Casey. Fort Lauderdale, FL: Chinese Boxing Institute International, 1998, p. 97.)

The application of acupuncture to the martial arts is an excellent development from the point of view of a Christian martial artist seeking a safe and humane method of self-defense. There are of course times when self-defense should be all or nothing, when killing a gun- or knife-wielding opponent is necessary to save your own life or that of a loved one. Those times are the exceptions, though, and for most self-defense needs a good knowledge of nerve strikes and holds should suffice.

Let me say here in passing that I do not believe in the so-called “death touch,” in which a kung fu master could simply touch an acupuncture point and kill his opponent, perhaps immediately or perhaps with a delayed effect. This does not fit with current knowledge of acupuncture. As one acupuncture expert has said, “The small prick of an acupuncture needle can cure some of the severest diseases, and yet is normally harmless if the wrong treatment is effected, as the threshold of response of the healthy organ is beyond the stimulus of a mere needle prick” (Mann, p. 25.)

It may be that uneducated people saw a martial arts master strike his opponent in a vital organ with an amazingly fast strike and cause internal bleeding, resulting in a delayed death. It is my guess that this is how the legend of the “death touch” began. However, that is a far cry from a simple touch on an acupuncture point that results in death.

Application

In this section I would like to get the reader started in training for a genuine knowledge of vital point striking and grabbing. In one of Gary Larson's “Far Side” cartoons, two primitive men are looking at a dead mammoth with one small arrow in it. One says to the other, “We should write that spot down!” (“The Far Side Gallery” 2001 desk calendar; Kansas City: Andrews McMeal, June 14 Publishing.) Obviously, this should also be our task as martial artists!

The following techniques will be from my own knowledge and research, though I have consulted some excellent books. In particular, the following are good resources for further research: Shaolin Chin Na, by Yang Jwing-Ming (Unique Publications, 1982.); The Boxing, by Chris Casey. (Fort Lauderdale, FL: Chinese Boxing Institute International, 1998. Note: I do not recommend Casey's very strange Asian philosophy presented in this book.); Wing Chun Kung Fu, A Complete Guide; Fighting and Grappling, by Dr. Joseph Wayne Smith. (Vermont and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1992.)

Let's look at the tools needed for vital point attacks. We will keep it simple. First of all, we will use for our striking of the vital points the “single-headed dragon” fist. In this fist, the second knuckle of the second finger is extended from a normal fist, and supported by the pressure of the thumb on the outside of the first finger. This knuckle is for pinpoint striking. (See Plate One.) Train your “single-headed dragon” by carefully striking a pad or a heavy bag. Accuracy is important, so you may want to make yourself a target for

practice. Patience is also extremely important, so plan to train for months or years, not days.

In our grasping of vital points, the thumb will be the tool. You will grip the muscle or skin in the area of the vital point with the hand, placing the thumb squarely on the vital point and squeezing. I suggest you train your grip with the spring grips designed for the hand muscles. Also, two traditional Chinese training methods are to toss objects in the air (a brick, a jar, etc.) and catch them, or twist a stick in opposite directions with your hands.

The vital points listed here are from the system presented in Acupressure, by Jon Sandifer. (Rockport, MA: Element, 1997.) I will not be including attacks that could cause serious damage, but only a few which cause pain and/or temporary paralysis. For this reason I will only name one vital point on the head.

Here, then, are a few techniques to get you started. I will name the acupuncture point and then describe the technique.

Small Intestine # 19. Strike or grasp the hollow place in front of the ear lobe, in between the ear and the jawbone. This will cause pain. Any place from there to the chin underneath the jawbone is also vulnerable.

Lung #5. This one is in the bend of the elbow, toward the outside of the arm. Grasp this point to cause some pain and control the opponent's arm.

Large Intestine #4. This point is where the bones of the index finger and thumb come together. Grasping your opponent's hand, place your thumb in the hollow place at this point, and you should be able to control his hand.

Small Intestine #8. This is a nerve point on the inside of the bend in the elbow. There is a slightly hollow place there next to the edge of the arm which you should be able to find with experimentation. This can be attacked by grasping with the thumb to cause pain and to control your opponent.

Liver #9. This point is on the inside of the thigh, about a third of the way up from the knee. There is a nerve complex in this area of the leg. You can cause temporary paralysis by kicking here with the toe of your shoe or by striking it strongly if you are in a down position.

Heart Governor # 1. This point is between the fourth and fifth ribs, about an inch out from the nipple. Striking it with the single-headed dragon fist can cause considerable pain. A strong strike with a full fist may cause much greater damage, so be careful here.

Triple Heater #4. This is in the hollow between the bones on the back of the hand. Any striking attack on this area of the hand can cause enough pain to release your opponent's grip.

Conclusion

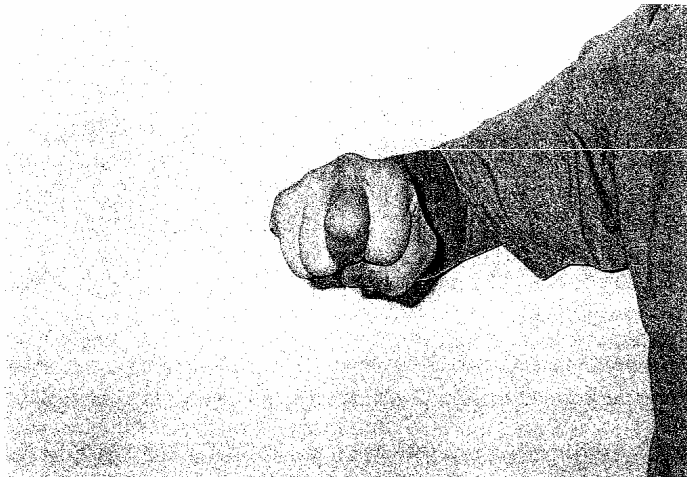
Is there a reason to avoid acupuncture? I asked my good friend “Uncle Miya” Miyakawa, a retired English teacher, if he thought acupuncture worked. He certainly did, but he wasn't going to try it. Why? He didn't like needles! Though actually the needles are smaller in diameter than those used for injections, and their insertion relatively painless, you may be like Uncle Miya. However, as has been seen, acupuncture has many good points. (Pun intended!)

Acupuncture is definitely not a miracle method to be used in place of modern medicine, but it can be used for much good. It has been proven to be an analgesic (pain relief) method effective on most people, and can evidently also cure some diseases. For the Christian martial artist it can provide knowledge for an effective, yet safe, means of self-defense in minor cases by attacking the nerves. Advanced knowledge (not given here) of nerves and pressure points can even cause severe damage to an opponent bent on mortal harm. In acupuncture, the “Lord of Heaven,” Who the ancient Chinese called Shang Ti, has given us a gift for our health and protection.

PLATE ONE

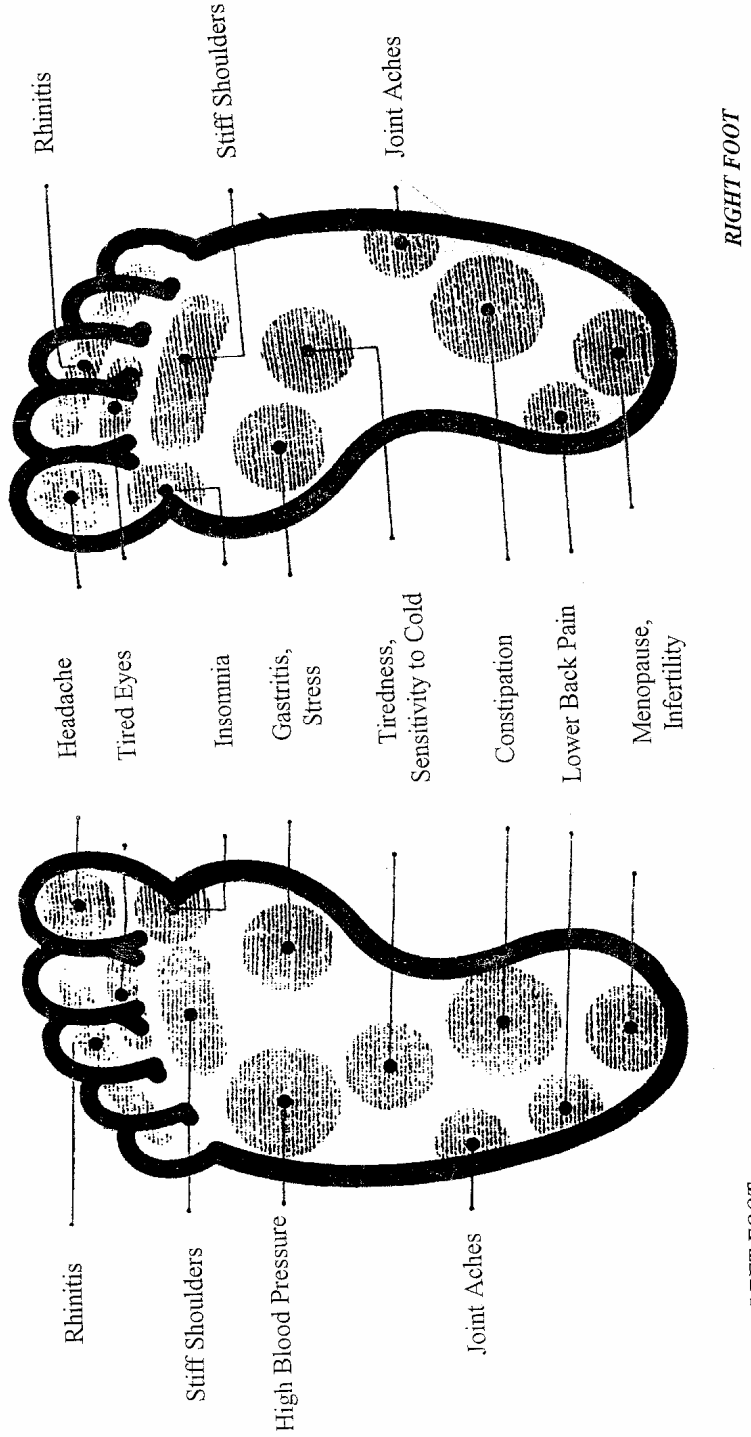


ACUPRESSURE DOWEL



SINGLE-HEADED DRAGON FIST

PLATE TWO



ACUPRESSURE CHART FOR THE FOOT