

Medical History in Japan

Sotetsu Ishizaka's "Shinkyu Chiyo Ichigen (3)

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[Part 3 of this series]

- Moxibustion, again according to the Chinese classics is a treatment form applied first when the sites of the body's arteries that are supposed to move have stopped moving, or else when the movement of sites that should move strongly is only very light.

The number of moxibustion cones ranges from three to seven.

It is used for all skin diseases, obstruction, entanglement, blockage, closure or weakening of the essence and spirit as well as the Eie nutritive and protective qi network vessels (luo mai) / Senraku (纖維 fine vessels, xian luo). Often marked effects can be achieved.

For these reasons it should be used for superficial pain in any location.

In China 365 points have been determined on the human body and are used as a guide for the acupuncture and moxibustion treatment.

For all ancient people these were sites at which the essence and spirit as well as the nutritive and protective qi accumulated and were given corresponding indicative names. Yet, during their handing down over the generations the number of mistakes has increased.

In today's China, simplistic concepts like "this point cures this disease" are used and both the acupuncture technique as well as the moxibustion method seem to have fallen into misuse.

Now, the sites at which essence and spirit as well as the nutritive and protective qi accumulate are also the portals through which the pathogenic qi enters. At the locations of this pathogenic qi

warmth/cold of the skin, smoothness/roughness have to be carefully observed and moxibustion performed at sites where that person suffers. It is important to understand that fomenting lotions should be used and cauterized with strong direct heat.

Red-hot needling or fire needling heals the muscles. Moxibustion is a method to heal the skin and interstices.

The size of the moxa cone should be prepared depending on whether one treats an adult, elder or child, exuberance or debilitation.

- The old names of "Banshin, Shoshin and Kashin" (all meaning fire needles) are made of iron in the shape of modern thin tongs that are baked until they are red-hot and then inserted into the ailing muscles, as a treatment for numbness and pain.

Prior to their application it must be carefully discerned whether the affected site is superficial or deep, and accordingly also pierced either superficially or deep. This technique does appear in the Chinese classics, but has declined and is no longer used.

Previously, in my days as an acupuncture instructor in Koshu, I heard a story from a certain person in the town Kajicho in Fuchu in the region of Suruga, describing how a certain blacksmith suffered for a long time from abdominal pain and tried various treatments. Yet, because it did not improve at all he started to think about suicide and thus heated tongs until they were red-hot and thrust them into the painful site. Thereupon the long-standing pain was cured immediately. That is a story showing that this act had a similar effect as the ancient "Banshin" (red-hot needling).

The above is an outline of the acupuncture and moxibustion techniques.

One phrase in the classic "Shinkei" (zhen jing) says: "Those who know the essence, can express it in one word. Those who don't know the essence loose themselves in pointless chatter."

That is why I have named it with the short title "Essentials in a word" (Chiyo Ichigen).

If this method and its techniques were practiced in the West, I am convinced that it will achieve good results.

Since the reducing technique of acupuncture has already be performed in the West for some time, acquisition of the skill for tonification with fine needles, directional reducing-reinforcing and the essentials of deficiency and excess and their performance in the various western countries will doubtlessly lead to a further development of acupuncture and moxibustion.

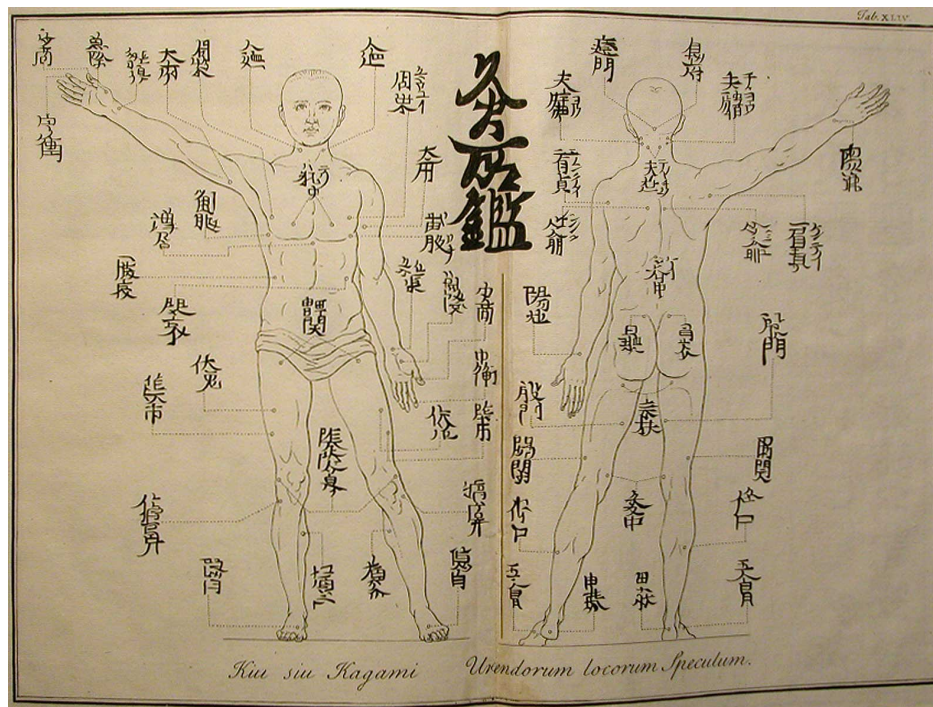
[Author's note: The above is a summary of the essentials of acupuncture and moxibustion.]

On New Year of the year Bunsei 7 (1824) I received a letter from the interpreter Sakusaburo Nakayama from the Nagasaki trade post. The following is a brief summary of its contents.

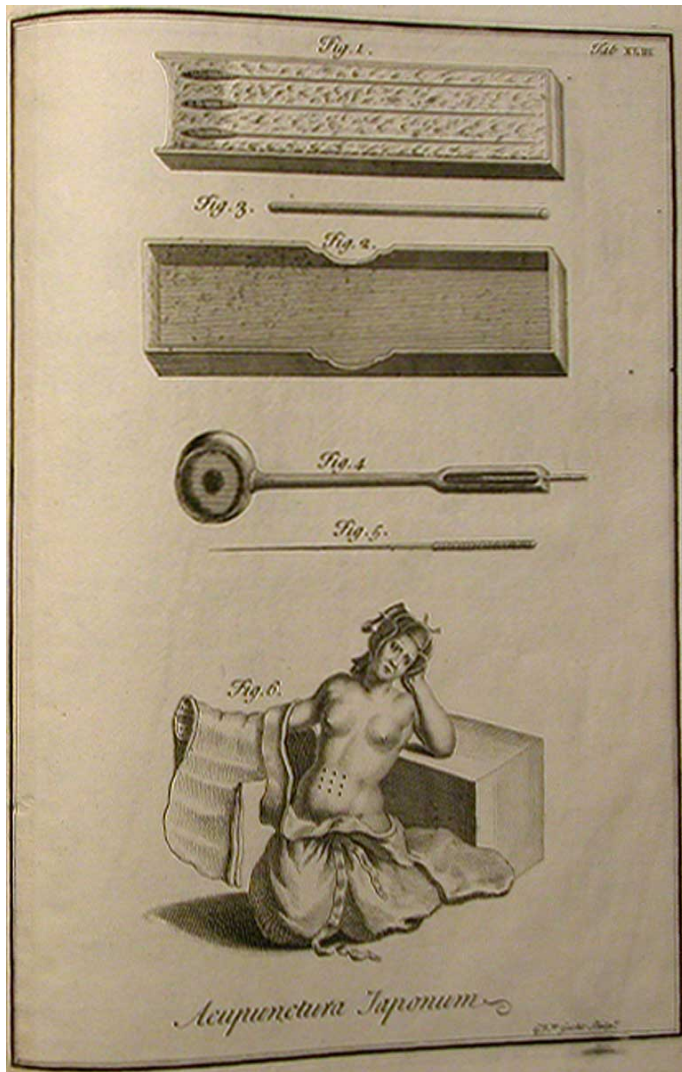
"Last year (1823) the surgeon Dr. Siebold came to Japan. He enthusiastically studies all sorts of subjects, since last autumn he started to collect medicinal plants and even started to prepare medicines and has gathered specimens I have never even seen before, corrected their indications and is a person of very high ideals. Dr. Siebold has already read a textbook about acupuncture written by Kaempfer²⁾ and therefore knows about acupuncture and moxibustion, but that particular book apparently was not very detailed, so that he aspires to see it with his own eyes and wants to know more about the technique. When I showed him a copy of "Chiyo Ichigen" he wanted to study the subject in greater detail, so that upon my explanations of the contents, he said: "This is truly the essence of acupuncture and moxibustion."

[Illustration 9] An acupuncture point chart according to Kaempfer's "Kyu Sho Kagami" (Examples of moxibustion sites)

[Illustration 10] Kaempfer "Tools for Japanese Acupuncture"



[Illustration 9]



[Illustration 10]

<http://record.museum.kyushu-u.ac.jp/>
<http://record.museum.kyushu-u.ac.jp/kaempfer/index.html>

* [Japanese acupuncture tools]

<http://record.museum.kyushu-u.ac.jp/kaempfer/eng44.html>

* [Acupoint chart according to the [Kyu Sho Kagami]

<http://record.museum.kyushu-u.ac.jp/kaempfer/eng45.html>

Dr. Siebold wanted to have this text translated into Dutch and therefore asked the student Junzo Mima in Tokushima prefecture, who has zealously devoted himself to the study of Western sciences, whether he would like to work on this manuscript for his own study. He prepared a draft and when he showed it to Dr. Siebold, he literally leaped up with joy.

Thus Siebold was able to grasp the intricacies of acupuncture and moxibustion and plans to go to Edo in spring of next year with the head of the Dejima trading post in Nagasaki. At that time he would really like to meet with master Sotetsu. He mentioned that he would like to ask some questions about still unclear passages. Please consider meeting him on that occasion.

The end."

This letter was translated by the official interpreter Sakusaburo Nakayama and presented to my father master Sotetsu. When my father Sotetsu saw the letter, he said:

"I am under the impression that this Dutch physician Dr. Siebold is a person with such a sagacious comprehensive faculty that "a word will be enough to this wise man". If that is so, I will look for an opportunity and later actually teach him acupuncture and moxibustion in detail."

2) German physician Engelbert Kaempfer (1651 – 1716). Written in Chinese characters as: "檢夫爾". During the Genroku era had an audience as a Dutch factory member with Tsuneyoshi. Wrote the book 『日本誌』 ("Nihonshi" = The History of Japan). In his book 『廻国奇観』 ("Gaikoku Kiran" = Amoenitates Exoticae) he introduced moxibustion therapy and included the illustration "Kyu Sho Kagami". Details about acupuncture therapy were unknown. Kaempfer's 『日本誌』 ("Nihonshi" = The History of Japan) is currently on display on the digital archive website of Kyushu University.

Occasionally, I, Soka, was observing master Sotetsu quietly by his side commented as follows while retreating.

"Regarding treatment techniques the Dutch physician has as a matter of course from the beginning a more detailed knowledge of anatomy, but also physiology and pathology than Kampo medicine. Unfortunately, however, he is not skilled with the filiform needles. That is a pity.

If Dr. Siebold could acquire these skills, acupuncture and moxibustion would spread widely throughout Europe. On that occasion the book "Chiyo Ichigen" will become a representative introduction to this field.

If that would happen to pass, it would become for future generations a precious testimony of the value of this single letter. That is why I write this down and pass it on.

Bunsei year 7 (1824), April 15

Signed: Soka Ishizaka³⁾

3) Husband of Sotetsu Ishizaka's daughter. The name is Soka, characters are "Koki, or Rekien" (公琦、榑園) and his artist name as well as alias is Sogen. As an heir to Sotetsu Ishizaka he served the eleventh shogun Ienari Tokugawa and the twelfth shogun Ieyoshi. He died in February of the year 3 of era Bunkyu (1863).
