
Foreword

Oriental Medicine and Nature

Oriental medicine was developed over 2000 years ago, when human beings were living their lives under greater influences of natural surroundings than those in the modern age. Those days were also the age when people began to construct megalopolises and the social surroundings began to have significant influences on people's minds and bodies; as a result diseases occurred and they were becoming therapeutic objectives. In other words, when you think of health and diseases, those ancient days were arguably the period in which people began to look for a balance between people's lives and nature and the way how the social environment should be. And then, the scale of urbanization began to expand at an accelerated speed. Human history is the history of overcoming nature's challenges and constantly destroying nature.

The environments of 2000 years ago generated oriental medicine. The original classic of oriental medicine *Suwen (Plain Questions)* includes the description of changes in the natural and social surroundings and of the thought toward the way how humans should be or live. Even though written 2000 years ago, this classic book points out the problems concerning the way how the people's lives should be in those days and how they set the frame of their minds, and explains ideal attitudes of their minds and desirable ways of people's living. The classic book further mentions that compared to the distant past, people has begun to lead their lives of a large scale separated far from nature, tend to become jealous of others, and exert themselves to succeed in life or satisfy their desires or ambitions –all these factors have brought people mental stresses, psychosomatic illness, autonomic dystonia, and other various disorders in return, which can only be relieved by the therapy of acupuncture, moxibustion or herbal decoctions; therefore, people should try not to satisfy their personal or social desire more than is necessary, avoid competing with others, and lead their lives by means of rising above the trivia of life and remaining calm and selfless.

As seen above, while the body and mind of an individual and the way the society should be are questioned in the classic book, a more important viewpoint about oriental medicine will be that it is the medicine deeply rooted in spontaneous remission or natural healing ability the human body has. Although such expression is usually used as cure by acupuncture and moxibustion, in effect the body that has been stimulated by acupuncture or moxibustion heals itself. It is not by acupuncture or by moxibustion that healing occurs. This is the point that makes a wide gap between oriental medicine and Western medicine in the way each medicine should be, theories and philosophy of each medicine. When both medicines are compared without giving consideration to the origin or construction of both medicines, opinions tend to be unilateral. In short, if the expression "medicine cures" is used plainly, it gives us a sense of a little bit hesitancy as oriental medicine is based on the notion that humans cure themselves. And if medicine does not cure, medical practitioners should be humbler towards the human body. They should assume an attitude of asking or speaking more to the body, like what kind of stimulation or treatment you want. Instead of the attitude of I will cure you, it may be good if there is such attitude that medical practitioners and patients follow together the processes to achieve cure. It will be the time for us to reconsider the relationship between illnesses, treatment, and to heal.

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