

Aggressive Energy and Evil Heat

Synopsis

A discussion of Aggressive Energy as taught by J. R. Worsley; and comparison with the concept of Xie Qi (Evil Heat). An explanation of the Law of Similar Transformation and Yin Fire Theory and the light they throw on the often complicated and contradictory symptoms that patients present.

Aggressive Energy

J R Worsley taught a particular protocol that he called draining Aggressive Energy. This is not part of TCM. We agree with Peter Eckman (who credits Bob Flaws) that it seems clear that this protocol is based upon a practice found in Taiwan and derived from the theories of Liu Wan-Su and Li Dong-Yuan; we will describe the theory in more detail. It is said that Aggressive Energy was coined by Lavier as a translation of Xie Qi. (Eckman 150)

1. Aggressive Energy is a form of unhealthy (Xie) Qi. Its cause can be external or internal and the resulting stagnation usually turns to heat and is trapped in the yin organs.
2. Aggressive Energy travels between the yin organs connected by the ke cycleⁱ
3. The presence of Aggressive Energy can cause severe and possibly life-threatening illnessesⁱⁱ.
4. Aggressive Energy is checked by placing needles (superficially) in the Back-Shu points of the Yin organs. It is present if erythema appears around the needles (but not the “dummy” needles.) The needles are left in place to drain the Aggressive Energy. When the erythema disappears the Aggressive Energy has been cleared.
5. If Aggressive Energy has been present the patient experiences significant improvement in health and the pulses and/or colour, sound, emotion, and odour often change as a result of treatment.
6. Not all patients with pathogenic heat show a reaction at the back-shu points. Pathogenic heat may be present at other levels, (i.e. in the Blood), but not in the organ and thus not show up as AE. The presence or absence of AE can only be confirmed or ruled out by testing. This is particularly true when it is related to the emotional causes as mentioned by Li Dong-Yuan.

Evil Heat

Many experienced TCM practitioners comment that Western patients appear to present with complicated problems, and that the textbook on Chinese Medicine thus portray a rather over-simplified picture of reality.

“It is my experience that TCM patterns do fit our Western patients but not like a ready-made dress taken directly from the rack. ...because of complex and deep-seated reasons... developing the sorts of difficult, knotty diseases they come to practitioners of acupuncture and TCM to treat, many and even most Western patients have complex pattern discriminations...there are a welter of signs and symptoms which frequently look confusing at best and contradictory at worst.”

One of the most common of the contradictions is the appearance of heat in patients who have underlying Cold conditions.

Two Chinese Doctors have contributed to our understanding of this.

Liu Wan-Su (1120-1200AD) developed the theory of similar transformation. The body's host qi is yang, therefore warm. Hence any evil guest qi, either externally invading or internally engendered, will tend to transform into a warm or hot evil similar to the body's host or ruling qi.

Li Dong-Yuan (1180-1252AD), in his monumental *Pi Wei Lun* (Treatise on the Spleen and Stomachⁱⁱⁱ), elucidated the mechanism of contradictory conditions first described by Hua Tuo in *Zhong Zang Jing* (Classic of Internal Viscera) 11 centuries earlier. Li Dong-Yuan (1180-1252) similarly described the various causes of pathogenic Heat in the body that he called Yin Fire (i.e. Fire caused by Yin Conditions e.g. Damp). It was recommended to utilize the Back-Shu points of the Zang Organs to drain this Heat. This protocol is not part of TCM, but appears to have survived in Taiwan from where it was brought to Europe by Jacques Lavier and Soulie de Morant.

Because Heat rises it tends to show in the pulse and tongue and thus will tend to mask the underlying Cold signs.

- Yin Fire theory explains why many patients exhibit Heat symptoms to some extent and this Heat may even mask^{iv} underlying Cold/Yang-Deficient conditions.
- “Yin Fire” is not to be confused with Empty Heat. It does share one common mechanism but is a broader, more complicated and inclusive concept.
- “Yin” refers to Yin Cold and Dampness generated mostly by a damaged Spleen.

Over-thinking, worry, over-taxation, overeating, under-eating and eating wrong foods - the Spleen fails to control transportation and transformation. The turbid portion of foods and liquid is not separated from the clear and this becomes damp turbidity. This damp turbidity, because it is yin, percolates down to the lower burner, there to damage the Liver and Kidneys. Because the host qi of the body is yang, damp turbidity often transforms into damp heat.^v Because of dampness damaging Kidney Yang and because the heat of damp heat tends to float upwards, yang loses its root in its lower source and also tends to surge upwards. Thus although there are symptoms of cold (and possibly damp heat below), there are symptoms of heat above, with other symptoms manifesting vacuity weakness of the Spleen.

- According to Li Dong-Yuan, there are five disease mechanisms that can cause of contribute to yin fire.
 - Spleen Qi Vacuity
 - Damp Heat
 - Blood vacuity (i.e. Yin Vacuity)
 - Liver Depression (i.e. Liver invading Spleen and Depressive Heat)
 - Stirring of ministerial fire due to extremes of the five or seven affects.

Most of our chronic Western patients have some manifestation of Yin Fire, e.g. allergies, auto-immune disease.

The basis of Worsley's teachings appears to fit well with the known theory of Pathogenic Heat. Worsley did not teach concepts such as pathogenic heat per se, and so it is possible that the presence or absence of AE may be suspected more easily than Worsley thought by applying these principles. However, AE cannot be diagnosed simply on the presence of pathogenic heat; it appears that its presence in the yin organs is also a crucial determining factor. The heat may be no different in nature, but the yin organs are said to transmit pathology across the Ke cycle and when the cycle completes the result is terminal. With these theories AE can be more strongly suspected but it remains the clinical experience of these practitioners that it is impossible to be absolutely certain without checking.

Bibliography.

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ⁱ Transmission of disease between yin organs via the ko cycle and the fatal conclusion of this transmission when it completes the cycle is dealt with in the Ling Shu and Nan Jing. Yang organs transmit via the Sheng cycle but the completion of this cycle is not considered to be terminal.

ⁱⁱ See note above

ⁱⁱⁱ He also founded the "Strengthening the Earth" school of Chinese Medicine.

^{iv} This split of outward appearance and underlying reality is part of the nature of Fire as a Phase. Over-activity of "Fieriness" or pathological Heat signs in the emotional sphere are often a sign of an underlying lack of substantiality in the Fire Phase. Fire similarly manifests in our complexion and our social persona.

^v One metaphor for why Damp commonly gives rise to heat is the analogy of the hayrick that heats up and even combusts because the hay was harvested while too damp.