

## Academic Ideas of Chinese Medicine Master HE Pu-ren

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Prof. HE Pu-ren, also known as HE Shi-niu or HE Kong-shui, was born in Shigui Village, Laishui County, Hebei Province on May 20, 1926. He was ambitious and present particularly smart and obsession with reading ever since childhood. At the age of 14, he started to learn acupuncture from NIU Ze-hua, a distinguished acupuncturist, and swore to become a compassionate doctor with fine skills. Four years later, following the advice of Dr. NIU, he began to learn YIN's Ba Gua Zhang (which literally translates into Eight Diagram Palm), and then stepped on a combined study way of medicine and martial arts, which provided him with a solid foundation for the future acupuncture study. In 1956, HE Pu-ren was distributed to Beijing Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, thus began his 30-year career as the chief physician of the Acupuncture Department. In 1990, he was nominated as one of the 500 distinguished TCM physicians by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Personnel and State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine. After that, he had tutored 8 apprentices, 3 postgraduates and hundreds of students, making great contribution to the succession of the culture of traditional Chinese medicine.

Prof. HE always paid much attention to the summary of clinical experience, and enhancing the work efficiency, Based on years of clinical experience, Prof. HE created a unique acupuncture method and extended the indications of acupuncture therapy. He then published books including *Acupuncture for Pain, Needles and Needling Technique, Moxibustion and Moxibustion Tools, Clinical Application of Acupuncture Rhymes, Clinical Application of Three Unblocking Acupuncture Methods and Illustrations of Three Unblocking Acupuncture Methods*. In 2008, Prof. HE obtained the title of "Inheritance Representative of Traditional Chinese Medicine Intangible Cultural Heritage". In 2009, he obtained the honorary title of "Traditional Chinese Medicine Masters". Of 30 masters, he is one of the two acupuncturists, demonstrating the importance of his academic ideas.

Prof. HE Pu-ren has been dedicated to the inheritance, exploration and development of acupuncture in his 70-year medical career. His academic ideas are now summarized as follows.

### 1 Sacred Profession and Humanity Spirit

The noble medical morality was recorded as "profound principle and sacred profession" in *Su*

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*Wen* (Essential Questions). Having been greatly influenced by Dr. NIU Ze-hua since he was 14 years old, HE Pu-ren was determined to become a good doctor to relieve the suffering of his patients. During the 8-year period of apprentice, he conducted physical exercise every (early) morning and helped Dr. NIU with the treatment of patients. In addition, he spent a lot of time reading medical classics including *Nei Jing* (Inner Classic), *Nan Jing* (Classic of Difficult Issues), *Zhen Jiu Jia Yi Jing* (A-B Classic of Acupuncture and Moxibustion) and other acupuncture classics in different generations. With profound traditional Chinese culture and firm basis of acupuncture knowledge, he created his

"Three Unblocking Acupuncture Methods". He strongly believes that acupuncture is deeply rooted in Chinese culture, and, therefore, exploration and study of acupuncture should always be based on traditional Chinese culture.

Human life and health deserve top priority in humanitarian ideas. Traditional Chinese culture emphasizes the ideas of "if you cannot become a good prime minister, please be an excellent doctor", "treating the patients with earnest, sincere and kind heart" and "be a good person first and be a good doctor second". By following the above principles in his lifelong career, Prof. HE Pu-ren earned the trust and admiration from both his patients and students.

Prof. HE thinks that traditional medical morality is a key part of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) culture and can, therefore, enhance the treatment effect. In his clinical practice, Prof. HE always does everything he can to help his patients no matter if they are rich or poor. He even offers material assistance to those with financial problems. Unlike most acupuncturists, Prof. HE frequently punctured Changqiang (GV 1) using a needle of 75 mm in length (this method is often considered very inconvenient despite its good effect). Also, he instructed how to treat severe acute respiratory syndromes (SARS) patients with acupuncture-moxibustion therapy during the SARS epidemic when he was nearly 80 years old.

Regarding the mental preparation prior to treatment, Prof. HE thinks it is essential to have a peaceful mind to allow smooth circulation of qi and blood during performing needling technique. As a consequence, the noble medical morality is much more than doctor-patient harmony.

## 2 Combined Medical Skill and Martial Arts

In the history of traditional Chinese acupuncture, most acupuncture masters are also good at martial arts and qigong. Both Dr. NIU Ze-hua and Prof. HE Pu-ren consider qigong and martial arts are essential for an acupuncturist to strengthen the body resistance and activate internal qi. Following the advice of Dr. NIU Ze-hua, Prof. HE Pu-ren learned YIN's Ba Gua Zhang from ZHANG Jin-chen, an apprentice of the second-generation master CAO

Zhong-sheng. Ba Gua Zhang is a type of martial arts containing qigong and neigong. Its moves are circular and primarily with the palms. Its basic principle is "transforming essence into qi, transforming qi into spirit" and "guiding qi by mind, guiding mind by heart, guiding body by qi, guiding force by body". Through the training of these movements, one can develop flexibility, speed and stamina, particularly the strength of the lower limbs. By combined the principle of Ba Gua Zhang with finger power and flexibility, Prof. HE always obtains better effects of acupuncture treatment.

As the honorary director of Beijing Martial Arts Research Society on Ba Gua Zhang, Prof. HE believes that acupuncturists have to practice exercise before studying acupuncture, practice qi to obtain good needling manipulations and therapeutic effects. It might take longer period of time for acupuncturists without learning martial arts or qigong to have qi. Regarding qi practice, Prof. HE thinks that it's necessary to regulate breathing, maintain a peaceful mind and induce qi to dantian [area covering Guanyuan (CV 4), Shimen (CV 5) and Yinjiao (CV 7)].

Finger power is an essential factor in acupuncture treatment, and it is associated with a smooth insertion and subsequent pain of the patients, whereas finger flexibility is associated with the needling manipulations. Prof. HE pays much attention to training thumb, index and middle fingers as they are especially important for an acupuncturist. An exercise method of the thumb power: standing on one side of a table, place the palmar sides of both thumbs on the edge of the table (keep the distance between the two thumbs as the same distance between the two shoulder joints) and form 45° between the transverse crease of the thumb joint and the table angle, and then press down. Practice it at anytime and anyplace. Follow the same method for index and middle fingers. An exercise method of the finger flexibility: bend the thumb and index finger naturally, contact the palmar side of the thumb with the radial aspect of the transverse crease proximal to the finger tip, and then perform twisting using even frequency of over 250 times per minute. The needle-inserting method of Prof. HE is known as flying or painless method. Coupled with his reinforcing or reducing

manipulations, Prof. HE can get good effect even for intractable conditions.

### 3 Underlying Acupuncture Principle

Medicine is explained as medical principle in *Nei Jing* (Inner Classic). As a traditional Chinese medicine master, Prof. HE considers medical principle as the highest level of traditional Chinese culture on the connotation and nature of motion in the universe. This principle also applies to acupuncture. Learning from the teacher and perception or quality of understanding are both important for an acupuncturist. Traditional Chinese medicine would be inevitably influenced by traditional Chinese culture because they shared the same origin. The importance of medical principle has already been revealed by *Nei Jing* (Inner Classic) and the clinical practice of famous doctors from different generations.

Prof. HE also thinks that needling technique is important but it alone is far from enough for an excellent acupuncturist. Other than basic knowledge on the Zang-fu organs and meridians, the classics of acupuncture including *Nei Jing* (Inner Classic), *Nan Jing* (Classic of Difficult Issues), and *Zhen Jiu Jia Yi Jing* (A-B Classic of Acupuncture and Moxibustion), together with the knowledge on traditional culture, such as Confucianism and Taoism, are essential for ideal effect of acupuncture treatment. Talent, sufficient practice and martial arts training are also required by Prof. HE for becoming a brilliant acupuncturist. *Ling Shu* (Spiritual Pivot) states that, "acupuncture is easier said than done". Since the effects of acupuncture treatment are associated with multiple factors, Prof. HE thinks the optimal effect can only be achieved by a perfect combination of meridian identification, syndrome differentiation, selection of meridians and points, combination of points and application of manipulations. "Experience and practice by heart" is the basic principle of Prof. HE's academic ideas. More importantly, it's necessary to understand the interaction between body and mind in the study and treatment of a disease. Indifference to anything

described above will cause mistakes in both diagnosis and treatment.

### 4 Conclusion

With approximately 70 years of clinical experience, profound knowledge of Confucianism and acupuncture classics, Prof. HE Pu-ren created the unique 'Three Unblocking Methods', which have been great influential in the acupuncture field.

Like other TCM physicians, Prof. HE also experienced frustration during his early clinical practice. However, through the efforts on studying ancient literature and years of practice, he made outstanding contribution to the development of Chinese acupuncture. Despite the complete theoretical system of the "Three Unblocking Methods", he still thinks it necessary to develop further.

Up to date, the "Acupuncture Treasure-Clinical Comments by HE Pu-ren" (Ming and Qing Dynasties) has been compiled in the highlight of the professor. This book contains comments on more than 150 clinical conditions by dozens of experts and involves the work of distinguished acupuncture scholars from the China Academy of Chinese Medical Science, Beijing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Beijing Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine Affiliated to Capital University of Medical Sciences. This is a monumental work consisting of acupuncture classics and also the first officially organized compilation book of literature comments. We believe that this forthcoming book will provide comprehensive information for studying the academic achievements of Ming and Qing Dynasties, and also for inspiring the current acupuncture clinical practice.

Despite his advanced age, Prof. HE still works every day. He is now engaged in providing and preparing comments on acupuncture literatures in the Qin, Han, Tang and Song dynasties, to constantly offer wise elucidation and contribution for the traditional acupuncture.

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