



CHI YU WELLNESS CENTRE: A PLACE OF ZEN IN THE HEART OF MARYLEBONE

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There is a place of healing in a quiet area of Marylebone that combines genuine oriental holistic treatments for the mind, body and spirit. A place of Zen and serenity where you can let your stresses go and let its practitioners get to the bottom of your body's concerns.

This little slice of East meets West retreat is called the Chi Yu Wellness Centre – *Chi Yu* meaning “healing and shizen chiyu ryoku means the ‘body’s’ self-healing ability’. As soon as one enters the centre, one can immediately breathe in the calm and zen throughout the space which is brought about by the scents, music and aesthetics.

We asked Chi Yu's founder, Mami, what made her decide to start the business and where she picked up her craft in acupuncture – “While growing up in Japan, I received traditional Eastern therapies to great benefit. My mother gave me big influence as she introduced me to acupuncture, herbs and massage since at a young age. This is the root of my fascination with the philosophy of holistic and complementary therapies. Since I decided to study complementary therapies and become a therapist about 19 years ago, it has always been my dream to set up my own practice so I can help others to benefit from the connection of body and mind.”



Based on this Japanese philosophy, Mami wanted to set up a wellness centre that provides the holistic support for clients' wellbeing. The treatments aim to assist the body's self-healing ability using both Eastern and Western holistic therapies which are tailored to the needs of each individual. Mami tells us that she wanted to create an oasis-like space where clients feel relaxed and rejuvenated mentally and physically.

“I didn't want to rush myself to start my own practice immediately after I qualified,” Mami tells us. “I took the time to learn and deepen my skills and experience as a therapist before I set up my own practice. While I was practicing as a complementary therapist, I continued to study other therapies such as Craniosacral therapy, Thai yoga massage, Tuina massage, La Stone therapy, Japanese facial massage and I decided to return to university to gain a BSc (Hons) degree in Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine from the University of Westminster in 2007. Two years later, I set up Chi Yu Wellness Centre.”

Whilst at Chi Yu, we tried out the centre's signature treatment – ‘Chi Yu Integrated Therapy’. After an assessment, the centre's therapists will create a bespoke treatment for you – be it acupuncture (which I ended up having), aromatherapy, craniosacral therapy, acupressure or meridian massage. Mami recommended I have a session of acupuncture combined with a massage and craniosacral therapy, focusing on the shoulders, neck and arms.



The treatment lasted for about an hour, starting off with the acupuncture, which Mami says helps to unblock the tension in the muscles. She left the needles in for a good 20 minutes before removing them and performing acupressure on the affected area.

Towards the end of the session, Mami performed craniosacral therapy; a special type of therapy involving a very gentle touch that is usually performed on the head, feet or whichever part of the body is affected. Without much movement at all and my head simply being held, I felt profound relaxation from within. I would not have expected this from any movement of the practitioner's hand, however craniosacral therapy is just that – light touches, gently resting on the body creating a rhythmic motion which ultimately opens the body up for deep relaxation. This type of method basically lets your body move on its own accord with the practitioner's hand readily assisting in your body's own movement. It was a new form of relaxation for me and as soon as the treatment was over, I can honestly say, I felt lighter on my shoulders.

I would not call Chi Yu a spa but most definitely a healing centre that provides special holistic treatments for those that are faced with post-injury issues, chronic tension in the body, and even mums-to-be as the centre offers treatment for pregnant women.



The speciality of Chi Yu is in its knowledge of “complementary medicine and conventional medical knowledge,” Mami says, resulting in highly effective holistic treatments that, “together with optional lifestyle advice, can enhance and support your wellbeing.”

We also asked Mami for a few tips and advice for those working long hours at a desk and who usually suffer from some form of back pain:

- Check your workspace – the height of your desk should be level with your elbows, see if your chair supports your back and that the position & angle of your PC monitor does not make your neck strained. Check if your wrist is not overextended while you are typing.
- Take regular breaks to rest your eyes and do some stretching for your neck and shoulder.
- Sit correctly, use your core muscles to support your lower back when you sit, and avoid slouching your upper back or crossing your legs, which over time, can create the tension in the muscles in the back and shoulders