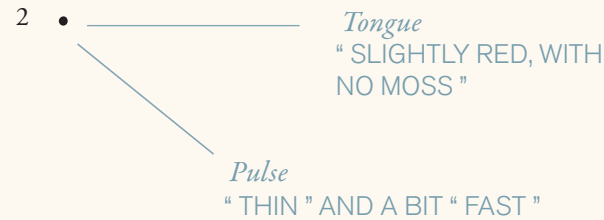




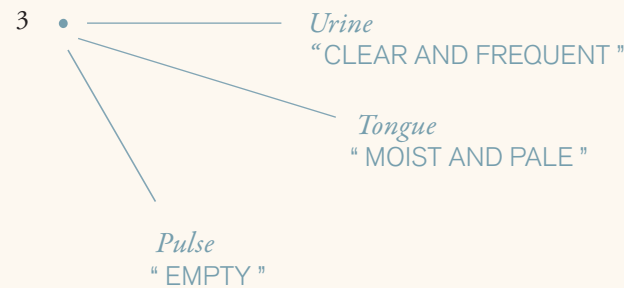
Upon questioning and examining the first patient, the Chinese physician finds pain that increases at touch (by palpation) but diminishes with the application of cold compresses. The patient has a robust constitution, broad shoulders, a reddish complexion, and a full, deep voice. He seems assertive and even aggressive, almost seems to be challenging the doctor.

Conclusion: patient is having the pattern of disharmony called "DAMP HEAT AFFECTING THE SPLEEN."



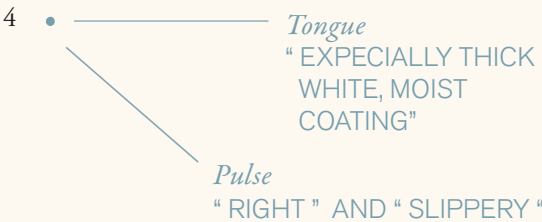
When the Chinese physician examines the second patient, he finds a different set of signs, which indicate another overall pattern. The patient is thin. Her complexion is ashen, though her cheeks are ruddy. She is constantly thirsty, her palms are sweaty, and she has a tendency toward constipation and insomnia. She seems nervous, fidgety, and unable to relax and also complains of feeling pressured. In her life, she is constantly on the go and has been unable to be in a stable relationship.

Conclusion: patient is said to have the pattern of "DEFICIENT YIN AFFECTING THE STOMACH,"



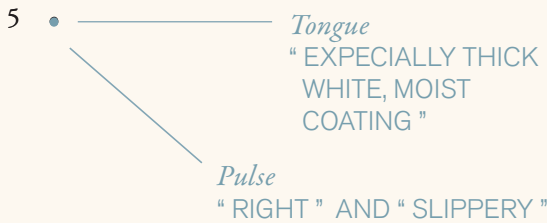
The third patient reports that massage and heat somewhat alleviate his pain, which is experienced as a minor but persistent discomfort. He is temporarily relieved by eating. The patient dislikes cold weather, has a pale face, and wants to sleep a lot. He appears timid, shy, and almost afraid. He seems unable to look the physician in the eye, and his head seems to hang in despair.

Conclusion: patient's diagnosed as the pattern of "EXHAUSTED FIRE OF THE MIDDLE BURNER," aka "DEFICIENT COLD AFFECTING THE SPLEEN."



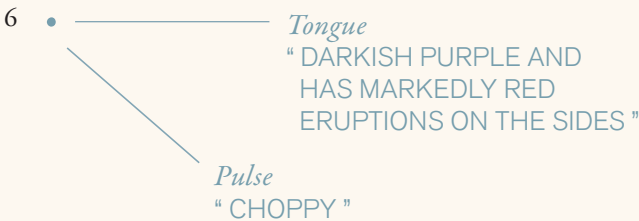
The fourth patient complains of very severe cramping pain; his movement and affect is ponderous and heavy. Hot water bottles relieve the pain, but massaging the abdomen makes it worse. The patient has a bright white face and a tendency toward loose stools. He is forty years old and came to the appointment with his mother with whom he still lives. His passion is a world-class stamp collection, which he constantly studies and wants to talk about.

Conclusion: these signs lead to a diagnosis of the pattern of "EXCESS COLD DAMPNES AFFECTING THE SPLEEN AND STOMACH."



The fifth patient experiences much sour belching and has headaches. Her pain is sharp, and, although massaging the abdomen makes it diminish, heat and cold have no effect. She is very moody. Emotional distress, especially anger, seems to precipitate attacks of pain. She feels frustrated and stuck in many of her life activities. During the discussion she says her husband is particularly "wiry."

Conclusion: these signs lead to a diagnosis of the pattern of "EXCESS COLD DAMPNES AFFECTING THE SPLEEN AND STOMACH."



The sixth patient has an extremely severe stabbing pain in the stomach that sometimes goes around to his back. The pain is much worse after eating and is aggravated by touch. He has had episodes of vomiting blood, and produces blackish stools. The patient is very thin and has a rather dark complexion. His eyes furtively and suspiciously dart around the room, as if to detect a hidden threat. He had been physically abused as a political prisoner.

Conclusion: The Chinese physician describes the patient's problem as a "DISHARMONY OF CONGEALED BLOOD IN THE STOMACH."

a *disharmony* very different from that of the first patient. Accordingly, a different treatment would be prescribed.

So the Chinese doctor, searching for and organizing signs and symptoms that a Western doctor might never heed, distinguishes six patterns of disharmony where Western medicine perceives only one disease. The patterns of disharmony are similar to what the West calls diseases in that their discovery tells the physician how to prescribe treatment. But they are different from diseases because they cannot be isolated from the patient in whom they occur. To Western medicine, understanding an illness means uncovering a distinct entity that is separate from the patient's being; to Chinese medicine, understanding means perceiving the relationships among all the patient's signs and symptoms in the context of his or her life. When confronted by a patient with stomach pain, the Western physician must look beyond the screen of symptoms for an underlying pathological mechanism—a peptic ulcer in

this case, but it could have been an infection, or a tumor or a nervous disorder. A Chinese physician examining the same patient must discern a pattern of disharmony made up of the entire accumulation of symptoms and signs.* The Chinese method is based on the idea that no single part can be understood except in its relation to the whole. A symptom, therefore, is not traced back to a cause, but is looked at as a part of a totality. If a person has a complaint or symptom, Chinese medicine wants to know how the symptom fits into the patient's entire being and behavior. Illness is situated in the context of a person's life and biography. Understanding that overall pattern, with the symptom as part of it, is the challenge of Chinese medicine. The Chinese system is not less logical than the Western, just less analytical.⁸

* From a biomedical viewpoint, the Chinese physician is assessing the patient's specific and general physiological and psychological response to a disease entity.