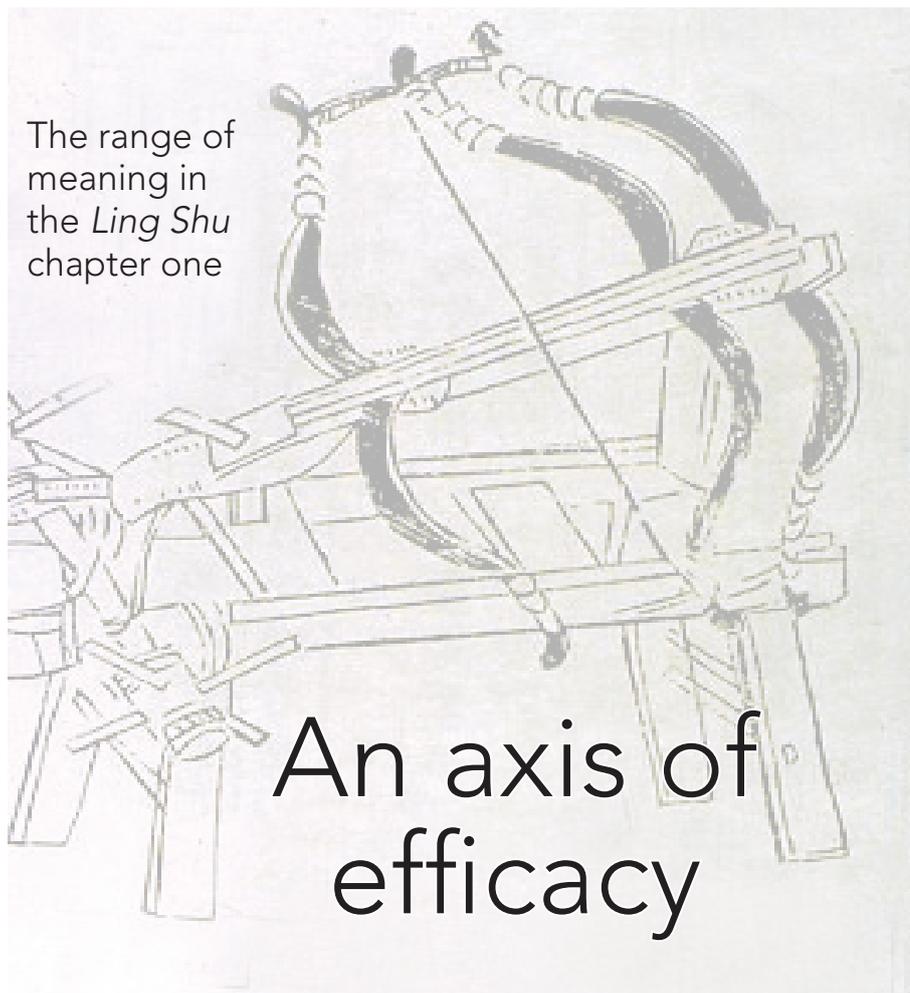


The range of meaning in the *Ling Shu* chapter one



## An axis of efficacy

By **Charles Chace & Dan Bensky**

In the last issue, authors Charles Chace and Dan Bensky began a discussion of the first section of Chapter 1 of the *Ling Shu*. In the second part of this article, they continue the translation of this section, which they call the *Ling Shu Précis*. They also further explore the subtle concept of *ji* 機 in this text, which suggests that the mechanics of needling, while important, are secondary to the manner and intention with which they are engaged by the practitioner.

刺之微在遲速。[5]

**The subtleties of needling lie in its speed.**

According to *Ling Shu*-3.1, “That the subtleties of needling lie in its speed, means slow or fast [needle manipulation].”<sup>a45</sup>

If it is the crude who attend to the mechanics of needle technique, then how is it that “the subtleties of needling lie in its speed”? This is a relative statement, predicated upon the sensibilities established in the first four lines. It

a. 刺之微在(數) [速] 遲者, 徐疾之意也。

### The *Ling Shu Précis*

from chapter one of the *Ling Shu*

Please tell me of the way [of needling].

The essentials of the small needle are easy to explain but difficult to engage.

The crude attend to the form, the superior attend to the spirit.

Spirit oh spirit! There is a guest at the door.

Without observing the disease, how can one know its origin?

The subtleties of needling lie in its speed.

The crude attend to the junctures and the superior attend to the dynamic.

The movement in the dynamic is not separate from its empty spaces;

The dynamic within this empty space is clear, still and subtle.

Its coming cannot be met and its going cannot be pursued.

Those who understand the way of the dynamic, will not impede it and thus it manifests.

Not understanding the way of the dynamic, one detains it and thus it fails to show itself.

To understand its goings and comings, emphasise its periodicity.

The crude are in the dark about this; sublime! Only practitioners have it.

Going away from it is contrary, promoting its arrival is going with the flow.

If one clearly understands the contrary and normal [flow of qi], then you can act correctly and without doubt or question.

By meeting it and taking it away, how could one not achieve depletion [of the qi]?

By pursuing and assisting it, how could one not achieve repletion [of the qi]?

Whether meeting it or following it, by means of one's attention, one harmonises it.

This is all there is to say with regard to the way of needling.



*It is not that technique is unimportant, only that it is useless without the proper level and quality of attention.*

is not that technique is unimportant, only that it is useless without the proper level and quality of attention.

The first five lines establish that the superior way to practice is to develop a relationship with spirit that is played out through one's engagement with the patient's qi, blood and corporeal form, and is also expressed in one's application of needle technique. The text now presents a new dichotomy, one that echoes the formulation described in Line 2 that "the crude attend to the form, the superior attend to the spirit."

粗守關上守機。[6]

**The crude attend to the junctures and the superior attend to the dynamic.**

This line is the crux of the passage. *Ling Shu*-3.1 explains:

*That the crude attend to the junctures means that they attend to the four extremities and do not understand the departure and arrival of the correct and pathogenic [influences] within the qi and blood. That the superior attend to the dynamic means that they know how to attend to the qi.*<sup>b46</sup>

Zhang Jie-Bin comments on this line in his *Lei Jing* (類經 Classified Classic, 1624) saying: "That the superior protect the dynamic, means that one must examine the movement and quiescence of the arrival of qi."<sup>c47</sup> For Zhang, *ji* is primarily a reflection of the activity of the qi. At this point in the discussion, the state of the correct or pathogenic qi, its excess or deficiency is secondary to a more general appreciation of the qi's comings and goings, a mode of perception that is defined by the focused concentration of the spirit within one's self. One attends to the *ji* by means of one's spirit and one's attention.

It is no accident that the superior practitioner attends both to the spirit and to the dynamic. As already discussed, they are two sides of the same coin. The dynamic is the way the spirit expresses itself and the way to truly engage the spirit is through the dynamic. The two words are closely linked in the *Nei Jing*. When they appear together,

b. 粗守關者，守四肢，而不知血氣正邪之往來也，上守機者知守氣也。

c. 上守機，察氣至之動靜也。

they refer to the overall life activity.<sup>d48</sup> According to *Su Wen*-70, "What is at the centre, is called the spirit-dynamic; if the spirit departs then the dynamic ceases."<sup>e49</sup> Zhang Jie-Bin explains this as: "What is at the centre of things takes the spirit as primary, and one's conscious activity is the expression of the spirit-dynamic. For this reason, if the spirit departs, then the dynamic also follows and ceases."<sup>f50</sup>

One might equally say that the superior attend to the situation or disposition (*shi* 勢). As Zhang Jie-Bin points out, this is not a static state of affairs, but a fluid ebb and flow of circumstance that is played out in the qi. The job of the physician is to discern the precise moment, place and manner to intervene. Perhaps the most important characteristic of this intervention is that it too, will issue from the spaces between phases of activity, a place of stillness.

機之動不離其空 空中之機，清靜而微。[7]

**The movement in the dynamic is not separate from its empty spaces; the dynamic within this empty space is clear, still and subtle.**

*Ling Shu*-3.1 continues its interpretive thread in reading this line both as a simple statement of one's understanding of deficiency and excess, while also acknowledging the deeper thread that the quality of one's intention is pivotal to the efficacy of one's needling.

*That the movement in the dynamic is not separate from its empty spaces means that one understands the state of deficiency or excess within the qi, and the speed with which to wield the needle. That the dynamic within this empty space is clear, still and subtle means that when needling to obtain the qi one must be extremely focused, attending to the qi so as not to lose it.*<sup>g51</sup>

Zhang Jie-Bin endorses the interpretation of the second passage. "This means that one must examine [the patient] with

d. 生命活動的概括

e. 根于中者，命曰神機，神去則機息。

f. 物之根于中者，以神為主，而其知覺運動，即神機所發也，故神去，則機亦隨而息矣。

g. 機之動不離其空中者，知氣之虛實，用針之徐疾也，空中之機清靜以微者，針以得氣，密意守氣勿失也。

detail and circumspection.”<sup>h52</sup> The modern commentator Guo Tian 郭湑 similarly emphasises the state of mind essential to a careful examination. “The physician must maintain a high degree of concentration and quietude.”<sup>h53</sup>

### The dynamic is defined by space and emptiness

The crux issue, however, as the next line makes clear, is that the *ji* is defined by the space or emptiness around which all this activity hinges. It is *the axis of quiescence from which activity springs*. This is the reason why one must quiet oneself in order to perceive it. On one hand, *ji* is the overall state of the qi and blood, and relative balance of healthy and pathogenic qi. As such, it is the disposition or propensity (*shi* 勢) of the situation. An appreciation of the initial propensity of a situation allows one to act effectively. Of equal importance, it allows one to intervene at the beginning of things when they are still nascent or incipient (*ji* 幾) so that it appears to be effortless (*wu wei* 無為).<sup>54</sup>

Then again, *ji* resides in the spaces between activity. It is the quiescence between phases of activity, and it is from here that one's intervention must be based. On another level, *ji* is the incipient point of stillness from which health arises and it is the job of the physician to discover that within the patient. Even the most materialistic commentaries acknowledge that because *ji* resides in “empty spaces,” its engagement requires a certain kind of attention.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, physicians must themselves be clear, quiet and focused to competently assess the stillness of the dynamic that also expresses itself in the empty spaces within the matrix of qi. Such a perspective encompasses the viewpoints of existing commentaries, even as it lends continuity to the entire passage.

其來不可逢，其往不可追。[8]

### Its coming cannot be met, and its going cannot be pursued.

Line 8 is another pivotal line in the interpretation of this text. *Ling Shu*-3.1 reads the line as an expression of the well-

h. 言察宜詳慎也。

i. 醫生高度集中安靜。

known axiom that one must not drain a deficiency or supplement an excess. “That its arrival cannot be met means that the qi is brimming and cannot be tonified”<sup>j</sup> ... and “that its departure cannot be pursued means that the qi is deficient and cannot be drained.”<sup>k56</sup>

There is some debate as to just what kind of qi is being referred to here. Zhang Zhi-Cong interprets the unspoken topic of Line 8 to be specifically pathogenic qi. “If this qi has just arrived, then the pathogenic qi will become properly exuberant. If the pathogenic qi is exuberant then the correct qi is greatly deficient. If one cannot avail oneself of the qi's arrival then one should meet and tonify it.”<sup>57</sup>

Line 8 introduces another aspect of *ji* relating to the timing of one's intervention.

It is, of course, ill-advised to tonify excesses and drain deficiencies, but the manner and timing with which one acts is equally important. This emphasis is apparent in the explanation provided in *Su Wen*-27.3.

*If one awaits the pathogenic qi and does not examine it until the great [pathogenic] qi has already passed, and then drains it, the true qi will collapse. If it collapses, it will not recover. The pathogenic qi will return again and the disease will worsen. This is why its going cannot be pursued.*<sup>m58</sup>

Zhang Zhi-Cong also stresses one's awareness of the “the subtleties of both coming and going”.

*One cannot avail one's self of the [correct] qi's departure, but [still] pursues and drains it, the concern is that one may damage [the patient's] correct qi. The crux is in the subtleties of its nascent coming and going.*<sup>n59</sup>

*Ji* lies in the spaces of quiescence between things which in this context are the comings and goings of the qi. When one works from

j. 其來不可逢者，氣盛不可補也。

k. 其往不可追者，氣虛不可瀉也。

l. 如其氣方來，乃邪氣正盛。邪氣盛，則正氣大虛。不可乘其氣來，即迎而補之。

m. 俟邪不審，大氣已過，瀉之，則真氣脫，脫則不復，邪氣復至，而病益蓄，故曰，其往不可追，此之謂。

n. 不可乘其氣往，追而瀉之，恐傷其正氣，在於方來方去之微，而發其機也。



*It is, of course, ill-advised to tonify excesses and drain deficiencies, but the manner and timing with which one acts is equally important.*



One must neither go rushing to meet, nor chasing after the qi, but remain instead with the dynamic.

the *ji* and one's action becomes effortless (*wu wei* 無為) and even the most subtle influence has a significant impact. Once again, the state of one's mind or spirit is a crucial part of the equation. According to Zhang Zhi-Cong, "[one must] calmly attend to the intervals between the comings and goings [of the dynamic] and tonify or drain it. Even the slightest error of a hair's breadth and it will be lost!"<sup>60</sup>

One's attention to the periodicity of the qi and its relation to the dynamic is an important thread in the *Ling Shu Précis* that is reiterated in Line 11. Before one can hope to execute any needle technique one must attune oneself with the timing of the qi itself. One must neither go rushing to meet, nor chasing after the qi, but remain instead with the dynamic. The superior practitioner executes the techniques of tonification and drainage from the within the empty spaces between the comings and goings of the qi in a calm and focused state of mind. The idea is to stay out of the way of the healthy functioning of the qi. This principle is then stated explicitly in the following line.

知機之道者，不可掛以發。 [9]

**Those who understand the way of the dynamic, will not impede it and thus it manifests.**<sup>61</sup>

*Ling Shu*-3.1 states: "That one cannot impede it and thus it manifests means that the qi is easily lost."<sup>62</sup> Subsequent commentators link the *ji*, the subtle interval between the comings and goings of the qi to the goal of its overall unification. Ma Shi, in particular, emphasises the single-pointed nature of *ji*. "For those who know the way of the dynamic, there is only this unifying qi, and it is as if it cannot be impeded by so much as the space of a single hair's breadth."<sup>63</sup> In interacting with it, one must match the subtlety of the dynamic as the incipient initiator of activity.

不知機道，扣之不發。<sup>64</sup> [10]

**Not understanding the way of the dynamic, one detains it and it thus fails to show itself.**

Those who comprehend the dynamic do

o. 靜守于來往之間，而補瀉之，少差毫發之間，則失矣。

p. 不可掛以發者，言氣易失也。

q. 知機之道者，唯此一氣，而已猶不可掛一髮以間之。

not impede it. By impeding the dynamic it fails to manifest itself. If the dynamic, and consequently the qi, fails to manifest itself, one cannot even begin to comprehend the intricacies of tonification and drainage. This is the central message of the *Ling Shu*-3 commentary. "One detains it, and thus it fails to show itself, means that one has no knowledge of the meaning of tonification and drainage. Once the qi and blood are exhausted, the qi cannot be directed downward."<sup>65</sup> This is what happens when one is too aggressive in one's intervention, or even one's intention.

By perturbing the dynamic, one creates unfavourable circumstances for its expression. How does one allow the dynamic to express itself? The following line explains the way in which one must attend to the intervals of its comings and goings.

知其往來，要與之期。 [11]

**To understand its goings and comings, emphasise its periodicity.**

This and the next four lines concern the concept of goings and comings (*wang lai* 往來) that define the qi dynamic and its relationship to meeting and following (*ying sui* 迎隨). *Ling Shu*-3.1 picks up its interpretive thread reading Line 11 in terms of flow and counterflow, excess and deficiency. "To understand its goings and comings means that one knows the qi's states of contrary and normal [movement] and whether it is brimming or deficient."<sup>66</sup> Yet even this text acknowledges that such considerations are dependent on one's attunement to the periodicity of the qi. "One who emphasises its periodicity knows the opportune moment when the qi can be taken."<sup>67</sup>

Zhang Jie-Bin emphasises proper timing in accordance with the comings and goings of the qi even as he articulates the mechanical details of tonification and drainage techniques. "One should tonify and one should drain according to the opportune moment in the instant when one meets the qi."<sup>68</sup>

r. 扣之不發者，言不知補瀉之意也。血氣已盡，而氣不下也。

s. 知其往來者，知氣之逆順，盛虛也。

t. 要與之期者，知氣之可取之時也。

u. 當補當瀉，用有其時，在氣會之頃。

*Ling Shu*-8.2 directly links one's attunement to *ji* to various aspects of the spirit. "What follows the coming and going of the spirit is called the ethereal soul and essence. That which goes out and in together with the essence is called the corporeal soul."<sup>v69</sup> Such a reading broadens the scope possible meanings considerably.

The topic of line 8.2 is still the *ji*. There is no question that the goings and comings of the *qi* are nothing more than an expression of *ji*, which is what Isabelle Robinet describes as "the dynamic aspect of the Way".<sup>70</sup> The *Nei Ye* (內業 Inner Workings) chapter of the *Guanzi* (管子 *Guanzi*, 26 BCE), an early text of Chinese mysticism, describes the goings and comings of the Way in terms that presage the language used in the *Ling Shu Précis* and elsewhere in the *Nei Jing*.<sup>71</sup>

Where the *Nei Ye* asserts, "The way is what fills the body, yet people are unable to fix it in place. It goes forth but does not return. It comes back but does not stay."<sup>w72</sup> *Su Wen*-15 echoes this sentiment in asserting that, "the spirit changes and does not revert, if it reverts it cannot change, and so loses its *ji*."<sup>x73</sup> The expression of *ji* is necessarily in a constant state of flux even as it remains still within itself.

The *Nei Ye* repeatedly identifies tranquillity as a prerequisite for the appearance of this essential vitality. Moreover, it fixes the *qi* both within the heart-mind and within the corporeal body.

There is a spirit naturally residing in the body,  
有神自在身,  
one moment it goes, the next it comes,  
一往一來,  
And no one is able to conceive of it.  
莫之能思.  
If you lose it you are inevitably disordered.  
失之必亂.  
If you attain it you are inevitably well ordered.  
得之必治.  
Diligently clean out its lodging place,  
敬除其舍,  
And its vital essence will naturally arrive.  
精將自來.<sup>74</sup>

v. 隨神往來者，謂之魂並精，而出入者謂之魄。  
w. 夫道者所以充形也，而人不能固，其往不復，其來不舍。  
x.

That miraculous *qi* within the mind

靈氣在心

One moment it arrives, the next it departs

一來一逝

So fine there is nothing within it,

其細無內

So vast there is nothing outside it,

其大無外

We lose it

所以失之

Because of the harm caused by mental agitation,

以躁為害

When the mind can hold on to tranquillity,

心能執靜，

The way will become naturally stabilised.

道將自定。<sup>75</sup>

In practising acupuncture, physicians must certainly attend to the relatively mechanical goings and comings of the *qi*, its pacing and its intervals. But it is essential to remember that this is the most superficial expression of a much deeper dynamic playing itself out in the interaction between one's patients and oneself.

粗之暗乎。妙哉！工獨有之。[12]

**The crude are in the dark about this. How sublime! Only [skilled] practitioners have it.**

The topic of this line is the goings and comings of the *qi* dynamic that are essential to effective needling. Yet in light of the broader perspective on *ji* detailed above, it is not surprising that the author of the *Ling Shu*-1.1 would consider the principles he has presented to be sublime. According to *Ling Shu*-3.1, "That the crude are in the dark means that they are benighted and do not understand the subtleties of the *qi*. That it is sublime and practitioners alone have it means that they have an exhaustive knowledge of the implications of needling."<sup>y76</sup> *Su Wen*-26.2 uses remarkably similar language in pointing out that it is not the outward appearance that one must attend to. "Examination by the benighted means that the circulation of *qi*, nutritive, and defensive is not manifested externally and [superior] practitioners alone know it."<sup>z77</sup>

Up to this point the *Ling Shu Précis*

y. 粗之暗者，冥冥不知氣之微密也，妙哉工獨有之者，盡知針意也。

z. 觀于冥冥者，言行氣營衛之不形于外，工獨知之。



*The Nei Ye repeatedly identifies tranquillity as a prerequisite for the appearance of this essential vitality. Moreover, it fixes the qi both within the heart-mind and within the corporeal body.*



One's appreciation of the ebb and flow of qi is crucial to effective needling.

has established that one must attend to the *ji* by means of the spirit. The *ji* is characterised as an empty space and as a place of quiescence between the intervals of activity. Attention to these intervals is the key to an effective needle technique. These are the true essentials of needling. Here the two interpretive threads begin to merge. The focus of the discussion now shifts to address more specifically the way in which one should interact with the movement aspect of the qi.

往者為逆來者為順 [13]

**Going away from it is contrary, promoting its arrival is going with the flow.**

Line 13 introduces the opposing concepts of *ni* 逆 and *shun* 順, which are defined in relation to the departure and arrival of the qi. *Ni* here does not necessarily suggest a state of “counterflow” or a going against the “normal” (*shun* 順) flow of things. *Ling Shu*-3.1 suggests that *ni* refers to the normal ebbing of the qi as it departs. The qi is *ni* in that it is relatively deficient during this phase of its cycle. “That going away from it is contrary, refers to the qi’s deficiency and its frailness. To be ‘frail’ is contrary”<sup>aa</sup> and “promoting its arrival is going with the flow, refers to a balanced state of the form qi. ‘Balanced’ is going with the flow.”<sup>ab78</sup> The emphasis here is that one must act in accordance with the normal cycles in the flow of qi.

明知逆順, 正行無疑問。 [14]

**If one clearly understands the contrary and normal [flow of qi], then one can act correctly and without doubt or question.**

One’s appreciation of the ebb and flow of qi is crucial to effective needling. *Ling Shu*-3 makes the interesting point that such an understanding informs one’s selection of acupuncture holes, as well as the timing and the needle technique one will use. “If one clearly understands the contrary and normal [flow of qi] one can act correctly and without errors, means that one knows how to select the place [for needling].”<sup>ac79</sup>

aa. 往者為逆者, 言氣之虛而小. 小者, 逆也.

ab. 來者為順者, 言形氣之平. 平者順也.

ac. 來者為順者, 言形氣之平. 平者順也.

The *Ling Shu Précis* goes on to make two much more general statements as to how such an understanding promotes effective intervention.

迎而奪之, 惡得無虛? [15]

追而濟之, 惡得無實?<sup>80</sup> [16]

**By meeting it and taking it away, how could one not achieve depletion [of the qi]?**

**By pursuing and assisting it, how could one not achieve repletion [of the qi]?**

The descendent texts in the *Nei Jing* and the commentary literature are fairly clear as to the meaning of these lines. *Ling Shu*-3.1 succinctly states: “Meeting and taking it away is drainage,”<sup>ad</sup> and “Pursuing and assisting it is tonification”<sup>ae</sup>.<sup>81</sup> Only if you follow and assist the qi, acting as a midwife to the qi, will you make the qi flourish.

迎之隨之, 以意和之。 [17]

**Whether meeting it or following it, by means of one’s attention, one harmonises it.**

The crux of line 17 is *yi* 意, generally translated as intention, denoting an expression of volition or purposefulness that is closely linked to will (*zhi* 志). The *Mencius* states: The will is the general of the qi; qi is what fills the body. When the will arrives, qi follows. Thus it is said; “Maintain your will and do no violence to your qi.”<sup>af82</sup>

*Mencius*’ point is that people should be governed by their will and not their qi, but his statement has resonance for those involved in medical practice as well. For some physicians, intention is the key to regulating the qi and it is brought into harmony by the force of their willpower. This reading of *yi* works but it is at least somewhat at odds with the principles laid out previously in the *Précis*.

Before *yi* becomes *intention*, it is first an awareness or an attention in the sense already described above. This use of the word is prominent in the *Nei Ye* which asserts the primal nature of *yi* in no uncertain terms.

ad. 迎而奪之者, 瀉也.

ae. 追而濟之者, 補也.

af. 夫志, 氣之帥也; 氣體之充也. 夫志至焉, 氣次焉. 故曰: 其志, 無暴其氣.

**That mind within the mind:**

彼心之心,

it is an awareness that precedes speech.

意以先言.

Only after there is an awareness does it take shape;

意然後形;

Only after it takes shape is there a word.

形然後言.

Only after there is a word is it implemented;

言然後使;

Only after it is implemented is there order.

使然後治.

Without order you will always be chaotic.

不治必亂.

If chaotic, you die.

亂乃死.<sup>83</sup>

*Yi* is what occurs before one thinks in words. Before one forms an intention one first becomes aware. Prior to exercising one's intention in needling, one must first refine one's attention.

In contrast to Mencius, the author of the *Nei Ye* asserts that *qi* is not so much governed as it is stabilised, and this is accomplished not by the force of one's willpower but by the stabilisation and attentive awareness of one's consciousness.

Once the *qi* is attended to and apprehended,

氣意得,

The sub-celestial realm will submit.

而天下服.

And once the mind's attention is stabilised,

心意定,

The sub-celestial realm will listen.

而天下聽.<sup>84</sup>

Using language that is remarkably similar to that used in the *Ling Shu Précis*, the *Nei Ye* explains that the *qi* cannot be bent to one's will using force of any kind,

Therefore, as for this *qi*,

是故此氣也,

it cannot be halted by force,

不可止以力,

and yet it can be calmed by virtue,

而可安以德.

It cannot be called by sound,

不可呼以聲,

but it can be met with attention.

而可迎以意.<sup>85</sup>

One's capacity for efficacy resides in the effortless activity and influence of one's consciousness resides in quiescence.

Relaxed and unwound, yet benevolent,

寬舒而仁,

In solitude you delight in your own person.

獨樂其身.

This is called "revolving the *qi*":

是謂雲氣:

One's attention and actions seem heavenly.

意行似天.<sup>86</sup>

Finally, the text even outlines the means by which we attain this tranquillity.

When the four limbs are aligned,

四體既正,

and the blood and *qi* are tranquil,

血氣既靜,

One may unify one's attention, and

concentrate one's mind.

一意搏心.

One's eyes and ears will not be sullied.

耳目不淫.

[To attain this,] though it seems distant, it is close at hand.

雖遠若近.<sup>87</sup>

Anyone who has ever practised acupuncture will appreciate the truth of this statement. Form matters; in the process of needling one cannot be sloppy in one's structural alignment.

This is an essential means for unifying one's mind, and thereby one's own *qi* and blood. It allows one to place oneself in the optimal position to appreciate the *ji* of the patient and to act both effortlessly and efficiently.

For all its subtlety, *ji* is fundamentally grounded in substance. That may well be why subsequent *Ling Shu* commentators have tended to focus on its most materialistic attributes; they are the easiest to talk about.

Be that as it may, when all is said and done, regardless of whether one is meeting or following, tonifying or draining, whether one is working with *qi*, blood, the channels, or the subtleties of one's needle technique, the harmonisation of the *qi* depends on one's attention to the *ji*.



*Form matters; in the process of needling one cannot be sloppy in one's structural alignment.*



“Going to meet” or “following after” the qi is not a headlong thrust in one direction or another so much as a nod or a wink at just the right moment and in just the right way.

針道畢矣。[18]

**This is all there is to say with regard to the way of needling.**

### Conclusion

The final line of the *Précis* may be taken quite literally. That really is all there is to say about the art of acupuncture. The rest of the *Ling Shu* is exegesis. The import of this initial passage has less to do with the mechanics of excesses and deficiencies, tonification and drainage than it does with the fundamental sensibility with which they must be engaged. This sensibility is intimately connected to the resonance between one's spirit and the dynamic. Whatever else the notion of spirit may encompass, it most certainly involves focused quiescence on the part of the practitioner. At the core of the concept of *ji* is a state of quiescence occurring between the comings and goings of qi. *Ji* is the pivot around which the qi organises itself. By attuning oneself to the *ji* one can most profitably assess and exploit the disposition of a situation. From here, one need do very little to exert a profound influence, and for this reason, one's intervention becomes very subtle. “Going to meet” or “following after” the qi is not a headlong thrust in one direction or another so much as a nod or a wink at just the right moment and in just the right way. In moving from the *ji*, it is not only the needle that becomes the *Ling Shu* 靈樞, the divine pivot, but the practitioner.

### Endnotes

45. *Huang Di Nei Jing Ling Shu Jiao Shi* 黃帝內經靈樞校釋, v.1, p.68.
46. *ibid.*
47. Zhang Jie-Bin (1964), p.627.
48. Guo Tian, p.433.
49. *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen Jiao Shi* 黃帝內經素問校釋, v.2, p.1008.
50. Zhang Jie-Bin, v.2, p.887.
51. *Huang Di Nei Jing Ling Shu Jiao Shi* 黃帝內經靈樞校釋, v.1, p.68.
52. Zhang Jie-Bin v.2, p.628.
53. Guo Tian, p.433.
54. For two excellent discussions of the

concept of *shi* 勢 in Chinese culture, see Francois Jullien (1995) and (2004).

55. *Ma Shi* is a holdout who is content to interpret the “empty spaces” in very concrete terms. “The *Su Wen* has a ‘Discourse on the Bone Holes’ (Chapter 60) that indicates this means the empty spaces along each channel (素問有骨空論, 指各經之穴言.)” *Ling Shu Zhu Zheng Fa Wei* 靈樞注證發微.

56. *Huang Di Nei Jing Ling Shu Jiao Shi* 黃帝內經靈樞校釋: v.1, p.68.

57. *Huang Di Nei Jing Ling Shu Jiao Shi* 黃帝內經靈樞校釋: v.1, p.3.

58. In many editions *si* 俟 is *hou* 候. *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen Jiao Shi* 黃帝內經素問校釋: v.1, p.371.

59. *Huang Di Nei Jing Ling Shu Jiao Shi* 黃帝內經靈樞校釋: p.3.

60. *ibid.*

61. An alternative translation might be “The way of knowing the dynamic, is that it cannot be impeded and thus it is expressed.”

62. *Huang Di Nei Jing Ling Shu Jiao Shi* 黃帝內經靈樞校釋 v.1, p.67.

63. *Ling Shu Zhu Zheng Fa Wei* 靈樞注證發微.

64. *Kou* 扣 is alternately be read as *kou* 叩 “to knock”. “One knocks [on its door] but it does not show itself.”

65. The implication is that the qi cannot be directed downward, lest it counterflow upward regardless of the practitioner's intention (*Huang Di Nei Jing Ling Shu Jiao Shi* 黃帝內經靈樞校釋: v.1, p.68).

66. *Huang Di Nei Jing Ling Shu Jiao Shi* 黃帝內經靈樞校釋: v.1, p.68.

67. *ibid.*

68. Zhang Jie-Bin v.2, p.641.

69. *Huang Di Nei Jing Ling Shu Jiao Shi* 黃帝內經靈樞校釋: v.1, p.174.

70. Robinet (2008): pp.536-37.

71. The *Nei Ye* appears as a chapter in the *Guanzi* 管子, however, it is generally considered an independent text in its own right.

72. Translations of the *Nei Ye* are our own, with reference to Harold Roth (1999) and W. Allyn Rickett (1998). *Guan Zi Zhu Zi Suo Yin* 管子逐字索引: 16.1/115/26.

73. *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen Jiao Shi* 黃帝內經素問校釋: v.1, p.190.

74. *Guan Zi Zhu Zi Suo Yin* 管子逐字索引: 16.1/116/14.
75. *Guan Zi Zhu Zi Suo Yin* 管子逐字索引: 16.1/117/29.
76. *Huang Di Nei Jing Ling Shu Jiao Shi* 黃帝內經靈樞校釋: v.1, p.69.
77. *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen Jiao Shi* 黃帝內經素問校釋: v.1, p.360.
78. *Huang Di Nei Jing Ling Shu Jiao Shi* 黃帝內經靈樞校釋: v.1, p.70.
79. *ibid.*
80. In other editions *ying* 迎 is *ni* 逆, and *zhui* 追 is *sui* 隨. The meaning is the same.
81. *Huang Di Nei Jing Ling Shu Jiao Shi* 黃帝內經靈樞校釋: p.67. The reading of these lines here is based on the version that appears in the Systematic Classic.
82. *Meng Zi Zhu Zi Suo Yin* 孟子逐字索引: 3.2/15/20.
83. *Guan Zi Zhu Zi Suo Yin* 管子逐字索引: 16.1/116/20-25.
84. *Guan Zi Zhu Zi Suo Yin* 管子逐字索引: 16.1/117/3-4. Alternately, Rickett translates this passage as “When *qi*’s attention is apprehended, the sub-celestial realm is served, When the mind’s attention is fixed, the sub-celestial realm is heard.” W. Allyn Rickett: 51.
85. *Guan Zi Zhu Zi Suo Yin* 管子逐字索引: 16.1/115/18-19. Here attention (*yi* 意) is an alternate reading for *yin* 音.
86. *Guan Zi Zhu Zi Suo Yin* 管子逐字索引: 16.1/117/25.
87. Both Harold Roth and W. Allyn Rickett translate *yi* 意 as awareness. *Guan Zi Zhu Zi Suo Yin* 管子逐字索引: 16.1/117/10.

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