

2,000-year-old treatment arrives here

# Acupuncture comes to Longview

By JOYCE TURNER  
Staff Writer

For 2,000 years, acupuncture has been an important part of traditional medicine in China. As early as the Stone Age, people used needles made of stone for curative purposes, and later on, needles of iron. But these days, acupuncture needles are made of steel, according to Dr. Duncan Zhang, who opened his Acupuncture Clinic in Longview last week.

For the benefit of those who associate needles with pain, Zhang said acupuncture doesn't hurt. Patients feel the needles "just a little," he said. And he can speak from experience. Zhang said he has had surgery, using only acupuncture to block the pain — not anesthesia.

Mary Zhang, his wife, said he was conscious during the surgery. "He was talking all the time. He had no pain. He could hear the sound — how do you say it — the cut, cut cut," she said, making a scissor-like movement with her fingers.

The Zhangs have been in the United States about 5½ years, and because English is still a new language to him, Zhang sometimes had difficulty explaining certain aspects of acupuncture. However, he indicated the technique developed through centuries of experience and compiled knowledge. The Chinese observed the nature of the diseases, compiled information on the various treatments and simply learned what worked, he said.

According to a brochure supplied by Zhang, traditional Chinese acupuncture is the insertion of special fine, sterile needles into definite acupuncture points to restore

the balance of the body's energy and promote healing.

Using a plastic replica of human body, Zhang pointed out the time-tested paths along the body, which has 361 "acupoints" divided into 12 channels. He explained the Chinese idea of "ying" and "yang," or positive and negative charges in the body.

"If the balance is good — no problem," he said. "Acupuncture's purpose is to make the body in balance."

Besides traditional acupuncture, Zhang also uses electro-acupuncture, where an electric current is applied to the needle. The therapeutic effect is achieved through the stimulation aided by the electric current, according to the acupuncture brochure.

Zhang was a medical doctor in China. According to a November 1983 story in *The Brown County Gazette*, Zhang received his medical degree from Western Medical College in Shanghai and started his work at the Shanghai-Hongzhen Hospital, where he stayed for 28 years. Thus far, learning English is the barrier which prevents him from taking the necessary tests to receive a license to practice medicine in this country. As an acupuncturist, Zhang is certified by the Texas Medical Board.

Mrs. Zhang also knows acupuncture. She explained, "Everyone studies acupuncture in China — even me, a medical technician."

According to one of Zhang's brochures, many different diseases can be treated by acupuncture, including sciatica, migraine, low back pain, sinusitis, bronchial asthma, tennis elbow and gastritis, to list a few. But it's also become popular as a treatment for two other problems — weight loss and cigarette smoking.

Asked how acupuncture can help an individual lose weight, Zhang stopped to select the right words. "Acupuncture helps make a new habit. Makes you feel full. You can cut down on food. Every day you cut down. So you don't like to eat too much. Fat supplies the energy. You lose weight," he said.

Concerning those who want to quit smoking, Zhang said self-motivation is important. "Acupuncture helps, but you help yourself. This is important. If somebody orders you to quit smoking — it's hard for you. If you want to quit smoking, you can," he said.

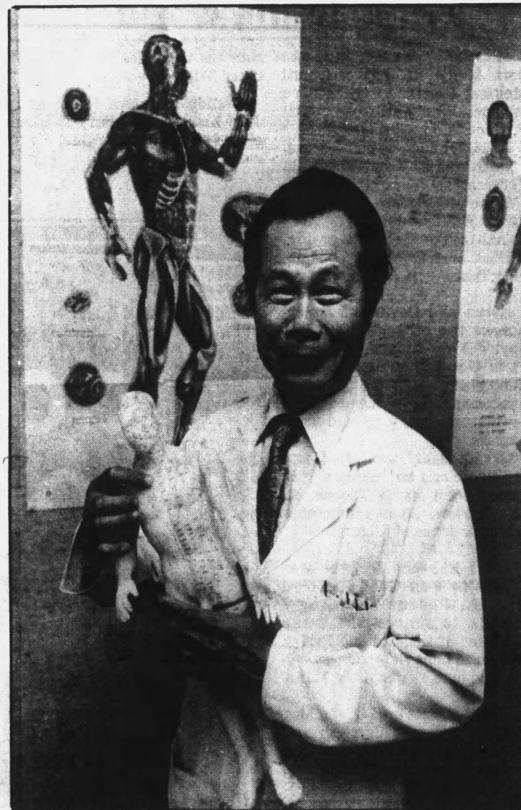
Because of the American curiosity about acupuncture, the Zhangs said they've had no problem with people finding out about their clinics. "TV usually introduces acupuncture," Mrs. Zhang said.

Since 1972, more Americans have traveled to China. Groups of doctors have visited hospitals and seen acupuncture operations, Zhang said.

"Now more people know (about acupuncture)," he said.

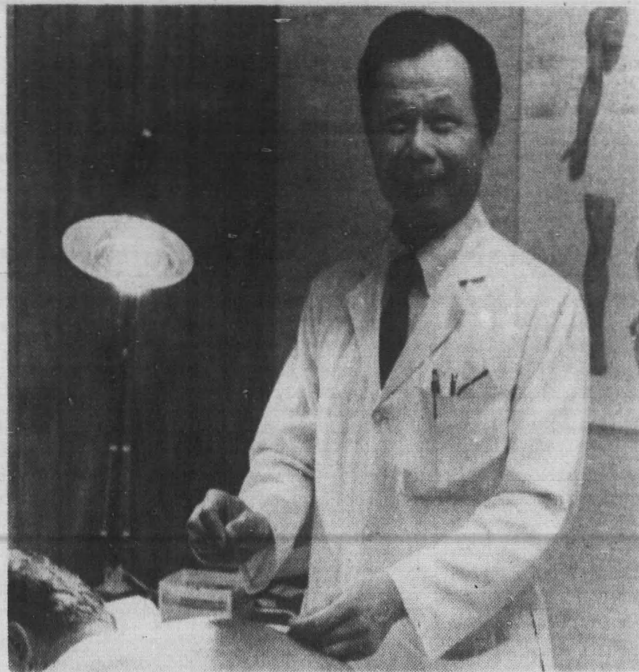
The Zhangs moved to the United States after their son attended college in Abilene and married an American girl. Their reason for coming to this country was simple:

"We're fond of freedom," Mrs. Zhang said. Her father died in prison because he was a pastor of a Christian church. "When Communists come, they don't believe in God. The reason we come here — we're fond of freedom. The United States is the best country in the world, I think. I come here because I can come to church. The American people help us so much. We appreciate it," Mrs. Zhang said.



Zhang displays acupuncture model

Staff photo by Ricky Russell



## It Works!

Don't let the name "Duncan Zhang" fool you. Dr. Duncan Zhang is Chinese, a medical Doctor in his native country, and he has brought acupuncture to East Texas.

Zhang, and his wife, Mary, who is a medical technician, have established acupuncture clinics in Tyler and at 1011 West Loop 281, Suite 12 in Longview. Acupuncture is one of the oldest medical treatments ever developed. Authorities claim that ancient Chinese doctors practiced rudimentary forms of it using stone needles, before the Great Pyramids were built.

Medical authorities still have difficulties explaining why the thin twirling needles can dull pain to the point that in the orient they are even used instead of anesthetic in surgery. But work it does. And the acupuncture needles themselves don't hurt when they're inserted.

Dr. Zhang studied at one of the finest Chinese medical schools, First Shinghi Medical College. He is a licensed physician in his native country, and will be in the United States when his English is proficient enough to pass the boards. He is working on that.

The Zhangs were able to leave China about five years ago, when they came to their son's wedding in Abilene, Texas, and chose, as Dr. Zhang says, "Freedom in America."

Now he is licensed as an Approved Acupuncturist by the Texas Medical Board. He uses acupuncture to relieve the pain of things like muscle spasms, sciatica, lumbago, and sinusitis. Dr. Zhang is also successful in using acupuncture to aid a patient in weight reduction, quitting smoking and impotence. But he stresses, the patient has to have the desire to change his life "in his head." Acupuncture just makes it a lot easier.

Acupuncture treatments are covered by most insurance policies, and Dr. Zhang uses disposable needles. "I don't even use the same needle twice on the same patient." His clinic is on the north side of the loop. The largest landmark, he notes, is the Haverty's store. Patients may call 759-8728 for an appointment.