

AN INSIGHT INTO BASIC PRINCIPLES OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE AND AYURVEDA – A COMARATIVE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Traditional Systems of Medicine are regaining significance in current health scenario. Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) are two important traditional medical systems of Asia. Ayurveda is the Traditional System of Medicine popular in India and TCM is Traditional Chinese Medicine. Ayurveda focuses on preventive as well as curative approach towards treatment. Ayurveda is the world's oldest medical science dating at least 3,000 B.C. in India. At the heart of it is an individualized daily practice bringing balance to body and mind. Ayurveda has the intention of achieving longevity and a healthy quality of life. Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) is based on the philosophical doctrine of Chinese Naturalism and Taoism (pronounced Daoism). The Tao is translated as "the way," however its meaning is much more subtle. In this sense people are a microcosm of the universe. The idea that Humans are a part of nature rather than a creation of omnipotent creator is largely a part of Chinese Naturalism. The present paper aims on comprehensive description of basic fundamentals of TCM and analytically comparing them with basic fundamentals of Ayurveda.

Keywords: TCM, Naturalism, meridian, Chi (Qi), Yin, Yang

INTRODUCTION

As long as living beings succumb to death, the ambrosia of Ayurveda will flourish on this earth. As long as flow of life continues; human beings will aspire to search for ways to understand life and to enhance it both qualitatively and quantitatively. The basic foundation of holistic medicine is healing from within. The best holistic medicine is prevention. The other key factor is empowering the individual to choose to better their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. This is a different healing paradigm compared with modern symptom based western medicine aimed on curing. How healing is different from curing? Curing can be defined as working on the surface level of the body and treating only the symptoms. On the other hand, healing is defined as treating the body as a whole, including the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Modern medical science is more focused on curing

the symptoms rather than healing the patient, whereas the traditional System of Ayurveda as well as TCM both believe in healing process. One such basic fundament is Prana, which is the life energy described in Ayurveda, or Qi, which is its equal in traditional Chinese medicine. With new technologies scientists are able to measure this elusive life energy. As Western quantum physicists begin quantifying consciousness and the possibility of extra-dimensional life, perhaps the modern doctor is ready to learn from two of the oldest forms of healing i.e. Ayurveda and traditional Chinese medicine. A comprehensive and comparative study of both these traditional systems of medicine is much required so that their merits and demerits can be assessed and utilized in Ayurvedic Parlance.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The work is based on the Ayurveda text books like Brihatrayi & Laghutrayi along with the review of Traditional Chinese Medicine literature. Magazines, journals, periodicals, internet material & research papers relating to the subject are also reviewed for support & enrichment of work.

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

CONCEPT OF OJAS & CHI. (Qi)

Chinese Traditional Medicine believe that energy flows through the human body continuously, this is a vital motivating force which burns like a fuel all through one's life. It is called vital energy or Qi. In a more general sense, Qi is an all-pervasive energy that includes Yin and Yang. However, Qi is broken into different types depending on function and origin. There are three different origins of Qi related to the humans. Yuan-qi, or original Qi, is determined at the moment of conception. Gu-qi is grain Qi derived from digested foods. Kong-qi, which is natural air Qi, comes from the air one breathes. These three types of Qi enter the body where they intermingle; therein the Qi performs various functions^[1]. The functions of Qi include: movement, protection, harmonious transformation, warmth, stability and retention. There are five subtypes of Qi based on function. The types of Qi within the body are organ, meridian, nutritive, protective, and ancestral Qi. Organ Qi, also called zang-fu-zhi-qi, is the Qi in each of the organs. Qi acts differently in every organ. Furthermore, every organ is said to have its own type of Qi. Meridian Qi, or jing-luo-zhi-qi, is the Qi that harmonizes organs and various body parts through the meridian system. Nutritive Qi, called ying-qi, is associated with transforming food into xue (blood). Ying-qi is located within the blood vessels and moves with the blood. Wei-qi, or protective Qi, is located in the chest and abdominal cavity. It regulates sweat and protects from external negative influences. Ancestral Qi, or zong-qi, is related with the heart and lungs. It controls the heartbeat as well as breathing^[2]. Same is the "ojas" concept in Ayurveda. As long as ojas exists in the body, the heart beats, the brain works and the whole organism stay as a living miracle. No one has seen Ojas but the concept is old and unchallenged. In few books this Qi is compared to Prana or Prana Vayu existing in the body but it has more resemblance to the Ojas concept, the only difference is that Qi is not measurable and Ojas is quantified in Ayurveda as, *Para Ojas* in *ashta bindu pramana* and *Apar Ojas* in *half anjali pramana*^[3].

One thing is common that both Qi and *Ojas* are related to immunity of modern science.

YIN, YANG AND PRAKRITI, PURUSH CONCEPT

Yin and yang are the two aspects of vital energy. They are complementary and balance each other but at the same time are opposite to each other if yin and yang relate to each other in harmony, balance exists in the body. Chinese believe that whatever law is applicable to the universe is applicable to human body. Universe is macrocosm and human body is microcosm. Man must live in harmonious relationship with his environment. As long as there is balance between yin and yang, life is smooth. Same is the concept of "*Purusho ayam loksamita siddhanta*"^[4] described in Sharira sthan of Charaka Samhita that there is direct relationship between individual and environment and "*Pindhbrahm Nyaya*" which states that individual is the complete presentation of universe and both are complementary to each other and directly influencing each other.

MERIDIANS AND SROTAS CONCEPT

In TCM the meridian system consists of the 12 regular channels, the eight extraordinary parts, and the branches of the 12 regular channels. The 12 regular channels allow Qi and Xue to circulate through the body. There are six Yin, and six Yang channels (each have three associated with the feet and three with the hands). The eight extraordinary channels regulate Qi and Xue^[5]. Acupuncture points are located on the meridians and this is the reason acupuncture stimulates or calms organs^[6]. *Strotasas* and meridians are related to the inner organs of the body. According to Chinese interpretation, the vital energy flows in a specific path and can be manipulated only where it can be reached. The points are connected to the inner organs through meridians. Likewise meridians, *Srotasa* meaning flowing, trickling and oozing^[7] and also said that in the body increase or decrease of the substance is due to *Srotasa* themselves^[8]. Charaka has explained that the number of *Strotasas* is quite similar to number of *Murtimanta* (physical) factors present in human body^[9]. Thus many types of *Strotasas* are present and are related to each other, to every tissue for its nourishment and are looking similar to meridians as both are connected to internal organs.

FIVE ELEMENTS OF TCM AND PANCHBHOUTIC CONCEPT OF AYURVEDA

Chinese divided the world into five elements and everything on the earth was considered to belong to these by its nature. Predominantly these five elements are wood, fire

earth, metal and water. Chinese thinkers observed that the entire outside world was built of these five elements, and through a macrocosmic – microcosmic relationship the five elements are applied to the human body and medicine. The inclusion of the element of metal shows Chinese civilization's influence over five elements theory, Chinese philosophy, and TCM. All the elements are interrelated in three different ways. There is the mother-child relationship, the controlling relationship, and insulting relationship. The five elements are always listed in the same way: wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. From wood it is possible to make fire; fire turns things to ash, which becomes earth; metal is born within the earth; metal can be melted into liquid; through water trees grow^[10]. This illustrates the mother-child relationship. For example wood is mother to fire, because wood supports fire. This is the sheng cycle; it is the most important of the three interrelationships. In Ayurveda we believe that everything is constituted by five basic elements as quoted by Acharya Charaka "*Sarvam dravyam panchmahabautiktvam*"^[11]. This shows that our *Panchbautik Sidhanta* and Chinese five element theory are very much similar.

1. Ayurveda – water, fire, air, earth, and atmosphere
2. Chinese – Water, fire, wood, earth, metal
3. Western – Water, fire, Air, Earth

According to both, five element theory (T.C.M.) and Ayurveda the five elements are not independent entities, they are in intimate relationship with each other. Nothing in the world belongs wholly to one element, each has all five but one predominates and is named accordingly, but has traces of other four elements also.

THE THREE TREASURES AND TRI DANDA SIDDHANTA

The three treasures are Qi, Jing and Shen. Jing, or essence, is associated with the primal instincts, and drives our needs for basic survival. It is passed on genetically. Shen translates to spirit, which heaven has given to humanity and only humanity. This is what makes human consciousness different from animals who only possess Qi and Jing^[12]. Shen, the last of the three treasures, has been divided into different five sub-spirits. The *Tri Danda Siddhanta* of Ayurveda is very close to the three treasures of TCM. *Sattvam*, *Atma* and *Sharir* components of human life are similar to the three treasures of TCM. Human life is totally dependent on these three components. According to Ayurveda, the whole universe is substantiated on the complementary conjunction of these three elements^[13].

These three elements and the three treasures of TCM have close resemblance in their functions.

XUE AND RAKTA DHATU

Xue is the term that has been translated to blood; however its meaning is more expansive than simply blood. Xue is Yin, while Qi is Yang (not Qi in the general sense, but only when working with the body). Blood's attributes are relaxed, soft, smooth, effortless, being, circulation, actualized, memory; Qi is active, quick, effort, becoming, potential, newness, and visionary. Xue functions are circulation, nourishment of organs, maintaining, and moistening. It is created from the essence of digested foods, which are purified in the spleen^[14]. Xue finds close resemblance with the *Rakta Dhatu* of Ayurveda both in its characteristics as well as in functions.

MEASUREMENT PROCEDURE OF ACUPOINTS & MARMAS

Acharya Sushruta described the *Marma* chapter precisely for surgeons with the vision of having sharp instruments in their hand and patients in front for surgery. So he has clearly cautioned not to cut the vital structures involved in *marma* as he has mentioned these sites as *Prana adhithan* simply means energy pockets which should not be destroyed. Similarly in TCM the Acupressure points are identified. According to Sushruta *Marma* should be measured in *Swayanguli pramana* i.e. person's self finger measurement^[15]. Same procedure is seen in measurement or in location of acupoints, they measure acupoints using cun which is acupressure measurement unit and is the distance between two palmar creases over the inter phalangeal joints of the middle finger of the patient but acupoints are much smaller than *Marma* points.

SEVEN EMOTIONS AND MANASA BHAVAS

Joy, anger, worry, anxiety, sorrow, terror, and freight are the seven emotions, which naturally result from environmental stimuli. All of these emotions, excluding joy, are often considered negative emotions; yet they have their place in TCM. If there are sudden, persistent emotional stimuli then they will disturb Zang organs, Qi, or Xue, which they are closely related to. Anger is related to the liver. When there is abnormally excessive anger the liver is over active, sending too much of its Qi to the spleen^[16]. Accelerated Qi and xue flow cause joy, the emotion related to the heart. Excessive joy can cause mania and the inability to concentrate^[17]. Anxiety is associated with the spleen. When one is anxious there can be a loss of appetite, signaling a weakened or out of balance spleen^[18]. Melancholy and sorrow are connected to the lungs. Exces-

sive melancholy can harm the lungs; alternatively lung disorders can exhibit melancholy^[19]. Fright and terror are related to the kidneys. An excess of these emotions can cause urinary and fecal incontinence^[20].

Ayurveda too focuses on psychological factors such as *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *irshya*, *moha*, *matsarya* etc^[21]. Ayurveda too accept the intermingling of physical and psychological factors and origin of diseases thereof^[22]. The one such emotion known as *Vishada* is considered as the most effective disease intensifying factor in all humans^[23]. Various psychological factors are found responsible in the pathogenesis of many diseases in Ayurveda^[24].

ORIGIN OF DISEASE/ *ROGA NIDANA*

According to TCM, causes of origins of illness are: external pathogens, epidemic pathogens, excessive emotion, improper diet, traumatic injuries, imbalance between rest and work, phlegm retention and coagulated blood. The six external pathogens are related to the seasons, external climate, and living surroundings. The six are: wind, cold, heat, dampness, fire, and dryness. When climactic changes are sudden and extreme or not arriving at a seasonal time, then these factors can become pathogenic. The external pathogens usually will attack and enter the body through skin, mouth, and nose. They can also transform into each other once in the body, i.e. a cold pathogen may be transformed into a dryness pathogen while moving to the interior of the body^[25]. Pathogenic wind is the most important external pathogen, taking a lead in external pathogenic disease. It is strongest during spring but can invade in any season of the year, often in combination with other external pathogens. Wind belongs to Yang^[26]. Pathogenic wind manifests as sudden onset, rapid progression, and symptoms that move throughout the body. Wind is responsible for many different diseases^[27]. Pathogenic cold occurs most during winter. It can attack the exterior of the body, or go directly to the interior. This Yin pathogen impairs Yang when attacking the body. It affectively blocks or obstructs the flow of Qi, xue, bodily fluids, contracts tendons, and closes meridians^[28]. Heat can act as a Yang pathogen when in excess. It is marked by a disturbed mind. In an upward and outward moving Qi typical yang causes the depletion of bodily fluids and Qi through excessive sweating. The heat pathogen disturbs the heart organ because it is the fire organ. This pathogen can stir internal wind and be accompanied by the external dampness pathogen^[29]. The dampness pathogen occurs in all seasons but mainly late summer. As a Yin pathogen, it can

obstruct the flow of Qi and attack Yang Qi. There is a tendency for the spleen and stomach Qi to become stagnant. Pathogenic dampness manifests as heaviness in the affected region, and turbid and foul excretions (puss, mucous, stool, etc.). Yin localities are also attacked by it. This lingering is difficult to cure quickly^[30]. Pathogenic dryness is yang by nature. It occurs in autumn and is paired with summer heat or winter cold. It is referred to as warm-dryness and cool-dryness respectively. It consumes body fluids causing dryness, often affecting the lungs^[31]. Pathogenic fire is advanced heat, differing only in degree. It is Yang in excess. It consumes bodily fluids, Qi, and can bring xue upward to the head causing fever, strong thirst, and rapid full pulse. Xue is in excess. The liver, the heart, and mental activities are susceptible to pathogenic fire^[32]. Epidemic pathogens were augmented into TCM during the Ming Dynasty when infectious disease spread rapidly, unhindered by the treatments of the time. These infectious agents mostly cause Yang and heat excess, sudden onset, and severe conditions. During extreme seasonal conditions such as drought or flood outbreaks are prone^[33].

Ayurvedic approach towards understanding of illness is very deep-rooted. In Ayurveda the threefold causes of diseases is *Asatmendriyartha Samyoga*, *Pragyaapradha* and *Parinama*^[34]. The six main causes of diseases in TCM can easily merge in the threefold causes of Ayurveda under different categories. *Purusha* (individual) is the part and parcel of continuum of *Loka* (universe) as all the material and spiritual phenomenon of the universe are present in the individual and vice versa^[35]. Their harmonious and concordant interaction i.e. *Samyoga* is the means of well-being and *Hinayoga*, *Atiyoga* and *Mithyayoga* i.e. deficient, excessive and erroneous interaction respectively is the cause of disease. *Kala*, *Buddhi* and *Artha* are the three levels of interaction. Unwholesome interaction alters the harmonious interplay of *Loka* and *Purusha* at these three levels. *Kala*, *Buddhi* and *Indriyartha* are the important factors responsible for causation of the diseases both *Sharirika* (physical) and *Mansika* (mental)^[36]. These three factors are known as *Parinama*, *Prajnapradha*, *Asatmendriyartha Samyoga* respectively and *Hinayoga*, *Atiyoga* and *Mithyayoga* of these factors cause the disease. Among these *Prajnapradha* is much important especially regarding mental disorders. Similarly, *Astamendriyartha Samyoga* and *Parinama* causing mental disorders by producing stress in human beings may also come under the purview of *Prajnapradha* because it is ultimately the *Prajnapradha* that leads to these two factors.

DIAGNOSIS IN TCM AND *PANCH NIDANA* OF *AYURVEDA*

There are four modes of diagnosis in TCM. They are observation, inquiry, palpation, hearing & smelling. The purpose of diagnosis is to determine the patients constitution, what elements require treatment, what are their blocks to treatment, and on what levels – body, mind, spirit – should treatment be given. In diagnostics it is very important that the physician differentiate between the patient's elemental constitution and a trait indicating unbalance^[37]. The body's general stature and several microcosms within the body can be observed in diagnosis. TCM identifies the following microcosms: ear, tongue, face, torso, upper arm, lower arm, hand, upper leg, lower leg, foot, and many others. The tongue is an important point of observation because it can reflect the underlying patterns when complicated conditions are causing conflicting clinical manifestations^[38]. Moisture, tongue coating, shape, and color are all important in observation of the tongue. Moisture signals the state of body fluids; coating indicates state of Yang organs, particularly the stomach (thin white coating is normal); size and shape reflect deficiencies in Qi and xue in specific organs; color reflects conditions of Yin or Yang, xue, and the Zang organs^[39]. Eyes are another area of inspection. A healthy eye should have a shine to it and display flexible movement. The eyelids should be free from ulcers or swelling. These traits signal the presence of shen or spirit. Figure 27 illustrates how the eye is used in diagnostics. The five Zang organs are reflected in the eyes because all 12 main channels are connected directly or indirectly to the eyes. Inquiry is an opportunity for the physician to learn of the patient's subjective experience. There are 10 questions that have been used traditionally in the inquiry process. These are only guidelines and something may need to be added depending on the patient. The ten questions ask about 1) chills and fever; 2) sweating; 3) head and limbs; 4) urination and defecation; 5) diet; 6) chest; 7) hearing and deafness; 8) thirst; 9) gynecology; 10) pediatrics^[40]. There are two aspects to palpation: pulse diagnosis and body palpation. Pulse is the most developed diagnostic method in TCM^[41]. In principle, the radial pulse is taken with three fingers. There two levels which the pulse are felt at: deep and superficial. The pulse is taken on both wrists and each finger feels the pulse of a different organ. Throughout the history of TCM different texts and physicians have put forward different techniques in pulse diagnosis. The scope of body palpation includes hands, feet, skin, acupuncture

points, chest, and abdomen. In palpation of hands, feet, and skin the physician feels for hot, cold, dry, damp, and other textures in order to perceive the interior environment. When palpating acupuncture points the physician can feel which organs are out of balance because acupuncture points are associated to the organs through the meridians. The reproduced organs are responsible for creating both sound and smell. Abnormal changes in these two factors indicate disturbed organ(s). Voice is one of the criteria of listening. Voice, respiration, cough, sneezing, vomiting, belching, hiccoughs, sighing, and intestinal rumbling are all part of the listening diagnosis. To use voice as an example the lungs, kidneys, stomach and spleen are connected to the voice. Lungs and kidneys have the strongest connection to voice. In voice loud and strong indicates heat pathogen or excess Qi, while soft and weak indicates cold pathogen or Qi deficiency in these organs. Diagnostic olfaction includes smelling of breath, nose, ears, eyes, sweat, stool, urine, menstrual blood, vomit, belching and the odor of the patient's room, among other things. In general a strong, foul, stinking smell indicates a heat, damp heat, or Qi excess condition, while a fishy or no smell indicates a cold, or Qi deficiency^[42].

Ayurveda has given various tools for an appropriate diagnosis. *Pancha Nidana* is the most famous among them. *Nidana*, *Purvarupa*, *Rupa*, *Samprapti* and *Upshaya* are the five diagnostic methods to generate complete information regarding any disease^[43]. Ayurvedic diagnostic approach has many similarities with TCM. Ayurveda has focused on examination of disease as well as examination of the patient. *Dashvidha Parikshya bhavas* are described for examining the patient^[44]. *Trividha Pariksha* is also mentioned. *Darshan*, *Sparshan* and *Prashna* are suggested. *Ashtavidha Pariksha* of Yoga Ratnakar is also in concomitance with TCM. The Pulse in TCM can be compared with the *Nadi Pariksha* of Ayurveda. Ayurveda has also given great importance to the examination of Tongue like TCM. The five objects of sense organs are also utilized in diagnosis in Ayurveda. Likewise TCM, the color, odor, taste, touch and sounds are utilized in TCM.

THE APPROACH TOWARDS HEALTH

In, TCM it is most important that the physician treats the primary cause of disease, (i.e. the element that is the root cause of disharmony). If the symptoms are acute and require immediate attention they should be treated^[45]. Herbology, acupuncture, moxibustion, massage, and exercises such as *ichi*, and *qi-gong* can be used in TCM^[46]. These therapies work by supporting deficiencies and re-

ducing excess, in Yin, Yang and the five elements, although, preventative measures are much more valued. Prevention includes emotional regulation, strengthening physical training that supports the body's constitution, and a regular lifestyle i.e. regular diet, exercise, and rest^[47].

The Ayurvedic towards health is almost similar to TCM. Ayurveda too focuses on preventive health. The most important aspect of Ayurveda is to maintain a state of equilibrium among *Doshas*, *Dhatus*, *Indriyas* and *Agni*. Ayurveda aims on removing the root cause of disease. Likewise TCM, various lifestyles related amendments are mentioned in Ayurveda too in the form of *Dincharya*, *Ratricharya*, *Sadvritta* etc.

DISCUSSION

During thorough comparison of Ayurveda and TCM, there evolves an opportunity of compatible cooperation in spite of a few fundamental differences. These modalities of healing can be used to complement each other. Health and disease are processes. Balance is active, not passive action. Both modalities of healing work on the phenomena of maintenance of equilibrium and harmony. Awareness is the foremost priority of Ayurveda and TCM. It is central in choosing to balance and critical in choosing health no matter where one is in the process of health or disease. Ayurveda's foundation in spiritual awareness puts humans in harmony with the creation, and puts the creation within humans; TCM does the same through Chinese philosophy. On this fundamental similarity, these systems of medicine can be combined with each other in ways suitable to the patient. Both of these complementary medicines are deeply influenced by their regional philosophy and religions (Sankhya/Taoism). Surely, they have some fundamental differences; chiefly Sankhya philosophy identifies an unmanifested source that initiated the Creation. This source is Purusha. The Creation is expressed through three *gunas*: *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. Alternatively Taoist thought puts forth an infinitely tiered Cosmos lacking a Creator, which express Yin and Yang at every level. Ayurveda is based on a triadic world, while TCM sees a dualistic one. Both systems explain the world differently. More importantly, both systems recognize a state of consciousness that is beyond or in harmony with the world. There is no fundamental difference between these two states of being. Both systems see the world (and the self) through a macrocosmic – microcosmic relationship. In the subtlest sense, both of these traditions can define the whole self as the whole world. Both traditions explain the

world through triadic aspects. Ayurveda and Sankhya focus on the *Tridoshas*, and the three universal *gunas*; and the Chinese philosophical concept of Heaven – Earth – human, signifying Yang, Yin and humans respectively. However, in TCM we see more relationships of two (Yin and Yang), and five (five elements). Ayurveda also has concepts of two and five. They are *Purusha* and *Prakruti*; and the five basic elements the *Panch mahabhuta*, five sense faculties i.e. five *Gyanendriyas*, and five faculties of action i.e. *Karmendriyas*.

Although Ayurveda and TCM both have five element theories central to their practice, yet there is difference in their description. The primary difference is Ayurveda's five elements (ether, air, fire, water, and earth) are very static compared to interrelatedness of TCM's five elements (wood, fire, earth, metal, and water). The *Tridoshic* model of describing the body is more similar to TCM's five elements in this respect. Ayurveda's *Tridoshic* and TCM's five elements are applied to the body constitutions. In looking for overlaps and common ground, the *kapha* and water archetypes can be compared. These are the hypoactive characters. The *kapha* constitution is large body frame, pale complexion, dark brown wavy hair and the character is described is steady, relaxed, and has potential for great enjoyment of sex. The water type is large body frame, dark complexion, wrinkly skin, and described as slightly laid back, and can have a tendency to overindulge in sexual activity. The most interesting difference is complexion. In Ayurveda a dark complexion indicates *vata*, which is intense movement, the opposite of *kapha*. In TCM the wood type is most similar to *vata*, and has a greenish complexion. Clearly there are differences in the *tridoshic* and five element approaches, but this does not necessarily make one model right and the other wrong. Constitutions in both systems have a genetic component. Thus differences in gene pools could explain variation between the constitutional types. Ayurveda identifies six tastes and TCM identifies five, however cold, and hot (Yin, and Yang) are the most important. Ayurveda's additional taste is astringent, which could be interpreted as an action rather than a taste. In Ayurveda the tastes are combinations of two elements, while in TCM each taste resonates with one element. The two systems are in agreement of the effects of the tastes, with the exception of salt. Ayurveda gives it a heating quality, while TCM identifies it as cooling. The reason for the divergence can be attributed to salts ability to increase digestive fire, but also increase water retention, and can purge the intestines in

larger amounts. In both systems, diet either stimulates or pacifies a *dosha* or element to create balance within the body. Unique to TCM is the idea that certain tastes strengthen particular meridians and organs. This occurs because every organ has an element in resonance. The concept of foods having a post digestive affect, which is different from the initial affect, is unique to Ayurveda another similarity between the two systems is that each meal should be balanced. In Ayurveda all six tastes should be eaten in a meal; in TCM every meal should be equal in cold and hot.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda and TCM have many fundamental commonalities. The focus of both the systems is on the patient rather than disease. Both systems fundamentally aim to promote health and enhance the quality of life, with therapeutic strategies for treatment of specific diseases or symptoms in holistic fashion. Almost half of the botanical sources used as medicines have similarities; moreover, both systems have similar philosophies geared towards enabling classification of individuals, materials and diseases. Both systems promote inclusive and holistic health. Both are doing well in their respective places. Both the systems can collectively play an important role in promoting complementary and alternative medicine at international front.

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