
Chapter 2

The Quantification of Health in the Practice of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), from the Conception of the Body that underlies it

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Abstract: Is it possible to quantify a “healthy” body in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)? What is the conception of the body that underlies this ancient practice (Taoism and Confucianism)? Can we draw any parallels with our pre-Socratic influence? What relevance does this theme have in the subject of health care today? These are the questions we propose to think about, in order to contribute to a reflection on the subject of health today. We believe we can do this, showing how the Oriental view of the body and health can be another tool to mitigate the negative effects of interpretations of modern mechanization of the body, in the field of health and care.

Keywords: Quantification, Health, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Heraclitus.

Since the translation of Oriental concepts can become difficult, given that, when translating, there is an entire underlying worldview that is often impossible to contain in just one word or concept, there may be those who question the establishment of parallels between Oriental and Greek conceptions about these body-related topics. Our intention is not to force this parallel, but we find, at least, in the two heritages that we chose to address in this presentation, which are chronologically close, a common concern: the understanding of the world around them.

The development of TCM unfolded over several centuries, going through several phases, but it is in the 4th century BC that it is systematized and properly documented, although it was in the Zhou Dynasty that Taoism and Confucianism began to develop (1045-221 BC). It is also around this time that Heraclitus, “the obscure”, lived (540-470 BC). What is a healthy body ac-

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ording to TCM? Can health be quantified in this culture? How does health manifest itself?

What can TCM tell us about what a “healthy” body is? To understand how a healthy body can be quantified from TCM principles, let’s try to summarize the main ideas that are on the theoretical basis of this practice.

Several streams have emerged in the West to study the history of TCM (Manfred Porkert, Joseph Needham or Erwin Ackerknecht) and it is with Paul Unchuld that we identify ourselves. This author argues that there are two basic paradigms that influenced the development of TCM and analyzes how these paradigms were being adapted in different conditions and societies.

The paradigmatic core of any conceptualized system of health care consists of the basic paradigm accepted by the creators of a particular system of therapy. This basic paradigm supplies the fundamental causal nexus necessary to explain the occurrence of illness. In the history of medicine in China, two basic paradigms appear to have provided the entirety of all therapy systems documented with a durable core. These two paradigms, known in other cultures as well, are the paradigm of cause-and-effect relations between corresponding phenomena, and the paradigm of cause-and-effect relations between non-corresponding phenomena. (Unchuld, 1985, p.5)

These two paradigms can coexist and together with the *Yin - Yang* laws of the Five Phases of Change of systematic correspondence (Five Movements), they are part of Chinese literature and are well represented in it. Taoism or Chinese philosophy, in its origin, does not intend to give an explanation of the world. It only wants to show its coherence.

So we should take into account that, in this long and differentiated history, built by many stories, it is not possible to define a “pure” therapeutic conceptual system: “in actual daily practice, eclectic and syncretic therapeutic systems emerge in complex societies with therapeutic plurality.” (Unchuld, 1985, p.13). It is also important to emphasize that it is a non-analytical worldview. Therefore, the fundamental elements are not determined separately, as has happened in the West after Modernity.

The law of *Yin* and *Yang* shows us how these concepts are used in the reasoning carried out in the energetic evaluation of a person, and that allows us to choose the therapeutic path to follow. This law shows us that the Oriental conception it is based on is one of belonging to relational and dynamic forces. They are not cosmic principles, but subjective metaphors that allude to the natural order of things, which can be observed. Hence, this practice is the result of empirical observation and not of scientific quantifi-

cation. The use of characters in pairs in the Chinese language is due to the influence of *Yin - Yang* dynamics.

These are relative notions, not absolute and never repeatable². What is *Yin* in some circumstances can be *Yang* in others. Let us look at the example of water in its three states: solid, liquid and gaseous. Liquid water is *Yang* relative to ice, which will be *Yin*. And liquid water can also be *Yin* relative to water vapor, which will be *Yang*. *Yin* and *Yang* are neither substances nor permanent states. *Yin* and *Yin* repel themselves, just like two north poles of two magnets, just as *Yang* and *Yang* repel among them. *Yin* and *Yang* attract each other, just as the proton attracts the electron. The extremity of one of them generates its opposite. Let us consider the example of ice, which can be classified as *Yin*, but also burns like *Yang* (heat). These ideograms are so interconnected in their meaning that they have in common the radical on the left, representing three trees upon a hill, of which it is important to point out the significance of the number three. Three is imbued with meaning for this culture, since “the one generates the two and the two generates the three, which are the ten thousand beings” (Lao Tse, 2010, p. 45): *Tao*, *Yin* and *Yang*. The radical on the right represents, in the ideogram *Yang*, the sun above the horizon. And the radical on the right of the ideogram *Yin* symbolizes “the clouds that pass through the sky at this moment”, evoking the formation of these clouds from vapors produced by the energy *Qi / Chi* (氣, or 气, in simplified Chinese) or breaths of the Earth that rise towards Heaven.

阴 *Yin* Ideogram

阳 *Yang* Ideogram

Yin is characterized by the adjectives: shadow, interiority, heaviness, cold; as opposed to the *Yang* that assumes the following: light, uncovered, exterior, lightness and warm. It is from this relationship that the world, in its diversity and multiplicity, appears. Hence the impossibility of a quantification, as this is derived from a modern reduction of the world to mass, measurement, weight and movement. From this *Yin - Yang* dynamics emerges the world that manifests itself in five movements - fire, earth, metal, water and wood - that are related to each other. There is no point in explaining them one by one, as this would make the work too extensive. It is only important to remember that they result from the empirical observation and understanding that man makes of his environment, for example by observing the seasons. From the relationship of these movements arise the laws of Oriental human physiology that explain the different pathologies, the laws of the five movements.

The “Law of the Five Movements” refers to the way in which the seasons alternate in the *Yin - Yang* dynamics and how they influence the different structures of the cosmos and man. Man is placed between heaven and earth, suffering the influences of both, and he man will be balanced if he is in agreement with the balance of the seasons that we can organize in 5 movements/elements, colors, flavors, foods, animals, organs, sounds, emotions, etc. and

² As Heraclitus would say: “we cannot bathe twice in the same water in the same river”, Fragment B 91; no two moments are the same, nor are they repeated.

that are physiologically interrelated among them by their own physiological and pathological laws.

Health will then be the result of the relative balance between *Yin* and *Yang*, the harmony created with heaven and earth and the four / five seasons (*Su Wen*, chap. V).

Do not take good health as granted. [just as one] should not forget danger in times of peace, try to prevent the coming of disease beforehand. (Deadman, 2016, 3)

Taoism, together with Confucianism, constitutes the education system in this area. While Taoism³ helps in the way of observing and understanding the nature around us, since TCM is based on effectiveness (and it is not an exact science), it accumulates a lot of experience. Confucianism guides us under the form of education, namely for the lifestyle (in the creation of hygiene and health habits, not only physical, but also mental) to be adopted in order to live in balance with nature, where man co-exists with others. The better the understanding of the world, the better will be the understanding of disease. In this respect, Confucianism moves away from Taoism, for which, in its purest form, we should not even try to fully understand the natural principles. We should just flow and participate in the natural process of continuous transformations, always opting for the “dazzle of doubt”. Taoism is not meant to answer questions. It leads to the realization that there is no point in asking questions.

Chinese medicine has its theoretical and practical bases duly grounded since the Han dynasty (206 BC), and by the 4th century AD the great classics had all been written (Shanghai College of Traditional Medicine, 1981, p.1), the most well-known and cited being the *Yellow Emperor's Book*, which developed the TCM theory, explaining the physiology, pathology, diagnosis and treatment bases. This happens in a time of radical changes in social, political, technological and cultural terms, with the gradual fall of the feudal regime (Fung, 1952, p. 9).

“During this time, massive clinical experience about disease was accumulated and formed the basis for systematic laws. These developing laws were greatly influenced by traditional Chinese philosophy. Theories about the essence, *Qi*, *Yin-Yang* and the Five Elements, were tested with random medical experiments.” (Xutian Stevenson et al., 2018, p.1354.)

Chinese medicine has an empirical basis and its theory can never be separated from practice, hence the difficulty in theorizing it and wanting to give it some scientific character. Its own technical language is ambiguous and very close to common language, which can cause some confusion in its comprehension. Despite this difficulty, the notion of body that it presents, and of whether the body can be quantified, can help us to have a better understanding of this ancient practice.

In Oriental culture we can find, over time, a more considerable amount of conceptions of what the body may be than in Western culture. This is due

³ The great reference work of this current is the Book of Changes, the I Ching.

to the way Oriental people observe and interpret the cosmos that surrounds them and the consequences that this observation has for the conception of man as the owner of a body.

From this we can understand how a medicine so old can exist and be so effective, even if founded on empirical dictates. In order to comprehend how the body is understood by Orientals, it is inevitable to talk about their cosmology and the principles and laws that govern it. That is why we have enunciated them.

Anything that is written about TCM must respect its dynamic world-view, since it is the basis of its reasoning and therapeutic application. Throughout its history, China has considered itself to be the center of the universe. And in the center of its center lies the figure of the Emperor. This Emperor, who maintains order and stability, does it simply because he exists. Like the *Tao*, he acts by not acting, controlling everything else, as we shall see. The organization of the world was made on this premise. This order, represented by the figure of the Emperor, applies from the functioning of the cosmos to the structure of society and to the structure of the individual, whose sovereign is his heart. The individual is an organizational unit, like the empire. Thus, the figure of the Emperor in the organization of society and the role that the heart plays in man are equivalent: both receive the "virtue of heaven", they preside over life. They do not exercise their power directly; the Emperor does so through his ministers and generals and man through the heart, who "governs" the different organs, which are equivalent to the Emperor's ministers and generals.

The notions of Heaven and Earth that are equivalent to the Sovereign act through *Yin* and *Yang*, which are equivalent to the ministers of the Sovereign, controlling the different seasons. Time itself is expressed by the continuous movement of *Yin* and *Yang* (circular and non-linear), by the alternation of the seasons, and it is this same continuous movement that will also explain the diagnosis and energetic treatment of diseases.

In the Chinese milieu it is natural to perceive life as the silent flow of vital energies within a concrete and tangible environment. (Larre *et. al.*, 1986, pp.12-13)

As we have already seen, Chinese medicine is the result of ancient thinking and has evolved according to the various currents of Chinese thought (Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism), and the way these streams have influenced each era socio-economically, culturally and therapeutically. Chinese medicine takes a global view of man inserted in his environment, which is the result of a condensation of energy, indivisible from the environment and with which it forms an open circuit. If the analogy is not absurd, this is similar to the micro- and macrocosms of the animist paradigm of nature in the Renaissance.

The notion of *Tao* - taken from Taoist philosophy - can be simplified as being the trace left in the visible world by the principle that governs it and of which man becomes aware through thinking; it is absolute perfection. Howe-

ver, the *Tao* does not exist in the visible world. It appears in the form of signs that need to be interpreted.

The Tao generates the One; One generates Two; Two generates Three; Three generates ten thousand creatures; the ten thousand creatures carry Yin and embrace Yang, combining these breaths of Chi to be harmonious. (Lao Tse, 2010, p. 45)

This “one” will produce the “two”, which is the energy, or breath - *Qi* or *Chi*, 氣 or 气, which is found in man in the material (*Yin*) and immaterial (*Yang*) form, making it a condensation of energy - which is the manifestation of *Tao*, “Three”.

Qi, the breaths, is the existential force presiding over all changes in the human body, whether they be macroscopic or microscopic. It is the truest expression of the way the Tao works in our bodies according to the modes of Yin / Yang. Qi is like the primordial materialization of Yang at the level of the human body. (Larre et al., 1986, 51)

Without the *Tao* nothing would manifest, there would be total balance, which would amount to non-existence. In energy, there are two opposite but complementary aspects, which are dialectically related and which give rise to the law of *Yin* and *Yang* mentioned above. Man appears in this context as one who is between Heaven and Earth, in interaction with the cosmos. The capital work that serves as a reference to TCM is *Huangdi Neijing Lingshu* (the aforementioned *Yellow Emperor's Book*), which is a work in the form of dialogue between Emperor Huang Ti and his doctor Qi Bo (mythical characters?), in which the first asks questions and the second replies, in order to expose the bases, rules and subtleties of acupuncture. This work and *Su Wen* - another part of the *Yellow Emperor's Book* - deal with medicine in general and more deeply with the human being in his indivisible unity, inseparable from the universe in which he lives. In the eighth book, chapter 25, of this work we find, in the words of the Yellow Emperor:

Covered by Heaven and carried by the Earth, all the myriad beings have come to existence. None has a more noble position than man. Man comes to life though the Qi of heaven and earth; he matures in accordance with the laws of the four seasons. Rulers and common people, they all wish to preserve [their] physical appearance. (Tessenow & Unchuld. 2011, p.425)

Heaven is in perpetual motion and is relatively dynamic in relation to the Earth; the Earth receives from Heaven the light and heat that keep it fertile, they are thus complementary. Man, who stands bipedal among Heaven and Earth, is the “two” who manifests himself as the “three”; he is the ternary product of the complementary opposition that manifests qualities corres-

ponding to Heaven and Earth. Thinking, pain, psychic function, correspond to Heaven. The bodies, their tissues and somatization will be represented by the Earth. In the same way the organ will be Earth, the meridian will be Heaven. We can dare to say that man is, therefore, a “condensation” of energies and remains related to the same energies that constitute him, hence the importance given to the “nature” that welcomes him and relates to him. Man as a body integrated in nature has a privileged place thanks to his positioning. We will see later that what we can understand by “health” is closely linked with this conception of man and his body. In the West, as we know, only in contemporary culture has the body been gradually discovered as a unit, which reveals it as a privileged place, object and agent. It is this conscience that has raised several questions, namely in the field of health (dualism, materialistic monism and mentalism).

The word “health” in Latin languages comes from the Greek term *salus*, which is related to *holos* (“whole”), and from the Latin *salute*, salvation. It has to do with the salvation that is related to the totality and implies a sacred life - *sacrum* - in its relationship and balance with the totality.

As Miguel Batista Pereira tells us:

[The] Latin word to measure, “mederi”, heal or restore balance, where the term medicine came from, has at its root the meaning of “measure” and this means for us that bodily health is the result of a state in which all parts and body processes fully balance the measurement. From the same root came not only the word “moderatio”, which designates the measure of just inner virtue, the basis of man’s social action and behavior, but also the term “meditatio”, which means weighting, weighing or immanent measuring to the process of understanding, which bring the internal activity of thought back to a stage of paradigmatic and harmonic balance. In its meditative depth, thinking means weighing beings and events, especially human ones, feeling them, assessing their importance and, by contrast, suffering the pain and grief of their destruction and loss. In this sequence, philosophical meditation and medicine are inseparable in the esteem and recovery of the human being, forgotten by formal and bookish humanism and already immolated in the utopian imagery of a future fusion between man and machine. Philosophical meditation is also born out of astonishment towards pain and, therefore, it becomes wisdom from the experience of suffering, or “patosofia”. (Batista, 2002, pp. 3-4)

Like their counterparts in the West, the great names of TCM, such as Huang Di, Fu Xi, Ben Cao or Sum Simiao, despite being known for being great doctors, were also very interested in (in their case, Taoist) philosophy, as is put

forward by Zhang Xichun (1918-1934), one of the greatest doctors and medical reformers of the 20th century in China.

We can find philosophical concerns in several areas of Oriental medical interest, especially in the “nurturing life” (Yang Sheng) practices that were first described in philosophical texts and later developed in medical treatises.

This link is made explicit by Zhang Xichun, who unequivocally describes philosophy as the basis of medicine.

What this author argues is that, although the work *Nei Jing* is an exposition about medicine, it begins necessarily with philosophy and understands philosophy as the study of how to “protect the person” (Raphals 2015, part 4). Zhang Xichun tells us that, although many recent medical journal reports consider that (traditional Chinese) philosophy holds back the progress of medicine, in his view philosophy is the real source of medicine. What this means is that medicine is the natural result of philosophy.

Disease can be caused by an internal energy imbalance that later affects not only the organism, but also the psyche, because man is understood in his unity and in relation to the environment, as we already know; or by the invasion of an external energy - wind, cold, heat, dryness, humidity, a strong emotion - that attacks the energy of the organism.

The Yellow Emperor asked: “What constitutes a healthy person?” Qi Po answered: “Man has one exhalation to one pulse beat which is then repeated, and he has one inhalation to one pulse beat which is also repeated. Exhalation and inhalation determine the beat of the pulse. When there are five respiratory movements to one pulse beat, it means that there is one extra movement inserted, bringing about deep breath in what is called a healthy and well-balanced person. A healthy and well-balanced person is not affected by disease. (Veith, 1984, p. 168)

Thus becomes understood the importance of cultivating a practice called “*Yang Sheng*”, “nourishing life”, which consists of a set of habits related to the moderation of emotions, food, sleep, sexual activity, pregnancy and postpartum, energetic gymnastics, caring for children.

In this form of medicine, in addition to all its energetic principles and its theoretical basis formulated through empirical observation - despite its rich history -, we can find a general consensus among its historians concerning the great influence that Confucius and Confucianism had in its development. We choose not to focus on the influence of Buddhism, as it appeared later (4th century AD) and is more related to religious practice and linked to individual development, bypassing the community.

Revisiting the influence of Confucianism, thinking about the relevance it may have for our investigation, we are led by the author Michel Dupuis to think about the ideogram *Ren* and the relationship it can have with the

notion of care. Indeed, Confucius's thought is organized according to a term for which he would have invented an ideogram that points to a reality:

[...] The Ren. It is Chapter 4 of the Analects that deals with it most in particular, although the notion remains fundamentally vague. It is usually translated as "sense of humanity", compassion or even pity. We can translate it as «kindness», «well-doing» or «benevolence». I venture to translate it as "care"... Its ideogram shows its content in a magnificent way; it consists of two elements: one designates a person adjacent to the sign «two», thus showing that being oneself is always a matter of community or, at the very least, dialogue with another. The ideogram shows exactly: "one person/two" (Dupuis, 2013, p. 37).

Through his conception of the organization of society, Confucius's purpose was to recover the ancient values of the philosophers' period, which had faded in his time, by rectifying the names given to things. For him, every human being, as a human, has a tie to a plurality. In this search for the *Tao*, the path, that would take him to this social organization, he used an approach to the notion of detachment different from Taoism. Confucius was based on a more realistic criterion, where the practice of ritual behavior would provide a real chance for followers of his doctrine to live harmoniously in society. For Confucius, the *Ren* was a practice and not a theory; a service, an act, both inspired by the knowledge of humanity and with a view to reinforcing that knowledge.

Confucius argued that each person should fulfill their role in society, not because it was meant to be, but because if each person did it correctly, through habit, they would be able to temper their spirit, avoiding excesses. Confucianism advocated the creation of a capable, culturally educated and organized society for the well-being of all. Some of the principles he left us are: *Ren*, humanity; *Li*, ritual courtesy; *Xiao*, filial piety; *Xin*, integrity, rectitude; *Chung*, loyalty, moral conscience; and *Shu*, altruism. "Being able to put these five things into practice, wherever you go, that constitutes *Ren*." (Fung, 1952, p. 73). Each of these principles would be linked to the characteristics that, for Confucius, were absent or decadent in society. His philosophy sought the redemption of the State by correcting individual behavior, advocating a code of social conduct. Nowadays, due to an incorrect application of the advances of the modern and technological era, there is also a loss of values and, in health, due to the instrumentalization of the body and the conversion of health services into businesses, human care has also been harmed in some ways, despite the great advances in medicine.

Every human being is linked to the plurality of others and through the practice of *Ren*, the human being puts himself at the service of others, by acting through care, through his humanity, in a harmonious movement (similar to a melodious dance movement).

It is through the ritual, *Li*, that a person can consolidate this care. The ritual is understood here not in a sense of routine or standardization of action, but as a "style, a fair way of doing things, an adaptation of gestures and atti-

tudes that must be appropriate to the circumstances.” (Dupuis, 2013, p. 40) The ritual, performed in a heartfelt way, is for Confucius a form of respect for the other.

Coming to this point of reflection we are forced to remember our freshman days in philosophy, with a year of advance in the study of TCM. It was impossible not to associate Heraclitus’s ideas with what we were learning about the theoretical bases of Chinese medicine.

Without wanting to establish unquestionable truths, we would like to share our curiosity when doing these readings. And we would also like to make clear that we haven’t made a historical investigation of facts that may prove that there’s been an interaction between Heraclitus and Chinese medicine or Chinese thought. And we know that translations have their contingencies.

Although geographically distant, the Oriental authors who systematized the theoretical bases of TCM and Heraclitus shared, at the same time, a common interest: the world around them.

The closest parallels we think we can establish are between the ideas of *Logos* and *Tao*, between the Theory of the Opposites and the Law of *Yin* and *Yang*, and the importance of life in society in order to be in harmony with *Tao / Logos*, in other words, of an ethics.

For Heraclitus, “what was vitally important was the complementary idea of a measure inherent to change, the stability that persists through it and governs it.” (Kirk et al., 1994, p.192). This change, apparently contrary to stability, makes us think about the alternation of the dynamics that operates between *Yin* and *Yang*, opposites that attract and balance each other, where the *Logos*, like the *Tao*, is the unifying and regulating principle of existence (and non-existence). As Heraclitus tells us in fr. 196: “By listening, not to me, but to *Logos*, you are advised to agree that all things are one.” (Kirk et al., 1994, p.193), referring to *Logos* as a measure and regularity of change, calculation or proportion. And also in fr. 232, Diogenes Laërtius, “It is not possible to discover the limits of the soul, even if it covers all paths: it has such a profound measure.” (Kirk et al., 1994, p. 211), since this soul / *Sheng* is related, not only to the body, but to the *Logos / Tao*.

As for the “relation of the opposites” that TCM presents in the notions of *Yin* and *Yang*, we find in Heraclitus the same notion of opposite realities. For example, in fr. 203, Aristotle, “things taken together must be, in the first place, the opposite: what we consider together with the night is, for example, the day.” (Kirk et al., 1994, p. 211). Or, still concerning opposites, fr. 201, Stobaeus, “disease makes health pleasant and good, like hunger does to satiety, and fatigue to rest.” (Kirk et al., 1994, p. 197). and fr. 202, Pseudo-plutarch, “And as one and the same thing there are life and death, wakefulness and sleep, youth and old age; for these things when they change, are the one, and those, when they change, are these.” (Kirk et al., 1994, p. 195).

According to fr. 207, Hippolytus, like the *Tao*, “an invisible connection is more powerful than a visible one.” (Kirk et al., 1994, p. 195), where

(fr. 208, Hippolytus), “the true constitution of things likes to hide.” (Kirk et al., 1994, p. 199).

But this confrontation of Oriental ideas with those of Heraclitus also extends to the notion of fire, as a coextensive of *Logos*. Fire “is the common element of all vapors (since they are conceived as a compound of fire and different kinds of incense). The change of one and the other causes a total change of name, which is misleading, since only a superficial component has changed and the most important constituent remains.” (Kirk et al., 1994, p. 198).

We also find the notion of a fire in TCM; the two most important types of fire are “imperial fire” (related to the ancestral and primordial energy of life, the vital essence or “*Jing Qi*”, which comes from the fusion of the egg cell with the sperm cell) and “ministerial fire” (that comes from the energy captured from the digestion of food and respiratory energy), and there are also energy imbalances associated with the “uncontrolled fire” in the body.

To conclude our presentation, let’s look at some fragments of ethical advice and human laws, that are supported by universal divine law. They are in agreement with the *Logos* which is a constituent and regulator of the cosmos.

We can read in fr. 227, Diogenes Laërtius, “wisdom consists of one thing, of knowing, with true judgment, how all things are governed through everything.” (Kirk et al., 1994, p.210) and in fr. 250, Stobaeus, “those who speak with judgment must rely on what is common to all, as a city must rely on the law, and with much more confidence. For all human laws are fed by one, the divine law; this law has as much power as it wishes, and for everything it is sufficient and still remains.” (Kirk et al., 1994, p. 219).

Leading a wise life in the understanding of the *Logos*, eliminating the soul’s “humidity”, which obscures reasoning, it is possible to live in a satisfactory way; “man’s life is linked to everything that surrounds him... absolute understanding can only be achieved by something similar to Zeus, whose fire and *Logos* are coextensive or different aspects of this fully wise being.” (Kirk et al., 1994, p. 210), and where change is an element of balance and not chaos, such as the alternating polarity between *Yin* and *Yang*.

Having all these ideas in mind, we can perceive a certain “quantification” of the body and health. The “body” is not divided in a body and soul conception, it is seen as a whole, it is a manifestation of the *Tao* through the *Yin* and *Yang* dynamics in its privileged position between “heaven and earth”. Health is not quantifiable in a scientific measure, but depends on the balance of the person with their natural and social environment. Health requires a certain rhythm, and that rhythm can be observed in many ways, for example, through the touch and analysis of the energy flow in a person’s pulse.

We can read in the *Su Wen*:

Huang Di asked: “I have heard that, when [the people] of antiquity treated a disease, they simply moved the essence and changed the Qi. They were able to invoke the origin and [any disease] came to an end. When the people nowadays treat a disease, [they em-

ploy] toxic drugs to treat their interior and [they employ] needles and [pointed] stones to treat the exterior. Some are healed; others are not healed. Why is that so?"

Qi Po replied: "People in antiquity lived among their animals. They moved and were active and this way they avoided the cold. They resided in the shade and this way they avoided the summer heat. Internally, they knew no entanglements resulting from sentimental attachments; externally, they did not have the physical appearance of stretching towards officialdom. In this peaceful and tranquil world, evil was unable to penetrate deeply. Hence it was possible to move essence and invoke the origin and [any disease] came to an end. The people today are different. Anxiety and suffering encircle their interior; exertion of the physical appearance harms their exterior. (Tessenow & Unchuld, 2011, p. 219).

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