

The Lung: Chinese Medicine Classics I

An Instructive Discussion (from: Larre & Rochat, 1992a)

The Ideogram for the Lung

Elisabeth Rochat: When we studied Spleen and Stomach we were able to grasp an idea of their functions from the ideograms of their names. With the Lung and Metal it's not exactly the same situation. From the Chinese texts it's more complicated to show the movement and the characteristics of Metal, or to grasp the function of the Lung from the ideogram. So we will try to use other ways to understand the Lung, Autumn and Metal, and the very specific function of the Lung inside the body.



The ideogram for the Lung, *fei*, is made with the radical for flesh. You can find the etymology in Weiger lesson 79G. The other part of the ideogram is a representation of plants branching up from the soil, part of the ideogram for earth, *tu* is contained in it, but without the lower horizontal line. It's not an image of plants which stand up straight from the soil but of creeping plants which spread out, multiplying indefinitely. By extension this ideogram also has the meaning of multiplication or something like fibres, and I think it's like an anatomical aspect of the Lung, which is why it was chosen for the ideogram of the Lung. It's impossible to interpret this ideogram any more than that, but we can show some others with the same construction and another radical.

If we add in the upper part the radical of vegetation in general we then have an ideogram with the meaning of bushy vegetation providing shade. Or if we add the radical of rain we have the idea of rain falling with great heaviness. The idea of something luxuriant, for example, luxuriant vegetation, can always be found in this right-hand part of the character. It appears in the ideogram for South, with some transformation, because the South is the area of very luxurious vegetation. Sometimes you can find the same ideogram with the pronunciation *shi* meaning a market, a place for exchange, and according to Su wen chapter 52, this market, *shi*, is a special name for the Stomach. This is quite unconnected with the ideogram's other meaning of bushy, creeping vegetation.

SU WEN CHAPTER 2**Harmonize the Spirits with the Four Breaths**

The three months of Autumn are called overflowing and balancing
 The Breaths of Heaven become urgent
 The Breaths of Earth are resplendent

One retires early
 One rises early
 One 'does the cock'
 Exerting the will peacefully and quietly
 To soften the repressive effect of Autumn
 Gathering in the Spirits and storing up the Breaths
 Pacifying the Breaths of Autumn
 Without letting the vitality be scattered outside
 Making the Breaths of the Lung clear and fresh
 This is what is proper to the Breaths of Autumn
 Which correspond to the maintaining and gathering in of life

To go counter-current would injure the Lung
 Causing diarrhoea in Winter through an insufficient contribution to thesaurization.

**Autumn,
 qiu**

Elisabeth Rochat: We can begin with two chapters of the Su wen, chapter 2 and chapter 5. In chapter 2 there is a description of the characteristics of Autumn, and what the movement of life and vitality are like during this period of the year. In chapter 5 there are all the connections with the West, Metal, the Lung and so on, and with all the parts of the body which represent this movement.

Claude Larre: The ideogram for Autumn, qiu is made up of two parts. On the left the character is the same as mu, wood, but with an extra stroke at the top giving the meaning of a stalk with an ear. Usually the ear of grain comes at the end of Summer but if you push that a little further you come to Autumn. On the right side the character is huo, Fire, so the combination of these two makes qiu, Autumn. This is the opposite of chun, Spring. We understand that at the end of Winter the power of the sun is lower, is under the ground, so the plant pushes up. In Autumn, on the other hand, there is no more pushing upward, there is only the bringing to maturity of the same plant which you saw in Spring. The correspondence between Spring and Autumn is so strong that for a period of time you can say chun qiu and the Chunqiu zuozhuan is the fifth classic in the collection of the Five Classics. It's just a chronicle which explains the relationships of the state of Lu, the state of Confucius, and all the other states around it. But chun qiu has a larger meaning than just chronicle, it's for any period of time.

Elisabeth Rochat: In the seasons we can see the unfolding and progress of time, and time is nothing other than a succession and movement of different qualities of Breaths, qi, the specific movement of Breaths. And the same succession and movement of Breaths occurs inside the human body in order to organize and maintain life. Spring is between Winter and Summer, this is obvious, but the meaning for the Chinese is that the root of Spring is in Winter, and the direction and expansion is towards Summer. In Spring you can begin to go out, but not too strongly and not without some precautions and so on. If you look at the Liver in the human body, the root is yin, in the Essences and Blood and in the Kidneys, and the movement, direction and expansion of this effect are yang, in the springing up and out of Breaths.

With Autumn we have exactly the opposite; it is between Summer and Winter, with its root in Summer and its tendency and direction towards Winter. In the Lung we see the same double aspect as with the Liver, with the movement of expansion and circulation right up to the extremities of skin and body hair, but also the concentration and descending movement. We can see these two seasons, Spring and Autumn, as a hinge or pivot.

此 秋
謂 三
容 月
平

**The three months of Autumn
are called overflowing and balancing**

In overflowing we have all the effects of Summer, when all the cereals and fruits are completely achieved and it's time for harvest. With balancing, ping, you can see the meaning from the character. This is very important because we find the idea of equilibrium (though not exactly this ideogram) in the functioning of the Lung. Ping means to restore the good balance between all sorts of Breaths. It is also to be very strong and cut off anything that goes beyond the limit. Autumn is the time of punishment when you cut the cereal crops or cut off the heads of criminals. In the Book of Rites, another of the Five Classics, it says that Autumn puts everything back in the balancing scales.

Claude Larre: Everything has to be measured exactly in order that all the trades and exchanges in the country would be according to the true value. The capacity, the volume and the value of gold and silver or whatever has to be verified. It means that Autumn has to be strict and exact, and the balance is between yin and yang.

Elisabeth Rochat: In the summer you can cheat a little bit, but not in Autumn! We'll see the same thing with the Lungs which receive all the mai, the network of animation of the body at the morning audience and restore equilibrium at dawn. At this time you can see the pulse in very good balance.

Claude Larre: Elisabeth is referring to the fact that every morning all the officials go to the court in order to be assigned different tasks, and every morning the one hundred mai or mo have to go to the court to be regularized and to take anew their charges so that everything starts right each morning. The expression of going to the court in the morning is an image from the text and not from our own imagination.

地 天
氣 氣
以 以
明 急

The Breaths of Heaven become urgent
The Breaths of Earth are resplendent

Elisabeth Rochat: The Breaths of Heaven which are clear, have the effect of pressing downwards, exerting a pressure, as though they are withdrawing into the interior. This interior can be the interior of the living being or the interior of Heaven. Therefore, for this reason during Winter the Breaths of Heaven retire into the bosom of itself and have nothing to do with Earth, so the Winter is the time of separation. On the other hand these yang, clear Breaths of Heaven have to go into the depths of the body, following this same movement. There's no difference between the movement that penetrates to the depths of your being and that which rises up into the depths of Heaven.

Claude Larre: Your own self is made from the purest energy from Heaven, so while Heaven does that, you are doing that with Heaven.

Elisabeth Rochat: Autumn is the period during which the normal movement of Spring and Summer is reversed. During Spring and Summer the yang Breaths go towards the exterior in an expansion from the interior, and the yin is like the basis or foundation of that. During the Autumn we have to reverse this and the exterior is the property of the yin Breaths, and the yang Breaths of life are secure in the depths of the body.

For this reason Autumn is the great period for intermittent fevers with the alternation of cold and warmth, because there can be some blockage and this movement doesn't happen correctly. But you can also have this cold and warmth in Spring, then the name in the ancient texts is not exactly the same, then they are called tepid diseases. Here the blockage is in the other movement with the yang spreading to the exterior.

The Breaths of Earth are resplendent

In Autumn Earth is very rich and bears all the fruits, it is very powerful and shows all the shapes and forms that Earth can give.

早
卧
早
起

One retires early

One rises early

This is going with the sun and warmth, but in Autumn we have to rise less early because the warmth and the sun are receding. One retires early because during the evening and night the coolness arrives early.



與
雞
俱
興

One 'does the cock',
Su Wen chapter 2

This is an expression used to describe the situation in which a living or human being is yin outside and yang inside. This is because a very strong fighting cock, especially in Daoist books, is not a cock of great aggression on the outside but is very calm and still. But if this cock has to fight another cock he's the fastest and he wins because all his force arrives from inside without a blockage.

Claude Larre: All martial arts are like that, you have your strength inside and you are quiet, just making your decision to move when it will have effect.

以 使
 緩 志
 秋 安
 刑 寧

**Exerting the will peacefully and calmly
 To soften the repressive effect of Autumn**

Elisabeth Rochat: The repressive effect of Autumn is double in nature. It's not only the period of harvest or the period of maturation of all things, it's also, in the second period of Autumn this time in which all vegetation begins to wither and shrivel. Harvest is the beginning of this time when the Earth becomes bare, and in human society Autumn is the time for punishment when criminals go to jail or to the place of execution. But it's necessary not to have any violence and to be very calm and peaceful at the same time as you are cutting off people's heads!

The violence of life is more in the Spring because it's a movement where yang can be visible, while in Autumn yang can slowly become more invisible inside the depths of the body. For this reason acting peacefully and calmly you can soften the repressive effect of Autumn, because in acting violently you will produce a countercurrent to the natural flow of life.

收
 斂
 神
 氣

**Gathering in the Spirits
 and storing up the Breaths**

Elisabeth Rochat: This is the time of harvest, but not only for the cereals and grains which must be put in the granaries for the Winter to avoid starvation. If you want to survive Winter it's also necessary to store Spirits and Breaths in your own inside granaries. Breaths are the yang of life, the dynamism, vitality and movement of life, and Spirits preserve the good direction of life in you. You have to protect the vitality in yourself, and the most important aspects of it are the Spirits and the Breaths.

使無使
肺外秋
氣其氣
清志平

**Pacifying the Breaths of Autumn
without letting the vitality
be scattered outside**

**Making the Breaths of the Lung
clear and fresh**

This is the same idea, that Autumn is the period of cleaning out. During the Spring and Summer you have strange ideas, you can say something against the government quite easily, but not in Autumn! In Autumn you have to concentrate all the force of your ideas and being for the rigours of Winter, because Winter is the period of danger. You streamline yourself, and you have to follow the party line because it's the only way to survive. We have to keep the vitality inside, which is the contrary of Summer when we can sweat. It's not very good to sweat in Autumn and especially not as Autumn nears Winter, because this is a way in which vitality in one form can go outside the body, and you risk creating a deficiency. This is to be avoided. The word pacifying means to put in good equilibrium and balance. You know that in the past France and England have pacified various countries around the world, which means we were just bringing a good balance to them! Sometimes it can be with the same effect as Autumn!

Making the Breaths of the Lung clear and fresh.

The ideogram for clear and fresh is qing. The Breaths of the Lung have to be qing. They have to be clear because they are the Breaths of Heaven and the subtle essence of alimentation, and they have to be fresh because if dryness or warmth are in excess then the Lung is in a very difficult position. You also know that unclear, troubled energy can bring a lot of disease. So during Autumn it is especially important that the Lung, which is like the Breaths of Heaven in the human body, is really clear, and that the clear Breaths are rising and expanding. A second idea is that Heaven's Breaths are the clearest that you can imagine, and their movement and activity is just to descend to Earth. If this didn't happen there would be no way to make Heaven and Earth have communication. The Lung and the Breaths of Lung have to be the clearest inside the body with the double function of expanding and diffusing, and the only way for the upper part to act is to descend.

逆 養 此
 之 收 秋
 則 之 氣
 傷 道 之
 肺 也 應

**This is the way that is proper
 to the Breaths of Autumn,
 Which thus correspond
 to the maintaining
 and gathering in of life.**

**To go counter-current
 would injure the Lung**

The Lung is exactly the same expression of movement with the same quality of Breaths inside the body as Autumn is in the progression of seasons.

奉 冬
 藏 為
 者 飧
 少 泄

**Causing in Winter diarrhoea
 through an insufficient contribution
 to thesaurization (storage)**

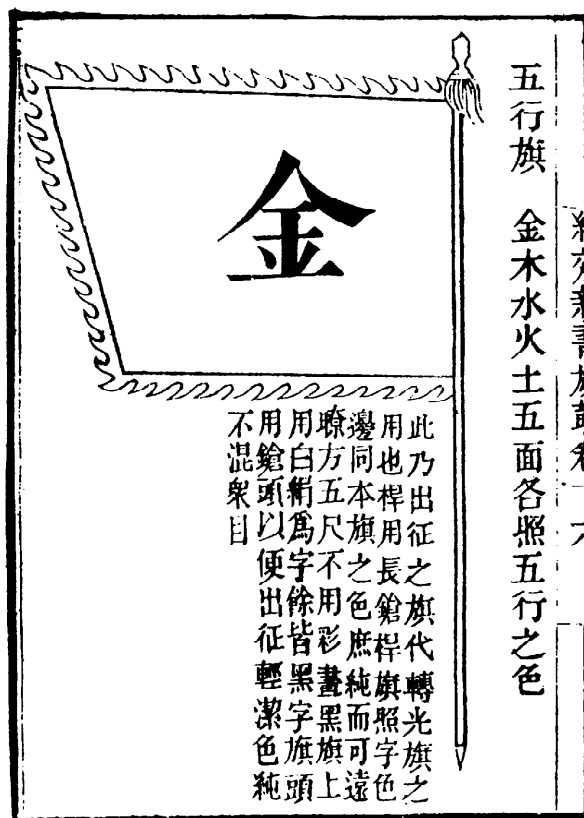
If during Autumn or if through the Lung you are unable to gather in and harvest, in Winter it will be worse. There will not only be lack of the gathering in but there will also be loss in the form of diarrhoea because you are unable to retain the vitality and Essences. Everything passes through the body without profit because in this situation you can imagine the Middle Heater (Spleen and Stomach) is weak and cannot ensure good digestion. So this kind of diarrhoea is with undigested food, and as a result you are unable to grasp the Essences and nourishment necessary for the maintenance and rebuilding of life.

Claude Larre: This is a special point for chronological biology. The thing has to be seen from two aspects. One is now, what happens if you are not doing what is proper to the season? The other is that in Chinese teaching if now, in Autumn, you are not doing what you should be according to the laws of the season, then you must expect that in the next season, Winter, the organs which are supposed to work then have not been made ready so there's a lack of preparation and support. When Elisabeth was talking about the Lungs she said that if in Autumn you were not abiding by the laws of Autumn, then you would have bad effects in Autumn and when Winter comes you would be in a state of weakness and would have diarrhoea.

Elisabeth Rochat: What are the characteristics of Autumn? It's to have munificence and overflowing, but at the same time to avoid carefully all excitation or agitation. So the season which is able to show this overflowing is also able to keep without letting the vitality be scattered outside. It can put boundaries and limits on itself and can begin the movement of return to storage.

Question: Could you amplify that last sentence please?

Elisabeth Rochat: I don't remember very well what I said, but I think it was that Autumn is the same season that can produce this overflowing and abundant vegetation and cereals with all its splendid munificence as well as being able to put limits on its vitality so that it doesn't scatter outside. It's a balancing, and we see that especially with the Lung which is able to send Breaths out to the skin and to stop any overflowing, so there's no loss. We'll see tomorrow that this is a good aspect of the rhythm which Lung and Metal and Autumn are connected with.



Daoist Banner
for Metal and the West

SU WEN CHAPTER 5**The great chapter on phenomena and how they correspond to yin and yang**

The Western Quarter produces dryness
 Dryness produces metal
 Metal produces the acrid taste
 Acrid produces the Lung
 The Lung produces the skin and body hair
 The skin and body hair produces the Kidneys
 The Lung masters the nose

In Heaven it is dryness
 On Earth metal
 In the body it is the skin and body hair
 In the zang organs it is the Lung
 In the colours it is white
 In the notes it is shang
 In the sounds it is sobbing
 In the disturbances causing change it is coughing
 In the orifices it is the nose
 In the tastes it is acrid
 In the instances of will it is grief

Grief injures the Lung
 Joyful excitement prevails over grief



West, xi

Elisabeth Rochat: The ideogram for West is xi. It's the beautiful image of a bird resting on its nest. (Weiger lesson 41D)

Claude Larre: If you look at the character for East, dong, it's not a question of a bird but of the sun. But the sun transforms itself into a bird at the end of its course to the West according to the Chinese, so for them there is no difference between the sun and the bird, they both are in the air and the bird exemplifies the yang power of Earth and the sun exemplifies the yang power of Heaven. It starts its life as the sun and finishes its life as a bird sitting on its nest, and this is seen in the characters. Finally, they're the same thing if we're not relating to vegetation or what we see in the sky, but are relating to what is behind all that. That is typical of the Chinese scheme of things.

Elisabeth Rochat: The West is the region of the sunset, and at sunset birds go to roost. We can see from this ideogram and from the etymology that in the idea of West there is a movement of return. In the quality of the Breaths of the West you will find the same quality of Breaths as in Autumn, there is something urgent, a concentration and a gathering. We saw that Autumn has the munificence of harvest as well as the threat of bareness, and it's the same thing in the West with the sunset. At the

moment of sunset there's an overflowing of light, but at the same time it's the beginning of night, of darkness and cold.

Each region and direction of space has a particular deity or genie, and the genie of the West is also the genie of punishment. He has the face of a man and the claws of a tiger, with white body hair. Another important thing is that in Chinese legends the West is the special region for Spirits. The traditional explanation is that the Spirits search for a dwelling place where peace, balance and equilibrium are good and where all cleaning up has been done. In such a place the Spirits can have a rest full of serenity.

Claude Larre: The fact is that the Chinese are more concerned with peace than ourselves, and they know that the Spirits would be miserable if they went to a place where things are not tidy and where there was nothing to eat. So since the West is a well-balanced region it is an appropriate place for the Spirits. Another reason is also that the West of China is a big expanse of land, and the East is the place of the rising of sun and life. But the Spirits are not connected with that aspect in this question, it's more the despair and the poor condition of the Spirits which are alluded to here.

Elisabeth Rochat: In the human body the Lung are like a roof or a canopy for all the viscera, especially the Heart. They are responsible for all the good equilibrium and balance of the Breaths, for calmness, and so on.

西
方
生
燥

The Western Quarter produces dryness

I think Father Larre explained this ideogram sheng in the last seminar. It is the movement of life, the process of life. How can we connect West and dryness? Father Larre said that in the West of China there is an area of desert, but what is the explanation of the Chinese people for that? We have to turn to Autumn. In Autumn the splendid fruits are ripe and full at the beginning, and we need to harvest them, because if they are not harvested they dry out. Autumn is also the period of white frosts, which are a condensation of vapours coming as a consequence of coldness descending on to the earth which is still warm from the Summer. In the traditional Chinese calendar the periods corresponding with the season of Autumn are the Ending of the Great Heat, White Dew, the Autumn Equinox, Cold Dew and White Frost, and there is this specific accent on the effect of this condensation in the shape of liquids. We find all that in the function of the Lung inside the body.

So we can think analogically that the West is the region of condensation and concentration, of vapours and Breaths, and there is no condensation and concentration without a movement of urging and pressing. We find this movement in one of the most important functions of the Lung, qing su, making things descend such as vapours and Breaths in the shape of liquids, by the movement of condensation. It's all in the pressure of Lung on all the bodily liquids in the trunk. Perhaps through all that we can find a connection between the West and dryness?

Claude Larre: From my own point of view we are not astute enough in our observation of the situation in our own practice. The Chinese say that if you see dew it is a sign of dryness, but we say that if you see dew it's a sign of humidity. But they are right because it proves that the humidity has been taken from the air and is just lying on the surface of the ground. We have to observe the way the Chinese construct their observation of the processes in nature and not just to stick to the result, because the difference between our Western minds and the Chinese is that the Chinese are observing how things are developing themselves, and we are more content with the pure fact of the result. So when they call something dry we are entitled to call it damp, but it is not contradictory. One is one aspect of the dryness in that everything has been taken out, and the other is an aspect of humidity in that since something has been taken out it has to be put somewhere, and it is put on the ground. The fact is that the big region in the west of China is so dry, and that this is not so in the east means that for the Chinese according to their own view of nature the West is dry. We have to use both ways to understand what they are saying.

Elisabeth Rochat: In pathology we can see that dryness can easily be mixed with cold or warmth. We find that the two seasons before and after Autumn are either the warm Summer or the cold Winter, and there's often a bad equilibrium and unbalanced situation with the dryness, which explains warm dryness and cold dryness. In the main part of China Autumn is not the season of rain, and this is the first state of the separation of Heaven and Earth, because Heaven is not giving more to Earth in the form of rain.

燥
生
金

Dryness produces Metal

To understand this sentence I think we must connect dryness with this movement of condensation and concentration. As a result of this pressure something goes down into the depths, and as we look at the same movement inside the earth we have Metal because Metal is precisely a condensation and a concentration within the depths of the earth. The ideogram for Metal, jin, is exactly the idea of men digging inside soil in order to find Metal. (Weiger lesson 14T). You can see at the bottom of the earth two nuggets of gold, so this ideogram, jin, means all kinds of Metal, or gold. At the top of the

ideogram you have the roof of the cave where they are digging. We have something analogous with Wood and tree. The same ideogram Mu has the meaning of Wood or a tree, because of all kinds of wood or vegetation the tree is the best example and the most precious with deep roots inside the soil and with the force to rise up towards Heaven. Of the Metals the most precious is gold, and gold is also the best example because gold is very easy to work although it is very hard.

If you look at the definition of the Metal element in all Chinese books you don't find the idea that it is something very hard and strong, but rather you find something like the definition in the Book of History, one of the Five Classics:

The property of Metal is to obey the hand of the craftsman and to take different shapes.

This is the characteristic of Metal, it is both harder than Water or Wood, but it is also easier to work. For example, Water can take any form but cannot keep any form by itself, it just takes the form of its container. It's the same for Fire, Fire just destroys forms and shapes but it can take its own form. With Wood you can cut it, but then it's finished. But with Metal you can melt it, and melt it again and work it many times. In the same Book of History it says of Wood that you can bend it but that it will straighten again, but Metal obeys the hand of the craftsman. There's always this dialectic of contraries of the compenetration of life, which is the fundamental point about the logic of China. At the same time this Metal is able to make structures and consolidate things. It can keep a form or change it - for example by the action of Fire, so for this reason Metal is very sensitive to the progress of Fire.

In another way Metal is the element which has a very brilliant and shining colour, and these qualities are some of the aspects of the colour of the West and of Autumn, white. But the Metal which has this shining colour is also the instrument of death because from Metal you forge arms, swords and so on. This fact is also in the Chinese mind, and by this means Metal is also linked with the other aspects of white which is the colour of sunset, of death, of the po and of the colour of the bones within the earth after a certain time. So even within the colour of Metal we find this double aspect of something shining and of something which can bring death.

Claude Larre: Taking Earth as the baseline, a tree has the quality of expanding upwards, going along its own way, but Metal is on the receding aspect and although it's hard it's also obeying at the same time. It's not like Wood which makes its movement by itself, Metal is ready to be depressed and oppressed because it is at the end of the process. This is important for the colleges when they teach the Five Elements, because the teaching should not be restricted to anything other than the process. The process of the elements is used to direct the mind to the pathology, and the yin /yang effect can be seen in the Five Elements. One of the best instructions would be to contrast Wood and Metal according to the Chinese etymology, and then that has to be transferred to the condition of the patient and for the treatment.

Question. I don't see why, according to that, Metal should be shining and Wood should be the opposite.

Claude Larre: The fact is that the Metal is so pressed and condensed that if you cut it, it shows, in the light, the ability to reflect it. This is not the same as Wood, even though leaves may seem glossy. Wood itself is not shiny, if you cut a tree there is just the colour of the tree, but if you cut a piece of Metal it will be shiny if there is enough light on it.

金
生
辛

Metal produces the acrid taste

We've explained many times this Chinese idea of taste. It's not exactly the savour in the mouth because it is also the internal structure and the more visible and perceptible quality of the Essences which compose a particular being. Through the decomposition of the Essences you can smell the odour, or you can experience the taste, and you can get an idea of the quality of the Essences which constitute the being.

Claude Larre: It's my own opinion that the explanation is that first we have the smell or the taste which is acrid. That is a perception, which is the same for Chinese and occidentals. But the question is how is it possible that what we taste and what we smell have something in common? If they do have something in common then it must be a quality behind what we perceive, and when something is behind what we perceive we call it a structure. So 'structure' is the word to describe what in one direction is the smell and in the other direction the taste, or in another the colour. The colour, the taste, the smell and the sound have something in common if they are of the Western quarter, or the Eastern quarter, or wherever. It is not that just because we cannot perceive what lies behind what we perceive it does not exist. The quality of the West can be seen as dryness, or a certain smell, or a certain taste, and the difficulty is that we are not used to this turn of mind. For the Chinese West is not just a division of space but a division of what exists, of life, and there is a quality there which when combined with the other qualities, composes the living being.

If I am able to have a Heart, or a Liver or Kidneys it's just because I am a man and within me these qualities are combining to make my zang. And when it's not a question of zang, when it's a plant, for example, or outside somewhere, what do we call that? It depends. We call it the Western Region, or the blue colour, or some kind of sound. The Chinese way is very clear, they have divided the unity of the cosmos into five and we call it the Five Elements or Phases. The point is that whenever there is composition or decomposition it is on the level of five. Of course it's true that the perception of individual things does not always correspond exactly to that, for example some things taste acrid but they are not white. But the white the Chinese are talking about is not necessarily the colour white

which can be seen. Yet if the white of the Chinese has the same properties as the West or the acrid taste then we would understand what they mean by white.

The trouble is that we are not abstract enough, we want the actual sensation of things. We think we know what white is but the Chinese answer is that we do not know what white is unless we take our information from Su wen chapter 5. You have to understand that the white alluded to is the white that is seen in the West, and that is different to the white colour seen here on this sheet of paper. But this sheet of paper, being white in the western meaning, is related to the West. It is truly white, but it is not the white you see. Behind what you see there is a structure which when it is seen is white and when it is tasted is acrid. There are two levels and everything goes by five. One level is more abstract, but very concrete! It's only abstract for our sensations. If we can accept the zang as we accept them in Chinese medicine why can we not accept the colours and tastes and smells in the Chinese way? The difference between white, and West and Lung and so on is much less than we think. At one level it is all the same thing. This is very difficult to understand, but it is very logical.

Elisabeth Rochat: The ideogram for acrid is xin (Weiger lesson 102H). The composition of the ideogram gives the idea of offending a superior. Etymologically the lower part has the meaning of offence, and consequently this ideogram xin also has the meaning of what happens after an offence is committed, that is a punishment, pain and bitterness. On the physical level it could be a wound or an injury and on the psychological level it can be a painful constriction of the heart. These things are all possible meanings of xin as well as acrid. Another meaning of xin is as the eighth of the Celestial Stems, corresponding to West and Metal and Autumn and so on.

Peter Firebrace: Basically the Ten Stems are an expansion of the Five Elements in that you have two Stems for each Element. So the first and second Stems correspond to Wood beginning with Gall Bladder and then Liver, and so on round the cycle to Fire, Small Intestine and Heart, on to the Earth with Stomach and Spleen, and then on to Metal with the Colon and then the Lung which would be the eighth Stem. Following on from that there would be the Stem for the Bladder and for the Kidneys. You always have the yang Stem and then the yin Stem, which is an expansion of the idea of the Five Elements as a cycle - instead of having a single element you have the yang aspect and then the yin aspect of the element. That's the simplest way of seeing the cycle of the Ten Stems. So here you have the Lung which will give way to the Stems for Water which will be the ninth and tenth Stems.

Claude Larre: One may ask how it is possible to go from the Five Elements to the Ten Stems? If you think that the virtue of Heaven is only yang it is impossible to go to the Stems. But this is not true. The virtue of Heaven has never been said to be only yang it is yin or yang depending. This point is not usually taught in the colleges, because the teachers are afraid to take a position on it as they are not sure how it can be. So what Peter said is good, there are five ways to organize the virtue but each of these ways is yin or yang. So if they are yin or yang a system organized by ten is necessary.

To return to what Elisabeth was saying, in Autumn there is repression and obedience. People either revolt or submit. It's good for the government if they submit, if they contradict it's not good for the government, but they contradict in an Autumn-like fashion. This is very important because in our simple way of thinking about life we say either they obey or they disobey. But this is not true. Either they obey or they disobey according to a certain phase, which in this case is the Autumn phase. So, the text is not so difficult to understand if we see that the Lung are constructed from a certain sort of Essence, the quality of which is in Autumn or the West, it's the same thing. They have to be according to the position of acrid in the Five Elements. The text of the Su wen chapter 5 is constructed in a way which is expressing the movement of life when organizing all the elements of living beings. So when we come to man we have to come to the zang, and the zang has to come from somewhere, and it comes from acrid because it is a taste and the taste is connected with the Essences. The quality for the taste of the West is acrid which is said to produce the Lung, xin shengfei.

Elisabeth Rochat: In the same way that Father Larre was describing the nature of acrid in accord with the movement of Metal, of dryness and the West, it is in accord with this kind of constriction or punishment or pain. But the effect of the acrid taste is diffusion, expansion of Breaths and sometimes humidification. The explanation is the same: only that which is able to concentrate is able to expand. In comparison the acid taste which is connected with the East and Spring, corresponds to a movement of expansion, but the effect of the acid taste, according to the Su wen chapter 22, is to collect together. This is exactly the same dialectical explanation.

辛
生
肺

Acrid produces the Lung

Elisabeth Rochat: How can that be? By 'acrid' we saw that we have to understand the structure of a specific quality of Essences which compose a being, or a kind of food, and the Essences which are the main component of a thing can first be perceived through the taste and smell. Within my being they can nourish and maintain the movements which express the same quality. In the case of acrid this is the Lung. If I eat something acrid I am eating something the Essences of which are able to nourish and maintain the movement of condensation and concentration within my being. So as a consequence the acrid taste has a special relationship with the Lung and constitutes the life of the Lung in my body. For this reason we can now understand the passage Acrid produces the Lung. Acrid produces the original structure from which the Lung can be made, it's like weaving something on a canvas. The Lung is not just flesh or tissue, before that it is one of five aspects of the vital movement within an human being.

Claude Larre: Let me recapitulate this. We have a Chinese text which starts with the West, and the effect of this is dryness, and the effect of dryness is this condensation, and the effect of this has to be seen at the level of what is called acrid. This acrid has so many meanings, it's not exactly the taste you have on your tongue but the structure that makes the taste which you experience as acrid. This is only possible when you eat something, so if there is no food there is no taste. And if there is no taste there can be no identification of the food. The identification of food comes from the fact that there are certain Essences present and not others, so taste, food and Essences are all the same thing. To be on the same level as something is to be composed of a certain structure which works on the canvas of human life, and in this case at that same level it makes the ability to be able to have Lungs. The Lung is not different from acrid which is not different from Metal which is not different from dryness which is not different from the West.

You have to follow the line as the Chinese have put it because if you don't do that where will the question of humidity come? Each of these terms can reverse itself, but you are not free to say that dryness is the same thing as humidity, first you have to state how the dryness is produced. Dryness is produced by the West. Then when you have this you can counter the dryness with humidity by the convertibility of terms. What is important is to follow the line, so we arrive here knowing what the difference between acrid and Lung is. The difference is that acrid is just acrid in nature and Lung is acrid in man, and the development of the Lung which is given at birth needs food, food which is of the same characteristic quality and structure as the Essences which are on the same canvas. What is the difference between taste and Essences? Taste is the more specific feeling we get through the food, and Essences are less related to food and taste because they are more abstract. When we say Essences it is more the philosophy of the thing which is being alluded to.

Question: What word are you translating as Essences here?

Claude Larre: Jing. If you want to know what Essences are you have to take them in the series of jing shen or jing qi. It's impossible to give any definition of a single Chinese word! You have to take it inside an expression and if possible to take the expression inside a sentence. If you are only working with a single word the context is given by you but if you are working with a sentence the context is given by the text. It's always better to talk Chinese with the Chinese than to talk Chinese with yourself!

Elisabeth Rochat: A definition of Essences based on the ideogram could be all that you can grasp or extract from grains along with the quality of rising vitality signified by the colour green.

肺
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皮
毛

The Lung produces the skin and body hair

Elisabeth Rochat: Following the same movements and line of thought we can understand skin and body hair as a boundary or limit to the diffusion and expansion of Breaths, and also to the bodily shape. At the skin and body hair we can see the limiting of the loss of vitality which could take place through the pores or the orifices of the skin. The body hair can be understood as the ripening of the 'vegetation' of the body reliant upon the internal vitality, because skin and body hair need the perpetual nourishment of liquid, Blood and Breaths etc. Skin and body hair retain the vitality inside and by this means make possible its fructification.

We can see another relationship between Lung and skin and body hair in the rhythm of respiration. In the respiration of the skin all the pores and orifices open and close along with the holes of each body hair. Skin and body hair form a whole, unlike, for example, bones and marrow which are produced by the Kidneys in the equivalent passage in Su wen chapter 5 and which can appear separately.

Skin and body hair are not exactly a couple, more a whole, forming the superficial area of the body. Skin and body hair appear at the level of Man in the median between Heaven and Earth. The West and dryness are also an expression of this movement in Heaven or by Heaven, and Metal and acrid are the expression of this same movement on Earth or through Earth, with Lung, skin and body hair at the level of Man.

皮
毛
生
腎

The skin and body hair produce the Kidneys

Elisabeth Rochat: Skin and body hair are at the limit of the movement of diffusion and prevent the loss of vitality, for example in the form of sweat. Therefore the skin enables the active and fruitful storage of Essences inside the body and especially through the Kidneys because the Kidneys thesaurize Essences and allow life to continue at the most internal level. The West, the Autumn etc are the beginning of the return to the yin and the increasing of the movement towards the inner depths. It's

a descending and concentrating movement, and the beginning of the return to the Kidneys which are a basis or foundation. We have here another example of the relationship between Metal and Water. Metal produces Water, and at the internal level the Lung condenses the humid vapours and causes the drops of water to descend through the trunk and arrive at the area of the Kidneys and Bladder.

Claude Larre: The fact is we draw some power from below, and that is the Water in the Kidneys which is full of Fire and Water. It's not water as such, but some kind of power which enables us to increase our being. So if we are drawing from below in order to expand it's probably that what is below has been condensed, and that for me is the image of a well. A well is the common place below where all the rain which has fallen and filtered through the ground collects and can be drawn from. If the water we are talking of is the water of life, then this water is what is needed to produce life. So life emerges from the interior of the being, and in order to emerge it has to have been condensed. The condensation is done by the Lung, principally through the effect of the skin and body hair, and the water which is then ready to be used is the Kidney.

We are not talking of anatomy, we are talking of functions, and when we talk of functions in ourselves they are not separate from functions in the universe. Any function you like has to follow the lines of one of the five classes. If this is condensation it is done through the effect of the Lung and to the effect of the Kidneys. One is doing an action and the other is taking from that and bringing it further, so the two zang are not quoted under the same aspect. This is one of the main difficulties of the text. It took me a long time to understand how it was possible that there could be two zang quoted. I thought that when we came to the level of Man there would be one zang and then the text would move on. So we must just keep in mind the process itself, and the images we use are helpful for this.

肺
生
鼻

The Lung masters the nose

Elisabeth Rochat: This is easy to understand. The nose is the upper orifice by which path the clear Breaths of Heaven enter, and the Lung is the zang connected with the Heavenly Breaths, and which is an Heaven for the other zang and fu. Another thing is that it is by the nose that the clear Breaths can descend inside the body, and then within the Lung there is a separation between the ascending Breaths for expelling and the descending Breaths going for maintenance of the body and so on.

The Lung masters, zhu, the nose. There is no relation of producing, sheng, here. The important thing is not that the Lung can produce an orifice but that in the construction and structure of the body it is the lord or sovereign over its vassal, the nose. Like a vassal it must observe the boundaries in order to see whether perverse barbarians are approaching, and it too is observed. If the nose is blocked or

something perhaps the Lung are not in a good state, because using this analogy we can have an idea of the lord from his vassal and vice versa.

Claude Larre: Usually when we talk of a master we feel that the master is more important than the servant, but that is not true because if the master no longer takes care of the servant there is no more servant. The master is the master and the servant is the servant, and when you accept that you can see from the other side and say I should be a good master in order to keep my servant. And the servant says I have a job and I should stick to it because at this time it's not so easy to find a good master. So the Lung and the nose are also related to each other in this way. This is very important because some of us may think that since the Lung is a zang and the nose is just an orifice the zang is more precious than the orifice. But that's not true. I refer you to Zhuang zi chapter 2. Inside the body everything is circulation and there is a hierarchy with the zang at a high level, but the Chinese way of feeling that high level is that it has to pretend to be more or less at the service of the lower level. One level is just facing the other. In the Chinese way one is not more important than the other.

The character zhu appears at the seventh position in this series of sentences. Up to this point it has been sheng that is used, but after the first six you have the addition of one, with zhu, which brings you to the level of seven, the level of life. But the level of life relies on the six relations which appear before. So here we can understand how the Chinese are playing with numbers.