

# On the Academic Value and Influence of Wang Hao-gu's 'Yinzheng Lueli'

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**Abstract:** The magnum opus of the famous physician Wang Haogu in the Yuan Dynasty, "Yinzheng Lueli (Brief Examples of Yin Syndromes)", invented the "Yin Syndrome" theory based on "The Treatise on Febrile Diseases", systematically discussed the theory of "cold drinking leads to internal injury", and advocated the treatment of warm tonifying the spleen and kidney rather than heat tonification, initiated the study of "warm tonification" in the subsequent Ming and Qing Dynasties. These have played an important role in the inheritance and advancement of the Yishui School, and also have a profound impact on the Chinese medicine theory and the diagnosis and treatment of diseases in later generations.

**Keywords:** Yinzheng Lueli; Yin syndrome; Drinking-cold induced internal injuries; Warm tonification; Influence

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Wang Haogu (1200-1264), alias Jinzhi, took on the title of Haizang Old Man in later years, was born in Zhao County in Yuan Dynasty. He was born in turbulent times, a world where medicine was respected and Confucianism was suppressed<sup>[1]</sup>. He first self-learned for nearly ten years, and later learned from Li Dongyuan, and imparted everything he learned. The Yishui School collection "Ji Sheng

Ba Cui" included his magnum opus "Yinzheng Lueli (Brief Examples of Yin Syndromes)" and other works, and he was called "the backbone of Yishui".

"Brief Examples of Yin Syndromes" took Wang five years to complete, "it has three volumes, differing in quantity"<sup>[2]</sup>. It was the epitome of the theory of Yin syndrome of febrile diseases before Yuan Dynasty, systematically discussed the etiology, symptoms, syndrome differentiation, symptom development, pulse features, prescriptions and medicine consumption methods for Yin syndrome of febrile diseases in details.

## 1 Inventing the "Yin Syndrome" theory from "The treatise on febrile diseases"

The meaning and scope of "Yin Syndrome" in "Yinzheng Lueli" refers to the three Yin syndromes and miscellaneous diseases belonging to the category of Yin in "The Treatise on Febrile Diseases". The climate of the Yuan Dynasty was similar to that of the Eastern Han Dynasty, where febrile diseases were rampant and those of Yin syndromes were especially harmful<sup>[3]</sup>. Wang Haoguzhi felt the harm of Yin syndromes, and wrote "Yinzheng Lueli" as he was distressed by people of his time sticking to prescriptions and belittling the medical classics.

"Neijing" and "The Treatise on Febrile Diseases" discussed more on Yang syndromes, while discussions on Yin syndromes were less and brief. Later studies had also focused on Yang syndromes

and neglected Yin syndromes. Wang Haogu sorted out predecessor's theory of Yin syndromes and then added his annotations, extensions and addendum, and called it the theory of Yin syndrome, which is of great academic value. His innovation was bright, systematic and practical. In general, the invention of Yin Syndrome theory based on "The Treatise on Febrile Diseases" includes: value internal causes from the etiological aspect, integrates internal and external causes, and put forward the theory of spleen and kidney deficiency, which postulated that the deficiency of the spleen and the kidney was the root cause of deficiency-induced febrile diseases. In terms of syndrome differentiation, based on the Six Classics and inspired by the syndrome differentiation of viscera, he was especially good at differentiating Yang disease of catching cold in summer time and was good at pulse reading. His discussion on drum-beating (guji) pulses enriches the meaning of tight pulse. In terms of treatment, warm tonification was advocated and heaty medicine was used with caution. In terms of prescriptions, Wang heavily relied on Zhongjing's prescriptions and often made his own additions, emphasizing the influence of dosage forms on treatment effects and advocating the method of taking medicines according to the categories.

## 2 Systematic discussion on "drinking-cold induced internal injuries"

The main innovation of "Yinzheng Lueli" is the systematic discussion of "drinking-cold induced internal injuries". Drinking cold refers to the eating and drinking of raw and cold things, which can be the trigger or the main cause of emergencies or chronic diseases. The relevant theories are scattered in "Yinzheng Lueli", and the eight medical records listed at the end of the book are all related to "drinking-cold induced internal injuries".

The "Neijing" discusses that when Yin pulse reaches its peak it will lead to Yang, the symptom of vomiting will show up, and when the Yang pulse reaches its peak it will shut the Yin, and the symptom of difficulty urinating will show up. Dongyuan theorized that "reverse diet over the limit" leads to Yin syndrome of internal injury, its main symptoms include loss of appetite and constipation. Wang Haogu believes that the theory of Yin Syndrome by Dongyuan originated from the "Neijing", and loss of

appetite and constipation are also the symptoms of Guan-ge. Dongyuan's prescriptions mostly came from Zhongjing, and they were all "remedies that suppress three Yin". Based on Dongyuan's theory of Yin syndrome of febrile disease, Wang Haogu proposed that "drinking-cold induced internal injuries" can also lead to Yin syndrome of febrile disease, which should be treated with "three Yin tonifying agents", and this is the theoretical origin of the treatment for "drinking-cold induced internal injuries".

For pulse syndrome, internal injuries from drinking cold first damage the stomach and then spread to the Three Yin meridian. Wang Haogu differentiates by pulse reading. It is necessary to know that the Yin syndrome pulse is tight during clinical diagnosis, and syndromes that are complex and difficult to distinguish between Yin and Yang should be differentiated based on pulse signs. Wang Haogu listed the "Three Yin Tonifying Recipes", all of which were Zhongjing's prescriptions. For injury in Jueyin, use Danguai Sini Decoction as the main prescription with modifications; for injury in Shaoyin, use Tongmai Sini Decoction and Wuzhuyu Decoction as the main prescriptions; for injury in Taiyin, treat with Lizhong Pills, and adjust the dosage form and consumption method according to the syndrome.

Patients who suffer from internal injuries due to drinking-cold, infected by external cold evil, showing pulse signs that are "obscure and trifling at Cunkou" and without sweating, use Shenshu Decoction for treatment. The qi of the frost, dew, rain, and mist from the mountains are all infectious external evils. People who seldom consume nutritious food and are weak in qi already caught a cold inside, showing symptoms of externally infected febrile diseases that are similar to those of internal injuries due to drinking-cold, both showing trifling pulse signs at Cunkou, and both are treated with Shenshu Decoction as the main prescription. If "externally infected cold and drinking-cold induced internal injuries became extreme", treat with Wuji-san.

For drinking-cold induced internal injuries, vital Yang will escape. If the Yang of the whole body disappear from the inside, the body and limbs will turn cold and the pulse sign is heavy and trifling, which is easy to identify, differentiate and treat; if the Yang of the whole body escape to outside, patients may show symptoms of externally infected febrile diseases, showing floating pulse signs, if prescribed

wrongly with sweat-inducing medicines, will aggravate the conditions due to excessive sweating. It should be treated by warming with neutralizing medicines, make Yang goes to the surface by itself from interior or bring Yang to the surface from inside to heat up, and the disease will cure by itself. Wang Haogu often used Lizhong Pills, and especially paid attention to the dosage forms and consumption method.

Long-term addiction to drinking cold will lead to cold accumulating in the stomach and intestines, and drum-beating pulse can be observed, which belongs to tight pulse, but is more rare and severe than usual tight pulse. "Neijing" says: "If coughing, sit and drink cold water, will tighten the pulse." When Wang Haogu's encountered such patients in clinical diagnosis, he would often first prescribe ginger with warming agents according to the syndromes, and then administer Tiaozhong Decoction and other medicines. If drinking cold to the extreme, bloody stool with color like pig liver can be seen, which is distinctly different from the bright red bloody stool due to blood-heat running frenetically.

Wang Haogu highly valued the use of medicines to treat internal injuries caused by drinking cold. "Yinzheng Lueli" mentioned twice that "the patients with soft stool should be prescribed with decoctions, and the patients with hard stool should be prescribed pills". Dongyuan used to convert Zhongjing's Zhizhu Decoction into Zhizhu Pills. Wang Haogu was inspired by Dongyuan to pay attention to the influence of dosage forms on the body's water content. Zhongjing had this theory of "three during daytime and two at night" for dosing and Wang Haogu knew its meaning. He cited "prescribe aconite and rhubarb in combination, take Yang medicines during daytime, and Yin medicines at night", to explain that the body's cold, heat, Yin and Yang all correspond to the cold, heat, Yin and Yang in the natural environment. He boldly adopted the dosing strategy of "three during daytime and one at night" in the clinical use of Lizhong pills, and achieved good results.

### **3 The Far-reaching Influence of the Concept of Warm Tonification of Spleen and Kidney**

Based on long-term clinical practice, Wang Haogu put forward the theory that inner deficiency and evil

infection leads to febrile diseases, and postulated that inner deficiency mainly takes place in the spleen and kidney. Internal injuries caused by drinking cold are the main cause of inner deficiency, so special emphasis is placed on tonifying the spleen and kidney. It is commendable of Wang to inherit Dongyuan's thoughts on the spleen and stomach but not blindly following it. Wang reasoned that the disease is located in the spleen and kidney rather than simply in the spleen. For treatment he advocated warm tonification instead of hot tonification, which is heeded by later generations till this day. Wang Haogu played an important role in the inheritance and advancement of Yishui School. Through academic comparison with Liu Hejian and other physicians in the era of Jin and Yuan Dynasties, Ding Guangdi believed that Wang Haogu's theory of Yin syndrome complemented Liu Hejian's theoretical inadequacy and became a physician with unique medical knowledge of Yin syndrome among various schools in the era of Jin and Yuan Dynasties<sup>[4]</sup>. The treatment method of warming the spleen and kidney that he advocated had opened up the study of "warm tonification" in the subsequent Ming and Qing Dynasties, and also played a certain role in promoting the formation of the "Concept of Yin-Yang balance" of future Fuyang School physicians.

### **4 Conclusion**

Wang Haogu had many original ideas when he invented the theory of Yin syndrome based on Zhang Zhongjing's treatise and Li Dongyuan's Spleen and Stomach Theory. "Yinzheng Lueli" is a phasal summary of the academic achievements of Yishui School, which laid the foundation for the theory of Warm Tonification after Yuan Dynasty. There are many researches on its academic thoughts, but there are few researches close to clinical applications. Yin syndrome is more common in modern society. It will certainly benefit more patients if it can draw more attention.

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