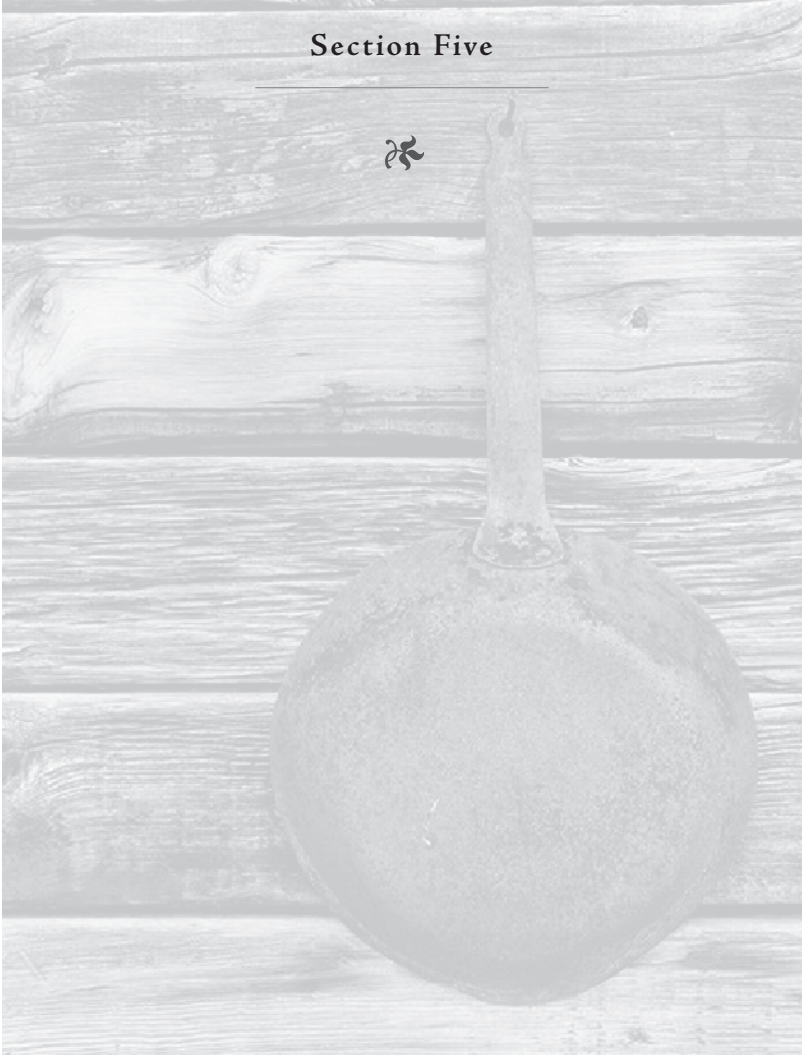




Section Five

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天有四時五行，以生長收藏，以生寒暑燥濕風。  
人有五臟，化五氣，以生喜怒悲憂恐。

*Tiān yǒu sì shí wǔ xíng,  
yǐ shēng zhǎng shōu cáng,  
yǐ shēng hán shǔ zào shī fēng.*

*Rén yǒu wǔ zàng, huà wǔ qì, yǐ  
shēng xǐ nù bēi yōu kǒng.*

*In Heaven, there are the Four Seasons  
and Five Dynamic Agents. By means  
of these, birth, growth, harvest, and  
storage take place. By means of  
these, Cold, Summerheat, Parching,  
Dampness, and Wind are engendered.*

*In humans, there are the Five  
Zàng Organs, which transform  
the Five Qi and by means of  
these engender happiness, anger,  
grief, mourning, and fear.*

Commentary by Zhāng Jièbīn 張介賓

四時者，春夏秋冬。五行者，木火土金水。合而言之，則春屬木而主生，其化以風；夏屬火而主長，其化以暑；長夏屬土而主化，其化以濕；秋屬金而主收，其化以燥；冬屬水而主藏，其化以寒。五行各一，惟火有君相之分。此言寒暑燥濕風者，即五行之化也。《五營運》等論言寒暑燥濕風火者，是為六氣也。。

五臟者，心肺肝脾腎也。五氣者，五臟之氣也。由五氣以生五志。如本論及《五營運大論》，俱言心在志為喜，肝在志為怒，脾在志為思，肺在志為憂，腎在志為恐。

*The Four Seasons are spring, summer, fall, and winter. The Five Dynamic Agents are Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water. Speaking of these in combination, spring is associated with Wood and rules birth; its transformation occurs by Wind. Summer is associated with Fire and rules growth; its transformation occurs by Summerheat. Long Summer is associated with Earth and rules transformation; its transformation occurs by Dampness. Fall is associated with Metal and rules harvesting; its transformation occurs by Parching. Winter is associated with Water and rules storage; its transformation occurs by Cold. The Five Dynamic Agents each are one, with the sole exception of Fire being divided into Sovereign Fire (jūn huǒ 君火) and Ministerial Fire (xiàng huǒ 相火). This passage says that Cold, Summerheat, Parching, Dampness, and Wind are indeed the transformations of the Five Dynamic Agents. When discourses such as the ones on the Five Movements (i.e., Sù Wèn Chapter 67) speak of Cold, Summerheat, Parching, Dampness, Wind, and Fire, this is a reference to the Six Qi.*

*The Five Zàng Organs are Heart, Lung, Liver, Spleen and Kidney. The Five Qi are the Qi of the Five Zàng Organs. It is out of the Five Qi that the Five Wills are engendered. As the present Discourse and the Great Discourse on the Five Movements (i.e., Sù Wèn Chapter 67) both state, the Heart among the Wills is happiness, the Liver among the Wills is anger, the Spleen among the Wills is ruminating, the Lung among the Wills is mourning, and the Kidney among the Wills is fear.*

THIS SECTION AGAIN EMPHASIZES THE CORRELATIONS AND interconnections between the external and the internal environment of the human body. In the first line, the four seasons in the macrocosm create a healthy normal response in the natural world, which is the cycle of life: giving birth in the spring, growing in the summer, gathering in the fall, and storage (in the sense of hibernation or of plants dropping or reducing their above-ground foliage and “hiding” underground to preserve their energy in the winter), before the cycle starts again in the following spring. Isn’t it beautiful how this line resolves the apparent conflict between cycles of four and of five, with the Four Seasons associated with the natural processes, and the Five Dynamic Agents associated with the generation of the five climatic factors?

The four key terms to describe the seasons, *sheng* 生, *zhǎng* 長, *shōu* 收, and *cáng* 藏 are here translated in their most general sense, but it is important to remember that they each have a very specific meaning in the context of the seasonal cycle: *Shēng* 生 “birth” derives from the notion of “sprouting” as suggested by early versions of the character that literally depict a plant pushing up through the surface of the earth from underneath to form its first leaf.



Early character for *Shēng* 生.

The earliest versions of the character for *zhǎng* 長 “to grow” or “to lengthen,” depict a person with long hair. The character for *shōu* 收 “to harvest,” is a combination of “threshing” with a hook- or sickle-like object. In a larger sense, it can mean “to receive” or “to gather in,” and in the context of physiology or pharmacological action even to “draw inward,” such as when it describes the process of Qì consolidation in a newborn baby. Finally, *cáng* 藏 “to store” or “to hide” (as in “to conceal in deep grass,” suggested perhaps by the grass radical) can also mean “to go underground,” which is what most animals and plants do to survive the harsh cold of winter, like a bear in hibernation.

The second half of this passage moves us directly back into the realm of the human body as the microcosm that operates within the same inherent cosmic structure and in resonance with the macrocosm. At this level, we have the Five *Zàng* Organs, which engender the Five

Wills (also known as Five Emotions, *wǔ qíng* 五情) by means of the “Five Qì.” This brings us to one of the most difficult phrases in this section of the text, namely how to understand the phrase “transforms the Five Qì” (*huà wǔ qì* 化五氣), resulting in some substantial disagreement among commentators. As so often in this entire discourse, the precise meaning of Qì is left unexplained. Zhāng Jièbīn explains them in the quote cited above as the “Qì of the Five Zàng Organs” (五臟之氣), which in turn engender the Five Wills (*wǔ zhì* 五志). Zhāng Zhìcōng, on the other hand, explains them as the “Qì of the Five Dynamic Agents” (五行之氣). Rather than narrowing the meaning of the term by explanation and personal interpretation, as these two authors have done, the best approach, in my opinion, is to consciously try to embrace the ambiguity and multiplicity of meanings in the term Qì and contemplate both options. The original text is, after all, the direct manifestation of a perspective that truly sees the macrocosm and all its associated microcosms not only as correlated and resonating with each other, but perhaps as identical and intertwined in ways that we modern humans are unable to grasp other than in short moments when we can turn off our rational minds and perceive with our *Shén* instead. As such, it is perhaps the greatest challenge for any reader of the *Huáng Dì Nèi Jīng* to accept that these fine details ultimately do not matter, since each one is identical on some deep level with the others. To grasp the basic homology between processes that occur in the natural world, in the human realm of society, and inside the human body means to understand the basic identity between Heaven, Humanity, and Earth. It should be noted here, however, that the doctrine of Five Movements and Six Qì, which Zhāng Jièbīn alludes to in the commentary above, was not developed fully until many centuries after the composition of the original *Nèi Jīng* text, and we must therefore always be cautious about not reading such later theories back into the text.

Before moving on to the next line, readers familiar with the medical classics will recognize the Five Emotions or Wills and know to relate happiness to the Heart, anger to the Liver, mourning to the Lung, and fear to the Kidney. And as you may have noticed, the character here used for the emotion of the Spleen, namely *bēi* 悲, which

I have translated literally as “grief,” is more often associated with the emotion of the Lung. The easiest explanation for this discrepancy here is to read *bēi* 悲 “grief” as a scribal error for *sī* 思 “ruminating,” which is the standard emotion associated with the Spleen. This argument is supported by other lists of the Five Emotions and their associated *Zàng* Organs in the *Nèi Jīng*, including the description of the Spleen and its resonances. Another intriguing possibility is that this list here reflects an alternative conception of the Five Emotions in general, and of the way in which the Spleen-Stomach system is affected by them in particular. For another non-standard account of the effect of the emotions in the *Nèi Jīng* corpus, see this quotation from *Sù Wèn* Chapter 39:

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*Quotation from Sù Wèn*<sup>1</sup>

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百病生於氣也，怒則氣上，喜則氣緩，悲則氣消，恐則氣下，  
寒則氣收，炅則氣泄，驚則氣亂，勞則氣耗，思則氣結。

*This is how the Hundred Diseases are engendered by Qi: Anger results in ascent of Qi, happiness in laxness of Qi, grief in diminishment of Qi, fear in descent of Qi, Cold in drawing inward of Qi, fireheat in leakage of Qi, fright in disordering of Qi, taxation in expenditure of Qi, and ruminating in knotting of Qi.*

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WHILE THIS PASSAGE DOES CITE THE STANDARD LIST OF ANGER, HAPPINESS, grief, and fear (presumably related to the Liver, Heart, Lung, and Kidney), it then adds a handful of other factors, before finishing with ruminating, as the emotion usually associated with the Spleen. It is not clear in this citation, however, whether these emotions are already associated with the *Zàng* Organs, as a modern reader would

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<sup>1</sup> *Sù Wèn* 《素問》 Chapter 39, *Jǔ Tòng Lùn* 舉痛論 (Discourse on Lifting Pain).

assume, or whether they are simply listed as different facets of Qi that cause disease. Similarly, the important essay “Rooted in Spirit” in the *Líng Shū* 靈樞 (Divine Pivot) does not repeat the standard list but describes the pathological effect of emotional upheaval in this way:

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Quotation from *Líng Shū* 靈樞<sup>2</sup>

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是故怵悌思慮者則傷神，神傷則恐懼流淫而不止。因悲哀動中者，竭絕而失生。喜樂者，神憚散而不藏。愁憂者，氣閉塞而不行。盛怒者，迷惑而不治。恐懼者，神蕩憚而不收。

*For this reason, rumination and discernment [with] alarm and anxiety result in injury to the Shén. When the Shén is injured, fear and panic flow without restraint or stopping. Stirring of the center because of grief and sorrow mean exhaustion and interrupted flow, and then loss of life. Happiness and joy make the Shén frightened and scattered so that it is no longer stored. Gloominess and worry block and congest the Qi, preventing it from moving freely. Exuberant anger leads to confusion and delusion and to a lack of good order. Fear and panic rattle and frighten away the Shén instead of gathering it in.*

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AS ELISABETH HSU HAS SUGGESTED IN THE ARTICLE CITED ABOVE ON “Outward Form and Inward Qi,” these different accounts of the emotions might point to an earlier conception of the body that was either dualistic, following the Yin-Yáng model by contrasting happiness, associated with the Heart as the representative of the upper body, and anger, associated with the Liver and the lower body, or perhaps trifold, with the addition of the Lung, as seen in *Líng Shū* Chapter 66. There, anger is still the emotion of the Liver, but the Heart is associated with

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<sup>2</sup> *Líng Shū* 《靈樞》 Chapter 8, *Běn Shén* 本神 (Rooted in Spirit).

*yōu sī* 憂思 “mourning and ruminating.”<sup>3</sup> One possible explanation for that conundrum may be suggested by Wáng Bīng’s commentary on the following line in the present text: He explains the correlation of anger with injury to Yīn, and of happiness with injury to Yáng by stating that anger causes the Qì to rise, and sudden ascent of Qì means injury to Yīn. Contrary to what we tend to think in Western psychology, Wáng then goes on to state that happiness causes the Qì to move down, and sudden descent of Qì injures Yáng (怒則氣上，喜則氣下，故暴卒氣上則傷陰，暴卒氣下則傷陽). If we read happiness here in this medical context as the emotion associated with the Heart and the upper body and, in the case of pathology, with causing Qì to fall, we might be able to appreciate Wáng Bīng’s explanation a little more easily.

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3 Hsu, “Outward Form and Inward Body,” 108-109.