

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF ACUPUNCTURE  
**ISA STUDY PROGRAMME**  
3 ½ YEAR EDUCATION

**Introduction:**

Many of the terms on the following pages may be unfamiliar to you, because they belong to the world of Chinese medicine. For this reason we have chosen headings like "Anatomy" and "Physiology" which are borrowed from Western medicine, to give structure to our curriculum.

The first two pages give you an overview about what is being taught in our school. On the pages following, the subjects taught in years 1 to 4 are listed.

**Philosophy**

Gives the framework to understand the interconnectedness of all the energetic systems in nature, including the body's tissues, substances and organs. Concepts such as Yin and Yang, the five phases of transformation (Five Elements), Heaven-Earth-Man provide the basic framework and vocabulary of our trade. You will also learn about Taoist cosmology and the place of humans in the cycles of nature. This heading includes the teaching of the 10 Heavenly Stems and 12 Earthly Branches as described in the Nei Jing, which enables us to create an energetic chart for each individual patient. We are therefore able to see and understand each patient as an individual. The chart helps us to explain the individual causes of pathology and is essential in the choice of points.

**"Anatomy"**

Describes essentially the multi-layered meridian system which enables the flow of Qi throughout the body. The Meridian system creates connections between the different tissues and organ systems within the body, and also between the body and the environment.

This heading also includes a detailed discussion of the acupuncture points, their qualities and functions.

You will learn to locate the acupuncture points according to anatomical landmarks, as well as feel the Qi of the points.

**"Physiology"**

Deals with the Zang Fu organ systems, their functions, and the substances associated with them. Zang are the solid or Yin organs (liver, heart, spleen/pancreas, lungs, kidneys (and heart governor)) which are the seat of the spiritual essences.

Fu are the hollow organs (gallbladder, small intestine, stomach, colon, urinary bladder (and triple heater)) in and through which the digestion and absorption of food happens.

Since Chinese medicine is essentially a medicine of interconnectedness, we will also learn about the relationships between the Zang Fu from different philosophical, anatomical and functional perspectives.

**Pathology**

After having studied the healthy functioning of the human organism, you will learn the patterns of pathology. Pathology can be understood from a variety of different perspectives. Starting from an energetic understanding of healthy function (year 1) we will explore the patterns of imbalance / pathology that can arise (year 2). During years 3 and 4 we will discuss pathology from the western point of view and then proceed to understand and treat all diseases based on an energetic

point of view. In practical terms this means we will discuss over 400 diseases as classified by western medicine and learn how to treat them with acupuncture. This teaching is unique in Finland, and is of great advantage in treatment, since our patients tend to present with real medical problems which have been diagnosed by their doctors. Currently there are only three schools (in Holland, England and Israel) where this knowledge is taught.

## **Diagnosis**

The art of diagnosis is mainly based on pulse-diagnosis, tongue-diagnosis and body diagnosis. As acupuncturists we do not have access to modern techniques of diagnosis such as x-rays, CT or MRI. Therefore the practitioner's own sensitivity, especially the skill of pulse diagnosis, needs to be developed in order to enable a precise diagnosis of the patient's condition. Only if the cause of the symptoms is understood, can the treatment be effective.

Furthermore you will learn how to conduct the interview with the patient, to gather information about the patient's history, the symptoms, medications etc. This information is needed for two reasons: 1- to understand the causes and the development of the patient's pathology, and 2- to put the results of the diagnosis in perspective.

## **Practical work**

In class we will learn

- to feel the meridians and the flow of Qi
- to listen to the pulse
- to locate the acupuncture points
- body- and tongue-diagnosis
- different needling techniques
- other techniques such as moxibustion (the burning of a special herb on an acupuncture point or the end of the needle)

## **Exercises**

Every morning there will be 30 to 60 minutes of Qi Gong (the art of working with the force of life). You will be taught a variety of exercises, some of which are more physical and others more internal. The purpose of these exercises is to rebalance the body's energy systems, calm the mind and spirit and develop the sensitivity necessary for diagnosis.

## **Clinical practice**

After passing the first year of your education, you will have the possibility to join us in the clinic as we treat our patients. This gives you the opportunity to develop your skills in observation and diagnosis over a period of 2 ½ years, until you graduate. Clinical practice is essential to integrate your theoretical knowledge and make it applicable. During the later stages of your training you may bring your own patients and treat them under our guidance.

## **Western Anatomy and Physiology**

During the first year all students are required to attend courses in anatomy, physiology and pathology outside our school. Such courses are offered for students of alternative medicine. A basic knowledge of the anatomy and functioning of the human body is necessary and also helpful, since much of our pathology teaching is actually based on a medical understanding of pathology.

# YEAR 1

During the first year we learn to see life, the world, and the human being from an energetic perspective. Year 1 essentially deals with the healthy functioning of the human organism. We will also talk about pathology in a general sense in order to understand the normal functioning.

## What is Medicine?

- Perspectives on
  - Health and Sickness
  - East and West, different understanding of reality results in different forms of medicine
  - Different doctors, different forms of healing
- Overview of Chinese Medicine
  - History
  - Pre and Post Revolution
  - Different styles of Acupuncture

## Philosophy

- # 1 – the Dao & Daoist Cosmology
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- # 2 – Yin and Yang
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- # 3 – The concept of Heaven – Earth – Man
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- # 4 – The 4 directions, the 4 emanations (Yuen Heng, Li, Zhi), the 4 cosmic animals, (28 constellations)
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- # 5 – The 5 phases of transformation (5 Elements) The 5 Substances (Qi, Xue, JinYe, Jing and Shen)
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- # 6 - The 6 Divisions / Liu Jing (Tai Yang, Jue Yin, Shao Yin, Tai Yin, Shao Yang, Yang Ming)
  - The six Qi / Liu Qi (Wind, Fire, Summer Heat, Dampness, Dryness, Cold)
  - The six extraordinary Fu / Qi Heng Zhi Fu (Brain, Marrow, Bone, Network of animation, Gallbladder, Uterus or Room of sperm)
- # 7 - The 7 senses, 7 emotions, 7 (women) and 8 (men) year cycles of development
- # 8 - Ba Gua (the 8 trigrams), Fu Shi and King Wen arrangements of the trigrams, I Ching, Qi Jing Ba Mai (the 8 Extraordinary Vessels)
- # 9 - Lo Shu (the magic square)
- # 10 - Ho Tu, the 10 heavenly Stems
- # 11 - San Jiao & Xin Bao (Triple Heater & Heart Governor/Pericard)
- # 12 - The 12 Earthly Branches & "the Chinese Clock"

- Qi (Ch'i, Chi) / Energy/vitality/"breathes"
  - Origin, creation and circulation
  - Different types: Yuan/Original, Yuan/Source, Zong, Zhong, Zhen, Zheng, Xie, Ying, Wei, Xue, Jin Ye

## **"Anatomy"**

- Anatomy of the physical body
  - Locomotoric system: muscles, tendons and bones
  - Blood vessels, nerves
  - Organs and other body parts where relevant to point location and needling
- Jing Luo Mai                      - Meridian system
  - Functions
  - Circulation of Qi through the meridian system – 'Chinese Clock'
  - Types of meridians
  - Pathways of the Main Meridians – Jing Mai
- Points
  - Names and anatomical locations of the 365 acupuncture points
  - Types of points and their functions
    - Five Shu-Transporting:
    - Jing-Well, Ying-Spring, Shu-Stream, Jing-River, He-Sea/Uniting
    - 5 Element, Horary, Stem, Branch
    - Mother and Son
    - Yuan, Luo, Xi; Shu and Mu; Entry and Exit
    - Meeting and reunion – Jiao Hui
    - Master and Couple of the Extraordinary Meridians
    - 4 Seas; Window of Heaven
    - Point formulas
    - 'Ghost points', 'Depression formulas' etc.
  - Basic qualities of major points

## **"Physiology"**

- Zang Fu organ systems
  - Zang (liver, heart, heart governor, spleen/pancreas, lung and kidneys)
  - Fu (gallbladder, small intestine, triple heater, stomach, colon and urinary bladder)
- Zang Fu functions are taught from the basis of 5 Element theory:
  - Spiritual Essence, Character and Personality
  - Psychological and Physiological pictures
  - Archetypes of Element, Stem, Branch, and Division
  - Emotions and Climates
  - 5 Element Qualities
  - 5 Element Correspondences: Body systems, tissues, organs, colours, emotions, dreams, trigrams, etc
- Interrelationships of the Zang Fu, according to
  - Function
  - 5 Element
  - Three heaters
  - Stem, Branch, Division, Seasonal Qi

- The six extraordinary Fu / Qi Heng Zhi Fu (Brain, Marrow, Bone, Network of animation, Gallbladder, Uterus / Room of sperm)
- The function of the San Jiao: Production and distribution of Qi, blood/Xue and Fluids/Jin Ye (simplified version of "Transformation of Shui and Gu")

## **Pathology**

Pathology is not part of the curriculum of the first year. However basic patterns and causes of pathology are introduced in order to illustrate the healthy functioning of the organism.

- Causes of Disease – the Etiology of Chinese Medicine
  - Pre Heaven – Post Heaven
  - Constitutional - "genetic", foetal, constitutional and conditional
  - Karmic
  - Spiritual - Integrity and Virtue
  - Psychological
  - Internal Climates - Emotions
  - External Climates - Seasons and Climates of Nature
  - Environmental - Natural energies, Electromagnetic Disturbances, etc
  - Astrological - the Forces of 'Heaven' (Stems), 'Earth' (Branches) and 'Man' (Divisions)
  - Diet
  - Lifestyle
  - Activity and Exercise
  - Modern Day Considerations
  - Others - Trauma, Accidents, Poisons, Wrong Treatment, etc.

## **Diagnosis**

- Listening to the pulse
  - Basic technique
  - The different pulse positions
  - Qualities according to health
  - Spirit, Character and Constitution
  - Season and Climates; Full and Empty
  - Elements
  - Organs
  - Seasonal energies
- Tongue diagnosis
  - Tongue map of internal organs
  - Body
  - Coating
- Body diagnosis

## **Practical work**

- Pulse
  - 'Listening to the pulse' - regular practice in class and at home
- Anatomy
  - Learning gentle touch and developing sensitivity to feel
  - Familiarising with the anatomy of the human body through theory and palpation
  - Palpating, sensing and locating meridians and 365 acupuncture points

## **Qi Gong Exercises**

- Opening the joints
- Stretching Ren Mai and Du Mai - harmonising the Microcosmic Orbit
- Rolling the Ball - (stimulating Macrocosmic Orbit) developing Qi sensation
- Building Qi
- Eight Brocades - harmonising 8 Extraordinary Meridians
- T'ai Chi Qi Gong - harmonising Meridians System
- Inner Smile - sensing and harmonising the inner organs

## YEAR 2

During the second year we begin to learn about pathology. What happens if the organism does not function as it should? What kind of symptoms may arise? How can we understand pathology based on our knowledge about the philosophy, "anatomy" and "physiology" of Acupuncture? In preparation for years 3 and 4 we will also begin to study Western pathology in a systematic manner. In addition you will learn about "Energetic Anatomy": In our system of treatment, each tissue in the body is controlled by a certain Qi. This knowledge, together with an understanding of western pathology, helps us to determine which Qi is involved. This information then needs to be confirmed by pulse diagnosis.

Under the heading of Philosophy we will learn about

### **Tian Gan Di Zhi – The heavenly Stems and the Earthly Branches**

Together with the six Divisions (Liu Jing) the Stems and Branches enable us to gain insight into the cycles of nature as understood by the authors of the classical books of Chinese medicine, the Nei Jing Su Wen and the Nei Jing Ling Shu. This knowledge enables us to draw up an energetic chart for each patient. The chart tells us about strengths and weaknesses of the patient, likely tendencies for pathology, as well as their general physical, emotional and psychological makeup. Having such knowledge enables us to understand the individual causes for pathology and helps us in the choice of points for treatment.

### **What is Pathology** - Introduction to the Year

- Reviewing from a perspective of etiology, diagnosis and pathology:
  - Health and Sickness
  - East and West
  - Chinese Medicine
    - Different Styles of Treating
    - Different Styles of Acupuncture
    - How we learn to diagnose and treat

### **Pathology**

- Theories of Pathology
- Basics of Pathology
  - 5 Element Theory
  - 8 Principles/Parameters
- Patterns of Disharmony
  - Ground Patterns
    - Pathologies of Yin and Yang
    - Syndroms of Substances
      - Ch'i, Xue, Jin-Ye, Jing and Shen
- Perverse Climates
  - Fire, Heat, Damp, Dry, Cold and Wind
- 7 Emotions
  - Anger, Joy, Obsession, Sadness and Grief, Fear and Fright
- Zang/Fu - Organ Systems
  - Zang Fu pathology is taught from a basis of :
    - Syndrome Pictures from TCM<sup>1</sup> (Patterns of Signs and Symptoms)
    - 5 Element Symptomology and Diagnosis; which includes:
      - Internal and External Climates and Emotions
      - Patterns of the Psyche and Spirit

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<sup>1</sup> NOTE: In contrast to TCM Acupuncture schools we do not use the concept of the Syndrome Patterns for diagnosis, or treatment. However, we will discuss the Syndrome patterns and fill the gap between the diagnosis and the choice of points by explaining the energetic reality underlying these concepts.

- Character and Personality Disorders
- 5 Element Disorders
- Progression of Pathology through:
  - 6 Divisions
  - 4 Stages
  - Three Heaters

## **Diagnosis**

- Instructions about how to conduct a proper patient interview
- Pulse
  - Review of Qualities in Health
    - Refining of this understanding
  - Qualities of Pathology
    - 8 Main Qualities:
      - Full – Empty
      - Strong – Weak
      - Fast – Slow
      - Superficial – Deep
  - 5 Element Qualities
    - Pulse Pictures according to:
      - Three Heaters
      - 5 Elements
      - Six Divisions
      - The Eight Extraordinary Meridians in Pulse Diagnosis
- Tongue
  - Review of Body and Coating in Health
  - Pictures in Pathology:
    - Body:               Form, Consistency, Shape, Colour
    - Coating:           Consistency, Quality, Colour
- Pathology viewed from disharmonies of:
  - Constitution and Spirit
  - Organ
  - Yin - Yang, Ch'i, Blood, Fluids

## **Philosophy**

- Review from Year I

### **Tian Gan Di Zhi – The heavenly Stems and the Earthly Branches**

- Shi Tian Gan / The 10 Heavenly Stems:
  - The order of the 10 Stems
  - Explanation of each of the 10 Stems, their effect on climate and personality
  - Likely imbalances (the 4 possibilities)
  - Relationships and interaction between the Stems (Ke cycle)
- Shi Er Di Zhi / The 12 Earthly Branches:
  - The order of the 12 Earthly Branches
  - Explanation and profile of each of the 12 Branches (= animals), their effect on climate and psychology
  - The Chinese Clock – Sheng cycle and unlike Qi
  - Seasonal Qi
- Liu Jing / The Six Divisions
  - Explanation of the six Qi, their effect on climate, personality and physical body

## **”Anatomy”**

- Jing Luo Mai - Meridian system
  - Review from year I
  - Functions and pathology of different meridian types
  - Pathways of the 72 meridians and their internal branches
    - Main Meridians - Jing Mai
    - Tendo Muscular Meridians - Jing Jin
    - Connecting Meridians - Luo Mai
    - Divergent Meridians - Jing Bie
    - 8 Extraordinary Meridians - Qi Jing Ba Mai
- Points
  - Qualities of all 365 points
    - Major points in detail:
      - Name
      - Element qualities
      - Energetic movement
      - Special qualities
      - Functions
      - Symptoms (physical, emotional, mental)
    - Secondary points: relevant details

## **”Physiology”**

Recap of Zang Fu organ functions, organ relationships, etc. from year 1.

## **Practical work**

- Pulses - ‘Listening to the Pulse’; regular practise of healthy and pathological pulses in class and at home
- Tongue - Practise of Examining Tongues in class and at home
- Anatomy - As for year 1 - refining skills

## **Qi Gong Exercises**

- As for year 1

If the students are ready and interested:

- Inner Smile - sensing and harmonising the inner organs
- Healing Sounds - clearing negative emotions
- Microcosmic Orbit
- Bone Marrow Nei Kung - strengthening the body and immune system by drawing Qi into the bones

NOTE: If there is interest it is possible to arrange Qi Gong courses outside the curriculum.

## **Clinical Training**

- Students begin clinical training
  - Observing treatment – You will be present as we treat our patients
  - Discussing treatment

## YEARS 3 - 4

The last 1 ½ years are dedicated to the detailed study of pathology based on the medical classification of body systems. The teaching is based on the **Merck Manual of Medical Information** and covers the following topics:

- Lung and Airway Disorders
- Skin Disorders
- Orthopedic and Rheumatoid Disorders
- Disorders of the Digestive System
- Heart and Blood Vessel Disorders
- Ear Disorders
- Eye Disorders
- Kidney and Urinary Tract Disorders
- Brain and Nerve Disorders
- Hormonal Disorders
- Disorders of the Reproductive System
- Psychological and Psychiatric Disorders

### **Pathogenesis:**

A detailed explanation of the processes of pathology and the underlying energetic mechanisms. Because Acupuncture is based on an energetic understanding of reality, we are able to make connections between different symptoms and diseases which, from a western medical point of view, may not be connected at all. You will learn how a simple condition such as pain or a non-bacterial inflammation may develop into serious pathology such as autoimmune disease or even cancer.

### **For each of over 400 diseases we will discuss**

1- From a medical point of view:

- Explanation of the disease name
- Definition – a short description of the disease
- Etiology – the causes of the disease
- Symptoms
- Diagnosis – diagnostic techniques and procedures used by medical doctors
- Treatment – treatments and medications used by medical doctors

Such information is important for us, because most of our patients present with medical conditions and are diagnosed and treated by medical doctors. Many patients are using medication, which has an effect on the functioning of the body and distorts the pulse. Therefore a knowledge of the energetic effects of medicines such as beta-blockers, antihistamines or corticosteroids is necessary.

2- From the chinese medical or energetic point of view:

- Etiology & Pathogenesis – the causes and development of the disease
- Treatment – detailed instructions of how to treat such pathology based on
  - the organ functions
  - the energetic anatomy – a unique system that correlates the tissues of the body with the Qi of the Zang Fu
  - the Jing Luo Mai (the meridian system including internal pathways)

- the acupuncture points

### **Diagnostics, Practical work, Clinical Practice**

During the last 1 ½ years the emphasis is more and more on clinical practice. You will join us as we treat our patients and refine your skills of diagnosis in the treatment situation. You will bring your own patients and treat them under our guidance.

**NOTE: During your education you are not allowed to needle patients on your own!**

### **Qi Gong Exercises**

- A for year 1 and 2

## **Year 4**

### **Becoming a practitioner**

This topic will be discussed during the first 6 months of the fourth year

- Assessing students needs to become practitioners?
- Treatment procedure
  - Observing, listening, touching, smelling
  - Interview
- Advice for setting up a practice

### **Final Exam**

#### **Starting to treat**

- Clinical observation (as for years 2-3)
- Supervised treatments
- Independent treatments
- Written reports of treatments to be evaluated and discussed together with your teachers.

#### **After the education**

- After passing the final exams you will have a period of 6 months to complete your clinical practice and supervised/ independent treatments and treatment reports.

#### **Graduating from our school**

In order to graduate from our school and earn your diploma, you need to:

- 1- show a diploma of a passed course in Western Anatomy and Physiology
- 2- pass the final exam at the end of the 3 ½ year education
- 3- complete your clinical practice and hand in the required treatment reports

You will receive a diploma from ISA that you have successfully passed our course and shown your ability to start to treat as an independent practitioner of Classical Chinese Medicine.