

An Zhen

TCM has four major methods of examination to diagnose disease and use in clinical practice: inspection, auscultation and olfaction, interrogation, pulse taking and palpation. These four diagnostic methods are called Four Diagnostic Methods.

Inspection diagnosis in the practice of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is the observation of the patient by the doctor. It is the collection of data regarding the spirit seen in the eyes, the body shape and color, the body of the tongue, including fur, excretion, and secretion. The doctor can then follow this information to understand the disease and condition of the patient.

The auscultation and olfaction technique involves listening to the patient's voice to see if it is irregular, such as too strong or too weak. Listening to the respiration determines the breathing condition and ascertains if there is bronchial wheezing, shortness of breath, dyspnea, or sighing. The auscultation diagnosis also includes listening to whether the cough is heavy or light.

Olfaction is a method to understand the meaning of a particular body scent or odor of a patient.

Interrogation is a method to question and interview the patients to understand their personal feelings and the cause behind these feelings, as well as general data, history of the disease, including changes, and healing, diet and lifestyle and so on.

Pulse diagnosis and palpation are techniques to understand the disease's condition by taking the pulse and palpating the skin and muscle, hand and leg, chest and abdomen, meridian points, and so on.

These four diagnostic methods are special techniques used in the process of TCM diagnosis. The use of these methods cannot be separated from the diagnosis we arrive at in our clinical practice. TCM concentrates on comprehensive analysis of the data gained by the four methods of diagnosis. In clinical practice, the four diagnostic methods of inspection, auscultation and olfaction, interrogation, and pulse taking are always used in combination.

The Four Diagnostic Method of TCM is an abstract philosophical concept. Its history of healing and its value are not easily denied, yet its deep, mysterious theory and philosophy are

not completely or correctly understood by each TCM healer. For example, if one hundred old and famous TCM doctors use the Four Diagnostic Method to diagnosis the same patient, a theoretical argument would ensue, such as the "Hundred systems with argument," and as the "Hundred flowers blooming or in bloom." Each successful TCM expert has his own understanding and way of applying the theory, just as one hundred philosophers have their own understanding of the same theory.

The human body is a unified whole, and sickness in any one part of the body can cause an imbalance in the whole body and, in turn, the whole body's imbalance can be reflected in one particular area of the body. Through the Four Diagnostic Method, the detection of syndromes and body functions can help to identify the type of disease, its cause and its location for differential diagnosis.

In addition to the Four Diagnostic Method in TCM, another method of diagnosis is body palpation for diagnosis that does not include pulse palpation. The TCM palpation diagnosis includes pulse and body palpation. In the practice of TCM, pulse palpation is much more popular than body palpation. Pulse diagnosis is also called pulse palpation, pulse pressing, holding pulse and waiting pulse.

In the *Su Wen* Chapter 5, *The Corresponding of Yin and Yang between Human and Phenomena* is described as, "He who is an expert for the diagnosis, first observes the complexion of Chi and Shen and palpates the pulse, then discriminates the yin and yang condition." This means the good doctor first observes the patient's energy and spirit from the patient's complexion and then proves the disease diagnosis by palpating the pulse to understand the balance of yin and yang.

Also, observation and pulse palpation are common and important methods for diagnosis within the Four Diagnostic Method. Observation is the doctor's use of vision to assess the patient's whole body or a particular area of the body's condition to gather data for analyzing the change in the disease. The data obtained includes the complexion, the spirit, Chi condition, color and shape, and detecting the condition of the tongue and excrement. The observation of spirit includes the internal mind's activity, the consciousness, and external activity from the life force.

In order to evaluate the patient's spirit, which the Chinese call Shen, the doctor observes the mind with its consciousness and emotion through the face and eyes, speaking and breathing. If a patient's consciousness is clear or unclear, their reaction is sensitive or dawdling, and activity is coordinated or slow, this data can be used to evaluate the patient's condition of Chi and blood, balance of Yin and Yang, and the heaviness or lightness of the sickness.

The color observation of the patient's skin is Zang and Fu organ external Chi expression. The changing of color can reflect the Zang and fu organs' different symptoms and types of diseases. The change in brightness means the skin color is shining or shady. The change of skin color expresses the Zang and Fu organs' state of Chi and essential condition. Classic TCM theory follows the way of "Twelve meridians, three hundred sixty-five connections within the net, its Chi is filled upward on the face." When the facial Chi and blood is filled up, the facial skin will be smooth and tender, the color and its changing easily shows. Therefore, color observation means looking at the Chi and blood's condition on the face. Through the observation of changes within facial color and its shining, one may understand the Chi and blood balance and the progress of the disease. When observing the body's shape and activity, one understands the correspondence between the Chi and five Zang organs. Generally, if the five Zang organs are strong, correspondingly the external is strong; if the five Zang organs are weak, then the body is weak.

Palpatory diagnosis, called An Zhen is the technique for detecting sickness by touch and pressing on the body's musculature, skin, hand, leg, stomach, abdomen and other. The major purpose of palpation is to detect physical location along with temperature, such as cold or hot, and skin and musculature softness or hardness. It is used to find the "ouch" point in the related areas, knots, or any differences other than normal feelings and changes. The collection of data from palpation can diagnose a sickness, including the type of sickness and the affected area of the body. Indeed, it does not matter. Whether it is Western medicine, Chinese medicine, or another alternative medicine system, each has their own way of palpatory diagnosis in their clinical practice,

which is a common way to detect the condition of a disease. Even the non-expert such as a housewife or medical healing lovers may instinctively use palpating diagnosis on a patient to find the sickness by pressing, palpating, or touching. Palpatory diagnosis is genetic instinct human beings use against disease.

The TCM palpatory diagnosis includes pulse taking and palpation, but the palpation method is not commonly used within clinical practice, even though it is in the content of each generation of TCM books. The general meaning of the palpatory diagnosis refers to pulse taking, which is also called palpate pulse, press pulse, or pulse listening. In TCM it is rare for people to think that palpatory diagnosis includes palpation, because in practice it is rarely used for diagnosis. There is a big difference between palpation and pulse taking; in fact, palpation can complement pulse taking. The palpation does not limit itself to the fourteen meridians and meridian points; it can include the diagnoses of tendons, bones, muscles, organs and specific areas of the body affected by sickness.

The ancient Chinese medicine book *Yellow Emperor's Canon of Internal Medicine*, which in Chinese is called *Huang Di Nei Jing*, describes palpatory diagnosis as:

"Huang Di asked: How can we get information from palpation?"

"Qi Bo replied: It depends on the syndrome corresponding with the pulse. If the pulse is strong and solid, yet the Chi and blood are deficient, then one should use palpation to find out the nature of the disease."

This means when the pulse palpation cannot help in a diagnosis, then we should use the body palpation method for a differential diagnosis. This is how the body palpation method complements pulse palpation.

TCM theory believes "When the cold pathogenic Chi deeply stagnates into the spinal meridian, palpation cannot reach deep enough. Therefore, it is useless for detecting it in the spinal column." From ancient times to the present, the palpation technique for checking spinal points is rarely used for diagnosis, although the *Huatuoji* method to stimulate the side of the spinal

column for healing was recorded. This is one reason the *Huatuojiaji* method was lost.

Indeed, using back Shu points for palpatory diagnosis is recorded in the *Huang Di Nei Jing* in the *Back Shu Chapter* as: “Back shu point (*xinshu*), its Chi flows into the heart, so when the Chi (of *xinshu*) is not balanced, it may cause heart pain. Palpate the back Shu (*xinshu*) will make the warm Chi come. When the warm Chi arrives to the heart, it will stop the heart pain.” The back Shu point is the original area of the heart's Chi. When the heart has trouble, it may cause pain in the back Shu point. The back Shu point and heart correspond and relate. When pressing or palpating the back Shu, the stimulation can increase warm Chi, and the warm Chi flowing into the heart can stop the heart pain.

In ancient TCM, the Chi of each back Shu connects the Five Zang Organ theory and Six Fu Organ theory and knowledge increases with practice and experience; but due to the limits of the times and development, this theory and experience has not evolved this knowledge to its maximum function.

Although the Five Zang Organ theory and Six Fu Organ theory use the *Huatuojiaji* points to find out the corresponding ouch point, these theories are limited by ancient medical knowledge. The *Huatuojiaji* and *Huang Di Nei Jing* have not been completely and clearly recorded or explained in the relationship between the back Shu point and organs. In *The Tom Tam Healing System*, in its annotations there is a new commentary for the correspondence between the Five Zang Organ, Six Fu Organ, *Huatuojiaji*, and other organs; also, this new annotation is called *Huatuojiaji New Annotation*. Tom Tam's *Huatuojiaji New Annotation* has a commentary on the ordinal and the replenished back Shu points with the bladder meridian and *Huatuojiaji*. It makes the TCM healing easier and expands the TCM healing ranges. Also, it is a big explosive jump in TCM history.

One chapter of the *Huang Di Nei Jing*, *Su Wen* states: "The cold pathogens Chi stagnates in the *Chong Mai*, *Chong Mai* begins in the lower Dantian, along the abdomen, and flows upward. The stagnation of cold pathogens Chi can block the meridian; the result of meridian blockage can cause the ‘Chi's running,’ which may cause chest Chi deficiency. Therefore, palpating the abdomen and

chest area can stop the wheezing.” TCM healing uses the palpation technique mostly in the abdomen and chest areas because it is easy to detect illnesses in the organs in the abdomen and chest areas. In addition, the patients mostly complain about pain in the Five Zang Organ and Six Fu Organ area, which is located in the abdomen and chest.

Su Wen describes the palpation diagnosis with the head, the upper limbs, and the lower limbs, which is called *The Body Three Part Palpation Diagnosis* method. In the Eastern Han dynasty (300 A.D.), Dr Zhang Zhong Jing in his medical book *Shang Han Lun* (treatise on febrile disease) talked about *The Three Regions Pulse Taking Diagnosis* method. The three regions are the Ren Ying pulse (carotid artery), Cun Kou pulse (radial artery), and the Fu Yang pulse (the pulse of the dorsal artery of the foot).

Another method of pulse taking for diagnosis is the Cun Kou pulse taking method, which is the most popular for TCM doctors to use in their practice. Also, the situation of Cun Kou is called Chi Lou or pulse Kou. (Kou means mouth or gate.) Its location is in the wrist, the obvious pulsation place of the radial artery. Cun Kou also is divided into Cun, Guan and Chi (inch, bar and cubit). Each wrist has three pulses; together both wrists have six pulses.

Each dynasty and generation of TCM places more attention on the Cun Kou pulse taking, and there are many articles and books to describe this pulse taking method. However, with other diagnostic methods such as the Palpatory Diagnosis, Three Regions Pulse Taking Diagnosis Method, and the Body Three Parts Palpation Diagnosis Method, descriptive recordings are rarely or never used.

The Cun Kou pulse taking method is earliest described in *Su Wen*, Chapter 11, *The Different Functions of Five Zang Organ*, and *Nan Jing*, (*Nan* is the difficult issue), Chapter One, *The First Nan*. The Cun Kou pulse taking method is “The method of only taking the Cun Kou location to detect whether the Five Zang Organ and Six Fu Organ's sign of death or life, good or evil auspices. Although the Cun pulse taking method is not easy to understand, yet, it is a profound Chinese medical study. This diagnostic method is the easiest to palpate and practice; this is the reason it is popular to use with practice. Cun Kou pulse taking and the

inspection of the tongue are the TCM special diagnostic methods. Many TCM practitioners purposely make it mysterious, which can make their patients feel more marvel toward their practitioners.

The Four Diagnostic Method is the basis of the TCM differential diagnosis. The palpation is a subordinate diagnostic tool. According to Tom Tam's healing theory it is the opposite; the palpatory diagnosis is the foundation and important diagnostic technique and the traditional Four Diagnostic Method is subordinate.

According to Tom Tam's healing theory, each disease must have a corresponding ouch point or a pain point detected by pressing. Pain is a protective warning signal from human physiological instinct. The patient can feel this pain signal directly, but sometimes this signal may be hidden and cannot be felt by the patient. External pressure can detect the hidden signal.

A pain point or ouch point means a high resistant point or area. In the human body, this high resistant point or area may cause a bioelectrical imbalance, or as known in TCM as a Chi blockage. This is the root that triggers the body dysfunction, which causes the disease. Each disease's ouch point location may not follow or relate to a meridian, but it cannot be separated from the location in the nervous system and artery.

According to TCM theory, detection of the blockage pain point mostly follows the meridian, acupuncture point, or sickness area. For example, when diagnosing and healing a stomach problem, the healer will follow the foot Yangming stomach meridian, and also the nearby stomach area, which is the CV13, to locate the ouch point. Following the meridian and sickness area for the blockage point is very limited. In fact, the TCM ouch point is distributed within a wide range, beyond the range of the meridian. With TCM diagnosis, many ouch points have no meaning if those points are not found within the meridian.

The TCM understanding of physiology and anatomy is different from modern medicine. For example, a stroke causes paralysis, and the ouch point that causes the stroke may be located from the opposite side Shaoyang small intestine meridian SI 16 (sky window point). Yet, the sky window point on the opposite

side from the paralysis does not make sense according to TCM theory.

If we follow modern medical theory from physiology and anatomy, the understanding should be that the acupuncture point sky window is the location of the vertebral artery area. When the vertebral artery area has a blockage, it may cause a blood circulation problem to the basilar artery, which connects from the cerebral arterial circle, also known as the Circle of Willis in the brain. When we use modern medical theory to analyze and explain the reason a sky window blockage can cause a stroke, it will make more sense and the theory is easily understood and accepted. If we follow this theory for practice, the healing result is not too bad. If we use TCM Yin and Yang or Five Element theory to analyze and explain the cause of stroke, it will be a difficult theory to logically practice. Of course, the healing result is different than the other method of healing.

Palpatory Diagnosis for TCM includes the palpation of skin and muscle, hands and legs, stomach and abdomen, along with the acupuncture point. The major purpose of palpation is to determine the body's condition as feverish, cold, moist, dry, soft, hard, tumescence, or excrescence. Palpatory diagnosis also considers the patient's feeling as painful, sore, and whether the patient favors or refuses palpation. After performing the palpatory examination and analyzing the data from the palpation, then the practitioner can differentiate the disease and syndrome.

Tam's healing system utilizes the Shu point palpation for differentiation of disease and syndrome. Long ago in the *Huang Di Nei Jing*, Shu point described the palpation method. In the *Huang Di Nei Jing* book two, *Ling Shu* (Miraculous Pivot) Chapter 51. The *Back Shu Chapter* states, "If you want to find out and prove the back Shu point, press the point for seeking situation, if gets the target where can alleviate the pain, which point is the back *shu* point."

Also, the *Ling Shu* theorized that, "The situation where the pain is, is the Shu point. Following the pain point for the Shu point means using the pressure to the point that can feel the pain from pressing. The pain point situation does not always occur in the meridian or the meridian point. It may be located out of the

meridian in the extra meridian or anywhere. In the human body, whenever pain occurs from pressing, it is called press pain point or ouch point.

In the *Ling Shu Chapter 1, The Nine Needles and Twelve Source Points* states that, “If the Five Zang Organ has the illness, it should be from the twelve source point. The twelve source point, each one has its own connection. When the practitioner understands its source, observes the reaction, understands the Five Zang Organ’s illness.” The ancient palpation diagnosis is limited by the development of time. Now with the big progression of modern medicine, when the Five Zang Organs and Six Fu Organs indicate the illness, its reaction point is not only limited with the twelve sources points range, it is beyond the twelve source point range.

In modern times, TCM research and practice has discovered that in the pathway of the meridian, or the meridian energy point, some may detect the press pain point, or the sensory point, or sometimes it can be touched, but has a node and tendon shape positive reaction object. This reaction point or object can help the diagnosis and healing. For example, when treating a lung problem, we can feel a node or mass in the lung Shu (T3), or can easily find an ouch point in the Zhong Fu (LU 1) area. The liver disease corresponds to a pressure pain point in the liver Shu (BL 18, next to T9) or Qi Men (LV14). The pyogenic infection of the intestines can be found in the ouch point in the large intestine’s lower connection point, which is the Foot Yangmen meridian’s Xia Ju Xu (ST 39). In TCM practice, the meaning and practicality of an ouch point is very limited. The palpatory diagnosis is rarely used for a TCM internal disease differential diagnosis. Mostly palpatory diagnosis is used to assist diagnosis. Many TCM doctors never use the palpatory diagnosis for their practice.

TCM has a few thousand years of history, and it does a great job, which is undeniable for the health of the Chinese and worldwide people. Yet, its unchangeable traditional theory and concept limits the development of Palpatory Diagnosis.

No one can deny that modern medical knowledge is so rich, but if we can reasonably use the modern medical scientific knowledge of anatomy, physiology, pathology, and psychology for

Palpatory Diagnosis, then its value will shine. The basic theory and concept of the Tom Tam Healing System is to combine and use modern medical theory and knowledge with TCM; hence, it can explain and heal many difficult cases, pertinacious diseases, rare cases, and hopeless cases.

The Tom Tam healing theory believes that each occurring disease should relate to a corresponding blockage with an ouch point. The blockage ouch point situation follows the theory and should be repeatable. Many years of practice, experience, and logic produce a high percentage rate of repeatable ouch points. Also, the ouch points prove to have a very high value for the practice of healing and diagnosis.

The meaning of an ouch point varies. It may be the point that feels painful when pressure is applied to the area. The blockage point may cause the disease, it can be the root of the disease, or the disease can cause the formation of the blockage. For example, a long period of bad posture, or following a car accident or any kind of external injury from an accident, can cause the spinal column to change shape, which may build the blockage. This blockage can affect the Chi movement or the flowing of bioelectricity, which can cause a dysfunctional or abnormal organ. Any organ dysfunction can cause a disease. The wrong diet can also cause blockages that produce organ disease. The wrong diet can affect the digestion and absorption functions, which over an extended period of time can form a blockage or node.

The blockage point does not fix stay in a situation without alteration. The forming of a blockage and its situation has its law. For example, beside the T5 is the heart Shu. When the heart malfunctions, it may find the blockage point in the left side of T5. However, sometimes the heart problem has no blockage point beside the left side of T5, but the blockage can be found in the bladder meridian’s Yu Zhen (BL 9 or jade pillow). This occurs because the BL 9 is located near the medulla within the brain stem. Inside of the medulla is a section called the cardiac center, which controls the heart beat. Therefore, when the cardiac center has trouble, it will cause an abnormal heart movement. In medical practice, most of the heart specialists or experts do not consider the

relationship between the function of the medulla and the heart. TCM knows nothing about the medulla.

Furthermore, another area related to the heart function is the hand Yangming large intestine meridian's Fu Tu (LI 18) and Tian Ding (LI 17) where deep inside the vagus nerve is located. If an injury or blockage occurs at the vagus nerve, it can slow or stop the heartbeat. This is the neck area's vagus nerve, which also is the parasympathetic nerve that controls the function of the heart. To simplify, when forming a differential diagnosis of the heart, five important factors should be considered, which include the heart, heart vessel, sympathetic nerve, parasympathetic nerve, and medulla. In addition, with palpatory diagnosis, never limit the blockage to the touch point on T5 left side without first considering these five factors.

Palpatory diagnosis uses the An technique, which is to put pressure or palpate the acupuncture point or area to detect the blockage. The blockage touch point is tender and sensitive and usually through palpatory diagnosis a "knot" or "cord" can be detected. In addition, Tui Na Chinese massage has the An technique for massage and healing. Actually, any technique for stimulation can open the blockage for healing. When the blockage is opened, the disease or symptoms will release or even be healed.