

Unit 5  
Reading C

Traditional Chinese Medicine and Modern Western Medicine 《中医与现代西方医学》

*Daniel Reid 丹尼尔·里德*

1 Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is the oldest and most comprehensive — and arguably the safest and most effective — system of human health care in the world. It has sustained the health and longevity of the world's longest ongoing civilization for over five thousand years, during which time its practitioners have carefully recorded the results of their meticulous research and clinical experience in medieval archives that span more than three thousand years of written history. Due to the ideogramic nature of the Chinese written language, which never changes with the vagaries of vernacular speak as alphabetic languages do, these ancient Chinese texts remain as clear and intelligible to contemporary practitioners today as they were to those who transcribed them through the ages.

中医是世界上最古老、最全面——也可以说是最安全、最有效的人类医疗保健体系。在五千多年的时间里，它维系了世界上持续时间最长的文明的健康与长寿。在此期间，中医从业者将他们细致研究和临床经验的结果认真记录在中世纪的档案中，这些档案跨越了三千多年的书面历史。由于中文书面语言的表意性质，不像字母语言那样随方言的变化而变化，这些古老的中文文献在今天对当代从业者来说仍然像历代抄写它们的人所看到的那样清晰易懂。

2 Traditional Chinese medicine is like an ancient tree of knowledge that has survived the storms of history and continues to grow and bear fruit today. Deeply rooted in the Great Principle of Yin and Yang, the Five Elemental Energies, and other primordial principles of the Tao, it spreads its healing branches far and wide to cover “everything under heaven” in the broad field of human health care. Among the many branches that have sprouted from the vulnerable old tree, herbal medicine constitutes the biggest and most important one. It's also the most ancient: the Chinese credit the legendary emperor Shen Nung with discovering herbal medicine over five millennia ago. “Shen Nung tasted the myriad herbs,” wrote the great Han Dynasty historian Ssu-ma Chien two thousand years ago, “and so the art of medicine was born.”

中医就像一棵古老的知识之树，历经历史的风雨而存活下来，在今天依然不断生长并结出果实。它深深扎根于阴阳大原则、五行能量以及道家的其他原始原则之中，在人类医疗保健的广阔领域里，伸展着它的疗愈枝干，覆盖“天下万物”。在这棵古老而脆弱的大树上长出的众多枝干中，草药构成了最大且最重要的一支。它也是最为古老的：中国人将草药的发现归功于传说中的神农氏，他在五千多年前发现了草药。两千年前，伟大的汉代史学家司马迁写道：“神农尝百草，于是医学之术诞生。”

3 Chinese herbal medicine first evolved high up in the misty mountains of ancient China, as a by-product of Taoist hermits' perpetual search for the elusive Elixir of Life purported to confer physical immortality to humans. After thousands of years of trial-and-error experimentation with virtually every plant, animal, and mineral in nature's domain, the old Taoist sages finally learned that the only true “elixir” is an invisible force that lies hidden deep within the human system and that the only “immortality” any human can achieve is purely spiritual, not physical. But in the course of their search, the mountain hermits discovered that the plants they'd been fiddling with

for so long did in fact have all sorts of practical therapeutic benefits for the physical, albeit mortal, human body, and that when correctly combined and properly prepared, they could confer health and long life to all human beings.

中草药最初在中国古代云雾缭绕的高山中发展起来，是道家隐士们持续寻找传说中能赋予人类肉体不朽的难以捉摸的长生不老药的副产品。经过数千年对自然界中几乎每一种植物、动物和矿物进行反复试验，古老的道家圣人最终认识到，唯一真正的“长生不老药”是一种隐藏在人体系统深处的无形力量，而人类所能实现的唯一“不朽”纯粹是精神上的，而非肉体上的。但在他们的探索过程中，山中隐士们发现，他们长期摆弄的那些植物实际上对凡人的身体确实有各种实际的治疗益处，并且当正确组合和适当制备时，它们可以赋予所有人类健康和长寿。

4 Modern Western medicine subscribes to the “single agent” theory of disease, whereby every disease is blamed on a specific external pathogen that invades the body from outside. Disease is thus attacked with knives, radiation, and powerful chemical agents designed to “kill” the alleged invader, and in the process these weapons often lay waste to the internal organs, impair immune response, and deplete vital energies, thereby sowing the seeds of even more severe ailments later. 现代西方医学遵循疾病的“单一病因”理论，即每一种疾病都归咎于一种特定的外部病原体从外部侵入人体。因此，疾病用手术刀、辐射和强力化学制剂来攻击，这些制剂旨在“杀死”所谓的入侵者，而在这个过程中，这些武器常常会破坏内脏器官、损害免疫反应并消耗生命能量，从而为日后更严重的疾病埋下种子。

5 Traditional Chinese medicine takes a different approach. It traces the root cause of all diseases to critical imbalances and deficiencies among the various internal energies that govern and regulate the whole body. Whenever such states of imbalance or deficiency are left unchecked for too long, they eventually give rise to serious malfunctions in the body’s biochemistry and internal organ systems, and that in turn impairs immunity, lowers resistance, and creates the conditions of vulnerability which permit germs, toxins, parasites, and other pathogens to gain a foothold in the body. By the time the obvious symptoms recognized by modern medicine appear, the disease has already reached a critical stage and is very difficult to cure. Moreover, symptoms of disease often manifest themselves in parts of the body far removed from the root cause, a phenomenon well known to traditional healers but usually lost on modern “specialists” trained to deal with only one part of the human body.

中医采取不同的方法。它将所有疾病的根本原因追溯到支配和调节整个身体的各种内部能量之间的关键失衡和不足。每当这种失衡或不足的状态长时间得不到控制时，它们最终会导致身体的生物化学和内脏系统出现严重故障，进而损害免疫力、降低抵抗力，并创造出易受感染的条件，使细菌、毒素、寄生虫和其他病原体在体内立足。当现代医学所认可的明显症状出现时，疾病往往已经到了关键阶段，非常难以治愈。此外，疾病的症状常常出现在远离根本原因的身体部位，这一现象为传统治疗者所熟知，但对于只接受过处理人体一部分训练的现代“专家”来说，通常会忽略这一点。

6 While modern Western medicine views disease as a malevolent external invasion by an enemy that must be killed, traditional Chinese medicine sees it more as a matter of “letting down your guard” and give entry to the malevolent agents and energies that cause disease. Rather than treating the disease, as modern medicine does, the traditional Chinese physician treats the patient

by correcting the critical imbalances in his or her energy system that opened the door to disease in the first place. “To restore equilibrium when energies are in excess or deficiency is the main object of the physician’s endeavors,” states a two-thousand-year-old Chinese medical text. This is known as “curing the root cause rather than treating the superficial symptoms.” By virtue of their “natural affinity” (guijing) for the specific organs and energies targeted by the physician, medicinal herbs reestablish optimum energy balance and restore organic harmony within the whole human system, thereby closing the windows of vulnerability (usually flung open by our own negligence), which allow ailments to enter and develop inside. States The Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Internal Medicine, a two-thousand-year-old text that remains standard reading in TCM training today, “If it’s too hot, cool it down; if it’s too cold, warm it up; if it’s too full, empty it; if it’s too empty, fill it.” It refers to the particular human energy system whose imbalance is responsible for the problem.

现代西方医学将疾病视为一种恶意的外部入侵，必须杀死敌人，而传统中医则更多地将其视为一种“放松警惕”从而让导致疾病的恶意因素和能量进入的问题。传统中医不像现代医学那样治疗疾病，而是通过纠正患者能量系统中的关键失衡来治疗患者，而这种失衡最初为疾病打开了大门。一部有两千年历史的中国医学文献指出：“纠正能量过剩或不足以恢复平衡是医生努力的主要目标。”这被称为“治根而非治表”。借助其与医生所针对的特定器官和能量的“天然亲和力”（归经），草药重新建立最佳能量平衡，恢复整个人体系统的有机和谐，从而关闭易受疾病侵袭的窗口（通常是由于我们自己的疏忽而敞开的），使疾病无法进入和在体内发展。有两千年历史、在当今中医培训中仍是标准读物的《黄帝内经》中说：“热者寒之，寒者热之，实者泻之，虚者补之。”它指的是特定的人体能量系统，其失衡是问题的根源。

7 A typical example of modern Western medical practice is its response to acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). Western medicine claims that this disease is caused by the recently discovered human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and it has responded to this challenge with total “germ warfare,” using toxic drugs such as AZT to kill the invader, even in people who show no overt symptoms of AIDS, which the pharmaceutical industry rushes to develop vaccines that will supposedly protect the uninfected from ever contracting HIV, thereby conquering AIDS. By contrast, traditional Chinese medicine views AIDS as a condition of extreme vulnerability acquired by chronic long-term exposure to acute environmental pollution, both internal and external, further aggravated by poor diets and other personal habits that promote illness rather than health. In this scenario, HIV is just another one of many symptoms associated with immune system deficiency, not the cause of it. The traditional Chinese solutions to AIDS is first to detoxify the major organs of the human system, particularly the liver and bloodstream, then to eliminate the personal habits, such as “junk food” diets, that impair human immune response and gradually rebuild immunity and vitality with proper nutrition, exercise, and supplemental herbs and formulas specifically designed to enhance human immune response.

现代西方医学实践的一个典型例子是其对获得性免疫缺陷综合征（艾滋病）的应对。西方医学声称这种疾病是由最近发现的人类免疫缺陷病毒（HIV）引起的，并且以全面的“细菌战”来应对这一挑战，使用像齐多夫定（AZT）这样的有毒药物来杀死入侵者，甚至在没有明显艾滋病症状的人身上也使用。制药业急于开发据称能保护未感染者永远不感染 HIV 从而征服艾滋病的疫苗。相比之下，传统中医将艾滋病视为因长期慢性暴露于内部和外部的严重环境污染而获得的一种极度脆弱的状态，不良饮食和其他促进疾病而非健康的个人习惯进一步

加重了这种情况。在这种情况下，HIV 只是与免疫系统缺陷相关的众多症状之一，而不是其原因。传统中医对艾滋病的解决方案首先是为人体主要器官解毒，特别是肝脏和血液，然后消除损害人体免疫反应的个人习惯，如“垃圾食品”饮食，并用适当的营养、运动以及专门设计用于增强人体免疫反应的补充草药和配方逐渐重建免疫力和活力。

8 “A stitch in time saves nine” has always been a fundamental tenet of traditional medicine, which regards the onset of any disease as a front-line failure in preventive health care, a view which places primary responsibility for health and disease on the patient’s own personal lifestyle. Today, people tend to eat, drink, and behave in whatever manner pleases them, then run to the doctor for a “quick fix” whenever something goes wrong, as though their bodies were machines rather than living organisms. The net result of such mass negligence toward the basic facts of life is a global health crisis that is rapidly spinning out of control, and modern medicine has clearly failed to cope with this catastrophe.

“及时一针省九针”一直是传统医学的一个基本信条。传统医学将任何疾病的发作都视为预防性医疗保健的一线失败，这种观点将健康和疾病的主要责任置于患者自身的个人生活方式上。如今，人们往往随心所欲地吃喝和行事，一旦出了问题就跑去找医生寻求“快速解决办法”，仿佛他们的身体是机器而非生物体。这种对生活基本事实的大规模忽视所带来的最终结果是一场迅速失控的全球健康危机，而现代医学显然未能应对这场灾难。