

SECTION THREE:

REACHING FOR THE TAIL

TRADITIONAL CONCEPTS IN MODERN PRACTICE

CHAPTER SEVEN

SYNTHESIZING DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

FORMULATING A CLINICAL PICTURE

The various theories of acupuncture and moxibustion can be seen against the background of the signal system as topological theories relating to structure, function and rhythm. Our experimentation has clearly established and verified the following postulates, based on and derived from classical theory:

- The twelve channels have a direction of flow. The yin channels flow from feet to body and body to hands; the yang channels flow from hands to head and head to feet.
- The twelve channels compose a continuous circuit.
- Within this circuit there are three smaller circuits each composed of two yin and two yang channels – the four-channel sets.
- The twelve-channel circuit evidences a circadian rhythm that is both a temporal cycle of maximum and minimum energies and a set of structural relationships (yin-yang, syntagonistic-antagonistic relationships). These structural relationships exist between the pairs opposite each other on the channel clock, (e.g., heart-gallbladder, bladder-lung).
- There is a set of acupoints on each channel that coincides with the so-called five-phase acupoints. The same-phase points exhibit properties common to other same-phase points, that is, they are isophasal with each other.
- The twelve channels also exhibit phase properties according to traditional teachings.
- The channels and five phase points (the transporting-shu points) exhibit interphase relationships described by traditional teaching as aspects of the five-phase cycles, the engendering or “creative,” “mother-child” cycle, and the restraining or “controlling,” “husband-wife” cycle.
- The supplementation and drainage points, two characteristic sets of phase points, exhibit polarity-dependent properties.
- The eight extraordinary vessels directly relate to body structure and symmetry. That is, they relate to the octahedral dividing lines of the body; they cross the

regular twelve channels at certain intersection points, through which they effect broad functional changes in the body. Generally, the eight confluence-*jiaohui* points of the extraordinary vessels are polarity dependent.

– The channels also coincide with each other at intersection-*jiaohui* points that exhibit unique, polarity-independent properties, what we have termed the *san yin jiao* characteristic.

– There are characteristic biorhythmically active points based on circadian, ten-day, and sixty-day cycles. Some of these are polarity dependent and some polarity independent, but all produce general effects throughout the body.

The results of our experimentations have led us to formulate a model of an X-signal system that is essentially bio-informational with a primary regulatory function. Our model proposes that this information system has primarily homeostatic functions, regulating the overall energetic condition and the overall physiological condition. The evidence we have gathered suggests that acupuncture, in particular the channels, qi, yin-yang and the five phases, participate in this signalling system. Treatment that takes advantage of, and activates changes in this system, can produce diverse effects because potentially the whole biological system can be affected.

If the function of the information system approaches the ideal, then the body will function optimally. It will tend to resist disease and, should a disease condition arise as a result of any of a variety of causes, so long as it does not reach a stage of organic degeneration, a timely recovery will occur. Should a derangement of the information system arise such that part of its overall control is lost and the body ceases to function properly, a small intervention from the outside can nudge the body's internal regulatory system back in the right direction and restore proper function.

This X-signal system is essentially not anatomical (though in microscopic structures it may have some physical expression), just as the various theories of the channels, yin-yang, and the five phases are not clearly anatomical. The system is described by what are essentially hidden or enfolded, primitive biological properties which we believe arose through various stages of evolution and were then masked by the development of the more efficient automation systems such as the nervous and endocrine systems. This process of enfoldment probably involves their being absorbed into the body of information stored, for example, in the genetic information carried by the DNA. As such, the information now represents a reserve of potential information that is unfolded only with the correct stimulus, influence, or condition. In the process of unfoldment, we can see manifestations of the clinical laws of acupuncture that were classically formulated as channel, yin-yang, extraordinary vessel, five phase, and biorhythmic theories.

The techniques we have designed and used to elicit these manifestations employ polarity agents, the nature of which produce effects so small that they do not primarily elicit neurohumoral or other clear biological responses, many of which are involved in the effects of acupuncture and moxibustion when stronger stimulation is applied. Instead, these polarity agents stimulate at the signal system level. By developing systematic methods of testing and utilizing these agents, we are not only able to confirm the biological existence of the various theories of acupuncture and moxibustion, and related clinical laws, but we also are able to formulate new clinical rules and systematic, reliable treatment methods that synthesize traditional methods and modern ideas. This new system, composed of many subsystems, is not a closed system. With careful research, testing, and observation, it is possible to interface the methods and concepts of other systems with those presented here.

Since the information system operates with tiny amounts of energy, it can be affected and regulated with equally minute amounts of energy. An advantage of using this intervention as a method of treatment is that there is little danger of causing any damage in the form of side effects. This intervention in, or interference with, the information system, is carried out with the following principal aims:

Activation: increase of function with an appropriate amount of stimulation, both in the sense of addressing hypofunction and in the traditional sense of correcting conditions of *xu*, vacuity.

Suppression: reduction of excess activity, both in the sense of addressing hyperfunction and in the traditional sense of correcting conditions of *shi*, repletion.

Rebalancing: activation of homeostatic mechanisms using appropriate methods and amounts of stimulation.

Induction: modification of the directions or locations of the body's reactions, both in the structural sense and in the sense of creating a kind of energetic symmetry.

Transformation: alteration of processes that have biphasic patterns, for example, taking advantage of biorhythmic fluctuations.

Stimulation: the use of stronger stimulation to correct imbalances, used primarily in difficult, stubborn cases.

Using this approach we are able to perform simple, systematic, highly effective treatments. Following the theories we have proposed, the systematic, step-by-step use of the signal system can be formulated as a "root" or general treatment approach. Based on our octahedral, yin-yang model, we can target different yin-yang surfaces one step at a time to effect a rebalancing of the body's yin-yang system. Thus we might term this approach a "yin-yang treatment style."

This style has the following purposes and merits:

- Regardless of the nature and complexity of the patient's condition, we are able to equilibrate total body imbalances. This is particularly important and useful in many kinds of functional diseases that are otherwise difficult to diagnose, and equally difficult to treat.
- We are able to economize on the number of points used and the doses of stimulation given to these points. As a result, even if incorrect treatment is given, no serious harm is done and side effects are few.
- We are able to minimize the symptom control treatments.
- For each step in the general yin-yang treatment procedure, we are able to obtain feedback as to the relative success and effects. This gives us the immediate possibility of modifying our technique or selection of points according to need.
- We can utilize the repeatable and demonstrable effects of polarity agents to great advantage. These polarity agents include ion-pumping cords, the ion beam device, and the electrostatic adsorbers. North and south pole magnets and zinc and copper pellets can be used, though our own experience dictates a preference for the first three devices.

It is important to note as well that the efficacy of treatment depends on the functional makeup of the information system, which is complex and stratified. Because of this complexity and stratification, a uniform pattern of intervention cannot be expected to produce a constant and uniform set of effects. Thus, treatments must be tailored to suit the individual.

Further, patterns of treatment will differ and produce different results depending on the range within which the intervention is introduced. For example, if a symptom such as pain is considered simply a local problem, the treatment will be administered locally as a symptomatic treatment. If the pain is considered an expression of an imbalance of the entire body, then the treatment will be holistic and general. Classical channel treatment according to the five-phase theory of acupuncture or the eight extraordinary vessels exemplifies this approach.

Finally the degree to which the concept of patterns of treatment plays a role in the effectiveness of the therapy depends on the abilities of the therapist. For example, if the therapist is able to take both external and internal origins into account, and is able to consider the ecology of the individual's environment, the possible treatments will become more numerous and more effective. His or her attitude toward the execution and focus of treatment will be more universal. In effect, the broader and deeper the therapist's education, and the less prejudiced their view, the greater the range of therapy.

We have found that the most interesting aspect of channel therapy is not dealing with each one separately, but taking their various relationships into account. Point combinations that are derived from relationships are able to work with synergistic effects, and absolute, though not indefinite, properties. The best treatment system is one that treats the channels flexibly by using combinations of points on the right and left, superior and inferior, anterior and posterior portions of the body. Diagnosis and treatment must be designed with the primary goal to correct imbalances and asymmetries, and only secondarily to address specific symptoms. Hence all of the practitioner's senses and sensitivity must be trained to discriminate delicate and subtle differences in the patient's condition.

Within the field of traditional medicine, a wide variety of diagnostic methods exists. These medical procedures, invented in ancient times, depended on the use of simple, unsophisticated techniques of inspection and palpation. However, for diagnoses directly related to the information system, a specialized, functional system of diagnosis, based on palpation, is required.

In the signal system model, the concept of diagnosis, the *zheng* 證 (*akashi* in Japanese), differs from Western biomedical diagnosis in several important respects. A Western diagnosis arrives at a disease name, which is an expression of functional and organic changes. *Akashi* is a collection or pattern of signs and symptoms that center on a treatment adaptation or method. Thus, depending on what treatment method is selected, the *akashi* will be different, where in Western biomedical terms, several cases might all be the same disease entity, regardless of treatment possibilities. For example, "gastric ulcer" is a Western diagnosis that remains the same regardless of the therapy to be used.

Akashi can be said to depend on the intentional consciousness with which we observe the patient. This is, again, the software that plays a significant role in acupuncture and East Asian or Oriental medicine. However, this makes the *akashi* dependent on the style, experience, sensitivity, and ability of each practitioner. Provided that diligence is maintained, and each patient's case is studied with care, the development of this kind of flexible approach to diagnosis, treatment, and assessment is a great benefit to patients. Patients with complaints that are undiagnosable by Western medicine, complaints that have been accurately diagnosed, but for whom allopathic treatment has not succeeded, or patients with multiple complaints, often benefit from this *akashi-based* approach, because the less rigid diagnostic concept permits a therapeutically tailored diagnosis.

ROOT TREATMENT AND SYMPTOM CONTROL TREATMENT

In the traditional practice of acupuncture and Oriental medicine, therapy consisted of a root or general treatment (*ben zhi fa* in Chinese, *hon chi ho* in Japanese), followed by a symptom control or local treatment (*biao zhi fa* in Chinese, *hyo chi ho* in Japanese). The root treatment was intended to equilibrate basic energetic problems, to balance and restore harmony to the body. The symptom control treatment was intended to address specific symptoms. Because it was also understood that symptoms could cause general, whole body imbalances, the distinction between symptom control and general treatments was given credence in treatment structure and approach.

With a root treatment, diagnosis and effective therapy can be administered for complex conditions that may not have clear symptomatic relationships to patterns, to diseases, or to indications for standard treatment methods. Complaints having no clinical or established etiology or progression in Western medicine can also be treated. For example, symptoms such as dysmenorrhea, fatigue, or pain are often subclinical. These conditions are identified with disease names, but without clear treatment strategies. Yet such conditions are easily treatable when we adopt an approach that looks for whole body imbalances and uses alteration of the informational and regulatory system for correction.

Symptoms, local conditions, can be seen as resulting from broader whole body imbalances. Correction of the overall imbalance often will relieve even quite diverse symptoms. Further, the same diagnosis and treatment patterns can be useful for different patients with diverse symptoms. Local problems, such as trauma, may also be sources of whole body imbalances that can be treated at the source level with the root treatment method. In conditions such as lesions or degenerations, where organic changes have already occurred, root treatment accelerates the healing and repairing processes.

Since root treatments are aimed at nudging the body's homeostatic mechanisms so that the body heals itself, these treatments are usually very simple. This simplicity is quite different than treatments that remain only at the level of symptom control. Symptomatic treatment without information regulation treatment can be complex, for if a patient has a number of complaints, many points must be selected to address each complaint one by one. Symptom control treatment that follows an information regulation treatment can be much simpler. Because a root treatment affects the energies at a much deeper, primal level, it requires only a small amount of energy. Further, the symptom control treatment that follows a root treatment typically requires fewer points and only small amounts of energy.

Today the channels seem to be used for symptomatic treatments. For example, many Japanese texts list symptoms that exist when the lung channel is replete and then recommend that certain points on the lung channel be drained when these symptoms are present. This is not so different from listing the indications of individual acupuncture points as is the practice with the *ba gang bian zheng* system. This information has value as a reference, but it does not give the clinician a systematic or reliable method for the selection of acupuncture points. Since diagnosis is often quite complex, requiring intricate patterns of points that are not experimentally investigated, but empirically justified, there is no idea of systematic validity. Since the treatments so justified are not staged, or even discussed in terms of imbalances, the effects of individual treatments are not assessed.