

Study on the Regulation Methods of Meridian *ki* Depending on the Pathological State of 'Discordance between Water and Fire'

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This study reviews and suggests the followings:

- 1) The balance and harmony between water and fire (*ki* and blood, *yin* and *yang*) is regarded as the basic condition of maintaining health in Oriental medicine.
- 2) Oriental medicine defines disease as the imbalance or disharmony of body. So the discordance between water and fire is in ill state, the coordination between water and fire is in healthy state.
- 3) Etiological factors and pathology are summarized by the conflict between vital *ki* and pathogenic factors, six exogenous factors, internal injury by seven emotions and the imbalance between *yin* and *yang*.
- 4) The regulation of meridian *ki* recovers the balance between water and fire, *ki* and blood using acupuncture, moxibustion, cupping therapy, herbal medicine and physical and breathing exercise and massage which is based on the principle of controlling *ki* and spirit.

Key Words: Water and fire, Meridian *ki*

INTRODUCTION

In the beginning of the book 『Introduction to Medicine (醫學入門, *Yi Xue Ru Men*)』, says: “All human diseases are caused by the discordance between water and fire.¹⁾” In other words, most of human diseases are caused by the imbalance and disharmony between water and fire. When speaking of the characteristics of water and fire, water is *yin* and fire is *yang*, since the nature of water is cold and descending, and that of fire is hot and ascending. Oriental medicine believes that blood belongs to water and *ki* belongs to fire, so blood is *yin* and *ki* is *yang*.

Chapter Three: Practice 15th (修行品 15), of the book 『The Scripture of the Founding Master (大宗經)』, explains the nature of water and fire,²⁾ and the reason of the harmony be-

tween water and fire which occurs when sitting in meditation. It says: “The nature of water is cold, clear and downward, and the nature of fire is hot, turbid and upward.” and “If a man starts to think complicated things, *ki* tends to go upward, head is heated and inspiration is becoming turbid, then body fluid is getting to be dry. The reason of this phenomenon is that the *ki* of fire ascends, whereas the *ki* of water descends. If there is no distracting thought, *ki* is calm. Because the *ki* of water ascends and the *ki* of fire descends, head is cool, inspiration is refreshing, then the mouth is filled with pure saliva.”

When speaking of water and fire in internal organs, they belong to the heart and the kidney. Oriental medicine expresses ‘Heart fire’ and ‘Kidney water’. The heart, with the property of *yang*, is classified as fire, since it lies in the upper

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1) All of human diseases are caused by discordance of water and fire. So, we must take care of the symbols, 'li' and 'gam' (☵☲), Blood belongs to water and *ki* belongs to fire, so blood is *yin* and *ki* is *yang*. In the emptiness of 'li' (☵), there is vital essence (real *yin*). In the fullness of 'gam' (☲), there is vital force (real *yang*). 『Introduction to Medicine (醫學入門, *Yi Xue Ru Men*)』

2) Harmony between water and fire; During meditation, the *ki* of water ascends and the *ki* of fire descends.

energizer and its nature is moving. The kidney, with the property of *yin*, is classified as water, since it lies in the lower energizer and its nature is stable. When our body is healthy, their physiologic functions are in harmony, and they can keep the coordination between water and fire.³⁾ The fire of the heart descends into the kidney to nourish its *yang* (vital function) and warm its fluid. At the same time, the fluid of the kidney ascends into the heart to nourish the *yin* of the heart so that the *yang* of the heart will not be excessive. The heart and the kidney have what is called in Oriental medicine an interdependent relationship characterized by mutual support and mutual check.

When kidney fluid is insufficient and unable to ascend to nourish the *yin* of the heart, the *yang* of the heart will be excessive, such signs and symptoms as restlessness in mind, insomnia, dream-disturbed sleep and seminal emission will occur. And this is called “breakdown of the normal physiological coordination between the heart and the kidney”.

In this paper, I will explain the physiological phenomenon and pathological origin of water and fire which is the basic essence of human body. In addition, I will show the way how to regulate meridian *ki*, which is the phenomenon of movement of *ki* and blood, as a method of treating the discordance between water and fire.

RELATIONSHIP AMONG WATER- FIRE, *ki* - BLOOD, AND *yin- yang*

1. Relationship between water- fire and *yin- yang*

Yin Yang Ying Xiang Da Lun (陰陽應象大論), Chapter 5 in 『Plain Questions (素問)』 says: “*Yin* and *yang* are the law of mighty nature, discipline of all things, and parent of change.” *Yin* and *yang* are relative concepts of opposite things and phenomena. When observing every kind of natural phenomenon, people can find that there are two components which oppose each other. This is the general law. One of opposite and interdependent two components is called ‘*yang*’, the other is called ‘*yin*’. *Yin* and *yang* represent not only opposite two components but also opposite sides of one thing. Also, *yin* and *yang* not only oppose but also contain each other, without the other, neither can exist. Thus, property of *yin*

3) Coordination between water and fire: The heart belongs to fire and the kidney belongs to water. Heart fire and kidney water interact to maintain physiologic balance of human body. So this phenomenon is called as the coordination between water and fire.

and *yang* in all things is not absolute but relative.

Yang means movement, *yin* means stability. *Yang* is active, *yin* is passive. Moving actively produces lots of heat and temperature goes up, and vice versa. So, *yang* is hot and *yin* is cold.

When *yin* and *yang* are in harmony, we can keep our body in health. If *yin* and *yang* are in disharmony, the balance of physiologic regulation are threatened, and diseases occur.

2. Relationship between water- fire and *ki* - Blood

Tao of the formation of the universe is only *yin* and *yang*, that is, the change of water and fire. In human body, water and fire corresponds to *ki* and blood. *Yang* manages *ki*. If *ki* is sufficient in human body, the spirit is prosperous. *Yin* manages blood. If blood is plentiful, the body is strengthened. Thus, men live based on *ki* and blood.

ki and blood are the basic essence for life activities. They are formed from the food essence received from water and food, and the innate vital substance of the kidney. The process of formation is dependant upon the joint work of the kidney, the spleen, and the lung. *ki* and blood have interdependent and harmonious relationship as *yin* and *yang*.

Based on the function of *ki* and blood, they are called ‘defending *ki* (*wi ki*)’ and ‘nourishing *ki* (*yeong ki*)’. Nourishing *ki* (*yeong ki*) refers to the *ki* circulating within the meridians and blood vessels restlessly. As it flows through the vessels with blood, it has such a close relationship with the blood that Oriental medicine often mentions them in a combined way ‘nourishing blood’. Defending *ki* (*wi ki*) is the *ki* moving outside the meridians, and its major function is guarding the surface of the body against exopathogen.

Human activities are based on the circulation of *ki* and blood. *ki* belongs to *yang* and moves outside, while blood belongs to *yin* and is stable inside. *ki* and blood correspond with *yin* and *yang* of nature.

ETIOLOGICAL FACTORS AND PATHOLOGY

1. Vital *ki* and pathogenic factors

Oriental medicine believes that the continuous conflict between the vital *ki* and pathogenic factors is related closely to the occurrence of a disease. Vital *ki* means physiologic function and resisting power against diseases of human body. Pathogens (邪氣) mean the pathogenic factors which cause disease, that is six exogenous factors (six evils).

Oriental medicine focuses its attention on the vital *ki* and holds that pathogenic factors can not invade the body so easi-

ly and cause a disease if the vital *ki* is exuberant. In Oriental medicine, the state of the vital *ki* is the most important key to determine the occurrence of a disease. In this meaning, the book 『*Plain Questions* (素問)』 says: “Pathogenic factors can not cause trouble if the vital *ki* is sufficient.”, and “Where pathogenic factors accumulate, the parts of the body must be deficient in the vital *ki*.”

2. Six natural factors and six exogenous factors

Six exogenous factors (Six *yin*- “*yin*” here implies excess) is a general term for the six climatic conditions in excess as pathogenic factors: wind, cold, summer-heat, dampness, dryness and fire. In normal condition, they are actually six normal climatic variations of nature, and are therefore also called “six natural factors”. Since six exogenous factors are unhealthy factors causing diseases, they are also called “six pathogens”. The pathological phenomenon caused by six exogenous factors can be summarized by water and fire.

3. Internal injury by seven emotions

Seven emotions (七情) refer to the seven kinds of emotional reactions, namely: joy, anger, melancholy, anxiety, grief, fear and terror, being the different responses of the human body to the environmental stimuli. In general circumstances, these are within the normal range of mental activities and will not cause disease, but when sudden emotional stimuli occur beyond the adaptability and endurance of the body, they will cause the functional disorder, and the emotional stimuli will then become pathogenic factors.

Ju Tong Lun (舉痛論) Chapter 39 in 『*Plain Questions* (素問)』 says: “Rage causes adverse upward flow of *ki*, excessive joy relaxes the *ki*, excessive sorrow leads to the consumption of *ki*, fear causes the sinking of the *ki*, fright interrupts the flow of *ki*, anxiety causes the stagnation of the *ki*.”, *Yin Yang Ying Xiang Da Lun* (陰陽應象大論) Chapter 5 in 『*Plain Questions* (素問)』 says: “Anger impairs the liver”, “Joy impairs the heart”, “Anxiety impairs the spleen”, “Melancholy impairs the lung”, “Fear impairs the kidney”. This explains that excessive seven emotions cause derangement of the internal organs. Like this, Oriental medicine believes that emotion influences on the flow of *ki*, and if excessive emotions block the smooth flow of *ki*, symptoms of fire will occur. In Oriental Medicine, *ki* is regarded as the bud of fire.

4. Imbalance between *yin* and *yang*

If *yin* and *yang* lose balance, it causes relative excess or deficiency of *yin* and *yang*. Relative excess or deficiency of *yin* and *yang* leads to chills and fever. The various kinds of pathogenic factors such as six exogenous factors, seven emotions, improper diet and overfatigue can only form a disease by way of the imbalance of *yin* and *yang* of the organism. So, the imbalance of *yin* and *yang* is a high summary of various kinds of pathogenesis relating to losing balance.

MERIDIAN *ki*

Meridian *ki* refers to the *ki* which flows in the meridians, and also refers to the functional activities of the meridians. It belongs to the category of true *ki*, what true *ki* is distributed to the meridians is called as meridian *ki*. True *ki* is received from heaven and combines with the food essence to nourish the body. In other words, meridian *ki* is the true *ki* which is distributed in the meridians and nourishes the body.⁴⁾ meridian *ki* represents true *ki* or vital *ki*, and is the ability to maintain normal life activities and resist against pathogens. It is also opposite to pathogenic factors.

1. The composition of the meridian *ki*

Meridian *ki* includes pectoral *ki*, defending *ki* (衛氣, *Wei ki*), nourishing *ki* (營氣, *ying ki*), primordial *ki* and so on. Defending *ki* and nourishing *ki* circulate in the whole body through meridians. Pectoral *ki* promotes and adjusts the circulation of blood and *ki*. Primordial *ki*, which commences from “the vital gate”, the portion between the two kidneys, is the basic vital force for the twelve meridians' activities.

True *ki* is originated from the combination of the original *ki* inherited and the acquired energy derived from food and air, and acts as the primary motive force for life activities. Therefore, true *ki* is a general term of all *ki* in human body. True *ki* has various names depending on where it exists. For example, if true *ki* is in the portion of *yang*, it is called as *yang ki*. *Yin ki* (in the portion of *yin*), Stomach-*ki* (in stomach), spleen-*ki* (in spleen), nourishing *ki* (inside of meridians), defending *ki* (outside of meridians), pectoral *ki* (in upper energizer), middle *ki* (in middle energizer), initial *yin* and *yang-ki* (in lower energizer), meridian *ki* (in meridians), primordial *ki* which means the motivating power of the vital

4) “True *ki* is meridian *ki*.” 『*Plain Questions* (素問)·離合眞邪論』

activities of human body, inborn *ki* which means the most important and fundamental *ki* and so on. Even though true *ki* varies in name, the real substance is only one *ki*.

2. The course of meridian *ki*

The course of meridian *ki* is same with that of twelve meridians, since meridian *ki* refers to both the *ki* which flows in meridians and the primary function of twelve meridians.

3. Regulating meridian *ki*

ki regulates the vital activities of human body, and at the same time can cause disease. So, the first thing of treatment is regulating *ki*, especially meridian *ki*.

Then, how can we regulate *ki*? Buddhism (The Dharma Words of Master Chōngsan [*Chōngsan chongsa pōbō*], VII. Exhortations for the Practice of the Way 44 [勸道編44]) says: "When *ki* and blood are in harmony, we can achieve healthy body." If *ki* is deficient, then replenish it, while if *ki* is excess, purge it. When the flow of *ki* is obstructed, promote it. Open when the flow of *ki* is closed, close when it is open. Purge *ki* in upper portion when pathogenic factors are in upper portion, and vice versa. Like this, treatment in oriental medicine is to regulate *ki* depending on the characteristics and location.

When Oriental Medicine treat diseases, it uses acupuncture, moxibustion, cupping, Tui Na (a form of therapeutic massage), breathing exercise and herbal medicine variously to regulate meridian *ki*. These methods are based on the principle of regulating *ki* and spirit.

METHODS FOR REGULATING MERIDIAN *ki*

As a method to change from discordance into coordination between water and fire, the importance of acupuncture has been recognized from ancient times. The old adage that "First, acupuncture. Second, moxibustion. Third, herbal medicine." approves this. According to *Yi Fa Fang Yi Lun* (異法方宜論), a chapter of the book 『*Plain Questions* (素問)』, if we use acupuncture, moxibustion, phlebotomy, herbal medicine and massage appropriately, we can recover the balance of the whole body through regulating *ki* and blood.

1. Acupuncture

The principle of curing disease by acupuncture is that acupuncture can regulate *yin* and *yang* through promoting the flow of meridians and keep *ki* and blood in harmony. *Gen*

Jie Pian (根結篇), a chapter of the book 『*Miraculous Pivot* (靈樞)』, recognized that the important mechanism of acupuncture is regulating *yin* and *yang* in body. So, it says: "When *yin* and *yang* are well-balanced, vital *ki* can be preserved well. In this condition spirit can be kept stable, since body and spirit are in harmony."

Prescription of acupuncture is composed based on opposing needling⁵⁾ and contralateral insertion.⁶⁾ These techniques aim to recover the balance and harmony in human body like the balance of seesaw, and attach importance to the smooth flow of *ki* and blood.

The key point of acupuncture stimulation is controlling *ki*. Controlling *ki* means the adjusting activity of *ki* and blood through the conduction of meridians. When the function of meridians or internal organs is in disorder, functional activities of *ki* promotes the circulation of *ki* and blood through needling certain acupoints. And acupuncture stimulation makes *yīng* and *wēi* in harmony, as a result diseases are cured.

2. Moxibustion technique

Moxibustion treats and prevents disease by applying heat to acupoints and Oh-yes-points directly or indirectly. Heating stimulation of moxibustion can help to maintain health by promoting the flow of meridians and keeping *ki* and blood in harmony.

The book 『*Bian Que Xin Shu* (扁鵲心書)』 says: "If three hundred moxa cones are applied to Guanyuan (關元, CV4) every year, the effect is enormous. Weak body is getting stronger and diseases are cured. Then, why isn't the life span prolonged?", and "If moxibustion is applied to Zusanli (足三里: ST36) continuously, it prevents contagious diseases and helps to keep healthy life by regulating *ki*." In the experiment on the function of moxibustion, it shows that moxibustion increases erythrocyte and promotes the metabolism of blood. It also promotes decongestion, alleviation of pain and nutrition.

3. Cupping therapy

Cupping, a method of treatment of Oriental medicine, eliminates waste matter from body and recovers the normal

5) Opposing Needling: It refers to cross needling. Select the point on the left with the diseased part on the right, and vice versa.

6) Contralateral Insertion: It refers to the technique which needles the points contralateral to the side of the body with the disorder when disease is in collateral branch of large meridian. It is also the technique which needles *Jing* points and stagnated blood in collateral branch of large meridian. It can treat the disease of superficial venues. 『*Plain Questions* (素問) · *Miu Ci Lun* (繆刺論)』

physiologic activities. It can be divided into two types of cupping, damp cupping and dry cupping. Damp cupping therapy is used to extract congealed blood with a needle or three-edged needle, while dry cupping therapy is attaching cupping glass to the skin spots to add negative pressure without pricking. The principle of dry cupping therapy is that when adding negative pressure to the skin, cupping therapy can help to purify the body fluids through gas exchange by the difference of pressure.

When speaking of the effect of cupping therapy, first, it accelerates harmonious metabolism and blood purification. Second, it helps the circulation of blood and the formation of blood. Third, it has good effects of sending nutrients to each cells and sending out waste material. In addition, it enhances immune system and has an effect on equilibrium between acid and base.

4. Physical and breathing exercise and massage

Do In An Gyo (導引按蹻), which is a method of treating disease and promoting health, includes physical and breathing exercise and massage, and is similar to *ki-gong* or Dantian breathing exercise. ‘*Do*’ of *do in* refers to breathing exercise which draws *ki* from nature into our body, and ‘*in*’ refers to physical exercise which contracts and extends body. *Do in* helps

the circulation of *ki* and blood and sends out harmful *ki*.

An Gyo (massage) is a method of massage that promotes the circulation of meridians, *ki* and blood by giving mechanical stimulation such as rubbing, patting and so on using hand and instruments.

CONCLUSION

1. The balance and harmony between water and fire (*ki* and blood, *yin* and *yang*) is regarded as the basic condition of maintaining health in Oriental medicine.

2. Oriental medicine defines disease as the imbalance or disharmony of body. So the discordance between water and fire is in ill state, the coordination between water and fire is in healthy state.

3. Etiological factors and pathology are summarized by the conflict between vital *ki* and pathogenic factors, six exogenous factors, internal injury by seven emotions and the imbalance between *yin* and *yang*.

4. The regulation of meridian *ki* recovers the balance between water and fire, *ki* and blood using acupuncture, moxibustion, cupping therapy, herbal medicine and physical and breathing exercise and massage which is based on the principle of controlling *ki* and spirit.