

Short Commentary

Commentary on Central-Earth Splenic Equilibrium from Philosophical Aspects

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Philosophical view of yin-yang originated by Nature

I mentioned in my papers that the original medicinal context of TCM was deduced from nature, which was inherited by our ancestors in past history [1-3]. Thereafter, Human-Universe Unification becomes an important issue in the worldview of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Philosopher Northrop once proposed two different conceptual thinking between the west and east cultures, which is the concept of intuition and the concept of postulation [4]. Meanwhile, the way of thinking in TCM tends towards intuition. Apparently, the concept of Neijing was intuition in which Dr. Porkert further explained in the way of macrocosmic and microcosmic dimensions [2,3]. We can feel and sense six-qì in the manner of a macrocosmic dimension: wind, cold, summer, heat, dampness, dryness and fire are those basic elements from nature. By means of yin-yang transformation, it may further be subdivided into the three-yin and three-yang, which are matched into the six-qì. Consequently, we have six-qì belongs to the real part (matter) whilst yin-yang is the imaginary part (mind). The real part can be sensed through our sensory organs but the imaginary part is not which can only be patternized in our mind. This point of view can further be applied to microcosmic visceral organs which are the liver, heart, spleen, lung, kidney, which is the substance (real part) and correlates respectively to wood, fire, earth, metal, water which are the form (imaginary part). It is compatible to I Ching which defines that substance or matter is the body (體) and form or pattern is the function (用).

Most of the time, it may work well with yin-yang relating to the five-element but not the five visceral organs. That means it focuses on the function. The five-element, which have had the attributes of their own entity (visceral organ) as: Emerging, Maturing, Transforming,

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Shrinkage and Consolidation [1], that is the conceptual functioning of the form. When the five-element circuit phases have been established, qì as a mover in the circuit, achieves an up-down, in-out vivid gateway which is interconnected to Human-Universe Unification. Like this mover, Confucius said, "What does Heaven say? The four seasons proceed, a hundred things are born; what does Heaven say?" expressing that Heaven (Nature/Universe) doesn't need to speak because of its actions. Illustrating that nature as a mover which is not necessarily to talk, humans are able to inspire from it. In the doctrine of Neijing, there are a lot of yin-yang theories derived from nature which have been applied to treat diseases successfully with clinical proof by our ancestors. Coincidentally, it is implied to the philosophical point of view, "Practice is the sole criterion for testing truth." For TCM, we have theory from Neijing and clinical experience for over two thousand years. Although the gap between east and west is wide, they can both treat diseases effectively and become common ground.

Treatment strategy based on the Eight Principal Syndromes

Basically, there are two separate modes of treatment strategy taking into account in TCM. As I mentioned that TCM always focuses on the organ's functional activities, not the visceral organ itself [1]. This statement is also a core concept in TCM diagnosis and treatment. Diseases in the TCM worldview can be summarized into eight categories, which is well-known as the Eight Principal Syndromes (EPS) and it is the structuralized yin-yang. Dr. Porkert mentioned that Yin and yang convey the idea of polar quality of all effects [5]. Categories of the EPS are as follows: yin-yang, exterior-interior, cold-heat and deficiency-excessiveness. Generally, it represents the general direction of treatment in TCM. Clinically, we may categorize patients with yin insufficiency which may further promote body heat. Due to EPS concepts, it is good enough to treat yin deficiency heat syndrome alone but not necessary to treat the disease itself. More precisely, it supports the concept of treating different diseases by the same method (異病同治). For instance, chronic productive cough is some kind of chronic bronchitis which may be diagnosed with yin deficiency. This diagnosis is made accurately. The TCM doctor just prescribed medications to relieve this yin-deficiency and the disease of the bronchus can be cured. I reiterate that EPS can be applied to treat diseases which are based on the directional indication, and sometimes it pertains to the methodology (法) in TCM. Actually, it is derived from the four essential clinical skills in TCM: principal (理), methodology (法), formula (方), herbal medicine (藥) and it is the core concept of differentiation of symptom-complexes (辨證).

Function of the Spleen and its Opposition

Spleen is the substrate itself (real part) and dampness is its function (imaginary part). I mentioned in my article that the splenic earth which handles and balances metabolic water in our body is called the dampness-earth [3]. Dampness actually might damage the function of the splenic earth, and it may frequently cause fatigue symptoms [3]. Hereby, the balance/equilibrium between deficiency and redundancy

as well as the idea of opposition will be further clarified. Studying of equilibrium from visceral orbis of the spleen, we should focus on the properties of the central earth, as the qi mover refers to Figure 3 & 6 in my paper [3].

Is dryness the opposition of dampness? The answer is not always be true. There are two comments on this question. Firstly, dampness and dryness have had a common ground, which is humidity. Generally, too much water vapor is dampness and less is dryness. Since different visceral organ orbis, which represent the level of dampness, are different. The spleen may work well by maintaining its dampness. The central splenic earth works well that means water metabolism and transportation smoothly throughout our body [1]. Secondly, opposition always conceives a positive power. Lao Tzu said, “The opposite is the movement of the Tao” (反者道之動). Although a property of the spleen is dampness, our ancestors told us that the spleen likes dryness and dislikes dampness, which are complementary. It also applies to water(cold) and fire(hot). They are not the opposite proposition. As I Ching implies, “Water and fire helping each other (水火共濟)”.

Conclusion

TCM is simply deduced from nature which fits into the concept of intuition. Reductionism of modern philosophy, which simplifies complexity by breaking down systems into fundamental parts, is really similar to processing the concept of intuition because of its simplicity. Prior to achieving concepts, there must be some sort of related knowledge in our minds which is Tao defined by Lao Tzu. He said “Tao gave birth to One, One gave birth to Two, Two gave birth to Three, and Three gave birth to all things.” Apparently, Tao represents thinking and knowledge of a human mind.

A final word elicits from Neijing, which said that knowing the essentials can be summed up with just a single word (知其要者，一言而終), this refers to grasping the meaning of the concept of intuition is important. Essentially, the concept of splenic earth equilibrium focuses on vital energy balance, which is regulated by microcosmic visceral orbis. This equilibrium status will be adjusted from proto-beginning to the end of a man’s life. Keep this in mind, Central-Earth splenic theory is applied due to the simplicity of yin-yang. Someone who studied and delved into the teaching of splenic earth but deposed yin-yang, will be led astray from truth. It was given by the teaching of Zhuangzi who said, “Forget the trap after you have caught the fish” (得魚忘筌). Being a TCM doctor, both the concepts of intuition, the doctrine of Neijing, and empirical clinical experience are all of them basic needs. Always keep in mind that the priority is the theory of yin-yang and, secondly, medical knowledge while owning both of them is perfect. Concurrently, evidence-based medicine is a popular topic. When traditional Chinese medicine achieves clinical efficacy that correlates to its theoretical foundations, I believe that it has already met a form of evidence-based requirement.

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