

# Innovation in Chinese Medicine

---

*Edited by*

**Elisabeth Hsu**

*University of Oxford*



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK  
40 West 20th Street, New York NY 10011-4211, USA  
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, VIC 3166, Australia  
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain  
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

<http://www.cambridge.org>

© Cambridge University Press 2001

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,  
no reproduction of any part may take place without  
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2001

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

*Typeface in Times 11/14.25pt [GC]*

*A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data*

Innovation in Chinese medicine/edited by Elisabeth Hsu.

p. cm. – (Needham Research Institute Studies; 3)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 80068 4 (hardback)

1. Medicine, Chinese. I. Hsu, Elisabeth. II. Series.

R601 .I566 2001

610'.951 – dc21

ISBN 0 521 80068 4 hardback

# Contents

---

<i>Notes on contributors</i>	page xi
<i>Series editor's preface</i>	xiii
<i>Table of Chinese dynasties</i>	xv
Introduction	1
ELISABETH HSU	
<b>Part I <i>Mai</i> and <i>qi</i> in the Western Han</b>	13
Introduction	13
1 The influence of nurturing life culture on the development of Western Han acumoxa therapy	19
VIVIENNE LO	
2 Pulse diagnostics in the Western Han: how <i>mai</i> and <i>qi</i> determine <i>bing</i>	51
ELISABETH HSU	
<b>Part II Correlative cosmologies</b>	93
Introduction	93
3 Iatromancy, diagnosis, and prognosis in Early Chinese medicine	99
DONALD HARPER	
4 The system of the five circulatory phases and the six seasonal influences ( <i>wuyun liuqi</i> ), a source of innovation in medicine under the Song (960–1279)	121
CATHERINE DESPEUX	

<b>Part III Dietetics and pharmacotherapy</b>	167
Introduction	167
5 Dietetics in Tang China and the first extant works of <i>materia dietetica</i> UTE ENGELHARDT	173
6 A Song innovation in pharmacotherapy: some remarks on the use of white arsenic and flowers of arsenic FRÉDÉRIC OBRINGER	192
<b>Part IV The canons revisited in Late Imperial China</b>	215
Introduction	215
7 The <i>Bencao gangmu</i> of Li Shizhen: an innovation in natural history? GEORGES MÉTAILLIÉ	221
8 Robust northerners and delicate southerners: the nineteenth century invention of a southern medical tradition MARTA HANSON	262
<b>Part V Medical case histories</b>	293
Introduction	293
9 <i>Yi'an</i> 醫案 (case statements): the origins of a genre of Chinese medical literature CHRISTOPHER CULLEN	297
10 From case records to case histories: the modernisation of a Chinese medical genre, 1912–49 BRIDIE J. ANDREWS	324
<b>Part VI Medical rationale in the People's Republic</b>	337
Introduction	337
11 A new, scientific, and unified medicine: civil war in China and the new <i>acumoxa</i> , 1945–49 KIM TAYLOR	343
12 Shaping Chinese medicine: two case studies from contemporary China VOLKER SCHEID	370
<i>Index</i>	405

# 1

---

## The influence of nurturing life culture on the development of Western Han acumoxa therapy

VIVIENNE LO

When tomb no. 3 at Changsha 長沙 Mawangdui 馬王堆, a burial mound outside the capital of the old Han kingdom of Chu 楚, was first opened in the early 1970s, scholars could hardly have predicted the degree to which its contents would revolutionise the history of Chinese medicine.<sup>1</sup> Nearly thirty years later the silk and bamboo manuscripts, which the tomb had preserved since its closure in 168 BC, still provide a rich resource for lively debate and new insights into the state of the heavens, the earth, and human society during the early Western Han period. Archaeologists have opened numerous tombs in Chu and elsewhere which have offered up further material for comparison. This study will focus on the texts excavated at Mawangdui and at one other tomb (no. 247) at Jiangling 江陵 Zhangjiashan 張家山.<sup>2</sup>

Evidence from Mawangdui has filled gaps in our knowledge of the relationship of spirit mediums or shamans and their magical practices and incantations to early Chinese medicine.<sup>3</sup> Recipe texts such as ‘Wushi’er bingfang’ 五十二病方 (Recipes for Fifty-two Illnesses), the largest text of the medical finds, give detailed instructions of how to prepare treatments for specific, named illnesses.<sup>4</sup> Remedies might include

<sup>1</sup> The Mawangdui burial mound is located in the northeastern section of Changsha, Hunan. It contains three tombs. Tombs no. 1 and no. 2 belonged to the Lord of Dai 軼, Li Cang 利蒼, and his wife (who was buried in tomb no. 1). Tomb no. 3, from which the manuscripts were excavated, was occupied by one of their sons, who died in 168 BC at the age of about 30. For the excavation report see Hunansheng bowuguan and Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo (1974). Details of the find are also in the introduction to Mawangdui Han mu boshu zhengli xiaozu (1980).

<sup>2</sup> On the dating of the Zhangjiashan tomb in Hubei and the identity of its occupant, see Zhangjiashan Han mu zhujian zhengli xiaozu (1985). See also Gao Dalun (1995), 3–7, and Shi Yunzi (1994). It seems that the earliest date for the closure of the tomb is 186 BC with a latest date of 156 BC.

<sup>3</sup> In a number of articles Harper introduces the magical aspects of Warring States medical practice. See for instance Harper (1985). His findings are collected together in *Early Chinese Medical Literature* (1998), 42–68 and 148–83.

<sup>4</sup> The texts did not originally bear titles. I use those given by Mawangdui Han mu boshu zhengli xiaozu (1985).

cautery, the preparation of herbs and animal substances, often selected for their magical properties. Many specify incantations and exorcism of the kind that would require the help or tuition of a specialist intermediary. Among the Mawangdui medical manuscripts there is also important evidence of a new medicine in its infancy – a medicine related to correlative cosmology and its theories of *yinyang*. Central to the new medicine are texts which conceptualise the body in *mai* 脈 (channels)<sup>5</sup> and an examination of the mode of construction of this concept of *mai* is the basic task of this chapter.

Both tombs, at Mawangdui and Zhangjiashan, have provided manuscripts that change our understanding of the *mai*,<sup>6</sup> which were fundamental to the development of classical medical theory first formulated in Han times. Their titles and descriptions bear similarities to the *jingmai* 經脈 (conduits, circulation tracts) of later acumoxa theory and the texts are therefore early examples of a textual genre that we can trace to later compilations such as *Huangdi neijing Lingshu* 黃帝內經靈樞 (Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon: the Numinous Pivot).<sup>7</sup> The Mawangdui medical manuscripts include two such

<sup>5</sup> Mawangdui Han mu boshu zhengli xiaozu (1985) contains the official transcription of the Mawangdui medical manuscripts as well as photographs of the originals. Ma Jixing (1992) also provides a transcription and full commentary for all of the medical texts (for many of the texts a modern Chinese rendering is also supplied). The texts are thought to be no earlier than the third century BC. See Ma Jixing (1992), 92. A translation of the entire corpus of the Mawangdui medical manuscripts is in Harper (1998).

<sup>6</sup> The word *mai* is difficult to translate. Harper (1982) translates 'vessel', which draws out the early association with the arteriovenous system. I prefer to follow the contemporary analogy with channel (*du* 瀆) or 'canal' found in the 'Maishu' 脈書 (Channel Document). See Jiangling Zhangjiashan Han jian zhengli xiaozu (1989), 74 (hereafter, 'Maishu' shiwen). The translation 'channel' also serves to emphasise the relationship of the *mai* to the superficial anatomical channels as defined by muscle and bone, as they were understood before the more elaborate theories of the *jingluo* and *jingmai* found in *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經 (Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon). *Jingluo* or *jingmai* has been variously translated as 'conduit', 'meridian', 'circulation tract', etc. As the focus of this paper is the excavated medical writing from Hubei and Hunan, which is representative of an earlier period, it is not necessary to commit to a definitive translation of the terms at present. See Sivin (1987), 34, 122 note 11; and Unschuld (1985), 75, 81–3.

<sup>7</sup> *Huangdi neijing* is a corpus now extant in three recensions, the *Taisu* (太素 Great Basis), the *Suwen* (素問 Basic Questions), and the *Lingshu* (靈樞 Numinous Pivot). See Sivin (1993). Each of these is a compilation of small texts dealing with separate topics which may reflect the thinking in a distinct medical lineage. It is thought that the earliest texts were set down during the first or at the earliest the second century BC. Collectively they represent the kind of debate through which classical medical concepts matured. In this respect they act as a convenient marker against which to assess the form and content of the excavated texts. For an extended discussion of the development of medical theories in China based on a clarification of the formation of the *Huangdi neijing*, see Yamada (1979); for a reassessment of the origins of acumoxa, see Unschuld (1985), 93–9. Since the discovery of the excavated manuscripts, most medical historians now agree that an essential fusion of the technical and theoretical elements at the foundation of acumoxa therapy could not have happened much before the first two centuries BC. See Sivin (1993) and Yamada (1979). The canons of acumoxa must also include Huangfu Mi's *Zhenjiu jiyijing* 針灸甲乙經 (AB Canon of Acumoxa) (AD 256–82) and the *Nanjing* 難經 (Canon of Difficulties) (first or second century AD), the latter of which is translated in Unschuld (1986).

texts; their Chinese editors have given one of the texts the title of ‘Zubi shiyimai jiujiing’ 足臂十一脈灸經 (Cauterisation Canon of the Eleven Foot and Arm Channels; hereafter, ‘Zubi jiujiing’) and the other they have called ‘Yinyang shiyimai jiujiing’ 陰陽十一脈灸經 (Cauterisation Canon of the Eleven *yin* and *yang* Channels; hereafter, ‘Yinyang jiujiing’). Two editions of this latter text were found at Mawangdui, yet another edition was found at Zhangjiashan as part of a compilation titled ‘Maishu’ 脈書 (Channel Document). ‘Maishu’, I shall argue, is the earliest treatise to set down explicitly the theory and practice of acumoxa.

Among the manuscripts which were folded together in a rectangular lacquer box at Mawangdui there was a significant amount of writing that set out the philosophy and techniques of nurturing life (*yangsheng* 養生). I use the term ‘nurturing life’ to refer to those techniques broadly aimed at physical cultivation and longevity which formed a part of elite culture during the Western Han period. The *yangsheng* practices documented in the Mawangdui and Zhangjiashan medical manuscripts include therapeutic gymnastics, dietetics, breath- and sexual-cultivation. The Zhangjiashan manual of therapeutic gymnastics (*daoyin* 導引 literally ‘guiding and pulling’), known as ‘Yinshu’ 引書<sup>8</sup> (Pulling Document), and parts of the Mawangdui manual ‘Shiwen’ 十問 (Ten Questions) are of particular significance to this study.

Both ‘Shiwen’ and two further works from Mawangdui that I shall cite, the ‘Tianxia zhi dao tan’ 天下至道談 (Discussion of the Highest Way Under Heaven) and ‘He yinyang’ 合陰陽 (Harmonising *yin* and *yang*), specialise in sexual-cultivation. In these three texts sexual-cultivation practice is often combined with elements of breath-cultivation,<sup>9</sup> a combination which later Daoist and medical literature preserves alongside other *yangsheng* practices.<sup>10</sup> *Yangsheng* focuses on preserving and strengthening the body, and the Mawangdui texts give fine detail of technique and practice. It is therefore a significant branch of medicine and was viewed as such by the book collectors who placed *yangsheng* literature together with other texts that concentrated

<sup>8</sup> ‘Yinshu’ transcript can be found in Zhangjiashan Han jian zhengli zu (1990), (hereafter, ‘Yinshu’ shiwen), accompanied by a detailed analysis by Peng Hao (1990). For a general introduction and annotated transcript see Gao Dalun (1995).

<sup>9</sup> Mawangdui Han mu boshu zhengli xiaozu (1985) 155–6, 163–7, and 146–8. Breath-cultivation involves specific breathing techniques thought to adjust favourably the internal environment of the body by balancing temperature and dryness/humidity in order to build up and store vital essences.

<sup>10</sup> *Beiji qianjin yaofang* 備急千金要方 (Essential Prescriptions Worth a Thousand, for Urgent Need), *juan* 27, 489, is titled ‘Yangxing’ 養性 (Nurturing Nature). The chapter includes instructions on massage, adjusting the *qi*, breathing exercises, and the sexual arts. The most comprehensive account in English of nurturing life practice can be found in a collection of articles in Kohn (1989).

more specifically on the treatment of illness. The full range of medical practices represented in the Mawangdui medical manuscripts is also reflected in the ‘Recipes and Techniques’ (*fangji* 方技) section of the ‘Yiwen zhi’ 藝文志 (Record of Literary Pursuits), the bibliographical treatise in the *Han shu* 漢書 (Document of the Han) (AD 32–92).<sup>11</sup>

A comparison of language and concepts evident in early descriptions of the *mai* with the body as it is revealed in *yangsheng* literature will demonstrate the differences between these two genres of medical literature. At a time when literature describing the *mai* barely recognised an organised movement of *qi* 氣 through the body, when it made no clear reference to acumoxa points, when correspondences with *yin* and *yang* were barely elaborated, the *yangsheng* literature reveals all of this and more. Can we then see a link between *yangsheng* culture of the late Warring States to the early Imperial period and the medical theory and practice found in the acumoxa canons?<sup>12</sup> To answer this question I shall refer extensively to the *Huangdi neijing* compilation, the title most famous for its exposition of classical acumoxa theories.

This paper, for the first time, will begin to explore the contribution that the observation and recording of a phenomenological experience of ‘own’ body, unique to *yangsheng* literature, made to classical Chinese medical thought. Observations about the body in *yangsheng* literature reflect a realm of human experience that, for obvious reasons, is not evident in medical literature that describes the illness and cure of other bodies. Where the eyes cease to organise and control their environment, visualisation may free our physical space through the practice of meditation. Breath-cultivation may bring increased vitality and a clarity of the spirit, feelings elicited in sexual arts may landscape the body with mountains, rivers, and spurting seas. In this liminal world the body may become a universe, a temple, or a continent.<sup>13</sup> An elaborate code which could at once embrace the body in its spiritual, physical, geographic, and political dimensions was to become a recurring device throughout Daoist literature.

### A *yangsheng* culture

In describing the body in its relationship with the macrocosmos, early Chinese *yangsheng* literature brings a metaphysical language into the realm of human physical experience. With its focus on longevity rather than pathology, it sets down a standard physiology of the internal environment of the body. *Yangsheng* techniques, then, describe many ways to assert control over this physiological process. The primary

<sup>11</sup> The *Han shu* ‘Yiwen zhi’, *juan* 30, 1776–80, lists books contained in the Han court library around the end of the first century BC. It is taken from the lost catalogue of Liu Xin 劉歆 (46 BC–AD 23).

<sup>12</sup> See note 7. <sup>13</sup> Schipper (1993), 100–12.



object of the present study is to examine the dynamic between the medical fields of *yangsheng* and the newly emerging medical models of the body based upon the *mai*.

The criteria for defining exactly which kind of activity came under the umbrella of nurturing life varies according to the period. By the time of the tenth-century Japanese medical work *Ishinpō* 醫心方 (Recipes at the Heart of Medicine), a compilation that preserves a great deal of early Chinese material, the 'Yangsheng' chapter includes such diverse topics as sleep, clothing, and propriety of language. Five of the practices listed in the *Ishinpō* are already represented in the literature of Mawangdui and Zhangjiashan.<sup>14</sup> Mawangdui practices also include the daily ingestion and application of mineral drugs, ingestion of talismans, and ritual interdiction. Recognised as coming under the general rubric of *yangsheng* are contemporary callisthenic exercises in revived form such as *taiji quan* (太極拳) and *qigong* (氣功), the therapeutic movement practised by young and old in Chinese city parks in the morning.

The preponderance of nurturing life texts among the burial goods in the tombs at Zhangjiashan and Mawangdui suggests that the courtly elite of Chu were familiar with the way of life advocated in the texts. I argue elsewhere that a figurine, buried five hundred miles away in south-west China, also testifies to the more general spread of nurturing life culture.<sup>15</sup> Burial goods were similar in design and quality, so it seems likely that the rich culture in the Chu tombs, which was once thought to be exclusive to the southern kingdom, is representative of the central core of elite society in the provincial courts and military outposts of the empire in the early Western Han period.

Despite the fact that *yangsheng* is an evolving category during the Warring States period and does not, by itself, refer to all the practices it later embraces, it is still relevant to consider the emergence of different types of physical activities for enhancing life as a distinctive trend. The above mentioned 'Record of Literary Pursuits' (Yiwen zhi) in the *Han shu* lists eight sexual-cultivation works which testify that they formed a significant part of mainstream medical literature.

Many Warring States writers also seem to know practices akin to nurturing life culture. Breath-cultivation and meditation are particularly common. References to nurturing life practice emerge incidentally in comment or as a more conscious part of a health care regime. The references are not always complimentary. *Zhuangzi* 莊子

<sup>14</sup> *Ishinpō*, *juan* 27, 449–59. For some remarks on the sources of the nurturing life material, see Barrett (1980). The five practices are breath-cultivation (*yongqi* 用氣, *shiqi* 食氣), sexual-cultivation (*fangnei* 房內), therapeutic gymnastics (*daoyin* 導引), regulated sleep (*woqi* 臥起), and dietetics (*tiaoshi* 調食).

<sup>15</sup> The figurine is made of black lacquered wood and has red lines which run from head to foot. An analysis of the lines and how they relate to the channels of acumoxa theory as well as other medical practices such as *yangsheng* can be found in He Zhiguo and Lo (1996).

(fourth – second centuries BC) criticises people who nurture the body (*yangxing* 養形) as falling short of the true *dao* 道 (the way):

To huff and puff, exhale and inhale, blow out the old and draw in the new, do the ‘bear-hang’ and the ‘bird-stretch’, interested only in long life – such are the tastes of the practitioners of ‘guide-and-pull’ exercises, the nurturers of the body, Grandfather Peng’s ripe-old-agers.<sup>16</sup>

His is a transcendent, less physical approach to life that is reminiscent of the cults of immortality. We can, perhaps, view immortality cults as an extreme extension of *yangsheng* culture.<sup>17</sup> Elsewhere, in an obvious reference to the practice of breath-cultivation, *Zhuangzi* says that ‘the realised man breathes with his heels’.<sup>18</sup> *Mengzi* 孟子 (late fourth century BC) differentiates between the benefits of breathing *qi* of the morning and that of the evening in nurturing man’s original heavenly nature. *Mengzi* sees this practice as inseparable from cultivating moral character. Cultivating courage and rightness comes through nourishing the flood-like *qi* (*haoran zhi qi* 浩然之氣).<sup>19</sup>

Early descriptions of these life-enhancing practices show the development of a subjectivising of philosophical thought which had begun with ideas attributed to Yang Zhu 楊朱 (fl. late fourth century BC). Yang Zhu, or the Yangists, suggested that it is our primary responsibility to protect and nourish our heaven-given nature so that we can live out the time decreed to us. For his followers, prioritising a more subjective, inner experience of life is part of their aim to free judgement from the artifice of an external social morality. Other writers simply described ways of strengthening and nourishing human nature. Perhaps this was to attune themselves to the qualities of heaven, to still the heart in meditation – and in doing so they created a language for the internal environment of the body and simultaneously opened up a new dimension to philosophy. Immediate human experience became a vehicle for understanding the external world and, through the principle of resonance, a mode through which one could exert influence upon it.

This belief in resonance was the fundamental principle of a theory of rulership that can be detected in *Lunyu* 論語 (Analects) (third – second centuries BC) of Confucius (traditional dates: 551–479):

The Master said, ‘If a man is correct in his own person, then there will be obedience without orders being given; but if he is not correct in his own person, there will not be obedience even though orders are given.’<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Zhuangzi*, *juan* 6, *pian* 15, 1; transl. Graham (1981), 265. <sup>17</sup> Harper (1998), 114.

<sup>18</sup> *Zhuangzi*, *juan* 6, *pian* 15, 2. <sup>19</sup> *Mengzi*, *juan* 6, 58; tr. Lau (1970), 77.

<sup>20</sup> *Lunyu* 論語, *pian* 13, *zhang* 6, 143; tr. Lau (1979), 199. See also Legge (1935), 266.

Once the ruler behaved correctly, a civilising effect would spontaneously radiate from his very person through the administrative structure. *Lunyu* describes a form of self-cultivation through study and an attendance to social propriety. But the theory that in government a good ruler should concentrate on perfecting his personal actions, patterning his behaviour after heaven, whilst leaving practical administration delegated throughout the bureaucracy achieves full elaboration in *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (Mr Lü's Spring and Autumn) (ca 239 BC):

One able to nourish what Heaven generates and not interfere with it is called 'Son of Heaven' . . . This is why officials are established; the establishment of officials is to keep life intact.<sup>21</sup>

In many different philosophic and political works, the influence of the conduct of the ruler is understood to be critical to harmony in the environment. Even the *Han Fei zi* (韓非子) (third century BC) suggests that focus and simplicity combined with the principle of non action (*wuwei* 無為) are the desired qualities for effective authority.

Authority should not be seen, in simplicity with no action. With business in the four quarters, remain at the centre. The sage holds to the essential principles and the four quarters come to serve him. In emptiness he awaits them and they spontaneously do what is needed.<sup>22</sup>

Only Mo Di 墨翟 (fl. late fifth century BC), possibly a carpenter and therefore the only artisan amongst the philosophers,<sup>23</sup> does not refer to nurturing life practices. He is singularly unconcerned about the distinction between the gentleman and the common man. His philosophy does not elevate culture and tradition, the trappings of the elite, but honours utility, the virtue of a craft. This exception suggests that cultivating bodily *qi* in the pursuit of long life was exclusively a part of the lifestyle of an educated elite.

Self-cultivation was a gentlemanly pursuit but it was sometimes at variance with the demands of court society. Zhang Liang 張良 (d. 187 BC), the strategist and military advisor to Liu Bang 劉邦, first emperor of the Han dynasty (reigned 202–195 BC), was a famous self-cultivator. After recurrent illness he took to practising *daoyin* and dietary techniques, leaving society to live as a recluse in company with the immortal, Master Red Pine 赤松子.<sup>24</sup>

Some scholars in the early Western Han period might have opposed ideas of ruling through attention to the kind of self-cultivation that focused on the body, rather than

<sup>21</sup> *Lüshi chunqiu*, juan 1, pian 2, 136. <sup>22</sup> *Han Fei zi*, juan 2, pian 8, 8b.

<sup>23</sup> For a discussion of Mo Di's social position, see Graham (1989), 31–6; for the other Warring States philosophers, see Graham (1989), 3.

<sup>24</sup> *Shiji*, juan 55, 2048.

moral and ritual behaviour or studying classical literature. But the two approaches were not necessarily in contradiction. Both provided the *literati* with tools for self-determination; as guardians of a written history which described the emperor as the pivot between heaven and earth they were indispensable to the throne. By developing self-help techniques for enhancing and lengthening life, they both freed their bodies from the calamities of ghosts and demons and, at the same time, strengthened themselves against the vicissitudes of heaven (the influence of the weather). Their lifestyle, as well as their learning, both distinguished them from the common people and empowered them at the expense of other practitioners.

‘Yinshu’ begins with a text which sets out an appropriate seasonal lifestyle in great detail. It describes a regime for personal hygiene, diet, breath-cultivation, exercise, and sexual practice in great detail. This is the prescription for life in summer and autumn.

On summer days wash the hair more frequently and bathe less; do not sleep late. Eat more vegetables. Get up early and after passing water, wash and rinse the mouth with water, pick the teeth, loosen the hair and pace slowly in front of the house. After a while drink a cup of water. Enter the chamber<sup>25</sup> between dusk and midnight (when it is time to) cease. Increasing it will harm the *qi*.

On autumn days bathe and wash the hair frequently; in drinking and eating your fill indulge the body’s desires. Enter the chamber whenever the body is nourished and derives comfort from it. This is the way of benefit.<sup>26</sup>

夏日，數沐，希浴，毋莫〔起〕，多食采（菜），蚤（早）起，棄水之後，用水澡澣（漱），疏齒，被（披）發，步足堂下，有閑而飲水一椀（杯）。入宮從昏到夜半止，益之傷氣。秋日，數浴沐，飲（飲）食饑飽次（恣）身所浴。入宮，以身所利安，此利道也。

The concluding passages of ‘Yinshu’ are a statement about the value of breath-cultivation and *daoyin* in distinguishing class. In the spirit of the philosophy attributed to Yang Zhu, the nobility moderate their behaviour through physical training to protect themselves and preserve their vitality. But the behaviour itself also sets them apart from the ignorant masses.

The reason that nobility get illness is that they do not harmonise their joys and passions. If they are joyful then the *yangqi* is in excess. If they are angry then the *yinqi* is in excess. On account of this, if those that follow the Way are joyful then they quickly exhale (warm breath) (*xu* 响), and if they become angry they increasingly puff out (moist breath) (*chui* 吹), in order to harmonise it.<sup>27</sup> They breathe in the quintessential *qi* of heaven and earth to make *yin* substantial, hence they will

<sup>25</sup> ‘Enter the chamber’ (*ru fang* 入房) is a euphemism for sexual activity.

<sup>26</sup> ‘Yinshu’ shiwen (1990), 82.

<sup>27</sup> Ma Jixing (1992), 826 note 17, discusses different techniques of breathing.

be able to avoid illness. The reason that lowly people become ill is exhaustion from their labour, hunger and thirst; when the hundred sweats cease, they plunge themselves into water and then lie down in a cold and empty place. They don't know to put on more clothes and so they become ill from it. Also they do not know to expel air and breathe out (dry breath) to get rid of it. On account of this they have many illnesses and die easily.<sup>28</sup>

貴人之所以得病者，以其喜怒之不和也。喜則陽氣多，怒則陰（陰）氣多，是以道者喜則急响（响），怒則劇炊（吹），以和之。吸天地之精氣，實其陰，故能毋病。賤人之所以得病者，勞卷（倦）饑渴，白汗夫（絕），自入水中，及臥寒突之地，不智（知）收衣，故得病焉，有（又）弗智（知）响（响）瘳（呼）而除去之，是以多病而易死。

Having established that members of elite society in late Warring States, Qin and Western Han society were at least familiar with *yangsheng* culture, whether they approved of it or not, I shall turn now to those texts that describe *mai* that were preserved alongside the Mawangdui and Zhangjiashan *yangsheng* literature.

### ‘Maishu’

The newly excavated Western Han textual sources that describe the *mai* have already altered our perception of the early development of acumoxa's channel theory. Physiological speculation is primitive when compared to received medical literature. The excavated texts do not reveal the network of channels systematically associated with the internal organs or a network of acumoxa points that we know as the mature acumoxa system. Their channels proceed in more parallel fashion along the limbs to the torso and head. They sometimes cross, but they do not join at the ends to form a continuous ring. The practice of lancing the body is mainly associated in these texts with abscess bursting, and the principles of practice related to the channels are extremely basic. These early texts document a first systematic attempt at the kind of physiological speculation that we see in later medical literature. When we come, for example, to examine references to *qi* in the excavated texts, we shall see that the authors of the early acumoxa texts did not conceive of a complex circulation or physiology of *qi*.

‘Maishu’, a manuscript excavated at the Zhangjiashan burial site, is the most complete and comprehensive of the works that describe the *mai* and is, in my view, the earliest extant treatise to set out theories and practice of acupuncture, wherein an implement is used to pierce the skin in order to influence the movement of *qi* in the body. It comprises 65 slips. Harper divides the document into six core texts which he describes as ‘Ailment List’, ‘Eleven Vessels’, ‘Five Signs of Death’, ‘Care of the Body’, ‘Six

<sup>28</sup> ‘Yinshu’ shiwen (1990), 86.

Constituents’, and ‘Vessels and Vapor’. Three of these – ‘Eleven Vessels’; ‘Five Signs of Death’; and ‘Vessels and Vapor’ – are editions of texts in the Mawangdui medical manuscripts. Harper’s titles indicate well the content of each text. I shall adopt his divisions, numbering the texts (1)–(6). Gao Dalun 高大倫, using a different schema, conflates the last three.<sup>29</sup>

‘Maishu’ (1) is a lexicon of illnesses and illness characteristics. It is organised by superficial anatomy listing sixty-seven illnesses beginning from the head and moving down to the soles of the feet. In part, the text constitutes an early attempt at differential diagnosis which bears a relationship to some of the categories worked out in the recipe text ‘Wushi’er bingfang’. It does not define the illnesses according to the kind of physiology that we will see in the remaining ‘Maishu’ texts.

‘Maishu’ (2) is an edition of the Mawangdui ‘Yinyang shiyimai jiujiing’. It describes the course of eleven different channels that run between the extremities and the head. The route of each channel is followed by a list of symptoms associated with a pathology of that channel.

‘Maishu’ (3) is an edition of the Mawangdui ‘Yinyang mai sihou’ 陰陽脈死候 (Death Signs of *yin* and *yang* Vessels). It differentiates between *yin* and *yang* pathology in recognising terminal conditions.

‘Maishu’ (4), ‘Care of the Body’, recommends movement and moderation as the secret to long life. This suggests the same philosophy evident in ‘Yinshu’s *daoyin* regimen. It is a statement which is repeated in *Lüshi chungiu*.<sup>30</sup>

Now flowing water does not stagnate, when the door pivots there will be no woodworm because of their movement. When there is movement then it fills the four limbs and empties the five viscera, when the five viscera are empty then the jade body will be benefited. Now one who rides in a carriage and eats meat, must fast and purify themselves in spring and autumn. If they do not fast and purify themselves then the *mai* will rot and cause death.

‘Maishu’ (5) is peculiar to Zhangjiashan. It provides early analogies for six different parts of the body: bone (*gu* 骨), sinew (*jin* 筋), blood (*xue* 血), channel (*mai* 脈), flesh (*rou* 肉), and *qi*. It follows by attributing a particular quality of pain to each part. Pain indicates the onset of serious physical decline and this text serves as a warning to those who do not take positive action to counteract this deterioration.

‘Maishu’ (6) is a complex piece of writing that may constitute three separate texts. The first part describes the movement of *qi* and how to influence its flow. This is followed by a very practical guide to abscess lancing. ‘Maishu’ ends with the earliest

<sup>29</sup> Gao Dalun (1992). <sup>30</sup> *Lüshi chungiu*, *juan* 3, *pian* 2, 136.

extant record of pulse taking. Together these elements add up to the most basic principles of acumoxa practice.

Harper concludes that the combination of these final texts in ‘Maishu’ is indicative of the influence of macrobiotic hygiene (i.e. *yangsheng* nurturing life practice) in the development of vessel (i.e. channel) theory.<sup>31</sup> The aim of the present study is to test this hypothesis using source material from ‘Maishu’ and the *yangsheng* manuscripts from Mawangdui.

The following passage from ‘Maishu’ (6) will form the key extract upon which I identify the incidence of acupuncture in the excavated texts.<sup>32</sup> Another edition of this passage exists among the Mawangdui medical manuscripts and has been assigned the title of ‘Maifa’. But key lacunae in the ‘Maifa’ obscure the meaning of the passage which in its recovered state refers to ‘cautery’ and not to body piercing. In the following extract we will find the most sophisticated of physiological ideas represented in ‘Maishu’ and the earliest extant treatise to document a link between body piercing and a formal movement of *qi*. For the first time, a text describes *qi* as a medical phenomenon subject to control by another.<sup>33</sup>

The channels are valued by the sages. As for *qi*, it benefits the lower body and harms the upper; follows heat and distances coolness. So, the sages cool the head and warm the feet.<sup>34</sup> Those who treat illness take the surplus and supplement the insufficiency. So if *qi* goes up, not down, then when you see the channel that has over-reached itself, apply one cauterisation where it meets the articulation.<sup>35</sup> When the illness is intense then apply another cauterisation at a place two *cun*

<sup>31</sup> Harper (1998), 32.

<sup>32</sup> I differentiate ‘acupuncture’ from blood-letting and other minor surgery by the target of medical intervention. Acupuncture, as I define it, is the act of piercing the body with the intention of moving *qi* in the channels.

<sup>33</sup> ‘Maishu’ shiwen, 74.

<sup>34</sup> This sentence could also mean that ‘the sages have cool heads and warm feet’, and if they practise what they preach indeed they should have. However, the focus of this section appears to be on the principles of therapy and so we have translated as if it were a therapeutic situation.

<sup>35</sup> The recurrence of *huan* 環 in the next sentence after the preposition *yu* 於 suggests that *huan* 環 could not be a verb. Harper (1998), 214, translates as ‘ring’ and speculates that *huan* refers to the waist. My view is that the ‘ring’ is the articulation of the joints. The very next sentence suggests that the intervention is made at the joints, by specifying treatment at the place where the *qi* comes out at the elbow or knee creases. By applying cauterisation around the joints one can expect to change the direction of movement of *qi* in the body. In this treatment a stone lancet is used to remedy the situation. Once the points for acumoxa were standardised it is easy to see that the point distribution was concentrated around the joints. One can imagine that a natural articulation which at the same time was a narrowing of the body could be considered a significant impediment to a movement of *qi* through the body. The *qi* might be visualised as becoming squeezed and obstructed at this point, just as water swirls backwards when it meets a lock. See note 40.

above the articulation. When the *qi* rises at one moment and falls in the next pierce it with a stone lancet at the back of the knee and the elbow.

夫脈者，聖人之所以貴毆。氣者，利下而害上，從煖而去清，故聖人寒頭而煖足。治病者取有徐(餘)而益不足，故氣上而不下則視有過之脈，當環而久之。病甚而上於環二寸益為一久。氣一上一下，當裕與腑之脈而砭之。

On the evidence of the excavated texts alone there is very little to suggest that *qi* in the body is present only in the channels, let alone that it travels in a particular direction along only those channels.

In this passage from ‘Maishu’ (6), *qi* is understood to move downwards and to the extremities and this is borne out in contemporary texts that describe the practices of breath-cultivation and *daoyin*.<sup>36</sup> The following exercises taken from ‘Yinshu’ demonstrate this principle in *daoyin*.<sup>37</sup>

Ailing from *lao li* 醪(瘳)醴(癯) liquor.<sup>38</sup> The prescription for pulling is: grasp a staff in the right hand, face a wall, do not breathe, tread on the wall with the left foot, and rest when tired; likewise grasp the staff in the left hand, tread on the wall with the right foot, and rest when tired. When the *qi* of the head flows downwards, the foot will not be immobile and numb, the head will not swell, and the nose will not be stuffed up.

病瘳癯，引之方，右手把丈(杖)，鄉(向)壁毋息，左足躐壁，卷(倦)而休，亦左手把丈(杖)，右足躐壁，亦卷(倦)而休。頭氣下流，足不痿？首不踵，毋事恆服之。

Similarly *qi* can be projected into the arms:

When suffering with there being less *qi* in the two hands, both the arms cannot be raised equally and the tips of the fingers, like rushing water, tend to numbness. Pretend that the two elbows are bound to the sides, and vigorously swing them. In the morning, middle of the day and middle of the night. Do it altogether one thousand times. Stop after ten days.

苦兩手少氣，舉之不鈇(鈞)，指端湍湍善舛(瘳)，賈(假)縛兩肘於兩肘，而力揮之，朝、日中、夜半皆為千、旬而已。

Downward movement of *qi* is not a feature of the ‘Jingmai’ treatise of the *Lingshu* where *qi* travels through the channels in the direction of the anatomical references

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, the Yellow Emperor’s conversations with Rong Cheng 容成 in the ‘Shiwen’ (Mawangdui Han mu boshu zhengli xiaozu (1985), 146–7).

<sup>37</sup> ‘Yinshu’ shiwen (1990), 83; Gao Dalun (1995), 122–3.

<sup>38</sup> The symptom is identified as 瘳癯. 癯 is an unattested character. 瘳, read *chou*, can simply be rendered ‘ill’ or ‘to recover’. However, in ‘Yinshu’ the word must be part of a compound name for an illness. I suspect that this is an illness associated with *lao* 醪 ‘liquor with sediment’ and *li* 醴 ‘new sweet liquor’.



which are arranged in an order that forms a circuit.<sup>39</sup> No such circuit is evident in the way the channels are formed in ‘Zubi jiujiing’ and ‘Yinyang jiujiing’, the excavated channel texts, where the anatomical references are given in an order that begins at the extremities and travels to the head. If *qi* were travelling in this direction it would be contrary to the natural movement given in ‘Maishu’ (6) quoted above. On the evidence of this passage and ‘Maishu’ (2), the text that contains descriptions of the route and direction of the channels, we can, therefore, dismiss the concept of circulation as a feature of the excavated texts.

### Classical medical writings

From *Huangdi neijing* we can see that within two centuries following the closure of the Western Han tombs, the body was conceived as a complete microcosm of the external environment. A regulated flow of *qi*, the vital substance of life, was as basic to physical health as it was to the harmony of heaven and earth, and the channels through which it flowed were as carefully mapped as the waterways of the empire.<sup>40</sup> The *yin* and *yang* viscera or the solid and hollow organs of the body (*zangfu* 臟腑), were also described as officials of state with responsibility for the various ministries – for economy, for planning, and for upright judgements.<sup>41</sup>

In *Huangdi neijing* correspondences with *yin* and *yang* have transcended the basic sequence of opposites of light and shade, heaven and earth to become fundamental principles in human physiology, as well as in the classification of different physical substances and conditions, both normal and pathological. Stages in *yinyang* transformation explain states of health as well as the aetiology of disease. The acumoxa channels themselves even have acupoints that reflect the construction of the universe, the structure of the Empire, the Imperial palace, and the geography of China in their names. Amongst the acupoints are the heavenly pivot (*tianshu* 天樞), body pillar (*shenzhu* 身柱), sun and moon (*riyue* 日月), spirit hall (*shenting* 神庭), and illuminated sea (*zhaohai* 照海).

<sup>39</sup> *Lingshu*, *juan* 3, *pian* 10, 1–9.

<sup>40</sup> In *The Way of Water*, Allan (1997), 39–40, describes how, in Chinese mythology, ‘directing water’ was the first step to a civilised world. Channelling *qi* into routes around the body, like digging irrigation ditches and flood control canals, marks a significant stage in bringing the body, conceived as natural process, under human control. In *Lingshu* 12 the rivers and streams of the body reflect the natural, rather than man-made, waterways of China, see n. 52. Once the analogy between the channels and man-made water courses has been made, all the qualities and techniques of directing and controlling water can then be applied to the movement of bodily *qi*.

<sup>41</sup> *Suwen* 8, *juan* 2, *pian* 8, 1–2. Is the *locus classicus* for a representation of the body as a reflection of the Imperial structure, ‘the spleen and the stomach are the officers in charge of the granaries, the five flavours emerge from the large intestine who is the officer of the passage ways . . .’ Unschuld (1985), 79–83, sets out some of these ideas. See also Chiu (1986), 73–7.

The body is an intricately mapped out mirror of the macrocosm.<sup>42</sup> But how did this come about? How did the body begin to embrace the greater construction of the universe?

### A creative tension

How does the *yangsheng* literature relate to the medical texts that describe how to manage illness in other people? As all the literature came out of the same lacquer box at Mawangdui, we can assume their physical proximity means that all the manuscripts enjoyed a similar readership.<sup>43</sup> But do the ideas that the different genres of medical writings express emerge at the same time, in the same social context? To answer this question we must consider the dynamic nature of technical and conceptual developments and their reflection in literature during the early Imperial period. At a cursory glance it is easy to see that such concepts as *yin* 陰, *yang* 陽, essence (*jing* 精), spirit (*shen* 神), and *qi* 氣 are more prevalent in some of the texts and barely appear in others. Cosmological explanations, for example, are not a significant feature of the pharmacological texts, but are ubiquitous in the descriptions of breath-cultivation in ‘Shiwen’.<sup>44</sup>

Rather than list the similarities between the assumptions of the *yangsheng* and the evolving *acumoxa* literature, it is more fruitful to investigate the differences between the two genres, before the medical synthesis of the ensuing centuries. Such a comparison will serve to emphasise that, for example, in exploring a language to express sexual relationships such texts as ‘He yinyang’ contributed a unique dimension to the development of later medical concepts. In fact there is a great deal of evidence to show that in the Western Han dynasty medical concepts were in the process of being worked out through the medium of different disciplines.<sup>45</sup> Some contemporary attempts at categorisation were destined for extinction.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Unschuld (1985), 51–100.

<sup>43</sup> Nurturing life texts are kept or catalogued next to the medical texts and in later works certainly refer to the same body of knowledge.

<sup>44</sup> Wile (1992), 19–23, lists many points of similarity between the medical texts and those on the sexual arts. He concludes that much is *borrowed* from medicine. My concern in this paper is what is *borrowed back*, what the special focus of, for example, the sexual practices eventually contributes to medicine.

<sup>45</sup> In later nurturing life literature there are many different constructions of the body that utilise terms and concepts which reflect the imperatives of the particular practice for which they were created. In the sexual arts the gate of life (命門 *mingmen*) will relate directly to the reproductive organs and be located deep inside the body. The same terminology in later *acumoxa* treatises refers to a point just beneath the skin between lumbar vertebrae two and three which can easily be penetrated with a needle, or affected by the heat of moxa, without damaging the tissue of the body.

<sup>46</sup> In a text that attributes the various stages of fetal development to wood, fire, earth, metal, and water, the Five Agents (*wuxing* 五行), one stage is also attributed to stone (*shi* 石), apparently the sixth. This sixth agent was not to be adopted into later tables of correspondence. See Mawangdui Han mu boshu zhengli xiaozu (1985), 136.

It is not my thesis that the authors of what came to be viewed as classical medical treatises took on ideas from *yangsheng* culture wholesale, but that in the construction of the acumoxa body,<sup>47</sup> they selectively adopted some of the perspectives that had been refined through the older *yangsheng* studies. In order to understand the mode of construction of the classical medical body it is necessary to explore the dynamic between representations in such canons as *Huangdi neijing* and representations taken from earlier Western Han medical cultures found in the excavated texts. In particular, to demonstrate the priority of important features of classical Chinese medicine in *yangsheng* literature, I will compare the lyrical descriptions of the surface of the body found in sexual-cultivation with more mundane representations of the exterior of the body in ‘Maishu’, where we find the earliest extant treatise on acumoxa theory and practice. The second task of this chapter will be to identify the influence of *yangsheng* culture, and in particular breath-cultivation, on the concept of a formalised movement of *qi* in the body. Included in the discussion will be an examination of early methods of influencing the movement of *qi* and how they had a bearing on the critical transition from the perception of *qi* as an independent external phenomenon, to the idea that it filled the body and was amenable to human intervention. In these two stages I will provide ample evidence to identify the influence of *yangsheng* on the development of classical medical theory.

### **Landscaping the body**

By comparing ‘Maishu’ (2) and ‘He Yinyang’ we can begin to see how images of the social world were first brought to the surface of the body. In ‘Maishu’ (2) the body is described in simple terms inspired by superficial anatomy. In contrast, the lyrical descriptions of the sexual arts landscape the body with images of the natural and human world, with mountains and seas, bowls and stoves. The same perception of the body can be traced to the names of the acumoxa points in later medical classics such as *Huangdi neijing Lingshu* or *Zhenjiu jiyi jing* 針灸甲乙經 (AB Canon of Acumoxa) (AD 256–82). I do not intend to privilege a knowledge of acupoints in interpreting the position or meaning of any of the anatomical locations in the excavated texts. I simply wish to demonstrate that a metaphorical language for describing the exterior body developed first within the context of a culture of self-cultivation and that its imagery was retained in classical medical theory by the authors of the acupoints who invoked a similar landscape for the body.

<sup>47</sup> i.e. a body delineated by channels through which *qi* moves and on which are points where *qi* can be influenced.

The description of each channel in ‘Maishu’ (2) begins with a title such as ‘Forearm great *yin* channel’ (*bi juyin zhi mai* 臂鉅陰之脈) or ‘Foot great *yang* channel’ (*zu juyang zhi mai* 足鉅陽之脈) followed by a description of the somatographic space occupied by the channel. Each location is linked by verbs of movement. The channel moves in a number of ways. It can go up (*shang* 上), down (*xia* 下), come out (*chu* 出), enter (*ru* 入), pierce (*guan* 貫), among similar verbs. Each verb is then followed by an anatomical location. Two lists of symptoms then follow each of the channel descriptions. The edition known as ‘Zubi jiujiing’ rounds up with the simple directive to cauterise it (*jiu zhi* 灸之).

On the routes around the body taken in ‘Yinyang jiujiing’, all the anatomical terms are visible structures on the surface of the body, except the great *yin* channel, which travels to the stomach, and the forearm lesser *yin* channel, which passes to the heart.<sup>48</sup> Most of the graphs contain radicals of the physical body, such as flesh (*rou* 肉), foot (*zu* 足), bone (*gu* 骨), or eye (*mu* 目):

The shoulder channel arises behind the ear, descends the shoulder, comes out at the inner surface of the elbow, comes out on the wrist at the outer surface of the forearm, and mounts the back of the hand.<sup>49</sup>

肩脈，起於耳後，下肩，出肘內廉，出臂外肭上，乘手北。

The nomenclature for the channels themselves, foot and arm, greater and lesser *yang* and *yin*, *yang* illumination and ceasing *yin* signifies the dark and light anatomical planes of the body i.e. an inner/outer, upper/lower distinction – meanings associated with the earliest known references of *yin* 陰 ‘the dark side of the hill’ and *yang* 陽 ‘the sunny side of the hill’.<sup>50</sup> A few exceptions such as the fish thigh (*yugu* 魚股), a location that appears to be a more lyrical and less visual representation of the body, in fact only describe shape – in this case the fish-like shape of the quadriceps above the knee. And this simple rationale is retained in the names of a number of acupoints described, for example, in *Zhenjiu jiayi jing*.<sup>51</sup> Prostrate hare (*futu* 伏兔) is still the name of an acupoint on the stomach channel known in modern acupoint theory as stomach 32. Its location is given as, ‘6 *cun* (寸) above the knee on the anterior prominent muscle of the thigh’. Seen from

<sup>48</sup> Although the routes of the channels are superficial to the body, illnesses of the channels commonly include symptoms of the alimentary tract and urinary system.

<sup>49</sup> ‘Maishu’ shiwen (1989), 73.

<sup>50</sup> See Granet (1934), 361–88.

<sup>51</sup> A comprehensive list of acupoints is in *The Location of Acupoints* by Anon. (1990), which also provides historical sources for both names and locations. See *Zhenjiu jiayi jing*, *juan* 3, 576, 683, and 685, for the classical sources of names and locations given in this paragraph.

a lateral angle the acupoint is on the eye of a prostrate hare that is formed by the seams of the muscles of the lateral, anterior thigh. An acupoint on the central anterior channel, known as *ren* (任) 15 in modern acumoxa theory, was also first seen named dove tail (*jiuwei* 鳩尾). Its location is given as ‘0.5 *cun* below the xiphoid process’. This is the end of a bone structure which, taking in the rib cage and the sternum gives a skeletal impression of a spreading dove’s tail. Calf nose (*dubi* 犢鼻), later known as stomach 35, is ‘on the border of the patella in the depression beside the large ligament’. When the knee is bent and seen from an anterior view the acupoint forms the calf’s nostril.

The authors of the channel descriptions in ‘Maishu’ (2) privileged a visual knowledge of the external body. A handful of visual clues in ‘Maishu’, like the *yugu*, only hint at the vividly described microcosm conjured up by the classical acupoint names. The names of the acupoints landscape the whole of the body’s surface. There are *yin* articulations (*yinxi* 陰郛), *yin* valleys (*yingu* 陰谷), *yang* valleys (*yanggu* 陽谷), *yang* ponds (*yangchi* 陽池), and the like. The metaphor of water which constantly informs us about the movement of *qi* also gains full maturity in the acupoint body where seas and oceans swell in the abdomen and fill the knees and elbows. Further on down the limbs there are rivers, springs, streams, and wells as the *qi* flows in different shapes and speeds towards the extremities.<sup>52</sup>

‘Maishu’ does not provide many leads towards understanding the development of a body landscaped with acupoints – nor does it link its channels systematically with movements of *qi*. In contrast ‘He yinyang’ (Harmonising *yin* and *yang*) begins with a kind of pre-coital massage which is couched in lyrical verse about the surface of a woman’s body. The text proceeds in parallel form, mostly beginning with verbal instructions to take actions that end in particular locations of the body. Each anatomical landmark is represented by the kind of two-graph term used later in the names of the acupoints.

I do not intend to translate the text or to attempt to determine definitively which parts of the body are massaged. That has been adequately accomplished both in English and in modern Chinese.<sup>53</sup> Where there appears to be confusion it is useful to refer to Li Ling and Keith McMahon who survey anatomical terminology in the whole of the Mawangdui sexual-cultivation corpus, making a critical study of existing interpretations.<sup>54</sup> I include massage at this point to build up a broad picture of the exterior body

<sup>52</sup> The *locus classicus* for an analogy of the circulation tracts with the waterways is *Lingshu*, *juan 3*, *pian 12*, 11–13, which matches rivers to the channels of the body. The rivers can be matched to those on maps of the early Han period. See for example Tan Qixiang (1982), 19–20.

<sup>53</sup> Harper (1998), 412–22. Wile (1992), 51–73. Ma Jixing (1992), 977.

<sup>54</sup> Li and McMahon (1992), 145–85.

in self-cultivation culture, a culture which prepares the ground for a new medical view of body topography.

Although the various translators often disagree, enough common ground can be found between the interpretations to begin and end the massage although, in the middle section, the exact anatomical locations become a little vague and cannot be conclusively determined. The massage begins on the *yang* ‘light’, or back side of the hand. It proceeds to the elbows and then to the armpits. Each of the locations so far has been designated with two graphs, one of which relates to a commonly used anatomical term. After these three unremarkable terms, the texts start using names that are far more lyrical.

The massage proceeds upward to a part of the body known as the stove net-rope (*zaogang* 灶綱), follows through to the neck region (*xiangxiang* 項鄉), and then to *chengkuang* (拯匡), variously interpreted as receiving canister (*chengkuang* 承筐)<sup>55</sup> and identified as the female pelvis or as receiving light (*chengguang* 承光), a name which later refers to the acupoint located on the bladder channel on the top of the head.<sup>56</sup> Thereafter there is a direction to cover (*fu* 拂) the encircling rings (*zhouhuan* 周環) – perhaps the eye sockets, the breasts, or the belly.<sup>57</sup>

After covering the ‘encircling rings’ the massage moves downwards to the broken bowl (*quepen* 缺盆), a term listed in *Shiji* as the clavicle,<sup>58</sup> but in *Suwen* adopted as the name of an acupoint on the stomach channel which nestles in the depression located above the centre of the clavicle.<sup>59</sup> In *Zhenjiu jiayi jing* we have another utensil, heavenly cauldron (*tianding* 天鼎) located close to the ‘broken bowl’.<sup>60</sup> Both these acupoints are sitting on top of the thoracic cage which suggests that the chest cavity might have been conceived as a stove within which a fire burnt. This might then explain the position of the stove net-rope, *zaogang*. Harper reads *zaojiong* (灶炯) and translates ‘stove trivet’. He refers to the numerous metal trivets for holding cooking utensils over an open fire that have been excavated from Han burial sites.<sup>61</sup> Alchemical imagery cannot be

<sup>55</sup> Harper (1987), 571–2. Harper makes a strong argument that the canister is the ‘osseous basket’ that holds the female genitals. He cites examples in *Shijing* and *Yijing* where the canister refers directly to female sexuality.

<sup>56</sup> Ma Jixing (1992), 979 n. 9, and *Zhenjiu jiayi jing*, *juan* 3, 476.

<sup>57</sup> Harper identifies the *zhouhuan* as the waist, Li and McMahon the breasts. ‘Maishu’ refers to the idiom, ‘the eyes are ringed, the look engraved’ (*muhuan shidiao* 目闕視雕), as the fatal sign of blood pathology. Perhaps *zhouhuan* refers to the rings of the eye sockets and covering the woman’s eye is a part of sexual foreplay.

<sup>58</sup> *Shiji*, *juan* 105, 2811. <sup>59</sup> *Suwen*, *juan* 15, *pian* 59, 13.

<sup>60</sup> *Zhenjiu jiayi jing*, *juan* 3, 547. <sup>61</sup> Harper (1998), 412–13.

ignored. Meditation texts also use the same kind of images to describe the process of refining *qi*, essence, and spirit in the body.<sup>62</sup>

Returning to ‘He yinyang’'s massage procedure, the guiding rope of a net (*gang* 綱) of the term stove net-rope (*zaogang*) may be compared with another acupoint, *yang* net-rope (*yanggang* 陽綱) which can be located at either side of the spine between thoracic vertebrae ten and eleven. There are many acupoints along the spine with names that also suggest the line of support for a larger structure, for instance, heavenly column (*tianzhu* 天柱), body column (*shenzhu* 身柱), spirit way (*shendao* 神道). Given the many, essentially similar images that we know to be simultaneously superimposed upon the body, a woven net spreading out from the spine would seem to have the same inherent qualities. Another resonant image is suggested by the term warp (*jing* 經), the thread of the net, which later becomes standardised for the channels of acumoxa therapy.

Continuing downwards from the clavicle, the movement travels over the syrupy liquor ford (*lijin* 醴津) perhaps the way through the fluid streaming down from syrupy liquor spring (*liquan* 醴泉)<sup>63</sup> which arises under the tongue or at the navel, alternatively, or perhaps simultaneously, the cleavage between lactating breasts<sup>64</sup> to two more locations before the final instruction to enter the dark gate (*xuanmen* 玄門), a euphemism for the vagina.

The first of the two intermediate massage locations, the spurting sea (*bohaisi* 淳海) and the second, mount constancy (*changshan* 常山), are both sites referred to in *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (Canon of Mountains and Lakes), possibly another text local to the region of Chu.<sup>65</sup> Harper maps the lakes and mountains onto the body and sets out the arguments for specific identification with anatomical locations.

Neither ‘mount constancy’ nor ‘dark gate’ are attested in the acumoxa canons, but by the time of *Zhenjiu jiayi jing* and *Lingshu* the body is littered with gates and mountains. Below the navel, at the probable location of the spurting sea (*bohaisi*) comes sea of *qi* (*qihai* 氣海) which is also called *boyang* 腠腧. *Bo* 腠 (neck), the first graph, is homophonous with *bo* 淳 (spurting) which suggests that the name may be a graphic variation.<sup>66</sup> Outside of the external malleolus of the ankle are the Kunlun mountains 崑崙山, the stairway to Heaven.<sup>67</sup> There are gates of dumbness and numerous palace

<sup>62</sup> See for example Robinet (1989). Robinet, discussing inner alchemy, explores the many different levels at which the image of the furnace and the crucible can be simultaneously understood.

<sup>63</sup> Wile (1992), 222 n. 8.

<sup>64</sup> Harper (1987), 576–7 describes the geographic locations of the *liquan* as they are given in Han sources. He identifies the *liquan* with a manifestation of the cosmic axis which joins heaven and earth.

<sup>65</sup> See Fracasso (1993). <sup>66</sup> *Zhenjiu jiayi jing*, *juan* 3, 582. <sup>67</sup> Major (1993), 46–67.

gates, not to speak of the gates of the various spirits and souls associated with human life, the *hun* 魂, the *shen* 神, and the door of the *po* 魄.<sup>68</sup>

For the purposes of this article it is not necessary to attempt to resolve the controversies in meaning and translation of the locations in ‘He yinyang’. It is enough to note that although all these terms clearly refer to physical locations, not one of them is a common anatomical term. Each is a metaphoric representation and can only be understood by appealing to literary allusion or analogous structures in contemporary society.

Some of the analogies relating to the natural and social worlds introduced here in the massage procedure are matched in the exercises described in ‘Yinshu’. In ‘Yinshu’ we find raising the body up on to the ball of the foot conveyed through the image of looking down from the battlements (*bini* 埤堦), perhaps peering over the crenellations of a castle wall:

With feet together leave the flat position, rocking thirty times. This is called working the toes. Extend the lower leg and straighten to the heels. With feet together rock thirty times. This is called looking down from the battlements.

傅（附）足离翕（合），崒（蹠）三十，曰金指。信（伸）脗直踵，并崒（蹠）三十，曰埤堦。

Waving the arms mimics the action of the *fuche*, thought to be equivalent to a *fanche*, a vehicle for trapping birds and rabbits:

Covering the cart.<sup>69</sup> With two arms parallel, wave them high to left and right, and then bring them down straight and wave them.

復車者，并兩臂，左右危揮，下正揮之。

‘Maishu’, ‘Yinshu’, and ‘He yinyang’ are educational treatises on the body. The former is devoted to the interpretation and treatment of symptoms, the second is a *daoyin* manual, and the latter a treatise on health-promoting sexual practice. Together they may

<sup>68</sup> *Lingshu*, *juan 2*, *pian 8*, 7b–9. ‘Benshen’ 本神 (rooting in the spirit), describes the relationship between the internal organs, emotion, and other aspects of the human consciousness and entities that we might approximate to spirit and souls. The *hun* 魂 and the *po* 魄, for example, are aspects of a human being that come to be paired in life and separated at death. New research into early references to these concepts has shown that *hun/po* dualism is not at the foundation of Han burial practice. Brashier (1996), 125–58 shows how the pair are related to medical states of anxiety. In *Lingshu* 8 the *hun* is said to reside in the blood, the *po* in the lungs. The will (*zhi* 志) resides in the kidneys. The *shen* 神 (originally a term for ‘spirit’ entities external to the body – and, in the *Lingshu*, a somatisation of the qualities of brightness and spontaneous perception that the spirits represented) is said to reside in the channels (*mai*).

<sup>69</sup> ‘Yinshu’ *shiwén* (1990), 83, and Gao Dalun (1995), 114. I take *fu* 復 as a graphic variant of *fu* 覆 (to cover). The movement could be a mime of throwing and shaking a soft covering over a cart.