THE TREATMENT OF SHEN DISTURBANCES WITH CHINESE MEDICINE

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THE FIVE MENTAL-SPIRITUAL ASPECTS (5 SHENs)

The Shen, and therefore the Heart, plays a pivotal and leading role in all mental activities. Yu Chang in “Principles of Medical Practice” (1658) says: “The Shen of the Heart gathers and unites the Hun and the Po and it combines the Yi and the Zhi”.

However, all other organs also play roles in mental, emotional and spiritual activities, very often overlapping with that of the Heart. In particular, the Yin organs are more directly responsible for mental activities. Each Yin organ “houses” a particular mental-spiritual aspect of a human being. These are:

- **Shen** (Mind) - Heart
- **Hun** (Ethereal Soul) - Liver
- **Po** (Corporeal Soul) - Lungs
- **Yi** (Intellect) - Spleen
- **Zhi** (Will-Power) - Kidneys
The “Simple Questions” in chapter 23 says: “The Heart houses the Shen, the Lungs house the Po, the Liver houses the Hun, the Spleen houses the Yi and the Kidneys house the Zhi”.

In chapter 9 it says: “The Heart is the root of life and the origin of the Shen … the Lungs are the root of Qi and the dwelling of the Po … the Kidneys are the root of sealed storage [Jing] and the dwelling of Zhi … the Liver is the root of harmonization and the residence of the Hun.”
The commentary to chapter 23 of the “Simple Questions”, also based on passages from the “Spiritual Axis”, says:

“The Shen is a transformation of Jing and Qi: both types of Jing [i.e. the Pre-natal and Post-natal Jing] contribute to forming the Shen.

The Po is the assistant of the Jing and Qi: it is close to Jing but it moves in and out.

The Hun complements the Shen and Qi: it is close to the Shen but it comes and goes.

The Yi corresponds to memory: it is the memory which depends on the Heart.

The Zhi is like a purposeful and focused mind: the Kidneys store Jing ... and through the Zhi they can fulfill our destiny.”
These five aspects together form the “Spirit” which is also called “Shen” or sometimes the “Five Shen” in the old classics. The five Zang are the residences of “Shen” i.e. the Spirit, and they are sometimes also called the “Five-Shen residences” as in chapter 9 of the “Simple Questions”.

The 5 Zang are the physiological basis of the Spirit. The state of Qi and Blood of each organ can influence the Shen or Spirit and, conversely, alterations of the Shen or Spirit will affect one or more of the internal organs.
**SHEN.** Mind, spirit, consciousness, vitality, expression, soul, energy, god, God. (It can be a noun and a verb)

**Shi** “Influx from heaven; auspicious or inauspicious signs by which the will of Heaven is known to mankind.” Altar (for sacrifices). Spirit tablet. “Numinous”

The two lines at the top are the old form of *Shang* 上 (superior, above, high, hence “Heaven”)

The three vertical lines represent hanging from Heaven, i.e. the sun, the moon and the stars, the mutations of which reveal to people transcendent things.
**Shen** = to state, express, explain, to stretch, extend, the 9th Earthly Branch

The form 申 means “to extend”. This may also refer to an increased or extended 申 [shen] spiritual revelation 示 [shi], the left side of the character.

Shen 神 is cognate with shen 申 and shen 伸, both meaning to “stretch”, “to extend”, “to state”, “to express”.

**Shen**
Xin 心 [Heart] is usually rendered as “mind” by sinologists. Many of the characters that refer to different modalities of “thinking” are also constructed with xin as a component. The point is that in the classical Chinese world view, the Mind cannot be divorced from the Heart. The cognitive is inseparable from the affective.

One of the Neo-Confucian schools of the Ming dynasty (Wang Yang Ming) was the Xin Jia or “School of Mind” as all sinologists translate it.

Note: Shen 神 is also cognate with shen 身 (= body)
NATURE OF SHEN IN CHINESE MEDICINE

The Shen (Mind) is one of the vital substances of the body. It is the most subtle and non-material type of Qi. Most authors translate the word Shen as “spirit”; I prefer to translate Shen of the Heart as “Mind” rather than as “Spirit”.

I translate as “Spirit” the complex of all five mental-spiritual aspects of a human being, i.e.;
SHEN 神: TWO MEANINGS OF “SHEN”

1) Shen indicates the activity of thinking, consciousness, self, insight, emotional life and memory, all of which depend on the Heart. I translate this as "Mind".

2) Shen indicates the complex of all five mental-spiritual aspects of a human being, i.e. the Shen itself, the Hun, the Po, the Yi and the Zhi. I translate this as "Spirit".

These five are called Five Shen 五神 or Five Zhi 五志

= SPIRIT
Please note that I am not saying that “shen” cannot mean “spirit”, of course it can. What I am saying is that, in the context of the Shen of the Heart, I prefer “Mind” as a better translation of it.
The Shen of a newly-conceived being comes from the pre-natal Jing of its mother and father. Of course, this is a primordial Shen that is not really fully developed until about 7-years old.

After birth, its pre-natal Jing is stored in the Kidneys and it provides the biological foundation for the Shen. The life and Shen of a newborn baby, however, also depend on the nourishment from its own post-natal Jing.
**JING-SHEN** 精 神 Spirit, mind, psyche, vitality, consciousness

Ling Shu, chapter 30

“When the Stomach and Intestines are coordinated the 5 Zang are peaceful, Blood is harmonized and mental activity is stable. The Shen derives from the refined essence of water and food.”

Mental illness is called “Jing Shen Bing” 精 神 病. This shows the close integration of mind and body in Chinese medicine.
Thus the Shen draws its basis and nourishment from the Pre-natal Jing stored in the Kidneys and the Post-natal Jing produced by Lungs, Stomach and Spleen. Hence the Three Treasures:

神  SHEN = HE

气  QI = LU-ST-SP

精  ESSENCE = KI
These Three Treasures represent three different states of condensation of Qi, the Jing being the densest, Qi the more rarefied, and the Shen the most subtle and non-material.

The activity of the Shen relies on the Jing and Qi as its fundamental basis. Hence the Jing is said to be the "foundation of the body and the root of the Mind".

Thus if Jing and Qi are strong and flourishing the Shen will be happy, balanced and alert. If Jing and Qi are depleted, the Shen will suffer and may become unhappy, depressed, anxious, or clouded.

Zhang Jie Bin:
"If Jing is strong, Qi flourishes; if Qi flourishes, the Shen is whole".
The SHEN RESIDES IN THE HEART

Of all the organs, the Shen is most closely related to the Heart which is said to be the “residence” of the Shen.

Su Wen, Chapter 8
“The Heart is the Monarch and it governs the Shen.”

Chapter 71
“The Heart is the Monarch of the 5 Zang and 6 Fu and it is the residence of the Shen”
The Heart-Shen is responsible for many different mental activities:

- Cognition
- Thinking
- Memory
- Emotions
- Insight, sense of self
- Consciousness
- Sleep
- Ideas
- 5 senses

**Clinical Note:**
In order to stimulate the thinking function that is associated with the Heart, I use the points HE-5 Tongli and BL-15 Xinshu.
Thinking (or cognition) depends on the Shen. If the Shen is strong, thinking will be clear. If the Shen is weak or disturbed, thinking will be slow and dull. The Chinese characters for “thought” (yi 意), “to think” (xiang 想) and “pensiveness” (si 思) all have the character for “heart” as their radical.

Memory has two different meanings. On the one hand it indicates the capacity of memorizing data when one is studying or working. On the other hand, it refers to the ability to remember past events. Both of these are called explicit memory and depend on the Shen and therefore the Heart, although also on the Yi of the Spleen and the Zhi of the Kidneys.

The Shen is also responsible for implicit memory.
Emotional life also depends on the Shen of the Heart. With regard to emotions, only the Shen (and therefore the Heart) can recognize them. Of course emotions definitely affect all the other organs too, but it is only the Shen that actually recognizes, feels and assesses them. For example, anger affects the Liver, but the Liver cannot feel it because it does not house the Shen. Only the Heart can feel it because it stores the Shen which is responsible for insight. When one feels sad, angry or worried, it is the Shen of the Heart that feels these emotions.

It is for this reason that all emotions eventually affect the Heart (in addition to other specific organs), and it is in this sense that the Heart is the “emperor” of all the other organs.
ALL EMOTIONS AFFECT THE HEART

ANGER ➔ LIVER

SADNESS ➔ LUNGS

GRIEF ➔ HEART

WORRY ➔ KIDNEY

FEAR ➔ SPLEEN

PENSIVENESS ➔
**Insight** indicates our capacity of self-knowledge, self-recognition and *identity of self*. The Shen of the Heart is responsible for our identity of self as individuals.

Insight is lost in serious mental illness like bipolar disease or schizophrenia and is caused by *obstruction* of the Shen.

Obstruction of the Shen, however, may occur in different degrees of severity and it does not always lead to serious mental illness.

**Consciousness** indicates the totality of thoughts and perceptions as well as the state of being conscious.

In the first sense, the Shen is responsible for the recognition of thoughts, perceptions and feelings.

In the latter sense, when the Shen is clear, we are conscious; if the Shen is obfuscated or suddenly depleted, we lose consciousness.
Please note that the term “consciousness” refers to two separate things.

The first is the “mind” itself, the self, the consciousness that is exclusive to human beings (although of course animals have some form of consciousness). This is the unique human quality that confers us the sense of self, or “I” and that is responsible for our thinking and cognition. We are conscious of being conscious. The Shen (not Hun, Po, Yi or Zhi) is responsible for this.

The second is “consciousness” in the sense of being conscious, i.e. a state of mental alertness that we have when we are awake. We lose consciousness when we faint or are in a coma, and also for brief seconds during attacks of petit mal. We also lose consciousness every time we fall asleep. In all these cases (sleep, fainting, coma, petit mal, the Shen is temporarily disabled).
Sleep depends on the Shen of the Heart and particularly Heart-Blood. If the Shen is properly anchored in Heart-Blood, sleep is easy and sound. If Heart-Blood (or Heart-Yin) are deficient, the person may find it difficult to fall asleep. Sleep is also negatively affected by Heart-Heat.

Please note that the quality of sleep also depends on the Hun of the Liver and also other organs, e.g. Kidneys.

Ideas are another function of the Shen. The Heart and Shen are responsible for our ideas, our projects and the dreams which give our lives purpose. This function of the Shen depends also on the Hun.
The Shen of the Heart is also responsible for hearing, sight, taste and smell.

Of course, each of the senses depends on a specific organs, i.e. hearing and Kidneys, sight and Liver, taste and Heart and nose and Lungs, but they all also depend on the Heart.

Many of the ancient Daoist and Confucianist texts view the senses (sight, hearing, smelling, taste) as “dangerous”. They “pull” on the Shen out of itself and dissipate its energy.
Finally, the Shen of the Heart performs the very important function of coordinating and integrating the various parts of our mental-emotional life into an individual whole: this is probably its most important characteristic and function. It is really in this sense that the Heart is the “emperor” or “monarch” of the other organs.

As the Heart controls all mental activities of the Shen and is responsible for insight and sense of self, which other organs do not have, this is another reason that it is the “emperor” of all the other organs. For this reason, the Heart is also called the “root of life” as in chapter 9 of the “Simple Questions”: “The Heart is the root of life and the origin of mental life.”
HEART

Chapter 80 of the Ling Shu: “When the Shen is exhausted, the Hun and Po are scattered and the Zhi and Yi chaotic.”

SHEN

- EMOTIONAL LIFE
- SENSE OF SELF
- 5 SENSES
- Coordinates and integrates
- HUN, PO, YI, ZHI
**SHEN 神 (of HEART)**

Is the Qi that:

- Forms life (but also with Po) from the union of the Jing of the parents
- Allows the individual to be conscious of his or her self
- Permits the cohesion of various parts of our psyche and emotions
- Defines us as individuals, confers sense of self
- Feels and assesses the emotions
- Is responsible for perceptions, feelings and senses (with Po)
- Is responsible for thinking, memory, intelligence, wisdom, ideas
- Determines consciousness (being conscious)
- Allows insight and sense of Self
- Is responsible for cognition
- Relations with others (*shen* = stretch, extend, project outwards)
- Determines sleep
- Governs the senses (sight, hearing, smelling, taste)
THE ETHEREAL SOUL (*HUN*)

**OLD CHARACTER FOR GUI**

Head of dead person without a body

Swirling movement of the “ghost” of dead person in the realm of spirits

The Hun enters the body 3 days after birth and is imparted by the father. Ethereal in nature, after death it survives the body in the realm of the dead.
The Shen and Hun are inseparably linked and together they form our consciousness, mind and spirit. The Hun assists the Shen in its thinking function and emotional life.

Zhang Jie Bin in the “Classic of Categories” says: “The Shen and the Hun are Yang...the Hun follows the Shen, if the Shen is unconscious the Hun is swept away”.

It also says: “The Shen corresponds to Yang within Yang; the Hun corresponds to Yin within Yang”.

魂  HUN

神  SHEN
When describing the Hun, the theme of “movement", "swirling", "wandering", “searching” etc. is ever present. The old form of the Chinese radical within the word hun depicts the swirling movement of the soul of a dead person in the realm of spirit.

The Hun is described as the “coming and going of the Shen” or “what follows the Shen in its coming and going is the Hun” (sui shen wang lai wei zhi hun) 随神往来为之魂.
MOVEMENT OF HUN

The Hun provides movement to the psyche in many ways:

1) Movement of the soul out of the body as in dreaming.

2) Movement out of one's everyday life as in life dreams and ideas.

3) Movement towards the others in human relationships.

4) Movement in terms of plans, projects, vision, ideas.

5) Movement in terms or creativity, inspiration.

Excessive movement of the psyche out of itself may result in mental illness.

Clinical Note:
The best point to stimulate the coming and going of the Hun is G.B.-40 Qiuxu.
**SHEN**

*Shen*, indicates the influx from Heaven, something pure, spiritual.

**HUN**

The *Hun*, by contrast, is the “gui”, i.e. the intuitive, non-rational side of human nature.
The *gui* in the character *hun* for the “Hun” has also another important meaning. The fact that the Hun has the nature of *gui* means that it has an *independent existence* from the Shen. The Hun has its own life and “agenda” over which the Shen has no say: the interaction and integration of the Shen with the Hun is the basis for our rich psychic life.

Unlike the Hun, the other two mental-spiritual aspects of *Yi* of the Spleen and *Zhi* of the Kidneys do not have an independent existence but could be said to be part of the Shen of the Heart.

Like the Hun, the Po also has its own independent existence although on a physical level.
魂 (鬼 + 云)

- HEAVEN
- YANG
- WITH SHEN

Movement, swirl, wandering, searching, independent existence

魄 (鬼 + 白)

- EARTH
- YIN
- WITH JING
SLEEP AND DREAMING

The Hun influences sleep and dreaming. If the Hun is well rooted in the Liver (Liver-Blood or Liver-Yin), sleep is normal and sound and without too many dreams. If Liver-Yin or Liver-Blood is deficient, the Hun is deprived of its residence and wanders off at night, causing a restless sleep with many tiring dreams. The Hun may be agitated by Heat which will also make sleep restless and cause excessive dreaming.

Tang Zong Hai says: "At night during sleep the Hun returns to the Liver; if the Hun is not peaceful there are a lot of dreams".
Hun restless, agitated, moving too much

Insomnia, excessive dreaming, nightmares

Deprives Hun of its residence

HEAT

Agitates Hun

HUN

LIVER-BLOOD AND/OR LIVER-YIN XU
The “Treatise of the Golden Flower” in chapter 2 says: “In the daytime the Hun is in the eyes and at night in the Liver. When it is in the eyes we can see. When it is in the Liver we dream”.

And also: “Dreams constitute the wandering of the Hun in the 9 Heavens and 9 Earths. When one wakes up one feels obscure and confused [because] one is constrained by the Po”.

The reference to being “constrained by the Po” is interesting. The Hun has a centrifugal, expansive movement while the Po has a centripetal, contractive movement. The Hun likes to move, explore while the Po brings us back into the body.
Dream sleep is a good illustration of the respective roles of the Shen of the Heart and of the Hun. When we are asleep, the Shen is temporarily disabled (so to speak) but during dream there is some consciousness: this is provided by the movement of the Hun at night.

From a Western perspective, Damasio says something similar. He says that wakefulness and consciousness generally go together but there are situations when that is not the case. During dream sleep, we have some consciousness (due to the Hun) but not wakefulness. That is because the Shen is asleep but the Hun is moving, producing some form of consciousness. During the REM phase of sleep, the cortex is asleep but the limbic system is very active.¹

The new research pointing to the role of sleep and dream sleep in memory stabilization and learning is interesting from a **Chinese perspective**. The night, and especially dream sleep, is the time of the Hun, it is the time when the Shen is unconscious and the Hun is active.

We dream when the Hun goes to the eyes at night: this ties in perfectly with Western psychology according to which, in daytime we (i.e. the Shen) react to external stimuli while at night we (i.e. the Hun) react to internal stimuli. (Also REM).

This confirms the role of the Hun in assisting the Shen in cognition, thinking and memory (and, of course, emotions as we will see later). It also confirms the role of the Hun in providing “movement” to the Shen.
In case of the Hun wandering at night and causing too much dreaming from Yin Xu, it is necessary to nourish Liver-Blood and Liver-Yin with sour and astringent herbs such as Mu Li *Concha Ostreae*, Long Chi *Dens Draconis*, Suan Zao Ren *Semen Ziziphi spinosae* or Bai Shao *Radix Paeoniae alba*.

There is an interesting correlation between the astringent and absorbing quality of such herbs on a physical level and their use in calming the Shen and "absorbing" the Hun to draw it back into the Liver.

Chinese books do not define “excessive dreaming”. In my experience, it is either having nightmares or having unpleasant or anxiety-creating dreams the whole night waking up exhausted.
The Hun also influences the dreams, aims and projects of our life. When one has a life “dream” this is dependant on the activity of the Hun. The Hun is therefore also responsible for having a sense of purpose in life and “dreams” in the sense of goals.

The Hun influences dreaming at night and “life-dreams” in our awake state. Thus when the Hun is in the eyes we have external visualization; when it is in the Liver we have internal visualization as in dreams or life dreams.
ASSISTS THE SHEN IN MENTAL ACTIVITIES

The Hun assists the Shen in its mental activities. The "Five-Channel Righteousness" (Tang dynasty), says: "Knowledge is dependent on the sharpness of the Hun".

The Hun provides the Shen, which is responsible for rational thinking, with intuition and inspiration. It also gives the Shen “movement” in the sense that it allows the Shen the capacity of insight and introspection as well as the ability to project outwards and relate to other people. ("shen" 申 = to extend).

This capacity for movement and outward projection is closely related to the Liver-Qi quality of quick and free movement. The words “movement”, “coming and going”, “swimming”, “wandering” are often used in connection with the Hun. The free flow of Liver-Qi is the physical equivalent of the Hun’s capacity for smooth movement and “coming and going".
Free flow of Liver-Qi helps the Heart and the Shen. Note that Liver also has a physiological ascending movement. That movement is towards the Heart; on a psychic level, it is the role that subconscious thinking, intuition and inspiration play in cognition.

Consciousness, thinking, cognition, memory, self

Movement of the Hun helps Shen to “extend”, project outwards

Subconscious thinking, intuition, inspiration
The Hun is always described as the “coming and going of the Shen” (sui shen wang lai wei zhi hun) or, to put it differently, “what follows the Shen in its coming and going is the Hun”.

On psychic level, this means that the Hun provides the Shen with “movement” in the sense of intuition, inspiration, movement towards others, relationships, creativity, dreaming (in the sense of life dreams), planning, imagination, projects, symbols, archetypes. The Hun gives the Shen the necessary psychic tension of Wood. The Shen without the Hun would be like a powerful computer without a software.
BalanCe of Emotions

The movement of the Hun is keeps a balance between it and the Shen. A normal relationship between these two prevents the emotions from becoming excessive and therefore turning into causes of disease.

On a physical level, this regulatory function of the Hun is closely related to the balance between Liver-Blood (the Yin part of the Liver) and Liver-Qi (the Yang part of the Liver). Liver-Blood and Liver-Qi need to be harmonized and Liver-Blood must root Liver-Qi to prevent it from becoming stagnant or rebelling upwards.
This balance on a mental-emotional level corresponds to the Liver function of being a “regulating and harmonizing” organ.

Chapter 9 of the “Simple Questions” says: “The Liver has a regulating function, it houses the Hun...”. If Liver-Blood is deficient there will be fear and anxiety; if Liver-Yang is in excess there will be anger.

The "Spiritual Axis" in chapter 8 says: “If the Liver is deficient there will be fear; if it is in excess there will be anger”.

Free flow of Liver-Qi

Hun comes and goes too much = "mania"

Hun comes and goes too little = depression
EYES AND SIGHT

The Hun is in relation with the eyes and sight. Tang Zong Hai says: "When the Hun wanders to the eyes, they can see".

The "Treatise of the Golden Flower" in chapter 2 says: "In the daytime the Hun is in the eyes and at night in the Liver. When it is in the eyes we can see. When it is in the Liver we dream".

This connection with the eyes can be easily related to the rooting of the Hun in Liver-Blood as Liver-Blood nourishes the eyes. On a mental level, the Hun gives us “vision” and insight.

On a physical level

SIGHT

At night

DREAMS

On a psychic level

VISION, INSIGHT
COURAGE

The Hun is related to courage or cowardice and for this reason the Liver is sometimes called the "resolute organ". Tang Zong Hai says: "When the Hun is not strong, the person is timid." Just as in disease Liver-Yang easily flares upwards causing anger, in health the same type of mental energy deriving from Liver-Blood can give a person courage and resoluteness.

The "strength" of the Hun in this connection derives from Liver-Blood. If Liver-Blood is abundant, the person is fearless and is able to face up to life's difficulties. If Liver-Blood is deficient and the Hun is dithering, the person lacks courage, cannot face up to difficulties or making decisions, and is easily discouraged.

Clinical Note :
In order to stimulate the courage” of the Hun I use the point G.B.-40 Qiuxu.
PLANNING

The Hun influences our capacity for planning our life and giving it a sense of direction. A lack of direction in life and a sense of spiritual confusion may be compared to the wandering of the Hun. If the Liver is flourishing the Hun is firmly rooted and moves normally, we can plan our life with vision, wisdom and creativity.

If Liver-Blood (or Liver-Yin) is deficient, the Hun is not rooted and we are confused about life’s direction. If Liver-Blood and Liver-Qi are deficient the Hun lacks movement and there is also a lack of a sense of direction in life and depression.
HUN’s RELATIONSHIP WITH SHEN

The Shen can only cope with one idea at a time originating from the Hun and it must therefore exercise some form of control over the material coming from the Hun. It must also integrate the material deriving from the Hun in the general psyche life.

Therefore the Shen “gathers” the Hun. Thus, the Hun brings movement to the Shen, and the Shen provides some control and integration.

If the Shen is strong and the Hun properly gathered, there will be harmony between the two and the person has calm vision, insight, wisdom and the right balance between “extending” and “withdrawing”.

Key Words: Control and Integration
If the Hun is overactive or if the Shen is weak and fails to restrain the Hun, this may be too restless and only bring confusion and chaos to the Shen, making the person scattered and unsettled. This can be observed in some people who are always full of ideas, dreams and projects none of which ever comes to fruition because of the chaotic state of the Shen which is therefore unable to restrain the Hun.

Hun coming and going too much = “mania”

Hun coming and going normally (Shen not controlling Hun) = “mania”
In psychiatric terms, signs and symptoms of mania (or a manic episode) include:

- Increased energy, activity, and restlessness
- Excessively "high," overly good, euphoric mood
- Extreme irritability
- Racing thoughts and talking very fast, jumping from one idea to another
- Distractibility, inability to concentrate well
- Little sleep needed
- Unrealistic beliefs in one's abilities and powers
- Poor judgment
- Spending sprees
- A lasting period of behavior that is different from usual
- Increased sexual drive
- Abuse of drugs, particularly cocaine, alcohol, and sleeping medications
- Provocative, intrusive, or aggressive behaviour
- Denial that anything is wrong
Mild “Manic Behaviour” is mania in people who are not mentally ill.

- Mental restlessness
- Hyperactivity
- Working and being active at night
- Spending a lot
- Having many projects simultaneously none of which comes to fruition
- Mental confusion
- Obsessive thoughts
- Laughing a lot
- Talking a lot
- Often artistic

**Note:** Mania can occur in many degrees of severity and there is a broad area of behaviours that, while not normal, do not constitute “mental illness”. In other words, in its milder forms, “mania” and “manic behaviour” are relatively common.
If the Hun’s movement is lacking (or if the Shen over controls it), the person lacks vision, imagination, life-dreams, creativity and will be depressed.

Hun coming and going not enough = depression
(Control by Shen normal)

Shen over-controls = depression
(Going of the Hun normal)
Normal relationship

Excessive movement of the Hun or lack of control by Shen

Deficient movement of the Hun or excessive control by the Shen
Relationship between Shen and Hun is all about expansion (stimulation of coming and going of the Hun) and contraction (restraint of coming and going of Hun) in our psychic life.

When we feel: “up”, extroverted, like going out, active

State of expansion *shen*

The Hun is “coming and going” normally

When we feel: “down”, introverted, passive, not feel like going out,

State of contraction *gui*

The Hun’s “coming and going” is restrained
This is reflected in herbal medicine by the two very important herbs:

YUAN ZHI: pungent, bitter, warm dispersing and draining, resolves Phlegm, opens the Heart orifices = stimulates *shen* expansion, i.e. coming and going of Hun

SUAN ZAO REN: sour, sweet, astringent, promotes sleep, anchors Hun = stimulates *gui* contraction, i.e. restraint of coming and going of Hun.
SHEN 神 and GUI 鬼 as CODEWORDS FOR EXPANSION AND CONTRACTION

Wang Chong (27-100 AD) said:
“When a person dies, his spirit ascends to Heaven and his flesh and bones return to Earth. To be an earthly gui means to return [gui] to be a heavenly shen means to expand [shen]. When the expansion reaches its limit, it ends and begins again. A person is born of gui and at death returns to them. Yin and Yang are called gui-shen. After people die, they are also called gui-shen”.

Note how in this passage “return” is counterposed to “expansion”. This is because “return” [gui] has also the meaning of “converge” and “contraction” and is homophone with gui (spirit of dead person).
Normal alternation of Shen and Gui, expansion-contraction
State of permanent shen expansion: “mania”

State of permanent gui contraction: depression
The Hun could be seen as presenting in two possible ways, a positive and a negative one, in the same way as Jung’s *anima*.

The positive Hun confers one inspiration, creativity, vision; the negative Hun makes one “manic”, chaotic, scattered.

That is why among artists, there is a disproportionate incidence of bipolar disease and suicide. The same mental energy that makes people artistic (the movement of the Hun) potentially makes them mentally ill.
DU-24 SHENTING

Du-24 is a very important and powerful point to calm the Mind. It is frequently combined with G.B.-13 Benshen for severe anxiety and fears.

An important feature of this point which makes it particularly useful is that it can both calm and lift the Mind: therefore it is used not only for anxiety and insomnia but also for depression and sadness. It is also used in psychiatric practice for schizophrenia and manic behaviour.

The name of this point refers to its strong influence on the Mind and Spirit. The courtyard was traditionally considered to be a very important part of the house as it was the one that gave the first impression to visitors; it is the entrance.

Thus, this point could be said to be the “entrance” to the Mind and Spirit and its being a courtyard, highlights its importance. Being the “entrance”, it controls our relationships with others.
G.B.-13 BENSHEHEN *Shen* Root

a) Nature

Point of the *Yang Wei Mai*.
Meeting point of the 3 Yang Muscle channels of the arm.

b) Actions

- Calms the Mind (*Shen*)
- Subdues Liver-Yang
- Extinguishes Wind
- Resolves Phlegm

  **Gathers Jing to the head**

- Clears the brain.

c) Indications

- Manic behaviour, fright
- Headache, dizziness
- Epilepsy, hemiplegia, convulsions
- Vomiting of foamy saliva, epilepsy with foaming at the mouth.
G.B-13 Benshen “gathers” Jing to the head. Its deep mental and emotional effect is also due to its action of “gathering” Jing to the head. Kidney-Jing is the root of our Pre-Heaven Qi and is the foundation for our mental and emotional life. A strong Jing is the fundamental prerequisite for a clear Shen and a balanced emotional life. This is the meaning of this point’s name “Root of the Shen”, i.e. this point gathers the Jing which is the root of the Shen.

Kidney-Jing is the source of Marrow which fills up the Brain (called Sea of Marrow): G.B.-13 is a point where Jing and Marrow “gather”. The “Great Dictionary of Acupuncture” says that this point “makes the Shen return to its root”\textsuperscript{1}: the “root” of the Shen is the Jing, hence this point “gathers” Jing to the Brain and affects the Shen.

As it connects the Shen and Jing, this point also treats both the Heart and the Kidneys and therefore the Shen and Zhi: for this reason, it is an important point in the treatment of depression. When combined with other points to nourish Jing (such as Ren-4 Guanyuan), G.B.-13 attracts Jing towards the head with the effect of calming the Mind and strengthening clarity of mind, memory and will power.

The connection between G.B.-13 and Jing is confirmed by the text “An Enquiry into Chinese Acupuncture” which has among the indications of this point: “excessive menstrual bleeding, impotence and seminal emissions.”

THE **YI** (INTELLECT 意)

The Chinese character for Intellect is *Yi* which can mean “idea”, “meaning”, “intention”, “desire”.

The *Yi* resides in the Spleen and is responsible for applied thinking, studying, memorizing, focusing, concentrating and generating ideas.

The Post-natal Qi and Blood are the physiological basis for the Intellect.

Thus if the Spleen is strong, thinking will be clear, memory good and the capacity for concentrating, studying and generating ideas will also be good.

If the Spleen is weak, the Intellect will be dull, thinking will be slow, memory poor and the capacity for studying, concentrating and focusing will all be weak.
In the sphere of thinking, remembering and memorizing there is considerable overlap between the *Yi* of Spleen, the *Shen* of Heart and the *Zhi* of Kidneys. The main differentiating factor is that the Spleen is responsible for memorizing data in the course of one's work or study. For example, it is not uncommon for someone to have a brilliant memory in his or her field of study or research (a function of the Spleen), and yet be quite forgetful in daily life (a function of the Heart).

The overlap between the Yi and the Shen in thinking and memory is very close, so much so that the “Spiritual Axis” says in chapter 8: “*The Heart function of recollecting is called Yi.*” In turn, the memorizing function of the Yi is so closely related to the Zhi of the Kidneys that the same chapter continues: “*The storing [of data] of the Yi is called Zhi*”. These passages confirm that Shen, Yi and Zhi are a continuum.
MEMORY

Studying, focusing, concentration, explicit memory

Memory of events (explicit memory) but also learned actions, implicit memory

Memory of past events (near or far), explicit memory
Implicit and Explicit Memory

Explicit memory

Declarative memories are encoded by the hippocampus, entorhinal cortex and perirhinal cortex (all within the medial temporal lobe of the brain),

Implicit memory

Implicit memory is the encoded and stored by the cerebellum, putamen, caudate nucleus and the motor cortex
LONG-TERM MEMORY

EXPLICIT
- Facts
- Experiences

IMPLICIT
- Conditioning
- Skills
- Priming

KIDNEYS - ZHI

HEART – SHEN

SPLEEN - YI

LUNGS - PO

HEART – SHEN
In physiological conditions, the Yi generates ideas. In pathology, ideas can turn into obsessive ideas and obsessive thinking. Just as in physiology the Yi allows us to concentrate and focus, in pathology, the Mind may be stuck on obsessive ideas. Obsessive ideas are an extreme form of “pensiveness”, the emotion of the Spleen and Yi.

**Clinical Note:** In obsessive thinking or behaviour, I use the points BL-49 Yishe and G.B.-15 Toulinqi.
THE ZHI (WILL-POWER 志)

The word Zhi has at least three meanings:
1. it indicates “memory”
2. it means “will power “
3. it is sometimes used to indicate the “five Zhi”, i.e. the five mental aspects Shen, Hun, Po, Yi and Zhi itself.

In the first sense, the Kidneys influence our capacity for memorizing and storing data. Some of the ancient doctors even said that the Yi of the Spleen and the Zhi of the Kidneys are almost the same thing, except that the Yi is responsible for memorizing in the course of studying and the memory of the Kidneys is responsible for the storing of data over the long term.

Tang Zong Hai says: “Zhi indicates Yi with a capacity for storing [data]”. 
In the second and clinically more important sense, the Kidneys house Will-Power which indicates drive, determination, single-mindedness in the pursuit of goals, enthusiasm and motivation.

Thus if the Kidneys are strong, the Will-Power is strong and the person will have drive, enthusiasm, motivation and determination in the pursuit of goals.

If the Kidneys are depleted and the Will-Power weakened, the person will lack drive and initiative, will be easily discouraged and swayed from his or her aims. A deficiency of the Kidneys and Will-Power is an important aspect of chronic depression.
Zhang Jie Bin says in the “Classic of Categories”: “When one thinks of something, decides on it and then acts on it, this is called Zhi”.

The implication of this passage is that thinking of something (an “idea”) derives from the Hun or the Yi depending on the kind of idea, making a decision depends on the Liver and Gall-Bladder (and the Hun), and acting on it depends on the drive provided by the Will-Power (Zhi) of the Kidneys.

1. Idea from Hun or Yi
2. Decision from Gall-Bladder
3. Acting on it from Zhi of Kidneys
The *Zhi* must be coordinated with the *Shen*, just as on a physiological level, the Kidneys and Heart must communicate.

The Zhi gives the Shen drive and determination in the pursuit of its goals, and the Shen directs and harnesses the Zhi.

If the Shen is clear in its aims and plans, and the Zhi is strong, then the person will have the drive to pursue goals. Thus it is necessary for both Zhi and Shen to be strong.
Lack of drive, timidity, fearful

Recklessness, taking risks
MEMORY AND ZHI

In modern psychology, “memory” is more than just the ability to store facts and information in our brain. It is actually an essential part in which our consciousness exists, works and manifests itself.

Even the thought “I live the present” requires short-term memory. Even the immediate present requires involves memory – what we know about the one present moment is basically what is in our working memory. Working memory allows us to know that the “here and now” is “here” and is happening “now”.

This insight underlies the notion, adopted by a number of cognitive scientists, that consciousness is the awareness of what is in working memory.

LeDoux says: “The self is in part made and maintained by memory and both implicit and explicit forms are involved.”

Thus, in a broader sense, Zhi is much more than “memory” in the sense of being able to remember past events. The Zhi contributes to our working memory and also to the long-term memory. Together with the Shen of the Heart and the Yi of the Spleen, this contributes to creating our consciousness and sense of self.
Therefore, memory can be stimulated by treating:

Heart (Shen): HE-7 Shenmen, HE-3 Shaohai, BL-15 Xinxu, BL-44 Shentang

Kidneys (Zhi): KI-3 Taixi, BL-23 Shenshu, BL-52 Zhishi

Spleen (Yī): SP-3 Taiabi, SP-20 Pishu, BL-49 Yīshe


However, remember that there are other factors at work, e.g. the Lungs affect memory by regulating the amount of Qi reaching the head. Thus LU-7 and LU-3 are important for poor memory due to Qi not reaching the head. The “Explanation of the Acupuncture Points” says that LU-3 can make Qi rise to treat forgetfulness, sadness and weeping due to Qi not rising to head.¹

Forgetfulness is an important indication for this point: this is forgetfulness due to clear Qi not rising to the head. According to the “Explanation of the Acupuncture Points”, this point treats forgetfulness by stimulating the ascending of Qi of both Lungs and Heart.²

2. Ibid., p. 27.
Another factor in memory is the Du Mai for three reasons. 
1) It flows through the Heart and therefore affects *Shen*. 
2) It originates from the Kidneys and therefore affects *Zhi*. 
3) It is the vessel through which the Kidneys’ sea of Marrow reaches the Brain.

The three main points are Du-11 Shendao, Du-20 Baihui and Du-24 Shenting.

Finally, it is important to remember that memory is affected by Full conditions, especially Phlegm and Blood stasis. This happens especially in the elderly.
OUTER BLADDER POINTS

**BL-52 Zhishi** Room of Will-Power: strengthens will power, memory, drive, initiative, determination

**BL-49 Yishe** Intellect’s Shelter: for Spleen’s pensiveness, brooding, obsessive thoughts

**BL-47 Hunmen** Door of Hun: strengthens Hun’s planning, intuition, inspiration, ideas, life’s dreams, sense of direction, projects, vision (Jing Xue Jie: *it stores the 5 Zang but they can be seen from the outside, Hun goes in and out* [through this point]). Can be used to stimulate or restrain the movement of the Hun.

**BL-44 Shentang** Hall of Shen: strengthens Shen, nourishes Heart, clear thinking, joy of life

**BL-42 Pohu** Window of Po: strengthens Po, sadness, grief.
THE CORPOREAL SOUL (PO)

The Po resides in the Lungs and is the physical counterpart of the Hun. The bai or bo (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.

魄 PO

白 BAI (or BO) (White)

鬼 GUI (Ghost, spirit of dead person)
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.
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 Mind (Shen of the Heart) in Chinese medicine.

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CORE CONSCIOUSNESS = PO

EXTENDED CONSCIOUSNESS = SHEN

HUN
1. **PO 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 foetus depends on the mother's Po, Blood and Jing which nourish it.
JING AND PO → Nourish → JING AND PO
The Po is related to Jing, hence the "Spiritual Axis" (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". The Po has a centripetal, separating, materializing movement which 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.
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 force of the Po combines with the centripetal forces of *gui*, constantly fragmenting eventually ending in 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.

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*GUI* (spirit)  
*GUI* (return)  
*KUAI* (pieces)
The souls of the dead that “return” after death.
Without the Po the Jing would be an inert, albeit precious, vital substance. The Po is the closest to the Jing and is the intermediary between it and the other vital substances of the body. In fact Zhang Jie Bin in the "Classic of Categories" says: "If the Jing is exhausted the Po declines; if Qi is scattered the Hun swims without a residence".

The Po represents life and the life force itself. Xu Da Chun said that if the Heart-Shen is cut off, the person is in a coma; it is only when the Po is cut off that death occurs.
Clinical Note:
The relationship between Po and Jing also explains the eruption of atopic eczema in babies. Eczema in babies is due to the surfacing of toxic Heat from the uterus: it is therefore closely linked with the Prenatal Jing of the baby. Atopy is also due to a deficiency of the Kidneys.

Since Jing is related to Po which manifests on the skin (with itching and pain), the toxic Heat from the uterus erupts on the baby's skin in the form of eczema.
2. INFANCY

The Po, being the closest to the Jing, is responsible for the first physiological processes after birth. Zhang Jie Bin says: "In the beginning of life ears, eyes and Heart perceive, hands and feet move and breathing starts: all this is due to the sharpness of the Po". This confirms idea that “in the first month of life a baby is all Po”.

In the first month of life especially, the baby is “all Po”.

The Po is responsible for touch and skin sensations and is nourished by the mother’s Po through breast-feeding and touching.
3. PO and SENSES

Po gives us the capacity of sensation, feeling, hearing and sight. When the Po is flourishing ears and eyes are keen and can register. The decline of hearing and sight in old people is due to a weakening of the Po (hence not only Kidneys and Liver).

Zhang Jie Bin says: “The Po can move and do things and [when it is active] pain and itching can be felt”. Po is responsible for sensations and itching and is therefore closely related to the skin through which such sensations are experienced. This explains the somatic expression on the skin of emotional tensions which affect the Po via the Shen and the connection between Po, Lungs and skin.

PO  →  LUNGS  →  SKIN
4. EMOTIONS

The Po is related to weeping and crying. Just as the Po makes us feel pain on a physical level, it also makes us cry and weep when subject to grief and sadness. Especially unexpressed grief constricts the Po and gives rise to accumulations. Lung-Qi stagnation affects the breasts and may give rise to the formation of lumps.

However, as the Po is the Corporeal Soul and is responsible for feelings, it is affected by all emotions.
ALL FEELINGS AFFECT PO

- ANGER
- SADNESS
- GRIEF
- WORRY
- FEAR
- PENSIVENESS

- LIVER
- LUNGS
- KIDNEY
- SPLEEN
EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS

Damasio makes a distinction between *feeling* and *emotion*. He says that feelings are inwardly-directed and private, while emotions are outwardly-directed and public. Damasio maintains that there are feelings we are conscious of and feelings that we are not. He says: “An organism may represent in mental and neural patterns the state that we conscious creatures call a feeling without ever knowing that the feeling is taking place.”

This is an interesting distinction and one that presents intriguing similarities with Chinese medicine. In fact, we could say that the feelings (conscious or not) are perceived by the *Po* while emotions involve the *Shen* and *Hun*.

Therefore not only all emotions affect the Po, but also all feelings do (conscious or unconscious). This is of huge consequence as it means that treatment of the Po and the Lungs is essential in all emotional problems, as important as that of the Shen of the Heart.

The above presents interesting connections with Chinese medicine as core consciousness is akin to the Po and, as we know, the Po modulates all emotions and feelings at a deep, autonomic and automatic level.

In other words, the *Shen* of the Heart is responsible for consciousness and it is the one that recognizes the emotions at a cognitive level them. For this reason, all emotions affect the Heart. However, not only all emotions but especially all feelings, in consciousness or not, affect the Po.

For this reason, treatment of the Lungs (especially with LU-7 Lieque and LU-3 Tianfu) is very important in emotional problems to soothe the Po and, through that, the Shen. With herbal medicine, I use especially the herb Bai He *Bulbus Lilii* to achieve the same effect.
Rise in blood pressure, sweating, quickened heart rate, muscle tension, changes in heat, surge in adrenalin, etc.

I “feel” angry, cognitive stage

ANGER

PO

SHEN
ANGER

Feeling
Sweaty palms
Increased heart rate
Raised blood pressure
Muscular contraction

Emotion
“I feel angry”
5. PHYSIOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES

Chapter 8 of the “Simple Questions” says: “The Heart is like the Emperor, in charge of the Spirit (Shen Ming). The Lungs are like a Prime Minister in charge of regulation”.

After saying that the Lungs are like a Prime Minister, the “Simple Questions” says that the Lungs are in charge of “regulation” (zhi 治). This means that, just as the Prime Minister regulates all administrative functions, the Lungs help to regulate all physiological activities in every organ and every part of the body, just as the Prime Minister’s office controls and directs the administrative functions of all government departments. This is a function of the Po.

Some modern doctors consider the Po the “basic regulatory activity of all physiological functions of the body”.

## COMPARISON OF HUN AND PO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>HUN</strong></th>
<th><strong>PO</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the &quot;coming and going of the Shen&quot;</td>
<td>the &quot;entering and exiting of the Jing&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pertains to the Shen</td>
<td>Pertains to the body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the Qi of the Shen</td>
<td>Is the Gui of the body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows the changes of Qi</td>
<td>Follows the changes of the body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is Yang and moves</td>
<td>Is Yin and is quiescent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates action with movement</td>
<td>Creates action without movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related to the Shen: when Qi gathers, the Hun gathers</td>
<td>Related to the Jing: when this gathers, the Po gathers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At birth the Hun joins with the Po</td>
<td>At birth the Po restrains the Hun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At death it swims away and returns to Heaven</td>
<td>At death it dissolves and returns to Earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is bright and it lights the Po</td>
<td>Is dark and it roots the Hun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is like a fire: the more things you add, the more it burns</td>
<td>Is like a mirror: it shines, but holds only a reflection (of the Hun)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Represents the movement of the Shen outwardly</td>
<td>Represents the movement of the Jing inwardly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is rooted in Blood and Yin</td>
<td>Is connected to Qi and Yang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disharmony causes problems with sleep at night</td>
<td>Disharmony causes problems in daytime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disharmony causes lack of direction and inspiration, confusion</td>
<td>Disharmony causes lack of vigour and vitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is the link with the universal Mind</td>
<td>It is purely individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corresponds to full moon</td>
<td>Corresponds to new moon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE EMOTIONS

The Chinese term for what we translate as “emotion” is “qing” 情 which is composed of the radical for “heart” and another component that is partly phonetic and partly conveying the idea of “green of growing plants”.

The word “emotion” itself is not a good term to indicate the Chinese view of the “emotional” causes of disease. The word “emotion” derives from Latin and it refers to “e-movere”, i.e. to “move out”: it is used to indicate any feeling of the mind as distinct from the cognitive or volitional states of consciousness.
The word “passion” would convey the idea of mental suffering better than “emotion” also because it implies the idea of something that is “suffered”, something that we are subject to. Indeed, feelings such as sadness, fear, anger become causes of disease when they take over our mind, when we no longer possess them but they “possess” us.

Indeed the Chinese expression most Chinese books use to describe the “stimulation” or “excitation” produced by the emotions is 兴奋 ji where “ji” contains the radical for “water” and means to “swash, surge” as a wave does, i.e. it denotes the surge of emotions like a wave that carries us away.

刺 Thorn, prick, irritate　激  swash, surge
Emotions are mental stimuli which influence our affective life. Under normal circumstances, they are not a cause of disease. Hardly any human being can avoid being angry, sad, aggrieved, worried, or afraid at some time in his or her life but those states will not lead to any disharmony. For example, the death of a relative provokes a very natural feeling of grief.

The emotions become causes of disease only when they are either long-lasting, or very intense. It is only when we are in a particular emotional state for a long time (months or years) that they become a cause of disease: for example, if a particular family or work situation makes us angry and frustrated in an on-going way, this will affect the Liver and cause an internal disharmony.

In a few cases, emotions can become a cause of disease in a very short time if they are intense enough: shock is the best example of such a situation.
One of the oldest mention of emotions is from Confucius’s “Book of Rites” (Li Ji) dating back to c. 500 BC. In this book, Confucius lists seven emotions: joy, anger, grief, fear, love, hatred and desire.¹

According to “Chinese Medicine Psychology”, the Daoist Lao Zi lists seven emotions that differ from those listed by Confucius: these are joy, anger, worry, sadness, love, hatred, desire.² Other texts mention six emotions: love, hatred, desire, anger, grief and joy.³

Interestingly, both these lists are close to the “7 Emotions” of Chinese medicine.

¹ Gu Yu Qi 2005 Chinese Medicine Psychology (Zhong Yi Xin Li Xue), China Medicine Science and Technology Publishing House, Beijing, p. 54.
² Ibid., p. 54.
³ Ibid., p. 54.
Joy
Anger
Grief
Fear
Love
Hatred
Desire

Joy
Anger
Worry
Sadness
Love
Hatred
Desire

Joy
Anger
Grief
Love
Hatred
Desire

OTHERS
The emotions taken into consideration in Chinese medicine have varied over the years. From a 5-Element perspective, the Yellow Emperor's Classic considered 5 emotions, each one affecting a specific Yin organ:

- **Anger** affecting the Liver
- **Joy** affecting the Heart
- **Pensiveness** affecting the Spleen
- **Worry** affecting the Lungs
- **Fear** affecting the Kidneys
Chapter 5 of the “Simple Questions” says: “Anger injures the Liver, sadness counteracts anger...joy injures the Heart, fear counteracts joy...pensiveness injures the Spleen, anger counteracts pensiveness...worry injures the Lungs, joy counteracts worry...fear injures the Kidneys, pensiveness counteracts fear.”

An interesting feature of this passage is that each emotion is said to counteract another along the Controlling Sequence (Ke Cycle) of the 5 Elements. For example, fear pertains to the Kidneys and Water, Water controls Fire (Heart), the emotion related to the Heart is joy, hence fear counteracts joy. This thinking presents some interesting ideas which are certainly true in practice, e.g. that “anger counteracts pensiveness”.
Anger

Joy

Sadness

Fear

Pensiveness

wood

water

metal

earth

fire

CHINESE MEDICINE ONLINE
However, these are not by any means the only emotions discussed in the Yellow Emperor's Classic. In other passages *sadness* and *shock* are added, giving 7 emotions:

- **Anger** affects the Liver
- **Joy** affects the Heart
- Sadness affects the Lungs and Heart
- Worry affects the Lungs and Spleen
- **Pensiveness** affects the Spleen
- **Fear** affects the Kidneys
- **Shock** affects the Heart
Chen Wu Ze (1174) lists the seven emotions that are usually discussed in modern books, i.e.

Joy
Anger
Pensiveness
Worry
Sadness
Fear
Shock

Zhang Jie Bin mentions 8 emotions in his “Classic of Categories”\(^1\).

Joy
Anger
Pensiveness
Worry
Sadness
Fright (kong 恐)
Fear (wei 畏)
Shock

A persistent emotional stimulus will affect an internal organ; vice versa, a disharmony of an internal organ will cause an emotional imbalance. (But the former is more common).

The “Spiritual Axis” in chapter 8 clearly illustrates the reciprocal relationship between the emotions and the Internal Organs. It says: “If Liver-Qi is deficient there is fear, if it is in excess there is anger ... if Heart-Qi is deficient there is sadness, if it is in excess there is manic behaviour.”
EFFECTS OF EMOTIONS ON INTERNAL ORGANS

Anger affects the Liver
Joy affects the Heart
Worry affects the Lungs and Spleen
Sadness affects the Lungs and Heart
Pensiveness affects the Spleen
Fear affects the Kidneys
Shock affects the Kidneys and Heart
The effect of each emotion on a relevant organ should not be interpreted too restrictively. There are passages from the Yellow Emperor's Classic which attribute the effect of emotions to organs other than the ones just mentioned.

Spiritual Axis, chapter 28

"Worry and pensiveness agitate the Heart"

Simple Questions, chapter 39

"Sadness agitates the Heart...".

Chapter 8 of the “Spiritual Axis” says: “Excess joy of the Lungs injures the Po and this may cause manic behaviour.”
With regard to anger, chapter 23 of the “Simple Questions” says: “When the Gall Bladder is diseased there is anger.”

Chapter 62 of the “Simple Questions” says: “When Blood rushes upwards and Qi downwards, the Heart is harassed and may cause anger.”

Chapter 8 of the “Spiritual Axis” says: “Anger affecting the Kidneys injures the Zhi.”

With regard to pensiveness, chapter 39 of the “Simple Questions” says: “Pensiveness makes the Heart [Qi] accumulate causing the Mind to stagnate: the Upright Qi settles and does not move and therefore Qi stagnates.”
With regard to worry, chapter 23 of the “Simple Questions” says: “When Qi rushes upwards it affects the Liver causing worry.”

Chapter 8 of the “Spiritual Axis” says: “Worry of the Spleen injures the Intellect.”

With regard to fear, chapter 4 of the “Spiritual Axis” says: “Worry and fear injure the Heart.”

Chapter 62 of the “Simple Questions” says: “When Blood [of the Liver] is deficient, there is fear.”

Chapter 19 of the “Simple Questions” says: “Fear makes Spleen-Qi stagnate.”

Chapter 23 of the “Simple Questions” says: “When Stomach-Qi rebels upwards there is vomiting and fear.”
The “Classic of Categories” says: “The five emotions interact with each other in causing disease; for example, excess joy affects the Heart but it may also affect the Lungs and injure the Po. Excess joy derives from the Heart but moves to the Lungs. Anger affects the Liver but also the Gall Bladder; Liver and Gall Bladder are interiorly-exteriorly related and when Liver-Qi is excessive it affects the Gall Bladder. [When there is anger] Blood rushes upwards and Qi downwards and this harasses the Heart. Sometimes anger affects the Kidneys and it injures the Zhi. Hence anger can affect the Liver, Gall Bladder, Heart and Kidneys. Pensiveness pertains to the Spleen but it also affects the Heart. The Heart is the Mother of the Spleen, when the Qi of the Mother does not move freely it affects the Child and therefore both Spleen and Heart are affected by pensiveness. Worry pertains to the Lungs but it also affects the Heart. Worry makes Qi rise and can affect the Liver; the Liver becomes overactive and it invades the Spleen. The Spleen is then affected by worry and this injures the Intellect [Yi]. Hence worry affects the Lungs, Heart, Liver and Spleen.”
Although each emotion affects a particular organ selectively, the relationship between a given emotion and a particular organ should not be interpreted too rigidly. Each emotion can and does affect more than one organ and often in a pattern that does not follow that of the Five Elements.

Summary of chapter 216 of the “Classic of Categories” (*Lei Jing*, 1624).

Thus, excess joy, anger, pensiveness, worry and fear affect the following organs:

**Joy:** Heart and Lungs

**Anger:** Liver, Gall Bladder, Heart and Kidneys

**Pensiveness:** Spleen and Heart

**Worry:** Lungs, Heart, Liver and Spleen

**Fear:** Kidneys, Heart, Liver, Spleen and Stomach.

The effect of an emotion also depends on other circumstances and on whether the emotion is manifested or repressed.

For example, anger which is expressed affects the Liver (causing Liver-Yang rising), but anger which is repressed also affects the Heart.

If one gets angry at meal-times, the anger will affect the Stomach and this will be manifested with a Wiry quality on the right Middle position of the pulse.
The effect of an emotion will also depend on the constitutional trait of a person. For example, if a person has a tendency to a constitutional weakness of the Heart, fear will affect the Heart rather than the Kidneys.
Chapter 28 of the “Spiritual Axis” also says that all emotions affect the Heart: “The Heart is the Ruler of the 5 Zang and 6 Fu…sadness, shock and worry agitate the Heart, when the Heart is agitated the 5 Zang and 6 Fu are shaken.”

The way that all emotions afflict the Heart also explains why a red tip of the tongue, indicating Heart-Heat, is so commonly seen even in emotional problems related to other organs.

Chinese writing clearly bears out the idea that all emotions affect the Heart since the characters for all seven emotions are based on the "heart" radical.
怒  ANGER
怒  ANGER
思  PENSIVENESS
愁  WORRY
愁  WORRY
恐  FEAR
恐  FEAR
惊  SHOCK
惊  SHOCK
悲  SADNESS
悲  SADNESS
忧  WORRY
忧  WORRY
怨  RESENTMENT
怨  RESENTMENT
心  HEART
喜  JOY
ALL EMOTIONS AFFECT THE HEART

All emotions, besides affecting the relevant organ directly, affect the Heart indirectly because the Heart houses the Mind. It alone, being responsible for consciousness and feeling, can recognize and feel the emotions.

Fei Bo Xiong (1800-1879) put it very clearly when he said: "The seven emotions injure the 5 Yin organs selectively, but they all affect the Heart. Joy injures the Heart...Anger injures the Liver, the Liver cannot recognize anger but the Heart can, hence it affects both Liver and Heart. Worry injures the Lungs, the Lungs cannot recognize it but the Heart can, hence it affects both Lungs and Heart. Pensiveness injures the Spleen, the Spleen cannot recognise it but the Heart can, hence it affects both Spleen and Heart."
Yu Chang in "Principles of Medical Practice" (1658) says: "Worry agitates the Heart and has repercussions on the Lungs; pensiveness agitates the Heart and has repercussions on the Spleen; anger agitates the Heart and has repercussions on the Liver; fear agitates the Heart and has repercussions on the Kidneys. Therefore all the five emotions [including joy] affect the Heart".
EMOTIONS AND THE BODY’S QI

The first effect of emotional stress is to affect the circulation of Qi. In each part of the body, Qi ascends or descends and enters or exits in the correct direction as appropriate. The correct ascending/descending and entering/exiting of Qi in the Qi Mechanism ensures the smooth flow of Qi.

- Anger makes Qi rise
- Joy slows Qi down
- Sadness dissolves Qi
- Worry knots Qi
- Pensiveness knots Qi
- Fear makes Qi descend
- Shock scatters Qi.
Simple Questions, chapter 39
"Anger makes Qi rise, joy slows down Qi, sadness dissolves Qi, fear makes Qi descend...shock scatters Qi...pensiveness knots Qi...“.

Dr Chen Yan says: "Joy scatters, anger arouses, worry makes Qi unsmooth, pensiveness knots, sadness makes Qi tight, fear sinks, shock moves".

Emotion → Qi
- Rising
- Descending
- Knotting
- Dissolving

→ Qi Stagnation
ANGER  - Makes Qi rise  
FEAR   - Makes Qi descend
SADNESS - Dissolve Qi  
GRIEF  - Slows Qi down 
JOY    - Scatters Qi  
SHOCK  - 
PENSIVENESS - Knots Qi
WORRY  - Knots Qi

- REBELLIOUS QI
- QI DEFICIENCY
- QI STAGNATION
EFFECTS OF EMOTIONS AS CAUSES OF DISEASE

The first effect of emotional stress on the body is to affect the proper circulation and direction of Qi. Qi is non-substantial and the Shen with its mental and emotional energies is the most non-material type of Qi. It is therefore natural that emotional stress affecting the Shen impairs the circulation of Qi and disrupts the Qi Mechanism first of all.

Although each emotion has a particular effect on Qi, all emotions have a tendency to cause some stagnation of Qi after some time. Even the emotions that deplete Qi such as sadness may have this effect because if Qi is deficient it cannot circulate properly and it therefore may tend to stagnate.
ANGER
- Makes Qi rise

JOY
- Slows Qi

SHOCK
- Scatters Qi

SADNESS
- Dissolves Qi

WORRY
- Knots Qi

PENSIVENESS
- Knots Qi

FEAR
- Makes Qi descend

QI STAGNATION

QI DEFICIENCY
Remember that it is quite possible (and frequent) that emotional stress may lead to both Qi deficiency and Qi stagnation.

For example, sadness depletes Qi in the chest; as Qi is depleted, it does not circulate well and it leads to Qi stagnation. In such cases of Qi stagnation (associated with Qi deficiency) we should not expect the pulse to be Wiry (as it is in case of full-blown Qi stagnation).
LUNG-QI STAGNATION AND QI DEFICIENCY

A feeling of lump in the throat, difficulty in swallowing, a feeling of oppression or distension of the chest, slight breathlessness, sighing, sadness, slight anxiety, depression, weak voice, weepy, tiredness, propensity to catching colds.

Tongue: slightly Red on the sides in the chest areas. Rest of tongue Pale.
Pulse: very slightly Tight on the right-Front position but Weak in general.

LU-7 Lieque, P-6 Neiguan, ST-40 Fenglong, Ren-15 Jiuwei, Ren-17 Shanzhong, ST-36 Zusanli.

Ban Xia Hou Po Tang *Pinellia-Magnolia Decoction*

*Three Treasures: Open the Heart*
HEART-QI STAGNATION

Palpitations, a feeling of distension or oppression of the chest, depression, a slight feeling of lump in the throat, slight shortness of breath, sighing, poor appetite, chest and upper epigastric distension, dislike of lying down, weak and cold limbs, pale complexion.
Tongue: slightly Pale-Purple on the sides in the chest area.
Pulse: Empty but very slightly Overflowing on the Left-Front position.

HE-5 Tongli, HE-7 Shenmen, P-6 Neiguan, Ren-15 Jiuwei, Ren-17 Shanzhong, LU-7 Lieque, ST-40 Fenglong, L.I.-4 Hegu.

Prescription
Mu Xiang Liu Qi Yin Aucklandia Flowing Qi Decoction
Ban Xia Hou Po Tang Pinellia-Magnolia Decoction

Three Treasures: Open the Heart
LUNG-QI STAGNATION

A feeling of lump in the throat, difficulty in swallowing, a feeling of oppression or distension of the chest, slight breathlessness, sighing, sadness, slight anxiety, depression.

Tongue: slightly Red on the sides in the chest areas.
Pulse: very slightly Tight on the right-Front position.

LU-7 Lieque, LU-3 Tianfu, ST-40 Fenglong, Ren-15 Jiuwei, P-6 Neiguan, Ren-17 Shanzhong.

Prescription
Ban Xia Hou Po Tang Pinellia-Magnolia Decoction

Three Treasures: Open the Heart
Qi stagnation usually leads to Heat, and most of the emotions can, over a long period of time, give rise to Heat or Fire. There is a saying in Chinese Medicine: “The five emotions can turn into Fire”. This is because most of the emotions can cause stagnation of Qi and when Qi is compressed in this way over a period of time it creates Heat.

When Qi stagnates, it may, in time, also lead to Blood stasis, especially in women. Blood stasis affects particularly the Heart, Liver and Uterus.
For this reason, when someone has suffered from emotional problems for a long time, there are often signs of Heat, which may be in the Liver, Heart, Lungs or Kidneys (in the case of this last organ, Empty-Heat). The tongue is red or dark red and dry, and usually has a red tip. A red tip of the tongue is a very common sign in practice which is always a reliable indicator that the patient is subject to some emotional stress.

With time, Heat may turn into Fire which is more intense, more drying and affects the Mind more. Fire, in turn, harasses the Mind causing agitation and anxiety.
BLOOD STASIS

When Qi stagnates, it may, in time, lead to Blood stasis, especially in women. Blood stasis affects particularly the Heart, Liver and Uterus.

Anger and guilt are particularly prone to lead to Blood stasis after Qi stagnation. However, other emotions such as sadness, grief and worry may also lead to Blood stasis in the chest after a period of Qi stagnation.

In women in particular, Qi stagnation in the breasts from sadness and grief may lead to Blood stasis and to breast lumps.
DAMPNESS or PHLEGM

Finally, the disruption of Qi in the Qi Mechanism caused by the emotions may, in time, also lead to the formation of Phlegm. As the proper movement of Qi in the right direction in the Qi Mechanism is essential to transform, transport and excrete fluids, the disruption in the movement of Qi may result in the formation of Dampness or Phlegm.

Phlegm, in turn, obstructs the Mind's orifices and becomes a further cause of emotional and mental disturbance.
When compressed, Qi generates Heat.

Heat condenses fluids.

Phlegm and Blood stasis aggravate each other.

Fire dries up Yin.

Yin Xu leads to Empty Heat.

The emotions:

- **Qi Stagnation**
- **Qi Deficiency**
- **Blood Stasis**
- **Blood Xu**
- **Heat**
- **Fire**
- **Yin Deficiency**
- **Empty Heat**
FIVE POINTS TO REMEMBER:

1) Do not interpret relationship between an organ and an emotion too rigidly (e.g. sadness may affect the Liver)

2) Do not interpret relationship between an emotion and its effect on Qi too rigidly (e.g. fear may make Qi ascend)

3) All emotions affect the Heart

4) Other organs besides the Liver suffer from Qi stagnation from emotional stress (e.g. Heart and Lungs)

5) All emotions affects Po and therefore Lungs.
ANGER

The term “anger” should be interpreted broadly to include several other emotional states, such as resentment, repressed anger, feeling aggrieved, frustration, irritation, rage, indignation, animosity, or bitterness.

Anger makes Qi rise and many of the symptoms and signs will manifest in the head and neck, such as headaches, tinnitus, dizziness, red blotches on the front part of the neck, a red face, thirst, a bitter taste, and a Red tongue with red sides. Wiry pulse.
Spiritual Axis, chapter 8
“Anger causes loss of self-control.”

Simple Questions, chapter 39
“Anger makes Qi rise and causes vomiting of blood and diarrhea”

Simple Questions, chapter 3
“Severe anger severs body and Qi, Blood stagnates in the upper part and the person may suffer a syncope.”
The effect of anger on the Liver depends on the person's reaction to the emotional stimulus. If the anger is bottled up it will cause stagnation of Liver-Qi, whereas if it is expressed it will cause Liver-Yang rising or Liver-Fire blazing.

If the person also suffers from some Kidney-Yin deficiency (perhaps from overwork), then he or she will develop Liver-Yang rising.

If, on the other hand, the person has a tendency to Heat (perhaps from excessive consumption of hot foods), then he or she will tend to develop Liver-Fire blazing.
ANGER

- Repressed → LIVER-QI STAGNATION
- Manifested → LIVER-YANG RISING
- Kidney-Yin Xu or Liver-Blood Xu → LIVER-YANG RISING
- Tendency to Heat → LIVER-FIRE
- Heart-crack → HEART-QI STAGNATION
In some cases anger can affect organs other than the Liver, especially the **Stomach**. This can be due to stagnant Liver-Qi invading the Stomach. Such a condition is more likely to occur if one gets angry at meal-times, which may happen if family meals become occasions for regular rows (arguments). It also happens when there is a pre-existing weakness of the Stomach, in which case the anger may affect only the Stomach without even affecting the Liver.

If one regularly gets angry an hour or two after meals, then the anger will affect the **Intestines** rather than the Stomach. This happens, for example, when one goes straight back to a stressful and frustrating job after lunch. In this case, stagnant Liver-Qi invades the Intestines and causes abdominal pain, distension and alternation of constipation with diarrhea.
Anger

Meal time

2 hours after meal

→ Qi stagnation in Stomach

→ Qi stagnation in Intestines
   (irritable bowel)
DISGUISED ANGER OR FALSE ANGER

In some cases anger may be hidden and disguise itself such as:

Depression (looks like depression/sadness, but...) → Anger

In other cases the opposite may happen, i.e. the person manifests with anger but that hides other emotions:

Guilt (hidden guilt comes out as...) → Anger

Fear, dislike of being controlled, inferiority complex → Anger
ANGER

- Qi Rising
  - Liver-Fire
  - Liver-Yang Rising
  - Liver-Qi Stagnation
  - Heart-Qi Stagnation
  - Stomach-Qi Stagnation
  - Intestine-Qi Stagnation

- Qi Stagnation
JOY (OVERSTIMULATION)

A normal state of joy is obviously not in itself a cause of disease; it is a beneficial mental state which favours a smooth functioning of the internal organs and their mental faculties.

Simple Questions, chapter 39
“Joy makes the Shen peaceful and relaxed, it benefits the Ying and Wei Qi and it makes Qi relax and slow down”

Simple Questions, chapter 2
“The Heart ... controls joy, joy injures the Heart, fear counteracts joy”.
What is meant by “joy” as a cause of disease is obviously not a state of healthy contentment but one of excessive excitement and stimulation which can injure the Heart. This happens to people who live in a state of continuous mental stimulation (however pleasurable) or excessive excitement. Another meaning of “joy” is sudden joy.

**Therefore, four meanings:**
- Excessive stimulation
- Excessive craving
- Sudden joy
- Overexcitement
EXCESSIVE STIMULATION or OVEREXCITMENT

Excessive stimulation consists in excessive stimulation of our senses. Modern life presents with many examples of overstimulation. For example:

- Stimulation by alcohol
- Stimulation by recreational drugs
- For those who live in big cities, excessive stimulation from entertainment, shopping, multi-cultural cuisine
- In children, the overexcitement and overstimulation of video games, TV, videos, etc.
EXCESSIVE CRAVING

Excessive craving is considered as a cause of disease by the three main philosophies of China, i.e. Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism. What does craving mean in a modern context?

I think it means the unbridled consumerism that is typical of modern, industrialized societies (both Western and Asian) that is also fuelled by advertising. More and more we are made to feel that we have to work harder and harder to obtain material goods.
Joy may also be marked out as a cause of disease when it is sudden; this happens, for example, on hearing good news unexpectedly. In this situation, “joy” is akin to shock (although the former makes the heart larger and the latter smaller).
“Medical Collection from Four Families from Meng He”
“Joy injures the Heart ... [it causes] Yang Qi to float and the blood vessels to become too open and dilated ...”

In these cases of sudden joy and excitement the Heart dilates and slows down and the pulse becomes Slow and slightly Overflowing but Empty.

One can understand the effect of sudden joy further if one thinks of situations when a migraine attack is precipitated by the excitement of suddenly hearing good news.

Another example of joy as a cause of disease is that of sudden laughter triggering a heart attack; this example also confirms the relationship existing between the Heart and laughter.

One can also understand joy as a cause of disease by observing children: in fact, in children, joy and over-excitement often end in tears.
Joy, in the broad sense indicated above, makes the Heart larger. This leads to excessive stimulation of the Heart, which, in time, may lead to Heart-related symptoms and signs. These may deviate somewhat from the classical Heart patterns.

The main manifestations would be palpitations, over-excitability, insomnia, restlessness, talking a lot and a red tip of the tongue. The pulse would typically be slow, slightly Overflowing but Empty on the left Front position.
SADNESS AND GRIEF

Sadness includes the emotion of regret, as when someone regrets a certain action or decision in the past and the Mind is constantly turned towards that time. Sadness and grief affect the Lungs and Heart.

Simple Questions
“Sadness makes the Heart cramped and agitated; this pushes towards the lungs' lobes, the Upper Burner becomes obstructed, Ying and Wei Qi cannot circulate freely, Heat accumulates and dissolves Qi.”

According to this passage then, sadness primarily affects the Heart and the Lungs suffer in consequence since they are both situated in the Upper Burner. Therefore; sadness affects the Lungs via the Heart.
The Lungs govern Qi and sadness and grief deplete Qi. This is often manifested on the pulse as a Weak quality on both left and right Front positions (Heart and Lungs). In particular, the pulse on both Front positions is Short and has no wave, i.e. it does not flow smoothly towards the thumb.

SADNESS \(\rightarrow\) LU-QI

Both cun positions Weak and Short
a weak voice
tiredness
pale complexion
slight breathlessness
weeping
and a slight feeling of oppression in the chest

In women, deficiency of Lung-Qi from sadness or grief often leads to Blood deficiency and sometimes amenorrhoea.

Although sadness and grief deplete Qi and therefore lead to deficiency of Qi, they may also, after some time, lead to stagnation of Qi, because the deficient Lung- and Heart-Qi fail to circulate properly in the chest.
Spiritual Axis, chapter 8

“When sadness affects the Liver it injures the Hun; this causes mental confusion ... the Yin is damaged, the tendons contract and there is hypochondrial discomfort”.

Although sadness is not the Liver’s emotion, sadness can naturally affect the Hun and therefore Liver-Blood. Sadness has a depleting effect on Qi and it therefore, in some cases, depletes Liver-Blood leading to mental confusion, depression, lack of a sense of direction in life and inability to plan one's life.

Dr Shen considers that grief which is un-expressed and borne without tears affects the Kidneys. When grief is held in without weeping, the fluids cannot come out (in the form of tears) and they upset the fluid metabolism within the Kidneys. This only happens after many years.
I personally find that sadness and grief are very common and important causes of disease in Western patients, much more than anger. I personally feel that anger as an emotional cause of disease is overemphasized in Chinese books.

What are sadness and grief caused by in Western patients? Apart from the obvious causes due to bereavement, very many Western patients of all ages suffer from sadness and grief deriving from the break-up of relationships and loss.

In other words, sadness and grief are primarily about loss, whether it be the loss of a dear one from death or the loss of a partner through separation.
It is very important to remember that Qi stagnation affects not only the Liver but, especially in emotional problems, also the Heart and Lungs. Sadness, grief and worry are common causes of Qi stagnation affecting the Lungs and Heart.

For example, in women, Lung-Qi stagnation affects the chest and breasts and, in the long run, it can give rise to breast lumps (benign or malignant). In my experience, in Western women, this is a more common cause of breast lumps than Liver-Qi stagnation.
Dr Xia Shao Nong thinks that breast lumps and breast cancer are due to sadness and grief deriving from widowhood, breaking of relationships, divorce, death of one’s children, and bereavement at a young age from the death of one’s spouse.

These events, especially if they occur suddenly, upset the Mind and lead to Qi stagnation and Qi depletion. It is interesting to note that all the events mentioned by Dr Xia involve separation and loss.

CLINICAL NOTE
The points I use for sadness and grief are LU-7 Lieque, LU-3 Tianfu, Du-24 Shenting, Ren-15 Jiuwei, HE-7 Shenmen, BL-13 Feishu, Du-12 Shenzhu.
Dissolves Qi

SADNESS

Qi stagnation

Heart-Qi Xu
Lung-Qi Xu
Liver-Blood Xu
WORRY

Worry is one of the most common emotional causes of disease in our society. The extremely rapid and radical social changes that have occurred in Western societies in the past decades have created a climate of such insecurity in all spheres of life that hardly anybody can escape worry.

Of course, there are also people who, because of a pre-existing disharmony of the internal organs, are very prone to worry, even about very minor incidents in life; they appear to be very tense and worry a lot.

On close interrogation about their work and family life, often nothing of note emerges. They simply worry excessively about trivial everyday activities and they tend to do everything in a hurry and be pressed for time. This may be due to a constitutional weakness of the Spleen, Heart, or Lungs or a combination of these.
Chen Wu Ze (1174) says: “Worry injures the Lungs and makes Qi accumulate.”

Chapter 8 of the “Spiritual Axis” confirms that worry knots Qi: “Worry causes obstruction of Qi so that Qi stagnates.”

Worry knots Qi, which means that it causes stagnation of Qi, and it affects both Lungs and Spleen: the Lungs because when one is worried breathing is shallow, and the Spleen because this organ is responsible for thinking and ideas.

Spiritual Axis, chapter 8

“In the case of the Spleen, excessive worry injures the Yi.”

“Worry causes obstruction of Qi so that Qi stagnates.”

In a few cases, worry may also affect the Liver directly, in my experience causing either Liver-Qi stagnation or Liver-Yang rising. In both cases, when worry affects the Liver, it affects the shoulder muscles causing a pronounced stiffness and ache of the trapezius muscles.
If worry affects the Lungs it will cause an uncomfortable feeling of the chest, slight breathlessness, tensing of the shoulders, sometimes a dry cough and a pale complexion.

The right Front pulse position (of the Lungs) may feel slightly Tight, indicating the knotting action of worry on Qi.
If worry affects the Spleen it may cause poor appetite, a slight epigastric discomfort, some abdominal pain and distension, tiredness and a pale complexion.

The right Middle pulse position (Spleen) will feel slightly Tight but Weak.

If worry affects the Stomach as well (which happens if one worries at meal times), the right Middle pulse may be Weak-Floating.
Finally, like all emotions, worry affects the Heart causing stagnation of Heart-Qi. This will cause palpitations, a slight feeling of tightness of the chest and insomnia.
Worry → Knots Qi

- Lungs
  - Lung-Qi Xu
  - Lung-Qi stagnation
- Heart
  - Heart-Qi Xu
  - Heart-Qi stagnation
- Spleen
  - Spleen-Qi Xu
  - Spleen-Qi stagnation
- Liver
  - Liver-Qi stagnation
  - Liver-Yang rising
PENSIVENESS

Pensiveness is very similar to worry in its character and effect. It consists in brooding, constantly thinking about certain events or people (even though not worrying), nostalgic hankering after the past. In extreme cases, pensiveness leads to obsessive thoughts.

In a different sense, pensiveness also includes excessive mental work in the process of one's work or study.

Pensiveness affects the Spleen and, like worry, it knots Qi.
Simple Questions, chapter 39

“Pensiveness makes the Heart [Qi] accumulate, and causes the Shen to converge: the Zheng Qi settles and does not move and therefore Qi stagnates.”

It will therefore cause similar symptoms as outlined above, i.e. poor appetite, a slight epigastric discomfort, some abdominal pain and distension, tiredness and a pale complexion.

The right Middle pulse position (Spleen) will feel slightly Tight but Weak.

Chen Wu Ze (1174) says: “Pensiveness injures the Spleen, Qi stagnates and does not move properly, there is accumulation in the Middle Burner, food cannot be digested, there is abdominal distension and contraction of the limbs. Pensiveness causes Qi stagnation.”

Some modern Chinese doctors think that “pensiveness” is an umbrella term that includes several different emotions. The modern book “Chinese Medicine Psychology” says that “pensiveness” includes pondering, sadness and resentment.

The inclusion of “resentment” under the umbrella of pensiveness” is interesting as I would associate resentment more with anger. However, it does have elements of both anger and “pensiveness” (intended in the sense of brooding).

The same doctor thinks that “pensiveness” replaced “sadness” in the list of emotions. In fact, chapter 5 of the “Simple Questions” lists the five emotions as joy, anger, sadness, worry and fear while later they became joy, anger, pensiveness, worry and fear.
FEAR

Fear includes both a chronic state of fear and anxiety and a sudden fright. Fear depletes Kidney-Qi and it makes Qi descend. The "Simple Questions" in chapter 39 says: "Fear depletes the Jing, it blocks the Upper Burner, which makes Qi descend to the Lower Burner".

This statement from the “Simple Questions” is interesting in that it says that fear blocks the Upper Burner (resulting in Qi of the Lower Burner to descend): this would imply that fear does not simply “make Qi descend” (as we usually say) but that it also causes some Qi stagnation in the Upper Burner.
Examples of Qi descending are nocturnal enuresis in children and incontinence of urine or diarrhoea in adults following a sudden fright.

Nocturnal enuresis is a common problem in children which is often caused by fear or a feeling of insecurity in the child due to some family situation.

Situations of chronic anxiety and fear will have different effects on Qi depending on the state of the Heart.

**Clinical Note:**
Fear makes Qi descend by *blocking* the Upper Burner. Treatment of fear, therefore, should not consist simply in lifting Qi, e.g. with Du-20 Baihui, but also in unblocking Qi in the Upper Burner with HE-5 Tongli, LU-7 Lieque, P-6 Neiguan and ST-40 Fenglong.
In adults, however, fear and chronic anxiety more often cause Qi to rise to the Upper Burner and head. This rise of Qi may take the form of Heat or Empty Heat (if there is deficiency of Kidney-Yin), with a feeling of heat in the face, night sweating, palpitations and a dry mouth and throat.

There are other causes of fear, not related to the Kidneys. Liver-Blood deficiency and a Gall-Bladder deficiency can also make the person fearful.

**Clinical Note:** The points I use for fright (with descending Qi) are KI-3 Taixi, KI-4 Dazhong, Du-20 Baihui, HE-7 Shenmen.

**Clinical Note:** The points I use for chronic fear (with ascending Qi) are KI-3 Taixi, KI-9 Zhubin, HE-5 Tongli, HE-7 Shenmen, Ren-15 Jiuwei, Ren-4 Guanyuan.
Fright does cause Qi to descend, but a chronic state of anxiety makes Qi rise. Some psychologists make a distinction between fear and anxiety which clarifies their different effect on Qi.

Öhman says: “Fear differs from anxiety primarily in having an identifiable eliciting stimulus. Anxiety is “pre-stimulus” whereas fear is ‘post-stimulus’.”¹

Epstein thinks that fear is related to coping behaviour, particularly escape and avoidance. However, when coping attempts fail, fear is turned into anxiety. Fear is therefore an avoidance motive; anxiety is unresolved fear or a state of undirected arousal following the perception of threat.²

¹ Handbook of Emotions, p. 574.
² Ibid., p. 574.
Heart Xu cannot descend to Kidneys

Yuan Qi Xu cannot root Qi and receive Heart-Qi

Yang and Yin cannot communicate

Fullness above

Deficiency below
“In Fear and Palpitations [Jing Ji 惊 悸], the Heart, Spleen, Liver and Kidneys are involved. Yang is connected to Yin and the Heart to the Kidneys. [In this disease] the upper part of the body is restless because it cannot link with the lower part; Heart-Qi is deficient and cannot connect with the Jing [of the Kidneys].

In Fear and Palpitations the main treatment principles are to nourish the Heart and the Shen, supplement the Liver and Gall-Bladder and tonify the Yuan Qi.”

Zhang Jing Yue “Complete Book of Jing Yue” (Jing Yue Quan Shu, 1624)

The above statement from Zhang Jing Yue is interesting because they confirms my experience according to which fear often makes Qi rise (rather than descend). In fact, in the statement above, Zhang Jing Yue says that in “Fear and Palpitations”, there is restlessness above and a disconnection between the Heart and Kidneys with Qi rising.
“In Panic Throbbing [Zheng Chong怔忡] the heart is shaking in the chest, the patient feels fear and anxiety. There is Yin deficiency and exhaustion; there is Yin deficiency below so that the Zong Qi has no root and Qi cannot return to its origin. For this reason, there is shaking [or throbbing] of the chest above and also throbbing on the sides of the umbilicus.”

Zhang Jing Yue “Complete Book of Jing Yue” (Jing Yue Quan Shu, 1624):
FEAR

Qi rising → Heart

Qi descending → Kidneys
SHOCK

Mental shock “suspends” Qi and affects the Heart. It causes a sudden depletion of Heart-Qi, makes the Heart smaller and may lead to palpitations, breathlessness and insomnia.

It is often reflected in the pulse with a so-called "Moving“ [Dong 动] quality, i.e. a pulse that is short, slippery, shaped like a bean, rapid and gives the impression of vibrating as it pulsates.
Simple Questions, chapter 39

“Shock affects the Heart depriving it of residence, the Shen has no shelter and cannot rest, so that Qi becomes chaotic”

Shock also "closes" the Heart or makes the Heart smaller. This can be observed in a bluish tinge on the forehead and a Heart pulse which is Tight and Fine (apart from the whole pulse having the Moving quality).
Guilt is a pervasive emotion in Western patients. It is simply missing from Chinese medicine books and it could be argued that it simply does not exist in the Chinese psyche and soul. It could be argued that guilt is intrinsically related to the Christian or Judeo-Christian religions and especially the Christian religion with its concept of “original sin”.

The concept of guilt is absent in Confucius writings and he did not even believe in punishment.
Guilt is:

• Feeling of responsibility for negative circumstances that have befallen oneself or others.

• Feeling of regret for real or imagined misdeeds, both past and present.

• Sense of remorse for thoughts, feelings, or attitudes that were or are negative, uncomplimentary, or non-accepting concerning oneself or others.

• Feeling of obligation for not pleasing, not helping, or not placating another.

• Feeling of loss and shame for not having done or said something to someone who is no longer available (or for having done and said).

• Accepting responsibility for someone else's misfortune or problem because it bothers one to see that person suffer.
A feeling of guilt may be due to the transgression of social or religious taboos or from having done something “wrong” which is later regretted. However, a feeling of guilt may also be innate and not related to any specific action. This latter feeling is the most destructive one.

Guilt forms the core of Judeo-Christian psychology and theology. Guilt formed also an important cornerstone of Freud's theories.

Must distinguish the subjective sense of guilt from its objective counterparts. For example, a person may be found guilty in a court of law, without feeling guilty; in a religious context, a person may deem himself to be guilty in front of God but still not feel guilty; someone may be guilty of doing something reprehensible, but still not feel guilty.
It is therefore the feeling of guilt that is all-important. Guilt is self-reproach for some actual misdeeds of an in-born feeling of guilt totally disconnected from any misdeeds. Guilt includes a sense of inadequacy and despair not found in shame. Guilt does not require any particular offence, as in the doctrine of Original Sin. In guilt a person is one's own judge and a more ruthless and less reasonable judge than any real judge.

Guilt is inner-directed and it object is the self. Guilt is based on a moral criteria of having broken a law of morality. The mythology of guilt is the doctrine of the Original Sin. The authority providing the criteria is absolute and unquestionable.

Guilt is a “dark” emotion with no redemption; it is a much “darker” emotion than shame.
EFFECTS OF GUILT

Guilt can have different effects in different people. First of all, it may lead to Qi stagnation: it affects any organ and especially the Lungs, Heart, Liver and Kidneys. Due to its “dark”, “stagnating” character, it causes Blood stasis easily and quickly. This Blood stasis may be in any part of the body and any organ but particularly in the Lungs, Heart, Spleen and Liver.

Under certain conditions, guilt may also cause sinking of Qi and affects the Kidneys causing some urinary problems or menstrual problems from sinking of Qi. The tongue has a red tip of the tongue, possibly purple tongue body. The pulse is Deep, Weak on the Kidney positions, possibly slightly Overflowing on the Heart position and Choppy, without wave. Or also Firm.
Qi stagnation → Lungs, Heart, Liver, Kidneys → Blood Stasis

Qi sinking → Kidneys
SHAME

Shame has *gui* in character with heart on left, hence a demon in the heart.

Kui 愧 Can Kui 慚 愧 (女鬼) Chi (恥) (恥)

Shame is a common emotion in Western patients. It may be caused by a feeling of shame about one's behaviour but, more commonly, it is an in-born feeling of shame due to one's upbringing. It is a feeling of worthlessness, absence of a feeling of self-worth. It is, in a way, the opposite emotion to anger and pride.

Anger is outer-directed (“I am angry at someone”) while shame is inner-directed. It is self-accusation, a feeling that one has to *hide* is an important aspect of shame. One feels *judged* all the time.
As a cause of disease, we consider the shame that is overwhelming, that is due to one's upbringing and that is not related to one's actions or to have done anything wrong. A person suffering from this shame will always feel as if they had done something wrong and will want to hide.

Shame is inner-directed, the object of shame are one's own actions, it is dictated by moral criteria and has a negative evaluation. One is responsible and blameworthy. As in anger, shame involves a courtroom mythology of law and judgement, accusation and punishment. In shame, unlike anger, one casts oneself in the uncomfortable position of defendant rather than judge, but a defendant who has openly admitted to his crime and is willing to accept punishment for it.
It is often said that Western societies are “guilt-based” and Eastern ones “shame-based”, so it is useful to explore the differences between shame and guilt. Shame is related more to one's place in society, what people think of us, the feeling that one has to hide because one has done something wrong, something that society frowns upon, something “dirty”.

In other words, as long as we do not do anything that society disapproves of or, most importantly, we are not seen, not found out to be doing something “wrong”, we do not feel shame. By contrast, in such situations we would feel guilty even if nobody sees us doing something “wrong”.
It is certainly true that Eastern societies are shame-based probably due to the strong Confucian influence. As the Confucian ethics is all about social relationships, and about one's “place” in society and *conforming* to strict rules of conduct and social hierarchy, it is natural that shame ensues from contravening the established rules of society.

Thus, people are worried about not being *seen* to be doing anything that society would frown upon. That is why shame can sometimes produce extreme results as when Japanese businessmen commit suicide when they are disgraced socially.
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SHAME AND GUILT

What is paramount in shame, is how one appears to the other members of the community, not how one feels inside. Guilt, is a “darker” emotion, more inner-directed, an emotion from which there is no escape, the judgement is there, whether anyone sees us or not.

The big difference between guilt and shame is that guilt has no redemption, it “eats” one inside for ever; shame has redemption and repair.

With shame, we have a feeling of being seen doing something wrong (by implication, if we are not seen, we do not feel shame). With guilt, we hear an inner voice condemning us and we cannot escape it.
SHAME

• The criticism invokes an ideal which we have failed to live up to
• The criticism is based less on identifiable harm or damage that we are supposed to have caused, though not necessarily intentionally
• The criticism can be met and turned only by an attempt on our part to change how we are
• Shame will tend to generate the desire to change
• What shame calls for is that others should forget what we have become
• The criticism is experienced as being conveyed by a look: feel eyes of disapproval upon us

GUILT

• The criticism invokes a set of injunctions which we have transgressed
• The criticism is based more on identifiable harm or damage that we are supposed to have caused, though not necessarily intentionally
• The criticism can be turned only by an attempt to compensate for what we have done
• Guilt will tend to generate the desire to repair
• What guilt calls for is that others should forgive what we have done
• The criticism is experienced as being conveyed in words: we hear the voice of disapproval

Guilt is law-oriented in that it signals a personal acknowledgement that one has committed a breach of established conduct.

Guilt tends to be individual as a condition of one’s relationship to law.

Shame is ritual-oriented in that it describes a consciousness of how one is perceived by others.

Shame tends to be communal as a condition of one’s relationship to others.
The term “guilt” (zui) occurs very infrequently in the Analects of Confucius. By contrast, shame (chi 耻) is mentioned in many passages. It is always used with reference to a lapse of responsibility, often accompanied by insult, estrangement and humiliation at the hands of others.

The word “guilt” (zui) occurs infrequently in the Analects (in contrast to shame “chi”) and when it does, it is mostly in a legal sense and it refers to “guilt” rather than a “feeling of guilt”.

For example:
“Confucius said that Kong Ye Chang could be allowed to marry his daughter. Even though Kong Ye Chang had spent some time in jail, it was not because of any guilt (zui) on his part. Confucius gave his daughter to him as wife.”
Shame is very ingrained in Confucianist ethics. It is even something that is considered a beneficial “tool” to keep people in line. Consider this passage from the Analects of Confucius:

“The Master said: ‘Lead the people with administrative injunctions [政] and keep them orderly with penal law, and they will avoid punishments but will be without a sense of shame. Lead them with morality [德] and keep them orderly through observing ritual propriety [礼] and they will develop a sense of shame; and, moreover, will order themselves’”.

In other words, laws and punishments may keep social order, but even better is to lead by example so that people will regulate themselves due to the sense of shame from not following the social order.
EFFECTS OF SHAME

Shame is inner-directed and it therefore make Qi stagnate but also possibly sink. Indeed, sinking of Qi is a very common result of shame; Dampness also frequently accompanies shame. When one feels shame, one feels “dirty” and “dirty” is characteristic of Dampness. In my experience, shame often manifests with sinking of Qi and Dampness: for example, prolapses, very chronic and stubborn vaginal discharge, excessive menstrual bleeding from sinking of Spleen- and Kidney-Qi, slight urinary incontinence. Most of all Dampness.
THE PERICARDIUM

The “Su Wen” in chapter 8 says: “The Pericardium is the ambassador and from it derive joy and happiness.” Like the Heart, the Pericardium houses the Shen and it therefore influences our mental-emotional state deeply.

For example, a deficiency of Blood will affect the Pericardium as well as the Heart, making the person depressed and slightly anxious.

Heat in the Blood will agitate the Pericardium and make the person agitated and restless.

Phlegm obstructing the Pericardium will also obstruct the Shen causing mental confusion.
The Pericardium function on the mental-emotional plane is the psychic equivalent of the Pericardium’s moving of Qi and Blood of the Heart and Lungs in the chest: just as it does that on a physical level, on a mental-emotional level, the Pericardium is responsible for “movement” towards others, i.e. in relationships.

Given that the Pericardium is related to the Liver within the Jue Yin channels, this “movement” is also related to the “movement” of the Hun from the self towards others in social, relationships and familial interactions. For this reason, on a mental-emotional level, the Pericardium is particularly responsible for a healthy interaction with other people in social, love and family relationships.

Physical level, move Qi in chest
Mental level, move Hun in relationships
Moreover, the “moving” nature of the Pericardium is also enhanced by its relationship with the Triple Burner as a channel (within the “Minister Fire” channels).

As the Triple Burner is responsible for the free flow of Qi (together with the Liver), the Pericardium’s relationship with the Triple Burner accounts for its action in moving Qi and Blood and its mental-emotional function of “movement” towards others.
Pericardium moves Qi of Heart and Lungs in chest

- Physical level
- Mental-emotional level (relationships)

Ren-17 Shanzhong
Ren-15 Jiuwei
Ren-14 Juque
(Combine with Du-24)
• The Pericardium houses the Shen (with the Heart)

• Blood deficiency of the Pericardium will cause depression and slight anxiety

• Blood Heat of the Pericardium will cause anxiety, insomnia and agitation

• Phlegm in the Pericardium will cause mental confusion and, in severe cases, mental illness

• The Pericardium affects emotional problems from relationship problems

**Clinical Note:**
• P-6 Neiguan lifts mood and treats depression
• P-7 Daling calms the Shen and settles anxiety
• P-5 Jianshi resolves Phlegm from the Pericardium to treat mental confusion
THE TRIPLE BURNER IN MENTAL -EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

The Triple Burner as the “hinge”

The Triple Burner belongs to the Shao Yang channels which are the “hinge” between the Tai Yang (opening onto the Exterior) and Yang Ming channels (opening onto the Interior).

On a psychological level, being the “hinge” means that these channels are “mediators” in the sense that they can affect a person's capacity to relate to other people and the external world. The use of Triple Burner’s points is therefore important in emotional problems deriving from relationships.
The Triple Burner and Pericardium channels affect the mental-emotional state also because the Minister Fire rises towards these two channels; therefore when the Minister Fire is aroused by emotional problems and it rises towards the Pericardium and Triple Burner channels, points of these channels can be used to clear Heat and calm the Mind.

Finally, the Pericardium and Triple Burner channels are symmetrical in so far as the former is the opening point of the Yin Wei Mai and the latter of the Yang Wei Mai: this is another reason why these two channels connect the 3 Yin and 3 Yang respectively.
Hinge of Yang

YANG WEI MAI → TB

MINISTER FIRE

Hinge of Yin

P → YIN WEI MAI
THE GALL-BLADDER AND THE EMOTIONS

CONTROLS DECISIVENESS
While the Liver is said to control the ability of planning one’s life, the Gall Bladder controls the capacity to make decisions. The two functions have to be harmonized so that we can plan and act accordingly.

Chapter 8 of the “Simple Questions” says: “The Gall Bladder is like an impartial judge from whom decisiveness emanates.”¹

Chapter 9 of the “Simple Questions” lists the functions of all the organs (omitting the Pericardium) and, at the end, it says: “All the 11 organs depend on the decision-making of the Gall Bladder.”²

2. Ibid., p. 69.
This is an interesting statement because it implies not only that the Gall Bladder controls our capacity to take decisions but also that all the other internal organs depend on the Gall Bladder's “decision making”: in other words, the Gall Bladder is the organ that “motivates” all others and Gall Bladder points can be used for this purpose, especially GB-40 Qiuxu.
The Gall Bladder is responsible for decisiveness, for the capacity of taking decisions.

Besides controlling decision-making, the Gall Bladder is also said to give an individual courage and initiative. For this reason, in Chinese, there are several expressions such as “big gall bladder” meaning “courageous” and “small gall bladder” meaning “timid or fearful”.

This is an important function of the Gall Bladder on a psychological level. It controls the spirit of initiative and the courage to take decisions and make changes. Although the Kidneys control the “drive”, will power, enthusiasm and vitality, the Gall Bladder gives us the capacity to turn this drive and vitality into positive and decisive action. Thus a deficient Gall Bladder will cause indecision, timidity and the affected person will be easily discouraged at the slightest adversity.
The Gall Bladder provides the courage for the *Shen* to carry out decisions. This reflects the Mother-Child relationship existing between Gall Bladder and Heart according to the 5 Elements. In cases of weak Mind from Heart deficiency, it is often necessary to tonify the Gall-Bladder to support the Heart.

As a further confirmation of the relationship between the Gall Bladder and the Heart, the Gall Bladder Divergent channel flows through the heart. On the other hand, the Shen provides the clarity and most of all, the integration and control necessary to somehow “moderate” the decisiveness of the Gall Bladder: without the control and integration of the Shen, the decisiveness of the Gall Bladder may turn into recklessness.
Moreover, the Gall Bladder influences the mental-emotional life in yet another way. On a physical level, Gall Bladder-Qi helps the free flow of Liver-Qi in relation to the Stomach and Spleen.

Liver-Qi has also a physiological ascending movement towards the Heart. This is the physical equivalent of the movement of the Hun towards the Shen.

As we have seen, the Hun (housed in the Liver) gives “movement” to the Shen of the Heart providing it with inspiration, planning, ideas, life dreams, creativity.

The Gall-Bladder channel stimulates this ascending of Liver-Qi and therefore movement of the Hun. I use GB-40 Qiu Xu to stimulate it.
HEART

Provides clarity and integration so that decisiveness does not turn into recklessness

GALL-BLADDER

Provides courage and decisiveness to the Shen

HUN

Ascending of GB-Qi

Helps movement of Hun

SHEN

Coming and going of Hun
As for the mental-emotional-spiritual aspect of the Shen (Heart), Hun (Liver), Zhi (Kidneys), Gall-Bladder and Small Intestine, we can build a picture of how these organs are involved and coordinated in decision-making.

• The capacity of planning our life, to have “dreams” and plans that is conferred by the Hun of the Liver

• The drive and will-power to want to make something of our lives that is conferred by the Zhi of the Kidneys

• The capacity to discriminate between issues, to analyse issues with clarity, to distinguish what is relevant and what is not that is conferred to us by the Small Intestine

• The capacity to take a decision with resoluteness once all issues have been analysed, the courage to act that is conferred by the Gall Bladder

• The integration and direction provided by the Shen of the Heart.
Mental clarity and integration

Planning

Drive, will-power

Discrimination, critical appraisal

Decisiveness

DECISION MAKING

HEART

LIVER

SMALL INTESTINE

KIDNEYS

GALL-BLADDER
HEART-BLOOD DEFICIENCY

Clinical manifestations

poor memory
Anxiety
Depression
insomnia
palpitations
dizziness
pale face
tiredness

Tongue: Pale and Thin.
Pulse: Choppy or Fine.
Mental-emotional profile
This person is most likely to be a woman, pale, depressed and anxious. The anxiety is mild and she hides it well.

Treatment principle
Nourish Heart-Blood, calm the Mind.

i. Acupuncture
HE-7 Shenmen, Ren-14 Juque, ST-36 Zusanli, SP-6 Sanyinjiao, LIV-8 Ququan, Ren-4 Guanyuan. All with reinforcing method. Moxa may be used.

ii. Herbal therapy
Prescription
GUI PI TANG
*Tonifying the Spleen Decoction*

*Three Treasures remedy*
*Calm the Shen*
KIDNEY- AND HEART-YIN DEFICIENCY WITH EMPTY HEAT

Clinical manifestations

dizziness
tinnitus
mental restlessness
palpitations
night-sweating
feeling of heat in the evening
depression
insomnia
anxiety that is worse in the evening
five-palm heat

Tongue: Red without coating
Pulse: Floating-Empty and Rapid
Mental-emotional profile
This person is more likely to be middle-aged. The anxiety is marked and is experienced more in the evenings. In women, this type of anxiety is markedly aggravated with the onset of the menopause.

Treatment principle
Nourish Heart- and Kidney-Yin, clear Empty Heat, calm the Mind.

i. Acupuncture
HE-7 Shenmen, Ren-14 Juque, KI-3 Taixi, Ren-4 Guanyuan, SP-6 Sanyinjiao, HE-6 Yinx, KI-7 Fuliu. Reinforcing method.

ii. Herbal therapy
Prescription
TIAN WANG BU XIN DAN
*Heavenly Emperor Tonifying the Heart Pill*

*Three Treasures remedy*
*Heavenly Empress (Women’s Treasure)*
LUNG- AND HEART-QI STAGNATION

Clinical manifestations
Depression
Sadness
Anxiety
Sighing
Slight feeling of lump in the throat
Distension or oppression of the chest
Slight shortness of breath
Pale complexion
Palpitations

Tongue: slightly Pale-Purple on the sides in the chest area
Pulse: Empty but very slightly Overflowing on both Front positions
Mental-emotional profile
This person is anxious but also worried and sad. They will tend to be pale and speak with a weak voice. The anxiety is experienced in the chest.

Treatment principle
Move Qi in the Heart and Lung, relax the chest, calm the Mind.

i. Acupuncture

ii. Herbal therapy
Prescription
BAN XIA HOU PO TANG
Pinellia-Magnolia Decoction

Three Treasures remedy
Open the Heart
Clinical manifestations
Anxiety
Depression
Insomnia
Dreaming a lot
Sputum in the throat
Palpitations
Feeling of oppression of the chest
Slightly manic behaviour

Tongue: Red, Swollen with sticky-yellow coating
Pulse: Slippery-Rapid

Mental-emotional profile
In this case, the anxiety is marked, to the point of agitation. The person may be hyperactive and slightly chaotic.
Mental-emotional profile
In this case, the anxiety is marked, to the point of agitation. The person may be hyperactive and slightly chaotic.

Treatment principle
Resolve Phlegm, clear Heart-Heat, calm the Mind, open the Mind’s orifices.

i. Acupuncture
P-5 Jianshi, HE-8 Shaofu, Ren-12 Zhongwan, ST-40 Fenglong, ST-8 Touwei, G.B.-13 Benshen, Ren-15 Jiuwei, Du-24 Shenting. Even method on all points except Ren-12 which should be needled with reinforcing method.

ii. Herbal therapy
Prescription
WEN DAN TANG
Warming the Gall-Bladder Decoction
Prescription
GUI SHEN TANG
Restoring the Mind Decoction (for ingredients see last slide)

Explanation
This formula opens the Mind’s orifices, tonifies the Heart, resolves Phlegm and calms the Mind. Its clearing-Heat effect is not strong.

Three Treasures remedies
- **Clear the Soul**: Clear the Soul clears Heat and resolves Phlegm from the Heart and Lungs and calms the Mind.

- **Settling the Soul**: Settling the Soul clears Heat and resolves Phlegm from the Heart and Liver, calms the Shen and settles the Hun.
LIVER-QI STAGNATION

Frustration
anxiety
pre-menstrual tension
hypochondriac pain and distension
abdominal distension
depression
moodiness
irregular bowel movement
Uptight
Vomiting
Nausea
irregular periods
tense
Wiry pulse

Treatment principle: soothe Liver, move Qi, relieve stagnation.
Acupuncture
LIV-3 Taichong, P-6 Neiguan, T.B.-6 Zhigou, HE-7 Shenmen.

Prescriptions
a) YUE JU WAN

b) WU GE KUAN ZHONG SAN
Bai Dou Kou Fructus Cardamomi rotundi
Hou Po Cortex Magnoliae officinalis
Sha Ren Fructus Amomi
Mu Xiang Radix Saussureae
Xiang Fu Rhizoma Cyperi rotundi
Qing Pi Pericarpium Citri reticulatae viridae
Chen Pi Pericarpium Citri reticulatae
Ding Xiang Flos Caryophylli
Zhi Gan Cao Radix Glycyrrhizae preparata

*Three Treasures remedy*
*Release Constraint*
YUE JU WAN

Xiang Fu *Rhizoma Cyperi* (Stagnation of Qi)
Chuan Xiong *Rhizoma Chuanxiong* (Stagnation of Blood)
Cang Zhu *Radix Atractylodis* (Stagnation of Dampness/Phlegm)
Shan Zhi Zi *Fructus Gardeniae* (Stagnation of Heat)
Shen Qu *Massa Medicata Fermentata* (Stagnation of Food)

By Zhu Dan Xi 1280-1358
Formula for the 6 Stagnations (Qi, Blood, Dampness, Phlegm, Heat, Food)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patterns</th>
<th>YUE JU WAN</th>
<th>XIAO YAO SAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liver-Qi stagnation</td>
<td>Liver-Qi stagnation, Liver-Blood deficiency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulse</td>
<td>All Wiry</td>
<td>Fine and slightly Wiry or Wiry on left, Weak on right</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WORRY INJURING SHEN

Depression
Anxiety
Worry
Sadness
Feeling like in a trance
Absent
No desire to do anything
Crying
Yawning

Tongue: Pale, tongue coating sticky-white
Pulse: Weak, Fine.

Acupuncture
Treatment Principle: nourish Heart, calm Shen.

Pathology and mental-emotional pattern
Empty pattern. It is caused by worry which knots Qi but also, in the long run, leads to depletion of Qi and Blood. Or caused by sadness that depletes Qi and leads to Qi stagnation. Heart-Blood is the residence of the Mind and when it is deficient, the Mind is deprived of its residence resulting in depression, anxiety and insomnia.

The patient presents with characteristic manifestations of Deficiency, i.e. pallor, slow walking, slow speech, sad expression, Weak pulse, etc. The Deficiency makes the patient lacking in drive so that he or she feels unwilling or incapable of doing things.

Prescription
GAN MAI DA ZAO TANG

*Three Treasures remedy*
*Soothe the Shen*
ZHI GAN CAO, DA ZAO, FU XIAO MAI

Modern Chinese books say that this formula is for Liver-Qi stagnation with the syndrome of plum-stone in the throat. They say that the formula pacifies the Liver with its sweet taste (reverse Ke cycle, i.e., sweet taste harmonizes Wood).

I personally use this formula for depression in Xu conditions (of Qi, Blood, Yang or Qi and Yin). It is true that it pacifies the Liver with its sweet taste but it also tonifies with its sweet taste. It therefore tonifies Qi and Blood and, by so doing, it nourishes the Shen. It relieves depression occurring against a background of Deficiency.

As it contains only three (mild) herbs, I frequently add this formula to other formulae when I suspect that the root of the problem is emotional.

It is also good for hyperactive children.
KIDNEY- YANG DEFICIENCY

Weariness
Tiredness
Chilliness
Depression
Lack of will power
Frequent urination
Pale urine
Lower backache
Dizziness
Exhaustion
Does not want to do anything

Tongue: very Pale
Pulse: Weak-Deep-Slow.

Acupuncture
Ren-4 Guanyuan, BL-23 Shenshu, BL-52
Zhishi, HE-5 Tongli, Du-20 Baihui.
Treatment principle: tonify and warm Kidneys.

Pathology and mental-emotional pattern
The Kidneys house the Will-Power (Zhi). “Will-power” as a translation of Zhi includes will-power itself, drive, determination, steadfastness and physical and mental power. As Yang implies activity and movements towards the outside, in this pattern of Kidney-Yang deficiency, there is a definite lack of drive, determination and initiative. The person is deeply depressed, lacks enthusiasm and is unable to find the drive to do anything.

Prescriptions
a) YOU GUI WAN
b) JIN GUI SHEN QI WAN

Three Treasures remedy
Strengthen the Root
The pathology of depression could be summarized as follows with the acupuncture points suggested for each aspect and the main mental-emotional aspect or organ involved:

1) The Will-Power (Zhi) is impaired, there is lack of will-power, drive, initiative, momentum to break out of depression: BL-23 Shenshu, BL-52 Zhishi. WILL-POWER (ZHI)

2) The Hun does not come and go enough, there is a lack of plans, ideas, dreams, hope, inspiration, sense of direction: G.B.-40 Xiuxu, BL-47 Hunmen. ETHEREAL SOUL (HUN)

3) Angst, anxiety, despair leads to sadness: Du-24 Shenting, Ren-15 Jiuwei, HE-7 Shenmen. MIND (SHEN).


6) Problem in relationships: T.B.-5 Waiguan, P-7 Daling, P-6 Neiguan, Ren-17 Shanzhong.  PERICARDIUM and TRIPLE BURNER

7) Deficiency of the Gall-Bladder’s “courage” leads to indecisiveness: G.B.-40 Qiuxu.  GALL-BLADDER.
POINTS FOR SHEN

**Du-24 Shenting**
Calm the Shen, settle the Hun, anxiety, depression, poor memory, thoughts of death, regulate relationship between Shen and Hun, slight manic behaviour.

**Ren-15 Jiuwei**
Calm the Shen, nourish the Heart, relax the chest, sadness, worry, fear, guilt, grief, depression, anxiety, sighing.

**Du-19 Houding**
Calm the Spirit, anxiety, insomnia.

**Yintang**
Calm the Spirit, insomnia.
LIV-3 Taichong
Calm the Shen, settle the Hun, subdue rebellious Qi, anxiety, insomnia, anger, guilt, worry, fear, pensiveness.

P-7 Daling
Calm the Shen, settle the Hun, de-obstruct the Shen, anxiety, insomnia, mania, anger, guilt, fear, worry.

P-5 Jianshi
Calm the Shen, settle the Hun, de-obstruct the Shen, anxiety, insomnia, mania, anger, guilt, fear, worry. Shen obstructed by Phlegm.
The following are examples of combination of points from the Ren and Du Mai for mental-emotional problems.

**Du-24 Shenting - Ren-15 Jiuwei**

Calm the Mind and nourish the Heart. It is used for depression, anxiety and mental-emotional problems from Deficiency.

**Du-19 Houding - Ren-15 Jiuwei**

Calm the Spirit. Du-19 calms the Spirit and extinguishes (internal) Wind while Ren-15 calms the Spirit and nourishes the Heart. This combination has a powerful calming effect. Ren-15 will also relieve anxiety manifesting with a feeling of oppression in the chest.
Du-20 Baihui - Ren-15 Jiuwei

Calms the Spirit and lifts mood. It is an excellent combination for mental depression with anxiety. This combination can simultaneously calm the Spirit and improve mood.

Du-20 Baihui - Ren-4 Guanyuan

Calm the Spirit, nourish the Kidneys and strengthen Yuan Qi. This relieves depression by nourishing the Kidneys, strengthening the Yuan Qi and tonifying the Zhi.
Yintang - Ren-4 Guanyuan
Calm the Spirit and root Qi in the Lower Burner by nourishing the Kidneys and strengthening the Yuan Qi. This combination is better for insomnia.

Du-24 Shenting - Ren-4 Guanyuan
Calm the Spirit by nourishing the Kidneys and strengthening the Yuan Qi. It is suitable for severe anxiety with Kidney deficiency. It is particularly indicated for anxiety as it roots Qi in the Lower Burner and draws it downwards away from the head and the Heart where it harasses the Mind.
ANXIETY - PHLEGM-HEAT HARASSING THE HEART

GUI SHEN TANG
Restoring the Mind Decoction

Ren Shen Radix Ginseng 15g
Bai Zhu Rhizoma Atractylodis macrocephalae 30g
Ba Ji Tian Radix Morindae officinalis 30g
Fu Shen Sclerotium Poriae pararadicis 15g
Zi He Che Placenta Hominis 6g
Ban Xia Rhizoma Pinelliae preparatum 9g
Chen Pi Pericarpium Citri reticulatae 3g
Bai Jie Zi Semen Sinapis albae 9g
Shi Chang Pu Rhizoma Acori tatarinowii 3g
Zhu Sha Cinnabaris 3g
Mai Men Dong Radix Ophiopogonis 6g
Bai Zi Ren Semen Platycladi 6g
Zhi Gan Cao Radix Glycyrrhizae uralensis preparata 3g