

Joe Rozencwajg

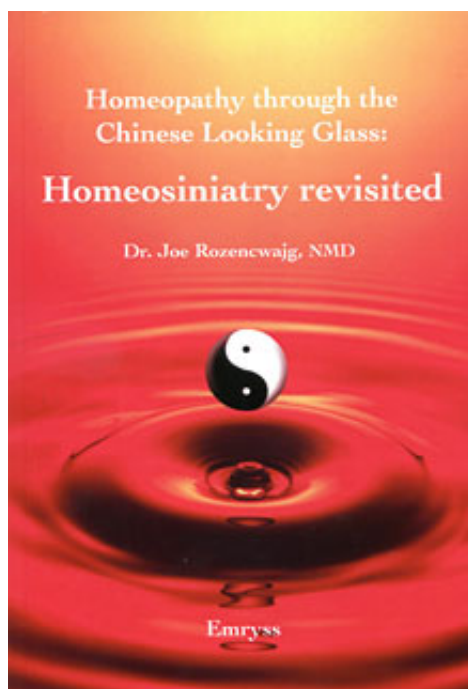
Homeopathy through the Chinese Looking Glass: Homeosiniatry Revisited

Leseprobe

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Introduction

Once upon a time, in "Homeopathy and Mental Health Care", Chapter 16, page 243, I wrote: "The diagnostic methods of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) can be used by homeopaths, especially in situations relating to very intimate problems that might be very difficult if not impossible for the patient to relate to the practitioner. Those methods allow pinpointing a group of remedies or a precise remedy without the need for the patient to perform a disturbing "psychological strip-tease".

What an iconoclastic, scandalous, horrifying, non-classical affirmation is that? Bring out the tar and the feathers!

Why would we want to use the tools of Traditional Chinese Medicine diagnosis to prescribe homeopathic remedies in psychological cases? Homeopathic case-taking is a well established technique that goes into the deepest details possible, grilling the patient almost as if he was to reveal state secrets and coming back again and again to the same subject until the picture is clear. Anyone who has recently listened to Rajan Sankaran has no doubt about that: Sankaran has developed a new method of case-taking built on repeatedly, annoyingly and irritatingly asking the patient to explain himself or his symptom or complaint, until nothing else can be extracted. And at times the patient looks at the practitioner as if he was dumb, unable to understand a proper answer...so much for patient-practitioner relationship.

And yet _ mental, emotional and spiritual issues are not the easiest of problems to reveal. We have all been confronted with patients giving us only partial information, coming back time and again complaining that the treatments were not helpful, only to inadvertently reveal some crucial information when saying goodbye at the end of yet another difficult session or during a fortuitous meeting in a shop or during a social gathering. Contrary to purely physical situations that can be seen, palpated, measured, quantified with tests or revealed through

X Rays, CT scans or MRIs, we depend on what the patients tell us or what we can sense or suspect through body language and use of specific words during the consultation. Even the new methods of Sankaran and Scholten (using the table of elements) depend on that type of information and are therefore subjective rather than objective (at least in my perception) and are useful only inasmuch as the patient is open and honest and the practitioner awake and perceptive. Those two authors are modern homeopaths who have created approaches very different from the usual, classical methods; they claim themselves that their methods should not be used without a proper knowledge of and grounding in classical homeopathy. Sankaran has created a system of interview that pushes the patient to reveal his deepest inner "disturbance" which is expressed also by gestures. The practitioner needs to be able to interpret those gestures, and this is not evident, at least to me. Scholten correlates the state in which the patient is, his evolution in life, with the rows and columns of the periodic table, whose elements are then used to prescribe the proper remedy; here too there is a lot of interpretation to be done. As much as I tried, I have been unable to use those techniques successfully even though I have witnessed magnificent results by other, more skilled, practitioners. Fear, shame, self-loathing are often to blame for the patient's inability to reveal his or her past history, but many situations are understandable: abuse and rape victims are still hiding their history, sexual orientations are not acknowledged, violence and anger are rationalized; controlled or uncontrolled pathologies like kleptomania, pyromania, paedophilia are rarely if ever admitted.

But the body does not lie. If one can read it, it will tell what state it is in and what remedy, or at least what type of remedy it needs. There are windows of perception into the deepest mental situations even when the physical appearance seems to deny it: the bronzed athlete or the beautiful, lascivious woman can be depressed, anxious or schizophrenic. They will just hide it better than the common human.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) does not differentiate between diseases of the body and diseases of the mind or the spirit, despite what can be read in recent publications. All symptoms and signs relate to patterns of energetic disturbances that can be understood by carefully listening to the patient, not only to the words but even more importantly to the way they are spoken, looking at him and especially focusing on facial expressions, body language, the colours and their brightness, the eyes and the tongue, and palpating with a special emphasis on that trademark of TCM, the pulses. Putting this information together leads to a specific pattern of imbalance independently of what actual or factual information the patient has accepted to reveal. Written differently, it is not what the patient says, it is the way he says it that becomes relevant. This is also true during the homeopathic interview, and yet some people have become very skilled at giving a very different picture of themselves through the use of words, sentences, and their way of speaking, that can confuse even the best observer. Using the TCM diagnostic tools, the typical Western classification of mental diseases becomes irrelevant; you can throw away the DSM, at least for the clinical use; its only relevance will be for administrative labelling that allows getting help, especially financially, which of course is nothing to be snubbed at.

Homeopathic remedies can also be understood in terms of TCM classification and a basic repertory can be created. Early French homeopaths and acupuncturists, like de la Fuye, the creator of homeosiniatry, did correlate acupuncture points with specific homeopathic remedies; yet I have not been able to find consistent literature, either in English or French, describing the remedies through the TCM vision, with the single exception of Dr. Jean-Claude Dubois' book. Acupuncture was my first introduction to the world of natural medicine and I suppose I have kept this optic while learning other methods. Therefore, the concepts about remedies and TCM exposed here are my own and widely open to modifications. Comparing the TCM diagnosis and the remedies fitting that description narrows the choice, as with the

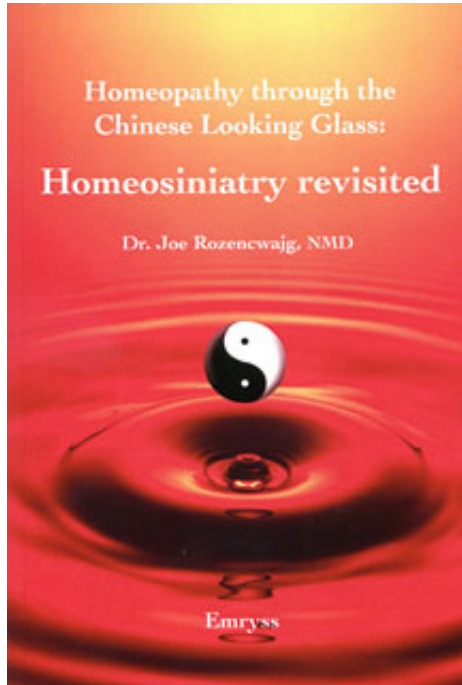
system of repertorisation used by homeopaths, but might also reveal unsuspected issues that can then be discussed with the patient. I regularly perceive Liver pulse disturbances in many patients; if there are no obvious liver organic pathologies or conventional drugs usage with known liver toxicity, I then ask them about their suppressed or repressed anger issues. This often opens the gates to a flood of information; it is not unusual that they tell me it is the first time they are talking about it. And I know I am on the right track when the pattern of the pulse changes immediately after having asked that question. Not only is that emotionally cleansing and a first step towards cure, it often changes the homeopathic repertorisation and the final prescription.

Homeopathy and TCM are both working with patterns. The energetic patterns of TCM lead to the energetic diagnosis of a perturbation, opening the way to an appropriate treatment, either with herbs or acupuncture, which resets the pattern to normal. The homeopath will selectively look at the pattern of behaviour that is typical of the individual patient and correlate this information with the proving pattern of a remedy. But in doing that, as already described, the practitioner depends almost exclusively on non-objective informations as given by the patient, his family and friends, and the interpretation made by the homeopath, which can in turn vary according to his own situation. Both approaches are highly individualised; they explore the patient, not a label; they are, in my opinion, different instruments analysing the status of the patient and allowing a precise treatment. Both systems need to be studied individually, the same way we study to interpret an ECG and an X-Ray separately, with both tests giving more informations together than each one on its own. I am aware there will be much resistance coming from the purist, so-called "Classical" homeopathic fraternity. Just look at this method a yet another repertory, another method of collecting information in a way that is not involving the patient actively, but needs some education of the practitioner. Alternatively, TCM practitioners who are skilled in those methods might also

find a different therapeutic tool, energetic like acupuncture, but also needing a mindset adaptation. In the end, it will become clear that both approaches are similar as they are both concerned with patterns of imbalance and ways to restore balance.

I will first cover the diagnostic concepts of Yin and Yang and other diagnostic clues, the Five Elements, Tongue and Pulse diagnosis, in a simplified, practical way, hopefully easily understandable and not hermetic, then address the Seven Emotions that lead to pathology according to TCM. I will try at all times to corroborate those concepts with homeopathy. It might sound strange at first reading; it did to me, so please bear with it, clarity will come soon. I will try to show how some homeopathic remedies can be deduced from a simplified analysis while classifying the patients accordingly. This is not meant to be the ultimate information that will allow the reader to use it immediately in practice. Its purpose is to open a window, yet another possibility to fine tune the patient's evaluation and treatment.

A preliminary paper regarding this method was published in the anthology "Homeopathy and Mental Health Care", Chapter 16. This is the evolution of this paper.



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