



Tang Zonghai discusses the two **souls**

From his *Zhōngxī Huìtōng Yījīng Jīngyì* (中西匯通醫經精義, Essential Meaning of the Medical Classics by Converging Chinese and Western Medicine, 1892).

Liver stores the *hún* (魂 ethereal soul) The *hún* is the essence of yang, the subtle efficacy (靈 *líng*) of *qì*. In the human body, *qì* is yang and blood is yin. If yang has no yin it cannot adhere (附 *fù*), if *qì* has no blood it will not remain. Liver controls blood while internally harbouring yang *qì*, and it is this which is called the *hún*.

If we investigate the root source of the *hún* we find that it is the single yang line in the centre of the trigram *Kǎn* which stands for water.



We can deduce from this that the function of the *hún* is to spread the primal *qì* of the Heavenly Metal (乾金之元氣 *qián jīn zhī yuán qì*).¹ Why then is *hún* not stored in the Lungs, but rather in the Liver? It is because yang submerges itself in yin. Why then is *hún* not stored in the Kidneys, but in the Liver? It is because what comes out of yin is yang.

During the daytime *hún* roams with the eyes and allows us to see; at night the *hún* returns to the Liver that we may sleep. If the *hún* is not peaceful we have vivid dreams, if the *hún* is not strong we are timid.

Western doctors do not know what sort of thing *hún* is, and so they never talk about dreams. Now the perceptions of Western people are the same as for Eastern people. But if we ask them why they see things while asleep at night, what makes it happen, they have nothing to say.

They don't know because the *hún* cannot

be found through dissection, and dreams cannot be measured by instruments.

Lungs store the *pò* (魄 corporeal soul) The flesh and blood of the human body is solid, tangible: the substance of yin. But having this substance also means that something governs it; the most efficacious controller of yin essence is what we call the *pò*.²

Liver controls blood and is fundamentally yin, but it stores yang *hún*. Lungs control *qì* and are fundamentally yang but they store yin *pò*. Yin is generated from yang.

Referring to its actual substance, it is the fine illustrious moistening *qì* within the Lungs,³ what Western doctors describe as the foamy film on the membranes of the Lungs. But while they say that is all it is, this foamy film is what is distributed as the paste-like thick fluids (膏液 *gāo yè*). It descends to become essence and blood, and this is what makes up yin substance.

Hún controls movement, *pò* controls stillness. Lily disorder (*Bǎi Hé bìng*) is from a restless disturbed *pò*. If the patient becomes stressed they get confused and can fall suddenly ill. If the *pò qì* is shut in, then if the person dies they become a ghost, which is the *pò qì* transforming.

Both *hún* and *pò* are formless but have appearance⁴ with immeasurable changes and transformations. Western medicine can dissect but never see them, and so they never talk about them. But if you are discussing medicine and never bring in *hún* and *pò*, how can you know anything about life and death?

1. *Qián* is the trigram for sky or heaven (☰), and Tang Zonghai in a previous chapter of this book defined Heavenly Metal (乾金 *qián jīn*) as the Lungs, explaining that the Lungs are the sky spreading over the other organs, and belong, of course, to metal.

2. For those who like to see the original characters for definitions: 秉陰精之至靈，此之謂魄。

3. 肺中清華潤澤之氣 *Fèi zhōng qīng huá rùn zé zhī qì*.

4. For an example of what this might mean, the sky is described as "formless but with appearance (天無形有象 *tiān wú xíng yǒu xiàng*)".