

PO

魄

PO

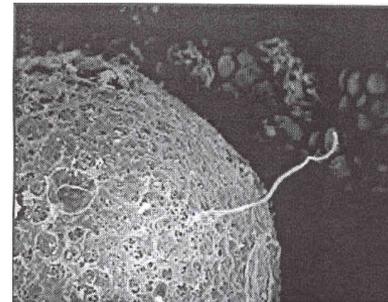
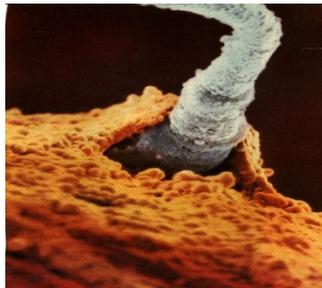
白

BAI (White)

鬼

GUI (Ghost, spirit)

The Po resides in the Lungs and is the physical counterpart of the Hun. The bai (white) within the character is related to the light of the waxing moon and is also phonetic. The association with the waxing moon (Yin) is in keeping with the association of the Po with Yin (as opposed to the Hun which is Yang) and the dark forces of gui. The connection between the Po and the moon is also related to the Po coming into being on the 3rd day after conception, analogous to the thin crescent of rising moon on the 3rd day.



Hence the connection between the Po and the embryonic lunar light (Yin) as opposed to the hot (Yang) sun light of the Hun. In fact, in the old times, the Po was also called “Moon-Po”.

One can therefore build a correspondence between West (where the waxing moon is)-white-Metal-Po-Lungs.



WEST-WHITE-METAL-PO-LUNGS

The Po can be defined as "*that part of the Soul [as opposed to the Hun] which is indissolubly attached to the body and goes down to Earth with it at death*".

It is closely linked to the body and could be described as the somatic expression of the Soul, or, conversely, the organizational principle of the body.

The Po is active from conception and it shapes the body. It could be also described as the organization of the organism and the coordinating force of all physiological processes.

Zhang Jie Bin says: "*In the beginning of an individual's life the body is formed; the spirit of the body is the Po. When the Po is in the Interior there is [enough] Yang Qi*".

As for movement, the Po gives the body the capacity of movement, agility, balance and coordination of movements (the Hun gives psychic movement”).

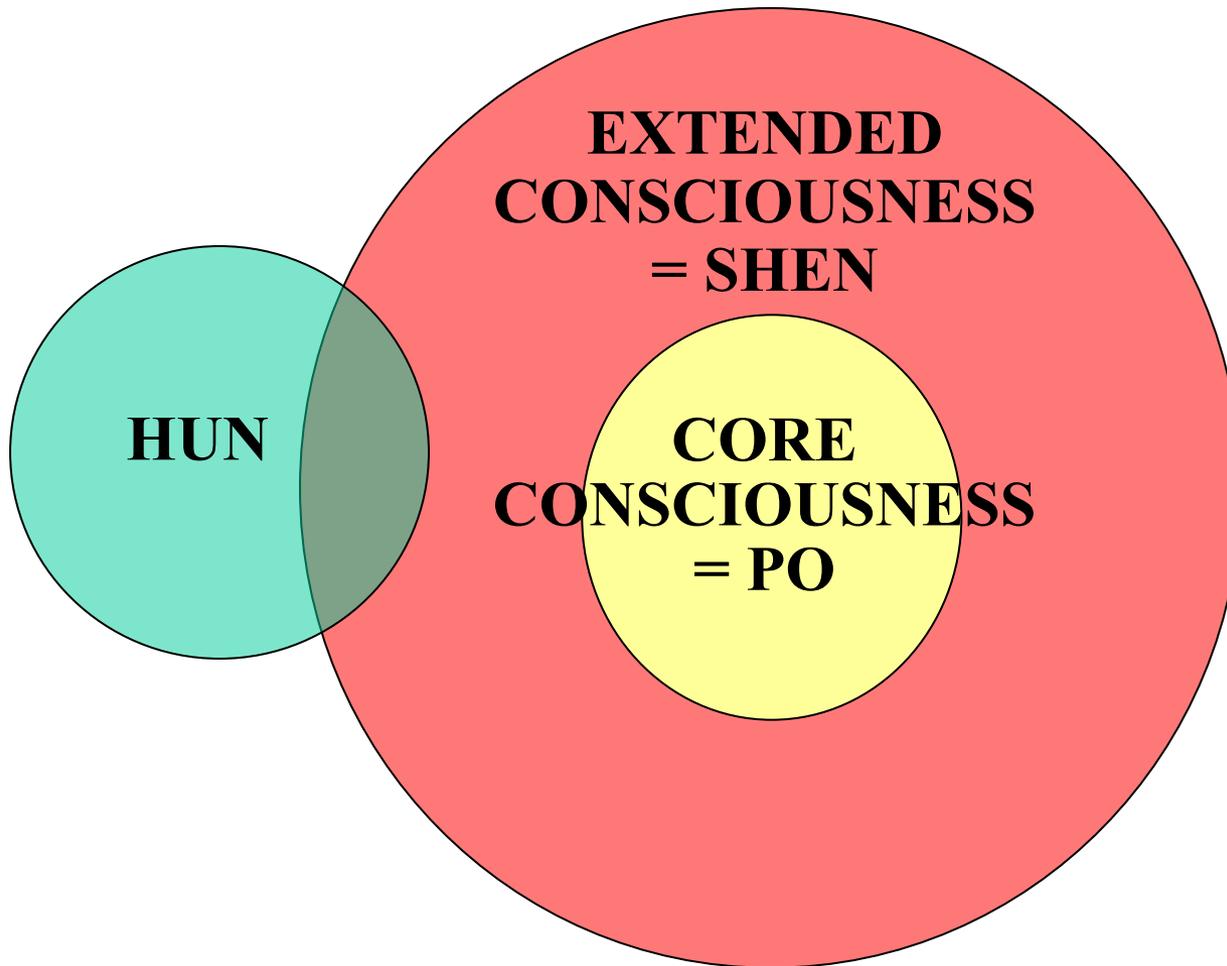
The Po dies with the body at death but it is thought to adhere to the corpse for some time, especially the bones, before returning to Earth.

Damasio's definition of *core* and *extended consciousness* presents interesting similarities with Chinese medicine. He calls *core consciousness* the one that provides the organism with a sense of self about one moment - now- and about one place - here. The scope of core consciousness is here and now. This is similar to the function of the Po.

He calls *extended consciousness* the one that provides “*the organism with an elaborate sense of self and places the person at a point in individual historical time, richly aware of the lived past and of the anticipated future.*”¹

This is a function of the *Shen* of the Heart in Chinese medicine.

1. Damasio A 1999 The Feeling of What Happens - Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness, Harcourt Inc., San Diego, p. 16.



Edelman has a similar distinction between *primary* and *higher-order* consciousness.

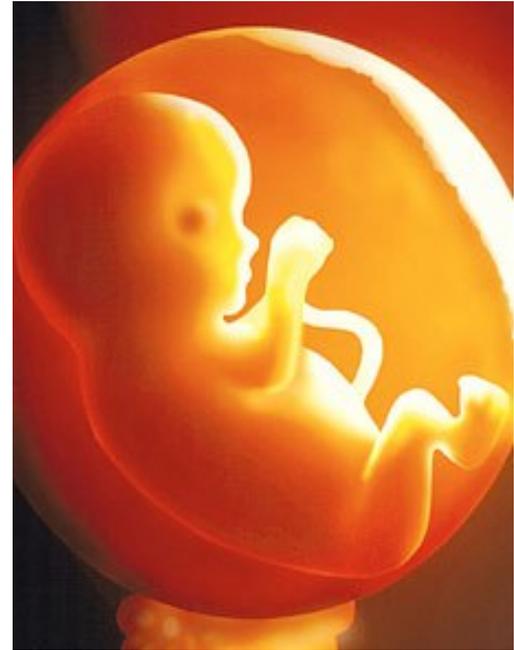
Primary consciousness – the ability to generate a mental scene in which a large amount of diverse information is integrated for the purpose of directing present or immediate behaviour – occurs in animals with brain structures similar to ours. Such animals are able to construct a mental scene but, unlike us, have limited semantic or symbolic capabilities and no true language. = **PO**

Higher-order consciousness is built on the foundations provided by primary consciousness and is accompanied by a sense of self and the ability in the waking state to construct and connect past and future scenes. In its most developed form, it requires a semantic and linguistic capability. Only individuals with higher-order consciousness can report conscious states and speak about consciousness: they are conscious of being conscious. = **SHEN**

1) CORPOREAL SOUL AND JING

The Po is closely linked to Jing and is described in the "Spiritual Axis" chapter 8 as the "**exiting and entering of Jing**". It derives from the mother and arises soon after the Pre-natal Jing of a new being is formed. Thus the Po, closely linked to Jing, is the first to come into being after conception. Both Jing and Po represent the organizational principles of life which shape the body from conception (the extraordinary vessels are the channels through which this happens).

During gestation, the foetus is "all Po and Jing" and communicates with the Po of the mother. The connection between Po and foetal life is very ancient: Granet calls the Po the "soul of blood". The foetus depends on the mother's Po, Blood and Jing which guide and nourish it.



JING AND PO



JING AND PO

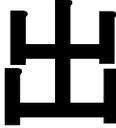
Nourish

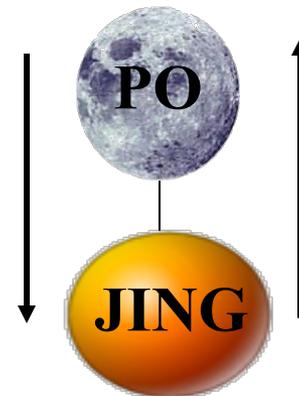
The Po is related to Jing, hence the “Ling Shu” (chapter 8) statement that *“That which enters and exits with the Jing is the Po”*.

"Entering and exiting" implies an Interior and Exterior, i.e. a separation of the individual from the environment. It also implies a vertical movement as *ru* (to enter) evokes "roots" and *chu* (to exit) evokes "branches". Thus the centripetal, separating, materializing of the Po also depends on the vertical exiting and entering of the Jing.

The Po is the manifestation of Jing in the sphere of sensations and feelings. Just as the Hun provides movement to the Shen (“coming and going of the Shen”), the Po provides movement to the Jing, i.e. it brings the Jing into play in all physiological processes of the body.


Ru= enter


Chu= exit



By giving rise to the human form during gestation, the Po is centripetal, separating, materializing, aggregating, as it separates, it aggregates, materializes into a separate existence in the foetus. As this separation is expressed by the skin (which separates the being from the world), there is a further connection between the Po-skin-Lungs. This separating power allies itself with the centripetal forces of gui, constantly opposing and fragmenting and is, eventually, the germ of death. With regard to fragmenting, there is a resonance between gui and *kuai* (gui with "earth" in front) which means "pieces".

The Po is therefore linked to a "thirst for existence", centripetal, materializing life force, aggregating into a separate existence.

鬼

GUI (spirit)

归

GUI (return)

塊 (块)

KUAI (pieces)

归 (歸)

GUI (return)



The dead souls that “return” after death

鬼

GUI (spirit)

塊 (块)

KUAI (pieces)

