

Chapter Six: Needling Patterns, cont'd.

(Difficult Issues 69-81, here 76-81)

THE SEVENTY-SIXTH DIFFICULT ISSUE

Overview: Discussion of the concepts of "filling" and "draining."

Unschuld's Translated & Collated Commentaries

(1) Liao P'ing: There is no need to pose such a question. The [Nei-]ching provides detailed and clear [information] on all the patterns of filling and draining by means of needling and cauterization. One must not refer to a "removal" or "release" [of influences]. It is a great error to state that filling is the removal of protective [influences] while draining is the removal of constructive [influences]. Filling and draining are applied in accordance with an abundance or weakness [of influences] in the individual conduits. There is no such doctrine that one distinguishes between protective and constructive [influences].

(2) Yü Shu: The lung moves the five influences; it pours them into the five depots. [The influences] penetrate the six conduits and find their way into the one hundred vessels. Whenever one removes influences [from one location to fill a depletion elsewhere], one must remove them from the protective influences. As soon as [one feels that protective] influences have accumulated [around the needle], one inserts the needle further [into the depth] and pushes [the influences] into the conduit-vessel that is depleted. [To exercise this technique,] one must distinguish between sections that are near the surface and others that are in the depth. This is the way to fill. Hence [the text] states: "When one has to fill, one removes influences from the protective [influences]." That is [what is] meant here. When evil [influences] are present in the section of the constructive [influences], one inserts the needle into the conduit affected by repletion. As soon as one feels that influences have accumulated [around the needle], one pulls the needle [out of the depth] and drains [the repletion]. Hence [the text] states: "When one has to drain, one releases influences from the constructive [influences]." Chih ("to release") stands for ch'ü ("to remove") and for ying ("to move against").

Kato Bankei: "The removal of influences from the protective [influences" means the following]. After inserting the needle only slightly, one lets it remain for a while. As soon as influences have accumulated around it, one pushes [the needle] into the depth. In this way, one causes influences that were dispersed below the surface to be accepted by the vessels. That is the filling of the [constructive influences in the vessels]. "One releases influences from the constructive [influences" means the following]. One inserts [the needle] deeply and lets it remain for a while. As soon as influences have accumulated around it, one pulls [the needle out of the vessel] and causes the influences that were in the vessel to disperse in the [section of the] protective [influences] outside [of the vessels]. That is the draining of the [vessels].

(3) Yü Shu: If, for instance, the gall does not have enough [influences] while the liver has a surplus, one fills the foot-minor-yang [conduit] first and drains the foot-ceasing-yin [conduit] afterward.

(4) Yü Shu: This pattern is the opposite of the one mentioned above.

(5) Yang: This [refers to] changes resulting from the yin and yang [units'] inflicting of depletion and repletion upon each other.

(1)-(5) Hua Shou: The fifty-second treatise of the Ling-shu states: "Those influences that proceed outside of the conduits below the surface are the protective influences; those essential influences that move within the conduits are the constructive influences." Hence, for filling, one removes those influences that move outside of the vessels below the surface in order to fill a place that is depleted. For draining, one releases constructive influences so that they have no further use. Chih ("to release") is used here like the chih in ch'i chih ("to discard"). However, man's illnesses may appear in many variations of depletion and repletion. Hence the principles of filling and draining are multi-faceted too. Thus, if the yang influences are not enough while there is a surplus of yin influences, one fills the yang first and drains the yin afterward in order to harmonize [their balance]. When the yin influences are not enough while there is a surplus of yang influences, one fills the yin first and drains the yang afterward in order to harmonize [their balance]. If one applies such [a treatment], the constructive and the protective [influences] will proceed through [the body] by themselves. For patterns of how to fill or drain, see a later paragraph.¹

Hsü Ta-ch'un: This [paragraph] is a continuation of the text of the preceding [difficult issue]; it discusses the pattern of filling and draining and emphasizes that one must investigate whether the yin or the yang [section] is affected by a depletion or repletion. The protective [influences] are yang; the constructive [influences] are yin. In case the protective [influences] are depleted while the constructive [influences] are replete, one fills the yang and drains the yin. In case the constructive [influences] are depleted while the protective [influences] are replete, one fills the yin and drains the yang. The pattern of filling and draining is further differentiated by [considerations] of which [of these interventions is to be carried out] first and which is second. In the treatise "Chung shih" of the Ling[-shu], it is stated: "In case of an abundance of yin [influences] and a depletion of yang [influences], one fills the yang [influences] first and drains the yin [influences] afterward in order to restore harmony. In case of a depletion of yin [influences] and an abundance of yang [influences], one fills the yin [influences] first and drains the yang [influences] afterward in order to restore harmony." That is the basis of what is said here [in the Nan-ching].

Liao P'ing: The [condition of the] depots counts here and nothing else; one does not distinguish between constructive and protective [influences in the context of draining and filling]. In case of an abundance, the constructive and the protective [influences] are both present in abundance. In case of a depletion, the constructive and the protective [influences] are both depleted. If one were depleted and the other were replete, they would balance each other and one could not speak of "filling" and "draining." To neglect the depots and palaces and to distinguish among constructive and protective [influences] for separate filling and draining is a great mistake.

Unschuld's Footnotes

1. See difficult issue 78.

THE SEVENTY-SEVENTH DIFFICULT ISSUE

Overview: Introduction of a classification of healers as "superior" or "mediocre" practitioners according to their understanding of the transmission of illnesses within the organism.

Unschuld's Translated & Collated Commentaries

(1) Li Chiung: A superior practitioner is a medical practitioner who takes up ten thousand [cases] and cures ten thousand [cases]. In all [cases] he treats illnesses that are not yet manifest [as illnesses]. A mediocre practitioner cannot yet fully understand and resolve [the dynamics of an illness]. Hence he will simply care for one depot and that is it.

Liao P'ing: The text of the [Nei-]ching was extremely clear. To ask such a mistaken question creates nothing but barriers.

(2) Liao P'ing: "To treat what is not yet ill" [corresponds to] the so-called ordering of the state before a revolt has arisen, and to the protection of the country before it is in danger. To extend this to [a statement that only the mediocre practitioner treats] what is ill already does not agree at all with the idea expressed in the [Nei-]ching.

(4) Li Chiung: He realizes that the liver has an illness but does not know the principle that the liver will transmit [the illness] to the spleen. He will focus all his attention on treating the conduit of the liver.

(1)-(4) Ting Te-yung: The Su-wen states: "Spring keeps late summer in check; late summer keeps winter in check; winter keeps summer in check; summer keeps autumn in check; autumn keeps spring in check." That is the principle of the four seasons and Five Phases keeping each other in check. With man's five depots, [it is as follows]. Those that have a surplus [of influences] move forward to keep [another depot] in check. Those that do not have enough [influences] receive evil [influences]. The superior practitioner fills first where there is not enough; thus he prevents evil [influences] from being received. Only afterward does he drain where there is a surplus. That is [what is meant by] "treating what is not yet ill." The mediocre practitioner takes the needle and simply drains where there is a surplus. Hence [the text] speaks of "treating what is ill already."

Yang: When [one of] the five depots gets an illness, it will always transmit it to [the depot] that it keeps in check. For instance, an illness in the liver is transmitted to the spleen. If the [latter] happens to be in its flourishing period, it will not accept what is transmitted. Hence it is not necessary to move [proper influences] into this direction. For example, an illness in the liver should be transmitted to the spleen. The spleen rules in late summer. If [the transmission] occurs exactly during that ruling period, [the spleen] will not accept the evil. Hence it is not necessary to cause a preventive repletion of [proper] influences in the spleen. If the time is not late summer, [the spleen] will accept the evil [influences] from the liver. Hence one must simply cause a preventive repletion of influences in the spleen, lest it accept the evil [influences] from the liver. Anybody who acts like this is called a superior practitioner. Kung ("practitioner") is used here like miao ("excellent"). That is to say, these

are [practitioners] who comprehend the origin of an illness in an excellent manner. A mediocre practitioner cannot resolve the entire [dynamics of an illness]. Hence he will simply care for one depot and that is it.

Hua Shou: If one realizes that the liver has an illness, one will first cause a repletion in the spleen so that the evil [influences transmitted from the liver] have no place to enter. That is "treating what is not yet ill." A man who acts like this is a superior practitioner. If one realizes that the liver has an illness and focuses all one's attention on treating the liver, that is "treating what is ill already." A mediocre practitioner acts like this. The fifty-fifth treatise of the Ling-shu states: "The superior practitioner pricks where [an illness] has not yet developed. Next he pricks where [the evil influences] are not yet present in abundance. Next he pricks where [the strength of the evil influences] is already weakening. The inferior practitioner pricks only where [the evil influences] are just launching their attack. Or he simply takes an abundance [of evil influences manifest in the] external appearance—or contradictions between the [perceived] illness and the [movement in the] vessels—as his guidelines for treatment]. Hence it is said that when [the evil influences] just happen to be present in abundance, one should not venture [to attack them, lest one] harm [the proper influences]; if one pricks when [the strength of the evil influences has] already weakened, one must be successful. Hence that is [what is] meant when it is said: "The superior practitioner treats what is not yet ill; he does not treat what is ill already'." Yeh Lin: The treatise "Ni shun" of the Ling-shu states: "The superior practitioner pricks where [an illness] has not yet developed . . . [see above, Hua Shou's quotation from Ling-shu treatise 55] . . . he does not treat what is ill already." That is to say, the superior practitioner pricks where an illness has not yet developed. Then he pricks where [the evil influences] have just arrived but are not yet present in abundance. Then, afterward, he pricks where [the evil influences] have already weakened. That resembles the military technique of avoiding the sharp [point of the enemy's] weapon and of attacking [the enemy] when he is careless and retreats. Hence Po Kao states: "Never move against the influences when they are moving in [with full vigor]; never strike against an army that is in full array; never prick a heat that is intensely hot; never prick a sweat that flows profusely; never prick a vessel that is in complete disorder. Never prick a [patient] if the [perceived] illness and [the movement in] the vessels contradict each other."² That is right. The inferior practitioner does not know about these principles. He pricks at that moment when the evil [influences] carry their attack into the conduit-vessels. Or he pricks just at that moment when [the evil influences] abound in the pores of the skin. Or he pricks when the evil and the proper [influences] are battling each other. He cannot look forward to a success [of his treatment]; all [his activities] are appropriate only to spoil the affair. The present [paragraph] discusses the necessity of reaching [into depots] where the illness has not yet developed or where it is just on the point of retreating, and of applying the needle only there. However, against all illnesses it is advisable to prepare strategies early. One must not wait until the illness has matured and then begin the treatment; this would only lead to late remorse. If the treatment starts early, the efforts one needs are few but the successes one earns are many. The merit of bending the chimney and removing the fuel is certainly higher than that of being severely burned in assisting to extinguish a fire. In treating illnesses, one must definitely act like this; actually, the administration of all affairs in the world should be like this. Why should these [principles] apply only to the techniques

of needling?! When the influences in any of the five depots abound, they will [be sent out to] assist the [depot which is] generated [by the depot where the influences abound]. The liver generates the heart; the heart generates the spleen; the spleen generates the lung; the lung generates the kidneys; the kidneys generate the liver. If the transmission [of influences] follows [this course], that is a good sign. In case of an illness, however, [the affected depot] will annoy the [depot] it can overpower. The liver [can] overpower the spleen; the spleen [can] overpower the kidneys; the kidneys [can] overpower the heart; the heart [can] overpower the lung; the lung [can] overpower the liver. That is a transmission [of influences] contrary [to the proper course]; it is a bad sign. "The superior practitioner treats what is not yet ill" means that he treats the depot to which the illness has not yet been transmitted. Hence, when he realizes that the liver has an illness, he knows that the liver transmits it to the spleen. Therefore, he must first cause a repletion in the spleen. In this way, he ensures that the illness of the liver can not be transmitted and will be cured. Hence the [text] states: "Treats what is not yet ill." The mediocre practitioner is unaware of this. He realizes that the liver has an illness and treats nothing but the liver. Then, before the illness in the liver has come to an end, an illness in the spleen will emerge in turn. Hence [the text] states: "Treats what is ill already."

Unschuld's Footnotes

2. See also Ling-shu treatise 55, "Ni shun".

THE SEVENTY-EIGHTH DIFFICULT ISSUE

Overview: Reinterpretation of the techniques of filling and draining by means of needling.

Unschuld's Translated & Collated Commentaries

(2) Yang: "Filling" means that one withdraws the needle while [the patient] exhales. "Draining" means that one inserts the needle while [the patient] inhales. Hence [the text] states: "Withdraw or insert the needle [in accordance with the patient's] exhalation and inhalation."

Hsü Ta-ch'un: The [treatise] "Li ho chen hsieh lun" of the Su[-wen] states: "When [the patient] inhales, one inserts the needle in order to avoid the influences clashing against [the needle]. One waits until the [patient] exhales and pulls the needle out. With the completion of the exhalation, [the needle must be] withdrawn. A large amount of influences will have left [the body]. Hence that is called 'draining'. If one inserts the needle when the exhalation is completed and lets it remain quiet for a while until influences have arrived, and if one then pulls the needle out at the same time as [the patient] inhales, no influences can leave [the body]—they will remain where they are. One closes the gate [with one's finger] and [thus] causes [the proper] spirit-influences to be retained and a large amount of influences [from elsewhere to] remain [at the location that was pricked]. Hence this is called 'filling'." That is the pattern of withdrawing or inserting [the needle in accordance with the patient's] exhalation and inhalation. Yüeh-jen thought that the principle [of filling and draining] was not outlined in sufficient comprehensiveness by these [words. Hence he felt it to be] appropriate to write the text that follows.

Liao P'ing: Hsü [Ta-ch'un] commented: "The [treatise] 'Li ho chen hsieh lun' . . . [see Hsü's comment above] . . . the text that follows" Later people were wrong when they took these words as an indication that Yüeh-jen supplemented what was incomplete in the [Nei-]ching. That is a great mistake!

(3)-(8) Yang: The pattern of inserting a needle is [as follows]. First, one must know the location of the hole. This is then pressed with the left hand. Then one squeezes this location, pressed down as it already is, with one's right hand. The movement [in the] vessel will be felt below the left hand. [The location of the hole] is then pressed with the fingers of the left hand. Next one seeks [the hole] with the needle and pricks it. One waits until the influences react below the needle and then pushes them into the [section of the] constructive [influences]. That is the "filling." When one [feels that] the influences have accumulated [around the needle], one simply revolves [the needle] and then withdraws it. That is [the technique of] "draining." If one lets the needle remain [in the section of the constructive influences] over an extended period of time and waits in vain for the influences to arrive, one then lets the needle remain in the [section of the] protective influences for a while and waits for influences [to accumulate around the needle] there. If no [influences] accumulate [there] even after an extended period of time, one inserts the needle once again into the [section of the] constructive influences. If at all these three locations² the influences do not react to the needle, that means that yin and yang are equally exhausted and cannot be subjected to needling again. Of ten persons [with such symptoms], ten will die. Hence [the text] states: "Ten will die without any [successful] treatment being possible." The protective [influences] are yang; the yang is external. Hence [the text] states: "[Seek them] in males in the external [section]." The constructive [influences] are yin; the yin is internal. Hence [the text] states: "[Seek them] in females in the internal [section]."

Ting Te-yung: "Those who know how to apply the needle rely on their left [hand]" means [the following]. The left hand first presses the location to be pricked. As soon as one perceives with one's hand an arrival of influences resembling the [pulsation of the influences at the usual locations] where the movement [in the] vessels [can be felt], one inserts the needle. That is another [variation of the pattern of] "withdrawal by moving against." The effect is draining. When the influences have passed and one pricks by following them with the needle, that is [identical with the pattern of] "support by following."³ In males yang influences move in the external [sections of the organism]; in females yin influences move in the internal [sections of the organism. Treating] males, one presses the respective hole [to be pricked] with a light hand; [treating] females, one presses the respective hole with a heavy hand. If after some time has passed no influences have arrived—that is, if no [influences] react to the [pressure exerted by one's] left hand—one must not prick. If one pricks there will be no effect. That indicates that the [flow of the] influences has been cut off. Hence [of ten persons afflicted with such symptoms,] ten will die and no [successful] treatment is possible. Why should one wait for the influences by letting the needle remain [inserted]?

Yü Shu: If one accumulates influences of the protective [section] and pushes them into a depleted section—[that is,] if one opens a hole [between the protective section and the depleted section] and then withdraws the needle—that is called "filling." If one removes influences from the protective [section] by pulling the needle out—that is, if one opens a hole [between the protective section and

the external environment] and then withdraws the needle—that is called "draining." If one waits for an inhalation to insert the needle and then, at the point of complete exhalation, withdraws the needle, that is called "filling first and draining afterward." If one acts contrary to this, that is called "draining first and filling afterward." The Hsüan-chu mi-yü speaks about the patterns of filling and draining as follows: "One presses the [location to be pricked] until influences have accumulated [there. Then one] inserts [the needle] into the section of the heaven. As soon as the influences have accumulated [around the needle] in the section of the heaven, one pushes them into the section of the earth. When the influences of heaven and earth interact, one withdraws the needle. That is called 'draining'. If one proceeds the opposite way, that is called 'filling'." This concept [and the present passage of the Nan-ching] contradict each other.

Chang Shih-hsien: Those who are experts in needling press the place to be needled with their left hand to inform themselves of whether the flesh of the patient under their fingers is thick or thin, whether muscles and bones are closely attached to each other, and whether the [location selected as a] hole [for needling] is genuine or false. Only then do they insert the needle with the right hand. They always rely on the pressure exerted by their left hand and do not wait until after they have inserted the needle to realize [whether the flesh is thin or thick, etc.]. Those who do not know how to needle do not [first] apply pressure with their left hand. In a senseless manner they insert the needle and only after the needle has reached the interior do they know whether they have hit the hole or not.

(3) Liao P'ing: That is a false statement! Since when does whether someone knows or does not know depend on a distinction between left and right?!

(4) Hsü Ta-ch'un: T'an ("to press down") stands for chi ("to strike"). Nu ("crossbow") stands for jou ("to bend," "to crush," "to rub"). "[By one's] fingernails" means that one sinks one's fingernails into the flesh.

Liao P'ing: The [Nei-]ching says chua erh hsia chih ("scratch [the respective location] and lower the needle").

(7) Liao P'ing: To distinguish [in this context] between males and females is an error within an error.

Unschuld's Footnotes

2. In his almost identical commentary, Chang Shih-hsien speaks of two instead of three locations.
3. See difficult issues 79 and 72.

THE SEVENTY-NINTH DIFFICULT ISSUE

Overview: Further elucidation of the theoretical basis underlying the treatment of states of depletion and repletion.

Unschuld's Translated & Collated Commentaries

(1) Liao P'ing: When [the Nan-ching] quotes a passage from the [Nei-]ching in order to pose a question, the following [text] differs in many cases from the [Nei-]ching. [The questions and answers of the Nan-ching] were not intended to quote the [Nei-]ching but to change and contradict its [contents].

(1)-(3) Hua Shou: This [passage] is based on the first treatise of the Ling-shu. Te ("gain") means ch'iu erh huo ("to ask for something and get it"). Shih ("loss") stands for tsung ("to let go") and for i ("to release"). The second paragraph states: "Repletion and depletion resemble having and not having." That is to say, in case of a repletion influences are present; in case of a depletion, influences are absent. When [the Nan-ching] states; "the [treatments of] depletion and repletion resemble a gain or a loss [respectively]," that is to say, filling must lead to significant gains; draining must lead to significant loss.

(3) Chang Shih-hsien: For hsü chih yü shih, the Ling-shu says wei hsü wei shih. For shih chih yü hsü, the Ling-shu says yen shih yü hsü. The wording here is different from the Ling-shu but the meaning is the same.

Liao P'ing: The [concept of] filling and draining through child and mother is a false doctrine of this book which does not appear in the [Nei-]ching.

(1)-(3) Hsü Ta-ch'un: For ying ("to move against") and sui ("to follow"), see difficult issue 72; for the [original] wording of the [quotation from the Nei-]ching, see the Ling[-shu treatise] "Chiu chen shih-erh yüan".

(4) Hua Shou: Ying ("to move against") means to proceed toward what is ahead. Sui ("to follow") means to follow toward what is behind.

(4)-(5) Hsü Ta-ch'un: The words "child" and "mother" used here refer to the [sequences of mutual] generation and destruction of the Five Phases as applied to the well and rapids [holes] on a particular conduit. They do not, as in the discussion of difficult issue 75, refer to "child" and "mother" among the five depots. In the text of the [Nei-]ching, ying ("to move against") and sui ("to follow") refer to the application of a needle contrary to or in accordance with the flow of the influences in the conduits. The withdrawal and the insertion of the needle in accordance with exhalation and inhalation of influences, and also the direction into which the needle is pointed, determine whether one fills or drains. The patterns outlined in both [the Su-wen and the Ling-shu books of the Nei-]ching are truly complete. Here, needling at the hole at which the influences arrive is called "to move against" and "to drain," while needling at the hole from which the influences departed is called "to follow" and "to fill." Hence, where the text of the [Nei-]ching considers the [needling] contrary to or in accordance with [the flow of the influences] as "moving against" or "following," here [in the present difficult issue, the needling of] the holes in front or behind the basic hole [associated with the illness] is considered as "moving against" and "following." The underlying concepts are certainly very close but the patterns are different in each case.

(6) Yü Shu: In case of an illness in the heart, one drains at the rapids [hole] of the hand-heart-master [conduit] because it is a pattern that the heart receives no illness. That which receives an illness is the heart-enclosing network. The hand-heart-master [conduit] is the hand-ceasing-yin [conduit associated with] the heart-enclosing network. The rapids [hole] on the [conduit associated with the heart-] enclosing network is [associated with the] soil. The heart is [associated with] fire. The soil is the child of fire. Therefore, draining this rapids [hole] means draining the child. Ying ("to move against") means ch'ü ch'i ("to remove influences"). To ("to withdraw") means hsieh ch'i ("to drain influences").

(7) Yü Shu: The heart is fire; the well [hole] is wood. When, in the present case, one fills the well of the [hand-]heart-master, that means that one fills the mother. Wood is the mother of fire. Sui ("to follow") means "to remove influences from the [section of the] protective [influences]." Chi ("to provide support") means "to fill a conduit that does not have enough [influences]".

(8) Yü Shu: "Firmness" and "softness" refer to depletion and repletion.

(1)-(9) Ting Te-yung: If [one of] the five depots is depleted, fill its mother. That is [what is] meant by "providing support [to influences] following [their proper course]." In case of repletion, drain the respective child. That is [what is] meant by "withdrawing [influences] moving against [their proper course]." Thus, if one wishes to perform a filling or a draining, one must first diagnose the vessels of the five depots. If the influences at the hole to be pricked arrive firmly and replete, one can drain them. If they come depleted and softly, one can fill them. If someone takes a needle and does not know about firmness and softness, [how could he perform a treatment resulting in] gain or loss?

(8)-(9) Hsü Ta-ch'un: The [treatise] "Hsiao chen chieh" of the Ling[-shu] states: "It is said: 'Repletion and depletion resemble having and not having'. That is to say, in case of repletion, influences are present; in case of depletion, influences are absent. [It is said further: 'The treatments of] depletion and repletion resemble a gain or a loss [respectively].' That is to say, filling must lead to significant gains; draining must lead to extreme loss." The sentence with [the words] yu ("to have") and wu ("not to have") refers, first of all, to the [presence or absence of] influences. The sentence with [the words] te ("gain") and shih ("loss") refers to the application of needles. [The presence or absence of influences and the application of needles] are, in fact, two different concepts. Here [in the Nan-ching,] the text of the [Nei-]ching is quoted and explained but the text of the [Nei-]ching has been altered. The words are reiterated but their meaning is difficult to comprehend. That is the reason why they have never been well interpreted.

THE EIGHTIETH DIFFICULT ISSUE

Overview: Comments on the techniques of inserting and withdrawing a needle.

Unschuld's Translated & Collated Commentaries

(1) Hsü Ta-ch'un: The text of the [Nei-]ching contains no [corresponding passage] that could be analysed [in comparison with] these two sentences.

Liao P'ing: The present difficult issue [outlines] the pattern that one must wait for the influences [to come if one intends] to apply needling or cauterization. Why would [the Nan-ching] employ [in this context] terms like "coming," "leaving," "arrival," and "stopping" that were used earlier [in this book in the context of] investigating the vessels at the inch-opening?

(1)-(3) Ting Te-yung: If one wishes to prick a person, one first waits with one's left hand for the influences in the respective hole. As soon as the influences arrive, one inserts the needle. One waits until the influences have [passed the hole] completely and withdraws the needle again. The hole [pricked here] is not [a child or mother hole] at which one drains or fills [in cases of influences] moving against or following [their proper course]. The present pattern is to be applied [in situations]

which are—[as the Nan-ching has] stated [earlier]²—neither a depletion nor a repletion but [cases where an illness] is to be removed from the respective conduit itself.

(2) Hua Shou: Below the statement yu hsien ju ju ("when it is apparent, then insert"), the four characters yu hsien ju ch'u ("when it is apparent, then withdraw") must be missing. Ju should be read here like erh ("then"). Meng-tzu wrote: "Watch the road as if (erh) you had never seen it before." Here the word erh is to be read like ju. The two were used with identical [meanings].

(1)-(3) Chang Shih-hsien: Skillful needling requires that the application³ [of the needle] follows the [movement of the] influences. Whenever one wishes to insert the needle one must first press with one's left hand the location to be needled. Then one must squeeze it with the fingernail [of one's right hand] until it swells. In this way, one causes influences to arrive at the place to be needled, [and the feeling one has below one's fingers] is the same as [that at one of the usual locations where] the movement [in the] vessels [can be perceived]. Then one begins to insert the needle. One waits until the influences have [left again] entirely and withdraws the needle afterward. [The statement] "until the influences have [left again] entirely" corresponds to the point made in the Ling-shu that [it is harmful] to replenish if one has already filled and to deplete if one has already drained.⁴ The character ju stands for erh.

(3) Hsü Ta-ch'un: Ch'i chin ("the influences have left completely") means that the influences have come and then have dispersed again.

(1)-(3) Yeh Lin: This [paragraph] states that for withdrawing or inserting the needle one must observe whether the influences have already arrived and whether they have already left. Only then may one withdraw or insert [the needle].

(2) Liao P'ing: When the influences arrive, one cannot withdraw the needle; when the influences have left, one must quickly withdraw the needle and should not let it remain [in the hole].

Unschuld's Footnotes

2. See difficult issue 69.

3. The text has san ("to disperse"), but the legend to the graph added to the text in Chang Shih-hsien's edition has shih ("to apply").

4. See difficult issue 81.

THE EIGHTY-FIRST DIFFICULT ISSUE

Overview: Warning against "replenishing a repletion" and "depleting a depletion."

Unschuld's Translated & Collated Commentaries

(1) Hsü Ta-ch'un: That is to say, one fills in case of a repletion where one should drain, or one drains in case of a depletion where one should fill—that is, one weakens what is already insufficient, or one adds to an existing surfeit. All of these [approaches] represent malpractice. For the [corresponding] text in the [Nei-]ching, see the Ling[-shu] treatise "Chiu chen shih-erh yüan.

Liao P'ing: The text of the [Nei-]ching was originally very clear. As soon as it was incorporated into the present book, it became confusing and misleading.

(2)-(3) Hsü Ta-ch'un: That is to say, [the person] posing these questions did not know whether "depletion" and "repletion" refer, in this context, to the [movement in the] vessels or to illnesses.

(2) Liao P'ing: This entire book was written with the single purpose of developing this one sentence. Hence the inch-opening is the most important [concept] from the beginning to the end [of the Nan-ching].

(2)-(3) Liao P'ing: The meaning of these two sentences is incomprehensible.

(5) Hua Shou: The two characters shih ping ("refers to illnesses") are a mistake; they have been added [by people in later times. In a situation where] the liver is replete while the lung is depleted, the metal should level the wood. That [pattern] parallels what was said in the discussion of the seventy-fifth difficult issue. If the lung has a repletion while the liver is depleted, one must curb the metal and support the wood. If, however, by applying the needles one does not fill the liver but, on the contrary, adds further repletion to the lung, that is "replenishing of a repletion and depleting of a depletion." This kind of weakening of what is [already] insufficient and this kind of adding to an existing surfeit will inevitably kill the patient. Chung-kung ("mediocre practitioner") refers to chung-ch'ang chih kung ("ordinary practitioner"); one could also say ts'u-kung ("unskilled practitioner").

(7) Hsü Ta-ch'un: For details, see difficult issue 75.

Liao P'ing: The Nei-ching says the same thing in different words. It was not necessary to tie these [ideas] to the Five Phases.

(9) Ting Te-yung: Chung ("mediocre") stands for shang ("to injure"). That is to say, a practitioner with inadequate training does not know about hardness and softness of the five depots.² His application of needles or drugs is marked by mistakes. Therefore he contributes to even greater damage.

Yang: A superior practitioner treats what is not yet ill; he knows the sources of depletion and repletion. Hence, when he fills or drains, he applies what is appropriate. The mediocre practitioner has not yet penetrated to the foundations of the transmission of illnesses. When he treats he will add even further damage.

Hsü Ta-ch'un: "Damage" means not only that he is unable to cure these illnesses but also that he, contrary [to what is expected from him], causes damage to the people [treated by him].

(5) Liao P'ing: This sentence too is incomprehensible. How can illnesses be compared with the inch-opening?

Unschuld's Footnotes

2. See difficult issue 10.