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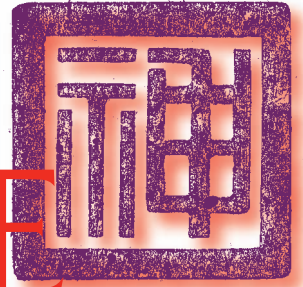
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PRINCIPLES OF  
TRADITIONAL  
CHINESE  
MEDICINE



*The Essential  
Guide to  
Understanding  
the Human  
Body*

XU, XIANGCAI

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## Foreword

I am delighted to learn that *Traditional Chinese Health Secrets* will soon come into the world. TCM has experienced many vicissitudes of times but has remained evergreen. It has made great contributions not only to the power and prosperity of our Chinese nation but to the enrichment and improvement of world medicine. Unfortunately, differences in nations, states and languages have slowed down its spreading and flowing outside China. Presently, however, an upsurge in learning, researching and applying Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is unfolding. In order to bring the practice of TCM to all areas of the globe, Mr. Xu Xiangcai called intellectuals of noble aspirations and high intelligence together from Shandong and many other provinces in China to compile and translate this text. I believe that the day when the world's medicine is fully developed will be the day when TCM has spread throughout the world.

I am pleased to give it my recommendation.

Prof. Dr. Hu Ximing  
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## Foreword

The Chinese nation has been through a long, arduous course of struggling against diseases. Through this struggle, it has developed its own traditional medicine—Traditional Chinese Medicine and Pharmacology (TCMP). TCMP has a unique, comprehensive—both theories and clinical practice—scientific system including both theories and clinical practice.

Though its beginnings were several thousand years ago, the practice of TCM has been well preserved and continuously developed. TCM has special advantages, which include remarkable curative effects and few side effects. It is an effective means by which people can prevent and treat diseases and keep themselves strong and healthy. All achievements attained by any nation in the development of medicine are the public wealth of all mankind. They should not be confined within a single country. What is more, the need to set them free to flow throughout the world as quickly and precisely as possible is greater than that of any other kind of science. During my more than thirty years of being engaged in the practice of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), I have been looking forward to the day when TCMP will have spread all over the world and made its contributions to the elimination of diseases of all mankind. However, it is to be deeply regretted that the pace of TCMP in extending outside China has been unsatisfactory due to the major difficulties involved in expressing its concepts in foreign languages.

Mr. Xu Xiangcai, a teacher of Shandong College of TCM, has sponsored and taken charge of the work of compilation and translation of such knowledge into English. This work is a great project, a large-scale scientific research, a courageous effort and a novel creation. I am deeply grateful to Mr. Xu Xiangcai and his compilers and translators, who have been working day and night for such a long time on this project. As a leader in the circles of TCM, I am duty-bound to do my best to support them.

I believe this text will be certain to find its position both in the history of Chinese medicine and in the history of world science and technology.

Mr. Zhang Qiwen  
*Member of the Standing Committee of All-China Association of TCM, Deputy Head of the Health Department of Shandong Province*

## **Preface**

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is one of China's great cultural heritages. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the treasure house of the theories of TCM has been continuously explored and the plentiful literature researched and compiled. The effort was guided by the farsighted TCM policy of the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese government. As a result, great success has been achieved. Today, a worldwide upsurge has appeared in the studying and researching of TCM. To promote even more vigorous development of this trend in order that TCM may better serve all humankind, efforts are required to further it throughout the world. To bring this about, the language barriers must be overcome as soon as possible in order that TCM can be accurately expressed in foreign languages. Thus, the compilation and translation of a series of English-Chinese books of basic knowledge of TCM has become more urgent to serve the needs of medical and educational circles both inside and outside China.

In recent years, at the request of the health departments, satisfactory achievements have been made in researching the expression of TCM in English. Based on the investigation of the history and current state of the research work mentioned above, has been published to meet the needs of extending the knowledge of TCM around the world.

The encyclopedia consists of twenty-one volumes, each dealing with a particular branch of TCM. In the process of compilation, the distinguishing features of TCM have been given close attention and great efforts have been made to ensure that the content is scientific, practical, comprehensive and concise. The chief writers of the Chinese manuscripts include professors or associate professors with at least twenty years of practical clinical and/or teaching experience in TCM. The Chinese manuscript of each volume has been checked and approved by a specialist of the relevant branch of TCM. The team of the translators and revisers of the English versions consists of TCM specialists with a good command of English professional medical translators and teachers of English from TCM colleges or universities. At a symposium to standardize the English versions, scholars from twenty-two colleges and universities, research institutes of TCM, and other health institutes probed the question of how to express TCM in English more comprehensively, systematically and accurately. The English version of each volume was re-examined and then final checked. Obviously this encyclopedia will provide extensive reading material of TCM English for senior students in colleges of TCM in China and will also greatly benefit foreigners studying TCM. The responsible leaders of three

## Preface

organizations support the diligent efforts of compiling and translating this encyclopedia:

1. State Education Commission of the People's Republic of China
2. State Administrative Bureau of TCM and Pharmacy and the Education Commission
3. Health Department of Shandong Province

Under the direction of the Higher Education Department of the State Education Commission, the leading board of compilation and translation of this encyclopedia was created. The leaders of many colleges of TCM and pharmaceutical factories of TCM have also given assistance.

We hope that this encyclopedia will promote further and improve instruction of TCM in English at the colleges of TCM in China, cultivate the sharing of ideas of TCM in English in medical circles and give impetus to the study of TCM outside China.

# The Concept of Traditional Chinese Medicine

## 1.1 TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE (TCM)

Traditional Chinese Medicine is a discipline that deals with human physiology, pathology, diagnosis and the treatment and prevention of diseases. TCM encompasses a specific, integrated system of theory, which comes from a history of several thousand years of clinical experience. TCM develops from the experience of the Chinese people in their long struggle against diseases. As a result, TCM has contributed a great deal to the promotion of health and prosperity of the Chinese nation and to the further development of medical sciences all over the world as well.

## 1.2 THEORETICAL SYSTEM OF TCM

The theoretical system of TCM consists of the theories of *yin* and *yang*, the five elements, *zang-fu* organs, meridians, pathogenesis, syndrome and techniques of diagnosis. It also includes the therapeutic principles of health preservation and the six natural factors. It is a theoretical system much influenced by ancient materialism and dialectics, with the doctrine on *yin* and *yang* and the concept of integrated whole as its guiding principle. This concept is based in the physiology and pathology of the *zang-fu* organs and meridians. The diagnostic and therapeutic features of TCM include *bianzheng lunzhi*, which is a selection of treatment based on differential diagnosis.

## 1.3 CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF TCM

TCM is mainly characterized by its specific diagnostic techniques and therapeutic principles based on a practitioner's interpretation of the physiological functions and pathological changes of the human body. For instance, TCM regards the body as an integrated whole, closely

interconnected by *zang-fu* organs, channels and collaterals that maintain a close link with the outer world. Where the development of disease is concerned, TCM stresses that endogenous pathogenic factors (namely, seven abnormal emotions) and exogenous pathogenic factors (namely, six exogenous pathogens) play an important role.

TCM utilizes four diagnostic techniques as its principal methods:

- Differentiation of diseases according to the theory of the *zang-fu* organs.
- Differential diagnosis according to the theory of the Six Channels.
- Differential diagnosis by the analysis of *wai, qi, ying* and *xue*.
- Differential diagnosis by the analysis of *san jiao* (tri-*jiao* or triple warmer/triple energizer).

TCM attaches great importance to the prevention and preventive treatment of disease. The practice of TCM maintains that the primary cause or root of a disease must be found and that a patient must be treated according to their physique as well as their seasonal and local conditions. In short, the characteristics of TCM can be summarized as:

- The concept of wholism.
- Selection of treatment based on differential diagnosis.

#### 1.4 THE CONCEPT OF WHOLISM

The concept of wholism refers to a general view of the human body as a single, integrated entity that inter-relates with nature.

The human body is composed of a variety of tissues and organs and each of these performs a particular function and contributes to the life activities of the whole body. Thus, the human body is an integral whole, in that its constituent parts are inseparable in structure and connected with and conditioned by one another.

Because humankind exists in nature, the human body is affected directly or indirectly by any changes that occur in nature.

#### 1.5 *BIANZHENG LUNZHI*

The word *bian* means comprehensive analysis and the word *zheng* refers to symptoms and signs. *Zheng*, however, not only refers to a mere combination of symptoms, but to a pathological generalization of a disease in a certain stage and the relation between body resistance and pathological agents.

When the two words are combined to form the word *bianzheng*, the term refers to the clinical data collected by the four diagnostic tech-

# *Yin-yang* and the Five-element Theory

## 2.1 *YIN-YANG* DOCTRINE

According to ancient Chinese philosophy the *yin* and *yang* are two opposite categories. In the beginning, their meanings were quite simple, referring to turning away from or facing the sunlight respectively. Later, the *yin* and *yang* principles were used to describe an endless variety of things such as weather (cold or warm), position (downward or upward, right or left, internal or external), moving condition (mobile or static) and so on. The philosophers of ancient times observed that each phenomenon had two aspects, which were opposites regardless of the focus. Thus, the *yin* and *yang* theory is known as the basic law of the universe.

*Yin* and *yang* theory states that a natural phenomena contains two opposite aspects, thus forming the concept of the unity of opposites. Generally speaking, things active, external, upward, hot, bright, functional and hyperfunctional are of *yang* nature, while those that are static, internal, downward, cold, dark, substantial and hypofunctional are *yin* in nature.

*Yin-yang* doctrine is used to illustrate the sources and primary forms of movement of all things in the universe and the causes of their beginning and end.

As a theoretical tool in TCM, the *yin-yang* doctrine was applied to the study of physiology and pathology of the body and to diagnosis and treatment of diseases.

## 2.2 THE UNITY OF *YIN* AND *YANG* AS TWO OPPOSITES

Every thing and phenomenon in nature has two opposite aspects, *yin* and *yang*, which are manifested mainly in their mutual restraint and struggle. For example, the motions of celestial bodies, including the sun and the moon and the climactic changes of the four seasons, are the specific manifestations of the unity of opposites between *yin* and *yang*.

# Qi, Blood and Body Fluid

## 3.1 Qi

TCM holds that the term *qi* refers to the essential substance that creates the human body and maintains its life activities. Because *qi* has the properties of powerful vigor and constant movement and because it controls important physiological functions for the human body, TCM often explains the body's life activities in terms of the movement and change of *qi*.

The physiological functions of *qi* include

- Impulsing
- Warming
- Defending
- Communicating
- Regulating

Zhang Jingyue said. "The life of a human being relies totally upon *qi*."

**Formation of Qi.** The *qi* in the human body derives from the integration of three kinds of *qi*:

- Congenital *qi* inherited from the parents.
- Qi from food essence.
- Fresh air inhaled from the external atmosphere through the comprehensive action of the lungs, spleen, stomach, kidneys, and other *zang-fu* organs.

The formation of *qi* is closely related to the physiological functions of the kidneys, spleen, stomach, and lungs, as well as to genetic predisposition, diet, and natural environment. Among them the transporting-transforming function of the spleen and stomach is particularly important, for human placenta depends on the spleen and stomach to absorb nourishment as to maintain life activities. Meanwhile, the congenital essence-*qi* also relies on essential substances from food for replenishment.

# Phase of Viscera

## 4.1 VISCERA

*Zang* (viscera) refers to internal organs of the body; *xiang* (phase or appearance) here refers mainly to the outward physiological and pathological manifestations. Zhang Jingyue, a famous physician in the Ming dynasty said in his *Classified Canon (Leijing)*, “*zang* implies storage, while *xiang*, figure and appearance. Since viscera are located within the body and their phase is observed from the outside of the body, these two characters *zang* and *xiang* put together denote phase of viscera.”

## 4.2 VISCERA-PHASE DOCTRINE

The viscera-phase doctrine states that by observing the physiological and pathological manifestations of the human body, one can study the physiological functions and pathological changes of its various viscera, their interactions and the interrelationship between visceral organs and structures of the body and the external environment.

**Five *Zang* Organs.** The heart, lungs, spleen, liver and kidneys are together known as the five *zang* organs. The *zang* organ was described in *The Yellow Emperor's Internal Canon of Medicine (Huangdi Neijing)* as an internal organ for storing and reserving. The common physiological property of the five *zang* organs is to produce and store vital essence.

**Six *Fu* Organs.** The gallbladder, stomach, small intestine, large intestine, urinary bladder, and tri-*jiao* (triple-burner or triple warmer) are known collectively as the six *fu* organs. The *fu* organ was referred to in the *Huangdi Neijing* as a container or a warehouse. The common functional property of the six *fu* organs is to take in, transport, and transform foodstuffs.

***Qibeng* (Extraordinary) *Fu* Organs.** The two characters, *qi* (this a different character than that of the character *qi* that means energy; this character has the same pinyin enunciation *qi*; here it means unusual) and *beng* (ordinary) put together imply “extraordinary.”

Extraordinary *fu* organs, unlike ordinary ones, include the following six organs: brain, marrow, bone, vessel, gallbladder and uterus. Like the



# Meridians, Channels, and Collaterals

## 5.1 MERIDIAN DOCTRINE

The Meridian Doctrine, or the theory of channels and collaterals, deals with the physiological functions and the pathological changes of the system of the channels and collaterals and their relationship with the *zang-fu* organs.

## 5.2 CHANNELS AND COLLATERALS

Literally, the channel means the “route,” and collateral, the “network.” The channel is the cardinal conduit of the meridian system and the collateral is its branch. “Meridian” is the general term for both the channels and collaterals. The meridian system acts as specific passageways for the circulation of *qi* and blood throughout the body, the interconnection between visceral organs and extremities and the communication of the upper body with the lower and of the interior body parts with the exterior. The channels take a definite route, but the collaterals are widely distributed throughout the body like an interlacing network that combines all structures of the body such as the *zang-fu* organs, body orifices, skin, muscles, tendons, and bones into an integral whole.

## 5.3 MERIDIAN SYSTEM

The meridian system consists of the channels, collaterals, and their connective tissues. This system links the *zang-fu* organs internally and joins the tendons, muscles, and skin externally.

The channels may be classified into two categories: regular channels and extra channels. There are twelve regular channels: the three *yang* channels of hand and foot, as well as the three *yin* channels of both hand

# Etiology and Occurrence of Disease

## 6.1 DISEASE

A disease is commonly considered to be the outcome of the imbalance between *yin* and *yang*, organic trauma, and abnormality in physiological functions of the body. The concept of disease includes the following points:

- A disease is the outcome of pathogenic factors acting upon the body.
- It manifests itself as a life process of imbalance between *yin* and *yang*.
- It is a process undergoing constant changes, during which from beginning to end exists the struggle of opposites between impairment and repair and between obstruction and readjustment of the body.

## 6.2 OCCURRENCE OF DISEASE

The occurrence of a disease refers to the condition in which, under the action of some pathogenic factors, the human body loses the balance between *yin* and *yang*, its *zang-fu* organs are impaired, and its normal physiological functions are disturbed.

Humans are always affected by variations in weather and environmental factors. In the struggle to adapt and transform, humans maintain a relative balance between *yin* and *yang* within the body and its normal physiological functions. A disease may occur when radical or abnormal changes in natural environment go beyond the body's ability to readjust itself. Disease can also occur when the body cannot adapt to pathogens due to insufficient vital essence, thereby bringing about the imbalance between *yin* and *yang* and impairment of the *zang-fu* organs.

# Pathogenesis

## 7.1 PATHOGENESIS

Pathogenesis is the mechanism of occurrence, development and change of a disease. Pathogenesis is closely related to the strength of the body's vital *qi* and nature of the invading pathogenic factors. For example, the invasion of *yang* pathogens tends to consume the body's *yin*-fluid while the invasion of *yin* pathogens impairs the body's *yang-qi*. This disturbs the relative balance between *yin* and *yang*. As a result of this imbalance the *zang-fu* organs and channels and collaterals can become dysfunctional, as well as the *qi* and blood. This in turn can bring about a variety of general or local pathological changes that manifest in ever changing clinical symptoms. Therefore, the general pathogenesis of a disease is inseparable from the wax or wane of vital *qi* and pathogens, the imbalance between *yin* and *yang*, the disorder of *qi* and blood and the dysfunction of *zang-fu* organs and channels and collaterals.

## 7.2 WAX OR WANE OF VITAL *Qi* AND PATHOGENS

The wax or wane of vital *qi* and pathogens refers to the struggle between vital *qi* and invading pathogens in the onset of a disease. The constant struggle between them is not only prevalent during the cause of disease but during the recovery period as well. The wax and wane of pathogens and vital *qi* also determines the nature of pathological changes such as the excess syndrome or deficiency syndrome.

**Excess Syndrome.** Su Wen states, "An excess syndrome results when the invading pathogens are exuberant." That is to say that although the invading pathogens are excessive, the body's defensive *qi* does not decline. As a result, a fierce struggle between them creates a series of pathological reactions of excess known as excess syndrome. This syndrome is often observed in the early or middle stages of an exogenic disease due to stagnation of phlegm, food, blood or water in the body. Its clinical manifestations are high fever, mania, high voice and strong breath, abdominal pain and tenderness, and constipation. Additionally

# Diagnostic Method

## 8.1 DIAGNOSTIC METHOD

The diagnostic method refers to the four basic techniques for diagnosis. They are: inspection auscultation, olfaction, interrogation and palpation. TCM holds that the human body is an organic whole whose component parts are physiologically interconnected and pathologically interactive. Therefore, local lesions affect the entire body and disorders of internal organs, in turn, manifest on the body's surface, especially on the five sense organs and the extremities. Diagnosticians use the four techniques to examine a disease's symptoms and signs, allowing them to determine the disease's causes, pathogenesis, and most effective treatment.

## 8.2 INSPECTION AND OBSERVATION

Inspection is a method of observing the patient's mental state, complexion, physical condition, and behavior to gain clinical data concerning the disease. All visible signs related to the disease are within the scope of inspection. Since the face and the tongue have close relation to the five *zang* organs and the six *fu* organs and since the vicissitudes of the *zang-fu* organs are most easily reflected by the appearance and color of these organs, they are the most common places for observation. Inspection of the superficial venules of the infant's index finger, as a special diagnostic method in pediatrics, is of great significance in the diagnosis of childhood diseases.

## 8.3 OBSERVATION OF VITALITY

To inspect a patient's vitality, one must observe the changes in the *zang-fu* organs. Vitality, a general term for life processes of the human body, is twofold:

1. Outward manifestations of all life activities
2. Thought and consciousness

Vitality cannot exist without a healthy physique; conversely, a diseased physique can certainly lead to abnormal vitality. As a result, the vicissitudes of vitality are an important mark of whether or not the

# Differential Diagnosis

## 9.1 BAGANG BIANZHENG (DIAGNOSIS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE EIGHT PRINCIPAL SYNDROMES)

To recap: The eight principal syndromes are: exterior or interior, cold or heat and deficient or excessive, *yin* or *yang*. *Bagang bianzheng* is a method of differential diagnosis used to determine the nature and location of pathological changes and the conflict between body resistance and pathogens in terms of the eight principal syndromes. This method focuses on a comprehensive analysis of all of the data obtained by means of inspection, auscultation and olfaction, interrogation, pulse feeling and palpation.

## 9.2 DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS OF INTERIOR OR EXTERIOR SYNDROME

A method of differential diagnosis used to determine the action of pathological changes and the development tendency of a disease.

**Exterior Syndrome.** Exterior syndrome is caused by an attack of the superficialities by six exogenous pathogens through the skin, hair, mouth, and nose. It is sudden in onset, superficial and mild in nature, and short in duration without affecting the function of *zang-fu* organs in most cases.

**Interior Syndrome.** Interior syndrome is characterized by pathological changes of the internal organs caused by pathogens. Interior syndrome is produced by:

- Exogenous pathogens that either enter the interior from the superficialities or directly invade the *zang-fu* organs.
- Other factors that affect the functions of *zang-fu* organs, such as emotional upset, improper diet, or overstrain.

**Invasion from the Exterior to the Interior.** Invasion from the exterior to the interior includes the invasion of pathogens from the superficial part of the body to the deep parts, or the replacement of

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