

Classics and Language Study

Week 1

Intro to class

A long study dependent upon context

Topics removed from context

Start with common areas then move to points of divergence

Sources

Most rigorous available translations

Modern dictionaries of Classical Chinese (P. Kroll *A Student's Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese*. Available on Pleco)

Classical dictionaries of Classical Chinese (SWJZ)

Modern dictionaries of classical medical texts (Unschuld & Tessenow *A Dictionary of the Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen*)

Modern dictionaries of modern medical Chinese (Wiseman & Ye *A Practical Dictionary of Chinese Medicine*. Available on Pleco.)

Seeking to understand more completely core concepts, foundational theories and ideas through direct study of the primary source texts

Seeking to improve access to primary source materials through learning the language in which they are written

Recognizing need for and existence of rigor in scholarship

Basing medical practice on the information we access

Reliability of outcome, prognosis, lifestyle changes, etc

We are the representatives of Chinese medicine

Circularity

Will cover the same topics, characters repeatedly, each time deepening our understanding (very Chinesey)

Intro to classics

Time

Han dynasty – Golden Era of Chinese civilization; brought together different traditions of medicine into a single more or less coherent system of medicine

Word “classics”

Nature of texts

Parallelism

Intro to Classical Chinese

Distinct from modern

Not mutually intelligible

Differing vocabulary and grammar

Modern definitions rooted in, and often equate with, classical

Rich meanings

Rare one-to-one English translations available

Heavily context based

Often require extensive footnoting to approach conveying complete original meaning

Characters

Majority are semantic-phonetic compounds

Semantic classifier (aka radical) indicates general meaning

Phonetic indicates general pronunciation

Be wary of purported etymology

Traditional versus simplified

Traditional retains indications of meaning within character, itself

Simplified often compromises embedded meaning for fewer strokes

Simplified used through-out China, traditional Taiwan

Reading practice only, no listening, speaking, or writing

Text Material – Foundations of Clinical Thinking

Suwen 1

上古 shàng gǔ - high/remote antiquity

之 zhī - possessive marker, e.g., 上古之人 people of high antiquity, 今时 之人 current people, people of today

春秋 chūn qiū - Spring and Autumn, the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BCE)

法于阴阳 fǎ yú yīn yáng

法 fǎ – “law; rule; objective standard, model, pattern; take as a model, standard; imitate” (SCM)

于/於 yú – preposition, “at, in, on”, etc.

阴/陰 yīn – SCM “shade(d), shadow(ed); dark(ness)”

“cold(ness); inactivity, declining strength; autumn and winter”

“feminine principle, ass’d with moon, earth... weakness, softness”

阳/陽 yáng

和于术数

和 hé – “harmonious, of sound; in harmony with; accord with” (SCM)

于 yú - preposition

术数 shù shù – “extrapolative numerology; divination based on close observation of particular phenomena and their inferred effects; projective calculation” (SCM)

食饮有节

食 shí – to eat; food

饮/飲 yǐn – to drink; drink. 食饮 food and drink, eating and drinking

有 yǒu – to have; there is/are

节/節 jié – grass radical 艹(草) cǎo. “joint of bamboo; joint; articulation; segment, section; measure(d), regular(ity); to moderate, temper” (SCM)

“eating has regularity to it, is tempered, moderated”

起居有常

起居 qǐ jū – regular daily life. 起 “get up, rise, stand; start, undertake” (SCM). 居 “site; residence, dwelling; sit down, stay awhile” (SCM)

有 - has

常 cháng – “constant, recurrent; enduring; steady; long-customed” (SCM)

不妄作劳

不 bù – verbal negative, “not/don’t”

妄 wàng – “haphazard; careless; groundless... falsehood” (SCM)

作 zuò – “rise; arise; begin; make; undertake; act, do” (SCM)

劳 láo – “(be)labor, struggle, put under strain; toil; troubled at heart, depressed; contribution, accomplishment”

“didn’t carelessly do things to the point of struggle, straining, becoming depressed”

故能形与神俱

故 gù – cause; basis; reason; therefore

能 néng – ability, able to

形 xìng – “outward form, appearance, shape; physical form of human being” (SCM)

与/與 yú – “give to, accord to; be associated with, join with, unite with” (SCM)

神 shén – “spirit(ual); sacred, ethereal; actualizing spirit in humans...; spiritual essence of humans that survives death...” (SCM)

俱 jù – altogether; completely; together with; comprehend, understand” (SCM)

而尽终其天年

而 ér – verb phrase conjunction subordinating former to latter conveying a sequential, temporal causal relation, “then”

尽/盡 jìn – “use(d) up, consume(d), expend all of, exhaust(ed) (SCM)

终 zhōng – “end, finish, conclusion; all the way to the end; in the end” (SCM)

其 qí – “his, her, its, their” etc.

天 tiān – heaven “as overarching power beyond human comprehension but often responsive to human entreaty...” (SCM); nature

年 niān - year

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以妄为常

以 yǐ – “to take up and use as a means for some purpose” (SCM)

妄 wàng – “haphazard, frivolous; insubstantial; fraud(ulent); sham” (SCM)

为/為 wèi – “on account of... for the sake of...; in place of, substituting for” (SCM)

常 cháng – “constant; permanent; frequent; conventional, ordinary, commonplace; routine”
(SCM)

...

务快其心

务/務 wù - “Apply oneself to; strive” (SCM)

快 kuài – “please(d); cheerful; untroubled, carefree”

其 qí – his, her, their

心 xīn – heart/mind

逆于生乐

逆 nì – go against; counterflow

于/於 – at, in, on

生 shēng – live, be alive; life

乐/樂 lè – “merry; delighted; (en)joy(ment)” (SCM)

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恬恢虚无

恬 tián – “tranquil, quiet; poised, peaceful” (SCM)

恢 huī – “extensive, vast; expand, increase, broaden” (SCM)

虚 xū – “empty, unoccupied” (SCM)

无/無 wú – to lack, be without; nothing

真气从之

真 zhen – “real, true to its nature, authentic; pure, perfect” (SCM)

气/氣 qì

从/從 cóng – “follow; come or go after” (SCM)

之 zhī – “her, him, it”