



# Theories and Clinical Practices of Historical Schools of Acupuncture and Moxibustion

Editor-in-chief: **Gao Xi-yan**

Translator-in-chief: **Yang Zong-bao & Wu Xiang**

English edited by **Pär Rufus Scott,**

**Naveen Prabakaran Christopher  
& Jing Meng**

Reviewed by **Wei Jia**

各家  
針灸學說



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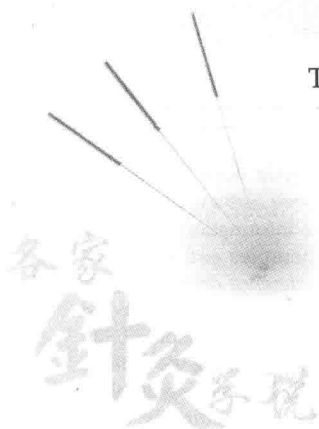
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# Theories and Clinical Practices of Historical Schools of Acupuncture and Moxibustion

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# Forward

It is my great pleasure to recommend the academic works *Theories and Clinical Practices of Historical Schools of Acupuncture and Moxibustion* to you. Acupuncture and moxibustion has been a Chinese medical heritage from ancient times. This academic work systematically summarizes the academic thoughts and clinical experiences of various masters of classical times in China from various dynasties.

This comprehensive textbook provide valuable knowledge of the life work of historical Chinese doctors whom have made remarkable contribution to the medicine such as Hua Tuo, Qi Bo, Huang Di, Zhang Zhong-jing and many more masters that have shaped Chinese medicine altogether. British great physicist Sir Isaac Newton once said, "If I have seen farther than other men, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants." As this scholar, practitioners today can learn from the great contributions of these previous masters.

This collection of precious experience also includes Chinese medical doctrines and schools of thoughts such as various needling and moxibustion techniques, applications of various masters, varieties on point locations and applications as well as the differences of using these techniques in different parts of China. As practitioners facing questions of today's diseases and disorders, we can resource ourselves in the experience and wisdom from the ancient masters. We must remember that they have shaped our medicine and without these masters, Chinese medicine would not be what it is today.

On the whole, the book focuses on comprehensive inheritance, and the ultimate goal of studying the academic works is to enhance efficacy and promote academic development and innovation.

Sincerely yours,

**Li Zhao-guo**

Professor and Dean of School of Foreign Languages  
Shanghai Normal University, Shanghai, China  
President of the Specialty Committee of Translation, World Federation  
of Chinese Medicine Societies, China.

May 2016

# Forward

I am very happy to write this letter for the new book *Theories and Clinical Practices of Historical Schools of Acupuncture and Moxibustion*.

As an acupuncturist as well as a professor, the editor-in-chief of this book, Prof. Gao has gathered extensive experience in acupuncture both at home and abroad but he has studied intensively various other theories of acupuncture, alleviating the pain of thousands of patients and teaching countless students. This book clearly illustrates his profound understanding of the principles and mechanisms of acupuncture.

As the preface mentions, without a solid grounding in fundamental theories, a practitioner's treatment can not be effective. In addition, this book provides a complete historical development of acupuncture theories that practitioners, both new and experienced, need to know.

The authors outline various schools of acupuncture theory of many famous acupuncturists in different periods and their clinical features, which comprehensively inherit the legacy of acupuncture masters in China, showing that there is more than just abundant acupuncture practice in China, but also splendid theories. This book broadens our vision and research fields, helping us realize that acupuncture theories and practice have a long history and remain a treasure needed to be explored. This book can serve as a guidance to conduct study of acupuncture theories and will lay a solid foundation for further teaching, research and clinical study, and can also help enrich clinical techniques and improve clinical curative effect. Translated in easy-to-understand English, this thorough and accessible book is essential reading for international students of traditional Chinese medicine, and will also be a useful basic reference for TCM practitioners.

**Prof. & Dr. Shan Bao-zhi**

Vice President and Secretary General of the Specialty Committee of Translation,  
World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies, China.

May 2016

# Preface

This book intends to summarize the academic thoughts of historical acupuncture schools and well-known physicians. This work, which can be used as a textbook for acupuncture students, represents the inheritance of our nation's medical legacy and serves to keep pace with the development of acupuncture.

Great importance is attached to inheritance in this book, which aims at developing and which is also the basis of development. Nothing can be accomplished at one stroke. It is said that people are able to understand more because they stand on the shoulders of giants, meaning that receiving and understanding from the works of our ancestors is important. The giants of the field of acupuncture are the acupuncturists from throughout the ages. Thus this book aims to demonstrate the theories and skills of many ancient acupuncturists so that readers can study them, and use their experiences as a guide, creating a living root in our history and yet always being at the forefront of science.

This work consists of two parts, the first of which focuses on ancient acupuncture schools, namely the Acupoint School, School of Needling Methods, School of Bloodletting by Pricking Collateral Vessels, School of Preference for Moxibustion, School of Preference for Acupuncture, School of Making Bold to All Heading on Acupuncture, Moxibustion and Medicinal. The second part consists of the theories and achievements of 49 famous doctors, from Zhang Zhong-jing in Western Han Dynasty to Cheng Dan-an of Modern Times.

The contents of this text, including the clinical experiences of each doctor and their individual thoughts on diagnosis and treatment, are specifically designed for the clinical enrichment of practitioners. The doctors mentioned from early historical periods in this book are experts in various branches of Traditional Chinese Medicine, such as Chao Yuan-fang, or Zhang Jing-yue, who were renowned herbalists as well as acupuncturists. The more modern doctors mentioned are usually only acupuncturists; for instance Lu Shou-yan, or Sun Hui-qing. The difference lies in too much specialization of subjects in recent



years.

There are also some controversial theories, such as Zhang Zhong-jing's theory of "Erroneous Use of Warming Therapy" and "Fire Deterioration", which are not excluded as heresies or sectarianism. More controversial still is the doctrine of Zhu Dan-xi, that acupuncture only has the effect of reducing and cannot supplement. All of these statements, although absurd by today's standard, are also important theoretical turning points, and should be included just how Freud's psychoanalysis is treated in modern psychology, as important stepping stones to our modern understanding. It advocates for one hundred schools of thought contending.

The purposes of compiling this book are as follows:

To learn that acupuncture and moxibustion has not only a rich clinical history, but also many theoretical models. What's more, it is important to not only address orthodox theories from the mainstream, but also to cover doctrines that deviate from orthodox, to demonstrate a full range of ideas. The goal is to address the erroneous idea that the science of acupuncture and moxibustion has no theoretical basis (apart from the more dominant models of herbal diagnosis and treatment).

The goal is thus to broaden the horizon of the reader and consequentially expand research in the field so that scholars will come to recognize that acupuncture and moxibustion has a long history that is worth examining, and there are a large number of underutilized materials. By expanding one's scope outside the realm of texts that are strictly about acupuncture, we can find sources in more general medical works or even in works from the fields of liberal arts. This text will provide readers with new paths to explore, and encourage them to read widely and thus lay the groundwork for clinical study, teaching, and scientific research which will be better grounded in the historical legacy of Chinese medicine.

Readers can familiarize themselves with general theories of each school, learn from their strengths, and borrow the clinical experiences of famous doctors so as to improve their own clinical skills.

To be inspired by studying our ancestors' attitude and way of thinking, to have a creative and active mind, to ponder on academic projects and thus to promote the development of acupuncture and moxibustion.

This book stresses the importance of inheriting, with its ultimate goal of improving curative effect and promoting development and innovation in academic research.

**Gao Xi-yan**  
**Yang Zong-bao**  
**Wu Xiang**  
August 2016

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# Part I

## The Classic Books of Acupuncture and Moxibustion

### Section 1 *The Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic* (*Huáng Dì Nèi Jīng*, 黄帝内经)

The collection of *The Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic* (*Huáng Dì Nèi Jīng*, 黄帝内经) was a work of great significance. This work mainly states the basic theories of TCM. It contains few descriptions of medicinals and prescriptions from the point of view of clinical herbal medicine, but a very rich discussion of acupuncture and moxibustion theories and techniques. As Wang Shi-shan recorded in *Questions and Answers on Acupuncture and Moxibustion* (*Zhēn Jiǔ Wèn Dui*, 针灸问对): 'The therapies in *The Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic* consist of a few decoctions, 10%-20% elixirs, 40%-50% moxibustion, with needle therapies constituting the majority'. Being the first cohesive and comprehensive text in the development of the history of acupuncture in China, *The Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic* reflected the development of acupuncture and moxibustion in early years. During the Warring States period, acupuncture and moxibustion had formed a system of theory, and developed into an important subject. It says in the *Basic Questions—Treatise on the Eight Right [Qi] and the Spirit Light* (*Sù Wèn—Bā Zhèng Shén Míng Lùn*, 素问·八正神明论): 'Knowing acupuncture is the first step to ancient medicine.'

#### 1. Achievements in Channel and Collateral Theory and Its Influence

The theory of channels and collaterals described in *The Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic* is a fairly complete system. It states the meaning of vessels, the conceptual difference between channels and collaterals, the physiological function of channels and collaterals, the source of qi and blood in channels

and collaterals, circulation pathways and their connection with *zang-fu* organs and joints. It also includes the trajectory of the three yin and three yang channels of the hand and foot, relations between disorders of channels and collaterals and human's growth and aging, observation of collaterals in the diagnosis of disease, and the principle of point selection in accordance with channels, and application of channels in exterior-interior relationship. Most of the material in this text serves as the basis for any later theoretical development for later acupuncturists.

## 2. Acupuncture Points

*The Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic* recorded the names of more than 100 frequently used acupoints, methods of acupoint location, the theory of specific points, and also gave a detailed description of the theory of five transport points, as well as *yuan*-source points, lower *he*-sea points, fifteen *luo*-connecting points, and back-*shu* points of the five *zang*-organs.

Wang Xi put forward a method of treating the diseases of five-*zang* organs by combining five transport points with front-*mu* point, and suggested selecting points according to the painful point, by pressing the painful point to obtain relief. Sun Si-miao of Tang dynasty developed this into the method of selecting *ashi* points. Wang Zhi-zhong of Song dynasty, in the clinical treatment of asthma, pressed BL 13 (*fèi shù*) to find "it's as painful as a prick"; for epilepsy, he pressed GB 20 (*fēng chí*), and so that "aching pain was felt upon pressure"; he pressed BL 23 (*shèn shù*) to cure nocturnal emission; he pressed RN 17 (*dàn zhōng*) to cure cough; to cure dysentery, he pressed BL 25 (*dà cháng shù*) till feeling severe pain; to treat vaginal discharge, pressed GB 26 (*dài mài*). After pressing treatments he then applied moxibustion or fire needling to the position, and good effects were usually obtained. Liu Wan-su in Jin dynasty was famous for the use of the five transport points, *jing*-well points, and *yuan*-source points. Li Dong-yuan attached importance to the theory of the spleen and stomach. He thought that ST 37 (*shàng jù xū*) and ST 39 (*xià jù xū*), though pertaining to the large and small intestine channel respectively as lower *he*-sea points, both belong to the foot *yangming* stomach channel, and therefore, they can be used to treat spleen-stomach weakness.



### 3. Acupuncture and Moxibustion Techniques

*Basic Questions* (*Sù Wèn*, 素问) recorded many types of needles such as: metal needle, stone needle, nine needles, and burnt needle. It also contains a variety of needling methods such as: lateral needling, central-square needling, paired needling, valley-union needling, great draining needling, collateral needling, repeated shallow needling, leopard-spot needling, transverse needling, superficial needling, short needling, contra-lateral shallow collateral needling, great needling and so on.

There are also detailed accounts of acupuncture reinforcing-reducing manipulation, arrival of qi, needling depth, needle retention, needle removal, contraindications for acupuncture and so on. Dou Han-qing, an acupuncturist in Jin-Yuan period, described the feeling of qi arrival, saying: 'The feeling should be like the ups and downs of a fish swallowing bait'. Dou added: 'In all cases of needling, no effect can be achieved without the arrival of qi'.

Collateral bloodletting was placed in a particularly important position in *The Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic*. Among 160 chapters of the book, there are more than 40 chapters related to this method, such as in the treatment of malaria, lumbago, depressive psychosis and mania. During Jin-Yuan dynasty Zhang Zi-he got his fame because of his skill in collateral bloodletting.

### 4. Therapeutics of Acupuncture and Moxibustion

*The Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic* established two general principles of point selection, namely, point selection in accordance with channels and point selection in accordance with *zang-fu* organs. It also contained three aspects: local point selection, distal point selection, and combined local and distant point selection.

## Section 2 *The Classic of Difficult Issues* (*Nàn Jīng*, 难经)

*The Classic of Difficult Issues* (*Nàn Jīng*, 难经) is a medical classic which