



Deepening Perspectives on Chinese Medicine

by Lonny S. Jarrett

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Sneak
Preview
Expected
publication date:
April 2021

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Spirit Path Press

www.spiritpathpress.com

Expected publication date: April 2021

850 pages

ISBN: 978-0-9669916-2-8

Have you ever wondered what integral medicine primarily informed by an East Asian medical tradition might look like? *Deepening Perspectives on Chinese Medicine* by Lonny S. Jarrett is an excellent example of innovative explorations in East Asian medicine. After decades of teaching and practicing, the author elaborates a manifesto that establishes a medical practice that is congruent with integral principles as they are developing in this day and age.

Integral theory is a meta-theory, a theory of theories, an elaborate perspective on systems of systems that have been laid out since Hegel and include Henri-Louis Bergson, Alfred North Whitehead, Teilhard de Chardin, Sri Aurobindo, and Jean Gebser as some of the most relevant in this field. Jarrett states:

“Integral theory offers the potential for the emergence of a more holistic medicine that embraces the sciences of structure and function equally in better service of humanity. ... Just as the synthetic nature of Chinese medicine [CM] allows it to subsume the quantitative sciences, so too does the meta-framework of integral theory allow it to subsume the complementary worldviews of East and West, induction and deduction, holism and reductionism, functional and structural perspectives, into a single, whole, unified, view.”

The author also believes that as more evidence is produced to support the effectiveness of CM therapeutics, the profession often fails to address the implications of East Asian medicine's sophisticated ontology in a way that faces current postmodern challenges. The book aims to present a clear vision that is both clinically and scholarly relevant in this specific context.

Jarrett believes that East Asian medicine has the potential to bring interiority to a globalizing medical practice that looks into itself from a 15 billion-year perspective. As such, he describes the need to willingly enact the critical virtues for a much-needed radical change on a collective as well as a personal level.

Western psychology and modern philosophy can and do mesh with eastern and western philosophy and religion. In this book, East Asian medicine concepts are elaborated and interpreted within an integral and developmental context with emphasis on the subtle dimensions of the self. Outlined with a spiritual undertone that is clear and abundant in detail, Jarrett discusses the transmission of a meta-narrative of human health and development within an evolutionary context that does not dissociate from any developmental quadrants of life.

The book is divided into three main parts. Part I establishes the foundations and perspective necessary for an appreciation of medicine as a method for catalyzing development. Part II elaborates on this foundation within the context of the five-element tradition and

includes several detailed case studies on this topic. Part III presents the integral practice of Chinese medicine through an elaboration of integral theory. The relationship of states, stages, quadrants, lines, and types to the practice of integral medicine is considered here, supported by the integral perspectives of diverse authors, including Sri Aurobindo, Jean Gebser Teilhard de Chardin, Ken Wilber, and Liu Yiming as they bring their enlightenment to bear on the subject of human development.

Based on quite *sui generis* interpretations of East Asian medicine, the author attempts to elaborate a practice of medicine that is congruent with integral principles as they develop in the context of 21st-century challenges. Some conjectures could very well be challenged by peers. But as this is a medicine that is recreated at each time it is enacted, there is certainly plenty of room for more or less liberal interpretations. The kind of liberal interpretation found in this book may well lead the reader to regard it as more authentic than other traditions.

As the clinical practice of East Asian medicine expands in the wake of an increasingly globalized movement, we observe a great flourishing of professional creativity. Lonny Jarrett is the kind of teacher and writer that may rescue those dismayed by a lack of humanism and meaningfulness in their medical practices. Yet, while presenting a paradigm that is in discursive competition with existing hierarchies of discursive power, this is not for the faint of heart. I found myself at times inspired and at times challenged by Jarrett's vision but always stimulated and engaged.

The tone of the discourse woven throughout the book reflects an experiential praxis that places greater emphasis on qualitative assessments and the development of meaningful relationships between subjects in consciousness rather than the quantitative assessments of single, isolated objects. Grounded in phenomenological-sounding claims about experiential praxis that are beyond religious dogmas—because they are eventually self-evident to the aware practitioner—Jarrett sees disease from a developmental perspective that includes subtle and very subtle dimensions as they involve consciousness, free will, and choice, endeavoring to support the patient to become increasingly aware, shift perspective, and remove themselves as the source of their own and others' suffering.

Again, in the author's own words:

"This book is about helping practitioners become exemplars of the type of change that we'd like to catalyze in our patients. For this is the basis of guiding patients to remove themselves as a source of unnecessary suffering. What I'm conveying here is a dharmic medicine predicated on the recognition of oneness. ... This text is written to a very specific demographic of people. It is my feeling

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that practitioners of Chinese medicine are among the most sophisticated systems thinkers on the planet.

Not suggesting that CM adopt integral theory as a replacement for the perennial philosophy and worldview on which it is based. Rather, explicating CM as the most substantial basis upon which the emergence of integral medicine might be based. Thus, we may appreciate the strengths of CM in this regard as well as note weaknesses that are necessarily complemented by other perspectives."

This discourse is an exemplar tradition where a psycho-analyzed, spiritualized practice is very different from many of the forms in China and East Asia. The demographic who will appreciate it the most are those who are immersed in a western modern to post-post-modern cultural background.

At some point in the path of studying Chinese medicine, etymological research can become crucial. Supported by the work of Elisabeth Rochat de la Vallé, F. Claude Larre, Heiner Fruehauf, and others, Lonny Jarrett continues to elaborate sophisticated, abundant etymological interpretations meant to be applicable in the clinical encounter between the EAM practitioner and its patient.

Deepening Perspectives on Chinese Medicine presents a narrative that is not founded on the lineage teachings of any branch of East Asian medicine, recreating myths and the etymology of ancient terms and meanings. This discussion may lead the reader to conclude that, indeed, where medicine and spirituality are merged, a liberated consciousness has everything to do with ancient Chinese medicine.

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