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The Evolution of Medical Thought in Ancient China: A Study of Philosophical Roots and Historical Transformations

تطور الفكر الطبي في الصين القديمة :دراسة في الجذور الفلسفية و التحولات التاريخية

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- **Abstract:**

This study examines the epistemological foundations of ancient Chinese medicine as an integrated intellectual system that unites humanity, nature, and the cosmos within a holistic organic framework, extending far beyond conventional therapeutic practice and rooted in major philosophical traditions such as Taoism. It argues that conceptions of the body and disease in Chinese thought emerged through a profound metaphysical vision that projected the laws of the macrocosm onto the human body as a microcosm. This is reflected in the transformation of concepts such as Qi energy and the Yin-Yang system from abstract philosophical notions into functional physiological principles. Tracing its evolution from early mythological and priestly contexts to the codification of classical medical texts, the study demonstrates how Chinese thought fused clinical observation with spiritual wisdom to produce enduring therapeutic models that harmonize science and philosophical insight.

Keywords: Ancient Chinese Medicine, Yin and Yang, Qi Energy, Acupuncture, Taoism.

الملخص:

تتمحور هذه الدراسة حول البنية المعرفية للطب الصيني القديم بوصفه منظومة فكرية متكاملة تدمج الإنسان والطبيعة والكون في وحدة عضوية شاملة، متجاوزةً كونه مجرد ممارسات علاجية تقليدية لتتجذر في الفلسفات الكبرى كالطاوية ،وتذهب الدراسة بأن الوعي بالجسد والمرض في الفكر الصيني تشكّل عبر رؤية ميتافيزيقية عميقة، أسقطت قوانين الكون الكبير على الجسد ككون صغير، وهو ما تجسد في تحويل مفاهيم طاقة "التشي" ونظام "الين واليانغ" من تجريدات فلسفية إلى أسس فسيولوجية وظيفية؛ حيث تتتبع الدراسة سيرورة هذا الفكر من فضائه الأسطوري والكهنوتي المبكر، وصولاً إلى مرحلة التدوين العلمي والكتب الكلاسيكية لطب الصيني، ومن خلال هذا التمازج الفريد بين الملاحظة السريرية والحكمة الروحية، نجح العقل الصيني في تحويل التأملات المجردة إلى بروتوكولات علاجية ملموسة، أثبتت قدرتها على الصمود التاريخي، لتقدم نموذجاً فريداً لتآلف العلم مع الحكمة الفلسفية. (يجب أن يكون ملخصك موجزًا ومتماسكًا، ويعكس موضوعك العام ويلخصه

الكلمات المفتاحية: الطب الصيني القديم، الين واليانغ، طاقة التشي، الوخز بالإبر، الطاوية.

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• Introduction

Traditional Chinese medicine represents one of the most enduring intellectual systems shaped by human experience in East Asia, with roots extending back thousands of years. From the legendary era of the early emperors, this medical tradition continued to evolve and crystallize until the compilation of the *Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine* in the second century BCE, a decisive historical turning point that transformed medicine from the realm of abstract philosophical reflection into a practical and systematic discipline. Through this transformation, deeply rooted cosmological ideas were translated into precise therapeutic practices and an organized scientific framework grounded in sophisticated philosophical theories. Cosmic concepts thus became tangible diagnostic and therapeutic instruments. This cumulative body of knowledge, forged through major historical transformations, enabled Chinese medicine to transcend the limits of a localized cultural heritage and emerge as a resilient global healing system distinguished by its unique theoretical foundations and practical applications.

Medicine in ancient China was inseparable from a broader cosmological worldview founded upon the principle of harmony between humanity and nature. The human body was perceived as a microcosm reflecting the universe itself, governed by philosophical concepts such as Yin and Yang, which symbolize the balance of opposing forces; *Qi*, the vital energy flowing through life channels; and the theory of the Five Elements, which explains the interrelationships among bodily organs and their interaction with the surrounding environment.

Building upon these philosophical foundations and centuries of historical accumulation, an integrated therapeutic system emerged that extended far beyond theoretical speculation to provide precise clinical solutions derived from close observation of nature and the application of its laws to human physiology. These theories, for example, served as a conceptual framework for classifying herbal medicines and correlating them with vital organs, while the pathways of vital energy evolved into anatomically defined points within the practice of acupuncture. This material embodiment of philosophy endowed Chinese medicine with its distinctive capacity for early diagnosis and for restoring bodily balance before disease could fully develop.

The significance of studying Chinese medical thought lies in revealing an uninterrupted intellectual trajectory through which healing practices evolved from the sphere of philosophical and cosmological contemplation into the domain of clinical application to the human body. While philosophy, particularly Daoism, provided this medical tradition with its conceptual spirit and theoretical framework for understanding vital balance, historical experience and empirical observation furnished it with practical methods and therapeutic efficacy. Understanding this system is therefore essential for comprehending how philosophical contemplation was transformed into effective clinical protocols that endured across centuries.

This paper is structured around two interrelated objectives. The first seeks to deconstruct the philosophical foundations of the Chinese medical system, particularly Daoist philosophy, in order to trace how its abstract concepts were transformed into operational medical principles. The second

aims to examine the major historical transformations that shaped the development of this medical thought.

The central research question may therefore be formulated as follows: To what extent did the philosophical foundations of ancient Chinese thought contribute to shaping a distinctive medical identity capable of transforming abstract cosmological concepts into practical medical principles?

To achieve the objectives of this study, the research will employ the descriptive-historical method to trace transformations across different historical periods, alongside the analytical method to deconstruct major philosophical concepts and examine their implications for the human body and therapeutic practices.

1. The Philosophical Foundations of Chinese Medicine

Chinese medicine cannot be understood in isolation from the philosophical matrix that gave rise to it. Whereas Western medicine developed through the anatomical dissection of matter and the fragmentation of bodily organs, Chinese medicine emerged from a philosophy of cosmic unity that reconceptualizes the body as a microcosm reflecting the universal laws of nature. Within this framework, philosophical foundations do not merely constitute a theoretical backdrop; rather, they function as the biological constitution through which the concepts of health and disease are defined.[1]

1.1 The Concept of Tao

The origins of Taoist philosophy are traditionally attributed to the sage Lao Tzu, a title that literally means "the Old Master." Lao Tzu condensed his wisdom into a concise work regarded as the principal reference of Taoism, internationally known as the *Tao Te Ching*, or *The Classic Book of the Way and Virtue*. This text is distinguished by its unique poetic style.[2] While the *Tao Te Ching* established the foundational principles of Taoist thought, the *Zhuangzi* endowed Taoism with its profound literary and philosophical spirit. The *Zhuangzi* is considered the second major pillar of Taoist literature and surpasses the *Tao Te Ching* considerably in length and scope. Although some scholarly debates attribute its authorship to different figures, the prevailing view associates the text with the sage Zhuangzi himself. Researchers further emphasize the intellectual independence of these two works, as each presents a distinct philosophical vision that makes it difficult to regard one merely as a continuation or supplement of the other.[3]

The Chinese believed in the existence of a single absolute reality underlying the visible world, a fundamental force or essential principle that unifies dispersed phenomena and harmonizes the fragmented events of everyday life into an integrated whole. This reality is known as the "Tao," literally meaning "the Way" or "the Path." Taoism thus represents a philosophy that integrates both spiritual and practical dimensions, seeking primarily to cultivate a life in harmony with the universe

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1- Fritjof Capra, Taoism and Modern Physics, trans. by Hanna Abboud, Damascus: Dar Tlass for Studies, Translation and Publishing, 1999, p. 10.
2- Joseph Needham, Science and Civilisation in China, Vol. II, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956, p. 35.
3- Fung Yu-Lan, A Short History of Chinese Philosophy, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950, p. 14.

through a return to natural simplicity and complete alignment with the laws of nature, free from artificiality and excessive human intervention. Central to this philosophy is the principle of *Wu Wei*, often translated as "non-action." This concept does not advocate passivity or inertia; rather, it refers to acting in accordance with the natural flow of existence without resistance, thereby attaining equilibrium between opposing forces.[4]

In Taoist thought, the body is not perceived as a burden upon the soul or a prison confining it; rather, it is conceived as a cosmic map in which mountains, rivers, and stars are mirrored through organs and vital systems. This profound interconnectedness transformed the care of the body into an act of devotion in itself. Taoists believed that preserving the integrity of the physical form constituted the sole means through which the spirit could dwell and endure. From this perspective emerged the concept of longevity, not merely as a desire for survival, but as a means of granting the soul additional time to comprehend the Tao, unite with it, and ultimately attain a state of permanence and resilience akin to the immortality of nature itself.[5]

1.2 Qi: Vital Energy

Qi is regarded as the hidden driving force behind all existence and the essential key to understanding Taoist philosophy. Although the literal meaning of the term is "breath," it fundamentally signifies the "life force" that flows through the veins of existence itself. For Taoists, Qi was not an abstract theoretical construct, but a tangible inner experience that intensified when one opened oneself to life and diminished when one withdrew into isolation. They believed that the true beauty of life lay not merely in survival, but in transcending ordinary existence toward the highest states of vitality and dynamism, ultimately aspiring to the supreme ideal of immortality. From this profound reverence for life emerged a range of rituals and practices intended to preserve this inner vital pulse and sustain it indefinitely.[6]

The highest form of efficacy in Taoist philosophy requires adherence to the principle of *Wu Wei*, a doctrine representing the ultimate ideal of self-regulation and harmonious alignment with the cosmic path of the Tao. Rather than resisting existence, the individual flows with its current. Here, "non-action" does not imply passivity or inertia; instead, it denotes a state of pure and effortless effectiveness. It is the art of achieving profound aims with minimal psychological exhaustion, whereby human action becomes an organic extension of nature's own movement, much like water, which, despite its softness and absence of force, possesses the power to carve through stone through the persistence of its gentle flow.[7]

4- Huston Smith, The Religions of Man, trans. by Saad Rostom, 3rd ed., Aleppo: Dar Al-Jusur Al-Thaqafiya, 2007, pp. 304–306.
5- Mircea Eliade, History of Religious Beliefs and Ideas, Vol. II, trans. by Abdel Hadi Abbas, 1st ed., Damascus: Dar Dimashq, 1987, pp. 32–34.
6- Lao Tzu, Tao, trans. and study by Hadi Al-Alawi, 1st ed., Beirut: Dar Al-Kunouz Al-Adabiya, 1995, pp. 16–17.
7- Huston Smith, op. cit., p. 316.

Diagnosis in Chinese medicine is grounded in an understanding of the dynamic interaction between Qi, blood, and bodily fluids. Qi functions as the activating principle responsible for all physiological and transformative processes within the body. Consequently, assessing the state of Qi and blood extends beyond mere organic examination; it constitutes an interpretation of the functional equilibrium that sustains the integrity of organs and tissues. Any disruption or deficiency in the flow of Qi is regarded as the primary indicator through which the practitioner identifies the pattern of illness, often before the disease manifests in a tangible physical form.[8]

1.3 Yin and Yang

Taoism does not perceive the world as a collection of fixed entities or isolated concepts. Rather, it adopts a dynamic worldview that transcends conventional binaries such as black and white, good and evil, or heat and cold, advancing instead the principle of the relativity of values. Within this philosophical framework, no element possesses an absolute value in and of itself; its significance is always derived from its relationship with its opposite. The boundaries separating opposites are therefore not rigid barriers, but permeable zones of transition and interpenetration in which static duality dissolves, and contradictions become existentially inseparable. In other words, the existence of one opposite constitutes the necessary condition for the existence of the other.

This conception is embodied in the Yin-Yang symbol (see Figure 1), which visually represents the law of perpetual transformation. The small dot contained within each half of the symbol, namely the seed of Yin within Yang and the seed of Yang within Yin, expresses the idea that every phenomenon inherently contains the embryonic potential of its opposite. Thus, at the very moment a phenomenon reaches its peak, it has already begun to transform into its contrary. Daylight, at the height of its brilliance, already carries within it the first traces of the darkness that will gradually emerge.[9]

Figure 1. The Yin-Yang Symbol[10]

8- Giovanni Maciocia, The Foundations of Chinese Medicine, 3rd ed., Edinburgh: Elsevier, 2015, pp. 45–46.
9- Firas Al-Sawah, Chapters from Chinese Philosophy, United Kingdom: Hindawi Foundation, 2022, p. 77.
10- Yin and Yang," Afaq Scientific and Educational Horizons, available at: https://www.afaqbio.com/2020/07/yin.yan.html.



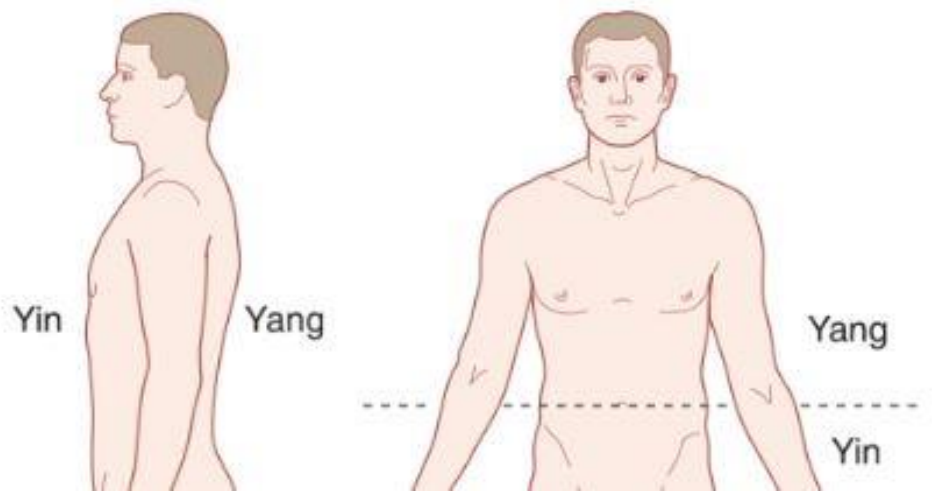
Taoism does not merely present an abstract philosophical understanding of the relativity of values; it extends this principle to the human body, where it becomes the cornerstone of traditional Chinese medicine. Every clinical symptom can be analyzed and interpreted through the Yin-Yang framework. This perspective maintains that relativity governs even the internal organs and anatomical structures of the body, which are themselves divided into regions and levels reflecting both existential and functional opposition and complementarity (see Figure 2).

The uniqueness of this vision lies in the fact that the principle of relativity remains operative even at the most intricate anatomical and physiological levels. Within this system, the body is not regarded as a static mechanical entity, but rather as a dynamic field structured into complementary domains characterized simultaneously by opposition and integration. The upper and posterior regions of the body correspond to Yang, representing movement, activity, and external defense, whereas the lower and anterior (abdominal) regions correspond to Yin, representing nourishment, stability, and the preservation of vital substances.

This epistemological foundation redefines disease, shifting it from the notion of a purely mechanical dysfunction to that of an imbalance in relational harmony and a disruption in the equilibrium between opposing forces. Consequently, treatment in Chinese medicine ultimately revolves around four major diagnostic and therapeutic strategies: strengthening Yang, strengthening Yin, eliminating excess Yang, or eliminating excess Yin. In this way, the Taoist principle of the relativity of values is transformed from a philosophical abstraction into a precise clinical instrument employed to restore the lost balance between complementary opposites within the human organism.[11]

11- Giovanni Maciocia, op. cit., p. 9.

Figure 2. Regions and levels reflecting existential and functional opposition and complementarity within the Yin-Yang framework.[12]



1.4 The Theory of the Five Elements

In Daoist philosophy, the Five Elements - wood, fire, earth, metal, and water - constitute the dynamic system through which existence manifests itself. They are not merely static material substances, but rather dynamic phases through which the Dao becomes embodied within the visible world. Following the division of primordial unity into the duality of Yin and Yang, the continuous interaction and cyclical movement between these opposing yet complementary forces gave rise to the Five Elements as a transitional bridge from concealment to manifestation. Through the varying combinations and ceaseless cyclical motion of these elements emerged the "ten thousand things," that is, the countless phenomena of the natural world. The Five Elements therefore function as the formative code through which the universe acquired both identity and form, transforming absolute stillness into a living process experienced in the details of everyday existence.[13]

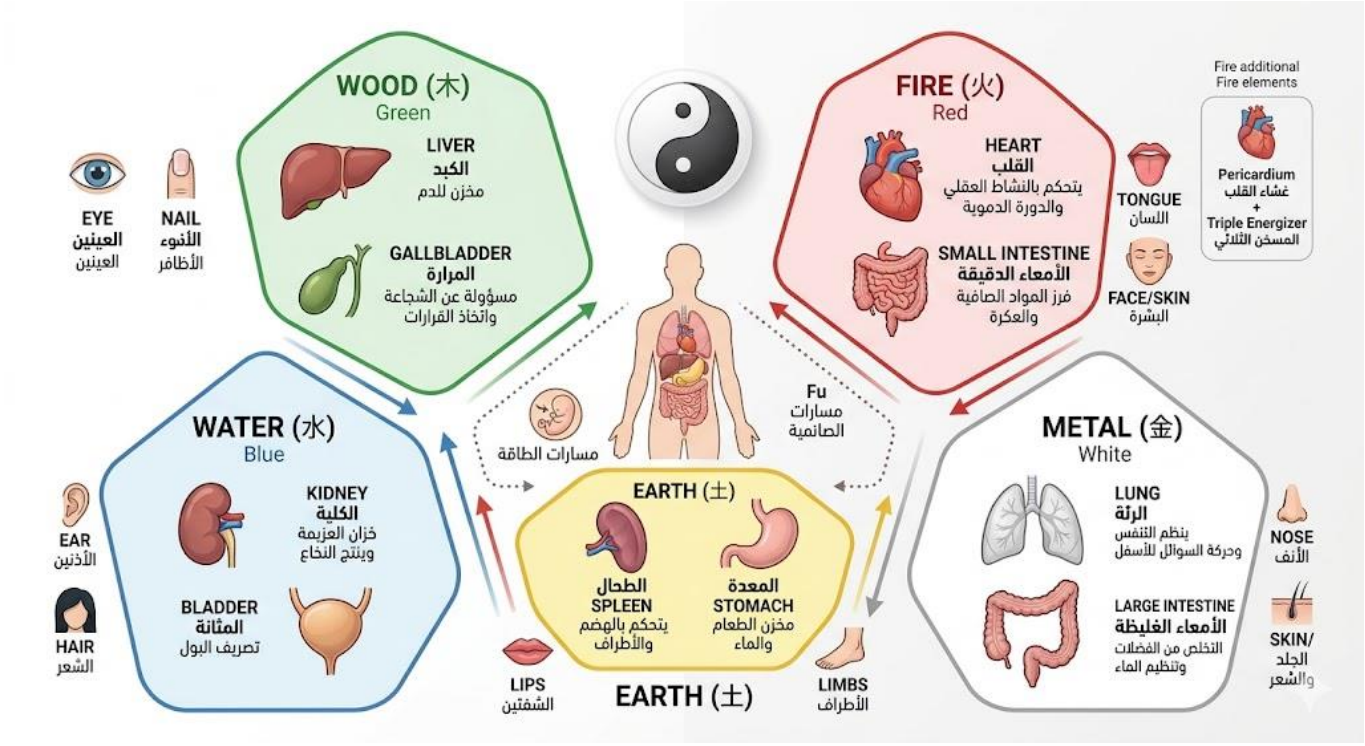
In traditional Chinese medicine, the Five Elements (wood, fire, earth, metal, and water) function as an integrated diagnostic framework rather than a system that examines each organ in isolation (see Figure 3). The practitioner instead interprets external manifestations as reflections of the condition of the internal organs within the *Zang-Fu* system, which is grounded in the principle of functional duality. According to this model, bodily organs are understood as complementary pairs consisting of solid and hollow organs interconnected through a network of vital pathways known as meridians, based on their physiological functions.

The *Zang* organs, namely the solid organs (heart, liver, spleen, lungs, and kidneys), are primarily responsible for storage, functioning as reservoirs of vital essence, blood, and energy. By contrast, the *Fu* organs, namely the hollow organs (intestines, stomach, gallbladder, and bladder), are primarily concerned with transformation and transport, receiving substances, digesting them, and eliminating waste. Each solid organ is associated with one of the Five Elements and paired

12- Ibid., p. 9.
13- Firas Al-Sawah, Tao: The Gospel of Chinese Wisdom (Interpretation and Commentary on the Text of Tao Te Ching), 1st ed., Damascus: Dar Alaa Al-Din, 1998, p. 122.

with a corresponding hollow organ to form a unified functional entity (see Table 4). This relationship extends beyond anatomical association to encompass an energetic connection originating during embryonic development, where the migration of organs from their original positions leaves energetic pathways linking each paired system together.[14]

Figure 3: Illustrative Diagram of an Integrated Diagnostic Map in Chinese Medicine



Source: Prepared by the researchers.

Table 4: Illustrative Table of the Zang-Fu System

Element	Solid Organ (Zang)	Hollow Organ (Fu)	Diagnostic Sense Organ	External Manifestation (Tissues)
Fire	Heart	Small Intestine	Tongue	Blood vessels and skin
Wood	Liver	Gallbladder	Eyes	Tendons and nails
Earth	Spleen	Stomach	Mouth / Lips	Muscles and limbs
Metal	Lungs	Large Intestine	Nose	Skin and hair
Water	Kidneys	Bladder	Ears	Bones and scalp hair

Source: Prepared by the researchers.

2. Mythological Origins and Classical Texts of Chinese Medicine

14- Amina Latrash, "An Ethnographic Approach to Alternative Medicine in Algerian Society: Chinese Medicine as a Model," Al-Mi'yar Journal, Faculty of Arts, University of Oran, No. 55, 2021, pp. 903–905.

The classical references of Chinese medicine were not merely historical records; rather, they constituted the theoretical framework upon which this ancient medical system was constructed. Through these texts, major cosmological concepts such as Yin and Yang and the Five Elements evolved from abstract philosophical reflections into precise diagnostic instruments and tangible therapeutic practices. The origins of traditional Chinese medicine can be traced to mythological foundations dating between approximately 2500 and 4000 BCE, during which the Three Emperors established the fundamental principles of this medical tradition.

Its development began with Emperor Fu Xi, who formulated the philosophy of the Eight Trigrams (*Ba Gua*) and employed stone needles in therapeutic practice. It later advanced under Shen Nong, known as the "Divine Farmer" or "Hermit Farmer," who is credited with discovering the medicinal properties of herbs. The tradition ultimately reached its intellectual culmination with Huang Di, the "Yellow Emperor," to whom the most important and authoritative text in the history of Chinese medicine is attributed: the *Nei Jing Su Wen* (*The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine*). This seminal work established the philosophical foundations of diagnosis, treatment, and the balance of Yin and Yang forces.

The codification of Chinese medical knowledge continued through the emergence of complementary classical texts, including the *Zheng Lei Ben Cao* (1082 CE) and the monumental encyclopedia *Bencao Gangmu*, authored by the scholar Li Shizhen in 1578 CE. Collectively, this intellectual heritage formed a comprehensive and highly sophisticated medical system.[15]

3. Major Therapeutic Practices in Traditional Chinese Medicine

Traditional Chinese medicine was not confined to philosophical speculation alone; rather, it developed a sophisticated body of practical therapeutic methods aimed at restoring the balance of the body's vital energy (Qi). Among the most prominent of these practices is the following:

3.1 Acupuncture

Acupuncture is regarded as one of the foundational pillars of traditional Chinese medicine, with a history extending back several millennia. Its discovery is traditionally attributed to the legendary first emperor, Fu Xi, who is believed to have been the earliest practitioner of this therapeutic method. The earliest documented references to acupuncture date back to at least 1500 BCE, while archaeological excavations in tombs from the Han Dynasty (206 BCE - 220 CE) have uncovered medical needles crafted from gold and silver.

From a philosophical perspective, acupuncture is based on the principle of regulating the flow of Qi through channels or "meridians" that resemble a circulatory network within the body. Needles are inserted at specific points in order to restore the equilibrium between Yin and Yang. Historically, the general physician was responsible for administering acupuncture and therapeutic massage, in addition to employing techniques such as fire needles and the "Peach Blossom Needle." Following 1949, these ancient therapeutic approaches were revived and systematically developed within

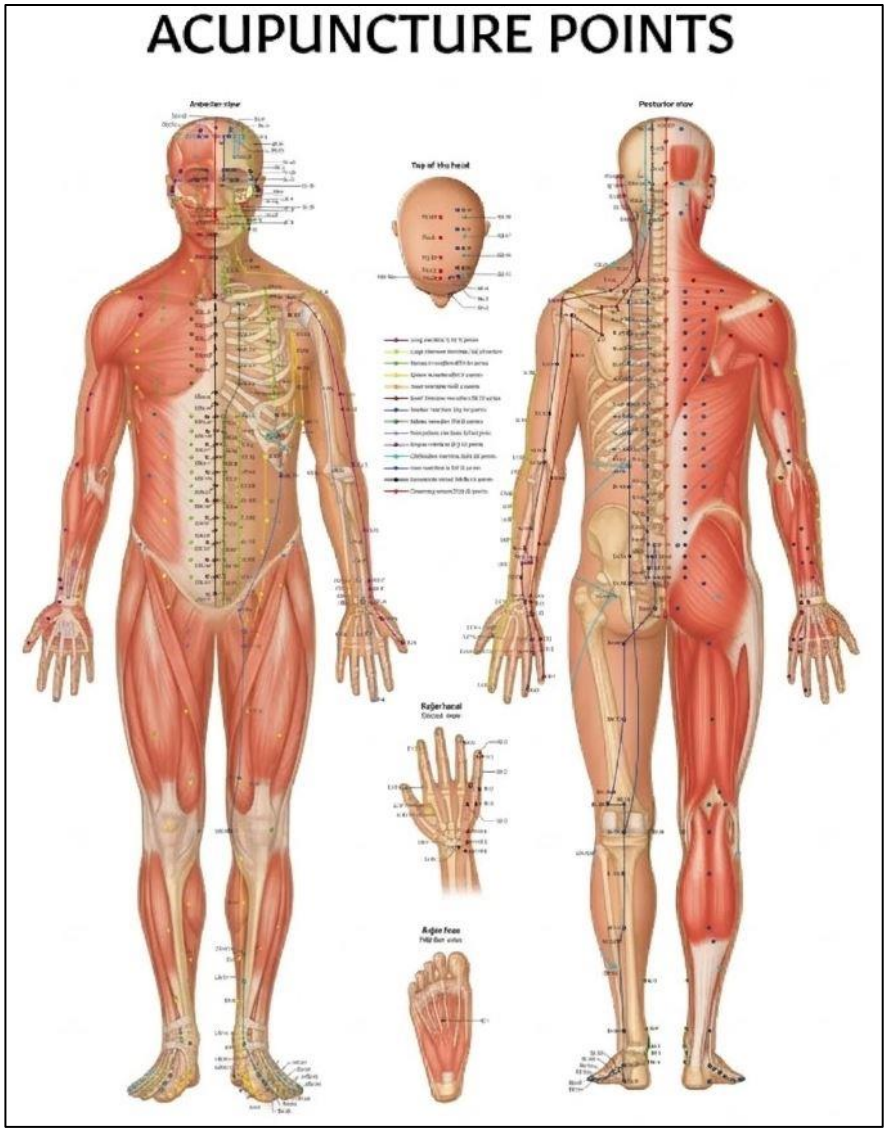
15- Mohammed Youssef Shehab, The Book of Chinese Medicine, 1st ed., Beirut: Rachad Press for Printing and Publishing, 2005, pp. 7–9.

specialized medical colleges, eventually becoming an officially recognized component of the modern healthcare system.[16]

Acupuncture points are distributed throughout the body according to a highly structured system comprising 365 principal points (see Figure 5), arranged along 14 meridian pathways. In addition to these fixed points, there exist hundreds of supplementary points, including Ashi points associated with localized pain, as well as microsystems located in the ears, hands, and feet, each containing numerous points believed to correspond to the body's organs in their entirety. Consequently, the total number of acupuncture points exceeds 2,000 in practice. Nevertheless, practitioners generally concentrate on the principal 365 points in order to achieve balanced and comprehensive neurological and physiological responses.[17]

Figure 5. Illustrative representation of acupuncture points in the body according to traditional Chinese medicine[18]

16- Ibid., pp. 96–101.
17- Medhat Ali, Chinese Medicine and Chinese Acupuncture, n.p., n.l., n.d., p. 7.
18 - Motor Points & Meridians Chart," Sports Medicine Acupuncture, available at: https://sportsmedicineacupuncture.com/product/motor-points-meridians-chart.



3.2 Herbal Medicine

The historical foundations of Chinese herbal medicine revolve around the anthropological symbolism of the figure of Shen Nong, the "Divine Farmer," who represents the formative stage of herbal medicine grounded in empirical observation. Traditional literature attributes to this legendary founder the systematic investigation of the sensory and medicinal properties of hundreds of plants and water resources, classifying them according to the duality of sweetness and bitterness in order to distinguish beneficial substances from toxic ones. He is also credited with the accidental discovery of tea as a therapeutic substance when tea leaves reportedly fell into a pot of boiling water beside him. In recognition of his foundational role, the most influential ancient Chinese herbal compendium, dating back to approximately 200 BCE, was named after him: *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing*. This text constituted the first systematic codification of Chinese pharmacology and institutionalized herbal practice through a cumulative historical tradition.[19]

The formulation of prescriptions in Chinese medicine is fundamentally based on the principle of "thermal balance," whereby each herb is classified according to its effect on the body's vital

19- Ody Yinelob, The Complete Medicinal Herbs, Beirut: Academia for Printing and Publishing, 1993, p. 14.

temperature as cold, very cold, warm, or hot. The composition of a prescription begins with diagnosing the thermal nature of the disease itself. If a patient presents with "hot" symptoms, such as fever or inflammation, the prescription is predominantly composed of cooling herbs intended to dissipate excess heat. Conversely, if the condition is considered "cold," manifesting through lethargy or cold extremities, warming herbs are prescribed to stimulate vital energy and blood circulation. The therapeutic sophistication of this system lies in the strategic combination of herbs to achieve equilibrium, such that cooling herbs moderate the intensity of warming herbs and vice versa, thereby treating the illness without disturbing the body's overall balance.[20]

3.3 Acupressure

Acupressure is based on the principle of stimulating specific vital points located along the body's energy pathways, known as meridians, in order to remove blockages and restore the flow of *Qi*. This technique relies on the use of fingers or joints to apply calibrated physical pressure that stimulates the nervous system and promotes the release of natural analgesic substances, thereby alleviating both physical and psychological pain without the use of needles. One of the distinctive features of acupressure is its dual preventive and therapeutic function, as it can be self-administered to provide immediate relief from common symptoms such as headaches, nausea, and stress through the restoration of energetic balance between the body's internal organs and its external environment.[21]

The thirty principal acupressure points constitute a concise yet comprehensive therapeutic system designed as a practical roadmap encompassing all major physiological systems of the human body, while avoiding the complexity associated with the hundreds of secondary points (see Table 6). These points are strategically distributed across the head and face to address neurological and sensory disorders, the trunk to regulate internal organ and respiratory functions, and the limbs to enhance energy circulation and strengthen immunity (see Figure 7). The selection of these thirty points is based on three essential criteria: the ease of locating them using the "cun" measurement system based on finger width, their high capacity to elicit immediate neurological responses, and their complete safety for self-application. Consequently, this set of points functions as a form of energetic first-aid toolkit, enabling individuals to manage a wide range of common conditions, from headaches and stress to joint pain and digestive disorders, through the restoration of energetic balance by means of targeted finger pressure.[22]

Table 6. Illustrative Table of the Thirty Principal Acupressure Points

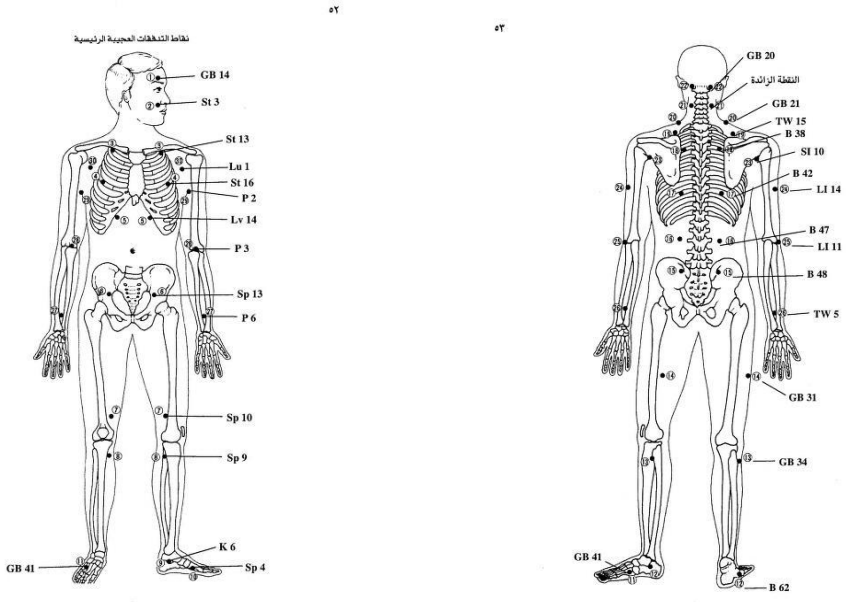
Region	Number of Points	Most Important Functions
Ear and face	7 points	Headache, eyes, and concentration
Hand and arm	6 points	General pain relief and heart regulation
Abdomen and back	8 points	Digestion, kidneys, and body energy

20- Ibid., p. 17.
21- Mohammed Youssef Shehab, op. cit., pp. 122–123.
22- Jin Shin, op. cit., pp. 57–67.

Leg and foot	9 points	Immunity, hormones, and stress regulation

Source: Prepared by the researchers.

Figure 7. Illustrative representation of the thirty principal pressure points used in body acupressure therapy[23]



• Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that ancient Chinese medical thought represents a distinctive model in the history of science, having succeeded in skillfully integrating Daoist philosophical foundations into practical medical application, thereby transforming abstract cosmological concepts into enduring diagnostic and therapeutic instruments. The significance of this system lies not only in the depth of its historical legacy, but also in its holistic worldview, which conceives the human being as an entity harmoniously integrated with nature, a perspective that has contributed to the renewed appreciation of preventive medicine in the modern era.

The historical transformations examined in this study demonstrate that Chinese medicine evolved from cosmological contemplation to clinical application through carefully structured institutional stages. Philosophy provided the system with its conceptual spirit and theoretical foundations, while empirical experience supplied the practical methods and therapeutic effectiveness. Chinese medical identity drew from Daoist thought the principle of correspondence between the cosmos and the human body, transforming natural phenomena such as seasons, winds, and heat into operational frameworks for understanding the causes of disease and classifying bodily imbalances. Likewise, the concept of *Qi* evolved from a Daoist philosophical notion into a precise network of anatomical pathways, namely the meridians, that became clinically accessible through acupuncture, thereby granting philosophy tangible therapeutic efficacy.

23- Ibid., p. 56.

At another level, philosophical thought also contributed to the construction of the "imperial body," in which bodily organs were conceived as an administrative system requiring wise governance in order to maintain balance. Medical treatment therefore extended beyond the repair of individual organs to the restoration of systemic order within the body itself. In this way, a comprehensive medical identity emerged that did not separate spirit from matter, but instead positioned the physician as an architect of cosmic equilibrium within the human organism. Consequently, contemplation of existence was transformed into a disciplined healing technique characterized by precision and institutional rigor, qualities that ensured the exceptional historical continuity of traditional Chinese medicine.

In conclusion, traditional Chinese medicine remains a compelling testament to the capacity of profound philosophical thought to generate practical solutions to human suffering, affirming that health is not merely the absence of disease, but rather a state of existential balance between the inner self and the external world.

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