

Diagnosis and Acupuncture Treatment of a Chronic, Recurring Skin Disease and Septicemia Using the Chinese Medical Model

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Abstract; This paper is the second in a series of case histories designed to illustrate the traditional Chinese medical model applied to the diagnosis and treatment of a sick person. The model is examined together with the traditional Western model to which this patient was repeatedly exposed for frequent relapses of her disease over a period of six years.

THE PATIENT, Mary, is a 29-year-old, unmarried actress, teacher and store owner. Her problem began at the age of 22 when she became extremely tired, developed a severe skin infection, an upper respiratory infection, vaginitis, bronchitis, and septicemia from which she nearly died. A similar symptom pattern had occurred to her four times in the past seven years. The first incident was the worst. The mildest infection became a serious threat to her life from which recovery was slow, sometimes as long as three years. Each of these episodes has occurred during a period of change and emotional stress. Four weeks prior to the first session she became depressed, her energy diminished, and a skin infection appeared on her face and extremities. At the end of the diagnostic examination during the first session, she revealed that she had been getting nauseated for months at a time and was nauseated prior to the beginning of this most recent episode. Relevant past history is a surgical excision of her tonsils and adenoids at the age of six.

Examination during the first session revealed a labile pulse rate from 76 to 86. The qi was low (that is, the top part of the pulse was absent). There was Vibration on the deep pulse, and her Liver was especially weak. Her tongue was pale with some heat (redness) on the edges, on the end of the tongue, and in the middle of the tongue. The eyes showed deficient heat (distinct vertical capillary lines under the bottom eyelid become confluent). Patches of a brownish dermatitis showed on her face, the dorsal surfaces of her arms, to a lesser extent on her legs, and slightly on the ventral surface of the arms.

We are faced with the diagnosis and treatment of a disease process which past history indicates is potentially life threatening. Previous treatments which centered on infection were effective only in the extreme. No one had yet established the underlying cause of her recurrent disease. Therefore, it could not be prevented.

Our first task is to discover the real cause of her illness. The inference is that factors other than infection are more basic to her disease process and that infection is only a secondary issue.

Fundamental Diagnostic Considerations

There are five important considerations in Chinese medicine concerning the differential diagnosis of skin ailments. The first concerns color. If the color is darker and brownish, the source is internal. If the color is brighter, the cause is external (as in the cause of sun rash, mechanical irritation or chemical irritants).

The second consideration is location. Darker rashes on yang surfaces are more often from a disturbance of the "fu" or hollow organs, especially the gastrointestinal tract; whereas rashes that are nervous in origin often affect the entire body or one large segment such as one limb or the entire head.

The third issue is whether the lesion is wet or dry. Wet rashes are considered to have their origin in the blood or gastrointestinal tract. All other origins are dry.

The fourth consideration is itching. This is associated with a rash related to the Lungs which the Chinese correlate with external "wind"¹ and which we call hives. These are usually dry. Itching from the blood may be wet.

The fifth consideration is swelling. If the swelling is on the feet, for example, it may come from excessive contact with hot surfaces such as beach sand, hot rocks, or pavement. This swelling often has the bright colored rash on its surface. Internal causes on the leg may come from Kidney or Spleen weakness. In the former case the swelling pits on pressure and the patient is more clinically ill than in the latter case. Phlebitis would be another cause and this is related more to Liver problems. Swelling in the upper extremities is more often related to Heart conditions. If swelling is associated with itching and is not chronic it may be related to external "wind" and the related organ is the Lungs or digestive system. If a recent swelling is not associated with itching, one may consider some kind of poison. Recent skin swelling with heat usually involves inflammation or infection. Obviously the reasons for a rash may be manifold and the diagnostic task is to differentiate how much one is dealing with of each of the various causes in order to develop a rational treatment program.

In Chinese medicine, the skin is controlled by both the Lungs (the holes in the skin) and the earth element (Spleen and Stomach) which control the connective tissue and muscles. Heat in either of these systems will cause weakness in the skin and vulnerability to infection.

The heat may be due to poor function from constitution, overwork, poor air or poor food, from poisoning or emotion, and in the case of the Lungs from stagnation due to weather (wind and cold) as well.

The Liver may also play a large part in the entire skin picture. More specifically, eruptions on the yin (inner) surfaces and on the head other than the cheeks, lips and chin may be due to tension. Since the Liver controls nerves, and because the Liver (yang) is related to internal "wind," this "heat" can go to any part of the body, either to one larger area such as a limb (part of whole) or in a patchy fashion around the body.

During this episode Mary erupted predominantly on yang surfaces and to a much lesser extent on yin pathways. The color was dark. Her skin infection was, therefore, of internal origin, primarily digestive and secondarily nervous. (It was after the diagnosis was made that she reported suffering nausea for several months prior to the visit and for several months at a time on other occasions). Since there was little itching, the Lungs and blood were not primarily involved during the early and intermediate stages.

Why, in her case, is the principal affected skin area controlled by the gastrointestinal tract? Do the nervous system and blood enter into the disease process? Is the primary problem within the earth element (Stomach and Spleen) as would seem self-evident?

The location of the skin rash and nausea indicate the earth element. The tongue, however, showed no evidence of the primacy of the earth element since there was no coating, and only a little heat in the center, which quickly disappeared in the course of the treatment.

The redness of the sides and tip implicated the Liver and Heart respectively, and the deeper paleness indicated the generalized weakness of all her organs and of the entire body (yang deficiency). Loss of energy before the onset of the skin and generalized infection, weakness of

¹ External "wind" refers more to a change in the weather than to the movement of air. The great cosmic and atmospheric forces move through us as do all phenomena. If we can flow with these forces, we are healthy and if not we are possibly ill. This is the meaning of "wind."

the Liver pulse, depression and the tongue picture mentioned above, all point to the primacy of the Liver as the basically involved organ. The Liver weakness affects the Stomach function leading to the skin symptoms described above. (This contention will receive further elaboration).

Elaboration of Diagnostic Considerations

We have already observed that the Liver recovers the energy of the body as we use it in the normal course of living. The energy of each organ is responsible for the function of that organ. If the energy of the Liver is weak or of poor quality, it will not serve to recover the general energy. Patients like Mary might report easy fatigue and lassitude. Traditional Chinese medicine says that if an organ is weak there will be qi stagnation and the formation of "bad qi." The fate of this "bad qi" varies from one organ system to another. Because the Liver is related to internal wind (which penetrates everywhere), "bad qi" can travel to any part of the body which is vulnerable and cause pain (or skin rash).

Possibly for constitutional reasons or because the Liver and Stomach are both in the middle burner and have a special relationship, "bad qi" from a weak Liver will often cause dysfunction in the gastrointestinal tract.

Again, depending upon vulnerability, the gastrointestinal tract is affected either in the Stomach, where digestion is slowed producing gas, or reversed producing nausea as with Mary, or in the intestines where brief episodes of explosive partially formed diarrhea occur two to three times a day with cramps before movement. Both areas may be involved simultaneously, and the degree depends on all of the variables mentioned in this discussion, including overall body condition. Since the Stomach (earth element) makes the raw energy after birth, its dysfunction diminishes the entire energy of the body.

This can also be explained by the five element system through the Ko cycle. The wood element (Liver, Gall Bladder) controls ("destroys") the earth element (Spleen, Stomach), and the latter has a feedback control ("despises"), all of which may go out of homeostasis in any direction and create pathology. (I do not believe that "destroy" or "despise" are either correct or meaningful translations of the original Chinese concept).

If Stomach function is poor, heat will develop. Excess heat occurs if the process is acute as with acute indigestion or consumption of yang foods such as spices, shellfish and alcohol. Deficient heat occurs after a long period of poor function and may be likened to the heat of friction in a poorly functioning engine. This is potentially true for any organ except possibly the Spleen where prolonged dysfunction is related to cold and damp- yang deficiency. The face is often the first place to show heat in the gastrointestinal tract through drying of the skin and pimples on the cheeks and chin. Often the next area is the arms along the Small Intestine and Large Intestine meridians- the abdomen along the Stomach meridian and then the legs along the same meridian.

When the infection tends to be damp and becomes more generalized over many areas of the body, we refer to this as heat in the blood. This heat may have several sources. Most often it is due to heat in the digestive tract and heat in the Liver. For Mary both causes should be considered. The blood will absorb some of either the excess or deficient heat of an organ which is important to its (the blood's) formation, storage, control and circulation. In Chinese medicine the blood is made in the Stomach through the action of the Yuan qi (original energy stored in the San Jiao) and the Jin-Ye or pure fluids which are part of the digestive process.

Whereas the blood is made in the gastrointestinal tract, it is stored in the Liver. If Liver function is poor over any period of time, "weak" heat can develop, in which case the blood stored

there becomes heated. Another aspect is the failure of a weak Liver to move its stored blood to the Heart to circulate freely (portal circulation). This means that the Heart has to work harder to control the blood, may now become less efficient, and may become more likely to produce deficient heat. Since the blood passes through the Heart it makes contact with this heat and absorbs it.

Even more relevant to our patient's condition is that the blood passes through the Lungs, and the Lungs control the openings in the skin. The relationship here is very profound to life in terms of exchange of gases and moisture. The heat in the blood contacts the lungs and is passed to large areas of the skin as well as to the lungs itself. (The Lungs make the qi and the qi moves the blood. If the Lungs are weakened for any reason, the qi will be weak and will not move the blood. Circulation will suffer in the long run, further complicating the condition. Mary's overall circulation had not been affected as yet). Since the blood reaches all areas of the body, widespread dysfunction of varying degrees may be anticipated over time, as it was for Mary, depending on constitution and the life pattern of abuse of the various organs. Her past history included severe septicemia, Lung and vaginal infections (the latter due either to weakness in this area and/ or excessive sex for her weakened energy state. Though there was reason to suspect the latter, the fact was never established).

It should be mentioned at this point that in Chinese medicine there is no concept of infection as we conceive it in the West. In the Orient what we refer to as infection is considered under the heading of "heat" as mentioned above. This heat may be thought of as excess heat, or deficient heat. The former would be a condition often based on an external cause such as sun heat, acute indigestion, or parasites. The pulse is very fast and the condition acute, often with high fever. The weak or false infection would reflect a weakened body condition which, as explained elsewhere in this paper, would lead to inefficient organ or system function, likened to a heat of friction. The symptoms and signs of this heat are similar to those of chronic infection in the West. The pulse would be slow and fever would be low, varying with energy states and time of the day. Even the excess nature of her disease would invite a search for underlying body weakness. In Mary the evidence is mainly on the side of a deficient or "weak" infection.

Let us return to a consideration of her pulse, tongue and eyes in our quest for the underlying cause of her problem. Her pulse rate was rapid and unstable. The instability of rate means that the energetic functioning of the Heart is out of balance since the nervous innervation of the Heart controls the pulse rate. The causes are usually emotional instability or constitutional predisposition. Let us consider first the rapid rate. Were the pulse rate consistently and only rapid (in a woman of her age over the rate of 80), the diagnosis would be that the person having this rapid rate had experienced at some time in their life a shock of an emotional or physical nature. The physical shock may have been a fall, an automobile accident or a blow from an object striking her chest. The sudden shock to the body may have been strong but not of a nature to demonstrate clear-cut symptomatology or pathology at the time. The trauma is to the circulation.

Undiagnosable pain may show up with increasing age and decreased energy. This process may take many years or, even for that matter, an entire life. The pulse is usually rather thin and hard as well as fast and over time may become somewhat stagnant, that is, the wave is relatively Flat. With stagnation one has a sense of going through cotton to reach the pulse. This Flat wave may also be caused by sudden lifting and sadness. The phenomenon of the Flat wave comes up later during the course of treatment and is discussed at that point more fully.

With physical shock there may be findings on the tongue which are rather subtle. There can be dark spots on the side of the tongue resembling a small varicosity. Another manifestation

may be a horizontal red line under the eyelid, a finding which did occur in this patient. (The presence of this line in Mary's eye led to questioning about a previous accident, which she then reported for the first time and which will be described later).

A consistent rapid rate is more frequently the result of an emotional shock, usually in the form of unexpected bad news such as the sudden death of a close relative or sudden loss of one's fortune. In the short run, this kind of rapid rate may or may not cause discomfort to the patient in the form of palpitations, feelings of discomfort or anxiety. Should it, however, persist over a long period of time, the consequences would be a weakening of the energy of the heart, which might, because of the central position of the Heart in the function of the body, have many ramifications.

In this process there are several gradations of seriousness. The least of these is the change in rate after activity. Within this context the variation may be either great or small. The greater the change in the rate, the more advanced is the condition, and the variation reflects the degree of susceptibility to anxiety under stress. One can, if one suspects such a problem, test the patient by asking him to move his arm or to move around the room after one has taken the pulse and then retake it immediately. The activity will cause the pulse rate to increase and during the following period of inactivity it will come down to a slower rate.

The condition in which the rate changes slightly is referred to as "Heart nervous." Symptoms are usually nervousness and easy fatigue. The person tends to sleep very lightly, awakes easily and frequently during the night. Sometimes there are palpitations which come and go. Generally this condition is caused by worry over a long period of time. Usually worry will affect the Liver first. However, if one of the other organs of the body tends to be weak for any reason, either constitutional or from previous illness or from shock, that organ will be affected. In a situation where we get a change in the pulse rate, the organ involved is the Heart. As indicated before, if the change in rate is a small one, the situation is not particularly serious. If the change in rate is a large one as a result of movement, we have a condition which the Chinese refer to as "Heart weak." In this situation the patient may have palpitations for longer periods of time than with the condition of "Heart nervous." The sleep pattern is somewhat different in that the patient will sleep steadily for several hours (four or five at the most) and then be completely awake and unable to return to sleep. He may also experience numbness in different parts of the body, particularly in the upper extremities. With "Heart nervous" the tendency is for the pulse rate to be a little fast.

However, in a condition of "Heart weak" the pulse rate tends to be either normal or a little slow and the pulse on the Heart itself is usually weak, depending on the duration of the condition. The tongue generally will show a line along the center in varying degrees of depth. In both the "Heart nervous" and "Heart weak" conditions, the eyes are generally normal and the tongue, except for the line and some redness at the tip, is unremarkable.

The above positive findings in this examination were commensurate with the condition "Heart nervous." In addition, however, there was the change in the pulse which occurred at rest, even when there was no movement.

When the pulse rate changes while the person is at rest are small, the principal meaning is that this person is worried. One must then look to the individual pulses to tell the specific cause of this worry. People whose pulse rate is changing very rapidly and quickly at rest are those who may sometimes feel that they are losing control of their mind and are often very frightened as well by these feelings. In addition to the rapid rate, the fairly large change in rate, both with movement and at rest, Mary's entire pulse, especially her deep pulse, had another quality. This quality was Vibration. Vibration on the entire pulse has a different meaning than Vibration on a

single pulse. Vibration on the entire pulse usually occurs in a person whose mind is never at ease and often again experiences deep fear related to a very strong sense of guilt. This Vibration is sometimes found on only one pulse such as the Heart, Liver or the Stomach. Generally when it is found on the Heart or the Liver and the condition of the patient is relatively good, fear and guilt are implicated. However, when we find it on only one or two pulses, the degree of fear and guilt is usually less. Here we also have to use other diagnostic modalities. The eyes, for example, will sometimes help us, and if, as the Chinese would put it, the eyes and the pulse "contact" each other, we may be even more sure that the patient is experiencing these feelings. The expression of fearful guilt in the eyes is something well known to most psychiatrists, but is difficult to describe except perhaps to say that it has a furtive quality.

Should one find Vibration on the pulse in a situation where the tongue and the eyes and the patient's appearance belie greater pathology, then the Vibration takes on a new meaning. Usually it is a sign that the organ involved is extraordinarily weak and might even be at a point of total collapse. In the differential diagnosis of the meaning of Vibration between a significant emotional as opposed to severe organic disease, the relatively rapid subsidence during treatment of this quality would indicate the former rather than the latter. (It may be noted that the Vibration abated quickly on Mary's pulse and that in one of the later sessions there was some return of the Vibration, temporarily and to a minor extent).

The aberrant pulse rates described above are the least serious of those which may and do occur in relationship to Heart function and Heart disease. The others are not relevant to this discussion and will be left for elaboration in another case study. Whereas the ones discussed do not indicate in Chinese medicine parenchymal damage to the Heart, they are often the result of or may lead to an emergent weakness of that organ. This emergent weakness may manifest itself in a weak left distal pulse and in a line down the center of the tongue of varying depth. The deeper the line, the greater the stress. Usually a deep line is a result of both constitution and life factors since stress will tend to weaken a constitutionally vulnerable organ. It must be emphasized that what we have described thus far involves only an energetic, and not a parenchymal problem. However, because in Western medicine energetic issues cannot be diagnosed, many symptoms and signs are left undiagnosed in patients who do have real problems; and not infrequently over a long period of time, what was once an energetic and relatively easy problem to deal with becomes a parenchymal problem and one that is quite difficult to deal with. The importance therefore of these concepts speaks for itself.

Returning to Mary, we saw that the emotional process had less of an effect upon her Heart than upon her body in general. Though the condition of "heart nervous" is clear, the left distal position is not weak. The Vibration was on the entire pulse and since her Heart is not especially vulnerable, the heaviest burden of her emotional tension was on her Liver, which we found to be particularly weak. However, to the extent that the Heart has been affected, it will be less able to control circulation and to maintain a balanced spirit (Shen). (The Heart stores the spirit during the day, and the Liver stores it at night-where it continues to express itself through dreaming. One branch of Chinese thought believes that only a troubled spirit dreams).

A weak Liver means that she cannot easily recover her energy and is therefore vulnerable to disease. If she is unable to recover her energy, she is unable to mobilize her body's force to cope with stress. This stress can be physical, chemical, or emotional. If, for example, a person is sad or angry, they will tend to become more overwhelmed by this emotional stress and more likely to become ill than they would if the Liver was strong and their energy easily recovered during the stress. In Western terms, when the Liver cannot recover energy, it cannot detoxify.

There is not only vulnerability but also "bad" qi. This "bad" qi discussed earlier, will go to those areas of the body which are most vulnerable due to constitution, trauma, previous illness, neglect, and especially to the gastrointestinal system and muscular and nervous system (the latter controlled by the Liver).

Why is her Liver weak? The etiology could be constitution, a long standing deprived physical existence such as poor nutrition, infectious disease (hepatitis), excessively long and difficult working conditions over an inordinate period of time, chemicals (alcohol or drugs), or from prolonged unhappiness. Mary's emotional history which was briefly revealed at the end of therapy, indicates the latter cause and the onset in early adulthood in the absence of a deprived life suggests constitutional predisposition.

Course of Treatment

The object of the treatment was 1) to clear her blood and her gastrointestinal tract of the "heat" and "bad qi," so as to interrupt the infectious process which apparently had been so dangerous to her in the past; 2) to relieve her nausea by relaxing the gastrointestinal tract and moving the energy down rather than up; 3) to build her Liver and restore its functioning, so that it might recover her energy; 4) to relax her Heart and improve circulation, thus restoring her energy and her spirit; and 5) to treat other problems that were exposed as we went along. There was a total of ten treatments.

During the first treatment, in order to clear the blood and the skin, we treated Hegu (L.I.-4), Quchi (L.I.-11), Zusanli (ST-36), Sanyinjiao (SP-6), Xuehai (SP-10) with moxa. Gaohuangshu (BL-43) was used to bring the illness out. It is a point that is especially useful in chronic illness and it is an important point for restoring energy in a person who is seriously ill or potentially seriously ill. This point and Ganshu (BL-18) and Gesu (BL-17) were needled with the technique of putting the needle in, vibrating the needle for a minute and then taking it out. The purpose of using BL-17 and BL-18 was to begin the process along with Taichong (LIV-3) of restoring Liver function, by moving and thereby eliminating the "bad qi" and helping the body to have more available good energy during the treatment process. "Bad qi" is qi that is stagnant, does not move. Herbs were prescribed for the infection to remove heat from the body and blood. Lu Shen Wan was prescribed to remove heat from the skin and the Liver. Shu Gan Wan was prescribed for the Liver and the digestive tract. She was given sweet rice and red dates and placed on a diet of bouillon soup, easily digested steamed vegetables, squash and potatoes. In the beginning the emphasis was on the sweet rice and the red dates which strengthen the stomach, the others being added according to her condition. Tofu (soybean cake) was also included for protein. An herbal mixture helping to clear her gastrointestinal tract and blood and including slippery elm, golden seal, burdock, chapparal, peppermint and licorice was prescribed. A Chinese proprietary ointment called "974" was used for her skin condition.

She was seen again in the second session four days later and the infection was gradually clearing from her face, arms, and legs. She slept a great deal. The depression seemed to lift but then returned slightly. At the second session her pulse was stable. There was no Vibration, though the pulse was still somewhat Rough and Deep on both the Liver and Stomach. It was noted that the lower burner was weak though this was not considered significant at this point since this pulse tends generally to be lower than the others. The tongue and the eyes remained the same. Treatment was similar except that S.I.-4 was added for vitality, BL-21 (Weishu) and Baichongwo (an extra point) were added, the former for the Stomach function and the latter to take into the account the possibility of parasites and for her skin condition.

When she was seen a week later the skin infection continued to clear. Her energy and her emotions were significantly improved. The pulse again showed some variability in rate but was steadier. The Liver was still weak. The Heart showed some heat and the lower burner again was relatively weak, though this time there was some tightness on the uterus in the left proximal at which point she revealed that she was having her period. The tongue on this occasion showed some tremor. This is significant. The neurological function of the tongue is related to the Heart. The tremor at this point would be an expression of what we described earlier as "Heart nervous" and also of Liver weakness since the Liver controls tendons, and nervous tissue. It is interesting that it would appear after two treatments. The reason is not entirely clear. Speculation might have it that the deeper tension in the nervous system and in the Heart nerves was coming to the surface, suggesting a mild "healing crisis." There was also at this point a very slight patchy white coating on the surface of the tongue, though it was still pale underneath. Otherwise, the tongue was the same.

The eyes, however, were interesting. There was less weak heat and for the first time I was able to observe a horizontal line. She was questioned about a previous accident, which is what a line of this sort indicates, and she revealed that at one point she had been in a car that fell off a cliff and that at another point in her life she had a serious fall on a trapeze. This information is important, particularly in relationship to the condition which we discussed as "Heart nervous." The accident in the car might have been a sufficient shock to affect the nerves of her heart and to set into motion or accentuate an already existing process leading to the condition of "Heart nervous." The herbs Yunnan Bai Yao were prescribed. These herbs are well known in China and have been investigated here as well for their ability to improve circulation of qi and blood especially when stagnation is caused by trauma (Yunnan Baiyao is also used to stop internal or external hemorrhage, which of course was not an issue in this case).

During the third session, the same goals were kept in mind. This time moxa was added to BL-18 (Ganshu) and BL-17 (Geshu). The first step in the treatment process was to remove heat from the skin, blood, qi and organs. The reduction in weak heat in the eyes, lessening of Vibration on the pulse and relief of the skin condition were indicators of the progress of the treatment. Once the heat was reasonably removed, we moved to the next step of building those systems and organs which were weak. The points along the Bladder meridian closest to the spine, ranging from BL-13 through BL-28 are points which connect directly to organs rather than to or through the meridian. The point Bladder-17 (Geshu) in this case is an intermediate point, a point which assists the organs in both the upper and particularly middle burner. By itself, the point has a direct bearing on the diaphragm, and in addition it is an extremely important point, especially with the use of moxa, to build the blood and move the qi. BL-17 and BL-18 along with BL-43 (Gaohongshu) are used in the treatment of blood dyscrasias and anemia.

The outer line of points on the Bladder channel are useful for treating psychological problems associated with the organs. BL-43 (Gaohuangshu), a point that we have referred to before in the description of the first treatment, is one of these psychological points and is an excellent point for enhancing self-confidence. It can also be used for pre-menstrual tension. During the third treatment the point Yinbai (Sp-1) was used. This point is effective in relaxation of the body in general and the gastrointestinal tract in particular, and was used along with the point Gongsun (Sp-4), which is the master point of the Chong mai. This extra meridian has a direct effect on the adrenal medulla, and some say the endocrine-nervous system axis enhancing the patient's ability to deal with stress. The Chong mai has many functions which may be found summarized in a previous paper on the extraordinary meridians. In this case its connection to the

gastrointestinal function, particularly through Daheng (Sp-15) and Zhongwan (Ren-12), was the main reason for its use at this point in the treatment. Daheng is important to the Small Intestine, and Zhongwan is important to Stomach function and to all the Fu organs. Yinbai (SP-1), the most distal Spleen point, was used within the framework of the five Yuan (Command point) system of acupuncture. The jing-well points have their greatest influence on the nervous system (The use of all these points simultaneously is extremely effective in manic depressive illness and in diabetes).

Because the patchy white coating was noticed for the first time on her tongue during the third session, I was concerned about the possibility of Mary developing a cold and prescribed a nutritional supplement (Coryzadyn), which includes extract of thymus, spleen, adrenal, as well as vitamin C and other vitamins. A week later, the patient's skin was clearing, and she reported that she had felt the onset of a cold which she found herself able to withstand. Her energy, however, was still not strong. The pulse was steadier at 72. The left side of the pulse was weak. The tongue was pale and in her eyes the line previously reported had diminished slightly. During this treatment an attempt was made to build her energy through the use of moxa at Ren 6 (Qihai), Ren-4 (Guanyuan), SP-6 (Sanyinjiao) and ST-36 (Zusanli). In addition, the points GB-41 (Zulinqi), LIV-3 (Taichong), were used to treat the Liver and to move the energy down and remove heat. I was particularly concerned at this point about the distribution of the energy and these two points have a tendency to bring the energy down. In addition, LU-7 (Lieque) was used. It is frequently a good point to use, when using moxa on the above mentioned points for the purpose of building energy, inasmuch as it closes and strengthens the Lungs and has the overall effect of building the qi, especially since the qi starts in the Lung.

During the fifth visit a week later, Mary's skin was clear except for a few "white bumps" along the San Jiao meridian, and the Bladder meridian. During this session she spoke about herself for the first time and reported that she was a restless spirit and not sure what she wanted in life. The pulse was generally more stable but had the quality of being what the Chinese call a "sad pulse" which is characterized by a somewhat Flat wave. This was in keeping with her mood. The intensity of the pulse was somewhat inconsistent, especially on the Liver. This is interpreted as being favorable. There was a process of change in the positive direction, since at times the Liver pulse was somewhat stronger, though not strong enough to hold the pulse continuously. The Heart pulse, on the other hand, was considerably more balanced. This session was primarily aimed at the patient's emotional state. At the next meeting, a week later, she reported that her energy had improved considerably. The pulse was generally steadier, though still a little Muffled as in the past, and the qi was still a little low. Her tongue this time was again coated white. The eyes, however, showed less weak heat and the line had almost disappeared. This time the session was spent largely discussing nutrition, and we were able to pinpoint certain foods which definitely had a negative effect on her. These included shellfish, chocolate, sugar, peanuts and white flour. Treatment again centered on undoing the effects of sadness using PC-6 (Neiguan), HT-7 (Shenmen), PC- 7 (Daling), LU-9 (Taiyuan), SP-6 (Sanyinjiao), Ren-4 (Guanyuan), and relaxation of the gastrointestinal tract. The seventh session was nine days later, during which time she reported feeling very well; her skin was completely clear and she was staying away from the foods mentioned previously. The pulse was more balanced, less Muffled, and generally stronger. There was a little Tightness in the Stomach pulse. Treatment again was aimed at her emotional state using one point in particular. It is a special point with no name between the second and the third heart point, and is especially good for helping to open the Heart. It was my impression from our contact and from her Heart pulse (the tightness, and also the flat wave, as

well as the red at the end of her tongue) that Mary had at some time in her life been emotionally hurt and had withdrawn her heart feelings. These thoughts which were never confirmed would of course also be relevant to the condition of "Heart nervous" discussed earlier.

Approximately one week later she reported a very important event. She had been feeling extremely well until she ate poorly one night and drank some wine and then re-experienced the feeling of nausea. This was the best way for her to begin to set her own limits and become her own physician. She was beginning to understand the messages her body was giving to her. The pulse was somewhat faster, somewhat less stable than the week before and both the pulses in the upper burner were somewhat Floating. In addition, the tongue was coated thick white, which indicated both the occurrence of cold and, of course, poor digestion. At this point the eyes did not show any weak heat. This is extremely important because when, after so few sessions, the weak heat disappears, it is an indication that the patient's main problem stems more from emotion rather than the organs and the blood. This treatment was directed toward circulation of energy in the gastrointestinal tract, and clearing the blood and the gastrointestinal tract. The point that I had used consistently during this effort is the point San Jiao 3 (Zhongzhu).

Stimulation of the Triple Burner system enhances gastrointestinal function since it is the reservoir and the conduit for the original energy of the body, Yuan qi. This energy makes digestion possible and is necessary for most of the transformations, both digestive and metabolic, in the body. During the next treatment the patient reported that she was well except for a head cold. This had been predictable from the previous observation of her tongue, which was coated white the last time, and because of the fact that both of her distal pulses were Floating. During this session for the first time Mary began to talk about particular issues in her life: her anger at her mother, her inability to confront her mother, to say no to her, and her own fear of separation and particularly of death. The pulse was Tense and Pounding and the treatment was aimed primarily at removing the external "wind" and the cold. Herbs were prescribed for the same purpose.

A week later Mary reported that her cold was better for a day after the treatment, then it had gotten worse again. She was producing a considerable amount of white-green mucus when she coughed, and her head felt rather stuffed. The pulse which had had a little Vibration, was now stable. The upper burner was still a little floating and the Liver, Stomach and Kidney a little weak. The session was once again directed toward removing the cold, the "wind" and reducing mucus as well as building her energy. This was the last session. The patient has been followed for three years and has had no return of her original symptoms since that time.

Conclusion

We have already dealt, as well as possible at this time, with the details of diagnosis and treatment. What is important to consider in this discussion is the contribution which the model of Chinese medicine could make to the solution of intractable medical problems in the West. The Chinese medical model is concerned with causality. In our diagnostic considerations we have searched for the basic problem.

In order to do this we have had to sift through the evidence and try to distinguish the real disease from the apparent ones, the "secondary" and "reactive" diseases.

The Western model is changing. For over a century the microbe would have been considered as the primary etiology in Mary's illness. Pathogens were cultured from her blood during previous septicemic episodes.

Within the framework of Western analytic thinking new concepts are being studied which approach the Oriental emphasis on the underlying body condition as the primary issue in health and disease and Claude Bernard's concept of the "milieu interior." These studies are in the field of immunology and endocrinology (the General Adaptation Syndrome). In Mary's case they were never brought into the diagnostic or treatment process of her previous therapies except for the heroic use of corticosteroids. The homeostatic concept of weakened resistance is expressed in Western medicine today through the intricacies of the autoimmune system. However, as yet, the physiological foundation of the immune system does not support a consistently practical rational treatment program. Furthermore, in the West we espouse a psychosomatic medicine which is hard put to make body-mind connections that are clear-cut and susceptible to therapeutic intervention. We have no body of knowledge in the West, such as the one we have discussed above in other sections of this paper which makes it possible to say precisely where we can look in the body for anger, worry, sadness, obsessional thinking or other emotional states. We have no techniques for diagnosing underlying emotional conditions comparable to oriental diagnosis by pulse, tongue, eyes, face reading, color and symptomatology.

Mary recovered several times within the framework of the Western model. The "enemy" was the microbe and the main treatment antibiotics. The recovery, however, took at times up to four years with long hospitalizations and relapses occurring within short periods of time. Though she was still alive, the model failed to keep her well. How could this be? Her recoveries seemed to have coincided with hospitalization. Her therapy in the hospital varied little from that received outside except during the critical periods of pneumonia and septicemia, when it was similar but intensified. Considering our own analysis of the problem as one of a weak Liver from prolonged unhappiness and a functionally impaired heart from similar sources (among others mentioned), a separation from the immediate cause of her unhappiness and the subsequent prolonged rest would allow the affected organs to recover. Rest plays a much more important role in oriental medicine because the medicine centers around the vicissitudes of energy. Illness generally is an expression of either a depletion or stagnation of energy. Rest permits the restoration of energy which by itself not only reverses depletion but through increased power may even overcome stagnation. (An Oriental doctor is as likely to order rest and meditation as a Western doctor would be to order exercise and activity, though the latter does also have an important place in Oriental practice). Rest is therefore central to healing.

The Liver once renewed by the reduction of stress could perform its task of recovering and re-circulating the energy and storing the blood, which would allow the other organs to function well again, remove their "weak heat," create energy and strength so that her body itself could resist and defeat infection. A strong Liver would make her less vulnerable and better able to cope with emotional stress as it inevitably arises, helping her to sustain an adequate steady energy state.

Medicine at its best helps to correct the mistakes of the past. The future depends on an accurate diagnosis of the cause of disease and upon the successful collaboration of doctor and patient toward the elimination of the cause. The Western model could not correct the mistakes of the past because it could identify and eliminate only one of those mistakes, the "secondary" microbe. Since the main problem was never identified, neither the mistakes of the past or the future could be eliminated and recovery could not be complete or permanent.

I have tried to show that using the Chinese model we identify long standing unhappiness which caused her Liver to be weak (and Heart to be nervous) as the core etiology, and have tried to relate this weakness to its effect on her gastrointestinal tract and blood, which I would

consider the secondary illnesses in that temporal order, and, finally, to the "reaction illness"- her nausea, easy fatigue, depression, skin rash and generalized toxicity (septicemia).

Unhappiness made a weak Liver, and fear (and shock) made her Heart nervous. Weakness in these two organs in turn made her more susceptible to emotional stress, quicker to react to disappointment, hurt, disapproval and rejection. This model gave us a rational basis for a treatment plan. Removing heat from the blood, restoring gastrointestinal function, relaxing her nerves, building her Liver and restoring her energy, led to a partial sharing of her unhappiness with the therapist and to a complete and lasting physical recovery to this time (three years). To me this is even more remarkable because of the very brief interaction on a psychotherapeutic level. I believe that she has still unresolved emotional problems though at the time of treatment she had made some clear-cut decisions and changes.

The answers lay in a reciprocal relationship between her body and mind. The positive blood cultures were the result, not the cause, of her illness. On his deathbed, Pasteur said: "Bernardⁱ is correct, the terrain is everything- the microbe nothing."

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ⁱ Claude Bernard was a proponent of the primacy of "homeostasis" as against the primacy of the microbe in health and disease.