

## ***Huangdi Hama jing (Yellow Emperor's Toad Canon)***<sup>1</sup>

Vivienne Lo

Beneath the image of a three-legged bird in the sun, the preface to the first section of the *Huangdi hama tu sui yue shenghui bi jiupan fa* 黃帝蝦蟆圖隨月生毀避灸判法 (Yellow Emperor's toad chart: method for avoiding cauterization and piercing according to the waxing and waning of the moon), and first part of the extant *Hama jing* 蝦蟆經 (Toad Canon) compilation, reads:

If, as the day closes, (the sun's) hue is fire-red yet lacks lustre, the Yang *qi* will be in great chaos. On such days it is not fitting to cauterize or pierce. It will damage a person's various Yang tracts, and ultimately make them crazy. (See fig. 1)

Of Yin and Yang, the opposing yet necessarily co-existing aspects of all being, Yang corresponds with fire, heat and the sun; thus treating while the sun is setting in this way will damage the Yang parts of the body. The thirty images of the human body that follow, in fact, map the course of *ren qi* 人氣 "human *qi*" as it moves according to the *lunar* cycle around the body. We might think of the movements of this entity around the human body as analogous to a sort of imperial progress, such as the putative seasonal movement of the emperor around his ritual

---

<sup>1</sup> On many occasions I have lamented not being able to discuss this paper with Michael Loewe, my first teacher of classical Chinese and principal adviser on the Han period. Fortunately, other scholars have been very generous with their time and I have to thank, in particular, Penelope Barrett, Timothy Barrett, Christopher Cullen, Donald Harper, Keiko Daidoji, Li Jianmin, Ma Kanwen, Roel Sterckx, Hermann Tessenow, Volker Scheid, Paul Thompson and Sumiyo Umekawa. I am also grateful to the editors of this festschrift for their invaluable suggestions. All errors, naturally, are entirely my own responsibility.

chambers, the *ming tang* 明堂 (Numinous Hall), or of Tai Yi 太一, supreme deity and brightest star in the Han (202 BCE – 220 CE) sky, around the Nine Palaces of the Heavens.<sup>2</sup> Here, it seems, we have an embodiment of celestial movements, the Han preoccupation with correlating the sky with human society made flesh and blood. Where human *qi* lodges daily becomes the site of a cautery and piercing prohibition for that day and each entry carries the warning that transgression will result in symptoms of varying degrees of ferocity - - from numbness of the toes to withering of the genitals.

Compounding a complex textual history, with the surviving pre-modern editions exclusively in Japan, there is no doubt that until the last few years the *Hama jing* has been left in obscurity by many of the most eminent modern historians of Chinese medicine on account of its “superstitious” nature.<sup>3</sup> Yet in China, correlative thinking, exemplified in Yinyang and the Five Agent cosmology, extends easily into what, in other contexts, might be thought of as sympathetic magic. Thus Yinyang divisions of the body, astronomy, astrology and the planetary gods and spirits exist on a continuum, and are all embraced within the same natural order.

The received compilation of *Hama jing* comes in nine sections and presents a variety of ideas about circulation, aimed at protecting elements of the inner body through keying them to

---

<sup>2</sup>An entire cultural complex is grafted on to the sky, with the polar area of the sky correlated with the imperial palace. See Sun and Kistemaker, *The Chinese Sky during the Han*, (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 96 –97. Kuriyama emphasizes the relationship between the concept of circulating of winds and the migration of Taiyi around the palaces (eight directions and a centre) in divination. He finds a reflection in medical thought in *Huangdi neijing lingshu* 11.77 “nine palaces and eight winds” (see n.9 below). Shigehisa Kuriyama, *The Expressiveness of the Body* (New York: Zone, 1999), pp. 244 – 245. Many scholars since Han times have speculated on the structure and function of the *ming tang*, associating it with architectural edifices of high antiquity. *Lu shi chun qiu*, *Liji*, *Zhouli*, among other texts, are the main sources for the reinterpretation of the *ming tang* in cosmographical terms. See John Henderson, *Development and Decline of Chinese Cosmology* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1984), pp. 75 – 82.

<sup>3</sup> Lu Gwei-djen and Joseph Needham, *Celestial Lancets*, (rept. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), p. 141.

cosmic regularities. A physician could then diagnose normal and pathological physiology. This was a medical manifestation of the macro-culture of *shushu* 數術, the art of determining regularities pervasive in Han thought, common to techniques of divination and the computation and description of “celestial patterns” at the foundation of the astro-calendrical traditions.<sup>4</sup> As a compilation that represents a significant body of acupuncture and moxibustion writings, it is fascinating that *Hama jing* barely acknowledges the more familiar structuring of the Chinese medical body into Yin and Yang tracts containing circulating *qi* known from Han times.

Given its co-existing and variant calendrical and divinatory schemes, it is easy to conclude that this was an over-determined field lacking coherent threads of interpretation. Yet, taken as a whole, this compilation provides us close acquaintance with a plurality of agencies involved in early and mediaeval medical practice; some of the skills, instruments, ritual, images, beliefs and knowledge systems that aligned in and constituted medical doctrine and practice over a, yet to be determined, period of time.<sup>5</sup> There is no authorial voice, no explicit social context, no description of individual moments of practice, and no verifiable date. But compared to other sources in the

---

<sup>4</sup> Different forms of *shushu* culture pervade all aspects of life in early China, and in Han times embrace types of divination using Yinyang 陰陽 and the *wuxing* 五行 (five phases), the “turtle and milfoil”, physiognomy, the determination of auspicious times and places, as well as types of exorcism, omenology, etc. Li Jianmin, *Sisheng zhi yu* 死生之域 (The Territory between Life and Death), (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2000, revised in 2001). See my review in *Medical History* 47.2 (2003), pp. 250 - 258. See also Michael Loewe, *Divination, mythology and monarchy in Han China* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1994), and Marc Kalinowski, “Les Instruments astro-calendériques des Han et la methode liu ren” in *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française de l'Extrême Orient* 72 (1983), pp. 309–419.

<sup>5</sup> In the field of science and technology studies, Pickering's analytical tool “the mangle of practice” has proved particularly helpful in thinking about how culture is constantly emerging through and in the process of practice. Andrew Pickering, *The Mangle of Practice: Time Agency, and Science*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). See the useful summary in Volker Scheid, *Chinese Medicine in Contemporary China. Plurality and Synthesis*. (London and Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), pp. 44 – 47.

received medical literature, the combined treatises of *Hama jing* offer a vivid and complex account of mediaeval China cautery and acupuncture-related practice, as well as the vestiges of much earlier practices.

## Techniques

In the history of acupuncture and related techniques there have been many methods of piercing the body, and what exactly is meant by *pan* 判 is uncertain. It is most likely that it is a printed variant of the graph 剡 seen in the Japanese medical compilation *Ishimpō* 醫心方 (Remedies at the heart of medicine, 984), that is a scribal variation of the more common acupuncture term *ci* 刺 (to pierce).<sup>6</sup> In *Huangdi neijing lingshu* 1, *jiuzhen shier yuan* 九針十二原 “nine needles and nine origins”, *Huangdi*, the Yellow Emperor, expresses dissatisfaction with crude methods associated with stone lancets. The earlier treatises that describe treating the channels do indeed use a stone instrument to move *qi* and equally to lance abscesses.<sup>7</sup> Yet, despite emphasis on *qi* work, much of the therapy described in *jiuzhen* itself, involves petty surgery and

---

<sup>6</sup> When discussing this sentence with Michael Loewe some years ago, Michael suggested that *pan* 判 in this context might be the result of a scribal error for *ci* 刺, the more common medical phrase being *jiuci* 灸刺 (cautery and piercing), the term for moxibustion and acupuncture. This is the most likely explanation and a variation to which Professor Zheng Jinsheng 鄭金生 adds further definition: one print of a hand-written copy of *Ishimpō* (Beijing: Renmin weisheng, 1993) in his possession commonly uses the graph 剡 for *ci*. 判 and 剡 are so close in form that the former may simply be a Japanese printing idiosyncrasy. *Jia*, the component to the left hand side of the graph 剡 is a common simplification of 夾. When paired with the knife radical (夾 + 刂) this graph would form the first in a three stage graphic variation from *ci* 刺 to *pan* 判. See *Hanyu da zidian* 漢語大字典 (Sichuan, Hunan cishu, 1996), p.223.

<sup>7</sup> Zhangjiashan 247 hao Hanmu zhujian zhengli xiaozu, *Zhangjiashan Hanmu zhujian* 張家山漢墓竹簡 (Beijing: WW, 2001), p. 244.

massage.<sup>8</sup> We should therefore not discount the possibility that *pan* may refer to petty surgery on the locations indicated, “a cutting out” of abscesses, or bloodletting in the sense of “splitting open” blood vessels, rather than to more subtle medical interventions involved in moving *qi*.<sup>9</sup> *Ci* 刺 “piercing”, and *qu* 取 literally “taking”, are common technical designations in the *Huangdi* (Yellow Emperor) corpus.<sup>10</sup> Both verbs are used in connection with bloodletting and moving *qi*,

---

<sup>8</sup> Vivienne Lo, “Spirit of Stone: Technical Considerations in the Treatment of the Jade Body” in *Bulletin of SOAS* 65/1 (2002), pp. 99-128.

<sup>9</sup>The word *pan* 判 is a term normally associated with passing legal “judgment”, and the decisive division of right and wrong metaphorically performed with a sharp cutting edge like the “Sword of Damocles”. The primary sense given in *Hanyu da zidian* is ‘to separate’ or ‘to split in two’ *Hanyu da zidian*, p.139. *Pan* is not normally connected with medical cutting in the lexical tradition, except perhaps when found together with *pou* 剖 (dissection) in the metaphorical term *pou pan* 剖判, which we might associate with “anatomising” an argument or idea. Epler makes a convincing argument for the formative influence of the practice of bloodletting in the development of acupuncture therapy, a tendency that is particularly evident in *Suwen*. Dean Epler Jr., “Blood-letting in early Chinese medicine and its relation to the origin of acupuncture” in *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 54, (1980), pp. 337 – 67. There is no substantial corroboration of bloodletting techniques in the Mawangdui or Zhangjiashan texts, a fact which confirms a multiplicity of traditions of practice during Han times.

<sup>10</sup> The combined treatises of the *Huangdi neijing lingshu* 黃帝內經靈樞, *Huangdi neijing suwen* 黃帝內經素問 and *Huangdi neijing taisu* 黃帝內經太素 (hereafter cited as *Suwen*, *Lingshu* and *Taisu*) are generally considered to contain the core theory of traditional Chinese medicine. Yamada Keiji 山天慶兒, “The Formation of the Huang-ti Nei-ching”, *Acta Asiatica* 36 (1979), pp. 67 - 89, compares the structure and content of the Mawangdui texts *Yinyang jiujiing* and the *Zubi jiujiing* with the “Jingmai” treatise of the *Taisu*, the version of the text which he considers the closest to a putative original *Huangdi neijing*. He also identifies various schools of thought represented in the treatises of the *Huangdi* corpus. Others are more cautious about the existence of formal schools, or even selective or closed medical teaching lineages. David Keegan, “‘Huang-ti Nei-ching’: The Structure of the Compilation, the Significance of the Structure” (Ph.D. diss., History, University of California, Berkeley, 1988) pp. 67 - 157 and pp. 265 - 323,

*Huangdi Hama jing* (Yellow Emperor's Toad Canon)

although instances of needling to move *qi* are the most common. Since the various primary and secondary networks of *mai* by this time were thought to contain both blood and *qi* in different quantities, bloodletting co-exists with *qi* therapy in varying degrees.<sup>11</sup> Different techniques are also expressed through *bu* 補 and *xie* 瀉, methods to supplement, or drain the body's essences.

In the surviving technique of *jiu* 灸, the term here translated “cautery” refers to the burning of the dried and ground leaves of *artemesia vulgaris* (mugwort) *ai* 艾 on or over the body to stimulate a response that is theoretically mediated via a system of *jingluo* 經絡, the primary and secondary networks of *mai* in the acupuncture body. The aim is to influence *qi*, to ease pain, to expel “wind” or other causes of disease.<sup>12</sup> *Ai* is referred to in *Hama jing*, but what we find in the

---

compares the Mawangdui editions of *Yinyang jiujiing* and *Zubi jiujiing* to *Lingshu* 3.10 “Jingmai” 經脈. On theories about the dating of the *Huangdi* corpus see Nathan Sivin, “Huang-ti nei-ching”, in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Michael Loewe (Berkeley: SSEC and IEAS, University of California, 1993), pp. 199 - 201.

<sup>11</sup> *Suwen* (SSBY edn.) 4.16, pp. 8 - 9, for example, states “one should stop the therapy when blood appears.” In contrast, other treatises such as *Suwen* (SSBY edn.) 11.41, pp. 7 - 11 give detailed instructions for piercing combined with bloodletting but forbidding the letting of blood in certain seasons. *Suwen* (SSBY edn.) 17.62, p. 1 recommends bleeding the smaller vessels to level a surplus of spirit, but not for a weakness of spirit. Following the contemporary analogy with *du* 瀆 “channel” or “canal” found in the *Maishu* 脈書, I have always translated *mai*, the earliest word associated with pathways around the body, as “channel”. See Jiangling Zhangjiashan Hanjian zhengli xiaozu, “Jiangling Zhangjiashan Hanjian (*Maishu*) shiwen” 江陵張家山漢簡脈書釋文, WW 7 (1989), p. 74. Harper translates “vessel”, which draws out the early association with the arteriovenous system. Donald Harper, *The Mawangdui Medical Manuscripts*, (London and New York: Keegan Paul International, 1998), pp. 82 - 84. More elaborate theories of *jingluo* 經絡 and *jingmai* 經脈, and many subsidiary vessels and tracts are found in *Huangdi neijing*. See Nathan Sivin, *Traditional Medicine in Contemporary China* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1987) p. 122 n. 11 and pp. 133–47.

<sup>12</sup> Winds were recognised as an independent source of illness from very early times. Kuriyama isolates lack of regularity and sudden change in the Winds as the characteristics that qualify it to be the “origin of one hundred

texts and images that follow our three-legged bird in the sun is evidence of a much richer, more culturally diverse practice, proscribed by hemerological calculations concerned with the movement of spirits and souls in the body.

A monograph dealing specifically with the history of cauterization in its own right is long overdue. Li Jianmin maintains that “*mugwort had been used to ‘attract’ solar fire since at least the Warring States [475 – 221 BCE] period, and burning it became the standard method of moxibustion.*”<sup>13</sup> Yamada finds early evidence that *artemesia vulgaris* was also used in atropaic techniques to protect the household from attack by demons. Its use, or more accurately misuse, is attested among literary analogies of the Warring States period when *Zhuangzi* 莊子 puts the idea of “*cauterizing where there is no sickness*” into Confucius’ mouth as an analogy for useless effort; *Mengzi* 孟子 likens inadequate preparation in government to the futility of using insufficiently mature *ai* 艾 to treat chronic illness.<sup>14</sup> Then, *jiu* 灸, an early graphic form for *jiu* 灸, features as one of the earliest known methods of treating 脈 *mai* or bodily “[pulsating] channels” as they emerged in the medical texts excavated from both Mawangdui and Zhangjiashan tomb libraries.<sup>15</sup> By Han

---

diseases”, disorders of time and space that can be manipulated by diviner and physician alike. See Kuriyama (1999), *The Expressiveness of the Body*, pp. 233 - 270.

<sup>13</sup> Li Jianmin. “Ai huo yu tian huo, jiu liaofa yansheng zhi mi” 艾火與天火 - 灸療法延生之謎 (Moxa fire and celestial fire: the riddle of the evolution of cauterization treatment), in *Studies in the History of Natural Sciences* 21.4 (2002), pp. 321 – 331.

<sup>14</sup> Yamada Keiji, *The Origins of Acupuncture, Moxibustion and Decoction*, (Kyoto: International Research Centre for Japanese Studies, 1998), pp. 66 – 78. *Zhuangzi* (SBBY edn.) 9.29, p.21b. *Mengzi* (SBBY edn.) 7. 9

<sup>15</sup> Mawangdui Hanmu boshu zhengli xiaozu, *Mawangdui Hanmu boshu* 馬王堆漢墓帛書 (Silk documents from a Han tomb at Mawangdui), vol. 4, (Beijing: WW, 1985) contains the official transcription of the Mawangdui medical manuscripts as well as photographs of the originals. The physical manuscripts are thought to be no earlier than the third century BCE although some scholars consider that some of the texts they contain might date to the Spring and

times we also know cauterization with mugwort was a part of front-line first aid, serving to treat the sick officers and soldiers of the Dunhuang military complex who were unable to consult physicians.<sup>16</sup>

Despite early references to *ai* in a number of therapeutic contexts, we cannot presuppose that it was always *artemesia vulgaris* in the practice of pre-modern cauterization associated with *jiu*, or how widely it was available. Indeed, the last text in our *Hama jing* compilation contains a cautionary treatise entitled *bian jiu huo mu fa* 辨灸火木法 (technique to differentiate cauterization fire wood) relating the different types of wood used in cauterization to various degrees of iatrogenic damage. We learn of eight bushes or trees that harm blood and channels, muscles, flesh, bone and marrow: pine makes for a difficult recovery, cypress has a lot of sap, bamboo harms the sinews, orange wood the skin and muscles, elm causes withering of the bone, bramble makes the vessels sink, mulberry damages flesh, jujube damages bone and marrow.<sup>17</sup>

### Problem of Dating

The problem of dating the *Hama jing* lies in understanding the extent to which the extant version of the text, an 1823 Japanese woodblock edition known as *Weisheng huibian* 衛生彙編, contains the same content as various *Hama* titles cited in earlier literature and textual analogues in

---

Autumn period. See Ma Jixing 馬繼興, *Mawangdui guyishu kaoshi* (Hunan: Hunan kexue jishu, 1992), p. 92. See also Lo (2002), pp. 99-128.

<sup>16</sup> Xie Guihua, Li Junming 李均明, Zhu Guozhao 朱國炤 (1987), *Juyan Hanjian shiwen hexiao* 居延漢簡釋文合校, A & B (Beijing: WW, 1987) p. 49.31 and p. 49.13 and Lao Gan 芳幹, *Juyan Hanjian tuban zhibu* 居延漢簡圖版之部, (Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, Taipei, 1957), special issue pp. 22 - 23, contain the following record: Private soldier attached to Dangqu Beacon Unit, Qu Fanzi 屈樊子 (??), in the first month □ day fell ill for four days, the office did not □□□□, three days later, □, Officer in Command of Wansui Beacon Unit, applied moxa to his back □□ in two places, after □□ within several days the physician at the Commandant's Office came, and he drank one dose of drug and disposed □□

<sup>17</sup> *Huangdi hama jing*, (Beijing: Zhongyi guji, 1984), pp. 55 – 56.



*Huangdi Hama jing* (Yellow Emperor's Toad Canon)

the transmitted medical literature.<sup>18</sup> Chinese scholars often imply a Han dating, and this is an assumption that requires further study.<sup>19</sup>

According to Uriyama the *Weisheng huibian* is extant in five nineteenth century Japanese manuscripts.<sup>20</sup> Two of these manuscripts are cross-referenced to each other, with comments

---

<sup>18</sup>The edition most widely known outside of China and Japan is *Huangdi hama jing*, (Beijing: Zhongyi guji, 1984). Building on an earlier article by Ma Jixing, the most comprehensive studies are relatively recent Japanese articles by Sakade Yoshinobu and Kika Uriyama, the latter a detailed analysis of textual transmission. Ma Jixing. “*Yixinfang zhong de guyixue wenxian chutan*” 醫心方中的古醫學文獻初探 (A preliminary examination of an ancient medical text in *Remedies at the Heart of Medicine*) in *Nihon Ishigaku Zasshi* 31.3 (1985), pp. 326-370. Kika Urayama, “*Koutei gamakyō Rinmo on no kachi*” 黃帝蛤蟆經臨模本の價值 (Yellow Emperor's Toad Canon: An Evaluation of the *Rinmo* Edition), in *Shinkyū* 17.4 (2001), pp. 87 – 98. Sakade Yoshinobu 坂出祥伸. “*Koutei gamakyō ni tuite* 黃帝蝦蟇經について” (About the *Huangdi Hamajing*) in Sakade Yoshinobu. *Chūgoku shisō kenkyū-iyaku yōsei/kagaku shisō hen* 中国思想研究醫藥養生・科學思想篇 (Researches into Chinese thought: medicine, pharmaceuticals, and nourishing life and scientific thought), (Kansai, Kansai University Press, 1999), pp. 200 – 212.

<sup>19</sup> See for example Yu Ying'ao 餘瀛 鰲 and Li Jingwei 李經緯 ed., *Zhongyi wenxian cidian* 中醫院文獻辭典 (A dictionary of Chinese medical terms) (Beijing: Beijing kexue jishu, 2000), p. 610. Guo Shiyu 郭世餘 admits the compilation date and author are unknown, but categorises the content as belonging to Qin and Han acupuncture. *Zhongguo zhenjiu shi* (A history of Chinese acupuncture) (Tianjin: Tianjin kexue jishu, 1989), pp. 62 – 63.

<sup>20</sup> Kokkai Toshokan 国会圖書館 (National Library); Kyōdai Fujikawa Bunko 京大富士川文庫 (Fujikawa Library at Kyoto University) [an edition with commentaries by Mori Yakushi 森約之 in 1860]; the private Tokyo Mukyukai kan-narai Library 無窮会神習文庫 [an edition with commentaries by Mori Risshi 森立之 ca 1830, privately owned by Ota Shojir 太田晶二郎]; of unknown location formerly in the possession of Tomioka Tessai 富岡鉄齋 (1836 – 1924). Urayama (2001), p. 414. Both editions with commentaries refer to a further lost manuscript owned by Isshō 聿修堂. The fifth edition, in hanging scroll form, dating to 1831, was rediscovered by Nagano Hitoshi in the archives of the Naitō Kinen Kusuri Hakubutsukan 内藤記念薬博物館 (Naitō Memorial Museum for Medicine). This may be a copy of Tanba no Motoyasu's original text since it attempts to copy his original seal (i.e. “廉夫” and “丹波元簡”). The “rediscovery” and naming of this copy is described in “*Koutei Gamakyō Rinmo Insha Kyō Shohon no*

*Huangdi Hama jing* (Yellow Emperor's Toad Canon)

partially concerning quotations from *Hama jing* in chapters 2 and 28 of *Ishimpō*, the Japanese compilation of Chinese medical material by Tanba no Yasuyori 丹波康賴.<sup>21</sup> In his 1797 post-face to *Weisheng huibian*, the prolific medical author and physician to the Shogun 將軍, Tanba no Motoyasu 丹波元簡 (1775 – 1810), apparently a descendant of the earlier Tanba, states that the text that he copied in scroll form was passed down through the family of 和氣 Wake [probably Wake no Hiroyo 和氣広世 (781 – 806), head of the Ministry of Medicine] and learnt to him by the Marquess of Shirakawa 白河候.<sup>22</sup>

Tanba believed that his text was *Huangdi zhenjiu hama ji* 黃帝鍼灸蝦蟆忌 (Yellow Emperor's toad prohibition for acupuncture and cauterisation), referred to in the *Sui shu* (History of the Sui: completed in 656) bibliographic treatise.<sup>23</sup> He states that in the intervening time it had fallen into obscurity, and this is the reason for the absence of a Chinese commentarial tradition. The remaining and larger part of the post-face was written in 1821 by Tanba's third son, Tanba no Mototane 丹波元胤 (1789 – 1827), another prolific medical scholar. The son laments the many

---

*Shutsugen* “黃帝蝦蟆經” 臨模影写旧鈔本の出現 (Emergence of the *Rinmo* copy of *Hama jing*) in *Shinkyū Osaka* 鍼灸大阪 (Osaka Journal of Acupuncture and Moxibustion) no.61.

<sup>21</sup>*Ishimpō* is preserved in a woodblock print edition from 1859. Citations to *Ishimpō* (Beijing: Huaxia, 1993). Mori Risshi's edition uses blue dots to cross reference the comments in red ink in the copy by Mori Yakushi (see previous note).

<sup>22</sup>i.e. Wake no Kiyomaro 和氣清磨. *Nihon kampo tenseki jiten* (1999), p. 375. Urayama identifies the Marquis Shirakawa as Matsudaira Sadanobu 松平定信, an official in the Tokugawa government in 1796, who also held titles at a local level in Shirakawa. Urayama (2001), pp. 208-9.

<sup>23</sup> *Sui shu* 隋書 (History of the Sui), (edn. Wei Cheng 魏徵 edn. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958), p. 1047. There is one other relevant entry in the treatise: the *Ming tang hama tu* 明堂蝦蟆圖 (Numinous Hall Toad Chart) in one scroll.

*Huangdi Hama jing* (Yellow Emperor's Toad Canon)

mistakes in the old manuscript and the lack of other editions with which to compare it.<sup>24</sup> Tanba no Mototane also cites an entry in *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (Encyclopaedia compiled in the Taiping xingguo era for the emperor's perusal), the tenth century Tang encyclopaedia, which in turn lists a citation in Ge Hong's 葛洪 (283-343) *Baopuzi* 抱樸子 (Holding-to-simplicity master, ca. 320) referring to a *Hama tu* 蝦蟆圖 (Toad Chart) in a now lost *Huangdi yijing* 黃帝醫經 (*Huangdi* medical canon).<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately the citation is missing in the transmitted version of *Baopuzi*, but this does not rule out *Hama tu* as a fourth century chart since *Taiping yulan* is among the most reliable encyclopaedias for its accuracy of quotation.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> In *Isekikō* 醫籍考 (An examination of medical texts), Tanba no Mototane refers to the scroll manuscript that had been handed down through the Wake family of imperial physicians. *Isekikō* (Tokyo: Kokuhon Shuppansha, Showa 8-10 [1933-1935]). The "old manuscript" he refers to may be the original copy of Wake's text made by his father, now lost, and possibly the same referred to by Risshi and Yakushi, as owned by *Issh d*. Alternatively, and as Urayama convincingly argues, the *Issh d* text is a different, and lost, manuscript scroll prepared by Tanba no Mototane on the basis of the original copy of Wake's text. The original scroll from the imperial library text may have disappeared, or been otherwise unavailable, in the interim period, making it difficult to identify original graphs. He therefore amended the original copy before making a woodcut, and it is this lost amended version that forms the main source material for our extant editions of *Weisheng huibian*.

<sup>25</sup>Li Fang 李昉 (925-96) et al., *Taiping yulan* 4, *Tian Bu* 天部 (Heaven Section) (edn. Taipei: Xinxing shuju, 1959), p. 146. On Ge Hong see Nathan Sivin, 'On the Pao p'u tzu nei p'ien and the life of Ko Hung' in *Isis* 60, (1969), pp. 388 – 390.

<sup>26</sup>The Wang Ming 旺明 edition of *Baopuzi neipian* simply records the citation as a missing fragment, of which it is clear that there are many. Wang Ming 旺明, *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 抱樸子內篇校釋, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), p. 362. Since the larger part of *Taiping yulan* is taken from a pool of source material thought to reflect texts extant in the sixth century, we might assume that there was a Toad Chart circulating before that time. The editors of *Taiping yulan* consulted some large encyclopaedias that were still extant until quite a late period, but have subsequently disappeared. See Timothy Barrett. "On the reconstruction of the *Shenxian zhuan*" in *BSOAS* (forthcoming).

*Huangdi Hama jing* (Yellow Emperor's Toad Canon)

Evidence of a seventh century origin to the *Hama* material, if not this specific text, are the textual parallels to be found in two compilations of medical texts, Sun Simiao's 孫思邈 *Beiji qianjin yao fang* 備急千金要方 (Essential Prescriptions Worth a Thousand for Emergency) (compiled between 650 and 659) and Wang Tao's 王燾, *Waitai biyao* 外臺秘要 (Arcane Essentials from the Imperial Library), which dates to a century later (752).<sup>27</sup> As we will see below, both these texts also refer to missing acupuncture and moxibustion charts, some concerned with prohibitions. A preliminary survey of the structure of the text, and some linguistic features also suggest a literary culture akin to that of Sun Simiao's work.

The nine sections of *Hama jing* are linked together by an overall theme, yet each is a coherent text in itself with an integral and consistent structure, quite different from the more heterogeneous and sometimes internally contradictory character of early imperial *Huangdi neijing* treatises.<sup>28</sup> This consistency of structure is not seen in acupuncture and moxibustion texts until the advent of medical books by a single named author, beginning with the Jin physician, Huangfu Mi's 皇甫謐 *Huangdi jiayi jing* 黃帝甲乙經 (Yellow Emperor's AB Canon, hereafter *Jiayi jing*) in the late third century. Other significant features of *Hama jing*, however, are not mirrored in this latter text. As we will see later in this paper, acupuncture prohibition material was circulating before Huangfu Mi's time, yet it does not feature as a separate category in his text. Nor do specific linguistic devices such as *you* 右 "the aforementioned [to the right]" gather up items in a list in the way they organise *Hama Jing* and, for example, Sun Simiao's seventh century medical and alchemical texts.

---

<sup>27</sup> *Beiji qianjin yao fang* 29, (edn. Beijing: Renmin weisheng, 1955), pp. 515 – 516 and 519 – 522. Wang Tao 王燾, *Waitai biyao* 外臺秘要 (ca. 752) 39, (edn. Gao Wenzhu 高文鑄 ed., Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, 1993) p. 779.

<sup>28</sup> Hermann Tessenow, *Asiatische Studien* LVI. 3 (2002), p.652 and 656. Nathan Sivin (1993), p. 198.

Apart from the *Ishimpō* 醫心方 citations of a *Hama jing* 蝦蟆經 (Toad canon) and a *Hama tu* 蝦蟆圖 (Toad chart), dating to three centuries later than the Sui catalogue,<sup>29</sup> and the odd quotation in 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century acupuncture texts, nothing more is known about the fate of the *Hama jing* until it turns up in nineteenth century Japan, possibly edited by Tanba no Motoyasu.<sup>30</sup> As Sivin points out, the absence of a particular title in orthodox literature may in a Daoist text indicate a period of secret transmission.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps we are seeing the same in a medical context, a possibility rather borne out by the circumstances of its preservation in Japan. This is as far as we can get for the moment towards a date of our *Hama jing* through textual analysis without embarking on an in-depth linguistic dating, which is outside the scope of this present paper. The sections that follow explore the content of the text from the point of view of the imagery, medical theory, positions of the prohibited locations, calendrical priorities, illnesses, and names. They remain tangentially concerned with dating inasmuch that it is possible to identify specific features with the medical culture of a period or place.

---

<sup>29</sup> Ma (1985), pp. 326–71 discusses the range of mediaeval sources selected for the *Ishimpō*.

<sup>30</sup> In *Keiseki H koshi Hoi* 経籍訪古志補遺 (Supplements to the 'Examination into bibliographical antiquities'), Mori Risshi asserts that statements in Tanba no Motoyasu's edition correspond directly with those quoted in *Ishimpō*. However, he claims there are many missing lines in Motoyasu's version and that our surviving text is therefore an edited version. See Urayama (2001), pp. 90. Urayama points out that as early as 1856, Mori Risshi had noted in *Keiseki H koshi Hoi* that although many of the *Ishimpō* quotations are identical in the extant editions of *Hama jing*, there are a considerable number which were then unique. It is possible that Tanba no Motoyasu edited the text at the point at which he borrowed and copied the Wake scroll.

<sup>31</sup> Nathan Sivin, *Chinese Alchemy: Preliminary Studies* (Harvard U.P., Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1968), pp. 59-60.

## The Images

### a) The animals

Sarah Allan emphasises that rivers, mountains and the heavenly bodies were by extension the spirits of those phenomena in ancient China. Spirit and substance, undifferentiated in many contexts, formed the object of cult offerings. Taiyi (the Great One) is thus both the polestar and the spirit with which that star was identified.<sup>32</sup> Taken together with the animal spirits associated with the four quadrants and their constellations, Vermilion Bird, Black Warrior [a tortoise], Blue-green Dragon, White Tiger, as well as *Gouchen* 勾陳 (Angular Arranger) representing the centre,<sup>33</sup> the images of the bird in the sun and the toad and rabbit in the moon from *Hama jing* give us a comprehensive guide to how intimately the human body was also embraced within the influence of, and inhabited by the planets, stars and their spirits. Schafer's elusive Vermilion Bird was partially a trope to convey Tang (618 – 907) images of the tropical south as a mysterious, exotic, sensual, and therefore dangerous, realm. It also serves to highlight the many dimensions that each animal simultaneously inhabits. One of the Vermilion Bird's many manifestations was the

red planet Mars emerging from the velvet black of the tropical night. To the mediaeval Chinese it was the spirit 'Anger of Red Sparks' or the 'Dazzling Deluder' His place is in the 'Southern Quarter'...The Fire red God is embodied in a Vermilion Bird'. ...The

---

<sup>32</sup> Sarah Allan, "The Great one, Water and the Guodian *Laozi*" in *T'oung Pao* (forthcoming). See the section entitled "The Pole Star and its Spirit". See also Donald Harper, "The nature of Taiyi in the Guodian manuscript *Taiyi sheng shui* – abstract cosmic principle or supreme cosmic deity?", *Chūgoku shutsudo shiryō kenkyū* 中國出土資料研究 (Research into Unearthed Documents in China) 5, (2001), pp. 1-13.

<sup>33</sup> Tr. John Major, *Heaven and Earth in Early Han Thought* (Albany: SUNY, 1993), p. 81.

*Gouchen* are six stars close to the five stars of *beiji* 北極, the north pole asterism located in Ursa Minor).

*Huangdi Hama jing* (Yellow Emperor's Toad Canon)

northward drift of the sun, inhabited by a red crow (a cousin of the Vermilion Bird), to its ultimate goal, the Tropic of Cancer...<sup>34</sup>

We first hear of a three-legged bird in a quotation attributed to the fourth century BCE astronomer Gan De 甘得:

Since the cock has three feet and the crow has two feet, the cock dwells within the sun and the essence of the crow, becomes a star which controls the orbit of the Grand Yang.<sup>35</sup>

Contrarily, our bird is rather a sparrow with three feet. But the image certainly speaks of the bird's mastery of his domain, perhaps through his essentially Yang nature.<sup>36</sup> The three-legged bird illustrated and cited frequently as constellation spirit in *Hama jing* has many analogues in the Han on various TLV mirrors and in tomb iconography. With the toad and the hare in the moon, a crow in the sun [with two feet] crowns both richly illustrated silk funeral banners that were draped over the coffins in Mawangdui tombs 2 and 3 (closed 168 BCE) (see fig. 2).<sup>37</sup> By the first century CE

---

<sup>34</sup> Edward Schafer, *The Vermilion Bird* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1967), p. 125.

<sup>35</sup> Tr. Michael Loewe, *Ways to Paradise: The Chinese Quest for Immortality*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1979), p. 128. For the star charts of Gan De, see Henri Maspero, "L'Astronomie chinoise avant les Hans," in *T'oung Pao* 26 (1929), pp. 267 – 284. See also Sun and Kistemaker (1997), pp. 75 – 76.

<sup>36</sup> Translating *Yilin* 易林, "The lonesome three-legged bird cries efficaciously to the Local Inspector. It presides over mistakes and punishes evil, but ruin and destruction have caused it to grieve", Roel Sterckx describes the abusive bird as a "judgmental arbiter of human affairs". Sterckx, Roel. *The Animal and the Daemon in Early China* (Albany: SUNY, 2002), p. 63 and p. 266 n85.

<sup>37</sup> Michael Loewe, *Ways to Paradise: The Chinese Quest for Immortality* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1979), pp. 127-130. There are many beautiful photographs in Fu Juyou 傅舉有 and Chen Songchang 陳松長, *Mawangdui Hanmu wenwu* 馬王堆漢墓文物 (Cultural artefacts from the Han tomb at Mawangdui), (Changsha: Hunan, 1992), p. 19. *Shiji* 史記 (edn. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1972) 117, p. 3060. Hiyashi Minao 林以奈夫 "kan dai no kamigami" 漢代の神神 (Kyoto: Rinkawa shoten, 1989). Tr. Yang Meili 楊美籍, *Zhongguo gudai yiwu shang suo biaooshi de qi*

*Huangdi Hama jing* (Yellow Emperor's Toad Canon)

the three-legged bird in the sun has become a standard trope<sup>38</sup> and is sometimes seen as messenger to the Mother Queen of the West, ultimately surviving as the three birds in her entourage.

References to auspicious red birds, crows or sparrows continue to romanticise a geographically indistinct Southern realm, the kingdom of the Red bird in Tang literature and beyond.<sup>39</sup>

In comparison with the three-legged bird, less has been written about either the toad or the hare in the moon (see fig. 3). Indeed, if it were not for the fact that the term *hama* itself clearly identifies a toad, we might even question the translation of toad and hare, since the images themselves suggest a frog and a rabbit. *Tu* 兔 on the other hand refers to both rabbits and hares, so this identification is less clear. Regardless of zoological accuracy, all four of the animals are prolific breeders and this may be significant in their association with the moon inasmuch that the moon relates to cycles of fertility. The apocryphal *Chun qiu yuan ming bao* 春秋元命包 (Spring

---

zhi tuxianxing biao xian 中國古代遺物上所表示的氣之圖像性表現 *Gugong xueshu jikan* (National Palace Museum research quarterly) 9.2, pp. 31 – 73.

<sup>38</sup>See for example *Can tong qi* 參同契 (Concordance of the Three; 142?), “The vermilion sparrow is the germ of fire”. *Can tong qi* is a philosophic treatise that applies the 64 hexagram structure of the Book of Changes to stages of alchemical process. For a translation of the text of *Cantong Qi* see Fabrizio Pregadio, *Zhouyi cantong qi: dal Libro dei Mutamenti all'Elisir d'Oro. Con un'edizione critica e una concordanza della recensione di Peng Xiao (947 d.C.)* [Zhouyi cantong qi: From the *Book of Changes* to the Golden Elixir. With a critical edition and a concordance of Peng Xiao's recension (947)] (Venezia: Cafoscarina, 1996). See also Nathan Sivin (1968), pp. 36 – 40.

<sup>39</sup>Schafer (1967), pp. 261 – 265. The three legged bird still features in illustrations from the twelfth centuries and other assorted periods concerned with the tradition of contemplative and medical practices of Daoist adepts, *xiu zhen* 修真 “cultivating perfection”, in the Daoist compendium *Yun ji qi qian* 雲笈七籤 (Seven tablets from a cloudy basket) 72, (edn. Xu Shu 徐蜀, Beijing: Shumu wenxian, 1992), p. 538.



and autumn annals: the original decree) identifies the toad and hare as Yin and Yang respectively. The hare being a fast runner and inclined to excited noises is warm and Yang in nature.<sup>40</sup>

The “toad” is the seventh of ten sexual positions related to animal movements as recorded in the second century BCE Mawangdui literature.<sup>41</sup> It is also evident in Western Han physical therapies, known as *daoyin* 導引 (guiding and leading) techniques. *Daoyin* is aimed at treating pain and keeping all the joints mobile as well as at cultivating inner *qi*, the essential “stuff of life” that animated and invigorated the body. In contrast to the sexual technique, which can only be surmised, we are given fine detail of the *daoyin* technique:

Leaping Toad. With hands parallel, wave them up and down to right and to left.<sup>42</sup>

We also find the name recurring in mediaeval *daoyin* literature.<sup>43</sup> But unlike the toad and hare of Western magical and healing traditions, our animals in the moon are not otherwise used here for therapy, or in the substance of ritual and remedy, but chart the passage of time. In the *Can tong qi* 參同契 (Concordance of the Three) we hear that the

spirit of the toad and the rabbit together illuminate the *qi* of sun and moon; the toad divines the divisions of time and the soul of the rabbit spurts forth light.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> *Isho shūsei* 緯書集成 (edn. Tokyo: Kan-Gi bunka kenkyū kai, 1963), vol. 4a, p. 35.

<sup>41</sup> Harper (1998), p. 432.

<sup>42</sup> There are a number of animal forms detailed in *Yinshu* (pulling book) transcribed in Zhangjiashan Hanjian zhengli zu, “Zhangjiashan Hanjian *Yinshu* shiwen” 張家山漢簡引書釋文 in WW 10 (1990), pp. 82 - 83.

<sup>43</sup> See for example Chao Yuanfang 巢元方, *Chaoshi zhubing yuanhou lun* 巢氏諸病源候論 (601) (Mr Chao's origins and symptoms of medical disorders), (edn. *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu* 諸病源候論校注 Beijing: Renmin weisheng, 1991), p. 21.

<sup>44</sup> Pregadio (1996) examines the history of the text from its origin in the world of diviners and cosmologists working on the Han exegetical tradition of the *Book of Changes* to the commentaries found in the Taoist Canon.

*Huangdi Hama jing* (Yellow Emperor's Toad Canon)

In the first images of the moon in *Hamajing* 1, the prohibited locations (i.e. locations of human *qi*) seem to be plotted according to the parts of the toad's body that are emerging from shadow each day, but this is not consistently the case throughout the charts.

In the treatise on divination by tortoise and milfoil in the first dynastic history *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Grand Historian, comp. 104-87 BCE), the toad appears together with the three-legged bird, together humiliating the celestial bodies:

The spirit tortoise knows the auspicious and inauspicious, yet his bones merely become hollow and desiccate. The sun is potent and rules over all under heaven, yet is disgraced by a three-legged bird. The moon is the law and assists the officials, it is eaten by a toad.<sup>45</sup>

The moon's humiliation by the toad is confirmed in the collection of essays composed at the court of Liu An 劉安 (ca. 180-122), the *Huainanzi* 淮南子:

In the sun there is a lame bird, yet in the moon there is a toad.

The moon illuminates all under heaven, yet is eaten by a toad. The crow is strong and overcomes the sun, yet is overcome by the sacrificial *zhui* bird (??)<sup>46</sup>

With the bird, both toad and hare are associated with the Mother Queen of the West.

Michael Loewe's description of the hare draws on lore from all over the world, linking the hare to the moon, to procreation, to Buddhism, artful cunning, wisdom. He attributes some of these qualities to the observation that the hare is to be seen on moonlit nights, its short and prolific breeding cycles, and its strange attraction to the naked flame, concluding:

There could be no clearer link between the hare and the cycle of birth, death and re-birth, than the image of the animal pounding the drug of immortality under the benevolent gaze and supervision of the Queen Mother of the West.

---

<sup>45</sup> *Shiji* 128, p. 3237.

<sup>46</sup> *Huainanzi* (SBBY edn.) 7, p. 2 and 17, p. 16.

b) A comparison with images from Dunhuang

Moving north-west in the general direction of the Kun Lun mountains, the home of Mother Queen of the West, at the Dunhuang Mogao cave shrines [carved into a cliff face between 4th and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries], we find many three-legged birds in another religious context. Perched in the suns of the Buddhist cave murals and in some manuscripts are three-legged sunbirds, more fanciful creatures than our little crow or sparrow (see fig. 4). Yet the birds link us to another dynamic between the content of the *Hama jing* and the Dunhuang scroll manuscripts. Among the tens of thousands of manuscripts recovered from cave 16 are the earliest extant Chinese moxibustion charts catalogued as S6168 and S6262, known as the *Jiufa tu* 灸法圖 (charts of cauterization method), and P2675 *Xinji beiji jiujiing* 新集備急灸經 (A Canon of Emergency Moxibustion Remedies, Newly Collected).<sup>47</sup>

Before concentrating on detail from the texts alone, we will do well to consider what the images in the charts S6168 and S6262 tell us themselves. The Dunhuang charts are simple line drawings of a well-built male body, structured with detail of the ribs, sternum, nipples and the supra-sternal notch outlined on the torso almost in the style of the leaner meditating Buddhas (see fig. 5). The bone structure of the larger, more well-covered figures of the *Hama jing* is less distinct, and the whole impression more characteristically Han Chinese. The only surviving fragment of the figure in P2675 affords a view of the head with elongated earlobes, again suggesting the Buddhist context of Dunhuang within which the image may have been copied. This image is particularly interesting for the title *ming tang* 明堂 (Numinous hall), and it is therefore probably the earliest extant example of a *Ming tang tu* 明堂圖 “Chart of the Numinous Hall”, such as the one referred to in the preface to *Ming tang* 明堂, *juan* 39 of *Waitai biyao* 外臺秘要 (Arcane

---

<sup>47</sup> The Dunhuang manuscripts, some hundred or so which have medical content, are primarily held in the British Library and Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

*Huangdi Hama jing* (Yellow Emperor's Toad Canon)

Essentials from the Imperial Library) (752) (see fig. 6). Wang Tao argues for the interdependence of canonical writings and charts in combining,

clarity about where the *mai* ([pulsating]channels) meet and come together

and

discussing the essentials of the 100 afflictions.<sup>48</sup>

Whereas neither Dunhuang charts nor *Hama jing* have much to say about the *mai*, both discuss the essentials of affliction, signs, symptoms and details of therapy.

Apart from the loincloth in S6168 and S6262, the figures are naked, as they are in *Hama jing* 1 and 2. In this respect all four sets of figures can be compared to the completely naked elderly, frail man drawn in P3589, a treatise on physiognomy. In the context of the general modesty characteristic of early and mediaeval Chinese art, where nudity is exclusive to the portrayal of Daoist hells, the candour of S6168/6262 and P3589 is extraordinary (see fig.7). Indeed, if it wasn't for the Dunhuang charts and the Song bronze acupuncture figures, this fact alone might have suggested Japanese intervention at the point that the *Hama jing* woodcut was made for printing.<sup>49</sup> Yet the anterior views on S6168 all show the face in detail with hair tied in topknots, one to each side of the head and the topknot is single and central in *Hama jing*. No concessions seem to have been made to nineteenth century Japanese hair fashions (see fig. 8).

Both *Hama jing* and the Dunhuang charts show a remarkable similarity in the relationship between the image and the legend on the image. The text is integrated in and around the image with the explicit aim of facilitating the process of practice. On all the Dunhuang charts treatment locations are marked on the figures with lines drawn to separate legends which record the name of the location, indications for use, and instructions for application of moxibustion. The legend on the *Hama jing* is shorter, mainly recording the name of the location, but the text to the side of each

---

<sup>48</sup>Wang, *Waitai biyao* 39, p. 779.

<sup>49</sup> For the Song bronzes see Lu and Needham (2002, rpt. 2001), p. 160 – 163.

image gives comparable information, in this case instructions for the times of avoidance and the consequences of transgression.

As with the moxibustion sites in S6168, S6262 and P2675, the forbidden locations in the *Hama jing* are given without systematic reference to, or illustration of, the Yin and Yang vessels or channels of the acupuncture body that are associated with the inner viscera and bowels. Given the lack of scholarly acupuncture theory evident in these charts, and the sole use of moxibustion and not acupuncture, we might be forgiven for concluding that their manifest accessibility and popular appeal meant that they were designed for sale exclusively in a domestic, less educated market and not destined for the same readership as copies of the canonical treatises of Chinese medicine. Certainly, when compared to the latter texts, these are manuals that provide quick and easy reference, and require little education to use. Indeed the intention of the compiler of P2675 is made clear in the preface: he suggests that he is abridging the moxibustion techniques of a number of *jia* 家, “schools” or teaching lineages, in order to provide a practical medicine for those who live in outlying regions and can't get hold of sophisticated drugs.

Yet these texts were by nature destined for a literate audience and might well have served as one part of the complex equipment of military or monastery medicine, or of household first aid, for an official and his family posted to a remote position. After all, we can find references to the original presence of lost charts in transmitted texts such as Sun Simiao's *Beiji qianjin yao fang*, and it may simply be that the comparative difficulty of committing diagrams faithfully to woodblock print, rather than to manuscript, accounts for their omission in the received scholarly medical traditions.<sup>50</sup> With research demonstrating the eclectic mix of Dunhuang society, and indeed Tang medicine in general, we must be cautious in our judgement about the circulation of the charts.

---

<sup>50</sup> *Beiji qianjin yao fang* 29, p.508, p.513. See also Catherine Despeux, *Prescriptions d'acupuncture valant mille onces d'or* (Paris: Guy Tredaniel, 1987), pp. 47 – 48.

On the other hand *Hama jing* Section 1 forms a counterpoint to the Dunhuang cautery charts and may serve to establish the latter as part of the more popular tradition. The prohibitions seem to represent a response to the type of quick and easy medicine exemplified in the Dunhuang manuscripts. In the simple therapeutic directives of the three cautery charts, and the more accessible practice that they appear to serve, we can perhaps detect the kind of medicine that was itself the target of *Hama jing* prohibition. Indeed this particular relationship may suggest a way of approaching the wider prohibition literature that relates to other fields such as nutrition and sex.

### **The Progress of the Spirits**

The dissemination of ideas and images concerned with medicine, astronomy and the calendar brings us to consider the social and educational structures in mediaeval Dunhuang. Many of the manuscripts found in cave 16 at the Mogao grottoes were copied at the official school complex of the Dunhuang prefecture, located to the west of Dunhuang town. Some were copied as a part of the education of local pupils and show us that subjects like divination, astrology, and the calendrical arts were part of the curriculum.<sup>51</sup> The Prefectural School (*zhouxue* 州學) of Dunhuang was therefore an important centre for the transmission of the technical traditions and also included an *yixue* 醫學 (Institute of Medicine).<sup>52</sup> Each Prefectural School had one hundred students and a director titled “Erudite” (*boshi* 博士). The latter “*who were also members of the government, were not only versed in the astro-calendrical and occult sciences but were also in charge of the redaction and diffusion of the annotated calendar*”, employed in various sectors of the

---

<sup>51</sup> Mark Kalinowski, “The interaction between popular religion and *Shushu* culture in the Dunhuang manuscripts”. *Proceedings of the third International conference on Sinology*, History Section. Institute of History and Philology, (Taiwan: Academia Sinica, 2002), pp. 264 – 276.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

*Huangdi Hama jing* (Yellow Emperor's Toad Canon)

administration.<sup>53</sup> And it is this preoccupation with the calendar that situates *Hama jing*'s cycles of the spirits and of *qi* together with the wider technical literature of the divinatory and occult practices founded in mediaeval *shushu* culture.<sup>54</sup>

In the same spirit as *Hama jing* Section 1 and 2, three Dunhuang manuscripts specify taboos relating to the passage of *ren shen* 人神 (human spirit) around the body according to the lunar cycle. S5737, *Jiu jing ming tang* 灸經明堂 (Numinous Hall of the moxibustion canon), prohibits *ci* 刺 (piercing with needles); P3247 sets out an alternative thirty-day *ren shen* (human spirit) cycle, equivalents of which are to be found in *Beiji qian jin yao fang*.<sup>55</sup> The text on the verso of P2675 describes the circulation of *ren shen* 人神 (human spirit) according to the lunar calendrical cycles as determined by the sixty-day *gan zhi* 干支 (stems and branches) system and *jian chu* 建除 calendrical systems.<sup>56</sup> The *ren shen* (human spirit) prohibitions are located after

---

<sup>53</sup> Kalinowski (2002), p. 280. In Northern Wei there were Erudites in schools at regional and commandery levels. This practice reoccurred in very limited ways at prefectural level during the Sui and Tang period. Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1985), p. 389.

<sup>54</sup> In his article "Dunhuang Iatromantic Manuscripts" Harper has conveniently tabulated different hemerological systems and their relationship to parts of the body, the prognosis of illness, and auspicious days for therapy as they are set out in *Hama jing*, *Beiji qianjin yao fang* and earlier literature. Donald Harper. "Dunhuang Iatromantic Manuscripts: P2856V<sup>o</sup> and P2675 R<sup>o</sup> in Lo and Cullen, *Mediaeval Chinese Medicine* (forthcoming).

<sup>55</sup> Ma Jixing ed. (1998), pp. 529 – 532. Cong Chunyu 叢春雨 (1994), *Dunhuang Zhongyiyao quanshu* 敦煌中醫藥全書 (Complete Collection of Dunhuang Manuscripts Related to Chinese Medicine), (Beijing: Zhongyi guji, 1994), p. 220. *Beiji qianjin yao fang* 29, p. 520.

<sup>56</sup> In the *gan zhi* cycle the basic unit of time was the day counted from midnight to midnight. Days were numerated in a cycle of 60 produced by combining a set of ten "heavenly stems" with 12 "earthly branches". The method was also used to enumerate years. *Jian chu* is the conventional way of referring to the astro-divinatory method that indicates twelve types of circumstance in human affairs, each being designated by a single character term, of which *jian* and *chu* are the first two. The system, a major cycle of twelve years and a minor cycle of twelve days, is

several texts concerned with predicting and influencing the future through understanding the importance of the birth year, or the implications for prognosis of illness based on the day on which one falls ill, the selection of auspicious days (and avoidance of inauspicious days) for repressing the demons of illness, etc. Other sections of this text correlate human destiny with the seven stars.<sup>57</sup>

The nine sections of the received compilation of *Hama jing* present a variety of calendrical cycles and ideas about circulation. After the set of thirty images mapping the monthly rotation of human *qi* there are also another nine images each charting one position of the *shen* 神 (spirit) in nine distinct sectors of the body for a set of 12 ages from age one to one hundred and eight years e.g. in the first, tenth, nineteenth, twenty-eighth, thirty-seventh, forty-sixth, fifty-fifth, sixty-fourth, seventy-third, eighty-second, ninety-first and one hundredth years of life, the spirit resides in the sector of the *shen gong* 神宮 (spirit palace), sometimes called *qi fish* 氣魚, four *cun* 寸 (hereafter, inches)<sup>58</sup> below the navel opposite *zhong ji* 中極 (middle extremity), a term which refers to the area of the uterus in women and a comparable place in the male (see fig. 8).<sup>59</sup>

---

common in the Shuihudi, Yunmeng tomb manuscripts as well in the Dunhuang manuscripts. *Jianchu* is thus not a meaningful word in itself. For the *Jianchu* system see “The Almanacs (Jih-shu) from Shui-hu-ti” in Michael Loewe, (1994), pp. 221 – 26.

<sup>57</sup> I am very grateful to Donald Harper for an advance copy of his notices of the iatromantic texts prepared for the first volume of Mark Kalinowski ed. *Divination et Sciences Traditionnelles dans la Chine Médiévale* (forthcoming).

<sup>58</sup> One *cun* is approximately equivalent to an English inch or 2.5 cms. See Nathan Sivin (1968), p. 253.

<sup>59</sup> Here we should probably understand the “middle extremity” as designating the uterus, or commensurate with that place in the body thought to be a vessel for the transformation of the reproductive essences in *He Yinyang* 合陰陽 (Harmonising Yin and Yang), the Mawangdui sexual cultivation text. Eventually the same terminology is used for *ren 3*, an acupoint just below the skin on the lower abdomen which has a powerful effect on acute genitourinary problems. See the discussion in Ma (1992), p. 1002, n.15.



The legend to Section 2 of *Hama jing* states that, according to Qi Bo 岐伯, legendary interlocutor of the Yellow Emperor in the *Huangdi* corpus, the nine sectors refer to the lodging of the spirit in a particular organ during the year in question when inappropriate cautery on the marked location might prove fatal. Sections 3 and 4 also locate the spirit according to calendrical cycles: the former text, does so according to the *gan zhi* cycle of sixty days, here known as *liu jia ri* 六甲日. The latter text differentiates five types of spirit and soul, the *shen* 神 itself, but also the *hun* 魂, *po* 魄, *zhi* 志, and *yi* 意:

At dawn to mealtime the *hun* 魂 is in the *zhongfu* 中府 (middle storehouse), the *po* 魄 is in the *muzi* 目眦 (canthus of the eye), the *shen* 神 is in the *pangguang* 旁光 (bladder) the *zhi* 志 is in the *dacang* 大倉 (great granary), the *yi* 意 is at *yin jiao* 陰交 (Yin crossing).<sup>60</sup>

These spirits and souls are often translated as “the ethereal soul”, the “earthly soul” “the will” or “ambition” and the “intention” respectively. In *Lingshu* 8 each of these entities is given a fixed lodging in one of the five viscera, the heart, liver, lung, kidney and spleen respectively.<sup>61</sup> Here we find them roaming around the body according to the twelve times of the day and taking up lodging in locations that are both at the surface of, and deep within, the body.

Some lodging places are also the names of acupuncture loci that survive in the received traditions; others such as the bladder and the canthus of the eye are more general terms. The “middle storehouse”, like “middle extremity” above, is variously the designation of an acupuncture locus on the Lung Taiyin channel or a term that refers generally to the inner organs in the

---

<sup>60</sup> *Huangdi hama jing*, (1984), p. 43.

<sup>61</sup> The *hun* 魂, and the *po* 魄, for example, are aspects of the human being that scholarship has traditionally seen as separating at death and as the object of early funerary practice. Ken Brashier has shown that *hun/po* dualism is not at the foundation of Han burial practice and is more faithfully described as a scholastic convention. He suggests that the pair are more closely linked to medical states of anxiety and illness. Ken Brashier, “Han Thanatology and the Division of ‘Souls’” in *Early China* 21 (1996), pp. 125 - 158.

*Huangdi Hama jing* (Yellow Emperor's Toad Canon)

canonical treatises of acupuncture, or a site for the transformation of bodily essence in early Chinese sexual cultivation.<sup>62</sup> “Yin crossing” in the acupuncture and moxibustion traditions is consistently placed just below the navel on the lower abdomen. The canthus of the eye is on the route of at least five of the earliest extant descriptions of the *mai*.<sup>63</sup> Once pierced with the incising tool, death is not immediate. For the *hun* it takes eight years, the *po* six, the *shen*, seven, the *zhi* four, the *yi* nine, and the *jing* 精 (essence) ten years.

The concept of spirits resident in the organs exists in *Taiping jing* 太平经 (Canon of heavenly peace), which may be datable in part to the later Han Dynasty.<sup>64</sup> A similar idea seems to develop independently in the Daoist meditation traditions at least from the fifth century CE if not much earlier. The *Huangting jing* 黃庭經 (Canon of the Yellow Court), two meditational manuals used in the Shangqing 上清 (Supreme Purity) tradition of Daoism, and later as an integral part of *xiu zhen* 修真 “cultivating perfection” practice, describes radiant gods resident in both the inner and outer body.<sup>65</sup> Illustrations from the *Yun ji qi qian* editions of *Huangting* material focus on the outward appearances of the creatures dwelling in the body.<sup>66</sup> Basic notions of cosmology, theories related to classical medicine and visualisation of the human body as an administrative system governed by inner gods all come to bear on the adepts’ practice. Medical analogues of the visions

---

<sup>62</sup> Huangfu Mi 皇甫謐, *Huangdi jiayi jing* 黃帝甲乙經 3 (Yellow Emperor's AB Canon comp. 256 – 282). (edn. Tokyo: Seibundo, 1950), p. 67. *Suwen* (SBBY edn.) 8.27 p. 11b. See also the discussion in Ma (1992), p. 1005, n.4, and Harper (1998), p. 420, n.5.

<sup>63</sup> He and Lo, “脈 The Channels: A preliminary examination of a Lacquered Figurine from the Western Han Period” in *Early China* 21 (1996), pp. 93 - 100.

<sup>64</sup> See *Taipingjing hejiao* 太平经合校, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979) pp. 14, 22, and 27.

<sup>65</sup> See the introduction to Schipper, Kristofer Marinus et al. (1975), *Concordance du Tao-Tsang: titres des ouvrages* (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient).

<sup>66</sup> *Yun ji qi qian* 14 (preface 1028 or 1029 edn. 1992), pp. 116 – 120.

*Huangdi Hama jing* (Yellow Emperor's Toad Canon)

of spirits and coloured *qi* in the meditations of the *xiu zhen* tradition can also be found in parts of Section 5 of *Hama jing*, which describes how different coloured *qi* fill the five viscera in the inner body and flow to the surface through various mediums:

*Red qi on the inside stores in the heart, and on the outside travels in the blood...*<sup>67</sup>

The tradition is shared in the fourth century *Baopu zi* and in Sun Simiao's medical compilation *Beiji qianjin yao fang* where he records a mid seventh century account of breath meditation which combines the technique of moving bodily *qi* with breath control, *daoyin* techniques and the visualisation of coloured essences flooding through the body.<sup>68</sup>

In Sections 5 and 6 of the *Hama jing* we also find seasonal prohibitions which include one passage that gives a day related to each of the spirits/constellations of the viscera according to the ancient *ganzhi* cycle:

When the liver is [corresponds to] the *qing long* 青龍 (Blue-green Dragon), the spirit is at *dingmao*. When the heart is the *zhu que* 朱雀 (Vermilion Bird), the spirit is at *gengwu*.

When the spleen is the *gouchen* 勾陳, the spirit is in the centre. When the lung is the White Tiger, then the spirit is at *guiyou*. When the kidney is the *xuan wu* 玄武 (Black Warrior) constellation, the spirit is *jiazi*.<sup>69</sup>

How are we to understand this passage? Apparently the inner dimension of the body is an image of the Heavens with the spirit moving residence according to the sixty-day *ganzhi* calendrical cycle. But whether the spirit resides in the five viscera on the designated day or it is elsewhere according to another implicit position governed by the cycle is unclear. All of the terms that identify the five viscera refer in some way to groups of star formations through the rubric of the *si xiang* 四象, the

---

<sup>67</sup> *Huangdi hama jing*, (1984), p. 45.

<sup>68</sup> *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 抱朴子內篇校釋, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985/88), p. 275 *Beiji qianjin yao fang* 27, p. 483.

<sup>69</sup> *Huangdi hama jing* (1984), pp. 43 –44.

*Huangdi Hama jing* (Yellow Emperor's Toad Canon)

animals of the four directions, that we know from Han astronomical theory and observation. Four of the directional animals then may form a group of constellations that are seven of the twenty-eight *xiu* 宿 (lodges). The Black Warrior is the tortoise depicted with the other three animals in Han motifs. The tortoise is evidently elevated to heavenly status through carapace divination, and associated with war through the image of its armour. The fifth direction, the six stars of *gouchen*, is needed to correlate to the power of five governed by the five agents, earth, water, metal, wood and fire, and manifest here in the five viscera. It refers to the centre, and is part of a conglomerate of eleven stars including the five of the *beiji* 北極 (north pole asterism) in Shi Shi's 石氏 star catalogue.<sup>70</sup>

*Hama jing's* concern for the safe passage of the spirits and souls of the human body is part of an elaborate tradition of medical prohibitions, including those concerned with food and sex. Together with P2675, which tells us that the prohibition texts were part of a written tradition used in far-flung places with no formal medical provision, a picture builds of a shared perception of acupuncture and moxibustion as a widespread, undocumented, potentially unorthodox practice.

The recovery of manuals such as S6168, S6262 and P2675, manuscript traditions that were not chosen for inclusion in surviving medical compilations, is evidence of the kind of widespread practice that may have become the cause for concern. With the parallel texts of prohibition to be found in all the major acupuncture treatises that date to Jin and Tang times, we might assume that the medical elite styled themselves as guardians of this unruly medical practice. Yet this also testifies to a surprising alignment of technical culture: however popular and widely distributed the prohibition texts, they were also an integral part of the scholarly medical traditions in mediaeval times. Nevertheless, an ambivalence about the therapeutic value of the prohibition literature is

---

<sup>70</sup> The star catalogue is attributed to a tradition following and partially authored by the fifth century astronomer Shi Shen 石申 of the Wei 魏 State (445 – 225 BCE), but probably compiled in later Han. Sun and Kistemaker (1997), pp. 42 – 52, p. 50 n.3, and pp. 113 – 146.

expressed through Sun Simiao's own scepticism about whether the prohibitions were always relevant in the event of an emergency. Yet two of seven treatises in part 1 of his section on acupuncture and moxibustion record the prohibitions.<sup>71</sup> The question for this paper is, can we trace the history of this technical tradition in texts prior to the seventh century CE?

a) A Thoroughfare for the Spirits

Despite convincing evidence in the transmitted medical collections, as well as the Dunhuang material, that situates our texts of *Hama jing* in the Tang period, there is plentiful evidence of similar iatromantic traditions in early China. Indeed, even the earliest reliable evidence of acupuncture at named loci was buried together with texts that prohibit treatment according to the patient's age, ensuring the safety and free flow of the *hun* 魂 (soul) and *shen* 神 (spirit).<sup>72</sup> From the flowering of hemerology and correlative cosmology in the fourth and third centuries BCE to the mediaeval world of Dunhuang there are well-defined continuities in a range of medical texts that synchronise the spirit world with hemerological and calendrical systems. Medical practice in this culture often included sacrifice, exorcism, and talismans.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> *Beiji qianjin yifang* 千金翼方 (Supplementary prescriptions worth a thousand pieces of gold for emergencies) (edn. Suzhou Wuxian : Xu min puji, 1878), j. 28.10, p. 11.

<sup>72</sup> Most of the text on 78 wooden and bamboo strips and 14 wooden boards excavated at the Eastern Han tomb at Hantanpo 旱灘坡 in Wuwei 武威 [also close to Dunhuang in the Gansu corridor of Northwest China] relates to medicine, largely of a pharmaceutical nature. Zhang Yanchang 張延昌 and Zhu Jianping 朱建平 eds., *Wuwei Handai yijian yanjiu* 武威漢代醫簡研究 (Beijing: Yuanzineng, 1996), pp. 21 – 23.

<sup>73</sup> Li Ling 李零. *Zhongguo fang shu kao* 中國方書考 (An examination of Chinese remedy literature) (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin, 1993). Donald Harper. "Dunhuang Iatromantic Manuscripts: P2856V<sup>o</sup> and P2675 R<sup>o</sup> in Lo and Cullen. *Mediaeval Chinese Medicine* (forthcoming).

Han acupuncture texts associate the movement of human spirits and *qi* with both solar and lunar cycles, the stars, planets, the climatic influences and the *ba zheng* 八正 (eight regularities).<sup>74</sup> The circulatory amble of human *qi* around the network of twenty-eight acupuncture tracts in the physiology of *Lingshu* 15, for example, matches a map of the heavens primarily concerned with divination: the dividing of what are naturally uneven lodges in quantitative astronomical observation and calculation into 36 equal divisions are a measure of the divinatory analysis of time sequences rather than the observation of actual angles or times.<sup>75</sup>

In the astronomical and numerological considerations that dominate ideas about the circulation of human *shen* (spirit) and human *qi*, we are faced with a view quite different from that which we find in other traditions, such as medical ideas of the heart influenced by the Western Han meditation and self-cultivation traditions. The *neiye* 内業 (inward training) treatise of *Guanzi* describes the proper seat of the spirit in the heart (but it can come and go), from whence it manifests in a radiance and acuity of the senses.<sup>76</sup> Unlike the free water-like flow, common to the

---

<sup>74</sup> The *ba zheng* are the harmonious winds from the eight directions which should arrive at the right time if the environment is to remain healthy. *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大辭典 (edn. 1986), vol. 1, p. 741. *Suwen* (SBBY edn.) 3.26, p. 5 – 6.

<sup>75</sup> *Lingshu* (SBBY edn.) 4.15, p. 5b - 6. At the period in question, the basic spatial division of the heavens was into 365 and  $\frac{1}{4}$  *du* 度 (degrees), close to the Western degree. We can see different divinatory priorities taking precedence over astronomical priorities on a number of early cosmographs: the one excavated at Fuyang is a round plate marked with the lodges at equal intervals, each marked with 12 numbers representing the months in which the sun was found in that lodge. See Christopher Cullen, *Astronomy and Mathematics in Ancient China*, (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P. 1996), fig. 2, p. 45 and Sarah Allan, "The Great one, Water and the Guodian *Laozi*" in *T'oung Pao*, (forthcoming). See the section entitled "The pole star, the cosmograph and the one".

<sup>76</sup> *Guanzi* is a miscellany of different writings mainly on political and philosophic themes, some which may date to the 5th century BCE. It is also a rich source of early references to ideas about Yinyang and *qi*. See W. Allyn Rickett, "Kuan tzu" in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Michael Loewe (1993), pp. 244 - 246.

imagination of *qi* in physiological models that remains popular in the modern theory of “traditional” Chinese medicine, the prohibition literature seems to envisage the human *shen* or the *qi* as a smaller, more self-contained, discrete entity taking up residence around the body rather slowly, day by day.<sup>77</sup> There are clear analogies with the way spirits, both benign and malevolent, make the body their dwelling place in both religious and medical literature. Significantly, the Dunhuang text P3247 uses the verb *zhu* 注 (literally “to pour in”) when referring to how the *ren shen* (human spirit) takes up residence in different parts of the body: *mei yue ren shen zhu zai dangri zuxia* ... 每月人神注在當日足下 (every month the human spirit takes possession of the bottom of the foot appropriate to the day...). *Zhu* is often translated “possession” since it also describes how demonic entities occupy and possess the body.<sup>78</sup>

Paying careful attention to the passage of the spirits in and around the body is a fundamental concern of the medical literature of Han times. Qi bo describes the three hundred and sixty five places where the *jie* 節 (joints) intersect, “where the *qi* of the *shen* 神 ‘spirit’ (or alternatively ‘*qi* and *shen*’) travel in and out.”<sup>79</sup> He differentiates crude and skilled practitioners by the quality of their attention to the acupuncture loci. Superior practitioners do not simply pierce the body randomly at the *guan* 關 (joints). Responding with the speed and agility necessary to treat the spirits, they needle the fleshy cavities known as *ji* 機, a term that associates acupuncture with aiming in archery, with the power motivating critical moments of change in astronomy, and with

---

<sup>77</sup> *Lingshu* (SBBY edn.) 3.12, pp. 11 – 13. Sarah Allan, *The Way of Water and Sprouts of Virtue* (Albany: SUNY, 1997), pp. 39 – 40.

<sup>78</sup> See the discussion in Nathan Sivin (1987), p. 103.

<sup>79</sup> *Lingshu* (SBBY edn.) 1.1, pp.1 - 4.

*Huangdi Hama jing* (Yellow Emperor's Toad Canon)

the name of a star.<sup>80</sup> Another *ji* 極 found in early acupuncture is also a term used for star names and is the centre from which all the constellations are located, mapping the sky in radiating segments like those of an orange.<sup>81</sup> In divination this *ji* represents the point of control in both a spatial and temporal sense. *Huainanzi* 20 describes how:

one who attains the *dao* 道 Way uses the *ji*.

When calm and contained, with *shen* (spirits) lodging in their heart and no perverse *qi*, on the four limbs, at the joints and intersections, the pores of the hair and skin steam and sweat, so the *jishu* 極樞 “pivots” are adjusted beneficially, then of the one hundred channels and nine orifices, not one is not smooth.<sup>82</sup>

b) The Acupuncture & Moxibustion Loci

Certain distinctive features of mediaeval acupuncture and moxibustion locations shared with *Hama jing* also invite a comparison with Han medical literature. Although the *Hama jing* only gives locations that represent places where it is prohibited to cauterise and pierce at certain times, by default they are also places where treatment can be given, and they are therefore taken to be potential moxibustion locations. The culture of naming the locations is quite unlike the extant tradition of acupuncture locations, which we can trace to Huangfu Mi's *Huangdi jiyi jing* of the late third century.

---

<sup>80</sup> *Hanyu da zidian* (1996), p. 546. *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 Xu Shen 許慎 (ca 55 - 149). Edition: *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注, ed. Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (compiled 1776 - 1807), (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1981), p. 262. the articulations of the body - - ultimately the sites of the vast majority of *xue* 穴, variously translated as the “caves” “loci” “points” “holes”, also primarily located in the cavities around joints A pair of acupuncture loci in the received tradition, *di ji* 地機 (the *ji* of the earth) still bear the term.

<sup>81</sup> The second star of the *beiji* (north pole asterism), sometimes referred to as the *tian ji xing* 天極星 (polestar) and the brightest in the constellation, was the throne of the supreme deity Tai yi. The term appears in the naming of the acupuncture locus *zhong ji* 中極 (middle extremity) *Shiji* 27, p. 1289. See also John Major (1993), p. 107.

<sup>82</sup> *Huainanzi* (SBBY edn.), p.3.



23 of some 68 locations recorded as the site of *ren qi* (human *qi*) in *Hama jing* Section 1, correlate exactly with the moxibustion locations and prohibitions in the Dunhuang texts. Most have a rather mundane anatomical character such as: *bizhu* 鼻柱 bridge of the nose, *chi* 齒 teeth, *faji* 髮際 hairline, or *gu* 股 thigh. Twenty of the *Hama jing* locations are also listed as landmarks on the *mai* 脈 ([pulsating] channels) as described in the Mawangdui and Zhangjiashan channel texts.<sup>83</sup> In the transmitted traditions, most of these locations are general areas containing a number of specific acupuncture and moxibustion loci. The teeth seem to be one exception, although there is one location in the surviving traditions on the upper gums which might be the place indicated here. Only the points with such names as *shou yangming* 手陽明 (*yangming* of the hand) and *zu yangming* 足陽明 are remarkable. Together with *zu taiyin* 足太陰, or *shou shao yin* 手少陰 in *Hama jing* these are well known to us as titles of channels of acupuncture. Yet, we know from the illustrations in Section 1 and 2 that they can also be the names of individual loci in their own right.<sup>84</sup>

Stylistically, the terminology in these four collections reflects the concrete physical locations of the body observed, and is quite unlike the microcosmic body found among Huangfu

---

<sup>83</sup> See the index of physiological terms in Harper (1998), pp. 511 - 529.

<sup>84</sup> Since the discovery of the Mawangdui manuscripts many scholars take the stance that the *mai* antedate a system of acupoints or loci. See Yamada Keiji, "Zhongyixue de lishi yu lilun" 中醫學歷史與理論 (Theory and the historiography of Chinese medicine) in *Gudai dongya zhexue yu keji wenhua* 古代東亞哲學與科技文化 (Liaoning: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996), p. 261, and Zhou Yimou 周一謀. ed., *Mawangdui yixue wenhua* 馬王堆醫學文化 (Medical culture of Mawangdui), (Shanghai: Wenhui chubanshe, 1993), pp. 18 - 21. Referring to the *Hama jing*, Li Jianmin makes a strong case for the separate development of the *shuxue* (loci for acupuncture intervention) and the network of channels associated with acupuncture and moxibustion treatment. See "Mingtang yu Yinyang: yi Wushier bingfang 'jiuqi taiyin taiyang' wei li" 明堂與陰陽：以五十二病方 '灸其太陰太陽' 為理 (Conference paper: Medicine and Chinese Society: A Symposium, Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, Taiwan, June, 1997).

*Huangdi Hama jing* (Yellow Emperor's Toad Canon)

Mi's *Huangdi jiayi jing* locations. The latter are characterised by lyrical names that weave together imagery from imperial architectural and social structures, and ideas of cosmology, together with the natural topography of the known universe. There are yin articulations (*yinxi* 陰鄰), yin valleys (*yingu* 陰谷), yang valleys (*yanggu* 陽谷), yang ponds (*yangchi* 陰池). The metaphor of water, which constantly informs us about the movement of *qi*, also gains full maturity in the acupoint body in *Jiayi jing*, where seas and oceans swell in the abdomen and fill the knees and elbows. Further on down the limbs there are rivers, springs, streams and wells, as the *qi* flows in different shapes and speeds towards the extremities. Together with the those location names that mirror the heavens: heavenly pivot (*tianshu* 天樞), body pillar (*shenzhu* 身柱), "sun and moon" (*riyue* 日月), spirit hall (*shenting* 神庭), and illuminated sea (*zhaohai* 照海), we find in *Huangdi jiayi jing* the system of points that has largely survived as the modern repertoire of acupuncture points.<sup>85</sup>

In contrast the descriptions of the locations in *Hama jing* and the Dunhuang prohibition literature gives us a much more mundane vision of the body, that is shared in the Mawangdui and Zhangjiashan channel texts. The terms are much more anatomical in flavour, only hinting at the vividly described microcosm conjured up by the classical acupoint names, and providing few leads towards understanding the development of a body so landscaped.

There is one exception in Section 4 of the *Hama jing*, *Ze wushen suo she shi bi jiupan fa* 擇五神所舍時避灸判法 (technique for avoiding moxibustion and piercing, selecting according to where the five spirits are in lodging). Where the spirits are in lodging, we find terms such as the *tian chuang* 天 (窗) (Heaven's Window), *ren ying* 人迎 (Meeting with People), *qi jie* 氣街 (*Qi* thoroughfare), *yin gu* 陰谷 (Yin valley), *da yin* 大陰 (Great yin) and *qi men* 期門 (Gate of Anticipation), *chi ze* 尺澤 (Foot Marsh), *jing men* 精門 (Gate of the Essence), *zhong fu* 中府 (Middle Palace), all names of loci found in *Huangdi neijing*, with the exception of *qi men* and *jing*

---

<sup>85</sup> Huangfu Mi, *Huangdi jiayi jing* 3, pp. 53 – 87.

*men*. The use of these lyrical terms to differentiate the lodgings of each of the spirit may suggest a specific religious context for the development of the acupuncture loci that we know in the modern repertoire. But this is an hypothesis that will require extensive research to verify and falls outside the remit of the present paper.

Strangely, the *Huangdi* corpus, widely acknowledged to contain the earliest canonical treatises of acupuncture, actually records very few of the acupuncture locations evident in the *Jiayi jing*. Even the locus classicus of the acupuncture channels and tracts, *Lingshu* 10 – 13, is peculiarly devoid of acupuncture loci and lays out the system in the style of the earlier excavated channel texts insomuch that they are presented in one treatise like a roadway, in another a system of waterways, or simply a record of a somatographic tour around the muscles. *Lingshu* 12, for example, matches the circulation tracts of acupuncture to the rivers of China, which can be found on maps of the early Han period.<sup>86</sup> Sarah Allan describes how, in Chinese mythology *directing water* was the first step to a civilised world. Channelling *qi* into routes around the body, like digging irrigation ditches and flood control canals, marks a significant stage in bringing the body, conceived as natural process, under human control. In *Lingshu* 12 the rivers and streams of the body reflect the natural, rather than man-made, waterways of China. But once the analogy between the channel and man-made watercourses has been made, all the qualities and techniques of directing and controlling water can then be applied to the movement of bodily *qi*.<sup>87</sup>

In the way Yin and Yang structure the body we can see a reflection of early Chinese belief about the underlying structures of the universe. At the same time, they also illustrate aspects of skeletal, muscular and arteriovenous structures - they map the experience of pain and of associated points for stimulating and relieving that pain. Here in the Han prototypes for the Yellow Emperor

---

<sup>86</sup> *Lingshu* (SBBY edn.) 3.12, pp. 11 – 13. For the rivers see Tan Qixiang 譚其驤 *Zhongguo lishi dituji* 中國歷史地圖集 (Collection of historical Chinese Maps), (Beijing: Ditu chubanshe, 1982), pp. 19 – 20.

<sup>87</sup> Sarah Allan, *The Way of Water and Sprouts of Virtue*, (SUNY Press, Albany, 1997), pp. 39 – 40.

prohibition literature, such as *Lingshu* 15 translated above, we find the channels as the central architecture of the body designed for the habitation of human *qi*. Elsewhere we find different spirits and souls resident in the organs, and other individual parts of the body. By the time of the *Jiayi jing*, that architecture is extended to acupuncture loci that structure the dwelling of the spirit: *shendao* 神道 (spirit path), *shenzhu* 神柱 (spirit column), *shentang* 神堂 (spirit hall), and *shenting* 神庭 (spirit courtyard) each with specific and individual functions.

Later medical literature attests an alternative architecture of the inner body designed for the habitation of ghosts. In *Beiji qianjin yao fang*, Sun Simiao describes the thirteen *gui gong* 鬼宮 (palaces of the ghosts), for treating the “one hundred *xie* 邪” (variously translated deviants, heteropathy, perversities, evils, noxiousness), a therapy attributed to the legendary physician Bian Que 扁鵲.<sup>88</sup> Treatment involves needling some well know acupuncture loci, which are given

---

<sup>88</sup>Sadly a related chart is missing in the text. *Beiji qianjin yao fang* 14, p. 261. Difficulties in rendering into English the Chinese term *xie* 邪 dog historians of Chinese medicine working in different historical periods and social/religious contexts. Treatment of *xie* sometimes involved medical drugs, stones, needles or exorcism and could refer to ridding the body of goblins or purging an unhealthy type of wind or *qi*. The term *xie* in medicine is frequently opposed to *zheng* 正, literally meaning “upright”, as opposed to “slanting” or “deviating”. Here the term refers to malevolent or deviant entities invading the body from outside. Elite medical theory, as well as state-sponsored medical compilations continued to implicate demonic infestation as a cause of illness right through the Ming and Qing periods, but by relegating it to a category equivalent to ‘wind’ or ‘cold’ pathology, they denied the spirit world transcendence. At the same time and in much of the classical medical literature, the term has less animistic qualities, and especially when combined with *qi*, or with ‘wind’ the concept *xie* becomes “as featureless a term as ‘infectious agent’”. See Nathan Sivin (1987), p.102. See also Li Jianmin, “Contagion and its Consequences” in *Medicine and the History of the Body* (Taipei: Academia Sinica, Proceedings of the 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> International Symposium on the Comparative History of Medicine – East and West, 1996), and Lo and Schroer, “Deviant airs in ‘traditional’ Chinese medicine” (forthcoming).

additional designations such as “ghost heart”, “ghost pillow”, “ghost bed”, “ghost rampart”, “ghost road” and “ghost market” “ghost hall” “ghost minister” etc.

### **Lunar Disorders**

*Hama jing* makes explicit statements that parallel the development of sexual-cultivation and acupuncture and cauterization practice, a relationship that is a recurring feature of both early and mediaeval medicine.<sup>89</sup> In the Mawangdui medical texts (tomb closed 168 BCE), which juxtapose early forms of cauterization and lancing with hygienic cultures such as sexual cultivation and therapeutic gymnastics, there is evidence that *jiu* was a technique to stimulate and replenish *qi* in early Chinese sexual practice.<sup>90</sup> The same combinations can be found in the Han and Sui bibliographical treatises as well as mediaeval medical compilations.

In contrast there is a marked absence of sexual cultivation literature in the Dunhuang manuscript cache, although references to symptoms of failing genito-urinary health are common. Six of forty-seven illnesses in the Dunhuang moxibustion charts S6168 and S6262 can be classified as illnesses of the genito-urinary systems, such as *shi jing* 失精 (loss of essence/semen) or *nanzi wulao qishang* 男子五勞七傷 “the five wearinesses and the seven harms and injuries in men”.

---

<sup>89</sup> I have explored this relationship in a number of papers. Vivienne Lo, “Tracking the Pain: *Jue* and the Formation of a Theory of Circulating Qi through the Channels” in *Sudhoffs Archiv* (1999) pp. 191 – 211, “Crossing the ‘Inner Pass’: An ‘Inner/Outer’ Distinction in Early Chinese Medicine?” in *East Asian Science, Technology and Medicine* 17 (2000), pp. 15-65 and “The Influence of Western Han Nurturing Life Literature on the Development of Acumoxa Therapy” in *Innovation and Chinese Medicine* (The proceedings of a conference held in commemoration of Lu Gwei-djen), ed. Elisabeth Hsu (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), pp. 19 - 51 and “Quick and Easy Chinese Medicine : The Dunhuang Moxibustion Charts” in Lo and Cullen, *Mediaeval Chinese Medicine* (forthcoming).

<sup>90</sup> Mawangdui Hanmu boshu zhengli xiaozu, (1980), p. 164.

One lone quotation from *Hama tu* 蝦蟆圖 (Toad Chart) in *Ishimpō* 28 solely concerns sexual prohibitions and is an intriguing hint at a lost tradition.<sup>91</sup> Section 4 of *Hama jing* may provide us with a clue the character of that tradition. It is specifically concerned with how Yin and Yang days relate to treatment according to gender [treat women on Yang days, men on Yin], and likens the cauterization and acupuncture prohibitions to those prohibitions for sexual intercourse on days when the light of the sun is obscured. The prohibitions are illustrated graphically in the first section where the days of full moon are a time of great prohibition for sexual relations. Here “harmonising Yin and Yang” is a euphemism for sexual intercourse:

It is not fitting to harmonise Yin and Yang, women will be struck by wind illness. Greatly prohibited, not insignificant. On the sixth day of the lunar month sex will bring on carbuncles and ulcers.<sup>92</sup>

Cauterising or piercing on the wrong days of the month causes all sorts of ailments, from redness of the eyes to violent death, but by far the most common symptoms are related to the sexual and reproductive system. Of eighty separate symptoms recorded in the legends to the charts in Section 1, eighteen refer to problems of infertility, menstruation, and sexual incontinence. These occur when treatment is given on the dark days of the moon at the residences of human *qi*, that is the twenty-fifth day of the lunar month until the sixth day of the next lunar month.

Of the other symptoms caused by harming human *qi*, of those three that are fatal, two are the result of disorders of the inner organs expressed in terms such as *neiluan wuzang bu an* 內亂五臟不安 (inner chaos and uneasiness of the five viscera). The constellation of other symptoms: loss of consciousness and sensory disturbance (5 of 80), locomotive difficulties and pain (9), disorders of the digestion (6), disorders of the ears and eyes (3) abscesses and ulcers (8), wind

---

<sup>91</sup> *Ishimpō* 28, p. 475.

<sup>92</sup> *Huangdi hama jing*, (1984), p. 42.

diseases (3), prolapse and hernia (6), fever and heat disorders (4) are generally reminiscent of illnesses treated in mediaeval gymnastic and acupuncture texts. Writing of mediaeval *daoyin*, Catherine Despeux states:<sup>93</sup>

The problems treated are mainly related to the locomotion and digestive systems, the two pathological areas about which most gymnastic literature was assembled in the succeeding centuries. Other common indications were deafness, inflammation of the testes and spring fevers.

Her analysis of illnesses treated by *daoyin* in and after mediaeval times echoes the treatments that we can see in the Dunhuang moxibustion charts: 17 of 47 identified are locomotive illnesses of the musculature, or of different pain and sensory disturbance and 15 of 47 are various gastro-intestinal disorders. Of the locomotive and sensory disorders there are three syndromes related to wind. In a series of articles I have argued that there was an interlinked development of the sexual cultivation and acupuncture and moxibustion traditions in early imperial times. The unusual predominance of sexually related diseases in the *Hama jing*, together with the sexual prohibitions interspersed throughout the text, mark its medical culture out as distinct from the medical literature of late mediaeval Dunhuang where, perhaps because of the monastery context for the preservation of the manuscripts, there is a virtual absence of sexual medicine.

## CONCLUSION

The last three sections of *Hama jing*, and in particular a concluding incantation, draw together many elements discussed in this paper, bringing us neatly to a conclusion. Here we find a practical demonstration of belief in the influence of the spirits of the constellations, prohibitions on treatment, the power of effigies, and the importance of location in the ritual performance of healing.

---

<sup>93</sup> Catherine Despeux, "Gymnastics: The Ancient Tradition", in Livia Kohn ed. *Taoist Meditation and Longevity Techniques*, (Michigan: Center For Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1989), p. 242.

These three sections introduce three spirit patrons, Tian Yi 天醫 (Heavenly Physician), Tian Shi 天師 (Heavenly Teacher) and Bian Que 扁鵲. The latter two characters are well known from Han texts. A biography of Bian Que written by Sima Qian in *Shiji* probably represents the historicising of an earlier cultic figure. Unlike the following biography of the physician Chunyu yi 淳于意, Bian Que's biography is redolent of the existence and assistance of gods or spirit teachers. He is said to have received secret recipes from his teacher -- as well as texts he is given a potion, which confers upon him extra-sensory vision allowing him to see through walls. The record says that his teacher was *probably not human*.<sup>94</sup> The title Heavenly or Celestial Teacher features as the name of one of the Yellow Emperor's interlocutors in the self-cultivation text known as *Shiwen* 十問 (Ten questions) from Mawangdui, as well as in another title for Qi Bo in *Suwen* 1. In the Mawangdui text, Tian Shi is depicted as an expert on how to consume Yin and attain a state of spirit illumination. By the second century CE, Celestial Masters was the title of a new Daoist organisation, originally based in the north of China, and which came to be identified with the healing arts. Religiously eclectic, Sun Simiao, although well-known for absorbing material from both Buddhist and Daoist sources, may himself have been a Daoist initiate, and he uses formulae in his prohibition texts that begin, "I am a Celestial Master".<sup>95</sup>

Less is known about the Heavenly Physician who also appears in the titles of Section 7 and nine of *Hama jing*. His name is used as a function in one of the *ba gua* 八卦 (eight trigram)

---

<sup>94</sup> See *Shiji* 105, p. 2785. Bian Que is depicted on Han reliefs as a human headed bird. See Lu and Needham, *Celestial Lancets* (rept. 2002), p. 86.

<sup>95</sup> Nathan Sivin, "On the word 'Taoism' as a source of perplexity with special reference to the relations of science and religion in traditional China" in *History of Religions* V. 17 (Feb-May 1978), nos. 3 & 4. p. 312, n.18.



*Huangdi Hama jing* (Yellow Emperor's Toad Canon)

sequences as listed in a Dunhuang divination manuscript.<sup>96</sup> Here in the *Hama jing*, the name of the Heavenly Physician is taken as a rubric in divination, as it is also in Sun Simiao's *Beiji qianjin yao fang* and Tanba no Yasuyori's *Ishimpō* prohibition texts. His influence is felt in different years and months on different days of the *ganzhi* cycle.

In the concluding incantation we find that Bian Que and the Heavenly Physician correspond with branches on opposite sides of a compass, so to face Tianyi means to turn the back on Bianque, and vice versa:

*Zhi zhubing xiang bei zhou* 治諸病向背咒 (Incantations used with directional orientation for treating various medical disorders)<sup>97</sup>

The ill person sits facing 'living *qi*' (a specific direction). The therapist sits with his back to the Heavenly Physician to administer the treatment. The moxibustion fire is placed at the position of Bian Que to prepare the mugwort. The person [preparing the mugwort] sits with his back to the Heavenly Physician. The person treating raises both hands and first calls the Heavenly Physician and the Heavenly Master. He lowers both hands and administers to them. The incantation states: Heavenly Master, Heavenly Physician. I keep guard and have come to treat the one hundred illnesses. I must apply needle and moxibustion to the sickness and do not treat the spirit illumination. The poisons of malevolent spirits, the poisons of ghost essence, the poisons of wind and cold, the poisons of eating and drinking, the ten thousand poisons of the one hundred *qi*. Quickly disperse and be destroyed. Urgent,

---

<sup>96</sup> The *ba gua* are eight symbols which, in combination, are used to represent the process of change and transformation in the world. The symbols are used in divination, each combination obtained by manipulating and counting yarrow sticks.

<sup>97</sup> Partially reproduced in *Ishimpō* 2, p.59.

urgent, in accordance with the statutes and orders.<sup>98</sup> The incantation states: Red as a Flame, Red as a Flame: The sun emerges from the east. To the left, the empress, Mother Queen of the West. To the front, the Vermilion Bird. To the rear, the Black Warrior 玄武, (the Herdboy?) and Weaving Girl cause me to moxa you. Physician of Lu, Bian Que, at this moment has them. Sickness and illness, quickly be gone. Urgent, urgent, in accordance with the statutes and orders. The incantation states: Heaven and Earth open and stretch out. The Yue King, who magically charms, grips the Golden Gang 金罡 (handle of the dipper). The needle does not encounter the spirit. In piercing I do not cause harm or injury. Sickness and illness quickly be gone. Urgent, urgent, in accordance with the statutes and orders. In all cases when treating illness recite the incantation thrice, and afterwards moxa and needle them.

The last text in the *Hama jing* compilation opens a rare window on to the culture within which many practitioners must have used acupuncture and moxibustion treatment to exorcise malevolent entities and protect the spirit and *qi* - - here observing the cautery and needle prohibitions to carefully avoid damaging the *shenming* 神明. *Shenming* “spirit illumination”, or “spirit brilliance” may refer to a state of the patient's spirit, a kind of “spirit-like intelligence” or equally to quite separate and external spirits. Indeed sometimes the term *shenming* itself refers specifically to an effigy.<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>98</sup>The use of the term, *jiji ru li ling* 急急如律令 (Urgent, urgent, in accordance with the statutes and orders) often implies that the practitioner is speaking with the authority of an ordained priest of the Celestial Master; cf. the use of this formula throughout *Qianjin yi fang* ch. 29 – 30. See Nathan Sivin, “Taoism and Science” in *Medicine, Philosophy and Religion in Ancient China*. (Variorum, 1995), ch. VII, n. 18.

<sup>99</sup> It may also be that *ming* 明 is a popular taboo avoidance for *ming* 冥, that replaces the dark and baleful associations of the latter with the brightness of the former. We might then render *shenming* 神冥 simply “spirits” or

From the outset of *Hama jing*, we know that the strategic choice of days determines when healing might be best supported by the spirit physicians.<sup>100</sup> In the incantation we find explicit instructions explaining how to facilitate that communication: through the careful positioning of his body, a practitioner could simultaneously call upon the assistance of the spirit patrons of the medical arts, the Heavenly Physician and Heavenly Master, together with Bian Que, addressed as Physician of Lu. All may be present as effigies, but simultaneously as the representative deities who channel the power of the directions and the constellations into the healing encounter.

Last, but by no means least, we should return to the question of dating. We know from comparisons with the Dunhuang medical manuscripts and with Sun Simiao's work that the kind of material that constitutes *Hama jing* was circulating in medical society at the centre and periphery of China between the seventh and tenth centuries. We also know from the Han dynasty medical canons and excavated texts that acupuncture and moxibustion prohibitions were a part of early imperial medical culture, with the caveat that there is nothing that would mark *Hama jing* as an early Han compilation. It is certainly the product of a medical culture that had begun to flower in the first centuries CE, and there is no reason to doubt that a Toad Chart *could* have existed in the third century when Ge Hong was compiling *Baopuzi*. But the *Hama jing* so closely mirrors Sun Simiao's format, in the parallel systems of cycles of human *qi* and human spirit, in the evocation of the Heavenly Physician, the format of the text and the combination of text and chart, even if the latter are missing in the received editions of his work. It allows us to imagine quite clearly the kind

---

"spirit effigy". The association between *shenming* and spirit effigies is also made in Edward Machle, "Shenming: Gods or Godlike Intelligence" in ed. AS Cua, *Encyclopaedia of Chinese Philosophy*, (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 703.

<sup>100</sup> In each of the thirty illustrations in Section 1 of *Hama jing*, we find the statement *tong shen* 同神 (13 days), or *bu tong shen* 不同神 (17 days). The graph here written *tong* is likely to be a variant of *tong* 通 · 通神 *tong shen* (communicating with the spirit (s)) being a trope commonly found as the aim of early Chinese self-cultivation techniques..

*Huangdi Hama jing* (Yellow Emperor's Toad Canon)

of images that would have originally filled Sun's manuscripts. In the absence of more detailed textual analysis, which no doubt will eventually provide a closer dating of our text, a reasonable conclusion is that the compilation of *Hama jing* dates to early Tang times and is a repository for a good deal of ancient wisdom.

The charts of the *Hama jing* and the rather formulaic prohibition literature of early and mediaeval periods are a valid and yet underused resource that can be a spur to the slow progress towards reconstructing the technical, social and intellectual worlds aligned in constituting medical practice in early and mediaeval China. When set against the diverse, sometimes chaotic acupuncture and moxibustion literature of Han times, they might give the impression of a lifeless tradition concerned with senseless calculation. Yet, understanding how the prohibition texts slot in to a culturally adapted and coherent body of practices, essential to the proper and effective conduct of medicine in their time and fully supported by social institutions that emanated from the imperial offices and spread to the remotest parts of the empire, allows us to appreciate them as an integral part of a vibrant healing tradition. The combination of a deeper understanding of early Chinese mantic culture, and of popular acupuncture and moxibustion manuals, with a new focus on transmitted literature is now beginning to build a multi-dimensional approach to the history of medical practices in China, where *Hama jing* has pride of place. In the set of texts that make up *Hama jing*, and in particular this last incantation, we can appreciate the large variety of written traditions that came to bear on the literate medical practitioner at the point of practice. With an internalised knowledge of canonical texts, with reference manuals, hemerological calendars locating the positions of spirits and souls, incantational literature, effigies, and perhaps the manuscripts themselves as sacred objects, all and any of these might exert their influence simultaneously in the clinical encounter as the practitioner aligned his body with the celestial spheres and deities and applied cautery and needle to a patient.