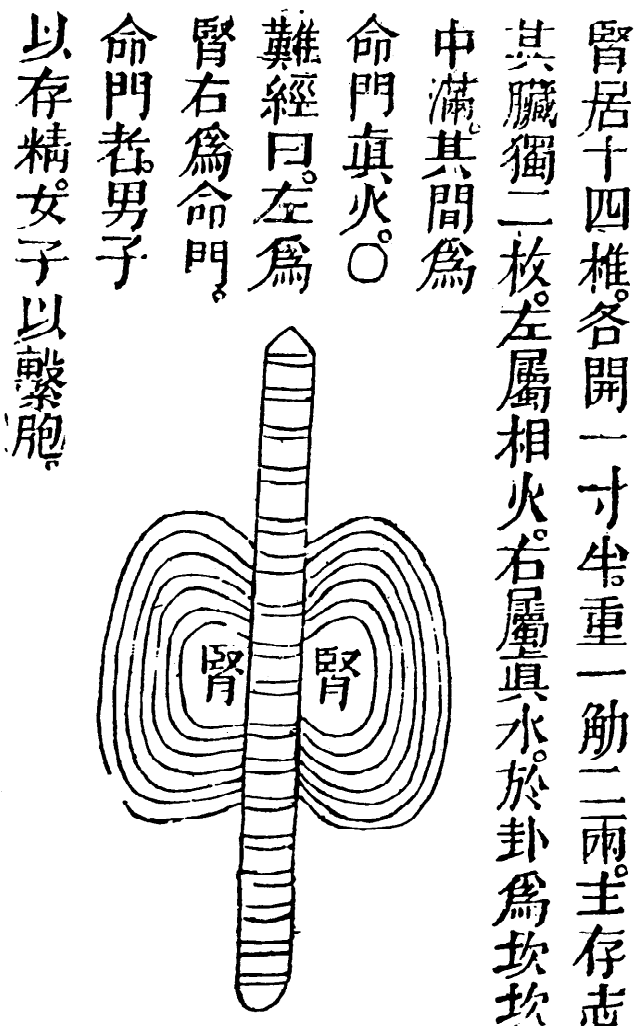


THE WATER ELEMENT IN TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

AN INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW: KIDNEYS AND URINARY BLADDER

(from: Claude Larre, Elisabeth Rochat de la Vallée: **The Kidneys** (1992); **The Secret Treatise of the Spiritual Orchid** (1992).



The Kidneys
Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen
Qing Dynasty
(from Larre & Rochat, 1992).

KIDNEYS: YIN ORGAN OF THE WATER ELEMENT

Extract from **Nei Jing Jing Yi**, (from Larre & Rochat ; **The Kidneys**,1992).

There is one Kidney on the left and one Kidney on the right (which includes ming men). The Kidney meridian has a luo relationship with the Bladder; it also has a biao li relationship with the Bladder.

In parts of the body, the Kidneys are linked with the bones and open their orifice at the ear.

Their functions are to thesaurize the Essences, cang jing, to be the source of reproduction and growth, to master the bones and marrow, to master the five ye, wu ye, the five kinds of interstitial fluids, so as to maintain the balance and metabolism of the fluids inside the body and to give their full extension to the faculty of hearing through the Breaths of the Kidneys. But the most important

physiological role of the Kidneys is to be the root of vital destiny (for each particular life in its becoming, sheng ming). It is because of this that the Kidneys are called by the ancients The trunk in which Anterior Heaven is rooted, xian tian zhi ben.

1. The Kidneys thesaurize the Essences, shen cang jing

The Essences, jing, are the fundamental substance of vitality (of each particular life). There are Essences, jing, of the sexual union between male and female, which is the trunk and root of reproduction.

There are Essences, jing, produced through the transformation of solid and liquid food and which are the nourishing substance for the maintenance of life.

The first are called: "Essences of Anterior Heaven", xian tian zhi jing.

The second are called: "Essences of Posterior Heaven", hou tian zhi jing. Both are stored in the Kidneys.

The Essences of anterior Heaven are received from the father and mother. From the beginning of embryonic life, they continue, without interruption, until old age and only death brings them to an end. They continuously set in motion and distribute the vital force, unceasingly produce and promote growth. But the formation of the Essences of Anterior Heaven, especially after birth, rely for their maintenance on the Essences that result from the transformation of solid and liquid food. It is the solid and liquid food which, through transformation, give the Essences: but these Essences (of Posterior Heaven) must rely on the abilities of the moving power of the Essences of Anterior Heaven. The two are inextricably linked and very closely connected.

To thesaurize the Essences is the most important function of the Kidneys. It is undeniable that the proper growth and development of the body, as well as a healthy constitution, are related to the Kidneys' role of thesaurizing the Essences.

When Essences stored in the Kidneys are sufficient, then the Breaths of the Kidneys rise in power, sheng. But when the Essences stored in the Kidneys are insufficient, then the Breaths of the Kidneys decline, shuai. The rising power and decline of the Breaths of the Kidneys are thus closely related to the whole development of the body, as is seen in Su Wen Chapter 1.

2. The Kidneys master the marrow and the bones. Their flourishing aspect is in the hair.

The Kidneys have the capacity to produce (engender, sheng) the marrow; the marrow is stored in the hollows of the bones to plenify and nourish them. This Kidney function of producing the marrow is part of their function of storing the Essences.

What nourishes and maintains the hair comes from the Blood. For this reason the hair is called "the excess of Blood". But the mechanics of producing the hair derives originally from the Breaths of the Kidneys; because of this the hair is the flourishing aspect of the Kidneys manifesting on the exterior. The process of hair growth reflects the rising in power or decline of the Kidneys. For example, when one is in the prime of life, the Breaths of the Kidneys are full and rise in power and the hair is shiny and glossy. But in old age, as the Breaths of the Kidneys progressively decline, the hair whitens and

falls out easily. One can observe whether the hair is in a healthy state or dried out so as to gauge the rising in power or decline of the Breaths of the Kidneys.

3. The Kidneys have charge of arousing the power; skill and ability stem from them.

That the Kidneys master what arouses the power and that skill and ability result from this is, in reality, an effect of the Kidney functions of storing Essences, producing marrow and governing the bones.

Thus, when the Kidney Breaths thrive and rise in power, the Essences are in fullness and the marrow is sufficient, which means not only that the jing shen (the vitality) is prosperous and healthy and that one is agile, alert and lively but also that the muscles and bones are full of strength and power and that movement is vigorous.

If on the contrary the Kidneys are in a bad state, the Essences empty, the marrow insufficient, then it often happens that there are sharp pains in the lumbar region and back, that the bones are weak and without strength, that the jing shen are tired and weary, that there is vertigo and loss of memory.

4. The Kidneys master the liquids

The Kidneys have the primary role in the metabolism of body fluids. If the Kidneys are disordered, effective action on the fluids is lost and then one cannot maintain the balance of the body's fluid metabolism.

The liquids enter the Stomach, then, from the Spleen, they rise and are transported to the Lung. The Breaths of the Lung have a lowering action and the liquids descend to flow and return to the Kidneys, it is the general process of raising and lowering inside the body those liquids that come from outside the body.

In the liquids there are clear, qing, and unclear, zhuo. The clear rises and ascends; the unclear descends and is lowered. Within the clear there is the unclear, within the unclear there is the clear.

The liquids that rise up to the Lung are the clear Breaths. The clear within the clear is that which, from the Lung, is transported right out to the skin and body hair.

The unclear within the clear is that which, from the passages and canalizations and irrigations of the Three Heaters, descends and reaches the Kidneys. The liquids that return to the Kidneys are unclear.

The unclear which is within the unclear is that which, from the Bladder is excreted to the outside.

The clear which is within the unclear is that which passes once more through the transformation of Breaths, qi hua, of the Three Heaters and rises up to the Lung. These liquids descend once again from the Lung where they undergo transformation down to the Kidneys.

It is like an annular circulation, an endless circle to maintain the balance of the body fluids.

URINARY BLADDER: YANG ORGAN OF THE WATER ELEMENT

Extract from the Zhong Yi Ji Qu Li Lun

The function of the Bladder is essentially to collect and excrete the urine. After the liquids have passed through the separation process of sifting the clear and unclear in the Kidneys, the surplus and

waste flow into the Bladder which collects them. They build up there to a certain quantity and go out to the exterior via the excretory apparatus.

This function of the Bladder is called: Transformation of the Breaths, qi hua.

The transformation of the Breaths proper to the Bladder is closely related to the capacity of opening and closing of the Kidney Breaths. When this function of opening and closing of the Kidneys loses its regulation then loss of regulation in the function of transformation of the Breaths of the Bladder can appear.

The pathology of the Bladder - anuria, polyuria, incontinence, dysuria, painful micturition... - leaving aside of course the origin of these disorders in the Bladder itself, has much to do with the disorders of the Kidneys.

The Kidney is the organ, zang, which depends upon the internal, li: the Bladder is the bowel, fu, that depends on the external, biao: their meridians have reciprocal relations of connection, luo, and dependence, shu: they are in relation, biao li.

There is a relationship between the excretory role of the Bladder and the rising in power or decline in Breaths of the Kidneys. When the Breaths of the Kidneys are in perfect fullness, the urine is excreted at the right time by the Bladder; it undergoes the function of transformation by the Breaths of the Bladder and is excreted.

If the Kidney Breaths are empty and cannot retain firmly, then there is polyuria, urinary incontinence, loss of control over micturition. The Kidneys being empty, the transformation of Breaths is not carried out (is delayed, not properly achieved) and then there is anuria and troubles with the flow of urine.

To sum up, in traditional Chinese medicine, the Kidneys encompass the urinary and reproductive functions, the internal secretions and the central nervous system of modern medicine, with all their attendant pathology. The Bladder in traditional Chinese medicine is practically the same as that of modern medicine.

KIDNEYS PATHOLOGY

PRINCIPAL CAUSES OF DISEASE

1. (Of) the six perverse influences, liu yin

Wind, feng, which can cause diseases of 'wind and water', feng shui

Cold, han, the yin perverse influence par excellence and which has the same nature as water and the Kidneys

The other perverse influences (fire, huo; dampness, shi; dryness, zao), can also injure the Kidneys, either directly or indirectly.

2. (Of) the seven emotions, qi qing

Anger, nu, which empties the yin (an example of the 'son', the Liver, Wood, stealing the qi from the 'mother', the Kidneys, Water)

Fear, kong, which leads to unrestrained collapse

Starting with fright, jing, which leads to separation of yin and yang.

3. Other causes

Worries and excessive tiredness which weaken the Kidney qi.

Sexual excess which injures the Essences/ Breaths, jing qi, of the Kidneys

PRINCIPAL SYMPTOMS

Sharp pains and softening of the lumbar area and the knees, yao xi suan ruan, lumbago, yao tong (the accompanying symptoms determine if it is from an emptiness of yin, an emptiness of yang, a fault in the drawing down of the qi by the Kidneys, or an overflowing of water through emptiness of the Kidneys)

Spermatorrhoea, yi jing (from multiple causes, such as the breaking of communication between the Heart and Kidneys)

Impotence, yang wei

Frequent, clear urine; dribbling drop by drop after urination

Deafness, er long, buzzing in the ears, er ming

Superficial oedema, anasarca, fu zhong

Urgent dyspnoea, chuan, chronic, with more noticeable difficulty on inspiration

Painful urination, haematuria, polyuria, dysuria

PRINCIPAL PATTERNS**1. Emptiness of Kidney yang, shen yang xu**

Emptiness and decline of the yang of the Kidneys, shen yang xu

The Kidney qi no longer ensures firmness, shen qi bu gu

The Kidney no longer draws the qi down into the depths, shen bu na qi

Through emptiness of the Kidneys, the water overflows, shen xu shui fan

2. Emptiness of Kidney yin, shen yin xu**3. Through emptiness of Kidney yin, the yang is too strong, shen yin xu yang kang**

KIDNEYS, SHEN

(from: Larre C., Rochat de la Vallée E. (1992) The Secret Treatise of the Spiritual Orchid.

Shen zhe zuo qiang zhi guan
ji qiao chu yan

Kidneys, Shen

The Kidneys are responsible for the creation of power. Skill and ability stem from them.

An Instructive Discussion

Claude Larre: Now we come to the kidneys. I will leave the explanation of why they appear so late in the text to Elisabeth. Shen zhe, that is the kidneys. Zuo is a bursting activity and qiang is fortitude. We come here to the natural, positive state of the kidneys which is to have control of life in ourselves, seen in the very fact that life is active. The charge or the responsibility for life of the kidneys is seen in the making, zuo, but the expansion of the zuo is the fortitude and strength. An activity tending to build strength in the flux of life is not a development of the body as such, it's a developing of strength itself, and such development of the body is not only related to bones and flesh and joints and so on. Of course, everything being related to everything else, you may say that the kidneys are responsible for the solidity of the body, and in Su wen chapter 1 the force which is constantly alluded to is the qi of the kidneys. In chapter 1 if you look at how a woman and a man develop themselves, you have to go through the stages of development of their kidney qi. At a certain point you see that the body is

very strong. But this is only one stage, and to understand the fullness of the role of the kidneys you have to take every stage into account. The fact that the young girl has beautiful hair and white, bright teeth is because there is a surplus in the activity of the kidneys in the body, and this has something to do with zuo. In common language zuo means to do or to make, but this is the weakest meaning. Close to the root of the character is the sense that something narrow is being pressed between the sides of a container and wants to surge forth. The left part of the character is the radical for man, being a symbol of activity. It has something to do with sexual activity since we know that the centre of power or activity is related to the sexual constitution of man and woman. Qiang contains the double bow, with all the implications of something strong and robust, and the preparation for springing out or shooting. The motion itself is always more important than the idea we might have about the motion!

The result, the effect or the product of the kidneys is ji qiao. Ji has something to do with techniques, arts and craftsmanship. It is seen in the radical of the hand. It is the way to do things with the hands. Ji shu is the ordinary expression for all the arts. Qiao has the meaning of very clever activity. Ji is just know-how, but qiao is perfect know-how, with skill and rapidity, perfection and ease. Qiao is a quality of the brain, like the mind turning rapidly and without effort. So there is a connection between the kidneys and this burst of activity which tends towards fortitude and strength.

Elisabeth Rochat: We can take two examples to see how the kidneys are this contained force or strength, which is both the basis of the body and also maintains it. We can express this differently by saying that the kidneys store the essences because the essences are the basis of vitality, not only for the exhalation of qi, but also for the strength, uprightness, and the correctness of life. For example, in stimulating the power of the essences, the kidneys will build up their marrow, and when this marrow is well constituted then the bones will form and be full of strength. There is an excitation, a movement and an activity which is at the level of the marrow, and then a strength which is at the level of the bones. Commentaries like this are traditionally made in China to show how the kidneys, which always have a double aspect, construct the inner power of the being which will ensure its solidity. The other example is that the kidneys store the essences while the heart is the dwelling place of the shen. The expression essences/spirits, jing shen, is therefore the expression that denotes life and vitality at its highest level.

Claude Larre: When you go to a concert, if the conductor is full of jing shen then everybody playing instruments and in the audience will be seized by a common spirit and elation in their minds. Everything will rise up. Why? Because the essences have been activated by the conductor, and the feeling you have is nearly physical. You feel the music with all your body, mind and spirit. That is an example of jing shen. Or if you go to an art gallery and see lots of Chagal or Turner exhibits, you think, how is it possible that a man could be so clever and so inspired that everything is touched in the same manner and gives such an extraordinary impression of the forces of the universe? Then you can say that this painter is a man of jing shen. It is so well organized that it flows and flourishes.

Elisabeth Rochat: The essences which are fundamentally dependent on the kidneys serve as the support and basis for the spirits. This connection between the kidneys and the heart, given by shao yin, establishes the central axis for vitality. So if on one hand the marrow and the bones are solid, and on the other the spirits can seize and rely on essences that are of good quality, then I will be able to live with all the know-how, skill and ability that is necessary for life. This is 'savoir vivre' in the sense of knowing how to live. It is because the marrow and the bones are there that I can make movements and can stand upright, and know how to direct my awareness through the clarity of the spirits.

Claude Larre: This is being able to conduct one's own life at the highest level of operation, with strong will, strong purpose, clear ideas and good feelings. All this is under the charge of the kidneys. It's a question of conducting, and you conduct life from the bottom to the top. The conducting relies on the bones and marrow and the essences which are stored in the kidneys.

Elisabeth Rochat: Now we come to the question of why the kidneys come in the ninth position in this presentation. We can say that 9, which is 3 times 3, is a number of power.

Claude Larre: We saw that previously in the Temple of Heaven. And by the way, the heart has 9 points and the kidney has 27, 3 times 9. This is significant.

Elisabeth Rochat: The kidneys come in this position, as if they were in an inferior position, because they represent life in the depths, in the invisible beginnings and in the seed. From this basis will emerge the fire of life, the fire which comes out of the water and which is expressed by the shao yang, and by the fire of the heart which is the supreme development of this fire of life. At that moment the kidneys are no more than the permanent and original basis for life. That is to say, the fire of the kidneys, the fire of ming men, is continually active right up until the death of an individual. So Su wen chapter 8 is taking account of the concentrated power of the kidneys as the basis of life, like the foundations of a house. I think this is the reason that they are presented in this position in the text. It's not that they are less noble than the intestines, it is just that in the presentation of the whole ensemble they are in the depths.

Claude Larre: You may ask why we have chosen to explain it in this way. It's because their product or effect is given at the highest level. If the text just said that the kidneys are for the domestic chores of life, then it would be impossible to say that they are the basis of all life and so on, but since they say that the final product is ji qiao, we have to see that this activity which is embodied with some genius for life is something very noble. In fact it's very clever of the man who made this presentation of the zang to dare not to follow the ordinary order.

Elisabeth Rochat: We must not forget what has been said about the kidneys in relation to the sexual side and to reproduction. The substance which is most charged with life and essences is the sperm. In Chinese this is called jing, which is exactly the same character as for essences. It has to be translated depending on the context. So in the kidneys there is not only the savoir vivre, the know-how and ability, but also the knowledge of how to create another life. It's this skill and ability which is shared between man and woman so that a new life can appear. The sexual aspect turned towards procreation

is found in the expression *zuo qiang*, and the strongest, most manifest expression of the creation of power is the life that you have created with your own life.

Claude Larre: There is a clue to this in Lao zi chapter 16 where it says: the ten thousand beings, being altogether, burst into life, and I myself am just there to contemplate their return. They burst into life, but all of them come back to their roots.

Question: What is their return?

Claude Larre: Their return is that life recycling. Therefore I am not surprised to see that life is coming forth from every corner, but I am sage enough to see that the true law of this bursting is that it has to come back to its own roots, even for living. It is not that I am contemplating death in life, it is that I am seeing the proper movement of life that is inscribed in every progression of life and which is to come back to its roots. I see how the *hun* expand everywhere, but I understand that they have to be contained and more or less detained by the *po* in order that they not go too far and escape my control. If they escape my control they destroy me. So this *zuo* character is really something to do with sexual activity in the large, broad meaning that life is given by it.

Coming back to the small intestine, we have been talking about transformed things and matter, but the most transformed of all things are actually the essences which are in the kidneys. So there is a link between this line of the large intestine and this line of the kidneys. We have to renew the essences up to the point where we renew their fertility. If they are fertile enough for reproduction, they are fertile for activity, and they are fertile enough to also give more sense to my own branch of life. It's the same thing. Activity, solidity, power for reproduction, they are all the same. That's the most essential part of the essences.

Question: You spoke of the seed in referring to the depths of the kidneys. Is this in the text or is it a Western reference?

Claude Larre: It is not a Western reference, it is a Chinese reference coming from another circle of texts, Zhuang zi for example.

Question: What about the sea of marrow?

Elisabeth Rochat: This rising of the essences is made in a very subtle, fine manner to serve as a support for the spirits of the heart. This is the opposite of the more material way in which the essences surge out from below when they are represented as sperm. This very fine and subtle movement of essences is carried up towards the head, the round image of Heaven at the highest point in an individual, where only what is most clear and pure can reach. Within the bones of the head is the brain, and the brain has one aspect which is yin, the marrow, and one aspect which is yang, the penetration of the spirits. The brain is equally called the *fu* of the original spirits.

So we can see that this rising of life finds its centre in the heart and its expansion in the head, not only with the brain but with all the orifices which allow penetration and communication, and which are the superior orifices for what is clear and in the realm of *qi* and spirits. The mouth occupies a position which is in the middle between the ears, eyes and nose, through which the more refined and subtle things - hearing, vision and smell - pass, and the lower orifices which have a connection with the

mouth and through which pass substance which are visible and materialised either empty of life in the form of waste products, or charged with life in the form of sperm.

But the most important functions for the life of man are in the head, referring to everything that is most heavenly. For example, the meridian of the heart has a pathway which passes from the system of connections of the heart, xin xi, and goes up to the interior workings of the eye. Therefore there is a connection between the heart and the brain and with everything that takes place when you have vision. Of course, this doesn't prevent the eye from also being linked with the liver. Another example is that the kidneys have an intimate connection with the ear.

Question: Why is the kidney connected with the ear?

Elisabeth Rochat: There's the question of shape or form, where shape is indicative of the deep nature of something. If the ear, like the kidneys, has the shape of a crescent moon, it indicates that there is a deep connection between the two. This is a connection between the depths of life and the reception of life, because just as the moon receives the light of the sun, so the ears receive all the time. You cannot close your ears, they are always open. So the kidneys are that which continually receives and stores the essences of life.

URINARY BLADDER, PANG GUANG

(from: Larre C., Rochat de la Vallée E. (1992) The Secret Treatise of the Spiritual Orchid.

膀
胱

膀胱者州都之官
津液藏焉
氣化則能出矣

Pang guang zhe zhou du zhi guan
jin ye cang yan
qi hua ze neng chu yi

Urinary Bladder, Pang Guang

*The bladder is responsible for regions and cities. It stores the body fluids.
The transformations of the qi then give out their power.*

An Instructive Discussion

Claude Larre: The bladder is very similar to what we saw for the triple heater, but it does not speak so much of water. It has the longest line, and the structure of the line is not the same as the others. There is something final in the statement. That is why there are more characters.

The charge has something to do with what is called zhou in Chinese. When water is clearly separated from the ground, or when in a river there are small, neatly separated islets, then the population may live from tilling the fields and they have the means of travel from one city to another on boats. The implication is that in the empire or in our own bodies it is very important to be sure that water stays in its place and is clearly separated from firm ground. This is the idea of zhou. Du is a capital, in the way that Beijing is the northern capital and Nanjing is the southern capital. Du with the character zhou

means to have, on a firm piece of land, a good establishment for the capital and for the administration, the emperor, the court and the palace and so on. So we understand that the bladder must have charge of some sort of territorial organization where the water and the earth are well separated, and it can control and keep in good state the established situation.

The outcome or product of the bladder is something we would not have guessed from the charge. It is that the qi, being transformed, is then able to appear. But between the function and this product there is an intermediary statement which is jin ye cang yan. The translation of the whole line would be: the charge of the bladder is to constitute territories where water and firm ground will be clearly and distinctly separated, and that something is established for government administration, and then through the storing and preservation of the jin ye it is possible for qi to appear after its transformation. It does not say that qi appears, it says that it's possible for it to appear. Or, if you interpret it slightly differently, it says that then it is able and strong enough to appear, and the better the bladder does its work, the richer the transformed qi is, and in association with blood is capable of assuming all the duties of a living person. To appear is to appear to work.

When it says qi hua it means all the transformations which are proper to the qi, which is itself proper to myself after the transformations. Before transformation the qi in any food might be transformed differently according to a person's individual, specific and different zang . So here, at the end of the process we come to see that the bladder had the role of making clear distinctions in this immense territory of the body in order to achieve life for it. This is exactly how a safe ruler, after having made a good separation of water and land, is able to have people working and enjoying life through the production of qi coming from this division. So there is a connection between the charge and the product, and the kind of water it is. Then if we refer to the final stage where life is showing through the transformation of qi, then the intermediaries are the jin ye. If anyone asks whether the study of jin ye is important, the answer is that at the end of this chapter they are shown in an exceptionally bright light, since the construction is made in order that we see what importance is given to them.

Elisabeth Rochat: It is astonishing that the only time we meet the ideogram cang in this passage which is concerned with the twelve zang is right at the end and in relation to the bladder, which some people in the west consider a very secondary organ. The bladder is not only seen with its function of elimination, you could even say that hardly appears in this text. It comes at the end, but there is still something that proceeds from it. Qi hua can be understood as the residue of the transformation, but it is much more commonly used to mean the way in which the whole universe lives and is animated. Everything that lives in the world is concerned with the transformation of qi, both how the qi is transformed and how the qi makes the transformations. The whole process of life is that from the essences come the qi that itself sets off all the functioning of life. And because of this work of transformation it will produce beings that are made of essences. It is some kind of cycle of life in the universe.

Claude Larre: The problem is that usually, when you talk of a subject you are limited to that subject, but since the analogy of the process is already in the mind of the Chinese, when we make a statement it's just to open up the field. Then we are obliged to call to our rescue all the other elements which

cooperate to make universal life. When they talk of how the qi is produced in me they don't only talk of how I produce qi myself, they extend it to the universe, and the generation of life which comes from me is understood, as are the ancestors who gave me all my genetic makeup.

Elisabeth Rochat: Life in a human being is the same as the life of the universe. I take essences, I possess them, and from them continually emanates the qi that makes all the subtle mechanisms of life work in myself, especially allowing the zang to store this life in the form of essences as a provision for the future emanation of qi. That is the function of the zang.

Claude Larre: In French we use 'thesaurisation' for zang. 'Thesauriser' means to keep very closely and sometimes to add something. It's like when you have plants in a greenhouse and they are actively treated and preserved, that process is typical of what happens in a zang.

Question: Is there an English word for this?

Comment: 'Distil' is quite good because you put in hops and it ferments to make beer. They're stored but they're also developing. Or 'to treasure'?

Claude Larre: 'To treasure' has two meanings in English. To like very much and to keep very, very precious. The word zang is much better. If there is no word that we are able to devise, then just turn to the Chinese word!

Elisabeth Rochat: The transformation of qi, qi hua, is a way of indicating all the phenomena of life in an individual. A particular use of this expression is when you use it to refer to the lower heater, to the particular region of bladder and kidneys. That is to say, the transformation of qi which is produced thanks to the activity of ming men. It is because of this that the text of Su wen chapter 8 says that the transformation of qi has the potential of giving out that power. This transformation of qi is also there to sum up and encompass all the twelve charges we have previously mentioned, because these charges are nothing other than the transformation of qi and the becoming of the essences in the light of the spirits.

So it is with the bladder, the tai yang which is turned towards the exterior of the body, that you find the term cang, to store, to preserve and conserve on the interior. This cang is made for all the liquids in the body, and it's used in contrast to the concept of flowing and evacuating. To show the regulation that the bladder has on the body's liquids it's important to see it in the liquids that it puts back into the circulation of the body and those it eliminates. In a restricted sense the qi hua is the work done on the liquids which arrive in the lower part of the body for purification or throwing out. That part which is clarified and still charged with life is put back into circulation by the action of the kidneys, the fire of ming men and all the workings of the triple heater.

This charge of the bladder is very difficult to grasp, and since it comes last there is both the specificity of its function and a recapitulation of everything which has gone before. That which has a position below and which commands by being below, has a way of directing and controlling the whole ensemble. It brings together all the functions which are found elsewhere. This is completely different from the control of the heart. It is important to underline that the bladder, which seems so unimportant, has in reality an action of control which is very great. It controls, by eliminating or re-injecting into the body, the quantity and quality of liquids from below. It determines the quantity of

liquids which will irrigate all the parts of the body, all the flesh and the muscular power which runs through the flesh. The tai yang meridian of the foot has a particular action on the muscles, and by virtue of its pathway up the back, governs all the attachments of the muscles of the back. The meridian which is the expression of the bladder allows us to understand the extension of the power of the bladder a little better.

And we always come back to the kidneys with their double storing of fire and water. There are two fu that are linked to the kidneys in the Nei jing. On the one hand there is the triple heater which takes charge of the fire of ming men, and on the other hand there is the bladder which takes account of the water side of the kidneys. From the waters of the bladder come the regulation that is called tai yang, which is the greatest expansion of yang and the principle heir of du mai.

The bladder controls the quantity and quality of the liquids, while the triple heater controls their regulation and movement. So it's through the ensemble of the lower heater and of the sea of qi below that the transformation is made, especially through all this work on the liquids. In a more general fashion it's in this way that all the qi hua are accomplished to make the life of the being through the twelve channels or the twelve zang. This is the power of life, the potential of being able to live.

CONCLUSION

Elisabeth Rochat: The Kidneys, basis of life, arouse the power of life in each zang through the fire which is in them or between them.

Through their care and responsibility for the Essences, they also provide for the stability of each zang: they are responsible for the water which rises to balance the fire of the Heart: they are the point of departure for the humid vapours that invest the Lung, permeating its numerous alveoli; they supply the basis, the model for the storage of Blood in the Liver, they are, with the Spleen, the guarantors who are responsible for the right proportion of humidity and liquids in the body. A weakening of this domain of the power of the Kidneys will therefore be reflected in diverse symptoms affecting more this or more that zang, according to each case.

One must also understand the function of the Kidneys at every level of activity of the organism: mastering water, keeping the liquids in the right proportion, retaining and drawing downwards, all the while guarding against the exaggeration of this movement that is so natural to them.

The Su Wen in Chapter 81 discusses the uncontrolled flow of tears and mucus through an attack on the Will, zhi. It then explains how the Kidneys, representing water of which the Will is the most profound emanation and support, are responsible for the proper control of liquids and of Water everywhere in the organism.

The ancestor of water (shui zong, the principle of gathering together, of unified command of all that concerns water in the being) is water in accumulation (ji shui - water with all its virtue, continually renewed and accumulated). Water in accumulation is the supreme yin. The supreme yin is the Essences of the Kidneys. When the water of the ancestral Essences (zong jing, the Essences gathered together under a unified command, by a directive principle recognized and respected by all) cannot leave (escape) then the Essences are retained with firmness.

Therefore when the Kidneys, the Will, are attacked and weakened, the firm control of the Essences will be disturbed: leading to the Essences escaping under the form of the ye liquids. This is the reason why the Ling Shu Chapter 28 recommends tonifying the shao yin of the leg when saliva flows from the mouth.

Tears can leave the eyes from the effect of sadness and from the Heart being shaken; mucus can leave the nose for the same reasons and saliva can run from the mouth because the Spleen is injured; this does not preclude that these liquids, which leak unduly from the body - even at the upper orifices - escape the control of the Kidneys, for which the Will, zhi, must everywhere keep guard, and ensure the sealing and closing of what is essential for vitality, so as to allow all springing up to occur.

And this same force of retaining and of Will, refers us back to the yang aspect of the Kidneys. A perpetual return and endless cycle where the Kidneys, through their double aspect, can appear as the privileged returning point, the coupling of yin and yang, whose affects are so well expressed in Su Wen Chapter 3:

The yin is that which in thesaurising the Essences allows springing up, and the yang is that which in ensuring defence on the exterior, keeps everything in good order.