



Core Dysfunctions: The Correction Stage of Healing

Patterns of Imbalance

Of all energy healing systems, acupuncture is the grandparent of the personalized and individual approach. What makes acupuncture unique in this respect is its emphasis on *ch'i*, the life force. According to acupuncture theory, the cause of disease is an imbalance in the flow of this (*ch'i*) through its subtle pathways, called meridians. A similar pattern of imbalance in one person may result in a different "disease" in another. Also, different people with the same "disease" will most likely have different "patterns of imbalance." Although acupuncture can cure many diseases, it is not the "disease," but the "pattern of imbalance" that it treats.

The layperson will be able to appreciate, cooperate with the acupuncturist and get much more out of acupuncture treatment if he will familiarize himself with this concept. Any given person can have many "diseases," but at the "Corrective" stage (see *Acupuncture Education Series #1*) he can have only one "pattern of imbalance" which is the underlying "theme." The "pattern of imbalance" organizes all of a person's "diseases" (past, present and future, as well as body and mind) into one coherent whole in a way that is totally unique to that person. The ability of the "pattern of imbalance" to capture the whole person gives acupuncture its power to holistically accomplish natural healing.

Core Dysfunctions

One can *experience* the meaning of "patterns of imbalance" at the "Correction" stage of treatment where the healing of individual core dysfunctions takes place. A core dysfunction is the "pattern of imbalance" when it reflects a person at the deepest and most comprehensive level. The core dysfunction describes in the most simple and basic way how a person turns from the path of health and well-being into the spiral of disharmony and disease. The longer one lives with a core dysfunction, the more habitually it becomes ingrained into one's self-perception. As this happens one loses touch with their true nature and, instead, begins to identify with the core dysfunction. Since only the true nature is *real*, and what one identifies with at this point is only an illusion, the attitudes and beliefs generated by the illusory core dysfunction act like a mirage leading one down the false and limited path of the disease process.

The core dysfunction is the pivot between the opposing spirals of well-being and disease. When the core dysfunction is transformed and healed, one's true nature is able to receive the support of all-that-is (Heaven and Earth as the ancient Chinese put it), so that all aspects of a person related to the disease process disappear from lack of support as it were.

Most everyone has an intuitive feeling about their own core dysfunction, but when this starts to become experientially and intellectually clear to you through treatment at the "Corrective" stage, you can really begin to know yourself and transform your life.

Because correcting "core dysfunctions" takes place from the inside out, this stage takes the longest time and produces the greatest qualitative results in comprehensive acupuncture treatment plans. Most people have no previous idea how satisfyingly deep and complete the "correction" stage can be until they have entered into it because it simply doesn't exist in Western medical models.

Constitution and Condition

Core dysfunctions, in turn, involve a combination of developments that took place before and after birth, forming what is called a person's constitution and condition. Constitutional imbalances arise from intrauterine and "karmic" factors. During the nine month period of human gestation, the fetus reenacts 3.2 billion years of evolution at an average of 1.3 billion years per

day. Because of this intense development, small disturbances on any level (such as physical trauma, unbalanced nutrition, environmental disharmony, the emotional and mental state of the parents and immediate family etc.) affect it much more greatly than any day to day factors after birth.

Understanding constitutional and conditional factors are important in developing a treatment program. While constitutional factors are the most difficult to cure, and play a significant role in a person's prognosis, they usually result in bringing a person's awareness to a greater sense of self-acceptance and purpose in life. In addition, correct acupuncture treatments during pregnancy can significantly increase the constitutional strength and balance of future generations. This means more healthy years with your growing children, more satisfaction and a deeper sense of enjoyment.

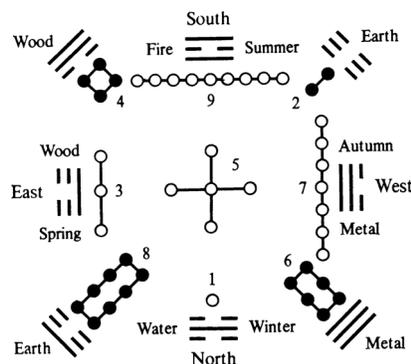
Conditional imbalances are created since birth from a combination of dietary, climatic and social factors. They are more difficult to cure than problems in the "Relief" stage (see *Acupuncture Education Series #1*), but easier to cure than constitutional problems.

As a combination of conditional and constitutional imbalances, the "core dysfunction" comprises a person's major lesson in life. forms the largest part of my practice, and brings the deepest satisfaction to the people with whom I work.

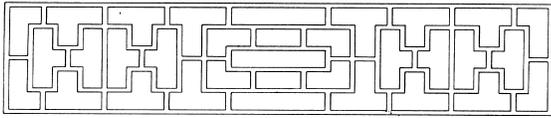
Is Acupuncture Good Insurance?

There is no insurance that can match the pricelessness of good health and well-being. The energetic "diagnosis" of the imbalances that lead to disease is not available from doctors trained solely in the Western medical approach. These imbalances are not always noticeable to the layperson either. Acupuncturists, however, are trained to pick up on these subtle imbalances so that acupuncture "check-ups" provide good preventive medicine.

What makes acupuncture the oldest and most comprehensive "preventive" health-care system in the world is that it recognizes the "patterns of imbalance" that ultimately lead to disease. However, the "Corrective" stage of treatment must be completed before complete preventive healing can be attained. Correction of these "Core Imbalances" ensures prevention at the deepest level.



The Lo River Chart
 (An Ancient Map of the Postnatal *Ch'i*)



Pre and Postnatal *Ch'i*

Your participation is instrumental in determining the effectiveness of acupuncture treatment schedules at the "Prevention," "Correction," and "Maintenance" stages. Understanding the important difference between pre- and postnatal *ch'i* will enable you to use and care for these energies in your day to day life so that your actions can contribute more significantly to your treatment progress.

Postnatal *ch'i* is derived after birth from what you eat, drink, breathe, think, and feel. It is responsible for maintaining the function of your condition on the day to day level. Prenatal *ch'i* is basically derived from constitutional factors acquired before birth. It is responsible for maintaining the longer 7 and 8 year cycles of change that include growth, maturity and decline, as well as providing a **reserve** for times of stress and old age.

Where you are now on the cycle of change will determine how much prenatal *ch'i* you have available for healing at the four stages. The more *ch'i* you have, the better the prognosis. This amount is also influenced by how much you have used up your reserve by succumbing to the major life changes such as: accidents; injuries; changes in season, location, jobs, or partners; getting married or divorced; having a baby; or a death in the family, in short--anything requiring a substantial investment of energy beyond the normal day-to-day requirements.

Practically, this means that any time this reserve is tapped, less will be available to nourish the long cycles of change, and therefore the quality and quantity of life will be diminished at those times. This is especially apparent in old age where an abundant reserve will contribute to a flexible body, strong bones, and an acute mind. Therefore, not only should these times be harmonized with the life-purpose whenever possible, but times when they unavoidably come up should be automatically considered for the scheduling of "Maintenance" stage treatments. Elderly people who have used up much of their pre-natal *ch'i* can still derive benefit from the "Relief" stage (see *AES #1*), although they would probably need to be more patient with their progress than someone who still had their pre-natal *ch'i* intact.

Your ability to keep these times of stress in harmony will determine how smooth your treatment program will go at the "Relief" and "Correction" stages and how far apart your "Maintenance" visits need to be. If you have any questions concerning these topics, please do not hesitate to ask or call.

Case History

Anne-Marie is a middle aged professional whose initial complaints included upper back stiffness, a tendency toward lack of relationships, and occasional depression especially concerning disappointment. Recent complaints include daily episodes of eyebrow plucking in which she trimmed them down to next to nothing. This left her in somewhat of an embarrassed state over her appearance.

When questioned about her job, Anne-Marie told me that he felt he was in the wrong profession. Her overly ambitious parents used to pressure her to go to medical school, but she rebelled, went into an academic field and couldn't complete the requirements. She went into her current field out of security, but secretly wanted to be an artist, if it would enable her to survive financially.

During the first series of acupuncture treatments, she found herself less reactive interpersonally. Her back opened up, she had more energy and could breathe better. When Anne-Marie started a course in art at the university, she found that she was able to fulfill her creative expression through her drawing assignments. She also noticed that she was giving in to the eyebrow plucking episodes 75% less frequently, and that she needed to give in less to them when she did.

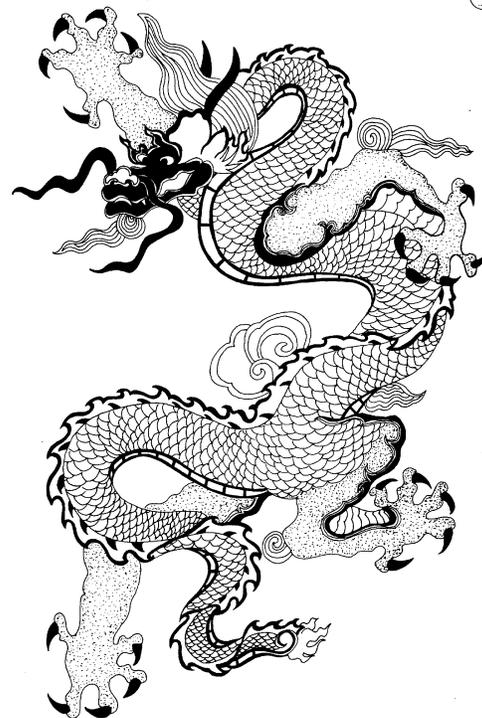
This treatment series was a bridge between the "Relief" and "Correction" stages. She responded well to the acupuncture

and her symptoms started to disappear. Simply put, Anne-Marie's "pattern of imbalance" was between the Liver and Lung functions. In healthy persons, the Liver is responsible for the expansion of the body-mind in ways that include getting things off the ground, self-assertion, the ability to say "no," and the setting of boundaries. On the other hand, the Lung helps to ensure that we do the right thing, that we fit the right mold and finish what we start.

Because Anne-Marie couldn't get in touch with and express her own needs (Liver), instead of her mother's, her self-assertion could only take the form of rebellion to her mother's demanding sense of conformity (Lung). This left her cut off from her own need to express herself (Liver), as well as her own ability to mold herself into what *she* wanted so that she could complete her own self-realization. The *trauma* of not being supported as a child for what *she* was and what *she* needed had left her stuck in frustration within her "Core Dysfunction."

Her mother had taken over her Lung function psychologically, so that she found herself constantly repressing her true nature at the unconscious level. Even though she was well aware of this intellectually, she was powerless to do anything about it because her "pattern of imbalance" was beyond her intellect. She was afraid that if she ever did get in touch with her own needs, she would disappoint (Lung) her mother. She still carried this childhood reaction within her, so that rather than disappoint her mother (which was not tolerable to her child-self), she was forced to disappoint herself. Such a willful act of self-sabotage on the part of a middle-aged professional resulted in the compulsive behavior exhibited by plucking her eyebrows.

This case history is a good example of how "Core Dysfunctions" and "Patterns of Imbalance" can be related to psycho-emotional symptoms at the "Relief" stage of treatment. Anne-Marie continues to improve, but has to work more extensively on *karmic* issues before she can complete the "Correction" stage.



**The Imperial Chinese Dragon:
Symbol of the Mastery of Self**