The Physiology of the Mind in Chinese Medicine:

Interpretation of the “Five Spirits” 五神 in
Zhang Jingyue’s Categories of the Canons (1624)

Minh Khai Mai-Thi
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In my humble opinion, spirit is the transformations of one’s brightest intelligence—simply the regulating principle of qi that is all.

ZHANG JINGYUE
Abstract

This thesis will argue that psychological theory was always a central part of Chinese scholarly medicine. Such theories were prominent already in the early literature and continued to be discussed and elaborated in the further development of the medical discourse. Even so, they have not received much academic attention and are therefore often overlooked in the wider discussions of Chinese and East-Asian theories of the mind. This study is the first in-depth analysis of the conceptual model known as the “five spirits” (wushen 五神). It is also the first to explore this topic specifically from the angle of medical discourse. The analysis is based on a 17th century medical commentary that has not yet been translated or thoroughly discussed in any international publication.

Theory is an abstract representation that seeks to explain why and how a certain phenomenon occurs. To understand such abstractions, one has to be familiar with the basic concepts, arguments, and practices of that theoretical field. The meaning of a chemical formula, for example, cannot be derived from its symbolic representation alone, but relies on a comprehension of how it relates to actual processes in nature. The goal of this study has been to understand the Chinese medical conceptualization of the mind not just as an abstract theory, but also as a concrete interpretation of mental and physical functions. However, since it was articulated in a language and style of reasoning unfamiliar to modern readers, such concrete implications can be harder to see. The main argument of this thesis is that to understand this model of the mind, we need to analyse its terminology, conceptual structure, and interpretation in the medical discourse. It is further hypothesized that such an understanding can be obtained from an attentive reading of medical commentaries.

The main source of this study—the Categories of the Canon (Leijing 類經)—is a late Ming dynasty commentary to the two main texts of the Yellow Emperor’s Inner Canon (Huangdi Neijing 黃帝內經). Chinese scholars describe it as one of the most influential works in the medical commentarial tradition. It was chosen because it had been recommended by a renowned Chinese physician as a reference to the five spirits. In itself it is only a small segment of the larger medical discourse. Yet as a commentary, it reaches back to the early formative literature and across the later developments, thereby providing us a glimpse of the extended historical dialogue between medical scholars.

Keywords: Chinese medicine, mind, psychology, physiology, body-mind relationship, Neijing, Leijing, commentarial tradition, Zhang Jingyue, Zhang Jiebin.
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I would also like to thank some of my former teachers. First of all, my teacher of traditional medicine in Vietnam, Nguyen Dai Phuc, who introduced me to the theory of the five spirits. His lectures on this subject were always clear and concise, and it has been joyful to retrieve many of his perspectives in the source material of this study. I wish to also express my gratitude to my late teacher in China, Wang Ju-yi 王居易, who first drew my attention to the Categories of the Canons and Zhang Jingyue’s writings. His profound theoretical and clinical understanding will always serve as an inspiration to me. This project would never have been realized without the help of another group of educators: the teachers of the Chinese language at the Oslo and Peking Universities. A special thanks to Liu Baisha whose warmth, humour, and enthusiasm I will never forget. Thanks also to Wang Qi and Song Wei who made our first introduction to Chinese such a joyous experience.

In regard to the study of Classical Chinese, I wish to express my gratitude to Professor Christoph Harbsmeier for sharing his tremendous knowledge of languages and teaching me the delights of grammatical analysis. Many thanks also to my fellow students and friends at the unofficial Reading Group of Classical Chinese who helped me build the courage and experience to embark on the translation of such historical sources. A special thanks to Gunnar Sjøsted, Anders Sydkjør, and Guttorm Gundersen for all the interesting discussions and always sharing the latest updates on useful tools and information.

Finally, this work would never have been possible without the love and support of my husband and children—Dong, Mai Chi, and Kien—who have been there for me every single day of this process. Heartfelt thanks also to all friends and colleagues that have encouraged me along the way.

## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inner Canon (corpus)</th>
<th>Huangdi Neijing 黃帝內經</th>
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<td>Basic Questions</td>
<td>Huangdi Neijing Suwen 黃帝內經素問</td>
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<td>Divine Pivot</td>
<td>Huangdi Neijing Lingshu 黃帝內經靈樞</td>
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<tr>
<td>Categories of the Canons</td>
<td>Leijing 類經</td>
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<tr>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Hanyu Da Cidian 漢語大詞典 (comprehensive historical Chinese dictionary)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TLS</td>
<td>Thesaurus Linguae Sericae (historical and comparative Encyclopaedia of Chinese Conceptual Schemes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMT</td>
<td>Chinese Medical Terms (digital dictionary of Chinese medicine)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDCM</td>
<td>A Practical Dictionary of Chinese Medicine</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDC</td>
<td>Student’s Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese</td>
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Introduction

This thesis explores the descriptions of the mind in the early medical canons and their later interpretations in the Categories of the Canons (Leijing 類經), a medical commentary written in the late Ming by scholar physician Zhang Jingyue 張景岳. What might be the relevance of such an analysis?

The conceptualization of the mind in Chinese medicine is not just a historical curiosity but a part of the still ongoing discourse which shape contemporary practices. For example, a search in the Cochrane Library (medical research database), shows 523 results for clinical trials with acupuncture for depression. Several meta-analyses on the same subject suggest that acupuncture is equally effective as antidepressant medication.¹ It is likely that the use of Chinese medical treatment methods will continue to increase in the future. Regardless of whether one “believes” in their theoretical foundation or not, without a comprehension of what it actually means, one cannot judge which methods would be the most suitable for a given type of condition. For instance, to select a combination of herbs or acupuncture points, one has to know how to distinguish between the disease patterns they are recommended for. The finding of studies like this, can contribute to a more precise understanding of how Chinese medical theory developed and was interpreted in the past, and thereby enhance modern practitioners’ ability to assert how and when to use it.

It also has relevance to the academic discussions on Chinese intellectual history, philosophy, and theories of mind. The medical discourse contains a large body of literature that evolved parallel to other discourses which have been more studied. An increased knowledge of the medical perspectives can shed new light on the distinctions, overlaps, and influences among different schools of thought. This can also add to the broader understanding of East-Asian popular notions of the body-mind relationship. For scholars in the field of Chinese medical history, it may contribute to a greater understanding of the role of commentaries in the medical discourse and negotiations between theory and practice.

The findings of this study are also relevant to the study of Chinese and East-Asian linguistics. The medical terminology that shall be analyzed in this thesis consists of terms that are also used in the vernacular languages of many Asian countries. However, the definition of

these terms in the medical literature is more restricted and specialized. For linguist, this may provide additional information about the etymology and historical usage of such terms. It also tells us something about the relationship between popular and professional use of language.

**Previous Literature and Research**

No international academic study that has so far analyzed the medical concept of the “five spirits” (wushen 五神). Some scholarly articles have briefly discussed the notion of “spirit” and emotions, but only on a very general basis. In the western clinical literature, some books have been published on this topic, but these contain few—or no—references to the original Chinese discourse. Lorie Dechar has written a book called *Five Spirits: Alchemical Acupuncture for Psychological and Spiritual Healing* which seems to reflect mostly her own understanding of these concepts. It refers to certain quotes from the *Book of Changes* and the *Daodejing*, but these are placed in a context that has more in common with popular Daoist mysticism than the descriptions found in the medical literature. Giovanni Maciocia’s book *The Psyche in Chinese Medicine: Treatment of Emotional and Mental Disharmonies with Acupuncture and Chinese Herbs* provides more quotes from the early medical canons and other texts, but it is not an in-depth analysis of how these theories was expressed, interpreted, and discussed in the medical discourse. In the contemporary Chinese literature there are more historical references but few books that analyze this topic in detail. Some years ago, while doing preliminary research for this study, I had a meeting with a professor of Chinese medical psychology at Beijing University of Chinese Medicine (*Beijing Zhongyi yao Daxue* 北京中医药大学). When I asked her if she could recommend any literature—historical or contemporary—that discussed the five spirit concepts, she said that almost all the medical classics speak of it yet none are devoted exclusively to this subject. As for contemporary books, she could not think of any. Later, when this project was coming to an end, I discovered that a new book on this topic had recently been published: *Zhongyi Wushen Bianzhixue* 中医五神辨治学 (*The study of Chinese Medical Five Spirits Pattern Discrimination and Treatment*). This book contains an overview of the historical development of these notions and several references that have been a useful addition to this

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2 For example Hsu, “Spirit (Shen), Styles of Knowing, and Authority in Contemporary Chinese Medicine;” Hsu, “Outward Form (Xing) and Inward Qi 氣: The ‘Sentimental Body’ in Early Chinese Medicine;” and Unschuld, *Huang Di Nei Jing Ling Shu: The Ancient Classic on Needle Therapy*, 9.

3 Teng, *Zhongyi Wushen Bianzhixue* 中医五神辨治学 (*The study of Chinese Medical Five Spirits Pattern Discrimination and Treatment*).
study. However, it does not go deeply into any specific source and its main focus in on the contemporary clinical application of these theories.

**Theory, Practice, and Medical Commentaries**

It must be emphasized that this study is not an attempt to reach a *conclusive* answer to how the mind has been conceptualized in Chinese medicine. In fact, there cannot be *one* such answer. The diversity of Chinese medical theory—spanning as it does over centuries, changing socio-political settings, varied geographical areas and heterogeneous groups of practitioners—makes it hard to talk of it in the singular without falling into the trap of essentialism. However, one may speak of a *common discourse* of the mind; a discourse consisting of various themes and discussions, theories and practices. At the centre we find a body of core terms that together make up what we might call a conceptual model of the mind. This thesis is a study of one specific interpretation of that model.

However, looking at the explanation of these terms is not enough to see the larger picture. When one starts searching for descriptions of something that could be referred to as “mind” in the early medical canons, one will soon discover that this is not a subject that is easily pinned down. Fragments of information will appear in varying contexts, entangled into other topics, somewhere clearly stated, other places barely implied. So how does one extract a clearer picture out of that? Somehow, the cognitive map that enabled the intended audience of these texts to make sense of it all must be recreated. To grasp the meaning of the psychological concepts one needs to locate them within the larger frame of Chinese medical discourse.

In textual analysis, the connection between individual parts and the larger whole has been described as a *hermeneutic circle*. According to this theory, interpretation always involves a circular movement from the particular to the general and back. Meaning is created by the interplay of specific terms, phrases, and passages of a text—and its wider literary, cultural, and historical context.¹ The hermeneutic circle emphasizes the importance of understanding intertextuality and contextualization in literary analysis.

For this study, however, we need a more precise definition of context. Looking at the conceptualization of the mind from a literary and cultural angle is indeed interesting enough; yet one may end up overlooking another significant aspect—its relationship to the field of

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practice. Context is more than theoretical influences. This point has been more clearly articulated in theories of discourse analysis. David Marsh, author of An Introduction to Discourse Analysis, claims that “language has meaning only in and through practices” and that any utterance (written or spoken) must be analysed as an expression of “who-doing-what.”5 In his view, a discourse is not just the verbal statements but also includes the social identities, practices, objects, symbols and so on that relate to that communication. All such factors should be considered in the analysis of a language material.

In this case, the main participants belonged to a proportionally small group of elite practitioners who contributed to the exchange, transmission, and development of medical theory—the so-called scholar physicians (ruyi 儒醫). Historically, this was never a strictly defined professional group. As time progressed, the role, status, and education of learned physicians underwent considerable change. Nevertheless, what stretched across these differences was the ideal of medicine as an art where the insights of ancient canons could be gradually realized through the process of practice. This ideal—together with the social rituals and bonds that followed the transmission of medical knowledge—produced a sense of shared identity through which these elite physicians distinguished themselves from other groups of practitioners.6

Medical writings were thus inseparably tied to social identity, professional demarcation, and medical practice. They were not written or studied just for the sake of argument. Foremost, these texts were aimed at guiding and improving medical treatment. However, since the early medical canons mostly expressed general principles, their interpretation and application traditionally relied on explanations provided by a master in the course of apprenticeship. Over time, such explanations were complemented by an increasing body of written commentaries.

To know all the individual interpretations is impossible. Even among the written material there are variations and disagreements. Yet some common ground made it possible for these physicians to understand each other, participate in the same discussions, and convert the doctrine into practices. If we wish to walk in that terrain we must bring along the map that helped navigate it. To get a profound understanding of how the mind was perceived, we must

5 Marsh, An Introduction to Discourse Analysis, 8.
also understand the theoretical framework and mode of reasoning that underpinned this conceptual model. What structures and presuppositions helped link these concepts together? Which elements were drawn upon to make it into a coherent whole? How was it related to actual phenomena, experience, and medical practice? Guided by these questions, we shall examine the notion of mind from a vantage point that, hopefully, enables us to see a landscape not too different from that which the earlier physicians gazed upon.

But this objective also represents a methodological challenge. If conceptualization cannot be located solely in the canonical literature, but rather in the intersection between these texts and the reality of the physicians that employed them—then how can it be studied? In the recent decades, some publications based on fieldwork and ethnographic studies have looked at how knowledge is (re)produced and transmitted in contemporary practices of Chinese medicine. Other studies have discussed such processes in regard to specific historical periods, writing genres, and medical lineages. Unfortunately, the insights brought forth by these studies have so far only scarcely been included into textual analyses. In the international scholarship on Chinese medicine, there seems to be a division between those working primarily with texts and translation, and those also concerned with the field of practice. As for now, there is no general consensus on how Chinese medical texts and theory should be analysed. Since no specific methodology exists, I have tried to keep all these perspectives in mind and include them wherever that would benefit our discussion.

This thesis is primarily a textual analysis of the interpretation of the mind in a medical commentary from the late Ming dynasty. The goal has been to stay as close as possible to the author’s own understanding; to translate and present his points of view in a way understandable to modern readers, and finally to analyse and discuss these findings in light of relevant perspectives from current scholarship. The choice of giving primacy to a commentary (and not just the original text it comments on), was based on the working hypothesis that this could reveal more about the process of contextualization—that commentaries represent a sort of intermediary between theory and practice.

In general, commentaries may be an overlooked resource in the understanding of Chinese medical concepts and the complex environment they emerge from. Traditionally,

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7 For example Farquhar, Knowing Practice: The Clinical Encounter of Chinese Medicine; Hsu, The Transmission of Chinese Medicine; and Scheid, Chinese Medicine in Contemporary China: Plurality and Synthesis.
they were only considered a means to facilitate the reading of ancient classics. But commentaries contain so much more than footnotes. They are an elaboration of the emic perspectives. They provide us with an opportunity to observe medical reasoning in progress. They reveal the inner workings of the hermeneutic circle. A commentary is a segment of an extended historical dialogue; it is a response to that which has been stated previously, and a contribution to the shared understanding of its contemporary audience and their successors. It is an attempt to resolve ambiguities and reconcile controversy—a chance to modify, adjust and even complement doctrine. As such, the commentary is a manifestation of both collective efforts and individual agency. It is a small reflection of the larger medical discourse.

In the evolution of Chinese scholarly medicine (as well as the broader sphere of East-Asian medical currents), the commentarial tradition played a significant role. On the younger scene of international scholarship, it has not received much attention. To my knowledge, no Chinese medical commentary has yet been fully translated into a European language. Some excerpts are found in more recent translations of medical classics, but then just as footnotes.

By placing a commentary in the foreground, I hope to achieve something different; to highlight that which was read between—and beyond—the lines of the ancient canons. I wish to explore how these theories were brought to life in the mind of someone both scholar and practitioner. From that angle conceptualization emerges as a field of negotiation—a dynamic compromise between past and present, theory and practice, abstraction and application.

Now, let me try to summarize the argument so far. My main claim is that in order to get a clearer understanding of how the mind was conceptualized in Chinese medicine, our analysis must include at least three levels: 1) the specific terms, concepts, and statements (language and terminology); 2) the embedded theoretical structure and reasoning (conceptualization); and 3) an example of emic interpretation that demonstrate how theory can be related to actual phenomena, experience, and practice (discourse). Additionally, I hypothesize that clues to all these three levels may be obtained from an attentive reading of historical commentaries. In the next chapter, we shall look closer at the methodological issues this approach entails. Now, the subject must first be specified a little further.

A Physiological Description of the Mind?

The medical discourse of the mind consisted of different topics, discussions, and practices. To include all of it would be far beyond the capacity of this study. Instead we shall
concentrate on those descriptions that relate to physiology. Physiology is the study of healthy, normal functions in an organism. There are three reasons why I wish to explore the conceptualization of the mind from this angle. First of all, it is a way to limit the material. Focusing on physiology means that other aspects—such as pathology (illness) and anatomy (physical structure)—will not be given the same attention. Of course, in medical theory these three overlap and cannot be completely separated. Physiological functions are normally attributed to certain tissues or organs, and the definition of “normal” and “healthy” is often derived from the perception of what is “abnormal” and “unhealthy.” So, although anatomy and pathology are not our primary concern, these aspects will still be included to some extent. Focusing on the physiology of the mind also allows us to see the more concrete interpretation of these theories. Their representation in the West has often been too vague or imaginative; partly because of the exotic terms and the limited access to the original discourse.

The second reason for focusing on physiology is that the medical theories of the mind simply cannot be separated from those of the body. If one tries to locate psychology as an “independent” field in Chinese medicine, the result will be rather scarce. Reflections about the mind—as the source material in this thesis will demonstrate—were often spread around and embedded into other medical discussions. Such theory may well be found in the middle of a passage on digestion, pulse diagnostics, or how to live in accordance with the climatic changes of the seasons. Even in Zhang Jingyue’s highly structured Categories of the Canons—where the content of two early medical canons are arranged into topical categories such as “internal organs,” “vessels and channels,” “diseases and treatments” etc.—there is no separate category for the mind. However, that does not mean that such theories did not exist. On the contrary, the human psyche was a central theme throughout the history of Chinese medicine. And perhaps precisely because of the importance ascribed to the mind, it was included into almost any kind of medical discussion. The mind could not be detached from the body, nor could the body from the mind. To understand its conceptualization we must therefore accept dealing with the larger systematization of the whole human organism. By limiting the scope to its healthy functions, however, we can filter the information and avoid being pulled in too many directions.

The last reason for focusing on physiology is because it highlights the particularity of the medical perspective. To understand how the parts of the human organism function and

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9 Newman, “Introduction to Physiology: History and Scope.”
are connected has always been one of the main objectives of medical theory. The persistent interest in how to optimize the body-mind interaction is perhaps a particular characteristic of Asian medical thinking. It builds on the same rationale as other Chinese practices such as “life-nourishment” (yangsheng 養生) and “self-cultivation” (xiushen 修身). What truly distinguished the medical discourse, however, was the degree to which mental and bodily functions were detailed and integrated into a larger psycho-physiological model. When we look closer at the three levels of analysis mentioned earlier, this point will become even clearer. On the level of terminology, we shall see that the psychological terms in this analysis were actually common terms also used outside the field of medicine. What infused them with a more specialized, professional meaning in medical contexts was exactly the much clearer attachment to the body. On the level of theoretical structure, we shall see that the conceptualization of physiology is what brings the individual concepts together as a whole.

Yet, here there is a puzzling paradox at work. Despite the importance of knowing how theory relates to actual phenomena—an issue that practitioners grapple with on a daily basis—this aspect seems to be the one most often overlooked by outside scholars. From a distance, the reflections of culture and socio-political conditions are perhaps easier to spot. That is why the third level of analysis is needed: an illustration of the emic interpretation. If the objective is to understand this conceptual model from the perspective of those who applied it, we cannot treat it merely as a historical curiosity or cultural artefact. At the very least, we must take seriously that to these physicians the primary purpose of theory was to understand how the human organism worked, and thereby be able to prevent and treat illnesses.

Methodology

As mentioned earlier, when I started working on this thesis, no detailed academic analysis of this conceptual model had yet been published, at least not beyond the more general notion of “spirit” (shen 神). There was therefore no established methodology to follow. One could look at how other related topics have been analysed (which I have), but since the objectives of these studies were different from mine, I had to compose my own methodology using the elements that suited the requirements of this analysis. This was not a straight forward task. The subject of this thesis could be related to a broad range of disciplines: medical, cultural, and conceptual history; hermeneutics, semiotics, philosophy of the mind, psychological anthropology and more. In addition, the work of this thesis would also entail a substantial amount of translation which requires its own methodological considerations. So, from early on I saw that the methodological approach needed to be eclectic.
Foremost, this has meant letting the source material guide the way. There are three original sources in this study: the *Categories of the Canons* (*Leijing* 類經) and the two texts of the *Inner Canon* (*Huangdi Neijing* 黃帝內經) that it builds on—namely the *Basic Questions* (*Su Wen* 素問) and the *Divine Pivot* (*Ling Shu* 靈樞). The *Categories of the Canons* is an unorthodox commentary in that it does not follow the consecutive order of the original texts, but rearranges their content according to categories such as “yin-yang” (*yinyang lei* 陰陽類), “visceral manifestations” (*zangxiang lei* 腫象類), “diseases” (*jibing lei* 疾病類) etc. It is a monumental work consisting in total of 32 fascicles (*juan* 卷).\(^{10}\) To read it chapter by chapter would not only be extremely time-consuming, but also pointless since much of the content deals with topics that are not relevant to this analysis. I therefore needed a way to locate the comments that could be useful. I did this by combining several methods. First, I proceeded with a more traditional strategy, reading the complete *Inner Canon*’s texts and marking all the passages that were relation to psychology and the mind. Next, I checked if the *Categories of the Canons* had any comments to the chapters of those passages, and if they contained any reference to the specific content I wanted to discuss. Most of the relevant annotations were—as expected—located in the section of “visceral manifestations” (inner organ physiology). Quite a few, however, were found under other categories like “pulse qualities” (*maise lei* 脈色類), “discussions of treatment” (*lunzhi lei* 論治類), and “diseases” (*jibing lei* 疾病類). After a while I discovered that the last four fascicle with the title “comprehensive categories” (*huitong lei* 會通類), were a sort of index that listed all the statements from the *Inner Canon* that had been commented on and where to find these. This section gathered all the original saying about the “spirit” (*shen* 神) in a separate subchapter.\(^{11}\) This traditional approach allowed me to become familiar with the structure and composition of all the three source texts. Eventually, I also came up with an easier search method; by converting a digital version of *Categories of the Canons* into a Word document where I could browse for specific characters or phrases.\(^{12}\) On its own, this would not have been a viable method because not all relevant commentaries contain predictable search terms. However, in

\(^{10}\) A fascicle (*juan* 卷) is a unit of book-division for ancient texts, somewhat comparable to a volume (but usually a little smaller). The fascicles in the *Categories of the Canons* are all further divided into chapters.

\(^{11}\) Zhang, “*Leijing*,” fascicle 29, chap. 3·12.

\(^{12}\) Zhang, “*Leijing* 類經.”
combination with the other strategies, I was able to find more than enough material for this analysis. Even with the annotations found, a representative selection had to be made.

The first stage of working with the source material was mostly explorative; I wanted to see what it told me before settling on a specific focus. As I worked with the translations, certain elements became more prominent, and I could see what would be interesting to analyse further. The next step was looking for theory and methodology that could help me understand, explain, and discuss these findings. Then, in the writing process, all these elements had to be brought together into a coherent and meaningful analysis.

As a practitioner of East-Asian medicine myself, this theoretical field was not unfamiliar to me. Being an “insider” comes with the risk of certain biases like idealization, normativity, or imposing modern interpretations onto historical material. I have been aware of these risks and tried to avoid them as best as I could. On the other hand, much of the work in this thesis could not have been done without a prior familiarity with this field. For sure, having experience with how theory can be applied to clinical practice, how it is explained and taught—both in Asia and other parts of the world—has made it easier for me to recognize the context of what is said. In general, this has been a great advantage and made it possible for me to notice things that could otherwise have been overlooked. One might also wonder if a doctor writing about western medical history would need to make such justifications. Representing minority positions often tends to demand more explanation.

**Thesis Structure**

In addition to the introduction and conclusion this thesis consists of the following chapters:

- **Chapter one** discusses the main methodological challenges when translating and analysing historical documents of Chinese medicine. It also introduces the theories and methods that shall be used in this study.
- **Chapter two** provides the historical background to the Chinese medical discourse on the mind. It presents the source material of this study and Zhang Jingyue’s life and work.
- **Chapter three** analyses the general aspects of the body-mind relationship as it is presented in the *Inner Canon* texts and Zhang Jingyue’s interpretations of these.
- **Chapter four** presents and analyses the detailed conceptualization of the five spirits in the source material and in particular Zhang Jingyue’s comments, explanations, and elaborations.

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13 Master’s Thesis for EAST 4591 can contain up to 100 pages à 2,300 characters (exc. spaces, footnotes, references and appendices), i.e. main text of up to 230,000 characters. This thesis has 219,430 characters.
1. Approaching Chinese Medical Literature

In this chapter we shall look briefly at the main challenges one encounters when dealing with historical documents of Chinese medicine. Then we shall consider some methodological approaches that can help us overcome these issues.

But first a few remarks must be made on the basic terms that are frequently used throughout this thesis, but have so far not yet been properly specified. We already touched upon the term “physiology.” It may be apparent that I do not presume (like the modern biomedical definition seems to suggest) that *a description of how our bodies work and how they actually work*, are one and the same thing. Any physiological theory is an *interpretation* and will always be limited by the existing level of knowledge as well as the historical, cultural, and ideological filters that determine our perception of reality. Yet, we need not surrender to absolute relativism. There is a phenomenological base that we can share the experience of. Without it, medicine could not be practiced. And because of such repeatable patterns, such shared experiences, we find that many of the issues described by people living hundreds—even thousands—of years before us, are still recognizable today. So, when I use the term “physiology,” it is with an acknowledgement of both this biological aspect and the historical frames that shape our understanding of it. This understanding is similar to the *bi sociocultural approach* of medical anthropology.14

Two other terms frequently used in this thesis are “psychology” and “mind.” Both terms will be used here with an intentionally loose definition so as to include any description of cognitive and emotional activities (as well as more sub-conscious forms of mental regulation), regardless of its historical or cultural origin.15 The generic term that comprises all such functions in Chinese medicine is *shen* 神—a concept for which there is no precise equivalent in European languages or thought. In this thesis (as well as most other translations of medical literature) it will be rendered as “spirit.” The medical notion of spirit does not refer to a spirit in the religious or supernatural sense (in contrast to the meaning of *shen* in some other non-medical contexts). Nor is it constricted only to thinking or feeling (as the words “mind” and “psychology” might suggest), but also includes the subconscious

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15 Harold Roth uses the term psychology “as a generic term referring to any theories of the nature and activity of the human mind, independent of any specific model—either Western or Eastern,” Roth, “Psychology and Self-Cultivation in Early Taoist Thought,” 600.
coordination of body functions. Today we speak of nervous and hormonal regulation, and for those familiar with these functions, some overlaps might be recognizable. Yet, the wrapping and classifications are of course different altogether. So, until a clearer perception of this concept is established, we must make do with the terms “mind” and “psychology.”

The last term that needs specification is “Chinese medicine.” As mentioned earlier, what it refers to in this thesis, is the scholarly branch of medicine that was practiced by elite physicians during the imperial era, and to a lesser extent the modernized versions of it that continue to exist in both China and other countries of the world. The term must not be confused with “medicine in China,” which would include all kinds of healing practices at any given time. “Chinese medicine” is the literal translation of the official Chinese label Zhong yi 中醫, and the preferred term in most international academic work.16 We should note, however, that throughout the imperial era it was only referred to as “medicine” (yi 醫). It was not until the wake of modern nationalism and the introduction of “western medicine,” that the label “Chinese” was added. This addition is to some degree problematic, because the medical discourse was never confined to the borders of modern-day China but spread out over many East Asian countries.17 It would perhaps better be described as “East Asian medicine.” But that matter shall rest for now, especially since this thesis will not include any other sources than Chinese.

The final question that should be addressed is how to define “medicine.” The German professor of sinology and medical history, Paul Unschuld, argues for a differentiation between the notions of “medicine” and “healing.”18 In his view, the term “healing” applies to all methods aimed at curing illness. “Medicine,” on the other hand, may be considered a sub-category of “healing” in which the treatment is based on a systematic understanding of natural laws, rather than attributed to some supernatural or random cause. In the strictest sense, purely empirical treatment procedures (experience-based but without a theoretical foundation), cannot be considered medicine either. A medical approach is characterized by the belief that the world operates with some form of regularity, that there are patterns or mechanisms that can be deciphered, and by systematically studying these we can improve our chances of avoiding unnecessary suffering and death. Unschuld’s definition works well as a basic distinction. When studying medical history, one needs a definition that is universal and

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16 Scheid, Chinese Medicine in Contemporary China: Plurality and Synthesis, 16.
17 Hinrichs and Barnes, Chinese Medicine and Healing: An Illustrated History, 2-3.
applicable to any medical system of the past, present or future. When such a general
definition has been established, more nuances can be added. As much new research has
revealed, in the real practice of medicine the boundaries between different forms of healing
have not always so clear-cut.19

Generally speaking, working with ancient and historical medical texts poses a number of
challenges for the modern researcher. Some issues are of a philological nature, others are
related to how we understand the contextual background. In either case, the possibilities of
misinterpretation are many, even for Chinese researchers. Some Chinese professors have
expressed their concern over the native students’ incapability of understanding classical
medical literature. In an article from 2005, Jia and Zhao emphasize three different levels of
analysis which they describe as the understanding of “the written language” (文字的理解),
“the theoretical system” (理论体系的理解), and “the mode of thinking” (思维方式上的理
解).20 Their perspective echoed my own concerns when dealing with medical writings, but
also helped me see how the material could be approached more systematically. I have taken
the liberty to rename and adapt their categories slightly: the linguistic aspects will be
discussed under the headline of language and terminology, the theoretical structure and mode
of reasoning under conceptualization, and then some broader analytical perspectives under
discourse. Now, let us look closer at these facets one by one.

1.1 Language and Terminology

All medical text up until the 20th Century was written in classical or literary Chinese (wen
yan 文言) which differs from modern Chinese both in terms of vocabulary, syntax and other
stylistic features. Literary Chinese is considered to be an uninflected language, which in our
case also implies that the grammatical function of its “words” often cannot be discerned from
their written form. The same character can for instance often have both a verbal and a
nominal meaning. The character 藏 can for instance mean both to store, a storehouse, or a

19 See for example Hinrichs and Barnes, Chinese Medicine and Healing, introduction and other chapters of this
book.
20 Jia and Zhao,“Postgraduate Education of Acupuncture and Moxibustion Program and Study of Classical
Theories”(Zhenjiu Zhuanye Yanjiusheng Jiaoyu Yu Jingdian Liluan Xuexi 针灸专业研究生教育与经典理论
学习).
*viscus* (inner organ).\(^{21}\) In many cases there can be several grammatically correct readings of a sentence. Understanding therefore relies very much on the readers prior knowledge of (or ability to recognize) the context.\(^{22}\)

In addition to such general challenges, medical terminology has its own particularities. Hence, the reading of pre-modern medical literature requires both a proficiency in literary Chinese, as well as a specialization in the domain of medical literature. Paul Rouzer, professor and teacher of literary Chinese, has remarked that “for example, medical language and Buddhist theological argumentation are so far beyond other forms of literary Chinese as to make them good examples of self-contained ‘dialects,’ and they would perhaps be best learned on their own.”\(^{23}\)

What he points at, more precisely, is what other linguists have described as the difference between *language for special purposes* (LSP) and *language for general purposes* (LGP). Nigel Wiseman, the author of the most comprehensive English-Chinese dictionary of Chinese medical terminology (as well several other publications on this topic), gives a thorough elaboration of this distinction in his PhD dissertation from 2000.\(^{24}\) LGP, he explains, refers to the basic form of language shared by all members in a community. LSPs, on the other hand, are a type of subgroup to that common language. The use of an LSP is originally limited to a social group engaged in a particular type of activity, and it must contain a specific terminology related to the concepts and objects of that activity. More loosely it could be described as “technical language.”

Medical terminology undoubtedly falls within this category. It is more interesting how the LSP and LGP relate to one another. Research has shown that LSP terms, as most new vocabulary of any language, are created either by redefining old words, combining language elements in new ways, or through lexical borrowing. If we exclude the borrowings (which in Chinese medicine are very limited), we see that most LSP terms are created out of recognizable LGP components. The difference then relates to how they are used and understood. In medical terminology, there are usually a set of basic anatomical structures for which the LGP and LSP terms are exactly the same, such as foot, hand, head, or visceral organs like lung, liver, and kidney. While such terms basically refer to the same thing, their

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\(^{21}\) The pronunciation of the verbal and nominal meanings is not the same (cang/zang) but in a written text this distinction has to be based on the syntactic structure or the context.

\(^{22}\) Fuller, *An Introduction to Literary Chinese*, 1-2.

\(^{23}\) Rouzer, *A New Practical Primer Of Literary Chinese*, XIII.

connotation will be different for a medical professional and a layperson. The same can be said about more abstract concepts. Take the modern notion of “depression.” It is clear that the popular usage of this term is much looser and does not build on the same criteria and theoretical foundation as the definition of a psychiatrist would. But such distinctions are fluid. LSP terms may arise out of popular notions, expand or transform their definitions, and then also influence back on the LGP meaning.

When faced with such terms, we must therefore determine which end of the line they are operating on. My own observation, from comparing the uses of the same term in early medical sources like the Basic Questions, is that it can shift from a specialized LSP meaning in one place, to a less specific, and closer to the LGP meaning, in others. This is particularly true for some of the psychological terms we shall examine. Take for instance the character zhi 志. In some passages it is used as a generic term referring to mental and emotional states in general. In other passages, it refers specifically to the mental faculty “intent-mind” associated with the kidneys. In the later discourse such distinctions were often clarified by adding another character (like qingzhi 情志 or shen zhi 神志). Some of the ambiguities of the early texts may be ascribed to their heterogeneous origin. As all research indicates, the Inner Canon texts were compiled out of various sources and later added to and edited in several stages.25

It seems reasonable to assume that in the early formative phase of medical theory, medical definitions were less distinct from the LGP notions than later on. Roth, Queen, and Sivin have estimated that medicine began to depart from general philosophy during the final three centuries BCE.26 As the field continued to evolve, specialization increased, and the LSP meaning of terms most likely followed the same course of development. On the other hand, the strong tendency towards syncretism, together with the historical perspective that saw early canons as the ultimate authority—were forces pulling in the opposite direction. Therefore, to understand medical terminology, we must increase our ability to distinguish between what reflects common properties and that which is unique to this particular system of thought.

Translation calls for another set of considerations. After having gained a thorough understanding of the terms in their original form—the so-called source language—one has to

find the best way to convert them into corresponding (and understandable) translations in the *target language*. In the case of LSPs—where terms are used to describe and communicate about specific activities—the need for terminological consistency is more pressing. A technical term must have a fixed and recognizable form. If, for example, the meaning of a term contains several nuances in the source-language, the translation of it should be able to function with the same semantic scope. Otherwise, the conceptual understanding will be reduced. In this regard, translation of LSPs differs from that of other types of literature where the choice of terms can be more optional and varied. In the transmission of Chinese medicine to the West, high quality translations of medical literature have just started to emerge. It is not until the last decade, for instance, that reliable translations of the most influential classics have been published. Compared to the vast body of literature produced in the course of more than two thousand years of Asian medical discourse, this is but a fragment. Other material written by Western practitioners have received critique for lacking affiliation to original sources.\(^27\) Most clinical books, have very few, or no, Chinese (Asian) references. Another problem has been that the earlier translations of terms were often based more on the needs and ideals of western readers than the form and meaning of the original concepts. Wiseman calls this *target-oriented translation*. The opposite approach is referred to as *source-oriented translation*. In the latter approach, the primary goal is to render the terms as faithfully as possible. It is therefore characterized by a more literal and transparent style of translation. Take the example *fenghuo yan* 風火眼, a diagnostic term that denotes the same symptoms as the biomedical term “acute conjunctivitis” (eye inflammation), and has thus often been translated as such. Wiseman renders it as “wind-fire eye.”\(^28\) This literal translation may be more challenging for some readers, but it preserves the inbuilt pathogenesis of the original term. Unschuld, who is the western scholar that has worked most extensively on translating the Chinese medical canons, also argues for the same approach.\(^29\) The methodological consistency of his annotated translations—together with Wiseman’s efforts to establish a standardized English terminology—have contributed substantially to raising the standards and level of knowledge in this field. In my own translations in this thesis, I shall attempt to follow their example.


1.2 Conceptualization

From the above discussion on terminology, we saw that understanding of medical terms relies on both the ability to read Classical or literary Chinese (LGP meaning), and the knowledge of medical theory as a specialized field (LSP meaning). The same applies to the understanding of a sentence or a passage. As the scope broadens, the challenge is not just to grasp the implicit meaning of each term, but to understand what they signify as a whole. Particularly in the early medical writings, like the *Inner Canon* (*Huangdi Neijing* 黃帝內經), a passage may have many sources of ambiguity. It might even be intentionally ambiguous so as to convey several meanings at the same time. A scholar of Chinese history may recognize the parallel to political ideology and social organization. A sinologist might notice the overlap with other philosophical orientations. A connoisseur of Chinese poetry may see the influence of riming and traditional sentence patterns. While these are all valid and interesting observations, the main concern in this thesis is to understand how such passages were related to the more concrete workings of the body and mind. In other words: the *medical* implications. If one is not familiar with that particular perspective it might be hard to recognize. Let me give you an example. In Chapter 8 of the *Basic Questions* it says:

![Chinese text]

When the ruler has clarity then the subjects are peaceful.

When the heart is without clarity then the spirit has no ruler, and the pathways of exchange between the viscera and bowels become obstructed and impassable. Hence, from the ruler and

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30 Unschuld and Tessenow, *Basic Questions Vol. 1*, 159. The translation has been slightly adapted by me.
down, none will not neglect their duty, and so all of the **twelve viscera [and bowels]** will be endangered, and disaster is unavoidable. When even oneself cannot avoid [such consequences], then how would it be for the world? The repeated warning ‘beware, beware!’ is to emphasize how unacceptable it is for the **heart-ruler** to lack clarity.\(^{31}\)

First of all, we may note that there are several metaphorical concepts at work here. The original passage speaks of “the ruler” (\(zhu\) 主), which we can see from the commentary refers to the heart (\(xin\) 心). This is a common analogy in Chinese philosophy, because the heart was generally considered to rule the mind and the whole body. In Chinese medicine, the execution of this “rulership” was further ascribed to the spirit (\(shen\) 神). The passage also talks of the “twelve officials” (\(shi’er guan\ 十二官), which the commentary tells us refers to the inner organs—the viscera and bowels (\(zangfu\ 臟腑\).\(^ {32}\) It then speaks of “pathways” (\(dao\ 道\). Zhang Jingyue interprets this as “the pathways of exchange between the viscera and bowels” (\(zangfu xiangshi zhi dao\ 臟腑相使之道), most likely referring to the network of channels and vessels (\(jingmai\ 經脈 or \(jingluo\ 經絡\) which Chinese medicine holds responsible for all circulation and regulation among the body’s organs and tissues. So, even as vague as the original passage might first appear, we see that it actually refers to a set of quite specific physiological concepts—all of which contain their own further connotations in the medical doctrine.

The metaphorical imagery these notions evoke is part of what we may call a **body-state analogy**. As the Chinese empire became increasingly organized during the Qin and Han-dynasties (221 BCE - 220 CE), state administration and infrastructure provided a rich source for metaphorical description which the early medical theoretician applied to the body.\(^ {33}\) Hence, the heart (and the mind) was likened to the sovereign, the other organs to his officials, the vessels to routes of communication and transportation (pathways, rivers) and so on. From the same imagery, the external surface of the body could be perceived as a type of geographical border, the frontier of the empire where troops patrolled to protect against foreign invasion.

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\(^{32}\) These are: the heart, pericardium, lung, liver, spleen, kidney, small intestine, large intestine, gallbladder, stomach, bladder and triple burner. Because the pericardium was so closely attached to the heart it is often not counted separately. The organ systems are therefore commonly referred to as the “five viscera and six bowel” (\(wuzang liufu\ 五臟六腑\).

In Lakoff and Johnson’s *metaphor theory*, this type of conceptualization is referred to as metaphorical structuring. Based on the findings of these and other researchers, it has been demonstrated that such structuring actually permeates all human cognition and language. Scientific descriptions are no exception. In general, when we need to understand and communicate about something more abstract, we do this by reusing other more concrete experiences of the world. This mechanism is so deeply embedded into our cognitive-linguistic systems that we normally do not recognize it. Only when we encounter unfamiliar metaphors, do we start noticing. The body-state analogy in the example above may for instance seem strikingly exotic and peculiar to a modern reader. Yet present-day descriptions of the immune system might allude to a similar notion of the body as a territory in need of “defence” without drawing any attention. It also makes perfect sense that books with drawings of the body are referred to as “anatomical atlases.” Earlier on, we looked at the Chinese medical term “wind-fire eye,” did we notice that the English word “inflammation” contains partly the same metaphor? What about the term “depression”? In accordance with Lakoff and Johnson’s theory, this expression could be explained on the basis of another more general metaphor called “good is up; bad is down” (or “happy is up; sad is down”) which possibly is related to our basic experience of how being up on our feet means being active and healthy, while laying down equals sickness or death. It is very likely that the notion of being “depressed” also relates to the physical sensation of heaviness and fatigue that often accompanies such states. Anyhow, general metaphors often give rise to a whole system of metaphorical expressions that correspond and reinforce each other’s comprehensibility. One may for instance also be “feeling down,” or “on the way up again,” or “high-spirited” etc. So we see that general metaphors like “good is up; bad is down” can structure how a wide range of emotions and situations are perceived and communicated.

Likewise, the body-state analogy made it possible for the early medical theoreticians in China, to describe the complex functions of the body and mind in a way that was understandable to their contemporaries. It also opened up for the possibility of expressing multiple meanings at the same time. As we could see from the commentary to the passage above, both a psycho-physiological and socio-political interpretation were clearly emphasized.

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34 Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*.
The same phenomena may also be described through different metaphorical models. When something is conceptualized in a particular way, this usually highlights certain aspects of it and conceals others.\textsuperscript{36} To elaborate a different side, another analogy may be applied. Sometimes these different models are completely unrelated; sometimes they can overlap or work together. In Chinese medical theory, the human organism was not only conceptualized through the metaphorical images of state organization, it was also conceived of in terms of natural phenomena. This is particularly evident in the application of the five agents (\textit{wuxing 五行}) and yin-yang (陰陽) theory—what Unschuld refers to as the \textit{doctrine of systematic correspondence}. In fact, human beings were not seen merely as a reflection of the empire, but as a microcosm that corresponded to the processes of the whole universe. In that way, the metaphorical imagery of both the natural and social environment was brought together.

Let me now try to draw some conclusions from what we have discussed in the previous paragraphs. General research on human conceptualization and language has shown that complex or abstract phenomena tend to be expressed by using more familiar and concrete experiences as structuring elements. This act is mostly subconscious and only draws our attention when the metaphors in use are unfamiliar (like in artistic and creative expressions or when the cultural or historical frame is different from our own). General metaphors usually correspond with dominating cultural and ideological perceptions, and therefore facilitate communication and enhance the logical foundation of an argument. As they are based on generally accepted cultural notions, but also occur in more specialized settings (like scientific writings), it seem reasonable to say that they belong to the LGP domain but are also applied in LSP contexts as a means to make unfamiliar concepts more comprehensible. Sociologist Mildred Blaxter has made the general remark that “Healing requires a legitimated, credible and culturally appropriate system.”\textsuperscript{37} In other words, medical procedures not only need to be effective, they must also be explained in a way that seems plausible to the general public. New ideas—or innovations—are therefore tend to be shaped by the “creative tension between convention and controversy,” as the medical anthropologist Elisabeth Hsu points out.\textsuperscript{38} This was particularly the case in pre-modern Chinese society, where the dominating historical perspective was marked by an idealization of the past, rather than the belief in a continuous

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{36} Ibid, 10-14.
  \item \textsuperscript{37} Quoted in Singer, \textit{Introducing Medical Anthropology: A Discipline in Action}, 1.
  \item \textsuperscript{38} Hsu, \textit{Innovation in Chinese Medicine}, 1-10.
\end{itemize}
progress. Expanding, elaborating, or reinterpreting existing conceptual frames was thus a way to approach the unknown and achieve recognition at the same time. By using analogy and metaphors, multiple meanings could be conveyed simultaneously and thereby reinforce the coherence between different concepts and theories.

1.3 Discourse

In the methodological discussion so far, I have tried to outline some perspectives and approaches that are useful to our understanding of Chinese medical terminology and conceptualization. Now, we shall look at some aspects related to the analysis of discourse. A discourse can be defined in several ways. Most generally, it denotes written or spoken communication centred on particular objects, activities, or social groups. Some analysts distinguish between discourses with a small d (language-in-use), and Discourses with a capital D (language combined with other non-verbal elements involved in the performance of a certain activity/identity). Thematic discussions are sometimes describes as “Conversations” within the Discourse. However, such distinctions are not overly important to the objective of this analysis. What is more relevant is the general recognition of the relationship between discourse and practice. Expressing something through language is—in itself—a way of doing and being. You enact a certain role connected to a certain activity. Discourses work on an even broader level to explain, give meaning to, and attune the various elements within a particular field of practice. They therefore often produce characteristic styles of expression, argumentation, terminology, codes, symbols etc., all of which makes it possible to recognize from a text the actors and activities of that discourse. So, discourses, practices, and social identities mutually shape and influence each other. Yet, while a discourse may be distinctive enough to be recognizable as such, its boundaries are not fixed. Different discourses may overlap, merge, diversify, dissolve, re-emerge etc. This combination of distinctiveness and fluidity is interesting in regard to our previous discussions on the relationship between common and particular properties of medical terminology and conceptualization.

Discourse analysis very much depends on how context is understood. In academic analyses of medical discourses, three main theoretical perspectives have been identified:

40 Compare Marsh to for example: Potter, “Discourse Analysis and Constructionist Approaches: Theoretical Background;” or Kärreman and Levay, “The Interplay of Text, Meaning and Practice: Methodological Considerations on Discourse Analysis in Medical Education.”
41 Marsh, An Introduction to Discourse Analysis, 19-23.
functionalism, political economy, and social constructionism. Since the 1980s the last category has been most influential, but perspectives may vary or be combined depending on the topic that is analysed.\textsuperscript{42} The same trends can be observed in contemporary research and scholarship on Chinese medicine. Unschuld, for example, mostly explains Chinese medical discourse on the basis of broad political and social developments. This approach may be criticized for being too deterministic and simplifying. It overlooks the negotiation that takes place between such broad political, economic, and cultural conditions, and the experiences, observations, and challenges of individual physicians on the micro level of clinical practice. The participants thus become deprived of all agency. Other analyses have been more attentive to the reflections of practice also in textual sources. Nathan Sivin has examined the relationship between text and experience,\textsuperscript{43} Elisabeth Hsu the terminology related to tactile diagnosis,\textsuperscript{44} and Shigehisa Kuriyama the significance of visual knowledge.\textsuperscript{45} In general, there are no reasons why such micro and macro perspectives cannot be combined.

It is obvious that when working with historical sources—whether it is reading, translating, or analysing—we are confronted with interpretation on every level. Interpretation, we should be aware, often says equally much about our own knowledge and attitudes, as it does about the object of investigation. As the 18\textsuperscript{th} century German scientist and philosopher Georg Lichtenberg pointed out: “A book is a mirror: if a monkey looks in, no apostle can look out.”\textsuperscript{46} When we encounter something that appears puzzling or irrational, we should therefore keep in mind that it may not be due to the limitations of the concept itself, but rather our own capability to understand its full implication. In the case of pre-modern, non-European medical literature, this is particularly important. When something is distant to our own conceptual frame, there is a higher risk of projecting onto it our own biased presumptions. First of all, there is the hazard of Orientalism. Due to the dominating economic, military, and technological position of the West during the recent centuries, comparative analyses are often framed in hierarchical, Eurocentric terms. This may results in a preconceived devaluation and depiction of other cultures and traditions. Secondly, there is the common inclination towards Presentism. It is easy to forget that the knowledge, values, and methods of today, are as much a reflection of our particular historical circumstances, as they

\textsuperscript{42} Lupton, “Theoretical Perspectives on Medicine and Society.”
\textsuperscript{43} Sivin, “Text and Experience in Classical Chinese Medicine.”
\textsuperscript{44} Hsu, “Tactility and the Body in Early Chinese Medicine.”
\textsuperscript{45} Kuriyama, “Visual Knowledge in Classical Chinese Medicine.”
\textsuperscript{46} Shapiro, \textit{The Yale Book of Quotations}, 459.
were in the past. If we apply our own notions of reality to historical sources, we risk not only misinterpreting what we see, but also overlooking the things that fall outside our field of vision. And thirdly, it is the everlasting temptation of Essentialism. Broad generalizations and simplifications are always easier made when we look back at something from afar. Although contemporary scholarship has done much to elaborate the diversity of Chinese medical history and practices, essentialist narratives still dominate the popular discourse, often in the form of orientalist devaluation or romantic idealization—both of which undermine the complexity of the subject.\textsuperscript{47} So, misinterpretation can arise from any combination of the above mentioned outlooks. Unfortunately, there is no way to guarantee an unbiased approach. A good start is to be aware of these possible pitfalls, and make one’s own analysis as transparent as possible.

However, the best antidote to biased presumptions is to stay source-oriented. We mentioned this earlier with regard to translation methodology. It is equally important on a larger scale. In an article comparing different ways of analysing medical discourses, the authors write: “To consider the level of meaning implies to learn the meanings used by the people under study: to become fluent in the specific vernacular used by the group of people you follow and try to understand. In Geertz’s formulation, it means to engage in thick, rather than thin, descriptions, unpacking the many layers of meaning in cultural material tapped, deployed, and played with by the insiders.”\textsuperscript{48} The excerpt seems to summarize much of the argument I have made so far. It addresses the necessity of being source-oriented, familiar with the particular language (LSP) and codes (conceptualization) in use, and combining different research material to explore the emic perspective from more than one angle. However, the analysis of this thesis cannot be quite as “thick” as the article proposes. If your objective is to understand practice, for example, then discourse analysis should be combined with other approaches such as observational or ethnographic methods. One cannot make substantiated claims about how something is done only by referring to how people say it is done (such answers may be idealized or normative). But this investigation is not about analysing medical practice as such. For our purpose it is sufficient to know that practice

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constitute an important part of the contextual frame and we should therefore be attentive to the ways this is reflected in the textual material. By combining examples from both original passages and their comments, I hope to provide a description that is rich enough to give a general impression of the multifaceted composition of Chinese medical discourse, and a clearer understanding of the conceptualization of the mind in particular.

As a final note to the analytical approach of this thesis, I would like to say something more about the interplay between properties that are commonly shared and those that are particular to a certain tradition. In the previous methodological discussions we have seen that this interplay exists on all levels: terminology, conceptualization, and discourse. Paying attention to how these properties interact should be part of the analysis of any linguistic and conceptual representation. Sinologist and professor of philosophy Roger T. Ames has expressed that “a first step in comparative philosophy must be to identify and excavate those shared yet usually unconscious presuppositions or premises that are implicit in the philosophical reflections of all members of a particular cultural tradition.” Such shared presuppositions will always play a role in how the world is perceived, even in the statements of those who seek to challenge or refute the general concurrence. But we could also say that understanding the general is a prerequisite for understanding the particular. The uniqueness of a certain depiction only becomes visible in a comparative perspective: by understanding how it relates to—and differs from—the general notions of that time.

The main purpose of this chapter has been to introduce the analytical perspectives and methodological approaches which will be applied in this thesis. In the discussion on terminology, we looked at the distinction between languages for general or special purposes (LGP/LSP), and the requirements for understanding medical terminology. In regard to translation, consistency and source-orientation were found to be the primary principles. On conceptualization, we saw that analogy was a common way to conceptualize abstract or unknown phenomena. In metaphor theory this is known as metaphorical structuring which is a dominant feature of all human conceptualization. In Chinese medical theory, a correlation was seen between man, state, nature, and universe. Through the classification of yin-yang and five agents’ theory, these elements were combined into a larger conceptual structure often referred to as “the doctrine of systematic correspondence.” In the discussion on discourses, we looked at the relationship between discourse and practice, and how discourse analysis

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always depends on the interpretative perspective of the analyst. It was argued that certain outlooks—orientalism, presentism, and essentialism—could lead to biased misinterpretations. Such tendencies are best countered by adopting a source-oriented approach which seeks to understand the material on its own premises. For medical discourses, the bio-sociocultural perspective offers a good frame for contextual understanding. In conclusion, it was noted that on all these three levels of analysis a negotiation between shared cultural traits and distinctive sub-field attributes could be observed. Observing how these two aspects interact, is thus a prerequisite for understanding the particularity of the medical conceptualization of the mind.
2. Mind in the History of Chinese Medicine

Already from the Classical period, the human psyche was established as a core theme in Chinese philosophical discourse. Discussions were focused on how to attain the optimal state of mental clarity, and what hindrances had to be overcome to achieve this. It was not merely a matter of personal health and development, but also considered a key to social harmony and political rulership. This threefold significance of the mind remained a common premise to philosophical argument throughout the pre-modern era, and thus gave rise to a broad range of discourses and self-cultivation practices.

Such theories and practices have been a favoured subject of many academic analyses. But while most scholars have focused on the broader perceptions of Confucian, Daoist, or Buddhist thinkers, other discourses running parallel to these—like the medical one—have largely been ignored. This has led some people to draw inaccurate general conclusions. For example, in a book chapter from 1994, T. T. C. Hang questions why more than two millennia of philosophical preoccupation with the human mind did not lead to a “fully developed Chinese psychology.” His explanation for this “shortage,” is that there was no differentiated psychological terminology, and that the concept of “[heart] mind” (xin 心) was too vague to encourage further elaborations. In the analysis of the Five Spirits model that follows later, I intend to demonstrate that these claims are wrong.

2.1 Psychological Theory in Medical Discourses

Among scholars in the field of medical anthropology there has also been some debate over the existence of psychological theory in Chinese medicine. Linda Barnes wrote an article in 1998 claiming that, as a response to the physiological focus of biomedicine, there had been a “psychologization” of Chinese medicine in the United States. Concepts of a religious or demonological origin had been reframed as psychology or spirituality to fit modern, western notions of holism, she claimed. In reply, an article published in 2008 reported the opposite case, namely the “physiologization” of Chinese medicine in Germany. There, the author

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50 (i.e., Warring-states, Qin, and early Han-dynasties) approximately 5th century BCE to 2nd century CE.
51 For some examples see: Schwartz, “The Emergence of a Common Discourse: Some Key Terms;” Tu, “Self-Cultivation in Chinese Philosophy;”and Roth, “Psychology and Self-Cultivation in Early Taoistic Thought.”
asserted, the prevailing form of cultural adaptation had been to incorporate—rather than oppose—biomedical perspectives.\textsuperscript{54}

Undoubtedly we could find numerous examples of such (and other) types of modern reinterpretation. It is known from discourse analysis that the way theory is presented not only varies according to cultural or historical settings, but also changes with the social situation. For example when a physician speaks to a patient or writes a peer reviewed article, the language and emphasis will be different.\textsuperscript{55} Scheid has described medical practice as a dynamic synthesis where different elements are constantly disappearing and re-emerging. Certain theories can thus appear to have been discarded and then resurface again in different contexts. During the Chinese transition towards modernity (and particularly in the escalated phase of the Cultural Revolution), perspectives linked to any form of spirituality had to be toned down.\textsuperscript{56}

Such adaptations are inevitable, but they do not tell anything about the theoretical foundation and discussions of the past. To know how—and to what extent—psychological theories had been articulated, we need an in-depth examination of the premodern medical discourse itself. We must also be aware that information will not be neatly served on a plate. The excerpt below is taken from the preface of a prescription book written by the renowned polymath Shen Kuo 沈括 (1031-1095):

[...]

Before the ancients treated patients, they first became familiar with the cycles of Yin and Yang and of time, and with the exhalations [of Qi] from mountain, forest, river, and marsh. They discerned the patient’s age, body weight, social status, living conditions, \textit{disposition} (性術), \textit{preferences} (好惡), \textit{feelings} (憂喜), and \textit{vigour} (勞逸). In accord with what was appropriate [to these characteristics], and avoiding what was not, they chose among drugs, moxa, acupuncture, lacing with the stone needle, decoctions, and extracts. They straightened out old habits and smoothed the \textit{patterns of thoughts and emotions} (性理).\textsuperscript{57}

This passage expresses (in a retrospective style) the ideal of how medicine should be practiced. It tells us which factors must be considered in diagnosis and treatment. As we see, quite a few are related to the cognitive-emotional aspect. Understanding and regulating the mental condition of patients was clearly something Shen Kuo considered an essential part of

\textsuperscript{54}~Tao, “A Critical Evaluation of Acupuncture Research: Physiologization of Chinese Medicine in Germany.”

\textsuperscript{55}~For different kinds of social language in scientific discourses see: Marsh, An Introduction to Discourse Analysis, 27-29. Elisabeth Hsu has explored how the same term is given different meanings in different contexts: Hsu, “Spirit (Shen), Styles of Knowing, and Authority in Contemporary Chinese Medicine.”


\textsuperscript{57}~My emphasis, the translation have been slightly altered from Sivin's version in \textit{Health Care in Eleventh-Century China}, 83. Original Chinese version at “Zhongyi Shijia 中醫世家.” The HDC explains \textit{xingli} 性理 as “emotions and reasoning” (qingshu he lizhi 情绪和理智).
medical competence. Furthermore, he saw it as an intrinsic part of orthodox medicine. We may also note how these psychological factors are described in the same vein as other etiological elements like climate, body weight, and living conditions. The state of the mind is greatly important, but should be seen in relation to other factors, not as a separate issue.

As mentioned earlier, psychological theories often appear as an integral part of other subjects. For instance under various sub-categories of internal medicine (nei ke 内科) such as sleep disorders, febrile hallucination, and other psychosomatic conditions. Or they appear in more direct debates over psycho-pathology—like the long-lasting discourse of “withdrawal and mania” (dian kuang 癖狂). This last category is a good example of how the medical definition of terms varies from the vernacular. In medicine “withdrawal” (dian 癖) and “mania” (kuang 狂) have distinct and separate meanings. Both have sub-categories that relate to different types of etiology. Such classifications gradually evolved over time and became the subject of much debate and some disagreement.58 Medical thinkers agreed that “withdrawal” was a Yin (cold) type of disease, while “mania” was a Yang (heat) pattern. The argument was over which causes and mechanisms were involved. Influential Jin-Yuan physicians emphasized the emotional factors and this perspective was further elaborated during the Ming dynasty. The author of the Categories of the Canons Zhang Jingyue for example wrote:

> Mania diseases are mostly caused by fire. This can either be due to unfulfilled aspirations (谋为失志), or pondering and worry [causing] restraint and binding (思虑鬱结). [Like being] bent without space to stretch out (屈无所伸), anger having no outlet (怒无所泄), resulting in reverse flow of liver and gallbladder qi, the evil-qi of Wood and Fire combine, this is genuinely a replete pattern of the east. If its evil-qi invades the heart, then the spirit and ethereal soul will not be protected (神魂不守). If evil-qi invades the stomach, it leads to uncontrollable and ruthless behaviour and movements (暴横刚强).59

Although this is but a fragment of his discussion, it clearly shows how emotional distress was considered a major cause of such conditions. The seamless transitions between psychology and physiology are also noteworthy. The idea that unresolved emotions could cause physical illnesses, or vice versa, was old news in Chinese medicine. Zhang Jingyue (and other Ming-Qing physicians) simply described the processes in more detail.

58 For an overview of the historical development and main positions of this discourse see Flaws and Lake, “A Brief History of Chinese Medical Psychiatry.”

But illness was not the only context where the understanding of the mind was exhibited. Much attention was given to how a healthy mind was cultivated; in a general sense or more specifically related to the practice of medicine. The ideal of the “great physician” (da yi 大醫)—whose mind could penetrate the hidden processes of the body, mind, and nature—had already been established in early medical writings. Further influenced by the Buddhist notion of compassion and the Neo-Confucian ideal of self-cultivation, medicine came to be seen as an alternative way to develop and practice benevolence. Although the physician was primarily associated with technical expertise, ultimate realization of skills was considered a question of personal virtuosity. Theoretical understanding had to be complemented by the gradual accumulation of experience and the refinement of one’s sensibility towards subtle manifestations of change.\(^\text{60}\)

### 2.2 Formative Conceptualization in the *Yellow Emperor’s Inner Canon*

The texts belonging to the *Yellow Emperor’s Inner Canon* (*Huangdi Neijing* 黃帝內經) are undoubtedly among the most influential works of the Chinese medical canon. They are the earliest preserved sources to what became the foundation of scholarly medicine, and still serve as a source of inspiration and knowledge for many practitioners today.\(^\text{61}\)

The received corpus consists of three texts: the *Basic Questions* (*Huangdi Neijing Suwen* 黃帝內經素問), the *Divine Pivot* (*Huangdi Neijing Lingshu* 黃帝內經靈樞), and the *Grand Basis* (*Huangdi Neijing Taisu* 黃帝內經太素). Although these texts were originally ascribed to the mythical figure of the Yellow Emperor (*Huang Di* 黃帝), even early Chinese historians agreed that they were most likely selected writings from the last centuries BCE that had been compiled and rearranged by unknown groups of writers in the Han dynasty. Further additions and editing then followed. The texts we have today are based on the standard versions that were produced during the Song dynasty.\(^\text{62}\)

What shall be referred to as “original passages” in this thesis are excerpts from the *Basic Questions* and *Divine Pivot*—the referential works of the *Categories of the Canons*. Chinese scholars have found that 32 (about 20%) of the 162 chapters of the *Basic Questions* and *Divine Pivot* are devoted to discussing psychological phenomena; if the body-mind

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relationship is included, it will be more than 90\%.\textsuperscript{63} The content of these two classics is highly diverse and sometimes even contradictory. Some of these contradictions are likely related to the heterogeneity and multiple historical layers of these texts. The chapters are often structured as a dialogue between the Yellow Emperor and one of his advisers (most commonly Qi Bo \(\text{岐伯} \) or Lei Gong \( \text{雷公} \)). In style, this resembles the form of a commentary; first a topic is presented, then explanations, questions, followed by further elaboration and so on. Considering the bibliographic background, some parts of these dialogues probably \textit{are} later comments built into the text for the sake of clarification.\textsuperscript{64} Hence already within the “original passages” we are presented with an early segment of medical commentarial discourse.

Unschuld has described the \textit{Inner Canon} texts as truly revolutionary for their time.\textsuperscript{65} What made them so extraordinary? At the time when the theories of these works was carved out, the prevailing worldview still saw human life as entirely subordinated to the will of ancestors, demon-spirits, and deities. The idea that nature—and life—could be understood on the basis of natural laws thus represented a fundamentally new perspective. Through the integration of Yin-Yang and Five Agents theory, phenomena and processes could now be explained according to predictable patterns that also connected all things. Nature, society, body, and mind—were all brought together in this model of systematic correspondences. Health and disease could suddenly be fathomed in a totally different way. Human beings were granted an unprecedented level of self-determination. It is probably no coincident that these perspectives emerged at a period of fundamental changes in Chinese society. By the beginning of the Han dynasty the basic structure of medical doctrine had already been established.\textsuperscript{66}

How did these new perspectives affect the medical perception of the mind? First of all, it was reflected in a much more secularized understanding of terms. This did not mean an abandonment of all metaphysics, but the new theories boldly declared that there were no supernatural powers controlling the universe. Whatever forces determined the changes of life, they arose from nature itself:

\textsuperscript{63} Li, “Zhang Jingyue Yi Xue Xue Shu Sixiang Yanjiu \(\text{张景岳医学学术思想研究} \) (A Study of Zhang Jingyue’s Medical and Academic Thinking),” 1935.

\textsuperscript{64} Lo, “The Han Period,” 39; Unschuld and Tessenow, \textit{Basic Questions Vol. 1}, 23.

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid, 2.

\textsuperscript{66} For more on this formative stage see: Unschuld, \textit{Medicine in China: A History of Ideas}, 51-100; or
When one takes heaven as law and earth as rule,
[and one’s] activities follow what is corresponding [to them],
[then] harmonizing with [heaven and earth] will be like an echo,
[and] following them will be like a shadow.
The Way does not include any demons-spirits;
one comes by oneself and one leaves by oneself.\(^{67}\)

Concepts like “heaven” (tian 天) and the “Way” (dao 道) were still retained, but they were no longer completely beyond the comprehension of man. Some aspects remained obscure, but even so, patterns and principles could be discerned. The same was true for the perception of the mind. Concepts that in earlier philosophical literature had been associated with something mystical and abstract now became systematically linked to the physical world and the body. Examples would be terms like “Spirit” (shen 神), “Spirit-brilliance” (shenming 神明), “Essence-spirit (jingshen 精神), and the other Five Spirits terms that we shall analyse later.

On a general level, we can observe the development towards an increasingly secularized and physiological understanding of psycho-spiritual terms by comparing the Inner Canon corpus to earlier and contemporary writings like the Guanzi 管子 and Huainanzi 淮南子. These texts are often classified under the label of Huang-Lao Daoism and considered some of the earliest sources to discuss the body-mind relationship in more detail.\(^ {68}\) Both the Guanzi and the Huainanzi also contain five agents’ categorizations that correlate natural phenomena, inner organs, and body parts. However, these are not elaborated in the same degree as those of the Inner Canon.\(^ {69}\) Many of the core terms that shall be analysed later in this thesis—“spirit” (shen 神), qi 氣, and “essence” (jing 精)—are also discussed in these other texts. In the Guanzi chapter “Inward Training,” which is probably the earliest of these sources, the descriptions of these concepts are more abstract and metaphysical than those in the Huainanzi.\(^ {70}\) In the Inner Canon corpus their physiological foundation is elaborated even further. We can therefore see that the conceptualization of the mind in the Inner Canon developed out of commonly accepted ideas among the Han elite.

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\(^ {67}\) *Suwen*, chap. 25·3. Translation adapted from Unschuld and Tessenow, *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen: An Annotated Translation of Huang Di’s Inner Classic* - *Basic Questions Vol. 1*, 428.


\(^ {70}\) For an introduction and analysis of these concepts in the Guanzi and Huainanzi see Rickett, *Guan Zi: Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays from Early China, A Study and Translation*, 15-98; Roth, “Psychology and Self-Cultivation in Early Taoistic Thought.” 611-620.
Yet, from then onwards medicine became more distinct from other philosophical orientations. It was not the only tradition focusing on the body, but it did so in much greater detail.

The designation “five spirits” (*wu*shen 五神) does not actually occur in the *Inner Canon* texts. Each of the spirit aspects are described and discussed but they are not given a common label. Once the *Basic Questions* refers to them in total as “that which the five viscera store” (*wu*zang *su*ocang 五藏所藏).\(^{71}\) It is unclear who first used the term five spirits, but by the Tang dynasty it appears frequently in the annotations of Wang Bing 王冰 (the scholar physician whose version of the *Basic Question* is the source of today’s *textus receptus*). For instance, when explaining why the visceral organs are described as “guardians of the centre” he says: “The centre of the bodily form is where the ‘five spirits’ are securely guarded” (*shen*xing *zh*izhong *wu*shen *a*nshou *zh*isuo ye 身形之中，五神安守之所也).\(^{72}\) But the “five spirits” designation and its connection to organ physiology must have been well-known from earlier on. Already in the Han era the concept was referred to outside of medical literature. An example is provided in Heshang Gong’s commentary to the *Daodejing*:

> 神，謂五藏之神也。肝藏魂，肺藏魄，心藏神，腎藏精，脾藏志。五藏盡傷，則五神去矣。

> Spirit means the spirit(s) of the five viscera. The liver stores the ethereal-soul, the lungs store the corporal-soul, the heart stores the spirit, the kidneys store the essence, and the spleen stores the intent-mind. When the five viscera are exhaustedly damaged then the five spirits depart.\(^{73}\)

Except for relating the intent-mind (*zhi* 志) to the spleen instead of the kidneys, and not including “attention” (*yi* 意), this definition is basically the same as that which became the standard in medical theory. Two distinctive traits can already be observed from these short statements: first, the value attached to these concepts as something precious that must be *stored* and *protected*; and second, that this *safekeeping* is tied to the *functions of the inner organs* and takes place *within the body*. As an inseparable part of Chinese medical physiology, the five spirits were not only attached to the visceral organs, but to life itself. When the spirit(s) had left the body, it meant you were dead.

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\(^{71}\) Unschuld and Tessenow, *Basic Questions* Vol. 1, 409.

\(^{72}\) Wang, *Huangdi Neijing Suwen* 黃帝內經素問補注釋文 (*Supplementary Explanations to the Yellow Emperor’s Inner Canon - Basic Questions*), fascicle 13·28.

2.3 Elaboration of the Five Spirits in the *Categories of the Canons*

Often when Chinese medical theories are described or analysed people mostly refer to the early Canons. The objective of this study has been to study the conceptualization of the mind through an example of the later medical discourse. The *Categories of the Canons* was chosen for several reasons. It had been referred to as a reference for the five spirits in a clinical book by Wang Ju-yi, and also frequently quoted in Unschuld’s annotated translations of the *Inner Canon* texts. As a work of the late Ming, it also represented a phase of the medical discourse where it had matured but not yet been altered by the impact of western medicine. Many of the famous physicians, and other thinkers, of the Ming era are also known for their elaborations on the human psyche. In addition, Zhang Jingyue, the author of the *Categories of the Canons*, is known as one of the medical commentators who elaborated his own perspectives the most. Before looking at this material, we need to know something about the historical development of the medical discourse and Zhang Jingyue’s life, background, and scholarship.

When the *Categories of the Canons* was published in 1624, more than a millennium had passed since the early conceptualizations of the *Inner Canon*. Chinese society, culture, and intellectual environment had changed substantially and this was also reflected on the medical scene. Before the Song dynasty, medical writings had been valued, preserved, but not widely spread. The theories of systematic correspondence displayed in the *Inner Canon* and other early works like the *Canon of Difficult Issues* (*Nanjing* 難經) and the *A-B Canon of Acupuncture and Moxibustion* (*Zhenjiu jiyijing* 針灸甲乙經) were mostly related to acumoxa therapies. Books on drug prescriptions (*fangshu* 方書) and *materia medica* (*bencao* 本草) belonged to a different genre of medical writings; pragmatic and less concerned with general principles of pathology and treatment. By and large medical practitioners were considered a type of craftsmen whose skills and status were attested by

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75 Treatments that sought to influence health through the stimulation of channels and points on the body (i.e., acupuncture loci) either by using stones, needles, heating techniques, massage, and sometimes even small-scale surgery. For further descriptions see Lo, “The Han Period,” 47-48.
family heritage. Literate and educated physicians certainly existed, but they were not in majority.\footnote{Scheid, \textit{Currents of Tradition in Chinese Medicine 1626-2006}, 35-37.}

Much of this changed during the Song. Pharmacology became integrated with the medicine of systematic correspondence. Medical classics that had been collected and annotated in previous centuries were now revised, standardized, and printed in large scale. A medical canon was officially established. This meant that expertise no longer relied just on (direct) lineage or apprenticeship; it could also be acquired thought scholarly study. Several Song governments heightened engagement with medicine also contributed to increasing the status of this profession. Because the state bureaucracy could not provide enough positions for the large number of aspiring officials and degree holders, more literati started to turn to medicine. The new position of this group was demonstrated by the coining of the term “scholar physicians” (ruyi 儒醫).\footnote{For a comprehensive description of the background to these changes see: Goldschmidt, The Evolution of Chinese Medicine: Song Dynasty 960-1200.}

The scholar physicians brought with them the habits and ideals of the Song elite. One example was their preference for annotation.\footnote{Ibid, 43-68, 81, 151.} Several important commentaries to the \textit{Inner Canon} texts already existed, but now the study of medical classics was intensified. Faced with the growing challenges of epidemics and other healthcare issues, the scholar physicians were determined to improve medical doctrines and practices. Their main approach was to re-examine old canons, but in the process they also synthesized and developed the theory in new directions. Such innovations were often presented in the form of commentaries. However, this did not mean that experience and practice could be bypassed. A deeper understanding of theory could only be achieved by interacting with the surrounding world. Classics had to be diligently studied, memorized, compared to each other, and then \textit{tested} against the experience of one’s teachers and oneself. In Ming and Qing Neo-Confucianism this ideal of learning was referred to as “knowledge painfully acquired” (\textit{kun zhi} 困知).\footnote{Scheid, \textit{Currents of Tradition in Chinese Medicine 1626-2006}, 159.}

Most of the trends that emerged during the Song were continued in the Ming dynasty along with other developments. The Ming period was a time of increased international exchange and flourishing cultural activity. On the medical arena there was a proliferation of new theories, discourses, and currents (\textit{liupai} 流派). Both orthodox and more contemporary
teachings came under questioning; it was an era of intense debate and diversification.\textsuperscript{81} New medical writing genres like collections of Case records (\textit{yi’an 醫案}) had emerged and soon became a central part of the medical discourse.\textsuperscript{82} The Ming era was a time where general consensus was not easily obtained; on the other hand there was more room for local and individual perspectives.

Such was the backdrop to Zhang Jingyue’s life and work in the late Ming. As common for the literati of premodern China, he applied several names: Jiebin 介賓 was his given name (\textit{ming 名}), Jingyue 景岳 was his literary name (\textit{hao 號}), and he also had several courtesy names (\textit{zi 字}).\textsuperscript{83} Zhang Jingyue was born in 1563 in today’s Shaoxing city of Zhejiang province. He died in 1640 at the age of 78. In his time, the Jiangnan region had become the centre of medical culture. Surveys have shown that the greatest number of (known) physicians in the empire came from the two provinces Zhejiang and Jiangsu. By no coincident, this was also the area with the highest number of successful candidates for the civil exams.\textsuperscript{84} Shaoxing, the birthplace of Zhang Jingyue, is mentioned as one of the hotspots of medical learning and innovation of late imperial China.\textsuperscript{85} Jiangnan physicians often belonged to medical lineages famous for certain skills or types of treatment; many also distinguished themselves through medical writings.

Zhang Jingyue came from a well-off family with a military background. Due to their merits at the beginning of the Ming dynasty, his forefathers had been granted a hereditary position of military service. His father also possessed some knowledge of medicine. Apparently Zhang Jingyue was an exceptionally talented child that loved to learn and read. He was interested in many things and acquired a broad range of knowledge and skills. He studied the general classics, medical literature, but also had a special interest for Sunzi and military strategy. At the age of 13, he went to Beijing with his father to learn more medicine, where he became the apprentice of a well-known physician with whom he studied for several years. Later he pursued a military career and travelled around northern China for several years.

\textsuperscript{83} Both Jiebin and Jingyue are used by modern writers. Since the latter is more frequent and also appears in the titles of his books, I chose to use this as his main reference.
\textsuperscript{84} Leung, “The Yuan and Ming Periods,”131.
But the Ming Empire was declining and the situation was difficult. In 1620 he abandoned the military and returned to his family in the south. From then on, he devoted himself entirely to medicine. His reputation as a highly skilled physician was soon established. Besides treating patients he worked intensively on his annotations to the *Inner Canon*. Within four years the writing was completed, and in 1624 three books were published. The main work was the 32 fascicles long *Categories of the Canons* (*Leijing* 類經). In addition he published two appendices: the *Wings to the Categories of the Canons* (*Leijing fuyi* 類經附翼), and the *Illustrated Wings to the Categories of the Canons* (*Leijing tuyi* 類經圖翼). Later in life he authored two more books; the most significant being the *Jingyue’s Complete Compendium* (*Jingyue quanshu* 景岳全書), a 64 fascicle long presentation of his clinical experiences and perspectives.  

Zhang Jingyue was highly respected and valued already in his own time. Later physicians referred to him as “a pillar among physicians” (醫門之柱石). Chinese historians describe him as one of the “great masters of internal medicine” (內科雜病大師). He is also known as one of the main proponents of the “warm-supplementation current” (wenbu pai 溫補派) that emerged partly as a reaction to the overemphasis on “heat pathology” advocated by Zhu Zhenheng and other influential Yuan physicians. As a physician primarily concerned with internal medicine, his focus was on how to prevent illness and strengthen the body from within. As a scholar physician, Zhang Jingyue contributed to many of the significant discussions of his time. He openly disagreed and critiqued the theories of prior and contemporary physicians. In his later writings he also corrected some of his own early work. Zhang Jingyue was well aware of the complexity and ever-changing nature of medical practice. He knew that many things could not be captured in words or learned from books. Knowledge could not be separated from practice. As many Ming intellectuals, Zhang Jingyue believed that the gradual accumulation of experience could lead to “sudden, intuitive

87 Ibid, 1862.
88 Ibid, 1867.
89 Leung, “The Yuan and Ming Periods,” 130.
revelations” (*zhijue dunwu 直覺頓悟*). This is also reflected in his understanding of the mind and the five spirits model.

The *Categories of the Canons* is Zhang Jingyue’s most famous work. It is considered one of the most important referential works for the *Inner Canon* corpus. The title *Leijing 類經* has not received a fixed English translation yet. In Wiseman’s CMT dictionary it is rendered as “The Classified Canon” which is an incorrect translation. Zhang Jingyue did not call his own work a canon; as he explains in his preface, the *jing 經* of the title refers to the two *Inner Canon* texts *Basic Questions* and *Divine Pivot*. Unschuld once translates the title as “The [content of the] Classics categorized.” This meaning is correct, but I find it too messy compared with the simple elegance of the original title. My own suggestion is therefore to translate it as *Categories of the Canons*.

The *Categories of the Canons* is not a commentary in the ordinary sense. As mentioned previously, it does not follow the consecutive order of the original texts but rearranges their content according to a set of categories. In the *Basic Questions* and *Divine Pivot* the same topic is discussed in many places and contexts. Zhang Jingyue collects these statements under one category and then adds his own annotations. This makes it easier to get an overview of what has been said on a particular subject. This was a new and original approach; more systematic, analytical and academic in its form. As a highly educated man, his pool of references is quite extensive. He effortlessly moves from medical literature to the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing 易經*), from *Zhuangzi* to *Sunzi* and numerous thinkers before his times. His style of reasoning is simultaneously syncretic and deductive. On the one hand, he draws on a broad range of sources; on the other, he draws the argument together by the consistent application of medical principles and doctrines. Not all of his interpretations were embraced by other physicians and some of his annotations have been corrected by later commentators.

The last noteworthy feature of the *Categories of the Canons* is its wider inclusion of clinical perspectives. Perhaps this reflected the influence of the new Case record genre. Wu

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94 Zhang, “Leijing”
Kun 吳崑, another eminent scholar physician of the late Ming, had also incorporated clinical examples into his annotations. But Zhang Jingyue’s comments were often longer and more elaborated than those of his predecessors. Unschuld asserts that “Zhang Jiebin [Jingyue] too let his clinical experience enter his comments on the Neijing, in that he was the first to quote entire case histories he had encountered as a practicing physician to elucidate the meaning of obscure passages.”97 The Categories of the Canons thus seems particularly suitable to explore how theory is contextualized in emic interpretations. As a work of the late Ming, it offers a genuine impression of Chinese medical reasoning before western medicine and globalization had made any substantial impact.

97 Ibid, 68-69.
3. General Aspects of the Body-Mind Relationship

In the previous chapters, we have been making preparations. We have gathered the necessary tools and information, and discussed which direction to take. Now we are ready to embark on this particular adventure: to explore the landscape of the mind and body as it is described by Zhang Jingyue in his commentary to the Inner Canon texts.

In this chapter we shall examine the general aspects of the body-mind relationship and the broader categorization of psychosomatic phenomena, as it is elucidated by Zhang Jingyue. We will begin with the most general descriptions and move gradually towards the more specific differentiations. In chapter 4 we shall look at the even more detailed classification of the mind—the individual meaning of each of the five spirits (wushen 五神).

But first a few things must be said about the translations. For the quotations from the Inner Canon corpus I have used the Chinese versions of the Chinese Text Project. For the English version, annotated translations have already been published by Unschuld. His translations have been an immensely valuable reference. However, I found that in many cases I preferred a slightly different wording than his. For much of the core vocabulary I have also chosen to use other terms. If my translation produces a difference in meaning, this shall be informed in a footnote.

All translations of Zhang Jingyue’s commentary are my own. In the traditional Chinese way of writing commentaries, annotations are inserted into the original text in a smaller script wherever clarification seems to be needed. In this thesis, the original statements and their comments will not always be presented directly after each other. If the distance is far a numerical mark ① will be placed at the end of the sentences in the main passage where a comment begins. The same number ① will then appear in front of the corresponding annotation.

Much of the source material in the following sections is taken from Zhang Jingyue’s comments to chapter 8 of the Divine Pivot: “Spirit as Foundation” (Ben shen 本神). This chapter may be said to contain the most comprehensive discussion on psychology in the Inner Canon corpus. It seeks to explain the origin, manifestation, and possible negative consequences of various psychological phenomena. As common for these early writings, its form is very condensed and almost cryptic. Fortunately, Zhang Jingyue has a lot to say on

98 “Chinese Text Project: Chinese Medicine.”
these issues. To be sure I did not miss something valuable I translated this chapter in its entirety. The complete text can be found in the Appendix A of this thesis. Zhang Jingyue’s annotations have been marked numerically (ZJY1, ZJY2 etc.), and this will be the reference in the footnotes when this text is quoted. Other relevant excerpts from the Inner Canon corpus and the Categories of the Classics have of course also been included.

Concerning core terminology, my choice of terms is mostly similar to those proposed in Wiseman’s dictionaries. His terminology is generally the most precise and applicable one. Unschuld’s translations tend to be a bit too abstract and long. For example he translates the viscera and bowels (zangfu 腑腑) as the “long-term depots and short-term palaces.” Anyhow, where such differences exist, the alternative translation will be given in a footnote.

When it comes to the translation of the five spirits, I find both Wiseman’s and Unschuld’s terminology somewhat inconsistent and confusing. Unquestionably, these terms are particularly difficult to translate. First of all, they have no exact equivalents in western thought or languages. Secondly, each concept often includes multiple meanings which make it hard to find one representative term. Thirdly, since no in-depth analysis of these terms has been published internationally, there is no systematic understanding of their usage to base the translations on. However, such challenges are common for most concepts in Chinese medicine. Even if their meaning is wide, they are nevertheless fixed entities within the framework of Chinese medical theory. As part of a professional language (LSP), terminological consistency is still required. Pinyin transliteration could be an option, but then the terms would no longer convey a meaning. For most translators this is therefore considered only as a last resort. Instead I shall propose my own set of terms, adapted from the available translations in comparison with the source material of this study. The translations applied to these concepts will be: spirit (shen 神), ethereal-soul (hun 魂), corporal-soul (po 魄), attention (yi 意), and intent-mind (zhi 志).

### 3.1 Essence, Spirit, and Qi: The Roots of Life

In this part we shall look closer at three components that in Chinese medicine were considered the foundation of the body and mind. Knowing what these concepts represented and how they were related is therefore a precondition for understanding all other descriptions of psychology and physiology in medical literature. The descriptions in the following sections reflect common concepts of the medical doctrine which are further elaborated and specified by Zhang Jingyue.
3.1.1 From Cosmology to Physiology

In the second passage of the “Spirit as Foundation” chapter Qi Bo explains to Huang Di the basic meaning and origin of various mental faculties and phenomena. One of the first statements in this explanation reads: “The origin of life is called essence” (sheng zhilai weizhi jing 生之來謂之精). In the comments to this chapter Zhang Jingyue pauses here to insert the following elaboration:

太極動而生陽，靜而生陰，陰陽二氣，各有其精。所謂精者，天之一、地之六也。天以一生水，地以六成之，而為五行之最先。故萬物初生，其來皆水，如果核未實猶水也，胎卵未成猶水也，即凡人之有生，以及昆蟲草木無不皆然。易曰：男女構精，萬物化生。此之謂也。

When the Supreme Ultimate moves it generates yang, [when] still it generates yin. Yin and yang, these two types of qi, each have their essence. As for the so-called essence: heaven has one, earth has six. Heaven uses the one to generate water, earth uses the six to give it form, and this becomes the primary [state] of the five agents. Hence, all life of the myriad beings originates from water; just as the unripe fruit stone is watery, and the incomplete embryo is watery, even the existence of every human being and all insects and vegetation—without exception it is so. The Book of Changes states: “[When] male and female ‘join their essence’ the myriad beings are transformed and given life.” This is what it speaks of.

For a scholar physician like Zhang Jingyue, we see that “essence” (jing 精) in this context is associated with a broad range of meanings. He starts with the metaphysics: the creation of all life from the interaction of the two polar forces of the universe—yin and yang—referred to in unison as the “Supreme Ultimate” (Taiji 太極). But yin and yang are not only abstract principles; they are two types of qi that have their own essence. It is the blending of these essences that creates physical manifestations.

Essence is here used interchangeably with “water” (shui 水). These terms both have concrete and more abstract meanings. The literal meaning of water is of course the transparent liquid that our bodies—and all other forms of life—need to survive. In a slightly more abstract sense, water is used as a generic reference to fluids or water-like substance in general. All living organisms contain such fluids: plants, fruits, animals, and human beings. Without it we dry up, wither, and decay. Water also has a symbolic meaning as one of the five agents (wuxing 五行). Each agent is associated with a particular set of abstract qualities; water is for example related to storage, cold, and sinking movement. But the abstract and concrete meanings are not unrelated. The fluids of an organism are stored within its physical

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99 Huangdi Neijing Lingshu 黃帝內經靈樞 (The Yellow Emperor’s Inner Canon - Divine Pivot), 8-2.
100 Appendix: ZJY 3, translated from Zhang, “Benshen Pian 本神篇 (The ‘Spirit as Foundation’ Chapter).”
form. They have a cooling quality, with too much heat they dry up or evaporate. When they are not heated, fluids and water will run downwards.

The commentary says that heaven generates water. This is not abstract metaphysics but alludes to the falling of rain from the sky. In the Inner Canon texts there are many references to the water cycle of nature. For example in Basic Question chapter 5 it says: “The qi of the earth rises and turns into clouds; the qi of heaven descends and becomes rain” (diqi shang wei yun, tianqi xia wei yu 地氣上為雲，天氣下為雨). In the commentary above, earth is also said to give form. This statement too has a concrete meaning. After a rainfall the seeds in the ground will sprout and grow into all kinds of vegetation. The meanings of heaven and earth are thus closely attached to this concrete depiction of fertilization and growth.

All these associations of water, fluids, and fertilization are thus embedded in Zhang Jingyue’s understanding of essence. Essence is a being’s most concentrated and pure form. In Chinese medicine it is considered the most precious and refined substance of the body. It is also the basis of all reproductive fluids. This means semen in men and menses, foetus-nourishing blood, and breast milk in women. So we see that the quotation “when male and female join their essence” (nan nu goujing 男女構精) is in fact an explicit reference to sexual intercourse and reproduction. When the essence of the father is blended with that of the mother an embryo is created. The embryo is like a seed in the soil. Nourished by the mother’s essences in her womb the foetus gradually develops into a complete being. Just as the rain of heaven initiates life and the nutrients of earth makes it grow and take shape. This is Zhang Jingyue’s interpretation of the statement “the origin of life is called essence.” Step by step he takes us from cosmology to biology to physiology—poetically demonstrating the concrete meanings of abstract principles.

3.1.2 The Manifestation of Life

Essence is the body’s most precious and refined substance, the root of one’s one being and the potential for creating new life. It contains the inherited properties from the parents that determine one’s basic constitution and development throughout life. Essence is therefore the basis of a person’s physical and mental capacities. The next statement in Qi Bo’s

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101 Huangdi Neijing Suwen 黃帝內經素聞 (The Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon - Basic Questions), 5·2.
102 For more details on these meanings of essence in early Chinese history see Lo, “The Han Period,” 42-45.
103 Wiseman and Feng, A Practical Dictionary of Chinese Medicine, 178-179.
explanation talks about the origin of the “spirit” (shen 神). It says: “The merging of the two essences is called spirit” (liangjing xiangbo weizhi shen 兩精相搏謂之神).\textsuperscript{105} Zhang Jingyue’s annotation to this statement reads:

兩精者，陰陽之精也。搏，交結也。易曰：天數五，地數五。五位相得而各有合。周子曰：二五之精，妙合而凝。是皆兩精相搏之謂。凡萬物生成之道，莫不陰陽交而後神明見。故人之生也，必合陰陽之氣，構父母之精，兩精相搏，形神乃成，所謂天地合氣，命之曰人也。

The two essences are the essences of yin and yang. 搏 means to “connect with.” The Book of Changes says: “Heaven has five numbers, earth has five numbers. These five are mutually exchanging yet each have their own unity.” Master Zhou states: “The essence of the two [polarities] and five [agents] subtly unite and congeal.”\textsuperscript{107} These [sayings] all refer to the merging of the two essences. Concerning the life-giving Way of the myriad beings, there is none that do no [rely on] the exchange between yin and yang and the following appearance of the spirit-brilliance. Hence, as for the life of humans, there must be a union of the yin and yang qi, a joining of the essences of the father and mother. When the two essences merge then the [bodily] form and the spirit are formed, this is the so-called “heaven and earth uniting [their] qi”—what we have named “human beings.”\textsuperscript{108}

The numerology and hexagrams of the Book of Changes was one of Zhang Jingyue’s specializations and as we have seen he often refers to it. In his opinion the Inner Canon and the Book of Changes complemented each other’s meanings and should preferably be studied together. The Book of Changes explained the subtleties of yin and yang, while the medical classics dealt with their operational mechanisms.\textsuperscript{109} In the above annotation there is also a quote from the Taiji Tushuo (太极图说), a philosophical work by the Song scholar Zhou Dunyi 周敦颐 (1017-1073). Using different classics to explain each other was a common style of textual interpretation (yongjing jiejing 用經解經).\textsuperscript{110} Intertextuality was a form of syncretism. By highlighting the similarity with other established works, medical theories could reinforce their validity. They became further specifications of concepts that were already culturally accepted. So by quoting these works Zhang Jingyue provides us with the

\textsuperscript{104} According to the HDC and CTM dictionary xiangbo 相搏 can mean to struggle, to be close, or to contend with each other. These meanings all reflect a type of movement and interaction. Unschuld’s translation reads “When two essences clash that is called spirit.” Zhang Jingyue says in his annotation that 搏 means to “connect with” (jiaojie 交結). I translate it as “merge.”

\textsuperscript{105} Divine Pivot, “Spirit as Foundation,” translation from Appendix.

\textsuperscript{106} The HDC has “mutual relations” (huxiang lianluo 互相聯絡) and “getting along” (bici touhe 彼此投合) as two of its explanations.

\textsuperscript{107} The quotation is taken from Taiji Tushuo 太极图说 a philosophical interpretation of the Book of Changes written by Song scholar Zhou Dunyi 周敦颐 (1017-1073), “Zhou Dunyi 周敦颐.”

\textsuperscript{108} Appendix: ZJY 4.


common frame of the topic. He shows that it has also been discussed in other settings, that it is not an isolated example but something of general value. Then he presents us with the more specific medical perspectives, and sometimes also his own personal opinions.

The main theme of this annotation is the origin of the spirit. Essence alone does not constitute a living human being. What is it that gives us consciousness and makes us more than a motionless mass? In his analysis of medical history, Unschuld points out that people have always been aware that life is determined by more than just our flesh. What that factor is, has been one of the main questions in all physiological investigation. Unschuld expresses it as a formula: life = body + X. Explanations for what this X is—and how it relates to the body—have obviously varied throughout human history. In Chinese medical theory, this is called “spirit” (shen 神).

As we learn from Qi Bo’s statement and Zhang Jingyue’s comment to it, the spirit is created out of the parents combined essences together with the [bodily] form. It is not described as some external, supernatural force that takes possession over the body. On the contrary it arises from within the organism itself, triggered by the merging of physical substances and the creation of a new physical form. When the essences of the parents are mixed their inherent life potential is released—this potential becomes the spirit. Spirit is the manifestation of life. It is what animates the body. It is therefore not only an aspect of human physiology, but the igniting power that drives it.

3.1.3 A Transformation of Qi Rooted in Essence

Now we know that the spirit originates from the fusion of essence that creates the [bodily] form. The [bodily] form and its substances are associated with yin. The yin aspects of an organism provide the material basis for its activities and functions. The functional aspects are associated with yang and realized through the transformations of qi (qihua 氣化).

There is no good equivalent to qi 氣 in European languages. Since qi is one of the core concept in Chinese medical theory and also the general philosophical discourse, many interpretations of its meaning coexisted. On a basic level, though, we may note that qi is not necessarily something completely immaterial. The traditional character shows “steam over rice,” signifying that qi—although used to describe the invisible forces within and around us—was seen to arise from a material basis. Unschuld has therefore proposed “finest matter

influence” as a possible translation. What is the relationship between essence and qi? Zhang Jingyue explains it thus:

 [...] 精能化氣也。氣聚則生,氣散則死,然則死生在氣,而氣本於精。

Essence can be transformed into qi. When qi is gathered then [one] is alive, when qi is scattered then [one] dies. And therefore life and death depends on qi, whereas qi is rooted in essence.

In this comment essence does not mean only the reproductive fluids. It refers to all the nutritional substances in the body. The essence of a human being consists of two parts. It has a congenital aspect, the so-called “pre-heaven essence” (xiantian zhi jing 先天之精), which is derived directly from your parents. After birth this essence must be supplemented by “post-heaven essence” (houtian zhi jing 後天之精) extracted from food. Together these essences generate qi. Qi is responsible for the vitality of the body and must be preserved within the organism for there to be life. The same can be said about the spirit. How then are these two aspects related? Zhang Jingyue explains it clearly in one of the appendixes to the Categories of the Canons:

夫形氣者，陽化氣，陰成形，是形本屬陰，而凡通體之溫者，陽氣也；一生之活者，陽氣也；五官五臟之神明不測者，陽氣也。及其既死，則身冷如冰，靈覺盡滅，形固存而氣則去，此以陽脱在前，而陰留在後，是形氣陰陽之辨也。

Now, as for the [bodily] form and qi: yang transforms into qi, yin becomes [bodily] form. This means that the [bodily] form is originally yin whereas the animation of a whole life is yang-qi, the warmth of the entire body is yang-qi, [and] the unfathomable spirit-brilliance of the five senses and the five viscera is yang-qi. After dying, then the body [becomes] cold as ice, the consciousness [is] completely extinguished, the solid [bodily] form remains but the qi has departed. It is because yang leaves first and yin is left behind, that is the distinction between [bodily] form and qi, yin and yang.

We see here that qi is responsible for all the functional aspects of the body. It ensures the distribution of warmth, the vitality throughout life, and all sensory and perceptive functions. The spirit is thus one of the manifestations of qi. More precisely: a transformation of qi rooted in essence. Qi is what performs activity, spirit is what directs it.

112 Unschuld, Medicine in China: A History of Ideas, 72.
113 Appendix: ZJY 25.
114 See further up in the same annotation.
115 Wiseman and Feng, A Practical Dictionary of Chinese Medicine, 178-179.
116 Zhang, “Dabao lun 大寶論 (Discourse on the Great Treasure)” in Leijing Fuyi 類經附翼 (Wings to the Categories of the Canons), fascicle 3.
3.1.4 The Inherent Regulation of the Body

So far we have seen that the spirit originates from the transformation of essence and qi, and this is what ties it to the body. Now we shall look at the basic properties of the spirit itself. The term spirit appears in many different contexts. Chinese scholars speak of its broad and narrow meanings. In this chapter we shall first concentrate on its general aspects. In the broadest sense, spirit refers to more than our subjective consciousness. In his comments to the “Spirit as Foundation” chapter, Zhang Jingyue provides a well of quotations to describe the various meanings of spirit. Here is one excerpt of it:

The Huainanzi says: “Someone may ask: ‘[what does] spirit [mean]?’ Reply: ‘[it means the] heart.’ ‘Please, may [I] hear about it?’ Reply: ‘It is latent in heaven and [is] heaven; it is latent in earth and [is] earth. Heaven, earth, and the spirit-brilliance are the unfathomable.”

The Huangting Jing says: The Ultimate Way [lies in] the effortless secret of true existence. The ‘little clay ball’ [i.e., the brain] and the ‘hundred joints’ all have spirit.

The Jindan Dayao says: “The heart is the ruler of the whole body, the ‘ten thousand spirits’ [all] follow its orders. Therefore the ‘void intelligence’ and consciousness gives life and extinguishes [life], complies with occasions and responds to circumstances, [is present in] the unceasing changes and transformations, ten thousand [places] in a flash, [in] dreaming and sleeping—in every possible way. Moreover, [it] can foresee the future, speculate about disaster and fortune, [is] big [enough to encompass] the world and the [whole] country, [and] small [enough to get to] the remotest [places] and [tiniest] cracks—[it] reaches everywhere. That being so, [where] the spirit arrives the heart must arrive, [and] where the heart resides the spirit also resides.”

Obviously the spirit was not only a concept discussed by medical theoreticians. These quotations are retrieved from Daoist writings of various periods in Chinese history. Zhang Jingyue clearly meant that they could be used to supplement medical descriptions of the spirit. The quotes refer to a number of different concepts at the same time. What we shall concentrate on here is one aspect that all these citations seem to point at: the spirit as an inherent form of self-regulation.

118 I could not find this quote in the Huainanzi of the ctex.org, but it appears in the TLS archives in Yangzi Fayan 揚子法言, Vol. 5. My translation.
119 Early Daoist text, possibly composed somewhere between 2nd and 4th century CE. My translation.
120 The HDC says that the “little clay ball” (niwan 泥丸) is a Daoist term for the “brain and Spirit” (naoshen 腦神).
122 A Daoist text written by Chen Zhixuan 陳致虚 in the Yuan dynasty. My translation.
123 Appendix: ZJY 4.
Let us start with the idea of something being “latent” (qian 潛). Other possible translations are “implicit; hidden; below the surface.” When something is latent it means that something has an inherent inclination to develop in a certain way—like an unconscious intentionality. The quotation says that spirit is latent and manifested in heaven and earth. Since heaven and earth encompass all creations of the universe, this means that spirit is inherently present in all creative processes. Things do not randomly take form. Their development is not completely arbitrary. They must have some kind of embedded inner regulation. Some latent mechanism that makes rain fall from the clouds when they get too heavy and the human embryo becomes a person and not a tiger or monkey.

This point is further emphasized by the next citation which associates the spirit with the “effortless secret of true existence” (bufan jue cun zhen 不煩訣存真). This implies that all things have the capacity to unfold by themselves without external influence or manipulation. In a comment to another passage in the Basic Questions, Zhang Jingyue refers to the spirit as “that which is made without anything making it” (莫之為而為者). He says that this is said with regard to the “Way of heaven,” meaning all processes of the universe and nature.

But the quotations do not only speak of abstract metaphysics. The texts also explicitly say that the brain, the hundred joints, and the whole body have spirit. This means that the spirit is responsible for both the conscious and subconscious regulation of our entire being. The heart for example beats by itself without any conscious effort on our behalf. The same goes for breathing, digestion, healing of wounds and so on. These are all basically self-regulatory functions. When it says that there is “ten thousand spirits” in the body, this means that its manifestations are uncountable. What we are able to recognize is merely a fraction of it.

So the spirit is something inherently present in all individuals and processes of life. It has both a metaphysical and psycho-physiological meaning. In the broadest sense, it refers to a governing principle within all organisms—that which initiates and makes processes unfold in a certain way. In human beings it is responsible for the inherent regulation of the body as well as all cognitive-emotional functions.

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124 SCM dictionary.
125 Zhang, “Leijing,” fascicle 23, chap. 3.
3.1.5 An Elevated Form of Consciousness

In the same annotation, these two basic functions of the human spirit are articulated even more precisely when Zhang Jingyue offers his own definition:

In my humble opinion, spirit is the transformations of [one’s] brightest intelligence—simply “the [regulating] principle of qi” that is all. Principle relies on qi to be performed; qi is manifested along with the [bodily] form. Wherever the regulation of qi reaches, that is where yin and yang resides. The place yin and yang resides, that is where spirit-brilliance is located. Thus it is said: “Yin and yang, [they are] the mansion of the spirit-brilliance. The “Comprehensive Discourse on Arrangements of the Principal [Qi] of Heaven” chapter states: “The unfathomable [aspects] of yin and yang is called spirit. The chapter “Comprehensive Discourse on Changes [resulting from] Qi Interaction” says: “Those who can speak of transformation and changes, they [are able to] penetrate the [governing] principles of the spirit-brilliance.” The Book of Changes states: “Those who comprehend the Way of change and transformation they really understand the workings of the spirit!” These are all meanings of spirit.

Zhang Jingyue says that spirit is the “regulating principle of qi” (liqi 理氣). Usually li 理 is translated as the intrinsic principle, pattern, or order of something. The meaning and relationship of li 理 and qi 氣 was thoroughly discussed both before and during Zhang Jingyue’s time (especially by different fractions of Neo-Confucian thinkers). As a well-informed intellectual he would certainly have been familiar with these discourses. However, in this context liqi 理氣 takes on a more verbal meaning, something like “regulating qi [according to an inner principle].” Ergo it refers to the same self-regulatory functions we talked about in the previous section.

The other part of Zhang Jingyue’s definition of the spirit says that it is the “transformations of one’s brightest intelligence” (lingming zhi hua 靈明之化). Since the sentence is ended by the construction “simply… that is all” (無非…而已), we may presume that what he is saying should be easy to understand. In other words, he is not referring to something mysterious beyond comprehension. I therefore translate the compound lingming...
靈明 with the meaning of “intelligence” (as in the HDC explanation congming 聰明, zhihui 智慧). The character līng 靈 can denote both a metaphysical spiritual power or refer to a person’s cleverness and intelligence. Ming 明 means clarity, brilliance, and enlightenment and is often related to a higher level of perception. When Zhang Jingyue says the spirit is the transformations of such qualities, it means all normal cognitive functions but also the potential of more elevated forms of perception and understanding. This higher level of consciousness is referred to as “spirit-brilliance” (shenming 神明). Those who have realized this potential are able to “speak of transformation and changes” and “penetrate” the deeper reality of things.

3.1.6 The Distinction of the Human Spirit

In a paradigm that emphasizes the correlation and unity of all things, distinctions can be difficult to identify. Was there any perceived difference between human beings and other living creatures? Chapter 70 of the Basic Questions talks of the internal “spirit-mechanism” (shenji 神機) which has to do with such differentiation:

根於中者，命曰神機，神去則機息；根於外者，命曰氣立，氣止則化絕根於中者，命曰神機，神去則機息；根於外者，命曰氣立，氣止則化絕

Those who are rooted on the inside are named spirit-mechanisms; when the spirit departs then [their] mechanism ceases. Those who are rooted on the outside are named qi-establishments; when the qi halts then [their] transformation stops.\(^{130}\)

In the annotation to this passage, Zhang Jingyue explains that this internal spirit-mechanism is what separates animals from plants:

物之根於中者，以神為之主，而其知覺運動，即神機之所發也，故神去則機亦隨而息矣。物之根於外者，必假外氣以成立，而其生長收藏，即氣化之所立也，故氣止則化亦隨而絕矣。所以動物之神去即死，植物之皮剝即死，此其生化之根，動植之有異也。

Beings that are rooted on the inside are governed by the spirit, and thus their consciousness and movements are exactly the expression of [their] spirit-mechanism. Hence, when [their] spirit departs then [their] mechanism also subsequently ceases.

Beings that are rooted on the outside, they must borrow external qi to be established, and thus their birth, growth, collection, and storage are precisely the manifestation of [their] qi transformations. Hence, when [their] qi halts then [their] transformation also subsequently stops. That is why animals die when their spirits depart, and plants die when their skin is flayed. Such are the roots of their birth and transformation—the difference between animals and plants.\(^{131}\)

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\(^{130}\) My translation, Unschuld and Tessenow, Basic Questions Vol. 2, chap. 70, 344-345.

\(^{131}\) Zhang, “Leijing,” fascicle 25, chap. 15.
This comment elaborates on the concrete distinction between plants and animals, qi and spirit. Plants are qi-establishments. They transform as an automatic response to the surrounding environment: sunlight, humidity, temperature, and soil fertility. They are stationary and therefore completely at the mercy of their outer milieu. Animals (including people) are spirit-mechanisms which mean that they have their own inner regulatory system. This gives them consciousness and the ability to move. These capacities indicate a higher degree of self-determination. They can to some extent choose how to interact with the surroundings.

This leads us to the next question: is there any distinction between the spirit of human beings and animals? In the comments to the “Spirit as Foundation” chapter Zhang Jingyue touches upon this issue:

然萬物之神, 隨象而應, 人身之神, 惟心所主。故本經曰：心藏神。又曰：心者君主之官，神明出焉。此即吾身之元神也。

However, the spirit of the myriad beings responds in accordance with images, [whereas] the spirit of the human body is governed by the heart alone. Therefore the original classic [i.e., the Inner Canon] says. “The heart stores the spirit.” It also says: “The heart holds the office of monarch, whence spirit-brilliance emanates.” This is exactly one’s own original spirit.132

To “respond in accordance with images” (sui xiang er ying 隨象而應), seems to imply a more direct and externally triggered type of response. One could say that animals respond more instinctively, that their behaviour reflects how they perceive what is currently before them. These responses are still mediated by their spirit, but through its more subconscious mechanisms.

The human spirit, Zhang Jingyue says, is “governed by the heart alone” (wei xin suo zhu 惟心所主). This means that it can be consciously regulated, intentional, and self-reflexive. Because the spirit is stored by the heart, these abilities are preserved over time and therefore not only temporary sensations and responses. The capacity to manage complex cognitive processes—expressed through the concept of spirit-brilliance—is another distinguishing feature of the human mind. It is also uniquely manifested in each person. All human beings have their own original spirit (wushen zhi yuanshen 吾身之元神).

In this section we have analysed the basic meanings of essence, qi, and spirit as they are presented in Zhang Jingyue’s annotations of the Inner Canon. These concepts are often

132 Appendix: ZJY 4.
referred to as the “three treasures” (sanbao 三寶),\(^\text{133}\) because they constitute the foundation of human life. We have observed that each of these concepts in fact has a combined psychosomatic meaning. Essence is the structural basis of the body and mind, the inherited potential for a person’s physical and mental development. Qi is responsible for the execution of these transformations, the driving force behind all physiological and psychological processes. Spirit is a transformation of qi rooted in essence. It is manifested in our individual consciousness and cognitive-emotional abilities, but also in the self-regulation of all bodily functions. Therefore one cannot speak of psychology or physiology in Chinese medicine without including both aspects. In extension, these concepts are also linked to processes and phenomena in nature. The both abstract and concrete associations brought forth by such comparisons work to highlight certain aspects of the body and mind. The psychology in Chinese medicine therefore has to be understood in relation to both physiology and cosmology.

This kind of overlap may seem strange to many modern readers; people are used to separate academic disciplines and specialization. This may in fact become a hindrance to our understanding of historical material such as Chinese medical literature. The inclination towards clear distinctions may cause us to either overemphasize or overlook certain aspects. The result might be a “psychologization,” “physiologization,” or just a one-dimensional emphasis on either the cultural, political, or philosophical elements. But as we have seen from the previous examples, Chinese medical theory does not fit such either/or categorization. From a holistic perspective that emphasizes the interconnection of all things, such a division would be unthinkable.

### 3.2 Spirit and Form: The Embodied Mind

In the *Inner Canon* texts there are many passages that describe the ideal state of mind and how to achieve this. Looking closer, we may see that such statements often contain a recurring set of verb phrases. These phrases exemplify what we discussed earlier in regard to metaphorical structuring. Metaphors help organize complex and abstract phenomena into something that can be spoken about. Such cognitive organization is not only reflected in the main configuration of concepts, but also in less noticeable elements such as verbs. In the

medical canons it is repeatedly stated that the spirit should be “stored” (cang 藏), “housed” (she 舍), “protected” (shou 守), “collected” (shou 收), “completed” (quan 全), and “unified” (he 合). These verbs all indicate a type of containment—the Spirit is an internal component contained by an external structure. Once we have seen this, we notice that the same idea is expressed in the descriptions of pathological conditions. When things go bad the spirit may become “scattered” (san 散), “dissipated” (dang 漁), “separated” (li 離), “departed” (qu 去), “unpreserved” (bucun 不存) etc. In the previous section we saw that the spirit originates from essence and qi. But which structure insures the unification, protection, and preservation of these three components? On the most general level it is the “[bodily] form” (xing 形). Within this form: the various visceral organs. We shall start by looking into the former and its relationship to the spirit.

3.2.1 The Outer Form and Inner Condition

In *Basic Questions* chapter 26 there is a passage describing the basic nature of the bodily form and the spirit. The context of the excerpt is a discussion of what separates the “superior practitioner” (shanggong 上工) from the “inferior practitioner” (xiagong 下工). The “superior practitioner” is someone who can “stop a disease before it fully develops.” He understands the inner mechanisms and deeper connections of things, and can see clearly that which to others is barely detectable. The “inferior practitioner” has not developed these abilities and can therefore only attempt to “rescue what is already ruined.” So is the difference between simply experiencing something and truly understanding it.

Phenomena may be experienced in many ways. Some have a visible form and touchable texture, like the shape of our bodies. Others, like our thoughts and feelings, are invisible yet clearly detectable. But regardless of the degree of tangibility, sensory perception alone cannot reveal the complete reality of our bodies and minds. How do we explain and deal with things that are not fully displayed? This has been one of the enduring challenges of medicine. In the following original passage, we shall get a glimpse of how the problem was perceived by some of the early Chinese physicians. Simultaneously we get to see how the basic nature of the body and mind was understood: 134

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然夫子數言形與神，
“[Huangdi said:] Now Sir, you have spoken several times of the bodily form and the spirit.

何謂形，
What does it mean: ‘bodily form’?

何謂神，
What does it mean: ‘spirit’?

願卒聞之。
I should like to hear about it comprehensively.” ①

岐伯曰：
Qi Bo said:

請言形，
“Please, let me speak about the bodily form.

形乎形，
The bodily form, ah, the bodily form!

目冥冥，
For the eyes it is obscure. ②

問其所病，
One inquires about its diseases,

索之於經，
one searches for them in the channels. 135

慧然在前，
Clearly perceivable in front of one,

按之不得，
[yet] by pressing it one does not obtain [an understanding],

不知其情，
one cannot know its [complete] condition. 136

故曰形。
Hence one speaks of ‘bodily form.’” ③

帝曰：
[Huang] Di:

何謂神。
“What does ‘spirit’ mean?”

岐伯曰：
Qi Bo:

請言神，
“Please, let me speak about the spirit.

神乎神，
The spirit, ah, the spirit!

耳不聞，
The ears do not hear [it]. ④

目明心開，
[Yet] when the [physician’s] eyes are clear and his heart is open,

而志先，
and his intent-mind leads ahead, ⑤

慧然獨悟，
it becomes] clearly perceivable to him alone.

口弗能言，
[But] the mouth cannot speak [of it]. ⑥

俱視獨見，
Everyone looks, [but] he alone sees [it]. ⑥

適若昏，
When approaching it, it seems dim,

昭然獨明，
[yet it is] clearly illuminated to him alone. ⑦

若風吹雲，
as if the wind had blown away the clouds.

故曰神。
Hence one speaks of ‘spirit.’” ⑧

何謂形。
“bodily form” (xing 形) 137 chosen here? There are many other terms in classical Chinese that also denote the body. 138 Several of them appear in the Inner Canon texts; in addition to “bodily form” there are also “body [person]” (shen 身), 139 “body
and various combinations of these three characters. Bodily form, however, is the most frequently used term. We find it in contexts where the body is referred to in a general way or when the body-mind relationship is discussed. Then it is always contrasted with the spirit. Zhang Jingyue has these comments to the passage above:  

① 形可見, 神不可見。易曰形乃謂之器, 利用出入, 民咸用之謂之神。

The bodily form is visible, the spirit is invisible. The Book of Changes states: “What has bodily form they [the sages] called a receptacle. [...] That which can profit from exiting and entering, [and] is employed by all people, they called the spirit.”  

② 形乎形, 見乎外也。目冥冥, 見粗者不見其精也。

The bodily form, ah, the bodily form; [it is something that] can be seen from the outside. For the eyes it is obscure, [means that] one can see [its] rough material not its [finer] essence.

So the bodily form is what we can see with our eyes. It is the outer shape, the surface appearance of things. And it is a “receptacle,” a container that is filled with something, and from which hidden material can enter and exit. It has this double function of exhibiting and concealing at the same time. One can perceive certain things from the outside, but “one cannot know its [complete] condition.” Hence it is “obscure.” The bodily form is like an outer border, a barrier, something that limits the physician’s vision. But it is not an empty, lifeless shell. There is a continuous exchange between the exterior and the interior. Reflections of the internal processes can be detected on the outside by those who have cultivated the right skills. As we see from the original passage, diagnosis was not considered a question of mere theoretical speculation; there were specific methods to be learned. Some are mentioned: verbal inquiry (wen 問), visual inspection (jian 見), and channel palpation (suo 索). These are still primary diagnostic methods in Chinese medicine. Zhang Jingyue’s comments read:

③ 所病有因, 可問而知, 所在有經, 可索而察, 則似乎慧然在前矣; 然仍按之不得者, 在見其形而不知其情耳。形者, 跡也。

it can often mean “generalized,” as in “generalized fever” (shen re 身熱). It can also mean just the trunk of the body (without the head and limbs).

140 Ti 體 seems to emphasize the internal structure of the body. In particular, there is an association with the skeleton, as in the expressions “body stature” (guti 骨體) or “body posture” (titai 體態). In some cases it refers only to the limbs (si ti 四體).


142 My translation, adapted from Wilhelm, The I Ching, 318.
For diseases there are causes, if one inquires one can understand [them]; for the location [of diseases] there are channels, if one searches one can examine [them]; then [it will be] as if it was [all] clearly perceivable in front of one. However, when pressing it there is no obtainment; one can observe a person’s bodily form, yet still not grasp his condition. The bodily form is a trace.

Inquiry, inspection, and palpation are ways to get an overview—to gather the empirical findings. But they are not sufficient by themselves. To reach a deeper understanding these skills must be combined with something else. The bodily form is a “trace” (ji 跡), Zhang Jingyue says. The term can also be translated as “indication” or “sign.” But what does that mean exactly—a trace, sign, or indication of what? For the physician to recognize a pathological process at its beginning, he must understand the inner mechanisms of the body: what governs and triggers its changes. And because he cannot look inside (or see that which is too fine to be detected by the human eyes), he must be able to interpret the signs that manifest on the outside.

3.2.2 The Unification of Sensory and Mental Perception

This is where the spirit comes into the picture. But whose spirit were they talking about? Zhang Jingyue’s comments read:

④神乎神, 二而一也。耳不聞, 聽於無聲也。

The spirit, ah, the spirit; [they are] two yet [they] are [like] one. The ears do not hear [it], [means that] one must listen for [it] in the soundless.

The first sentence is somewhat mysterious. Judging by the structure of it, he seems to offer an explanation to the phrase “spirit, ah, the spirit!” by saying “two yet one” (A = B 也). If we consider the context and the sentences that followed in the original passage, the meaning of his explanation becomes more comprehensible. In the part that talks about the spirit, two phenomena are described. One is the spirit of other people (patients), which is a part of their inner workings, and thus something that must be understood in order to fully grasp their condition. It is difficult to perceive, even more than the bodily form, because the spirit has no visible shape. It cannot be touched or inspected, so the physician must employ other methods to observe it. That is the second phenomenon, the spirit of the physician himself. Somehow these two must be unified (“[they are] two yet [they] are [like] one”). To understand something you needed to become one with the object of your attention. Sensory perception has to be guided by a deeper, inner experience of the world. This type of non-dualistic, self-reflexive awareness was a familiar concept that by the Ming era had been thoroughly discussed by both Chan Buddhists as well as Neo-Confucian thinkers like Wang
Yangming.\textsuperscript{143} Zhang Jingyue was quite certainly familiar with these discourses. As we shall see later, he often refers to this mode of understanding in relation to psychological phenomena and complex conditions.

This idea of unification also comes out in Zhang Jingyue’s grammatical interpretations. It seems like he does not take the phrase “spirit, ah, the spirit!” as a poetic exclamation,\textsuperscript{144} but in a more literal way meaning “spirit to spirit.”\textsuperscript{145} We cannot know if this was the intended meaning of the Basic Question’s passage. But if my reading of Zhang Jingyue’s comment is correct, then the structure of his explanation makes even more sense (spirit to spirit; they are two yet they are like one). If so, we may also need to adjust how we understand his “bodily form, ah, the bodily form!” Perhaps this too should be read as “bodily form to bodily form; [it is something that] can be seen from the outside.” The reading is plausible, because what follow after that in the original passage, is a description of how to investigate the patient’s physical condition by means of the practitioner’s physical abilities (touch, sight, speech).

Anyhow, more is said about the operations of the spirit. If sensory perception is not enough to grasp the inner condition of patients, which other capacities must then be employed? The original passage says that the physician’s eyes must be clear and his heart open, and his “intent-mind” (\textit{zhi} 志) must lead ahead. Zhang Jingyue makes this comment:

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{5} 目著明，心藏神，心竇開則志慧出而神明見。
\end{quote}

If the eyes are clear, the heart stores the spirit, [and] the heart orifices are open, then intention and intelligence will come forth and the spirit-brilliance will manifest [itself].

Here he expands the meaning of individual terms (heart, intent-mind) and links them with other concepts (spirit, heart orifices, intelligence, spirit-brilliance). The original phrase “the heart [must be] open” (xin kai 心開) is given two parallel interpretations: first it is linked to the heart’s function of “storing the spirit,” then to the actual openings of the physical organ (heart orifices). Both these interpretations have a double psycho-physiological meaning. “The heart stores the spirit” emphasizes that the functions of the mind are maintained by a bodily organ. That “the heart orifices [must be] open” points to the necessity of not blocking the circulation to the heart, something that in the later medical discourse was considered a

\textsuperscript{143} Unschuld, \textit{Medicine in China: A History of Ideas}, 196-197.

\textsuperscript{144} With the character 乎 meaning ‘ah!’

\textsuperscript{145} 乎 read with a meaning similar to the particle 于 (to; at; with).
potential cause of both physical and mental illness.\textsuperscript{146} In other philosophical literature, \textit{xin kai} 心開 could have been given a more abstract interpretation, something like “broad-mindedness.” Zhang Jingyue does not need to exclude any of these meanings; they overlap and can expand each other’s scope. Yet as a physician his main focus is on explaining the mechanisms involved in the body-mind relationship. But as early physicians also noted, not everything can be expressed by words. A profound understanding can only arise from the internal synthesis of one’s own knowledge and experience:

\begin{quote}
口弗能言，妙不可以言傳也，故與眾俱視，惟吾獨見。
\end{quote}

The mouth cannot speak [of it], [means that the] subtle cannot be transmitted by words. Hence [it] can be looked upon by all, [but] only I [the superior practitioner] alone can [truly] see [it].

\begin{quote}
觀於冥冥，適若昏也。無所見而見之，昭然明也。
\end{quote}

Looking at it, [it is] dusky, [that is the meaning of] when approaching it, it seems dim. When there is nothing to look at and still one see it; that is [the meaning of] clearly illuminated.

\begin{quote}
若風吹雲，宇宙清而光明見也。豁然了悟，人則在心，至哉莫測，故謂之神。
\end{quote}

As if the wind had blown away the clouds; [means that] the universe appears clear and radiant. A sudden realization in the human heart, reaching the utmost unfathomable, hence we call it ‘spirit.’

In these sentences the spirit again refers to something more elevated than the normal capacity of reasoning. It is a higher state of perception that unifies all the sensory and cognitive abilities. In such cases it is often combined with the character \textit{ming} 明 which has the meaning of clarity, illumination, brightness, and enlightenment. Spirit-brilliance (\textit{shenming} 神明) thus represents the highest level of consciousness. In order for the physician to reach this state, his body and mind must be \textit{stable} (spirit stored), \textit{unrestrained} (heart orifices open), and \textit{keenly perceptive} (clear vision). On that basis, he can use his knowledge and intelligence to guide the diagnostic process, “his intent-mind leads ahead” (\textit{zhi xian} 志先). Finally, the spirit-brilliance must be employed to process and evaluate all the empirical data. In that way the physician can reach an understanding that relies on—yet goes beyond—pure craftsmanship. In this section we have seen that the emphasis on connectedness does not mean there are no distinctions. The body and mind could indeed be discussed as a contrast. What we must be

\textsuperscript{146} See for example Li Dongyuan’s comment on psycho-emotional diseases in Flaws and Lake, “A Brief History of Chinese Medical Psychiatry,” 7.
aware of, however, is that difference and contrast do not mean the same in all cultural contexts.

Roger Ames makes an interesting distinction between the perspectives of dualism and polarism. From a dualistic angle, contrasts are seen as reflecting fundamental differences—something is either material or immaterial, soma or psyche. This perspective has been dominating in western philosophical discourses, hence the “body-mind problem” and Cartesian dualism. As a consequence, the physical realm became the domain of the natural sciences while the mental realm was mostly left to the humanities (or religion). This gap still exists to some extent, and therefore one may get the impression that psychology and physiology do not belong to the same field.

In classical Chinese complementarism, binary distinctions were instead interpreted from the angle of polarity. This perspective is most clearly exemplified by the doctrine of yin and yang which is based on a different premise: the idea of contrast within a unity. As Ames explains “[…] since all existents fall on a shared continuum differing in degree rather that in kind, the distinctions which obtain them are only qualitative.” By qualitative distinctions he means things like “thick and thin” (hou 厚 bo 薄), “clear and turbid” (qing 清 zhuo 濁) etc. Such distinctions are precisely what we have observed in the examples we have analysed so far. The bodily form, essence, qi, and spirit are just variables on a continuum of transformation. The difference between them relates to their degree of density—with the bodily form and the spirit at each end of the scale—and the essence and qi as transformative stages in between. Even when distinctions are made they are framed by the overarching idea of interdependence and symbiosis. As a general comment to how the body-mind relationship was perceived in classical Chinese thought Ames concludes: “It was not that the Chinese thinkers were able to “reconcile” this dichotomy; rather it did not arise.”

One of the characteristics of yin-yang and five agents’ theory is that any phenomenon can be part of a larger concept and at the same time be differentiated into even smaller units. On all levels things are defined by their relation to other phenomena. Distinctiveness and unity are therefore just two sides of the same object. In his comments to the “Spirit as Foundation” chapter Zhang Jingyue also alludes to this doubleness of things.

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150 Appendix: ZJY 4.
易曰：天數五，地數五。五位相得而各有合。周子曰：二五之精，妙合而凝。

The Book of Changes says: “Heaven has five numbers, earth has five numbers. These five are **mutually exchanging** yet each have their own enclosure.” Master Zhou states: “The essence of the two [polarities] and five [agents] subtly unite and congeal.”

Clearly both the yin-yang and five agents’ doctrine were used to differentiate and categorize phenomena. For medical thinkers, the emphasis of oneness did not mean seeing the body and mind simply as one indistinguishable mass, but rather to understand as clearly as possible how the various subparts contributed to the shared existence of the organism as a whole. Different elements could therefore be “mutually exchanging yet have their own enclosure.” The same could have been said about the five viscera, the five spirits, or indeed any other classifications within Chinese medical doctrine. In fact, it could also work as a basic definition of the body-mind relationship.

### 3.3 Visceral Manifestations: Psychology within the Living Body

In this part we shall examine the more detailed differentiations and connections of the body-mind complex. Particularly, we shall see how psychological phenomena are related to the dynamic processes of the living body and the organ systems referred to as the “viscera and bowels” (*zangfu* 脏腑).

#### 3.3.1 Visceral Manifestations

As we saw in the previous section, the bodily form was not just described as a container but also a *trace, sign, or indication* of the hidden, internal processes. This understanding of the body is further developed in the model of “visceral manifestations” (*zangxiang* 臟象) which Unschuld translates as “the reflection of the condition of the inner organs in secondary body parts.”

The systematization of the visceral manifestations is like an internal structure of Chinese medical physiology. It organizes anatomical structures, physiological functions, and psychological phenomena into five main systems—each governed by one of the five visceral

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151 The HDC has “mutual relations” (*huxiang lianluo* 互相联络) and “getting along” (*bici touhe* 彼此投合) as two of its explanations.

152 The quotation is taken from Taiji Tushuo 太极图说 a philosophical work interpreting the Book of Changes written by Song scholar Zhou Dunyi 周敦颐 (1017-1073), see “Zhou Dunyi 周敦颐.”

organs. These five systems are further associated with other yin-yang and five agents classifications of natural phenomena. Such correspondences are discussed many different places in the *Inner Canon* corpus. This correlations became the foundation of the medical doctrine and all later discourse on organ physiology. The main elements of this categorization are provided in table 3.1 and 3.2.

**Table 3.1** Schematic representation of the system of “visceral manifestations”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Viscus</th>
<th>Bowel</th>
<th>Body structure</th>
<th>External tissue</th>
<th>Body fluid</th>
<th>Orifice/ sense organ</th>
<th>Sense</th>
<th>Mental faculty</th>
<th>Mental state</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liver</td>
<td>Gall-bladder</td>
<td>Sinews</td>
<td>Nails</td>
<td>Tears</td>
<td>Eyes</td>
<td>Sight</td>
<td>Ethereal-soul</td>
<td>Anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart</td>
<td>Small intestine</td>
<td>Blood and vessels</td>
<td>Face</td>
<td>Sweat</td>
<td>Tongue</td>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>Spirit/Spirit-brilliance</td>
<td>Joy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spleen</td>
<td>Stomach</td>
<td>Flesh and limbs</td>
<td>Lips</td>
<td>Salvia</td>
<td>Mouth</td>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>Pondering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lung</td>
<td>Large intestine</td>
<td>Skin</td>
<td>Body hair</td>
<td>Nasal mucus</td>
<td>Nose</td>
<td>Smell</td>
<td>Corporal-soul</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidney</td>
<td>Bladder</td>
<td>Bones, marrow, teeth</td>
<td>Hair</td>
<td>Essence</td>
<td>Ears, urethro-genital and anal</td>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>Intent-mind</td>
<td>Fear</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.2** The organ systems and their main five agents associations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organ system</th>
<th>Five Agents Affiliation</th>
<th>Associated Quality</th>
<th>Associated Season</th>
<th>Associated Weather</th>
<th>Associated colour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liver-Gallbladder</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Wind</td>
<td>Green-blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart- Small intestine</td>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Summer-heat</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spleen-Stomach</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Transformation</td>
<td>Late-summer</td>
<td>Dampness</td>
<td>Yellow-brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lung-Large intestine</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Collection</td>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>Dryness</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidney-Bladder</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Storage</td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Cold</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

154 See for example *Suwen*, chap. 9 and 23.
The spirit is also a part of this model. As a unified concept it is governed by the heart, but certain of its functions also rely on the other visceral organs (i.e., the five spirits). These spirit aspects can therefore be considered a type of visceral manifestations.

“Manifestation” indicates some form of external visibility. In the basic presentation of the visceral manifestations it says that the heart “blooms in the face” (qi hua zai mian 其華在面). This has relevance in regard to how the spirit can be observed. Both facial expressions and complexion are seen to reflect the condition of the heart and the spirit. In her analysis of visual knowledge in Chinese medicine Shigehisa Kuriyama says: “[…] physicians studied the face in much the same way that a gardener judges the condition of plants.” The concept of outward manifestation is therefore linked to an analogy between the human organism and vegetation. The external surface of plants can give us an immediate impression of their general state. It may be smooth, shiny, and colourful. Or grey, withered, and dry. As Shigehisa also remarks, “[…] it is perhaps the colour and lustre of the blossoms and leaves that offers the subtlest and most revealing index of vitality.”

But observing the visceral manifestations is not just about skin tone or facial expressions. The condition of the heart may be expressed in the face; but the liver “blooms” in the nails (zhao 爪), the lungs in the body hair (mao 毛), the kidneys in the hair of the head (fa 髮), and the spleen in the “four white [areas around] the lips” (chun sibai 唇四白). The “fullness” (chong 充) of the viscera is manifested in the slightly more internal structures of the body (like the stem of a plant); thus the heart’s fullness is in the blood and vessels (xuemai 血脈), the liver’s is in the sinews (jin 筋), the lungs’ is in the skin (pi 皮), the kidneys’ is in the bones (gu 骨), and the spleen’s is in the muscles (ji 肌). The spirit aspect(s) is expressed not only in the face, but also in the keenness of sensory perception (sight, hearing, smell, and taste), tone of voice, responsiveness and movements, and the general vitality of the body. Such manifestations reflect the combined condition of essence, qi, and spirit. Later this was generally referred to as “having spirit” or being “spirited” (youshen 有神).

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155 Ibid.
156 For a more detailed explanation of the chun sibai 唇四白 see Wiseman and Feng, A Practical Dictionary of Chinese Medicine, 559.
157 Suwen, chap. 9·7.
158 These connections are described in various places of the Inner Canon so I cannot give one specific reference to it. Many of them will appear in quotations later in the thesis.
A proper understanding of Chinese medical physiology would require more information and explanations than can be provided here. For now it will suffice to know that when one speaks of the five viscera in medical contexts, this does not only refer to these organs as morphological entities, but to the complete organ systems they represent. The associated bodily tissues, functions, channels and vessels, and mental-emotional phenomena—are all reflections of these systems. That is the meaning of “visceral manifestations.”

For a scholar physician knowing these correspondences was elementary; something all readers of medical literature were expected to know. In the medical canons, such correspondences are often only hinted at by using certain key terms (which are either considered self-explanatory or elaborated elsewhere). When one knows the broader connotations of these concepts, the meaning of specific statements will often both expand and become more concrete. In the following sections we shall look closer at a few key terms that will help us understand the subtler nuances of the body-mind conceptualization.

3.3.2 Storage (cang 藏) and Governing (zhu 主)

To “store” means that something is not carelessly wasted or lost. It means having reserves to insure stability regardless of changing circumstances. But the immaterial spirit cannot be stored by itself; it must be enclosed by a physical structure. To be stored it must have some kind of physical manifestation. This materialization is provided by the yin aspects of the organism: the bodily form, the visceral organs, and their substances (essence and blood). If these structures and substances are intact, the body and mind will be “firm” (gu 固), “stable” (ding 定), and “secured” (an 安). In chapter 43 of the Basic Questions it says:

陰氣者，靜則神藏，躁則消亡

As for the yin qi; if it is calm then the spirit is stored, if it is agitated then it is consumed and perishes.\(^\text{159}\)

Early medical literature sometimes refers to the five spirits and the five viscera as one concept, as in the designation “five spirit depositories” (wushenzang 五神藏).\(^\text{160}\) The spirit aspects were the most precious constituent of the organism and their preservation was

\(^{159}\) Translation adapted from Unschuld and Tessenow, Basic Questions Vol. 1, 645.

\(^{160}\) Teng, Zhongyi Wushen Bianzhixue, 17.
therefore the primary responsibility of the inner organs. This is asserted by a passage in *Basic Questions* chapter 23 which declares:

藏所藏:  What the [five] viscera store:  
心藏神,  The heart stores the spirit.  
肺藏魄,  The lung stores the corporal-soul.  
肝藏魂,  The liver stores the ethereal-soul.  
脾藏意,  The spleen stores the attention.  
腎藏志,  The kidneys store the intent-mind.  
是謂五藏所藏。  These are the so-called ‘what the five viscera store.’

Here we are again faced with the question of distinctions within a unity. As we noted earlier, from a non-dualistic perspective a phenomenon can both contain distinctions and be part of a larger whole. In regard to the spirit, Chinese scholars often speak of its *broad* and *narrow* meanings. Zhang Jingyue also comments on this issue:

神之為義有二︰分言之, 然則陽神曰魂, 阴神曰魄, 以及意志思慮之類皆神也。合言之, 則神藏於心, 而凡情志之屬, 唯心所統, 是為吾身之全神也。

There are two meanings of “spirit.” Speaking of its *differentiation;* then the yang [part of the] spirit is the ethereal-soul, the yin [part of the] spirit is the corporal-soul, and the other categories like the attention, intent-mind, pondering, consideration and so on—these are all [aspects of] the spirit. Speaking of its *unification;* then the spirit is stored by the heart alone, and all that classify as an emotional or mental state are brought together under the control of the heart—this is one's complete spirit.

Until now we have only spoken about the spirit in the singular, meaning its general characteristics as a *unified concept.* The term spirit then functions as a *generic term,* meaning that it represents a *category of phenomena.* In this case the *totality* of all mental-emotional activity and self-regulatory mechanisms of the human organism. This is what Chinese scholars refer to as its *broader meanings* (*guangyi* 廣義). But the spirit can also be differentiated into more specialized functions and faculties, like each of the five spirits and certain other concept we shall analyse in the next chapter. That is the *narrower meanings* (*xiyi* 狹義) of the spirit.

Earlier we noted that the first character for the visceral organs 藏 had a double meaning. It could be read as a verb (*cang*) meaning to store, hide, or keep safe. Or as a noun (*zang*) meaning a type of storehouse or treasury. Both these meanings are relevant to our understanding of how the visceral organs were first conceptualized. Later, the “flesh” radical

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肉 was added to distinguish the physiological meaning of bodily organ (臟), but the associations of the earlier form were still retained within the character. We therefore see that the function of “storing something valuable” was not just attributed to the viscera, but also embedded in their very definition. The viscera produce and store the vital substances (essence, blood, construction, qi, and spirit) and thereby govern the whole organism.\(^{164}\)

The original character for the bowels 府 also referred to a type of storehouses, the flesh radical was added later (腑).\(^{165}\) The bowel organs do not produce or store vital substances like the viscera; their main function is to process food and excrete waste material.\(^{166}\) There is also the “extraordinary bowels” (奇恆之腑) consisting of the brain, marrow, bones, vessels, uterus, and gallbladder.\(^{167}\) Both the bowels and the extraordinary bowels are considered to be subordinate to the five viscera. Among them only the stomach, gallbladder, and brain are directly linked to psycho-emotional phenomena.

The administration of the human organism is a cooperative undertaking. Although the viscera each have their main responsibilities, all functions are in the end collaborative—the various systems depend on and regulate each other. The heart monarch rules the empire supported by his council (the other spirit aspects), the local officials (sense organs), the administrative units for water and food supplies (the bowel organs), and routes of communication and transport (the channels and vessels). We can see that this conceptualization of the human organism is based on the body-state analogy referred to in the beginning. Administrative and architectural metaphors are frequently used to describe psychosomatic phenomena and functions.

The viscera are also often said to “govern” (主) many aspects of the organism. This governing function is related to the qi and spirit aspect of each organ system. The medical vision of governance seems to negotiate the ideals of royal centralism and decentralized interdependency. We may read it entirely as a reflection of the socio-political environment of early and pre-modern China. On the other hand, it can also as an attempt to articulate the complex dynamics of the body-mind relationship. Mental control can override many physical impulses; we can for example choose not to eat even though we are hungry, or keep our finger in the fire even though it hurts. The final decision on how to respond and deal

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165 Ibid, 140.
167 The gallbladder is considered both a bowel and an extraordinary organ. For further explanations see Wiseman and Feng, *A Practical Dictionary of Chinese Medicine*.
with circumstances lies in our minds. Yet, if we get seriously ill we cannot just decide to be well again. The mind cannot function properly if the body is not preserved. A monarch cannot rule without a kingdom. This balancing of central authority and local self-governance may therefore be read in several ways. Besides the political and physiological references, it can also be seen to reflect the enduring negotiation between the ideals of “ritualized behaviour” (li 禮) and “non-interference” (wuwei 無為) in Chinese philosophical discourse. These two principles may be viewed as different modes of self-regulation; the former is centralized and intentional, the latter is localized and spontaneous. As we noted earlier, the general meaning of spirit in Chinese medicine includes both these forms of regulation.

3.3.3 Nourishment (yang 養)

Since the substances of the living body are constantly consumed and excreted, preserving resources cannot be a passive process. Storage depends on continuous supplementation and is therefore closely related to the concept of “cultivation/nourishment” (yang 養). In the Basic Questions chapter 26, the notion of “cultivating the spirit” (yangshen 養神) is given a very literal meaning:

| 故養神者 | So, [as for] the cultivation of the spirit; |
| 必知形之肥瘦 | one must know whether the bodily form is fat or thin, |
| 覺衛血氣之盛衰 | [and] whether the construction, defence, blood, and qi are flourishing or weak. |
| 血氣者 | Blood and qi, |
| 人之神 | [they are] the spirit of man; |
| 不可不謹養 | [one] has to nourish them carefully. |

Although this is still a very general description, it specifies the body-mind relationship a little further. Construction, defence, qi and blood are vital substances that contribute to the physical structure of the body. The two concepts “construction” and “defence” need some explanation. “Construction” is an abbreviation of “construction-qi” (rongqi 榮氣, or yingqi 營氣). It refers to the finer extracts of nutrients that circulate in the body and nourish all tissues. It is derived from the digestive functions of the spleen-stomach system, and closely connected to blood. Zhang Jingyue says: “Construction is the essential-qi of water and grain

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168 Unschuld has: “… and whether the camp and guard [qi], the blood and the qi, abound or are weak.”
169 Adapted from Unschuld and Tessenow, Basic Questions Vol. 1, 443.
170 Wiseman and Feng, A Practical Dictionary of Chinese Medicine, 96.
[i.e., digested food].”  

The character rong 榮 is considered a synonym to ying 營 which later became the standard character for this concept.  

Unschuld translates these characters as “camp,” Wiseman and Feng as “construction.” In Unschuld’s translation the military-political metaphor of the term is highlighted, but the verbal meaning—to operate, develop, or construct—is lost. I therefore prefer Wiseman and Feng’s translation because it conveys both the analogy to state administration and that of infrastructure maintenance. It is also easier to see the physiological parallel of this metaphor. “Defence” is another concept from the body-state analogy. It is short for defence-qi (weiqi 衛氣), which is a form of qi governed by the lungs. Its most important function is to protect the exterior of the body against external pathogens. Defence-qi flows through the flesh and skin—providing warmth and regulating the opening and closing of pores.  

Now, let us return to the meaning of the original passage. As transpires, its recommendations of how to cultivate the spirit are quite explicit. The physical size and composition of the body must be well-balanced. One should be properly nourished but not overweight. This implies regulating one’s diet and digestive system. The same topic is also discusses in chapter 9 of the Basic Questions where it says:

五味入口， 隱於腸胃， 味有所藏， 以養五氣， 氣和而生， 神乃自生。  

The five flavours enter through the mouth and are stored in the intestines and in the stomach. When the flavours have somewhere to be stored, and can thereby nourish the five qi [of the viscera], [then] qi will be harmoniously engendered, the body liquids will complete each other, [and] the spirit will be engendered by itself.  

Translated to more modern terms, what these passages actually put forth is a hypothesis of the relationship between nutrition, body metabolism, and mental activity. The spirit is not something purely transcendent—it is contained by the body and preserved by specific systems and substances within it.

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172 For more details about the frequency and use of these terms in the Inner Canon texts see Unschuld and Tessenow, Basic Questions Vol. 1, 18.  
173 Wiseman and Ye, A Practical Dictionary of Chinese Medicine, 121.  
174 My translation, slightly different version in Unschuld and Tessenow, Basic Questions Vol. 1, 176-177.
3.3.4 Free Passage and Communication (tong 通)

The storage and nourishment provided by the five viscera is like having a safe home where you can return to rest and recharge. But the spirit must also be able to move freely, reach all parts of the body, and communicate with the exterior world. These abilities rely on the yang-aspects of the body—in particular the flow of qi in the channels and vessels (jingmai 經脈).

When qi is abundant and the passage of the channels and body openings (orifices) are unobstructed, then circulation, metabolism, and communication will be smooth. As we can see from table 3.1, most of the “orifices” (kaiqiao 開竅) actually overlap with the sense organs (referred to as the “five offices” wuguan 五官). The openings of the eyes, ears, nose, and mouth are places where the spirit can “enter and exit,” exchange and communicate with the surrounding environment. This is also a precondition for the spirit’s ability to perceive, process, react, and express itself.

All of these functions are summarized by the concept of “free passage” (tong 通). There is no single English term that covers all the meanings of this character. The perhaps most basic translation is open, passable, going through. As a verb it can mean to penetrate, exchange, communicate, permeate, or understand thoroughly. So, again we are faced with a concept which has a double psycho-physiological meaning. We have actually seen this idea of communication expressed several times already. In the discussion of the basic nature of the bodily form and the spirit, Zhang Jingyue quoted a saying from the Book of Changes: “That which can profit from exiting and entering (利用出入) and is employed by all people, they called the spirit.” And in the passage related to the spirit as an elevated form of consciousness it said: “Those who can speak of transformation and changes, they are able to penetrate the governing principles of the Spirit-brilliance (通神明之理).” And if the heart and spirit is not in a state of peaceful clarity, this can damage the circulation and communication of the whole organism: “When the heart is without clarity then the spirit has no ruler, and the pathways of exchange between the viscera and bowels become obstructed and impassable (閉塞不通).”

So we see that the function of free passage is conditioned both by the stability of the mind and the uninhibited flow of qi in the body. A decline in either of these conditions can thus reduce the spirit’s ability to regulate, govern, and communicate.

175 Wiseman and Feng, A Practical Dictionary of Chinese Medicine, 205.
3.3.5 Emotions and States of Mind (qingzhi 情志)

So far we have said almost nothing about emotions. How were they explained and conceptualized in the early medical canons? What was their relation to the spirit and the other concepts we have discussed? In the Basic Questions this definition is given:

天有五行，
御五位
以生寒暑燥濕風，
人有五藏，
化五氣，
以生喜怒思憂恐

Heaven has the five agents; [which] control the five positions. thereby generating cold, summer-heat, dryness, dampness, and wind. People have the five viscera; [which] transform the five qi, thereby generating joy, anger, pondering, anxiety, and fear.\(^\text{176}\)

We see from this passage that emotions are understood as qi transformations generated by the five viscera. In itself this is only a reflection of normal physiological processes. People are supposed to be able to feel different emotions. Just like it is normal for the seasons to have different types of weather. The five sentiments mention in this passage were later referred to as the “five [states of] mind” (wuzhi 五志), but this collective designation does not appear in the Inner Canon texts. They are only referred to as zhi 志 singularly, like in phrases such as “[the heart:] its state of mind is joy” (其志為喜).\(^\text{177}\) Since the same character is also used to denote one of the five spirits—the intent-mind pertaining to the kidney system—one has to determine which meaning is implied from the context. This is often clearer in the later medical discourse where the meaning “state of mind” is clarified either by using the designation “five [states of] mind” or the compound term “affects [and states of] mind” (qingzhi 情志).

The Inner Canon texts do not refer to emotional and cognitive phenomena only by using the above mentioned terms. There are a multitude of other descriptive terms, for example: “cravings and desires” (shiyu 嗜欲), “anger and resentment” (huichen 恼嗔), “strategies and considerations” (moulu 謀慮), “decisiveness” (jueduan 決斷), “pensiveness” (sixiang 思想), “relaxed contentment” (tianyu 恬愉), “peaceful tranquillity” (anning 安寧), “secret intentions” (siyi 私意), “courage and timidity” (yong-qie 勇怯), “unfulfilled aspirations” (suoyuan bude 所願不得) and many more. So it is not the lack of other terms or

\(^{176}\) Suwen, chap. 66·1.
\(^{177}\) Ibid, 67·7.
understanding of the variations of cognitive-emotional phenomena that makes one speak of the “five states of mind.”

Listing is about making generic categories. The reason these five are particularly mentioned is because they belong to the model of visceral manifestations. However, the Inner Cannon contains several versions of such listings. In a different Basic Questions chapter, the five emotional states attributed to the viscera are said to be “joy, anger, sorrow, anxiety, and fear.” Speaking of how emotional conditions can affect the pulse, six types are listed: “Whenever a person is startled, fearful, angry, fatigued, agitated, or calm, this all causes changes” Often the text only says “joy and anger” (xi-nu 喜怒) which in most cases does not refer specifically to these two sentiments, but is a reference to emotions in general. In the Categories of the Canons there are several lengthy discussions about emotions. On the various listings Zhang Jingyue offers the following comment:

All emotions, cognitive functions, and mental states are seen to emerge from the qi transformations of the visceral organs. They emerge as a response to some internal or external stimulus—sensory, physical, mental, or emotional. As we remember, the spirit is also a “latent potential” for all our conscious and unconscious responses. When triggered they can become manifested. Then the clarity of the heart and spirit-brilliance will determine how we react to it.

In the Inner Canon emotions are often discussed in relation to illness. As we noted earlier, they are generally considered a manifestation of normal physiological processes. In the same way as weather changes, emotions first become problematic when they are excessive. Excessive can mean several things; either that they are too strong, sudden,
untimely, restrained, unresolved, or prolonged. Excessive emotions are described both as the cause and result of diseases. Imbalance of the visceral systems can for instance increase the susceptibility to certain emotions. Like in this excerpt: “In the case of liver disease, there will be pain below the two flanks which pulls on the lower abdomen, causing the person to become [more] irascible” (肝病者，兩脅下痛引少腹，令人善怒).\(^{182}\) Or as in this statement: “[When heart] qi is insufficient the [one] becomes more susceptible to fear” (氣不足則善恐).\(^{183}\) But as previously mentioned, emotions can also be the cause of illness. Chapter 39 of the Basic Questions, “Discourse on Pain,” contains a detailed discussion on how different states of mind affect the body. It begins with Huang Di giving this introduction:

余知百病生於氣也,怒則氣上,喜則氣緩,悲則氣消,恐則氣下,寒則氣收,炅則氣泄,驚則氣亂,勞則氣耗,思則氣結,九氣不同,何病之生。

“I know that the hundred diseases are generated by qi. When one is angry, then the qi rises. When one is joyous then the qi relaxes. When one is sad then the qi dissipates. When one is fearful then the qi descends. Cold causes the qi to contract. Excessive heat causes the qi to discharge. When one is frightened then the qi is chaotic. When one is exhausted then the qi is consumed. When one is pensive then the qi is bound. These nine qi [transformations] are not identical, which diseases generate these states?”\(^{184}\)

Therefrom, Qi Bo elaborates the mechanisms involved in these various changes and what kind of physical symptoms they give rise to. Zhang Jingyue comments on this passage in a chapter called “Affect-Mind and the Nine [pathological changes of] Qi” (qingzhi jiuqi 情志九氣), where he has a lengthy discussion on how different types of excessive emotions can cause illness.\(^{185}\) But the influence goes both ways, physical imbalances can also give rise to emotional distress. In either case the mechanisms of the disease involve an irregular change in the functions of qi referred to as “evil-qi.” Zhang Jingyue explains:

氣之在人,和則為正氣,不和則為邪氣。凡表裡虚實,逆順緩急,無不因氣而至,故百病皆生於氣。

[As for] the qi in human beings; when harmonious [it] is proper-qi, when disharmonious [it] is evil-qi. In all conditions of exterior or interior, vacuity or repletion, counterflow or compliance, slow or urgent—there are none that is not caused by qi [transformation]. Hence the hundred diseases are all generated by qi.\(^{186}\)

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\(^{182}\) *Suwen*, chap. 22-8.

\(^{183}\) *Lingshu*, chap. 10-19.

\(^{184}\) *Suwen*, chap. 39-6.


\(^{186}\) Ibid.
3.4 Summary

In this chapter we have explored, analyzed, and discussed the general aspects of the body-mind relationship as it is described in the *Inner Canon* and Zhang Jingyue’s annotations to these texts. We have moved from the broadest distinctions towards an increasingly detailed description of the human organism. On all levels we saw that different elements were mixed and correlated—cosmology, physiology, and psychology. These various elements were drawn together by a systematic classification of phenomena based on yin-yang and five agents’ theory. The model of *visceral manifestations* laid the foundation for a more differentiated and specific understanding of the organ systems and their associated psychophysiological functions.

We have seen that the *spirit* was perceived as a transformation of *qi* rooted in *essence*. It was created together with the *bodily form* at the moment of conception. Throughout life it had to be *stored* and *nourished* in the body, and this was considered one of the most important responsibilities of the *visceral organs*. The spirit also depended on *circulation* and *free passage* to perform its tasks of *governing*, *regulation*, and *communication*. But the dependency went both ways. The spirit was not just a reflection of body metabolism, but also the main premise for its workings—the very distinction between life and death.

In the analysis of these various concepts, we have observed that the conceptualization of the body and mind is framed by a wider *body-state, microcosm-macrocosm* analogy. This allows for a flexible combination of various types of metaphors: administrative, architectural, agricultural, and botanical. In some cases, this is only a figurative way of making abstract phenomena more comprehensible. In others, such comparisons reflect the belief in a real, existing resonance between certain things in the universe. It may also be seen as an attempt to hypothesize the shared mechanisms, processes, and properties of different natural phenomena. Kuriyama says: “[…] the botanical vision of the body was a vision in the literal as well as figurative sense. Chinese physicians did not merely speak of *se* [fascial complexion] as flower; they saw it as such.”\(^{187}\) From a non-dualistic perspective there is no need for a complete either/or distinction. Something can be literal *and* metaphorical, concrete *and* abstract, internal *and* external, manifested *and* hidden, material *and* immaterial—in cyclic

alternations. It is precisely the creative tension between polar qualities that makes a phenomenon come to live and worth studying.

In this chapter we have concentrated on the general aspects of the body-mind conceptualization. We have therefore only explored the broad meanings of “spirit” and not the differentiated qualities and functions ascribed to each of the “five spirits.” That is what we shall examine next.
4. The Five Spirits: A Differentiated Model of the Mind

We have actually covered more than half of the conceptualization of the five spirits already, because it rests on the theories analysed in the previous chapter. Everything that shall be examined in this part is therefore only further specifications of these concepts, functions, and relationships.

In the following sections we will look at each of the five spirit aspects. Initially I meant to present them individually one by one, but as I explored their description in both the Inner Cannon corpus and Zhang Jingyue’s annotations, I found that they are very often discussed in pairs: the ethereal and corporal souls, and the attention and intent-mind. The spirit of the heart can be related to any of the other concept, or discussed separately as we have seen. The analysis will therefor follow the same organization. But firstly, I will present two passages from the Inner Canon that provided the clearest definition of the psychological functions ascribed to the five spirits and the internal organs. Before we break them up to look at Zhang Jingyue’s explanations of each concepts, the passages should be read once in their original form. The following passage is taken from Basic questions chapter 8,\(^\text{188}\) which from here onward shall be referred to as the “Hidden Canon” passage:

心者，君主之官也，神明出焉。
肺者，相傅之官，治節出焉。
肝者，將軍之官，謀慮出焉。
膽者，中正之官，決斷出焉。
腎者，作強之官，伎巧出焉。
脾胃者，倉廩之官，五味出焉。
大腸者，傳道之官，變化出焉。
小腸者，受盛之官，化物出焉。
腎者，作強之官，伎巧出焉。
三焦者，決瀆之官，

The heart holds the office of monarch, whence spirit-brilliance emanates. ①
The lungs hold the office of chancellor and assistant, whence order and moderation emanate. ②
The liver holds the office of general, whence strategies and considerations emanate. ③
The gallbladder holds the office of justice, whence decisions and judgements emanate. ④
The ‘chest center’ holds the office of minister and envoy, whence joy and pleasure emanate.
The spleen and stomach hold the office of granaries, whence the five flavours emanate. ⑤
The large intestine holds the office of conveyance, whence change and transformation emanate.
The small intestine holds the office of reception, whence the transformation of matter emanates.
The kidneys hold the office of labour, whence agility and technique emanate. ⑥
The triple burner holds the office of sluice opener.

\(^{188}\) The full title of this chapter is Linglan midian lun 靈蘭秘典論 (Discourse on the Hidden Canons in the Numinous Orchid [Chambers]).
The other passage is taken from the “Spirit as Foundation” chapter of the *Divine Pivot*.\textsuperscript{191} We have analyzed several of Zhang Jingyue’s comments to this chapter already. In the following we shall see what he has to say about the statements describing the other spirit aspects. These explanations are all found in the annotations to this next passage:

Qi Bo answered: Heaven manifests itself within us as Virtue. Earth manifests itself within us as qi. When Virtue flows and qi have joined then life begins. Hence, the origin of life is called essence; the merging of the two essences is called spirit. That which comes and goes following the spirit is called the ethereal-soul. That which enters and leaves together with the essence is called the corporal-soul. That which is responsible for all matters is called the heart. When the heart reflects on something, that is called attention. That which is preserved from the attention is called the intent-mind. What is preserved and changes because of the intent-mind is called pondering. [Having] far-reaching aspiration because of pondering is called consideration. Handling matters because of consideration is called wisdom.

The comments to these two passages will also be supplemented by other relevant explanations taken from different parts of the *Inner Canon* or the *Categories of the Canons*.

### 4.1 The Ethereal and Corporal Souls

The concepts of the ethereal and corporal souls\textsuperscript{192} are already discussed in many of the earliest sources of Chinese philosophy and self-cultivation literature.\textsuperscript{193} In the *Inner Canon* the “Spirit as Foundation” passage asserts: “That which comes and goes following the spirit is called the ethereal-soul. That which enters and leaves together with the essence is called the corporal-soul.” This statement is the basis for several extensive comments in the *Categories of the Canons*. Zhang Jingyue first explains the basics:

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\textsuperscript{189} According to the HDC *du* can mean the “place of water assembling” (水流汇聚。亦指水流汇聚之所), quotations from the *Guanzi* and *Shiji* are offered as examples.

\textsuperscript{190} My translation is based on a combination of Wiseman’s and Unschuld’s translations of these sentences. See Wiseman and Feng, *A Practical Dictionary of Chinese Medicine*, under each of the listed viscera and bowels; and Unschuld and Tessenow, *Basic Questions Vol. 1*, 155-158.

\textsuperscript{191} A presentation of this chapter is given in the beginning of chapter three of this thesis, a full translation of the original text as well as Zhang Jingyue’s annotations can be found in the Appendix.

\textsuperscript{192} These translations are the same as Wiseman’s. Unschuld uses a semi-transliteration: *hun*-soul and *po*-soul.

\textsuperscript{193} For example in the *Baihutong* 白虎通, *Hanfeizi* 韓非子, *Huainanzi* 淮南子, and *Zhuangzi* 莊子.
精對神而言，則神為陽而精為陰；魄對魂而言，則魂為陽而魄為陰。故魂則隨神而往來，魄則並精而出入。

In regard to [how] the essence relates to the spirit it is thus: the spirit is yang and essence is yin. In regard to [how] the corporal-soul relates to the ethereal-soul it is thus: the ethereal-soul is yang and the corporal-soul is yin. Hence, the ethereal-soul therefore comes and goes following the spirit, [and] the corporal-soul therefore enters and leaves together with the essence.  

This shows us that the ethereal and corporal souls are conceptualized almost like an extension to the essence and spirit. Below in the same comment, Zhang Jingyue explains that this categorization represents a further yin-yang differentiation among the spirit aspects. He says: “[…] the spirit is the yang within yang (陽中之陽), and the ethereal-soul the yin within yang (陽中之陰). The essence is the yin within yin (陰中之陰), and the corporal-soul the yang within yin (陰中之陽).” This is again a form of qualitative distinction. It tells us that these faculties are associated with different degrees of physicality and activity level—almost like stages of a transformative process. The spirit is the utmost yang (most light and moving) and the essence is the utmost yin (most condensed and still). The ethereal and corporal souls are the variables in between.

In addition to the direct annotation of “Spirit as Foundation” chapter, Zhang Jingyue also elaborates on the meanings of the ethereal and corporal souls in another comment where he quotes a series of other philosophical texts. In the following excerpt we can see that they are related to the early development and basic functions of the body and mind:

唐。孔氏曰︰人之生也, 始變化為形, 形之靈曰魄, 魄內自有陽氣, 氣之神曰魂。魂魄, 神靈之名, 初生時耳目心識手足運動, 此魄之靈也; 又其精神性識漸有知覺, 此則氣之神也。

In the Tang [dynasty] the honourable Kong said: “In the life of human beings; first change and transformation becomes the bodily form, the [spiritual] power of the bodily form is called the corporal-soul, inherent in the corporal-soul there is yang qi, the spirit of qi is called the ethereal-soul. The ethereal and corporal souls, these are the names of the spiritual powers. After birth, the activity of one’s ears and eyes, consciousness, and arms and legs—these [functions] are the power of the corporal soul. As for the gradually increasing perception of one’s essence-spirit and natural understanding—these [functions] are the spirit of qi.

In this excerpt the ethereal and corporal souls are associated with qi and bodily form. Nevertheless, this does not contradict their relationship to spirit and essence, since essence is
the foundation of the bodily form and spirit is a transformation of qi. The underlying emphasis of both these classifications is that the corporal-soul is tied to the material yin aspect of the body, whereas the ethereal-soul is linked to the functional yang aspect. Together they are responsible for what we earlier described as the more subconscious regulations of the spirit (whose potential is inherent in the essence). In the above quote, the most basic level of movements and sensory activity is attributed to the corporal-soul. In modern terms we could describe it as instinctive responses. The further development of these basic capabilities into a more advanced and attuned form of responsiveness is ascribed to the ethereal-soul.

This association with early human development is also expressed in a passage on embryology (prenatal development) in the *Categories of the Canons*.\(^{198}\) Zhang Jingyue quotes another Ming dynasty medical work on pediatrics.\(^{199}\) The excerpt describes the evolution of the fetus month by month. First the placenta is made, then the embryo takes form and develops, the ethereal-soul is created in the third month, the corporal-soul in the fourth,\(^ {200}\) then the rest of the organs and so on. He also quotes another source which says that in the seventh and eighth month the ethereal and corporal souls are starting to “stroll around” (you\(^ {201}\) ) and therefore the fetus begins to move its hands.

The ethereal and corporal souls are closely related to the physical aspects of the human organism—its basic development, vitality, and eventual decline. This last point is illustrated by a quote from the influential Song scholar Zhu Xi:

朱子曰：魂神而魄靈，魂陽而魄陰，魂動而魄靜。生則魂載於魄，而魄檢其魂；死則魂游散而歸於天，魄淪墜而歸於地。運用動作底是魂，不運用動作底是魄。魄盛則耳目聰明，能記憶，老人目昏耳記事不得者，魄衰也。

Master Zhu\(^ {202}\) said: [As for] the ethereal-spirit and the corporal-power; the ethereal-soul is yang and the corporal-soul is yin. **the ethereal-soul moves and the corporal-soul is still.** When one is born the ethereal-soul is carried along with the corporal-soul, and thus the corporal-soul keeps one’s ethereal-soul in check. **When one dies the ethereal-soul drifts off and returns to heaven, the corporal-soul collapses and returns to earth.** That which applies movement is the ethereal-soul; that which does not apply movement is the corporal-soul. When the corporal-soul is vigorous then the ears and eyes have clear perception and [one] is able to recall [things]. When old people have clouded vision and the ears cannot keep records of events [anymore], that is the corporal-soul declining.\(^ {203}\)

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\(^{198}\) Zhang, “Leijing,” fascicle 17, chap. 62.
\(^{200}\) 三月陽神為三魂; 四月陰靈為七魄.
\(^{201}\) 七月遊其魂，兌能動左手；八月遊其魄，兌能動右手.
\(^{202}\) Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), the main proponent of Song dynasty neo-Confucianism.
\(^{203}\) Appendix B.
The notion that after death the ethereal-soul will drift off to the sky while the corporal-soul will return to earth with the body had already been stated in various early sources. This is one of the reasons why they are often translated as the “ethereal” and “corporal” souls. Zhu Xi also emphasises their association with movement and stillness, which are keywords to understand their separate functions and responsibilities. Generally, these terms may be linked to different types of psycho-physiological phenomena: actual body movements, consciousness and perception, sleep and dreaming. Zhang Jingyue says:

As for the real conditions of the ethereal and corporal souls, like having something evident to examine, then [this can be] located at the time of sleeping and dreaming. Like when there is dreaming with action but no responses in the body, then that represents the movement and stillness of the ethereal and corporal souls—movements depend on the ethereal-soul and stillness depends on the corporal-soul. When the dreams can change but [one] is unable to awaken, then that represents the separation and union of yin and yang—separation comes with vacuity and union comes with repletion. Although these are all symptoms of the ethereal and corporal souls, yet with replete [conditions] then [in regard to] survival or death there is [still] hope. If the heart [of the physician] can be focused like the Great void [i.e., the universe], and be totally clear and totally calm, then [he can managed to see] the gate of dream and consciousness, life and death, [but] to know it [he] must have attain a profound understanding.

This passage seems to reflect different types of clinical experiences. Under normal circumstances, when we sleep and dream the body is still, sensory registration is shut off, but there is some internal activity in our minds. In a comment to a different passage, there is a quote that states: “Perception equals yang, sleep equals yin. Those who are highly perceptive have a powerful ethereal-soul; those who sleep long have a robust corporal-soul” (覺與陽合，寐與陰並。覺多者魂強，寐久者魄壯).204 With illness these parameters can become more unbalanced. One may awaken too easily, move and toss around, or sleep too heavily. But the passage also speaks of more severe situations that reflect dealing with patients who are seriously ill—delirious or possibly in a coma. These are also the real manifestations of the corporal and ethereal souls, something the physician can observe to determine the likelihood of recovery or death.

204 Zhang, “Leijing.” fascicle 18, chap. 79.
Zhang Jingyue’s ends his discussion with the following summary and conclusion:

陰主藏受, 故魄能記憶在內; 阳主運用, 故魂能發用出來。二物本不相離, 精聚則魄聚, 氣聚則魂聚, 是為人物之體; 至於精竭魄降, 則氣散魂游而無所知矣。

Yin governs storage and reception and therefore the corporal-soul can keep memories on the inside. Yang governs movement and function and therefore the ethereal-soul can express and apply [one’s inner capacities] outwards. These two properties are originally not separated; when essence is assembled then the corporal-soul is assembled, when qi is assembled then the ethereal-soul is assembled—this is the structure of a human being. So, when the moment arrives when the essence is dried up and the corporal-soul collapses, then the qi will disperse and the ethereal-soul drift away without any [more] knowledge of it.\(205\)

4.1.1 The Lungs and the Corporal-Soul (po 魄)

In the medical doctrine the corporal-soul is also said to be stored by the lungs. It is rooted in essence (stored by the kidneys), but it is the lung system that engages directly with its functions. In particular, lung-qi. The “Spirit as Foundation” chapter it says: “The lungs store qi; qi houses the corporal-soul” (肺藏氣，氣舍魄).\(206\) Let us now look at the main features of this relationship and what it represents.

Body stability

The “Hidden Canon” passage says that “the lungs hold the office of chancellor and assistant, whence order and moderation emanate.” Zhang Jingyue’s comment to this statement reads:

② 肺與心皆居膈上, 位高近君, 猶之宰輔, 故稱相傅之官。肺主氣, 氣調則營衛臟腑無所不治, 故曰治節出焉。

Both the lungs and the heart reside above the diaphragm; [the lungs have] a high position close to the monarch, just as a prime minister, therefore they are called the “office of chancellor and assistant.” The lungs govern qi; when qi is regulated then [regarding] the construction and defence, viscera and bowels—there is nothing that is not ordered. Hence it says “whence order and moderation emanate.”\(207\)

The original passage calls the lungs “chancellor and assistant,” Zhang Jingyue says “prime minister.” He explains these designations partly on the basis of the anatomical localization of the lungs (next to the heart). They are also a way to express the general importance of the lung system. The primary responsibility of the lungs is to breathe and absorb the “great-qi”

\(206\) Lingshu, chap. 8.15.
\(207\) Zhang, “Leijing,” fascicle 3, chap. 1.
(daqi 大氣) of the environment (air). They also govern the circulation of qi which moves the blood. The lungs are therefore said to assist the heart, especially with regard to blood circulation. All the other organs, structures, and tissues in the body rely on this circulation. The lungs are thus responsible for maintaining the stability of the body. Basic functions such as breathing and blood circulation need to be even and at all times. The lung system provides this regularity, and so they are the origin of “order and moderation.” This has both physiological and psychological connotations. All regulatory functions are related to the spirit(s). The corporal-soul both reflects the condition of the lung system and oversees its regulation.

**Body Sensations and Reactions**

The Corporal-soul is manifested in the self-regulating mechanisms of the body. This is what we referred to earlier as the subconscious, inherent regulations of the spirit. Zhang Jingyue provides further explanation for the role of the corporal-soul in this annotation to the “Spirit as Foundation” chapter:

> 精之與魂皆陰也，何謂魂並精而出入? 蓋精之為物，重濁有質，形體因之而成也。魂之為用，能動能作，痛痒由之而覺也。精生於氣，故氣聚則精盈；魂並於精，故形強則魂壯。此則精魂之狀，亦可默會而知也。

The common of the essence and the corporal-soul is that they are both yin, what does it mean that the corporal-soul enters and leaves together with the essence? Presumably the essence creates matter, [it is] dense and turbid and has substance, the [bodily] form and structure is made from it. The functions of the corporal-soul [manifest as] the ability to move and do things—pain and itching is felt because of it. Essence is generated from qi so when qi gathers then essence is abundant; the corporal-soul is together with the essence so when the [bodily] form is strong then the corporal-soul is robust. These are the conditions of the essence and the corporal-soul; [they] can also be understood from inwardly gathered comprehension.

It may seem puzzling that the corporal-soul is related to both strength and stillness. Its vigour is reflected for example in the basic ability to move, as one of the quotes said: “the activity of the arms and legs.” If we think about it, some body movements are not consciously initiated but instinctive. Such responses are particularly visible in infants (later they become more concealed and mixed with our intentional behaviour). Much of the activity in the body happens on its own: breathing, fluid circulation, bowel movements, shivering, body language etc. These are spontaneous reactions. Instincts. Reflexes. Zhang Jingyue says that the corporal-soul is what makes us feel inching and pain, these are elementary body sensation.

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209 Appendix A: ZJY 5.
There is also something called “corporal-soul sweating” (pohan 魄汗) which refers to a form of spontaneous, prolonged sweating (without physical exertion).\(^{210}\) As we saw in system of visceral manifestation (table 3.1), the lungs are related to the skin and body hair and regulates body heat through the opening and closing of pores and sweating. Such instinctive reactions do not depend on our conscious mind. Even when we are sleeping they run their course. Only the dead body is completely still.

The Corporal-soul is the “yang within yin,” its regulatory mechanisms are silent and almost undetectable. In the Zhu Xi quotation it said that “the corporal-soul keeps one’s ethereal-soul in check.” The balance of movements and rest, expressiveness and quietude, being awake and asleep—depends on the combined functions of the ethereal and corporal soul. The Corporal soul ensures order and moderation. It prevents the ethereal-soul from becoming overactive, restless, and frenetic. If the yin substances are intact, the body maintains its instinctive ability to calm down, relax, and sleep. The earlier quote said that “those who sleep long have a robust corporal-soul.” Strength may also manifest as stability.

**Sensory Registration and Memory**

As we have seen the corporal-soul is also associated with certain parts of sensory perception. In several of the quotations, it was linked to sight and hearing. In the medical doctrine, these functions also depend on other organ systems and their spirit aspects. The eyes are normally said to be the sense organ/orifices of the liver, which means they are also related to the ethereal-soul.\(^{211}\) But seeing clearly can also mean understanding clearly, which is associated with the spirit-brilliance of the heart. In addition, clear sight depends on proper moisture and “nourishment” of the eyes which rely on several organ systems. The corporal-soul’s connection to the eyes and ears is possibly more elementary, like the physical ability to move (and close) the eyes, distinguish sounds, and register sensory stimuli in the same ways as with itching and pain. Hearing is generally associated with the kidney system. However, the kidneys store essence which is the foundation of the corporal-soul, so this is not really a contradiction. The connection between the corporal-soul and the essence can also explain why the decline of sight, hearing, and memory in old age is related to both these systems. The lungs belong to Metal (in five agents’ theory). Metal is associated with “collection” (shou 收).

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\(^{210}\) See for example Zhang, “Leijing,” fascicle 7, chap. 21; or fascicle 13, chap. 5 and 6.

This abstract notion is concretized in the functions of drawing fresh air, absorbing sensory input, and collecting impressions which are ascribed to the corporal-soul and the lungs.

Zhang Jingyue concludes by saying that the meaning of the corporal-soul “can also be understood from inwardly gathered comprehension” (亦可默會而知也).\(^{212}\) This suggests that it should not only be studied through description and external observation, but also by one’s own inner experience. Here we see again the ideal of intuitive learning; the synthesizing of knowledge, experience, and self-reflexivity. In this particular case, his recommendation seems to imply using the exact capacities associated with the corporal-soul—to submerge oneself in its quiet inner expressions. Like silent meditation that gradually makes one aware of the rhythm of breath and all the other subtle sensations in the body.

4.1.2 The Liver and the Ethereal-Soul (hun 魂)

As we noted in the section about visceral manifestations, in the medical doctrine the ethereal-soul is also linked to the liver. The “Spirit as Foundation” chapter states that “the liver stores blood; blood houses the ethereal-soul” (肝藏血，血舍魂).\(^{213}\)

Perceptiveness

We have seen in several passages that the ethereal-soul is related to perception. The quotation of Tang scholar Kong Yingda said: “The gradually increasing perception of one’s essence-spirit and natural understanding—these [functions] are the spirit of qi” (又其精神性識漸有知覺，此則氣之神也). What he refers to as the “spirit of qi” is the ethereal-soul. In another quote it was asserted that “those who are highly perceptive have a powerful ethereal-soul.” The condition of the ethereal-soul is thus expressed by the level of sensory and mental keenness. This is how Zhang Jingyue describes it:

神之與魂皆陽也，何謂魂隨神而往來？蓋神之為德，如光明爽朗、聰慧靈通之類皆是也。魂之為言，如夢寐恍惚、變幻游行之境皆是也。神藏於心，故心靜則神清；魂隨乎神，故神昏則魂蕩。此則神魂之義，可想象而悟矣。

The common of the spirit and the ethereal-soul is that they are both yang, what does it mean that the ethereal-soul comes and goes following the spirit? Presumably [it is so that] the spirit creates virtue, [qualities] like [being] bright and candid, intelligent and quick-witted are all [expressions of] this. [Concerning] what is said about the ethereal-soul, conditions like dreaming

\(^{212}\) The HDC explains 默會 as “inwardly comprehension” (anzi linghui 暗自领会).
\(^{213}\) Lingshu, chap. 8 · 12.
and being absent-minded, changing irregularly and moving about, these are all [expressions of] it. The spirit is stored in the heart, hence when the heart is calm the spirit is clear; the ethereal-soul follows the spirit, so when the spirit is clouded the ethereal-soul dissolves. These are the meanings of spirit and ethereal-soul; [one] can envision [them] and suddenly understand [what they mean].

If the corporal-soul is responsible for instinctive responses; the ethereal soul determines the speed and sharpness of such reactions. It also follows the spirit (of the heart) and assists its functions. This has to do with the rapidness of perception and mental processes. Imbalances of the spirit and the ethereal-soul can give rise to both a decreased and increased level of perceptiveness and activity (vacuity or depletion). As the annotation says, this can give rise to psychosomatic symptoms such as absent-mindedness, irregular changes, and restlessness.

**Initiative and Strategies**

The “Hidden Canon” passage compares the liver to a general. This figurative description alludes to certain physical and mental functions ascribed to the liver system and the ethereal-soul. Zhang Jingyue’s comment to this statement reads:

③肝屬風木，性動而急，故為將軍之官。木主發生，故為謀慮所出。

The liver belongs to wind and Wood; its nature is moving and fast, therefore it “holds the office of general.” Wood governs initiative and birth; hence [the liver] is “whence strategies and considerations emanate.”

This responsibility for strategy and calculation is already asserted by the original statement. Zhang Jingyue adds to the description by referring to the five agents’ associations of the liver. The liver belongs to Wood which represents fast movement (dong 動) and initiative (fasheng 發生). This is relevant in regard to the ethereal-soul’s enhancement of the spirit’s “quick-wittedness” (lingtong 靈通). The liver system also contributes with “strategies and considerations” (moulu 謀慮). This is different from the “pondering and considerations” (silu 思慮) of the attention and intent-mind (spleen and kidneys) which is analytic and may arise from “far reaching aspirations” (yuanmu 遠慕). The ethereal-soul is the “yin within yang” which suggests that it is not as elevated as the spirit. Its strategic capacity is therefore more basic and action oriented—somewhere in between the instinctive responses of the corporal-soul, and the cognitive reasoning executed by the attention and intent-mind. Like a general, the ethereal-soul has to quickly assess how to handle the situation at hand. This includes

estimating one’s own ability to “move and do things” (which the corporal-soul provides the basis for). It is part of the preparatory phase before initiating some kind of action.

Decisions and Implementation

The ethereal-soul is said to follows the spirit. As we have seen this means assisting with perception and strategizing. The ethereal-soul and the liver system also contribute to decision-making and implementation. In one of the earlier annotations Zhang Jingyue said that “yang governs movement and function and therefore the ethereal-soul can express and apply [one’s inner capacities] outwards” (陽主運用，故魂能發用出來). The Zhu Xi quote said: “That which applies movement is the ethereal-soul” (運用動作底是魂). The ethereal-soul is part of the external manifestation of the spirit, through body movement it expresses and implements the strategies and decisions that have been made. This responsibility is thought to be shared with the gallbladder. In the “Hidden Canon” passage, the gallbladder is likened to an “official of justice” (zhongzheng zhi guan 中正之官) who insures that the liver general does not make rash or unjust decisions, or lack the courage and strength to take action when needed. Zhang Jingyue’s explains it this way:

④ 膽稟剛果之氣，故為中正之官，而決斷所出。膽附於肝，相為表裡，肝氣雖強，非膽不斷。肝膽相濟，勇敢乃成。故奇病論曰：肝者中之將也，取決於膽。

The gallbladder supplies the qi of firmness and resolution, and therefore it “holds the office of justice,” and is where “decisions and judgements emanate.” The gallbladder is connected to the liver; they are in an external-internal relationship. Although the liver qi is strong, without the gallbladder, there is no decisiveness. When the liver and gallbladder assist one another then courage develops. Hence the “Discourse on Strange Diseases” \(^{215}\) says: “The liver is the general of the center, it receives its decisions from the gallbladder.”\(^{216}\)

These mental functions should be seen in relation to the physiological role of the liver and gallbladder according to the system of visceral manifestations. Liver is said to govern sinews (jin 筋) and thereby physical movement. It is also responsible for “free coursing” (shuxie 疏泄) which ensures the smoothness of all qi dynamics.\(^ {217}\) Together these aspects of the liver-system determine the strength, quickness, and flexibility of body movements. Only through some form of body movement can the decisions of the mind be externally expressed and implemented. The ethereal-soul is what initiates and coordinates this process.

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\(^ {215}\) Basic Questions, chap. 47.
\(^ {217}\) Wiseman and Feng, A Practical Dictionary of Chinese Medicine, 357.
Courage and Self-control

The capacity for implementation also has something to do with courage. This was also asserted by Zhang Jingyue in the previous comment. There are several passages in the Inner Canon that discuss this topic, chapter 50 of the Divine Pivot is called “On courage” (論勇) and contains a rather amusing elaboration of how alcohol influences the body and mind:

黃帝曰：怯士之得酒，怒不避勇士者，何藏使然？少俞曰：酒者，水谷之精，熟谷之液也，其氣慓悍，其入于胃中，則胃脹，氣上逆，滿於胸中，肝浮膽橫，當是之時，固比于勇士，氣衰則悔。與勇士同類，不知避之，名曰酒悖也。

Huang Di said: “When a cowardly male has had a drink, is enraged and does not avoid [a confrontation with] a courageous type, which viscera makes him behave that way?”

Shao Yu answered: “Alcohol is the essence of water and grain; the liquid of fermented grain—its qi is hasty and aggressive. When it enters the stomach then the stomach is distended, the qi will counterflow upwards and cause fullness in the chest, the liver will be drenched and the gallbladder unrestrained. In that moment, [the drunken coward] feels strong enough to match the braver man. [Afterwards] when the qi has declined, he will regret having considered himself the equal of the courageous type and not having known how to avoid him. That is called ‘unreasonable behaviour caused by alcohol’.”

We see that the descriptions of body-mind interaction in the early medical canons are not only vague and cryptic, but can also be very concrete and specific. This passage calls to mind the colloquial Chinese expression “[having a] big gallbladder” (dadan 大膽) which refers to being “over-confident” or “audacious.” The passage above also speaks of anger which is the (primary) state of mind associated with the liver. The “Spirit as Foundation” chapter says:

肝藏血，血舍魂，肝氣虛則恐，實則怒。

The liver stores blood, blood houses the ethereal-soul. If liver qi is vacuous then [the patients] will be fearful, if replete then [they] will be angry.

The susceptibility to fear is often seen as a sign of qi vacuity. Anger or rage is an expression of unrestrained LR qi. When blood (yin) is abundant the qi-mechanisms and functions of the ethereal-soul (yang) will be smooth and balanced. The person will have good self-control and also sleep peacefully. In chapter 10 of the Basic Questions it says that “when people lie down [at night] blood returns to the liver” (人臥則血歸於肝). This expresses the idea that when sleeping the ethereal-soul rests within the body and should not be perceptive of external stimuli. If liver blood is insufficient, however, one may become too alert and therefore easily

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218 Unschuld, Ling Shu, 494-495.
219 Lingshu, chap. 8·12.
220 Suwen, chap. 10·3.
startled, frightened, or awakened from sleep. Fright (jing 驚) is also associated with the liver system. It has a sudden and strong effect on the body (i.e., irregular change) and is therefore slightly different from fear (kong 恐) which has a deeper, more even character. Commenting on a syndrome called “Liver impediment” Zhang Jingyue says: “The liver stores the ethereal-soul, when there is liver qi impediment then the ethereal-soul will be disquieted, and therefore when lying [sleeping] in the midst of night [one] awakens with panic” (肝藏魂，肝氣痺則魂不安，故主夜臥驚駭). Both in the original canons and Zhang Jingyue’s annotations there are many detailed descriptions of how emotional turbulence can affect the body. Some, like the example above, also explicitly mention the spirit aspects. As explained in the previous chapter, excessive emotions are seen as both a cause and effect of organ pathology. If unresolved it can become a vicious circle. The focus of this thesis is on the physiology (normal functions) of the mind. We therefore cannot go deeper into such cases here.

In the first annotation of this section Zhang Jingyue ends by saying: “These are the meanings of spirit and ethereal-soul; one can envision them and suddenly understand [what they mean]” (此則神魂之義，可想象而悟矣). Again he refers to a more intuitive way of understanding something. Yet in this case, it is not the silent “inward comprehension” he suggested for understanding the corporal-soul, but the active employment of the mind’s creative and imaginative abilities. In other words, the type of functions associated with the spirit and ethereal-soul. It seem like he says that a more profound understanding of what these faculties actually represent, should be obtained not only through observing their external manifestations, but by one’s own inner experience of using them.

### 4.2 The Attention and the Intent-mind

The attention (yi 意) and intent-mind (zhi 志) are responsible for the conscious cognitive processes of the mind. They therefore belong to the more elevated functions of the spirit. The “Spirit as Foundation” passage presented at the beginning of this chapter says:

> When the heart reflects on something that is called **attention** (意). That which is preserved from the attention is called the **intent-mind** (志). What is preserved and changes because of the intent-

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221 Zhang, “Leijing 順經,” fascicle 17, chap. 67.
mind is called pondering (思). [Having] far-reaching aspiration because of pondering is called consideration (慮). Handling matters because of consideration is called wisdom (智).

The spirit, attention, intent-mind, ethereal and corporal souls together constitute the “five spirits” (wushen 五神). They all represent a type of mental faculty (with varying degrees of conscious regulation). Each belongs to one of the organ systems; they are “what the five viscera store.” Linguistically speaking, the yi 意 and zhi 志 are different from the other terms in that they can refer to both the faculty that performs the activity and the function performed. This means that zhi 志 can refer to both the mental faculty intent-mind and the actual intentions that arise from mental processes. Similarly, yi 意 can mean the attention producing thoughts and ideas, but also the ideas themselves. The first two sentences of the above excerpt could therefore also have been translated something like: “When the heart reflects on something that is called an idea (意). That which is preserved from that idea is called intention (志).” However, the functions ascribed to these two concepts in the medical literature are much wider that just having ideas and intentions. The attention and intent-mind both represent a permanent capacity to perform different cognitive tasks. As two of the five spirits they must therefore have fixed denotations. What we should keep in mind, though, is that their original Chinese characters are more flexible than these translations.

Will (zhiyi 志意)

In the Inner Canon the attention and intent-mind are often described in relation to each other. Quite often they are also used together as one concept, which I shall translate here as “will.”222 It is not entirely clear how much of the individual meanings of these two characters are retained in this compound expression. According to Zhang Jingyue its meaning is synonymous to the “five spirits” (i.e., a generic term for all mental and regulatory functions of the human organism). This is explained in his comment to a Basic Questions passage that states: “The will penetrates [everything] inside and connects with the bones and marrow thereby completing the body-form and the five viscera” (志意通, 內連骨髓, 而成身形五臟).223 Zhang Jingyue’s comment says:

志意者，統言人身之五神也。骨髓者，極言深邃之化生也。五神藏於五臟而心為之主，故志意通調，內連骨髓，以成身形五臟，則互相為用矣。

222 Unschuld’s translation is “mind.”
223 Suwen, chap. 62·1.
The “will” is an encompassing reference to the five spirits of the human body. The “bones and marrow” emphatically expresses [the body’s] deeper transformations and generative processes. The five spirits are stored by the five viscera and the heart is their governor, therefore the will penetrates and regulates [everything] in order to complete the body-form and the five viscera—in that way [the spirits and the viscera] are of mutually assistance to each other.\(^{224}\)

Wang Bing’s annotation from the Tang era says much the same.\(^{225}\) Still this compound expression seems to emphasize a form of intentionality which is also linked to the specific functions of the attention and intent-mind. The term is often combined with verbs that express orderliness, like “harmonize” (he 和), “administer” (zhī 治), and “regulate” (lǐ 理).\(^{226}\) This combined “will” seems to coordinate the various regulatory functions, thereby sharing some of the overall responsibility of the heart spirit. Commenting on chapter 47 of the *Divine Pivot* Zhang Jingyue says:

志意者，所以御精神，收魂魄，適寒溫，和喜怒者也。

*The will*: it is what controls\(^{227}\) the essence-spirit, gathers the ethereal and corporal souls, adjusts to\(^{228}\) cold and heat, and harmonizes the emotions.\(^{229}\)

So the “will” has the capacity to harmonize the body-mind interaction. This appears like a semiconscious function, which perhaps could be enhanced by a more deliberate guidance of one’s attention and intent-mind.

Perhaps there is a better translation for *zhìyi* 志意. Unschuld’s “mind” is too vague; especially since this compound is neither the only—nor the most general—designation for the human psyche. We shall let the matter rest, and continue to explore the individual meaning of these two concepts.

4.2.1 The Spleen and the Attention (yi 意)

In Chinese medical theory the attention belongs to the spleen system. The “Spirit as Foundation” chapter says that “the spleen stores construction; construction houses the attention” (脾藏營，營舍意).\(^{230}\) The implications of this relationship shall be elaborated

\(^{224}\) Zhang, “Leijing,” fascicle 14, chap. 18.

\(^{225}\) See Unschuld and Tessenow, *Basic Questions Vol. 2*, 103.

\(^{226}\) The combination of *zhìyi* and these verbs can be seen in for example *Lingshu*, chap. 47·1, *Suwen*, chap. 14·2 and chap. 78·1.

\(^{227}\) The annotation also says that the *yu* 御 of the original passage means “control” (tongyu 統御).

\(^{228}\) The annotation says that *shì* 適 means to “regulate and mediate” (tiaoxie 調燮).

\(^{229}\) Zhang, “Leijing,” fascicle 4, chap. 28.

\(^{230}\) *Lingshu*, chap. 8·12.
Further down. First, a few things must be said about the translation of the concept “attention” (yi 意). Unschuld translates with different terms. Sometimes he uses “sentiments” other times “intention.” In my opinion, neither fit the descriptions of this concept very well. In Wiseman’s digital CMT dictionary “ideation” is proposed. Ideation refers to “the process of forming ideas or images,” which is indeed one of the main functions of yi 意—but not the only one. The sinologist Harold Roth uses “awareness” in his translation of the Guanzi chapter “Inward Training” (Neiye 内業). “Awareness” could also work in medical contexts. Yet, after analysing the source material of this thesis, I find that the translation of yi 意 needs to also express its more active and intentional aspects (without restricting it to a specific mental process such as thinking or having intentions). My proposition is therefore the term “attention” which seems to work as an overarching designation for the functions we shall now examine.

Awareness

Awareness is a good word for describing one function of the attention. The basic definition provided at the beginning of this chapter says that “when the heart reflects on something that is called attention” (心有所憶謂之意). As we shall see from Zhang Jingyue’s annotation, this statement can be read with several meanings:

憶，思憶也。謂一念之生，心有所向而未定者，曰意。

“Reflect on” means to “think about and recall.” [It] refers to the birth of a thought, when the heart has some direction but has not settled [it] yet, this is called attention.

Zhang Jingyue says that “reflect” (yi 意) means to “think about” (si 思) and to “recall” (yi 意) which are actually two related but separate cognitive functions (one can think about something new, but only recall something already familiar). Then he mentions the aspect that is relevant to the function of awareness: the mental activity that precedes the formation of thoughts. This early stage is when the cognition starts, the “birth of a thought” (一念之生).

231 Unschuld and Tessenow, Basic Questions Vol. 1, 409; Unschuld, Ling Shu, 148.
232 “Dictionary.com.”
233 Roth, Original Tao: Inward Training (Nei-Yeh) and the Foundations of Taoist Mysticism.
234 It should be noted that 意 is also used in the medical literature with the ordinary meaning “concept; idea” (as in 是亦此意, 即此意也, 意同, 此其微意, 深意 etc.) It is fairly easy to tell the difference between this usage and 意 as the mental faculty “attention.”
235 Appendix A: ZJY 7
But before that thought has settled into something “fixed” (ding 定), the attention only has a certain “direction” (xiang 向). This meaning has to be understood in relation to the definition of the intent-mind (which follows in the original passage). The passage says: “That which is preserved from the attention is called the intent-mind.” The attention is therefore only responsible for the conscious mental activity of the present—that which one is aware of in the moment. This can be a thought processes or a wordless forms of awareness. In the “Spirit as Foundation” chapter it is for example said that “those who are mad cannot keep their attention” (狂者意不存人). ZJY explains it thus:

意不存人者，旁若無人也。

To “not keep one’s attention” means to act as there was nobody else around.

In this example, not keeping one’s attention is the same as not noticing. It means being inattentive and unaware of one’s surroundings (as in the modern colloquial expression “pay no attention” 不在意). Keeping attention is the opposite of randomness and chaos, it means being present within oneself and in the moment. There is another concept that is linked to this function of awareness; namely the idea that the attention can direct the flow of qi. The earliest reference to this notion is possibly a statement in the “Inward Training” chapter of the Guanzi which says: “[qi…] cannot be summoned by speech, but [it] can be welcomed by the attention” (氣…不可呼以聲, 而可迎以音

This idea has been preserved for instance in Qigong and Taiji practices where one is supposed to focus the attention on parts of the body to guide qi there. Such functions of the attention have little to do with analytical reasoning. It is about focus and awareness. In the Inner Canon this meaning is echoed in for example recommendations on needling techniques. One of Zhang Jingyue’s comments to this topic reads:

凡調氣之初，務要體安氣和，無與氣意爭。

At the start of any type of qi regulation, the body [of the patients] must be at ease and [their] qi harmonized so that nothing interferes with qi’s attention.
Focus and Processing

Now let us look closer at the relationship between the spleen and the attention. In medical theory the spleen is said to “govern post-heaven” (脾主後天) which means the constitution acquired after birth. The prenatal essence from your parents nourishes you until you are born, after that your body relies on a steady supply of food and water to preserve its constitution, vitality, and functions. This is provided by the digestive system. The spleen is responsible for the processing and distribution of nutrients to the whole body. Together with the stomach it produces construction, qi, and blood—which are the foundation of our day-to-day body metabolism. The “Hidden Canon” passage says that “the spleen and stomach hold the office of granaries, whence the five flavours emanate” (脾胃者，倉廩之官，五味出焉). Zhang Jingyue’s annotation to this statement says:

⑤脾主運化，胃司受納，通主水穀，故皆為倉廩之官。五味入胃，由脾布散，故曰五味出焉。刺法論曰：脾為諫議之官，知周出焉。

The spleen governs transport and transformation, the stomach is in charge of reception and intake, and the passage and management of water and grain, therefore they are both “the officials of granaries.” The five tastes enter the stomach and are distributed by the spleen; hence it says “whence the five flavours emanate.” The “Discourse on Needling” says: “The spleen holds the office of admonition and mediation, whence knowledge and thoroughness emanate.”

In the “Hidden Canon” passage some statements refer mostly to the bodily functions ascribed to the organ systems, while others explicitly point to mental functions. In many cases, however, there is an implicit double meaning to these descriptions. We saw this in the association of the lungs and corporal-soul with “order and moderation,” and the liver and ethereal-soul with “movement and initiative.” The associated qualities of the spleen system are “transport and transformation” (yunhua 運化). As Zhang Jingyue explains this refers to the responsibility for digestive functions. In the application of five agents’ theory the spleen belongs to Earth which is associated with transformation. The earth provides the nourishment so that all vegetation can grow and be transformed; the spleen system does the same for the human organism. As we saw in the analysis of “nourishment” (yang) in the previous chapter, the nutritional status was also considered important in regard to mental functions. The link between mental activity and body metabolism was therefore not new. What Zhang Jingyue does is making it even more explicit. As in the previous annotation, he also reminds us of

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240 Wiseman and Feng, A Practical Dictionary of Chinese Medicine, 557.
241 Basic Questions, chap. 72-16.
descriptions given elsewhere in the *Inner Canon* and explains in greater detail how these elements are connected. In the next annotation we can see that his understanding of the links between spleen, blood, construction, and attention are very concrete:

營出中焦，受氣取汁，變化而赤是謂血，故曰脾藏營。營舍意，即脾藏意也。脾虛則四肢不用，五臟不安，以脾主四肢，而脾為五臟之原也。太陰脈入腹絡胃，故脾實則腹脹經溲不利。調經論曰︰形有餘則腹脹經溲不利。

The construction comes from the middle burner\(^2\) which receives qi and selects the juices [that the body needs]. That which is transformed into red [fluid] is called blood, therefore it says: “spleen stores the construction.” “Construction housed the attention” has the same meaning as “the spleen stores the attention.”

The attention is, as we saw in its earlier definition, also responsible for “thinking” (*si* 思) and “reflection” (*yi* 儀). These functions correspond to what Wiseman calls *ideation* and includes all types of active mental processes such as forming ideas, conceptualizing, reasoning, analysing, contemplating etc. Here there is a metaphorical overlap between the spleen’s *physical processing* of nutrients, and the attention’s *mental processing* of ideas. These two functions are both related to the spleen system’s responsibility for “transport and transformation.” Mental processing also relies on the ability to *focus*. The attention is said to be stored by the construction (*ying* 營) which Zhang Jingyue’s earlier quote said was “the essential-qi of water and grain [i.e., digested food].” This hypothesized relationship between nutrition, metabolism, and mental focus is interesting. In a modern clinical setting, it could for example be related to the connection between blood sugar level and concentration.

**Learning and Understanding**

Learning and understanding require focused concentration. Because the attention is responsible for the conscious mental activity of the present—thinking, reasoning and so on—it is also what processes new ideas. In the first annotation of the previous paragraph it was also said that “the spleen holds the office of admonition and mediation, whence knowledge and thoroughness emanate” (脾為諫議之官，知周出焉).\(^2\) Further explanations are given in this annotation:

脾藏意，神志未定，意能通之，故為諫議之官。慮周萬事，皆由乎意，故智周出焉。

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\(^2\) The middle burner (*zhongjiao* 中焦) refers both to the body cavity between the diaphragm and the umbilicus and the digestive functions of the organs that are located there, particularly the spleen and stomach.


\(^2\) The quote is from *Suwen*, chap. 72-16.
The spleen stores the attention, when the spirit-intent is undecided the attention can be employed to thoroughly understand it; therefore it is the “office of admonition and mediation.” The thoughtful consideration of matters all comes from the attention; hence it is “whence knowledge and thoroughness emanate.”

So we see that the attention is not only responsible for the basic capacity to focus, but also the more complex and demanding forms of mental activity. Such abilities can be used “when the spirit-intent is undecided” (神志未定). In the original passage and Zhang Jingyue’s comment these functions are described as a form of “thoroughness.” It involves the ability to “learn from looking at something from many angles” (zhizhou 智周) and “thinking things through” (tongzhi 通之). In modern terms this would correspond to the capacity for problem-solving, analysis, logical reasoning, and abstract thinking. The attention is also said to hold the office of “admonition and mediation.” This refers to an actual governmental title, perhaps an official whom had the responsibility for mediating and solving conflicts. Through its analytical capacities the attention can assist the spirit and the intent-mind (i.e., the conscious aspects of the mind) in processing information, understanding what it means, and finding the best solutions. It is therefore the basis for learning and acquiring knowledge. However, the attention is only engaged in the ongoing processes of the mind, it is where the analytical abilities “emanate” (chu 出). The further development and preservation of knowledge rely on the storing capacity of essence and the intent-mind.

**Memorization and Recollection**

The attention is also attributed some responsibility for memory. As we noted earlier, memory is also related to the corporal-soul and the intent-mind. The distribution of responsibility among these three spirit aspects is rarely explained very clearly. It can therefore appear somewhat confusing. In my opinion, however, their difference can be discerned from comparing their general descriptions to the passages that has to do with memory. Let us look at one example that describes a clinical condition which can affect the attention’s responsibility for recollection. The original *Divine Pivot* passage says:

厥頭痛，意善忘，按之不得，取頭面左右動脈，後取足太陰。

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246 CMT says that this compound refers to the “conscious mind.”
When [a patients have] reversal headache, [their] attention will be forgetful. In such cases pressing [on the head] will have no effect; one has to [first] select the arteries on both sides of the face, afterwards one takes the foot Taiyin [channel].

Zhang Jingyue’s comment to this passage reads:

脾藏意，意傷則善忘。陽邪在頭而無定所，則按之不得。故當先取頭面左右動脈以泄其邪，後取足太陰經以補脾氣也。

The spleen stores the attention, when the attention is harmed [one] becomes forgetful. If yang-evils [i.e., pathogenic factors] is in the head but there is no precise location [of the pain], then pressing it will have no effect. Therefore [one must] first select the two arteries on each side of the face to drain the evil [qi], afterwards [one can] select the Foot Taiyin channel in order to supplement spleen qi.

In these passages the memory function of the attention is related to a very concrete clinical example. It describes a patient that has an underlying spleen weakness combined with reversal headache that is strong but without a precise localization. If there is both pain and weariness, one can easily imagine that this would lead to a lowered mental focus and a tendency to forget. The term “forgetfulness” (shanwang 善忘) does not mean forgetting who you are or things you have learned, but rather that you are distracted and forget what you are doing—which we might call a temporary reduced short term memory. This example is something that most of us can relate to; surely Zhang Jingyue had encountered this type of patients many times in his clinical practice.

Let us now see if we can understand more clearly how the attention relates to memory.

In the earlier definition of attention, it was said that to “reflect on” (yi 懐) means to “think about and recall” (siyi 思憶). The description is actually quite precise; one has to think about something to recall it. In order to remember, the memories have to be brought back into the active consciousness of the mind. This function is similar to what was said about knowledge in the previous paragraph; the attention is not responsible for storing memories but the active recollection of them—the phase where you are remembering. At the other end of the process, the attention also contributes to creating memories and memorizing knowledge. Such processes depend on the ability to concentrate on, select, and process certain features (we cannot memorize all details). This is what the attention contributes with in regard to memory.

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248 Lingshu, chap. 24·2. Taiyin is here short for the Foot Taiyin channel of the spleen, see Zhang Jingyue annotation.
249 Zhang, “Leijing,” fascicle 21, chap. 43.
4.2.2 The Kidneys and the Intent-mind (zhi 志)

Before we analyse the functions of the intent-mind and the kidney system, something must be said about the translations of this concept. As mentioned earlier, the character zhi 志 is used with several meanings. In many contexts it does not refer to the specific mental faculty of the kidneys (i.e., the intent-mind). We have encountered some example of this already, as in the “five [states of] mind” (wuzhi 五志) or the later compound “affect [and states of] mind” (qingzhi 情志). Sometimes zhi 志 is also used alone as a general reference to “mind” as in statements like “let the mind be peaceful and tranquil” (使志安寧) or “let the mind have no anger” (使志無怒).\(^{250}\) Zhang Jingyue’s comment to the first statement says that it means “wanting the spirit-intent [to be] peaceful and tranquil” (欲神志安寧)\(^ {251}\) which makes it clear that zhi 志 is here used as a generic term. Such distinctions are important if we want to find out what particular functions are related to the intent-mind. It should also be clear from the translation which of the meanings is in use. Wiseman uses the translation “mind” in all of the above contexts (which is too imprecise for this study). Unschuld translates it as “mind” or “state of mind” when it is used with the general meanings. When it refers specifically to the mental faculty of the kidneys, he sometimes uses “will” and sometimes “mind” (which is a little confusing).\(^ {252}\) In all of my own translations of zhi 志 I have kept the term “mind” (to indicate that they have a common written form and certain shared association) but combined it with other elements to distinguish between the above mentioned usages. In the following section we shall only concentrate on the properties related to the intent-mind.

Memory and Enduring Mental Processes

The “Spirit as Foundation” chapter says that “the kidneys store essence; essence houses the intent-mind” (腎藏精, 精舍志).\(^ {253}\) Among the vital substances of the body only essence has a stable component throughout life (the inherited pre-heaven essence). All other substances are continuously replaced. Essence is therefore the foundation of continuity and all preserved aspects of the human organism. The basic definition of the intent-mind in the “Spirit as

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\(^{250}\) Both examples are found in Suwen, chap. 2·1.

\(^{251}\) Zhang, “Leijing,” fascicle 1, chap. 4.

\(^{252}\) See for example Unschuld and Tessenow, Basic Questions Vol. 1, 409; Unschuld, Ling Shu, 148.

\(^{253}\) Lingshu, chap. 8·16.
Foundation” chapter says: “That which is preserved from the attention is called the intent-mind” (意之所存謂之志).\(^\text{254}\) Zhang Jingyue’s comment reads:

意之所存，謂意已決而卓有所立者，曰志。  

“That which is preserved from the attention” means when the attention\(^\text{255}\) has already decided [on its focus] and has become something properly established, that is called the intent-mind.\(^\text{256}\)

So whatever remains from the processing of the attention becomes a part of the intent-mind. The intent-mind is thus responsible for all the enduring aspects of the mind. This means memories, knowledge, thoughts, ideas, goals, aspirations, plans and so on. As we noted in the previous section, such functions depend on a continuous exchange between the attention and the intent-mind. That is why these two faculties are often described together. A passage in the “Spirit as Foundation” chapter for example says that “when the intent-mind is damaged then [the patients] will often forget what they just said” (志傷則喜忘其前言). Zhang Jingyue explains this statement thus:

志傷則意失，而善忘其前言也。

If the intent-mind is damaged then the attention is lost and [the patient] forgets what he just said.\(^\text{257}\)

These statements exhibit the interdependent relationship between these two faculties; it also shows that the stability of the intent-mind is a precondition for the proper functioning of the attention. In addition, the character zhi 志 is directly associated with the function of memory. In other contexts it has the meaning of keeping records, like in the colloquial expression “remembering forever” (yongzhi buwang 永志不忘) or terms for written documentation such as “local chronicles” (fangzhi 方志).

**Stamina and Skills**

The “Hidden Canon” passage says that “the kidneys hold the office of labour, whence agility and technique emanate” (腎者，作強之官，伎巧出焉). Zhang Jingyue offers this explanation:

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\(^{254}\) Unschuld’s translation reads: “The location where the intentions are that is called the mind.”

\(^{255}\) This sentence is hard to translate well because of the flexibility of the term yi 意. Here it can refer to the mental faculty “attention” and a “meaning; concept; idea” simultaneously.

\(^{256}\) Appendix A: ZJY 8.

\(^{257}\) Appendix A: ZJY 23.
To understand this annotation one has to be familiar with the system of visceral manifestations (table 3.1) and the structures and functions that are ascribed to the kidney system. The kidneys are said to “governs pre-heaven” (腎主先天) which means one’s inherited constitution (as opposed to the required constitution governed by the spleen). This function is related to the storage of essence. As mentioned in the previous chapter, essence is the source of the reproductive fluids; it also lays the foundation for growth, development, reproduction, and aging. The bones, teeth, and hair are some of the body structures that belong to the kidney system. Processes such as getting teeth, growing taller, puberty, menopause, the graying of hair, weakening of bone structure in old age etc. all reflect the condition of the kidney essence. The constitutional strength of a person also depends on the kidney’s so-called “original-qi” (yuanqi 元氣) which is the driving force behind all vital functions. When Zhang Jingyue says that “essence is the root of physical form” (精為有形之本) and that this is the foundation for “strong movements and functions” (作用強), these specific functions of the kidney system are implicitly understood. Our spine and skeleton literally carries us through life and takes all the heavy loads. Therefore the original passage says that “the kidneys hold the office of labour” (腎者，作強之官).

As we have seen many times now, such statements often contain a double psycho-physiological meaning. The kidney essence and original-qi are considered the basis of both our physical and mental constitution. The intent-mind is stored by the essence and is responsible for all long-lasting processes of the mind. This also means the capacity for mental endurance, stamina, willpower, determination etc. Such mental functions are in fact directly associated with the character zhì 志 and will be among the possible translations given in dictionaries. Perhaps because the characters zhì 志 and yì 意 were used with such meanings in the everyday vernacular (LGP), Zhang Jingyue does not explain these concepts as much as

259 Wiseman and Feng, A Practical Dictionary of Chinese Medicine, 324-325.
260 The HDC for example lists “will; willpower; determination” (zhìyi 意志) as its first explanation of zhì 志.
he did with the ethereal and corporal souls. Seemingly he expects the readers to understand from the context what they mean.

He links the statement “whence agility and technique emanate” (伎巧出焉) with the ability to create life—which is “exquisite and imperceptible” (精妙莫測). We know that the kidney system is responsible for all reproductive processes, but this description seems to point to something else. More like a form of resourcefulness. The association of the kidneys with “agility and technique” can be interpreted as a reference to physical flexibility (of the spine and joints) and the development of trained physical skills. However, Unschuld’s translation reads “technical skills and expertise” which is perhaps closer to Zhang Jingyue’s understanding of the phrase. In any case, there is an association to some kind of skilfulness. Techniques are perfected through repeated rehearsal. Expertise requires a combination of physical and mental abilities. If we consider some of the functions ascribed to the kidneys and the intent-mind—stamina, determination, knowledge, and memory—we see that these are all qualities needed for developing any type of skilfulness.

**Focused Concentration**

As the translation indicates, the intent-mind is also responsible for intention and will. In the section about the embodied mind, there was a statement that said: “[…] the intent-mind leads ahead” (志先). The context was the process of diagnosis. From such descriptions we see that the intent-mind is often associated with a deep concentration—a stable and sharply focused attentiveness. This meaning often appears in guidelines for clinical practice, like in this passage from the *Divine Pivot*:

深居靜處，占神往來，閉戶塞牖，魂魄不散，專意一神，精氣之分，毋聞人聲，以收其精，必一其神，令志在針。[Treatment with needling must be administered] inside a secluded and quiet location, to keep the spirit from coming and going, the doors [should be] closed and the windows sealed [so that] the ethereal and corporal souls are not scattered, [the physician must] focus his attention and unify his spirit, [so that] the essence and qi do not part, no voices must be heard [so that] he can gather his essence, he must be one with his own spirit and project his intent [mind] into the needle.

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263 The HDC also lists “accurate conduct” (作为准的) as one meaning of *zhī* 志.
264 *Lingshu*, chap. 9·27.
This passage seems to combine the idea of deep concentration with the capacity for technical expertise that we discussed in the previous paragraph. If the physician manages to be completely focused his intent-mind can be transferred into the needling technique. The needle will then be like an extension of his mind, something that can be used both to perceive and influence the patient’s body. Zhang Jingyue’s annotation says:

言刺此者，須必清必靜，聚精會神，詳察秋毫，令志在針，庶於虛實疑似之間，方保無誤也。

Speaking of needling, [the physician] needs to be clear and calm, completely focused, examine carefully all subtle signs, and project his intent-mind into the needle so that if there is uncertainty about the vacuous or replete [nature of the condition, he can] insure that the treatment method is [still] flawless.265

This link between concentration and the intent-mind also reflects the associations of the concept “essence.” An “essence” always refers to the purified and concentrated form of something. In Chinese medical physiology, the kidney essence represents the most refined and precious body substance. Since the intent-mind is “housed” by the essence, it is in extension also associated with something deep and concentrated.

**Experience and Wisdom**

As a continuation of the above mentioned qualities, the intent-mind also contains the ability to gather experience and wisdom. The “Spirit as Foundation” chapter says:

因志而存變謂之思，因思而遠慕謂之慮，因慮而處物謂之智。

What is preserved and changes because of the intent-mind is called pondering. [Having] far-reaching aspiration because of pondering is called consideration. Handling matters because of consideration is called wisdom.266

These statements follow directly after the earlier quoted definitions of the attention and the intent-mind. Read as a whole, they seem to describe a chain of mental processes, starting with awareness, then thoughts, aspirations, considerations, and wisdom. Zhang Jingyue’s comments to these last statements read:

因志而存變，謂意志雖定，而復有反複計度者，曰思。


266 Lingshu, chap. 8.2. Unschuld’s translation says: “If the mind longs for changes, that is called pondering. If pondering results in far reaching plans, that is called consideration. If considerations guide one’s handling of affairs, this is called knowledge,” Unschuld, Ling Shu, 148-149.
“What is preserved [but] changes due to the intent-mind” refers to when although the will has settled but there are still calculations and measurements back and forth, [this] is called pondering.  

深思遠慕，必生憂疑，故曰慮。

Deep pondering and far-reaching aspiration will inevitably generate anxiousness and doubt; hence [we] call it consideration.  

疑慮既生，而處得其善者，曰智。

When doubts have already been generated yet [one] manages to obtain something good from it, [we] call it wisdom.  

Wisdom is something that develops over time, like a distillation process. The intent-mind does not just passively store information; it can also change it and determine what its meaning is. This is not an automatic process; one has to decide what to do with one’s experience, knowledge, and understanding. Wisdom is not an inherent quality but something that must be developed. Zhang Jingyue seems to associate it with the ability to handle difficult situations (“when doubts have already been generated”). If things are easy there is perhaps not so much need to be wise. Wisdom, he says, is when despite challenges one “manages to obtain something good from it” (處得其善者). To do this requires a certain degree of flexibility. One has to be able to adjust one’s understanding, knowledge, and expectations to the shifting circumstances. If one’s plans are too rigid, they will not necessarily fit with reality. In the Basic Question there is a passage that states: “When the operation of the spirit follows no prescribed method, this is called sagehood” (神用無方謂之聖). To explain what this means Zhang Jingyue refers to a quote from the early Daoist classic the Zhuangzi:  

神之為用，變化不測，故曰無方。無方者，大而化之之稱。《南華天運篇》曰：無方之傳，應物而不窮者也。故謂之聖。此以人道言也。

[As for] the operations of the spirit; [its] changes and transformations are unfathomable, so we call it “having no prescribed method.” This “no prescribed method” is just a general designation. The “Revolution of Heaven” chapter [in Zhuangzi] says: “the tradition of [acting with] no prescribed method means responding to things without [causing] exhaustion.” Hence it is called sagehood. This is said with regard to the Way of people.

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267 Appendix: ZJY 9.  
268 Appendix: ZJY 10.  
269 Appendix: ZJY 11.  
270 Siwen, chap. 66·1.  
In this vision of sagehood, being wise also means to not waste any resources (neither one’s own or that of others). It is of course related to the principle of “non-interference” and “effortless action” (wuwei), but also the ideal of “preservation.” The wise person does not over-do or over-use anything.

**Approaching Death**

In the previous chapter we saw that the spirit was considered the primary manifestation of life. In this chapter we have also seen some examples of how the different spirit aspects were related to death. Such descriptions often reflect both the abstract conceptualization of life and death, as well as the concrete experience of dealing with terminally ill people. In the *Categories of the Canons* an entire chapter is devoted to the discussion of how to interpret the changes of the body and mind that occur prior to death. The following passage from the *Divine Pivot* specifically mentions the intent-mind:

> 五陰氣俱絕則目系轉，轉則目運，目運者為志先死，志先死則遠一日半死矣。

> When all of the five yin [organ’s] qi has expired then the eye connector \(^{272}\) turns, when [it] turns then the eyes rotate [inwards]. The rotation of the eyes means that the intent-mind has died first, when the intent-mind has already gone then death will occur within one and a half days at the most. \(^{273}\)

Zhang Jingyue’s comment says:

> 五臟之精皆上注於目，故五陰氣絕則目轉而運，志先死矣。蓋志藏於腎，陰之神也，真陰已竭，死在周日間耳。今有病劇而忽爾目無所見者，正陰氣竭絕之候。

> All the essences of the five viscera ascend and pour into the eyes, hence when the five yin [organ’s] qi expires then the eyes turn and rotate [inwards], and the intent-mind dies first. This is presumably because the intent-mind is stored by the kidneys, [it is] the spirit of the yin [aspect], when the true yin is exhausted death will occur within just a day’s time. \(^{274}\)

From such passages we can see that the medical understanding of the spirit aspects is not only philosophical but also directly linked to anatomical structures, bodily functions, and observations derived from medical practice.

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\(^{272}\) According to another passage in the *Divine Pivot* the “eye connector” (目系) connects the eyes to the brain, see Wiseman and Feng, *A Practical Dictionary of Chinese Medicine*, 192.

\(^{273}\) *Lingshu*, chap. 10: 33.

\(^{274}\) Zhang, “Leijing,” fascicle 18, chap. 95.
4.3 The Unified Spirit

In the previous chapter we analysed the general properties of the spirit as one concept. This equals what modern Chinese scholars refer to as its “broad meanings” and Zhang Jingyue calls “summarizing it” (合言之). In this chapter we have examined the differentiated functions of each individual spirit aspects. The spirit of the heart is special though; it is one of the five spirits but also the unified totality of all the spirit aspects put together. In the following we shall look at what this particular responsibility entails.

4.3.1 The Heart and the Spirit

In the non-medical philosophical discourse, the term “heart” (xin 心) is often used with a more abstract meaning of “mind” or “consciousness” (especially after the introduction of Buddhist teachings). In medical theory, however, the heart also retained its literal meaning of body organ. The Basic Questions for example contains a specific description of how long it takes to die if the heart (or the other visceral organs) is pierced. In the Canon of Difficult Issues (Nanjing 難經) the viscera and bowels are described with specific measures of size, shape, and location. So undoubtedly the early conceptualization of the viscera and bowels also includes an understanding of their anatomy. But as we noted in the section “visceral manifestation,” the name of each viscus does not just refer to that particular organ. It represents a larger organ system responsible for certain tissues, structures, and psychophysiological functions within the human organism.

Overall Responsibility and Personality

The heart is assigned with the overall responsibility of the mind. In addition it governs blood and vessels, and regulates the body heating together with the lung system. The warmth provided by the heart is referred to as the “sovereign-fire” (junhuo 君火). In cooperation with the “ministerial-fire” (xianghuo 相火) of the kidneys, it generates the impetus to all physiological and psychological processes. The “Spirit as Foundation” says that “the heart

275 The sinologist A. C. Graham has argued that the translation “mind” is only suitable for post-Buddhist texts, see Graham, Disputers of the Tao: Philosohical Argument in Ancient China, 484.
277 Wiseman and Feng, A Practical Dictionary of Chinese Medicine, 549 and 396.
stores vessels: vessels house the spirit” (心藏脈，脈舍神).278 Earlier in the same chapter the psycho-physiological role of the heart is summarized like this:

所以任物者謂之心，

That which is responsible for all matters279 is called the heart.

As we have seen earlier, Zhang Jingyue refers to the spirit of the heart as “one’s own original spirit” (吾身之元神) or “one’s own complete spirit” (吾身之全神).280 The term “original” (yuan 元) means that the heart spirit is the source of all other spirit aspects and mental-emotional phenomena. “Complete” (quan 全) means that it also represents the total and final expression of these various functions put together. When Zhang Jingyue refers to the heart spirit as “one’s own…” (吾身之…), indicating that it is personal and unique to each human being. The overall manifestation of the five spirits represents one’s individual character and personality. In the elaboration of the ethereal-soul Zhang Jingyue said that “presumably the spirit creates virtue; qualities like being bright and candid, intelligent and quick-witted are all expressions of this” (蓋神之為德, 如光明爽朗、聰慧靈通之類皆是也).

Emotional Regulation

Each of the five spirits belongs to a specific organ system but is also subjected to the supervision of the heart spirit. How is the distribution of responsibility between the heart and the other viscera perceived? Zhang Jingyue explains it thus:

按此數者，各有所主之臟，今皆生之於心，此正諸臟為之相使，而心則為之主宰耳。

[...] these various [cognitive] functions each have their own governing visceral organ. Now [as we know], they all originate from the heart. These respective organs empower281 them, whereas the heart only rules over them.282

The visceral organs provide the physical foundation of the spirit aspect (through nourishment and qi transformation), in return the five spirits participate in the regulation of these organ

278 Lingshu, chap. 8·16.
279 Unschuld’s translation says “all affairs.” Zhang Jingyue understands it as the “myriad beings” (wanwu 萬物) which refers to all living beings as well as all creations of the universe (HDC: yuzhoujian de yiqie shiwu 宇宙間的一切事物). “All matters” can include living organisms, creations, and dealings.
281 CMT says that xiangshi 相使 means to “empower,” as when one component of an herbal formula makes another component more powerful. Shi 使 alone is commonly translated as “to cause; employ; enable.”
282 Appendix A: ZJY 11.
systems. The heart supervises all these processes and particularly that which has to do with mental and emotional activities. Any state of mind therefore also reflects the condition of the heart spirit. Zhang Jingyue explains:

可見心為五臟六腑之大主，而統統魂魄，兼該志意。故憂動於心則肺應，思動於心則脾應，怒動於心則肝應，恐動於心則腎應，此所以五志惟心所使也。

It is thus evident that the heart is the great sovereign of the five viscera and six bowels; and unifies the ethereal and corporal souls, the attention, and the intent-mind under its command. Hence, if anxiety stirs the heart then the lungs will respond [to it], if pondering stirs the heart then the spleen will respond [to it], if anger stirs the heart then the liver will respond [to it], if fear stirs the heart then the kidneys will respond [to it]. This is why the five [states of] mind are [all] caused by the heart alone.  

All mental-emotional stimuli thus originate the heart. In this regard, Zhang Jingyue also makes another interesting judgement:

是以心正則萬神俱正，心邪則萬神俱邪，迨其變態，莫可名狀。

Therefore when the [condition of the] heart is regular then the “ten thousand spirits” will all be regular, and when the heart [is affected by] evil [i.e., pathogenic influences] then the “ten thousand spirits” will all be [affected by] evil. **Before its appearance changes abnormally, it cannot be described.**  

He says that the spirit cannot be described **before its appearance changes abnormally.** In other words, when the body and mind is well-functioning everything will work together as one unit. All transitions will be seamless. Thus the particular functions of the spirit aspects are hard to distinguish. However, when a pathological change occurs, some functions are distorted and therefore become prominent. The unity cracks and the differences can be seen. In medical history, many physiological mechanisms have been discovered through the observation of pathological changes. When something becomes malfunctioning one understands what its normal functions are.

**Joy and Contentment**

We have not analysed the relationship between emotions and the organ systems in much detail. This has been a conscious choice because the subject is so complex that it would require a thesis of its own. Instead we have looked at the general understanding of emotions and some examples that illustrate how they are related to specific conditions in clinical

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284 Appendix: ZJY 4.
Emotions are generally not considered harmful unless they become excessive. However, only the emotional state associated with the heart—joy (喜)—is described as having a positive impact on the body. In the original passage that discusses how emotions influence the movement of qi, the emperor’s adviser Qi Bo says:

喜則氣和志達，榮衛通利，故氣緩矣。

When joyful then the qi is harmonious and one’s mind is unimpeded. The construction and defence [qi] pass freely. Hence, the qi relaxes. 286

This is generally a good thing. But also joy and happiness should not be excessive. Zhang Jingyue’s comment reads:

氣脈和調，故志暢達。榮衛通利，故氣徐緩。

When the qi and vessels are harmonious and well-regulated, then the [state of] mind is unobstructed, the construction and defence have free passage, and therefore the qi slows down and relaxes. However, if there is excessive joy then the qi will slacken too much and thus gradually dissipate. Hence the “Discourse on Regulating the Channels” says: “If joyous then qi descends.” 288 The “Spirit as Foundation” chapter says: “[With] happiness and joy the spirit is startled and disperses and therefore no longer stored.” 288 The meaning is understandable.

As explained earlier, “excessive” often means too strong, sudden, or prolonged. If one becomes overly excited one may lose one’s inner unity and balance. Zhang Jingyue explains more in the annotations to the “Spirit as Foundation” chapter:

喜發於心，樂散在外，暴喜傷陽，故神氣憚散而不藏。憚，驚惕也。

Happiness issues from the heart, joy disperses [qi] to the exterior, sudden happiness [causes] damage to the yang, thus spirit-qi is startled and disperses and therefore no longer stored. 289

The ideal state of mind is therefore described as a form of peaceful contentment.

Contentment does not necessarily rely on external conditions; it can come from accepting and enjoying life as it is. This is how Zhang Jingyue envisions it:

設能善養此心而居處安靜，無為懼懼，無為欣欣，婉然從物而不爭，與時變化而無我，則志意和，精神定，悔怒不起，魂魄不散，五臟俱安，邪亦安從奈我哉？

285 As in the section on courage, fear, and fright in relation to the liver and ethereal-soul.
286 Suwen, chap. 39·6.
287 Suwen, 62·8.
288 Lingshu, chap. 8·4.
289 Zhang Jingyue says that 憚 means to be “startled and alert” (jingti 驚惕).
290 Appendix: ZJY 15.
If one would be able to cultivate this heart in a proper way and live in peace, without being fearful, without being [overly] happy, just gracefully follow the course of things without resistance, transform with the changes of time and detached from one’s ego—then one’s will would be harmonious, one’s essence-spirit would be stable, resentful feelings would not rise, the ethereal and the corporal souls would not be scattered, the five viscera would all be secured, how then could one possibly be countered by evil [pathogenic factors]? \(^{291}\)

As we can see, this ideal of peaceful contentment is not just about personal development but also how to preserve good health. Zhang Jingyue concludes his comment with this advice for clinical practice: “So whenever someone is given treatment, the superior [method] is to cultivate the spirit, the second best [method] is to cultivate the body” (則凡治身者，太上養神，其次養形也). \(^{292}\)

### 4.3.2 The Essence-spirit (jingshen 精神)

The unified spirit can be referred to by different terms. Often it just called “spirit” or “heart spirit” (xinshen 心神). Another designation is the “essence-spirit.” This concept is also directly linked to the heart; in the *Divine Pivot* there is a passage that states: “The heart is the great governor of five viscera and the six bowels [and] the abode of the essence-spirit” (心者，五臟六腑之大主也，精神之所舍也). \(^{293}\)

#### Stability and Preservation

The significance of the heart as the ruler of the spirit (and thereby all regulatory aspects of the body and mind) is frequently expressed. However, the heart spirit cannot exist and operate on its own. All functions are in the end collaborative. The activity of the spirit relies on essence and qi which are provided by the other organ systems. This interdependency is clearly expressed in the following annotation:

夫精全則氣全，氣全則神全，未有形氣衰而神能王者，亦未有神既散而形獨存者，故曰失神者死，得神者生。

Now, if the essence is complete then the qi is complete, when the qi is complete then the spirit is complete. There has not been a case where the bodily form and qi had declined and the spirit [still] managed to [hold its position as] monarch, nor has there been a case where the spirit had already been scattered and the bodily form [continued to] exist on its own. Hence it says: “Those who lose their spirit dies, those who obtain their spirit lives.” \(^{294}\)

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\(^{292}\) Appendix A: ZJY 4.

\(^{293}\) Lingshu, chap. 71.


Appendix A: ZJY 4.
In Zhang Jingyue’s time there were no machines that could keep a person alive after cardiac arrest or brain-death. It would have been interesting to hear what he would think if he saw someone in coma breathing through a respirator. Perhaps that we had found a way to keep the corporal-soul going even when the viscera are seriously damaged and the other spirit aspects scattered and lost? That the vice minister is temporarily in charge while the sovereign is indisposed?

Anyhow, without any artificial help the spirit relies on essence and qi to be preserved and function. The essence is its stable base of nourishment and preservation. It also contains all the latent potential of the spirit. In the medical literature the separate meanings of essence and spirit are also retained in the compound term “essence-spirit” (jingshen 精神). This is evident from the way these two characters can be used both separately and as a compound in the same passage. The term “essence-spirit” work as a synonym to “spirit.” In the colloquial language (LGP), it also became a standard expression for “mind” or “psyche” which in the modern vernacular has lost the concrete attachment to physiology implied by the LSP-meaning of essence. In the classical medical doctrine, however, essence-spirit highlights the interdependency between the body and mind—in particular the heart and kidneys shared responsibility for mental functions.

**Inward Concentration and Alignment**

Essence has already been mentioned in relation to concentration and focus. The term essence-spirit also occurs in such contexts. Here is one example from the *Divine Pivot*:

[...] 志意和, 則精神專直, 魂魄不散, 悔怒不起, 五臟不受邪矣。

When the will is harmonious then the **essence-spirit will be completely concentrated**, the ethereal and corporal souls will not be scattered, resentful feelings will not rise, and the five viscera will not receive any evil [influences].

Zhang Jingyue’s comment to this description of the essence-spirit says:

専直, 如易系所謂其靜也專、其動也直, 言其專一而正也。

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294 Appendix A: ZJY 4.
295 See for example Unschuld and Tessenow, *Basic Questions Vol. 1*, chap. 14, 236-238. Zhang Jingyue’s comment to this passage is also quoted.
296 *Lingshu*, chap. 47·1.
“Completely concentrated,” as in the *YiXia*297 saying “their stillness was focused, their movements had direction,” [which] expresses their complete concentration and alignment [within themselves].

In these passages essence-spirit is associated with inner concentration and alignment. Perhaps one could say that it is the internal manifestation of the unified spirit—the combination of the mind’s stored potential (essence) and its active employment (spirit).

### 4.3.3 The Spirit-brilliance (shenming 神明)

Spirit-brilliance is another term for the spirit aspect of the heart. Whereas the “ordinary” heart spirit can be seen as the totality of the “ten thousand spirits,” the spirit-brilliance refers to the mental abilities that belong exclusively to the heart. There are several metaphorical references attached to this concept. We saw earlier that the spirit was considered the *yang within yang* (陽中之陽). That means that it is the purest and least material form of qi. “Yang” is also a reference to the sun. Ideally the spirit should shine brightly like the sun which illuminates the world and makes all things become clear. This can only happen when it is not “clouded” by emotional turbulence. In premodern China the emperor was referred to as the “Son of heaven” (*tianzi* 天子) and also likened with the sun. This analogy is also embedded in the concept of spirit-brilliance, since the latter originates from the heart which is the “sovereign” of the human body.

**Intelligence and Creativity**

In the “Hidden Canon” passage it says that “the heart holds the office of monarch, whence spirit-brilliance emanates (心者，君主之官也，神明出焉). Zhang Jingyue’s annotation reads:

① 心為一身之君主，由虛靈而含造化，具一理以應萬幾，臟腑百骸，惟所是命，聰明智慧，莫不由之，故曰神明出焉。

The heart is the sovereign of the whole body; endowed with the void [spiritual] power and filled with [the ability to] create, equipped with the one [unifying] principle whereby one responds to the ten thousands happenings. The viscera and bowels, the hundred bones, alone [the heart] controls all fates, [one’s] intelligence and wisdom—there is nothing which is not caused by it. Hence it says “whence the spirit-brilliance emanates.”298

297 The title of a section in the *Book of Changes*.
Intelligence has something to do with coordinating and combining one’s abilities. The spirit-brilliance represents this potential. It can collect all the input from the other spirit aspects and create something new out of it. The corporal and ethereal souls contribute with sensory registration and perception, the attention and intent-mind with the processing of information and ideas. Only the spirit of the heart has the capacity for creativity. It also has the final saying in the decision of how to act and respond.

**Outward Communication and Self-transcendence**

While the spirit-essence may be said to represent the inner “gatheredness” of the spirit, the spirit-brilliance is its outward manifestation. This is also evident from the verbs that it is usually combined with, such as “come out” (*chu 出*), “appear” (*jian 見*), and “open to” (*tong 通*). Brilliance is something that radiates outward. The condition of the spirit-brilliance can be detected in the facial complexion and expressions, the tone of voice, and the clearness of the eyes.²⁹⁹ In a comment to the process of diagnosis, Zhang Jingyue says:

> 必清必淨, 則心專志一而神明見, 然後上觀之以察其神色聲音, 下觀之以察其形體逆順。

One must be **clear and pure**; then the heart will be **focused** and the intent-mind **unified**, and the **spirit-brilliance will manifest** [itself]. After that, one can **observe** the above [manifestations] to **examine** [the patient’s] **spirit-expression and sound of voice**, and observe the below [manifestations] to examine his body’s reverse or complying [condition].³⁰⁰

The spirit-brilliance is responsible for our communication with the external world. In patients, the outward manifestations of the spirit—or lack thereof—are indications of their wellbeing. The physician can use his spirit-brilliance to observe and understand these subtle signs. The spirit-brilliance also represents the potential for spiritual development and self-transcendence. In the *Basic Questions* there is a statement that says: “Hence the sages concentrated their essence-spirit, complied with the qi of heaven, and thus communicated with the spirit-brilliance” (故聖人傳精神, 服天氣, 而通 神明).³⁰¹ Zhang Jingyue’s annotation reads:

> 惟聖人者, 能得天之精神, 服天氣, 而通 神明, 所以與天為一而神明可與天通矣。

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²⁹⁹ The brightness of the eyes is linked to a concept called “essence-brilliance” (*jingming 精明*) which is related to our ability to “see” the world clearly. It is also considered to reflect the spirit. Zhang Jingyue says: “To observe the essence-brilliance of the eyes is to diagnose the spirit qi” (視目之精明，診神氣也), see Zhang, “Leijing,” fascicle 5, chap. 1.


³⁰¹ *Suwen*, chap. 3-1.
Only those who are sages can obtain the spirit-essence of heaven, comply with the original qi of heaven, and thereby become one with heaven and thus be able to communicate with heaven [through their] spirit-brilliance.\footnote{Zhang, “Leijing,” fascicle 13, chap. 5.}

4.4 Summary

In this chapter we have analysed the differentiated functions of the five spirits and how they relate to the inner organ systems. This should be seen as a continuation of the findings of the previous chapter.

Earlier we saw that the spirit could be defined as a transformation of qi rooted in essence; now we have seen that in addition, each spirit aspect is contained by a specific substance or structure in the body (qi, blood, construction, essence, and vessels). These substances are produced and maintained by the visceral organs and therefore link the five spirits to the physiological processes of the body. Moreover, the spirit aspects are also directly involved in the initiation and regulation of such bodily processes.

Earlier it was said that the spirit represented the inherent regulations of the body; in this chapter we have seen that such functions are mainly performed by the corporal and ethereal souls. These two manifest and develop the basic properties of essence and spirit, which can to some degree also be adjusted by the semiconscious “will” of the attention and the intent-mind.

We already knew that the heart spirit had the overall responsibility for all conscious mental-emotional processes; now we have seen that functions such as perception, processing, and understanding rely on the collaboration between several mental faculties: the ethereal-soul, the attention, the intent-mind, and the spirit (and potentially the spirit-brilliance). The external manifestations such as expressiveness, communication, and implementation are carried out on different levels by the ethereal-soul, the heart spirit, and the spirit-brilliance. The unified and complete mind of each individual can be referred to as just spirit, heart spirit, or essence-spirit. Spirit refers to the active employment of the mind. Essence-spirit represents its inner concentration and continuity. Spirit-brilliance is both the external manifestation of the heart spirit and the potential for intelligence, creativity, and self-transcendence.

In the Chinese medical doctrine, all physical and mental functions are in the end collaborative and interdependent. This is the “physiology of the mind” and the “psychology
of the body.” A simplified version of the five spirits model based on the findings in this study is provided in Figure 4.4.1.

Figure 4.4.1 The relationship between the spirit aspects, visceral organs, and their substances.
Conclusion

The inseparability of the body and mind in Chinese medical thought is no new discovery. Neither are the concepts of the five spirits a secret, though they have not received much attention in contemporary scholarship. The lack of academic analyzes might explain why some scholars have misinterpreted these concepts as some sort of demonology, and claimed that Chinese medicine first became “psychologized” by western practitioners. While it may be true that groups of modern clinicians have reinterpreted Chinese medicine in a different way, this study has demonstrated that psychological theory was always a central part of the original Chinese discourse. The same can be said about physiology. The overlap of these theories, as well as their fusion with cosmology and other cultural-historical conceptual models, may however have made it difficult for modern scholars to recognize the separate contributions to these specific fields.

In western clinical literature, the descriptions of the five spirits have had very little reference to original Chinese sources. Contemporary Chinese writings refer only to the most general and well-known statements. This study is therefore the first in-depth analysis to have examined both the medical, linguistic, conceptual, and discursive aspects of these theories. It has explored in detail how this body-mind relationship was construed, and what functions were actually ascribed to these mental faculties. Moreover, it has focused not only on how this part of medical theory was presented in the early canons, but also on how it was interpreted, analyzed, explained, and discussed in the later medical discourse.

On this basis we can conclude that Hang’s earlier claims that there was no “differentiated psychological terminology” in Chinese thought, and that the concept of “[heart] mind” was “too vague to encourage further elaborations,” are incorrect. Broad terms like “heart” and “spirit” had many coexisting meanings, both in the common vernacular (LGP) and in different specialized contexts (LSP). These meanings evolved, overlapped, and influenced each other. Including medical theory into the wider analysis of Chinese (and East-Asian) intellectual history broadens our understanding of the contextual frame as well as providing new insight into the historical development (etymology) of terms and concepts. In medical theory, concepts that first appear very simplistic are often generic terms that contain further differentiations and are systematically correlated to other concepts. We have observed this with terms like essence, qi, the five spirits, and the five viscera. As to whether a “fully developed Chinese psychology” ever existed, this question would require a larger analysis of both theories and practices. One would need to include pathological theory (such as the
withdrawal-mania discourse and other theories of mental illness), as well as different types of
treatment for such conditions. This would probably not lead to the discovery of a
“psychology” resembling that which emerged in the West, but certainly something that is
both “developed” and distinctly “Chinese.”

This study has demonstrated the multilayered nature of Chinese medical terminology,
conceptualization and discourse. The meaning of concepts and statements are often concrete,
abstract, literal, figurative, physiological, psychological, philosophical, and ideological—all
at the same time. We saw that for example the original character for “viscus” (zang 藏) referred both to a governmental depository and a bodily organ. As we know, the five spirits
were the most precious substances stored by these “depositories” and also referred to as “that
which the five viscera store.” This multilayered, psycho-physiological meaning was thus
embedded in the very designation of these two concepts. The same can be said about other
terms like essence, qi, spirit, and so on. The consistent use of metaphors enhanced the
coherence between different part of theory and made complex phenomena more
comprehensible. This metaphorical structuring was expressed not only in the main
terminology, but as we have seen, also in supportive vocabulary such as verbs. Lakoff and
Johnson have shown that all metaphorical structuring works to highlight certain features and
conceal others. The conceptual model analyzed in this thesis emphasizes and elaborates
certain aspects of the mind and body, but certainly not all. However, this is also the case with
any other historical or contemporary medical theory.

It was suggested at the beginning of this thesis that the Chinese medical
conceptualization of the mind should be understood as a negotiation between theory and
practice, abstraction and application, convention and innovation. It was also hypothesized
that historical commentaries could contribute to a clearer understanding of what this
negotiation entails, reveal more about how theory was related to actual phenomena,
experiences and medical practice, and exhibit the inner workings of the hermeneutic circle.
After analyzing all the material of this study, I find this to be accurate. Obviously, not all
commentaries are alike, the quality and degree of their elaborations will vary. However, they
can certainly tell us more about the processes of emic interpretation than just the early
medical canons alone.

As for Zhang Jingyue’s commentaries to this particular topic, they evidently contribute
to a clearer, richer and more systematic understanding of this conceptual model. By
explaining the concrete meanings of terms, drawing together different parts of theory,
providing examples, sharing the conclusions extracted from studying and analyzing these
canons over and over, Zhang Jingyue offers us a unique opportunity to see the world from his perspective. His primary goal is not to demonstrate his own version of these theories, but help us understand the meaning and inner logic of these original passages. In general, his explanations are always rooted in some part of orthodox medical theory and are therefore not innovative per se. Though these theories and connections might already exist, he makes them much more explicit. This is particularly true for the conceptualization of the mind which had not been elaborated that clearly by many others. Another of his contribution is the establishment of more explicit distinctions. This can be observed from his definition of the heart spirit as one’s individual “original” and “complete” spirit and the other spirit aspects as further differentiations of this overarching term. This is not in opposition to the descriptions of the early canons, but an elaboration and systematization of these concepts.

As we have also observed, Zhang Jingyue draws from a rich pool of both medical references and philosophical literature. Much of these sources were written after the early medical canons, so he adds new perspectives to the original medical discourse. Through this we get a glimpse of the historical development and wider context of this conceptual model. It may be seen as an example of what Unschuld describes as “a continuous tendency towards syncretism of all ideas that existed,” but also as Zhang Jingyue’s contribution to what he perceived as a common discourse. The medical discourse is closely tied to social identity and professional demarcation. Zhang Jingyue was a highly esteemed scholar and practitioner; both these identities are clearly detectable in his writing.

Another contribution to the more concrete interpretation of the original passages is that he frequently offers his own personal perspectives. This can be explicit, like when he says: “In my humble opinion…” or just by given us his own examples like “… just as the unripe fruit stone is watery, and the incomplete embryo is watery, even the existence of every human being and all insects and vegetation.” He often concludes a wider discussion by drawing the attention back to a more specific and clinical interpretation, like when he says: “… spirit is the transformations of one’s brightest intelligence—simply the regulating principle of qi that is all.” More subtly, his explanations also exhibit the experience of a physician used to treating patients of all conditions, from those suffering with headache or fatigue to the terminally ill. He is not just explaining the theory, but also trying to show how it can be used to improve clinical practice, like in this comment: “As for the real conditions

303 Unschuld, Medicine in China: A History of Ideas, 57.
of the ethereal and corporal souls, like having something evident to examine, then [this can be] located at the time of sleeping and dreaming.” For an elite physician like Zhang Jingyue, practice did not merely mean treating patients. Of equal importance was the cultivation of the practitioner’s own mental focus, understanding, experience, and self-reflexivity. As we discovered, such internal processes were also considered a valuable source to understand the workings of the mind.

Commentaries like the *Categories of the Canons* cannot tell us *everything* about the relationship between theory and practice, or provide us a *comprehensive* picture of how the mind was conceptualized. But it can help us understand more about how these theories were interpreted and how individual as well as collective efforts have shaped the historical discourse of Chinese medicine. This thesis has contributed to more knowledge on the role of psychological theories in Chinese medicine. Hopefully it will inspire other studies into this valuable field.
Bibliography


Appendix A: Annotation of the “Spirit as Foundation” (Ben shen 本神)

This is the complete translation of Zhang Jingyue’s annotations to chapter 8 in the Divine Pivot: “Spirit as Foundation” (Ben shen 本神). The annotation contains almost all of the original texts (except for the five last passages).

黄帝問於岐伯曰︰凡刺之法, 必先本於神。血脈營氣精神, 此五臟之所藏也, 至其淫泆離臟則精失、魂魄飛揚、志意恍亂、智慮去身者, 何因而然乎? 天之罪與? 人之過乎? 何謂德氣生精神魂魄心意志思智慮? 請問其故。

Huang Di asked Qi Bo: Concerning all methods of needling [i.e., acupuncture]; first they must be rooted in the spirit. Blood, vessels, construction, qi, essence, and spirit, these are what the five viscera store. If a person indulge in an excessive lifestyle [making these substances] depart from the viscera, then the essence will be lost, the ethereal and corporal souls will take off, the intent-mind and the attention will be confused and chaotic, and wisdom and consideration will leave the [person’s] body. Why is that so? [Is it] the punishment of heaven? [Or] the transgressions of that person? What does it mean that the Virtuous-qi gives life to essence, spirit, ethereal-soul, corporal-soul, heart, attention, intent-mind, pondering, wisdom, and consideration? I would like to enquire about the causes of all of them.

ZJY 1: 泬, 淫放也, 恍, 恍惚也。詳如下文。渉音逸。

渉 means “indulge in sensory pleasures.” 恍 means “confused.” More details [will be given] in the text below.渉 is pronounced as 逸。

岐伯答曰︰天之在我者德也, 地之在我者氣也, 德流氣薄而生者也。

Qi Bo answered: Heaven manifests itself within us as Virtue. Earth manifests itself within us as qi. When Virtue flows and qi have joined then life begins.

ZJY 2: 人稟天地之氣以生。天地者, 阴陽之道也。自太極而生兩儀, 則清陽為天, 濁陰為地; 自兩儀而生萬物, 則乾知大始, 坤作成物。故易曰︰天地之大德曰生。

People receive life from the qi of heaven and earth. Heaven and earth are the Way of yin and yang. From the Supreme Ultimate the two polarities [yin-yang] are born; the clear

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304 Zhang, “Leijing,” fascicle. 3, chap. 9, 44-47. Both the translation of the original passages and the annotations are my own. When the translation of the original passages is markedly different from Unschuld’s, this is informed in a footnote. For his complete version see Unschuld, Huang Di Nei Jing Ling Shu, chap. 8.

305 De 德 can also be translated as “moral/innate power” or “potency.”

306 Unschuld translation is “What are they to say: virtue, qi, life, essence, spirit, hun soul, po soul, heart, intention, mind, pondering, knowledge, and consideration?” My reading is related to Zhang Jingyue’s explanations further down in the text.

307 我 is normally translated as “me” but can also mean “we” or “ourselves,” see the TLS entry. Here it seems more likely that Qi Bo is referring to people in general, and not something concerning only himself.
yang then becomes heaven, [and] the turbid yin becomes earth. From the two polarities the myriad beings are born, then “the Qian oversees the Great beginning, the Kun forms all things.”³⁰⁸ Hence the Book of Changes says: “The Great Virtue of heaven and earth is called life.” The ‘Discourse on treasuring life and preserving physical appearance’ says: “Man receives his life from earth, his fate depends on heaven.”³⁰⁹ This being so, then yang comes first and yin after; yang provides and yin receives; the Virtue of life’s beginning is rooted in heaven; the qi of physical formation is rooted in earth. Hence, the manifestation of heaven within us is Virtue, [and] the manifestation of earth within us is qi. ‘When Virtue flows and qi have joined [then] life begins,’ expresses how the composition of the [physical] form has been completed, and the life-giving Way thus fully provided.

故生之来谓之精,
Hence, the origin of life is called essence.

ZJY 3: 太極動而生陽,靜而生陰,陰陽二氣,各有其精。所謂精者,天之一、地之六也。天以一生水,地以六成之,而為五行之最先。故萬物初生,其來皆水,如果核未實猶水也,胎卵未成猶水也,即凡人之有生,以及昆蟲草木無不皆然。易曰︰男女構精,萬物化生。此之謂也。

When the Supreme Ultimate moves it generates yang, [when] still it generates yin. Yin and yang, these two [types of] qi, each have their essence. As for the so-called essence: heaven has one, earth has six. Heaven uses the one to generate water, earth uses the six to give it form, and this becomes the primary [state] of the five agents. Hence, all life of the myriad beings originates from water; just as the unripe fruit stone is watery, and the incomplete embryo is watery, even the existence of every human being and all insects and vegetation—without exception it is so. The Book of Changes states: “[When] male and female ‘join their essence’ [i.e., fertilization], the myriad beings are transformed and given life.” This is what it speaks of.

兩精相搏謂之神,
The merging³¹⁰ of the two essences is called spirit.

ZJY 4: 兩精者,陰陽之精也。搏,交結也。易曰︰天數五,地數五。五位相得而各有合。周子曰︰二五之精,妙合而凝。是皆兩精相搏之謂。凡萬物生成之道,莫不陰陽交而後神明見。故人之生也,必合陰陽之氣,構父母之精,兩精相搏,形神乃成,所謂天地合氣,命之曰人也。又決氣篇曰︰兩神相搏,合而成形,常先身生,是謂精。見本類後二十五。愚按: 神者,靈明之化也,無非理氣而已。理依氣行,氣從形見,凡理氣所至,即陰陽之所在,故曰陰陽者,神明之府也。天元紀大論曰︰陰陽不測之謂神。氣交變大論曰︰善言化言變者,通神明之理。易曰︰知變化之道者,其知神之所為乎﹗是皆神之為義。然萬物之神,隨象而應,人身之神,惟心所主。故本經曰︰心藏神。又曰︰心者

³⁰⁸ Qian is the creative, male principle of the universe; Kun is the receptive, female principle of the universe. These two are the first of the 64 hexagrams.
³⁰⁹ Unschuld and Tessenow, Basic Questions Vol. 1, chap. 25, 423.
³¹⁰ 相搏 can mean to struggle, to be close, or to contend with each other. These meanings all reflect a type of movement and interaction. Unschuld’s translation reads “When two essences clash that is called spirit.” Zhang Jingyue offers his interpretation of the characters in the following annotation.
君主之官，神明出焉。此即吾身之元神也。外如魂魄志意五神五志之類，孰匪元神所化而統乎一心？是以心正則萬神俱正，心邪則萬神俱邪，迨其變態，莫可名狀。如八正神明論曰：神乎神，耳不聞，目明心開而志先，慧然獨悟，口弗能言，俱視獨見，適若昏，昭然獨明，若風吹雲，故曰神。淮南子曰：或問神。曰：心。請聞之。曰：潛天而天，潛地而地，天地神明而不測者也。黃庭經曰：至道不煩訣存真，泥丸百節皆有神。金丹大要曰：心為一身君主，萬神為之聽命。以故虛靈知覺，作生作滅，隨機應境，千變萬化，瞬息千裡，夢寢百般；又能逆料未來，推測禍福，大而天下國家，小而僻陋罅隙，無所不至。然則神至心必至，心住神亦住。邪客篇曰：心者，五臟六腑之大主也，精神之所舍也。心傷則神去，神去則死矣。故曰事其神者神去之，休其神者神居之。則凡治身者，太上養神，其次養形也。諸神詳義見藏象會通。

The two essences are the essences of yin and yang. 搏 means to “connect with.” The Book of Changes says; “Heaven has five numbers, earth has five numbers. These five are mutually exchanging yet each have their own enclosure.” Master Zhou states: “The essence of the two [polarities] and five [agents] subtly unite and congeal.” These [sayings] all refer to the merging of the two essences. Concerning the life-giving Way of the myriad beings, there is none that do no [rely on] the exchange between yin and yang and the following appearance of the spirit-brilliance. Hence, as for the life of humans, there must be a union of the yin and yang qi, a joining of the essences of the father and mother. When the two essences merge then the [bodily] form and the spirit are formed, this is the so-called “heaven and earth uniting [their] qi”—what we have named “human beings.” Also the “Differentiation of the Qi” says: “When the two spirits merge their union results in the formation of a [bodily] form. That which generally precedes the generation of a human body is called ‘essence’.” See chapter 25 after this category.

In my humble opinion, the spirit is the transformations of [one’s] brightest intelligence—simply the “[regulating] principle of qi” that is all. Principle relies on qi to be performed; qi is manifested along with the [bodily] form. Wherever the regulation of qi reaches, that is where yin and yang resides. The places yin and yang reside, that is where spirit-brilliance is located.” Thus it is said: “Yin and yang, [they are] the mansion of the spirit-brilliance. The “Comprehensive Discourse on Arrangements of the Principal [Qi] of Heaven” chapter states: “The unfathomable [aspects] of yin and yang is called spirit.” The chapter “Comprehensive Discourse on Changes [resulting from] Qi Interaction” says: “Those who can speak of transformation and changes, they are able to
penetrate the [inherent] principles of the spirit-brilliance." The Book of Changes states: “Those who comprehend the Way of change and transformation they really understand the workings of the spirit!” These are all meanings of spirit.

However, the spirit of the myriad beings responds in accordance with images, [whereas] the spirit of the human body is governed by the heart alone. Therefore the original classic [i.e., the Inner Canon] says, “The heart stores the spirit.” It also says: “The heart holds the office of monarch, whence spirit-brilliance emanates.” This is exactly one’s own original spirit. [Among] other classifications like the ethereal and corporeal-soul, intent-mind and attention, the five spirits, and five [states of] mind—whom [of them] are not transformations of the original spirit and unified by the one heart? That is why when the [condition of the] heart is regular then the ‘ten thousand spirits’ [all] will be regular, and when the heart [is affected by] evil [i.e., pathogenic influences] then the ‘ten thousand spirits’ [will all be] affected by evil. Before its appearance changes [abnormally], it cannot be described.

Like the “Discourse on Eight Cardinal [Turning Points] and on Spirit-brilliance” says: “The spirit, ah, the spirit! The ears do not hear [it]. [Yet] when the [physician’s] eyes are clear and his heart is open and his intent-mind leads ahead, [it becomes] clearly perceivable to him alone. [But] the mouth cannot speak [of it]. Everyone looks, [but] he alone sees [it]. When approaching it, it seems dim, [yet it is] clearly illuminated to him alone, as if the wind had blown away the clouds. Hence it is called ‘spirit’.”

The Huainanzi says: “Someone may ask: ‘[what does] spirit [mean]?’ Reply: ‘[it means the] heart.’ ‘Please, may [I] hear about it?’ Reply: ‘It is latent in heaven and [is] heaven; it is latent in earth and [is] earth. Heaven, earth, and the spirit-brilliance are the unfathomable.’

The Huangting Jing says: The Ultimate Way [lies in] the effortless secret of true existence. The ‘little clay ball’ [i.e., the brain] and the ‘hundred joints’ all have spirit.

The Jindan Dayao says: “The heart is the ruler of the whole body, the ‘ten thousand spirits’ [all] follow its orders. Therefore the ‘void intelligence’ and consciousness gives life and extinguishes life, complies with occasions and responds to circumstances, [is present in] the unceasing changes and transformations, ten thousand [places] in a flash, [in] dreaming and sleeping—in every possible way. Moreover, [it] can foresee the future, speculate about disaster and fortune, [is] big [enough to encompass] the world and the country, [and] small [enough to get to] the remotest [places] and [tiniest] cracks—[it] reaches everywhere. That being so, [where] the spirit arrives the heart must arrive, [and] where the heart resides the Spirit also resides.”

The “Evil Guests” chapter says: “The heart is the great governor of five viscera and the six bowels [and] the abode of the essence-spirit. [...] If the heart is harmed then the spirit leaves, if the spirit leaves then [one] dies.” Hence it is said: “If one’s spirit is troubled it will leave the [abode], if one’s spirit is reposed it will reside.”

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316 Ibid, chap. 69, 283.
317 Unschuld and Tessenow, Basic Questions Vol. 1, chap. 8, 155.
319 My translation. I could not find this quote in the Huainanzi of the ctext.org library, but it appeared in the TLS Yangzi Fayan 扬子法言, Vol. 5.
320 Early Daoist text, possibly composed somewhere between 2nd and 4th century CE.
321 The HDC says that the “little clay ball” (niwan 泥丸) is a Daoist term for the “brain and Spirit” (naoshen 腦神).
323 A Daoist text written by Chen Zhixuan 陈致虚 in the Yuan dynasty.
324 Adapted translation from Unschuld, Ling Shu, chap. 71.
325 This saying also appears in the Huainanzi, chap. 2.
So whenever someone is given treatment, the superior [method] is to cultivate the spirit, the second best [method] is to cultivate the body. For more details on all the various [sayings of spirit, see the "Comprehensive Study of the Visceral Manifestations."\textsuperscript{326} 拟 is pronounced as "博".

隨神往來者謂之魂，並精而出入者謂之魄，

That which comes and goes following the spirit is called the ethereal-soul. That which enters and leaves together with the essence is called the corporal-soul.

ZJY 5: 精對神而言，則神為陽而精為陰；魂對魂而言，則魂為陽而魄為陰。故魂則隨神而往來，魄則並精而出入。愚按：精神魂魄，雖有陰陽之別，而陰陽之中，複有陰陽之別焉。如神之與魂皆陽也，何謂魂隨神而往來？蓋神之為德，如光明爽朗、聰慧靈通之類皆是也。魂之為言，如夢寐恍惚、變幻游行之境皆是也。神藏於心，故心靜則神清；魂隨乎神，故神昏則魂蕩。此則神魂之義，可想象而悟矣。精之與魄皆陰也，何謂魄並精而出入？蓋精之為物，重濁有質，形體因之而成也。魄之為用，能動能作，痛痒由之而覺也。精生於氣，故氣聚則精盈；魄並於精，故形強則魄壯。此則精魄之狀，亦可默會而知也。然則神為陽中之陽，而魂則陽中之陰也；精為陰中之陰，而魄則陰中之陽者乎。雖然，此特其陰陽之別耳；至若魂魄真境，猶有顯然可鞠者，則在夢寐之際。如夢有作為而身不應者，乃魂魄之動靜，動在魂而靜在魄也；夢能變化而寤不能者，乃陰陽之離合，離從虛而合從實也。此雖皆魂魄之証，而實即死生之幾。苟能致心如太虛，而必清必靜，則夢覺死生之關，知必有洞達者矣。又神氣魂魄詳義，見後十四，所當互考。

In regard to [how] the essence relates to the spirit it is thus: the spirit is yang and essence is yin. In regard to [how] the corporal-soul relates to the ethereal-soul it is thus: the ethereal-soul is yang and the corporal-soul is yin. Hence, the ethereal-soul therefore comes and goes following the spirit, [and] the corporal-soul therefore enters and leaves together with the essence.

In my modest opinion: although the essence, spirit, ethereal-soul, and corporal-soul are differentiated according to yin and yang, yet among these yin and yang [categories] there are still further distinctions of yin and yang. For example, the common of the spirit and the ethereal-soul is that they are both yang, what does it mean that the ethereal-soul comes and goes following the spirit? Presumably [it is so that] the spirit creates Virtue, [qualities] like [being] bright and candid, intelligent and quick-witted are all [expressions of] this. [Concerning] what is said about the ethereal-soul, conditions like dreaming and being absent-minded, changing irregularly and moving about, these are all [expressions of] it. The spirit is stored in the heart, hence when the heart is calm the spirit is clear; the ethereal-soul follows the spirit, so when the spirit is clouded the ethereal-soul dissolves. These are the meanings of spirit and ethereal-soul; [one] can envision [them] and suddenly understand [what they mean].

The common of the essence and the corporal-soul is that they are both yin, what does it mean that the corporal-soul enters and leaves together with the essence? Presumably the essence creates matter, [it is] dense and turbid and has substance, the [bodily] form and structure is made from it. The functions of the corporal-soul [manifest as] the ability to move and do things—pain and itching is felt because of it. Essence is generated from qi so when qi gathers then essence is abundant; the corporal-soul is together with the essence so when the [bodily] form is strong then the corporal-soul is robust. These are

\textsuperscript{326} A sort of endnote or Index chapter at the end of the \textit{Categories of the Canons}. 

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the conditions of the essence and the corporal-soul; [they] can also be understood from “inwardly gathered comprehension.”

Then it is so that the spirit is the “yang within yang” and the ethereal-soul the “yin within yang,” the essence is the “yin within yin” and the corporal-soul the “yang within yin.” However, these are only the particular yin-yang distinctions. As for the real conditions of the ethereal and corporal souls, like having something evident to examine, then [this can be] located at the time of sleeping and dreaming. Like when there is dreaming with action but no responses in the body, then that represents the movement and stillness of the Ethereal and Corporal souls—movements depend on the Ethereal-soul and stillness depends on the Corporal-soul. When the dreams can change but [one] is unable to awaken, then that represents the separation and union of yin and yang—separation comes with vacuity and union comes with repletion. Although these are all symptoms of the ethereal and corporal souls, yet with replete [conditions] then [in regard to] survival or death there is [still] hope. If the heart [of the physician] can be focused like the Great void [i.e., the universe], and be totally clear and totally calm, then [he can managed to see] the gate of dream and consciousness, life and death, [but] to know it [he] must have attain a profound understanding.

For additional explanations of the meanings of spirit, qi, ethereal-soul, and corporal-soul, see the following 14th chapter, where [they] are examined together.

所以任物者謂之心,

That which is responsible for all matters is called the heart.

ZIJ 6: 心為君主之官,統神靈而參天地,故萬物皆其所任。

The heart is the official functioning as ruler; [it] unites the spirit-intelligence and partake in [the work of] heaven and earth. Hence the myriad creations are all [part of] its responsibility.

心有所憶謂之意,

When the heart reflects on something that is called attention.

ZIJ 7: 憶,思憶也。謂一念之生,心有所向而未定者,曰意。

“Reflect on” (yi 憶) means to “think about and recall.” [It] refers to the birth of a thought, when the heart has some direction but has not settled [it] yet, [we] call it attention.

意之所存謂之志,

That which is preserved from the attention is called the Intent-mind.

327 The HDC explains 默會 as “inwardly comprehension” (anzi linghui 暗自领会).
328 Appendix B.
329 Unschuld’s translation says “all affairs.” Zhang Jingyue understands it as the “myriad beings” (wanwu 萬物) which refers to all living beings as well as all creations/objects of the universe (HDC: yuzhoujian de yiqie shiwu 宇宙间的一切事物). “All matters” can include living organisms, creations, and affairs.
330 See the previous footnote. In this passage wanwu 萬物 presumably has a wider meaning that just “living beings.”
331 Wiseman has proposed a new translation of yi 意 in the CMT dictionary “Ideation.” His earlier PDCM suggestion said “reflection” (p.561). “Ideation” refers to the formation of ideas or concepts.
ZJY 8: 意之所存，謂意已決而卓有所立者，曰志。

“That which is preserved from the attention” means when the attention\(^{333}\) has already decided [on its focus] and has become something properly established, it is called the intent-mind.

因志而存變謂之思，

What is preserved and changes because of the Intent-mind is called pondering.\(^{334}\)

ZJY 9: 因志而存變，謂意志雖定，而複有反複計度者，曰思。

“What is preserved [but] changes due to the intent-mind” refers to when although the will has settled but there are still calculations and measurements back and forth, [this] is called pondering.

因思而遠慕謂之慮，

[Having] far-reaching aspiration because of pondering is called consideration.\(^{335}\)

ZJY 10: 深思遠慕，必生憂疑，故曰慮。

Deep pondering and far-reaching aspiration will inevitably generate anxiousness and doubt, hence [we] call it consideration.

因慮而處物謂之智。

Handling matters because of consideration is called wisdom.\(^{336}\)

ZJY 11: 疑慮既生，而處得其善者，曰智。按此數者，各有所主之臟，今皆生之於心，此正諸臟為之相使，而心則為之主宰耳。

When doubts have already been generated yet [one] manages to obtain something good from it, [we] call it wisdom. According to [the explanations of] these various [cognitive] functions each have their own governing visceral organ. Now [as we know], they all originate from the heart. These respective organs empower\(^{337}\) them, whereas the heart only rules over them.

故智者之養生也，必順四時而適寒暑，和喜怒而安居處，節陰陽而調剛柔，如是則僻邪不至，長生久視。
Hence, [when] those who are wise [practice] life-nourishment, [their] behaviour must be in accordance with the four seasons and adjusted to the cold or hot [weather], [their] feelings [must be] harmonized and [their] homes peaceful, yin and yang [must be] moderated, firm and soft [must be] balanced. In this way deviation-evils [i.e., pathogenic factors] will not reach [them], and they will live long lives and maintain [clear] perception.

ZJY 12: 此言四時也、寒暑也、喜怒也、居處也，皆明顯易曉；惟節陰陽調剛柔二句，其義最精，其用最博，凡食息起居、病治脈藥，皆有最切於此而不可忽者。

The statements [about the] “four seasons,” “cold and hot,” “feelings,” and “homes” are all clear and easy to understand. Only the two sentences about “moderating yin and yang and balancing firm and soft” have the most essential meanings and broadest applications. All [cases of] eating, resting, rising, and living [i.e., daily life], and diseases, treatments, pulse [qualities], and drugs [i.e., medical practice]—they all have something corresponding closely with these [two meanings] and cannot be overlooked. If [one] wishes to understand clearly these principles, [one] should seek their simple meaning and then gradually deepen the understanding of them [through one’s own experience and practice].

是故怵惕思慮者則傷神，神傷則恐懼流淫而不止。

Consequently, those who feel alarmed by the pondering and consideration will harm [their] spirit; if the spirit is harmed then fear [will cause] unceasing overflow.

ZJY 13: 此節言情志所傷之為害也。怵，恐也。惕，驚也。流淫，謂流泄淫溢，如下文所云恐懼而不解則傷精、精時自下者是也。思慮而兼怵惕，則神傷而心怯，心怯則恐懼，恐懼則傷腎，腎傷則精不固。蓋以心腎不交，故不能收攝如此。怵，出、恤二音。

This section speaks of the injury caused by emotional and mental damage. 怵 means “being afraid” (kong 恐). 恐 means “being startled” (jing 驚). 流淫 refers to “flooding and overflow” (liuxie yinyi 流泄淫溢). As stated in the text further down, unresolved fear [can] damage the essence, [for] those who sometimes have spontaneous discharge of essence [i.e., seminal emission], this is the case. If [there is] pondering and consideration combined with fear, then the spirit will be injured and the heart [become] timid. When the heart is timid then [one is easily] afraid. When afraid, then the kidneys are harmed. When the kidneys are harmed, then the essence is not secured. Presumably due to the “non-interaction of the heart and kidneys” so [one] is not able

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338 Like “moderating the degree of” (jiedu 節度).
339 Could also be “it’s meaning in the Book of Changes.”
340 “Flooding and overflow” (liuxie yinyi 流泄淫溢) can refer to something being “excessive and overwhelming” but also to urinary and faecal incontinence.
341 “Seminal emission” refers to a condition where a man’s semen emits frequently without any sexual activity.
342 In Chinese medicine “timidity” (qie 怯) is a diagnostic term related to either the heart or the gallbladder. It denoted a condition where a person lacks courage and is easily frightened. The link to the heart and gallbladder has to do with the mental-emotional functions attributed to these organs. CMT translates xinqie 心怯 as “timid heart.”
343 A disease pattern.
to hold onto [the essence] like this. 恤 is pronounced like 出 and 恤 [with the] second [tone].

因悲哀動中者, 竭絕而失生。

When the centre is stirred because of grief and sorrow, [there will be] exhaustion, impairment, and loss of life.

ZJY 14: 悲則氣消, 悲哀太甚則胞絡絕, 故致失生。竭者絕之漸, 絕則盡絕無余矣。

Sorrow causes qi to disperse, if there is extreme grief and sorrow then [the circulation of] the uterin network vessels [will be] impaired, thus causing the loss of life. Exhaustion is the [result of] gradually increasing impairment, [with] impairment there will be a complete exhaustion [of resources] and no remaining surplus.

喜樂者, 神憚散而不藏。

[With] happiness and joy the spirit is startled and disperses and [is] therefore no longer stored.

ZJY 15: 喜發於心, 樂散在外, 暴喜傷陽, 故神氣憚散而不藏。憚, 驚惕也。

Happiness issues from the heart, joy disperses [qi] to the exterior, sudden happiness [causes] dammage to the yang, thus spirit-qi is startled and disperses and therefore no longer stored. 慚 means to be “startled and alert” (jingti 驚惕).

愁憂者, 氣閉塞而不行。

[With] worry and anxiety qi is obstructed and blocked and therefore cannot move [freely].

ZJY 16: 愁憂則氣不能舒, 故脈道為之閉塞。

When worried and anxious then qi cannot [flow] smothly, thus the vessel-pathways will become obstructed and blocked because of it.

盛怒者, 迷惑而不治。

[With] range [there is] disorientation and confusion and therefore [the patient] cannot be treated.

ZJY 17: 怒則氣逆, 甚者必亂, 故致昏迷皇惑而不治。不治, 亂也。

When angry then qi will counterflow, if [the anger is] extreme chaos is inevitable, thus [the person] will be stunned, disoriented, terrified, and suspicious—and therefore cannot be treated. No treatment means chaos.

344 In this case meaning upwards to the head. Anger is often related to “liver qi ascending counterflow” (ganqi shangni 肝氣上逆).

345 I list all these meanings because their nuances may be of importance. Hunmi 昏迷 can mean being stunned, in stupor, or in coma which all implies degrees of inability to move the body and function normally. Huanghuo 皇惑 means being “terrified and suspicious” (HDC: huangkong er huaiyi 惶恐而怀疑). If all these conditions are combined then one understands how difficult it would be to carry out treatment.
恐懼者，神蕩憚而不收。

[With] fear the spirit is dissipated and startled and therefore cannot be gathered.

ZJY 18: 恐懼則神志驚散，故蕩憚而不收。上文言喜樂者神懼散而不忘，與此稍同；但彼云不藏者，神不能持而流蕩也，此云不收者，神為恐懼而散失也，所當詳辨。

When fearful then the spirit-intent is frightened and disperses, thus [it] is dissipated and startled and therefore cannot be gathered. The text above said “[with] happiness and joy the spirit is startled and disperses and [is] therefore no longer stored,” [which] has some similarity with this [case]. But that saying about “not being stored” means that the spirit cannot be held [under control] and therefore floats about; this saying about “not being gathered” means that the Spirit [is] scattered and lost because of fear—such are the particular distinctions.

心怵惕思慮則傷神，神傷則恐懼自失，破腯脫肉，毛悴色夭，死於冬。

If the heart is alarmed by the pondering and consideration then the spirit will be damaged. When the spirit is damaged then [the patient will be] afraid and lose [control over] himself, [his] flesh and bulk will be shed and lost, the body hair withers and the complexion perishes, and [he] will die in winter.

ZJY 19: 此下言情志所傷之病，而死有時也。心藏神，神傷則心怯，故恐懼自失。

From here onwards [the text] speaks of the diseases caused by affect-mind damage, and [how this can result in] death at a particular season. The heart stores the spirit, if the spirit is damaged then the heart [becomes] timid, hence [the patients are] afraid and loses [control over] themselves. The “bulk” (jun) is the place where the sinews and muscles are gathered. If [there is] heart vacuity then the spleen becomes weak, thus the flesh is shed and bulk lost. The “withering of the body hair” means [the same as] “haggard skin,” this will be confirmed further down in the text. [As for] the perishing of complexion: the color of the heart is red, the preferable [skin tone] should be like [something] red covered by [something] white, and not like hermatite. When Fire is weak it is intimidated by Water, hence [they] die in winter. Jun 腓 should be read with the initial as ju and ending like yun 允.

脾愁憂而不解則傷意，意傷則亂，四肢不舉，毛悴色夭，死於春。

If the spleen [is affected by] unresolved worry and anxiety then the attention will be damaged. When the attention is damaged there will be disorder, [the patient] will be unable to lift [his] four limbs, the body hair withers and the complexion perishes, and [he] will die in spring.

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346 Shenzhi 神志 is a generic term comprising both the Spirit and Intent-mind. According to the CMT dictionary this compound refers to “the conscious mind.”
347 Meaning severe emaciation, same as CMT: “shedding of flesh and loss of bulk” (tuorou pojun 脫肉破腯).
348 Affect-mind (qingzhi 情志) is a generic term that stands for all emotions and states of mind.
349 A reddish-brown mineral consisting of ferric oxide.
350 Unschuld’s translation says: “If worrying and sadness fail to be resolved, then this will harm one’s intentions.”
Anxiety is originally the [state of] mind of the lungs but it can also damage the spleen, [because] the qi of the mother [spleen] and child [lungs] is connected. If [there is] anxiety then spleen qi will be constrained, when [it is] constrained then [it] cannot move [freely], hence [the patient] will be indifference, depressed and therefore in disorder. All the four limbs [normally] receive qi from the stomach but [when] it does not reach the channels it must be because only the spleen received it [and could not distribute it further], hence when the spleen is damaged then the four limbs cannot be raised. 

As for the perished complexion of the spleen; it should preferably be yellow like yellow realgar wrapped in a silk gauze, and not like yellow soil. When Earth is weak it is intimidated by Wood, hence [he] dies in spring. Men 愧 should be read with the initial of mei 美 and the ending of ben 本.

If the liver [is affected by] grief and sorrow stirring the centre then the ethereal-soul will be damaged. When the ethereal-soul is damaged then [the patient] will be manic, forgetful, and have no essence. Without essence his [functions] will not be proper. Such people will have retracted genitals and cramping sinews, the two rib-sides cannot be raised [when they breathe], the body hair withers and the complexion perishes, and [they] will die in autumn.

The liver stores the ethereal-soul. If the grief and sorrow is too extreme then the ethereal-soul will be damaged, when the ethereal-soul is damaged then [the patient] will become manic and forgetful, and no longer have essence-brilliance. If the essence-brilliance is lost then [the behaviour] will be absurd and improper, the person can have retracted genitals and contracted sinews. The inability to raise the two rib-sides is due to the defeat of the liver channel. As for the perished complexion of the liver; the green-blue [tone] should be like the grey-green, jade-like [colour] of a pond, and not as indigo-blue. When Wood is weak it is intimidated by Metal, hence [the patient] dies in autumn.

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351 A metaphorical description of the relationship between the spleen and the lungs.
352 A mineral used as a colour pigment and in fireworks.
353 A male genital disorder.
354 Essence-brilliance (jingming 精明) is another psycho-physiological concept that is related to the eyes and the ability to see clearly (both physically and mentally).
355 The liver (and gallbladder) channel runs along the rib-sides.
356 The Pleco SCM dictionary says that cang 蒼 is a general term for blue-green hues of low saturation: a) gray-green, grizzled, as of dense mountain forests, or of distant undergrowth. b) bluish-green, elegant variation for the blue of the sky.
If the lungs [is affected by] unlimited happiness and joy then the corporal-soul will be damaged. When the corporal-soul is damaged then this will result in mania [madness]. Those who are mad cannot keep their attention [within themselves], [their] skin parches and dries up, the body hair withers and the complexion perishes, and [they] will die in summer.

Joy is originally the [state of] mind of the heart but it can also damage the lungs. Sudden and intense happiness cause damage to the yang, Fire-evil overwhelms Metal. The lungs store the corporal-soul, if the corporal-soul is damaged then the spirit will be chaotic and become manic. To “not keep one’s attention” means to act as there was nobody else around.

Among the [mentioned] damage of the five viscera there are none that does not [result in] a haggard complexion, but only this [passage] says that the skin [also] parches and dries up. This is because the skin and body hair is [directly] connected to the lungs and therefore is even more severely affected by them. [As for] the perished complexion of the lungs; it should be white like goose feathers, not as salt. When Metal is weak it is intimidated by Fire, hence [the patient] dies in summer.

If the kidneys [are affected by] incessant rage then the intent-mind will be damaged. When the Intent-mind is damaged then [the patients] will forget what they just said, [their] lower back and spine can no longer be bent and stretched, the body hair withers and the complexion perishes, and [they] will die in late summer.

Anger is originally the [state of] mind of the liver but it can also damage the kidneys. The liver and kidneys are child and mother, their qi is interconnected. The kidneys store the intent-mind, if the intent-mind is damaged then the attention is lost and [the patient] forgets what he just said. The inability to bend and stretch the lower back and spine, [is because] the lower back is the residence of the kidneys. [As for] the perished complexion of the kidneys; it should be black as the colour of coated lacquer paint, not like the ash-grey [colour] of the ground. When Water is weak it is intimidated by Earth, hence [the patient] dies in late summer.

If there is unresolved fear then the essence will be damaged. When the essence is damaged then this will result in aching bones and wilting reversal, and sometimes spontaneous discharge of essence.
This [passage] also speaks about the [combined] damage of the heart and the kidneys. Presumably [it is like this]: although it is said that exuberant anger will damage the kidneys, yet fear is the original [state of] mind pertaining to the kidneys. Fear causes qi to descend and fall down, and therefore it can damage the essence. The kidneys govern the bones, so if the essence is damaged then there will be bone wilting. Wilting [means] wilting of yang. Reversal [means] debilitation of yang. If the Life gate does not safeguard [the essence] then there will sometimes be spontaneous discharge of essence [i.e., seminal emission]. Even if this disease is caused by damage to the kidneys, the “Disease forms [caused by] Evil-qi in the Viscera and Bowels” chapter states that “anxiety and fear will damage the heart,” and higher up in this text it is said that “if the Spirit is harmed then fear will cause unceasing overflow,” their meanings are connected to this [passage]. “Aching” (suan 痠) is the same as “soreness” (suan 酸).

Consequently, those who apply needles [must] observe the condition of the patients in order to understand the meanings of existing and perishing—of having or losing—the essence, spirit, ethereal-
soul, and corporal-soul. If the five [viscera] have been caused [severe] damage, then using needles will not be able to cure it.

ZIJ 26: 此承篇首之問而言。凡用針者，必當察病者之形態，以酌其可刺不可刺也。設或五臟精神已損，必不可妄用針矣。故五閱五使篇曰：血氣有餘，肌肉堅致，故可苦以針。邪氣臟腑病形篇曰：諸小者陰陽形氣俱不足，勿取以針而調以甘藥也。根結篇曰：形氣不足，病氣不足，此陰陽氣俱不足也，不可刺之。觀此諸篇之訓，可見針能治有餘而不可治虛損明矣。凡用針者，當知所慎也。

This [part] takes up the question that was raised at the beginning of this chapter. Everyone that uses needles [i.e., acupuncture] must examine the condition of the patients [carefully] to consider if they can be needled or not. If the five viscera and essence-spirit have already been [severely] damaged, then needling must absolutely not be misused.

Therefore “The Five Observation points and the Five emissaries” chapter says: “[Such people’s] blood and qi have a surplus, and [their] muscles and flesh are solid and fine, hence [they] can endure needling.”363 “The Apperance of Diseases resulting from Evil-qi in the Viscera and Bowels” chapter says: “In all cases of diminished [circulation in the vessels] and insufficiency of yin and yang, the [bodily] form, and qi—[one] must never remove [any qi] by means of needling but rather regulate it by using sweet medicinals.”364 The “Root and Connection” chapter says: If the qi of the bodily form is insufficent, and the qi [manifestation] of the disease is insufficient, this means that yin-yang and qi are all insufficient—the person therefore cannot be needled.”365

Observing the cautions of these writings, [we] can see clearly that needling can [only] be used to treat [conditions] of surplus and not to treat [conditions] of insufficiency. Everyone using needles should know what to be cautious of.

362 Unschuld’s translation says: “[…] observe a patient’s condition to know whether his essence, spirit, hun soul and po soul are still preserved or have been lost, and whether he is subjected to gain or loss.” To know whether something is either A or B, is not the same as understanding the meaning of A and B which also means knowing the different nuances and causes of A and B.

363 Unschuld, Ling Shu, chap. 37, 389.
364 Ibid, chap. 4, 104.
365 Ibid, chap. 5, 121.
Appendix B: More on the Ethereal and Corporal Souls

In fascicle 3, chapter 14 of the Categories of the Canons Zhang Jingyue provides addition comments to the “Spirit as Foundation” chapter. The following is an excerpt from that discussion:

至於魂魄之義，如前本神篇曰︰隨神往來者謂之魂，並精而出入者謂之魄。及諸家得理之論，再附於左以詳其義。唐。孔氏曰︰人之生也，始變化為形，形之靈曰魂，魄內自有陽氣，氣之神曰魂。魂魄，神靈之名，初生時耳目心識手足運動，此魂之靈也；又其精神性識漸有知覺，此則氣之神也。樂祁曰︰心之精爽是謂魂魄，魂屬形體，魄屬精神。精又是魂，魄是精之神；神又是魂，魂是氣之神。邵子曰︰氣形盛則魂魄盛，氣形衰則魂魄亦從而衰。魂隨氣而變，魄隨形而化，故形存則魄存，形化則魄散。朱子曰︰魂神而魄靈，魂陽而魄陰，魂動而魄靜。生則魂載於魄，而魄檢其魂；死則魂游散而歸於天，魄淪墜而歸於地。運用動作底是魂，不運用動作底是魄。魂盛則耳目聰明，能記憶，老人目昏耳記事不得者，魂衰也。又曰︰人生則魂魄相交，死則各相離去。月之黑暈是魄，其光是魂，魂是魄之光焰，魄是魂之根柢。火是魂，鏡是魄，燈有光焰，物來便燒，鏡雖照見，卻在裡面。火日外景，金水內景，火日是魂，金水是魄。陰主藏受，故魄能記憶在內；陽主運用，故魂能發用出來。二物本不相離，精聚則魄聚，氣聚則魂聚，是為人物之體；至於精竭魄降，則氣散魂游而無所知矣。

As for the meaning of the ethereal and corporal souls, it is like the previous “Spirit as Foundation” chapter says: “That which comes and goes following the spirit is called the ethereal-soul. That which enters and leaves together with the essence is called the corporal-soul.” And as in the discourse of the various schools of reasoning which have added to the explanation of their meanings as follows.

In the Tang [dynasty] the honourable Kong 367 said: “In the life of human beings; first change and transformation becomes the bodily form, the [spiritual] power of the bodily form is called the corporal-soul, inherent in the corporal-soul there is yang qi, the spirit of qi is called the ethereal-soul. The ethereal and corporal souls, these are the names of the spiritual powers. After birth, the activity of one’s ears and eyes, consciousness, and arms and legs—these [functions] are the power of the corporal soul. As for the gradually increasing perception of one’s essence-spirit and natural understanding—these [functions] are the spirit of qi.

Le Qi 369 said: “The essence-vitality of the heart is called the ethereal and corporal souls; the corporal-soul belongs to the bodily form and structure, the ethereal-soul belongs to the essence-spirit. Essence is the same as the corporal-soul; the corporal-soul is the spirit [aspect] of essence. The spirit is the same as the ethereal-soul; the ethereal-soul is the spirit [aspect] of qi.

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367 Referring to Kong Yingda 孔穎達, an influential Confucian scholar of the Tang dynasty. Shi 氏 is a honorific designation added to the surname of celebrated scholars or persons of fine repute.
368 HDC explains xingshi 性識 as “natural gift; special endowment” (tianfen 天分) and power of understanding; comprehension (wuxing 悟性).
369 An official from the Spring and Autumn period (presumably before 500 BCE).
370 According to the HDC the meaning of jingshuang 精爽 is similar to that of jingshen 精神.
Master Shao said: “When the qi and the bodily form are vigorous, the ethereal and corporal souls are vigorous, when the qi and the bodily form decline then the ethereal and corporal souls also thereby decline. The ethereal-soul follows the changes of qi; the corporal-soul follows the transformations of the bodily form. Hence, as long as the bodily form remains the corporal-soul remains, if the bodily form transforms then the corporal-soul is dispersed.

Master Zhu said: [As for] the ethereal-spirit and the corporal-power; the ethereal-soul is yang and the corporal-soul is yin, the ethereal-soul moves and the corporal-soul is still. When one is born the ethereal-soul is carried along with the corporal-soul, and thus the corporal-soul keeps one’s ethereal-soul in check. When one dies the ethereal-soul drifts off and returns to heaven, the corporal-soul collapses and returns to earth. That which applies movement is the ethereal-soul; that which does not apply movement is the corporal-soul. When the corporal-soul is vigorous then the ears and eyes have clear perception and [one] is able to recall [things]. When old people have clouded vision and the ears cannot keep records of events [anymore], that is the corporal-soul declining.

Also it is said: “when people are alive then their ethereal and corporal souls interact, when [people] die then each [soul] is separated and departs on its own.” [And it is said:] “The faint darkness of the moon is the corporal-soul and its light is the ethereal-soul. The ethereal-soul is the radiance of the corporal-soul, and the corporal-soul is the foundation of the ethereal-soul.” Fire is the ethereal-soul; mirror is the corporal-soul. A lamp has radiance, when things come [into its light] they burn. A mirror—although reflecting the light and making [things] visible—contains [its reflection] on the inside. The Fire of the sun lights up the external scenery; Metal and Water lights up the internal scenery, the Fire of the sun is the ethereal-soul, Metal and Water is the corporal-soul. Yin governs storage and reception and therefore the corporal-soul can keep memories on the inside. Yang governs movement and function and therefore the ethereal-soul can express and apply [one’s inner capacities] outwards. These two properties are originally not separated; when essence is assembled then the corporal-soul is assembled, when qi is assembled then the ethereal-soul is assembled—this is the structure of a human being. So, when the moment arrives when the essence is dried up and the corporal-soul collapses, then the qi will disperse and the ethereal-soul drift away without any [more] knowledge of it.

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371 Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011-1077), Song dynasty philosopher and scholar.
372 Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), the main proponent of Song dynasty neo-Confucianism.
373 The Pleco SCM dictionary says that po also refers to moonlight, particularly the faint sliver of the moon during the first 3 days of the (lunar) month.
374 Jing 景 can mean both “scenery” and “light.”