

Clinical Realizations of a Chinese Medicine Physician

Part Two

Lecture Transcript



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TRANSLATED BY

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THE REASON THAT I WAS ABLE TO HAVE THIS LEVEL OF contact and treatment of patients was entirely due to my continuous study, and the elders in my family transmitting medical knowledge through teaching and example. Because of early training, I have been able to treat diseases that are still a puzzle to Western medicine.

In my early years, that is, around the age of 18 or 19, everyone referred to me as “Young Fire Spirit”. At that time, I would see many patients in one day, and despite my age many patients sought me out specifically. I saw patients at my work unit during the day, and then I saw patients when I got home at night. Before I even returned home, patients would be lined up outside the door, waiting to see me. It’s already been forty years since those days, and I realize now that the reason I was able to treat patients successfully at such a young age is intimately connected to the education and transmission of medical knowledge that I received from my elders.

Chinese medicine emphasizes transmission. Recently a book has come out titled *Sikao zhongyi* (Thoughts on Chinese Medicine). I am wondering if students in the audience have read this book or not. This book has made a huge impression on the Chinese medicine world and even outside medical circles. The author’s name is Liu Lihong, and he’s a professor at the Guangxi College of TCM. In this book, Liu emphasizes the role of the classics and the importance of transmission from teacher to student. It’s for this reason that my wife often says to me that I stand on the shoulders of giants. I truly have inherited the medical research and clinical practice

of generations of famous doctors, starting with my uncle, Lu Yongding, going back to my grandfather, Lu Zhuzhi, then to his teachers, Yan Longchen, Zheng Qin'an, and finally to their teacher, Liu Zhitang. Zheng Qin'an and Yan Longchen were both students of a remarkable man named Liu Yuan, who also went by Zhitang. So you see, not only have I received many generations of genuine transmission, this transmission has been refined and tested over time. So now that I am in clinic and have been able to treat so many patients, you can say it is like a fish taking to water, yet I feel different from the majority of Chinese medicine doctors, because I have the opportunity to live and practice the robust theoretical principles that my teachers before me created and refined.



Lu Lineage: Lu Zhuzhi

Of course, now our own college has started to gradually recognize the importance of teacher-to-student transmission of clinical experience. For example, not long ago the city of Chengdu established a working group of renowned doctors. It has gathered doctors from all over the province and the city to work together on how to best transmit and develop Chinese medicine. So if this is such an important part of Chinese medicine, is this to say that we shouldn't have Chinese medicine schools? No, I am not suggesting that. I once had the point of view, which I later recognized was really too difficult to put into practice. What was it? I suggested that a requirement to be a teacher in a Chinese medicine school should be that you are a good clinician, regardless of whether you teach theory or clinical practice. If you were at least a good clinician, you would be able to transmit something of your experience to students. You wouldn't just be talking out of a book. Students who were taught in this way would definitely have received something of value. This is important, because most of the students who graduate from Chinese medicine colleges will go on to practice in the clinic. If you study Chinese medicine, by default you will have to practice in the clinic, unless you give up the field of Chinese medicine all together. Of course, the implementation of this is very difficult, and there are all kinds of obstacles that currently we don't have a way to resolve.

So what exactly did I inherit from my elders? I received the Supporting Yang (*fuyang*) theories and their practical and clinical applications, which, in turn, have given me great clinical results. So, now I will briefly go over some important historical events in the transmission of the Zheng Qin'an/Lu family line of Supporting Yang theory.

I cannot talk about the origin of this school of thought without first mentioning Liu Zhitang. Liu was a great scholar of the classics and a person of outstanding quality. He was born in 1767 and died in 1855 and he was an eminent thinker of his time. He is mentioned in many different histories of the Qing dynasty. His given name was Liu Yuan, but was known by the name Liu Zhitang. He passed his imperial examination in the 57th year of the Qianlong reign (1792) and he took the post of county magistrate for Tianmen county in Hubei province in the 6th year of the Daoguang reign (1826). Later, because he did not wish to take a position outside the capital, he served as a teacher at he Imperial College. Following that, he moved from Shuangliu County to Chunhua Street in Chengdu city. There was a large osmanthus tree in the courtyard of his house, so he called his home Osmanthus Studio. He lectured to his students almost every day, and from these lectures emerged the Osmanthus Studio School of Thought. Liu was a staunch proponent of Confucian principles, but he was able to critically discuss and consider ideas from other schools of thought, including Daoism and Buddhism. So you could say he was



*Lu Lineage
Lu Chonghan and Lu Yongding*

a broadly balanced scholar of all the classics. He was a prolific writer, and his collected works total over 30 million characters. Among his published writings are several books on medicine. The most representative of these are *Shisanjing hengjie* (A Lasting Explanation of the 13 Classics) and *Xiaojing zhijie* (A Direct Explanation of the Classic of Filial Love). His works on academic thought include *Zheng hua* (Corrected Errors), *Zi wen* (Questions for the Masters), *You wen* (Further Questions), *Daxue guben zhiyan* (Simple Thoughts on the Original Version of the Confucian *Great Learning*), *Yucheng tang jia xun* (Family Teachings in the Line of Yu Chengtang), and *Shi cun* (The Presence of History) among more than a hundred others. Master Liu Zhitang was truly a remarkable individual! Although he was not mentioned in many medical book collections from his time, he authored *Shengyu yi'an* (*More Medical Cases from the Sages*), *Yili dagai yueshuo* (*A Grand Summary of Medical Principles*), *Huoyou xinfa* (*Heart Transmissions About Saving Children's Lives*) and other medically relevant works. But as for his practical experience in medicine, he was not someone who treated patients for a living. So you might think of him as a medicinal connoisseur. To make an analogy, think of some fans of Beijing opera: they are so avid in their love of the music, that they may know the songs better than the performers themselves. Liu Zhitang was this kind of a person, and thought of medicine as a beautiful and elegant thing, one that could save lives, after all. This great man, Liu Zhitang was the teacher of Zheng Qin'an. So, what kind of a person was Zheng Qin'an?



Book Cover of *Huoyou Xinfa*,
written by Liu Zhitang,
ancestor of the Fire Spirit School

Grandmaster Zheng Qin'an's given name was Shouquan (Complete Longevity). His ancestral home was Anhui province, but his ancestors immigrated to Sichuan province and established their home in Qionglai County. He was born in the 9th year of the Jiaqing reign (1804) and died in the 27th year of the Guangxu reign (1901), enjoying 97 years of life. In his youth, Qin'an was very industrious in his studies of the classics and histories of China, and in the final years of the Jiaqing reign, he successfully passed the first level of imperial examinations. But later he gave up his position as a county bureaucrat and took on medical studies with Liu Zhitang. Zhitang guided Qin'an in his studies of the *Neijing*, *Yijing*, *Shanghan lun*, *Jingui* and *Shennong bencao jing*. So Zheng Qin'an liked to say that he studied for 30 years, never relaxing his vigilance in studying the classics. After this period of intensive study, he realized several essential truths that they all emphasized. His key principles can be summarized as follows:

- “*Yuanqi* (primordial qi) is the master of yin and yang in human life”
- “The establishment of human life lies in the seed of yang energy stored in the deepest yin”
- “All disease is a result of the damage to the yang aspect of the *yuanqi*”
- “Differential diagnosis need never stray from the Six Confirmations (*liujing*) of the *Shanghan lun*”
- “In treating disease emphasize supporting yang”

Zheng Qin'an applied these principles in his clinical practice and infused them into his own three medical works, *Yili zhenchuan* (True Transmission of the Underlying Principles of Medicine), *Yifa yuantong* (Penetrating the Circular Nature of Medical Law), and *Shanghan henglun* (Treatise on the Eternal Nature of *Shanghan* Teachings). He already established his medical practice in Chengdu when he was quite young. Once he started practicing, he became an incredibly influential doctor, so now we respectfully refer to him as a medical sage, and as the founder of the Support the Yang School of medicine. Along with other well-known doctors, such as

Cao Yingfu, Yun Tiejiao, and Lu Yuanwei, he is considered to be a representative of the Shanghan School of medicine. In 1980, the Shanghan Lun Academic Forum recognized Zheng Qin'an as one of the representatives of the Southern School of Shanghan Lun thought. Have any of you studied from the textbook *Zhongyi mingjia xueshuo* (Theories by Important Luminaries of Chinese Medicine)? In the fifth edition of this book, there is a section devoted to Zheng Qin'an, stating that he is one of the outstanding historical scholars of Chinese medicine.

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My grandfather Lu Zhuzhi's given name was Yuchen, and he was widely known as the Old Man of Golden Longevity (Jintao Laoren). He passed the first level of imperial examinations at the end of the Qing dynasty. Because he was born into a family that practiced medicine, from an early age he studied with the doctor Yan Longchen. Yan Longchen was also a very well known doctor from the Deyang area. Not only was he a doctor, he was also an official on the county level, and he had a thorough command of the Confucian classics. At that time in Sichuan, Zheng Qin'an was quite famous, and he was often referred to as “Fire Spirit Zheng”. Both Yan Longchen and Zheng Qin'an

had been students of Liu Zhitang, so they were essentially brothers under the same teacher. So because of this connection, my grandfather moved from Deyang to Chengdu in order to study with Zheng Qin'an. Before he sought Qin'an out as a teacher, my grandfather had already been studying medicine for a while. Although he was still quite young, he had a good command of the classics and medicine as well. He then followed Zheng Qin'an for a total of eleven years, not only studying with him, but living with him as well. My grandfather lived out the truest sense of “following a teacher”, studying with him until Qin'an died. Qin'an required my grandfather to read the medical classics over and over in order to have a deep understanding of these books. My grandfather listened to Zheng Qin'an lecture on the classics and lecture from his own two works, *Yili zhenchuan* and *Yifa yuantong*, which were basically devised as textbooks for his students. At the end of the Qing dynasty, Zheng Qin'an's third and final book, *Shanghan heng lun* was published. In fact, it was my grandfather who primarily put this book together, for by that time Zheng Qin'an was already in his nineties. When Zheng Qin'an passed away, my father heeded his advise and travelled all over China. He took three years to travel to 21 provinces in China. In these various places he would research the local customs, herbs, climate, agricultural products, food preferences and how the local environment influenced human development, paying particular attention to where there was variance. He took careful notes of his observations, making surveys on the one hand, and seeing patients on the other. Only on his return to Chengdu three years later did he officially start his own practice as a Chinese medicine doctor. In the final years of the Guangxu reign, he opened his clinic, which he named Yangzheng Yiguan (Nourishing the Righteous Medical Clinic).

His clinical results were outstanding, and he repeatedly raised patients out of severe chronic illness. On top of that, his medical standard of ethics was also very high, so his name was known throughout Sichuan. In his time he was respectfully referred to as “Fire Spirit Lu”. The famous painter Qi Baishi was a good friend of my grandfather. Whenever Qi Baishi was ill while he was in Sichuan, he always sought out my grandfather for treatment. Qi Baishi himself carved a personal stamp for my grandfather, thus creating the moniker, The Old Man of Golden Longevity. In the 1930s there was a popular phrase in medical circles, that went, “Lu in the

South, Xiao in the North”. “Xiao” referred to the well-known physician, Xiao Longyou, and “Lu”, of course, referred to my grandfather. This phrase was a way of recognizing the contributions made by these two doctors. In the 1950s, right after so-called Liberation, a special office recommended that Lu Zhuzhi, my grandfather, take a position in Beijing. I remember it was 1954 when the National College for Chinese Medicine Research invited him to take a position there. At that time he was already quite advanced in years and he declined the offer. In 1956, Chengdu College of TCM was established and he was offered the position of vice-president of the college. He refused this also, citing his old age as the reason for his refusal. In 1958 the Central Government had a meeting in Chengdu at the exclusive Golden Ox Dam Hotel. My grandfather had treated many high level officials in the government before, so when they gathered for this meeting, many of them sought him out. At that time, my grandfather was just seeing patients at home, as he was officially retired, but he still saw a great number of patients. Some of the high-level leaders he had treated, out of concern for him, secured him a post as a doctor at the Communist Party Provincial Institute. What were his duties? Well, the real reason for this post was to provide for his old age, but he had the title of the highest level of physician at that facility.



*brush written prescription
by Lu Yongding
(containing 150g of processed Fuzi)*

As for my uncle, Lu Yongding, his given name was Yunlong. He practiced medicine for 60 years, and is still known as one of Sichuan’s famous doctors. He was born into a family of doctors and was the eldest son of Lu Zhuzhi, and he started following his father in the practice of medicine in his youth. His first training was in acupuncture and external medicine, but he later changed his focus to internal medicine. Lu Yongding was a master of Chinese medicine theory, and a tireless clinician with abundant experience. He continued to develop the medical theories that had formed into the Zheng/Lu system of Chinese medicine, emphasizing the importance of the *Yijing* and the principle that yang initiates and yin follows. He was excellent at explaining physiology, and he stressed the importance of the yang stored within the deepest yin. In treating disease, his primary approach was to eliminate yin through the use of “fire” [warming herbs]. He continued to accumulate and expand the clinical experience within the Lu lineage, and he was particularly good at using large dosages of herbs such as ginger, cinnamon, and aconite to treat both external and internal disease. In diagnosis and herbal prescriptions, his unique approach set him apart from other Chinese medicine practitioners.

Because his treatments produced obvious improvement, curing many with very serious conditions, he enjoyed great trust and approval from his patients. Like his father before him, he was referred to as “Fire Spirit Lu” and his name was known throughout Sichuan. To further investigate the healing properties of ginger, cinnamon and aconite, Lu kept meticulous records of every patient who came to see him. Starting from the 1950s he took the patient histories of everyone who came to see him, and he accumulated these records for more than 30 years, for over several 100,000 patients, totaling more than 50 million written characters. Because of sheer volume, it would be impossible to publish the entire series of clinical cases that my uncle documented. These cases were important material in the transmission, investigation and organization of the Lu lineage of medicine. You can also say that they are a vast written treasure of the Fire Spirit school.

So what is the point that I want to illustrate by introducing these several generations of Chinese medicine doctors to you? Each one of them was deeply steeped in the histories and canonical texts of China, each held high respect for the classics, and their study of them was very broad. They each were experts in the *Yijing*. In fact, you could say that their training in and respect for the classics the most fundamental characteristic that

they all shared. You could say studying the classics is what allowed them to become some of the best-known doctors in China during their time.

At this point, I'd like to mention a few other well-known doctors, Wu Peiheng from Yunnan College of TCM and Zhu Weiju of Shanghai. I'm not sure if you in the audience have read any of their articles or heard mention of them. Or how about two famous doctors from Chengdu, Fan Zhonglin and Tian Bawei? In his book, *Sikao zhongyi* (Thoughts on Chinese Medicine), Liu Lihong refers to Tian Bawei. What connection could all these doctors have with the Fire Spirit school? Soon after the Republican Revolution of 1911, my grandfather

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established a forum in Chengdu for discussing and promoting the Fire Spirit ideas. This forum mainly discussed topics from the *Neijing*, *Shanghan*, *Jingui*, and *Shennon bencao jing*, in addition to the three works by Zheng Qin'an. There were discussions held two to three times a week for a couple of hours to discuss clinical cases or topics from the medical classics. In those years both Wu Peiheng of Yunnan and Zhu Weiju of Shanghai (originally from Sichuan) studied the ideas put forward by my grandfather at these forums. At that time they were both quite young, just in their early twenties. My grandfather at the time was in his forties and already quite accomplished, so he was often one of

the lecturers at these gatherings. In later years, both Fan Zhonglin and Tian Bawei also came to hear these lectures, among many others, including the teachers who later went on to establish the Chengdu College of TCM. These lectures were free and open to anyone who was interested in Chinese medicine. Many people who later became well-known doctors were exposed to and accepted the Supporting Yang ideas. Starting in the 1960s until the 1980s, my uncle also held free and open forums on Chinese medicine. Likewise, members of the forum discussed medical principles, the teachings of Zheng Qin'an, the Lu family style of medicine, and lessons learned from clinical practice. In those days, Chengdu's Tang Buqi also attended the forum. In the 1970s, I became quite familiar with Tang Buqi. His interest in Chinese medicine started in the 1960s, but his life had many interesting twists and turns. Under my uncle's inspiration and guidance he became quite an accomplished doctor.

Whether Zheng Qin'an, Lu Zhuzhi, or Lu Yongding, all were great scholars of Zhang Zhongjing's *Shanghan lun*. But as Qin'an said in his book, *Shanghan heng lun*, he would rather put forth his own interpretation of this classic than just copy what scholars of previous generations had already said. His ideas on cold damage were tightly connected to his experiences in the clinic. Take for example, the following line from the *Shanghan lun*, which says "disease with fever and aversion to cold arise from yang." In the original text it says that these types of disease will resolve in 7 days, while diseases that arise from yin will resolve in 6 days. Qin'an explained that yang diseases resolve in 7 days because the number 7 is categorically a yang number, while 6 is a yin number. Of course he also involved Zhongjing's original text in his explanation. Qin'an had another perspective on these lines which was based on his clinical observation. He said, "According to the indications of taiyang protective disorder (*taiyang weizheng*) there should be signs of fever, aversion to cold and spontaneous sweating. In the case of cold damage yin disorder there should be absence of sweating and aversion to cold." To Qin'an the phrase "[diseases that] arise from yang" (*fa yu yang zhe*) referred to taiyang pattern disorders. Now what is underneath taiyang? Shaoyin! So in this case he felt that the phrase "[diseases that] arise from yin" referred to shaoyin pattern disorders. He felt that if the "yin" and "yang" mentioned in these key phrases only referred to

the ying and wei disharmony in the taiyang layer, then Zhang Zhongjing would have chosen different herbs for treatment. The herbs he designated for treatment were not in line with a taiyang wind and cold damage. Qin'an emphasized that this is why in clinic, whenever you see a case where there is only aversion to cold, body aches and absence of sweat, and treat it with Guizhi Tang (Cinnamon twig decoction) plus heavy amounts of aconite, you will see surprisingly good results. Qin'an was of the opinion that the theories presented in the *Shanghan lun* had to be based on clinical observation. He felt that if you accept the principles from the classics, and you dare to apply them in clinic, you will get wonderful results time and time again. Based on his experience treating the above pattern, he felt there was substantial evidence that it originated in yin [shaoyin]. As for the number of days in which the yin and yang disease would resolve, he felt that the numbers are symbolic representations of yin and yang rather than predictions of actual disease duration.

Lu Zhuzhi and Lu Yongding were very diligent scholars of the classics, but at the same time they were open to new ideas, they were focused and intentional, and they were not afraid to be creative. They came to emphasize two key points. The first is that "the vitality of the human body rests on the function of fire, and the basic principle of treating disease is to dispel yin with fire." The second is "when the disease is yin in nature, support yang to raise yin; when the disease is yang in nature, use yang to transform into yin." This is precisely why they emphasized the use of warm and acrid herbs. They didn't just have a whimsical affinity for these herbs, but through their study and experience, they firmly believed that using heavy amounts of warm, acrid herbs was the correct way to treat most diseases. I have completely carried on their clinical practices and thoughts on medicine, and this is why I get good clinical results. The Lu lineage has now become a school of medicine itself, and in the field of Chinese medicine, it stands apart from the rest. So it is my personal experience that through our own clinical explorations and the diligent study and evolving understanding of Chinese medicine principles can we make the classics our own. If this process was used everywhere, I believe Chinese medicine would grow and expand even more, and we would see superior clinical results.

On the topic of treating disease, I've given some examples of cases I treated and I've told about the lineage I've inherited. The one thing I've never departed from in my career, from my youth until now is the clinic. Except for when I am teaching, I am basically in the clinic every working day. This is where my personal achievement lies. In the past I've had a thought, that if every student of Chinese medicine, once graduated, was able to establish himself as an effective clinician, then there would be great hope for the profession of Chinese medicine. Because today there are great policies behind us and there is a great market for our skills. So when I see our students graduating and having a hard time finding jobs, I get very concerned. Because it shouldn't be hard to find work, when there are so many patients who genuinely need Chinese medicine. But the key point is that you have to be effective. If after 5 years of undergraduate studies, 3 years of master's studies and 3 years of doctorate studies you graduate and still can't solve problems for patients in the clinic, then they won't need you. The market won't need you. So how do we solve this problem? First, you have to study the classics, you have to find some doctors who have real clinical experience behind them and become familiar with their ways of thinking and then make their ideas your own. Then when you come to apply these ideas in clinic you'll get some real results. Just imagine our college was producing hundreds of talented doctors who are truly proficient in the clinic with each graduating class. People would be lining up and waiting in front of Chinese medicine clinics everywhere. For this to happen, however, you have to be able to really, really solve people's problems. This point is very important. I believe that this is achievable, and that through diligent study and effort, any problem can be solved.

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