

Overview of Japanese acupuncture in Europe

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Abstract

After moving to Europe in 1997 the lecturer has taught courses on a number of styles and methods of Japanese acupuncture across Europe. Today Japanese acupuncture and moxibustion methods are more widely known and are regularly featured at annual congresses in several European countries. The lecturer will briefly discuss this, future prospects and implications in relation to schooling and research on acupuncture.

Introduction

I first studied acupuncture in the US starting in 1980. I studied a form of pre-TCM acupuncture with Tin Yau So and then TCM acupuncture with Ted Kaptchuk. But this did not agree with me. I then started studying Japanese acupuncture methods which I have specialised in since 1982. I was first introduced to them by Kiiiko Matsumoto, writing three books with her.ⁱ I then studied with Yoshio Manaka (1985-1989) writing his book in English.ⁱⁱ I have studied with Toyohari Meridian Therapists (Fukushima, Yanagishita, Takai and many others) continuously since 1988, and have taken additional workshops with Denmei Shudo and others. I have co-authored one book on Japanese acupuncture with Junko Ida, and authored a book on Shonishin by myself.ⁱⁱⁱ Since moving to Europe fourteen years ago I have been practising and teaching a variety of Japanese acupuncture techniques and systems. I would like to briefly report on the state of development of Japanese acupuncture in Europe.

History

Japanese acupuncture and moxibustion methods started appearing in Europe in the second half of the seventeenth century. After visiting Japan in the late 1600s Hermann Bushoff wrote a book on mogusa (moxa) in English in the mid-1670s, Willem ten Rhijne published a book on pulse diagnosis around 1680 and Engelbert Kampfer wrote a book on Japanese acupuncture around 1690. Thus Japanese acupuncture and moxibustion methods were introduced early into Europe, just as Chinese acupuncture ideas were penetrating into Europe. The influence of acupuncture in the West rose and fell in small waves [1]. Japanese acupuncture gained attention again through the work of Phillip Franz von Siebold by the mid-1800s [7]. Gradually as acupuncture

took on a life of its own in Europe after the 1930s, different competing influences brought various Chinese sources and traditions, various Japanese sources and traditions, newly evolving French, German, British and other influences and styles into the picture. By the post-war period in Europe a range of different influences and styles of acupuncture had developed [1].

Keiraku Chiryō 経絡治療, 'Meridian Therapy' first arrived in Europe in the mid-1950s when Sorei Yanagiya came to Europe to teach at the invitation of Herbert Schmidt [4]. Dr Schmidt had gone to Japan to study acupuncture in the 1950s. He studied with a number of different people at that time, among them Yoshio Manaka (with whom he authored a book [8]) and members of the Keiraku Chiryō Gakkai, including Sorei Yanagiya. Upon returning to Europe, Schmidt brought Yanagiya to teach in Europe in 1955. Then Masae Hashimoto lectured in Europe in 1958 and published a book in English [5]. Thus Keiraku Chiryō was brought to Europe and practised in some form or another starting in the mid-1950s, at the same time that TCM was being developed in China.

These early developments left their mark in the practice of acupuncture in Europe. Dr Schmidt influenced the young Jack Worsley, founder of the 'Traditional Acupuncture', English style of acupuncture [4]; while Worsley did not understand the system of Keiraku Chiryō, he assimilated aspects of it into his diagnostic approach. Worsley also studied other Japanese acupuncture methods including the system of Akabane jing point heat testing [4]. Since the Worsley system has been and continues to be popular in the UK, being the second most popular style of acupuncture there after TCM acupuncture [3], there is thus a permeation of Japanese acu-

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puncture related methods within the UK acupuncture community. There were also others that continued practising some form of Keiraku Chiryō or for whom its approaches became influential in their own styles of practice (I met several older practitioners on the continent in Europe that were familiar with the system since the 1960s). However, with the sudden opening of China to the West in 1972 after years of being closed to Western influences, Chinese acupuncture rose to dominance and these early Japanese influences became lost in the flood of Chinese acupuncture that followed [2].

Moving back to Europe

Prior to 1997 when Junko Ida and I moved to Holland, I had done a few small workshops in the UK and Holland in the early 1990s. I knew that Kiiko Matsumoto had done some teaching in Europe and that Dr Yamamoto regularly taught among physicians in Europe, especially in Germany. But I was not prepared for how little was known about Japanese acupuncture when we started teaching here. In some countries many people were quite shocked to see such treatment methods given what they had learned in their TCM acupuncture training. We have come across or heard about Japanese practitioners who emigrated to Europe from Japan, moving to places like London, Lisbon, Stuttgart, Stockholm, Munich. While these practitioners have done some teaching they are not part of the main stream of acupuncture in the places where they live and work. So while there has been a continuous Japanese acupuncture presence in Europe since the 1950s, it has been very small scale and not part of the mainstream.

In 1998 we started teaching in Holland, the UK and Germany introducing various Japanese acupuncture methods including Japanese needling with guide tube, okyu, intradermal needles, basic Meridian Therapy,

Shonishin and Yoshio Manaka's treatment system. By the end of 1999 we started running the annual one-year program on Toyohari 東洋はり with the assistance of senior teachers from Tokyo. To date we have run thirteen Toyohari programs teaching over 260 practitioners from thirteen countries, especially Holland, Germany, Switzerland, the UK, Spain and Portugal where branches of the Toyohari Association are established. I have regularly taught Japanese acupuncture methods in many locations in Europe; the largest acupuncture congress in Europe in Rothenburg, three acupuncture schools and two doctor groups in Germany, four locations in the UK, two in Holland and locations in Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Austria, Italy. Several books were available in English before we moved to Europe, since then several have been translated to German with ongoing plans to translate some of these texts to Spanish. In Germany the fact that several books were available in German made it easier to install Japanese acupuncture teaching within the undergraduate schools, notably in Munich and Berlin where I help the schools run their courses so that Japanese acupuncture methods are, once again, a part of the mainstream of acupuncture in Germany. I estimate that we have taught Shonishin to over eight hundred practitioners in Europe, a simple form of Meridian Therapy to at least four hundred practitioners, Yoshio Manaka's system of treatment to over four hundred practitioners and general needling and moxa techniques to many more. Recently a colleague at an acupuncture college in the UK is making efforts to start teaching some Japanese acupuncture within its core acupuncture degree program and as Associate Professor at the University College of Health Sciences – Campus Kristiania, Oslo, Norway I am in discussion with colleagues there to bring Japanese acupuncture into the Masters degree we are planning.

Table 1 - Introductory workshops on Keiraku Chiryō by Japanese teachers:

Year	Location	Teachers
2001	Amsterdam	Akihiro Takai, Toshio Yanagishita, Shozo Takahashi, Haruo Amano
2007	Rothenburg	Yutaka Shinoda, Michitaka Tokunaga
2010	Rothenburg	Denmei Shudo
2011	Rothenburg	Yutaka Shinoda, Michitaka Tokunaga

Table 2 - Further training workshops by Japanese teachers:

Year	Location	Teachers
	Amsterdam	Akihiro Takai (and as part of the Toyohari program)
2000	Amsterdam	Shuho Taniuchi, Koryo Nakada (and as part of the Toyohari program)
2001	Amsterdam	Akihiro Takai, Toshio Yanagishita, Shozo Takahashi, Haruo Amano (and as part of the Toyohari program)
2002	Amsterdam	Shozo Takahashi, Koryo Nakada (and as part of the Toyohari program)
2003	Amsterdam	Toshio Yanagishita, Haruhiro Kasumi (and as part of the Toyohari program)
2004	London	Michio Murakami, Atsuo Kinoshita, Hitoshi Kunisada
2005	Basel	Yutaka Shinoda, Norimitsu Takai, Michitaka Tokunaga
2006	Amsterdam	Toshio Yanagishita, Shuho Taniuchi, Fumio Sakata
2007	London	Shuho Taniuchi, Fumio Sakata, Hideki Sagawa
2008	Berlin	Michio Murakami, Haruhiro Kasumi, Atsuo Kinoshita
2009	Barcelona	Koryo Nakada, Shuho Taniuchi, Fumio Sakata, Hideki Sagawa
2010	Lucerne	Koryo Nakada, Haruhiro Kasumi, Atsuo Kinoshita,
2011	Den Haag	Michio Murakami, Akira Fukushima, Hiroki Nagaoka
2012	London	Shuho Taniuchi, Haruhiro Kasumi, Takashi Abe

In the time that we have been in Europe we have brought or helped bring a number of senior Japanese teachers from Japan to either do introductory workshops in Europe (Table one) or help us teach programs in Europe or do workshops for members of study groups here such as the Toyohari Association (Table two). The best known teacher to come teach in Europe was Denmei Shudo who he delivered his first lecture at the big TCM congress in Rothenburg, May 13, 2010, at the same time that his wife was receiving the life time achievement award from the Emperor in Japan on his behalf. Most of the other teachers that have come have had between 40-60 years of experience in practice. Besides the above teachers, others have come to Europe from Japan, but it is difficult to track these as little information is available in English, since most workshops will have been taught on the continent in for example, German.

The future of Japanese Acupuncture in Europe

There is no licensing for acupuncture in Europe, with the exception of some Swiss Kantons. Thus there are no official numbers of acupuncture practitioners in Europe. Additionally there have been few demographic studies in Europe so we have no real idea how many acupuncture practitioners there are in Europe let alone those that might be practicing Japanese acupuncture methods. However two recent surveys in the UK each found about 9-10% of respondents stating that they use Japanese acupuncture methods [3, 6].

The prospects for Japanese acupuncture are gradually improving in Europe. There is an openness to Japanese acupuncture that is very encouraging. It is now a regular feature at major acupuncture congresses in Germany (Rothenburg), the UK (British Acupuncture Council) and Scandinavia. It has also started to influence how researchers think about studies on acupuncture and influence the curriculum of acupuncture schools within Europe. I anticipate a gradual expansion of interest in Japanese methods and more research on them. One very interesting area of research is the use of moxa to treat tuberculosis first in open and now formal studies in Africa (see www.moxafrica.org). This is a truly remarkable project. Clinical and laboratory researchers are finally starting to look at the effects of the shallower and milder needling methods of Japanese acupuncture. Just as these techniques adapted well to an industrialised Japan, they will adapt well here in industrialised Europe. I hope through my role as Associate Professor at the University College in Oslo to be able to report on studies in the future.

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Endnotes

ⁱ Five Elements and Ten Stems, Extraordinary Vessels and Hara Diagnosis (all published by Paradigm Publications).

ⁱⁱ Chasing the Dragon's Tail (published by Paradigm Publications).

ⁱⁱⁱ Japanese Acupuncture (published by Paradigm Publications) and Shonishin (published by Thieme Medical Publishers).