

[IMAGE]

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## **How the Strategy of the 12 Magic Points Makes a Tiger With a Pair of Wings**

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What if an acupuncture strategy promised to balance and harmonize the *qi* in all 12 channels, treat the whole body, engage timing and seasonal factors, *and* provide a yin-yang global balance ...

all in one fell swoop? Enter Dr. Tan's 12 magic points. It could very well be the *gan cao* of acupuncture.

A middle-aged male lay comatose in the intensive care unit of a local hospital, with unstable vital signs, trauma to the right cerebral hemisphere, and a fever of 106°. The hospital staff does everything in its power for eight solid days, but the patient continues to decline. By request of the family I was granted permission to treat this man with acupuncture. Due to the complexity of the case, and because I was limited to the areas of the body where I could place needles, the 12 magic points seemed ideal. I chose to use the following five transporting points below the knees and elbows, from *jing* well to *he* sea:

Right: LI 4, SJ3 , SI 3, SP 6, Liv 4, K 3

Left: LU 11, P 9, Ht 9, ST 36, GB 34, UB 40

After just three treatments, the attending doctors and nurses were amazed to find that his fever cleared and his vital signs began to stabilize. He emerged from his comatose state, moved out of the ICU and was admitted, alert, to a hospital bed to recuperate.

One does not have to use Dr. Tan's strategy on head trauma to see its effects. It works as well with run-of-the-mill chronic and acute headaches. For migraines, I often begin using the *jing* well points on the hand opposite the headache; they kick-start the *qi* in all channels and begin to balance and harmonize unstable meridians. Most patients experience headache relief while still on my treatment table, and most eventually give up their prescription pain medications, because the treatments are so effective.

A female in her 30s presented with unremitting headaches located in the foot *yang ming* channel. Although she complained of no other physical problems, she had been unable to get pregnant after two long years of infertility drug treatments. Her husband had a good sperm count and motility.

I chose to treat her primary complaint, headache, for which she returned for regular acupuncture treatments. After just six weeks using 12 magic points, the intensity, frequency and headache recovery times diminished progressively, until she became completely headache-free. In addition, she came to me with the exciting news that she had become pregnant while under my care! The 12 points had performed their magic once again.

I sometimes use the strategy to open a blockage when I hit a wall with treatment. A 49-year old male came to me with chronic cough and asthma. He had a history of significant steroid use, which had led to a kidney deficiency by TCM diagnosis. When he didn't respond to traditional treatments, I decided to use the 12 magic points. His cough soon diminished. He was surprised to find that his decade-long problem with impotence began to dramatically improve as well.

For nearly three years, I have had the opportunity to apprentice with Dr. Richard Tan. I have watched him test and develop new acupuncture strategies using his systems of the balance method, seasonal and timing theories, concepts from the *I Ching Ba Gwa*, Master Tong points, and Chinese astrology *ba zi*. Drawing from these rich sources, he continually reinvents new acupuncture treatment strategies.

The magic is not in the points themselves, but in the advantageous combination of so many healing factors. As a big-picture treatment strategy it's useful in cases in which the problem can't be pinpointed or when the problem is everywhere - those ailments Dr. Tan calls "the modern diseases": fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue, and irritable bowel syndrome. Pain in a specific area of the body tells us where to begin, but when there is no pain or when the pain is everywhere, rather than sticking 100 needles in a patient, why not use just 12 points to heal and balance the whole person on a small hologram of the body?

The beauty of nature is that it is always changing and presenting itself anew. No two cases are ever alike. The beauty of the 12 magic points is that it offers a system that empowers the practitioner to adapt to the unique challenges each patient presents, which could be better than sticking out a prescribed point protocol that fails to engage the practitioner and sometimes fails to balance a problem. Dr. Tan likes to refer to his students as "flying tigers with a pair of wings."

Far from painting by numbers, the strategy of the 12 magic points allows acupuncturists to become artists in the realm of healing. Dr. Tan's gift to our medicine is a palette of bold color to be applied to the broad canvas of the human meridian system. Our patients become a beautiful picture of health.

*Reference*

- Tan, Richard Teh Fu, OMD. *Dr. Tan's Strategy of the Twelve Magical Points*.



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