

## Introduction

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), with a history of thousands of years, is the crystallization of the ancient Chinese people's experience in their struggle against diseases. It is also an integral part of the splendid Chinese culture. Under the influence and direction of classical Chinese philosophies, it has undergone long-term medical practice and infiltrated into, as well as absorbed from, other subjects at that time, thus gradually evolving into a unique medical theoretical system that contributed significantly to the health care of the Chinese people and the prosperity of the Chinese nation.

The basic theories of TCM are the theoretical foundations for guiding traditional Chinese preventive medicine and clinical medicine, and encompass such aspects as the philosophical foundation for TCM, the understandings of TCM on the physiology and pathology of the human body, and the principles in TCM for life-cultivation, rehabilitation, diagnostics, and therapeutics. In this sense, these basic theories are regarded not only as an important part of TCM, but also as a compulsory course fundamental to the studying and researching on TCM.

### SECTION 1 A SUMMARY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF BASIC THEORIES OF TCM

#### *The Warring States Period — The Eastern Han Dynasty*

The end of the Warring States Period has witnessed a dramatic change in society with remarkable advancement of politics, economics and culture, thus providing a considerable impetus to the development of academic thoughts that became increasingly dynamic and brisk. It is exactly during

this period that the earliest medical classic in China, *The Yellow Emperor's Canon of Medicine* (*Huang Di Nei Jing*, 黄帝内经), or *Nei Jing* for short, came into existence. It covered the achievements before the Warring States Period from various subjects, such as philosophy, astronomy, calendar, meteorology, mathematics, biology and geography. Particularly, under the far-reaching influence of yin-yang and wuxing (five elements) theories, it summarized the medical achievements and experience before the period of Warring States and established the unique theoretical system of TCM, thereby laying a solid foundation for the development of traditional Chinese medicine.

*Nei Jing* is composed of two parts: *Ling Shu* (*Miraculous Pivot*, 灵枢) and *Shu Wen* (*Plain Conversation*, 素问), 18 volumes and 162 chapters in total. Through the conversation between Huangdi and Qibo, it adopts a question and answer approach to discuss systematically the relationship between man and nature, the physiology and pathology of the human body, and the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of diseases, thus laying a theoretical foundation for TCM. It covers aspects such as visceral manifestation, meridians and collaterals, etiology, pathogenesis, diagnostics, therapeutics, life cultivation, yunqi (five successive evolutive phases corresponding to five elements), acupuncture and moxibustion, etc. While addressing the medical theories, it also probes into some philosophical thoughts being the focus of attention at that time, such as yin-yang, five elements, qi, correspondence between man and nature, and the relationship between body and spirit. In such a way, it not only promoted the development of TCM by assimilating the advanced philosophical theories during that period, but also enriched and improved, in turn, the philosophical theories on the basis of medical progress. Many viewpoints in this book were really advanced at that time. For example, in *Ling Shu-Jingshui* (*Miraculous Pivot-Meridians and Vessels*, 灵枢·经水), it was clearly pointed out that, "After death, he or she can be examined by anatomy." And in the same book, it was also recorded that the ratio of the esophagus to the intestine is 1: 35, which is very close to the modern finding of 1:37. In *Su Wen-Wei Lun* (*Plain Conversation-Discussion on Paralysis*, 素问·痿论), it was put forth that, "The heart governs the blood and vessels of the body." And in *Su Wen-Ju Tong Lun* (*Plain Conversation-Discussion on Pain*), it was emphasized that the blood "circulates around

the body in an endless circle.” These statements have survived the lapse of time and, till today, they are still considered to be correct. For this reason, *Nei Jing* has been revered as an essential textbook for medical learners since its advent.

*Nan Jing (Canon of Difficult Issue, 难经)*, written in the Eastern Han Dynasty, addresses 81 difficult issues in a question and answer approach. The book aims to elucidate the theories in *Nei Jing* and covers many different fields such as physiology, pathology, diagnostics and therapeutics. For pulse diagnosis, “exclusive examination on cunkou (a specific location on the radial artery at the wrist)” is particularly emphasized. And it further developed the theories of mingmen (gate of life) and sanjiao (triple energizer) in *Nei Jing*. For this reason, it was thought of as another important medical classic after *Nei Jing*.

*Shang Han Za Bing Lun (Treatise on Damage Cold and Miscellaneous Disease, 伤寒杂病论)*, written by Zhang Zhongjing, a great physician at the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty, summarized the clinical experience of many doctors before the Eastern Han Dynasty, as well as the author himself under the guidance of theories in *Nei Jing*. It discussed cold-induced diseases in terms of six-meridian theory and miscellaneous diseases in terms of zang-fu theories, and put forth the principle of treatment according to syndrome differentiation encompassing principle, method, prescription and medicine, thus serving as a significant and indelible milestone in the rapid development of Chinese clinical medicine. The original *Shang Han Za Bing Lun (Treatise on Damage Cold and Miscellaneous Disease, 伤寒杂病论)* was once lost, and during the Song dynasty, it was divided into two books: *Shang Han Lun (Treatise on Exogenous Febrile Diseases, 伤寒论)* and *Jin Gui Yao Lue (Synopsis of Prescriptions in the Golden Chamber, 金匮要略)*. The former formulated the outline and specific methods for treatment of six-meridian disorders based on syndrome differentiation, expounded the characteristics of the syndromes of the six meridians (taiyang, yangming, shaoyang, taiyin, shaoyin and jueyin), and established the principles and methods for the mechanisms of transmission from one meridian to another as well as their treatment according to syndrome differentiation. In this sense, it has laid a theoretical foundation for the diagnosis and treatment of exogenous febrile diseases. The second book, *Jin Gui Yao Lue (Synopsis of Prescriptions in the Golden Chamber,*

金匱要略), took the viscera and meridians as the outline, and put forth more than 40 therapeutic methods based on syndrome differentiation and 262 meticulously-formulated prescriptions perfect in principles, methods and herbs, thereby providing effective methods and approaches for the diagnosis and treatment of miscellaneous diseases due to internal damage.

*Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing* (*Shen Nong's Classic of the Materia Medica*, 神农本草经), compiled in the Eastern Dynasty, is the earliest monograph on materia medica extant in China. In this book, 365 kinds of medicinal substances are recorded and, according to their properties and actions, divided into three grades: the superior, the mediocre, and the inferior. It also deals with the medicinal theories or concepts, e.g., the classification of herbs in a prescription into four types: monarch, minister, assistant and guide, the four properties, and the five flavors, etc. It has laid a theoretical foundation for the development of Chinese Materia Medica. All of these clearly pointed to the fact that this was a critical phase when experiential knowledge was channelled into systematic theories.

### ***The Wei Dynasty, Jin Dynasty, and Southern-Northern Dynasties***

During this period, medical theories were systematically summarized by Wang Shu. He rearranged Shang Han Lun, and wrote *Mai Jing* (*The Pulse Classic*, 脉经), the earliest most elaborate monograph on pulse-taking. This book elaborate the theories, methods and clinical significances of sphygmology in addition to the standardization of the titles for different pulses. Huang Fumi in the Jin Dynasty compiled *Zhen Jiu Jia Yi Jing* (*A-B Classics of Acupuncture and Moxibustion*, 针灸甲乙经), the earliest comprehension monograph on acupuncture and moxibustion. This book, which rich in content, complete in theories and practical in application, covers areas such as viscera, meridians, acupoints, pathogenesis, diagnostics, therapeutics and medication taboos, etc. In *Ben Cao Jing Ji Zhu* (*Collective Commentaries on the Classic of Materia Medica*, 本草经集注), Tao Hongjing proposed the classification of medicinal substances according to their natural sources and the application of an universally-applicable medicine for all diseases, which had a significant influence on the later generations. *Lei Gong Pao Zhi Lun* (*Master Lei's Discourse on Medicinal*

*Processing*, 雷公炮炙论) compiled by Lei Xiao, dealt exclusively with the theories about the properties and flavors of medicinal substances and the methods for their preparation and decoction.

### ***The Sui and Tang Dynasties***

During this period, the theoretical system of TCM continued to evolve owing to its rich medical practice. *Huang Di Nei Jing Tai Su* (*Grand Simplicity of Yellow Emperor' Canon of Medicine*, 黄帝内经太素) compiled by Yang Shangshan is the earliest thickest? annotation edition. In *Bu Zhu Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen* (*Supplementary Commentaries on Plain Conversation of Yellow Emperor' Canon of Medicine*, 补注黄帝内经素问), Wang Bing expounded and developed some theories in *Nei Jing*, and advocated that “restraining predominant yang by strengthening yin and restraining predominant yin by reinforcing yang,” which was highly regarded by the later generations. He also supplemented seven chapters about five movements and six climates, in which the theory of Yun Qi was rooted. *Zhu Bing Yuan Hou Lun* (*Treatise on Causes and Manifestations of Various Diseases*, 诸病源候论), the earliest monograph on etiology and symptomatology, was compiled by Chao Yuanfang. In this book, he made penetrating elucidations on the causes and symptoms of various diseases due to internal damage. Moreover, Sun Simaio devoted all his life to the writing of two great books: *Qian Jin Yao Fang* (*Valuable Prescriptions*, 千金要方) and *Qian Jin Yi Fang* (*Supplement to Valuable Prescription*, 千金翼方). The two books highly regarded in the medical history of China because they cover a relatively comprehensive discussion on various medical fields from basic theories to clinical subjects.

### ***The Song, Jin and Yuan Dynasties***

This period witnessed the tremendous development in the theoretical system of TCM. In the Song Dynasty, and Chen Wuze wrote *San Yin Ji Yi Bing Zheng Fang Lun* (*Treatise on Diseases, Patterns and Formulas Related to the Unification of the Three Etiologies*, 三因极一病证方论). In this book, he put forth the well-known “theory of triple factors in causing diseases,” which further improved the theory of etiology in TCM.

*Cha Bing Zhi Nan (Guide to Diagnosis, 察病指南)* written by Shi Fa is a book recording 33 pictures, each depicting the characteristics of a certain pulse. In *Ao Shi Shang Han Jin Jing Lu (Ao's Golden Mirror Records for Cold Damage, 敖氏伤寒金镜录)* written by Du Ben, there are 36 pictures depicting the morbid conditions of the tongue. It is the earliest extant book dealing exclusively with tongue examination. Zhang Yuansu summed up the essentials of many previous physicians and came-up with a comparatively systematic theory on visceral syndrome differentiation. He also proposed the theories of medicinal tropism and medicinal guide. Besides, Qian Yi is the first one to apply syndrome differentiation of the five zang-organs to treat infantile diseases, gradually developing a systematic set of fundamental principles or methods for infantile syndrome differentiation and treatment. In the Jin and Yuan Dynasties, there came forth four great medical schools represented by Liu Wansu, Zhang Congzheng, Li Gao and Zhu Zhenheng. Their achievements provided significant impetus to the development of basic theories in TCM. For example, Liu Wansu believed that "fire-heat" is the main cause of a variety of diseases, including the hyperactivity of six climatic factors and five emotions. He often treated these diseases with herbs cool or cold in nature; so his theory, known as the "School of Cold and Cool," had a far-reaching impact on the later generations and, in particular, contributed significantly to the formation of warm-disease theory. Zhang Congzheng believed that all diseases are caused by exogenous pathogenic factors and such factors should be driven out of the body by means of sweating, vomiting, and purging. For this reason his theory is known as the "School of Purgation." Li Gao put forward that internal impairment of the spleen and the stomach would bring about various diseases and therefore emphasized that the spleen and stomach are the foundation for the primordial qi. Improper diet, overstrain or emotional stimulation may all impair the spleen and stomach, giving rise to a variety of diseases. So he suggested that the most important thing in clinical treatment should be warming and invigorating the spleen and the stomach. That is why he was regarded as the founder of the "School of Reinforcing the Earth (spleen and stomach)." Zhu Zhenheng advocated forcefully that yang is usually redundant while yin is frequently deficient, which is based on the theory of ministerial fire (kidney fire). Clinically he often used the prescriptions

for nourishing yin and reducing fire to treat patients. So his theory was known as the “School of Nourishing Yin.” Besides, he was also a master at treating miscellaneous diseases, and came up with many ingenious ideas such as “almost all diseases are caused by phlegm” and “stagnation is responsible for a myriad of diseases.”

### *The Ming and Qing Dynasties*

In the Ming Dynasty, Zhao Xianke put forth the theory of mingmen (gate life) and emphasized that the gate of life is the pivot for regulating the yin and yang and the visceral activities of the whole body, which further enriched the theory of visceral manifestation in TCM. Li Zhongzi also stated that the kidney is the prenatal foundation while the spleen is the postnatal foundation. Even today, this remark is still widely used to guide clinical practice. It is noteworthy that, during this period, the theory of warm disease, emerged. Although it is a clinical subject focusing on the occurrence and development patterns of seasonal warm disease, as well as its treatment based on syndrome differentiation, the theory is of great significance to the improvement of the theoretical foundation of TCM. In the late Ming Dynasty, Wu Youxing first put forward the idea in *Wen Yi Lun (Treatise on Warm-Heat Pestilence, 瘟疫论)* that the cause of pestilence was different from the six abnormal climatic factors comprising of wind, cold, summer-heat, dampness, and so on. He believed that it is a special pathogenic factor in the natural world and that the channel of infection by pestilence is through the mouth and nose. All of these great contributions have revealed, from theory to practice, the causes of pestilence and warm disease, as well as their routes of transmission. In the Qing Dynasty, Ye Tianshi and Wu Jutong established the theories and methods for the treatment of warm disease based on syndrome differentiation and centered on “wei, qi, ying and blood” and the “triple energizer.” In such a way, the theory of warm disease was further developed and became self-consistent in etiology, pathogenesis or treatment based on syndrome differentiation. Moreover, Wang Qingren wrote *Yi Li Gai Cuo (Corrections on Medical Errors, 医林改错)*. In this book, he rectified some errors in a number of medical classics with regard to the human

anatomy and, more noticeably, developed the theory of pathogenic blood stasis, thereby making certain contributions to the development of the basic theories of TCM.

### ***Daily Exercises***

1. Why it is said that *Huang Di Nei Jing* has laid the theoretical foundation for TCM?
2. What are the main viewpoints of the four great medical schools in the Jin and Yuan Dynasty?
3. In which book were the remarks made by Wu Youxing on the etiology of pestilence originated?

## **SECTION 2 THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF BASIC THEORIES OF TCM**

The theoretical system of TCM has evolved in the long course of clinical practice under the guidance of ancient Chinese philosophies. It originates from practice and, in turn, guides the practice. This unique theoretical system is essentially characterized by the concept of holism and the treatment based on syndrome differentiation.

### **Concept of Holism**

Concept of holism views everything as holistic and integral objects, and deems the connection among them as inseparable. In light of this concept, the human body is regarded in TCM as an organic whole of which the constituent parts are inseparable in structure, interdependent in physiology, and inter-affected in pathology. The unity between the body and its external environment is also emphasized in TCM. It is just through the process of actively adapting to and remolding the natural environment that human beings maintain their normal life activities. For this reason, the concept of holism is highly valued in TCM, and is widely used in various branches of TCM such as physiology, pathology, diagnostics, syndrome differentiation and therapeutics.

### ***The Human Body is an Organic Whole***

The human body is composed of five zang-organs (the heart, liver, spleen, lung and kidney), six fu-organs (the stomach, small intestine, large intestine, triple energizers, urinary bladder, and gallbladder), five body constituents (the skin, vessels, muscles, tendons and bones) and seven orifices (the eyes, nose, ears, mouth, tongue, external genitalia and anus). Though different in physiological functions, they are interconnected rather than isolated. The unity of the body, according to the theory of TCM, is realized through the dominance of the five zang-organs, the assistance of the six fu-organs, and the communication of the meridians. The meridians, pertaining to the viscera in the interior and connecting with the limbs and joints in the exterior, can circulate essence, qi, blood and body fluid so as to nourish and coordinate various organs and tissues. In this sense, it is considered that TCM approaches the human body from a holistic perspective, e.g., digestion, absorption and excretion of food must rely on the coordinated action of the stomach in decomposition, the spleen in transformation and the large intestine in transportation; besides, the metabolism of water and fluid is also a concerted effort of the spleen in transformation and transportation, the lung in dredging and regulating waterways, and the kidney in distribution and excretion.

Such activities in a coordinated fashion are the prerequisite for the soundness of the body. If a pathological change takes place in a local area, there will be functional disorders not only in this specific region, but also in its related organs or even in the organs and tissues of the whole body. Take the spleen and stomach for example. The spleen and stomach are the postnatal foundation of the body, and if they fail to ascend and descend properly, there will be disordered reception and transformation and, consequently, the malnutrition of the organs of the whole body, or general weakness. Besides, the heart controls blood, while the lung governs qi. Blood is promoted by qi, whereas qi is carried by blood. If the lung qi is stagnated, the heart blood will fail to circulate smoothly; in contrast, if the heart blood is obstructed, the lung qi will fail to disperse properly. Moreover, if the essence qi of the five zang-organs are in deficiency, the organs or tissues related to them will be in disorder accordingly, e.g., insufficiency of liver blood leading to dizziness and dry eyes, or even

contraction of the tendons and vessels; and insufficiency of kidney yin resulting in dizziness and tinnitus, or even soreness and weakness of the waist and knees.

Since the various organs and tissues of the body are physiologically interdependent and pathologically affected, external manifestations, such as the changes in the five sensory organs, body constituents, complexion and pulse, can be used to identify and diagnose the disorders of the internal organs, so as to make a correct diagnosis and treatment. What's more, the treatment of regional disease has to take the whole body into consideration. There are a number of therapeutic principles in TCM developed under the guidance of this holistic concept, such as treating the ear from the perspective of the kidney, treating the nose from the lung, and treating the eye from the liver, in addition to "drawing yin from yang and drawing yang from yin; treating the right for curing diseases on the left and treating the left for curing diseases on the right" and "needling the acupoints on the lower part of the body for diseases in the upper part and needling the acupoints on the upper part of the body for diseases in the lower part."

### ***The Close Connection Between Man and Nature***

Man lives in the natural world, and the changes in nature will inevitably affect the human body in a direct or indirect fashion, causing different reactions of the body. This is called "correspondence between man and nature." Take seasonal changes for example. Usually spring is marked by warmth, summer by hotness, autumn by coolness and winter by coldness. Under the influence of such changes, the living things on the earth will also change in order to adapt to environmental changes. In spring and summer when yang qi is predominant, the body's qi and blood tends to flow to the superficialities, making the muscular interstices open and causing perspiration; in autumn and winter when yang qi begins to decline, the body's qi and blood tend to flow inward, making the muscular interstices closed and causing excessive urination. The seasonal variations are influential on the human body, so are the changes within a day. The morning is likened to spring, the noon to summer, the dusk to autumn and the midnight to winter. Although the temperature change within a day is not so dramatic as that of the four seasons, it has certain influences on the

body, too. This also points to the fact that the human body can adapt its physiological activities to the natural changes of the day and night, as well as the yin and yang.

The differences in geographical environment and local climate may also affect the human body. It has been observed that in the south of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River with low-lying terrain and warm, humid climate, people are characterized by loose muscular interstices. Once these inhabitants move to other geographically distinct areas, they may encounter discomforts at the beginning, but after a period of time, they will gradually get accustomed to the new environment.

Human beings can take the initiative to adapt themselves proactively to the natural environment. For this reason, normal climatic changes will not cause adverse effects. However, if the body fails to adjust itself to such changes, or when the changes are so extreme that it exceeds the regulative capacity of the body, there will be occurrence of diseases. That is why some diseases are prominent in a certain season, e.g., spring is marked by wind diseases, summer by febrile diseases, autumn by dry diseases, and winter by cold diseases. Besides, sudden changes in the living environment may also lead to the conditions of “one’s system disagreeing with a new natural environment.” For these who are old, weak, or with chronic diseases, they may have physical discomfort and disease onset or aggravation whenever the seasons alternate. Some patients may experience the process of “feeling comfortable in the morning, being at ease in the daytime, worsening at dusk, and aggravating at night.” In this sense, the treatment must take the natural climate and geographical environment into consideration, and always keep in accordance with the time and locality.

Social environment may also influence people psychologically and emotionally. A sound environment is good for people’s health, whereas a negative environment may become the disease-inducing factor. Therefore, people should always strengthen their will and cultivate their mind so as to better adapt to the social environmental changes.

## **Treatment Based on Syndrome Differentiation**

Treatment based on syndrome differentiation, another important feature of TCM, is a basic principle in TCM for diagnosing and treating diseases.

Syndrome is a pathological generalization of a disease at a certain stage in its course of development. It includes the location, cause and nature of the disease, as well as the relationship between pathogenic factors and healthy qi, and can reveal the overall conditions of the pathological changes at a certain stage of the disease.

Differentiation of syndrome implies that the patient's symptoms and signs collected through the four diagnostic methods (inspecting, smelling-listening, inquiring and pulse-taking) are analyzed so as to identify the etiology, nature and location of a disease, and the relationship between healthy qi and pathogenic factors, thereby generalizing them into a certain syndrome.

Treatment refers to the selection of the corresponding therapy according to the result of syndrome differentiation. Syndrome differentiation is the prerequisite and foundation for the determination of proper therapies, whereas treatment is the purpose of syndrome differentiation. The course of treatment based on syndrome differentiation is actually a process of understanding the nature of disease as well as treating the disease. In this sense, syndrome differentiation and treatment are interconnected and inseparable in the process of disease diagnosis and treatment.

The relationship between disease and syndrome is dialectically dealt with by treatment based on syndrome differentiation, which is the basic principle guiding clinical diagnosis and treatment. It is believed that one disease may include several different syndromes, while different diseases may manifest the same syndrome during the course of development. That is why TCM uses two different clinical methods to deal with the relationship between disease and syndrome: "treating the same disease with different therapies" and "treating different diseases with the same therapy."

"Treating the same disease with different therapies" means that the same disease may manifest different syndromes or pathogeneses at different stages or under different conditions in terms of time, locality and individuality. As a result, the therapies will also be different. For example, common cold is differentiated into several syndromes: wind-cold, wind-heat and summer-damp, so it can be treated by the following methods: dispelling wind and dissipating cold, dispersing wind and clearing away heat, relieving summer-heat and resolving dampness. "Treating different diseases with the same therapy" means that different diseases may

manifest similar syndrome or the same pathogenesis in the process of development, which can be treated with the same therapy. For example, proctoptosis due to prolonged dysentery, gastroptosis and uterine prolapse are different diseases. However, if they show the same syndrome of sinking of middle qi (gastrosplenic qi), all of them can be treated with the therapeutic method of lifting middle qi. This demonstrates that the treatment of diseases in TCM does not concentrate on the difference or similarity of diseases, but on the difference of pathogenesis. In other words, diseases with similar pathogenesis can be treated with therapeutic methods that are basically the same, while diseases with different pathogeneses have to be treated with different therapeutic methods. For this reason, “treating the same disease with different therapies” and “treating different diseases with the same therapy” are regarded as the specific manifestations of differentiating syndrome to decide treatment.

### *Daily Exercises*

1. What are the main characteristics of the theoretical foundation of TCM?
2. Why it is said that the human body is an organic whole?
3. How can we understand the “correspondence between man and nature”?

## **SECTION 3 THE ESSENTIALS OF BASIC THEORIES IN TCM**

The basic theories of TCM cover many aspects, primarily the essence, qi and spirit, the yin-yang and five elements, the visceral manifestation, the meridians and collaterals, the qi, blood and body fluid, as well as the etiology, pathogenesis, and the preventive and curative principles, etc.

The theory of essence, qi and spirit, and the theories of yin-yang and five elements are ancient philosophical thoughts in China. The theory of essence, qi and spirit holds that all the things in the universe are composed of qi, which is in constant motion and variation. The world is made up of qi, and the motion of all the things on earth is, as a matter of fact, a reflection of the movement of qi. If qi varies, everything will change

accordingly. Hence, the theory of essence, qi and spirit is actually a doctrine of monism about the origin and essence of the world. The theory of yin-yang believes that anything in the world can be divided into either yin or yang. Yin and yang are mutually opposed and inter-rooted, which means that neither of the two can exist in isolation. Besides, yin and yang are constantly waxing and waning within a certain entity which, when yin prevails, is essentially yin in nature; otherwise, it is yang in nature. So yin and yang are interchangeable. Since all the things on earth can be divided into two aspects, the theory of yin-yang is deemed as a dualism about the origin and essence of the world. The theory of five element looks upon the world as a combination of wood, fire, earth, metal and water, which are inter-generated and inter-restricted. Such a relationship among them maintains the dynamic balance of all things in the universe. So the theory of five elements is a doctrine of pluralism about the origin and essence of the world. With tremendous influence on TCM, the three philosophical thoughts have already infiltrated into every field of TCM and become its philosophical foundation.

The theories of visceral manifestation and meridians explore chiefly into the physiological function, pathological change and interrelation of the five zang-organs, six fu-organs, twelve meridians and eight extraordinary meridians, as well as the intimate association between the viscera and meridians and the external environment. Among them, the theory of visceral manifestation, in the light of ancient anatomy, divided the internal organs into three types according to the physiological function of the viscera: five zang-organs, six fu-organs and the extraordinary fu-organs. Despite their relative independence, these organs are mutually connected and coordinated during their life activities, making up an entirety in which one zang-organ is related to another zang-organ, one fu-organ to another fu-organ, different zang-organs to different fu-organs, and different zang-fu organs to the various body constituents and orifices. While located deep inside the body, the zang-fu organs can manifest their functional hyperactivity or debilitation on certain regions of the body surface through the connection of meridians. So by observing the external signs or manifestations, we can further understand the visceral functions and their interconnections. So it is believed, according to the theory of meridians, that the meridians and collaterals, ubiquitous inside the body or on the body

surface in a crisscross pattern, are passages for circulating qi and blood as well as an intricate network for connecting the viscera, limbs, tendons, muscles and skin. Pathologically, the meridian system can also become the routes for pathogenic invasion and transmission. For this reason, the meridians and collaterals are of great and unusual value in the diagnostic and therapeutic practice.

The theory of qi, blood and body fluid probes into the production, distribution and physiological function of the basic substances for life. They are viewed in TCM as the basic materials for constituting the human body and the fundamental substances for maintaining the life activities. Qi is an extremely fine substance in constant motion; blood is a red fluid circulating inside the vessels; while body fluid is a collective term for all the normal fluids within the body. All of them are metabolic products of the physiological activities of the viscera on the one hand, and on the other hand, they can provide necessary substances or energy in turn so as to maintain the normal physiological function of the viscera and meridians. In this sense, they also serve as the material foundation for the functional activities of the viscera and meridians.

The theories of etiology and pathogenesis expound mainly the properties, characteristics and pathogenic manifestations of various pathogenic factors, as well as the occurrence, development, change and prognosis of diseases. In TCM, etiological factors are divided into four types: exogenous pathogenic factors, endogenous pathogenic factors, pathological products, and other pathogenic factors. Exogenous pathogenic factors, including wind, cold, summer-heat, dampness, dryness, fire and the highly epidemic qi, derive from nature and invade the body through the skin, muscles, nose and mouth. Endogenous pathogenic factors damage the internal organs directly due to abnormal emotions or behaviors, including joy, anger, worry, thinking, sorrow, terror, and fright, or overstrain, excessive rest, and improper diet. Metabolic products, such as water-damp, phlegmatic fluid and blood stasis, are produced during the process of some diseases and may also become pathogenic factors engendering other diseases. Other etiological factors include external injury and medicinal damage. Pathogenesis can be discussed in terms of basic pathogenesis and system pathogenesis. The former refers primarily to the exuberance and debilitation of pathogenic factors and healthy qi, imbalance between yin

and yang, and disorders of qi, blood and body fluid. These are the most fundamental pathogeneses which may occur in any disease. The latter refers to the pathological mechanisms of the viscera, meridians, body constituents, orifices and exogenous febrile diseases. These are the specific manifestations of the basic pathogenesis in different regions of the body or in different diseases.

Preventive and therapeutic principles are basic laws for preventing and treating diseases. Prevention before the occurrence of diseases is highly valued in TCM, which is of great significance to the controlling of the occurrence and development of diseases. The basic therapeutic principles mainly incorporate treating diseases from the perspective of the root, strengthening the healthy qi and expelling pathogenic factors, balancing yin and yang as well as suiting measures to individual, seasonal and geographical conditions, etc.

The above-mentioned are important constituent parts of the theoretical system of TCM, coming from practice and, in turn, directing practice. They also serve as the foundation for studying other branches of TCM, especially the clinical subjects.

### ***Daily Exercises***

1. What are the main contents of the basic theories of TCM?
2. Summarize the main contents of the theory of etiology in TCM.