

NAN-CHING Chapter Six: Needling Patterns, cont'd.

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

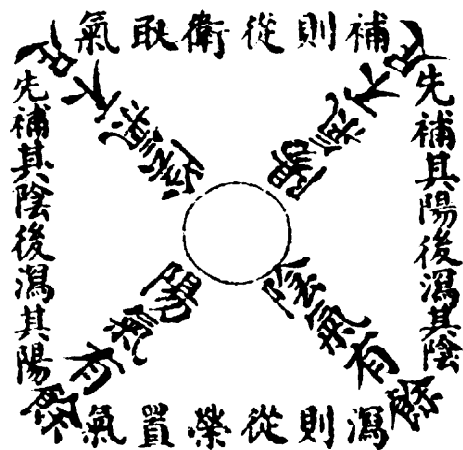
THE SEVENTY-SIXTH DIFFICULT ISSUE

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

七十六難曰(一)何謂補瀉當補之時何所取氣當瀉之時何所置氣(二)然當補之時從衛取氣當瀉之時從榮置氣(三)其陽氣不足陰氣有餘當先補其陽而後瀉其陰(四)陰氣不足陽氣有餘當先補其陰而後瀉其陽(五)榮衛通行此其要也

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七十六難
陰陽補瀉
之圖



The seventy-sixth difficult issue: (1) What is meant by "filling" and "draining"? When it is advisable to fill, whence shall one remove the influences? When it is advisable to drain, whence shall one release the influences?

(2) It is like this. When one has to fill, one removes influences from the protective [influences]; when one has to drain, one releases influences from the constructive [influences]. (3) When there are not enough yang influences while there is a surplus of yin influences, one must fill the yang [influences] first and then drain the yin [influences]. (4) When there are not enough yin influences while there is a surplus of yang influences, one must fill the yin [influences] first and drain the yang [influences] afterward. (5) The flow of the constructive and protective [influences through the organism] is the major [goal] of the [therapeutic interventions of filling and draining].

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.

七十七難曰(一)經言上工治未病中工治已病者何謂也(二)然所謂治未病者見肝之病則知肝當傳之與脾(三)故先實其脾氣無令得受肝之邪故曰治未病焉(四)中工治已病者見肝之病不曉相傳但一心治肝故曰治已病也

七十難上中治之 圖病工工難十

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The seventy-seventh difficult issue: (1) The scripture states: The superior practitioner treats what is not yet ill; the mediocre practitioner treats what is ill already. What does that mean?

(2) It is like this. The so-called treatment of what is not yet ill [implies the following]. When one sees an illness in the liver, one should know that the liver will transmit it to the spleen. (3) Hence one prevents this [transmission] by filling the influences of the spleen, with the effect that it will not accept the evil [influences] from the liver. Hence [the scripture] speaks of "treating what is not yet ill." (4) When a mediocre practitioner sees an illness in the liver, he does not know about mutual transmission, and he will focus all his efforts on treating the liver. Hence [the scripture] speaks of his "treating what is ill already."¹

Unschuld's Footnotes

1. Various commentators, including Hua Shou and Yeh Lin, have pointed to the close relationship between the present difficult issue and a statement found in Ling-shu

treatise 55, "Ni shun". Yet the phrasing of the question in sentence 1 should also remind one of Su-wen treatise 2, "Ssu ch'i t'iao-shen ta-lun", with the famous statement: "The sages practice the tao in their daily life; the uneducated merely revere it. To live in harmony with yin and yang means life; to oppose [yin and yang] means death. To act in accordance means order; opposition means disturbance. To act contrary to what is in accordance [with yin and yang] means opposition— that is, internal resistance. This is the reason the sages did not treat those who have already fallen ill but rather those who are not yet ill (ku sheng-jen pu chih i ping chih wei ping). They did not try to bring order when chaos had already erupted but rather when unrest had not yet appeared." This passage appears to be a general advice to value prevention more highly than curative efforts. The last line of the corresponding passage in Ling-shu treatise 55 repeats the Su-wen literally, except for a replacement of sheng-jen ("sages") by shang-kung ("superior practitioner"). Although the Chinese wording pu chih i ping chih wei ping is identical, the meaning in the Ling-shu is different; it points out that in treating an individual patient, one must focus on those parts of the organism that have not yet been affected by an illness in order to prevent a further transmission of evil influences within the organism. The general preventative effort recommended in the Su-wen statement for keeping an individual person from falling ill was narrowed down in the Ling-shu to preventative efforts aimed at the protection of healthy functional units in the individual organism when other units have fallen ill already. The Nan-ching elucidated the Ling-shu statement by providing a concrete example based on the Five Phases paradigm.

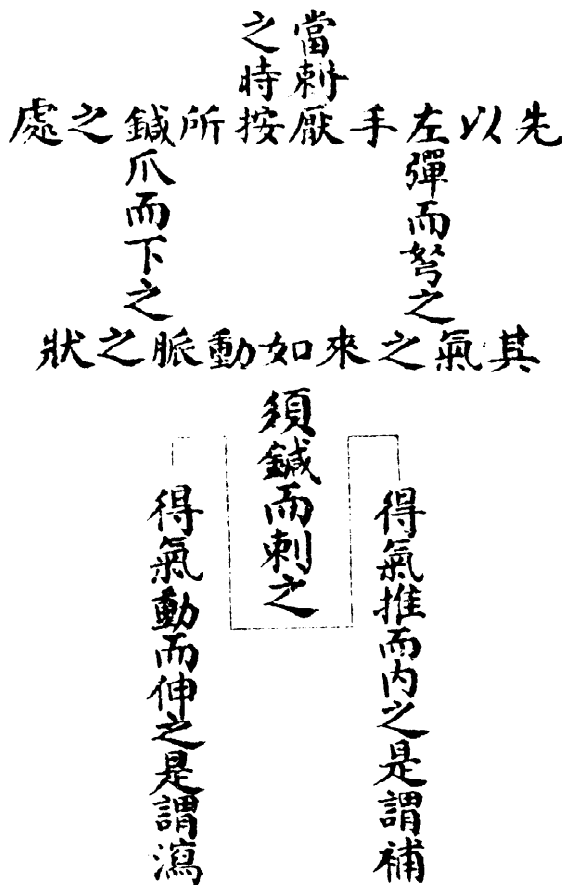
THE SEVENTY-EIGHTH DIFFICULT ISSUE

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

七十八難曰(一)針有補瀉何謂也(二)然補瀉之法非必呼吸出內針也(三)然知爲鍼者信其左不知爲鍼者信其右(四)當刺之時必先以左手厭按所鍼榮俞之處彈而努之爪而下之其氣之來如動脈之狀順鍼而刺之(五)得氣因推而內之是謂補(六)動而伸之是謂瀉(七)不得氣乃與男外女內(八)不得氣是謂十死不治也

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圖瀉補鍼用難八十七



The seventy-eighth difficult issue: (1) With needles one may fill or drain. What does that mean?

(2) It is like this. The patterns of filling and draining do not imply that one must withdraw or insert the needle [in accordance with the patient's] exhalation and inhalation. (3) Instead, those who know how to apply the needle rely on their left [hand]; those who do not know how to apply the needle rely on their right [hand]. (4) When one is about to prick, one first presses with one's left hand the transportation [hole] where one [intends to] needle the constructive [influences]. The pressure is to be exerted with full vigor through one's fingernail. As soon as the arrival of the influences [felt below one's left hand] resembles the [pulsation of the influences at the usual locations] where the movement [in the] vessels [can be felt below the skin], one inserts the needle. (5) When the influences have accumulated [around the needle], one pushes them toward the interior. That is called "to fill."

(6) To move [the needle] and withdraw it [from the section of the constructive influences into the section of the protective influences] is called "to drain." (7) If no influences accumulate [around the needle, one must seek them] in males in the external and in females in the internal [sections of the organism]. (8) If [even then] no influences accumulate [around the needle], that is a so-called [situation in which, of ten such patients,] ten will die without any [successful] treatment being possible.¹

Unschuld's Footnotes

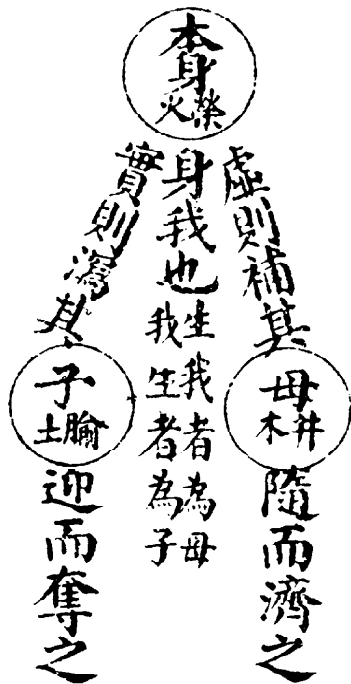
1. This difficult issue modifies the techniques of "filling" and "draining" as outlined in the Nei-ching. A comparison of the corresponding passage in Su-wen treatise 27, "Li ho chen hsieh lun," with the version given here in the Nan-ching shows where the latter disagrees with the former. The Nei-ching version has the following wording: "When [the patient] inhales, one inserts the needle in order to avoid the influences clashing against [the needle]. One lets the needle remain quiet for a while to avoid the evil [influences] dispersing. When the patient inhales [again], one revolves the needle until influences have accumulated [around the needle]. One waits until [the patient] exhales [again] 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'. The Emperor said: 'If [the influences] are not enough, how does one fill them?' Ch'i Po replied: 'One must first lay one's hand [on the location to be pricked] and seek [the depleted section]. Then one presses it down and disperses [the protective influences]. Then one pushes [one's hand into the flesh] and holds it tight. One squeezes [the respective location] and causes [influences to arrive in] great excitement. Then one scratches [the respective location] and lowers the [needle into the flesh]. Then one lets [the influences] pass [again] and removes the needle by pulling it toward outside through the gate [opened by the needle. Immediately afterward, one closes the hole with one's finger] to keep the spirit[-influences] from leaving. One inserts the needle at the point of complete exhalation and lets it remain quiet for a while until the influences have arrived. That is just as if one were to wait for someone dear to come—one would be unaware of whether it is morning or already evening. When the influences have arrived, one treats them appropriately and keeps them carefully. If, then, one 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 [opened by the needle with one's finger] and thus causes [the proper] spirit-influences to be retained and a large amount of influences [from elsewhere comes to] remain [at the location that was pricked]. Hence this is called 'filling'." Obviously, the Nei-ching approach to filling and draining is based on the assumption that an artificial hole opened by a needle serves, in addition to mouth and nose, as a further gate where influences may enter or leave the body corresponding to exhalation and inhalation. The Nan-ching, with its concept of an internal exchange of influences between the sections of the protective and constructive influences, states, of course, that it is not necessary to link filling and draining to inhalation and exhalation. For the concept of filling and draining through internal exchange, see difficult issues 70, 71, 72, and 76. The passage t'an erh nu chih chao erh hsia chih may be a corrupt version of the Nei-ching passage quoted above (t'an erh nu chih chua erh hsia chih). My rendering of sentence 3 however, follows the alternative assumption that the characters nu ("excitement") and chua ("to scratch") were changed deliberately to nu ("vigorous") and chao ("fingernail"). Thus in the Nan-ching version hsia-chih should not refer to the insertion of the needle but to the lowering of one's fingers or hand into the flesh.

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

七十九難曰(一)經言迎而奪之安得無虛(二)隨而濟之安得無實(三)虛之與實若得若失實之與虛若有若無何謂也(四)然迎而奪之者瀉其子也(五)隨而濟之者補其母也(六)假令心病瀉手心主俞是謂迎而奪之者也(七)補手心主井是謂隨而濟之者也(八)所謂實之與虛者牢濡之意也(九)氣來牢實者為得濡虛者為失故曰若得若失也

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七十難
 九難
 迎隨
 補瀉
 之圖



The seventy-ninth difficult issue: (1) The scripture states: One withdraws [influences by] moving [the needle] contrary [to the direction of their flow]. How can one avoid creating a depletion [if one follows this advice]? (2) [The scripture states further:] One provides support [to the influences by] following [with the needle the direction of their flow]. How can one avoid creating a repletion [if one heeds this advice]? (3) [The treatments of] depletion and repletion resemble [attempts to achieve] a gain or [to create] a loss. Repletion and depletion resemble having and not having. What does that mean?

(4) It is like this. [If one intends] to withdraw [influences] moving contrary [to the direction of their regular flow, one should] drain the respective child. (5) [If one intends] to provide support [to influences] following [their proper course, one should] fill the respective mother. (6) Take for example an illness in the heart. To drain at the rapids [hole] of the hand-heart-master [conduit] would be called "to withdraw [influences] moving against [the direction of their flow]." (7) To fill at the well [hole] of the hand-heart-master [conduit] would be called "to provide support [to the influences] following [their proper course]."

(8) The [concepts of] so-called depletion and repletion convey the meaning of firmness and softness. (9) If the influences arrive firm and replete, that is [comparable to] a "gain"; if they [arrive] soft and depleted, that is [comparable to] a "loss." Hence [the scripture] states: "Resemble a gain or a loss."¹

Unschuld's Footnotes

1. This difficult issue provides another example of a reinterpretation of terms quoted from the Nei-ching. Three different concepts are combined here. First, there is the concept, outlined in difficult issue 50, that a child who sends its influences backward in the sequence of mutual generation causes a repletion in its mother, while a mother who sends evil influences to her child is responsible for the

latter's depletion. Hence one must drain the child in case of a repletion so that it can no longer send a repletion evil to its mother; in case of a depletion evil, one fills the mother with proper influences so that she will no longer have to transmit evil influences to her child. Second, the concepts of "moving against" and "following" continue the point elaborated in difficult issue 72. The Chinese phrases ying erh to chih, and sui erh chi chih, are identical here in sentences 1 and 2 (quoting the Nei-ching) and in sentences 4 and 5, where they offer the understanding of the Nan-ching. But the meanings are different, so they must be rendered differently into English. As in difficult issue 72, the Nei-ching concepts of ying ("to move against") and of sui ("to follow") refer to the mechanics of inserting the needle. In contrast, the Nan-ching concepts of ying and sui refer to the movement of the influences arriving at a certain hole, either "moving against their proper course" or "following their proper course." If, for instance, influences move contrary to their proper course in the sequence of mutual generation of the Five Phases, they are responsible for a repletion. A depletion is caused by a mother in her child—that is, by influences following their proper course. However, if we follow difficult issue 69, the illness in the heart described in the present issue appears to be a case in which the respective conduit has fallen ill by itself, because the Nan-ching suggests (in difficult issue 69) that such illnesses be treated on the respective conduit itself. This, then, is the third concept to be taken into account here. The level of theoretical abstraction is noteworthy because the mother-child concept—which was introduced to explain (in an abstract manner) the origins of repletion and depletion—is employed here to guide the selection of holes (through their association with the Five Phases) on a single conduit (that has fallen ill by itself) in order to treat its repletion or depletion. For comparison, I add here the original version of the Nei-ching passage (Ling-shu treatise 1) quoted in sentences 1 through 3: "The general [principles of] needling [are as follows]. In case of a depletion, one must replenish the [depleted section]; in case of a repletion, one must drain the [replete section]; in case something remains [in the organism] for too long, one must eliminate it; in case evil [influences] gain dominance, one must clear them out. The Ta-yao says: 'Through slow [insertion] and quick [withdrawal of the needle] one achieves repletion; through quick [insertion] and slow [withdrawal of the needle] one achieves depletion'. That is to say, depletion and repletion resemble having and not having. One must investigate what are secondary [symptoms] and what were the original [causes of an illness], and whether [the proper influences] are still present or whether they have been lost already. The treatment of a depletion resembles [attempts to achieve] a gain; the treatment of a repletion resembles [attempts to create] a loss." (Ta-yao is the title of an unknown text quoted by the Nei-ching several times).

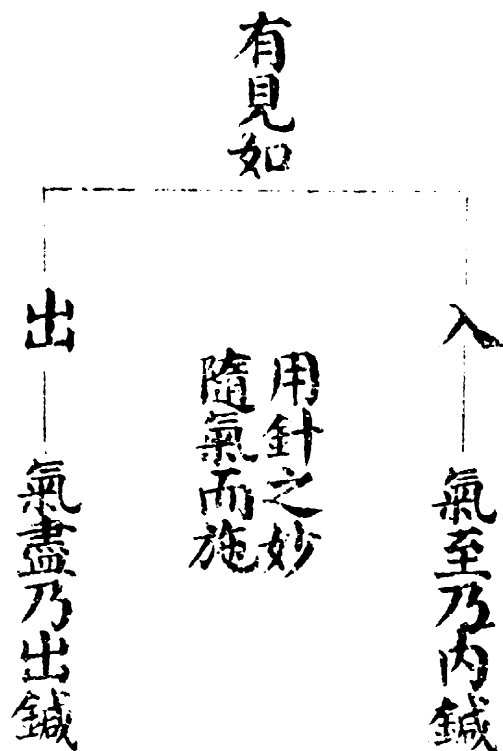
THE EIGHTIETH DIFFICULT ISSUE

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

八十難曰(一)經言有見如入有見如出者何謂也(二)然所謂有見如入者謂左手見氣來至乃內鍼(三)鍼入見氣盡乃出針是謂有見如入有見如出也

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圖鍼內出難十八



The eightieth difficult issue: (1) The scripture states: When it is apparent, then insert; when it is apparent, then withdraw. What does that mean?

(2) It is like this. The statement "when it is apparent, then insert" means that as soon as one [notices] with one's left hand that the influences appear, one inserts the needle. (3) When the needle is inserted and when it is apparent that the influences have left completely, then one withdraws the needle. That is [what is] meant by "when it is apparent, then insert; when it is apparent, then withdraw."¹

Unschuld's Footnotes

1. In Kato Bankei's edition, the text of the present difficult issue is combined with that of the seventy-fourth issue to form difficult issue 78.

THE EIGHTY-FIRST DIFFICULT ISSUE

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

八十一難曰(一)經言無實實虛虛損不足而益有餘(二)是寸口脈耶(三)將病自有虛實耶(四)其損益奈何(五)然是病非謂寸口脈也(六)謂病自有虛實也(七)假令肝實而肺虛肝者木也肺者金也金木當更相平當知金平木(八)假令肺實而肝虛微少氣用鍼不瀉其肝而反重實其肺故曰實實虛虛損不足而益有餘(九)此者中工之要害也

The eighty-first difficult issue: (1) The scripture states: Do not replenish a repletion or deplete a depletion—[that is, do not] weaken what is insufficient [already, and do not] add to any existing surfeit. (2) Does that concern [a misinterpretation of the movement that is felt at] the inch-opening [section of the] vessels? (3) Or [does that refer to] illnesses resulting from [an incorrect treatment of] depletions and repletions? (4) "To weaken" and "to add," what does that mean?

一八
十難
反施
補瀉
之圖

肝虛
用鍼者
肺實

虛虛損不足
中工所害
實實益有餘

(5) It is like this. [The statement quoted] refers to illnesses [resulting from malpractice]; it does not refer to [a misinterpretation of the movement that is felt at] the inch-opening [section of the] vessels. (6) The illnesses referred to are those resulting from [an incorrect treatment of cases of] depletion or repletion. (7) Take for example a repletion in the liver and a depletion in the lung. The liver is [associated with] wood; the lung is [associated with] metal. Metal and wood should level each other, and one should know how to level the [repletion in the liver, which is associated with the] wood, by [employing the functions of the lung, which is associated with the] metal. (8) Take, as another example, a repletion in the lung and a depletion in the liver. [The latter has] very few influences. [If, in this case,] one employs the needle not to fill the liver but to even further increase the repletion of the lung, one could, consequently, speak of a "replenishing of a repletion" and of a "depleting a depletion," or of a "weakening of what is [already] insufficient" and of an "adding to an existing surfeit." (9) Mediocre practitioners committing such [mistakes] cause serious damage.¹

Unschuld's Footnotes

1. Various authors have combined this difficult issue with the text of issue 12 to form one paragraph. Huang Wei-san explained this as follows: "The former paragraph [i.e., difficult issue 12] discusses [a situation] where the physician does not understand whether the appearance of the [movement in the] vessels indicates a depletion or a repletion. [Hence] he commits mistakes when he applies the methods of filling or draining. The latter paragraph [i.e., difficult issue 81] discusses [a situation] where the physician does not investigate whether an illness manifests itself as a depletion or as a repletion. [Hence] he commits mistakes when he applies the methods of filling or draining. As a result, he will cause minor afflictions to turn serious and serious afflictions to end in death." (See Huang Wei-san, 1969, 122.) The passage sun pu tsu erh i yu yü, in sentence 1 is quoted from Ling-shu treatise 1 "Chiu chen shih-erh yüan."