

# DIFFERENTIATING SYNDROME ACUPUNCTURE (*BIAN-ZHENG ZHEN-JIU*) & HERBAL PRESCRIPTION (*BIAN-ZHENG FANG-JI*) - A NEW HEALING PARADIGM FOR WESTERN MEDICINE

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The majority of diseases are not clear-cut, mechanical disturbances as Western orthodox medicine presumes, but holistic and individual syndromes as understood by Eastern medicine and as depicted in complex Chinese ideographs. Modern Western therapy is not concerned with an integrated analysis of the whole system of the human being but tries instead to combine heterogeneous views of different specialist areas by perceiving human individuals just as bodily objects, as an *a posteriori* in philosophical terms. Thus, orthodox medicine increases parameters and data without understanding the human being from the inside, something which becomes possible by applying a *Differentiating Syndrome Diagnosis* (Chinese: *Bian-Zheng*). Immanuel Kant's statement that "all knowledge is transcendental" should be effectuated in Western medicine. Transcendental information is contained in ancient Chinese medical characters as an *a priori*. Chinese medicine is the "Medicine of Time", the powerful New Paradigm of Natural Healing, which is instrumental in extending human life expectancy (WHO). This is in line with Aristotle's definition of Nature (φύσις) and consistent with the work of famous Western medical authorities of the past like Hippocrates, Paracelsus, Hufeland and others. Here, the Occidental roots of Chinese medicine can be found, namely in the Western cultural tradition.

**Key words:** Chinese syndrome acupuncture and herbal prescriptions, Chinese differentiating diagnoses (*Bian-Zheng*), The concept of nature (φύσις) in Aristotle physics, The *a priori* and *a posteriori* (Immanuel Kant) in medicine, Randomised and controlled studies on acupuncture, Transcendental aspects of - medicine, Human homeodynamics (homeostasis), A new healing paradigm: "Medicine of Time", Occidental roots of Eastern medicine.

## 1. Epistemological Considerations Concerning a New Paradigm in Medicine

Preliminary remark: The term "paradigm" was coined by the American physicist and philosopher, Thomas S. Kuhn, in his book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn explained paradigms as "universally recognised

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scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners”. Later in this lecture we will see that Chinese medicine and *Zhen-Jiu* are oriented toward and based on the horizon and the flow of time, which turns out to be the skyline as well as the condition for all further intellectual reflections. Orientation according to the rhythm of time, then, is *the paradigm of the whole*- the paradigm of *all* paradigms.

The cognitive starting point of orthodox Western medicine is the division of the unity of the human being into body and soul, of the world into matter and mind, “nature” and spirit. From there arise the so-called objectifications of medical findings in Western medicine: documentation of parameters such as laboratory tests, ECG curves, X-ray photos of all kinds, measurements like blood pressure values etc., as well as less spectacular medical specialities such as psychoanalysis and psychological treatment. In short: the paradigm, the foundation, the reason and (in the original *Latin* meaning) the *ratio* of orthodox medicine can be characterized as the “objectivity of the object”. That is why Western medicine describes the human organism as a *body*, a term borrowed from the vocabulary of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century physics which only applies to bodily objects, not to living beings. We know that orthodox medicine is incapable of dealing with the human individual as a *being*, namely the human being, understood as a *whole*.

Because of this somewhat artificial constitution, the procedure of orthodox Western medicine can be characterized by using an acknowledged philosophical term as a medicine *a posteriori*, something which implies the primary necessity of a prerequisite assumption which is later on neither questioned nor discussed again.

On the other hand, Chinese medicine is a medicine *a priori* because it does not require any artificial prerequisite as a starting point. Chinese medicine originates from *Yin-Yang*, which represents the flow of time as we will see later, and arises simply from Nature as it really is, it has the Natural Actuality (gr. φυσικ) of which Aristotle speaks in his famous lecture “*On Nature*” which is the authentic basis of all further scientific reasoning-including Galilei and Newton, modern science as well as nuclear and quantum physics- in the West over the centuries and millennia:

“Among the existing things some are out of Nature, others are due to other causes Nature and Natural Actuality (φυσικ) has everything which has the basic reason for its creation, change and stability in itself and this applies to all living beings in contrast to all other things which are produced artificially. Natural Actuality is an underlying or basic substance (gr. ὑποκειμενον) and “Natural Actuality” implies that it has underlying quality which is due to Nature.... It would be a ridiculous attempt to try to *prove* that Natural Actuality exists, since it is evident many things of this sort exist.... To rely on the non-obvious to establish what is evident is a sign of being incapable of distinguishing between what is and what is not intelligible in itself.... People in this kind of situation argue only at the level of hollow terms and concepts but do not understand anything. “(Aristotle, *On Nature* [Lecture on Physics B], Book II, Chapter 1, 192-193)

We will see in the following that (Chinese Medicine and *Zhen-Jiu* (which is not adequately translated as “acupuncture”) arise from Nature, belong to Nature, to φυσικ as the underlying substance, the *Hypokeimenon* of which Aristotle speaks in his work. The underlying principle of Chinese Medicine is the natural power of self-

regulation and of self-healing within not only every human but also every living being, something the medical profession sometimes refers to as homeodynamics (or not quite so plausibly as *homeostasis*), and this foundation of Chinese Medicine is not only evident, it also possesses a high logical quality because it is grounded in the time-honoured epistemological tradition of Occidental thought and of Western scientific reasoning itself.

At no time has Chinese Medicine departed from its innate foundation on Nature which is identical with the *a priori* of Occidental educated and cultivated humankind, namely with Aristotle's *Physis*, with Nature and Natural Actuality which is, as well, the source of (but is no longer identical with) the concepts of "Nature" in modern natural sciences, since these, same as orthodox medicine, follow the idea of the "objectivity of the object" as much as the mind-matter-split both of which represent an '*a posteriori*' in the tradition of Western thought.

The dogmatic attitude of orthodox medicine towards Chinese Medicine, however, implies the tacit switch from what is *a priori* and *a posteriori* by making a claim to *prove* the efficacy of *Zhen-Jiu*, acupuncture and Chinese Medicine by demanding studies on randomised and controlled patients' groups in order to establish the effect of needle and moxa therapy "scientifically", and, in doing so, uses diagnoses of the orthodox Western type. We will see later that Western type diagnoses are of limited relevance to the clinical application of Chinese differentiating syndrome diagnoses (*Bian-Zheng*) which are basic for Chinese medicine because the majority of Western diagnoses (e.g. hypertension, trigeminal neuralgia, hyperthyroidism) are not grounded on the *a priori* of Nature but just on the *a posteriori* of the "objectivity of the object".

Aristotle's verdict about those who cannot distinguish and who "do not understand anything", is fully applicable to the demand of orthodox Western medicine to prove the effects of acupuncture and Chinese medicine only by objectifying measurements and by statistics. Western medical men following this track are "relying on the non-obvious to establish the obvious". Moreover, they are not familiar with the fundamentals of occidental logic since their mistake in reasoning represents the so-called *petitio principii*, a logical error which suggests "obtaining a proof under false pretences".

How important the distinction is between what can and what cannot be proven by logical reasoning is mentioned in other parts of Aristotle's work. In his *Metaphysics* he states:

"If someone does not know for which things a proof can be sought and for which things not, this just shows a deficiency in education". (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book IT, chapter 4, 1006a)

## 2. Perception and Cognition in Chinese Medicine

Understanding the human being is entirely different in Chinese medicine compared with that of Western medicine. Between both there are no comparable levels of reasoning, let alone of congruence. As far as I am concerned, the incredible success of Chinese medicine in the West is simply due to the fact that it has quite unexpectedly opened up certain fundamental and essential dimensions of traditional occidental thought and understanding



Fig. 1. *Yin-Yang*.



Fig. 2. *Zhong-The Middle Kingdom*.

of humanity and of the world which were for long suppressed and forgotten in the Western community. Accordingly, Chinese medicine brings us back to our own roots and sheds a new light on what we call actuality (gr. *ἐνέργεια*), reality and evidence.

Chinese medicine starts with *Yin-Yang* which means dark and light, moon and sun, night and day as appearing periodically on the sky, phenomena which involve the horizon of time.

The circumference of the *Yin-Yang* emblem represents heaven according to Chinese tradition, whereas earth is represented by a quadrangle. That is why China, the Middle Kingdom and the Middle Way of Confucianism what is the same, is depicted as the centre of the earth in Chinese pictographs.

The occidental pre-socratic philosophers have at the outset of Western thought identified time as the one and the only authentic basis for the coming into being, the opposition and the final expiring of all things according to their mutual guilt. This was first stated by Anaximander (610-546 BC). Herakleitos (544-483 BC) determined the flow of time as well as its dualistic and contradictory alternation as the greatest power on earth, something which comes close to Chinese *Yin-Yang* teachings and to the Book of Changes (*Yi-Jing*).

Aristotle's *On Nature* contains the passage:

"All those things which are liable to de cease and to generation, which sometimes exist and sometimes do not, are necessarily in time"... . "All those things which time does not contain in any manner neither were nor are nor will be". (Aristotle, *On Nature A*, Book IV, chapter 12, 221-222).

More than two thousand years later, the German philosopher of the Age of Enlightenment, Immanuel Kant, explains this in an almost identical statement in his *Critique of Pure Reason*:

"The time is a formal condition *a priori* for all phenomena in general"... . "Time is not an empirical based on an experience"... . "Time is a necessary apprehension which is the foundation of all perception".... . "Hence, time is *a priori*". (Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A p. 31 ff, B p. 46 ff.)

The horizon and the flow of time is always present in a traditional Chinese diagnosis, a Syndrome Differentiation (*Bian Zheng*) because each single syndrome maintains and keeps up the connection with *Yin-Yang*. The time flow has to be taken into account in Chinese therapy in applying acupuncture, herbal prescriptions, *Tui-Na* massage, *Qi Gong* and other kinds of treatment, provided that they are at all based on a syndrome differentiation.

In passing I wish to recall that in Chinese medical texts the classical pictograph for “Time” stands at the very beginning. Chapter 1 of the book *Su-Wen*, entitled “Celestial Genuineness of the Ancestors” (*Shang-Gu Tian-Zhen*), contains the respective character “Shi” eight times. The pictograph “Bu” stands in the same section for contradiction or negation, and is, not unlike ARISTOTLES’ *Metaphysics*, used in chapter 1 of the *Su-Wen* sixteen times as the most important character of the whole paragraph. That for “Shen” is used six times, “Qi” is only mentioned three times. In addition, time is already intrinsically contained in the structure of such characters as shown in Fig. 3.

These few examples may suffice to demonstrate that the dimension which is called metaphysical or transcendental in Western tradition is constitutional for the design of classical Chinese medical as well as other characters. Such transcendental understanding of the ancient Chinese texts in the West is extremely important for Western doctors who try to practice Chinese medicine and for Chinese physicians practicing Chinese medicine in the West because terms of our Western languages, made up from the 26 letters of our alphabet, normally do not communicate transcendental information and understanding, at all.

Immanuel Kant called all knowledge transcendental, “which is occupied not so much with objects as with our mode of cognition of objects, so far as this is possible *a priori*” (*Critique of Pure Reason* B25, All-12). The essential

Shi (time) 時	日 is the sun, 艸 means seasonal growing of plants, 寸 means palpation of the pulse on the human individual's wrist.
Yin 陰	The shadow of a cloud 云 brought about by the obscured sun (sun → dark → time).
Yang 陽	Time is intrinsically contained in the character sun 日 and in the rays of sun.
Qi 氣	Rice 米 is digested in (the Middle Burner of) the organism and by this process circulating blood 血氣 is produced.
Shen 示申	示 means transcendental influences from heaven, sun and moon on humankind. 申 means to give account, to enlarge and to spread.
Emptiness (xu) 虚	A high landscape which is barren and empty.
Fullness (shi) 實	To have heaps of bundled cash 帑 in the house which means to be really rich.

Fig. 3. Examples that show “time” as an intrinsically contained structure of classical Chinese long characters.

task of analysing ancient Chinese medical pictographs with regard to their transcendental information has not yet been recognised in the West, let alone been attempted so far in Western languages. To conclude this section I will not hesitate to characterize Chinese Medicine as a “Medicine of Time”, a term which may serve for a while in order to establish a New Paradigm in the task of healing.

### 3. The Practical Approach: Differentiating Syndromes (*Bian Zheng*) versus Orthodox Western Diagnoses (*Bian-Bing*)

The practical approach of *Zhen-Jiu* physicians to their patients' illnesses should be based on a *Chinese syndrome diagnosis* which differs considerably from the orthodox Western diagnostic point of view and, consequently, from the Western type of diagnosis.

How is such a syndrome diagnosis achieved? *Yin-Yang* can be characterized as the horizon of time, the *Tao* which means the way or path which everything, including humankind takes. From this time related horizon all further steps and phenomena can be deducted. *Yin-Yang*, the dark and light visible on the sky, in other words the order of the universe, is the origin as well as the ground of Chinese medicine. All diagnostic procedures (observing, hearing and smelling, taking the patients history, palpation-including pulse and tongue diagnosis) stem from here. Chinese medical diagnosis is an analysis, and analysis means: “Retracing to a basic connection within a system”. (after Martin Heidegger, Zollikon Seminars, p. 150). Provided that the horizon of time is taken into account as the starting point for this analysis, Chinese medicine is an analytic procedure. Such a procedure is logically characterized as deductive. The Chinese physician deduces his diagnostic findings from the horizon of time, namely from *Yin-Yang*.

Set against this, the way of proceeding in orthodox medicine is inductive, because a multitude of isolated measurements and data, objectifying observations are needed in order to come to a conclusion on a “Whole”, namely the unified human being, which, paradoxically does not exist for the orthodox medical person as long as the artificial basis of orthodox medicine, the “objectivity of the object” represents the foundation, the questionable “ratio” of orthodox scientific reasoning. Thus, orthodox medicine can only deal with parts. Allow me to quote Aristotle again: “The Whole is more than the sum of its parts”. (Aristotle, *On Nature A*, Book I, chapter 1, 1 84a).

In order to show the distinction between both types of diagnoses, the orthodox Western and the traditional Chinese, an example of a typical syndrome differentiation will be demonstrated. In this way, the integrating, holistic, and patient-centred character of the Chinese method is shown and can be distinguished from Western diagnostic procedure, which is reductionist, objective, and predominantly concerned with objective measurements and the isolated symptoms of a disease.

The syndrome of “Emptiness of the yin of the Heart and the Kidney with Emptiness Fire” is such an example and comprises the following 16 clinical symptoms:

1. Lower Back Pain

2. Pain in the knee joints
3. Sweating during the night
4. Anxiety
5. Insomnia
6. Dizziness (giddiness)
7. Deafness and tinnitus
8. Loss of hair
9. Dental disease
10. Hyperthyroidism
11. Paroxysmal tachycardia
12. High blood pressure
13. Mental depression
14. Trigeminal neuralgia
15. Red tongue without coating
16. Sparse and fast pulse

In terms of Western specialised areas, according to orthodox medical thinking, at least ten specialists would need to attend to a patient suffering from such symptoms.

1. A specialist in orthopaedics (for lower back and joint pain)
2. A specialist in internal medicine (for high blood pressure)
3. A psychiatrist (for mental depression, insomnia, and anxiety)
4. A neurologist (for dizziness [giddiness] and trigeminal neuralgia)
5. A dermatologist (for loss of hair)
6. A specialist in dentistry (for dental disease)
7. A specialist in endocrinology (for hyperthyroidism)
8. A cardiologist (for tachycardia)
9. A specialist in gastroenterology (for the red tongue)
10. A specialist in ENT (for deafness and tinnitus).

For a proper and adequate treatment of “Emptiness of the *yin* of the Heart and the Kidneys”, however, one single physician, well-trained in Western medicine, Chinese medicine, and *Zhen-Jiu*, will suffice. It is not sufficient, however, in our modern world to be just a specialist in Chinese medicine without having thorough knowledge in orthodox Western medicine and epistemology including the roots of Occidental culture.

The professional modern doctor of Chinese medicine must be an expert in both, in order to be able to differentiate and treat a Chinese syndrome as well as a Western diagnosis. This one doctor is then able to cure the

patient more effectively and faster than the ten highly specialized Western consultants. In addition, the *Zhen-Jiu* doctor's professional services are available at much lower cost.

#### **4. Treatment of the Syndrome “Emptiness of the Yin of the Heart and the Yin of the Kidney with Emptiness Fire”**

##### **4.1. Treatment by needle therapy**

The following foramina (points) are chosen according to their syndrome effect and can be punctured:

*Xino Hat* (heart meridian 3)

*Tai Xi* (kidney meridian 3)

*San Yin Jim* (spleen meridian 6)

*Shen Men* (heart meridian 7)

*Guan Yuan* (conception vessel 4)

*Zu San Li* (stomach meridian 36)

*Ju Que* (conception vessel 14)

*Shen Shu* (bladder meridian 23)

*Xin Shu* (bladder meridian 15)

##### **4.2. Treatment with herbal prescription**

This syndrome condition should be treated with a blend of two well known classical Chinese prescriptions, namely

“Tian Wang Bu Xin Tang” and “Liu Wei Di Huang Tang”.

The selection of ingredients, their varying quantification and the change of the components should be undertaken according to:

- the traditional rules of Chinese prescription,
- special features of the individual patient and
- current diagnostic changes (using tongue and pulse control etc.).

For instance the following ingredients may be selected:

##### **(Part 1: Taken from *Bu Xin Tang*)**

*Sheng Di Huang* (Rehmannia root)

*Xuan Shen* (Scrophularia root)

*Pen Shen* (Ginseng root)

*Dan Gui* (Angelica root)

*Mai Men Dong* (Ophiopogon root)

*Suan Zao Ren* (Ziziphus seeds)

*Mu Wei Zi* (Schizandra fruit)

**(Part 2: Taken from *Liu Wei Di Huang Tang*)**

*Shan Yao* (Yams [*Dioscorea*] root)

*Fu Lang* (*Sclerotium Poriae*)

*Ze Xie* (Rhizome of *Alisma plantago-aquatica*)

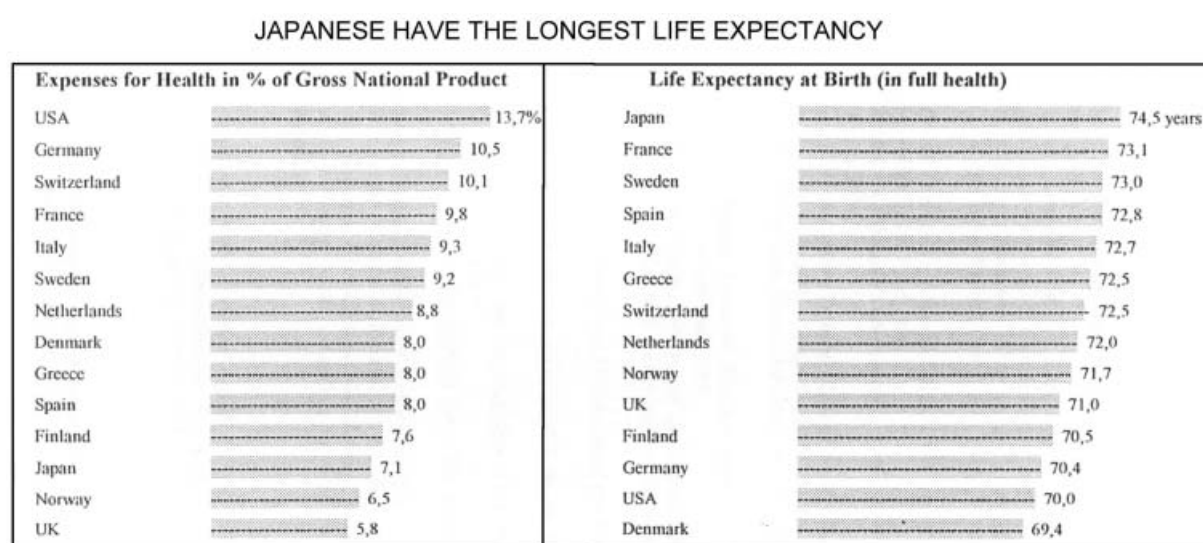
*Shan Zhu Yu* (Fruit of *Cornus officinalis*)

Explaining the clinical approach for an effective professional treatment of patients with acupuncture and herbal prescriptions according to differentiating syndromes will be part of another lecture which will cover differentiating syndromes.

## 5. Conclusion

It is worth mentioning here that the majority of diseases in medical practice are not clear-cut, mechanical disturbances as Western medicine presumes and as orthodox Western diagnoses try to make believe, but holistic individual syndromes as understood by traditional Eastern medicine. The realistic and correct approach to their cure, therefore, is not the Western procedure but the Chinese method of syndrome differentiation and therapy. The idea prevailing in the West, with its mechanistic model of the human organism as just a complicated machine interferes with the natural and basically reasonable thinking in Eastern medicine and contrasts with the Occidental cultural tradition. The essential task for us Westerners is to get back to our own cultural roots.

Orthodox modern western therapy is in general not concerned with an integrated analysis of the whole system of the human body, but tries instead to combine the heterogeneous, often contradictory views of different Western medical specialist areas and therapeutic measures. By pursuing these ideas, Western medicine mainly increases data on



Source: WHO/2000

**Fig. 4. WHO – Life expectancy 2000.**

the human organism. From modern computer science one understands, however, that intelligence does not actually consist of increasing, but of decreasing data.

Specialised Western approaches were developed on the basis of a non-integrative thinking, which lacks the ability to understand the various aspects of the human being as a unity. The side effects of Western therapy and the explosion of costs in Western health care result directly from an incongruency between the methods of Western medicine and the reality of the patient as a whole.

In other words, Western medicine is not able to focus on the real problems of individual health and disease. Compared with countries in which multi-specialised Western health systems prevail, overall costs are much less in countries where *Zhen-Jiu* and Chinese medicine handle basic medical care and where, consequently, life expectancy is higher.

This can be seen on a diagram published by the World Health Organisation in 2000 where the life expectancy is amazingly low in those countries who spend the most money on medical technology and equipment (the United States of America and Germany), whereas in Japan, a country with a considerably high potential in complementary (especially Chinese and Japanese) medicine, life expectancy is extended. The future for Chinese as well as for Western medicine, however, lies in an intelligent synthesis and application of the two different methods and in an enlightened evaluation of both medical procedures.

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# 辨證論治針灸與方劑一 西方醫學治療範例

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大多數疾病相當複雜，並非如西方醫學假定的僅是簡單機械性障礙，而是類似東方醫學所認知的整體與個別證型，有如豐富的中國文字來表現。

現代西方醫學治療，並非基於人體各系統所表現的整體情況作分析，而是以不同專科領域所診察得知結果，來加以整合，將人體當作物件，如哲學中的後天概念。正統醫學在參數與數值分析相當進展，但沒有真正從內在去了解人類。採用辯證可以從內在去了解人類，康德曾說：「所有的知識均為超自然的。」這句話可在西方醫學看到實例。在早期中國醫學便相當重視先天自然觀。中國醫學重視時間醫學，是一種強而有力的自然痊癒的範例，可藉以提高世界衛生組織所寄望重視人類生活品質，這與亞里斯多德對自然的定義是一致的，也包括過去著名的西方醫學學者如希波克拉提斯、帕拉西斯、赫夫蘭、韓尼曼等的著作相符，在此，可找到在中國醫學裏的西方根源，也是西方文化傳統原來所擁有的。