

Golden Needle Therapy (*Serkhap*)

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Abstract

Since Bhutan is sandwiched between two giant continents; and concealed by the elevated terrains; the unique therapy with golden needle that prevails only in Bhutan has not really been eminent beyond the boundary. The philosophy is rooted in the Tibetan medicine which dates back during an era of Buddha. Since Chinese and Japanese acupuncture have various origins but Bhutanese acupuncture with golden needle has embedded in the Last treatise (*Physi-rgyud*) of *Bgu-bzi* (The four treatises). Some fundamental theory is seen common with the Chinese and Japanese acupuncture; regarding meridians, points and energy flow.

We believe that the practice of acupuncture began during the Stone Age when stone knives or sharp edged tools were used to puncture and drain abscesses etc, with the passage of time it gradually made its way to the present queue.

While Golden needle therapy is the backbone of the National Traditional Medicine Hospital; it is well administered with the infection controls and increasing in the number of patients annually; it has been vital to disseminate its effectiveness and the procedure involved.

The properties of gold escorted with the conceal points, spiritual influence and the heat aids to the healing power. It is now available with the establishment of traditional unit in all twenty dzongkhags and some Basic Health Units. It continued to be developed and codified in texts over the years and gradually became one of the standard therapies used in Bhutan, alongside herbal medicine, Moxibustion, Venesection, Cupping and various hydro therapies.

Background

Traditional art of healing thrived ever since mankind came to existence in this world. Amongst usage of various therapeutic methods, searing of aching joints or any body part with hot metal, which progressively bloomed as *gSerkhap* (Golden needle) has been the most thriving.

With the establishment of National Traditional Medicine Hospital at Kawang Jangsa in 1979, it has been one of the patients' priorities. Amongst the various therapy services provided, Golden needle therapy (*Serkhap*) is seen as one of the most prominent.

The point's on the channel corresponds to a particular organ. Acupuncture points are specific in locations on the channel that may be needed to affect the balance of its energy and thereby regulate the function of its corresponding organ too.



Golden needle is about two and half inches in the length and about one and half mm in diameter (on an average). It's of pure gold with few coils at one end and pointed on the other apex. Both needle and précised areas of the application are the deciding factor.

How does it work?

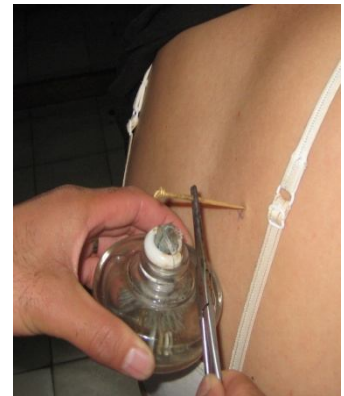
The human body is governed by *three Humors, seven physical constituents and three excretions*, according to the theory of Bhutanese Traditional Medicine System. Any imbalance among them leads to affliction of different forms of disorders, which is continuously moving along the conceal points.

Hence the direct application of needle restores the bothered balance.

How it is applied?

There are four ways of application. Among them burn method is the most prominent. The application is superficial and it is not inserted deep into the derma, there by ascertaining it's none invasive nature. It has to be heated prior to application, about two – three minutes i.e. before it becomes red hot. Physician selects corresponding points (The conceal points are condensed into two groups 1. The related corresponding points in regards to the disorder 2. The vicinity which has been swollen or having excruciating pain/aching based on the patient's motivation)

Prior to the application, Physician seek refuge to *Bhaisajyaguru Vaiduryaprabha* (Medicine Buddha), in order to involve spiritual influence and to assure, therefore patients get well in next to no time and pray for the liberation of all sentient beings from three mental poison and ailment.



In what conditions is this therapy not advisable?

Conditions due to Bile, Blood, Jaundice and those conditions which are hot in nature and Pregnant ladies are not advisable. Application near the orifice and right after having the food should be restricted.

For what conditions is it applied?

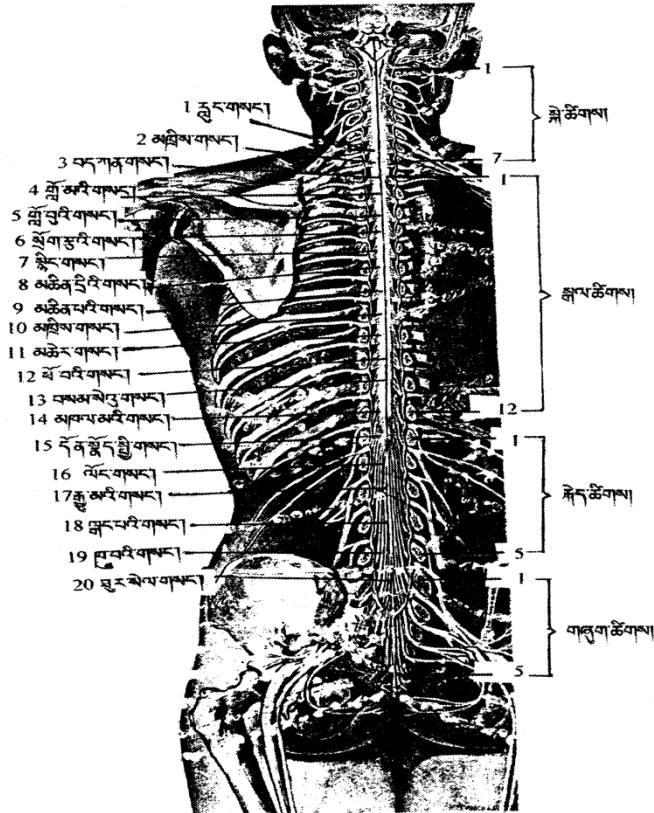
- 1) **Respiratory:** Sinusitis and Synocytises, Asthma and Chest pain etc.
- 2) **Orthopaedic:** Arthritis, Gout, Rheumatism, Lower backache, Oedema, Cervical spondylosis, Periathritis etc.
- 3) **Neurological:** Paralysis and fibrositis, Neuritis, Neurosis, Necrotic, varicose veins, Colic and Sciatica, Anagesia, Vertigo, Headache, Migraines, Hay fever etc.
- 4) **Other:** Vitilogo, Warts, Insomnia, Obstinate skin diseases, Anxiety, Chronic Gastritis,

Constipation and tumors etc.

What are the conceal points you use?

The points are divided into four groups:

- 1) Conceal points of *front*.
- 2) Conceal points of *back*.
- 3) Conceal points of *head*.
- 4) Conceal points of *branches*.



Conceal points of the back

How do you locate the exact conceal points?

Basically there are two types of measurement to locate the exact point:

- 1) The width of one hand (refers to distance across the rear-most palm)
- 2) The length of thumb (refers to the distance between the vertex and its first joint)



Conclusion

National Traditional Medicine System as one of the distinctive method that supplements to the unique traditions of Bhutan, which has been one of the prominent beholders. Since it has been

combating with the budding of various diseases, golden needle therapy has been one of its paramount arsenals.

Since both allopathic and homeopathic has been granted the same priority, it is the people of Bhutan that avails the opportunity.

Though it is stirring through oscillating periods of expansion and decline, Golden needle therapy (*Serkhap*) would ultimately become one of the staple Bhutanese medical and social traditions.

Golden needle therapy (*Serkhap*) has come a long way since its origins and has won an uphill battle against `time, misunderstanding, and criticism to gain the great popularity that it enjoys today. Despite its successes, however, there are still many legislative and public opinion battles to be fought in terms of its acceptance and utilization as a modern medicine. It is hoped that within the next several years,

Golden needle therapy will break through the remaining political barriers and that the world will see this traditional as primary care providers.

References

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