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The Tian Lineage® and its Pulse System

The Tian Lineage® is an unbroken line of clinicians, from Dr. Tian Qitai, Dr. Tian Heming (aka Tian Ba Wei) (1883-1980), Dr. Zeng Rongxiu (1931-2012), and Dr. Arnaud Versluys, who practice a unique system of pulse diagnosis and classical prescription.

Dr. Tian Heming was a famous Chengdu physician who was in clinical practice for more than 70 years, and would typically see in excess of 200 patients per day. Dr Tian was well known for his speed and accuracy in diagnosis and prescribing, which is what allowed him to see such high patient numbers day after day for 70 plus years. This was made possible through the highly efficient system of pulse diagnosis he used, with which he was able to narrow down the potential formulas that patient required to just 2-3, and then with one or two very specific questions, differentiate between the remaining options to reach a final focused treatment in a matter of minutes.

One question that must arise at this point is, if Dr. Tian was jumping straight to a formula without going through the steps of 'Diagnosis, Treatment Principle, Treatment Strategy' etc., then weren't his treatments just aimed at a very symptomatic level, rather than the root cause we often seek in Chinese medicine? Quite the contrary! Dr Tian's practice was rooted in the Han Dynasty canon of the Shanghan Zabing Lun (Shanghan Lun & Jingui Yaolue), which works on the principle of 'the treatment is the diagnosis'. The formulas of the Shanghan Zabing Lun are systematically designed along a 5 element & 6 conformations model, to exactly mirror physiology. And so, classical formulas (Jing Fang) are not just treatments, they can be seen as units of therapeutic support of physiology for when a certain function is failing in the body. When physiology fails then this will manifest in the pulse, and so every formula has very specific characteristics in the pulse, allowing one to prescribe very accurately. So by prescribing a specific formula in this manner you are making a diagnosis. And applying the principle of 'the treatment is the diagnosis' offers a solution to the problem, rather than just a name for the problem.

Transmission of the Tian Lineage Pulse System

Until recently this pulse system was passed down in a very traditional manner, one-on-one in clinic, teacher to student over many years. Dr. Tian would take the pulse, ask one or two questions, and then prescribe, and Dr. Zeng would take the pulse and note the questions and prescription, and over many years of doing this, the system would be transmitted. Dr. Arnaud Versluys would do likewise with Dr. Zeng, learning the pulse system in clinic through hands-on training with Dr. Zeng. But Dr. Versluys came to realise that though this method does produce a very high quality of student, it is very labour and time intensive, and it wasn't accessible to many in the modern age, so the number of students that can learn the system in its entirety in this manner is very limited. And so, combining his practical skills in the Tian Lineage pulse system learned from Dr. Zeng, and his knowledge of classical

formula science gleaned from pursuing his PHD in that subject, Dr Versluys designed a training program that helped the student grasp the theoretical underpinnings of the pulse and formula system outlined in the Shanghan Zabing Lun, and the practical training in the pulse system, along with guidance in clinical application.

This training programme was first offered in 2006, and has consistently ran in numerous locations around Europe, the US and Australia, producing hundreds of graduates. During this period the training programme has undergone continual development and enhancement to produce the current syllabus, which covers:

- The study of physiology & pathology on the classical 5 element & 6 conformation model
- The study of single herbs on a five flavour model
- The study of classical formula science and formulas – based on the 5 element & 6 conformation model
- A systematic approach to understanding and applying modification of formulas
- Tian Lineage pulse diagnosis for Shanghan Lun & Jingui Yaolue formulas
- Abdominal diagnosis (fukushin) for Shanghan Lun & Jingui Yaolue formulas
- Clinical strategies & case studies demonstrating the clinical application of all of the above knowledge

In addition to the core syllabus, there are numerous continuing education opportunities and advanced courses after graduation, which build on the foundations outlined above. These include:

Clinical training

- This involves the practical training in the Tian Lineage pulse system in clinic, much like the traditional method, and can be done either in a group or one-to-one setting;
- Students are eligible to begin this training once they have completed at least one pulse seminar.

Textual study of the Shanghan Lun lines

- Unlike most conventional Shanghan Lun education, we don't begin teaching by trawling through the text, but rather teach the principles underlying the text. Once these principles are firmly in place we then explore the text in full with greater understanding.

Advance seminars – these include:

- Study of the Wuyun Liuqi: system of medical meteorology that forms the basis of the classics;
- Study of the Yiyin Tangye Jing: the text that formed the blueprint of the formulas science of the Shanghan Zabing Lun;
- Study of Dr. Tian and Dr. Zeng's case studies;
- Study of Classical formula equivalencies;
- Dr. Tian's methods of modification & concluding treatment;
- Etc.

Schedule

Canonical Foundations:

1. 5 Flavours – 17-18 July 21
2. 19 Lines – 11-12 September 21
3. Inner Circle – 30-31 October 21
4. Outer Circle 1 – 27-28 November 21
5. Outer Circle 2 – 22-23 January 22

Shanghan Lun:

6. SHL Basics – 12-13 March 22
7. SHL Pulse – 7-8 May 22
8. SHL Fukushin – 2-3 July 22
9. Formula Families – 27-28 August 22
10. Modifications – 8-9 October 22
11. SHL Cases – 3-4 December 22

Jingui Yaolue:

12. JG 1 – 21-22 January 23
13. JG 2 – 11-12 March 23
14. JG 3 – 29-30 April 23
15. JG Pulse 10-11 June 23
16. JG Fukushin 26-27 August 23
17. JG Cases 30 Sept – 1 Oct 23

About Arnaud Versluys

Dr. Versluys is one of the very few Westerners to have received his full medical training in China. He spent a total of twelve years at the Chinese medical universities of Wuhan, Beijing and Chengdu, where he pursued his Bachelor, Master and Doctorate degrees in Chinese medicine.

In 1999, Dr. Versluys met his ultimately lifelong teacher, Dr. Zeng Rongxiu 曾榮修, under whom he trained in traditional Shanghan Lun discipleship for 13 years. This consolidated and strengthened his passion for the Han-dynasty canonical style of Chinese herbal medicine as presented in the Shanghan Lun and Jingui Yaolue, and as practiced in the Tian Lineage.

Though originally from Belgium, in 2003, Dr. Versluys moved to Portland, OR, USA, to teach at the School of Classical Chinese Medicine at the National College of Natural Medicine (NCNM). In 2008, Dr. Versluys founded the Institute of Classics in East Asian Medicine and he has worked as its director and the chief architect of its Canonical Chinese Medicine Training™ program, ever since.

Link to ICEAM website bio: <https://www.iceam.org/about-iceam/faculty-and-leadership/arnaud-versluys/>

About Laurie Ayres

Laurie has been studying the Tian Lineage of Shanghan Zabing Lun practice with Dr. Arnaud Versluys since 2007. During those years he was fortunate enough to also train with Dr. Zeng Rongxiu.

Laurie was appointed director of the London branch of the Institute of Classics in East Asian Medicine (ICEAM) in 2009, and approved as the Institute's first instructor and clinical supervisor. In 2010 Laurie started teaching ICEAM's Canonical Chinese Medicine® Training program, and has been the primary lecturer and clinical instructor in Europe ever since. He has published on the subject matter, and continues to deliver regular lectures and clinical training in locations across Europe, Australia and the US.

Full bio – link to ICEAM website: <https://www.iceam.org/about-iceam/faculty-and-leadership/laurie-ayres/>

About Tony Todd

Anthony Todd received his BSc in Physics from Birmingham University and his MSc in Parallel Processing from the University of West England. In 2000, he graduated with a diploma in Chinese medicine from the International College of Oriental Medicine in London, the oldest Chinese medicine college in the UK. He trained both Manaka and Toyohari style acupuncture since 2002, both of which rely heavily on abdominal palpation.

Before meeting Arnaud Versluys, he trained for two years in Kampo. In 2008, Mr. Todd enrolled in the Canonical Chinese Medicine Training offered by the London Institute of Classics in East Asian Medicine and received his certification as Diplomate in Canonical Chinese Medicine® (DCCM®) in 2011. As of 2012, Mr. Todd has been the designated instructor for both Shanghan Lun and Jingui Yaolue abdominal diagnosis Fukushin courses in both Europe, the US and Australia.

Full bio – link to ICEAM website: <https://www.iceam.org/about-iceam/faculty-and-leadership/anthony-todd/>

About Lettie de Wit

While studying Chinese medicine at Academy Qing-Bai, she also began studying Western medicine and after graduating started working as a medical doctor, specialised in paediatrics. She also opened her private practice for acupuncture and Chinese herbs around that time.

In 2015 she began her training in the Tian Lineage of Shanghan Zabing Lun, and following 3 years of focused study she graduated from the training with a diploma in Canonical Chinese Medicine (DCCM) in 2018. She continued her training through advanced seminars and hands on clinical training, and completed her clinical fellowship (FICEAM®) in 2020. Because of the way in which she found it enhanced her clinical practice, Lettie wanted to help ensure the training continued to be available to others throughout Europe and so became branch director of Utrecht ICEAM and coordinator of this course. She can be reached for further questions at ldewit@utrecht.iceam.org.

Full bio – link to ICEAM website: <https://www.iceam.org/about-iceam/faculty-and-leadership/lettie-dewit/>