

The Lung: Yin Organ of the Metal Element

(from: Larre, Rochat de la Vallée, 1992a,b).

THE LUNG: AN OVERVIEW, FROM THE NEI JING JING YI

The Lung is located in the middle of the thorax, xiong zhong. Its main meridian runs along the larynx and goes out, it descends and has a connection, luo, with the Large Intestine, it also has a biao/ li (internal/external) relationship with the Large Intestine. The parts of the body with which it is linked, he, are the skin and body hair, its orifice/ opening is at the nose.

Its functions are to master the Breaths, zhu qi, to direct expiration and inspiration, si hu ji, so as to ensure the reciprocal communication of the Breaths from the inside and outside of the body; it receives the 100 mai in morning audience, so distributing the power of its fullness, chong, to the whole body: it masters, zhu, the skin and body hair as well as the moistening and irrigation of the flesh; its Breaths are in free communication, tong, with the nose and can thereby smell odours.

1. The Lung masters the Breaths, fei zhu qi.

The Breaths represent what is essential for maintaining the vital animation of the human body. Their origin is two fold: on the one hand the essential Breaths, jing qi, that derive from the liquids and cereals that form solid and liquid food, on the other hand the Breaths of nature that enter the body through inspiration.

That the Lung masters the Breaths means that the Breaths of the human body are under the mastery of the Lung. The Breaths of nature which are outside the body enter it through the inspiration of the Lung. The Breaths coming from the digestion of cereals, which are inside the body, pass, jing, by the mai of the Spleen to be transmitted and transported, chuan shu, and rise and pour out into the Lung. The two kinds of Breaths unite and join together, accumulating in the middle of the thorax, xiong zhong, at the Sea of Breath. This is called zong qi, Ancestral Breaths.

The Ancestral Breaths, zong qi, go out of the larynx to produce inspiration and expiration, they connect with the mai of the Heart to diffuse and spread, bu san, throughout the whole body.

For this reason the meaning of the expression, the Lung masters the Breaths, is not only that the Lung masters expiration and inspiration but also that it masters the Breaths of the human body that rise and descend, that are in biao/ li exchange (i.e. that go towards the interior or towards the exterior): all of this is also under the mastery of the Lung. Thus it is said in Su wen chapter 10, All the Breaths are dependent on the Lung.

2. The Lung has the charge of minister and assistant, xiang fu. It governs well regulated rhythms, zhu zhi jie.

Minister and assistant, xiang fu, indicates the one who assists the prince and master, jun zhu.

Well regulated rhythms, zhi jie, designate the physiological activities that ensure the constant maintenance of the functions of the zang fu.

In the human body every kind of organism and function can therefore rely on well-regulated and ordered activities. Although the Heart has the role of governing the shen ming, the radiance of the

Spirits, nevertheless it receives support and help from the Lung. When Heart and Lung are well regulated, then the whole vital ensemble takes place normally, correctly, and without disorder.

So, in Su wen chapter 8, The Lung has the charge of minister and assistant, from it stem well regulated rhythms.

The Lung's function of being minister and assistant appears most clearly in the relationship between the Breaths and the Blood, qi xue. The Heart masters the Blood, the Lung masters the Breaths.

It is thanks to the circulation of Breaths and Blood which ensures the movement for transporting food, that the human body can maintain the mechanism of each organism so ensuring their own vital functions and that their mutual relations are fulfilled as normal.

The transport and circulation of Blood, although under the authority of the Breaths of the Heart, nevertheless needs the Breaths of the Lung to be able to spread out everywhere with ease, and it is by connecting with the mai the Heart that they communicate freely everywhere in the whole body.

Thus Ling shu chapter 71 says:

It is thus that the Ancestral Breaths, zong qi, accumulate in the middle of the thorax, go out of the larynx, to connect with the mai of the Heart and give rise to expiration and inspiration.

Heart and Lung, Blood and Breaths, help each other and it is their close reciprocal relationship that ensures their functioning.

3. The Breaths of the Lung descend, fei qi su jiang. They ensure the communication and regulation of the waterways, tong tiao shui dao.

The circulation, transport and evacuation of fluids, shui ye, which concern each organism in the human body are not only related to the Spleen's function of transporting, yun, but are also closely related to the Lung's function of governing descending, su jiang.

The Breaths of the Lung descend, su jiang, and the water pathways, shui dao, by which the waters move can communicate freely and descend to the Bladder.

Thus it says in Su wen chapter 21:

The liquid and solid food enter the stomach. They float and overflow into the Essential Breaths. Above they are transported to the Spleen, the Breaths of the Spleen diffuse the Essences, which rise to reach the Lung and ensure the communication of the water pathways. Below they are transported to the Bladder.

If this descending of the Breaths of the Lung loses its normality there can be rising in countercurrent which causes gasping, chuan, and coughing, ke. When this has repercussions on the water metabolism it can result in a stopping or stagnation of these liquids, and when it is intense, the urine no longer flows and there is formation of watery swellings, shui zhong, a kind of oedema.

For this reason, the correct or incorrect functioning of the urine is closely related to the Lung's function of descending the Breaths. It is because of this that in later times the Lung was called the upper source of liquids.

4. The Lung masters the skin and body hair, zhu pi mao.

The Lung masters spreading. On the exterior it is linked to the functions of the skin and body hair.

This appears especially in the following two aspects:

The Lung masters the Breaths, directs respiration, ensures that there are mutual exchanges between the Breaths of the interior and exterior of the body. The pores (literally the holes of the sweat) of the skin also have the role of diffusing the Breaths. This is why Su wen chapter 3 calls the pores the doors of the Breaths, qi men.

On the other hand, the skin and body hair rely on the warming and moistening which are provided for them by the Lung so that they are well irrigated. If the Breaths of the Lung diminish and weaken they can no longer distribute the Breaths to warm the skin and body hair. Then the nutrition of the skin and body hair is insufficient and there is emaciation and wasting, drying out and withering.

Thus it says in Ling shu chapter 10; When the Breaths of the tai yin of the hand are interrupted, the skin and body hair are burnt.

OVERVIEW OF LUNG PATHOLOGY

PRINCIPAL CAUSES OF DISEASE

1. [Of] the six perverse influences, liu yin

Cold, made worse by wind

Dryness, made worse by heat

2. Internal attacks

Damage to the Lung qi:

through long-standing and chronic illnesses;

through excessive tiredness leading to exhaustion of Lung qi;

through dietary disturbance, where there is repercussion on the Lung from an attack on the Spleen and Stomach;

All kinds of disorders linked with water, dampness, phlegm and the unclear

3. [Of] the seven emotions, qi qing

Sadness, bei, which blocks communication and destroys the qi.

Oppression, you, which slowly weakens the vitality

PRINCIPAL SYMPTOMS

Cough, ke sou, (from external injury or internal attack)

Dyspnoea, asthma, xiao chuan, (from emptiness or fullness)

Phlegm, tan, (which can be cold or hot, and combined with damp, dryness or wind)

Pain in the thorax, xiong teng, (from blockage of qi, stagnation of blood, phlegm and dampness, or emptiness in the mai)

Spitting of blood, ke xue, haemoptysis, (from emptiness or fullness)

Loss of voice, shi yin, hoarseness, (from emptiness or fullness)

PRINCIPAL PATTERNS

1. Patterns of perverse fullness of the Lung

Wind and cold constrain the Lung, feng han shu fei

Perverse heat attacks the Lung, xie re fan fei, which can be subdivided into the following different headings: Wind and heat attack the Lung, feng re fan fei

Fire and heat, huo re, on the Lung

Phlegm and heat obstruct the Lung, tan re yong fei

Phlegm and the unclear block the Lung, tan zhuo zu fei

The perverse influence of dryness injures the Lung, zao xie shang fei

2. Patterns of perverse emptiness of the Lung

Emptiness of Lung qi, fei qi xu

Emptiness of Lung yin, fei yin xu

The Lung loses its regulation and free circulation (of the water ways), fei shi tiao tong

LUNG, FEI*(from: Larre C., Rochat de la Vallée E. (1992b).***Lung, Fei**

肺者相傳之官
治節出焉

fei zhe xiang fu zhi guan
zhi jie chu yan

The Lung holds the office of minister and chancellor. The regulation of the life-giving network stems from it.

Elisabeth Rochat: Directly after the heart come the lungs. In Chinese it's really the lung, because it's one organ even though there are two lobes. The character, fei, is composed with the radical of the flesh on the left side, like most of the zang and fu. Only the heart and the triple heater do not have this flesh radical, and obviously this isn't just by chance, but we'll come back to that later. The other part of the ideogram on the right represents plants which creep on the ground and which are continually dividing into many, many branches. In this branching you have the idea of proliferation, abundance, and a certain violence and speed, the rapidity of the vital force which comes out like this. Some people have also made the connection between this diversification and branching out of the plant with the structure and fibres of the lungs.

Claude Larre: That is the reason why you see so many illustrations of the lungs in Chinese texts with the appearance of leaves. It's not etymology for the sake of etymology, it's the normal representation as seen in the mind.

Elisabeth Rochat: The lung holds a privileged place because it's found in the upper part of the body above the diaphragm, along with the heart. This doesn't seem to tell us very much at first, but the body that we have is the result of very ordered work which comes from the regulation of qi from Heaven and Earth. The situation or location of different parts of the body, on the left or on the right, above or below, will give an indication of the actual functions of the zang that are found in these specific places. Because Heaven is above and Earth is below, the fact that the head is on high in the body is an indication that it has the same quality as that which is most refined, meaning Heaven.

We can do the same analysis for the other organs of the body by looking at their location in the trunk, and trying to see the hierarchy amongst the zang. If you couldn't make such deductions, then the body would not actually be an expression of the joining of Heaven and Earth. So it's for this reason that the lung, which is just next to the heart, is the minister and chancellor, and has the function of being the helper of the heart. The character, xiang, which is translated as minister, also has a common meaning of reciprocity, or to reinforce an aspect of relations between two people.

Claude Larre: But this does not take out the hierarchy between the sovereign and minister. Just because they are on speaking terms does not mean that the minister may pretend to be some sort of sovereign, or that the king would be so silly as to look on the minister as only a friend. Disorder in all kingdoms, or in all life, just stems from this weakness in the prince or this arrogance in the minister, all of which can be seen throughout the history of China and other countries. So it's interesting to see that they chose xiang and fu, and if on giving explanations they pay attention to the fact that in other relationships reciprocity is made without taking notice of hierarchy, in this situation that would not do. As for the chancellor being a more external function than the xiang, we have the same relationship as with jun and zhu in reference to the heart. We have already seen that the inner self of the heart is the lord, but that the expression of that inner self is as master. In this sort of relationship there is always one sort of position, and then the expression coming out of that position. With the lung we have the minister, but the minister in acting with orders, ordinances, and so on, is in that aspect chancellor. The chancellor has to do with writing and stamping, while the minister confers with the prince, offers advice and opinions. But the hierarchy is preserved, and in the offices where the writing and administration is done, they wait for instructions, and it is the lung who, after consultation with the king, instructs the attendants on what to write. At that time he is acting as chancellor. It's very interesting to see that the lung is so powerful. Now we can understand why the beating of the heart and the rhythm of respiration are so interconnected, and that this is just the more external aspect of some sort of inner relation between the heart and lung which is exemplified in the relationship between the lord who is sovereign and the prime minister who is chancellor.

Elisabeth Rochat: In the couple made by sovereign and minister, heart and lung, the heart is considered a masculine or male zang and the lung is a feminine or female zang. This gives the same idea of the minister who is yin in relation to the sovereign who is yang.

There is also another couple related to the vitality presided over by the heart and lung, and that is blood and qi. The lung governs or masters the qi of the whole body, and the heart is responsible for the blood. Blood and qi are just another expression of the whole vitality. We can ask why is the blood, which is liquid, linked to the heart which is yang? And why is the qi, which is an expression of yang nature, linked to the female lung? One can say two things about this. The first is that there is a crossing over as the yin becomes yang and the yang becomes yin. For example, in a Chinese legend about the creation of the world with Fuxi and Nugua, in classical times Fuxi was represented as a man and Nugua as a woman. The man, Fuxi, held in his hand a set-square which represented Earth, and Nugua held a compass which represented the circle and Heaven. There has to be an exchange of powers so that there can be fertilization. This is seen at the moment of the birth of the world, and the same thing has to occur at each moment for the renewal of life in an individual. The examples of this are infinite.

Claude Larre: One more example is that the normal sequence in Chinese texts is Heaven/Earth and yin/yang. Heaven is the masculine principle, Earth the feminine principle, but yin as the leading female in the second principle and yang as the following male principle. This is the way to contradict what has been said in order to link it for life.

Elisabeth Rochat: Another thing must be said. Blood is not only a liquid made of choice juices, it has then passed through the heart. Liquid which has not passed through the heart is not called blood. The juices which are made in the middle heater by the stomach are very choice and rich. They are presented to the lungs by the spleen and oxygenation takes place there. Then they go to the heart. At that moment, says the Ling shu, there is a transformation which ensures that it actually becomes red from that point on, and this is the blood which then carries life to the whole body. So this liquid which is rich and full of life, penetrated by the power of the lungs, is also charged with the power and spirit of the heart, and it's because of this that the blood is red. It unites this quality of being a liquid with the colour of fire and life.

Claude Larre: To swear brotherhood people cut their veins, take some blood and mix it. This is done because it is intended that that which is mixed is not only a fluid but the spirits which are an essential part of the fluid. Something is done, not just symbolically but actually.

Elisabeth Rochat: Thus the blood, which some texts call the dwelling-place or residence of the spirits, has a very eminent position with regard to the qi. They have an equal position, and equal value. They can't be separated. You have to have both for the maintenance and provision of life. The texts say they are like the body and its shadow. This marks the totality of a united couple, the heart and lung, together. When the lung fulfils its office of minister and chancellor well, what results from this is the regulation of the life-giving network, zhi jie. In Chinese zhi is to know how to treat life. It can also

mean to govern the kingdom, and if you know how to govern, you know how things operate, and how to regulate the whole thing.

Claude Larre: We may add a political statement, saying that the king has to maintain and to conserve. He may expand his territory, or the richness of the nation, but only up to a certain point, just as a man should not develop himself in order to have a big belly. There are limits. To govern is to govern life at the level of the empire or kingdom, at the level of the family, or at the level of the individual self. If you want more money maybe it is because you think the family will have a better life, but to raise this money means you are never at home. Then the family is destroyed just when you think you are building it up. It is the same for the emperor. He may extend his territory, and make war or peace to gain some advantage. But he is not the only one doing that and perhaps after so much warfare the nation will be exhausted, no men, no money, nothing. Afterwards the next king will be unable to recover from what his father has done.

Elisabeth Rochat: All this is at the level of the empire. When this ideogram zhi relates to the body it means to treat, cure or heal. It means that you understand the care that has to be taken either of the empire, or of your family, or of the body, or of yourself. There are two other characters made with the right hand part: with the flesh radical on the left it means embryo, tai, and with the radical for woman on the left it means to begin, shi. In the text that we have here the radical on the left represents water, so there is something that is being constructed or built from a beginning, and with someone who knows how to let life flow in conformity with the beginning you reach the meaning of to govern, to treat, to heal or to cure. With the character for life added afterwards you also have the popular expression for earning a living, zhi sheng.

Claude Larre: To earn a living you have to be clever enough to govern all circumstances in order to find a way to survive. Everywhere that this character zhi is seen there is some sort of establishment, whether it is controlled by order or is something related to the body or to a woman, in all cases there is something which has to be maintained. This is the very profound feeling of the Chinese.

Elisabeth Rochat: So there is in the lungs a force which instinctively knows how to govern life, which perhaps makes us think of the po, the soul.

The second character which shows the function of the lung, jie, is a knot of bamboo. The upper part of the character represents bamboo. What's interesting about bamboo is that it is the knots which mark its vitality. The distance or space between them marks the vitality of life. How the bamboo grows is shown by the knots, and as the years go by you can see it reflected in them. Bamboo is hollow, but where there's a knot there is a sort of concentration of life force, and it's just at this point, where the communication seems to be obstructed, that it's actually the most intense, since the knot permits the surging or production of a new section of bamboo. The Chinese love bamboo!

TAN ZHONG

Tan Zhong

Tan zhong zhe chen shi zhi guan
xi le chu yan

Tan zhong has the charge of resident as well as envoy. Elation and joy stem from it.

Claude Larre: Tan zhong is something we do not understand since it is not French or English, it's just pure Chinese, and there's no translation. It's necessary that we leave the two Chinese characters without a translation because there is no such thing as tan zhong in Occidental medicine.

The text runs: Tan zhong zhe chen shi zhi guan xi le chu yan. The character zhong has been seen already, and we know that it is not safe to just translate it as the middle! The translation of zhong has to be made specifically in each context. Zhong is so beautiful and so simple and much used as a character in Chinese, not only in medicine but everywhere in Chinese books. So we must pay special attention to the spiritual value of zhong and of its complementary character nei. Nei is the interior, and zhong is the so-called middle, but the interior may be internal, and zhong might not be the middle but

just the position between two other things. So it's better not to rush into any translations for characters like nei and zhong. They do not have the same significance as other characters.

Chen was seen previously to be the slaves and servants who became ministers. It was found inside the character zang. Chen is a position, a trust, and the chen is more or less detained in the palace, he is under the jurisdiction of the court. Shi, on the other hand, are officials sent from the court to different countries with the status of ambassadors, or as representatives of different ranks. Or they could be just sent to deliver messages. So the opposition between chen and shi is the usual opposition we saw for all previous functions. The division is between the people who stay and work in one place as opposed to the people who are sent outside. To be sent outside means that they are a manifestation of the court, because the court is the inner life of China, and the ambassadors or people sent on missions, are the manifestations of the power, glory and life-giving power of China. And China or an empire, a kingdom or the body are all only different kinds of life in a state.

Xi le chu yan. Here we are concerned with the specific production of tan zhong. If we look at the characters we see that the first, xi, and the second, le, have some similarity with shen ming. While we were talking of the heart as producing life under a certain aspect, we saw that this aspect of production was a state of spirituality and radiance. The heart gives this aura of spirituality to the face, the behaviour, the deportment and the language of the person. Now we see that tan zhong is giving something very close to that. When a young couple is about to get married the Chinese present them with a lot of gifts with these two characters, xi and le, on them, and New Year's cards are often inscribed with the xi character. Xi is a kind of excited joy, and le is when Joy is calm and profound, silently pervading the heart. This is solid joy. So an excited joy and a solid joy are the product and the radiance proper to tan zhong.

In relation to tan zhong perhaps we might ask Roger if he could say something about tian tan, the Temple of Heaven because the characters tan are very similar.

Roger Hill: I'd like to start off with a broad map of Beijing which is a walled city in origin, built on a very ancient site but developed at about the end of the 15th century. Slightly north of the centre is the Imperial Palace, which in itself is an architectural lesson on the structure of man, with the head, the kidneys and the heart. On the way in there is a stream over which there are five little bridges indicating the five senses, indicating the communion between the inner part of man and the outside world. The Temple of Heaven is in the south eastern quarter of this ancient city, and there's a relationship here between the imperial power as used to govern the empire, and the imperial power in relationship with Heaven. This is expressed geographically as well as in terms of function.

The Temple of Heaven is also a walled enclave in its own right, a walled temple with gatekeepers and a huge park around the outside. The emperor would go there on two occasions in the year, the winter solstice and the autumn equinox I think, to perform ceremonies which would last the whole of one day. To give you some idea of the scale you should think in terms of Hyde Park for the size of the whole area. Within that the temple is divided into three parts. There is the circular temple with a long connecting causeway to another area which was walled off with a smaller temple in the middle, and then another causeway to three more open platforms.

So you have the central north-south axis, and three main units, of which the middle one is walled. The open platforms are in mathematical and architectural terms, an expression of the law of three. Their whole construction is based on the number three. You have three platforms rising up, and every architectural detail is a multiple of three, so that on the top platform there are eighty one paving stones radiating from the middle. The next platform down is a larger multiple by three of eighty one, and so on. Around each of these platforms is a balustrade made of marble which again reflects a multiple of three, the law of three, Heaven, Earth and Man. One of the tricks in terms of sound in this part of the temple is that if you stand in the middle, where it's completely open, and you speak as if from a position of quietness, not only inner quietness but also external quietness, you will hear back an echo of your own voice, even though you speak apparently to the open air. It has a similar quality to the Taj Mahal in that respect, being a most perfect sounding box and returning to you the nature of your own expression.

The two temples are quite similar to each other. Like all Chinese buildings they are raised from the earth and in this case have a platform of three steps. The roof, supported on pillars, is always an important part of any Chinese building whether it's a humble domestic peasant dwelling, or a palace or temple like this. There are basically three roofing tile colours in China: grey for ordinary use, yellow or golden for imperial use, and blue which is used to reflect the power of Heaven and found only in great imperial temples such as this. You have a circular building supported by twelve massive columns on the outside representing the twelve months of the year, the twelve two-hour divisions of the day and so on. Inside are four pillars representing the number 4 with the implication of the fifth in the middle. It was to this crossing point in the northern-most temple looking south down through the rest of the structure that the emperor would come to give his obeisance and to pray for good harvests.

Claude Larre: Thank you Roger. From what has been said here about tian tan, you can see that if tan zhong is related to that structure, everything which has been said here has a relevance for tan zhong. To make explicit the relationship we have to see which character is used for temple in the Temple of Heaven, and which character is used for tan in tan zhong. Also, if the comparison is good, the nobility of zhong now appears in the context of Heaven. Some people may object that if you are always pushing the interpretation towards Heaven you will not understand the logic of Chinese thinking, but I think it is just the contrary. The more you push statements beyond a sensible appreciation the more you stay in the tradition given by the classical texts. It is a pity to see that some constriction of mind proper to the modern Occidental way of thinking now presses on the Chinese mind. There are few people either inside or outside China who can withstand the pressure which is making all Chinese civilization turn around when it has been built the other way. So it is important not to accept any reduction of meaning when it is not clearly indicated in the text or context.

Looking at the two characters, if you take the tan of tan tian and replace the earth or humus radical on the left with the flesh or part of the body radical, then you no longer have the Temple of Heaven but some sort of temple in man himself. If the spirits are supposed to dwell somewhere they may well dwell in the heart, but they can also remain in tan zhong since there's a place for them at the point where animation occurs and where excitement and profound Joy are realised. So even when we do not

know the meaning of tan zhong we take for granted that it is a place and a function since it has to be located somewhere. And when we are talking of a man with a body there must also be a place there for tan zhong. We know the charge or function of tan zhong has been described as chen shi. Chen shi may be just the opposite of jun zhu which was the heart as lord and master, the lord by position and the master by destination or operation. Facing the lord there is the servant, and facing the master there are all those officials who are able to dispatch the executive power which characterize the master. From that perspective, without any knowledge of what tan zhong is, we know that he is facing the heart.

Elisabeth Rochat: First of all we have to consider tan zhong in this series of twelve charges. In this series we might expect to see the heart governor, the heart controller or the heart constrictor, but none of these appear at all, and neither does the expression xin bao luo appear anywhere in the Su wen, or the expression heart governor.

Claude Larre: For that I require one minute of silence from the audience just to commemorate the death of xin bao luo! This is a very important fact. I am sure that on leaving this seminar you will resume your old habits and be sure that xin bao luo is really the twelfth zang, but you have to make a decision about that yourself!

Elisabeth Rochat: There is the word zhong in tan zhong, the middle, the centre, a point from which an influence will spring up and radiate out. Tan zhong is also the name of the point Ren 17, the sea of qi in the chest. It's the place where the zong qi, the ancestral energy exists. What this means is that it is a place where there is an activity which we call ancestral qi. It's not a question in the texts of describing a circulation of ancestral qi, since that is not what it means. What we call ancestral qi is, in effect, what is created in the middle of the chest, in the centre. It is there that everything which is going to have this effect is reunited or joined.

The middle heater contributes to this point with what is drawn from food and drink in order to renew the essences. There is also the contribution of the lower heater, the fire of ming men, that rises to the upper heater. There is also the qi which comes in through respiration, the proximity of the heart and the radiation of the spirits from the heart, and all this is joined here and creates what we call the sea of qi in this place where all the ancestral qi is accumulated and gathered together. The Chinese term which we are translating by accumulate is an accumulation which is not a piling up, it's an accumulation of virtue.

Claude Larre: It's an endless springing of virtue's well, it's not piling up as in storage. It wells up.

Elisabeth Rochat: This makes life function effectively. Ancestral qi is what makes the mechanism of inspiration and expiration in breathing. It is through the lungs that one breathes, but in order that the mechanism of inspiration and expiration takes place it's necessary to have these ancestral qi. It's because of this that the business of respiration in general is not just the duty of the upper heater but also of the middle and lower heaters, especially the kidneys.

Claude Larre: If I may interrupt for one moment, we come here to a point where Chinese thinking is quite different from what we have in our own ways of representing life. We say that it is not enough to just have the mechanism, we also have to provide the zong qi in order to operate this mechanism. This comes from the fact that we are obliged to make a distinction between the mechanism and an operator, or having enough supply of fuel to make the machine work. But we have to remind ourselves that the machine is life itself. It is because we are not able to share the Chinese concept of life that we divide the mechanism of life, the operation, the operator and the fuel supply. It is the fact that we want to explain things which multiplies all these intermediaries.

Even if we are not looking at life, life is still there, and between life and life there is no mechanism, no operator and no fuel supply, since it is impossible to separate the operator from the machine, or the creation from the fuel supply needed to maintain the creation. It's our own reflective minds which oblige us to make so many distinctions. So in a way, when somebody outside the world of acupuncture listens to what we are saying they might think we are discussing the sex of angels! But we cannot do otherwise. The limits are set by the text. If the text does not say that there is an operator or an operation, then why should we say it? That would be criticising the way tradition expresses life, and who dares to do that? In certain places the tradition is very prolix, and in others is very brisk and dry, but when it is so implicit it is just because it is relying on more detailed explanation elsewhere. So we have to make a judgement about what we choose to explain, and to try and steer a middle course between too strict pronouncements and too much prolix explanation. We are not in a position to do anything other than follow the text.

Elisabeth Rochat: The ancestral qi that is at tan zhong makes respiration work and makes the qi circulate throughout the body, in particular the defensive and nutritive qi which have their point of departure in tan zhong.

Claude Larre: The meaning of this is that even though they come from the three heaters the true place for their influence in the general circulation is in the chest.

Elisabeth Rochat: These qi go everywhere, even to the most external parts of the body, the nails and the hair, and this makes one think of the function of the lungs to propagate, and diffuse the qi. This is different from the function of the lungs concerning the rhythm of circulation, here we have a movement of coming together like rivers that flow into the sea.

Claude Larre: Or like the sea accepting the rivers, you can see it both ways. A river flows to the sea or the sea, being lower, attracts the rivers just by its position.

Elisabeth Rochat: There is another very important function of the zong qi which is to make the heart beat, and to give it the possibility of manifesting its life through its movement. It's thus that we see tan zhong is really serving the master and sovereign, giving him everything he needs to make the heart beat and the blood pulsate through the mai. This is also how tan zhong is the messenger who goes out like an ambassador or courier, ensuring that the orders of the heart are carried out everywhere. Tan zhong is at the origin of the circulation of qi and the movement of blood.

In the series of chapter 8 tan zhong is in the fifth position. It is therefore the centre that gathers together and from which all these effects radiate out. It's different from the rhythm of the lungs which has the function of holding a morning audience with the mai. It's different from the energy of the liver which can penetrate any obstacle. It's also different from the shen ming, the subtle radiance of the spirits of the heart. Coming in the fifth position it's a kind of recapitulation, or resume. It's because of this that tan zhong is a sea, and it's from it that all influences in the form of qi or blood go out into the body, just as at the moment of the winter solstice the emperor leaves his palace to go to the Temple of Heaven in order to create the harmony which has to last the whole year. It is precisely because he performs the rites there that the beneficial effect spreads out to the whole of his people, and this kind of influence is expressed in two ideograms, xi and le, the joyous excitation and the profound joy. There has to be some kind of excitation so that the movement of breathing and beating can be made, and when it's made there is the sense that the whole body will be taken over with this excitement of life.

The other aspect is the deep sense of the joy of being alive and being in harmony with Heaven. When one speaks of joy related to life or the power of Heaven we use the character le which means music. Music is a very important part of Chinese classical civilization, coupled with the rites. Rituals give order, make separations and distinction. Everyone has their place and their rank in the hierarchy, and has to make certain movements or stay in certain positions in the ritual.

Claude Larre: I'm going to add a casual remark! When you are invited to a restaurant by Chinese friends, ritual is necessary. When you arrive they will offer tea, even if there's no reason for it. They they will start talking about the weather and the general condition of life, and a lot of other talk. I know this is not a surprise for you because English people do the same! And as the ritual goes on you reach a point where things are very loose and no rite is observed any longer. But nearing the end you feel the ritual power coming back, and everybody knows that the time for leaving has come. This is the chaining or linking of life. Without all that it is impossible to have social life. But there is much that is boring, even for the Chinese, and something has to compensate for that, and that is music.

Elisabeth Rochat: Music links together and unites the hearts of all people. All the people who have different positions and different movements in the ritual have to have something which will bring them together and create a unity within it, and this is the role of music. That is why in all the great Chinese rites you have the presence of music. The ideogram le shows some kind of orchestra (Wieger, lesson 88C). But why does music create unity? It's because all music comes from the heart of man. This is a phrase which is repeated all the time in the Book of Rites. Music touches the heart of man and will touch all that is most deep and heavenly in his heart. In texts on music it is written that music makes the blood circulate correctly and makes the energy flow correctly in the mo.

Claude Larre: So when you go to a concert you feel that your mind has been refreshed and that you are ready for work and all that. But usually you do not count on it for the regulation of your own circulation of blood and spirits because we are inclined to separate the mind from all the movement

proper to life and from all bodily functions. The Chinese, on the other hand, would say that music has this effect on blood or qi circulation. This is the difference in outlook.

Elisabeth Rochat: So tan zhong, being the servant and messenger of the heart creates everywhere this free and easy circulation of everything which makes life and which is called the joy that belongs to life. Close to the heart it will maintain and sustain it, and far away from the heart it will allow the spirits to express and direct or control life. Tan zhong is like a kind of protection of the heart. In the Su wen it says that tan zhong is like the Forbidden City, the palace which surrounds and protects the sovereign. The agents who go on missions are just like the meridian of the heart in activity, xin zhu, which is the heart as master. If you are looking at it from the point of view of the qi, then chen is connected to the zong qi, and shi is connected to the nutritive and defensive qi.

Claude Larre: I would just like to add that the meaning of zhong is now clear. It is not the centre of tan, it is tan acting as a centre, and it is constructed in the same pattern as we saw for jun zhu or the other positions. The difference here is that for the first time we have a zang with a double name. From the very fact that it's not a single character, like gan, xin or fei, but an expression, we have to try to understand how the first character is playing with the other one, and vice-versa. The only explanation is that tan is really the specific indication, but how, where and why this specific indication is really there, is found in zhong, to be the centre. When you occupy the centre you are the centre, and when it's no longer useful you should retire, as Lao zi says. The usual translation for zhong is middle or centre, but here zhong is associated with tan. If we just make a translation for zhong and a translation for tan then the richness of the expression formed by their close union is be lost. That is always the case when two characters join to make an expression, and even more so when three characters do. This is seen in xin bao lu and xin zhu. We have to understand xin and bao and lu and xin bao and bao lu and xin lu and xin bao lu. That is the power of the classical expression in the characters. They are images and schemes. A character has an emblematic power, so it gives you not only a meaning in the mind, but a desire to do something.

Question: I would like to clarify the terms used for the different energies.

Peter Firebrace: Ancestral qi are zong qi, original qi are yuan qi and authentic qi are zhen qi.

Claude Larre: I would say that from the point of view of the unique qi in the universe, which is always in yourself, it is dependent on the origin. Everybody is purely themselves in the origin. Everybody here is full of yuan qi, and for that reason we are connected together, we have the same qi circulating here and there. But in terms of zong qi each one of us has a special fate and a special, specific nature. So although the yuan qi is common it is not the same in each of us because the zong qi is not the same in each of us. In you the yuan qi and the zong qi are the same qi because your yuan qi informs all that you do in a way that is similar to the ancestral energies. And, as long as you practise respiration and nourishment, function with the seasons and so on, then you preserve what has been given to you. But what has been given, which is the virtue of Heaven, is nothing other than the zhen qi. They are all authentic, but concretely speaking all of them should be different.

Elisabeth Rochat: To say the same thing in other words: the original qi, the yuan qi, in me are what are called qi of anterior Heaven, or pre-Heaven. That is to say, they are the surge of life which is given at the moment of my conception and which will push my life forward throughout my existence. The original qi must be everywhere in order to make the zang function. This is the vital life-giving animation which is received when you receive life. And life will last as long as the original qi last. Here we can look at Nan jing difficulty 8. The question there is why, when the pulse seems to be completely in balance, do people die? The answer is that the original qi have been exhausted. When a tree dies by the roots then the leaves soon wither and die. Zong qi, the ancestral qi, is the way in which the qi find their commanding power in myself, something which gathers them together under a single authority, and guarantees that all these qi are part of the same family and form one single being.

Claude Larre: That is the foundation of immunology for the Chinese. Zong qi accepts that which is proper and rejects that which is not compatible or similar.

Elisabeth Rochat: Zong has the sense of an ancestor, but not an ancestor as in the founder of a lineage or line. There's another ideogram for that. It's more the sense of the lineage itself.

Claude Larre: The most simple example is to look at any chronology of Chinese dynasties with the name of the emperor. For example, the first in the Han dynasty is Gao Zu, but the others in the dynasty would be zong, with the zong of zong qi. This is because the others are the rightful successors in the lineage, they are the family tree.

Elisabeth Rochat: Zong also indicates he who is in charge of organizing and directing the cult of ancestors. He has the necessary authority for this because he is of the proper rank in the family, and he brings together all those who have the right to participate. So in zong there is this idea of gathering together for a higher function, and that is exactly what we saw with regard to the sea of qi in the centre of the chest in relation to the ancestral qi which bring together all qi under the same authority to direct their circulation and movement throughout the body. Life is perpetuated in an ancestral line in just the same way. It's the idea of gathering together in order to direct somewhere. You can also put the character zong with other characters, for example mo or jin, and there's the same idea of bringing together in order to be able to direct the action.

Question: Does this lineage reflect the uniqueness of the person?

Claude Larre: The coherence of self is the same as the cohesion of the others. When somebody is agitated that person is unbearable for the neighbours and the family. The reason why we should be quiet is not just because it is good for us, it is good for others. There is nothing more unpleasant than being obliged to live in a family where somebody is not at rest. All life is shaken around. That is a question of zong. If you are not able to be coherent then all others will suffer, but the more coherent you are yourself, the more the other people will naturally come together and arrange themselves in order around what you are doing, saying and living.

Elisabeth Rochat: Zhen qi, authentic qi, is when everything that happens in my being conforms to what I should be. That is to say that the destiny which I received from Heaven, called in Chinese ming,

a mandate, which is nothing more than the best line I can make with what I have been given, is correctly followed. At this moment the quality of qi will conform to my nature, which is the same thing as conforming to my origin. This is called authenticity, and this is why we find this term zhen, authentic, as a synonym for original, yuan, and for the original yin and yang of the kidneys. An authentic man will be a man of very great saintliness. In Su wen chapter 1 the authentic men are at the highest level of saintliness, they are practically beyond Heaven/ Earth.

Claude Larre: They are more saints than saintly men.

LARGE INTESTINE, DA CHANG

The image shows two large, bold Chinese characters in a calligraphic style. The top character is '大' (Da), and the bottom character is '腸' (Chang). Together, they read 'Large Intestine'.

Large Intestine, Da Chang

The image shows a vertical column of Chinese calligraphy. The characters are arranged in two columns, reading from right to left. The right column contains '大腸者傳道之官' (Da chang zhe chuan dao zhi guan) and the left column contains '變化出焉' (bian hua chu yan).

Da chang zhe chuan dao zhi guan
bian hua chu yan

The Large Intestine is responsible for transit. The residue from transformation stems from it.

Claude Larre: This is the large intestine, da chang. The other one is xiao chang, small intestine. The function or charge is chuan. Chuan is to transmit, dao means along the way or along the road, which we can call transit. So chuan is the progressive march of what is inside, but it is also the movement by which this transit is made. The necessary function of the large intestine is to take whatever results from the previous presentation in the series, stomach and spleen, and connect it with the following one, the small intestine. And we need to see how specialized it is in tranquilly leading it along the way to the end.

Chuan has different meanings. One is not only to transmit but also in a way to specialize and make a distinction within the mass of what has been elaborated through the combination of pi and wei. It is a continuation as well as an elaboration of the ingested material that has to be transmitted. During the process of transmission something more is done by the large intestine. But it is better to see the large

and small intestines working together, and it is easier to explain one through the other than just taking one after the other.

Dao is the same word as in Dao de jing, the Way and the Virtue. But here we understand it as the network by which what has been ingested and digested is now conducted through the organism to an end which will be partly assimilation and partly rejection. Dao also has a meaning connected with the mo or mai, since they too are going in certain directions. It means the direction which, materially speaking, follows the current of nourishment. But after the consideration of the location immediately comes the consideration of the function. We have to see both at the same time, that there is a certain place where things are going, and there are certain activities of life which are done in following that network. That is the meaning of chuan dao, and chuan dao is the charge of the large intestine in comparison with the charge of the small intestine which is not said to work along a path, but which receives things, works on them and then disperses them throughout the organism.

Bian hua chu yan, is a very important and subtle description of what the final product of the work done by the large intestine is. When I say product I am not referring to a material thing. It's important not to materialize what is said in the text. Bian is a change, and hua is another way to look at that change. Together as bian hua it is a fundamental expression in the field of Chinese medicine. Since we are facing the problem of expression in two characters normally we would think that bian is operated through Heaven's power, and hua is the answering of the formative activity of Earth. When there is a hua there is a transformation actually made or in the making. When it is bian there is something in the process of change.

You are driving a car, and when you turn the wheel that is the change, but the fact that the vehicle is no longer in the same place and is now on another stretch of road, or another road entirely, that is hua. So with your wheel you are master of the direction and this is bian, and when your car is obediently going along another stretch of road that is hua. So bian hua as a typical expression in the vocabulary contains the Heaven/ Earth operation which results in your benefit. It is the product or result of what is made by the large intestine, of the nourishment which has been ingested and digested, and at the same time of your own personal disposition. We are here in a situation of nourishment, and everything which has been said is said primarily about that nourishment, but at the same time it's also said of the person who benefits from the operation of being nourished.