

NAN-CHING THE CLASSIC OF DIFFICULT ISSUES

Chapter Five: Transportation Holes (Difficult Issues 62-68)

THE SIXTY-SECOND DIFFICULT ISSUE

Overview: Explanation of why the conduits associated with the palaces have six transportation holes, while those associated with the depots have only five.

六十二難曰(一)藏井榮有五府獨有六者何謂也(二)然府者陽也三焦行於諸陽故置一俞名曰原(三)府有六者亦與三焦共一氣也

62

六十二難
二難
臟腑
井榮
之圖



The sixty-second difficult issue: (1) The [vessels associated with the body's] depots have five [holes each; these are the] "wells," "brooks," [etc]. Only the [vessels associated with the body's] palaces have six [holes each]. What does that mean?

(2) It is like this. The palaces are yang. The Triple Burner passes [its influences] through all the yang [conduits and palaces]. Hence an [additional] transportation [hole] has been established, named "origin." [When it is said] "the palaces have six," this is so because the [three sections of the] Triple Burner have one influence in common, which is added [to those of the remaining five palaces].¹

Unschuld's Footnotes

1. This is the first of a series of seven difficult issues discussing the locations and functions of holes suitable for needling. The Nei-ching advocates at least two systems of needling: (1) the (older?) system of pricking locations distributed all over the body and located on the conduit-circuit, and (2) the system of extremities' needling, which recognizes only a limited number of holes—holes that are not situated on the conduit-circuit. The Nan-ching took over extremities' needling only, and appears to have disregarded the system of circuit-needling completely. (see the Prolegomena, section I.B.). The system of extremities' needling is based on a recognition of twelve conduits. The names of these conduits are identical with those of the classical conduits (hand-great-yin, etc.), but their courses and

conceptual basis are entirely different. The twelve conduits of extremities' needling are not part of the conduit-circuit passed by the constantly circulating ch'i, although the holes to be needled on the former also appear in the system of circuit-needling. Invisible to the human eye, the twelve conduits of extremities' needling are conceptualized as streams; the term ching, which denotes these conduits, is henceforth rendered as "stream." These streams spring forth from the feet or hands, extend to the knees or elbows, respectively, and submerge there again. The six streams associated with the five (plus one) depots have five holes each, while the six streams associated with the six palaces have six holes each. Together, these are the so-called transportation holes. They carry generic names that apply to all twelve streams alike. The locations where the streams originate are called "wells"; next come the "brooks," "rapids," "streams," and "confluences." On the streams associated with the palaces, a sixth hole—called yüan—is identified between the "rapids" and the "streams." Originally, this term yüan may have been inserted carrying the meaning of "plain." The underlying image resorted to by all these designations is that of a river which comes from the mountains, rushes down the cliffs, crosses a plain, and becomes a stream before it flows into the ocean. The Nan-ching itself and most of the commentators equate yüan with yüan ("origin"), relating the yüan hole to the "original" influences emitted by the Triple Burner. This may be seen as a breaking away from the original metaphor, but it should be recalled that the character used for yüan remains identical for both readings and may therefore continue to convey the old image, as hinted at by a statement in the Ling-shu to the effect that at this point the stream "crosses over" or "passes through" (kuo). More problematic is an adequate rendering of the term yü. In accordance with traditional Chinese interpretations, I have translated yü here as "rapids"—that is, as the place where the young stream "rushes forth" (chu). The etymology of the term suggests meanings such as "boat on water" (Karlgrén, *Analytic Dictionary of Chinese and Sino-Japanese*, 1923, p. 374) or "the making of a boat by hollowing out a tree" (Shuo-wen); also, yü has often been interpreted as being identical with shu ("to transport"). Linking all these meanings might be the idea, in the present context, that transportation on a stream becomes possible only once the latter has passed its rapids. Where the term yü is used to designate holes for needling in general, I have translated it as "transportation [hole]"; in that context, the underlying idea appears to be the possibility of transporting influences in the organism by means of needling. A third meaning of yü will appear in difficult issue 67.

THE SIXTY-THIRD DIFFICULT ISSUE

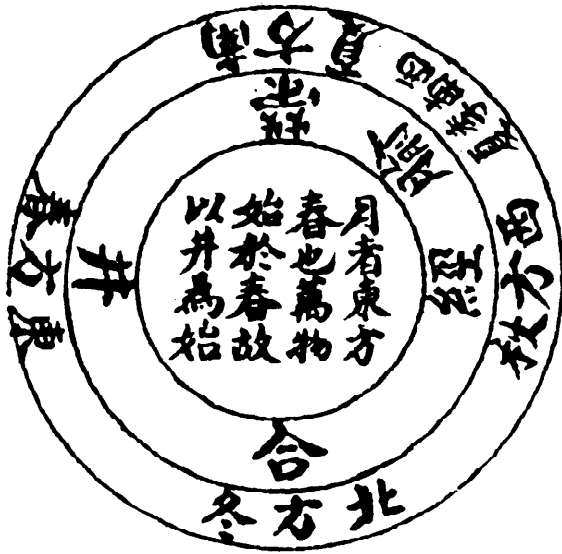
Overview: Explanation of why each conduit has a "well" as its first transportation hole.

六十三難曰(一)十變言五藏六府榮合皆以井爲始者何也(二)然井者東方春也萬物之始生諸岐行喘息蜎飛蠕動當生之物莫不以春而生(三)故歲數始於春日數始於甲故以井爲始也

The sixty-third difficult issue: (1) The Ten Changes states: The [sequence of holes located on the streams associated with the body's] five depots and six palaces, [including] "brooks," ["rapids," "streams," and] "confluences," is always preceded by a "well." Why is that?

63

六十三難
井始之圖



(2) It is like this. The "wells" are [associated with] the eastern regions and with spring. [That is the season when] all things come to life, when all the ch'i [insects start to] move, when the chui¹ [insects start to] breathe, when the chüan [insects start to] fly, and when the juan [insects start to] wriggle. All things that must come to life will come to life in spring. (3) Hence the counting of the [seasons of the] year begins with spring, and the counting of the days² begins with chia. Hence the "wells" constitute the begin [in the sequence of holes on the streams associated with the five depots and six palaces].

Unschuld's Footnotes

1. I interpret ch'uan here as an error in writing for chui.
2. Some editions have yüeh ("months") instead of jih ("days").

THE SIXTY-FOURTH DIFFICULT ISSUE

Overview: Introduction of a systematic categorization of the transportation holes according to yin and yang and the Five Phases.

六十四難曰(一)十變又言陰井木陽井金陰榮火陽榮水陰翕土陽翕木陰經金陽經火陰合水陽合土陰陽皆不同其意何也(二)然是剛柔之事也陰井乙木陽井庚金陽井庚庚者乙之剛也陰井乙乙者庚之柔也乙為木故言陰井木也庚為金故言陽井金也餘皆倣此

The sixty-fourth difficult issue: (1) The Ten Changes states further: The yin wells are wood; the yang wells are metal; the yin brooks are fire; the yang brooks are water; the yin rapids are soil; the yang rapids are wood; the yin streams are metal; the yang streams are fire; the yin confluences are water; the yang confluences are soil. In each case, the yin and yang [categories are associated with] different [phases]. What is the meaning of that?

(2) It is like this. This is a case where hardness and softness [are matched with each other]. The yin wells are [associated with the Celestial Stem] *i* and [with the phase of] wood; the yang wells are [associated with the Celestial Stem] *keng* and [with the phase of] metal. The *keng* of the yang wells' *keng* is the hardness of *i*. The *i* of the yin wells' *i* is the softness of *keng*. [The Celestial Stem] *i* [represents the phase] wood. Hence [the Ten Changes] states: "The yin 'wells' are wood." [The Celestial Stem] *keng* [represents the phase] metal. Hence [the Ten Changes] states: "The yang 'wells' are metal." The same applies to all the remaining [holes].¹

64

之配井四六
圖合榮難十



陰井配陽井
陰榮配陽榮
陰脬配陽脬
陰經配陽經
陰合配陽合
陽剛配柔剛
合各從其類

Unschuld's Footnotes

1. In this difficult issue, the Nan-ching perfects the theoretical systematization of the holes on the "streams" in the extremities by linking them to both the yinyang and the Five Phases categories. The "wells," "brooks," and so on are divided into two groups following their location on a stream associated with a depot (i.e., yin) or palace (i.e., yang). Each pair of yin and yang wells, brooks, and so forth is then matched with a pair of two of the Five Phases in such a way that the yang partner always represents a phase which is able, according to the sequence of mutual destruction, to control the phase represented by the yin partner. This control is expressed by reference to the matching of a hard component (i.e., yang) with a soft component (i.e., yin). Later commentators equated this metaphor with the image of husband and wife. In sentence 2, the pattern is further clarified by reference to the system of the Ten Celestial Stems. The usual sequence in which these stems appear is shown in the first table.

The Five Phases	Wood	Fire	Soil	Metal	Water
yang stems	<i>chia</i> 甲	<i>ping</i> 丙	<i>wu</i> 戊	<i>keng</i> 庚	<i>jen</i> 壬
yin stems	<i>i</i> 乙	<i>ting</i> 丁	<i>chi</i> 己	<i>hsin</i> 辛	<i>kuei</i> 癸

The Five Holes	Wells	Brooks	Rapids	Streams	Confluences
The Five Phases (yang)	Metal	Water	Wood	Fire	Soil
The Five Stems (yang)	<i>keng</i>	<i>jen</i>	<i>chia</i>	<i>ping</i>	<i>wu</i>
The Five Stems (yin)	<i>i</i>	<i>ting</i>	<i>chi</i>	<i>hsin</i>	<i>kuei</i>
The Five Phases (yin)	Wood	Fire	Soil	Metal	Water

To achieve a matching of yin and yang holes on the basis of mutual control between the two phases concerned, the Ten Stems appear in pairs in the present difficult issue, as in the second table. Horizontally (in the second table), the Five Phases appear in the sequence of mutual generation (e.g., Wood generates Fire, etc.); vertically, the Five Phases appear in the sequence of mutual destruction (e.g., Metal controls Wood, etc.).

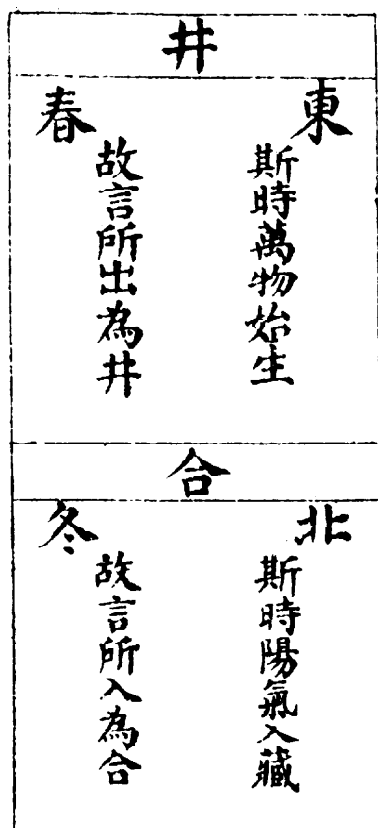
THE SIXTY-FIFTH DIFFICULT ISSUE

Overview: Remarks concerning the "well" and "confluence" transportation holes.

六十五難曰(一)經言所出爲井所入爲合其法奈何(二)然所出爲井井者東方春也萬物之始生故言所出爲井也(三)所入爲合合者北方冬也陽氣入藏故言所入爲合也

65

之入出五
圖合井難十



The sixty-fifth difficult issue: (1) The scripture states: Where [they] appear are the wells; where they disappear are the confluences. What kind of a pattern is that?

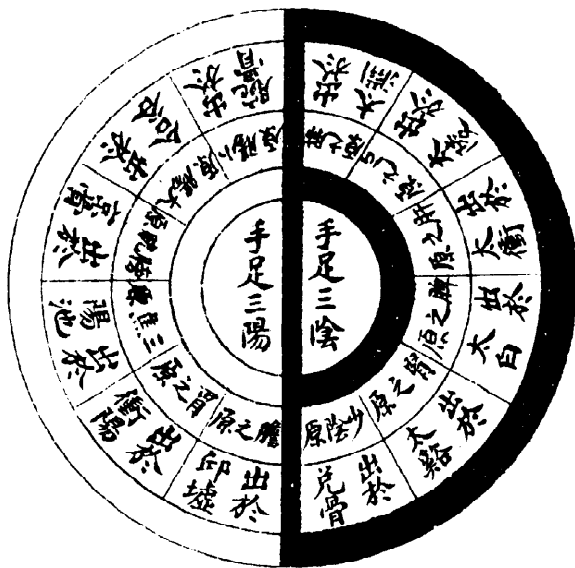
(2) It is like this. "Where [they] appear are the wells" [means the following]. The wells are [associated with] the eastern region and with spring. [During spring] all things come to life. Hence [the scripture] states: "Where [they] appear are the wells." (3) "Where [they] disappear are the confluences" [means the following]. The confluences are [associated with] the northern region and with winter. [During winter] the yang influences disappear and are stored away. Hence [the scripture] states: "Where [they] disappear are the confluences."

Overview: Discussion of the "origin" transportation holes as outlets of the "original influences" of the six depots and six palaces.

六十六難曰(一)肺之原出于太淵(二)心之原出于大陵(三)肝之原出于太衝(四)脾之原出于太白(五)腎之原出于太谿(六)少陰之原出于兌骨(七)膽之原出于邱墟(八)胃之原出于衝陽(九)三焦之原出于陽池(十)膀胱之原出于京骨(十一)大腸之原出于合谷(十二)小腸之原出于腕骨(十三)十二經皆以俞爲原者何也(十四)然五藏俞者三焦之所行氣之所留止也(十五)三焦所行之俞爲原者何也(十六)然臍下腎間動氣者人之生命也十二經之根本也故名曰原(十七)三焦者原氣之別使也(十八)主通行三氣經歷於五藏六府(十九)原者三焦之尊號也(二十)故所止輒爲原(二十一)五藏六府之有病者取其原也

66

圖穴原經二十難六十六



三焦者原氣之別使主通行三焦經歷五臟六腑原者三焦之尊號故所止輒爲原五臟六腑之有病者皆取其原也

The sixty-sixth difficult issue: (1) The original [influences] of the lung appear at the t'ai-yüan [hole]. (2) The original [influences] of the heart appear at the ta-ling [hole]. (3) The original [influences] of the liver appear at the t'ai-ch'ung [hole]. (4) The original [influences] of the spleen appear at the t'ai-pai [hole]. (5) The original [influences] of the kidneys appear at the t'ai-hsi [hole]. (6) The original [influences] of the minor-yin appear at the tui-ku [hole]. (7) The original [influences] of the gall appear at the ch'iu-hsü [hole]. (8) The original [influences] of the stomach appear at the ch'ung-yang [hole]. (9) The original [influences] of the Triple Burner appear at the yang-ch'ih [hole]. (10) The original [influences] of the bladder appear at the ching-ku [hole]. (11) The original [influences] of the large intestine appear at the ho-ku [hole]. (12) The original [influences] of the small intestine appear at the wan-ku [hole].

(13) On all the twelve streams the rapids [holes] constitute the origin [holes]. Why is that?

(14) It is like this. The rapids [holes on the conduits associated with the] five depots are the locations where the influences that are sent out by the Triple Burner stop and rest.

(15) Why are the transportation [holes] where the [influences] sent out by the Triple Burner [stop and rest called] "origin" [holes]?

(16) It is like this. The influences moving below the navel and between the kidneys constitute man's life. They are the source and the basis of the twelve conduits. Hence they are called "original

[influences]." (17) The Triple Burner is the special envoy that transmits the original influences. (18)

It is responsible for the passage of the three influences through the [body's] five depots and six

palaces. (19) "Origin" is an honorable designation for the Triple Burner. (20) Hence [the place]

where [its influences] come to a halt is [called] "origin." (21) In case the [body's] five depots and six palaces suffer from an illness, one always selects their respective [conduits'] origin [holes for pricking].¹

Unschuld's Footnotes

1. Taken by itself, this difficult issue contains rather unambiguous information. But in comparison with various treatises in the Nei-ching, a number of incongruities became apparent to those commentators of later centuries who did not perceive the innovative nature of the Nan-ching. The resulting discussion—ranging from syncretistic attempts to harmonize the differing statements of the Nan-ching and Nei-ching to outright rejection of the Nan-ching data as wrong—is another excellent example of the kind of reasoning and argumentation in a system of knowledge based almost entirely on pure logic and lacking the tendency to analyse a tangible substratum.

THE SIXTY-SEVENTH DIFFICULT ISSUE

Overview: Explanation of the location of "concentration holes" on the front and of "accumulation holes" on the back of one's body.

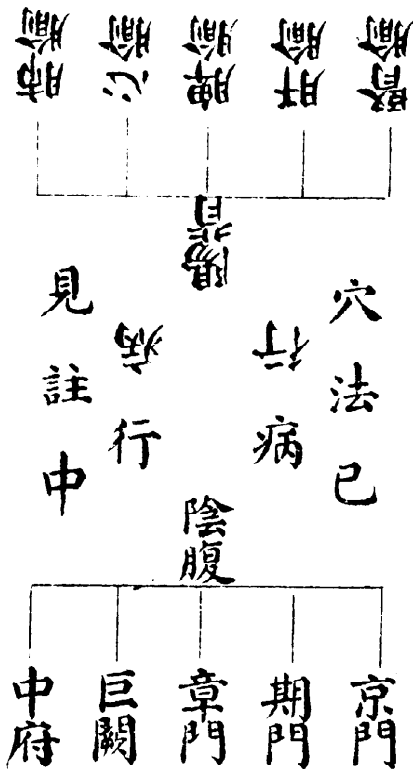
六十七難曰(一)五藏募皆在陰而俞在陽者何謂也(二)然陰病行陽陽病行陰(三)故令募在陰俞在陽

The sixty-seventh difficult issue: (1) All the concentration [holes associated with] five depots are located at the yin [side of the body]; all the transportation [holes] are located at the yang [side]. What does that mean?

(2) It is like this. Yin illnesses [may] move to the yang [section of the body]; yang illnesses [may] move to the yin [section of the body]. (3) It is for this reason that the concentration [holes] are located at the yin [side of the body], while the transportation [holes] are located at the yang [side of the body].¹

67

之陽陰七六
圖輸募難十



Unschuld's Footnotes

1. Sentence 1 may be based on a statement in Su-wen treatise 39, "Chü t'ung lun", where a mu location is associated with the stomach while a yü location is associated with the back. Another, even less informative reference to the mu and yü locations appears in Su-wen treatise 47, "Ch'i-ping lun", where it is stated: "For treatment use the mu and yü of the gall." In his commentary, Wang Ping added: "Chest and abdomen are called mu; the back and the spine are called yü." Subsequently, he outlined the exact positions of the mu and yü locations associated with the gall on the abdomen and on the back, respectively. The origin of this concept is not clear. It must have been of interest to the author of the Nan-ching because it permitted an application of the yinyang theory to a therapeutic needling of the trunk without resorting to circuit-needling. As may be recalled, difficult issue 45 introduced another alternative to circuit-needling of the trunk by proposing the "eight gathering-points."

THE SIXTY-EIGHTH DIFFICULT ISSUE

Overview: Introduction of a list of illnesses that can be cured by needling the respective transportation holes associated with them.

六十八難曰(一)五藏六府各有井榮俞經合皆何所主(二)然經言所出爲井所流爲榮所注爲俞所行爲經所入爲合(三)井主心下滿(四)榮主身熱(五)俞主體重節痛(六)經主喘咳寒熱(七)合主逆氣而泄(八)此五藏六府其井榮俞經合所主病也

The sixty-eighth difficult issue: (1) Each of the [conduits associated with the body's] five depots and six palaces has a "well," "brook," "rapids," "stream," and "confluence." What [illnesses can] be mastered through them respectively?

(2) It is like this. The scripture states: Where they appear are the "wells"; where they flow¹ are the "brooks"; where they rush down are the "rapids"; where they proceed are the "streams"; where they disappear are the "confluences."

68

之圖 主病 五穴 八難 六十



(3) [Through] the wells [one can] master fullness below the heart. (4) [Through] the brooks [one can] master body heat. (5) [Through] the rapids [one can] master a heavy body and pain in one's joints. (6) [Through] the streams [one can] master panting and coughing as well as [alternating spells of] cold and heat.(7) [Through] the confluences [one can] master influences proceeding contrary to their proper course, as well as diarrhea. (8) These are the illnesses [that can be] mastered [through] the wells, brooks, rapids, streams, and confluences of the [conduits associated with the body's] five depots and six palaces.²

Unschuld's Footnotes

1. The corresponding passage in Ling-shu treatise 1, "Chiu chen shih-erh yüan," has liu ("to stream") instead of liu ("to flow").
2. Sentences 3 through 8 were added by the Nan-ching author; they are not part of the Nei-ching quotation referred to by sentence 2.