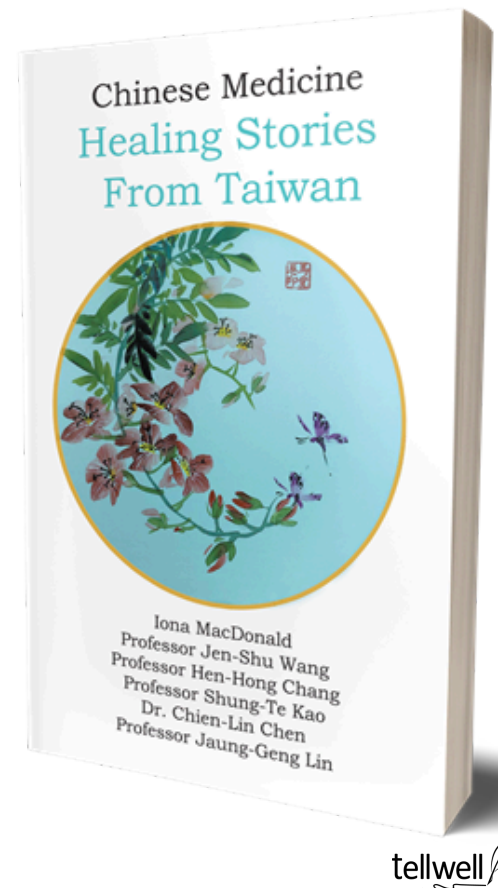


Chinese Medicine Healing Stories From Taiwan

Iona MacDonald

Chinese medicine has a long history, with the earliest records of its use in China dating back almost 3,000 years. This medical system includes several therapeutic methods: herbal medicines, acupuncture, moxibustion, cupping, and acupressure, as well as the movement and massage therapies of Qigong, Taichi and Tuina, all of which have been studied, practiced and evaluated in millions of patients over time. This book describes the use of these methods in Taiwan, with case reports detailing individual patient-healing experiences and interviews with patients revealing their thoughts about Chinese medicine.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Iona MacDonald is a medical writer trained in Western medicine and scientific research. Working in a medical research university in Taiwan exposed Iona to the healing capabilities of traditional Chinese medicine. The case reports in this book were shared with Iona by Taiwanese doctors who integrate traditional Chinese and Western medicine in their clinical practice and daily life. These case reports describe ways in which Chinese medicine (alone or combined with Western medicine) can effectively cope with different medical conditions that Western medicine alone cannot easily treat (or even at all). This book is her tribute to researchers and clinicians dedicated to the practice of Chinese medicine in Taiwan. Iona hopes that by sharing their work and approaches to healing, this book will give people insights into how they can use this ancient form of healing to promote a state of physical, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being.

A LOOK INSIDE



CHAPTER 9

TCM case reports

While working in China Medical University (CMU), I met many TCM doctors working in the university's hospital who told me about their clinical caseloads and how they can treat all sorts of conditions that Western medicine cannot cope with very well or even at all. Initially, I began to share these cases with friends in New Zealand, to give them an insight into Chinese medicine and its capabilities. I wanted them to know to how useful acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicines can be, especially for chronic ailments, such as atopic dermatitis, type 2 diabetes mellitus, or inflammatory bowel disease.

I soon realised that many of these TCM cases are never published, because the doctors cannot spare the time from their extremely busy clinic schedules to write up their experiences with their patients. Moreover, of those cases that are reported, many are only available in Chinese-language journals and limited to local readership in Taiwan. I knew how privileged I was to be interacting with some of Taiwan's highly experienced TCM physicians, despite my lack of Chinese language ability and no formal TCM training. I decided that their TCM case reports deserved to be translated into English, to introduce them to a much wider audience outside Taiwan. However, I never imagined that it would be difficult to persuade the doctors to give me the material that I needed.

The difficulty was not due to any language barrier, because all of the TCM doctors are able to communicate with me in English. However, I could not understand why they always behaved politely towards me and let me question them about their work, yet they were nevertheless

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CHAPTER 9: TCM CASE REPORTS

unenthusiastic about me transforming their therapeutic practices into print. It took me a while to understand that I was approaching this concept from my Western viewpoint: I naively thought that the doctors would be thrilled to have the chance to showcase their clinical work worldwide, which would make it easy for me to collect any number of case reports. Eventually, I learnt that my thinking was at odds with the doctors' training in Chinese medical ethics.

Conversations with some TCM doctors enlightened me to the fact that Confucian ideology is the underlying paradigm of ancient Chinese medical ethics. Confucian ethics was the dominant moral philosophy and ideology of Chinese culture for 2,500 years. The first mention in the literature concerning the ethics of Chinese medical practice appeared during the seventh century, when the famous Taoist physician Si-Miao Sun 孫思邈 (581–682 CE; see Chapter 5, Fig. 5.5) published his monograph *On the absolute sincerity of great physicians*.¹⁰ According to that work, the basic values of medical practice are “compassion (*tz'u*)” and “humaneness (*jen*)”, which are based on Confucian ethics. For 1,300 years after the time of Si-Miao Sun, Chinese medical ethics emphasised humaneness (*jen*) as a virtue and physicians were expected to be virtuous in their daily medical practice. They were encouraged to seek to become an ideal Confucian person, “*chun-tzu*”, the “superior man”. Confucian medical ethics required physicians to respect the patient and the medical profession by practicing with a sincere, devoted, generous, and selfless attitude, without seeking wealth and fame. These commandments are taught today in China Medical University, Taichung, Taiwan.

¹⁰ Unschuld PU. *Medical ethics in Imperial China*. London: University of California Press, 1979: 26-33. Primary source: Chen Meng-lei, et al. *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng*. Place and year of publication, not available. Publisher: Chung-hua shu-chu.

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