

Examining Kē Yùnbó's Academic Innovations through the Lens of the *Shānghán Lùn Yì* (Supplement to the *Shānghán lùn*)

Sòng Jùnshēng, Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine

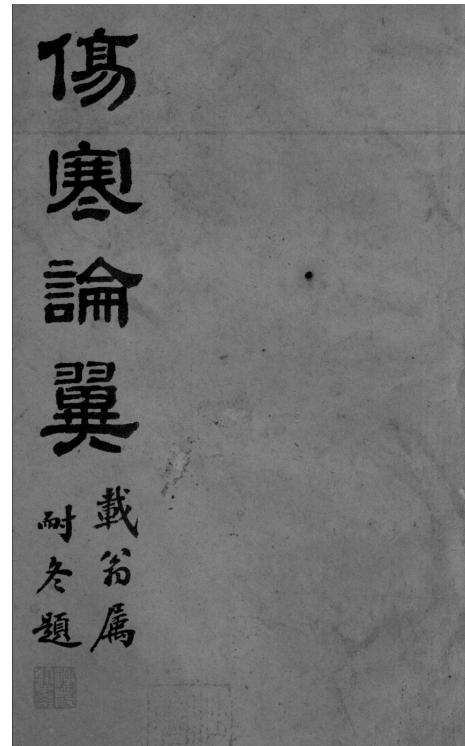
Translated by Eran Even, Ph.D

The *Shānghán Láisū Jí* (Collection for Reviving the *Shānghán lùn*) is Kē Yùnbó's representative work, consisting of three parts: *Shānghán Lùn Zhù* (Annotations on the *Shānghán lùn*), *Shānghán lùn Yì* (Supplement to the *Shānghán lùn*), and *Shānghán Fùyì* (Further Supplement to the *Shānghán lùn*).

Among them, the *Shānghán Lùn Zhù* (in four juan, completed in 1669) primarily consists of Kē's reorganization of the *Shānghán Lùn*. Using the editorial method of "classifying formulas by pattern and taking the pattern as the guiding principle," Kē systematically rearranged the original text, making this work the main body of the *Shānghán Láisū Jí*.

Shānghán lùn Yì (in two juan, completed in 1674) serves as a complement to the *Shānghán Lùn Zhù*. The first juan discusses the general principles of the entire treatise, the six conformations, combined patterns, wind-cold, warm and summer disorders, spasms, dampness, and pulse examination. The second juan provides a systematic exposition on the pathomechanisms, pulse and symptom patterns, therapeutic methods, and transformations of disorders within the six conformations, and also elaborates on overarching therapeutic principles.

Shānghán Fùyì (in two juan; date of completion unknown) focuses specifically on the formulas of the treatise, organizing them according to the six conformations. Each section begins with a general discussion of that conformation, offering a comprehensive introduction to its associated prescriptions. It then explains the formula intentions and indications in relation to etiology, pathomechanism, and pulse presentation, including the rationale behind medicinal choices and their practical applications.



The distinguishing feature of the *Shānghán lùn Yì* is that it closely integrates the theoretical framework of the *Nèijīng* with the content of the *Shānghán lùn*, yet without being constrained by or merely repeating the *Nèijīng*'s wording. Kē often provides original insights that go beyond the understanding of his predecessors, commanding great respect. The following is a brief summary of the author's reflections upon reading the *Shānghán lùn Yì*.

1. Explaining the *Shānghán lùn* through the *Nèijīng*: Kē's Innovative "Conformation Boundaries" Theory

Building upon his deep study of both the *Nèijīng* and the *Shānghán lùn*, Kē Qín (Yùnbó) proposed a distinctive theory of "conformation boundaries".

Kē first rejected the idea that Zhāng Zhòngjǐng's six conformations derived from the chapter "Discussion of Heat" (*Rèlùn*) in the *Sùwèn*. In the *Shānghán lùn Yì*, he wrote:

"[Wáng] Shūhē did not understand that Zhòngjǐng's six conformations refer to the 'channels as territorial divisions,' not to the channels and network vessels. He erroneously cited the *Discussion of Heat* from the *Nèijīng* as a preface to Zhòngjǐng's text, thereby confusing the patterns and treatments of the six conformations, leaving their principles unclear."

Kē argued that Zhāng Zhòngjǐng's concept of the six conformations did not originate from the *Discussion of Heat*, but rather from the *Discourse on the Bodily Regions* (*Píbù Lùn*) of the *Sùwèn*. He stated:

"Since Zhòngjǐng said he composed his work based on the *Sùwèn*, it must have been the six conformations as broadly expounded therein. According to the *Discourse on the Bodily Regions*: 'The skin has divisions, the vessels have order, and diseases arise differently according to each part. By distinguishing the regions—left and right, upper and lower, yīn and yáng—one understands the beginnings and ends of all the channels.' This marks the origin of Zhòngjǐng's establishment of the six conformation regions."

Kē then defined the spatial basis for each of the six conformations as follows:

- *Tàiyáng region*: "Internally connected to the heart and chest, externally from the vertex, extending anteriorly to the forehead, posteriorly to the shoulders and back, and inferiorly to the feet—this is the *tàiyáng* domain."

- *Yángmíng region*: “From the heart and chest internally to the stomach and intestines, externally from the head and face down to the abdomen and feet—this is the yángmíng domain.”
- *Shàoyáng region*: “From the heart to the throat, exiting at the cheeks, ascending to the ears and eyes, obliquely reaching the vertex, and externally from the flanks connecting internally to the gallbladder—this is the shàoyáng domain.”
- *Tàiyīn region*: “From the abdomen through the spleen to the intestines and anus—this is the tàiyīn domain.”
- *Shàoyīn region*: “From the abdomen to the kidneys and bladder—this is the shàoyīn domain.”
- *Juéyīn region*: “From the abdomen through the liver and diaphragm to the heart, and from the flanks downward to the lower abdomen along the essential tendons—this is the juéyīn domain.”

Kē divided the human body into six territorial “surfaces,” each internally linked with the viscera and bowels and externally with the limbs—extending upward to the vertex and downward to the thoracoabdominal cavity. These regions interlock anatomically and complement one another functionally: in health they cooperate harmoniously, in disease they influence one another reciprocally.

This spatial conceptualization, though not universally accepted, expanded the understanding of the six conformations beyond the channel system. It offered a comprehensive physiological framework encompassing all bodily functions and a pathological framework reflecting all possible disease transformations.

As Kē himself stated: “Zhòngjǐng’s six conformations are divisions of the body’s six territories—their scope is broad. Although the pulse pertains to the channels, the theory is not confined to them.”

He further wrote: “All conditions—whether wind-cold, warm-heat, internal damage, or external contraction; from the surface to the interior; involving cold or heat, deficiency or excess—are included within these six conformations.”

Kē’s innovative “conformation boundary” (*Jīngjiè*) theory thus played a positive and pioneering role in deepening the study of the six conformations as expounded in the *Shānghán lùn*.

2. Explaining the *Shānghán lùn* through the *Nèijīng*: Elucidating the “Therapeutic Principles”

In the *Shānghán lùn Yì*, Kē Qín applied the theoretical framework of the *Nèijīng* to analyze in detail the treatment methods of the *Shānghán lùn*, thereby closely integrating the therapeutic principles of both classics. Kē wrote: “It must be understood that all of Zhāng Zhòngjǐng’s therapeutic methods are founded upon the *Nèijīng*.”

Guided by the principles of the *Nèijīng*, Kē employed concrete examples from the *Shānghán lùn* to explain these methods, laying a solid foundation for later physicians to more deeply comprehend and apply the *Nèijīng* in clinical practice.

Kē further elaborated:

“As Qí Bó said: ‘In regulating and treating illness, one must first distinguish between yīn and yáng. For yáng disorders, treat the yīn; for yīn disorders, treat the yáng. Distinguish between interior and exterior, each governed by its own domain. Treat the exterior from the exterior, and the interior from the interior. When the exterior influences the interior, treat the exterior first; when the interior influences the exterior, harmonize the interior. If the interior disorder overflows outward, regulate the interior first and then treat the exterior; if the exterior disorder penetrates inward, treat the exterior first and then harmonize the interior.’”

Kē then applied this passage to interpret Zhāng Zhòngjǐng’s therapeutic logic:

“In the *Treatise*, fever with aversion to cold arises from yáng disorders, while aversion to cold without fever arises from yīn disorders — this is the distinction of yīn and yáng. In yáng disorders, formulas such as *Bái Hǔ Tāng* and *Chéng Qi Tāng* are used to preserve yīn; in yīn disorders, *Fùzǐ Tāng* and *Wúzhūyú Tāng* are employed to support yáng. For exterior disorders, *Máhuáng Tāng* and *Guizhī Tāng* are used to release the surface; for interior disorders, *mángxiāo* and *dàhuáng* formulas are used to purge internally.”

When the exterior is deficient and the interior excess, or the exterior hot and the interior cold, the methods differ — releasing the exterior, harmonizing the surface, attacking the interior, rescuing the interior — each determined by the relative depth of the disorder

and its proper sequence and weighting. Thus are the interior and exterior defined, each abiding within its own domain.

For simultaneous tàiyang–yángmíng disorders, a mild sweating method with *Máhuáng Tāng* treats from the exterior inward. For pure yángmíng disorders, with heat effusion, sweating, and aversion to heat rather than cold, *Zhīzǐ Chǐ Tāng* regulates from the interior outward. When sweating fails to resolve fever and the body feels steaming hot, *Tiāo Wèi Chéng Qi Tāng* regulates the interior first. When the exterior remains unresolved and there is fullness under the heart, one must first resolve the exterior, then address the internal focal distention — treating the exterior first, harmonizing the interior afterward.”

By using the *Nèijīng*’s statement in the *Treatise on the Correspondence of Yin and Yang with the Natural Order* — “In treating disease, one must seek its root” — and illustrating it through the concrete therapeutic practices of the *Shānghán lùn*, Kē demonstrated a model of uniting theoretical insight with clinical application. His interpretive method stands as an exemplar of the synthesis of classical theory and medical practice.

3. Advocating Zhāng Zhòngjǐng’s Six Conformations as the Model for “All Diseases”

Kē Qín held that Zhāng Zhòngjǐng’s six conformation system was a framework for understanding *all* diseases — not only those of cold damage. He argued that the principles of treatment for cold damage and for miscellaneous diseases are fundamentally the same, as both conform to the regulation of the six conformations. Thus, one who studies cold damage must understand the logic of miscellaneous diseases, and vice versa.

He wrote in the *Shānghán lùn Yì*: “Who would have thought that Zhòngjǐng’s concise system could encompass all diseases within the six conformations, leaving none beyond their scope?”

Kē was the first to propose explicitly that the six conformations serve as a model for all diseases. He maintained that all illnesses of the body fall within the six conformations, and that cold damage is but one type among them. The six conformation framework includes both externally contracted and internally generated disorders. He further asserted that “the principles for treating cold damage and miscellaneous diseases are not two,” emphasizing that “each conformation includes cold damage; cold damage alone does not possess the six conformations.”

In discussing the relationship between cold damage and miscellaneous diseases, Kē pointed out that Zhāng Zhòngjǐng's work on miscellaneous diseases was already contained within the *Shānghán lùn*. Moreover, within the treatise, miscellaneous diseases were frequently interwoven with cold damage. He wrote:

"According to Zhāng Zhòngjǐng's preface, his *Shānghán lùn* and *Miscellaneous Diseases* originally consisted of sixteen juan, showing that cold damage and miscellaneous diseases were never meant to be separated into two works. Wherever a clause does not specifically refer to cold damage, it pertains equally to miscellaneous diseases."

For example:

"Stiffness and pain of the head and nape (tài yáng), excess of the stomach domain (yáng míng), bitterness of the mouth, dry throat, and dizziness (shào yáng)... these are not merely 'cold damage of the six conformations,' but rather manifestations of the six conformations' general pathological functions. The six conformations outline all diseases, not solely those of cold damage."

Kē observed that among the six conformations, only the *tài yáng* chapter focuses primarily on external invasion by cold, since *tài yáng* governs the exterior. Later compilers such as Wáng Shūhē mistakenly took the entire work to concern only cold damage. Yet Zhāng Zhòngjǐng himself made clear that his text was not limited to that scope. Hence, in the *tài yáng* section, he first clarified the threads of various disorders in detail — more thoroughly than in the other conformations.

Kē quoted the treatise: "In *tài yáng* disease, whether heat effusion has manifested or not, if there is aversion to cold, body pain, vomiting, and a tight pulse in both yīn and yáng positions, it is called cold damage (*shānghán*)."

Kē noted that this not only defines the *tài yáng* cold damage pattern but also serves as a general outline for all six conformation disorders. Furthermore, Zhāng Zhòngjǐng subdivided *tài yáng* disorders into cold damage, wind strike, heat stroke, warm disease, and damp impediment, while the other conformations were not divided in this way — revealing the coherent logic of integrating both external and internal pathologies.

Kē pointed out that many patterns — such as chest bind, visceral bind, yáng bind, yīn bind, jaundice from constrained heat, heat entering the blood chamber, or manic speech — may arise from cold damage or from other causes. The complex intermingling of such disorders demonstrates the treatise's intended integration of cold damage and miscellaneous diseases.

Outside of cold damage, all are miscellaneous diseases, whose names are innumerable. Hence the six conformations were established to govern them. Within cold damage, numerous miscellaneous conditions are interwoven — internal and external, deficiency and excess. Therefore, studying *cold* damage and miscellaneous diseases together allows us “to see the clear and the turbid of the *Jīng* and *Wèi* [rivers] within their union”—this is the essential method.

This phrase — “to see the clear and the turbid of the *Jīng* and *Wèi* [rivers] within their union” — highlights two key points: first, that cold damage and miscellaneous diseases can be compared to distinguish the correct and the pathogenic, the interior and exterior; and second, that the two are intimately interconnected.

Although Kē’s views were not universally accepted in his time, his principle that “the six conformations establish laws for all diseases, not merely cold damage” has since become widely acknowledged. He also emphasized: “Only by understanding the topography of the six conformations can one grasp the pivot of all diseases. Only by tracing their pathways can one master the rules of treatment.”

This perspective provided a theoretical foundation for applying *Shānghán lùn* formulas to a wide range of diseases, thereby expanding their clinical relevance and influence.

Later scholars praised Kē’s contribution. As Cáo Hé wrote in *Notes on Reading Medical Books*:

“Cold damage and miscellaneous diseases follow different paths but share the same origin. The six conformations indeed establish laws for all diseases, not solely for cold damage. Kē’s achievement perpetuates Zhāng Zhòngjǐng’s unextinguished flame through millennia — a truly monumental contribution.”

By skillfully integrating the *Nèijīng*’s theoretical principles with the content of the *Shānghán lùn*, Kē demonstrated both depth of scholarship and precision of application, setting a model for later generations to follow.

Of course, upon closer examination, certain statements in his work tend toward overcorrection — for example, his assertion that “Zhòngjǐng’s six conformations are not the channels and network vessels.” This seems somewhat self-contradictory, since Kē’s own division of the body into six conformation regions depends upon the channel and network vessels as its pathway. The material basis of his “conformation boundary” (*Jīngjiè*) theory must therefore include the viscera, the channels, and the domains of qi transformation; otherwise, it would be “a source without water, a rootless tree.” Nevertheless, Kē’s spirit of scholarly innovation — seeking development through inheritance — provides a valuable example for the continued evolution of Chinese medical thought.

(From the Journal of Guǎngzhōu University of Chinese Medicine, Vol. 19, No. 2, 2002)

