

Yin and Yang Transformation Therapy in Cancer Patients

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Introduction

In conventional Western medicine, cancer is depicted from a somatic point of view, as a clone of cells which has proliferated at the expense of its environment and has outgrown the body control mechanisms. These cells are considered as abnormal, hostile to the body. When such cell proliferation is discovered in a patient, the occidental medicine, in this state of emergency, proposes a palliative treatment consisting of annihilating the abnormal cancer cells by chemotherapy or immunotherapy. In Asian medicines, the treatment of cancer is performed in a healing optic consisting of restoring, in priority, an adequate internal terrain in the sick organ. In fact, the visible cancer manifestations (the symptoms) are only a fraction of a global syndrome of a major deleterious alteration of Yin/Yang imbalance. To understand cancer processes in a global way, it is necessary to reach the root of the disorders by deciphering the impairments of Yin/Yang imbalance.

The Sino-Vietnamese medicine considers in priority the internal global terrain of the patient and more precisely its Yin-Yang picture as a key factor. Acupuncture and herbal medicine, combined with a suitable behaviour including diet, therapeutic massage, including fitness exercises such as Qi gong, are capable of restoring Yin/Yang balance, to help the body to recover from illness and to sustain health.

In this article, we discuss the essence of Yin-Yang transformations in chronic diseases and how this Yin-Yang imbalance could be preserved during modern cancer treatments.

Yin-Yang transformation: the book of change in medicine

Chinese culture takes its roots in the Book of Changes (Yang 1998) which has exerted a great influence on Chinese philosophy, literature, historical, as well as natural and social sciences. The basic theories of the *Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon* (Anonymous in Warring States Period), such as *Yin and Yang*, *Zang Xiang* (the representation of organs from outside) and *Qi Hua* (the production, transformation and circulation of vital energy) were derived from here. It also provides a reservoir of medical data, such as the

description of diseases and medical herbs, and many terms of physiological dissection, sterility and psychological treatment.

What must be reminded first from the *Book of Changes* that everything is permanently changing, transforming in a dynamical way. The Yin-Yang picture tells us more than the existence of two opposite entities (Yin and Yang) whose balance may give the fitness to a body. Yin-Yang means permanent instability, movement, interchange. The practitioner of Chinese medicine must understand this principle to put it into application and offer the best treatment that this medicine can afford, according to the concept of Tao, as Lao Zi (2002) said:

*The Tao begets the One
The One consists of Two in opposition
The Two begets the Three
The Three begets all things of the world
All things connote the Yin and the Yang
The Yin and the Yang keep acting upon each other
And thus things keep changing and unifying themselves*

Briefly, the "moving" Qi is the great one from which Yin and Yang arise. It is the root and origin of the whole body energetic system. The transformation of the Tao into energy occurs in the energetic centre, the abdomen, the Hara or Dan Tian. The eight extra meridians play a fundamental role in keeping and optimizing the alternation of Yin and Yang in the body, because they are the precursors of all the other meridians. These meridians do not have a precise pathway as the twelve meridians. Their nature is different, if we can compare the twelve meridians as waveguides that stimulate communication in between organs and tissues, the extra meridians are more likely global resonance modes that shape the body and orchestrate the different embryonic stages. The extra meridians are presently considered (Maciocia 2006) to form vortex of energy emanating from the centre of the body from the space between the kidneys where the motive force resides, in synchrony with the embryo development. Li Shi-zhen who lived in the 16th century (Li Shi-zhen 1984) called them the 'Source of Creation'. The thoroughfare vessel (*Chong Mai*) is at the centre of this energetic vortex as it is also the 'sea of the five yin and six yang organs', the 'sea of Qi and

blood' and the 'sea of the twelve channels' and it starts from the kidney itself.

The Qi and blood of the thoroughfare vessel are then distributed all over the body in small channels. When its Qi reaches KI-6 (*zhao hai*), KI-9 (*zhu bin*), BL-62 (*zhen mai*), BL-63 (*jin men*) and GB-26 (*dai mai*), it gives rise to the yin heel vessel (*Yin Jiao*), yin link vessel (*Yin Wei*), yang heel vessel (*Yang Jiao*), yang link vessel (*Yang Wei*) and belt vessel (*Dai Mai*) respectively. Thus the thoroughfare vessel can be considered as the origin of these five extra meridians.

These meridians contain the morphogenetic and metabolic program of the body which must be preserved. This is particularly important when treating chronic, systemic diseases such as cancer that touch the root, the essence of the body regulation. Cancer occurs as a breakdown of this Yin-Yang continuous alternation, and leads inevitably to Yin exhaustion. Combination of acupuncture and medical herbs used in the correct direction to restore a suitable global terrain the body can revive this alternation. Unfortunately the original spirit of this art is only partly preserved in the modern treatises of Chinese medicine. By turning back to more ancient treatises or to sino-medicines such as Vietnamese medicine, it is possible to meet again the root of the Yin-Yang principle of treatment. When the 'program' has been lost by the regulation mechanism of the body, it is necessary to reset this program and this must be performed by a delicate work on the eight extra meridians. In particular, as discussed later, the Yin extraordinary vessels and their command points give us the key for restoring the Yin Qi and finally nourishing the Yang aspect of the body by its counterbalancing.

Hai Thuong Lan Ong Le Huu Trac (Lan-Ong) (1720-1791) played a major role in the transmission and the development of Chinese medicine in Vietnam. For him, the pathological physiology is essentially based on the Yin-Yang principle. Human characters where Yang dominates are called hypertonic, those where Yin dominates are called hypotonic. Those where the Yin-Yang distribution is equal are called amphotonic. The study of the pulse occupies a very important place, because he considers that beyond diagnosis the pulse can be used for prognosis. A whole chapter is devoted to the description of the kidney which is the perfect example of Yin-Yang regulation. For Lan-Ong, the left and right kidneys are not antagonist in their nature (Yin and Yang), but they both sustain a Yin exocrine function (urinary excretion). The endocrine function (Yang), usually attributed to the right kidney is provided by a median organ, the Life gate (*Ming men*), whose role can be compared to the one attributed to adrenal glands by occidental medicine. The Life gate (*Ming men*) is itself separated in three elements: a median one corresponding to the sexual principle (Yang), surrounded by two capsules; one of which is

Yang and is a satellite of the right kidney and the other one is Yin and is a satellite of the left kidney. There must be a constant interaction between the thermic (Yang) principle and the aqueous (Yin) principle for health preservation. The Life gate (*Ming men*) deserves its names, since it presides the whole embryonic development. For Lan-Ong, the loss of dynamical compensation of the two constituents of the Life gate would be the main cause for most somatic and psychic disorders. The knowledge of the principle of the Life gate is essential for the treatment of somatic perturbations. For instance, if the aqueous (Yin) principle dominates over the thermic (Yang) principle, the treatment will avoid inhibiting the first one but will rather stimulate the second one. If the inverse situation occurs, when the aqueous (Yin) principle is weak, the principle of treatment will be to tone the Yin. "It is dangerous to limit our treatment to fight the thermic principle with a brutal method, it must rather be spared". Lan-Ong considers that the kidney participates to the genesis of weird and complex diseases. In that case, the external manifestations of the disease must not be given too much importance; the root of the disease must rather be reached. The acupuncture and herb treatments suggested by Lan-Ong revive the oldest foundations of Chinese medicine because they use the extra meridian concept in a global way.

Addressing cancer process with a 'like-therapy'

Cancer results from physical impairments of the patient terrain, reflecting how the different organs, which interact with each other to sustain life have progressively lost their correct regulation. Some recent advances on cancer research show an evolution of our state of mind, since the concept of stroma (extra-cellular matrix) has recently been pointed out in occidental medicine as environmental factor on tumour proliferation (De Wever 2003). Hiding the symptoms and visible manifestations of cancer by destroying abnormal cells is rather like hiding the root of cancer.

Interestingly, Sino-Vietnamese medicine (Hai Thuong Lan Ong Le Huu Trac) emphasises the detrimental effect of a major Yin deficiency in cancer, thus offering possibilities to treat the roots of cancer in addition to the efficient occidental destruction of cancer cells.

Four major Yin-like principles are proposed to approach chronic, systemic diseases and to decode the hidden face of cancer behind its appearance and origin:

1. Compassion for the patient that allows a deep psycho-somatic exchange with the physician through all the senses (seeing, listening, touching, tasting, smelling).

2. Therapist development of a deep sensibility for evaluating impairment of Yin-Yang balance by pulse detection.
3. Observance of the Yin-Yang principle of treatment to find the pitch that will help restore the free alternation of these two entities.
4. Combination of herbal medicine and acupuncture for optimal restoration of the Yin-Yang compensation dynamics. If the patient has enough energetic resources the treatment can be focused on acupuncture, but if their resources are exhausted, herbal medicine is strongly required to consolidate the acupuncture treatment and the combined acupuncture-herb treatment will be longer.

To evaluate the Yin-Yang impairment, the traditional diagnosis method of Chinese medicine (look, listen, question and pulse sensing) must be completed by a meticulous observation and palpation of the meridians that irrigate the sick tissues and organs. This requires not only a long clinical experience with patients but also a personal training in global energetic equilibration methods such as Tai qi, Qi gong, Yoga, meditation, etc. This method is based on a profound respect of the person as a whole in his/her cosmotelelluric environment. Getting into the Yin aspect of a person, shows his/her relationship with a multi-dimensional environment, consciously or unconsciously. This "spirit" point of view which can be defined as a superior Conscience of the Being in its environment (terrestrial and cosmic) (Bel 2011) is something natural among human beings (not cultural). We are bodily and spiritually, deeply rooted in our environment and we are nurtured by this environment.

Presentation of the method

Acupuncture

The acupuncture treatment of this method combines extra meridians (*Qi jing ba mai*), tendon meridians (*Jin mai*) and collateral (*luò*) points, and uses the season rhythms (transport points (Wang Ju-Yi 2008, Pirog 1996)) to make an efficient and correct distribution of the Yin and Yang energies throughout the body of the patient. After the treatment, the modification of the flux of energy from Yang to Yin is visible, palpable on the pulse and on the general state of the patient. Respiration, sleeping, joint, back and head pain are clearly improved. Compared to herbal treatment, acupuncture efficacy is immediate. Since the beginning of the acupuncture treatment, the patient observes that his/her pains are soothing, he/she looks well, feels less stressed, less tired, breathes more freely and his/her pulse progressively regulates.

The needling method is also important to follow the Yin-therapy principle. Small needles (less than 25 mm in length) are inserted softly and rapidly on groups of

points chosen on major acupuncture channels for their synergetic function. The needles are warmed with a moxa or a flame for a few seconds and rapidly withdrawn. Three zones of the body are successively and separately treated: the legs and arms, the abdomen and the back. On each zone, the same protocol of needle insertion, short heating and withdrawal is applied. The Yin character of this method relies on the very soft insertion of small and fine needles, the body is not aggressed by the needles, the warming of the needles is securing the body, making it feel comfortable. The use of a quite high number of needles requires a special dexterity for the practitioner, and could be considered as lengthy; however the combination of many needles on a same meridian reinforces their action by a kind of resonance or amplification effect.

Restoring the Yin/Yang balance

For Yin deficiency restoration, the list of points given in table 1, will be needled and heated.

A combination of the Yin extraordinary vessel command points to fortify the Yin energy of the whole body: **LU7 (r) (liè quē)**, **SP4 (r) (qōng sūn)**, **PC6 (l) (nèi guān)**, **KI6 (l) (zhào hǎi)**. (*r*) = right side, (*l*) = left side. A strengthening of the two foot Yin meridians (KI, SP) using for each of these meridians the season tonification points (see table 1) with the collateral (*luò*) points, respectively **SP4 (gōng sūn)** and **KI4 (dà zhōng)**. Deliverance of the liver meridian stagnation with a combination of the ting point **LR1 (dà dūn)**, the collateral (*luò*) point **LR5 (lí gōu)** and the season dispersion point of the liver meridian (see table 1). Finally, to consolidate the Yin/Yang balance, a set of points chosen on front and back sides and the legs are needled and heated: **RM12 (zhōng wǎn)**, **RM6 (qì hǎi)**, **RM4 (guān yuán)**, **DM4 (mìng mén)**, **DM1 (cháng qiàng)**, **ST36 (zú sān lǐ) (2)**, **BL52 (zhì shì) (2)**, **BL40 (wěi zhōng) (2)**, **BL57 (chéng shān) (2)**. ((2) for bilateral needling). Note that the combination of BL52 and DM4 is particularly suited for stimulating the kidney with its Yin-Yang duality.

To understand the use of transport points with seasons we refer to the engendering cycle interconnecting the five phases or five movements: wood, fire, earth, metal, water. Each phase begets the next phase in the sequence. In acupuncture, we apply this concept, i.e. toning up an organ through its mother and dispersing it through its son. To treat the organ disorders, we combine this five phase ordering of the five transport points with the seasons. These seasons are classified with a slight shift of date for the two hemispheres; we show in table 2 the classification for the north and south hemispheres. For instance, depending on the season we take the transport point corresponding to the organ to be treated and use the mother point on the same meridian to tone up or the child point on the same

meridian to drain the meridian. Table 1 summarises this method.

Seasons	Spring		Summer		5th season		Autumn		Winter	
	D	T	D	T	D	T	D	T	D	T
Lung	LU10	LU5	LU9	LU11	LU8	LU10	LU5	LU9	LU11	LU8
Spleen	SP2	SP9	SP3	SP1	SP5	SP2	SP9	SP3	SP1	SP5
Heart	HT8	HT3	HT7	HT9	HT4	HT8	HT3	HT7	HT9	HT4
Kidney	KI2	KI10	KI3	KI1	KI7	KI2	KI10	KI3	KI1	KI7
Pericardium	PC8	PC3	PC7	PC9	PC5	PC8	PC3	PC7	PC9	PC5
Liver	LR2	LR8	LR3	LR1	LR4	LR2	LR8	LR3	LR1	LR4
Large Intestine	LI5	LI2	LI11	LI3	LI1	LI5	LI2	LI11	LI3	LI1
Stomach	ST41	ST44	ST36	ST43	ST45	ST41	ST44	ST36	ST43	ST45
Small Intestine	SI5	SI2	SI8	SI3	SI1	SI5	SI2	SI8	SI3	SI1
Bladder	B60	B66	B54	B65	B67	B60	B66	B54	B65	B67
Triple Burner	TB7	TB2	TB10	TB3	TB1	TB7	TB2	TB10	TB3	TB1
Gallbladder	GB38	GB43	GB34	GB41	GB44	GB38	GB43	GB34	GB41	GB44

Table 1: Tonifying (orange) and draining (light green) season points (Deadman 2007, Focks 2008).

Season	Beginning	End	Season	Beginning	End
Spring	5th February	16th April	Autumn	2th February	18th April
5th Season	17th April	4th May	5th Season	19th April	6th May
Summer	5th May	19th July	Winter	7th May	23th July
5th Season	20th July	6th August	5th Season	24th July	10th August
Autumn	7th August	19th October	Spring	11th August	17th October
5th Season	20th October	6th November	5th Season	18th October	4th November
Winter	7th November	17th January	Summer	5th November	14th January
5th Season	18th January	4th February	5th Season	15th January	1th February

Table 2: Annual schedule of the seasons in the north (left) and south (right) hemispheres.

Herbal medicine

Rationale for applying Chinese medicine as chronotherapy against cancer have been proposed to integrate western and Chinese medicines (Seki et al. 2005). However, the term integration is misleading. For us what is important to consider is the nature (Yin or Yang) of the therapeutic principle itself and not simply the composition of the treatment. Herbal treatment must work in the correct sense and with correct amplitude, adapted to the person. This can be illustrated by what we feel during very hot summer days, where we feel very tired, wrinkled as the vegetation in the fields. All these phenomena are the consequence of an excess of Yang and of a loss of Yin. If there is rain, the ground can restore its smoothness, the air is fresh and plants and animals recover their vivacity. The same phenomenon occurs inside our

body. When the Yin is too low in the lower part of the body, we observe cold extremities (pain in the lower abdomen, oedema in the legs, constipation, etc) and it produces an elevation of the Yang in the upper part of the body (red face, elevation of the cardiac rhythm, tiredness, vertigo, headaches, etc). The re-establishment of the Yin-Yang balance in the body brings back blood circulation to the lower part of the body and heat the lower extremities, the lower abdomen organs are better fed and stronger; they recover their Yin energy.

The formula called the “eight flavours” (noted as BV1 in table 3) is actually like ‘rain’ for the body; it fortifies the Yin and leads to a quick recovery of the Yin-Yang balance. This formula which is one of the major herbal

combinations was proposed by Zhang Zhongjing who authored the *Shang Han Lun* (Zhang Zhong-jing, 3rd

century): Treatise on cold damage, in the third century AD.

Radix Rehmanniae glutinosae conquitae (<i>Shu Di Huang</i>)	Fructus Corni Officinalis (<i>Shan Zhu Yu</i>)	Radix Dioscoreae Oppositae (<i>Shan Yao</i>)	Rhizoma Alismatis Orientalis (<i>Ze Xie</i>)
Cortex Moutan Radicis (<i>Mu Dan Pi</i>)	Sclerotium Poriae Cocos (<i>Fu Ling</i>)	Cortex Cinnamomi Cassiae (<i>Rou gui</i>)	Radix Aconiti Lateralis Praeparata (<i>Fu Zi</i>)

Table 3. Formula BV1 elaborated from the “eight flavour” formula.

Radix Ginseng (<i>Ren Shen</i>)	Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae (<i>Bai Zhu</i>)	Sclerotium Poriae Cocos (<i>Fu Ling</i>)	Radix Glycyrrhizae Preparata (<i>Zhi Gan Cao</i>)
Pericarpium Citrus reticulata (<i>Chen Pi</i>)	Fructus Amomi (<i>Sha Ren</i>)	Rhizoma Pinelliae Ternatae (<i>Ban Xia</i>)	Radix Rehmanniae glutinosae conquitae (<i>Shu Di Huang</i>)
Radix Angelicae Sinensis (<i>Dang Gui</i>)	Rhizoma zingiberis (<i>Gan Jiang</i>)	Radix Bupleri (<i>Chai Hu</i>)	Rhizoma Zedoariae or Rhizoma Curcumae (<i>E Zhu</i>)

Table 4. Formula SB6. SB6 is combined with BV1 for lower burner tumour treatment.

Radix Rehmanniae preparata (*Shu Di Huang*) has the higher percentage of this formula as the emperor; it fortifies the kidney in organic liquids and in energy, by clearing heat and cooling the blood. Radix Dioscoreae Oppositae (*Shan Yao*) is the minister, it fortifies and nourishes the spleen, stomach, lung and kidney Yin energy and organic liquids.

The three assistants: (i) Fructus Corni Officinalis (*Shan Zhu Yu*) fortifies the liver and kidney, it retains the essence (jing) and the kidney Yin energy, (ii) Sclerotium Poriae Cocos (*Fu Ling*) promotes urination and resolves dampness, it strengthens the spleen and calms the shen, (iii) Rhizoma Alismatis Orientalis (*Ze Xie*) fortifies the kidney and the bladder and regulates water circulation and resolves dampness. The three ambassadors: (i) Cortex Moutan Radicis (*Mu Dan Pi*) neutralizes the hidden heat inside the organs, particularly in the lower abdomen, (ii) Cortex Cinnamomi Cassiae (*Rou gui*) helps with blood circulation and tonifies kidney Yang energy and augments Life gate *ming men* fire, (iii) Radix Aconiti Lateralis Praeparata (*Fu Zi*) warms the right Yang kidney. They stimulate the triple burner function in a correct way. The triple burner regulates the whole body temperature and ensures a good drainage of water towards the kidney and bladder.

The “eight flavour” BV1 formula (see table 3) reinforces the energy of three organs in the following order: first the kidney, then the spleen and finally the liver. The kidneys have a direct relation with heart and lungs through their meridians. The spleen is also related to stomach and heart. The liver has an energetic

relation with the lung. Regulating the function of the meridians of these three organs revives immediately the heart and the lung. The person feels a global improvement of their body state and can recover a better sleep. This formula gives the recovery of the Yin-Yang balance, so the Du Mai, Ren Mai and Chong Mai meridians can restore a normal function. Since the two meridians Chong Mai and Ren Mai control and nourish the uterus and the ovaries, these two organs recover a better energy circulation, the tumours or induration in the matrix resorb naturally. This reinforces the principle of body balance restoration, by a direct action on the eight extra meridians. This formula must be adapted, depending on the patient and its pulse response, to compensate as closely as possible the Yin-Yang imbalance.

Illustration of the Yin method for cancer

A person with a tumour has a systematically imbalance of Yin-Yang and mostly a vacuity of Yin, with an energetic obstruction or stagnation because the cellular proliferation of cancer cells is no longer controlled (Bel 2011). Restoring the Yin-Yang balance and releasing the energetic obstruction improves the Yin energy of the sick organ, providing a better blood flow, a better oxygenation and an improvement of the global energetic state of the patient (better sleep, better digestion, better tone, etc). The cells of the sick organ may consequently recover a normal division stage, and imply a progressive extinction of the tumour process. Whereas occidental treatment of cancer targets the tumour process itself, in a Yang method: fighting the fire by the fire, this Yin method offers a

complementary view for compensating the drawbacks of a Yang method.

Lower burner cancers

The lower burner area, located in the lower abdomen, spreads from the navel to the genitals and involves three meridians: kidney, liver and spleen that irrigate all the organs of the lower abdomen. The restoration of the Yin energy in the lower burner will be afforded thanks to the global Yin/Yang balance recovery and to the release of the liver meridian obstruction (which is mainly concerned by these tumours). More generally, the energetic re-establishment in this area leads to (i) a better elimination of urine, (ii) an easier evacuation of faecal material, (iii) a recovery of the vital essence (jing) and (iv) a better production of hormones (male and female), of sperm (male) and an improvement of the menstruations (female).

The lower burner cancers concern the uterus, the ovaries, the small intestine, the peritoneum, the kidneys and the bladder. These cancers are considered as Yin pathologies, in comparison to large intestine and rectum cancers. For their treatment, the three Yin meridians: kidney, spleen and liver must be treated to ensure the Yin-Yang balance and a correct energetic circulation in the lower abdomen. The acupuncture treatment will be similar to the one described above, with some variants depending on the pulse of the patient. The herbal treatment will use the BV1 formula, with the addition of Yin ingredients that will facilitate the release of the obstruction of the affected meridian by the tumour process and will promote healing of the sick area. The addition of *Fructus Lycii* (*Gou qi zi*) and *Du Zhong* (*Cortex Eucommiae*) will stimulate the blood and the Yang. A second formula noted SB6 will be given in combination with the “eight flavour” formula (see table 4).

The association of formulas BV1 and SB6 magnifies the effect of each of these formulas taken separately. It gives a faster restoration of an undisturbed sleep, good appetite, better digestion and a faster recovery of the Qi. The three Yin meridians kidney, liver and spleen are reconstituted and reinforced, which improves automatically the Qi circulation in the lower abdomen and the unlocking of the obstructions which were the initial cause of the tumour.

Conclusion

In conclusion, by restoring a global Yin-Yang balance in the patient, before the release of the meridian blockages interrelated to the organ tumour, this Sino-Vietnamese method proposes a rich complementary view of cancer care. The Ying-Yang transformation principle could be considered as the forerunner of the perpetual motion principle for living systems, as a minimisation principle of consumed Qi. The way we

treat the diseases must also follow this principle, combining Yin and Yang approaches to adapt the medicine to the body impairment. Efficacy of acupuncture to counteract the side effects of chemotherapy has been often proclaimed in the past decades (O'Regan 2010). This Sino-vietnamese Yin-type healing method may be a powerful adjunct to occidental palliative medical systems using chemotherapy, immunotherapy and surgery which can be considered, in our terminology, as Yang-type treatments. It gives us strategies to operate synergisms between palliative and healing treatments in cancer.

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