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Chi Yu Wellness Centre, Marylebone

I have a fascination with the East when it comes to health and beauty. Their holistic approach to medicine has always interested me, even more so since a Chinese doctor fixed my Nan's back hernia that western doctors claimed could only be cured with a very risky surgery. Not to mention their innovation in the beauty arena, with South Korea being where all big Western corporations are looking at for inspiration. So when I walked past Chi Yu on George Street I knew I had to come in for a treatment and for a cup of lovely herbal tea.

A wellness centre, not a spa, Chi Yu is inspired by traditional Japanese philosophy and provides personal holistic treatments to balance body, mind and soul. Chi Yu means healing in Japanese and the complimentary therapies aim to support the body's own healing process. Prior to my treatment I was in contact with the well reputed and very knowledgeable Mami Tsang, who founded the salon over five years ago. She recommended I tried Integrated Therapy, one of their signature and more popular treatments, which combines any number of techniques in order to suit the client's needs and preferences. Anything from aromatherapy and meridian massage to acupuncture and acupressure can be incorporated, based on an initial assessment, to provide a truly bespoke experience.



During my consultation Mami asked me some questions about my physical and emotional strains and I told her all about my back aches, headaches and general stresses associated to the life of an average office worker as well as my daily vivid dreams. I also had to tell her about my ridiculous (yet very real) fear of needles as I didn't think I'd be able to handle acupuncture, so she suggested acupressure instead.

The next step was choosing the essential oils that she would use for the treatment. Based on my needs we agreed on a balance between relaxing and energising and so I got to choose three aromas that Mami then blended together. For the base notes I picked sandalwood, which would help 'ground my mind', the second scent was geranium, a pungent smell that helps achieve balance, and the final oil was orange flower, a refreshing floral scent similar to jasmine.



Mami started with a therapeutic massage that combined western deep tissue techniques with Aromatherapy, Meridian Massage and Thai Yoga. Her hands were very skilled and from the beginning I could feel how effective the massage was on my knots without being painful at any point. The Meridian Massage element is based around the Chinese theory of the life energy path that run across our bodies, while the Thai Yoga moves help your whole body stretch and let go of tensions.

I was very pleased to learn that my fear of needles wouldn't stop Mami working on the key body points that promote the flow of vital energy, also known as Qi. Using acupressure to revitalise and stimulate the body and mind, in my case she focused mostly on the points that link to the brain, kidneys, lungs, and liver. Interestingly, stress often weakens the latter, which can manifest in intense headaches and anxiety.



Next, we move on to craniosacral therapy, used to identify the accumulated tensions and restrictions within the body that result from physical and emotional issues. Mami puts one hand below my back and another on my tummy and through very light touch helps my body release these tensions. She moves her hands slowly upwards along my spine and it's very interesting how strains manifest, with for example, the back of my head becoming increasingly hot without any direct contact.

Finally, it's time for reflexology and eastern foot massage, a technique that's believed to be very powerful and that I've always wanted to try (I don't think what some Thai ladies offer for a tenner on most European beaches counts). This ancient healing art uses finger pressure to access the whole body through the feet

and helps unblock areas of congestion and restore balance. Not only was it incredibly relaxing but I really did feel the tension leaving different parts of my body as specific points and meridians on the feet are massaged.



Chi Yu offers a wide range of oriental and complimentary therapies, as well as holistic beauty treatments, and only uses green, ethical and organic quality products. Overall I thought it was a lovely wellness centre that inspires calm as soon as you walk through the door— a haven in the heart of the city, where East meets West. I'd definitely recommend a visit to all stressed out urbanites!

<http://www.chi-yu.co.uk/>

Integrated Therapy at Chi Yu costs £75 for 60 minutes

Chi Yu, 36 George Street, W1U 7DR



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About the Author



Tatei Montejo Spanish by origin, Londoner by choice, Tatei has lived and worked in the City for the past four years. Lover of all things beauty she's partial to an indulgent spa treatment in the morning followed by a Real Madrid game in the afternoon and a Bellini in the evening

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