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# THE CHINESE CONCEPT OF CH'I

# IN SOMATIZATION

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ABSTRACT

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IN SOMATIZATION

By

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Affective disorders are not only universal psychophysiological processes but also as components of indigenous systems of mental illness which have their own internal structure and coherence. The indigenous understanding of somatization in Chinese culture can be fully grasped through the study of important native concepts. Based on foundational Chinese medical texts (especially the Huang Ti Nei Ching Su Wen, or The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine), and the works of contemporary experts in Chinese medicine (such as Liu Yanchi, Unschuld, Porkert and others), the thesis introduces the critical concept of Ch'i, and analyses its role in contributing to the underlying mechanism of the somatized pattern of mental illness construction in Chinese society. The analysis is accomplished by treating the concept of Ch'i as a core symbol which acts to weave cosmological, medical, psychocultural and social dimensions into a symbolic network. This symbolic network functions to channel dysphoric affects into physical disorders; hence emotional and cognitive orientations response together to organize beliefs, feelings, values, expectations that lead to somatized illness experience.

To my professor

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# INTRODUCTION

Somatization is conceptualized as "the substitution of somatic preoccupation for dysphoric affect in the form of complaints of physical symptoms and even illness" (Kleinman 1980: 40). Kleinman (1980, 1986; and Lin 1981) points out, as do others (Tseng 1975), that many Chinese are inclined to express their affective disorders in terms of physical disorders. The work of Kleinman and other scholars on the topic of somatization in Chinese society besides providing considerable insights into an interesting cultural phenomenon, has explored the underlying psychological mechanisms and pathological structure of this culturally sanctioned manifestation of affective disorders.

Affective disorders are not only universal psychophysiological processes presenting as culturally specific symptoms, they can also be described according to indigenous systems of mental illness which have their own internal coherence with reference to psychocultural and social dynamics as well as pathological structure. Although much has already been learned about somatization in Chinese society, a thorough exploration of the internal structure of somatization among Chinese in terms of the indigenous conceptual framework has yet to be carried out. However, the indigenous understanding of somatization among Chinese cannot be fully grasped unless some key native concepts are studied, and their meaning and symbolic structure explored.

The purpose of this paper is to introduce one such important indigenous concept, "Ch'i", and to analyze its role in shaping and channeling somatically constructed illness experience. This is accomplished by treating Ch'i as a core symbol which acts to weave cosmological, medical, psychocultural and social domains of Chinese society into a symbolic "final common pathway" (Carr 1978). It is intended that this analysis will contribute to the identification of the relationship between the concept of Ch'i and psychosomatic tendency in Chinese culture, and suggest directions for future research work.

## THE CONCEPT OF CH'I

If one looks up the word "Ch'i"( ) in the Chinese-English dictionary, one will find that it can mean breath, vapor, vital fluid, energy, anger, health, steam, air, weather and the unseen life force, etc.. The concept of Ch'i has pervaded the Chinese language and culture and become at the same time the most enigmatic and the most important word in all aspects of daily life. In her work "The Art of Mastering the Unseen Life Force", Siou (1973: 9-10) provides us with various meanings that are associated with the concept of Ch'i. For example, Ch'i is an essential concept in Taoism where the doctrine holds that by cultivating the Ch'i in one's own body, one can achieve longevity. When the character Ch'i is combined with other characters to form a new word such as "Er ch'i" ( ), then it means the double original force of Yin and Yang. A person is believed to be composed of three Ch'is: the principal constitution, the original constitution and the spiritual constitution. In the social domain, "Ch'i" means manner, style, disposition, temperament and it has wide implications in every sphere of human endeavor. Thus, the ability to write good articles is associated with "Wen ch'i" ( ), the "scholarly disposition". A distinctive quality of "brush control" which is supposed to be possessed by a good calligrapher is called "Bi ch'i" ( ). Moral courage or integrity is called "Gu ch'i" ( ). Even for the average person, a proper understanding of his natural capacity

which results in tolerance, "Ch'i liang" ( ), is needed for him to be able to deal with people (Siou 1973: 9-10).

In the classics of Chinese medical literature, Ch'i is not a metaphor but a physical reality. There are at least thirty two types of Ch'i (Porkert 1974: 168) which move in and out of the human body in a constant flux. Its strength and motion can be detected by diagnostic methods and its regular flow can be maintained and restored by specific treatment (Kaptchuk 1983: 37). Kleinman has drawn attention to Ch'i as an important medical concept in the understanding of one major form of mental illness among Chinese -- neurasthenia. He points out that "weakness and loss of energy (exhaustion), which are usually thought of as the essence of neurasthenia, are key symptoms in traditional Chinese medicine, where they relate to lack or blockage in the flow of qi (Ch'i) and imbalance between Yin and Yang" (Kleinman 1986: 54).

Nevertheless, although this concept has frequently been encountered in medical and philosophical literature and has occasionally appeared in articles and papers on the subject of somatization among Chinese, its role as a core symbol in relation to the meaning and cause of the somatized pattern of mental disorders has never been systematically studied in an anthropological context. An investigation needs to be carried out, not only of the role of Ch'i in Chinese medicine, but also of the function of Ch'i as a core symbol in Chinese culture.

Before embarking upon a study of the status of Ch'i as a core symbol, it is helpful to review some anthropological literature

concerning core symbols in general. Ortner (1973: 1338-1339) has published a paper on key (core) symbols where she traces the history of the way in which certain key elements in the cultural system have caught the attention of anthropologists and how this has developed into the notion of the key symbol in anthropological analysis. She has raised the question of how to recognize the key (core) symbol, and provides methodological approaches for this. According to her, the key status of core symbols is indicated primarily by their recurrence "in many different contexts" and "many different symbolic domains" (1973: 1939).

Good (1977: 38-39) sets out the criterion for the recognition of a core symbol. He states that core symbol "gather their power and meaning" by combining a set of diverse symbols or phenomena and condensing them into a single concept. Such a concept can invoke a symbolic network which "mobilizes in social interaction and is deeply integrated into the cultural and social structure of the society" (1977: 54). Good (1977: 38) also argues that a core symbol attains its status through its quality of polysemy, which is, by Fox's definition, "the property of a symbol to relate to a multiple range of other symbols" (Fox 1975: 119).

It is argued here that the Chinese concept of Ch'i fits very well into the methodological framework set out by Ortner, and its core symbol status can be signaled by its appearances in different linguistic situations and symbolic systems, as has been described in the preceding paragraph. Moreover, the concept of Ch'i also meets the criterion suggested by Fox and Good (the attainment of the polysemic

quality. It brings together various aspects of Chinese society and condenses all the different realities into a single concept, thus formulating a symbolic network. This symbolic network accounts for various cultural phenomena of which the cultural tendency of somatization in Chinese culture is one. Evidence in support of the recognition of the core symbol status of Ch'i will be presented in later sections.

Regarding the classification of core symbols, Ortner (1973) suggests that there are two kinds of core symbols -- two extremes, in fact, of the continuum of symbols. The "summarizing symbol" is used to represent or "stand for" an idea or a state of affairs, which already pre-exists, while the "elaborating symbol" has the capacity to act as a framework for analysis and development of those ideas. If this classificatory system is applied to the concept of Ch'i, then it is obvious that the concept of Ch'i is an elaborating core symbol with great analytical power, which provides "a set of categories for conceptualizing other aspects of experience, or, ...formulate(s) the unity of cultural orientation underlying many aspects of experience, by virtue of the fact that those many aspects of experience can be likened to it" (Ortner 1973: 1339-1340).

On a different level, the functioning of the concept of Ch'i also has to be analyzed. The question that should be dealt with is not only whether the concept of Ch'i has been adopted as a core symbol in Chinese culture, but if so, why. That is to say, interest in the concept of Ch'i lies not only in the recognition and classification of it as a core symbol, but also in the way in which those unique

characteristics of the concept of Ch'i sustain the possibility of its acting as a core symbol.

The first of such characteristics is concreteness. For the Chinese, Ch'i is not a metaphor that "stands at one remove from 'the real world'" (Rosaldo 1980: 21) only to give rise to interpretive reflections without substantial content. It is a physical reality that can be tested, diagnosed and manipulated in specific ways and has been documented in the classic medical texts as well as incorporated into the lay medical belief system. The Chinese have a tendency to express ideas and to conceptualize about the world through concrete images and concepts. For example, even for an abstract notion such as "brightness", the Chinese character expressing this notion is composed of a "window" ( ) and a "moon" ( ) in its ancient form ( ), and consists of a "sun" ( ) and a "moon" ( ) in its modern form ( ) (Liu, 1962: 15). The reason for this can be traced back to the nature of the Chinese character because "... a script of this kind can more readily represent concrete objects than it can abstractions" (Bodde 1957: 12). The etymological form of the Chinese written language not only has limited the possibility of recording and passing down abstract ideas to the next generation, but also encouraged the Chinese to develop a habit of using concrete images and concepts to organize their cognitive activities, which has eventually resulted in the lack of vocabulary for the expression of more abstract intrapsychic feelings. Thus, the concrete concept of Ch'i suits the concrete way of thinking and expressing in Chinese culture, and is an excellent candidate for the status of core symbol.

Second, the concept of Ch'i is a very flexible concept. One author writes, "...it (Ch'i) is capable of producing all that is claimed for it by the Chinese" (Smith 1894: 218). It is well known that the Chinese place much stress on classification; in fact, the Chinese word for science (ke xue: ) means literally "classification of knowledge" (Needham and Lu 1970). The Chinese are particularly keen on numerical categorizing systems (Bodde 1981b: 142); in some of these systems the number of the categories takes priority over the content. For example, an extra season -- late summer was added (See Table 1 in p. 58) to the existing four seasons to match the five categories in Chinese medicine which were derived from the Five Elements theory in Chinese cosmology (See section 1). Moreover, it has been pointed out that the Yin-Yang system consisting of two categories had been in severe conflicts with the Five Elements theory encompassing five categories. However, not until the twentieth century did the two schools stand side by side (Unschuld 1986: 251), resulting in an "and/or" state of affairs. Furthermore, it becomes quite understandable why an all-purpose concept is favored as a core symbol to accommodate all the numerical categories in Chinese philosophy, cosmology and medicine without running into any difficulties. In this way, the flexibility of the concept of Ch'i enables it to bracket together any categories, even categories embracing diverse ideas and phenomena, to cater for the Chinese preference for numerical categorizing systems.

Third, according to Chinese philosophy, all things embraced within the universe form an inseparable unity and stand mutual

relation through the never-ending process of change and transformation. In particular, Ch'i is known as the flux of life force moving back and forth within the universe. This dynamic quality of Ch'i further legitimizes and justifies its adoption as a core symbol in that Ch'i can flow between the universe and men as well as between the universe and every other form of existence, linking them coherently together.

In the preceding paragraphs, I have surveyed some specific characteristics of Ch'i and suggested that there is an intrinsic tendency for the concept of Ch'i to be adopted as a core symbol, because the concrete, flexible and dynamic qualities of Ch'i can serve to cater for the different needs of Chinese culture, such as the preference for concrete expression and concrete thinking, the emphasis on the numerical categorizing system, and the needs to legitimize and justify Chinese philosophical principles. Indeed, it is further suggested that the ability to cater for specific needs of a culture is an essential prerequisite for possession by a symbol of the property of polysemy, and hence is an essential qualification for that symbol to be considered a core symbol.

In order to conduct a systematic inquiry such as the role of Ch'i in somatization in Chinese culture, a sizable body of information is necessary. My attempt to relate as much material as possible to my research interest has resulted in a wide range of sources that will be cited in this paper. To analyze the function of Ch'i in Chinese medicine, materials will be drawn from foundational Chinese medical texts, especially the Huang Ti Nei Ching Su Wen or The Yellow

Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine (206 B.C.—A.D. 220), one of the earliest medical texts in China which have established the main branches of the Chinese medical tradition, and the works of contemporary expects in Chinese medicine such as Liu Yanchi, Unschuld, Porkert and others. The range of sources expands to include Lock's study on East Asian medicine because the central doctrine of Chinese medicine preserves much of its essence in spite of the fact that it has been adapted to the Japanese setting for over 1,300 years.

With a sizable body of information from a wide range of sources available, one can now analyze how the polysemic quality of the concept of Ch'i enables it to relate to different aspects in Chinese culture and to form a symbolic network which leads us phenomenologically to the shaping and molding of the unique coping strategy, thus giving testimony to the full recognition of such a core symbol as Ch'i and to identify the relationship between this core symbol and somatization in Chinese culture. For the sake of convenience, this will be treated in four sections: (1) Ch'i in Chinese cosmology; (2) Ch'i in Chinese medicine; (3) Ch'i in Chinese personality construction; (4) Ch'i in Chinese value orientations and behavioral norms. In this way, the four aspects of Ch'i and their connections with the correspondingly different realities can be revealed, the core symbol status of Ch'i can be recognized, and the tie between the concept of Ch'i (with its symbolic network) and somatization in Chinese society, can be identified.

## SECTION 1. CH'I IN CHINESE COSMOLOGY

Since Ch'i is a concept that originated from cosmological literature, Chinese cosmology is an excellent vehicle by means of which to probe into the cultural meaning of the concept of Ch'i. This provides an entree to the analysis of the cause of somatization in the Chinese culture.

At the outset, however, it should be understood that as elsewhere, the orthodox thinking of Chinese elites is not the same as the popular opinions held by the majority of the masses. In particular Bodde (1981a: 132-138) points out that the existence of a Creator God and a personal immortality has been denied in the orthodox tradition but acknowledged in the popular tradition. What will be discussed in this section is primarily based on orthodox thinking at a philosophical level, rather than on manifestations in popular tradition. This atheistic tradition of the orthodox thinking, and the concentration of attention by Chinese intellectuals on the concrete, at the expense of the remote is summarized by Confucius when he says: "'Not yet understanding life, how can you understand death?'" (Analects, XI, 11, quoted from Ware 1938).

The importance attached by Chinese to their immediate surroundings, and their feelings towards Nature is something which must be thoroughly appreciated in order to understand Chinese cosmology. For them, the natural world is not a backdrop for man to perform in front of. On the contrary, the relationship between man and Nature is one of mutuality, and the life of man, in all its phases, is inseparably linked with and a part of Nature, on a level with every other form of existence, whether animal or plant, sky or

mountain. Man is not the creature that has the potential to conquer the world of Nature, as he seems to be in the Western world; he is only one part in existential dependence upon the universe as a whole. This general feeling towards Nature has become the foundation of Chinese cosmology, upon which the agrarian nature of Chinese civilization has been built (Bodde 1981a: 132-3).

Most materials on cosmology cited here are derived from the orthodox philosophical literature and are mainly based on two of the major cosmological schools. The first set of materials taken from the works of Lao Tzu and other Taoist authors obviously belongs to the school of Taoism. According to Bodde (1981c: 239), the Taoist school believes that the universe "is operating in a constant flux but this flux follows a fixed pattern consisting of eternal oscillation between two poles." The other material is quoted from Chang Tsai, who is a Neo-Confucian philosopher. This school has a view similar to that of Taoism, though it departs from Taoism in that Neo- Confucianists hold that the pattern of universal movement is not eternal oscillation between two poles, but within a cycle. With this orientation, one can now start to appreciate the origin of Ch'i in the Chinese cosmological literature.

Since in the orthodox tradition, a personal creator outside of the universe does not exist, and the Chinese cosmos had been conceived as a self-contained system, (as apposed to the Western cosmological system as having been created by a superior God), it is postulated that there must exist a basic material agent from which all animate and inanimate beings have evolved. There are four texts in existence

concerning this, which have been handed down from generation to generation, namely, the Book of Changes, the Book of History, the Book of Poetry, and Tao Te Ching. The last book was written by the great Chinese Taoist philosopher Lao Tzu (prob. 4th -- 3rd centuries B.C.) and in it he has developed some cosmological ideas to their fullest extent:

> In the Beginning there was chaos, Absolute Void. Out of it, as time took place, there evolved the Great Absolute. Therein is combined the double basis of metaphysical and of material being. In its creative aspect, the Great Absolute is a metaphysical principle, the Way of Life, the Tao, from which all ideas within the universe were fashioned. Gradually, Prime Matter evolved and divided into two parts. There are the two cosmic forces, Yin Yi ( ) and Yang Yi ( ) the negative and the positive principles of the universe. The gross and heaviest part, Yin, was precipitated and became earth. The finer, lighter part, Yang, became sublimed and formed heaven. These two, Yin and Yang, are the regulative forces that form, by their union and interaction, both the soul and material basis of the universe" (Hume 1940: 17, summarizing the Tao Te Ching).

The preceding citation describes very concisely the cosmogony of the universe as perceived by the Chinese, according to this view, after the original state of chaos (Absolute Void), the metaphysical principle (Great Absolute), the abstract rule governing the universe appeared, followed by Prime Matter (the material principle). It seems that Prime Matter is that very prime agent which is being sought. While insufficient information exists to give a very clear picture of its nature, one can speculate on the quality of such a first material agent, based on the information from several sources. According to Edkins, "a Taoist priest denied that creation was God's act and maintained that it was that act of the material agent which is called Ch'i, a word meaning a very pure form of matter, and which was the creator of things" (Edkins 1984: 110). The same kind of understanding

has been found in the work of Zhuang Tzu (ca. 369 -- ca.286 B.C.), a disciple of Lao Tzu, as he states that "all through the universe, there is one Ch'i and therefore the sages prized that unity" (quoted from Needham 1956: 76).

Ch'i, then, was the basic material agent-- the so called "prime matter", out of the evolution of which there came the manifestation of Ch'i -- Yin-Yang principles, which, taken together, are all inclusive. Yang is in the form of ascending Ch'i, representing light, heat, health, strength, activity and masculinity; Yin is in the form of descending Ch'i, representing darkness, coldness, disease, death, passivity and femininity. Through the interplay and interaction of these two principles, the five primary elements came into being: fire, water, earth, wood and metal. Among them, fire is the essence of Yang, water is the essence of Yin, and the remaining three elements are combinations in varying degree of Yang and Yin. These elements in their turn unite and reunite to produce everything in the universe (Veith 1949: 13-18). This subdivision system of Yin-Yang system, which is referred as the Five Elements theory, further explains the myriad of things in the universe.

It is important to understand that the nature of Ch'i is certainly more than being the basic material agent. Schiffeler (1979: 286) points out that in the state of primal, spiritual quintessence (Tao or the "Way"), the celestial justice (Ti'en-li: ) blends with the spiritual aspect of Ch'i, "an animate, ethereal principle conceptualized as a vapor". Mahdihassan (1982: 272) further argues about the spiritual aspect of Ch'i. He analyzes the Chinese concept

of blood soul and traces out its relation with Ch'i. It is considered that this magical substance, the blood soul, is originated from Ch'i. He concludes that "As I-Ch'i, the One-Soul, the cosmic-soul, it finally became IK-Si-R, Iksir or Elixir, an agency capable of transforming an old person into a youth and a base metal into gold." Thus, Ch'i remained the essence of human beings and cosmos, "by nature refined matter, and by function, creative energy" (Mahdihassan 1982: 272). Johnson (1928: 45) also informs us that "the general term Lien-Ch'i (the art of proper breathing) signifies transmuting the breath, indicating that the breath (Ch'i) was being transmuted into soul substance (of the individual whose life was prolonged thereby)". Thus, this Ch'i, "when assimilated, would add years and increase the lifespan. It is like a patient receiving a blood transfusion and therefore having his life prolonged. At a certain age, the greatest concern of human beings is to have life prolonged and certain people have concentrated all their energy to trap Ch'i, the Cosmic Soul. Their attempts are based on the hypothesis that Ch'i exists in the atmosphere and that Ch'i is the Creative Energy" (Mahdihassan 1982: 273).

The conviction that is expressed here is that the Prime Matter, which is Ch'i, consists of both the basic material agent and spiritual content. In this interpretation of the cosmogenic scheme, the difficulty can be summarized in the form of a question: how can the Prime Matter consist of the spiritual content? In order to answer this question, an indigenous understanding of the terms "spiritual content" or "soul" is necessary. For a native Chinese, soul is not an

abstract thing as a Western person perceives, and the term "Prime Matter" (Ch'i) used in Tao Te Ching does not have to exclude the possibility of its consisting of spiritual content. This has already been shown by the fact that the air a person inhales can be transmuted into soul substance. In this case, "air" and "soul substance" are different forms of Ch'i at different stages, and can both be considered matter. In the same manner, both material aspect and spiritual aspect can be demonstrated in the form of energy. Regarding this point, it is proposed that Mahdihassan's explanation about Ch'i can be used as an access to the understanding of the two fundamental interchangeable forms of Ch'i. He argues that Ch'i is matter-cum-energy, and only when we understand Ch'i as both matter and energy, can we attribute the source of all macrocosm and microcosm to Ch'i. In this way Ch'i can be reasonably considered the source of all creations whether it be in the form of matter such as water, plant or man, or in the form of energy such as heat and light (Mahdihassan 1982: 272-273).

Before we begin to introduce another aspect of Ch'i, it should be noted that some materials discussed below regarding the death of Lao Tzu and the creation of the world based on his "cosmogenic body", certainly do not represent the atheistic tradition of the orthodox thinking. However, these materials are still cited because such mythological legends serve as an allegory for the cosmogony embodied in the form of a human being, and the story reflects some elements of the orthodox tradition which have permeated into the popular tradition, particularly regarding the function and nature of Ch'i.

With the perspective which has been developed about the concept of Ch'i, it can be further argued that the differentiation of Ch'i is not only the origin of birth, but the origin of death, because only after the death of the physical body can the Ch'i that originally was contained within the individual's body be released and shaped into a new being. The differentiation of Ch'i is also the origin of creation, which is implied in the myth of Lao Tzu (Schipper 1977: 359). It is recorded that after his death, the creation of the world came out of the transformation of his body. "Lao Tzu transformed his body. His left eye became the sun, his right eye the moon, his head the Kun-lun mountain, his beards the plants and the heavenly mansions, his bone dragons, his flesh quadrupeds, his bowels snake..." A parallel case is the death of another mythological figure, Pan-ku, as " the creation through the transformation of the world" also took place after he had died (Schipper 1977: 359, citing from Hiao Tao Lun).

It is also worth mentioning that Chang Tsai (1020-770), a neo-Confucian philosopher, says that "the entire universe consists only of Ch'i, which, however, undergoes alternating phases of dispersion and condensation. In its state of dispersion it is invisible and intangible and is then known as the Great Void. At that time, therefore, there is only the Ch'i as such, but no organized world of discrete objects. But, with the condensation of the Ch'i, such a world comes into being, only to suffer dissolution, however, at which time the Ch'i again disperses and reverts to its former state" (Fung 1953: 497).

We can conclude that in Taoism, the concept of Ch'i is many-faceted and includes the following different aspects: (1) its original meaning as the all-becoming and all-performing Cosmic Soul; (2) its role as the basic material agent as well as spiritual agent; (3) its function as an agency for transformation and creation; (4) its possession of two fundamental interchangeable forms: matter and energy. With such an all-inclusive cosmogenic concept the central contradiction between the polarity of a Yin-Yang system and the Chinese idea of the ordering and harmonizing of the world are smoothly resolved, and the cosmological environment is made sense of for the Chinese people. In Neo-Confucianism, not only has the concept of Ch'i retained all its inherited properties from the Taoist cosmology, but it has also gained a new dimension. For example, its origin and extinction has been theoretically related to the Great Void, thus the changing cycle has been described as: Great Void --> condensed Ch'i --> all beings (through the five phases of the five elements) --> dispersed Ch'i --> Great Void. With this cyclical formula, use of the concept of Ch'i was able to mediate the conflict between an ever-changing universe and a world of equilibrium, thus legitimizing the rationality of the new cosmological school. As far as the nature of this concept is concerned, the cyclical formula may be regarded as a fifth aspect of Ch'i, to complete the description of the many-faceted nature of Ch'i.

What makes the study of the origin of Ch'i so essential is that this origin provides the cosmological background for us to understand its role as a core symbol in other dimensions of Chinese culture such

as the medical dimension, psychocultural dimension, and social dimension. It is the role that Ch'i plays in these different dimensions of the symbolic network associated with Ch'i that gives rise to the cultural construction of affective disorder--somatization. Since, according to the Chinese, all phenomena of macrocosmic dimensions are interconnected with those of the microcosmic, then Ch'i, which is the agent embodying both material and spiritual elements in the cosmos, should also operate within the individual organism. Because of its dynamic and all-pervading nature, the contribution of Ch'i to the formulation of social values and behavioral norms, to the structure of the Chinese consciousness and the Chinese notion of the constituents of personhood, and to its manifestation in the medical domain as a tendency of somatization, is considerable and profound.

## SECTION 2. CH'I IN CHINESE MEDICINE

Given the cosmological origin of Ch'i and illustrations of its nature presented in the preceding discussion, it is proposed here that the Chinese conceptualization of the role that Ch'i plays in the medical sphere is an important variable in understanding the cultural tendency of somatization. Particularly, if we consider that for most native Chinese, Ch'i is a real phenomenon[1] whose physical reality is an unquestioned part of the world view. Countless generations of men and women were born, grew up and died in the fold of Chinese culture whose diverse realities have been woven into a complex whole by such a medical concept as Ch'i.

Unschuld (1985: 72) informs us that "the concept of Ch'i was used extensively in the third and second centuries (B.C.)... its meaning included related ideas and phenomena such as 'that fills the body,' 'that means life,' 'breath,' and 'vapor,' in general, such as clouds in the sky, or even 'wind'. As early as the late Chou or beginning of Han period[2], substance of tangible matter was believed by at least one author to consist of dispersible finest vapor, designated with the term Ch'i".

As a consequence, Chinese medicine, which has a documented history of about 2000 years, has transferred cosmological conceptions to its own sphere and has developed into a medicine of energetics whose theoretical principles are based on the concept of Ch'i and its related theory of the Yin and Yang doctrine (Unschuld 1985: 69, Fisch 1973: 99).

Chinese medicine maintains that:

(1) Ch'i is the biological substance as well as the dynamic force manifested in various energetic phases within the human body (Yin and Chang 1983: 55-57).

(2) Ch'i performs various important functions in the body, such as (a) the dynamic function of activating physicochemical and mental processes; (b) the warming function of maintaining the normal temperature in the body; (c) the protective function of resisting entry of pathological agents into the body; (d) the retaining function of maintaining the circulation of the blood within the veins and of preventing excessive discharge of bodily fluids; and (e) the transformative function of maintaining metabolical activities within

the body (Yin and Chang 1983: 55).

(3) Ch'i is the ultimate parameter in the diagnostic process.

(4) Manipulation of Ch'i is the major mode of access for therapeutic intervention to achieve a healing effect.

The third and fourth points in the preceding paragraph are extremely important in understanding the relation between the medical concept of Ch'i and the somatic orientation among the Chinese, and these aspects are illustrated below.

Chinese medicine maintains that a disease manifests itself in the imbalance of Yin and Yang in the body, or, alternatively, the improper circulation of Ch'i (Yin and Chang 1983: 102). Means exist for assessing these criteria on the basis of physical observations, giving rise to two diagnostic paradigms.

Referring to the first of these two diagnostic paradigms -- the imbalance of Yin and Yang in the body, Porkert (1974: 167-174) summarizes that there are "more than a dozen basic forms" of Ch'i and that "well over two dozens accessory forms" have been mentioned in the Chinese medical literature. These different types of Ch'i can be viewed as different parts of Ch'i which carry out different functions or act at different stages. They are generally classified into two categories: the "constructive and configurational" form of Ch'i and the "active and energetic" form of Ch'i, the former being assigned the quality of Yin and the latter the quality of Yang, in accordance with the Yin-Yang theory.

As transformation of Yin and Yang into each other is the basic motion of the Yin-Yang system, the waxing and waning of Yin Ch'i and

Yang Ch'i represent the quantitative change in the Yin and Yang aspects of the body (Liu 1988:I: 36), therefore, the Yin-Yang system can be understood in terms of the oscillating quality of Ch'i, and the imbalance of Yin and Yang can be boiled down to a problem of improper distribution of different parts of Ch'i.

The second diagnostic paradigm -- the improper circulation of Ch'i -- is based on the following conceptual framework. In classical texts Ch'i is said to move around the body in a prescribed route through twelve Ch'i channels called meridians, each of them being related with one of twelve primary organs. For example, the Yang energy starts from the kidneys, after arriving at the liver, it proceeds to the eyes in order to reach the Yang area before finally emerging at the surface in the so-called Tai Yang area[3]. The Yin energy originates from digestion and is absorbed by the spleen; "it flows to the lungs where it joins the Ch'i from cosmos (air). From the lungs the Yin energy heads towards the first point of the meridianic cycle" (Fisch 1973: 100).

It is postulated in Chinese medical literature that normal physiological activity in the body requires that Ch'i move harmoniously in various directions[4] to carry out various physiological functions. Nevertheless, imbalance would arise due to (1) stagnation of Ch'i (Ch'i is blocked in a particular location); (2) rebellion of Ch'i (Ch'i moves upwards excessively); (3) sinking of Ch'i (Ch'i moves downward excessively); (4) leakage of Ch'i (Ch'i cannot be properly retained inside the body); (5) depression of Ch'i (Ch'i stays inside the body without the proper access towards the exterior). (Yin and

Chang 1983: 56). All the above forms of improper circulation of Ch'i can result in an insufficient input of one type of Ch'i and excessive input of the opposite type, thus developing improper distribution of Ch'i in the body.

The two diagnostic paradigms that have been discussed so far, the imbalance of Yin and Yang and the improper movement of Ch'i would both affect the distribution of Ch'i, and would thus be expected to affect the normal biochemical and physiological patterns of the body (the balance of Yin and Yang in the body). Inharmonious distribution of Ch'i would in turn influence the natural circulation of Ch'i. Therefore, the ultimate parameter underlying both the two paradigms is the concept of Ch'i. If any abnormal change occurs in any of the aspects of Ch'i within the body, whether it be a problem regarding the distribution of Ch'i or the circulation of Ch'i, the person in question would be considered as a patient.

As a result, the diagnostic plane in Chinese medicine has become a very important link between its pathological theories and its therapeutic theories. Once again, Ch'i, as the core medical concept in the diagnostic process, plays the key role in unifying the working of Chinese medicine in terms of its transference of psychological pathology onto its physical plane, so that it may be treated with the same methods that are used to combat physical disorders.

According to The Synopsis of the Golden Chamber, written by the famous physician Zhang Zhongjing in the third century (A.D.), pathological theory in Chinese medicine proposes that disease etiology should be divided into three categories: (1) the exogenous

pathogenetic factors, (2) the endogenous pathogenetic factors, and (3) the neither-exogenous-nor-endogenous factors. The first category includes the six excesses (wind, cold, heat, dampness, dryness, fire) which are used with reference to seasonal disease. The second category contains seven emotions (joy, anger, sadness, pensiveness, grief, fear, fight) which are considered to be the source of internal disorders. The third category refers to the pathogenetic factors such as pestilence, injury and life style. (Liu 1988:I: 143-159, summarizing from The Synopsis of the Golden Chamber). Nowadays, Chinese practitioners tend to classify pestilence and injury into the first category, and irregular diet or excessive sexual practice into the second (Liu 1988:I: 160).

It is important to note that the twin-categorized pathological classification (epidemic and seasonal disease versus emotional disorders) in the theoretical framework does not run in parallel with the therapeutic classification in which all types of treatment are carried out on the physical plane, whether it be medicinal therapy, acupuncture, moxibustion, massage, respiratory therapy or remedial exercises. However, this dichotomy between the pathological classification and the therapeutic classification, particularly between psychological disorder and physical treatment, can be managed and mediated by the following medical theories as well as belief systems.

First, the importance attached to the body demonstrated in the psychocultural domain (which will be discussed in the next section), is also a basic conception in the medical sphere. The Chinese believe

that merely talking (as the psychoanalyst does) will not remove the symptoms and cure the affective disorder. It is thought that only when the body is well nourished and all the bodily functions are well maintained can the mind perform its functions well, so that the cure of psychological disorder should take place on the physical plane.

Second, according to a table (see Table 1 in p. 58) in Huang Ti Nei Ching Su Wen (Veith 1949: 21), the body organs and the psychological pathogens such as anger, joy, grief, etc., are classified into the same system (the physical system), and closely related to each other. For example, anger is considered as associating with the liver, joy with the heart and grief with the lungs, etc.. Therefore, it is thought that if treatment can be applied to the corresponding organs, the psychological disorder caused by those seven emotions can be cured.

Third, since Chinese medicine is a medicine "which endeavors to resolve problems of human health and disease on the basis of Ch'i (Fisch 1973: 99), thus, in the diagnostic process, all the pathological, physiological, biochemical and psychological conditions should be interpreted in terms of Ch'i and its related categories Yin and Yang. For example, in the case of neurosis, the disease (illness) entity is interpreted as (1) insufficiency of Ch'i and blood caused by mental strain, (2) disharmony of the heart and kidneys caused by protracted illness that leads to consumption of kidney Yin, (3) deficiency of heart Ch'i and gallbladder Ch'i causing agitation of the mind, and (4) upward flaring of liver fire (associated with excessive Yang Ch'i in the liver) because of mental depression, etc. (Liu

1988:II: 330-331).

This is because the pathological theory in Chinese medicine is built on a conviction that the pathological factor affects the body through the medium function of Ch'i. For example, it is believed that the exogenous factor of dampness is a Yin pathogenetic factor, and is therefore apt to act on Yang Ch'i before it affects the function of spleen. Referring to endogenous factors, "Treatise on Abrupt Pain" in Huang Ti Nei Ching Su Wen states that "...rage causes Ch'i to flow upward; joy allows Ch'i to be relaxed; grief produces dejected Ch'i; terror causes Ch'i to descend; fight drives Ch'i to disorder; and pensiveness makes Ch'i stagnant", thus leading to the impairment of the liver, heart, lungs, kidneys and spleen respectively (Liu 1988:I: 150-159). Thus, the important medium role of Ch'i in the pathological theories sets a firm theoretical ground for the establishment of the interpretive function of Ch'i in the diagnostic and therapeutic intervention.

The way in which such an interpretive procedure links the etiological and therapeutic poles of the theoretical framework can also be understood by considering the contrast between the holistic approach of Chinese medicine in comparison with that of Western medicine. Western medicine, with its technological bias, particularly the antiseptic method derived from modern bacteriology, stresses the elimination of the pathogenetic invader or the removal of specific symptoms by "direct" therapeutic interventions (Croizier 1968: 234). On the other hand, in Chinese medicine, the changes taking place in an individual's body are considered to be influenced by the energetic

precess of the cosmos with the regulation of Ch'i, and the emphasis becomes one of maintaining health and balance rather than of attacking particular pathological factors. Hence, identification of a specific disease entity is not considered sufficient. "A search is made for a pattern of events that could have allowed the patient to become vulnerable to the specific cause of disease" (Lock 1980: 9). Indeed, holistic therapeutic intervention can be possible only when the diagnostic interpretation is accomplished and the symptoms and causes of a disease are interpreted in terms of Ch'i.

In Chinese medicine, psychological pathogenetic factors (abnormal emotional states) are not treated directly on the physical plane. They are first interpreted in terms of Ch'i, and then specific methods of treatment are adopted to supplement the deficiency of Ch'i, drain the excess of Ch'i, stimulate or arrest the flow of Ch'i. In this way, the movement of Ch'i can be regulated and balance can be restored in the body. Once again, Ch'i becomes the major mode by which the therapeutic intervention achieves an effective result. The following case (quoted from Liu 1988:II: 341) will illustrate well the traditional therapeutic intervention.

Case

Female, age 32, first visit on November 4, 1972.
History: Because of rage, the patient had suddenly lost consciousness for a few minutes and developed cold limbs and pallor. After the incident, she complained of dizziness, feeling of oppression in the chest and hypochondria, frequent sighing, anorexia, restlessness, insomnia, and excessive dreaming during sleep.
Diagnosis and treatment: On examination, a thin slimy tongue and taut pulse were observed. The trouble was thought to be caused by adverse flow of vital energy (Ch'i) due to a depressed liver. It was thus considered advisable to remove stagnancy of vital energy (Ch'i) to ease the mind. The herb administered were as follows (the style of using capitals is retained from the original source):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Radix Bupleuri | 6 | grams |
| Rhizoma Cyperi | 9 | " |
| Radis Angelicae Sinensis | 9 | " |
| Radix Paeoniae Alba | 9 | " |
| Poria | 12 | " |
| Lignum Aquilariae Resinatum | 3 | " |
| Fructus Aurantii | 9 | " |
| Radix Polygalae | 6 | " |
| Semen Ziziphi Spinosae | 9 | " |
| Caulis Polygoni Multiflori | 15 | " |
| Herba Menthae (decocted later) | 6 | " |

After four doses were taken, the feeling of oppression in the chest and hypochondria had almost disappeared, but excessive dreaming during sleep still remained. Then 24 grams Concha Margaritifera Usta were added to the prescription, which was taken for a few more days. Upon follow-up four months later, there had no relapse and the patient's condition had improved markedly.

-- From Luo Guojun, Practical Traditional Chinese Internal Medicine (Shanxi People's Publishing House 1981), p.328.

As it is shown in this case that the somatically oriented therapeutic principle discussed here is not merely a coping system which managed the situation before psychiatrists existed in China. Indeed, this principle has proved to be effective for curing mental illness and it is based on a profound understanding of body-mind unity as well as psychosomatic medicine. Nowadays, China has its own psychiatrists and mental hospitals, but traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture are extensively used other than Western psychiatric methods (Wang 1983: 299).

Meanwhile, such a unique therapeutic principle itself shapes and molds psychosomatic experience in the way in which it influences the communicative framework (Kleinman 1981) between the patient and the doctor. Such a communicative framework, in turn, influences the

medical belief systems and explanatory models (Kleinman 1980) describing psychological disorders among Chinese.

In order to establish an explanatory model for the therapeutic intervention to be taken on the physical plane for a patient who suffers from an affective disorder, the negotiating process has to be carried out within a communicative framework which encourages the patient to agree upon the explanatory model derived from the fundamental theory of Chinese medicine and thus accept the somatically oriented treatment.

There are four standard diagnostic methods, namely, observation, listening, pulse-taking and questioning, which a doctor can utilize to achieve this goal. The first two diagnostic methods are designed to detect the patient's constitution, general state of health, and the related pathogenetic factors with reference to the correspondence system[5]. For example, the green color, the eyes, the internal organ liver, the endogenous pathogenetic factor "anger", and the exogenous pathogenetic factor "wind" are all classified in the same category (the wood category) in the correspondence system; thus if a doctor detects dry eyes, or other eye problem, particularly if there is also a blue-green tinge to the tongue, he would suspect that the liver is affected by either 'anger' or 'wind'(Lock 1980: 38).

The third method is the palpation of the pulse. According to the Nan Ching, (The Difficult Issues), a text of the mature medical classic written during the first century A.D., specific data regarding the circulation of Ch'i can be acquired by feeling the pressure of the "influence-opening" positions located at the wrists (Unschuld 1985:

86). This is the most important method of the four diagnostic techniques, as various qualities of the pulse pressure reveal detailed information of Ch'i as well as the related condition of the internal organs (Wong and Wu 1953: 43-44) the general feeling among Chinese is that a good traditionalist physician should be able to reach the diagnosis alone by assessing the diagnostic data obtained from pulse examination.

Based on these diagnostic techniques and his understanding of the body-mind relationship and psychosomatic pathology, the doctor then asks questions concerning sensations and body processes such as perspiration, sleep, appetite and taste, feelings of hot and cold, etc.. This method may help reach a diagnosis, but rarely plays a determining role in the diagnostic intervention (Kaptchuk 1983: 152).

It is obvious that although on the doctor's part, the specific medicine or therapy is prescribed before the implicit explanatory model has been referred to the psychological condition of the patient, the patient has no access to what is going on inside the doctor's mind, and has the impression that the physical dimension is the primary dimension in which the disorder seems to have taken place, from which the diagnosis is being drawn, and in which the therapeutic intervention is going to take place. Under such circumstances, the negotiation carried out within a somatically oriented communicative framework virtually becomes a learning process in which the patient is encouraged to learn how to monitor the correlates between the functional change in the physical plane and the emotional change caused by intrapsychic conflicts. In addition, he learns how to use a

set of physical symptoms to indicate psychological problems, and how to use the corresponding internal organs as somatic symbols to express a specific affective disorder (Kleinman and Lin 1981: 9).

In summary, the principle of the somatically oriented intervention based on the medical content of Ch'i has significant impact on the culturally specific coping responce, not only with regards to its interpretive function in the diagnostic intervention, but also by establishing a somatically oriented communicative framework to cultivate the somatic pattern of the psychological disorder.

## SECTION 3. CH'I IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHINESE PERSONALITY

Methodologically, in order to study the components of the Chinese construction of personhood and its relation to the concept of Ch'i, it is advantageous to start with a comparison between the Chinese and Western personality constructs. Although Freudian psychology, which is used here to illustrate the Western personality construct, is not a theory accepted by everyone in the West, at least it can (1) provide insights into the understanding of the Western concept of personality in spite of the fact that a gap between the theory and reality exists, and (2) serve as a reference point or yardstick for us to attempt to obtain an objective view of Chinese psychophysiological processes, as the Chinese tradition is lack of the analytic framework in the psychocultural domain.

In the West, the structure of mind was initially conceptualized

by Freud (1900, 1915) as entailing three systems: the unconscious, the preconscious and the conscious. The consciousness is the agent of the mind which is in charge of inner and outer stimuli. The unconsciousness contains elements that require special efforts to become conscious while the preconsciousness contains elements that can easily reach the level of consciousness. This is known as the topographical hypothesis (quoted from Giovacchini 1977: 21). Later on, Freud (1923) postulated another tripartite system known as the structural hypothesis in which mind is divided into id, ego and superego. Giovacchini (1977) points out that in this Freudian model, the mind is viewed as a hierarchically ordered entity. The "biologically based instincts" (id) at the lower end of the mental spectrum strives to reach the "internalized moral standard" (superego) at the higher end of the spectrum through ego -- "individual expression against the more structured reality". He also argued that although Western psychology has developed different personality theories such as "psychoanalysis, rational emotive theory, reality theory, Gestalt theory, Rogerian theory and existential psychology", these theories are all more or less influenced by psychoanalytic psychology which is based on the Freudian tripartite system (Giovacchini 1977: 15).

In ontract, "mind" has been conceptualized by the Chinese as differing in content from the Freudian model, and their personality construct is closely connected with Chinese theories of cosmogony as well as with the Chinese concept of the body. According to Huang Ti Nei Ching Su Wen, there are five categories in the Chinese personality

construct in correspondence to the Five Elements in the cosmological system; they are five components of the "mind": shen ( ), hun( ), po( ), yi( ), zhi( ) (Veith 1949: 25).

Of the five components making up the Chinese concept of "mind", shen is the most important, yet the most difficult to understand, particularly for the Western people. Here it is convenient to use the term "spirit" adopted by Veith, the translator of Huang Ti Nei Ching Su Wen. However, there are some connotations in "shen" which cannot be conveyed by the English translation "spirit". First, "shen" has some relation to the mental component of the individual, because shen implies "the spirit and the energy that can be thoroughly understood by knowledge and wisdom" (Veith 1949: 222). Second, "shen" is a concrete "spirit", it may be considered as a type of Ch'i that contributes to the total structure of the individual personality (Porkert 1982: 99). The Huang Ti Nei Ching Su Wen states that: "Shen, the configurative force, manifests itself as Ch'i -- 'active configurational energy' in the Heaven (at the active pole of the Cosmos); it constitutes hsing (form: ), 'structive substrates, substantial bodies' on Earth (at the structive pole of the Cosmos) (Veith 1949: 175). "Shen here exists both as the active and the structive aspects of the Cosmos, and consequently may be said to represent both aspects (the mind and the body) implicitly" (Porkert 1974: 181). Therefore, it can be inferred that "shen" is indeed the Chinese version of "spirit", which manifests itself in the form of a specific type of Ch'i possessing the mental functions.

Hun is the Yang-natured ascending Ch'i within a person of which

the higher order of the individual is composed. Po is the Yin-natured descending Ch'i within a person of which the lower order of the individual is composed, linking with the animal kingdom. Yi is intelligence and understanding. Zhi is will or volition. To summarize the relationship between these categories, The Spring and Autumn Annals explain: "In man's life the first transformations are called the earthly aspect of the soul (po). After po has been produced, that which is strong and positive is called the heavenly aspect of soul (hun). If he has an abundance in the use of material things and subtle essentials, his hun and po will become strong. From this are developed essence and understanding until there are spirit and intelligence" (quoted from Chan 1963: 12).

In Huang Ti Nei Ching Su Wen, it is stated that the five components of the "mind" is each controlled by the liver, heart, spleen, lungs or kidneys, and associated with one of the Five Elements, namely, wood, fire, earth, metal and water respectively. By the same token, the Five Elements interact with each other in a cycle, so do the five components of the "mind" in a corresponding manner. For example, in the mutual productive cycle, the relation between the five components is: hun produces shen, shen produces yi, yi produces po, po produces zhi, and zhi produces hun, corresponding to the order of their controlling organs in the same mutual productive cycle, namely, liver (wood) --> heart (fire) --> spleen (earth) --> lungs (metal) --> kidneys (water) --> liver (wood). Applying the Yin-Yang system to the Chinese structure of "mind", as wood and fire are Yang elements, hun and shen are assigned the Yang qualities; po and zhi are

assigned the Yin qualities as they are associated with the Yin elements, metal and water. Yi here is supposed to be in a state of equilibrium (Loewe 1982: 74-75). However, the nature of one's mind, like all other things in the universe, is one of homeostasis, that is, the mental system is a self-regulating one with a natural tendency to revert to equilibrium (Lock 1980: 36).

In the Chinese personality construct, "mind" consists of five components. However, since hun and po are different stages of shen (spirit), this shen together with the remaining two components yi and zhi (intelligence and will power), could constitute a sort of Chinese tripartite system. In comparing the two triparite systems (Freudian and Chinese), it can be seen that the Chinese tripartite model is defined by the three mental functions, that is, spirit, intelligence and will power, and these functions are closely related to each other within a cycle. The Freudian tripatite model, on the other hand, is defined by the different level at which the mental functions are performed such as the conscious level, the unconscious level and preconscious level, and these different levels form a vertical layered order. The conclusion that might be drawn here is that the Chinese "mind" is a functionally defined cyclical system while the Western "mind" is a structurally defined hierarchical system.

With an understanding of the difference between the Chinese "mind" and Western "mind", a series of psychocultural dichotomies in the two personality constructs may be revealed, including: (1) the alienation of man from the universe versus the dissolution of man in the universe; (2) the body-mind separation versus the body-mind unity

and the stress of mentality in the western theories versus the physical dimension emphasized in the Chinese theories; and (3) the individuated person versus the person in society and culture. The existence of the dichotomies implies that the psychological process may be organized and applied very differently in the contemporary West and in China to produce correspondingly different patterns of culturally constituted experience of affective disorders.

With regard to the first mentioned dichotomy (alienation versus dissolution), it is obvious that the two constructs lead to different conceptualizations of "mind" and thus lead to the formation of different relationships between a person and his environment. For example, in comparison with the Western personality construct, the Chinese counterpart is characterized by a relative lack of individuality, which reflects a different mode of interaction with his surroundings. In the Western personality construction, because of its inclusion of the individually-centered ego which is derived from the Freudian psychology, personality in the West is regarded as a self-contained entity, separated from the universe. Hence, the separation between man and his natural environment in Western thought has come into being.

The Chinese personality construct does not include such a clearly defined ego or permanent individual soul, as demonstrated in the philosophy of the neo-Confucian philosopher Chu Hsi (A.D. 1130--1200). He argued that the mind is physical and concrete, thus it is transitional and delusive, subject to the changes of the physical being which possesses the mind. In other words, the mind within any

individual cannot develope itself into a permanent entity ( Chu-tzu wen-chi, quoted from Fung 1942: 48-49) such as a clearly defined ego. This philosophy parallels the argument that has been developed so far, that is, the major component of the Chinese personality construct, shen, leads the individual identity to its dissolution into a large cosmic identity through the ceaseless exchange of Ch'i between the person and the cosmos.

In the second of the dichotomies concerned with the body-mind relationship, which is the nucleus of an individual's identity, the cultural variants of this relationship and its related value orientations are also derived from divergent conceptions of personhood. In the West, the body and mind are conceptualized as "ontologically distinct" (Kakar 1983: 240) and should be dealt with on different levels. Physical disorders should be handled by the physician; psychological disorders are to be handled by the psychiatrist. Furthermore, in the more narrowly defined Freudian tripartite system only mentality is highlighted, whereas the physical dimension is completely absent. The body is merely viewed as a tool for distinguishing the inner world from the outer, protecting and safeguarding the development of mentality. The image of the body is portrayed as a "this worldly" corporate form, as opposed to the mind, which is the component capable of the achievement of an immortal individual soul. This results in an apparent separation of the body and mind and even in the rejection of body. As Kubie (1937: 391) describes, there is a tendency to devalue the human body as "a kind of animated, mobile dirt factory, exuding filth at every aperture and

that all that is necessary to turn something into dirt is that it should even momentarily enter the body through one of these apertures."

In the Chinese personality construct, the structure of "mind" is grounded in a tradition in which the psychological aspect and physical aspect have not rent asunder, thus it constitutes what Kakar (1983: 240) describes as a "psychophysical monism", and has become locus of identity of both mind and body. This is derived from the facts that (1) shen (Ch'i) in the Chinese tripartite system represents both psychological and physical dimensions, and (2) all the mental components are controlled by physical organs. Therefore, the Chinese maintain that there is no real distinction between the body and mind, or rather the distinction between them is one of degree, not of kind.

Not only does the body-mind relationship in the Chinese personality theories differ from its counterpart in Western theories, but also the value orientations regarding the body and mind are reversed. This is implied by the different ways put forward for gaining immortality. The inclusion of Ch'i in the Chinese personality construct encourages the Chinese to pursue longevity through physical means. One method of Chinese physical exercises, the art of proper breathing (see p. 15) indicates that the breath can be transmuted into soul substance. In this way, the spiritual part of the human organism and the Cosmic Soul pervading the cosmos can be physically exchanged through the circulation of Ch'i from the air, as a result of employing physical means -- inhalation (Hume 1940: 169).

The the primacy of body can be also traced from the Taoist

creation myths (see p. 17). Indeed, Schipper (1977: 357) states that the "priority of the human body in relation to the rest of the universe" is the oldest theme in Chinese culture. From The Lao Pien Hua Ching (The Book of the Transformation of Lao Tzu), a text composed in about 165 A.D., we are told that, after Lao Tzu's death, his body became the "cosmogenic body" in which the whole world, the sun, the moon, the sky, the earth, etc. came into being (Schipper 1977: 358-359).

Schipper further points out that for the Chinese, the correspondence of the human body with its environment is far beyond a metaphor, as Lao Tzu's body was not only the image for the creation of the world, but also the focus for a great number of transformative processes to be carried out during the creation. This very "special relationship of sympathy" gives rise to the Chinese belief that by nurturing the energy within one's body, the outside forces can be manipulated and governed; peace and harmony in the body can result in peace and harmony in the natural environment (Schipper 1977: 357).

Once the implicit notion of the primacy of the human body in Taoist mythology is made clear, the relation between the high value orientation towards the body and the causes of psychosomatic illness can be understood. If mental illness is viewed as a condition resulting from the conflict between a person and his environment, then it naturally follows that such conflicts should be dealt with at the physical level where mental activities are carried out, and where the principle of the "special relationship of sympathy" between the body and the environment can be applied.

Linguistic evidence can also be found to illustrate the importance of the body in the Chinese personality construct. For example, one way of expressing "I" or "me" could be "this body of mine" (ben shen: ). Instead of saying "personal" or "in person", the Chinese would say "by one's own body" or "on one's own body" (ch'in shen: ). The literal translation of one word for "life" (zhong shen: ) in the Chinese language is "the course of the body". In a similar manner, the Chinese equivalent for "devotion" (shan shen: ) is "to give one's body for"; and for "conduct oneself properly" is "hold one"s body" (ch'i shen: ). Perhaps the most interesting example is the Chinese phrase "raise the body" (jing shen: ), which has its English translation as "improve one's social status". In general, if the Westerner identifies his individuality as derived from mentality, then probably for the Chinese person it is the physical body which should be regarded as identical to the individual.

The implication of body-mind unity and the stress of the physical plane in the Chinese personality construct, as well as the connection between the internal organs and the mental components, particularly between heart and "shen", all provide a link between affects and mentality, and tie in the physical dimension with the psychological. This alone may be expected to give rise to a pattern of somatization of affective disorders among Chinese, that is, a tendency towards using the body to mediate the individual's perception, experience and interpretation of dysphoric affects, and bringing various types of somatized symptoms and behaviors into coping strategies. In contrast, "mind" occupies the most important position in in the Western

construct of personality, thus, it is expected that a tendency towards psychologization, towards expressing affective disorders through culturally sanctioned psychological terms and organizing illness experience in the psychological dimension, should be the pattern of mental illness construction in contemporary Western society.

The third psychocultural dichotomy mentioned earlier relates to the social implications of the difference between Chinese and Western personality constructs. The importance attached to mentality and its assumed control over the body resulted in the "traditional Western definition of personality moving from a central core of the unconsciousness, through preconsciousness and unexpressed conscious to the expressible conscious behavior" (Pedersen 1977: 374). Therefore, an individual is seen ont only as a self-centered entity apart from society, but also as a conscious being that can change and create his immediate surroundings as well as society.

However, in Chinese view, it is the social aspect which is central to the theory of personality. This is because Ch'i is the essence of the social environment as well as that of the natural environment. Harmony in the society depends on the proper behavior of its members, which can only come from a calm temperament and a balanced mental state. This state, being a state of "quiet awareness" rather than of "unconscious relaxation", cannot be attained by any other means but the "controlled inhalation and exhalation" (Siou, 1975: 49), in other words, only the proper regulation of Ch'i would bring harmony to the individual as well as to the society. Hence, the Chinese concept of personhood goes beyond those vertical structural

layers of Freudian tripartite system such as the id, ego and superego, into the diffuse-oriented relationships between the person and his social context.

The relationship between the psychocultural and social dimensions is embodied in the Chinese word "ren", which means "humanity". The character of "ren" ( ) consists of two distinct segments; a pictogram indicating "person" is placed on the left side of a pictogram "two". This linguistic evidence indicates that in Chinese society personhood can only be achieved in the presence of two people. In analyzing the work of Hsu, who constitutes the term "psychosocial homeostasis" (Hsu 1971) to describe Chinese personality, Pedersen (1977: 374-375) argues that this term "emphasizes interpersonal transactions and evaluates the central value of an individual according to how well he serves to enhance interpersonal adjustment"; and as a result, the locus of personality is not in the individual, but in the "circle of humanity, ideas, and things that define goodness in the person's transactions with fellow human beings". This brings us to the difference between Chinese individuality and its Western counterpart. It is argued here that even for those Chinese who are actively seeking individuality and interior experience, the socially-defined and other-oriented individuality they might achieve is not the same as the individuality assumed in Western psychology.

Another important contrast between Western and Chinese constructs of personality is the position of emotion in the conceptual framework. According to Chinese medicine, the mental capacities can control neither the physical organs nor emotions. Instead, it works the other

way around, emotions are viewed as pathogens, which can adversely affect the circulation of Ch'i as well as physical organs (see p. 26), these physical organs in turn control the mental capacities. This lack of regulation mechanism for emotions and their expression in the Chinese personality construct contrasts markedly with the strong emotional control which the Chinese are known to display. Being a practical and pragmatic people, the Chinese have eased the tension between personality theory and reality by producing ethical and moral speculations derived from Confucian and other philosophies on the nature of ideal society.

The tight control over expression of emotion is a direct cause of somatization among Chinese. They are said to guard their personal feelings, particularly intrapsychic conflicts against all except family members and close friends (Kleinman 1980), as they believe that revealing of such feelings would endanger their interpersonal relationships and thus endanger their achievement of personhood. Therefore, when the expression of intrapsychic feelings is closely monitored and almost blocked, somatic manifestation proves to be the possible and acceptable expression. Control of expression of emotion (for a more detailed discussion, see Solomon 1971, Chapter VI), being the basic characteristic of communications among Chinese, is certainly one important variable in shaping psychological disorders into somatic experience[1]. Furthermore, an acceptable way of hiding away those personal or intrapsychic feelings from the public is to express them through highly standardized and categorized patterns according to concrete situational contexts. Since subjective intrapsychic

experience are difficult to standardize and categorize to fit into these communicative patterns, objective patterns such as somatic organs are thus utilized subconsciously as cultural patterns to convey the psychological meaning in various situations.

In summary, the concept of Ch'i, which is the manifestation of the most important mental component "shen" in the Chinese personality construct, serves as an all-pervading agent to dissolve the individual soul in the cosmos, as well as to constitute the "psychophysical monism" (Kakar 1982: 240) and the theme of the harmonious relationship between man and his natural environment. The attainment of Ch'i through inhalation results in the Chinese employing physical means to gain immortality, which relates to the explanation for the notion of the primacy of the body. Moreover, because the proper circulation of Ch'i is supposed to embody itself in the social domain as to create a harmonious society, thus, the socially defined Chinese individuality can be understood as the reflection of the social dimension of Ch'i in the Chinese personality construct.

From the perspective advanced in this section, it is shown what a key role the concept of Ch'i plays in the psychocultural dimension of the symbolic network. Ch'i underlines the contrast between Chinese and Western personality constructs by the way in which it gives rise to three pairs of opposing principles: (1) man in harmony with Nature versus man alienated from Nature; (2) body-mind unity and primacy of body versus body-mind separation and rejection of body; (3) socially-defined personhood versus self-centered individuality. These different concepts lead to the divergences in personality constructs,

which prove to be one important aspect of cognitive system that influences the predominat pattern of mental illness construction. Thus, while psychologization is the appropriate response in the contemporary West, somatization seems to be the logical coping strategy in Chinese society.

## SECTION 4. CH'I IN VALUE ORIENTATIONS AND BEHAVIORAL NORMS

In the previous sections, an exploration has been conducted of the way in which the core symbol Ch'i affects and modifies the experience of mental illness through the cosmological, medical and psychocultural domains. Yet the concept of Ch'i, as a core symbol, is not only deeply integrated in the three different domains of Chinese society which have been discussed in the previous sections, but also mobilized in social interactions and helps to determine value orientations and behavioral norms, with an possible consequence for somatizing patterns of managing affective disorders.

Since the social context of somatization in Chinese society has been well treated in anthropological literature (Kleinman 1980, 1981, 1986; Wang 1983), only those features that are closely related to the key role of Ch'i and its symbolic network will be discussed. One of the significant features of Chinese society is familism. The social ethic centers around dependency and reciprocity within the family and one's kinship framework instead of independence and individuality. The Chinese ascribe their successful achievements to the strength and stern discipline of the family, and by the same token, any failure in

their education, careers or moral constitution would adversely affect the family's reputation. Affective disorder is viewed by the Chinese society as moral degeneration on the part of the patient, for the patient is held responsible for not controlling his emotions properly; such behavior can bring severe stigma to the family as many studies have shown (See Lin et al. 1978, Kleinman 1980).

As family members have a tendency of responding strongly against the patient or may even blame the patient for being mentally ill, dysphoric affects are preferentially expressed in the form of physical disorders. Thus, somatization has become a family solution not only sanctioned by cosmological and psychocultural idioms but also approved by the value system in a society in which familism is deeply rooted in the fabric of social life.

In order to illuminate the key role that Ch'i plays in Chinese social structure in terms of molding the social values and disease-related behavioral norms, the question which should be raised here is: what is the symbolic meaning of Ch'i in the operation of the family institution? There are three ways for an individual to obtain Ch'i, or we may say, there are three sources of Ch'i contributing to the total Ch'i in the human body. "The first of these is Original Ch'i, also called Prenatal Ch'i, which is inherited from the parents at the conception of a child. The second source is Grain Ch'i, which is derived from the digestion of food. The third is Natural Air Ch'i, which is extracted by the lungs from the air we breathe" (Kaptchuk 1983: 36). The first two sources are relevant to the psychological tendency being described here, because they both can be related to

specific social interactions.

The first source of Ch'i (Prenatal Ch'i) underlines the significance of the family institution in Chinese culture. The influence of Ch'i in family relationships ranging from filial piety to ancestor worship can be seen to stem from a belief in inheritance and transmission of Ch'i at the time of conception, which is taken for granted by a native Chinese. The traditional father-son and ancestor-descendant relationships are rationalized, and have become the basic socialization model in the Chinese society as the superior and inferior in these relationships can be identified with the giver of Ch'i and receiver of Ch'i respectively. Therefore, it can be argued that the core symbol Ch'i has created the socially constituted mechanism for coping with affective disorders through the family institutions.

The second source of Ch'i (Grain Ch'i) can be related to another feature of Chinese culture, which has been termed the "oral calculus" by Solomon. Solomon (1971: 42) says: "The considerable (oral) indulgence accorded with a (male) child in infancy and early childhood, affection expressed above all through the giving of food, seems to be the basis of an "oral" calculus in the way that the Chinese approach interpersonal relations throughout life. The reckoning of their family or population size in terms of "mouth" (ren-k'ou) rather than "heads", and the emphasis on eating which has produced one of the world's great culinary traditions, are only part of the view of life in which oral forms of pleasure and pain predominate".

The cultural theme of eating in Chinese interpersonal relations also has a significant impact on the pattern of socialization at an early age, which in turn influences the process of learning of the attitude towards the body and the pattern of illness construction. As has been pointed out, early childhood is associated with oral indulgence because parents believe that the more food a child eats, the more vital energy (Ch'i) he has access to from the food, and the healthier he will become. When a child reaches school age, he will be given more food or better food when he gets a good grade and will not be allowed to eat good food or to eat with other family members if the parents think the grade is not good enough. In Chinese child rearing practice, whether it be the parental love and concern a child encounters at an early age, or the rewards and punishments that he receives at a later age, all are expressed in terms of food instead of by verbal interactions. Rewards, punishments and love are received through the body of the child instead of though the mind, and the child will use the body rather than the mind to express his feelings and needs. A parallel liking for tonic food or tonic medicines, which are supposed to contain more nutrition than ordinary food and to provide more Ch'i, might also be developed, which may encourage the somatizing process in psychological disorders, as these disorders have to be somatized before they can be treated with tonic medicine or medicine from "mouth" (Tseng 1972, Wang 1983: 301).

From the moral, social and intellectual point of view, affective disorder expressed in the form of psychologization is seen in Chinese society as a sign of disharmony and lack of emotional control, which

is associated with negative value orientations such as shame, stigma and disappointment. In contrast, owing to the aesthetic aspect of the phenomenon of somatization, somatized illness is related with positive value orientations which not only arouses sympathy and aspirations, but also help to secure other benefits, including: material gains, support from the family and the kinship framework, shared understanding from the members of the same society, temporary relief from pressure or responsibility, desired changes in interpersonal transactions or power structures etc.. Thus, the negative value embodied in the strong stigma attached to the psychological disorder acts as a force to push the patient into the somatizing process, while the positive value amplified by aesthetic power of somatization acts as a force to pull the patient into it. The value system comprises not merely elements in the symbolic context of somatization, but actual "forces" in social interactions (Turner 1967: 28-9), which determine the disease-related behavioral norms in Chinese society.

Since the negative values embodied in the stigma of mental disorder have already been discussed, what has to be carried out is an investigation of the positive value orientations derived from the aesthetic aspect of somatization, which requires us to look beyond the phenomenon itself to description, reflections, explanations and expectations in people's accounts of the somatized experience, particularly, to stories in which the somatization phenomenon is described, to the images which are created in these stories and to the general feelings such stories arouse.

In Wang Jen-Yi's study on psychosomatic illness in the Chinese

cultural context, he states: "A study of Chinese classics explicitly demonstrates the belief that strong emotions can lead people to sicken or to die...lovers are always sick because they miss each other; once they are heartbroken, they die very soon... In the Ching dynasty, the great novelist Tso Sheh-ching created a female figure who, in his work The Dream of the Red Chamber, has influenced generations of Chinese" (Wang 1983: 299). The girl in the novel is very intelligent, sensitive, beautiful and delicate. She is, of course, always sick because of her suppressed passion for her lover. As happens in many other love stories, she dies the moment she learns that her lover has to obey his parents' order to marry another girl. "Many Chinese view her with great admiration; for over two centuries, the girl's name is a symbol for all smart, beautiful and weak women. Sickness here is not a shortcoming; on the contrary, it is a virtue possessed by characters of traditional Chinese beauty" (Wang 1983: 299). In Chinese classical literature, sickness caused by psychosomatic disorders almost always appears with a series of other themes such as beauty, love, death, sensitivity and intelligence. It is important to note that in order for the somatized illness to achieve the positive attribute of social efficacy, that is, to enable the patient to gain respect and sympathy for their moral constitution, it is essential that it be apparent to all that although the disorder is expressed in physical terms, it has an emotional cause (as above). Thus, in Chinese society, the object of somatization is not to disguise the root cause, but to make it socially acceptable.

The link between a cultural phenomenon and its accompanying

themes is a topic that has been thoroughly treated by Geertz (1973). In his book The Interpretation of Cultures, he offers an example of a Balinese cockfight as a cultural event which "catch(es) up these themes --death, masculinity, rage, pride, loss, beneficence, chance-- and ordering them into an encompassing structure, presents them in such a way as to throw into relief a particular view of their essential nature... (The) disquietfulness of (the cockfight) arises out of conjunction of immediate dramatic shape, metaphoric content and social context... and its aesthetic power derives from its capacity to force together these diverse realities" (Geertz 1973: 443-4).

In the case of somatization, as discussed here, when many connected themes had been caught up by the somatization phenomenon and passed down together from generation to generation, they were allowed to be displayed in an ordered array, over and over again, until the reality of the inner affiliation between somatization and all the other themes had been repeatedly emphasized and clearly felt. Thus, the somatization phenomenon and all the themes gradually became internally bound to each other, and an "encompassing structure" (Geertz, 1973) had been established. The structure enables a wide range of phenomena represented by the accompanying themes to be imbued with sense because they can be intrinsically related with the central phenomenon -- somatization. In turn, the essential nature of somatized experience and behaviors can be better understood because the underlying mechanisms of somatization are highlighted in a concentrated way within such a powerful structure.

When all the themes are virtually brought together, with the

aesthetic aspect of each theme maximally enhanced, the overall aesthetic effect of the central phenomenon -- somatization can be utilized to "serve its cognitive end" (Geertz 1973) -- the interaction, integration and mutual transferable relationship of body and mind. In this way, the cultural meaning of somatization centered around Ch'i can be more powerfully articulated and more exactly perceived through the aesthetic value of the many-themed structure. As Rosaldo (1980) reminds us that "meanings and feelings are intimately linked." These accompanying themes invoke "sensory knowledge and emotionally laden thoughts" among Chinese. The symbolism underlying and the positive value orientations related to somatization is easy for the Chinese to grasp, as they are impressed and touched by the accounts of lovers' somatized experience. Sympathy or even admiration is "a sign of social import", because the affects produced by the stories "guarantee the constraining force" of the social sanctioned idiom upon psychological disorders. As it turned out, "participation in such sentiments of mutual concern are necessary for the perpetuation of such cultural tendency and the reproduction of an orderly social world" (Rosaldo 1980: 35).

To conclude, in this section, two features of Chinese culture—familism and the importance attached to eating are described, and their relationships to the concept of Ch'i are analyzed. As to the aesthetic aspect of somatization, the conviction is expressed here that although this many-themed aesthetic structure does not have direct relation with the core symbol "Ch'i", nevertheless, its function as sub-symbolic structure is significant. The aesthetic

power of this sub-symbolic structure contributes to the establishment of the positive value orientations towards somatization and to the formation of a sharp contrast between the two different attitudes associated with two patterns of mental illness constructions, thus serving to articulate and amplify the function of the main symbolic network organized around the concept of Ch'i.

# CONCLUSION

In this paper, an attempt has been made to reveal and unfold the phenomenon of somatization in Chinese culture not merely at the level of surface form and functions, but in a way in which the inner structure and interactions of this cultural tendency can be understood in indigenous terms. An analysis of the native term "Ch'i" is employed as a powerful and effective means to achieve this end.

The concept of Ch'i is not only a native key term which brings the underlying social structures and cultural meanings to the foreground to explain various cultural phenomena, but also a core symbol whose polysemic nature enables it to weave different symbolic systems into a symbolic network, which "shape(s) the perception, experience and behavioral correlates of affective disorder into culturally-specific 'final common pathway' (Carr 1978)" (kleinman 1981: 9).

Since the concept of Ch'i contains a multiplicity of connotations and symbolic meanings, an analysis of how each of these underlying elements of Ch'i functions in different symbolic domains facilitates the comprehension of the symbolic structure of Ch'i and its relation to the somatization tendency in Chinese culture. The cosmological origin of Ch'i as both the basic material agent and spiritual agent provides the symbolic context for understanding the all-pervading role that such a cosmogenic concept can play in the medical, psychocultural

and social domain to shape psychosomatic illness. The concrete nature of Ch'i in Chinese medicine is the underlying reason for its interpretive function in the diagnostic intervention and for the establishment of a somatically-oriented communicative framework in the clinic context. The interpretive process in the diagnostic intervention and somatically-oriented communicative framework contribute to the major characteristic of traditional Chinese medicine in which both physical and psychological disorders are treated physically, and thus accounting for the tendency of somatization. In the psychocultural domain, it is argued somatization is the logical consequence of the Chinese personality construct underpinned by Ch'i because the cognitive distinction of Ch'i rationalizes and legitimizes a personality construct which emphases the interaction with the cosmos, the primacy of the body and the social dimension in the concept of personhood. In the social domain, the value system implied in the concept of Ch'i is reflected in the significance of the family institution and the legitimization of the cultural theme "eating", both features leading to the somatization tendency. In addition, the presence of accompanying themes, such as beauty, delicacy, sensitivity, love and death in the somatization phenomenon serves to enhance the function of the core symbol "Ch'i" in the somatization experience, reinforcing the social norms and perpetuating the culturally sanctioned construction of mental illness.

After investigation of the role of Ch'i in each of the four symbolic domains, it is clear that Ch'i acts as a core symbol to link different realities to form its unique configuration of a symbolic

network. In this powerful network, not only the role of Ch'i in each of the symbolic domains claims to account for the social and cultural construction of mental illness, but the interrelationships between the four functions of Ch'i also account for the tendency of somatization, which has greatly enhanced the potential and influence of such a symbolc structure. In addition, an associated cluster of symbols, meanings and phenomena which are related to the concept of Ch'i within any of the single symbolic domain or the sub-symbolic domain can contribute to the shaping and molding of psychosomatic disorders, and somatization among Chinese appears to be brought about through the systematic channeling of the cosmological ideology, medical discourse, personality structure and social interactions by formulating a symbolic network based on the concrete, flexible and dynamic concept of Ch'i. Such a symbolic network functions to channel dysphoric affects into physical disorders, hence emotional and cognitive orientations response together to organize beliefs, feelings, values and expectations that lead to the somatized illness experience.

The theoretical framework for understanding this symbolic network as well as the relationship between the concept of Ch'i and somatization in Chinese culture has significant implications for cross-cultural studies and clinic practice, as it provides an emic analysis of mental illness among Chinese, and also advances our knowledge of the way ideological, psychocultural and sociocultural factors affect illness construction through the symbolic network woven by the core symbol.

## NOTES

### SECTION TWO

1. Recently, a host of scientists such as Kholodov (1967), Wheeler (1969 1970), Freidenberg (quoted from Galton 1973: 56), Brighton (quoted from Galton 1973: 56), and Barnothy (1964 1969) has contributed much to our knowledge of the electrical, electromagnetic and magnetic makeup of the human body (McGarey 1974: 16-21). It is possible that the very existence of Ch'i could be proved and demonstrated by modern science in the near future.

2. Chou dynasty (1122 -- 256 B.C.); Han dynasty (206 B.C.--A.D. 220).

3. Tai Yang area is "at the 'Yu' point of the bladder meridian next to the spine" (Fisch 1973: 100).

4. Ch'i is in constant motion and has four primary directions: ascending, descending, entering and leaving. The Huang Ti Nei Ching Su Wen states: "Without entering and leaving there is no development, without ascending and descending no transformation, absorption, and storing." (Quoted from Kaptchuk 1983: 37).

5. Based on the Five Elements theory, the correspondence system (see Table 1 in p. 58) provides a framework in which the relationship of the body organs one to another, and to the seasons, climate, emotional states, etc., are divided into five categories (Lock 1980: 31-32).

### SECTION THREE

1. The lack of regulation mechanism for emotions not only causes a tension between the social orders and the individual needs, but also creates a dynamic and dialectical relation between oversensitivity and emotional control. In other words, emotional control is masked as a social norm for Chinese socialization, but its function is beyond the social domain. It is a built-in mechanism which has arisen to balance the overwhelming emotional functions in the Chinese personality construct. Only at this level can we understand some seemingly paradoxical cultural themes and expressions such as the interdependence of personal relationships and the lack of exchange of interpersonal feelings, and moreover, the lack of expression of intrapsychic feelings and the apparently low incidence of mental illness in China which has been mentioned in the work of Sidel and Sidel (1973).

TABLE 1

Table of Correspondences

| | Yang | Yang | | Yin | Yin |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SEASON | Spring | Summer | Late summer<br>Long summer | Fall | Winter |
| DIRECTION | East | South | Center | West | North |
| CLIMATE | Wind | Heat | Humidity | Dryness | Cold |
| VISCERA | Liver | Heart | Spleen | Lungs | Kidneys |
| ELEMENT | Wood | Fire | Earth | Metal | Water |
| COLOR | Green | Red | Yellow | White | Black |
| MUSICAL NOTE | chio ( ) | chih ( ) | kung ( ) | shang ( ) | yu ( ) |
| NUMBER | 8 | 7 | 5 | 9 | 6 |
| FLAVOR | Sour | Bitter | Sweet | Pungent | Salt |
| ODOR | Rancid | Scorched | Fragrant | Rotten | Putrid |
| SOUND | Shout | Laugh | Sing | Weep | Groan |
| EMOTIONS | Anger | Joy | Sympathy | Grief | Fear |
| ORIFICE | Eyes | Ears | Nose | Mouth | "Lower orifice" |
| ANIMAL | Fowl | Sheep | Ox | Horse | Pig |
| GRAINS | Wheat | Glutinous millet | Millet | Rice | Beans (peas) |
| PLANET | Jupiter | Mars | Saturn | Venus | Mercury |
| BOWELS | Gall bladder | Small intestine | Stomach | Large intestine | Triple burner |
| TISSUES | Ligaments | Arteries | Muscles | Skin and hair | Bones |

Source: Huang Ti Nei Ching Su Wen, translated by Veith (1949: 21).

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