

ACUPUNCTURE CELESTIAL STEMS

& TERRESTRIAL BRANCHES

WŨ YÙN LIÙ QÌ — THE PHILOSOPHY &
PHYSIOLOGY OF ACUPUNCTURE

NEW

Peter van Kesteren

Content of the Book

Chapter 1

| Qì | Yīn | Yáng | 氣 | 陰 | 陽 |

Initially, there is only qì, universal qì. Qì is unique and undifferentiated, the source of anything in creation. Chinese medicine uses metaphorical principles to explain the different qualities and aspects of qì. There is a conceptual idea of pre-heavenly qì, connected to the ancestors and hereditary aspects. The process of creation is the moment of existence of qì. This omnipresent qì is the foundation of anything and all beings.

Chapter 2

| Pre-Heaven Qì | Xiān Tiān Qì | 先 天 氣 |

Qì is rooted in heaven or *pre-heaven*, and reveals itself, as expressed within Chinese characters. Throughout history, the inner meaning of the different Chinese characters changed due to a changed opinion, political influences, or ordered by an emperor. The sources are the several translations of the *Nèi Jīng* and the work of modern sinologist, who write about Chinese history and the etymology of characters. This chapter tries to unravel the different types of qì connected to pre-heaven and to give an etymological introduction and explanation.

Chapter 3

| Qì | Jīng | Shén | Sān Bǎo | 氣 | 精 | 神 |

Part of the pre-heaven qì is the concept of the *sān bǎo*, *three treasures*, qì - jīng - shén. They deserve a chapter on their own, as one of the most important doctrines of Chinese medicine. Qì is the foundation of anything; jīng - essence, is the essence that makes it possible for qì to be, while the shén - spirits, is the root of the different aspects of the five spirits, which are present in the human being.

Chapter 4

| Qì | Lǐ | Shù | 氣 | 理 | 數 |

One of the most ancient concepts and principles in Chinese medicine, is the trinity of qì, lǐ, and shù. On a most banal way, these terms could be translated as *energy*, *laws*, and *numbers*. From the unique oneness, the qì itself, there will be a development into the number two. The yīn and yáng way of expression of the initial qì, presents the number two. The qì, lǐ and shù in itself, presents the number three, as does the trinity of treasures, sān bǎo, from heaven. Yīn and yáng develop into *potential* and *ultimate* yīn and yáng, as representatives of the number four. These four original qualities of qì, are rooted within the centre and are the force behind the four emanations yuán, hēng, lì, and zhēn, rooted in qián, to complete number five. From the number five it is a small step to reach the number ten, as five in a yīn and yáng phase there are the ten heavenly stems. Number five also develops into number six, the liù qì, six qì. They form the

foundation behind the six climates, six divisions, and the twelve earthly branches. Within all described above there are specific laws active, which is the *lǐ*. Chapter 4 will present all of this.

Chapter 5

| Qì | Heaven | Earth | 氣 | 天 | 地 |

After an introduction of qì, lǐ and shù, the book continues to elaborate upon the concepts of *heaven* and *earth*, or *pre-heaven* and *post-heaven*. What is the relationship between them? How does the qì of heaven present itself on *earth*? Heaven is creating earth, as *space* is enhancing the flow of *time*. The concept of heaven is connected to *space*, as the concept of earth, or post-heaven, is connected to *time*. Space reveals itself initially into four corners, with a centre and a three dimensional aspect. The centre is the representation of the heaven and is called *qián*. From this centre, the qì is emanating into four directions. The four directions are dividing space, and are named the four emanations *yuán*, *hēng*, *lì*, and *zhēn*. These four heavenly forces, emanating from the centre, are the source for the ten celestial stems. All of this belongs to the concept of space.

Chapter 6

| Tàì Jí | 太 極 | Space | 宇 | Qián | Yuán | Hēng | Lì | Zhēn | 乾 | 元 | 亨 | 利 | 貞 |

From the *tài jí*, the great supreme, into four directions the universe expands. The four directions are the four emanations *yuán*, *hēng*, *lì*, and *zhēn*. The centre, the representative of the *tài jí*, is named *qián*. This gives a total of five initial forces or the five elements. They are the basis, the root for anything created in heaven and on earth. From each of those archetypes, all kinds of aspects are created in the macrocosm and microcosm. Those five Chinese archetypes, *qián*, *yuán*, *hēng*, *lì*, and *zhēn*, are the first five characters of the oracle book *Yi Jing* - Book of Changes. Each of those five principles is responsible for many connected aspects, such as a direction, a colour, a season, a couple of organ, one of the five senses, etcetera. The manifestations of the four emanations, with its centre, create in a *yīn* and *yáng* way the ten celestial stems.

Chapter 7

| Ten Celestial Stems | Shí Tiān Gān | 十 天 干 |

In this chapter, the ten celestial stems will be explained in detail. The etymology of the Chinese character of each of the ten stems, their inner meaning, relationship with nature and with the physical body, will be elaborated upon. The ten stems have a specific order, are connected as couples of stems, and last but not least, they have a mutual balancing relationship with one another.

Chapter 8

| Tài Jí | 太 極 | Time | 時 | Qián | Yuán | Hēng | Lì | Zhēn | 乾 | 元 | 亨 | 利 | 貞 |

This chapter returns to the basic concept of the four emanations, with its centre. In chapter 6, the existence of space was explained. The same initial concept of the four forces, will create *time*. Time in space initiated by movement and sequence. From the same four emanations, with its centre, it is possible to explain the order of the twelve terrestrial branches.

Chapter 9

| Twelve Terrestrial Branches | Shí Èr Dì Zhī | 十 二 地 支 |

After the concept of *time* is brought to life in chapter 8, the twelve terrestrial branches will be explained in this chapter. The etymology of the Chinese characters of the twelve branches and their inner meaning, relationship with nature and organs, is explained. The earthly branches have a specific order, as complementary to the heavenly stems. Within the order of the earthly branches, there are many suborders, smaller cycles, and inner connections. The most important trait of the branches, is their connection with a specific *qì* of a season. This will make the physiological function of the organ, related to that branch, clearer.

Chapter 10

| Universal Qì | Personal Qì | 普 氣 | 個 氣 |

As there is a stem and a branch of the year, there are also stems and branches of the month, day, and hour. These form the four pillars as a foundation for a being. In clinical practise, they are not used in the same way. How, and when they will be used, will be explained. The four pillars determine the *personal* and the *universal* *qì*. The personal *qì* is fixed, will not change for an individual person, while the universal *qì* changes constantly.

Chapter 11

| Qì | Jīng | Shén | 氣 | 精 | 神 |

In chapter 3 the *sān bāo*, *qì*, *jīng*, and *shén*, are introduced. This trinity is from pre-heaven origin. The *qì*, *jīng*, and *shén*, are going to function as couples in the post-heaven. Those couples are *jīng qì*, *jīng shén*, *shén qì*, and their function and role will be explained in this chapter. Furthermore, there will be a short introduction to the five spirits, *shén*, *hún*, *pò*, *yì*, and *zhì*. Two of those five spirits incarnate from heaven, two are connected to earth, and in the merging of these four spirits, exists number five, the *yì*.

Chapter 12

| Post Heaven Qì | Hòu Tiān Qì | 後 天 氣 |

As in chapter 2, the concept of *pre-heaven* is discussed; chapter 12 will elaborate on the *post-heaven* concept, with all the different types and qualities of *qì*. The pre-heavenly *qì* is going to

function as post-heavenly qì. What connects between these two realms, are qì, jīng, shén, presenting themselves as couples. There are different types of post-heavenly qì. All of them will be explained, the etymology will be clarified, as well as their role and function in the human being.

Chapter 13

| Transformation of Shuǐ and Gǔ into Qì | 水 谷 |

Qì needs to be maintained and is transformed out of food and drinks, in order to nourish men. The Chinese concept has its own way of explaining this process, while western physiology describes this process from another perspective. This chapter will present this process of digestion of food, from both perspectives, uniting the different views.

Chapter 14

| Six Qì | Liù Qì | 六 氣 |

The heavenly stems are introduced in the beginning of the book, followed by the earthly branches. These are the *heavenly* and *earthly part* of the wǔ yùn liù qì, while the actual wǔ yùn liù qì are the liù qì, the six types or qualities of qì, metaphorically presented as the *six climates*. This is a vast subject and a long chapter. This is followed in the next chapter (15) by the wǔ yùn aspect of the wǔ yùn liù qì, or the five phases, better presented as the wǔ xíng. The liù qì has many aspects, and is a immense subject within the Nèi Jīng Sù Wèn. All aspect will be discussed, presented in an ordered way, in a metaphorically order of the liù qì of *heaven*, liù qì of *earth*, and liù qì of *man*.

Chapter 15

| Five Transformation Phases | Wǔ Xíng | 五 行 |

The wǔ xíng is the practical tool in the daily life of the clinic. With the use of the principles and rules of the wǔ xíng, as explained in this chapter, the practitioner can influence the qì with acupuncture. As an introduction all the different five phases will be discussed. The etymology of the Chinese characters is a returning item in this book, so also for each of the five phases. Furthermore, their function within the body and mind will be explained. Last but not least, the two main principles functioning within the wǔ xíng, the shēng - generating cycle, and the kè action - controlling and harmonising action.

Chapter 16

| Channel System | Jīng Luò Mài | 經 絡 脈 |

This chapter will present the different channel systems, jīng luò mài, and all the different types of points. There are four channels systems, linked by the *connective channel* system. Each of the channel system is connected to one of the four emanations, while the connective channel system relates to the centre, qián. The channels systems are: jīng jīn | 經 筋 | tendo-muscular channels,

jīng mài | 經 脈 | main channels, jīng bié | 經 別 | divergent channels, bā qī jīng mài | 八 奇 經 脈 | eight extra ordinary channels, and luò mài | 絡 脈 | connective channels. Furthermore, twenty-two groups of points will be presented, and their function will be discussed.

Chapter 17

| Chinese Calendar | Rì Lì | 日 曆 |

This chapter will give an introduction to the Chinese calendar. All the charts, which show how to calculate the stem and branch of the year, month, day, and hour, are found. Most charts are valid until 2043; 2044 is the beginning of a new cycle of 60 years. A new edition of the book will be published then. This chapter is full of tables, dates of the beginning of the new moon from 1924 until 2043, and formulas as how to calculate for instance, the stem of the day. Those charts are undeniable a necessity for the clinic of the wǔ yùn liù qì practitioner.

Chapter 18

| Acupuncturist | Zhēn Jiǔ Yī Shī | 針 灸 醫 師 |

The last chapter discusses in a very thorough way, the complete process of a treatment with all the tools of the wǔ yùn liù qì. There will be three different cases studied. The process begins with the interview and ends with analyzing the chart of the year and *four pillars* of the patient. Initially, the personal qì of the patient will be discussed, with all the strong and weak aspects of the constitution of the patient, and all the *do's and don'ts*. From here, a treatment strategy will be planned. In each of these cases, there will be examples of treatments on different days, and on different hours of the day. Besides this, the same case, diagnosis, will be discussed, but with all the information of another person, born on another day, with different constitutional qì, and treated on different days and hours. This is the art of wǔ yùn liù qì, how to treat a patient in a personal way.

Nèi Jīng Sù Wèn chapter 71-295:

The way of the sages, the great transformation of the heavens and the earth,
the sequence of circulation, the patterns of liù qì,
the administrative duty of yīn and yáng,
the order of cold and summer heat are all governed by principles,
which can be thoroughly understood by you.

Please, allow me to store it in the emperor's Treasure House of Books,
with the title *Great Outlines of the Formal Patterns of Six Original Qì*.

I will show it to nobody only on special occasions of religious nature
when one abstains from eating meat and doing certain other things,
and when one takes a sacred bath.

I will then pass it on to prosperity with great respect.

NEW



Peter C. van Kervel was re-trained as an acupuncturist by Dr. J.D. van Buren, who introduced the knowledge of the *stems and branches* (*wū yùn liú qì*) acupuncture to the west, as well as being the founder of ICOM, England and The Netherlands.

Peter is seen as the second generation to bring this ancient knowledge into the world, in a practical and didactical way, as manifested in the form of books. He has been working in the field of health care for more than 35 years, predominantly as an acupuncturist. Peter is the founder and teacher of a 4 year full-time program in Israel, which is affiliated with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a program teaching acupuncture and herbal medicine. He also teaches and guides post-graduate acupuncture programs in Holland, England, Israel, Sweden, Finland, Italy and Turkey. Peter's determination to clarify and merge the ancient knowledge of the *stems and branches*, with modern western medicine science, has lead him to write this and other books about the vast art of acupuncture.

Although there are many who practice acupuncture, just a few practitioners in the world use this ancient knowledge in the clinic. This is partly because of the limited resources available, which explain in a clear way this once hidden knowledge, traditionally passed on through oral teachings and hands-on clinical experience.

The doctrine of the so-called *stems & branches* acupuncture is an obscure knowledge within the realm of acupuncture. The philosophical background, on which acupuncture is based, has remained hidden and obscure for many decades. This system of acupuncture basis it's knowledge on ancient books, such as the *Nèi Jīng*, *Nán Jīng* and *Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng*.

The current and up to date system has been developed so as to incorporate this ancient knowledge, the knowledge of correcting physiological and energetic imbalances of the organs (*zàng* and *fǔ*) on a individual based way, making it possible to reverse pathological conditions as well as to prevent these from re-occurring. In clinical practice of many of his students and himself, they encounter daily the power of acupuncture to cure many pathologies such as auto-immune diseases, neurological and digestive disorders, to name a mere few.

This book reveals, in a didactic order, the secrets of acupuncture, to be used in clinic. Acupuncture does not simply mean to puncture a particular point which has an action on a symptom, rather, it is the art of correcting underlying individual imbalances of qi, which have to be diagnosed and treated, step by step in a coherent strategical and conscious way, thus inviting the body to cure itself. The treatment itself should be tailor made to each individual, taking into account the personal constitution, as well as the universal qi available at the moment of treatment.

The aim of this book is to bring clarity to a once secret knowledge, in a didactic coherent fashion, for the benefit of acupuncture practitioners and their patients. But above all, to merge this ancient knowledge of acupuncture with the modern western medical science. All of this will be revealed in this book, which you are holding in your hand, and other books published by Lán Dì Press.

Gadi Marcus B. Ac. Israel

