

## 臟腑通治 Mutual Treatments of the Zang-Fu

Written by Tang Zonghai, 1892

Translated by Allen Tsaur, 06/05/2017

Below is a quick partial translation of a medical essay authored by Tang Zonghai in 1892. At his time, Tang was the traditionalist figure of the first generation of integrative practitioners.

At the time, it was the declining years of the last Chinese dynasty, where China was ceding territory after territory to foreign powers in humiliation. Western knowledge was rapidly pouring into China through the newly opened ports, missionaries, and the Chinese scholars sent abroad by the imperial court. Western medicine, along with western philosophy and science, was generally hailed as superior to that of China. Tang at the time spent years studying western medicine and anatomy, integrated these knowledge into his practice, and later established the Blood Stasis School that is quite influential to this day (especially in Taiwan). A difference in his approach, though, was that he incorporated western knowledge into the framework of Chinese medical system – an approach that is quite lacking in today's one-sided “integrative” medicine.

This essay discusses an additional communication network between Zang-Fu organs/channels that is not discussed elsewhere. Herbalists have long discovered some of these connections in isolated cases, such as Wen Dan Tang (Warming the Gallbladder Decoction) treats the Heart-Shen diseases & promoting sweat in the Taiyang (BL) channel to treat wind cold, a Lung disease. This is the paper that proposes a comprehensive framework to explain this relationship.

For those who may be interested, historically, this is a further development of a 16<sup>th</sup> century work by Li Yan (醫學入門, “Entering the Door of Medicine”) – whose texts are basically the section headers that I have translated below. Tang provided the commentaries for each connection.

From my limited study, I believe only herbalists are utilizing this relationship to some degree. Master Tung's apprentice, Dr. Wei-Chieh Young, is possibly the first person who utilize this relationship in acupuncture. He first publicized this relationship in 1973 and dubbed it 臟腑別通 “Alternate Communication of Zang-Fu.” He used this connection to explain why some of Master Tung's points work – for example, treating knee pain with PC-5, treating heart disease with ST-36, treating neck and shoulders with LU-5... etc. I once asked Dr. Young in person what he thinks this connection is in term of channels, his response is divergent channels. I trust his words, since he is a living encyclopedia of Chinese Medicine (*who has published more than 40-50 books – many of them are now textbooks in Asia and are considered as authoritative interpretation of the classical texts*), though I have yet to verify that.

- Allen, 06/05/2017

心與膽通，心病怔忡，宜溫膽為主，膽病戰栗癡狂，宜補心為主。

The Heart communicates with the Gallbladder. When there is the Heart disease of fright and palpitation, one should focus on warming the Gallbladder. When there is the Gallbladder disease of trembling, shivering, maniac, or madness, one should focus on supplementing the Heart.

舊注君相二火一氣相通，此解通字與以下各通字不合。蓋所謂通者，必有相通之道路，唐宋後憑空說理，不按實跡。西醫雖詳形略氣，然如此等道路非借西說不能發明。西醫云：人之臟腑全有連網相聯，其連網中全有微絲管行血行氣，據此則知心與膽通，其道路亦在膜網之中。

Old commentaries mentioned that the two Fires<sup>1</sup> are essentially one qi that mutually communicate to each other. This definition of “communicating” is different from that of the “communication” mentioned below.

What it means by “communication” must have certain pathways that communicate one with another. After Tang and Song dynasties, [people] made up hypotheses in abstraction without physical evidences. Even though the Western medicine focuses on the physicality and neglects on the qi, this system of pathways cannot be clarified without the Western knowledge.

The Western medicine stated, “Zang-Fu organs are all linked together by connective network. This network is entirely filled with fine vessels that move qi and blood.” From here, it is understandable that the pathway communicating Heart and Gallbladder exists in such membranous network.

蓋膽附於肝。肝系著脊，上循入肺系，連及於心。膽與心通之路，即在其系中。故心病怔忡宜溫膽，膽病戰栗癡狂宜補心，非空論矣。又溫字補字有辨。經言溫之以氣，補之以味，內經言以苦補心，是瀉心火，即是補心，以益其陰也，溫之以氣，是益其陽也。

Gallbladder is attached to Liver. The Liver system<sup>2</sup> attaches to the spine, ascends and to the Lung system, and connects with the Heart. The pathway that communicates Gallbladder and Heart is right there in this very system.

Thus, when there is the Heart disease of fright and palpitation, one should focus on warming the Gallbladder. When there is the Gallbladder disease of trembling, shivering, maniac, or madness, one should focus on supplementing the Heart. This is not an empty saying.

In an additional note, there is a difference between “warming” and “supplementing.”

The Classic stated, “Warm by the qi<sup>3</sup> and supplement by taste.”

The Inner Classic stated, “Supplement Heart with bitters.” This is to drain the Heart fire in order to supplement the Heart, due to [its effect] of benefitting the yin [substances]. “Warming by the qi” means to benefit the yang.

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<sup>1</sup> Sovereign Fire and Ministerial Fire

<sup>2</sup> 系 Xi – here translated as system

<sup>3</sup> Qi in term of herbal medicine = temperature and energetic directionality; taste = flavor and material texture.

肝與大腸通，肝病宜疏通大腸，大腸病宜平肝經為主。

The Liver communicates with the Large Intestine. For Liver diseases, it is suitable to dredge and un-obstruct the Large Intestine. For Large Intestine diseases, one should focus on balancing/moderating the Liver channel.

肝內膈膜，下走血室，前連膀胱，後連大腸。厥陰肝脈又外繞行肛門。大腸傳導。全賴肝疏泄之力，以理論則為金木交合，以形論則為血能潤腸。腸能導滯之故，所以肝病宜疏通大腸，以行其鬱結也。大腸病如痢症、腸風秘結、便毒等症，皆宜平肝和血潤腸，以助其疏泄也。

Liver [enters] into the diaphragm, descends to the blood chamber, links up with the bladder in the anterior, and links up with the large intestine in the posterior. The Jueyin Liver channel also encircles the anus in the exterior.

Large Intestine's [function] of transmitting<sup>4</sup> all depends on the force of Liver's dredging and draining. By fundamental theory, this is the interaction of Metal and Wood. By physical anatomy, blood can moisten the intestine. Due to the intestine's ability to transmit the stagnation, for Liver diseases, it is suitable to dredge and un-obstruct the Large Intestine, which moves/frees the oppression and binding [of the Liver].

For diseases of the Large Intestine, such as dysentery, intestinal wind, constipation, binding, groin (bubo) sores,<sup>5</sup> it is suitable to balance the Liver, harmonize its blood, and moisten the intestine – which is benefiting its [function] of dredging and draining.

脾與小腸通，脾病宜泄小腸火，小腸病宜潤脾為主。

The Spleen communicates with the Small Intestine. For Spleen diseases, it is suitable to drain the fire of Small Intestine. For Small Intestine disease, one should focus on moistening/lubricating the Spleen.

西醫圖繪脾居連網之上，小腸通體皆與連網相附，連網中均有微絲管相通，據此則內經所言道路顯然。西醫不知內經，妄詆軒岐以為未見臟腑，此不足怪，獨怪中國趨好洋學，舍古聖之書，而弗深考，豈不謬哉。

In the Western anatomical drawing, the Spleen resides superior to the connective network<sup>6</sup>. The entirety of the Small Intestine also attach to the connective network. This connective network is filled with fine vessels that allow free communications.

This unquestionably demonstrates the pathways mentioned by the Inner Cannon. It is not strange that the Western medical practitioners falsely accuse that Huang Di and Qi Bo had never seen the Zang-Fu organs, since they do not know a thing about the Inner Cannon. [I] only blame the Chinese [medical

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<sup>4</sup> Suwen 8: "The large intestine is the official functioning as transmitter along the Way. Changes and transformations originate in it." (translation by Unschuld)

<sup>5</sup> Or "toxic constipation/discharges"

<sup>6</sup> I am not completely sure what this structure he's speaking about. My speculation that it is the archaic term for the greater omentum due to the fitting features he mentioned elsewhere in the same work and the following sentence where "the entirety of the small intestines are attached to it"

practitioners], who favor the foreign knowledge vainly and hastily, who abandon the works of the ancient sages and do not investigate deeply. Isn't this bizarre?

脾病多是小腸之火蒸助濕氣，發腫脹作瀉滿小便混濁，故當瀉小腸。至於小腸所以化物不滯，全賴脾濕有以濡之。西醫所謂甜肉汁入腸化物是矣，故小腸病痢及秘結、闌門不開、膈食等症，皆宜潤脾。

Spleen diseases are mostly due to the excessive steaming and generation of damp qi by the Small Intestine fire. This creates swelling, fullness, diarrhea, distension, and turbid urine. Thus, one should drain the Small Intestine.

How does the Small Intestine transform substances without creating stagnation? It all relies on the moistening of the Spleen dampness. Western medicine describes this as the secretion of the [pancreas]<sup>7</sup> that aids digestion/transformation in the intestines. Thus when there is the disease of dysentery, constipation, obstructed ileocecal valve<sup>8</sup>, or indigestion<sup>9</sup>, it is suitable to moisten the Spleen.

**肺與膀胱通，肺病宜清利膀胱水，膀胱病宜清肺氣為主。**

The Lungs communicate with the Bladder. For Lung diseases, it is suitable to clear and disinhibit the water of Bladder. For Bladder diseases, one should focus on clearing the Lung Qi.

肺主通調水道，下輸膀胱，其路道全在三焦膜中，上卷已詳言之，故肺與膀胱相隔其遠，而實相通。肺病則水停為痰飲，故宜清利膀胱以瀉之。膀胱病多由肺之上原不得疏通，故宜清肺氣為主。

The Lungs govern the communication and regulation of the water pathways. It transits downward into the Bladder. This communicating route is entirely within the membranous [network] of the Triple Energizers, which is explained in details in the previous volume [of this work]. Thus, although the Lungs and the Bladder seem far away separated from one another, they in fact communicate to each other.

When the Lungs are ill, the [pathogenic] water becomes stagnant, which turns into phlegm-rheum. Thus it is suitable to clear and disinhibit the Bladder to drain [the pathogenic fluids]. Diseases of the Bladder are mostly due to the inability of the Lung to course and communicate as the upper source [of fluid], thus it is suitable to focus on clearing the Lung Qi.

**腎與三焦通，腎病宜調和三焦，三焦病宜補腎為主。**

The Kidneys communicate with the Triple Energizers. For Kidney diseases, it is suitable to regulate and harmonize the Triple Energizers. For Triple Energizers diseases, one should focus on supplementing the Kidneys.

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<sup>7</sup> The classical term for pancreas is "sweet meat"

<sup>8</sup> The classical term for ileocecal valve is "door-screen gate"

<sup>9</sup> A specific type of indigestion where one feels bloated in the chest and has difficulty in swallowing

三焦之原即發於腎系，故腎與三焦相通。三焦為腎行水化氣，故腎病宜調和三焦。譬如腎氣丸用芩澤以利三焦之水，保元陽用黃耆以充三焦之氣是矣。三焦病不能行水，則宜滋腎陰，不能化氣，則宜補腎陽。

近醫不知三焦為何物，西醫名連網，不名三焦，且又不知腎系為三焦之根，安知人生氣化哉。

The source of the Triple Energizers originates from the Kidney system, hence the Kidneys communicate with the Triple Energizers. The Triple Energizers move water and transforms qi in behalf of the Kidneys, thus it is suitable to regulate and harmonize the Triple Energizers for Kidney diseases.

For example, Shen Qi Wan (Kidney Qi Pill) utilizes Ze Xie (alisma) to disinhibit the water of the Triple Energizers; to fortify the source Yang, one can certainly utilize Huang Qi (astragalus) to fill up the qi of the Triple Energizers. When the Triple Energizers are unable to move water, it is suitable to nourish Kidney yin. When it is unable to transform qi, it is suitable to supplement Kidney yang.

The contemporary medical practitioners do not know what the Triple Energizers are. The Western Medicine names it connective network and not the Triple Energizers. If they do not know the Kidney system is the root of the Triple Energizers, how can they know how a man is generated and how qi is transformed?

此條全可考臟腑路道。西醫形跡之學。未及如是之精，而今人不講。反為西人所笑。堪發一嘆。

This writing can all be verified by the pathways of the Zang-Fu [channels]. The study of Western medicine, which [relies on] physical [shapes] and visible [anatomy], cannot achieve such refinement; however, since people today do not discuss this, [we] are ridiculed by the Westerners. For this, I sigh.