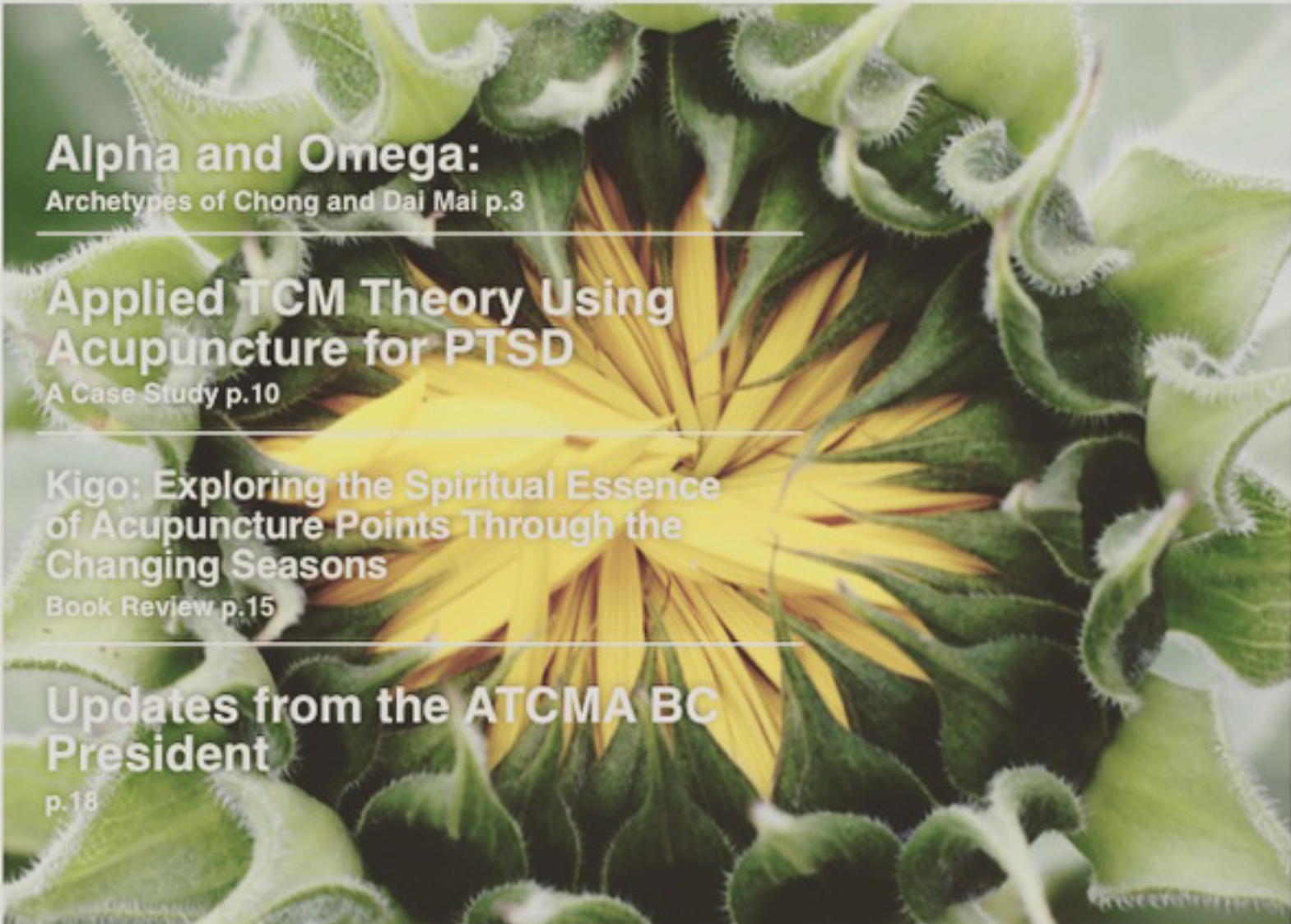


Spring 2021

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Kigo:

Exploring the Spiritual Essence of Acupuncture Points Through the Changing Seasons

By Lorie Dechar

Kigo

Exploring the Spiritual Essence of Acupuncture Points Through the Changing Seasons



SINGING DRAGON

LORIE DECHAR

Reviewed by Care Motika, L.Ac.

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Lorie Eve Dechar's latest book 'Kigo: Exploring the Spiritual Essence of Acupuncture Points Through the Changing Seasons' is an invitation to connect with a broader intelligence of which we are a part, and not the exclusive owners of.

The word 'Kigo' means 'season word' in Japanese, which 'gives us a glimpse of the ephemeral spirit that imbues each moment of the turning year.' For example, 'Last cricket, sickle moon, light snow on crimson leaves,' evokes the seasonal atmosphere. Through the lens of 'kigo', we can meet the seasons, elements and acupuncture points with new eyes. Water, wood, fire, earth and metal become archetypes, even friends, with which we as practitioners can come into relationship. Dechar illustrates that our practice can show reverence for these powerful allies; slowly making their acquaintance instead of assuming ownership.

Dechar brings the reader into the process of the seasons and the Five Elements. With three decades of experience as a poet, teacher and scholar, she aligns the material into a powerful guidebook that invokes the senses, imagination and intellect.

We are in the world of the Five Elements from the moment we open the book. Each chapter begins with one element and its paired season. Through storytelling, she introduces us to the elements, slowly revealing how they live, breathe and move. As we read, we embrace the deeper layers and patterns of these elements and begin questioning our perceptions. What if we could loosen our grip just a little about what we expect to see? How would the world look if we fell back into our senses? One where the seasons can be in present time and not a memory. The pulse is here and now beating like the weather and the wind. This book allows us to take a break from the vigilance of our times, to listen to the old ways of not always needing to know.

'Kigo' takes us on a journey with each element, it's strengths and vulnerabilities. We get to know it's traditional language, pictographs, animal, archetypes and seasons through poetic yet clear explanations.

“The spirit of the Kidneys looks like a Two-Headed Deer. Its name is Mystic Darkness and its color

is xuan 玄 black, so dark as to be nearly invisible. Although it cannot be seen with the ordinary eyes, Mystic Darkness can be seen with the eyes of the Heart, in the white mists of early morning or the gray clouds of twilight, when the vulnerable and easily frightened creatures feel safe enough to emerge from hiding.’

A picture of these fundamental forces is being painted, awakening our imagination. As we go deeper into the chapter we are met with individual acupuncture points. Each point starts out with a haiku written by Dechar that furthers our experience with the material.

In 'Spring equinox. Twilight. The sun dips down behind my back as I greet the rising moon,' she writes about Gall Bladder 24- Sun and Moon-Ri Yue.

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She applies her personal experiences and those of her patients to an element and point to show us what possible cues we are looking for.

Dechar uses Lung 10 on a woman whose mother had died six months earlier. 'I needle Fish Region-Yu Ji with a small, slender needle to support this kind of surrendering to grief, this settling into self-awareness. Used in this way, the point does not erase grief but rather enhances grief's capacity to open us to the preciousness of life by softening, warming and brightening the Metal Element.'

By now, greater understanding of these energetic portals has begun. We are in their story, their myth and their mystery. There is a feeling of excitement about getting to know these points again and again. Each has a certain inherent personality that can shift with each passing season.

The book feels like it practically wrote itself, with a fluidity that is easy to read and comprehend. It flows from one page to another eloquently and succinctly. Particular tools and methods are recommended, such as needling techniques, moxibustion, essential oils and flower essences.

Regarding Heart 8 she says, 'Whether I approach the point with a needle, oil, flower essence or expanded sight, I imagine I am opening the door to a small summer palace where the Empress of the Heart waits to meet me on her crimson throne. The Empress is easily startled and will scatter and hide if my approach is too loud or if I enter without invitation. But if I approach her with care and reverence, she comes forward to meet and receive me.'

These suggestions feel like the author is inviting us to walk through an open door. Through that door are so many possibilities that we could never know all of the combinations in one lifetime. So many possibilities, that it gently shakes the comfortable routine that we might have gotten ourselves into in our own practice. As opposed to picking our favorite 'go to' methods, we may take a pause and think who and what else wants to be included today? What elements are at play for this patient, for me, for us?

This is the way with Dechar's work. She is asking us to be intimate and receptive; willing to make mistakes and pivot. Dechar effortlessly shares her own experiences with what she has seen but always holds the possibility of another way.

I am struck with how unimportant it is to know how to do this perfectly but rather the importance to stay open and curious to the process. To stay aware of the tenderness and vulnerability of people and the seasons and elements they carry within.

The future of this work is a living breathing process not a concept. This book embodies that notion and gives us tools on how to take it into the world, to help our patients and ourselves. This book addresses our 'collective rejection of body wisdom, the yin and the intimate connection between life and death' with the tenderness and attention it so desperately needs. This is a book for our times.

- Care Motika

DISCLAIMER: the views, information, or opinions expressed in this article are solely those of the individual. No compensation was given to the author of this article.



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Care Motika has been in the healing arts field for the past 20 years. She is a licensed acupuncturist in both California and Maine with a degree from Emperors College. She lives in mid-coast Maine where she has her clinic and shop called Window of the Sky. Care offers tele-sessions and in person sessions from her studio in Maine.

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