

# Yellow Emperor's Classics: Inspirational Resources of Acupuncture

Henry C. Lu

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The majority of Chinese historians are of the opinion that The Yellow Emperor's Classics of Internal Medicine was accomplished through the cooperative efforts of a group of most outstanding scholars around the 3rd century B.C. The invaluable first Chinese medical classics stood for an excellent presentation of past experiences that had been accumulated from the days Chinese medicine began to be practised in ancient China. The Chinese believe that the practice of Chinese medicine in China dates back to the time of Yellow Emperor around 2,600 B.C., primarily on the ground that this gigantic classic was attributed to Yellow Emperor himself. This implies that Chinese medicine had already been practiced in China for over two thousand years before the Yellow Emperor's Classics of Internal Medicine was first published. The position of the Classics in Chinese medicine may be compared to that of Plato's Republic in Western philosophy and that of Shakespeare in English literature, for the good reason that the classic in question had, since its first publication, become the most authoritative guidance for the practice of Chinese medicine. It had become the foundations of Chinese medicine in the same way as the thought of Confucius had become the foundations of Chinese philosophy. Very few, if any, Chinese physicians of traditional Chinese medicine would challenge the basic contents of this celebrated classic to this day. "To make diagnosis without asking the patient as to how the disease originally started, whether he has any worry or irregular habits of eating, whether he has any excessive habits of living, whether he has suffered from toxic effects, and to rely solely on hasty pulse diagnosis at the wrist to come up with a name of disease on such shaky grounds, which could easily cause harm to the patient are the fourth fault on the part of physicians." "A physician may become known to people living as far as one thousand miles away by word of mouth, but he cannot be called a good physician unless he knows thoroughly about pulse diagnosis and human affairs. The way of treatment consists in the precious heritage of naturally established truth. It is not wise to stick to pulse diagnosis at the wrist without an adequate knowledge of the pulse of the five viscera. When one hundred diseases begin to attack, the physician may blame himself or he may blame his teacher for his failure to instruct him in medical knowledge, but the most important thing is to administer treatment according to the established principles. A physician who fails to administer treatment according to the established principles and foregoes the legitimate medical skills may treat his patients with effects by accident, but it is quite foolish for him to be content with his accidental success." "Alas. Medicine is so subtle that no one seems able to know about its complete secrets. The way of medicine is so wide that its scope is as immeasurable as heaven and Earth, and its depth is as immeasurable as the four seas. Unless you learn by heart, it is likely that you will remain in the dark about the bright theory of medicine."

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