



AN IDEAL MEDICAL MODEL: INTEGRATING CHINESE MEDICAL PHILOSOPHIES
AND ETHICS INTO THE CURRENT HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

by

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The Twenty-first International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences
Washington, D.C. November 24-30, 1997

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Into the Current Healthcare System**

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Abstract

This paper discusses ways in which advantages offered by Chinese medical philosophies and ethics can rectify shortcomings in the prevailing biomedical model. Supporting his argument with case studies drawn from his experience practicing medicine in the United States, the author proposes a new holistic medical model that will involve multi-dimensional thinking and varied therapeutic modalities, and will allow patients to receive maximum benefit from modern medical techniques.

Several fundamental concepts from Chinese medicine and ethics are advanced as part of the new model. Recognizing that the human body is inseparable from nature and thus affected by factors such as climate and weather, season, and time will allow considerations of geography and chronologically in assessing treatments. Accepting the body as a single, inseparable unit when designing therapies will help to reduce trauma and destruction ensuing from single-focus therapies, and restore balance to the interrelationships of the body's organ systems. And finally, a renewed consideration of medical ethics will greatly benefit the relationship between doctor and patient.

I have practiced Chinese medicine in the United States for the past 5 years. During that time, I have encountered a great number of cases that have caused me to very seriously weigh both the advantages and the shortcomings of the current American healthcare system against the practice of Traditional Chinese Medicine.¹ Chinese

¹ All the cases mentioned in this paper are actual cases. Patients' names have been changed for the purpose of confidentiality.

medicine and Western(modern) Medicine represent two total different healthcare systems. The first being based on synthesis, the latter on deduction. The best comparison is Quantumphysics versa Newtonian physics. Also Chinese Medicine is the only existing all encompassing, total healthcare system which exists outside the Western Hemisphere. Modern biomedicine has recently made great advances, especially in surgical techniques and emergency management. But its conceptual framework limits its best performance. The advantage of Chinese medicine lies in dealing with pernicious and chronic diseases by means of regulating the body's natural healing process. Because of its theory and philosophy, this ancient practice continues to shine in the modern era, despite the fact that its therapeutic modalities appear to be old and unsophisticated . Of course, one shortcoming of Chinese medicine lies in dealing with emergency case and surgical techniques. Currently, using Chinese medicine as a complementary medicine is, at the very least, an improvement over the uni-dimensionality of the biomedical model. But, as I have found in my clinical practice -- the idea of Chinese medicine as *complementary* medicine is not enough.

We should establish a *comprehensive* medical model, in which the current modern biomedical model and the essence of Chinese medical philosophy and ethics are merged into a new system. This will equip advanced scientific medical techniques with an organically brilliant humanistic mind. Modern medicine can then achieve its best, most efficient performance. As Dr. Capra (1985) said in his forward to *Space, Time & Medicine*, the time to do this project is right now :

In spite of the great advances of modern medical science we are now witnessing a profound crisis in healthcare in Europe and North America....., perceive the shortcomings of the current healthcare system as being rooted in the conceptual framework that supports medical theory and practice, and have come to believe that the crisis will persist unless this framework is modified....., what we need is a new vision of reality, a fundamental change.

As Dr. Capra correctly observed: this is already a real social crisis. Dissatisfied with the current health-care system, many people have searched for alternative medical treatment. This is an objective fact.

Nature and Humankind Correspond to Each Other

-----Living beings cannot exist separate from nature.

Chinese view the individual as a microcosm: a reflection of the surrounding universal macrocosm. The principles of universal energy flow are embodied in the inner workings of human beings. From the Chinese philosophical viewpoint, a healthy life is one in which the forces of Yin and Yang are evenly balanced. An imbalance of these polar energies causes a shift in the organism's equilibrium, which ultimately coalesces into patterns of disharmony and illness in the physical body.

Climate

Living in a material world, human bodies are affected in many ways by weather and climate. I have encountered many cases in which individuals found that their bodies began to deteriorate as soon as they moved to Florida. Typical symptoms were ankle edema, chest stiffness, and skin lesion -- all appearing without apparent cause. The individuals who came to my office had already undergone numerous biomedical examinations and been told that modern medicine could do nothing for them. This put them under pressure to look for relief in "alternative medicine".

These patients wanted to live in Florida, even though they recognized that their symptoms were related to Florida's humidity and hot weather. Many of the doctors whom they consulted neglected that desire. The physicians came up with new tests, and applied new treatments, but without positive results. In treating these kinds of patients, two mistakes were committed. First, the physicians did not have in their mental model the idea

that climate affects people. Having no conception of this as a causative factor, they could not conceive of a solution.

Case 1: Mrs. Austin, 56 years old. Five years ago, she moved to Florida from Ohio. Since then, she has suffered from stuffiness in the chest, water retention, and a sensation that her head was held in a tight band. She felt ill. On the surface, this appears to be a very simple case. But Mrs. Austin suffered. She was acutely aware that this climate was not good for her, because each time she visited her grandchildren in California, her symptoms completely disappeared.

When I examined Mrs. Austin, I found that her pulse was rolling and her tongue was pale with a slippery coating. In Chinese medicine, such a case presents a typical dampness syndrome. The therapeutic principle is to increase spleen energy and transform the dampness to make the energy move smoothly, which means to increase the body's metabolism of water and so dry the internal environment. By this means, the patient's tolerance for humidity and damp will significantly improve.

After two months of acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine treatment, Mrs. Austin's energy moved smoothly inside her body and her symptoms simply disappeared. The key to achieving this outcome was the concept of shaping the body to deal with the environment.

Case 2. Mrs. Lambert, 64 years old. She consulted me because of ankle edema, which was a pit edema. She had undergone almost all the tests she could be given, and had even consulted the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville. Still, no diagnosis could be made. Mrs. Lambert herself observed that she should not live in Florida, because all her complaints began when she moved to Florida and when she goes away, her symptoms go away. This is not coincidental. However, Mrs. Lambert feels she has no choice. All the members of her family member live in Florida, and her husband loves Florida weather.

Seeing no other way to go, Mrs. Lambert decided to try alternative medicine, and appeared in my office requesting treatment. Her pulse was rolling, her tongue was slippery. In Chinese medicine, her suffering is easily diagnosed as damp syndrome with spleen Qi deficiency. Treatment is very simple: increase spleen Qi (energy) and drain the damp from her body with acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine formulae.

After two months treatment, Mrs Lambert's symptom completely disappeared. Some might say that is not a very challenging case; nonetheless, the patient endured a great deal of suffering for which modern medicine offered no treatment. Chinese medicine, on the other hand, was very easy and very effective.

American medical practice needs to consider geographic factors. Then we can create -- or at least implant -- some effective techniques into our healthcare system. Also, at least we can suggest that the patient live somewhere suitable for her/his body constitution.

Time and Seasons

In accordance with the same principle, people are also affected by time and seasons. In some cases, a patient's symptoms will coalesce at certain times, otherwise that patient has no problem at all. Many cases illustrate this. For example, most chronic bronchitis is worse during the cold, winter season. Arthritis patients are worse during humid, rainy seasons. Patients with cardiovascular disease often get their attacks close to midnight.

This conception of Time has long been well recognized in Chinese medicine. The Time pattern was established when Yin-Yang theory and Five Elements theory (aspects of ancient Chinese philosophy) were incorporated into Chinese medicine. Daytime -- and associated diseases -- belongs to Yang. Nighttime -- along with related diseases -- belongs to Yin. Diseases related to Yang deficiency will worsen during Yin time. For example: the heart is a Yang organ, and during the Yin time (nighttime), Yang is under more stress. This is why patients with heart disease are always worse at night.

The seasons and even the hours of the day were classified with respect to the elements and various internal organs. Spring belongs to the liver. Summer belongs to the heart. Late-summer belongs to the spleen. Autumn belongs to the lungs. Winter belongs to the kidneys. As very clearly described in the *Nei Jing* (one of the Classic Chinese Medical Book), different diseases attack people in different seasons. A distinguished and very practical theory evolved for treating and preventing disease according to different seasons and times of day. A famous historic case occurred in China in 1955 when epidemic encephalitis B occurred at Shijiazhuang. Relatively high curative effects were

obtained by using Chinese medical herbs, primarily Gypsum decoction, which was prescribed by a well-known Chinese doctor, Pu Fuzhou, after he had gone to the epidemic area and observed the patients.

In 1956, epidemic encephalitis B occurred in the Beijing area. The same prescription was adopted, but patients failed to respond. The doctors changed their therapeutic strategies. Recognizing that the season was different, they added four other aromatic herbs to eliminate the damp/turbid effects of the prescription. The results were striking and the epidemic was controlled. Clearly: although the diseases appeared to be the same, their epidemic localities and seasons of onset were different. At Shijiazhuang encephalitis B occurred in the summer when the weather was hot and dry; In Beijing, it occurred during the late-summer/pre-autumn season when the weather was humid and damp because of an unbroken spell of rainfall. Consequently, they should not have been treated in the same way.

Case 3. Mr. Jiang, 38 years old. He had a very interesting disease. For the past four years, he had suffered attacks of high fever, which began in mid-February. Each time Mr. Jiang suffered an acute episode, he ended up in hospital for infusion and heavy dosages of antibiotics over two- or three-week periods. According to his own description, he went to hell once a year. After the most recent episode, he felt that he was exhausted, and that made him panic. Otherwise, Mr. Jiang is a very strong man without any complaint.

I saw him during the summer. He wanted me to help him to get rid this attacking evil. His pulse was wiry and his tongue was normal. A wiry pulse means liver Qi stagnation, but by itself is not sufficient evidence for a diagnosis. Considering that Mr. Jiang's problem fit the spring season (a liver-dominant period), my diagnosis was Liver Qi stagnation with Liver energy deficiency. In the spring, liver Qi is normally strong enough to manage the whole body, but because Mr. Jiang's liver energy was weak, it could not carry out its responsibility, and allowed the invading pathogens to cause high fever. I prescribed Bupleurum Decoction to increase and to regulate his liver energy in advance of the spring, which successfully cured his problem. The patient has had no episode of fever for the past three years.

Because diseases are associated with different times of day, treatments must also differ. Different organs dominate different times during the twenty-four hours of a day. Each organ dominates 2 hours. The gall-bladder dominates from 1-2 a.m.; the liver from 3-4 a.m., and so on. The development of modern chronology has provided a great deal of scientific data to explain this basic theory of Chinese medicine. Nonetheless, modern medical practice, does not incorporate this concept, and so many cases cannot be properly treated.

Case 4. Mrs. Showman, 54 years old. For 7 years she had suffered from chronic hepatitis B. Most of the time she was in a relative steady condition. Recently, she visited my office because of early morning sickness. Every morning around 3-4 a.m., she woke up by sweating and hot flushes, and chest oppression. She had undergone cardiovascular tests and hormone therapy without result. Obviously, the patient suffered neither a heart problem, nor a post-menopause syndrome. Her pulse was wiry and her tongue pale. The time of the attacks was a liver dominate time, so the diagnosis was liver Qi deficiency. I prescribed Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang, a decoction to increase the middle Jiao² energy. After using that medicine for one week Mrs. Showman's symptoms were completely controlled.

In these cases, the theoretical framework of medical analysis was more important than the concrete technique itself. Given the correct philosophic theory, the relative modality can be developed or established.

The Body is a Single Inseparable Unit

-----In the current medical model, to treat one problem is to cause a new problem.

In Chinese medical theory, the human body is an integral whole in which all organs and tissues have correspondences with one other. Normal physiological homeostasis is based on the perfect coordination of each organ with each other organ. Chinese medical philosophy aims to restore : balance or harmonization by treating the

² Middle Jiao is a physiological terminology in Chinese Medicine, which indicates the middle portion of the body, specially for spleen and stomach.

disease holistically. Neglecting this principle when treating patients invites disaster. In Chinese medicine, treating liver disease, always entails using some herbal medicine to take care of the spleen/stomach system (the digestion system) in order to prevent the liver disease from affecting the spleen/stomach. In treating any kind of disease, one must know and care about the patient's stomach Qi, must be certain the patient can absorb the nutrient, must be certain that the patient will be able to have a good life and live independently after recovering from the disease. Because of the interrelationship between the lung and large intestine, when treating asthma patients we take care of the large intestine at the same time and insure that the patient has a normal bowel movement, thereby allowing the respiratory system to gain the maxim benefit from the treatment.. The interrelationship between the heart and kidney is emphasized in treating insomnia patients. Treating cardiovascular disease most often requires treating the stomach. Cardiologists are often puzzled by how a stomach problem can trigger palpitations, extra beats, or atrial fibrillation. Modern medicine knows very little about these interrelationships, and by neglecting or ignoring them allows many unnecessary disasters to occur.

Case 5. Mr. Freeman, 55 years old. Three years ago Mr. Freeman consulted me about ascites from due to post hepatitis B cirrhosis. He recovered very well with only Chinese herbal medicine treatment, and for more than two years his liver profile remained in a normal range, with no ascites. Three months ago he hurt his back due to some improper work and wanted me to treat him for severe lower back pain. I performed three sessions of acupuncture. His back pain was relieved by 50%, but I was not satisfied with the result. I suggested further examination by his biomedical doctor to confirm the diagnosis, never imagining how catastrophic that would be.

Mr. Freeman consulted a physician, who performed MRI and many other tests. The diagnosis was lumbar degeneration. The patient was put on Coumadin and one pain killer, which caused severe subcutaneous bleeding, and his hemoglobin dropped to 3. Mr. Freeman had a convulsive attack. Twelve units of transfused blood barely kept him alive. Finally Mr. Freeman left the hospital and quickly came to visit me. His back pain remained the same. However, he now had a huge hematoma in his back, and his liver situation had worsed. Having no choice, I again put him on herbal medicine. Now he still has almost no back pain, and has returned to his normal life.

This is a typical case that happens almost every day. The modern biomedical model treated his pain, but forgot his liver situation, and forgot his blood platelet count and coagulation time. Such disasters can easily be avoided. I mention this case not to criticize the doctor, but rather to criticize the medical system.

Case 6. Mr. Smith, 73 years old. He visited my office because of severe back pain. After three back surgeries, he had collapsed. He could not walk and could not play golf anymore, which made him very depressed. The biomedical model supposes that the surgery should be done regardless of whether or not it is successful, whether or not the patient's body can tolerate the surgery. Mr. Smith was very weak and had several cardiovascular diseases. Certainly, he would have benefited more from the surgery, had the surgeon considered the situation of the other organs, avoided traumatic therapy, and instead sought to elevate the patient's general condition and increase his pain threshold.

Case 7. Mr. Kepler, 75 years old. In Sept. 1995, after previously consulting 16 other physicians, he visited my office as a last resort. His major complaint was severe cough. He had been coughing all day and all night for two months, could not sleep, and was losing weight fast. His cough began after heart bypass surgery two months earlier. Mr. Kepler was frustrated, and claimed that he would rather die than live this way, with no quality of life and so much suffering. Mr. Kepler was very fragile and weak. The bypass surgery may have cured his heart but it created another evil, even worse than his heart problem. While the technique for heart surgery is very sophisticated, and has allowed many people to survive, in this case it was a failure. The surgeon did not comprehensively evaluate the patient, and neglected the patient's weak lung condition; the trauma of the surgery caused his bronchial spasm and respiratory failure. Luckily, Mr. Kepler's exhaustive cough was cured in two months through acupuncture and herbal medicine.

Case 8. Mr. Robinson, 66 years old. A very nice man from Canada, Mr. Robinson had been diagnosed with lung cancer. He did not die of cancer, but from heart failure due to heavy dosages of chemotherapy. I mention him because he was a good man. His death also reminds us of the importance of conceptualizing the body as an inseparable unity.

How can we treat the cancer and forget the heart, or other organs?. It only causes more trouble for the patient. How many cancer patients have died from conventional therapy rather than from the cancer? Why are so many cancer patient afraid of conventional treatments? We think that patients have been helped when, as a matter of fact, they suffer more and their survival rates are not significantly improved -- not to

mention the expense of chemotherapy and the related tests. Some have observed -- and I agree with them -- that the problem is the framework of our modern medical model.

The deficiency or shortcomings of this conceptual framework is shown in dealings with elderly patients. Most of the time, elderly patients do not suffer from only a single disease. A patient suffering from hypertension, for example, may at the same time suffer from diabetes or stomach ulcer or more. More than a dozen different medications are often prescribed and consumed every day by such patients! The human body has not been treated like an integral organic unit, but rather, like a machine into which medications are mechanically inserted with the blind faith that they will find their own ways to work on the different problems. Both doctor and patient are confused: neither knows which medications are essential, which are not, or even which side effect is coming from which drug. The patient's health gets worse and worse. We can not blame the physicians, we have to blame their medical training.

Many patients who come to my office are very sick. They tell me that they faithfully take the prescription drugs but do not get any better. I suggest they discuss with their physician whether it's possible to stop all medications for a while and observe what happens. Many patients even stop taking various drugs before consulting with their physicians, they feel better right away without that medications.

By contrast, Chinese medicine emphasizes interrelation and balance among the organs. The root pathology is determined through a comprehensive analysis of all the symptoms taken together as a whole. Each prescription is based on an entire "SYNDROME" -- not only on separate symptoms. The root pathology is treated, and formulae of medicinal herbs simultaneously regulate the related organs to bring them into a new balance. The major principle is not to treat aggressively, but to regulate and harmonize the body by means of the body's own healing processes.

Case 9. Mr. Kennedy, 80 years old. He suffered severe insomnia, and had had no sleep at all since a prostate biopsy procedure 45 days earlier. He had been taking about 4 pills per day of Ambien, which had done nothing for his sleep. He was devastated, had no energy, and slight ankle edema. He also took two additional medications for his cardiovascular problem. Mr. Kennedy did not believe in alternative medicine, but he felt that at this moment he had no other choice. When I saw Mr. Kennedy, his complexion was flushed, his eyes were baggy and swollen; he was tired and frustrated. His heart pulse was very thin. The tip of his tongue was very red. He also complained of very dry mouth and lips.

My diagnosis was heart Yin Deficiency, and the major concern was to tonify the heart Yin. I prescribed an herbal formula combined with acupuncture to increase his heart Yin. He responded very quickly to this treatment, and in two weeks, he could use one Ambian to sleep 7 hours every day. All his symptoms were gone, he was able to play golf again. Why his heart Yin deficiency? It is most often caused by overdoses of diuretics [prescribed], which induces a state of near dehydration.

Case 10. Mr. Brown, 93 years old. His major complaint was diarrhea and weight loss. He had been passing watery diarrhea with undigested food in 6 ~ 8 bowel movement per day for 8 months. His height was 6'3', his weight was 120 lb. -- very slim. "Conventional medicine and gastroentriologists have done all they can do" his wife told me. I gave him a physical examination. No malignancy was apparent. His heart pulse and lung pulse were very weak. In Chinese medicine, we claim that the small intestine is related to heart, and the lung related to the large intestine. Food can not be absorbed when there is no heart fire to help fermentation. The heart dominates the whole body Yang,. Now his heart Yang deficiency was the key -- nothing was related to his gastrointestinal system.

I prescribed a Chinese herbal formula Yang Xin Tang (Decoction to Tonify Heart). In three days, his bowel movements were down to 2 ~ 3 times per day, almost formed. In two weeks, his bowel movements were back to normal, his energy had improved and he had gained back 12 lb. If I had treated only his gastrointestinal system, there would have been no result, because heart Yang deficiency was the root pathology in his disease.

Balance and Harmony is the Final Goal of the Treatment

-----Overdoing is the major cause of medical crisis in modern biomedical model

In Chinese medicine, we emphasize balance between Yin and Yang, and harmony among all the internal organs. Disease is the breakdown of this balance and harmony. To treat the disease is to recover the original balance.

In the current medical model, we create and use many strong drug/medications and traumatic therapies to treat disease. We forget the concept of balance and harmony in the body. In curing one problem we often create another, and place the patient in an vicious circuit. We need to train our doctors to understand this principle -- not only to know how to treat by getting rid of disease, but also how to promote life. A very simple and familiar example is the overdosage of antibiotics to kill one pathogenic bacterium, and while healing this infection, the balance of bacterial strains is disturbed, and yeast infection always follows. In clinical practice, we meet so many elderly patients often taking three or four antibiotics at the same time for urinary tract infection. And even with this very heavy dosage, they continue to suffer from the infection. What has happened is that the over-use of the drugs has brought the body farther and farther away from its balanced state. We have made the patient worse.

For chronic disease, we need an accurate diagnosis and low dosages to invigorate the body's healing system and stimulate it to achieve its own balance. The problem lies in not respecting the ability of the body to heal itself. We try to kill bacteria, to kill viruses, to kill organisms, to kill cancer cells. Why not think more about how and why these evils invade and attack the body? Chinese medicine emphasizes that the cause of pathogenic invasion is the body's weakness. If the body is strengthened and balanced, bacteria/virus and tumor cells will have no opportunity to grow. But we neglect this, knowing only how to kill with strong drugs. In the treatment of cancer, survival rates have shown no significant improvement in more than 10 years. This does not parallel the great advancements in modern biomedical techniques. Why? We can arrive at a clear answer only if we consider the question from the perspective of philosophy or methodology.

So many new chemotherapy drugs have been developed for killing tumor cells. But what do we do to balance the body and increase the body energy? Nothing. In Chinese medicine, we do not have these powerful drugs, but the medicines are more natural and more easily accepted by patient's body. Tumors and cancers are caused by

imbalances among various internal organs -- not only by imbalance in the affected organs. In lung cancer, for example, spleen deficiency forms phlegm, and liver involvement causes energy stagnation. Lung cancer is a compensatory reaction to poor spleen and liver performance. Therefore: to treat lung cancer we should focus on transforming the phlegm and regulating the liver energy in order to recover the balance among these three organs. The treatment is gentle, but it works. Often it works much better than the conventional cancer therapy.

Case 11. Mrs. Mitchell, 72 years old. After being diagnosed with lung cancer, she was put on chemotherapy. After two sessions, the patient collapsed; her body was very weak, bone marrow depressed. She could not tolerate the chemotherapy at all. She was then was put on Predisone and Radiation therapy. After two sessions, she had a compression fracture, and suffered horribly from severe pain. She claimed she would rather die than continue with this therapy. I fully understood why this patient sought alternative therapy.

At the time Mrs. Mitchell became my patient, she was very weak, with a lot of pain in her upper back and rib cage, severe depression, and difficulty breathing (she also had emphysema). I used gentle acupuncture to relieve her pain and depression, and a Chinese herbal formula to increase her spleen energy, regulate liver energy, and help her lung dispersion. Gradually she gained more energy and became stronger without chemo and radiation therapy. Her lung cancer became so stable that her MRIs have shown no growth or metastases in two years. The tumor size even began to diminish. If we could incorporate this concept into our daily clinical practice, we could achieve many more beneficial effects.

As modern medical techniques progress, the branches of medicine are becoming more and more specialized. One patient may have five or six doctors, each doctor prescribing different drugs. Lack of communication and harmonization among the doctors creates a plethora of problems. How can they promote balance in the body? How can they help their patients to balance the organs and achieve a cure? We have the general practitioner, who should regularly respond to and communicate with the patient's varied specialists about the medications and therapies. But in fact, most of them fail to do this job. Often you see a patient taking more than 10 different drugs, some of which coneract

with each other. The patients have paid for expensive medicines that only make them more sick. Balance and harmonization means not only harmonizing the patient's body; it also means harmonizing the doctor and patient. Actually that is another big topic.

Ethics and Multi-dimensional Thinking

----- Caring and flexible/multiple treatments can boost the body's natural healing process to heal pernicious disease

Many complaints are heard about practitioners' attitudes and manners in modern medicine. Doctors do not spend enough time with patients and they rush the patient too much. And it is very difficult to get appointments when you really need them. Or they do not take the patient seriously, and so on

Medical ethics has been a big topics since the very beginning of medical practice. In Chinese medicine, it is the first required class that a medical school student takes. Many ancient famous doctors had excellent descriptions of ethics. Confucian philosophy, the main essence of Chinese medical ethics, requires that doctors treat patients as they would treat their parents or siblings. In Confucianism, parents and the emperor held the highest status. You were not allowed to neglect, abandon, or mistreat them. That was the law. How you treated your parents was the standard for judging your personality -- whether you were a good or bad person. So: if doctors treated their patients as their relatives, there would be no problem about medical ethics.

In Tang dynasty (618-906 AD), the very famous doctor Sun Simiao³ wrote a beautiful statement of medical ethics which is almost the same as the medical ethics oath of the Greek physician Hippocrates, written 400 years later. Sun's code of ethics was

³ Sun, Si Miao, who was the author of <<*Qian Jin Fang*>> (The Formulas Worth of Thousand Tons of Gold).

passed from generation to generation in Chinese medical schools. Hippocrates' oath was consigned to history.

In the U.S. I have met many mothers who were seeking an alternative to vaccination for their children. I found this phenomenon very surprising. With the great advance of modern science, how is it that so many people have come to want to avoid vaccination, which has been so successful in preventing deadly infectious disease? The mothers are very certain that they do not want their children vaccinated. If I advise them to get their children vaccinated, they may become angry with me. But my medical ethics and my heart force me to persuade them to let their children be vaccinated. Some of them even said "I came here for something new -- otherwise why am I here?" I patiently educate them about the importance of vaccinations for the child's future. Most of them listen to me, and get their children vaccinated.

The underlying problem is our physicians -- particularly some doctors who claim to do alternative medicine, and who want to please their patients even to the extent of neglecting basic science. By the way, originally vaccination technique was invented in ancient China. Much misguided information has created this catastrophic social phenomenon. As physicians we have to do things from our heart if we are concerned about doing good for our patients. Medical practice is not a business. We can not disobey our medical ethics and basic common sense to attract patients, and we can not take the patient as our client for business' sake. But in this country, medical practice has become a big business. I have no idea how to solve this problem.

For many cancer patients' treatment, the medical routine is MRI and biopsy for diagnosis, then surgery, then chemo- or radiation-therapy, and finally the patient is exhausted or tired to death -- rarely recovered. Here I quote the *New England Journal of Medicine* (1997;336:1569-74) "Despite decades of basic and clinical research and trials of

promising new therapies, cancer remains a major cause of morbidity and mortality.... The war against cancer is far from over. Observed changes in mortality [are] due to early detection. The effect of new treatments for cancer on mortality has been largely disappointing.”

Ask oncologists, how much do they trust this routine therapy? Have they seen whether this therapy works or not? If their own parent suffers cancer, are they willing to put them on this routine therapy? I doubt it. But treating cancer is big money business. And insurance companies will pay for this therapy.

Case 12. Mrs. Washington, 47 years old. She is an electronic engineer, and very intelligent. In March 1996 she was diagnosed through biopsy with a very malignant breast carcinoma. Her oncologist strongly suggested removing the mass through surgery while the cancer was still in its early stage -- the best time to have surgery. But Mrs. Washington refused surgery. She came to my office for alternative therapy.

For her situation, what should I do? That is a big dilemma for me. To suggest that she go back for surgery? To accept her as a patient and treat her with Chinese medicine exclusively? In comparison to the conventional therapy for cancer, Chinese medicine works very well, but it is very slow, working through boosting the body natural healing system to achieve a cure. It takes time. Surgically removing the mass could win time for the Chinese herbal medicine treatment. In the early stage of cancer treatment, if surgery is available, it is obviously correct thing to do. For Mrs. Washington, surgery was the right thing to do. I have seen many breast cancer patients survive and live very well after the early stage cancer was surgically removed.

So I advised her to return for surgery. But she was very convinced about what she wanted and what she was doing. In general, she was deeply disappointed with modern medicine. She was afraid of conventional therapy. She told me what happened to her friend and neighbor, a 49 year old man. During an annual physical examination, enlarged lymph nodes were found in his left neck. His doctor suggested a biopsy, which confirmed non-Hodgkin's lymphomas. Then he was put on chemotherapy, became exhausted, caught pneumonia, and died -- all in a period of two months. Mrs. Washington thought that if her friend had not taken the rough treatment of chemotherapy, he might still be alive. I pushed her very hard, but finally gave up. She has her instincts. We have to respect her feelings. I accepted her as a patient for treatment with Chinese herbal medicine and dietary regulation.

Fortunately, without surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy, she is still in good shape. The breast tumor is slightly larger. But she feels fine, without any metastases, and her cancer antigen is in the normal range. Her weight has remained almost the same.

If our oncologists can get their patient's trust and get the surgery done, then the patient will receive the greatest benefit from the combination with Chinese herbal medicine treatment. As a Chinese medicine practitioner I can more easily fulfill my role. Patients will take less risk. The oncologists should re-think their status and differentiate individual cases: do not treat all cancer patients with one invariant medical model and routine.

The cases I have described are real cases. These types of problems are an incredible phenomenon, and you can encounter them every day in your practice. What do you want to do -- as an oncologist, as a physician? We must change, we must improve our performance. My thinking is to construct another, a better medical model: one that would introduce Chinese medical philosophies and ethics into the current medical healthcare system. As to *how* to integrate the Chinese medical philosophies into the current medical model: many things need to be discussed. It can not happen in one or two days. But it is essential to improve the quality of medical practice and create a better medical model that would greatly benefit our people.

Summary

This paper proposes a new holistic medical model that would introduce fundamental principles of Chinese medicine into current medical practice, thus strengthening the effectiveness of conventional medicine, while at the same time addressing some of its shortcomings. The new medical model will involve multi-dimensional thinking, and will adopt varied therapeutic modalities, allowing patients to receive maximum benefit from modern medical techniques.

The main points discussed in this paper center around 1) the necessity to recognize the relationship between the human body and natural factors (such as weather, locality, time; 2) the need to conceptualize and treat the body as a single inseparable unit in which all organ systems are interrelated; 3) the value of emphasizing balance and harmony (rather than the simple elimination of disease) as a goal of treatment; and 4) the promise of reevaluating assumptions about medical ethics and the relationship between doctor and patient.

As what I mentioned above how to integrate Chinese Medical philosophies into current medical model means to go into detail and submitting another paper. At least I think we need to educate medical students at university level about these two existing healthcare systems. Only then are we able to accomplish what I call the best medical model for the well-being of every person.

Acknowledgment: Great thanks to Dr. Carolyn Bloomer(Ph.D.) for editing this paper in her busy schedule. Thanks also to my colleague Dr. Helga Wall-Apelt(M.D.) for her great help. Without their support and encouragement, this paper would not be available.

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