

CCM versus TCM

Introduction

There are many differences between the omnipresent TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine), and the less known wǔ yùn liù qì acupuncture, known as CCM (Classical Chinese Medicine). One of the main differences is found in the way of treatment. If a TCM practitioner diagnoses an inadequate liver - (gān) qì, liver points will be chosen for treatment. A stems & branches practitioner (wǔ yùn liù qì practitioner), will choose points from channels that will nourish the liver - (gān), or points on channels that are in *opposition* of liver - (gān), to harmonise. Points of the liver - (gān) are not chosen, as this organ is out of order. Nourishing will be according the shēng - nourishing cycle. Opposition indicates a relationship with another organ that is placed opposite to it, in the system of the heavenly stem, earthly branches, or the wǔ xíng. This relationship is known as *xiāng kè qì*, a yīn-yáng opposition relationship.

The practical principles in an acupuncture clinic, are based on philosophical doctrines. They describe the universe, existence of space and time, heaven and earth. The metaphorically presented principles describe the laws of the universe, like the four emanations with its centre. This last principle describes the creation of *men* in a pluriform way, based on the number five (four plus its centre). In treatment, all of those laws and principles are applied to perform a strategy based on those universal principles.

Another important concept is the comparison of the *macrocosm* with the *microcosm*. This concept is known to any acupuncturist. Practitioners proclaim to embrace the above described principles, while their daily life practice, in terms of diagnosis and treatment, is much more closely aligned to choosing points according a set formula. It is possible to be acquainted with all kind of philosophical principles, and above all, being able to apply this in clinical practice.

The Chinese calendar is a lunar calendar system, and is part of the wǔ yùn liù qì doctrine, applied in practise. The calendar on its own, is not so fascinating. It is the connection between cycles of years, months, days and hours, connected with the zàng fǔ, the internal organs. These are the so-called stem and branch of the year, month, day, and hour, known as the four pillars. The knowledge of this system makes it possible to treat each patient on an individual way, taking into consideration the available qì on the moment of treatment.

The *personal qì* of the patient is based on the four pillars. The combination of four aspects of time, connected to a cyclic system of flow of qì. The entering, birth, or being part of a specific phase of the cyclic movements of qì, creates a specific individual being. When one takes this into consideration, treatments can be applied according this specific individual constellation of qì. From Chinese medicine point of view, the qì of the year and the month (of birth of the person) are much more powerful in comparison to the qì of the day and hour.

At the moment of treatment, *universal qì* is omnipresent in a specific form. Knowledge of the present universal qì is an aid for the practitioner to choose points in accordance with this aspect. This will benefit the qì of the patient to adapt to available circumstances, therefore recovering better and faster.

Yīn & Yáng

The basic principle of the wǔ yùn liù qì is the concept of yīn and yáng. Anything in creation expresses itself in duality, as rooted in the unity of the source. Within this expression, there is a mutual relationship. This relationship is expressed in the first fundamental law:

yīn nourishes yáng, while yáng creates yīn.

This fundamental principle is applied within the clinical practise of the acupuncturist, on a permanent base. In the first place, there are female and male patients. In comparison to the male, the female are yīn, therefore needled on the yáng side of the body, the right side. The male are needled on the left side of the body, the yīn side. If symptoms occur in the upper part of the body, or the head, we apply acupuncture points to the lower part of the body or the feet. If there are symptoms of pain in the right shoulder, within the treatments points are applied to the left hip or knee area. When we meet patients in the *winter*, we apply points belonging to the *summer*, the fire phase. When we meet the patient at *noon*, the fire part of the day, we apply acupuncture points belonging to *midnight*, the water phase. This fundamental principle of yīn and yáng is not only applied in accordance with the symptoms of the patient, but also in connection to the personal qì of the patient and in relationship with the universal qì, present at the moment of treatment. Of course, there is a certain hierarchy in the values of the different aspects taken in consideration within treatments. This is the art of the wǔ yùn liù qì practitioner.

Space & Time

This basic concept of yīn and yáng is represented in a metaphorical way as *heaven* and *earth*, and less metaphorical as *day* and *night*, *summer* and *winter*, *man* and *woman*, *above* and *below*, *left* and *right*, *space* and *time*, etcetera. Space and time are the basis for our existing as human beings. As a metaphor, space is connected to the idea of *heaven*, while time is connected to the concept of *earth*. These metaphorical concepts of heaven and earth are the expression of yáng and yīn, as seen in the term *celestial stems & terrestrial branches*. The concept of *heaven* includes anything like hereditary, genetic, congenital, and *running in the family* issues. The concept of *earth* includes daily life events, mental, social and emotional issues. The initial source of the creation, the tài jí, divides into yīn and yáng, represented as *space* and *time*. The phenomenon of space is represented as a metaphor in the next step of development of yīn and yáng. The initial or original yīn nourishes potential yáng, while the original yáng creates potential yīn. These four archetypal phenomena are the basis for space. They represent four corners, rooted in the source, and they create the vertical and horizontal axes. The four corners and the centre are called the *emanations*. From these four basic archetypal principles emanate anything which is created in the universe. The four emanations and the centre are the foundation for the wǔ yùn, the *five movements*. The human being is built according these five principles, as we are built of five types of cells, five types of tissues, five pairs of organs, and five senses. These five are represented in a yīn and yáng way, metaphorically expressed as the *ten celestial stems*. The ten celestial stems determine any aspect of life on earth. They are the framework, the blueprint of life, metaphorically connected to space and the wǔ yùn.

Following this, is the concept of *time*. The concept of time is a post-heavenly concept. At the moment the universe is created, time starts to flow. Chinese philosophy speaks about the human being between heaven and earth. Above is heaven, representing the yáng force, while beneath is earth, representing the yīn force. This trinity, *heaven*, *earth* and *man*, is the foundation for the post-heavenly concept, or the created universe. The trinity represents itself in a yīn and yáng form, as *liù qì*, six qì. The six qì are represented as the six climates of the heaven - *wind*, *heat*, *warmth*, *dampness*, *dryness*, and *coldness*; as the six phases on earth, *wood*, *heavenly fire*, *earthly fire*, *earth*, *metal*, and *water*; as the six couples of channels in man, as the *jué yīn*, *shào yīn*, *shào yáng*, *tài yīn*, *yáng míng*, and *tài yáng*. Each of these coupled channels has a branch connected to the arm and one to the leg, to make the completion of twelve channels in the human body. The ultimate number of time is *twelve*, as there are twelve periods in a day; there are twelve lunar cycles (months) in a year and there is a twelve year cycle. These concepts of time are described in the aspects of the twelve terrestrial branches. Besides the concept of time,

the branches describe the character of any being, in connection to the year of birth. Anybody is born in a specific year, and the branch of that year determines specific characteristics. Metaphorically, the years carry the name of an animal. There is the year of the *rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and boar*, each with their own characteristics. Above all, these animals present themselves in five qualities. These qualities are *wood, fire, earth, metal, and water*. This indicates there are sixty types of animals and sixty qualities of character. All of this is part of the terrestrial branches.

Macrocosm | Microcosm

One of the most interesting aspects of Chinese philosophy is the comparison of the macrocosm and the microcosm, represented by the human being. Initially, there is the metaphorical aspect of *heaven and earth*, and the real *heaven and earth*. In the concept of *heaven and earth*, each of them represents a specific aspect. The concept *heaven* represents the idea of the creation, the moment before there is a creation, sometimes referred to as *pre-heaven*. This is the creative force, the creative principle that initiates creation of an idea. On the other hand, the concept of *heaven* represents all that lies behind us, all of that from where we came. As a human being we are born. We came through our mother into this world. However, where did we come from? We came from pre-heaven and we are the descendent of our ancestors. In modern times, this *pre-heavenly* concept stands for *hereditary and genetic* aspects of the human being. Furthermore, the congenital and running in the family aspects are also part of this pre-heaven concept.

The *heaven* creates the *earth*. The *earth* is the post-heaven concept, or the created, in contrast to the creative. The idea is created and time will unfold all events. There is an ongoing influence from *heaven* upon *earth* that will guide anything, any event on earth. From the changing of the seasons, birth and death, to the development and decline of civilisations. *Earth* is created according the idea of *heaven*. The ten celestial stems symbolise the *qi* and heaven's influence on man. The *wū yùn*, the five movements and the ten dynamic aspects are seen in man. The twelve terrestrial branches represent the process of time, in which all events take place, as in a specific order.

There are two separate concepts, sometimes used together. On one hand, there is the concept of *heaven and earth*, also presented as *pre-heaven and post-heaven*. On the other hand, there is the *heaven - earth - man* concept. Within Chinese philosophy the order of heaven-earth-man is used in the process of creation, in the pre-heaven concept. The post-heaven concept is the created universe, in which we find the order of heaven-man-earth. The *man* is placed between heaven and earth as the representative of the image of heaven.

The heaven is divided into five different heavens, as the earth is divided into five continents and five populations. Heaven has a central part, the pivot of heaven, as it seems to turn around the pole star. In each direction, seen from the central part, there is another heaven. In each of the four corners, one of the heavens is found. These five heavens divide the heaven into space. Earth has a pivot and is turning around this pivot, with its' five continents and five populations, divided into men and women. The heaven is covered with a big black blanket, seen in the night. This blanket has small and tiny holes which differ in size. Through these holes, sparkling bright lights shine through, seen in the night. The tiny holes in the sky of the heaven are the acupuncture points in men, on earth.

In the heaven, there are the wandering stars. Seen with the naked eye from earth, there are five wandering stars. The wandering stars in heaven are the five planets, representing the force of the *wū yùn*, the five movements. These planets are, respectively, Jupiter (wood), Mars (fire),

Saturn (earth), Venus (metal), and Mercury (water). These five organs of heaven are represented within the human body as the five organs, *liver, heart, spleen-pancreas, lungs, and kidneys*. The five viscera are indissolubly connected to the five bowels, to form a yīn-yáng couple, as the representatives of the five organs in heaven. The *liver* is joined with the *gallbladder*, as the *heart* cooperates with the *small intestine*, the *spleen-pancreas* with the *stomach*, the *lungs* with the *large intestine* and the *kidneys* with the *bladder*.

As heaven is divided into four quarters, circling around its pivot the polar star, the year is divided into four seasons, as seen on earth, circling around the sun. The changes of qì in heaven are changing the qì on earth. From the beginning, from *spring*, the yáng will grow to its peak to create the *summer*. At the peak of yáng, yīn will grow to nourish the *autumn* and to reach its peak in the *winter*. The human being is born in the spring of its life, to live its youth and to reach adolescence. In the second part of life, the human being becomes an adult and the winter of life is the old age. This is an ongoing cycle, divided into four parts, that will go on forever, time after time.

In the dynamic action of heaven upon earth, the centre is not a static centre, but an active transformer. Any cycle of life on earth starts with the growth of yáng, represented by the *wood* and the *fire*. The yáng reaches its peak and needs to be transformed, to enhance the growth of yīn. The centre is the transformer and takes part in the process of transformation, the process of change, and is named *earth*. As the potential yáng is transformed into the peak of yáng, the earth will change it into the potential yīn, to reach the peak of yīn. The *metal* phase represents the potential yīn, as the peak of yīn is *water*. This will give the order of wood-fire-earth-metal-water. The before described five phases are the *wǔ xíng*, the five transformation phases, as the foundation of acupuncture.

The qì of the five phases represent themselves in the physical body. This representation is from the smallest building brick in the body, the cell, up to five tracts or functioning systems and the five senses. The five types of cells are, respectively, the *muscle cell, blood cells, connective tissue cells, thelium* (epi- and endothelium), and *nerve cells*. They are the basic structures for the muscles; the nourishing and protective function of the blood; the structures that will give the shape and form, the connective tissues; the covering of the outer lining, the skin, and the inner lining, the mucous membrane and the nerve system. As seen above, the five phases are the force behind the physiological functioning of the five couples of organs, and above all, manifest themselves in the five senses, as eyesight, taste, touch, smell, and hearing.

Man on earth, under the firmament of the sky, lives its' life. Seen from earth the sky is changing on a daily base, while the fixed stars are located in the same place - yet the configuration is *moving*, caused by the turning of the earth. As a year is divided into twelve moons, months, the firmament is divided into twelve parts. As in a chain, the separate links following each other, the fixed stars of the zodiac are forming a circle. This is seen in the physical body as a chain of the channels of qì, connected by acupuncture points, from one point to the other, from one channel to the other. Following the twelfth channel, the twelfth month, the chain continues with the first one, as the year starts with the first month. A chain with neither beginning nor end, connected by acupuncture points.

Four Pillars | Chinese Calendar

Any human being lives his life in space and time. Space and time influence the being, metaphorically represented as the ten celestial stems and twelve terrestrial branches. This metaphysical system is the foundation of acupuncture, applied by wǔ yùn liù qì practitioners. As

there are four emanations, sprouting from the source, there are the so-called *four pillars*. The four pillars show the available qì present in *a year, a month, a day, and an hour*. There is a cyclic follow up of qì, as shown in the Chinese calendar. The calendar began more than 4.500 years ago. In the year 2637 BC, the five main planets were aligned with the sun and moon, as seen from earth. This was the beginning for the count of the calendar. This very rare astronomical phenomenon was the onset of the cycles of qì, during the reign of huáng dì, the yellow emperor. The cycles of qì are in an order of a sixty-year cycle - in the order of five years in which there are sixty cycles of the moon (months), as well as in a sixty days cycle, and in sixty periods of time (hours), covering five days. Since 1984, we are living in the 78th cycle of sixty years. This is covering a period of 4.680 years. Every period of two hours there is a change of qì, as there is also a change every day, month, and year. This will determine the quality and quantity of qì available at a specific moment. This metaphysical system is based on astronomical phenomena, and shows the influence from heaven upon earth and man. Each of these four indicators of time is connected to a stem and a branch, as metaphorically expressing space and time.

Personal Qì | Universal Qì

Everybody is born on a specific hour, as part of a certain day, connected to a specific phase of the moon (month) and at a certain moment in the cycle of years. The stem and branch of these four indicators of time, will give a specific quantity and quality of qì, which was available at moment of birth. This is very important in the clinical practise of an acupuncturist, if one wants to give a treatment based on personal conditions. From the four cycles of qì, the year and the month are changing slowly, therefore having a stronger impact on the person. This indicates that the stem and branch of the year and month of the person are the most important. It shows the weak and strong aspects of the patient, reflected by the stem and branch of the year (hereditary, genetic, congenital, and running in the family) and the stem and branch of the month (social, emotional, mental).

The stem and branch of the year and month are very important in treatment, in order to perform a strategy based on personal conditions. It is possible to have the same diagnosis or complaints by the patient, but in each person, we choose different points. The art of a wǔ yùn liù qì practitioner is to work on an individually based acupuncture. The patient could be from the same gender, could have the same symptoms, existing for the same length of time - yet it is another individual being. This indicates that we have another treatment strategy and choose other points. The action of the points will be more precise, more in relationship with the constitution of the patient. The stem and branch of the year and month give indications about *what to do or not to do* in consideration of choice of acupuncture points.

Time changes constantly. From sunrise until sunset there is a change of qì. The months pass by, the phases of the moon change, seasons come and go. Seeds that were planted are growing to be crops, ready for harvest, as trees giving fruits and nuts. It seems as if ages ago we were playing as young children, studying for a degree, raising a family. Qì is always on the move. The universal qì is qualified in four aspects of time, the four pillars. A constant changing of the qì of the year, month, day, and hour is noticeable, if one focus on it.

This changing of qì will influence the choice of points. If we meet a patient with a specific complaint or diagnosis, the treatment strategy will adapt to different moments. The same patient seen in another season, on another day or time of the day, will not have the same acupuncture points needed. It is the same patient, the same diagnosis, but a different universal qì. The stem and branch of the year and month are changing very slowly and do not make a big difference in the changes of the universal qì. However, the stem and branch of the day and hour

do make a difference. The quick changes of qì during the hours of the day and of the days themselves have to be adapted by the acupuncturist. In the treatment of a patient, we take into consideration the stem of the day and the branch of the hour. The branch of the day and stem of the hour are also important, but less. All of this will be explained in this book.

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