

# NAN-CHING Paul U. Unschuld

(Translated & Collated Commentaries)

## Chapter Two: Conduits and Network Vessels (Difficult Issues 23-29)

### THE TWENTY-THIRD DIFFICULT ISSUE

*Overview:* Systematized presentation of the lengths and courses of the conduit vessels as sections of a large circulatory system. Also, reference to the significance of feeling the movement in the vessels at the wrists of both hands, and explanation of the concepts of "end" and "beginning."

### Unschuld's Translated & Collated Commentaries

(2) Yang: Each hand has three yang [conduits]. Both hands together have six yang [conduits]. Hence, [the text] says: "Five [feet] times six amounts to three chang."

Yü Shu: The vessels of the hand-great-yang [conduits] start from the tip of the small fingers of both hands and extend upward along the arms to in front of the pearls of the ears. They are [each] five feet long; for both hands together that adds up to one chang. The vessels of the hand-yang-brilliance [conduits] start from the outer sides of the fingers adjoining the thumbs of both hands and extend upward along the arms until they reach the nose, [with the vessel coming from the] left [arm connecting with the] right [side of the nose, and the one coming from the] right [arm connecting with the] left [side of the nose]. They are [each] five feet long; for both hands together that adds up to one chang. The vessels of the hand-minor-yang [conduits] start from the tips of the fingers adjoining the small fingers of both hands. They extend upward along the arms and end in front of the ears. They are [each] five feet long; for both hands together that adds up to one chang. Hence, [the text] states: "Five [feet] times six amounts to three chang."

(3) Yang: Both hands have three yin [conduits], respectively; together that amounts to six yin [conduits]. Hence, [the text] says: "Three [feet] times six amounts to one chang and eight feet."

Yü Shu: The vessels of the hand-great-yin [conduits] start from the central burner; they reach downward to the large intestine where they turn around to proceed to the "stomach-opening." They are attached to the lung and emerge below the armpits. They descend [in the arms] to the elbows and enter the inch-opening, from which they move upward to the fish-line. They emerge [again] at the tips of the thumbs. They are [each] three feet five inches long. For both hands, that adds up to seven feet. The vessels of the hand-minor-yin [conduits] start from the heart center. There they emerge to become attached to the heart duct. They move downward until they reach the small intestine. From there they ascend to the lung and emerge below the armpits. They extend along the arms and emerge [again] at the tips of the small fingers. They are [each] three feet five inches long; for both hands, that adds up to seven feet. The vessels of the hand-ceasing-yin [conduits] start from the center of the chest. They are attached to the heart-enclosing [envelope] and to the Triple Burner. They emerge from the ribs below the armpits. They extend along the shoulder blades, enter the elbows, and emerge [again] at the tips of the fingers adjoining the small fingers. They are [each] three feet five inches long; for both hands, that adds up to seven feet. Hence, [the text] speaks of "two chang and one foot."

(4) Yang: Both feet have three yang [conduits], respectively; hence, [the text] says: "Six [feet] times eight amounts to four chang and eight feet." The measurement of these vessels is seven feet five inches for the body of a medium-sized person. However, [the text here] speaks of "eight feet." The reason for this is difficult to explain. It is [perhaps] like this. The six yang [conduits] of the feet start from the toes and extend upward. Because they are bent and make curves, [the text] speaks of "eight feet."

Yü Shu: The vessels of the foot-great-yang [conduits] start from the outer sides of the small toes of both feet. They extend upward to the knees, pass through the popliteal space, and ascend in the center of the back up to the head. Then they descend to enter into the inner corner of the eyes. They are [each] eight feet long; for [the two] ascending both feet, that adds up to one chang eight feet. The vessels of the foot-yang-brilliance [conduits] start from the tips of the toes adjoining the large toes. They follow the shinbones, extending upward to the navel, [which they pass] to the left and to the right at a distance of two inches, respectively. They end at the hairline of the temples. They are [each] eight feet long; for both feet together, that adds up to one chang six feet. The vessels of the foot-minor-yang [conduits] start from the tip of the toes adjoining the small toes. They extend upward along the outer corners of the knees. They enter into the tender ribs, extending upward to the outer corners of the eyes. They are [each] eight feet long; for both feet together, that adds up to one chang six feet. Hence, [the text] speaks of "four chang and eight feet."

(5) Yang: Both feet have three yin [conduits], respectively. Hence, [the text] says: "Six [feet] times six amounts to three chang and six feet." The foot-great-yin and the [foot-]minor-yin [conduits] both extend to below the tongue. The foot-ceasing-yin [conduits] extend to the top of the head. Here, [the text] says: "They extend to the chest." This [statement] is probably based on the place where [the two foot-ceasing-yin conduits] meet each other.

Yü Shu: The vessels of the foot-great-yin [conduits] start from the inner sides of the big toes. They extend upward following the inner ridges of the shinbones. They emerge in front of the [foot-]ceasing-yin vessels and extend further upward to enter the abdomen. They are attached to the liver and are linked to the stomach; [finally] they connect with the base of the tongue. They are [each] seven feet five inches long. The two together extend over one chang five feet. The vessels of the foot-ceasing-yin [conduits] start from above the accumulation of hair on the big toes. They extend upward along the ridge of the insteps, passing the inner ankles at a distance of one inch. Eight inches above the ankles, they emerge behind the foot-great-yin [conduits]. They follow the thighs and enter into the pubic hair. They encircle the genital organs and arrive at the lower abdomen. They pass close to the stomach, they are attached to the liver, and they link up with the gall. They follow the windpipe and enter into the pharynx, connecting with the eye duct and emerging at the forehead. They are [each] six feet five inches long. The two together extend over one chang three feet. The vessels of the foot-minor-yin [conduits] start from below the small toes. They proceed diagonally toward the center of the feet, from which they extend upward through the inner sides of the calves and thighs. They are linked with the spine, they are attached to the kidneys, and they are tied to the bladder. They are linked with the liver and they enter the lung. They follow the windpipe and approach the base of the

tongue. They are [each] six feet five inches long; together, that is one chang three feet. Hence, [the text] speaks of "three chang and nine feet."

(6) Yang: Man is seven feet five inches tall. Thus, the walker-vessels, extending [only] from the ankles to the eyes, cannot measure seven feet five inches [too]. When the [Nan-]ching speaks here of seven feet five inches, it [appears to consider] the vessels as proceeding from the feet to the [top of the] head. When [the text] says "they extend to the eyes," it refers to [the highest points where they display their] function.

Yü Shu: Man has the two vessels of the yin walker and yang walker [conduits]. For both feet together these are four vessels. The yang walker [conduits] start from the centers of the heels. They extend upward along the outer ankles and enter into the "pond of winds."<sup>4</sup> The yin walker [conduits] also start from the centers of the heels. They are secondary network[-vessels] of the foot-minor-yin [conduits]. From behind the inner metatarsal bones, they extend upward above the inner ankles. They extend upward directly to the inner side of the thighs, from which they enter into the genital [region]. Along the abdomen they extend further upward into the chest and enter into the hollow behind the clavicle. Further up they emerge in front of the jen-ying [holes]<sup>5</sup> and enter into the inner ridges of the cheek bones. They are attached to the inner corners of the eyes where they join the great-yang vessels. They are [each] seven feet five inches long. The two together extend over one chang five feet. In accordance [with this delineation of the courses of the yin and yang walker conduits], one may conclude that [the statement in the text] "they extend to the eyes" refers only to the extension of the two yin walker-vessels from the feet. Hence, the [Nan-]ching states: "They extend from the feet to the eyes. They are seven feet five inches long, adding up to one chang and five feet."

Hsü Ta-ch'un: One distinguishes between yin and yang walker vessels. To the left and to the right these are altogether four vessels. I do not know where this [fact] is pointed out here [in the Nan-]ching]. Also, the yin walker-vessels are secondary [vessels] of the minor-yin [conduits]; the yang walker-vessels are secondary [vessels] of the great-yin [conduits]. In the Ling-shu treatise "Mai-tu", the start and the end of the walker-vessels is outlined, but only the yin walker is mentioned, not the yang walker. This is because its length equals the length of the yin walker. Hence, when the Emperor asked: "There are yin and yang walker-vessels; which [of these] vessels is counted?" Ch'i Po replied: "In males count the yang [walker]; in females count the yin [walker]."<sup>6</sup> Although there are differences between the yang walkers and the yin walkers, in that the former are located internally and inside, while the latter are located externally and outside, their lengths are about identical.

Liao P'ing: The two walker[-vessels] are not necessarily equally long. Their [length] is calculated in the same way as that of the supervisor and controller vessels.

(7) Yang: The vessel of the supervisor [conduit] starts from the flesh adjoining the [lower end of the] spine and extends upward to the head. From there it descends into the face where it reaches the [upper] seam of the teeth in the mouth. Calculating this [course, the vessel should] not be only four feet five inches long. When [the text] here speaks of four feet five inches, it refers to the "wind palace"<sup>7</sup> as the topmost position reached by this conduit. Both the hands and the feet have twelve vessels [each]. That adds up to a total of twenty-four vessels. Together with the supervisor [conduit] and the controller [conduit], as well as with the two walker [conduits], that adds up to twenty-eight

vessels, a number corresponding to the twenty-eight zodiacal constellations. The total length [of all twenty-eight vessels together] is sixteen chang two feet. When the constructive and the protective [influences] have circulated through this distance, that constitutes one passage.

Yü Shu: The [Nei-]ching states: "The supervisor vessel starts from the bottom-most transportation [hole]";<sup>8</sup> [from there,] it ascends inside the spine up to the wind palace. There it enters into and becomes attached to the brain. It is four feet five inches long. The controller vessel starts from below the chung-chi [hole],<sup>9</sup> from which it ascends to the [pubic] hairline. It extends upward through the abdomen. From the kuan-yüan [hole],<sup>10</sup> it reaches to the throat. It is four feet five inches long.

Calculating the supervisor and the controller [vessels] together, they are nine feet long. The twelve conduits mentioned above represent altogether twenty-four vessels. Their total length is thirteen chang and eight feet. If the [lengths of the] vessels of the supervisor, of the controller, and of the yin walker are added, their total length is two chang and four feet. All in all, these are twenty-seven vessels with a total length of sixteen chang and two feet. They reflect the pattern of the numbers three and nine, corresponding to the [clepsydra's] water dripping down for two markings. Mr. Yang has spoken of twenty-eight vessels. Here he has included the yang walker in his considerations. Two walker [conduits would imply that] four [vessels] pass through [both feet]. That would result in a surplus of feet and inches. When Mr. Yang spoke of twenty-eight vessels he was wrong.

Liao P'ing: The supervisor [vessel] is long and the controller [vessel] is short. But just as [in the case of] the two walker [vessels], they are calculated together and then divided up into two vessels of equal length.

(9)-(14) Ting Te-yung: This [refers to] the rise and fall of the yin and yang influences of heaven and earth in the course of one year, and to the appearance and disappearance of sun and moon, light and darkness, within twenty-four hours. Similarly, man's constructive and protective [influences] proceed through twenty-four sections of conduits and network[-vessels] before they meet once again with the inch-opening and the jen-ying. The so-called inch-opening is the vessel-opening of the hand-great-yin [conduit]. This hole is called t'ai-yüan. Hence, the [movement in the] vessels meets with the t'ai-yüan [hole]. All the twelve conduits and fifteen network[-vessels] are supplied [with influences] by the Triple Burner; [as long as this continues, a person will] live. Hence, [the influences] start from the central burner and flow into the hand-great-yin and [hand-]yang-brilliance [conduits]. This is, therefore, the place where the illnesses can be located and where [prognostic] judgments can be made concerning death or survival.

(11)-(14) Yang: The twelve conduit-vessels and the fifteen network-vessels contain altogether twenty-seven [kinds of] influences. This reflects the pattern of the numbers three and nine. Heaven has the nine stars; earth has the nine geographical regions, and man has the nine orifices. All the [influences] flowing through the conduits and network[-vessels] meet with the inch-opening and with the jen-ying. Therefore, if one examines the (movement in the vessels at the) inch-opening and at the jen-ying, one recognizes the illnesses of the conduits and network[-vessels], and the symptoms of [imminent] death or survival.

(11) Yü Shu: When [the text states: "blood and influences] start from the central burner," that refers to [a location] directly between the two breasts, called the tan-chung hole. Another name is ch'i-hai ("sea

of influences"). That is to say, the influences rise from here to flow into the great-yin [conduit of the] lung. After they have completed their move through the lung [conduit] they are transmitted to the hand-yang-brilliance [conduit]. The Su-wen states: "The tan-chung is the emissary among the officials."<sup>11</sup> That is to say, the stomach transforms the taste [of food] into influences which are transmitted from here upward to the lung. [The text states further: "From the foot-]ceasing-yin [conduit] they flow back into the hand-great-yin [conduit]." If one investigates the [number of] chang and feet [to be passed in one passage] on the basis of this [circuit], then a contradiction emerges between meanings [of statements] in different sections of the [Nan-]ching. The distance from the sages [of antiquity] is far; it is difficult to provide even a rough explanation.

Hsü Ta-ch'un: The treatise "Ying-ch'i" of the Ling[-shu] discusses the same order of the movement of the constructive influences, but its discussion focuses on the constructive influences, not on the [course of the] vessels. The text of the [Nei-]ching is much more detailed. Here, there is only a summary on the basis of the end and beginning of the vessels. Because the constructive influences proceed inside the vessels, the movement of the constructive influences is the movement in the vessels. Thus, the meaning [of the present paragraph] is also understandable.

Hua Shou: Yin ("to follow"; here, "to return") stands for sui ("to follow"). Yüan ("origin") stands for shih ("begin").

Liao P'ing: When [the text] says that "[the influences] move in a ring without end," what sense does it make to state further down that they appear only at the inch-opening?

(14) Li Chiung: The inch-opening is the great meeting-point of the [movement in the] vessels; it [is the place] where the movement in the hand-great-yin vessel [can be felt]. Hence, when an illness is present in the five depots and six palaces, it always becomes apparent at the influence-opening. Consequently, based on its [examination] one can make judgments concerning auspicious or inauspicious signs, that is, concerning death or survival. Also, the ascent and the descent of yin and yang [influences] in the course of one year has its meeting-point at "spring begins." Light and darkness of the yin and yang [sections] in the course of one day have their meeting-point in the early morning. The circulation of the constructive and protective [influences] through the entire body has its meeting-point at the [influence-opening of the] hand-great-yin [conduit]; it follows the passage of heaven and amounts to 13,500 breathing periods [each twenty-four hours]. The original [text of the Nan-]ching states: chao yü ts'un-k'ou jen-ying ("[all the influences and the blood] appear at the inch-opening and at the jen-ying"). The jen-ying is at the left hand; it belongs to the minor-yin (conduit). It is a location where [various] conduit-vessels meet. In the same way as in the text further down, I have changed [the statement mentioned above] to chao yü ts'un-pu ch'i-k'ou ("they appear in the inch-section of the influence-opening").

Hua Shou: Chao ("to appear") equals the chao in chao-hui ("to assemble").... Those [vessels] passing straight [through the body and its extremities] are the ching ("conduits"); [those vessels] emerging sidewise [from the conduits] are the lo ("network-vessels").... As for the inch-opening and the jen-ying, a [diagnostic] method of ancient times considered the [locations] on both sides of the throat where a movement in the vessels [can be perceived] to be the jen-ying [holes]. Then, Wang Shu-ho of the Chin [era] regarded a section in front of the gate of the left hand as the jen-ying and a

section in front of the gate of the right hand as the influence-opening. Later generations followed him. I say the reason why the people in old times selected the jen-ying and the influence-opening [for diagnostic purposes] is that the jen-ying belongs to the foot-yang-brilliance conduit of the stomach which receives the influences of the grains and nourishes the five depots, while the influence-opening belongs to the hand-great-yin conduit of the lung, [constituting a location] where [the influences of] all the vessels appear and are represented in equal balance.

Hsü Ta-ch'un: For the "inch-opening," see the first difficult issue. Jen-ying is the inch-opening at the left hand. Chao is used here like the chao in chao-chin ("to appear at an audience"); that is to say, they come together here. They are supplied with influences once again and leave. Ch'u (to locate") stands for k'uei-to ("to estimate"). The meaning is that of the first difficult issue where it was stated: "One selects only the inch-opening in order to determine life or death."

Liao P'ing: The character chao is a mistake here. The vessels do not chao ("meet") with each other. This [expression here] results from a mistaken reading of the sentence fei chao pai mai. Pai mai refers to the tertiary network[-vessels]. Fei chao sun-lo ("the tertiary network[-vessels] meet with the lung") is not the same as pai mai chao fei yü ts'un-k'ou ("all vessels meet with [that of the] lung at the inch-opening"). Hsü [Ta-ch'un's] commentary is wrong.

(15)-(18) Hua Shou: Mr. Hsieh [Chin-sun] has stated that treatise 9 of the Ling-shu says: "The principles of needling require an understanding of end and beginning. If one wishes to know clearly about [imminent] end or [continuous] beginning [of the movement in the vessels, one must] take into account the information offered by the five depots. [This information] is determined by the [condition of the] yin and yang [influences associated with the depots]." It says further: "If someone is not ill, [the movement in the vessels that can be perceived at] the "vessel-opening" and at the jen-ying corresponds to the four seasons." [Later on the same treatise states:] "If someone's influences are few, [they appear to be] few at the "influence-opening" and at the jen-ying, regardless of whether the foot- or the inch[-sections] are concerned." If one considers the present paragraph in light of earlier statements to the effect that every illness can be located at the inch-opening and at the jen-ying, and that judgments can be made [on their basis] concerning death or survival, [the present paragraph contains the] message that if one wishes to know about [imminent] end or [continuous] beginning [of the movement in the vessels], this can be determined by examining the yin and yang [movements in the conduits]. The [condition of the] yang [movement in the] conduits is judged by taking [information] from the jen-ying; the [condition of the] yin [movement in the] conduits is judged by taking [information] from the influence-opening. As for chao shih, chao means that the influences and the blood pour through [the body] in correspondence to the time [of the day] like tides (ch'ao) of water. Shih means that the yin and yang [influences] activate each other. Here "beginning" refers to the beginning of living beings; "end" refers to the expiration of living beings. If one wishes to know about the [imminent] death or survival [of a person], that can be investigated through [an examination of the condition of the movement in his] vessels. When the yin and yang influences move through the vessels like tides, [alternately] activating [each other], like in a ring without end, then no illness is present. But if they do not move like tides alternately activating each other, then an illness is present. Chang Shih-hsien: Yin [refers to] the depots; yang [refers to] the palaces.

(16) Hsü Ta-ch'un: In the treatise "Chung-shih" of the Ling[-shu], it is stated: "The principles of needling require an understanding of end and beginning. If one wishes to know clearly about [imminent] end or [continuous] beginning [of the movement in the vessels, one must] take into account the information offered by the five depots. [This information] is determined by the [condition of the] yin and yang [influences associated with the depots]." Further down the text states: "The yang [vessels] receive their influences from the four extremities; the yin [vessels] receive their influences from the five depots. Hence, in order to drain one moves [the needle] against the [regular course of the flow]; in order to fill one follows, [with one's needle, the regular course of the flow]."

"Beginning" and "end" obviously refer here to the beginning and end of the twelve conduits. By moving [the needle] against or following [the regular flow], one fills or drains them. It does not say that the flow of the influences constitutes a [continuous] beginning, while the interruption of the [movement in the] vessels is the end. At the conclusion of the "Chung shih" treatise, the [appearances of] illnesses [in one's bodily] form due to an interruption of the [movement in each of the] twelve conduits is recorded in the same manner as in the Su-wen [treatise] "Chen yao ching chung lun". Here, ["end"] is used with still another meaning, which is by no means the meaning of "end and beginning." How can anybody commit the error of considering the "end" of "end and beginning" to be the "end" [meant] here, only because at the conclusion of that [Su-wen] treatise the [appearances of] illnesses [in one's bodily] form due to an "end" of the [movement in the] conduits [is discussed for all] twelve conduits? Why did nobody think about this thoroughly?

(17) Li Chiung: The yin and yang influences appear, beginning with the early morning, at the influence-opening in the inch-section, revolving through the vessels like in a ring without end, and continuously beginning [their movement at this location]. Hence, [the text] speaks of [continuous] "beginning." I have changed the statement ts'un-k'ou jen-ying ("inch-opening and jen-ying") of the original text to ch'i-k'ou ("influence-opening").

Liao P'ing: The two characters jen-ying appear here because they were not deleted entirely. The doctrine of [the location of] the jen-ying at the left [hand] was introduced relatively late; no such doctrine existed in antiquity. Hence, the text of the Nan-ching is not clear on this.... Hsü [Ta-ch'un] commented on chao shih ... [see above]. Hsü's commentary is wrong. The [meaning of the] two characters chao and shih cannot be understood.

(18) Li Chiung: The [appearance in the patient's bodily] form of an interruption [of the flow] of influences through the foot-minor-yin [conduit] is such that the teeth grow long and decay, while the flesh turns soft and shrinks. The [appearance in the patient's bodily] form of an interruption [of the flow] of influences through the foot-great-yin [conduit] is such that the flesh [swells because of] fullness and the lips turn around. The [appearance in the patient's bodily] form of an interruption [of the flow] of influences through the foot-ceasing-yin [conduit] is such that the tongue rolls up and the testicles shrink. The [appearance in the patient's bodily] form of an interruption [of the flow] of influences through the hand-great-yin [conduit] is such that the skin dries out and the hair breaks off. The [appearance in the patient's bodily] form of an interruption [of the flow] of influences through the hand-minor-yin [conduit] is such that the face turns black and resembles a pear. The [appearance in the patient's bodily] form of an interruption [of the flow] of influences in three yin [conduits] is such

that one's vision is dizzy and that one loses the ability to clearly distinguish between black and white. The [appearance in the patient's bodily] form of an interruption [of the flow] of influences in six yang [conduits] is such that sweat protrudes like pearls. Hence, [the text] says: "Each [such situation of imminent] death has its specific [symptoms that appear in the patient's bodily] form." "End" stands for death.

Chang Shih-hsien: "Three yin and three yang" [refers to] the twelve conduits. Changes in the twelve conduits become apparent in the inch-opening and in the jen-ying. If the circulating flow continues without break, that is called [continuous] "beginning"; if it is interrupted or blocked and cannot pass through [the conduits], specific [manifestations of such blockades appear in one's bodily] form corresponding to the specific depot [where the movement] died. That is meant by "the end has its [specific symptoms appearing in the patient's bodily] form." For an outline [of these symptoms,] see difficult issue 24.

### *Unschuld's footnotes*

4. Feng-ch'ih ("pond of winds") is the name of a hole behind the ears at the side of the head shortly above the hairline.
5. These jen-ying holes are the original jen-ying locations to the right and left of the throat. See also below Hua Shou's commentary on sentence 14.
6. Cf. Ling-shu treatise 17, "Mai-tu".
7. Feng-fu ("wind palace") is the name of a hole on the back of the head, one inch above the hairline.
8. This quotation refers to Su-wen treatise 60, "Ku-k'ung lun". However, the Nei-ching wording is slightly different; it says: "The supervisor vessel starts from the center of the bone below the lower abdomen."
9. The chung-chi hole is located shortly above the genital organs.
10. The kuan-yüan hole is located on the abdomen below the navel.
11. Cf. Su-wen treatise 8, "Ling-lan mi-tien lun".

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## THE TWENTY-FOURTH DIFFICULT ISSUE

*Overview:* Systematized presentation and prognostic evaluation of external symptoms indicating that a specific conduit-vessel has been cut off from the movement in the vessels.

### **Unschuld's Translated & Collated Commentaries**

(1) Hsü Ta-ch'un: This treatise repeats exactly the original text of the "Ching-mai" treatise of the Ling-shu. Only a few words have been changed. It does not explain anything.

Yeh Lin: This [difficult issue] quotes from the treatise "Ching-mai" of the Ling-shu, but the discussion here is confused.

(2) Ting Te-yung: The foot-minor-yin conduit is the vessel [associated with] the kidneys; it belongs to [the phase of] water and it reigns in winter. Internally, [the movement of] influences through this [conduit] nourishes the bones and the marrow. Externally, it provides brilliance to the hair. When [the movement of] influences [through this conduit] is cut off, the base of the teeth grows long, the

bones wither, and the hair loses its glossiness. Hence, [the text] states: "[Such an illness will be] severe on a wu day; death will occur on a chi day." This is the [appearance in the patient's bodily] form of a [situation where the flow of influences through the] foot-minor-yin [conduit] is cut off. Yang: Ch'üeh ("to withdraw"; here, "to shrink") stands for chieh so ("to shrink"). That is to say, the flesh at the roots of the teeth shrinks. Hence, the teeth gradually grow longer and wither. That is to say, the teeth dry out and their color lacks any moisture. The kidneys control the body's liquids. Here now, no liquids are present any more. Hence, that causes the hair to lose its glossiness. [The days] wu and chi are [associated with the phase of] soil. The kidneys are [associated with the phase of] water. The soil is capable of overcoming water. Hence, [the text] states: ["Such an illness will be] severe on a wu day; death will occur on a chi day."

Yü Shu: The yin and yang [categories] have weak and strong [subcategories]. Hence, three yin and three yang [conduits] exist to transport the [protective] influences and the blood and to nourish the human body. Thus, the three yin [conduits are linked to vessels which] part from them and tie them [to the other yin-conduits]. The great-yin [conduit] is the "opener." The ceasing-yin [conduit] is the "cover." The minor-yin [conduit] is the "pivot." The opener guards the foundations of movement and rest. The cover holds control over tight sealing. The pivot controls the subtleties of the revolving movement. The three conduits must not lose [contact to] each other. Here, the [flow of the influences through the] foot-minor-yin vessel of the kidneys is interrupted. Hence, [contact to] one of the conduits has been lost. The minor-yin [conduit] cannot act as pivot; the subtleties of the revolving movement are out of control. Hence, [the text] speaks of "death."

Li Chiung: The brain is the sea of the marrow. The kidneys master the bones and the marrow. The hair is nourished by the brain. Hence, the [latter] provides brilliance to the hair. Here, the bones and the marrow wither. Hence, the hair lacks its glossiness.

Hsü Ta-ch'un: Ju ("soft") means chih ("to obstruct"). The [Nei-]ching states: "Becomes soft (juan) and shrinks." Ch'üeh ("to shrink") stands for t'ui-so ("to withdraw and shrink"). For k'u ("to wither") the [Nei-]ching has kou ("to become stained"). When the flesh shrinks, the [teeth] have been severed [from their base] and the upper section becomes visible. Hence, [the text states]: "The teeth grow long." "To wither" means that they lack moisture. The teeth are extensions of the bones. Hence, [the condition of the latter] is examined in the [condition of the former].

Yeh Lin: The kidneys master the storage of the essential [influences] and the transformation of the blood. The hair is the excess of the blood. When the [movement of the] essential influences of the kidneys is cut off, the hair lacks its glossiness.

(3) Ting Te-yung: The foot-great-yin conduit is the vessel [associated with] the spleen; it belongs to [the phase of] soil and it reigns in late summer.<sup>5</sup> Internally, [the movement of] influences through this [conduit] nourishes the flesh; externally, it provides brilliance and protection to mouth and lips. When [the movement of] influences through this [conduit] is cut off, the lips will curl back. Hence, [the illness will be] severe on a chia day; death will occur on an i day. This is the [appearance in the patient's bodily] form of a [situation where the flow of influences through the] foot-great-yin [conduit] is cut off.

Yang: Chia and i are [associated with the phase of] wood. The spleen is [associated with the phase of] soil. Wood is capable of overcoming soil. Hence, [the text] states: ["Such an illness will be severe on a chia day; death will occur on an i day."]

Yü Shu: Mouth and lips are extensions of the flesh. They are also called "[external] brilliance of the spleen." Here now the lips curl back and the complexion turns virid because the wood [has come to] destroy the soil. In the [system of the] separate and combined [functioning] of the yin and yang [conduits], the great-yin [conduits] are considered to be the "openers." That is to say, they watch over the foundation of movement and rest. Here now, [the flow of influences through] these vessels has been cut off. As a consequence, the foundations of movement and rest have lost their over-seer. Hence, [the text] speaks of "death."

Hsü Ta-ch'un: The treatise "Ching-mai" [of the Ling-shu] states: "When the vessels do not [provide] constructive [influences], the flesh turns soft and the tongue will dry up. The [respective] person's center [i.e., the stomach region] will be full. When the center is full, the lips curl back." That is quite clear. Here [in the Nan-ching, the text] states: "The flesh [is full]." That is difficult to explain.

(4) Ting Te-yung: The foot-ceasing-yin conduit is the vessel [associated with] the liver; it belongs to the [phase of] wood and it reigns in spring. Internally [the movement of] influences through this [conduit] nourishes the muscles; externally [this conduit] is tied to the base of the tongue. Below, it circles around the genital organ. When [the movement of] the influences through this [conduit] is cut off, the tongue rolls back and the testicles shrink. Hence, [the illness will be] severe on a keng day; death will occur on a hsin day.

Yang: Keng and hsin are [associated with the phase of] metal. The liver is [associated with the phase of] wood. Metal is capable of overcoming wood. Hence, [the text] states: "[The illness will be] severe on a keng day; death will occur on a hsin day."

Li Chiung: The liver controls the muscles. All the movements of man result from the strength of the muscles.

(5) Ting Te-yung: The hand-great-yin conduit is the vessel [associated with] the lung; it belongs to the [phase of] metal and reigns in autumn. Internally, [the movement of] influences through this [conduit] controls the [protective] influences; externally, it nourishes the skin [and its] hair. When the [movement of the] influences through this [conduit] is cut off, the body's liquids leave. Skin and hair burn out. Hence, [such an illness will be] severe on a ping day; death will occur on a ting day.

Yang: Ping and ting are [associated with the phase of] fire. The lung belongs to the [phase of] metal. Fire is capable of overcoming metal. Hence, [the text] states: "[Such an illness will be] severe on a ping day; death will occur on a ting day."

(6) Ting Te-yung: The hand-minor-yin conduit is the vessel [associated with] the true heart; it belongs to the [phase of] the ruler-fire and it reigns in summer. It controls the transport of the constructive [influences] through the vessels. It is not so that the [Nan-ching] does not talk about the hand-ceasing-yin [conduit which is associated with the] heart-enclosing [network] controlling the minister-fire. A minister acts but the ruler gives the orders. [Together] they control the passage of the constructive influences. Here, the true heart has been cut off from the [movement of the] influences. Consequently, the constructive influences do not move [through the organism any longer]. When the

constructive influences do not move, the blood does not flow. Therefore, one's complexion and moisture fade away. Hence, the face turns black and assumes a sallow color. [Such an illness will be] severe on a jen day; death will occur on a kwei day. This is an illness; it is not [the result of] exhaustion due to old age! The character li ("pear") should be changed here to li ("sallow").

Yang: The [Nei-]ching speaks of three hand-yin [conduits]. Here, however, only the great-yin and the minor-yin [conduits] are referred to. The heart-master [conduit] is not discussed. Why is that? It is like this. The heart-master [conduit] is the vessel [associated with] the heart-enclosing network. The minor-yin [conduit] is the vessel [associated with] the heart [itself]. Both these conduits [generate symptoms that] are indicators of [illnesses of] the heart. Hence, when it is stated that the [movement of influences through the] minor-yin [conduit] is cut off, then the [movement of influences through the] heartmaster [conduit] is cut off, too. Both [conditions] are examined the same way; hence, they are not distinguished in this explanation here. The [Nei-]ching stated originally: "The face turns black and resembles ch'i-ch'ai."<sup>6</sup> Here, [the Nan-ying] states: "It resembles a pear." Ch'i-ch'ai grows in the Heng mountains; the color of this herb is yellow-black. It has no glossiness. Hence, it was used here as an illustration. "Pears" are fruits consumed by man. Again, their yellow-black color was used [as an illustration] to explain that a person's complexion turns yellow-black when no blood is present. That resembles the lack of brilliance of both [ch'i-ch'ai and pears]. Jen and kwei are [associated with the phase of] water; the heart is [associated with the phase of] fire. Water overcomes fire. Hence, [the text] states: "[Such an illness will be] severe on a jen day; death will occur on a kwei day."

(7) Ting Te-yung: The so-called three yin [conduits] are just the three yin [conduits] of the feet. The foot-minor-yin [conduit] is [associated with] the liver. The kidneys store the essential [influences] and the mind. The foot-ceasing-yin [conduit] is [associated with] the liver. The liver stores the hun and [its spirit] passes through the eyes.<sup>7</sup> Hence, when [the flow of influences through these conduits is] cut off, one loses one's mind and becomes disorderly; the hun leaves and the eyes will be confused through dizziness.

Yang: The three yin [conduits] are the three yin vessels of the hands and the feet, constituting the vessels of the five depots. The five depots are the root and basis of man. Hence, when all three yin [conduits] are cut off [from the movement of the influences] at the same time, the eyes will be closed. Ming ("closed eyes") stands for pi ("closed"). That is to say, the root is cut off internally and one's [sources of] brilliance are lost externally. The eyes are man's [sources] of brilliance. Hsüan ("confused vision") stands for luan ("disorder"). That is to say, the eyes are in disorder and cannot recognize anybody. The kidneys store the essential [influences] and the mind. [Here] the essential influences are completely exhausted. Hence, [the text] speaks of a "loss of one's mind." When all three yin [conduits] are cut off [from the movement of the influences at the same time], death follows within one day and a half.

Yü Shu: The vessels of the five depots are the three yin [conduits]. The vessels of all the five depots meet in the eyes. Here, the three yin [conduits] have been cut off [from the movement of the influences through the organism]. Hence, the eyes are confused by dizziness [or] are closed. The five mental [states] of man are all associated with yin. That is to say, the mental [state associated with the]

liver is anger; the mental [state associated with the] heart is joy; the mental [state associated with the] spleen is pondering; the mental [state associated with the] lung is grief; and the mental [state associated with the] kidneys is fear. Here, the three yin [conduits] have been cut off [from the movement of the influences]; the five depots have lost their mental [states]. Hence, there is no joy, no anger, no grief, no pondering, no fear. All the five mental [states] have gone. Hence, [the text] speaks of a "loss of one's mind." When Mr. Yang spoke of a "loss of one's mind," he only talked about one depot, that is, the kidneys. In the [Nei-]ching it was stated originally: "when the yin and yang [sections of the organism] are separated from each other, dissatisfaction results and loss of one's mind." That is [what is] meant here.

Ting Te-yung: The so-called six yang [conduits] are the three yang [conduits] of the hands and feet, respectively. Then [the text] states: yin yü yang hsiang li. That is to say, the three yang [conduits] of the hands pass the influences of heaven. Therefore, they are termed yang. The three yang [conduits] of the feet pass the influences of the earth. Hence, they are termed yin. When the yin and yang [influences] of heaven and earth are not [mutually exchanged in the organism but remain] separate from each other, that [what is] is meant when [the text] states: yin yang hsiang li ("yin and yang [influences] remain separate from each other"). As a result, the pores will be drained and sweat will appear intermittently, resembling a string of pearls. Hence, death will occur before the coming morning or night.

Yang: This [paragraph elucidates the idea that] one will die before one day has passed if the six yang [conduits] have been cut off from the [movement of the] influences. The manifestations of such an interruption of the [movement of the] influences through the six yang [conduits] are summarily delineated here. The [Nei-]ching states: "When the great-yang vessels are cut off [from the movement of the influences], this entails that one's eyes look upward fixedly, that one is bent backwards, and that one has convulsions. One's complexion is white; sweat protrudes intermittently. When it protrudes, the end has come. When the minor-yang vessel is cut off [from the movement of the influences], this entails that one's ears are deaf, that all the joints are limp, and that the eyes revolve with their ties [to the head] severed. When these ties are severed, death follows within one day and a half. Those with a virid complexion will die [too]. When the yang-brilliance vessel is cut off [from the movement of the influences], this entails that one's mouth opens and one's ears widen, that one has a tendency to being scared, and that one talks nonsense. The complexion is yellow. When [the patient's] conduits in the upper and lower [sections of the body] are replete and numb, the end has come. These are the manifestations of the interruption of the [movement of the influences through the] three yang [conduits]."<sup>8</sup> Above, [the Nan-ching text] speaks of "six yang [conduits]." Here, the [Nei-]ching speaks of "the manifestations of an interruption of the [movement of the influences through the] three yang [vessels]," because when [the movement of influences] is cut off from all yang vessels of the hands and feet, the manifestations of such an interruption are identical [to those outlined above]. Hence, they are not discussed here separately.

(8) Chang Shih-hsien: The "six yang" are the three yang [conduits] of hands and feet, respectively. When the yang influences protect the external [sections of the body], the pores are closed tightly. When the [flow of] yang [influences] is cut off, the pores are no longer closed firmly and the yin

[influences] alone cannot remain [in their conduits. Hence,] the constructive influences are drained off through the pores. The respective person is not yet dead but his influences have already died. Man is ruled by his influences. When the influences have died, man must die. [Hence, death] can be predicted for before the [coming] morning or night.

### *Unschuld's footnotes*

5. "Late summer" is a fifth season, conceptualized to achieve correspondence between the Five Phases and the seasons of a year.
6. Ling-shu treatise 10, "Ching-mai".
7. See difficult issue 34.
8. This is a modified quotation from Su-wen treatise 16, "Chen yao ching chung lun".

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## THE TWENTY-FIFTH DIFFICULT ISSUE

*Overview:* Explanation of the concept of "twelve conduits" in the presence of only five depots and six palaces through the introduction of the concepts of "heart-enclosing network" and "Triple Burner" as carrying a name (i.e., fulfilling a function) without having a form (i.e., an anatomical substratum).

### **Unschuld's Translated & Collated Commentaries**

(1) Yang: The hand-minor-yin [conduit] is the vessel [associated with] the true heart. The hand-heart-master [conduit] is the vessel [associated with] the heart-enclosing network. Both vessels are heart vessels. Now, the [hand-]minor-yin [conduit] is linked to the [vessel of the] small intestine, while the heart-master [conduit] is linked to the vessel of the Triple Burner. The Triple Burner has a position but no form; the heart-master [conduit] has a name but no depot. Hence, the two conduits constitute "outside and inside." The five depots and six palaces have one vessel each; that equals eleven vessels. The heart has two vessels. That adds up to twelve vessels. Similarly, one could state that of the six palaces actually only five palaces exist.<sup>2</sup>

Hsü Ta-ch'un: The [treatise] "Chiu chen lun" of the Ling[-shu states concerning] the five depots: "The heart stores the spirit; the lung stores the p'o; the liver stores the hun; the spleen stores one's imagination; the kidneys store the essence and the mind." The six palaces include the small intestine, the large intestine, the stomach, the gall, the bladder, and the Triple Burner. They are responsible for emission and intake of water and grains, resembling a palace treasury that oversees expenditure and income. Hence, they are called "palaces."

Liao P'ing: Among the depots and palaces, the brain and the heart are designated with the same name. The inner and the outer kidneys are also designated with the same name. If five and six adds up to twelve, two [conduits] must be designated with the same name. Among the twelve conduits the brain constitutes an external master of the heart. This is similar to the inner kidney and the outer kidney; if one differentiates among them, they, too, represent two [entities]. In old times one assumed that the yellow fat outside of the heart constituted a "heart enclosure." That was wrong.

(2)-(3) Ting Te-yung: [The text] states: "[One of the conduits encompasses] the hand-minor-yin [vessel] and the heart-master [vessel] as separate vessels." That is to say, the heart and the small

intestine constitute outside and inside [of one unit,<sup>3</sup> and] the heart-master and the Triple Burner constitute outside and inside [of one unit, too]. The minor-yin [conduit] is the vessel of the true heart; [the latter] constitutes the ruler-fire. The heart-master constitutes, together with the Triple Burner, the minister-fire. Hence, the [hand-]minor-yin and the heart-master [conduits] are separate. The minister carries out the orders of the ruler. Hence, [the heart-master] has the name of the heart but not its position.

Li Chiung: The heart-master [conduit] is the hand-ceasing-yin [conduit]. The Triple Burner [conduit] is the hand-minor-yang [conduit]. The two conduits constitute "outside and inside."

Hua Shou: Someone asked: "The hand-ceasing-yin conduit is called 'heart-master' and it is also called 'heart-enclosing network'. Why is that?" [The answer is:] "It carries the name of the ruler-fire, but it occupies the position of the minister-fire. The hand-ceasing-yin [conduit] acts on behalf of the ruler-fire. In terms of its function it is called 'hand-heart-master'; in terms of its [status as a separate] conduit it is called 'heart-enclosing network'. It is one single conduit but carries two names and represents the minister-fire."

(3) Hsü Ta-ch'un: [According to the treatise] "Chiu chen lun" of the Ling[-shu], the yang-brilliance and the great-yin [conduits] of the feet constitute outside and inside; the minor-yang and the ceasing-yin [conduits of the feet] constitute outside and inside; the great-yang and the minor-yin [conduits of the feet] constitute outside and inside; the yang-brilliance and the great-yin [conduits] of the hands constitute outside and inside; the minor-yang and the heart-master [conduits of the hands] constitute outside and inside; the great-yang and the minor-yin [conduits of the hands] constitute outside and inside. "Separate vessels" means that the heart-master, encircling the heart, basically constitutes something like walls encircling a royal residence. One would expect that it forms outside and inside with the heart, but on the contrary, it is separate [from the heart], forms outside and inside with the Triple Burner, and has a separate conduit. Hence, there are twelve conduits.

(4) Li Chiung: The heart-enclosing network constitutes a fine muscular membrane, located outside of the firm fat [of the heart]. It resembles silk threads and is linked to the heart and to the lung. For a detailed [discussion of the] Triple Burner, see the thirty-first difficult issue. Both have names but no form.

(2)-(4) Chang Shih-hsien: The hand-minor-yin [conduit] is the conduit of the true heart. The heart-master is the heart-enclosing network. The heart-master [conduit] is a secondary vessel of the true heart. It does not coincide with the conduit of the true heart. The true heart constitutes the ruler-fire; the heart-master constitutes the minister-fire. The Triple Burner is the father of the influences; the heart-enclosing [network] is the mother of the blood. Together they form "outside and inside." The two have a real name but no substance. To the [eleven conduits of the] five depots and six palaces is added the one conduit of the heart-enclosing [network]. Together that equals twelve conduits.

(4) Hsü Ta-ch'un: [The text] states that the Triple Burner has no form. That cannot be. It states [further] that the hand-heart-master has no form, but such a doctrine definitely does not exist. The heart-master is the network enclosing the heart; it consists of a fatty membrane protecting the heart.

How could it have no form? It is not called a depot because the heart-master acts on behalf of the heart. In itself, it does not store anything. Hence, it is not called a depot.

(3)-(4) Ting Chin: This paragraph states that the heart-master and the Triple Burner constitute outside and inside, and that both have a name but no form. Because of the two words "no form," people in later times who did not check the meaning of the [Nei-]ching have engaged themselves in highly confused argumentations. They not only criticized the [alleged] mistakes of Yüeh-jen but also criticized [what they considered to be] erroneous interpretations forced [on this passage] by [Wang] Shu-ho. Over the past three thousand years, this has never been settled finally. I always think that the Nan-ching was not yet distant from antiquity. Of all the authors who appeared [in later times to comment on the ancient scriptures, Yüeh-jen] was the very first. Also, one must base [one's understanding of the Nan-ching] word for word on the Nei-ching. Why should misunderstandings and a deception of mankind be created just for the two key [concepts] of the [heart-]enclosing network and the Triple Burner? There is no other way to elucidate [their meaning] except by comparing the meaning in the Nei-ching with that in the Nan-ching. Thus, the Nei-ching states that all the five depots have form and color, that the five palaces, too, can be measured in chang and feet, and that the water and the grains with which they are filled can be recorded in amounts of pints and pecks. If the [heart-]enclosing network and the Triple Burner had a form, why would they be the only ones with colors, sizes, and capacities that are not clearly recorded? Well, one should look at what the Nan-ching says about the [heart-]enclosing network and pick its meaning from the term "enclosing," and [one should look] also at what [the Nan-ching] says about the Triple Burner and pick its meaning from the term "triple." Thus, in the Ling[-shu] and in the Su[-wen], the treatise "Pen-shu" states: "The Triple Burner is a palace [acting as] central ditch; the passageways of water emerge from it. It is associated with the bladder and it constitutes the palace of uniqueness." The treatise "Pen-tsang" states: "When the pores are sealed tightly and when the skin is thick, the Triple Burner and the bladder are thick [too]." The treatise "Chüeh-ch'i" states: "The upper burner [is responsible for] emissions; it disperses the taste[-influences] of the five grains, [a process] resembling the gentle flow of mist. [What is distributed] is called 'the influences'. The central burner receives influences. It absorbs the juices, transforms them, and turns them red. That is called the blood." In the treatise "Ying wei sheng hui",<sup>4</sup> it is stated: "The constructive [influences] emerge from the central burner; the protective [influences] emerge from the lower burner." It states further: "The upper burner resembles fog; the central burner resembles foam; the lower burner resembles a ditch." The discussion in the [treatise] "Wu lung chin-yeh pieh-lun" states: "The Triple Burner emits the influences in order to warm the flesh and to fill the skin." The treatise "Hsieh-k'o" of the Ling-shu states: "The heart is the great master of the five depots and six palaces. As a depot it is strong and firm. Evil [influences] cannot settle in it. If they do settle in it, the heart will be injured; the spirit will leave and [the respective person] will die. Hence, it is stated that if evil [influences] are present in the heart, they are always in the network enclosing the heart." All the lines quoted above from the Ling[-shu] and from the Su[-wen]<sup>5</sup> describe the Triple Burner as completely enclosing the five depots and six palaces. The [heart-]enclosing network has the meaning of enclosing only the heart. The "palace [acting as] central ditch" is the "palace of uniqueness." If it were not for the fact that the Triple Burner enclosed the

[organism] externally, how could [this palace] have this singularly honorable designation? It was said further that "when the pores are sealed tightly, and when the skin is thick, the Triple Burner is thick [too]." Now, if the inside of the skin and the flesh of the entire body were not supported by the Triple Burner, how could their thicknesses correspond to each other? It was said further that "the upper burner disperses the taste[-influences] of the grains; the central burner receives influences, absorbs the juices, transforms them, and turns them red." If the Triple Burner did not enclose all the body's depots and palaces, how could all the body's depots and palaces share in the influences of the Triple Burner in order to [further] diffuse and transform them? It was said further that "the constructive [influences] emerge from the central burner; the protective [influences] emerge from the lower burner." The constructive [influences] become the blood because they are [generated from] the essence of the taste[-influences] of the grains. The protective [influences] are [volatile] influences [because they are] generated from the [volatile] influences of the grains. All these [transformations occur] because of the [activities of the] stomach. But how could the stomach be stimulated to perform these transformations if it were not for the fact that the Triple Burner externally completely encloses [the stomach] and manages the movement of the influences? It was stated further: "[The upper burner] resembles fog; [the central burner] resembles foam; [the lower burner] resembles a ditch." Above, [the upper burner] gives orders concerning emissions; below, [the lower burner] manages the passageways of water. How could this be if it were not for the fact that the Triple Burner externally encloses all the body's depots and palaces, exerting complete control over them? It was stated further: "[The Triple Burner] emits the influences in order to warm the flesh and fill the skin." That is a clear indication of the fact that the Triple Burner constitutes a layer supporting the skin and the flesh from inside. It was stated further: "Whenever evil [influences] are present in the heart, they are always in the network enclosing the heart." That is a clear indication of the fact that the enclosing network constitutes a layer holding the heart from outside. Later readers of these texts were to say, if the Triple Burner has no form, how can passageways of water emerge from it? How can it be thick or thin? How can it be like mist or fog or foam or a ditch? How can it emit influences in order to supply warmth to the flesh? And if the enclosing network [of the heart] has no form, how can all the evil [influences] settle in this network enclosing the heart? Why is it the only [entity] that cannot be seen? Why does it lack color, width, and length? They obviously did not know that the [heart-]enclosing network is a small bag providing a network internally and an enclosure externally. Thus, the name already states that it is an "enclosing network." Its form does not have to be described in terms of big or small, feet or inches. The Triple Burner is a large bag supporting [the organism] from outside and holding it inside. The uniqueness of its holding [function] is described fully by nothing but the term "triple." The term "burner" fully describes the provision of the entire (body) with influences. Hence, the name already states that it is a Triple Burner. Again, its form does not have to be described in terms of large or small, change or feet. Anybody who hitherto has harbored some doubts can have them resolved now if he follows this [argumentation]. Also, if one matches this small bag resembling a depot and [therefore] constituting a separate depot with that large bag resembling a palace and [therefore] constituting a separate palace, that is the principle of heavenly creation and earthly organization. Yüeh-jen stated the two words "no form" here, and again in the thirty-fourth difficult

issue. An examination reveals that they are highly appropriate; an analysis shows that they are quite correct. How could the people of later times grasp but the hair on the skin of the Nei-ching and then criticize exemplary men of former times? Often [enough, their statements] reveal only the dimensions of their ignorance.

Liao P'ing: That is to say, the [Triple Burner] is spread out [to cover, internally,] the entire chest and back. It is unlike the other depots and palaces, which have a distinct location and a distinct form and which can be pointed out as concrete [entities]. If it is said [here] that if one assumes that "it has no form," that was not even followed by the authors of the apocryphal writings. It was a mistake of the one who said that.

### *Unschuld's footnotes*

2. The Triple Burner is a palace.
3. Each depot (yin, internal) is linked to a specific palace (yang, external)—namely, lung to large intestine, spleen to stomach, heart to small intestine, kidneys to bladder, heart-master/heart-enclosing network to Triple Burner, and liver to gall.
4. "Jung wei sheng wei" is a mistake for "Ying wei sheng hui" .
5. Actually, all the quotations are from the Ling-shu.

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## THE TWENTY-SIXTH DIFFICULT ISSUE

*Overview:* Remarks on the fifteen network-vessels.

### **Unschuld's Translated & Collated Commentaries**

(1)-(3) Ting Te-yung: "[There are] twelve conduits and fifteen network[-vessels]" is to say that each conduit has one network[-vessel]. The conduits of liver, heart, and kidneys are located on the left; their network[-vessels] are located on the right. The conduits of spleen, lung, and heart-enclosing network are on the right; their network[-vessels] are on the left. The yang walker conduit [starts from] the external ankle of the left foot; its network[-vessel starts from] the external ankle of the right foot. The yin walker conduit [starts from] the internal ankle of the right foot; its network[-vessel starts from] the internal ankle of the left foot. These are the network [-vessels] of the yin walker and of the yang walker [conduits]. As for the great network[-vessel] of the spleen, the spleen reflects the soil; it reigns in the central residence, and its rule extends through [all] four seasons. It provides nourishment to the four [remaining] depots. Hence, the [Ling-shu treatise "Ching-mai"] states: "The great network[-vessel] of the spleen is called ta-pao ("great enclosure"). Three inches below the yüan-yeh [hole] it extends through the entire chest." It emerges between the ninth ribs.

Yang: The twelve conduits have one network [vessel] each; that accounts for twelve network[-vessels]. Here now [the text] speaks of fifteen network[-vessels, that is to say, in addition] there are two yin and yang network[-vessels] and the great network[-vessel] of the spleen. That adds up to fifteen network[-vessels]. Man has the two yin and yang walker [vessels]; they are located in both feet on the inner and outer sides, respectively. In males, those located at the outer side of the feet represent the conduits, while those located at the inner side of the feet represent the

network[-vessels]. In females, those located at the inner side of the feet represent the conduits, while those located at the outer side of the feet represent the network[-vessels]. Hence, there are the two network[-vessels] of the yin and yang walker [vessels, respectively]. The [Nei-]ching states: "For males count the yang [walker]; for females count the yin [walker]. Those to be counted are the conduits; those not to be counted are the network[-vessels]." <sup>2</sup> That is [what is] meant here. The great network[-vessel] of the spleen is called ta-pao ("great enclosure"). The spleen, then, has two network[-vessels]. All conduit-vessels represent the inside; those that branch out and run crosswise are the network[-vessels]. Those that depart from the network[-vessels] are the tertiary [network-vessels, sun]. <sup>3</sup>

Li Chiung: The yang walker conduit is located at the outer ankle of the left foot; [its] network[-vessel] is located at the inner ankle of the right foot. The yin walker conduit is located at the inner ankle of the right foot; [its] network[-vessel] is located at the outer ankle of the left foot. The great network[-vessel] of the spleen starts from the spleen at a [hole] called ta-pao hole. It is located below the navel. <sup>4</sup>

Hua Shou: Those [vessels] proceeding straight [through the body] are called "conduits"; those that leave sideways are called "network[-vessels]." The conduits resemble the real flow of the Han river; the network[-vessels] are branches [resembling] streams diverging [from the main river]. Each conduit has a network[-vessel]; the twelve conduits have twelve network[-vessels]. For instance, the hand-great-yin [conduit] is associated with the lung; [its] network[-vessel] links it to the large intestine. The hand-yang-brilliance [conduit] is associated with the large intestine; [its] network[-vessel] links it to the lung. Here, [the text] states: "There are fifteen network[-vessels]" because it includes the network[-vessels] of the yang walker and of the yin walker [conduits], as well as the great network[-vessel] of the spleen. For the yang and yin walker [conduits], see the twenty-eighth difficult issue. What are called "network[-vessels]" here are the single conduits" (ch'i-ching) that are not included among the twelve conduits. It is quite possible to call them "network[-vessels]."

Chang Shih-hsien: The yang walker [vessel] penetrates the five palaces; it masters the external [affairs]. The yin walker [vessel] links and penetrates the five depots; it masters the internal [affairs]. The network[-vessel] of the spleen penetrates and links all conduits, including those in the yin or yang, in the external or internal, as well as in the upper or lower [sections of the body]. Hence, it is called the "great network[-vessel]."

Hsü Ta-ch'un: As far as the fifteen network[-vessels] are concerned, the treatise "Ching-mai" of the Ling[-shu] clearly points out the [network-vessels] leaving from the twelve [main] conduits as well as from the supervisor and controller [conduits]. Together with the great network[-vessel] of the spleen, these are fifteen network [-vessels]. They are all named after the hole [from which they branch off]. Illnesses can be manifest in them, and methods exist to treat them. Here, [the text] takes recourse to the two walker [vessels] to make up for the [number] fifteen. I do not know where that [doctrine] originated.

Kato Bankei: The Ling-shu adds the [network-vessels of the] controller and supervisor [conduits] to the network[-vessels] of the twelve [main] conduits. [Together,] these are fifteen network[-vessels].

This difficult issue replaces the [network-vessels of the controller and supervisor conduits] by [those of] the yang walker and yin walker [conduits]. Why is that? Well, if the single conduits (ch'i-ching) are contrasted with the twelve [main] conduits, they all [count as] network[-vessels]. Hence, one knows that—besides the controller and the supervisor [conduits]—the holes belonging to the two walkers are equivalent to the holes of all the other network[-vessels]. The fifteen network[-vessels] of the Ling-shu include the two [network-]vessels [associated with the] controller and the supervisor [conduits], but not the yin [walker] network[-vessel] and yang [walker] network[-vessel]. Now, the controller and the supervisor are part of the circulation system, and they have specific holes.<sup>4</sup> Hence, they were replaced, in this difficult issue, by the [network-vessels of the] yin and yang walkers.

Liao P'ing: Including the [network-vessels associated with the] supervisor and controller [conduits], there are fourteen network[-vessels]. Altogether, the [main] conduits amount to fourteen, too. If each [main] conduit is matched with a great network[-vessel], that amounts to twenty-eight.... The number of the network[-vessels] should be fourteen. When [the text] states "fifteen," this may have resulted from a mistaken understanding and counting of the great network[-vessel] of the spleen. A commentary to the [Nei-]ching further adds a great network[-vessel] of the stomach, thus reaching the number sixteen. These are all alike mistakes.... Yang walker vessel must refer here to the supervisor [vessel]. The names are identical but the substance is different. [Yin walker vessel] must refer to the controller [vessel].

### *Unschuld's footnotes*

2. Ling-shu treatise 17, "Mai-tu". See also difficult issue 23, Hsü Ta-ch'un's commentary on sentence 6.

3. Literally, "grandchild."

4. Ch'i ("navel") may be a mistake here for yeh ("armpits"). The ta-pao hole is located below the latter.

5. In contrast to the network-vessels, which are associated only with the one hole at the junction where they branch off from the main conduits. Kato Bankei's argumentation appears odd here. Usually, the walker, supervisor, and controller conduits are all considered "single conduits" (see also difficult issues 27 through 29 ). They all have a course and specific holes employed for functional needle treatment.

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## THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DIFFICULT ISSUE

*Overview:* Introduction of the term "eight single-conduit vessels," and of the concept that they function as "ditches and reservoirs" absorbing surplus contents of the main conduits.

### **Unschuld's Translated & Collated Commentaries**

(1) Ting Te-yung: Earlier, [the text] talked about the twelve [main] conduits and fifteen network[-vessels]—adding up to twenty-seven—through which the influences move up and down consecutively. [These twenty-seven conduit-vessels] transmit the flow of the [protective] influences and the blood; they are tied to each other and there is no break [in the circulation proceeding in them].

Here, these eight vessels are passageways proceeding separately. Hence, they are called the eight "single-conduit" vessels. Their points of origin are discussed in a subsequent chapter.

Yang: Ch'i ("single") means i ("different"). These eight vessels are not part of [the system of] mutual seizure [of contents] among the twelve conduits; they constitute passageways proceeding separately. They are "different" from the main conduits. Hence, they are called "single-conduits." Their number is eight; hence, one speaks of eight [single-conduit] vessels.

Yü Shu: Ch'i is to be read like chi; it stands for hsieh ("sideways") or ling ("odd," "fraction"). The meaning implied here is "single." That is to say, these eight vessels are not linked to the yinyang classification of the proper conduits. They do not consist of matching [conduits, resembling the] outside and inside [classification of the main conduits]. They constitute separate passageways proceeding singly. That is why they are called "single-conduits." [The statement of the text that these vessels] are not touched by the [movement of the influences through the main] conduits is verified by these [arguments]. When Mr. Yang stated that "single" means "different," he was wrong.

Hsü Ta-ch'un: Ch'i ("single") should be read like the ch'i in ch'i-ou ("odd," "single"). That is to say, in contrast to the twelve [main] conduits, no pairs of foot and hand [conduits] exist in their case. For details, see the next treatise.

Liao P'ing: The [Nei-]ching has no clear textual passage on these eight vessels. If one were to say that those [vessels] with holes are the [main] conduits while those without holes are the single[-conduit vessels], then there should be only six single[-conduit vessels] because the supervisor and the controller [vessels] have holes. The latter add up [with the remaining twelve main conduits] to a total of fourteen conduits, as Mr. Hua [Shou] has pointed out correctly in his [book] Shih-ssu ching fa-hui ["Elucidations Concerning the Fourteen Conduits"].

Li Chiung: Wei ("tie") means ch'ih ("to support"). The [yang tie vessel] is tied to and supports all the yang [sections of the organism; the yin tie vessel] is tied to and supports all yin [sections of the organism].

(3) Li Chiung: Ch'iao ("walker") stands for chieh-chi ("rapid") or hsieh ("to hasten"). That is to say, this vessel provides th mechanism for one's walking [ability]; it is the source of the movement of one's feet.

(4) Li Chiung: The through-way vessel is the sea [in which] the twelve conduit-vessels [end]. Ch'ung ("through-way") stands for t'ung ("penetration"). That is to say, this vessel reaches down to the feet and up to the head. It receives [protective] influences and blood from [all] the twelve [main] conduits.

Yeh Lin: Ch'ung ("through-way") means chih-shang ("straight upward").

(5) Li Chiung: Tu ("supervisor") means tu ("administrative center"). It represents the central link of all the yang vessels.

Yeh Lin: Tu ("supervisor") means "general supervision" (tsung-tu) of all yang [sections].

(6) Li Chiung: Jen ("controller") stands for hui ("commanding");<sup>2</sup> that is the origin of man's [coming to] life and nourishment.

Yeh Lin: Jen ("controller") means "controlling" (t'ung-jen) all yin [sections].

(7) Li Chiung: Tai ("belt") stands for shu ("to bind"). It binds all the other vessels, bringing [their contents] into balance.

(5)-(6) Liao P'ing: They have special holes; they cannot be single-conduit vessels.

(8) Liao P'ing: These should be six. The [Nei-]ching does not have this designation [i.e., eight single-conduit vessels]. It was established by this book. Later people adopted it without checking [whether it already existed in the Nei-ching].

(9) Liao P'ing: Among the eight vessels [outlined in] this difficult issue are the supervisor and the controller [vessels]. Is this not a contradiction to [the statement in] the preceding difficult issue, [where it was said] that the yang network[-vessel] is the network[-vessel] of the yang walker, and that the yin network[-vessel] is the network[-vessel] of the yin walker?

(10) Liao P'ing: If one counts the controller and the supervisor [vessels] among them, there should be fourteen [main conduits].... There are [not fifteen but 1]4 [network-vessels].... It should be "[In all, 2]8 [of them]."

(12) Li Chiung: The earth has twenty-four waters, matching the twenty-four conduits and network[-vessels]. In addition to these twenty-four waters, the sages devised and constructed ditches and reservoirs. This is used here as a metaphor for the eight single-conduit vessels. "Ditches and reservoirs" are passageways opening passages between all [the twenty-four] waters; they are [designed as] preventive measures against unforeseeable [conditions].

Hsü Ta-ch'un: For pu-jan ("extraordinary"), one could also say pu-yü (unexpected").

(13) Li Chiung: In times when the rainfloods rushed wildly through the ditches and into the reservoirs, the sages just listened to their flow. They did not [have to] make any further plans [to prevent a catastrophe].

(14) Li Chiung: When the eight single-conduit vessels are full to overflowing, the twelve [main] conduits will not seize any [of their contents]. They let [the contents of] these passageways proceed separately.

Hua Shou: The movement [of the influences] through the [main] conduits and network[-vessels] is marked by a continuing passage. The eight single-conduit vessels are not included in the sequence [of the main conduits and network-vessels]. The planning and construction of ditches and reservoirs by the sages is used here as an analogy. It elucidates that when the network-vessels are full to overflowing, none of the [main] conduits can seize any [of their surplus contents]; the single-conduit [vessels] serve this purpose. That means that the single-conduit [vessels] serve [as additional ditches and reservoirs] in case of an overfilling of the network-vessels.

Hsü Ta-ch'un: The waterways are used here as a metaphor for the blood vessels of the human body. When the blood vessels are filled completely, the twelve [main] conduits do not suffice to accept the [surplus from the blood vessels]. Consequently, there is an overflow into the single-conduit [vessels]. Hence, the single-conduit [vessels] are separate vessels [branching off from] the twelve [main] conduits.

Kato Bankei: The network-vessels are the fifteen network-vessels mentioned earlier [in the preceding difficult issue]. Mr. Hua [Shou] believed [that the term "network-vessel" could be interpreted here] as designating the single-conduit vessels. That was wrong.

*Unschuld's footnotes*

2. Although the meaning of the term hui ("commanding") corresponds to that of the term jen ("controller"), from the statement that follows it one may assume that it is a mistake for jen ("pregnancy"). See also Yang's commentary on sentence 3 of difficult issue 28.

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**THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DIFFICULT ISSUE**

*Overview:* Description of the courses of the eight single-conduit vessels in the organism.

**Unschuld's Translated & Collated Commentaries**

(1) Hsü Ta-ch'un: For chi ("to continue"), the Mai-ching writes hsi ("to be attached to").

Liao P'ing: The fourteen [main] conduits (ching) resemble the fixed stars (ching-hsing) which do not move. The single[-conduit] vessels stop on their way [at the main conduits] in the same way that the planets utilize the fixed stars as their resting places. The movement and the stopping of the two [kinds of stars] are not identical. The [movement of the] fixed stars and that of the planets are opposite to each other. "Eight" should be "six."

(2) Lü Kuang: The supervisor vessel is the sea [in which all] the yang vessels [end].

Ting Te-yung: [When the text states that] the supervisor vessel originates from the transportation [hole] at the [body's] lower end, it refers to the ch'ang-ch'iang hole at the lower end of the backbone.<sup>2</sup> That is where the supervisor and controller [vessels] meet and tie up with each other. The two ascend together inside the backbone to the feng-fu hole, which is located one inch above the hair[-line]. There the supervisor vessel meets with the yang tie [vessel].

Yü Shu: The [Nan-]ching states: "The supervisor vessel originates from the [body's] lower end; it ascends and enters the brain." Mr. Lü has said: "It is the sea [in which] all yang [vessels end]." Mr. Yang has said: "It is the central link of all the yang vessels." The flow through the supervisor vessel starts from the hui-yin hole.<sup>3</sup> It follows the center of the backbone, ascending towards the ta-ch'ui hole,<sup>4</sup> where it meets in an intersection with the three yang [conduits] of the hands and feet. It ascends further to the yin-men hole,<sup>5</sup> where it meets with the yang tie [vessel]. It ascends further to the pai-hui hole,<sup>6</sup> where it meets in an intersection with the great-yang [conduit]. Then it descends to the nasal column, down to the shui-kou hole,<sup>7</sup> where it meets in an intersection with the hand-yang-brilliance [conduit]. From this course one may conclude that [the supervisor vessel] is indeed the "sea [in which] all yang [vessels end]" and the "central tie of all the yang vessels."

Hsü Ta-ch'un: Yü ("transportation") stands for hsüeh ("hole"). "Lower end" refers to the ch'ang-tuan hole.<sup>8</sup> It belongs to the controller vessel and is located at the tip of the bone at the lower end of the spine.

Liao P'ing: Of each conduit it is said: "It is tied to that-and-that [vessel] and constitutes [together with it] outside and inside, and it belongs to that-and-that [depot], which represents its basic depot." Here it is said that the [supervisor vessel] belongs to the brain. Well, if the supervisor vessel belongs to the brain, it must be the conduit-vessel of the brain.

(3) Ting Te-yung: Chung-chi ("central pole") is the name of a hole, located four inches below the navel. Below the "central pole" is the ch'ü-ku ("crooked bone") hole where the controller vessel

originates. [When the text states that] it proceeds inside the abdomen, ascends to the kuan-yüan [hole], and reaches the throat, it refers to the t'ien-t'u hole.<sup>9</sup> This is the point where the controller vessel meets [with the yin tie vessel].

Yang: Jen ("controller") stands for jen ("pregnancy"). This is the basis of man's [coming to] life and nourishment. Hence, [the text] states: "It is located below the chung-chi [hole] and above the ch'ang-ch'iang [hole]."

Yü Shu: According to the Chen-ching,<sup>10</sup> the controller vessel originates from the hui-yin hole. [When the text of the Nan-ching states that] it moves upward to the [pubic] hairline, it refers to the ch'ü-ku hole, which is located at the [pubic] hairline below the lower abdomen. There [the controller vessel] meets with the foot-ceasing-yin vessel. Then it ascends to the kuan-yüan [hole], which is located two inches below the navel. It reaches the throat where it meets with the yin tie vessel. The Su-wen states: "With two times seven years, females reach sexual maturity. The controller vessel is passable and the through-way vessel is full. The monthly affair commences to descend and [the girl] is now able to bear children."<sup>11</sup> That is why Mr. Yang has said: "[The controller vessel] is the basis of man's [coming to] life and nourishment."

(4) Lü Kuang: The through-way vessel is the sea [in which all] the yin vessels [end].

Yang: The [Nei-]ching states: "The through-way vessel is the sea [in which all] twelve conduits [end]." In this case it is not just the sea [in which] the yin vessels [end]. I fear Mr. Lü was wrong here. Ch'ung ("through-way") stands for t'ung ("penetration," "all"). That is to say, this vessel reaches down to the feet and up to the head. It receives influences and blood from all (t'ung) the twelve conduits. Hence, it is called ch'ung.

Yü Shu: The Su-wen states: "The through-way vessel originates from the ch'i-chieh [hole]." The Nan-ching states: "It originates from the ch'i-ch'ung [hole]." Furthermore, the Chen-ching has both these names among its [designations of] holes. The meanings of both ch'ung and chieh refer to "penetration." The Su-wen states: "[The through-way vessel] parallels the foot-minor-yin conduit." The Nan-ching states: "It parallels the foot-yang-brilliance conduit." Moreover, the minor-yin vessels pass the navel both to the left and right at a distance of five inches, respectively. The yang-brilliance conduits pass the navel both to the left and right at a distance of two inches. The ch'i-ch'ung [hole] is the place where the influences of the yang-brilliance vessel emerge. In conclusion, the through-way vessel originates from the ch'i-ch'ung [hole]. It ascends in between the yang-brilliance and minor-yin conduits, passing close by the navel. The reason for the [different statements in the Su-wen and in the Nan-ching] has become clear now. Principally, the supervisor vessel, the controller vessel, and the through-way vessel all three emerge from the hui-yin hole, where they are united. One vessel, then, branches out into three [vessels], which proceed separately through the yin and yang sections [of the organism]. Hence, they all have different names.

(5) Ting Te-yung: One inch eight fen below the smallest rib is the hole where the belt vessel [originates]. It forms one circle around the body.

(8) Hua Shou: The twelve characters i ch'u pu neng huan liu ch'üuan kai chu ching che yeh ("when they are filled to overflowing ... into the main conduits") should follow the sentence, "similarly, the twelve [main] conduits cannot seize [the surplus contents of the eight single-conduit vessels]." They

do not fit here, but there they would follow [the course of the argument]. Mr. Hsieh [Chin-sun] has, therefore, reached the conclusion that some text must be missing in the beginning or at the end [of this difficult issue].

Hsü Ta-ch'un: The [Nei-]ching has no clear textual passage on the two tie vessels. Hence, one cannot check where they originate and where they end.

Liao P'ing: Following [the words] wei lo yü shen ("are tied like a network to the body"), some text must be missing. These two sentences may have been moved here mistakenly by later people. Hence, they are difficult to understand.

(9) Nanking 1962: "Where all yang [vessels] meet each other" refers to the location of the chin-men hole of the conduit [associated with the] bladder; it is situated below the outer ankles of the feet to the front.... "Where all yin [vessels] intersect" refers to the location of the chu-pin hole of the conduit [associated with] the kidneys; it is situated above the inner ankles of the feet.

(10)-(12) Yang: Within the nine geographical regions are twelve transit-streams (ching-shui); their flow drains the influences of the earth. Man has twelve conduit-vessels (ching-mai) reflecting these [transit-streams]. They, too, by means of their flow, pour blood and influences through the body, supplying it with life. Hence, they are compared to ditches and reservoirs.

(12)-(14) Yü Shu: When the twelve conduits are filled [to overflowing, their surplus contents] enter the eight [single-conduit] vessels where they are no longer part of the circulation. When evil [influences] are present in the eight [single-conduit] vessels, they cause swelling, heat, and accumulations. Hence, one must hit and prick them with a sharp stone. Hence, [the text] states: "Hit [the respective vessel] with a sharp stone."

(14) Hsü Ta-ch'un: This refers to the method of treating [illnesses in the single-conduit vessels]. The [contents of the] single-conduit vessels cannot join the circulation. Hence, evil influences [after having entered them] have no way of getting out. When one uses sharp stones to hit [these vessels], the evil influences follow the blood and will be drained. As a result, the illness will be cured.

### *Unschuld's footnotes*

2. The ch'ang-ch'iang hole is situated three fen above the lower end of the spine. It is also the point where the foot-minor-yin and the foot-minor-yang vessels meet.
3. The hui-yin hole is situated on the perineum.
4. This hole is situated at the lower end of the neck.
5. This hole is situated at the hairline in the center of the back of the head.
6. This hole is situated on the top of the head.
7. This hole is situated in the center between the nose and the upper lip.
8. Ch'ang-tuan may be a mistake for ch'ang-ch'iang.
9. The t'ien-t'u hole is situated in front of the trachea between the clavicles.
10. A "scripture on needling" mentioned in the Nei-ching and in Sui and T'ang bibliographies. It is no longer extant.
11. Su-wen treatise 1, "Shang-ku t'ien chen lun".

**THE TWENTY-NINTH DIFFICULT ISSUE**

*Overview:* List of signs and symptoms caused by illnesses in the eight single-conduit vessels.

**Unschuld's Translated & Collated Commentaries**

(3) Lü Kuang: Ch'ang-jan ("uncomfortable") means that a person is afraid. When one is afraid, the tie vessels relax. Hence, the respective person will no longer be able to support his bodily [stature].

When one is afraid, one loses one's mind; one has a tendency to forget, and one will be confused.

Ting Te-yung: The [yin and] yang tie [vessels] are the ties linking the yin and the yang [vessels]; they are responsible for supporting the vessels of the yin and yang [sections of the organism]. Here, they

cannot maintain their respective ties; that is, the yang [tie vessel] can no longer support all the yang [vessels], and the yin [tie vessel] can no longer support all the yin [vessels]. Hence, [the text] states:

"One feels uncomfortable and loses one's mind." Jung-jung ("weak") means nuan-man ("relaxed and slow"). Hence, one is unable to support one's [bodily stature].

Hsü Ta-ch'un: Jung-jung ("weak") describes a drifting, unsettled state.

Liao P'ing: That is an illness of one's muscles.

(4)-(5) Lü Kuang: The yang [influences] are the protective [influences]; hence, [when the yang tie vessel has an illness one suffers from fits of] cold and heat. The yin [influences] are the constructive [influences]; the constructive [influences] are the blood. The blood is [associated with] the heart.

Hence, [in case of an illness in the yin tie vessel], one suffers from heartache.

Ting Te-yung: The yang tie vessel is attached<sup>1</sup> to all yang conduits; in case of an illness [in the yang tie vessel], one suffers from [fits of] cold and heat. The yin tie [vessel] is attached to all yin conduits; in case of an illness [in the yin tie vessel] one suffers from heartache.

Hsü Ta-ch'un: The yang [conduits] rule the external [sections of the organism]; in case of an unbalanced [presence of] yang influences, [fits of] cold and heat will result. The yin [conduits] rule the internal [sections of the organism]. The heart is [associated with] the minor-yin. In case of an unbalanced [presence of] yin influences, heartache [will result].

(6)-(7) Lü-Kuang: The yin walker[-vessel] ascends at the inner ankle. In case of an illness, this vessel will be tense from the inner ankle upward [while the yang walker-vessel] will be relaxed from the outer ankle upward. The yang walker[-vessel] ascends at the outer ankle. In case of an illness, this vessel will be tense from the outer ankle upward [while the yin walker-vessel] will be relaxed from the inner ankle upward.

Ting Te-yung: The eight single-conduit vessels [reflect] the principle behind the planning and the construction of ditches and reservoirs by the sages in order to ensure the passability of the waterways [even under extraordinary circumstances]. The illnesses [of these vessels] cannot emerge from within [these vessels] themselves; they are always caused by an influx [of surplus contents] from the [main] conduits when the latter are replete. These [surplus contents] are taken away [from the walker-vessels] by pricking them with sharp stones. Whenever the yang vessels are replete, they distribute [their surplus contents] into the yang walker[-vessel]; as a result, the yang walker[-vessel] is ill. Whenever the yin vessels are replete, they distribute [their surplus contents] into the yin walker[-vessel]; as a result, the yin walker[-vessel] is ill. Hence, when the [text states that in case the]

yin walker[-vessel] or the yang walker[-vessel] are ill, the [respective] yin or yang [walker-vessels] are relaxed or tense, this means that they suffer from depletion or repletion. When the yin walker[-vessel] is ill, the yang [walker-vessel] is relaxed and the yin [walker-vessel] is tense. That is, one suffers from a depletion of yin [influences]; one's feet are stiff and straight, and the fifteen<sup>2</sup> network[-vessels] are blocked. When the yang walker[-vessel] is ill, the yin [walker-vessel] is relaxed and the yang [walker-vessel] is tense. That is, one runs madly, does not lie down, and dies. Ch'iao ("walker") stands for chien ("active").

Chang Shih-hsien: All yin vessels distribute their excess contents into the yin walker. When the yin walker has received these evil [influences], the resulting illness will be manifest in the yin section, not in the yang section. Hence, the yang [walker-vessel] will be relaxed while the yin [walker-vessel] is tense. "Relaxed" and "tense" carry the meaning of "depletion" and "repletion," [respectively]. All yang vessels distribute their excess contents into the yang walker. When the yang walker has received these evil [influences], the resulting illness will be manifest in the yang section, not in the yin section. Hence, the yin [walker-vessel] will be relaxed while the yang [walker-vessel] is tense.

Ting Chin: When the yin walker receives evil [influences], the yang walker is relaxed while the yin walker is tense. The yin walker originates from the center of the heels and proceeds upward along the inner ankle. When the yang walker receives evil [influences] the yin walker is relaxed while the yang walker is tense. The yin walker originates from the center of the heels and proceeds upward along the outer ankle.

(8) Lü Kuang: The through-way vessel proceeds from the kuan-yüan [hole] upward to the throat. Hence, when this vessel has an illness, [its] influences move contrary to their proper course and tensions occur inside [the body].

Ting Te-yung: Ni-ch'i ("influences moving contrary to their proper course") refers to [influences in the] abdomen moving contrary to their proper course; li-chi ("internal tensions") refers to pain in the abdomen.

Liao P'ing: The through-way vessel is the sea [in which] the twelve conduits [end]; man's ancestral influences (tsung-ch'i) emerge from it. In particular it rules the reproductive affairs. It is called "lymphatic vessel" (lin-pa-kuan) by the Westerners. Its main [course proceeds] through the abdomen, but at the same time it proceeds along the back. Hence, Mr. Yang's T'ai-su considered the three vessels—the through-way, controller, and supervisor—to constitute one entity.

(9) Lü Kuang: The supervisor vessel is in the spine. In case of an illness, this vessel is tense. Hence, it causes the spine to be stiff.

Hsü Ta-ch'un: Chüeh ("backward") has the same [meaning] as ni ("contrary to a proper direction").

(10)-(11) Lü Kuang: The controller vessel starts from the cervical opening. Hence when this vessel is [blocked by] knots, it causes the seven accumulation ills [in males] and the concentration ills [in females].

Yü Shu: The controller vessel ascends along the abdomen. Hence, [in case of an illness] one suffers from internal knots; males will develop the seven accumulation ills<sup>3</sup>—namely, chüeh accumulation, p'an accumulation, han accumulation, wei accumulation, fu accumulation, lang accumulation, and ch'i accumulation. These seven illnesses originate from [conditions of] depletion and weakness of the

influences and the blood, and from imbalances of cold and warmth. Females will suffer from the concentration ills. There are eight concentration ills—namely, virid concentration, yellow concentration, dryness concentration, blood concentration, fox concentration, snake concentration, turtle concentration, and fat concentration. Chia ("concentration")<sup>4</sup> means [that one suffers from an illness] that "appears to assume" (chia) a [specific] material form.

Chang Shih-hsien: The controller vessel originates from below the chung-chi [hole] and moves upward toward the [pubic] hairline. It proceeds inside the abdomen, ascends to the kuan-yüan [hole] and reaches the throat. In case of an illness [a condition emerges] inside the abdomen as if [the vessel]<sup>5</sup> were knotted and impassible. The illness manifests itself in males in the seven accumulation ills—namely, first, chüeh; second, p'an; third, han; fourth, wei; fifth, fu; sixth, mai; and seventh, ch'i. In females this illness manifests itself as an abdominal concentration ill. [Such an illness] often results from stagnating blood. One speaks of chia concentration ills when they assume some specific material form. The chia concentration ills are known under eight different names, including snake-chia concentration ill; virid-chia concentration ill; fat-chia concentration ill; yellow-chia concentration ill; dryness-chia concentration ill; blood-chia concentration ill; fox-chia concentration ill; and turtle-chia concentration-ill. The chü concentrations form lumps and do not remain at a specific location.

(10) Hsü Ta-ch'un: Chieh ("knots") stands for chin-chieh ("twisted tightly") or ning-chih ("congealed and obstructed"). The controller vessel originates from the cervical opening and proceeds along the abdomen. Hence, [in case of an illness] internal knots will result.

(11) Hsü Ta-ch'un: The seven accumulation ills include, first, the chüeh; second, the p'an; third, the han; fourth, the wei; fifth, the fu; sixth, the mai; and seventh, the ch'i [accumulations]. Some say [they include the] han, shui, chin, hsüeh, ch'i, hu, and t'ui [accumulations].

(12) Hsü Ta-ch'un: Chia means "to appear as some item and assume its material form." Chü refers to "concentrations that do not disperse." Because males are yang and are associated with the influences, while females are yin and are associated with the blood, their illnesses differ. The Su-wen [treatise] "Ku k'ung lun" [states]: "In case the controller vessel has an illness, males suffer from internal knots and from the seven accumulation ills; females suffer from concentrations below the belt-line. In case the through-way vessel has an illness, the influences move contrary to their proper course and internal tensions occur. In case the supervisor vessel has an illness, one's back is stiff and one is bent backward." That is truly identical with what is [said] here.

(13) Lü Kuang: The belt vessel circles belt-like around the human body. In case it has an illness, the abdomen is relaxed. Hence, it causes the loins to be weak.

Hsü Ta-ch'un: Jung-jung ju tso shui-chung ("[the loins will be] bloated as if one were sitting in water") refers to a state when one is at ease, relaxed, and shrinks back at cold.

(14) Kato Bankei: The [discussion of the] bodily [manifestations] of illnesses in the eight [single-conduit] vessels is distributed in the Nei-ching among many treatises as if they were unrelated to each other. Therefore Yüeh-jen has concentrated [all that scattered information], stating it as the present difficult issue.

*Unschuld's footnotes*

1. I interpret chu ("to rule") here as chu ("to be attached to").
2. The text says "five." That is probably a mistake for "fifteen."
3. Shan ("accumulation ill") is a term mentioned in the Shih-chi, biography of Shun- yü, (ca, 100 B.C.) and in the bibliography of the Han-shu. It seems to refer to swellings due to various causes, and it has been associated mostly with illnesses in the abdomen and, in particular, in the male reproductive organs. Ch'ao Yüan-fang (fl. A.D. 610), in chapter 20 of his Chu-ping yüan hou lun, named the "seven accumulation ills" as they are quoted here by Yü Shu. The origins of some of the seven designations are not clear, including p'an ("bowl"), fu (written variously in different texts), and lang ("wolf"). The others may be interpreted from their associated symptoms: chüeh ("backwards," i.e., vomiting resulting from accumulations), wei ("obstruction"), han ("cold"), and ch'i ("influences"). Chang Tzu-ho (1156-1228), in chapter 2 of his Ju-men shih-ch'in, wrote perhaps the most detailed account of the seven accumulation ills, introducing, however, partly different designations—namely, han ("cold"), shui ("water"), chin ("muscles"), hsüeh ("blood"), ch'i ("influences"), and t'ui (unclear here). Hsü Ta-ch'un (see his commentary on sentence 11) referred to still another list when he quoted Chao Yüan-fang's original sequence, exchanging, however, lang ("wolf") for mai ("vessel").
4. Chia ("concentration ill") is an ancient term; it appeared in the Shan-hai ching (eighth to second century B.C.) and is also mentioned in the Shun-yü I biography of the Shih-chi. Commentators of the respective passages assumed that the term designated swellings caused by concentrations of worms/insects. In Su-wen treatise 60, "Ku k'ung lun", Ling-shu treatise 57, "Shui-chang," and the bibliography of the Sui-shu, which lists a title Fu-jen chia ("Women's Concentration Ills"), chia is referred to solely in a gynecological sense. In this context, it came to be used to designate various swellings in the female reproductive tract, all specified by additional terms (as mentioned, for instance, in Chang Shih-hsien's commentary on sentences 10 and 11).
5. Or [the vessels].