

Acupuncture Therapy: Current Chinese Practice. BY LEONG T. TAN, MARGARET Y.-C. TAN, AND ILZA VEITH. Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1973. Pp. 159. \$15.00.

Chinese Acupuncture. BY WU WEI-P'ING. Translated by Phillip M. Chancellor from J. Lavier's French edition. Rustington, Sussex, England, Health Science Press, 1962. Pp. 191+. Ib 2.50. (Distributed by The British Book Centre, Elmsford, New York, \$10.00.)

Acupuncture Handbook. Second edition. BY DENIS AND JOYCE LAWSON-WOOD. Rustington, Sussex, England, Health Science Press, 1973. Pp. 141. (Distributed by The British Book Centre, Elmsford, New York, \$7.95.)

For the anesthesiologist who wishes to learn something of the methodology of acupuncture, three new books that provide a comprehensive overview have recently become available. These are essentially guides to the locations of acupuncture points and the conditions for which they are appropriate. In this respect they are sufficient for the interested physician who wishes to conduct experimentation on his own. None of the books, however, is very helpful for the non-Oriental who wants to understand the reasons behind the effectiveness of this remarkable technique.

Acupuncture was apparently used for the relief of pain in China as early as the sixteenth century B.C. The first documentation on the subject dates from the third or fourth century B.C. Classification of the eight hundred points and associated therapies has continued to the present. Acupuncture for anesthesia, though, is a very recent development, dating only from 1958. Hence, much less is known about acupuncture-anesthesia than about other uses, and these books are similarly limited in their coverage of this area.

Acupuncture Therapy is probably the most helpful for anesthetic techniques. The brief fourth chapter of this book discusses the history of acupuncture-anesthesia in China, the principles behind it, and the selection of points for inserting needles. A number of points on the face and ears used expressly for anesthesia are located in sufficient detail. The authors report a 90 per cent success rate in the 500,000 acupuncture anesthetics performed to date in China. It has been found most effective for surgical procedures of the head, neck, and chest. In China, acupuncture has become the anesthesia of choice, although it is used in conjunction with conventional anesthesia.

The authors of this book have covered a number of important topics relative to the background and uses of acupuncture while maintaining an understated confidence in the efficacy of the technique. In so doing, they have made *Acupuncture Therapy* into an informative overview of acupuncture without the extravagant claims as to cures for cancer, heart disease, and deafness often found in other literature on the subject. In addition to the use of needles and selection of points, the authors also

discuss moxibustion and electric acupuncture. The major portion of the book consists of a listing of acupuncture points by their Chinese names, with locations, indications, and technique for insertion. The book contains a limited but useful bibliography.

Chinese Acupuncture, the only one of the three books actually written by a Chinese acupuncturist, provides the most extensive discussion of the philosophical bases of acupuncture. The first chapter locates and discusses the twelve Meridians, the channels of energy which connect the external acupuncture points and the internal organs. There are a number of two-color charts at the end of the book which trace the Meridians and locate the acupuncture points.

Techniques of acupuncture are covered in the second chapter, with greater emphasis on the underlying philosophy than the previous book. Nine "fundamental rules of acupuncture" are presented, relating the various insertion methods to the desired effect. The effects of two translations, from Chinese to French and then to English, have obscured some precision, although the text is completely intelligible. There is also a lengthy discussion of moxibustion, a cauterization using the dried leaves of *Artemesia selengensis*. Most of the book is devoted to a listing of the acupuncture points and relevant indications, many of which do not correspond to those presented in *Acupuncture Therapy*. The points are cross-referenced by body part.

In a later chapter, the author describes the five elements (fire, earth, metal, water, wood) and their correspondence to the five major organs of the body (heart, spleen, lungs, kidneys, liver). The importance of this correspondence is based on the balance between Yin and Yang, which is thought to control health. An interesting sidelight is the discussion of the pulse, as determined by the Chinese method. The Chinese distinguish between left and right, superficial and deep, and among three different locations on each wrist.

Acupuncture Handbook covers essentially the same material as *Chinese Acupuncture*, in somewhat less detail. It too differs slightly from the other two books as to the proper acupuncture point and insertion technique for a given ailment, but it is unique among the three in using photographs rather than diagrams to locate the points.

Anesthesia by acupuncture is too recent a development to form any firm conclusion as to its efficacy and the proper methodology, although it will undoubtedly continue to play some part in the physician's efforts to relieve pain. Because of the uncertainty and variability associated with this technique, the anesthesiologist desiring to investigate further would do well to exhaust the limited literature on the subject. These three books provide a useful introduction.

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