Comparative study on WHO Western Pacific Region and World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies international standard terminologies on traditional medicine: Syndrome Differentiation According to Eight Principles (Part one)

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Keywords: linguistics; terminology; translation; English; terms; traditional Chinese medicine; diagnosis


WHO 西太区与世界中医药学会联合会中医名词术语
国际标准比较研究: 八纲辨证(一)

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关键词: 语言学; 科学术语; 翻译; 英语; 中医名词; 诊断

The so-called eight principles include 阴、阳，表，里，寒，热，虚，实 which are usually transliterated and translated as yin, yang, exterior, interior, cold, heat, deficiency and excess. These eight principles serve as a theoretical basis for treatment based on syndrome differentiation. These eight principles are easy to understand, translate and standardize.

However, the translation of 辨证 is somewhat different in the translation field. Some translators have rendered it as syndrome differentiation, and some others have translated it as pattern identification. In WHO International Standard Terminologies on Traditional Medicine in the Western Pacific Region(1)(abbreviated as WPRO Standard) and International Standard Chinese-English Basic Nomenclature of Chinese Medicine compiled by World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies(2) (abbreviated as WFCMS Standard), both ways of translation are maintained. However, in WPRO Standard, pattern identification is the first choice and syndrome differentiation is the second; in WFCMS Standard, the opposite is the case.

In WPRO Standard, 76 terms concerning syndrome differentiation with the eight principles are included. In WFCMS Standard, altogether 437 related terms are included. This article tries to make a comparative study between these two international standards according to the studies made in the book entitled International Standardization of English Translation of Traditional Chinese Medicine: Study of Theory, Summarization of Practice and Exploration of Methods(3).

Chinese: 世界中医药学会联合会
国际标准比较研究: 八纲辨证(一)
drome differentiation: categorization of patterns/syndromes according to yin-yang theory, e.g., interior, cold, and deficiency patterns/syndromes pertaining to yin, and exterior, heat, and excess patterns/syndromes pertaining to yang.

证, a basic concept in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), refers to the progress of a disease at a certain phase, significantly reflecting the cause, nature, location, manifestation and prognosis of the disease. So one single disease may demonstrate different 证 at different stages. That is why different diseases may demonstrate the same syndrome and the same disease may demonstrate different syndromes. Though the Chinese character 证 is often translated as syndrome or pattern, actually both ways of translation are not quite accurate. Since the English words syndrome and pattern are traditionally used to translate 证, they are often taken as two equivalences of 证. However, when we use these English words to translate this special Chinese character, we have to bear in mind that they are actually quite semantically different.

伤 证 yin pattern/syndrome: a collective term for interior, cold and deficiency patterns/syndromes with inhibitory, hyperfunctional, quiescent or dimmed manifestations, or inward and downward symptoms, as well as morbid conditions caused by pathogenic factors of yin nature.

In defining 伤 证, WPRO used the expression pathogenic factor which, in fact, is the most suitable equivalence to the Chinese concept 邪气 or 病邪 that is often translated as pathogen in the West. Pathogen may be similar to 邪气 or 病邪, however, it sounds too modern to be a traditional medical concept. Of course in translating TCM, it is possible, if necessary, to loan words from modern medicine, just as WPRO Standards states in its foreword:

Since both traditional and modern medicines aim at maintaining health and treating diseases, there must be some overlap between the two systems of medicine in concept and hence in terminology. On such occasions, the only difference exists in wording. When a traditional term in Han character has a corresponding Western medical term expressing the same concept, use of that Western medical term is not only reasonable but also necessary. Otherwise, creation of a new English term from the original term in Han character would cause confusion. On the other hand, improper use of Western medical terms is misleading and therefore is excluded from this document.

阳证 yang pattern/syndrome: a collective term for exterior, heat and excess patterns/syndromes with excitatory, hyperfunctional, restless or bright manifestations, or outward and upward symptoms, as well as morbid conditions caused by pathogenic factors of yang nature.

阴阳失调证 pattern/syndrome of yin-yang disharmony: any pattern/syndrome in which yin and yang are out of balance.

The Chinese concept of 阴阳失调 are also translated as “imbalance between yin and yang” and “disorder of yin and yang”. Since 阴阳失调 means imbalance or disharmony between yin and yang, the preposition “between” cannot be omitted otherwise the logical relationship implied in this concept may sound unclear.

伤阳证 yin damage pattern/syndrome: a pattern/syndrome characterized by damage to yang resulting from various causes such as exuberance of yin-cold in the interior, excessive use of cold-natured medicinals, excessive sweating or diarrhea, usually manifested as fear of cold, pale complexion, spontaneous sweating, cold extremities and faint or even hardly perceptible pulse.

In defining 伤阳证, WPRO Standard has translated the Chinese term 恶寒 or 畏寒 into fear of cold, which sounds quite simple and clear. In the current translation field, 恶寒 or 畏寒 is often rendered as aversion to cold. It is a common practice now to translate the Chinese character 恶 or 畏 as aversion. However, comparatively speaking, fear of cold seems more natural.

伤阳证 yin damage pattern/syndrome: a pattern/syndrome characterized by damage to yin, often resulting from invasion of heat pathogen or in advanced cases of febrile disease with impairment of the liver and kidney yin, usually manifested as low fever, heat sensation in the palms and soles, emaciation, thirst, malar flush, dry and scarlet red tongue, and fine, feeble and rapid pulse.

The so-called 伤阳证 actually refers to consumption and damage of genuine yin, known as 真阴耗损 in Chinese. This syndrome is usually caused by hyperactivity of yang qi that scorches and consumes yin fluid inside or by severe impairment of body fluid as seen in the advanced stage of warm and heat diseases in which genuine yin in the liver and kidney is damaged. In WPRO Standard, 稀病 is translated as warm disease which is used quite popularly now. However, in
the definition mentioned above, 温热病 is rendered as febrile disease which sounds somewhat inaccurate. According to the current translation practice and WPRO Standard, the proper translation of 温热病 may be warm and febrile disease because 温病 and 热病 are two different kinds of diseases. In this definition, the Chinese term 舌绛 is translated as scarlet red tongue, sounding a little awkward. The Chinese 绛 means deep red (深红色), often translated as crimson which means a deep slightly purplish red color in English. In English, the word scarlet means a very bright red color, often connected with marks of rank and office, etc., obviously different from 绛 in Chinese.

阴虚证 yin deficiency pattern/syndrome: a pattern/syndrome resulting from deficiency of yin fluid and essence, incapable of restraining yang and usually manifested by emaciation, dizziness, tinnitus, dryness of the mouth and throat, constipation, dark-colored urine, afternoon fever, malar flush, night sweats, reddened tongue with scantly coating and rapid fine pulse; in Kampo medicine, it is understood as “yin pattern in combination with deficiency pattern”.

In this definition, “dark-colored urine” seems to be the translation of the Chinese term 尿短赤 which is a common symptom seen in yin deficiency syndrome. However, such a translation is obviously inadequate. In the Chinese term 尿短赤, 赤 means dark-colored or brown-colored, while 短 means scanty or little. So the proper translation of this term may be scanty dark-colored urine.

阳虚证 yang deficiency pattern/syndrome: a pattern/syndrome resulting from deficiency of yang qi with reduction in its warming and activating power, manifested by intolerance of cold, cold extremities, spontaneous sweating, loose bowel, long voidings of clear urine, pale tongue, and deep and weak pulse; in Kampo medicine, it is understood as “yang pattern in combination with excess pattern”.

In WPRO Standard, the Chinese term 阳气虚寒 is translated as fear of cold while 气寒 is rendered as aversion to cold. However in this definition, 气寒 is translated as “intolerance of cold”, which is of course understandable and acceptable in terms of the connotation of the original expression in Chinese, but appears somewhat inconsistent with the Standard. The expression “long voidings of clear urine” in the definition seems to be a translation of the Chinese term 小便清长. In this Chinese term, “long” means profuse. To translate 长 as “long” sounds too literal. According to TCM, the clinical manifestations of yang deficiency syndrome also include fatigue, shortness of breath, no desire to speak, light-colored and tender tongue as well as indistinct and thin pulse.

阴阳两虚证 pattern/syndrome of dual deficiency of yin and yang: a pattern/syndrome resulting from deficiency of both yin fluid and yang qi of the bowels and viscera, usually manifested as dizziness, tinnitus, lassitude, aversion to cold with cold limbs or vexing heat in the chest, palms or soles, palpitations, lumbar soreness, pale and dry tongue, and rapid weak pulse.

In the current translation practice, the Chinese character 两 in terms like 阴阳两虚证 is often translated as simultaneous or both, such as syndrome of simultaneous deficiency of yin and yang or syndrome of deficiency of both yin and yang. In TCM, 阴阳两虚证 is caused either by deficiency of both yin and yang in the zang-organs (脏) and fu-organs (腑), or by deficiency of both qi and blood, or by deficiency of both yin and yang. In this definition, the Chinese concept 脏腑 is translated as “bowels and viscera”, sounding quite inaccurate. The Chinese concept 脏 includes bowels, but not just bowels. In fact, 脏 covers a number of the internal organs, including gallbladder, stomach, large intestine, small intestine, bladder and sanjiao (三焦) which is rendered as triple energizer in WPRO Standard on acupuncture and moxibustion nomenclature.

阴阳内热证 pattern/syndrome of yin deficiency with internal heat: a pattern/syndrome resulting from deficiency of yin fluid with endogenous heat, usually manifested by persistent low fever or afternoon tidal fever, heat sensation in the chest, palms and soles, malar flush, night sweats, dry mouth with desire for drink, short voidings of dark-colored urine, constipation, reddened tongue lacking moisture and rapid fine pulse.

Currently in translating the Chinese character 内 in such terms as 内热, 内燥, 内风 etc., some translators, including the author of this article, often use the English word “endogenous”. In WPRO Standard, the Chinese character 内 in the related terms is translated as “internal”. However, in this definition, “endogenous heat” obviously is the translation of the Chinese term 内热 which is rendered as “internal” in the translation of 阴虚内热证. It seems to show that some of the common
expressions or even terms in TCM, like 内 and 外, can be translated differently because they are not the core terms or concepts in TCM. That means to say that the standardization program should just concentrate on the core terms and concepts, not on all the expressions and terms used in TCM.

阴虚火旺证 pattern/syndrome of yin deficiency with effulgent fire: a pattern/syndrome of effulgent fire arising from yin fluid deficiency, manifested by vexation, insomnia, dry throat and mouth, night sweating, nocturnal emission, flushed cheeks, bone-steaming, tidal fever, dry and bound stool, short voidings of yellow urine, or hemoptysis, epistaxis, reddened tongue lacking moisture, or ulceration on the tongue and rapid fine pulse

The Chinese character 旺 in 阴虚火旺证 is often translated as flaring, exuberance and flaming etc., quite differently. In WPRO Standard and WFCMS Standard, 旺 is translated as effulgent, vivid and accurate because the English word effulgence means strong glorious light or stream of bright light as from the sun, sounding quite similar to the connotation of 旺 in Chinese. In the definition, “bone-steaming” is certainly the translation of the Chinese term 肾蒸 which is sometimes translated as hectic fever in the current translation practice. Of course, “bone-steaming” is also frequently used in translation. Comparatively speaking, “bone-steaming” is a back translation and thus sounds better than “hectic fever”. The expression “reddened tongue lacking moisture” seems to be the translation of the Chinese term 舌红少津 which is also translated as “red tongue with scanty moisture”, similar to the way adopted by WPRO Standard in translating 舌红少苔 as seen in the definition of 阴虚阳亢证.

阳虚火旺证 pattern/syndrome of yin deficiency with yang hyperactivity: a pattern/syndrome of yin fluid deficiency with yang hyperactivity, marked by tidal fever, night sweating, flushed cheeks, dizziness, blurred vision, agitation, insomnia, reddened tongue with scanty coating and rapid fine pulse

In this definition, “flushed cheeks” is certainly the translation of the Chinese term 面赤. In fact in the current translation field, 面赤 is usually translated as “flushed cheeks”. However in WPRO Standard, this Chinese term is also rendered as malar flush as seen in the definitions of 阴虚证 and 阴虚证, sounding like a new trial in the translation of this Chinese term.

阴虚津亏证 pattern/syndrome of yin deficiency with fluid depletion: a pattern/syndrome of yin fluid deficiency, manifested by dire thirst, dry skin, sunken eyes, short voidings of yellow urine, dry and bound stool, vexing heat in the chest, palms and soles, emaciation, night sweats, reddened tongue with scanty coating and rapid fine pulse

The expression “dire thirst” may be a translation of the Chinese term 烦渴 which means heat vexation, the way adopted by WPRO Standard in translating 烦渴, or the Chinese term 大渴 which means extreme thirst. However, in both cases the translation seems inaccurate. The expression “dry and bound stool” may be a translation of the Chinese term 大便秘结 which means retention of dry feces or 大便秘结 which means retention of feces due to dryness. Comparatively speaking, “dry and bound stool” seems to be an ideal translation of both Chinese terms.

阴虚水停证 pattern/syndrome of yin deficiency with water retention: a pattern/syndrome of yin fluid deficiency complicated with retention of water, manifested by localized edema of limbs, reduced passage of urine, dry throat and mouth, vexing heat in the chest, palms and soles, constipation, reddened tongue with scanty coating and rapid fine pulse

In this definition, the Chinese term 五心烦热 is translated as “vexing heat in the chest, palms and soles”, quite similar to common practice in dealing with this Chinese term. However this Chinese term is sometimes also translated as “five center heat”.

阴虚湿热证 pattern/syndrome of yin deficiency and dampness-heat: a pattern/syndrome of yin-fluid deficiency complicated with dampness-heat obstruction, manifested by low fever, night sweating, flushed cheeks in the afternoon, vexing heat in the chest, palms and soles, bitter and greasy taste in the mouth, cumbersome limbs, reddened tongue with yellow slimy coating, and rapid fine pulse

The expression “cumbersome limbs” in this definition may be a translation of the Chinese term 四肢不收 which means that the limbs are too weak to move freely as often seen in paralysis or flaccidity due to qi deficiency resulting from spleen deficiency or 四肢不用 which also means that the limbs are too weak to move. In the current translation practice, these two Chinese terms are often translated as “dysfunction of limbs” or “flaccidity
of limbs”. However, “cumbersome limbs” also sounds understandable, acceptable and natural.

Yang虚血滞证 pattern/syndrome of yin deficiency and blood stasis: a pattern/syndrome of yin fluid deficiency complicated with blood stasis, manifested by vexing heat in the chest, palms and soles, dry throat and mouth, low fever in the afternoon, local stabbing pain, expectoration of blood stasis, dark blood with clots, purple spots on the tongue, and fine rough (choppy) pulse

It is not clear what Chinese term the expression “fine rough (choppy) pulse” in this definition reflects. In clinical practice, if a pulse is fine, it cannot be rough or choppy because fine pulse is usually weak and hard to feel. If a pulse appears rough and choppy, it must beat forcefully. So pathologically speaking, “fine rough (choppy) pulse” does not sound quite reasonable.

Yang虚气滞证 pattern/syndrome of yin deficiency with qi stagnation: a pattern/syndrome of qi stagnation arising from yin deficiency, manifested by aversion to cold, cold limbs, pale complexion, painful distention in the chest, epigastrium and abdomen, borborygmus, sloppy stools, long voidings of clear urine, pale and enlarged tongue, and slow, sunken and weak pulse.

The expression “sloppy stools” may be a translation of the Chinese term 便溏 which is often translated as “loose stool” in the current translation practice. However, “sloppy stools” also sound reasonable and vivid because in English the word “sloppy” means (of clothes) loose, informal and careless or wet and dirty. In “pale and enlarged tongue”, the word “pale” may be used to translate the Chinese expression 舌淡 which is often translated as “light-colored tongue”. Comparatively speaking, “light-colored” is better than “pale” in revealing the nature of tongue according to its coloration.

Yang虚湿阻证 pattern/syndrome of yin deficiency with dampness obstruction: a pattern/syndrome of dampness obstruction attributed to insufficient yang qi with disordered qi transformation, manifested by aversion to cold, cumbersome limbs, dampness obstruction, edema, inhibited urine, sloppy stool, reduced food intake and abdominal distension.

In this definition, “inhibited urine” may be a translation of the Chinese term 小便不利 which is often rendered as “unsmooth urination” and “reduced food intake” may be a translation of the Chinese term 食欲不振 which is similar to 纳呆 or the Chinese term 食欲减退 which is occasionally translated as “reduced appetite”.

Yin虚水泛证 pattern/syndrome of yang deficiency with water flood: a pattern/syndrome arising when yang deficiency of the spleen and kidney leads to retention of water in the body, usually manifested by generalized edema, inhibited urine, palpitation, dyspnea, aversion to cold with cold limbs, abdominal distension, soggy diarrhea, pale and plump tongue with white slippery coating, and slow, sunken and weak pulse.

The Chinese phrase 水泛 in 阴虚水泛 is often translated as edema which of course does not sound accurate and clear. In WPRO Standard, this phrase is translated as “water flood” which sounds quite horrible but at least makes it different from edema. In 阴虚水泛, the phrase 水泛 means that water flows wantonly in the internal organs and inside the body because of disturbance in water transportation due to deficiency of kidney yang. In this sense, to translate 水泛 into “water flood” seems somewhat reasonable.

阴虚痰凝证 pattern/syndrome of yin deficiency with congealing phlegm: a pattern/syndrome of insufficient yang qi complicated with congealing phlegm, manifested by aversion to cold, cold limbs, dizziness, somnolence, oppression in the chest with profuse phlegm, obesity, or goiter, swollen inflamed lymph glands, breast nodules, swollen and stiff joints, slimy tongue coating and slippery pulse.

The Chinese phrase 痰凝 in 阴虚痰凝证 is often translated as “coagulation of phlegm” or “stagnation of phlegm”. To render it as “congealing phlegm” is also clear and reasonable. In this definition, “slimy tongue” may be a translation of the Chinese term 舌腻 which means that the coating of tongue is greasy or slimy. Traditionally the Chinese character 腻 in 舌腻 is translated as “greasy”. Of course to translate 腻 as “slimy” is also understandable. Slimy is the adjective of slime which means partly liquid mud that appears ugly and bad-smelling or thick sticky liquid produced by the skin of various fish and snails. According to the connotation of 腻 in Chinese and slime in English, the better translation of 腻 is obviously “greasy” because 腻 in Chinese is used to describe the feeling of something that is covered with grease.

阴虚寒凝证 pattern/syndrome of yin deficiency with congealing cold: cold limbs, pain in the chest, epigastrium, abdomen, waist and knees
relieved by warmth, and in women, late periods, painful periods, menstrual discharge of dark blood and clots, pale and enlarged tongue with white slippery coating, and slow sunken pulse.

The Chinese phrase 寒凝 in 阳虚寒凝 is frequently translated as “coagulation of cold” or “stagnation of cold”, similar to the translation of 阳虚寒凝 in analyzed above. The word “period” used in this definition certainly refers to menstruation. However, such a use of “period” sounds rather informal in an international standard.

The above is a brief analysis about the terms concerning yin deficiency in syndrome differentiation. Generally speaking, most of the terms listed above are translated quite reasonably and clearly. However, the logical relationship underlined in some of the terms still needs to be properly revealed. Take the Chinese term 阴虚内热 for example. It means internal heat due to yin deficiency. To translate it as “yin deficiency with internal heat” seems a little unclear in terms of the logical relationship between “yin deficiency” and “internal heat”. Other examples are the so-called 津亏, 热, 血瘀, 气滞, 水泛, 湿热 and 寒凝 caused by 阳虚 or 阳虚. In WFCMS Standard, all the cause and effect relationships are understood as something parallel. For instance, the Chinese term 阴虚动血证 is translated as syndrome/pattern of yin deficiency and bleeding. In fact, this term means bleeding caused by yin deficiency.

阴血亏虚证 yin-blood depletion pattern/syndrome: a pattern/syndrome marked by emaciation, sallow complexion, low fever, flushed cheeks, numb limbs, dizziness, blurred vision, palpitations, insomnia, reddened tongue with scanty coating and rapid fine pulse

The so-called 阴血 in Chinese actually just refers to the blood. According to the theory of yin and yang, the blood pertains to yin in nature. That is why the blood in TCM is usually called yin blood. In the current translation practice, 阴血 is often frequently translated into blood. In order to make a difference in terminologies, some translators insist on rendering it as yin-blood just as what is done in WPRO Standard.

阴盛阳衰证 pattern/syndrome of yin exuberance with yang debilitation: a pattern/syndrome arising when exuberant yin cold leads to debilitation of yang qi, manifested by aversion to cold, cold limbs, long voidings of clear urine, diarrhea, or cold pain with preference for warmth, pale tongue with white coating, and slow sunken pulse

In the current translation practice, the Chinese character 盛 in 阴盛阳衰 is also frequently translated as “predominance”. The Chinese character 衰 in this term is often rendered as “decline” in the current translation practice. In WPRO Standard, the English word debilitation is used to translate the Chinese concept 衰. In TCM, if衰 is used to describe physical weakness, it can be understood as “debilitation”; if衰 is used to describe weakness of yin or yang or qi, it may be understood as “decline”. If the degree of decline is severe, it is described as 衰微 in Chinese which means something like declination.

阴盛格阳证 pattern/syndrome of exuberant yin repelling yang: a pattern/syndrome in which exuberant internal cold forces yang qi to the outer body, giving rise to signs of true internal cold and false external heat

The Chinese character 格 in 阴盛格阳 means repelling. Sometimes it is also translated as “rejecting”. The expression “true internal cold and false external heat” in this definition may refer to the Chinese term 真寒假热 which is usually simply translated as “true cold and false heat”. That means the English words “internal” and “external” can be omitted because the Chinese character 真 in this term emphasizes the nature of the related syndrome while the Chinese character 假 describes the manifestation or symptom of the related syndrome. So in TCM, the relationship between 真 and 假 is self-evident.

阴损及阳证 pattern/syndrome of detriment to yin affecting yang: a pattern/syndrome arising when long-term depletion of yin fluid causes damage to yang, resulting in deficiency of both yin and yang, in which yin deficiency is primary while yang deficiency secondary

The Chinese character 损 in 阴损及阳证 literally means damage or impairment or detriment. That is why these three English words are all frequently used to translate 损. In WFCMS Standard, the English word “damage” is used to translate the Chinese character in dealing with 损及 真 and 阳损及 阴. In the definition, the English word damage is also used to translate 损 as in the clause “when long-term depletion of yin fluid causes damage to yang”. Sometimes when this Chinese character is used to describe the condition of qi, blood and essence, the English word consumption is often used to translate it. As to the Chinese character 损, the English word “involve” is also frequently used to translate it. In this definition,
the expression “deficiency of both yin and yang” is obviously the translation of the Chinese term 阴阳两虚. However in WPRO Standard, the Chinese term 阴阳两虚 is translated as “dual deficiency of yin and yang”, which is analyzed previously in this article.

阴损及阳证 pattern/syndrome of detriment to yang affecting yin: a pattern/syndrome arising when long-term debilitation of yang qi causes damage to yin, resulting in deficiency of both yin and yang, in which yang deficiency is primary while yin deficiency secondary.

阴竭阳脱证 pattern/syndrome of yin exhaustion and yang collapse: a critical pattern/syndrome of yin-essence exhaustion followed by yang collapse.

The Chinese term 阴竭阳脱 actually implies a cause and effect relationship, indicating that collapse of yang is caused by exhaustion of yin or exhaustion of yin is primary while collapse of yang is secondary. According to such an analysis, to translate 阴竭阳脱 as “yin exhaustion and yang collapse” seems inaccurate because 阴竭 and 阳脱 are not parallel to each other.

清阳不升证 pattern/syndrome of clear yang failing to ascend: a pattern/syndrome marked by dizziness, blurred vision, tinnitus and impaired hearing, aversion to cold with lack of warmth in the extremities, lattdiusness of yin and lack of strength, anorexia, sloppy stool, pale tongue with white coating, and relaxed weak pulse.

The Chinese character 清 in the term 清阳不升 is also frequently translated as “lucid” and the whole term is often rendered as “failure of lucid/clear yang to ascend”. In the definition, the expression “lack of strength” seems to be the translation of TCM expression 无力 which is often translated as “weakness” or “fatigue”. However, to translate it as “lack of strength” seems quite equivalent to the original expression in structure and connotation.

戴阳证 upcast yang pattern/syndrome: a critical pattern/syndrome of true lower body cold and false upper body heat characterized by pale complexion with tidal reddening of the cheeks.

The Chinese term 戴阳 refers to a critical pathological condition or a severe disease characterized by true cold in the lower part and false heat in the upper part of the body due to deficiency of kidney essence and floating of true yang with the clinical manifestation of pink and migratory coloration of the cheeks. That is why it is often translated as “floating yang” in China. However, such a translation is easy to be confused with 虚阳外越 which is another term in TCM. Comparatively speaking, to translate 戴阳 as “upcast yang” seems more acceptable because it has at least made a difference between 戴阳 and 虚阳外越.

亡阳证 yin collapse pattern/syndrome: a serious pattern/syndrome resulting from exhaustion of yin fluid, manifested by thirst and craving for cold drink, flushed face, restlessness, dry tongue and rapid fine pulse.

The Chinese character 亡 in 亡阳 is also frequently translated as “loss”, “exhaustion” or “depletion”. According to the connotation of 亡, “loss” is undoubtedly an ideal equivalence to it. In the definition, the English word “craving” is perhaps used to translate the Chinese character 欲 which is also translated as “preference” or “like”.

亡阳证; 阳脱证 yin collapse pattern/syndrome: a serious pattern/syndrome resulting from exhaustion of yang qi, manifested by pallor, dripping of cold sweat, cold limbs, pale and moistened tongue, and hardly perceptible pulse.

In the definition, the expression “exhaustion of yang qi” is obviously a translation of the Chinese term 亡阳 (气), somewhat differing from the previous translation of this term. The expression “dripping of cold sweat” seems to be the translation of the Chinese term 冷汗淋漓 which is often rendered as “profuse cold sweating”. The expression “hardly perceptible pulse” seems to be the translation of the Chinese term 脉微欲绝 which is frequently translated as “indistinct pulse” or “pulse on the verge of distinction”. Comparatively speaking, “hardly perceptible pulse” seems clearer in meaning.

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