



## INTRODUCTION

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This book, along with those that follow it, is an introduction to Contemporary Oriental Medicine (COM), written for all students and practitioners of this medicine. Volume One will describe general principles and concepts that define the unique, COM approach to Chinese medicine, and which underpin the COM diagnostic system. Volume Two will explain in detail, and illustrate through case studies, COM techniques and methods for gathering information. It will also present a systematic process for analyzing the data practitioners obtain, and organizing it into a sophisticated management system.

This first volume offers the reader a new and different take on important elements of the medicine, such as symptoms, terrain, stress, root, vulnerability, and Lifestyle. These are, however, just a few of the concepts covered.

The second volume will focus on the Intake process, and on the formulation of a diagnosis and management plan. It will explore, through the COM lens, what questions practitioners should ask their patients, and what those questions (and their answers) mean in terms of Chinese medical conditions.

It will examine a patient's chief complaints and why he came for treatment, along with a very thorough Review of Systems. In addition, the second volume will explain, from the COM perspective, how a practitioner can fit all of the data he obtains into the larger picture of a complete Chinese medicine diagnosis.

This integration is vital for the clarification of each clinical situation with which a practitioner is presented, and will reveal new resolutions and approaches to the problems of individual patients.

The Contemporary Oriental Medicine method of formulating a diagnosis and management plan is taught, over a period of seven semesters, at Dragon Rises College of Oriental Medicine in Gainesville, Florida, as part of their Master's degree program. Enrollment in classes is kept deliberately small; much of COM, and Pulse Diagnosis especially (another seven semesters), must be taught in a hands-on fashion, with a small teacher-to-student ratio. The goal of a COM education is to provide, in addition to skills and knowledge, a nourishing personal experience that graduate practitioners can later transmit organically to their patients.

Some of the material taught at the College will be covered in this series of volumes on COM. It is our intention to bring this invaluable information to the rest of the practitioner community; we believe that the ideas and principles of Contemporary Oriental Medicine have a vital role to play in the future of Chinese medicine, and in the evolution of modern healthcare.

## OBJECTIVES

This book has a specific set of objectives. One of the most important is to teach students and practitioners “how to think in Chinese medicine”: essentially, how to develop an effective diagnostic system that will allow a detailed, accurate diagnosis of the patient as an individual. This strong COM emphasis on the individuality and difference of each patient is in contrast to a TCM diagnosis made solely in terms of standard classifications: the Causative Factors, Eight Principles, Six Divisions, Four Levels, the Sho, Shen, Hun, Po, etc. However, these classifications are integrated into the COM program when they are appropriate and useful.

The pattern, disease, the symptom and the syndrome are the basic ideas of TCM. The meanings of ‘disease’ and ‘symptom’ are similar to those in Western medicine. Zheng, which can generally be

translated as ‘syndrome’, is the basic unit and the key term in TCM theory, with a unique meaning. Zheng is the clinical outcome of the disease at any moment, and it generally encompasses the etiology, pathology and disease location.<sup>1</sup>

In keeping with my assertion that it is not only what you know, but who you are, that makes you a healer - a Chinese medicine physician seeking the root of each individual’s condition - I feel it is important for me to share my philosophy. It is who I am, and I will share it to the best of my ability, where it is relevant.

## SOLVING THE MYSTERY OF THE INDIVIDUAL

As practitioners, we must solve the mystery of the individual: the specific patient who has the condition for which he is seeking help. Each person is unique: no two people have ever been born who are exactly alike, not even identical twins. Our goal, therefore, is not simply to match patients to standard diagnostic classifications, nor is it to only treat conditions, as conditions are not the same from person to person. Rather, we strive to treat each patient as an individual who has a Chinese medical condition: a person whose condition is unique to him. In COM, we must ask, “Who is this person with this problem?”

The solution to this mystery - a mystery which will present itself afresh with every new patient - is based primarily on an enhanced awareness. We must be more awake, and more aware of who we are. We must also, as practitioners, be more aware of who our patients are, and help them to find that awareness for themselves. That is the heart of the courses at Dragon Rises College, and the essence of this book: to enhance practitioner awareness, and to encourage enhancement of self-awareness for patients.

The job is not to ‘fix’ patients’ problems, nor only to remove their symptoms. Symptoms are messages of a more profound pathological

process; problems are opportunities to grow and learn. The role of a physician is not to deprive patients of the chance to understand, grow, and learn; rather, it is to help them become more aware of themselves, so that, perhaps with their practitioners' help, they can solve their own problems through self-awareness and change. Illness can have an incredible life-healing power, relaying messages that, if listened to and understood, can provide an opportunity to evolve in ways of which an individual has previously been unaware, or failed to attain. The COM methodology, if followed judiciously, will always bring a practitioner back to an understanding of the individual.

## AWARENESS AND KNOWING

In the practice of Chinese medicine, awareness depends upon highly-developed physical senses - what we see, hear, feel, etc. - and something beyond. I call this “seeing with the ‘third eye’ and hearing with the ‘third ear’”: using a trained intuition. In our medicine, it is critical. It is crucially important to understand that there are many different ways of knowing. The two that are of most interest here are knowing with the Heart, and knowing with the Brain. Although these two forms of knowing are very different from each other, it is important to remember that seeing with the third eye and hearing with the third ear are possible only with the knowing that comes from the Heart.

A very significant manifestation of the harmony between the Heart and the Kidney is the relationship of the mind and the brain, more specifically the mind-spirit (controlled by the Heart) and the brain-marrow (created and sustained by Kidney Essence/Marrow). Together, they determine mental stability and function. The Heart could be seen as the software, and Kidney Essence as the hardware. The Triple Burner mediates this relationship, and should always be considered in the management of problems relating to the Heart-Kidney connection.

There are multiple ways of knowing that are not logical. I learned this to begin with from a dog, Haysee, who was with me for eleven years. She was a Chesapeake Bay Retriever: the best duck retriever in the world. When I worked as a psychiatrist-psychoanalyst, Haysee was with me constantly.

She slept most of the time, waking only when exceptionally withdrawn people, who could not communicate with me, came to my office. Haysee sensed these patients - adults and children - when they came to the door, before they even entered the room. She would wake up, come out from under the table and sit in front of them, and they petted and talked to her. Of course, I heard. She also never failed to come out for people in profound grief. Haysee would unhesitatingly climb on the couch and sit on their chests until they felt better. You could not move her, and no patient ever objected to her presence. She 'knew' what patients needed even when they did not.

I learned from Haysee that there are ways of knowing beyond that offered to us by the brain. I would like to introduce this idea to others, if not as an experience, then at least as a concept which, sooner or later, will become an experience. The practitioner who develops this 'Heart' way of knowing, will really know his patients, but not only through what the patients tell him. He will know the patient through himself.

My canine assistant had access to information not readily accessible to the human brain; her 'knowing' came through her Heart. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the author of *The Little Prince*, summed it up with, "And now here is my secret, a very simple secret: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye." (Saint-Exupéry, 1971, p.70)<sup>2</sup>

It is thought to have been Albert Einstein who said, "The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source

of all true art and all science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed.”

Nietzsche said, “And if a man goes through fire for his doctrine - what does that prove? Verily, it is more if your own doctrine comes out of your own fire.” (Nietzsche, 1994, p.205)<sup>3</sup>

In Chinese medicine, the Heart is that ‘fire’.

The Heart-Mind and the Kidney-Brain are both different from, and indispensable to, each other. The Heart-Mind needs the balance of ego functions performed by the Kidney-Brain: people need to know how to cross the street or balance their bankbooks. Likewise, the Kidney-Brain needs the Heart-Mind to lend inspiration, spirit, and passion to daily life.

Conventional knowing comes from the Kidney-Brain in the form of linear logic, but a different form of ‘Knowing’ comes, potentially for all of us, as with Haysee: through the Heart-Mind.

Proper functioning of this aspect of the Heart is dependent upon a healthy amount of Heart Blood, on which memory, attention and concentration also depend. Heart Blood itself rests upon the strength of Kidney Essence, since some of the Blood must be produced in the bone marrow. Having had a major role in producing Blood, Kidney Essence then depends upon the Heart to move the Blood to where it will do the most good.

To understand how this reciprocal relationship between the Heart and Kidney affects sleep, let us consider an example of how their relationship can enter a state of disharmony.

## ***Disharmony through Fear***

Fear, especially of the unknown, depletes the Water: it drains the Kidneys. This happens when the emotional strengths of Kidney Qi, yin, and yang – namely faith, hope, love of fellow man and God - fail to assuage fear. As part of its relationship with the Kidney, the Heart will also provide an element of protection.

The relationship itself will work to prevent the depleting effect of fear. The Heart-Pericardium protects the Kidneys (and the whole organism) from the ravages of fear, through what have, in my opinion mistakenly, been called ‘defenses’. These ‘defenses’ are really survival adaptations employed by the Pericardium to protect the organism from fear and all excess emotions: shock, grief, and rage, etc. Defense mechanisms work by distorting the threatening emotions (in this case, fear) into acceptable forms, or by creating a blockage of these impulses at an unconscious level.

An example of such mechanisms is ‘sublimation’. This can include creative acts such as composing music, writing a book or painting, and also the practice of nursing and the healing arts. Other forms of defense include obsession, a way of displacing fear from consciousness by thinking constantly about something else, and repression, a way of eliminating fear from consciousness. Anna Freud describes twenty-two ‘defences’ in *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence*<sup>4</sup>. I allude to these ‘defences’ as ‘mal-adaptions’ because they are usually patterns developed during the stresses of childhood in order to survive, to stay in contact, to stay ‘intact’. This concept was discussed in my book, *Dragon Rises, Red Bird Flies* (revised edition, Eastland Press, 2005).

If the protective processes fail and fear gets out of control, then over time there is resultant physiological chaos. This can manifest either as psychosis, or as what is alluded to as ‘autoimmune’ disease (I include cancer in this group), or both. An earlier sign of disharmony within the Heart-Kidney relationship can be seen through its effect on sleep.

