

26 October 1972

Dear Harold:

Attached herewith are four clippings on acupuncture which might shed some light on the question as far as your problem is concerned. The first two deal with current theories as to how its anaesthetic effect is achieved, and it needs to be emphasized that this aspect is something into which Chinese doctors only recently have begun to get involved. The traditional acupuncturist, as I understand it, for some reason did not use it ~~except~~ more than incidentally for that purpose. Their emphasis tended to be more on what Gary Schoener ~~was probably~~ probably would assign to the field of suggestion. Had to do with achieving a balance of Yin and Yang forces in the patient's mind and body, with considerable attention to rapport and understanding between patient and physician, apparently comparable with that sought by the European naturopath, if you know anything about them.

I'm a poor person to ask about acupuncture. At the time I was in China no western or western-trained doctor would be caught dead even asking about it, and there was NO conversation on a serious level about it. As you probably know, it is only one field of Chinese medicine, the other being herbal treatment which is equally voluminous and includes a little understood treatment called moxibustion, which involves ^{burning} a certain herb called moxie by foreigners, near the skin. But the Chinese pharmacopoeia is an enormous one, and around 40 years ago yielded the important drug we know as ephedrin and which we use routinely. It also includes the Chinese equivalent of penicillin, known thousands of years to Chinese in the form of fermented bean curd and which they call candidly ch'ou tou-fu or stinking bean curd.

In the past year I've been stuffing clippings on acupuncture in with everything else, and the enclosed represents what I consider possibly meaningful for your purposes from about the last six months, but it meant sifting through hundreds of clippings. It is clear from this brief sampling, however, that arthritic troubles are definitely one area where acupuncture is used, though probably with ~~varying~~ varying success depending upon the patient. The variation would include not only response s among individuals but variations with one individual at differnt times and under different conditions. However, as a pain killer, it seems to work for arthritis. I doubt if it could more than incidentally help with the accumulatio n of calcium; at least I've found no reference to calcium deposits.

Last summer the California Medical Association conducted a demonstration of acupuncture by two Chinese from Vancouver, B.C. The most enthusiastic subject was the retiring head of the CMA, an elderly physician from the cow-town of Colusa who was thoroughly sold on it. He had serious arthritic problems with his back, as I recall it, and delighted in submitting to treatment before several dozen perspiring and sceptical colleagues who were jammed into the small operating theatre where the demonstrsation took place. Said afterward he felt ~~wonderful~~ wonderful, no pain which ordinarily with him was chronic and inescapable. How long he said the effect remained, I cannot recall, but my impression was that it ranged up to a week or so. Unfortunately I had to sacrifice a clipping on this event because it was on the back of something I needed, or thought I needed, more at the time. Later in the summer when the AMA was here the demonstration was more or less repeated, with similar results, but the AMA crowd was less receptive and the press coverage considerably less comprehensive...

I hesitate to say one way or another whether acupuncture holds out any promise of relief to your mother. There is no question that done by the right doctors it does have an astonishing anaesthetic (the Chinese are now saying it's rather an analgesic rather than an anaesthetic) effect. Ed Snow's wife is positive the Chinese team Chou sent to Switzerland during the last weeks of his life spared him unlimited suffering from terminal cancer. And the old doctor from Colusa is certainly convinced that as far as his arthritis is concerned, nothing else works. But I would have to caution that cases will vary, that individuals present different problems. And doctors vary.

This does not mean I am not profoundly impressed with acupuncture -- and this is not limited merely to the anaesthesia in which most western interest centers. I have taken several good looks at acupuncture charts, and the pattern of puncture points for achieving various effects is astonishingly independent of the central nervous system as we know it. My candid impression is that whoever made the original acupuncture charts had access to what might be called the original blueprints to the human body. This, is true, has staggering implications. It means that acupuncture is NOT the empirical science it is universally assumed to be, even by the Chinese. It means that acupuncture could be a vestigial science, the remnant of a once-detailed and precise body of knowledge, the only portion of which to survive the famous burning of the books during the Ch'in Dynasty (roughly about the time of Christ) was the chart itself. The Ch'ins were barbarians who invaded, conquered and ruled for less than 100 years, but during that time did their best to wipe out all vestiges of Chinese culture. They burned the classics, and that is why no one is too sure about pre-Ch'in accounts of what went on in China. But they apparently overlooked the acupuncture chart, which survived along with the memories of Chinese doctors as the only vestige of an elaborate system of medicine which already had been in use for more than 2,000 years.

So I suspect that acupuncture has enormous importance from an anthropological standpoint. No one knows where the Chinese came from. They just appeared some four or five thousand years ago with a rather full-blown civilization of which acupuncture was a part. The Chinese anomaly is of course only one of many all over the world -- what happened to the Neanderthal man, so suddenly overwhelmed by the vastly superior Cro-Magnon who resembled modern Europeans? Where did all sorts of people come from, including the Chinese, Japanese, pygmies, Finns, Basques, Magyars, all people with highly distinctive cultures and traits what cannot be explained by normal evolutionary and other known phenomena?

My personal theory, if I have not said so before, is that a great deal of colonizing from outer space has been done on this planet throughout this and many previous geological ages. All religions and other bodies of mythology refer constantly to visitations by gods in fiery chariots and similar phenomena. I suspect the gods were all from a common human stock which varied from time to time as widely as our own races do, and that they're still around. And that acupuncture may be an important clue to the story.

There are of course innumerable other clues, and I'll name just two. The Turks have an ancient map, believed to have come from the library at Alexandria in Egypt, which shows the world centered on Cairo from a perspective about 10,000 miles in space. It shows the eastern rim of the Americas and the northern shores of Antarctica. As you probably know, the Egyptians describe what appear to be flying saucers in their literature and their pyramids were designed, according to the scholars, ~~whx~~ by someone who knew the geography of the earth and of the heavens. Another item is that cave drawings have been found in the Sahara depicting what appear to be men in space helmets closely resembling those now in use. Still another, a gold Peruvian artifact which has the aerodynamics of a jet interceptor or landing craft. Still another, an ~~xxxx~~ intricately wrought gold artifact, on a chain yet, found in a coal deposit. Coal was laid down many ages before the human race as we know it is supposed to have appeared.

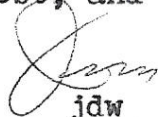
In other words, I am not in the least running down acupuncture. All I'm saying is that we don't know much about it, and I believe that the more we learn the more impressed we're going to be.

Due partly to repair of a water main which kept the mailman away and the ~~three~~ ^{three} day veterans day holiday, your letters 15 through 19 all arrived yesterday, and today 20 came in. We are immensely grateful for the Washington Post clippings. Although nearly all the stuff we have collected on the Watergate locally has been based on Post stuff recently, each of the clippings you sent has contained, without exception, something important omitted from other accounts based on it. So we're delighted to have this stuff and hope it is not too much trouble to get your wholesaler to keep you an extra copy. I enclose \$10 to compensate in a small way for your expenses in papers and postage for a few weeks. Perhaps this will die down after the election, but I doubt it. It certainly appears that Mitchell tweaked the wrong nose when he threatened the Post by saying Mrs. Graham would be "caught in a big fat wringer" if she went ahead and published the Baldwin story.

There is no time now properly to answer your letters or to copy more than a sampling of the stuff we want to send you. I want to get this off to help if possible with your acupuncture problem. And to let you know how happy we are that you took all the trouble to protect us on the Washington Post. The STM is still trying to get to the NYTimes.

If you want to use the Chinese for Watergate (水門) for something, I'm sure it's correct, as it's a literal translation. 水 means water, and 門 means gate. But I'd suggest omitting that first character 水, which is okay in the vernacular I know so poorly, but in the written language a quite different character could be required. But 水門 for Watergate is safe. 水 means water, is ~~pronounced~~ romanized shui and pronounced shway; 門 means gate, romanized men and pronounced mun to rhyme with bun. If Lil needs it worked out on graph paper, I'd be glad to try. Amaze your friends, etc.

Best, and more later,


jdw