

There are of course different degrees of right and wrong in the matter of how to translate terms. In the terminology we are advancing here, {μê} *xu1* and {1ê} *shi2* are rendered as 'vacuity' and 'repletion'. However, these terms have been represented by depletion/repletion, asthenia/sthenia, inanitas/plethora and emptiness/fullness, but deficiency/excess are the most commonly used.

No equivalents chosen for *xu1* and *shi2* are ideal, and none of the various translations that have been put forward are definitively wrong. Each pair has advantages and disadvantages that can be explained rationally, but we must be aware that the users of each pair may have an emotional attachment to their own preferred choice that colors the appreciation of objective data.

The primary meaning of *xu1* is 'empty'; that of *shi2* is 'full' or 'solid'. Extended meanings of the pair that follow from this in the ordinary language are:

### **Xu1**

<i>qian4 xu1</i>	modest
<i>kong1 xu1</i>	empty
<i>xu1 ni3</i>	invented, fictitious
<i>xu1 huan4</i>	illusory
<i>xu1 xian4</i>	virtual image
<i>xu1 kua1</i>	boast(ful)
<i>xu1 rong2</i>	vanity
<i>xu1 wei3</i>	sham, false, hypocritical
<i>xu1 zi4</i>	empty or grammatical word

### **Shi2**

<i>shi2 zai4</i>	real
<i>shi2 xin1</i>	solid (of objects)
<i>shi2 xi2</i>	practice
<i>shi2 gan4</i>	get right on the job, do solid work
<i>shi2 jia4</i>	actual price
<i>shi2 kuang4</i>	actual situation
<i>shi2 quan2</i>	real power
<i>shi2 wu4</i>	material object
<i>shi2 xian4</i>	realize ,achieve
<i>shi2 yong4</i>	practical
<i>shi2 zhan4</i>	actual combat
<i>shi2 zu2</i>	full solid
<i>shi2 zi4</i>	content word
<i>chong1 shi2</i>	substantial

These terms are used as contrasting pairs such as: `fanciful/real', `modest/honest' and `insincere/sincere' (the intended meaning usually supported by an additional character, as in {μê°} *xu1 wei4*, literally ``empty-fake," (i.e., insincere, hypocritical). The commonly used compound {μê@z} *xu1 ruo4* that means `weak' (lacking in vigor, of poor health) has no natural compound opposite that includes *shi2*.

In Chinese medicine, *xu1* denotes a condition created by an insufficiency of wanted things, while *shi2* denotes a condition created by the presence of unwanted things or an excess of normal things. Nevertheless, they are slightly different in meaning from {ɤɤ'~} *bu4 zu2*, `insufficiency' and {i³} *you3 yu2*, `superabundance'. We often see in Chinese texts explanations such as ``heart blood *xu1* is the manifestation of the *bu4 zu2* of heart blood." What is meant here is that heart blood *xu1* is a condition of the whole body in which a specific insufficiency of heart blood is the cause.

If we apply the commonly used rendering of `deficiency' in this context, we would translate the whole phrase as ``heart blood deficiency is the manifestation of insufficiency of heart blood." Since `deficiency' is virtually synonymous with `insufficiency', we logically end up in English with a sentence that means `X is the manifestation of itself." The Chinese sentence does not, however, contain a tautology, but encourages the reader to understand: ``[The general condition of] lack (or weakness in) heart blood is a manifestation of insufficiency of heart blood." In the distinction made here the physical condition of being empty of heart blood is set in contrast to the specific insufficiency of heart blood itself. In nine Chinese medical contexts out of ten, *xu1* and *bu4 zu2* are the same in meaning. Yet in the above example, the Chinese reader will not for an instant feel that definition involves a tautology. They are aware in this context that a distinction is being made between *xu1* and *bu4 zu2* on the basis of *xu1* meaning `empty (of)'; {ɤβ!âμê} *xin1 xue4 xu1* means `being empty of (or weak in) heart blood', which is explained as being caused by an `insufficiency of heart blood'.

We have established that *xu1* is a close synonym of *bu4 zu2*, `insufficiency'. However, the primary notion of `emptiness' is present as an important connotation. For those that conceive Chinese medicine to be holistic, we could argue that {ɤβ!âμê} *xin1 xue4 xu1* is the name for the condition of the whole body that is affected by the ``insufficiency of heart blood," the body ``empty of blood". The notion of emptiness is also present in the context of the pulse. A pulse that is described as *xu1* is one that feels empty. If in this context we substitute the word `deficient', the description would be far less specific. A `deficient pulse' might be equated with any of several pulses small in size or lacking in strength.

We have pointed out that `emptiness' is the primary meaning of *xu1*, and that this meaning attaches to its specific senses in the context of Chinese medicine. We rejected `emptiness/fullness' only on the grounds that another word, *man3*, also means fullness. This word is the ordinary word for `fullness' in the everyday language of the Chinese, and in the medical context it describes a subjective feeling of fullness in the body. This feeling is, however, often due to *xu1* rather than *shi2*, and is called {μê°} *xu1 man3*. This term would be highly confusing if it were rendered as ``empty fullness" or

``emptiness fullness" (the latter rendering is strictly more correct because the condition is one of fullness due to emptiness, not a fullness that is empty). By contrast, ``vacuity fullness" is acceptable, since the different words separate the abstract concepts (vacuity/repletion) and physical meanings as the original Chinese terms do.

This point, incidentally, highlights another very important aspect of terminological translation: terms cannot be rendered in isolation. The set of Chinese terms has to be translated into a set of English equivalents that each represent not only the concept in question but that also distinguishes it carefully from other concepts. A terminology is a system of words employed in the description of a conceptual system; it has to be translated systematically.