



## THE PIONEERING SPIRIT OF AN ACUPUNCTURIST

by K Gurunathan

**T**he acceptance of acupuncture into mainstream health services in New Zealand was given a shot in the arm in this year's New Year Honours. One of the highest civic awards, Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit, was given to Tim Haiselden in recognition of his 27-year commitment, to the development of acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM).

In a telephone interview, the former president of New Zealand Register of Acupuncturists (NZRA), said he was surprised and "over the moon" when he first heard the news. "The honour is not mine but one that belongs to all of us, who have worked hard over the years, to make this a professional medical service. It's an endorsement of the acceptance of acupuncture into the mainstream," he said.

The official recognition, however, states that: "Without a doubt, his exceptional leadership and extensive voluntary work deserves special recognition." His dogged dedication saw him engage and make inroads into four challenging and critical areas: statutory regulation, ACC, NZ Qualifications Authority and international relations.

There is no doubting his passion from the very beginning. He recounts how he came to be interested in acupuncture while travelling in Asia in the early 1970s.

His travelling companion was suffering from a bout of persistent dysentery. While in Bangkok, another friend, who had been one of the first students of the Australian School of Acupuncture, suggested he ask his friend to try acupuncture. Tim located a practitioner in Bangkok's Chinatown. "The treatment was spectacular and immediate. He spoke good English. I asked him so many questions, while he was treating my friend, that he invited me to join a regular discussion group he conducted," Tim said. He ended up spending one year as an apprentice.

Back in New Zealand, Tim said he did not feel competent enough to "represent this new discipline within the New Zealand health system". He set up practice for a year and then went to England and completed a Bachelor of Acupuncture degree.



*Tim Haiselden*

In 1979, he returned to Wellington, where there was only one practising acupuncturist in the Wellington region – a New Zealand Chinese gentleman named, Claude Yee.

In those days, the medical profession was suspicious and progress in securing clients was by word of mouth. Today, Tim runs a successful clinic in Karori and the Wellington region has an estimated 50 registered acupuncturists. The growth is a testimony to Tim's dedication and the work of NZRA which was formed a year before Tim's arrival from England.

One of the benchmark achievements was in 1990 when the title "acupuncturist" was conferred to members of NZRA in legislation as Treatment Providers under ACC. Tim recounts a fascinating story of how that crack in officialdom was opened to make this happen. One of Tim's clients was a well-known economist and member of the New Zealand Planning Council, Sir Frank Holmes.

The rationale Sir Holmes put to ACC was for them to explain why ACC paid for treatment from mainstream doctors and specialists which did not work, but did not pay for acupuncture treatment which did.

In 1990, Tim was also deeply involved in international relations. He accompanied China's acknowledged "Living Treasure" Ms Jing Erbin around New Zealand hospitals and public promoting acupuncture and TCM. He established other early links with international organisations, including the special links with the Australian Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Association.

Tim was also in the forefront of securing the underpinning statutory regulations that the profession needed. He was Chair of the Statutory Regulations Committee for 15 years. The official document detailing the reasons for his New Year Honours recognition, details countless hours of submissions on consumer protection, advice to successive NZRA presidents and council members, meetings with Health Ministry officials and the veritable lobbying of politicians. In 2007, NZRA secured the approval by

the Minister of Health, for the profession of acupuncture to be included under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003. This process is ongoing, with the updated application for Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine in the hands of the Ministry.

No profession is sustainable without a framework for teaching and training. Changes to legislation enabled Tim and Adejola Olatunji to work with NZRA and NZQA to form the Acupuncture Advisory Group. Mr Olatunji is the director of New Zealand School of Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine. Following this, NZQA registered the National Diploma in Acupuncture in 1998. Tim was involved again when the first Bachelor Degree in Health Science was developed in 2008.

"The full recognition and acceptance of acupuncture into hospitals, is still some way off, but significant progress has taken place in the last 20 to 30 years. And that's encouraging," said Tim Haiselden, who will be receiving his accolade from the Governor General in the next three months. ■

## STUDENT CLINIC



NEW ZEALAND  
SCHOOL OF  
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CHINESE MEDICINE

Treatments are provided by our dedicated students and supervised by our qualified tutors. Each consultation and treatment is for an hour.

### AUCKLAND CLINIC:

#### Acupuncture treatment:

\$12, or \$60 for six treatments

#### Tuina treatment:

\$15, or \$75 for six treatments

382c Manukau Road, Epsom  
Auckland 1344, New Zealand

### WELLINGTON CLINIC:

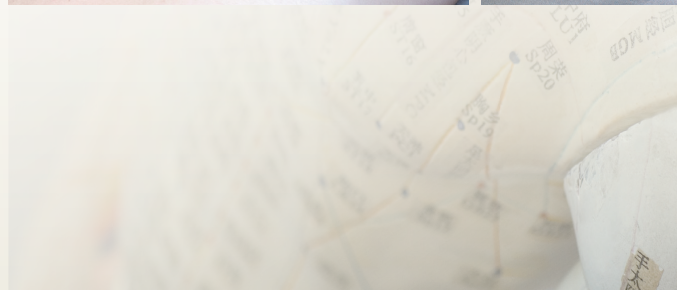
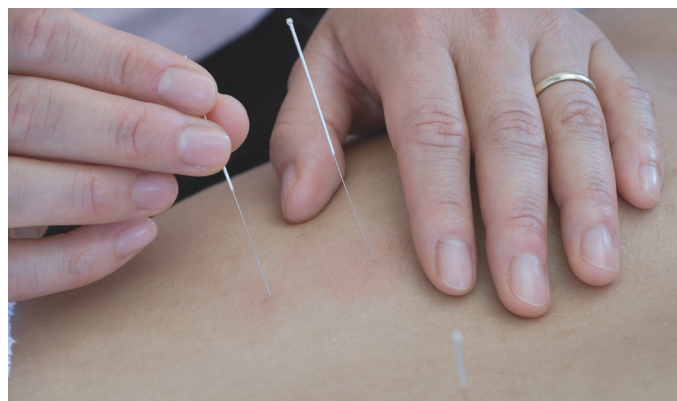
#### Acupuncture treatment:

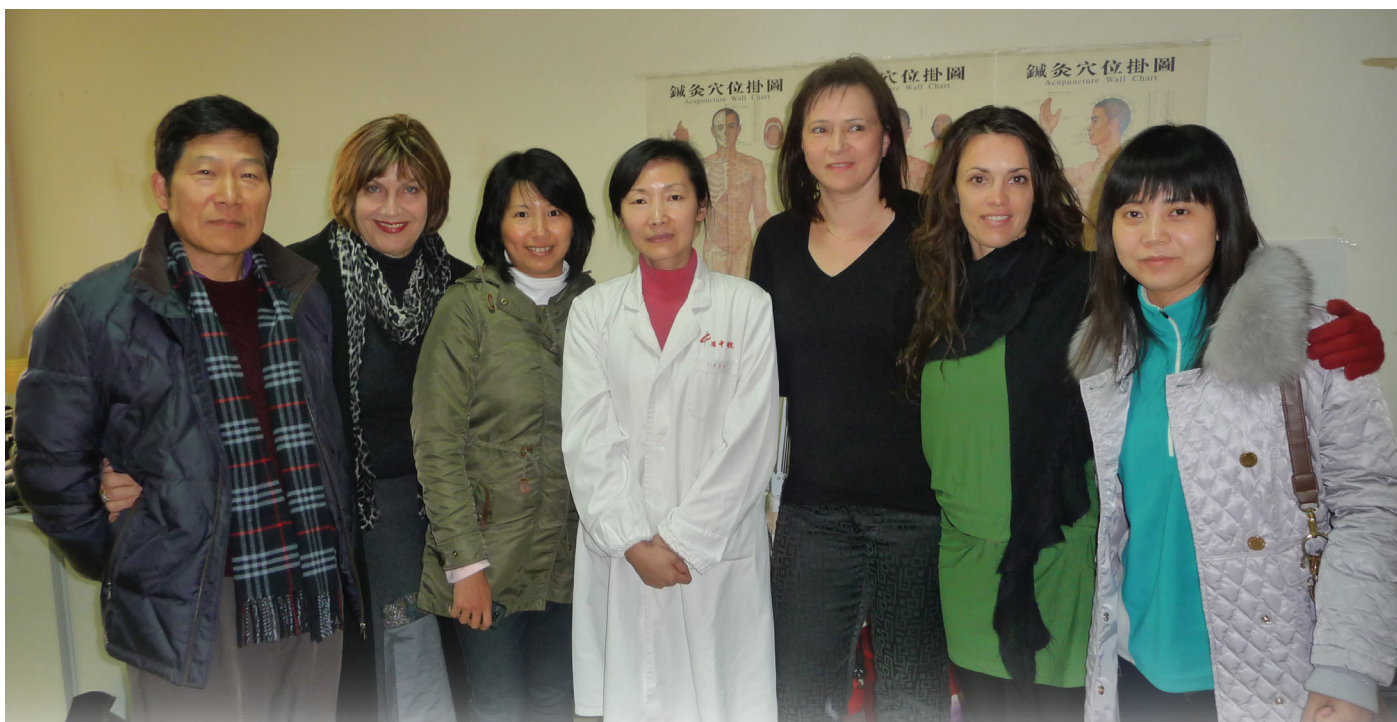
\$15, or \$70 for six treatments

#### Tuina treatment:

\$20, or \$100 for six treatments

Level 10, Willbank House  
57 Willis Street, Wellington 6142  
New Zealand





## Enter The Dragon - the China Experience

by K Gurunathan

**F**ive New Zealand students, who went to China for a short study stint in December, have come back buzzing from the experience. They went to observe how acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) were taught in China. "Everyone agreed the experience was invaluable, insightful and defining. It reinforced the career choices made by the students," said Marion King, Marketing/Student Support Executive of New Zealand School of Acupuncture and TCM.

They were given rigorous training in practical skills at the Hubei University of Chinese Medicine in Wuhan City. Marion accompanied Annie Gao, Basil Jung, Kean Tang and Radmila Damanovic from the Auckland campus, and Becs Arahanga from the Wellington campus.

The School held successful fundraising dinners in Auckland and Wellington to help the students make the trip. Kean spoke for the team when she said: "I am grateful the School gave us this opportunity to learn and know more about traditional Chinese medicine. It was a valuable and even joyous experience. It opened my eyes."

The 12-day trip saw them being welcomed into three different hospitals. "The highly qualified and respected doctors and professors were patient and keen to share their astonishing knowledge," said Radmila. Learning opportunities included interactive demonstrations of tuina techniques.

They were particularly impressed by the lecture topics on facial paralysis and strokes, followed by observation of actual cases and treatment procedures in hospital and outpatient clinics. "The students also became patients and were treated by one of the top professors at the hospital," said Marion.

Two of the highlights were the University's impressive herb museum and the mind-blowing human anatomy laboratory. "Real human bodies cut into many sections are on exhibition showing every detailed part of the anatomy," said Basil.

The hosts provided excellent interpreters and, with the additional translation skills of Annie and Kean, the visitors were able to assimilate and better appreciate the social and cultural traditions of the local community. That meant checking out the small shops, street vendors, night markets and restaurants. "The general consensus? We would have liked more time. As a learning and cultural experience, it was over too quickly," said Marion.

The School plans to organise another study tour to China this year. For detailed information, contact **Marion** ([marion@nzsao.com](mailto:marion@nzsao.com)) or **Cherry** ([cherry.li@nzsao.com](mailto:cherry.li@nzsao.com)). ■

*Photo caption (left to right) Basil Jung, Marion King, Kean Tang, Professor Zhou, Radmila Domanovic, Becs Arahanga, Annie Gao.*





# Learning the Art of Acupuncture

by Yuna Lee

**W**hatever your motivation, New Zealand School of Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine (NZSATCM) provides a supportive environment for all to acquire specialist knowledge, skills and attitude.

NZSATCM teachers are genuine, friendly, and enthusiastic. They are willing to spend their time to aid students' learning. Most of the second year's assignments require us to apply our knowledge in clinical cases. It sounds pretty easy provided your fundamental knowledge is concrete. Unfortunately, it wasn't in my case. I often got lost in the middle of nowhere, feeling guilty that I must be the only one who did not remember the first year's studies. Luckily, our expert teachers could tell the despair from my empty stares. They kindly approached me and offered extra help. They elicited my previous knowledge and assisted in self-discovery rather than spoon-feeding. This made obtaining knowledge more memorable, and helped me develop confidence in gaining good grades.

One of the teachers even did not mind giving his/her home phone number to discuss questions whenever I needed to. I found this very encouraging and supportive. It was like he/she was willing to throw tonnes of gold to me and all I had to do was prepare a basket.

The teachers value each student's ability equally and try to maximise it. Having a small number of students in a class creates a family-like environment and helps to develop a close relationship between the students and the teachers. The teachers have a fair understanding of each student's capacity, strengths and weaknesses.

Based on this, they help the students accordingly. For example, I am terrible at mastering the new qigong exercises. My qigong teacher is patient and kind enough to show me the same exercises repeatedly and wait for me to learn them slowly. I appreciate his help and support.

I have wonderful classmates who are good friends and always ready to provide support and advice. We often had study groups in year one and during the term breaks. We celebrated each other's birthday and had shared lunch with a variety of food. Although regular celebration and shared lunch became troublesome and time-consuming in the end (especially during the exam times), we enjoyed each other's company.

Senior students are also easy to get along with. They share their knowledge and clinical experiences with junior students. As a Korean, talking to the seniors with a huge age gap can sometimes be uncomfortable and difficult. However, Korean senior students at NZSATCM are like big uncles who take care of young ones without exerting the authority and power. They helped me purchase most of my text books and acupuncture equipments at good deals.

Overall, NZSATCM is a unique school that provides a wonderful and supportive environment for learning. I hope sharing my experience helps others gain an idea of what our School is like. I am also willing to help new students, like I was helped by the teachers, friends and senior students. ■

*Yuna is a 3rd-year student, studying BHSc (Acupuncture) and Diplomas of Chinese Herbal Medicine, Tuna & Qigong.*