

# Nursing in Ancient China

In the third millennium BC, the first state unit with a developed culture began to be created even on the territory of China in the basin of the Chuang-che River. The influence of cultism did not play a significant role, so it did not greatly affect the care of the sick in ancient China. This was based on natural healing and the use of medicinal plants. Anatomical findings were quite poor, autopsies were not performed. Priests were called to treat and heal the sick, because only they know the mysterious wishes of the gods and are mediators between them and man.

## The Chinese recognized two principles

- **yin, the feminine principle** – death, darkness, weakness, cold, softness
- **yang, male principle** – life, sun, sky, light, strength, heat, hardness

Diseases arise when these two principles are in disharmony. When *yang* predominated, disease arose from increased organ function. Due to the predominance of *yin*, the disease arose from the reduced function of the body's organs. **The treatment** was also based on this - fever was treated with cooling.

**Palpation of the pulse** was a peculiar examination method. The Chinese knew and recognized more than 150 types of pulse, each specific to a certain disease. **The tongue** and all **body openings** (mouth, nose, ears) were also important for establishing the diagnosis.

The care of the sick consisted in administration

- **herbal medicines** - laxatives, emetics...
- **mineral drugs** - arsenic, iron ...

A special method was *acupuncture*, i.e. inserting needles into vital points of the body. There were 360 of them. After injecting into these points, the defect in the flow of energy through the body was supposed to be removed. **Moxa (moxibustion)** is the burning of the patient's body with burning twigs of medicinal plants and herbs. **The first prophylactic intervention** was introduced - rubbing powder from smallpox scabs into the noses of healthy children.

Strict hygiene rules in ancient China were based on the fact that disease enters the body through the mouth. The rules imposed regularity in work, rest, sleep, food. Moderation was recommended in all. According to the opinions of this time, a person was responsible for his health not only to himself, but also to the whole society.

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