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強曉梅醫師，北京人，自幼酷愛中醫。曾拜北京公安醫院針灸科主治醫生，針灸專家孫慈光和孫玉英兩兄妹為師，正式學習針灸知識，培養專業技藝。為了弘揚中醫，她于1990年來到了美國紐約。經過三十多年的艱苦奮鬥，她擁有自己的診所，備受病友們尊敬，是一位醫德高尚的女醫師。

Xiaomei Qiang comes from Beijing; she loves TCM very much in early age. She once studied and been trained by Ciguang Sun & Yuying Sun (Both are famous experts of acupuncture in Beijing public security hospital.) In order to introduce TCM to all human being, she immigrated to America in 1990. Nowadays, she not only has had her own clinic, but also was widely prized and honored by the public.

## 30 Years of Traditional Chinese Medicine, No Regrets

"How can you see the rainbow, if you never experience the rain?"

Chinese medicine, as an ancient traditional medical system, has been optimized over thousands of years. Through the years, it has impressed people around the world due to its effectiveness on many complicated contemporary and epidemic diseases. Chinese medicine has been successfully "exported" from China and has become popular because millions of Chinese people and Chinese medical professionals have endeavored to spread this knowledge. They carried out this mission consistently year after year, allowing the world to witness the unbelievable power of traditional Chinese medicine. Among those working to disseminate Chinese medicine is Xiao Mei Qiang. Her highly skilled acupuncture technique and unique method of combining Eastern and Western medicine have demonstrated the special healing effect of Chinese medicine on all kinds of diseases, particularly on post-stroke recovery and neurological diseases.

### **Going Abroad to Fulfill the Dream**

Doctor Qiang – her patients often warmly call her "Mei or Dr. Mei" – is from Beijing, China. She is the only daughter and the youngest one in the family and was deeply cared for since she was very little. However, she was never indulged by her parents whose influence and successful upbringing made her an independent and strong-minded person. By middle school, Dr. Mei decided on her career goal to become an

excellent Chinese medical doctor, curing illness and saving lives.

In 1975, Dr. Mei started her apprenticeship with Dr. Zhichun Zhang who was a retired doctor and professor from Beijing Chinese Medical College. She learned fundamental Chinese medicine and herbalogy under the instruction of Dr. Zhang. At the same time, Dr. Mei also apprenticed with Dr. Ciguang Sun and Dr. Yuying Sun who were brother and sister. They both inherited Chinese medicine knowledge and special acupuncture skills from their older generation, and both were the principal acupuncture doctors in Beijing Police Hospital. From all her teachers, Dr. Mei not only formally trained in acupuncture techniques and herbal knowledge, but she also learned to practice medicine with high ethical and moral standards and with a kind heart. However, after training and working hard for so many years, Dr. Mei still could not find her career platform in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution in China. At this point she made a wise choice to go abroad to study medicine and use her Chinese medical skills to help people and to disseminate the culture of Chinese medicine.

### **Harsh Reality Cannot Stop the Ongoing Steps**

Dr. Mei came to New York with a love and passion for Chinese medicine in 1990. Although acupuncture was introduced to America after President Nixon's visit to China in early 1970s, acupuncture was only known for its function of "reducing pain." Very few Americans really understood the essence of Chinese medicine; many of them were suspicious of acupuncture or had never heard of it. Chinese medicine was considered to be unorthodox and could not be accepted at that time.

Dr. Mei came to America as a newcomer; her major concerns were to adapt to the culture and to make a living, which would be the foundation for her to disseminate Chinese medicine in the future. Therefore, she went to college to study physical therapy, which she thought would be the best combination with Chinese medicine. During the 10 years following graduation, she worked as a physical therapist assistant in different rehabilitation settings, including a private physical therapy clinic, nursing homes, a sub-

acute medical center, and in the largest acute hospital in Brooklyn. While she worked in the acute hospital for eight years, she developed excellent PT skills for inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation, especially for post-stroke recovery. While working in the PT field, Dr. Mei continued her study of Chinese medicine at Pacific College of Oriental Medicine in New York. In 2006, she earned her dual master's degree for acupuncture and Chinese medicine and received her New York state license for Chinese medicine. In addition, after ten months of training at Harvard Medical School in 2008, she received a certificate for completion of Japanese-style acupuncture training.

Since the day Dr. Mei came to this country, she has made consistent efforts to help Americans understand Chinese medicine, hoping one day it would be included in America's mainstream medicine. In 1990, Dr. Mei was introduced by a doctor who worked in a Brooklyn hospital to the dental department of that hospital because she needed minor dental surgery. These dentists learned of Dr. Mei's acupuncture skills and expressed their interest in seeing the effects of acupuncture anesthesia. Dr. Mei demonstrated by inserting four needles in her body instead of receiving their usual anesthesia. All the doctors and nurses witnessed the magic of acupuncture anesthesia during the surgery.

Long before working in the PT field, Dr. Mei had already successfully helped many American patients with different conditions, such as tendinitis of the shoulder and elbow, sprains and strains, and pain syndromes, using Chinese medical skills, including acupressure, cupping, and Chinese massage. During the past ten years of working as a PTA, she often brought Chinese medicine components into PT treatments to achieve optimized healing. Her hard work and effective treatments prevented many patients from having to undergo surgery, shortened their recovering time, and even restored sensation and function in post-stroke patients who were able to stand up again and walk out of the hospital. It surprised her colleagues, patients' families, nursing staff and medical doctors, as well as enabled them to learn and to believe in Chinese medicine.

anticipating our next session each and every week...As much as I benefited from your treatments physically, I would be remiss if I didn't also thank you for the extreme kindness, genuine compassion and emotional support you have also provided over the course of our relationship. The simplest touch of your hands has a calming and reassuring effect on me as I face this difficult and terrifying disease, and it is for this I cannot thank you enough. In you I consider myself fortunate to have found that rarest of individuals -- a true and dedicated healer."

In recent years, more people understand, accept and benefit from Chinese medicine. The Acupuncture Fellowship Program at St. Vincent hospital has received more MDs' referrals for patients to have acupuncture treatments. Many MDs are now routinely educating their patients and families about acupuncture. All of these developments have made Dr. Mei feel her 30 years of dedication have finally paid off. She is enriched and very happy.

#### **Doctor Mei's Appeal and Advice**

Dr. Mei says that more people have acknowledged Chinese medicine and choose Chinese medicine as their career and that more MDs are engaged in doing acupuncture, which means the outlook for Chinese medicine in America is great. However, the status of licensed acupuncturists is still not high in American society. Currently, many medical insurance companies do not cover acupuncture treatments conducted by licensed acupuncturists, but instead only cover those given by MDs, who only receive short-term training to be certified, which is not reasonable. This results in patients missing the best treatment periods or delaying or prolonging treatment. Patients tend to wait until all their MDs' visits are covered by insurance, then pay for acupuncture treatments from their own pocket, and, often, they cannot afford the cost of continuous acupuncture treatments.

Dr. Mei hopes that all Chinese medicine practitioners, united together, strive for the legal rights and better position of Chinese medicine in America, allowing more people

to benefit from Chinese medicine and further disseminating the traditional Chinese medicine.

On the other hand, Dr. Mei sincerely advises our readers: "Good mental health and a healthy body are the premise and foundation for success, or doing anything. I really hope everyone would pay more attention to personal healthcare and disease prevention. Use China's traditional natural healing medicine to mobilize and strengthen your body's immunity and ability for healing and maintaining health. Please go to see the doctor as soon as possible when you feel sick. Do not delay. Finally, I wish for everyone to live a healthy, happy and high-quality life."