

“Laughing Disorders” and Medical Discourses on Joy in Early Imperial China¹

Jen-der Lee [李貞德]

(Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, [No. 130, Academia Road, Nankang 11529, Taipei, TAIWAN.
jender@mail.ihp.sinica.edu.tw])

Abstract

This chapter deals with laughter and the attitudes towards joyful emotions in medical tradition of early imperial China. It discusses laughing disorders in medical texts and discovers a growing tendency to use laughter as symptoms in description of various disorders, from mental illness, food poisoning, and visceral sickness to demon possession. The treatments suggested for different ailments shifted from bloodletting to acupuncture and moxibustion and later to herbal recipes, in accord with current knowledge on the development of Chinese medicine. When medical writers used the term “laughter” to describe the patients, they were either trying to capture a kind of human voice that conveyed unbearably joyful emotions or to discern a sort of uncontrollable facial expressions and body motions. Either way, according to Chinese medical conceptualization of the body, the patient was suffering from losing his or her essential air, the *qi* when s/he laughed too much. Since all emotions were considered harmful to one’s health, joy did not occupy a higher status than anger, melancholy, anxiety or fear in the culture of life-nourishment. People would be advised by medical doctors not to laugh at all if possible, much to the amazement of the modern seekers of a healthy life.

Keywords: laughing disorders, joy, emotions, medicine, life-nourishment, conceptualization of the body

1 Introduction: Lu Yun’s “Laughing Disorder”

It is said that Lu Yun 陸雲 (261–303), the famous scholar of the early Jin dynasty, suffered from a “laughing disorder”:

As Wu 吳 was pacified, [the Lu brothers] came to Luo 洛. When [Lu] Ji 陸機 first met Zhang Hua 張華, Hua asked where [Lu] Yun was. Ji said, “Yun is suffering from a laughing disorder (*xiaoji* 笑疾), so he does not dare present himself to you.” Before long, Yun came. Hua’s manners were rather affected, and he liked binding his beard with silk ropes. Upon seeing this, Yun burst into laughter, unable to control himself. Once, [Yun] got onto a boat wearing

¹ This chapter was first published as an article in Chinese: “Xiaojikao: jianlun Zhongguo zhonggu yizhe dui xilede taidu” (笑疾考：兼論中國中古醫者對喜樂的態度), *Zhongyang yanjiu yuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* (中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊, *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica*, hereafter cited as BIHP) 75.1(2004), pp. 99-149. It was translated by Dr. Jie Guo, edited by Dr. Marta Hanson, and revised and updated by the author to incorporate some new research. For this chapter, the author has consulted the latest available English versions of quotations from ancient medical classics, including: Paul U. Unschuld and Hermann Tessenow, in collaboration with Zheng Jinsheng, trans. and ed., *Huangdi neijing suwen: An annotated translation of Huang Di’s Inner Classic – Basic Questions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Paul U. Unschuld trans. and ed., *Huangdi neijing lingshu: the Ancient Classics on Needle Therapy: the Complete Chinese Text with an Annotated English Translation* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2016); Bianque (ca. 255BCE), *Nanjing: the Classic of Difficult Issues: with Commentaries from Chinese and Japanese Authors from the Third to the Twentieth Centuries: the Complete Chinese Text with an Annotated Translation by Paul Unschuld* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2016). For most of the technical terms, the author consults Nigel Wiseman and Feng Ye, *A Practical Dictionary of Chinese Medicine* (Brookline, MA: Paradigm Publications, 1998).

hemp mourning clothes and sashes. When he saw his own reflection in the water, he laughed so hard that he fell into water. He only survived because someone came to his rescue.²

That Lu Yun had a “laughing disorder” was what his elder brother Lu Ji (260–303) had told Zhang Hua (232–300) when they first met. According to *Jinshu* 晉書 (The book of Jin), the symptom of Lu Yun’s “laughing disorder” was that he was “unable to control himself” when he laughed. Did this kind of disorder really exist in the medical discourses of the early Jin period? If not, what was Lu Ji trying to convey when he introduced his brother?

Indeed, we can find symptoms such as “incessant laughter” (*xiao buxiu* 笑不休, *xiao buzhi* 笑不止), or “being apt to ceaselessly laugh” (*shanxiao buxi* 善笑不息) in traditional medical documents. The *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經 (Inner canon of the Yellow Emperor, hereafter *Neijing*) claims that such symptoms were caused by a “surplus of spirit” (*shen you yu* 神有餘) and the “repleteness of the heart’s qi” (*xin qi shi* 心氣實).³ It states that, if the meridian that controls the heart, the “meridian of hand jueyin heart enclosure” (*shoujueyin xinbaoluo* 手厥陰心包絡) suffers from a disorder, this might prompt someone to laugh without being able to stop.⁴ Moreover, according to *Lingshu* 靈樞, the “Divine Pivot” section of the *Inner Canon*, at the beginning of his/her insanity, a patient would tend to laugh a lot.⁵ The *Nanjing* 難經 (The classic of difficult issues), a text from the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220 CE), aiming to clarify the difficult problems raised in the *Neijing*, treats the presence of laughter as a major sign which could distinguish mania (*kuang* 狂) from withdrawal (*dian* 癲).⁶ In his *Huangdi zhengjiu jiyijing* 黃帝針灸甲乙經 (A-B classics of acupuncture and moxibustion of the Yellow Emperor, hereafter *Jiyijing*), Huangfu Mi 皇甫謐 (214–282), who was from a slightly earlier period than Lu Yun, states that, if the six

² Fang Xuanlin (房玄齡, 579–648) et al., *Jinshu*, 晉書, *Book of Jin* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), vol. 54, “Biography of Lu Yun”, pp. 1481–1482. Ouyang Xun (歐陽詢, 557–641), *Yiwen leiju*, 藝文類聚, *Categorized Collection of Literature*, Wang Shaoying (汪紹楹) annotated. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999) vol. 19, pp. 356–357 cites *A New Account of the Tales of the World* (*Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語) claiming that Lu Yun was only “about to fall into the water”.

³ See *Suwen* vol. 17 “Tiaojinglun, 62” (On the Adjustment of Channels), and *Lingshu* vol. 2 “Ben shen, 8” (The Foundation of the Spirit). The exact time and authorship of the *Suwen* remains mysterious; traditionally, it was attributed to the Yellow Emperor and Qibo and his subjects. Some scholars also hold that it was written in the Spring and Autumn Period, the Warring Period, the Qin and the Han period, or the Western Han dynasty. Today, most scholars agree that the contents were composed in different periods; except for a few treatises, the majority was from the Warring States period and the Western Han, and edited by various medical experts and scholars over time. See Guo Aichun 郭霽春 ed. *Huangdi neijing suwen jiaozhu* 黃帝內經素問校注, *The Yellow Emperor’s Inner Canon with Annotations* (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1992), “Postscript”, pp. 1224–1280. Scholars used to hold that the *Lingshu* appeared later than the *Suwen*, but today, most tend to believe that both works came out around the same period. See Hebei Medical College, ed. *Lingshujing jiaoshi*, 靈樞經校釋, *The Divine Pivot with Annotations* (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1982) “Preface”, pp. 1–13.

⁴ *Lingshu jing jiaoshi*, vol. 2, “Jingmo, 10” (經脈第十, Treatise Ten: Channels), p. 244.

⁵ *Lingshu jing jiaoshi*, vol. 5, “Dian Kuang, 22” (癲狂第二十二, Treatise Twenty Two: Mania and Withdrawal), p. 401.

⁶ See below for further discussion on the distinction between mania and withdrawal. The period in which the *Nanjing* appeared remains unconfirmed. Scholars once attributed it to the periods ranging from the Warring States period to the Tang. Today, most scholars hold that it must have come out no later than the Eastern Han. See Ling Yaoxing 凌耀星, ed. *Nanjing jiaozhu*, 難經校注 *The Classic of Difficult Issues with Annotations* (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1991), “jiaozhu houji” (校注後記, Postcripts to the Annotated Edition), pp. 137–172.

channels or the five viscera suffered from coldness or fever, or if the *yang* caught a wind chill, the symptom of laughing unceasingly might appear.⁷ Zhang Hua, who the Lu brothers met, mentions in his *Bowuzhi* 博物志 (Chronicle of extensive things) that eating fungi grown on maple trees might lead people to laugh incessantly.⁸ Ge Hong 葛洪 (284–363) and Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (452–536), two eminent Daoist doctors, also held the same view.⁹ Ge Hong, particularly, pointed out that if women copulated with evil things, they might “talk to themselves and laugh alone, losing themselves in a trance.”¹⁰

However, what exactly did cause Lu Yun’s “laughing disorder”? The biography of Lu Yun in the *Jinshu* contains no indication that he had experienced a stroke, poisoning, or insanity, or that he was suffering from any illnesses of coldness or fever when he met with Zhang Hua. So, was Lu Yun often in a state of “surplus spirit” or “repleted heart *qi*”? According to his biography, Lu Yun’s character was “clean and righteous, talented and reasonable.”¹¹ The *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (A new account of the tales of the world) describes him as gentle and lovable, quite different from his brother, who spoke “as sonorously as a bell, and often uttered vehement remarks.” Liu Xiaobiao 劉孝標 also quotes an annotation in *Wenshizhuan* 文士傳 (Biographies of literati) to compare the Lu brothers, claiming that Lu Ji had an aggressive style, and was feared by his countrymen, while Lu Yun had a quiet disposition, and his gentle manners were admired and imitated by his literati friends.¹² How could a person of such character have frequent bouts of unstoppable laughter? Was it a disease or not?

Two possible explanations come to mind. First, Lu Yun might have been in deep sorrow, and his incessant laughing was a physiological reaction, a reaction that could not be concealed. The *Jinshu* records that, when he boarded the boat, he was wearing coarse mourning clothing.

⁷ Huangfu Mi (皇甫謐, 214-282), *Huangdi zhenjiu jiyijing* 黃帝針灸甲乙經, *A-B Classic of Acupuncture and Moxibustion of the Yellow Emperor*, in Chen Zhenxiang 陳振相 and Song Guimei 宋貴美, eds. *Zhongyi shida jingdian quanlu* 中醫十大經典全錄, *Comprehensive Collection of Ten Greatest Chinese Medical Canons* (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 1995), vol. 7, “Liujing shoubing fa shanghan rebing I.2.” (六經受病發傷寒熱病第一下, Cold and Heat Resulting from the Illnesses in the Six Channels, I.2.), pp. 779-780; vol. 8, “Wuzang chuanbing fa hanre I.2” (五臟傳病發寒熱第一下, Cold and Heat Resulting from the Illnesses in the Five Viscera, I.2.), p. 793; vol. 10, “Yangshoubing fafeng II” (陽受病發風第二, Wind Resulting from the Illnesses in the Yang, II.), p. 822.

⁸ Zhanghua (張華, 232-300), *Bowuzhi* quoted in *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽, *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1992), vol. 998, “Baihuibu 5, jun” (百卉五·菌, A Hundred Flowers, Part 5: Mushrooms), p. 4550a.

⁹ Tanba Yasuyori (丹波康賴, 912-995), *Ishinpo* (醫心方, *Essential Formulas of Medicine*, 982) (Taipei: Xinwenfeng reprint of the Japanese 1854 Ansei edition, 1982) vol. 29, “Shiyangsheng, zhishijun zhongdufang, 31 (食養生·治食菌中毒方, Life Nourishment through Diet, Prescriptions for the Treatment of fungi poisoning), Section 31,” p. 38b, quotes *Geshifang* and claims, “Those who eat mushrooms under maple trees may laugh violently.” Li Shizhen (李時珍, 1518-1593), *Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目, *Compendium of Materia Medica* (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1975-1981), vol. 5, “Shuibu” (水部, Water Section), p.406, quotes Tao Hongjing’s words: “If one eats raw maple trees, one could have an unstoppable laughing fit.”

¹⁰ See Ge Hong 葛洪, *Zhouhou beiji fang* 肘後備急方, *Handbook of Recipes for Emergencies* (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1994), vol. 3, “Zhi cude jingxie huanghufang, 18” (治卒得驚邪恍惚方, Recipes for Trances Caused by Shock, 18), p. 45a.

¹¹ *Jinshu*, vol. 54, “Biography of Lu Yun,” p. 1481.

¹² Liu Yiqing (劉義慶, 403-444), annotated by Liu Xiaobiao (劉孝標, 462-521), commented by Yu Jiayi (余嘉錫, 1884-1955), *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語, *A New Account of Tales of the World* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993), “Shangyu, 8” (賞譽第八, Praises, 8), p. 443.

Obviously, he was grieving for someone's death. According to the rules laid out in the *Sangfu* 喪服 "Mourning" chapter of the *Yi Li* 儀禮 (Classic of etiquette and rituals), a person should wear coarse hemp clothes and sashes as follows. For the death of one's father, wear coarse hemp clothes for three years; for one's mother, one to three years; for one's grandfather, uncle, wife, brother, or brother's son, one year; and for one's great grandfather or great, great grandfather, three months. For other relatives, one should not wear coarse, but processed hemp clothes (*gong* 功) or finer hemp clothes (*sima* 緦麻) for mourning.¹³ If we take the account in *Jinshu* literally, Lu Yun might have been mourning for a close family member. Historical records show that Lu Yun was only eleven years old when his father died; and when he was nineteen, his brother Lu Jing 陸景 was killed during the Wu-Jin dynastic transition.¹⁴ If Lu Yun was wearing mourning clothing for his father or brother, then his laughing may have been a kind of defensive act induced by sorrow.¹⁵

Yet Lu Yun's visit to Zhang Hua took place after the fall of the Wu. As the *Jinshu* records, the Lu brothers were highly ambitious. Since they regarded themselves as belonging to a prestigious family, when they first arrived in the Jin capital Luoyang, they did not think much of the literati there. It was not until they met Zhang Hua that they showed any admiration. They felt as if Zhang was an old acquaintance, and treated him as their mentor.¹⁶ Zhang Hua was an important figure in the early Jin court, participating in making imperial rituals and policies for the newly-established dynasty.¹⁷ Perhaps the Lu brothers were experiencing both anxiety and anticipation in their first encounter with Zhang Hua. Therefore, Lu Yun's laughing could be an outpouring of these complex feelings.¹⁸

¹³ *Yili* 儀禮, in *Shisanjing zhushu ben* 十三經注疏本 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan), vols. 28-34, "Sangfu, 11" (喪服, On Mourning, 11.)

¹⁴ Lu Kang died in 273, while Lu Jing died in 280. See Chen Shou (陳壽, 233-297), *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 *Records of the Three Kingdoms* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959) vol. 58 "The Biography of Lu Kang," p. 1360.

¹⁵ In William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, the Roman general Titus laughed upon the return of his own severed hand and the heads of his two sons, whose lives he was expecting to save by paying his own hand as a ransom. Similar cases appear not only in literary texts, but also in medical essays. Stanley Hall, one of the founders of American psychology, reported an anecdote in 1897 in which an American frontiersman came home to find his wife and children dead, scalped and mutilated by the Native Americans. He laughed uncontrollably, exclaiming, "It is the funniest thing I have ever heard of," until he died of a ruptured blood vessel. See Robert R. Provine, *Laughter: A Scientific Investigation* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 2000), Chapter 8, "Abnormal and Inappropriate laughter: Clinical Perspectives," pp. 153-188.

¹⁶ *Jinshu*, vol. 36, "The Biography of Zhang Hua," p. 1077.

¹⁷ According to *Jinshu*, vol. 36, p. 1070, Zhang Hua was "in charge of drafting the dynastic history, ritualistic regulations, as well as most of the imperial edicts. He enjoyed an esteemed reputation and was an expected candidate for the prime ministership."

¹⁸ Lü Buwei (呂不韋, 292-235BCE), *Lüshi Chunqiu* (呂氏春秋, Spring and Autumn Annals by Mr. Lü) (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1983), Volume 5, "Zhongxiaji, 5" (仲夏紀第五, Annal of mid-summer, 5), p. 6, claims that, "he who is drowned does not laugh." The third century scholar Gao You 高誘 explained in his annotations that, "whoever is drowned will laugh, but the laughing is by no means joyful." That is, this kind of laughter was meant to conceal fear and panic. Also, the twelfth-century scholar Wang Mingqing 王明清 noted in his *Huizhulu* 揮麈錄 that Wang Kuang, an inexperienced doctor of the Northern Song went to treat a wealthy salt merchant. The merchant was so shocked by the sudden changes made to regulations on salt selling that his tongue protruded and could not be retrieved back. Upon seeing the merchant, Wang Kuang "suddenly burst into uncontrollable laughter, while thinking that the merchant's illness was hard to deal with." Therefore, on the one hand, Wang's unstoppable laughter reflected his surprise, and on the other, was a strategy to deal with the embarrassing situation. However, that time Wang was fortunate enough to be able

Nonetheless, there might be other causes of Lu Yun's laughter. As the *Jinshu* relates, when Lu Yun saw Zhang Hua, the latter had bound his beard with silk ropes. This surely would have looked comical, and might be the reason why Lu Yun could not contain his mirth. Moreover, what the *Jinshu* describes as boarding a boat dressed in coarse clothes could also mean that, although Lu Yun was in mourning, it was not necessarily for particularly close family members. During the Jin, in big families, several generations might live together. The Lus were a big clan in Wu; their relatives' weddings and funerals probably took place quite often. As a result, emotions displayed at those frequently-held ceremonies may sometimes have been considered affected. When Lu Yun saw the reflection of himself dressed in mourning, he may have laughed out loud due to feelings of sarcasm instead of sorrow.¹⁹ That is to say, both of Lu Yun's bouts of laughter were preceded by specific visual and funny experiences.

Whatever caused it, Lu Ji would have not approved of such behavior. As mentioned above, while Lu Ji had a serious and upright personality, Lu Yun was rather more casual. The *Jinshu* claims that Lu Ji was very much under the influence of Confucian learning, and never did anything that contradicted its rituals.²⁰ Therefore, faced with what Lu Yun found amusing, Lu Ji may well have not perceived it in the same way. Even if he had done so, he might not have found it as laughable as Lu Yun did. Nowadays, when we see someone reacting to something in a way that is beyond our comprehension or approval, we might scornfully say, "You're out of your mind." When Lu Ji told Zhang Hua that Lu Yun had a laughing disorder, he might well have been making a similar comment. In this sense, Lu Yun's laughing disorder was not symptomatic of any injuries to his inner organs, but a kind of strong emotional reaction that was not acceptable to his contemporaries. Interestingly, traditional medical accounts also regard strong emotional reactions as being harmful to one's health, and these accounts sometimes define "excess" even more strictly than Lu Ji did.

In the extant documents from early imperial China, Lu Yun's case was the only one that explicitly mentioned a *xiaoji* (laughing disorder). However, there are plenty of contemporary records that disapprove of excessive laughing, particularly in medical texts.²¹ Focusing on the early imperial China in which the Lu brothers lived, this chapter examines traditional medicine's

cure the merchant using acupuncture. This case not only made him rich, but also motivated him to learn extensively. He eventually became a famous doctor, and acquired an official title after Emperor Huizong asked for his medical expertise.

¹⁹ Anecdotes from *Shishuo xinyu* reflect the manners in which famous literati of the Wei and Jin periods behaved. Take, for example, an anecdote recorded in the section "Rendan" (任誕, Indulging and Preposterous), p. 731: Ruan Ji's sister-in-law once went back to her birthplace. Ji went to say farewell to her. Some people criticized Ji, who then responded: "Are rituals really meant for people like me to abide by?" Ruan Ji's (210–263) claim was not targeted at weddings or funerals, but echoed the sarcastic tone that marked the story about Lu Yun.

²⁰ *Jinshu*, vol. 54, "The Biography of Lu Ji," p. 1467.

²¹ In extant historical records, another person who was said to have had "laughing disorders" was Hu Meng 扈蒙 of the Song dynasty. According to Tuo Tuo (脫脫, 1314–1356), *Songshi* 宋史 (History of the Song dynasty), vol. 268, "The Biography of Hu Meng", p. 9240, Hu Meng was "by nature kind, and did not gossip about others. He liked reading Buddhist classics, disliked killing animals, and was praised by others as a virtuous person. He had laughing disorders, and could not control himself even in front of the emperor." It really makes one wonder what it would look like when such a kind person laughed uncontrollably in the imperial presence. However, as in Lu Yun's case, it seems that Hu's laughing disorders did not affect his reputation with his peers.

attitude toward laughing. I shall first look at the ways in which medical texts recorded, explained, and treated laughter that was regarded as pathological, in order to understand how the authors of these texts perceived laughing. Building on this investigation, I then will analyze how traditional doctors saw joyous emotions and their – sometimes extreme – manifestations.

2 Laughter: symptoms, causes, and treatment

By the early Jin dynasty, during which Lu Yun lived, Chinese medical works had observed and diagnosed unstoppable laughter as a disorder. Which parts of the body suffered from this disorder? Most medical accounts held that it was the heart.

2.1 If the heart's *qi* is full, laughter is incessant

The *Ben shen* 本神 “Spirit as Foundation” chapter in *Lingshu* explains that, “The heart harbors the vessels, and the vessels shelter the spirit. If the *qi* in the heart is thin, there will be sorrow; if it is full, laughter is incessant.”²² The *Suwen* 素問 (Basic questions) contains a chapter on “Discourse on Regulating the Channels” (*Tiao jing lun* 調經論), which claims that “the heart harbors the spirit”:

When the spirit assumes a state of surplus, one laughs without end; when it assumes a state of insufficiency, one is sad. When blood and *qi* have not yet collected, the five viscera are in peace and stable. But the evil has settled in the physical appearance. A feeling of shivering emerges from the finest body hair. It has not yet entered the channels and meridians. Hence, it is termed the “slight disease of the spirit.”²³

This asserts that the heart takes charge of and harbors the spirit (*shen*) as a vital force in human life and activities. If evil *qi* invades the heart, and if such an invasion is not too serious and only skin deep, this might lead to an excess or insufficiency of *shen* (or that of the heart *qi*). “Laughing incessantly” is a symptom of excessive *qi* of the heart and surplus *shen*. In the *Neijing*, the patient who suffers from an overabundance of heart *qi* is described not only as laughing endlessly while awake, but also even dreaming about laughing while asleep.²⁴ Laxative treatments are recommended in both situations.

Table 1: Dreams and the fullness of *Qi* in the viscera
(From “Excess Evils Release Dreams”)

| Conditions of Yin-Yang, <i>Qi</i> and the Viscera | Contents of Dreams | Therapy |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Yin qi</i> abound | Wading through vast water, | Approach [the destination] |

²² *Lingshu jing jiaoshi*, vol. 2, “Ben Shen, 8,” p. 183.

²³ *Huangdi neijing suwen jiaozhu*, vol. 17, “Tiaojinglun, 62,” p. 747. I follow Paul Unschuld’s translation here with some modifications. See Unschuld, *Huangdi neijing suwen*, Volume II, chapter 62, p.104-105.

²⁴ *Lingshu jing jiaoshi*, vol. 7, “Yinxie fameng, 43,” (淫邪發夢, excess evils release dreams), p. 19. See Table 1 for dreams resulting from various *qi* abundant in the viscera.

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | afraid | and drain there. This will bring about an immediate cure |
| <i>Yang qi</i> abound | A big fire and being burned | The same as above; the same therapy applies to the following too |
| Both <i>Yin qi</i> and <i>Yang qi</i> abound | Mutual killing | |
| <i>Qi</i> abound above | Flying | |
| <i>Qi</i> abound below | Falling | |
| Very hungry | Taking something | |
| Eaten to satiation | Giving away | |
| The liver <i>qi</i> abounds | Being enraged | |
| The lung <i>qi</i> abounds | Being in fear and weeping, and rising into the air | |
| The heart <i>qi</i> abounds | A tendency to laugh, while being fearful at the same time | |
| The spleen <i>qi</i> abounds | Singing joyfully. The body is heavy, and cannot be lifted | |
| The kidneys' <i>qi</i> abounds | The lower back and the spine are separated in two and have lost their connection. | |

The vessel that parallels the heart is called the “the heart vessel.” According to the *Neijing*, there are two kinds of heart vessels. The first is the “minor yin” (*shaoyin* 少陰). Since “the heart is the major ruler of the five *zang* (臟, viscera) and six *fu* (腑, residences) and is where the *jing* (精, essence) and *shen* (神, spirit) are lodged, it is so strong that it will not allow heteropathy to reside there.”²⁵ Once evil *qi* invades, it will injure the heart and force the *shen* to leave, and once the *shen* leaves, the patient will die. Therefore, another heart vessel, the “heart enclosure” (*xin zhi baoluo* 心之包絡) exists to absorb various evils.²⁶ As such, the minor *yin* is in the interior and is the heart’s vessel; the heart enclosure is at the exterior and is like the outer circumference of the heart, in that it protects the heart by receiving heteropathy in its place. The *Lingshu* claims that the heart enclosure meridian passes through the middle of the chest, the armpits, the elbows, and the hands (see Figure 1). Thus, if evil invades, the pulses in these areas will produce abnormal beats. The patient will then have symptoms such as heat in their palms, cramp in their arms and elbows, with their chest and sides experiencing a feeling of being full to bursting, as well as a sensation of racing movement and intense excitement in the heart. Observed from the outside, the patient may appear to have a reddish face, yellowish eyes, and be “joyously laughing without cease.”²⁷

²⁵ *Lingshu jing jiaoshi*, vol. 10, “Xieke, 71” (邪客第七十一, Heteropathy Guests, 71), p. 277.

²⁶ *Lingshu jing jiaoshi*, vol. 10, “Xieke, 71,” p. 277.

²⁷ *Lingshu jing jiaoshi*, vol. 3, “Jingmai, 10” (經脈第十, Channels and Pulses, 10), p. 244.

In sum, according to the ancient medical canons, laughing incessantly was symptomatic of illnesses of the heart.²⁸

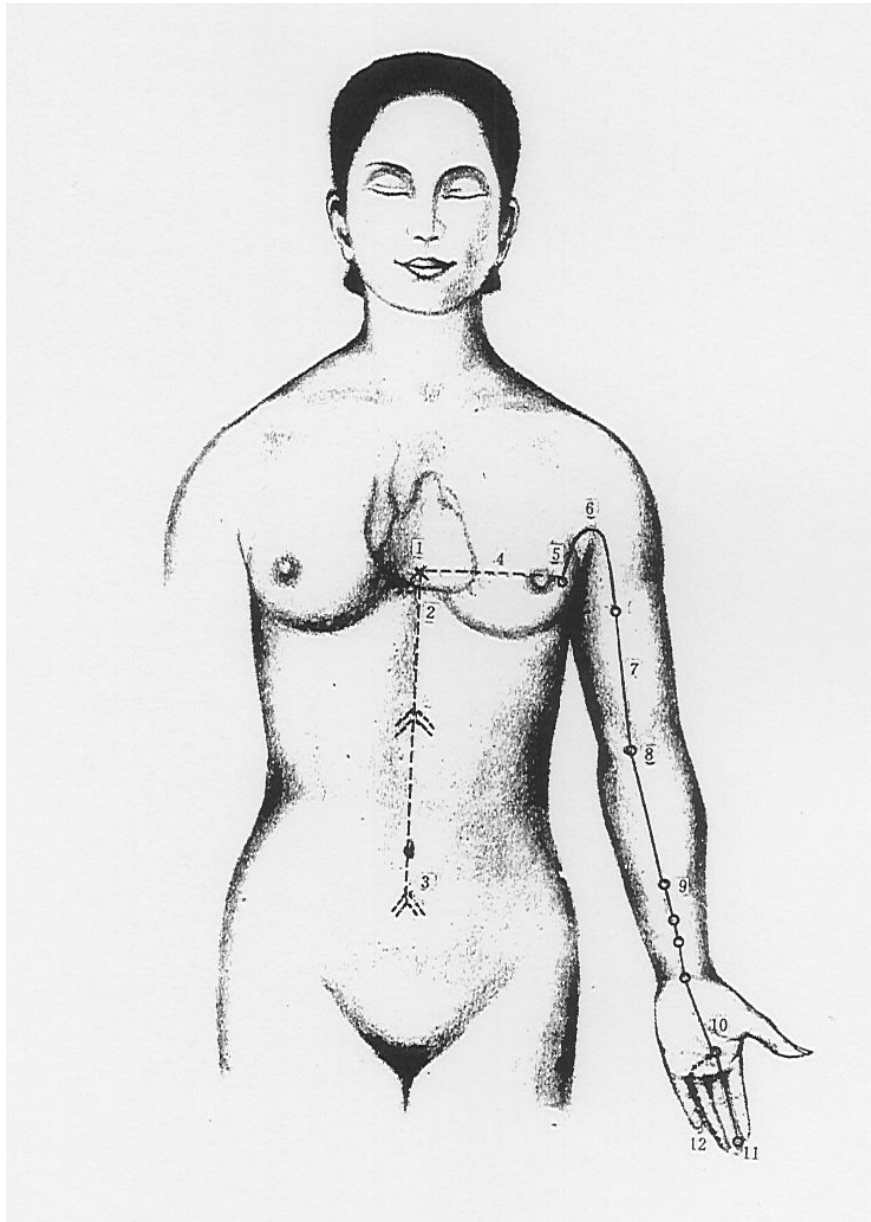


Figure 1: Circulation route of the hand jueyin heart enclosure vessels
(From Lu Shouyan and Zhu Rugong, *Diagrams of Acupuncture-Moxibustion Points (Zhenjiu shuxue tupu 針灸腧穴圖譜)*, p. 72.)

²⁸ Huang Longxiang 黃龍祥, *Huangdi mingtang jing jijiao 黃帝明堂經輯校* (Beijing: zhongguo yiyao keji chubanshe, 1988), pp. 143-144, mentions “laughs endlessly” while explaining the function of acupuncture points of *laogong* and *daling*. For historical development of distinguishing viscera disorders through channels and pulses, see Li Jianmin, *Sisheng zhiyu: ZhouQinHan maixue zhi yuanliu 死生之域：周秦漢脈學之源流, The Realm of Life and Death: Origins of Pulse Studies of the Zhou, Qin and Han Periods* (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 2000), pp. 228-234.

In its discussion of various pulse changes, the *Nanjing* holds that one should rely on both internal and external patterns to identify the viscera and the major vessels that are suffering from an illness. The internal pattern is what a doctor feels about the activity of the *qi* in the stomach, by pressing the navel with their hand and observing how much pain this induces in the patient, while the external pattern is what a doctor could observe about the patient's complexion and emotions (see Table 2). Among the symptoms, "joyous laughing" is grouped together with a red face and a dry mouth. They are all used as exterior indications for judging whether the heart vessels are ailing.²⁹

Table 2: Internal and external patterns of disorders in the five viscera
(From the "Sixteen Difficult Issues" of the *The Classics of Difficult Issues*)

| Viscera | External Patterns | Internal Patterns | Disorders |
|---------|---|--|--|
| Liver | Prone to cleanness, greenish complexion, and irritability | <i>Qi</i> movement left of the navel, feeling hard and painful when pressed | Fullness of the limbs, dysuria, dyschesia, twisted sinew |
| Heart | Reddish complexion, dryness in the mouth, and the tendency to laugh | <i>Qi</i> movement above the navel, feeling hard and painful when pressed | Irritable, heartache, hot palms and nausea |
| Spleen | Yellowish complexion, prone to burping, pensiveness, and excessive appetite | <i>Qi</i> movement on the navel, feeling hard and painful when pressed | Fullness of the abdomen, indigestion, feeling body weight and joint pains, lazy and sleepy, loose in the limbs |
| Lung | Whitish complexion, the tendency to sneeze, feeling sad and prone to weep | <i>Qi</i> movement right of the navel, feeling hard and painful when pressed | Coughing with heavy breaths, shivering due to chilliness and heat |
| Kidney | Dark complexion, prone to fear and yawning | <i>Qi</i> movement under the navel, feeling hard and painful when pressed | Inverted breath, acute pains in the lower abdomen, feeling heavy in the lower body and coldness in the calves |

When later medical works mention incessant laughing, they often quote the *Neijing*, attributing it to symptoms such as "excessive *qi* in the heart" and "surplus *shen*" caused by illnesses of the heart vessels. For instance, the *Jiyijing* quotes the *Suwen*, claiming that the heart

²⁹ *Nanjing jiaozhu*, "Shiliunan" (十六難, Sixteen Difficulties), p. 33.

harbors the *shen* and that, if there is an overabundance of the *shen*, a person will laugh without being able to stop. As to high temperature in the hands, spasm in the elbows, swellings in the armpits, expansion of the chest and the ribs, redness in the face, yellowness in the eyes and endless laughing, namely, the pathological symptoms that arise when the *shoujue yin* vessel of the heart changes, it all follows statements in the *Lingshu*.³⁰ Chao Yuanfang 巢元方, an imperial doctor in the Sui dynasty (581–619), surveyed etiological theories, and offered a meticulous description of the condition of the heart's *qi* in his *Zhubing yuanhou zonglun* 諸病源候總論 (On the origins and symptoms of diseases, hereafter cited as *Bingyuanlun* 病源論):

The overabundance of the heart *qi* is caused by the excessiveness of the *shen* (spirit). As a result, the patient feels a pain inside his chest; his flanks inflate and he feels pain. There is pain in his ribs, chest, back, shoulder bladders, and the inside of his arms, and he laughs endlessly. Since all these are caused by the fullness of the heart *qi*, it is appropriate to release it. If there is an insufficiency of the heart *qi*, then the patient's chest and abdomen will enlarge. He feels pain in his flanks, waist and back. He will experience shock, fear and trance. His face will lose color, his tongue become stiff, and he will feel sorrowful. All these are caused by the thinness of the heart *qi*, and it is appropriate to replenish it.³¹

Suwen, *Lingshu*, and *Jiayijing* all claim that, while the patients will laugh endlessly, they will also exhibit symptoms such as redness of the face, yellowness in their eyes, dryness in their mouth, heat in their hands, and even heartache. *Bingyuanlun* asserts that even more parts of the patients' body will ache: they will not only feel pain in their heart, but also in their lower ribs, on their back, and even between their arms and shoulder bladders. Even so, doctors still held that a patient like this would have the symptom of incessant laughter.³²

The causes of heart illnesses were many and complex. If it was due to catching a wind that led to a cold fever or wind blockage-illness, the medical classics held that the effect was not limited to the outmost body hair, but would reach the blood vessels and inner viscera systems. The ninth volume of the *Basic Questions* contains several treatises on fever, the first and second volumes contains pieces such as the "Treatise on Wind" and the "Treatise on Blockage-illness" and the *Lingshu* has pieces such as "Illnesses of Fever" and "Wind Blockages-illness," while the second and fifth volumes of the *Taisu* (太素, the *Grand Basis*) also discuss fevers – although none of these writings mention the symptom of joyously laughing relentlessly.

³⁰ For instance, *Huangdi neijing jia yi jing*, vol. 6, "Wuzang liufu xushi dalun, 3" (五臟六腑虛實大論第三, The Big Treatise on the Depletion and Repletion of the Five Viscera and Six Residences, 3," p. 756, and vol. 2, "Shire jinmai luomai zhibie, 1" (十二經脈絡脈支別第一, Branches of the Twelve Channels, 1), p. 681.

³¹ Chao Yuanfang 巢元方 (ca. 610), annotated by Ding Guangdi 丁光迪, *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu* (諸病源候論校注, *On the Origins and Symptoms of Diseases with Annotations*) (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1991), vol. 15, "Wuzang liufu zhuhou, 2, xinbinghou" (五臟六腑諸候二, 心病, Symptoms of the Five Viscera and the Six Residences: 2. Symptoms of the Heart Illnesses," p. 466.

³² In addition to pain in more areas, complexion, and changes at the root of the tongue, emotional changes accompanying the depletion of the heart *qi* were not limited to sorrow, but could include shock, fear, and trance. Although traditional Chinese medical experts hold that both repletion and depletion may cause illnesses, they seem to worry more about depletion than repletion, which aligns with our study of laughing disorders here. For further discussion on repletion and depletion, see Shigehisa Kuriyama, *The Expressiveness of the Body and the Divergence of Greek and Chinese Medicine* (Boston: Zone Books, 1999), "Emptiness of Chinese Medicine," pp. 217-231.

However, Huangfu Mi, in his *Jiayijing*, reorganized the text of the *Neijing* and observed that, if a patient suffered hot wind, s/he would become irritable, experiencing joy, sorrow, desires and sighs, and became driven to incessant laughing. In that case, acupuncture on the *laogong* 勞宮 point was recommended³³ (see Figure 2). In another chapter of *Jiayijing*, Huangfu Mi juxtaposed incessant laughing with typical symptoms of heart diseases such as “irritation caused by fever without perspiration, spasm in the ribs, and swollenness in the armpits,” “ache in the heart,” and “eyes becoming reddish yellow,” holding that such symptoms should be treated by acupuncture on the *daling* 大陵 point³⁴ (see Figure 2). Perhaps these passages originated from the *Mingtang*, one of the four versions of the *Neijing*.³⁵ The *Bingyuanlun* followed suit, arguing that when the five viscera suffer from cold and fever, patients who had a “fever in the heart” would have a high temperature in their palms, an irritated and nauseous feeling, fever in their body, and a feeling of fullness under their heart. The patients would have a dry mouth, yellowish eyes and, at the same time, show the symptom of “presumptuous laughing” (*wangxiao* 妄笑). Using “presumptuous” to label incessant laughter, the author indicated that this kind of laughter was neither conventional nor acceptable.³⁶ Likewise, Sun Simiao (孫思邈, 581–682), in his *Beiji qianjin yaofang* 備急千金要方 (Essential recipes worth a thousand gold for emergencies, hereafter cited as *Qianjinfang* 千金方), followed the *Jiayijing* and described patients with a wind blockage as being irritable and prone to incessant laughing, which he advised treating with acupuncture on the *laogong* and *daling* points, both on the meridian of heart enclosure.³⁷

³³ *Huangdi zhenjiu jia yi jing*, vol. 10, “Yangshoubing fafeng, 2b” (陽受病發風第二下, Wind disorders caused by the Illnesses in the Yang, 2b,” p. 822.

³⁴ *Huangdi zhenjiu jia yi jing*, vol. 7, “Liujing shoubing fashanghanrebing, 1b” (六經受病發傷寒熱病第一下, Cold and Fever Resulting from the Illnesses of the Six Channels, 1b,” p. 779..

³⁵ *Huangdi zhenjiu jia yi jing* collates and organizes different parts of the *Neijing*, including the *Suwen*, the *Lingshu*, and the *Mingtang*; see Huangfu Mi’s Preface, pp. 655–656. *Jia yi jing* is a precious source that has preserved the *Mingtang*; see Huang Longxiang, *Huangdi mingtang jing jijiao*, “Jijiao shuoming” (輯校說明, Explanations about the Collection and Edition,” pp. 1–5. See *Huangdi mingtang jing jijiao*, pp. 143–144 for how to treat *laogong* and *daling*, two major acupuncture points.

³⁶ *Bingyuanlun*, vol. 8, “Shanghanbing zhuhou, 35” (傷寒病諸候下, 35, Symptoms of Cold Damage Disorders: Section 35. Fever Symptoms in the Five Viscera due to Cold Damage Disorders,” p. 250.

³⁷ Sun Simiao (581–682), *Beiji qianjin yaofang* (備急千金要方, *Essential Recipes worth a Thousand Gold for Emergencies*, hereafter cited as *Qianjinfang*) (Taipei: Hongye shuju reprint of the Edo edition of the Song woodblock version, 1849), vol. 30, “Zhenjiu, fengbi, 4” (針灸下·風痺第四, Acupuncture: Wind Blockages, 4), p. 536b.

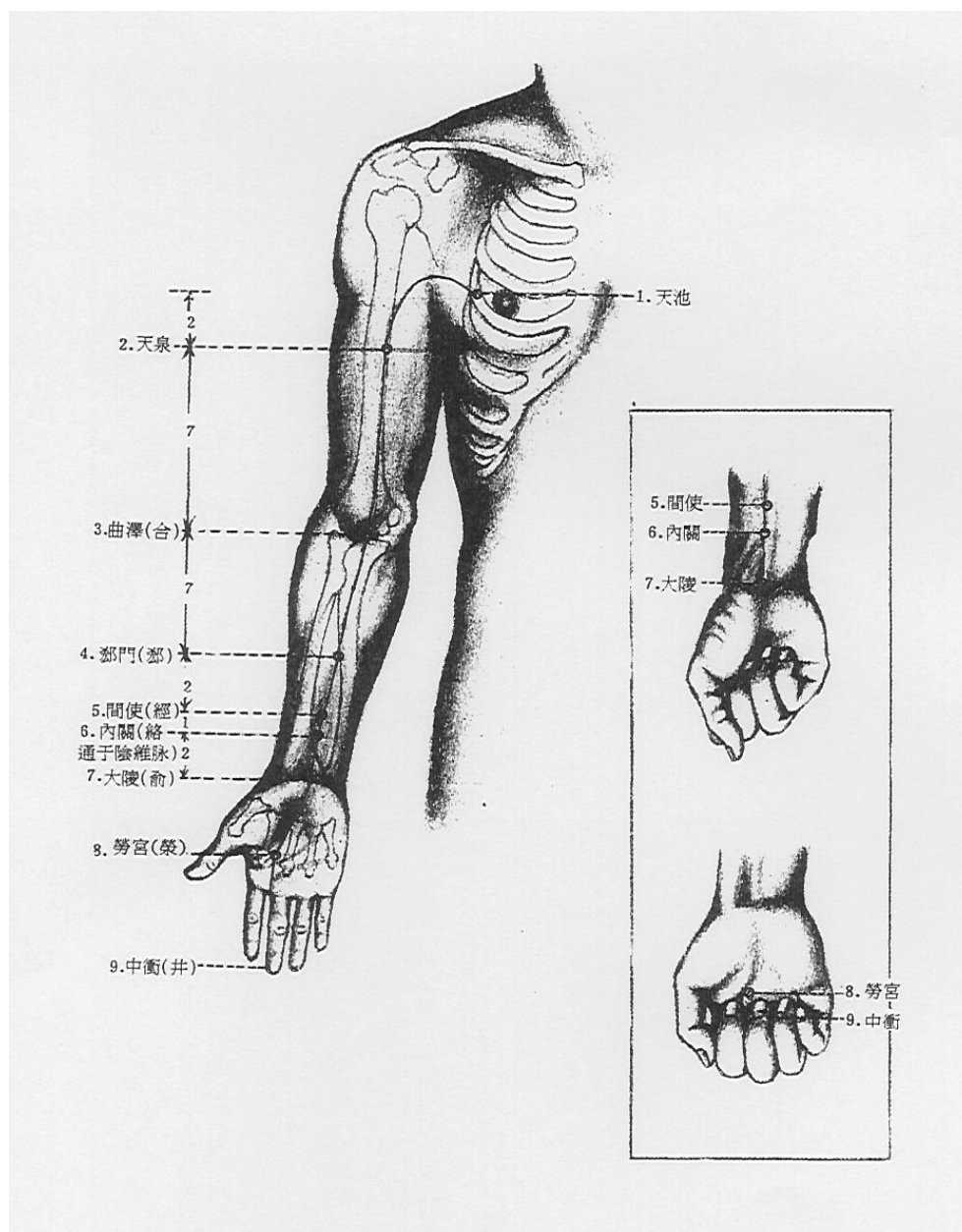


Figure 2: Acupuncture points on the hand *Jueyin* heart enclosure meridian
(From Lu Shouyan and Zhu Rugong, *Diagrams of Acupuncture-Moxibustion Points (Zhenjiu shuxue tupu 針灸胸穴圖譜)*, p. 74.)

With regard to the symptom of endless laughing caused by the fullness of heart *qi*, all the medical classics suggested using acupuncture “to release” the problem. But what would that actually release? The *Suwen* asserts, “When the spirit has assumed a state of surplus, then drain blood from the small vessels. When letting blood, do not push deeply. Do not hit the large

channels. As a result, the *shen* and the *qi* will be balanced.³⁸ Obviously, this was a treatment that relied on releasing blood.³⁹ The third-century *Jiayijing* quotes this passage from the *Neijing* without making any changes to the wording,⁴⁰ while the seventh-century *Bingyuanlun* just mentions the treatment of releasing, without specifying the method.

Blood releasing gradually became less visible in medical texts after the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220). In the *Nanjing*, the method for replenishing and releasing is described as the doctor pressing and flicking the flesh to stimulate it, and only inserting a needle when the *qi* arrives and the channel points pulsate.⁴¹ Obviously, the method refers to *qi* rather than blood.⁴² If the heart vessels were invaded by illness—for instance, when cold and fever caused endless laughing, as described in the *Jiayijing*—doctors were advised to puncture the two points of *laogong* and *daling*. Sun Simiao also held that the method of releasing should be applied according to seasonal changes, suggesting the *jianzhi* 間使 point for autumn and the *quze* 曲澤 point for winter when patients experienced ferocious laughing caused by problems of the heart vessels.⁴³ Like *laogong* and *daling*, both *jianshi* and *quze* were acupuncture points on the heart enclosure meridian (see Figure 2). The purpose of puncturing them was to release *qi* rather than blood. In sum, after the Han dynasty, acupuncture to readjust *qi* gradually replaced blood releasing as the treatment for both the fullness of the heart *qi* and the endless laughter caused by heart conditions.

In addition to the established medical classics, medical documents discovered in Dunhuang show the belief in endless laughing being caused by problems of the heart enclosure meridian. The text *Fuxingjue zangfu yongyao fayao* (輔行訣臟腑用藥法要, *The Auxiliary Guides to Treat Visceras and Residences with Drugs*), attributed to Tao Hongjing, records that, “the depletion of the heart will cause endless sorrow, while the fullness of the heart will result in endless laughing.”⁴⁴ It also observes that outer heteropathy would cause a fullness of the *qi* in the heart enclosure meridian and, as a result, the patients’ chest and ribs would feel full, their face would become red, their eyes yellow, and they would laugh unceasingly. “Depletion, however, indicates the scarcity of

³⁸ Huangdi *neijing suwen jiaozhu*, vol. 17, “Tiaojinglun, 62” (調經論第六十二, The Adjustment of Channels, 62), p. 748. Also see Unschuld, *Huangdi neijing suwen*, Vol. II, Chapter 62, p. 105.

³⁹ For various needles used in acupuncture, see Li Jianmin, *The Realm of Life and Death: Origins of Pulse Studies of the Zhou, Qin and Han Periods*, pp. 245-254.

⁴⁰ Huangdi *zhenjiu jia yi jing*, vol. 6, “Wuzang liufu xushi dalun, 3” p. 756.

⁴¹ *Nanjing jiaozhu*, “Qishibanan” (七十八難, Seventy Eight Difficulties), p. 132. For a discussion of the relationship between pulses and the *qi*, see Li Jianmin, *The Realm of Life and Death: Origins of Pulse Studies of the Zhou, Qin and Han Periods*, pp. 256-264.

⁴² For a discussion of the relationship between the blood-releasing therapy and acupuncture in traditional Chinese medicine, see Kuriyama, *The Expressiveness of the Body and the Divergence of Greek and Chinese Medicine*, Chapter Five, “Blood and Life,” pp. 195-231.

⁴³ *Beiji qianjin yaofang*, vol. 13, “xinzang: lun, 1” (心臟·論第一, The Heart: The First Treatise), pp. 234a-b.

⁴⁴ Tao Hongjing, *Fuxingjue zangfu yongyao fayao* (輔行訣臟腑用藥法要, *The Auxiliary Guides to Treat Visceras and Residences with Drugs*), in Ma Jixing 馬繼興, et al ed. *Dunhuang yiyao wenxian jijiao* (敦煌醫藥文獻輯校, *Edited Collection of Dunhuang Medical Documents*) (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1998), pp. 173-174. Since the text contains phrases such as “Tao says,” or “Tao Yinju says,” it would seem to be based on what Tao Hongjing’s disciples recorded as having learnt from Tao. The text contains a few annotations, and this suggests that it has been edited. Since the book does not avoid using expressions that were tabooed in the Song, it must have been written before the Northern Song. See Ma Jixing et al. ed., *Dunhuang yiyao wenxian jijiao*, Section 14 “Fuxing jue zangfu yongyao fayao yishu tijie” (輔行訣臟腑用藥法要佚書題解, Introduction to the lost book *Auxiliary Guides to Treat Visceras and Residences with Drugs*), pp. 169-170.

the blood *qi*, and the patient tends to feel sad endlessly, showing withdrawal.”⁴⁵ This document poses an opposition between laughter and sorrow, regarding them as symptomatic of the fullness or depletion of the heart enclosure meridian. Notably, this medical text then prescribes using big or small heart-draining decoctions (*xiexintang* 瀉心湯), containing ingredients such as coptis, scutellaria, rhubarb, peony, dried ginger and licorice. These were prescribed to treat symptoms such as fullness in the abdomen and chest, moodiness in the heart, bitterness in the mouth, and redness in the face. On the one hand, this Dunhuang text adopted herbal recipes, which was a very different approach from the treatment methods such as blood releasing and acupuncture seen in the medical classics. On the other hand, when advocating this treatment, these herbal recipes rarely mention if the problem of “endless laughing” was ultimately solved, as if the symptom was used as a byword instead of a genuine health issue.⁴⁶

To treat endless laughing with herbs, the seventh-century *Qianjinfang* added a few other formulas. A bamboo succus decoction (*zhulitang* 竹瀝湯) was used to “treat fullness and heat in the heart, awakening from dreams, joyous laughing, fear, anxiety and uneasiness.”⁴⁷ A ligusticum decoction was used to treat “stroke, paralysis in the four limbs, and proneness to unceasing laughter.”⁴⁸ A frutex succus decoction (*jinglitang* 荊瀝湯) was prescribed to treat “presumptuous laughing on one’s own,” symptoms of the invasion of the heart by ferocious wind.⁴⁹ The tenth-century *Taiping shenghuifang* 太平聖惠方 (Imperial grace formulary of the Taiping era) summarized the herbal recipes that preceded it and recommended using costal glehnia powder (*Shasheng san* 沙參散), ephedra powder (*Mahuang san* 麻黃散), and limonite powder (*Yuyulian san* 禹餘糧散) to counter the tendency to laugh, incessant laughing, and laughing accompanied by singing, all symptoms when the heart was invaded by heteropathy wind.⁵⁰ On the one hand, from the fourth century on, incessant laughter gradually became specifically symptomatic of illnesses related to fevers caused by wind; on the other, herbal medicine recipes were added to the treatments of blood releasing and puncturing the *qi*, becoming one of the standard methods to treat laughing-related disorders.⁵¹

⁴⁵ See Ma Jixing et al ed., *Dunhuang yiyao wenxian jijiao*, p. 175.

⁴⁶ See Ma Jixing et al ed., *Dunhuang yiyao wenxian jijiao*, p. 175.

⁴⁷ *Beiji qianjin yaofang*, vol. 13, “Xinzang, xinshushi, 2” (心臟·心虛實第二, The Heart: Depletion and Repletion of the Heart, Section 2), p. 236b.

⁴⁸ *Beiji qianjin yaofang*, vol. 8, “Zeifeng, 3” (賊風第三, Surreptitious Winds, Section 3), p. 162a; Sun Simiao, *Qianjin yifang jiaozhu* (千金翼方校注, *Supplement to Recipes worth a Thousand Gold with Annotations*), Zhu Bangxian 朱邦賢, Chen Wenguo 陳文國 etc. annotate and edit, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999), vol. 17, “Zhongfeng, 1” (中風第一, Invasions of the Winds, Section 1), p. 465.

⁴⁹ *Beiji qianjin yaofang*, vol. 8, “Surreptitious Winds, Section 3,” p. 162a.

⁵⁰ Wang Huaiyin (王懷隱, ca. 925-997), *Taiping shenghui fang* (太平聖惠方, *Imperial Grace Formularies of the Taiping Era*) (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1980), vol. 4, “Zhi xinshi xiexin zhufang” (治心實瀉心諸方, Heart-releasing recipes to treat heart repletion), p. 248; “Zhi xinzang zhongfeng zhufang” (治心臟中風諸方, Recipes to treat the invasion of the heart by winds), pp. 258-259; “Zhi xinzang fengxie zhufang” (治心臟風邪諸方, Recipes to treat the Invasion of the heart by heteropathy winds), pp. 272-273. For the three *materia medica* involved, I consult Li Shizhen compiled, translated and annotated by Luo Xiwen, *Compendium of Materia Medica: Bencao Gangmu* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2003), Vol. II, p. 1267, Vol. III, p. 1716, Vol. II, p. 1094 respectively.

⁵¹ Since the Jin (1115-1234) and the Yuan (1271-1368) periods, discussion on the spirit of the heart began to include the element “fire.” Li Shizhen cited the *Suwen* statement: “When the *shen* (spirit) assumes a state of surplus, one laughs without end,” and explained that, “The spirit is the fire of the heart. When helped by the wind, the fire grows, and laughter is its manifestation.” Li Shizhen also noted that Zhang Zihe had once

2.2 A maniac tends to laugh and loves to sing

Laughing, in addition to being seen as caused by cold and fever illnesses, was also regarded by medical classics as being symptomatic of madness. In its description of the various phases of the disease, the *Lingshu* asserts that, at the initial stage of “withdrawal” (*dian* 癲), the patients would feel unhappy, their heads would feel heavy, they would have a headache, would tend to glance upwards, and their eyes became red. If this continued, the patients would gradually become irritable. They would either cry out loud with palpitations or feel rigid due to a backache. The *Lingshu* states that “if the withdrawal breaks out into mania (*kuang* 狂), the patient will die,” appearing to view mania as a deteriorating signal of the withdrawal disorder.⁵² As for the development of mania, it seems to distinguish stages between “initial emergence” (*kuang shisheng* 狂始生) and “initial breaking out” (*kuang shifa* 狂始發).

In the stage of initial emergence, the patients will first pity themselves; they tend to be forgetful, irritable, and fearful, and this is because they are sad and hungry. To cure this, one should remove blood from the vessels of hand major *yang* (*shoutaiyang* 手太陽) and *yang* brilliance (*shouyangming* 手陽明). As soon as the color of the blood changes, the treatment is to be stopped. The vessels of foot major *yin* (*zutaiyin* 足太陰) and foot *yang* brilliance (*zuyangming* 足陽明) are also possible points. In the stage of initial breaking out, the patients need little sleep and do not feel hungry. They consider themselves outstanding, smart and precious. They are prone to scolding and will not stop for days and nights. To cure this, one should remove blood from vessels of the hand *yang* brilliance, major *yang* and major *yin*, as well as from minor *yin* below the tongue. Where one finds abundance, it is to be removed. Those without abundance are to be spared. Patients who speak madly, who are startled, who tend to laugh, and who love to sing and be happy, who make presumptuous movements and find no rest have become this way because of a massive fright. To cure this, one should remove blood from the vessels of hand *yang* brilliance, major *yang* and major *yin*. A maniac has absurd visions, hears absurd sounds, and tends to shout, this is caused by a dimunition of *qi*. To cure this, one should remove blood from the vessels of hand major *yang*, major *yin*, and *yang* brilliance, as well as at the head, from the foot major *yin* on both cheeks. A maniac eats a lot, tends to see demon spirits, and tends to laugh without expressing it outwardly. This is because they have major delight. To cure this, one should remove blood from the vessels of foot major *yin*, major *yang* and *yang* brilliance, and then from the vessels of hand major *yin*, major *yang* and *yang* brilliance. When the mania has just broken out and has not yet reached the above conditions, blood is to be removed first from the moving vessels to the left and right

treated a woman suffering from incessant laughing with salt. See Li Shizhen, *Bencao gangmu*, vol. 11, “Jinshibu, 4: shiyan” (金石部四·食鹽, Metals and Stones: Section 4, Salt), p. 633. For a discussion on the role of “fire” in traditional Chinese medicine after the Jin-Yuan era and its influence on Li Shizhen’s *Bencao gangmu*, see Li Jianmin, “Bencao gangmu huobu kaoshi” (本草綱目火部考釋, Fire as Medicine: the “Fire” Section of *Bencao gangmu*), *BIHP* 73.3 (2002): 395-442. For Zhang Zihé’s treatment, see Zhang Congzheng (張從正, ca. 1151-1231), *Rumen shiqin* (儒門事親, A Scholar’s Service to His Parents), in *Zihe Yiji* (子和醫集, Compilation of Zhang Zihé’s Medicine, Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1994), “Shixing sanliao” (十形三療, Ten Forms and Three Therapies), ‘huoxing, xiaobuzhi, 30’ (火形·笑不止三十, The Form of Fire: Incessant Laughing, 30), p. 173.

⁵² *Lingshu jing jiaoshi*, vol. 5, “Dian Kuang, 22” (癲狂第二十二, Mania and Withdrawal, 22), pp. 394-399.

of the *ququan* point. Where there is abundance, the blood is made to appear. This will end the disease within a short time. If no cure is achieved, the blood is to be removed in accordance with the pattern outlined above. Also, the tailbone is to be cauterized twenty times.⁵³

Judging by this, when madness first emerged, a patient would display negative emotions such as sorrow, anger, and fear. When it initially broke out, there would be self-deception, and the patient slept and ate less. As this state of excitement continued, the tendency to laugh would appear, accompanied by crazy talk, alarm, singing and inappropriate behavior, as well as hallucinational vision and hearing. If the disease developed further, a patient's laughter would change into a kind of silent laughing to themselves.⁵⁴ The *Divine Pivot* states that the way a patient laughs can be used as a criterion to judge the progression of his/her disease, and determine which different vessels and points blood should be released from to effect a cure.⁵⁵

The *Nanjing* explicates the difficult points made in the *Neijing*, clarifying that if a patient is laughing or not is a way to diagnose whether s/he is suffering from mania or withdrawal:

By what criteria can the diseases of mania and withdrawal be distinguished? It is like this. During the initial outbreak of mania, patients rest only rarely and do not feel hungry. They will speak of themselves as occupying lofty, exemplary positions. They will point out their special wisdom, and they will behave in an arrogant and haughty way. They will laugh—and find joy in singing and making music—without reason, and they will walk around heedlessly without a break. During the initial outbreak of withdrawal, their thoughts are unhappy. The patient lies down and stares straight ahead. The *yin* and *yang* movements in the vessels are full in all three sections.⁵⁶

Thus, it appears that the authors of medical classics distinguished between mania (*kuang*) and withdrawal (*dian*) by observing a patient's emotions at the initial stage of the disease. They believed that mania was accompanied by laughing, happiness, and frenzy, while withdrawal was symptomatic of depression and retreating into oneself. In terms of diagnosis, both the *Lingshu* and the *Nanjing* depended on observing the patients' emotional changes, without emphasizing the need to feel their pulse. Meanwhile, the purpose of acupuncture was explained as being to release blood rather than to balance *qi*. Joyous laughing, an extreme emotion, had now become one of the major signs for diagnosing mental illness.⁵⁷

⁵³ *Lingshu jing jiaoshi*, vol. 5, "Dian Kuang, 22", pp. 399-406. The discussion on mania and withdrawal in Volume 30 of *Huangdi neijing taisu* is almost identical to this passage here.

⁵⁴ *Lingshu jing jiaoshi*, vol. 5, "Dian Kuang, 22", p. 402.

⁵⁵ *Lingshu jing jiaoshi*, vol. 5, "Dian Kuang, 22", pp. 394-406.

⁵⁶ *Nanjing jiaozhu*, "Wushijiu nan" (五十九難, The Fifty-Ninth Difficulty), pp. 106-107. The phrases "*kuangji*" and "*zi ju gui*" are from Hua Shou (滑壽, 1304-1386), *Nanjing benyi* (難經本義, Original Meanings of the Classic of Difficulties) (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1985), without following *Nanjing jiaozhu* by adopting "*kuang*" and "*zi gui ju*."

⁵⁷ In addition to *qi* and vessel patterns, Chinese medicine also observes a patient's emotional changes to diagnose mental disorders. See Ishida Hidemi, "Chugoku kodai niokeru seishin situbyoukan" (中国古代における精神疾病観, The conception of mental disorders in traditional China), *Nippon Chugoku gakkaiho* (日本中国学会報, *Bulletin of the Sinological Society of Japan*), 33 (1981): 29-42.

In its effort to reorganize the *Neijing*, Huangfu Mi includes in his *Jiayijing* diseases of mania and withdrawal in the chapter “Yang Receding Leading to Alarm and Mania.”⁵⁸ This treatise quotes from the chapter, “Discourse on Strange Diseases” in the *Suwen* and discusses the distinction between prenatal and postnatal madness.⁵⁹ He then cites the chapter, “Discourse on Rules of Extended Piercing,” which used occurrences of cold and fever to distinguish between mania and withdrawal.⁶⁰ Next, he refers to the chapter, “Discourse on Disease Manifestation” to analyze patients who are prone to mania and suggested using fasting as a treatment, claiming that “taking away their food will cure them.”⁶¹ Finally, the *Jiayijing* copies extensively from the *Lingshu* on madness, particularly the passage quoted above, from “in the stage of initial emergence” to “the tailbone is to be cauterized twenty times.” However, after quoting this passage, Huangfu Mi repeatedly uses the word “*kuang*” as an epithetic in his discussion of “*dian*” with regard to the latter’s symptoms, progressions and treatments. *Kuang* appears to signify a patient’s manic behavior when *dian* madness breaks out, such as “walking maniacally due to *dian*,” “lying stiffly with manic malarias (*kuang nue*, 狂癘) due to *dian*” and “*dian* breaks out maniacally.” Also, he talks about the “*kuang dian* illnesses” together, enumerating which blood vessels and acupuncture points should be used to treat symptoms including “tongue protrusion, melancholy, hot abdomen, manic raving, and being prone to laughter and seeing ghosts,” as well as “mania, gluttony, and being prone to laughter without outward expression.”

The phrasing in the *Jiayijing* blurs the distinction between *kuang* as mania and *dian* as withdrawal. Although symptoms such as “being prone to laughter and seeing ghosts” and “being prone to laughter without outward expression” were still combined with the term *kuang*, unlike in the *Lingshu* and the *Nanjing*, they were not used to distinguish the progression of mania or differentiate between mania and withdrawal. Rather, it suggests that they might appear in patients suffering from various mental disorders at differing stages.⁶² The seventh-century *Bingyuanlun* puts *dian* and *kuang* into the category of “wind influx” (*fengzhu* 風注), attributing symptoms such as “crazily walking around with disheveled hair and breaking people and things by hitting them” to *dian* patients, and symptoms such as “shouting, cursing, talking and laughing

⁵⁸ *Huangdi zhenjiu jia yi jing*, vol. 11, “Yangjue dajing fa kuangxian” (陽厥大驚發狂癘, Yang Receding Leading to Startlessness and Mania, Section 2), pp. 826-828.

⁵⁹ *Huangdi neijing suwen jiaozhu*, vol. 13, “Qibinglunpian, 47” (奇病論篇地四十七, Treatise on Strange Diseases, Section 47), pp. 607-608.

⁶⁰ *Huangdi neijing suwen jiaozhu*, vol. 14, “Zhangcijie, 55” (長刺節論地五十五, Discourse on Rules of Extended Piercing, 55), p. 662.

⁶¹ *Huangdi neijing suwen jiaozhu*, vol. 13, “Bingnenglunpian, 46” (病能論篇第四十六, Discourse on Disease Manifestations, 46), p. 594.

⁶² According to *Huangdi neijing suwen jiaozhu*, vol. 7, “Xuanming wuqi pian, 23” (宣明五氣篇第二十三, Wild Promulgation of the Five Qi), p.340: “When evil *qi* enters the *yang* section, craziness results. When it strikes at the *yang*, then this causes peak illness.” In his annotations, Guo Aichun quotes from the third-century *Nanjing* and *Maijing* as well as the seventh-century Chao Yuangfang and Sun Simiao to explain that a person will get mania from excessive *yang* and withdrawal from excessive *yin*. Hidemi speculates that, “the defeated *yang* results in withdrawal” may have indicated that heteropathy has turned into *yin*, which may echo the statement in *Nanjing*, “Reshinan” (二十難, the twentieth difficulty): “Heavy *yang* results in mania, and heavy *yin* results in withdrawal.” The *dian* 癘 here may have meant “epilepsy” instead of withdrawal in the case of bipolar disorder. See Ishida Hidemi, “The conception of mental disorders in traditional China,” pp.32-33. However, in *Huangdi zhenjiu jiayijing*, vol. 11, “Yangjue dajing fa kuangxian,” pp. 826-828, includes both withdrawal and epilepsy in its description and blurs the distinction between the mania/withdrawal bipolar and the disorder related to epilepsy.

to himself” to *kuang* patients.⁶³ Although the excitement and noise-making that had been associated with maniacal progression since the *Lingshu* are still present, “walking crazily,” a symptom previously regarded as signaling mania, is now categorized under the *dian* wind influx.⁶⁴

It would become even more common for later medical texts to use the terms *kuang* and *dian* interchangeably, where the tendency to laughter and excessive joy were no longer always regarded as characteristic of mania disorder.⁶⁵ In his *Qianjinfang*, the seventh-century Sun Simiao lists six treatises and thirty-four recipes for the category of the “wind *dian*,” which included both mania and withdrawal. With regard to withdrawal, he cites the discussion of prenatal madness in the *Suwen* and melancholy symptoms in the *Lingshu*, dividing the disorder into five different types: “*yang* withdrawal,” “*yin* withdrawal,” “wind withdrawal,” “wet withdrawal,” and “horse withdrawal,” offering herbal medicine recipes for each of them. With regard to mania, Sun quotes passages from *Suwen* and *Lingshu* which describe patients being prone to anger and lofty self-perception. Right after this, however, Sun made a sudden turn of conversation by claiming that, if a patient wept and groaned, alternating between excitement and depression, it was not mania but evilness (*xie* 邪), and should be treated differently. In his appendix, Sun groups together singing, crying, murmuring, laughing, eating stools, being naked, wandering around, and cursing, recommending both acupuncture and herbal medicine as treatments. Moreover, he claimed that practitioners of wind divination may also consider these diseases to be caused by evil spirits.⁶⁶ In this juxtaposition of mania, withdrawal and evil ghosts, the tendency to laugh was no longer identified as a single symptom. Rather, it became a condition that intermingled with other problems, and was used to describe a patient’s confused and unbalanced state.

Since ancient times, both acupuncture and herbal medicine had been used to treat illnesses of mania and withdrawal. The passages quoted above from the *Lingshu* and the *Nanjing* mention the method of puncturing vessels. The earliest extant herbal recipe to treat madness is found in the *Wushire bingfang* 五十二病方 (Fifty-two recipes) excavated at Mawangdui (today Changsha in

⁶³ See *Zhubing yuanghou lun jiaozhu*, vol. 24, “Zhubing zhuhou, 1: Zhuzhuhou” (注病諸候一·諸注候, Symptoms of the Illness of ‘Influx,’ Section One: Various Symptoms), pp. 690-691. For a discussion on illnesses of “influx” in traditional Chinese medicine, see Jianmin Li, “Contagion and Its Consequences: Problems of Death Pollution in Ancient China,” in Yasuo Otsuka and Shizu Sakai, *Medicine and the History of the Body* (Tokyo: Ishiyaku Euro-America, 1999), pp. 201-222.

⁶⁴ In addition to *dianfeng* (顛風, withdrawal-wind) and *kuangfeng* (狂風, mania-wind), there are ten other wind-influx disorders recorded in Chao Yuangfang’s *Bingyuanlun*. However, only the patients of *dafeng* (大風, big wind) exhibits the emotion of “not wanting to hear human voices,” while patients with other wind-influx disorders are only described as showing physical changes relating to skin and hair.

⁶⁵ Some scholars believe that the distinction between mania and withdrawal is an important contribution in Chinese psychiatry. However, a review of medical texts produced after the *Jiayijing* reveals that physicians use the words *dian* 顛, *kuang* 狂, *xian* 癲, and *feng* 風 in various combinations to describe a variety of different disorders. Even though nowadays medical historians, supported by modern psychiatric categorizations, can identify *kuang* as mania, *dian* as withdrawal, and *xian* as epilepsy, the ways in which traditional medical texts describe and categorize these disorders are not self-evident. For a discussion of psychiatry in ancient China, see Zhou Zhangfa 周長發, “Zhongyi jingshenbingxue fazhanshilue” (中醫精神病學發展史略, A brief history of chinese medicine for mental disorders,” *Zhonghua yishi zazhi* 中華醫史雜誌 *Chinese journal of medical history* 15.3 (1985): 144-147. I am grateful to Prof. Liao Yuqun for directing me to this reference.

⁶⁶ Sun Simiao, *Beiji qianjin yaofang*, vol. 14, “Xiaochangfu, fengdian, 5” (小腸腑·風顛第五, Small intestine residence, Wind-Withdrawal, Section 5), p. 261a.

Hunan province); the fifteenth section of which, on “*dian* madness,” contains two entries.⁶⁷ However, neither entry mentions symptoms such as the tendency to laugh. The *Qianjinfang* recommends both acupuncture and herbal medicine to treat madness, whether it is related to ghostly things or not. The earliest extant recipe to treat wind madness with animal meat seems to be Zan Yin’s *Shiyi xinjing* 食醫心鏡 (Mirror of dietetic medicine), which advocates using pork to cure the symptom of manic singing and laughing,⁶⁸ and fox meat soup to cure the symptoms of “feeling startled and rapturous, being unable to speak correctly, uncontrollable singing and laughing, coldness in the five viscera, cold and fever caused by *gu* toxin.”⁶⁹ On the one hand, the distinction between mania and withdrawal was no longer made by observing whether a patient cried or laughed; instead, both were placed under the broader category of wind heteropathy for observation and treatment. On the other hand, animal meat had become an important ingredient in recipes since the Tang and Song dynasties to treat uncontrollable singing and laughing caused by wind heteropathy and mental disorders.⁷⁰

In explaining incessant laughing, medical classics such as *Neijing* and *Nanjing* all referred to the fullness of the heart *qi*, the heteropathic invasion of the heart vessels, and mania-withdrawal disorders. The proposed treatment was first to use needling to release blood, then acupuncture to balance *qi* and later, in the Tang-Song era, herbal medicine became prominent in the prescriptions. However, endless laughing caused by poisoning and malaria (*nuebing* 癘病) was not recorded in the ancient classics, and was only clearly identified in medical texts after the third century. With respect to emotional changes caused by spleen malaria (*pi nue* 脾癘) or kidney malaria (*shen nue* 腎癘), later physicians, just like the earlier ones, advocated acupuncture to treat them, while in the treatment of laughing disorders caused by poisoning, herbal medicine was consistently used from the beginning.

2.3 Incessant laughing caused by food poisoning

The ancients believed that food poisoning could also cause unstoppable laughing.⁷¹ In his *Jinkui yaolie* 金匱要略 (Essentials of the golden casket), Zhang Zhongjing (張仲景, 150–219) warned,

⁶⁷ see Ma Jixing 馬繼興, *Mawangdui guyishu kaoshi* 馬王堆古醫書考釋 *Annotated Investigation of the Ancient Medical Documents from Mawangdui* (Changsha: Hunan kexue jishu chubanshe, 1992), pp. 425–428.

⁶⁸ Li Shizhen, *Bencao gangmu*, vol. 50, “Shoubu wulei, shoubuyi, chuleireshiba, Shi” (獸部五類·獸部一·畜類二十八種·豕, Animal five species, Category of Animals section 1, Domestic animals, 28 Drugs, Pig,” p. 2686 quotes *Mirror of Dietetic Medicine*.

⁶⁹ Li Shizhen, *Bencao gangmu*, vol. 51, “Shoubu wulei, Shoubure, Shoulei sanshiba, Hu” (獸部五類·獸部二·獸類三十八·狐, Animal five species, Category of Animals section 2, Wild Animals: 38 Drugs, Fox,” p. 2878 quotes *Mirror of Dietetic Medicine*.

⁷⁰ See *Taiping shenghui fang*, vol. 96, “Shizhi fengxiekuang zhufang” (食治風邪狂諸方, Food recipes to treat mania of wind heteropathy), p. 9652; Zhu Su (朱橐, 1361–1425), *Puji fang* (普濟方, *Recipes of Universal Help*) (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1959), vol. 257, pp. 4320–4321. Li Shizhen, *Bencao gangmu*, vol. 3, “Baibing zhuzhiyao, dianxian” (百病主治藥·癲癇, Medications for hundred kinds disorders, Epilepsy,” p. 142. All include either pork or fox meat in recipes to treat wind-influx disorders.

⁷¹ People in ancient Greece also thought that unstoppable laughing might be caused by vegetation poisoning. Writing in the second century A.D., Pausanias noted that there was a herb in Sardinia which looked like celery but, if people ate it, they would die of laughing. That was why Homer referred to something very unhealthy as a “Sardinia laugh” in his poem *The Odyssey*; while in modern medicine, risus sardonius is regarded as a main symptom of tetanus. The statement of Pausanias, see Pausanias, *Guide To Greece*, vol. I:

“Mushrooms that curl upward or are red in color are not edible.”⁷² For incessant laughing caused by mistakenly eating mushrooms grown on maple trees, he recommends drinking a liter of human excrement, or one or two liters of muddy water. One might also boil beans and drink the juice, or simply take various drugs that would lead to vomiting to help detoxification.⁷³ As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Zhang Hua, who caused Lu Yun’s laughing disorder to erupt by tying his beard with silk ropes, confirms in his *Bowuzhi* that mushrooms from mountains south of the Yangtze River could be fatally and unexpectedly poisonous. In particular, Zhang Hua states that, “people say that those grown on the maple trees will cause unstoppable laughter and drinking muddy water can cure it.”⁷⁴ Zhang was not sure whether the poison was innate within the mushrooms or was carried into them by snakes passing by. Being a native of the north, Zhang used vague words such as “unexpectedly” and “people say,” indicating that what he recorded may have been just hearsay. However, Ge Hong, a southerner who lived shortly after Zhang, also warned against eating mushrooms to prevent incessant laughing, and suggested drinking either underground water or succus from cooked soybeans as a cure.⁷⁵

Medical authors, such as Zhang Zhan from the fifth century, Tao Hongjing from the sixth, Sun Simiao from the seventh, and Chen Zangqi from the eighth all alerted people to avoid the poisonous mushrooms grown on maple trees, and noted that the single most obvious symptom of it was laughing endlessly. They agreed that patients should drink muddy water or soybean succus as a treatment, while Chen Zangqi added that succus from winter melon vines may also be useful for detoxication.⁷⁶ The tenth-century scholar Sun Guangxian (?–968) also claims in his *Bei meng suoyan* 北夢瑣言 (Northern dreams of trivial talk) that people who mistakenly eat poisonous mushrooms tend to laugh. He did not indicate whether he was referring to maple tree mushrooms or not, but suggested the cure of drinking the succus from fish cooked with mulberry

Central Greece, P. Levi trans. (Baltimore: Penguin, 1971). On discussions around risus sardonius and other forms of vegetation poisoning in modern medicine, see Robert R. Provine, *Laughter: A Scientific Investigation*, pp. 157-161, 177. In addition to vegetation poisoning, Provine also notes that some cases of laughing uncontrollably were caused by poisoning by metals such as manganese and copper.

⁷² Zhang Zhongjing (張仲景, 150-219) authored, annotated with treatises by Xu Zhongke 徐忠可, proofread by Deng Mingzhong et al, *Jin kui yao lue lun zhu* (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1993), “Guoshi caigu jinji bingzhi, 25” (果實菜穀禁忌并治第二十五, Forbidden fruits, nuts, vegetables and cereals and related treatments, Section 25), p. 366.

⁷³ *Jin kui yao lue lun zhu*, “Guoshi caigu jinji bingzhi, 25,” p. 366.

⁷⁴ Quoted in *Taiping yulan*, vol. 998, “A Hundred Flowers, Part 5: Mushrooms,” pp. 4549b-4550a.

⁷⁵ *Ishinpo*, vol. 29, p. 38b quoting *Geshifang*.

⁷⁶ See Li Shizhen’s *Bencao gangmu*, vol. 5, p. 406 for Tao Hongjing’s words: “If one eats maple trees fungi, one could have an unstoppable laughing fit. To cure it, one could drink muddy water.” Sun Simiao’s statement was quoted in Zhu Su’s *Puji fang*, vol. 252, p. 4177, but was not included in extant version of Sun’s *Qianjinfang*. See Tanba Yasuyori’s *Ishinpo*, vol. 30, p. 47ab for statement quoted from Zhang Zhan’s *Yangsheng yaoji* (養生要集, *Recipes for Life-Nourishment*): “Those who eat mushrooms under maple trees may laugh uncontrollably.” See Li Shizhen’s *Bencao gangmu*, vol. 28, p. 1713 for Chen Zangqi (陳藏器, 681-757) warning against maple tree fungi for causing unstoppable laughing. The ascertainment of the author of *Yangsheng yaoji*, see Ota Tenrei 太田典禮 eds, Li Yongchi 李永熾 translates, *Yixinfang zhongriwen jieshuo* 醫心方中日文解說, Chinese and Japanese explanations of *Yixinfang* (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1982), p.21. Also, Ma Jixing 馬繼興, “Yixinfang zhongde guyixue wenxian chutan,” (醫心方中的古醫學文獻初探, A Preliminary Investigation of Medical Documents cited in *Yixinfang*), *Nihon ishigaku zasshi* 日本医史学雜誌 *Journal of the Japanese Society for the History of Medicine*, 31.3 (Tokyo, 1985), pp. 325-371.

fruits.⁷⁷ Chen Yuren of the Song dynasty claims in his *Jūn pǔ* 菌譜 (Genealogy of mushrooms) that mushrooms grown in soil could easily be confused with the Amanita fungi (*egaojun* 鵝膏蕈) that grew in the mountains. Local people considered the soiled mushrooms to be borne out of the poisonous *qi* and a person might die from eating them. Whoever was poisoned by them would laugh unstopably. To detoxify himself, a patient could swallow bitter tea leaf and alum with freshly-boiled water. This shows that mushrooms believed to cause unstopable laughter were not just those grown on maple trees, and the ways to detoxify an affected person were not limited to drinking muddy water and soybean juice.⁷⁸ Similar to the case of poisoning, malaria in the five viscera and jaundice were also diseases that had been recorded in ancient medical classics but developed the symptom of incessant laughing much later.

2.4 Laughing caused by malaria or jaundice

In his discussion of the symptoms of malaria in *Bingyuanlun*, Chao Yuanfang states that patients with “malaria in their spleen” would have abdominal pains if they felt chilly and intestinal rumbles if they felt hot, and would perspire after the rumbles stopped. If the person did not usually show anger or joy, but suddenly became emotionally unpredictable, such as “speaking seriously but with his nose showing signs of laughing, without responding to others. These are the acoustic symptoms of the spleen disease.”⁷⁹ Thus, in addition to body temperature, painful feelings, and sounds, a patient’s emotional changes were also taken into consideration in the diagnosis. Furthermore, Chao held that, up to this phase of the illness, “in no more than a month, disaster will surely arrive.”⁸⁰ With regard to “speaking seriously but with his nose showing signs of laughing”, some scholars suggest that “‘speaking seriously’ indicated that the patient had a rather serious attitude while speaking, and ‘the nose showing signs of laughing’ described a facial expression that showed contempt or sarcasm.”⁸¹ Therefore, “speaking seriously but with his nose showing signs of laughing” was evidence of the patient’s emotional capriciousness. However, some records assert that “*bi xiao* (鼻笑, the nose showing signs of laughing)” was a misspelling for “*zi xiao* (自笑, laughing by oneself),” and therefore was not a sign of contempt or sarcasm, but signaled excessive laughing.⁸² Similarly, in discussing malaria in the kidney, Chao in

⁷⁷ Kim Ye-mong (金禮蒙, 15thc) et al, *Euibang yuchui* (醫方類聚, *Categorized Collection of Medical Recipes*) (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1981-1982), Tome 7, Volume 163, “Haedogmun” (解毒門, Detoxication) quoting Sun Guangxian.

⁷⁸ Li Shizhen, *Bencao gangmu*, vol. 28, “Caibusan, tujun” (菜部三·土菌, Vegetables Part 3, earth fungi), p. 1720.

⁷⁹ *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu*, vol. 11, “nuebing zhuhou” (瘧病諸候, various symptoms of malarial), p. 346.

⁸⁰ *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu*, vol. 11, “nuebing zhuhou,” p. 346.

⁸¹ *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu*, vol. 11, “nuebing zhuhou,” p. 346.

⁸² In Wang Tao’s (王燾, 670-755), *Waitai miyao* (外台秘要, *Essential Secrets of the Palace Library*) (Taipei: Guoli zhongguo yiyao yanjiusuo reprint of the Xinan Cheng jingtong edition, 1985), vol. 5, “Wuzang ji weinuefang” (五臟及胃瘧方, Recipes for Five viscera and Stomach Malarial), p. 153b, the phrase should be “*duoyan zixiao*” (多言自笑) rather than “*zhengyan bixiao*” (正言鼻笑). However, Li Xiaoding (李孝定, 1918-1997), *Jiagu wenzi jishi* (甲骨文字集釋, Collected annotations of oracle bone scripts) (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinia, 1970) vol. 4, pp. 1207-1208, points out that in the oracle bone scripts from the Shang dynasty, the character “zi” 自 can be used interchangeably with the character “bi” 鼻. In this sense, these two terms do not differ widely in meaning, though the latter does not necessarily suggest sarcastic laughing.

his *Bingyuanlun* includes emotional changes such as the ways of laughing as one of the criteria for diagnosis. He first describes the pain patients would feel in their lower back, difficulty in passing stools, and the coldness they felt in their hands and feet. Then he continues: "If the patient, who usually does not tend to easily get happy or angry, suddenly becomes irritable," then "harm has already been done to his kidney. Though he may not be aware of the disease, symptoms have surfaced." And, if the patient "starts to laugh even before he speaks when he meets with people, and if he often closes his mouth, with his hand covering his abdomen, all these are acoustic symptoms of the kidney disease."⁸³ From then on, medical texts such as Sun Simiao's *Qianjinfang* and Wang Tao's *Waitai miyao* 外台秘要 (Essential secrets of the palace library) all took emotional changes as a telling sign for diagnosing the malaria in the five viscera.

Nonetheless, if we look at discussions on malaria in ancient classics such as the *Suwen*, we cannot find any record that uses laughing or other emotional changes as criteria for observation. In its description of the symptoms of malaria in the five viscera, "To Pierce Malaria," the *Suwen* only records that, "Those who suffer malaria in the spleen feel chilly and have pain in their abdomen; when they feel hot, their intestines will rumble, and they will perspire after the rumbles stop." As for kidney malaria, "it makes a person shiver. Patients writhe with pain in their lower back and spine, and have difficulty in passing their stools. Their vision is dizzy and their hands and feet are cold."⁸⁴ The descriptions of spleen malaria and kidney malaria in the *Jiayijing* are similar; but do not use emotional changes as criteria for diagnosis as Chao Yuanfang does in *Bingyuanlun*.⁸⁵ Some scholars hold that views attributed to Chao Yuanfang, Sun Simiao and Wang Tao may have either been their personal statements, or been supplemented by later authors.⁸⁶ *Taiping Shenghuifang*, which was compiled in the early Song, partly adopts Chao Yuanfang and Sun Simiao's views, claiming that spleen malaria patients "tend to be capriciously angry or joyous, often talk and laugh by themselves without responding to others," while it never mentions if patients with kidney malaria would have the symptom of "laughing out loud."⁸⁷

Although laughter was not mentioned in the *Taiping Shenghuifang*'s description of kidney malaria, it was added to the list of symptoms of "various jaundices" (*zhu huang* 諸黃). This tenth-century compilation held that "various jaundices" were basically caused by cold damage, and that these patients would feel alternately energetic and overwhelmed. They may experience a loss of focus and act in an agitated way, while at the same time being "talkative for a moment and silent for another, with the tendency to laugh joyously and to suddenly see ghosts."⁸⁸ Although it asserts that these symptoms were shared by all the "jaundices," the *Taiping Shenghuifang* only mentions alternating joyous laughter and wind-like wailing in its section on "heart jaundice."⁸⁹ No ancient medical classics designated specific chapters for individual

⁸³ *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu*, vol. 11, "Nuebing zhuhou," p. 347.

⁸⁴ *Huangdi neijing suwen jiaozhu*, vol. 10, "Cinuo pian" (刺瘡篇第三十六, To Pierce Malaria, 36), pp. 480-481.

⁸⁵ *Huangdi zhenjiu jia yi jing*, vol. 7, "Yinyang xiangyi fasannue, 5" (陰陽相移發三瘧第五, Shifting of Yin-Yang resulting in malaria), p. 788.

⁸⁶ *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu*, vol. 11, "Nuebing zhuhou," p. 349.

⁸⁷ *Taiping shenghui fang*, vol. 52, "Zhi wuzangnue zhufang" (治五臟瘧諸方, Recipes for treating malaria of the five viscera), pp. 4955-4956.

⁸⁸ *Taiping shenghui fang*, vol. 55, "Zhi sanshiliuzhong huangzhenghou dianluolun bingfang" (治三十六種黃症候點烙論并方, Recipes for treating thirty-six jaundices), p. 5284.

⁸⁹ *Taiping shenghui fang*, vol. 55, "Zhi sanshiliuzhong huangzhenghou dianluolun bingfang", p. 5286.

jaundices. The *Suwen* claims that, “When the face is swollen, that is called wind. When the feet and the shins are swollen, that is called water. When the eyes are yellow, that is called jaundice.” Indeed, the above quoted paragraphs from the *Suwen* mention “reddish and yellowish eyes” when describing patients with heart vessel disorders, but jaundice was not associated with laughter until fairly late in medical history.⁹⁰

It was similar with the description of *qi* receding (*jue* 厥). The *Jiayijing* claims that, when people suffer from a *jue* headache, their faces become swollen, and they are so agitated and manic that they see ghosts. Moreover, they “tend to laugh endlessly and outwardly as if they are in great joy, but at the same time their throats become so numb that they cannot speak. The *Fenglong* 豐隆 point is to be acupunctured.”⁹¹ This text associates the tendency to laugh with a *qi*-receding headache, which is not found in extant treatises of “*Juelun*” 厥論 *the Qi-receding Diseases*). The *Divine Pivot* describes *qi*-receding headaches as displaying symptoms such as a swollen face and agitation, distinguishes them from “real headaches” (*zhengtoutong* 真頭痛), and discusses acupuncture therapies to treat them.⁹² The “*Jue*” chapter (厥章, *Discourse on Recession*) in the *Suwen* does not mention laughing at all.⁹³ The *Taisu* even claims that a patient suffering from a *qi*-receding headache will feel “sorrow in the heart and tends to weep.”⁹⁴ All in all, it seems that laughter was not connected to the illness of *qi* receding until Huangfu Mi’s time in the third century.

2.5 Soliloquizing, crying and laughing while encountering ghosts and evil spirits

As mentioned above, while Sun Simiao differentiated between mania and withdrawal, he did not exclude the possibility of evil spirits in diagnosing madness. In his description, laughing joyously was not an isolated symptom of a certain illness; rather, it was often accompanied by weeping sorrowfully and a state of trance, and was regarded as resulting from evil strokes or encountering ghosts. Sun Simiao’s views were not without precedent. Ge Hong recorded in his fourth-century *Zhouhou beijifang* 肘後備急方 (Handbook of recipes for emergencies) that, “If a woman has an encounter with evil things, she will talk and laugh to herself, meditating sorrowfully in a trance,” and Ge Hong recommended *xionghuang* (雄黃, realgar) to get rid of the heteropathy.⁹⁵ Ge Hong’s statement not only pointed out that a ghost-related illness could lead to emotional changes but also reserved the possibility that women may have taken the initiative. Since then, “intercourse between women and ghosts” was listed as one of the regular diagnoses for disorders inflicted by ghosts and evil spirits, together with causes such as being “contacted by ghosts” and “attacked by ghosts.” The fourth century *Sengshenfang* (僧深方, *Recipes of Monk Shen*) holds that, if affected by ghostly things, in addition to symptoms such as weight loss, agitation, insomnia, high

⁹⁰ Zhu Su, *Pujifang*, vol. 196, “Huangdanmeng, sanshiliuhuang” (黃疸門·三十六黃, the category of jaundice, thirty-six jaundices), pp. 2693, 2696, 2698 quoting *Taiping shenghui fang*.

⁹¹ *Huangdi zhengjiu jia yi jing*, vol. 7, “Liujiing shoubing fa shanghanrebing, 1b” (六經受病發傷寒熱病第一下, Cold and Heat Resulting from the Illnesses in the Six Channels, Section 1b,” p. 779.

⁹² *Lingshu jing jiaoshi*, Vol. 5, “Juebing, 24,” pp. 430-444.

⁹³ *Huangdi neijing suwen jiaozhu*, vol. 11, “*Juelunpian*, 45” (厥論篇第四十五, *Discourse on Recession*, 45), pp. 578-589.

⁹⁴ Yang Shangshan (楊上善, 585-670), *Huangdi neijing taisu*, vol. 30, p. 8.

⁹⁵ Ge Hong (葛洪, 284-363), *Zhouhou beji fang*, vol. 3, “*Zhi cude jingxie huanghufang*, 18,” p. 45a.

temperature in their hands and feet, and loss of appetite, patients would also experience alternate tendencies to either “face a wall and weep or laugh unpredictably.” Monk Sheng suggested taking bovine bezoar powder (*niu Huang san* 牛黃散) as a cure.⁹⁶

When Chao Yuanfang discusses the symptoms of “wind disorders,” he includes the category of “ghosts and evil spirits” (*guixiehou* 鬼邪候) and lists a variety of symptoms, such as “erroneous speeches, shouting laughters, startled walking, withdrawal and mania alternating as if losing their senses,” claiming that patients would either feel joy, anger, sorrow, and laugh, or feel terrified as if they were being pursued. They would either sing songs or shout, or not want to talk at all. The suggested treatments include shamanistic techniques involving needles, new white cloths and knives.⁹⁷ In addition to this, Chao lists the category, “Intercourse with Ghosts” in his chapter “Miscellaneous Diseases of Women,” asserting that if women had intercourse with ghosts it was the depletion of their viscera and the weakness of their spirit that allowed the ghost *qi* to get them. Their symptoms included “the unwillingness to see people, but preferring to talk and laugh by oneself as if engaging in conversation, and sometimes sorrowfully weeping.”⁹⁸ Judging by the way medical texts put it, phrases mentioned above such as “contacted by ghosts” and “attacked by ghosts” seemed to suggest that it was the evil spirits who were believed to take the initiative, against people whose gender was not specified. In the cases where “women had intercourse with ghosts,” however, the patient appeared to have taken an active role, and that patient was specifically female.⁹⁹ As for treatments for incessant laughter caused by ghosts and evil spirits, Sun Simiao recommended moxibustion in addition to the herbal medicine and shamanistic methods proposed by Chao Yuanfang.¹⁰⁰

Further on, in the tenth century, the *Taiping Shenghuifang* summarizes medical authors from earlier periods and proposes using both bovine bezoar powder and cinnabar powder to cure unpredictable emotional changes, such as alternate crying and laughing caused by ghosts and evil spirits.¹⁰¹ As for women, not only mania and withdrawal, ghosts and evil spirits, but also menstrual obstruction and post-partum visceral depletion were considered possible causes of “unlimited groaning, weeping, singing and laughing,” and different recipes such as *Fangfen san*

⁹⁶ Wang Tao, *Waitai Miyao*, vol. 13, p. 364b quoting *Sengshenfang*. For a discussion on the contagiousness of ghostly things, see Zhang Jiafeng 張嘉鳳, “Jiyi yu xiangran: yi zhubing yuanhou lun wei zhongxin shilun weijin zhi suitang zhijian yijide jibingguan” (疾疫與相染—以諸病源候論為中心試論魏晉至隋唐之間醫籍的疾病觀, The Conceptions of Contagion in Chinese Medicine: A Case from the *Zhubing yuanhou lun*), *Taida lishi xubao*, (臺大歷史學報, Historical Inquiry) 27 (2001): 37-82.

⁹⁷ *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu*, vol. 2, “Fengbing zhuhou, 47, Guixiehou” (風病諸候四十七·鬼邪候, symptoms of wind disorders, 47, symptoms of disorders caused by ghosts and heteropathys), p. 65.

⁹⁸ *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu*, vol. 40, “furen zabing zhuhou, 95, yugui jiaotonghou” (婦人雜病諸候九十五·與鬼交通候, symptoms of women’s miscellaneous disorders, 95, symptoms caused by contacts with ghosts,” p. 1149.

⁹⁹ Copulation with ghosts was seen as a specific illness women suffered. For a discussion of its pathological and socio-cultural significance, see Chen Hsiu-fen, “Between Sleep and Dreams: Perceptions of “Dreaming of Sex with Demons” and Female Sexual Frustration in Pre-modern Chinese Medicine,” *BIHP* 81.4 (2010): 701-736.

¹⁰⁰ *Beiji qianjin yaofang*, vol. 14, “Xiaochangfu, fengdian, 5,” p. 262a. *Qianjin yifang*, vol. 30, p. 853. The origins of moxibustion may also be related to shamanistic healing of exorcising ghosts. See Li Jianmin, “Aihuo yu tianhuo: jiuliaofa dansheng zhimi” (艾火與天火：灸療法誕生之謎, The Moxa Fire and the Heavenly Fire: Riddles around the Birth of Moxibustion,” *The History of Natural Science*, 21. 4 (2002): 320-331.

¹⁰¹ *Taiping shenghui fang*, vol. 56, p. 5371; vol. 70, p. 6942.

(防風散, *divaricate saposhnikovia powder*), *Taoren san* (桃人散, *peach kernel powder*), and *Dansha wan* (丹砂丸, *cinnabar pills*) were recommended as treatment.¹⁰² Although men who suffered from madness and invasion of the heteropathy may also have exhibited symptoms of singing and laughing, due to specific experiences such as menstruation and childbirth, it was women that medical experts regarded as being susceptible not only to heteropathies and ghosts, but also emotional unsteadiness. Therefore, singing, weeping, crying, and laughing became an important indicator for diagnosing female patients.¹⁰³

2.6 Brief summary

In examining descriptions of “laughing disorders” in classic medical texts and the prescriptions proposed in medieval medical recipes, two trends have surfaced. First, the susceptibility to laughing gradually became a pathological symptom, and was used as a criterion in diagnosis, as well as a way to describe a patient’s condition. The *Neijing*, most likely compiled between the third century BCE and the first century CE, provided two explanations for unstoppable laughing: first, it could be a fullness of the heart’s *qi* caused by wind invading the heart vessels; second, it signaled a specific stage of madness. The *Neijing* also contained separate treatises on “blockage” and “malaria,” but did not list “joyous laughing” or other emotional changes as criteria for diagnosis. The *Nanjing* from the Eastern Han (25–220) went further, using joyous laughing as a way to distinguish between mania and withdrawal. In other words, diseases signaled by emotions such as laughing and behaviors such as singing were defined in certain identifiable ways. However, in Huangfu Mi’s *Jiayijing*, compiled at the end of the third century, the distinction between mania and withdrawal became ambiguous, and singing and laughing were not just used to describe people with mania. At the beginning of the seventh century, in his account of malaria of the spleen and the kidney, Chao Yuanfang included joyous laughing as one of their symptoms. Building on previous views, Sun Simiao held that, in addition to a “numbness in the four limbs,” patients suffering from a high temperature and blockage caused by wind invasion would also laugh endlessly.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² *Taiping shenghui fang*, vol. 69, p. 6739; vol. 72, p. 7111; vol. 80, p. 7934.

¹⁰³ That medical writers since early on considered women vulnerable and apt to emotional ups-and-downs could be seen from Sun Simiao, *Qianjinfang*, vol. 1, “Furenfang” (婦人方, *recipes for women*). For detailed discussion, see Lee Jender, “Han-Tang zhijian quizi yifang shitan: jianlun fukelanshang yu xingbie lunshu” (漢唐之間求子醫方試探：兼論婦科濫觴與性別論述, *Reproductive Medicine in Late Antiquity and Early Medieval China: Gender Discourse and the Birth of Gynecology*), *BIHP* 68.2 (1997): 283-367.

¹⁰⁴ Laughing usually came with other psychical symptoms, such as speaking crazily, seeing ghosts and having excessive emotion. The treatments for this included *xiexin tang* (瀉心湯, *heart-draining decoction*), *Chungchung tang* (芎藭湯, *ligusticum decoction*) and *mahuang san* (麻黃散, *ephedra powder*), and most of the recipes were meant to calm the *shen* and to regulate *qi*. That is why laughing endlessly was often considered as a symptom of mental disorders. It should be noted that modern psychiatry may have validated some of these symptoms, in the cases quoted in this chapter. However, the case of poisoning by maple tree fungi and laughing endlessly caused by wind influx should probably be considered as pathological changes related to the nervous system, while incessant laughing caused by fullness of heart *qi* or speaking too much and laughing by oneself could also be emotional problems. It would be dubious to directly define them as mental disorders in the sense of modern psychiatry. More importantly, both psychiatric illness and nervous disorders are new disease categories under modern medicine, and the conceptions and categories were unfamiliar to ancient people. This chapter does not aim to deny that the above-mentioned cases were

Second, the treatment of incessant laughing gradually turned from blood-letting and acupuncture to herbal medicine. The method of needling recorded in the *Neijing* aimed to release blood, while the *Nanjing* emphasized the use of needling to adjust a person's *qi*. Zhang Zhongjing asserted that accidentally eating maple mushrooms would cause endless laughing, suggesting that people who did so should drink human excrement, muddy water, or thick soybean soup to detoxify themselves. Following Zhang's view, both Ge Hong and Tao Hongjing proposed using *materia medica* to treat unstoppable laughing. *The Auxiliary Guides to Treat Visceras and Residences with Drugs*, attributed to Tao Hongjing, contained several herbal prescriptions that were intended to treat fullness and heat of the heart. However, while the symptom of laughing was included in their descriptions of these illnesses, it was not specified in the sections on treatment. During the subsequent period from the seventh to the tenth centuries, it was stated that each laughing disorder caused by wind fever, wind blockage, mania and withdrawal, or ghosts and evil spirits could be treated with a decoction recipe. In the tenth-century *Taiping Shenghuifang*, herbal recipes were also recommended for "fullness and heat in the heart," which had previously been treated by acupuncture. Scholars have pointed out that, in traditional Chinese medicine, needling was once applied mainly to release blood and gradually became used in acupuncture to adjust *qi*; and that mainstream treatment also shifted its heavy reliance on acupuncture and moxibustion to recipes composed of *materia medica*.¹⁰⁵ The treatments for incessant laughing also testified to this development in Chinese medicine.

From the third century BCE to the tenth century CE, medical texts viewed excessive or inappropriate laughing more and more as a pathological symptom, and was used to describe the facial expressions or vocal reactions of patients suffering from various diseases. We do not know for sure whether the diseases mentioned above would actually cause incessant laughter, but we notice that the tendency to laugh had attracted the attention of medical authors and been recorded. So much so that the *Shengji zonglu* 聖濟總錄 (General record of imperial relief), an anthology of medical prescriptions from the early twelfth century, devoted a whole section to being "prone to laughter," identifying laughing as a sign for observing various illnesses.¹⁰⁶ That is to say, this section has not discussed which diseases would cause laughing and which were misjudged by doctors, but it has noted that, in the transmission and expansion of medical texts, doctors in early imperial China gradually came to consider that whether a patient tended to laugh or not was a clue for diagnosis.¹⁰⁷ Thus, it seems understandable that when Lu Yun

possibly symptoms of mental disorders, but to put "laughing" back into traditional contexts to observe its meanings in various cases (whether psychiatric illness or not). My thorough survey has found that, as a symptom, "laughing" was used more and more in diagnosis from ancient to medieval China, so serves as a valuable indication to ascertain the common attitude of traditional Chinese physicians toward joyous emotions and expressions. For a similar approach and a useful example, see Ishida's research on ghost-seeing medicine and its relation to the development of medieval Daoism. Ishida Hidemi, "Genkiyaku kō" (見鬼藥考, A study of ghost-seeing medicine), *Tōhō Shūkyō* (東方宗教, *Journal of Eastern Religions*), vol. 96 (Kyoto, 2000), pp. 38-57.

¹⁰⁵ Liao Yuqun 廖育群, *Qi-Huang yidao* (岐黃醫道, *The Medical Way of Qibo and Huangdi*) (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe, 1991).

¹⁰⁶ Zhao Ji (趙佶, 1082-1135) ed, *Shengji zonglu* (聖濟總錄, *General Record of Imperial Relief*) (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1962), vol. 43, "Xinzang meng" (心臟門, the Category of the Heart), pp. 825-826.

¹⁰⁷ That is to say, some disorders may indeed have resulted in the tendency to laugh, but ancient medical experts did not start to record this until after the third century. Understood from today's medical perspective, some illnesses might have had nothing to do with laughing, but they were still recorded in the

laughed, out of all proportion, Lu Ji saw it as some kind of disorder. It is worth noting that Lu Yun burst into excessive laughter because he had seen something he thought was hilarious; that is, his laughing was related to his emotions. This point, however, was not emphasized by the medical texts' descriptions of laughing disorders. So, what exactly did laughing mean to the doctors whose job it was to diagnose and treat diseases?

3 Is laughing caused by some unbearable joy or an uncontrollable body?

From early to medieval China, laughing gradually became viewed more as a pathological symptom in medical texts. However, doctors' descriptions did not always focus on a patient's emotions. Neither the *Suwen* and the *Lingshu*, or the *Bingyuanlun* and *Qianjinfang* elaborated on patients' mental state when they were laughing. "Endless laughing" described the way patients laughed without being able to stop, but not necessarily their uncontrollable emotions. These medical texts sometimes used the phrase "*xi xiao buxiu* 喜笑不休", as if the patients were joyous (*xi* 喜) while laughing incessantly. But if we understand "*xi* 喜" as meaning "*xihao* 喜好 (like to)," then this phrase was not very different from "*shan xiao buxiu* 善笑不休," being prone to laughter. Describing the symptoms accompanying illnesses of the heart, doctors claimed that, in addition to endless laughter, patients would also have redness in the face, yellowness in the eyes, a dry feeling in their mouth, heat in their palms, and heartache. Among these symptoms, redness in the face, yellowness in the eyes and endless laughing may have been observed by a doctor, while dryness in the mouth, hot palms and heartache had to be described by the patient themselves. Yet, judging by the descriptions in these medical texts, neither the patient or the doctor seemed too concerned about how these feelings coexisted with emotions such as joy and happiness. Was laughing really caused by joy, or was it just an uncontrollable body movement? What exactly were the medical texts' authors referring to when they invoked the word "laughing" to describe illnesses?

3.1 Laughter as a sound of joy

As mentioned above, the treatise "Spirit as Foundation" (*ben shen* 本神) in the *Lingshu* claims that, "The heart stores the vessels, and the vessels host the spirit. If the heart *qi* is depleted, the patient will be grieved; if it is repleted, then he will laugh without end." Seen as a force for vital activities of human body, the spirit, or the heart *qi*, is controlled and sheltered by the heart. The status of the heart experienced changes in ancient Chinese's perception of the body. In the Spring and Autumn period (eighth–fifth century BCE), people's descriptions of the body concentrated on superficial parts such as the skin, hair, and the four limbs; in the Warring States period (fifth century–221 BCE), it began to include an understanding of the inner viscera.¹⁰⁸ From then on, in both medical and philosophical classics, the heart occupied an important position, being seen as

medical texts of early imperial China. This study holds that, whatever the "truth" really is, the number of records that regarded laughing as a pathological symptom increased over time.

¹⁰⁸ See the discussion in Du Zhengsheng 杜正勝, "Xingtì, jingqì yu hūnpò: Zhongguó chuāntōng duìrén renshìde xíngchéng" (形體、精氣與魂魄：中國傳統對「人」認識的形成, The Body, Vitality, and the Soul: the Understanding of "Self" in Chinese Tradition), *Xin Shi Xue* (新史學, *New History*), 2.3 (1991): 1-66.

playing an imperative and leading role.¹⁰⁹ From the late Warring States period to the late Western Han (202 BCE–8 CE), vessels theories based upon the notion of the *qi* gradually became systematized. Specialists of “recipes and techniques” (*fangji* 方技) held that the *qi* in the human body surged and ebbed depending on time and direction, and that these changes could be labeled using signs from the *yin-yang* system, the Five Elements (*wuxing* 五行) system, and the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches (*gan-zhi* 干支) system. The relationships between the vessels and the inner viscera were also established, based upon these numerological techniques.¹¹⁰ The “heart,” possibly due to its importance in earlier medical texts, was regarded as the principal viscera.¹¹¹ However, when discussed together with *qi*, the heart, treated more or less the same as the other viscera, was only regarded as part of the forces in human existence and activities. In contrast, *qi* was seen as passing between heaven and earth, circulating in and around the human body, and connecting the body and heaven-and-earth by way of resonance.¹¹²

In this new perception of the human body, the heart was designated to take charge of the spirit (*shen* 神) and, like the heart, the other viscera also had their own areas to cover. “Discourse on Regulating the Channels” in the *Suwen* deems that the five viscera in the human body look after different things: “The heart shelters the spirit; the lungs, vigor (*po* 魄); the liver, the soul (*hun* 魂); the spleen, intent (*yi* 意); and the kidney, the mind (*zhi* 志).”¹¹³ The treatise of “Spirit as Foundation” in the *Divine Pivot* holds a similar view, claiming that the emptiness or fullness of the five viscera may lead to various bodily symptoms.¹¹⁴ The treatise, “Comprehensive Discourse on Phenomena Corresponding to Yin and Yang” (*Yin Yang yingxiang dalun* 陰陽應象大論) in the *Suwen* compares the five locations of the east, west, south, north and center with the five viscera of the liver, heart, spleen, lung, and kidney. It claims that the south generates heat, and is represented by the heart, which controls joyous emotion and utters sounds of laughter (see Table 4):

Heaven has four seasons and five elements, which cause geneses, growth, harvesting, and storage. It also generates cold, summer heat, dryness, dampness, and wind. Humans have five viscera that transform the five *qi*, and thereby generate joy, anger, sorrow, anxiety, and fear... The East generates wind... and is represented by the viscera of the liver... the sound of shouting... and the mind state of anger. Anger can harm the liver, but sorrow overcomes

¹⁰⁹ Du Zhengsheng, “Xingt, jingqi yu hunpo” part 3 ‘The Position of the Heart and the Qi in the Human Body,’ pp. 13-22.

¹¹⁰ In his discussion on the competition, integration, and systemization of various theories of channels and pulses in ancient China, Li Jianmin names the “numerological body conception” that was based upon the systems of *gan-zhi*, *yin yang*, and the Five Phases. See Li Jianmin, *Sisheng zhiyu*, Chapter 5 “The *Shushu* (Numerical Arts) Body Conception,” pp. 205-241.

¹¹¹ For instance, *Lingshujing jiaoshi*, vol. 1, part 5, “*Kouwen*, 28” (口問第二十八, Oral Inquiry, 28) p. 478: “The heart is the ruler among the five viscera and six residences”. See also *Huangdi neijing suwen jiaozhu*, vol. 3, “*Linglan midianlun*, 8” (靈蘭秘典論第八, Discourse on the Hidden Canons in the Numinous Orchid, 8) pp. 128-130: “The heart is the official functioning ruler. Spirit brilliance originates in it”. See Li Jianmin’s discussion on heart as the center of “five viscera and six residences” system. Li Jianmin, *Sisheng zhiyu*, p. 225.

¹¹² For a debate in traditional medical texts on whether it is the heart or the *qi* that is more important, see Du Zhengsheng, “Xingt, jingqi yu hunpo,” part 4 “The Formation of the Qi-Based Vessels System,” pp. 22-33.

¹¹³ *Huangdi neijing suwen jiaozhu*, vol. 17, “*Tiaojinglunpian*, 62,” p. 746.

¹¹⁴ *Lingshu jing jiaoshi*, vol. 2, “*Benshen*, 8,” p. 183. See also Table 3.

anger... The South generates heat... and is represented by the viscera of the heart... the sound of laughing... and the mind state of joy. Joy can harm the heart, but fear overcomes joy... The center generates dampness... and is represented by the viscera of the spleen... the sound of singing... and the mind state of pensiveness. Pensiveness can harm the spleen, but anger overcomes pensiveness... The West generates dryness... and is represented by the viscera of the lungs... the sound of weeping... and the mind state of anxiety. Anxiety can harm the lungs, but joy overcomes anxiety... The North generates cold... and is represented by the viscera of the kidneys... the sound of groaning... and the mind state of fear. Fear can harm the kidneys, but pensiveness overcomes fear...¹¹⁵

Thus, the five viscera controlled different things, and each of the emotions and sounds was taken care of by a particular organ. If some destructive *qi* infected the human body, entering through the hair, the skin, the flesh or the vessels to reach the inner viscera, then the resulting illness would be extremely hard to cure. Therefore, good doctors needed to prevent the heteropathy invasion of the *qi* before it reached deep into the body.¹¹⁶ In addition to listening to the patients' sounds and observing their appearance, an important technique in a doctor's repertoire was pulse-taking. After establishing the links between vessels and viscera, the information obtained by taking a pulse, just like the impression gained by observing a patient's sounds and appearance, became the basis on which to diagnose the illnesses of the viscera. Even if the heteropathy *qi* only reached a patient's hair, an expert doctor could perceive it by observing the patient's appearance and sounds, and cure it even before s/he showed any symptom of it.¹¹⁷ If the heteropathy *qi* had reached the viscera, then pulse-taking was used for diagnosis. The author of the *Lingshu* asserts that there were six types of pulses: relaxed (*huan* 緩), tight (*ji* 急), diminished (*xiao* 小), increased (*da* 大), smooth (*hua* 滑), and rough (*se* 澀), and that these six types could be further differentiated by degree, for instance, "very" (*shen* 甚) or "somewhat" (*wei* 微). Patients with the symptom of fierce laughing were expected to demonstrate very relaxed pulses on their heart vessels.¹¹⁸

Table 3: Physical conditions and depletion/repletion of the five viscera
(From Chapter 1 "Ben Shen, Spirit as the Foundation, 8" of *Divine Pivot*)

| Viscera | Physique | What It Holds | Depletion | Repletion |
|---------|----------|---------------|-----------|----------------------|
| Liver | Blood | Soul | Fear | Rage |
| Heart | Vessel | Spirit | Grief | Laughing incessantly |

¹¹⁵ *Huangdi neijing suwen jiaozhu*, vol. 2, "Yin-yang yingxiang dalunpian, 5," pp. 83-90.

¹¹⁶ *Huangdi neijing suwen jiaozhu*, vol. 2, "Yin-yang yingxiang dalunpian, 5" p.100. For a discussion on the view that the human body is a layered space, see Kuriyama, *The Expressiveness of the Body and the Divergence of Greek and Chinese Medicine*, pp. 164-165.

¹¹⁷ The Han physician Zhang Zhongjing claimed that "A great doctor will know the illness simply by observing the patient; a mediocre doctor will have to ask in order to know; an inexperienced doctor will have to take the pulse." See Zhong Zhongjing (張仲景, 150-219), *Shanghan lun* (傷寒論, *Treatise on Cold Damage Disorders*) (Taipei: Zhiyin Press, 1990), Part II, p. 623. Also, Zhang Zhongjing (aka. Chang Chung-ching), *Shāng-hán-lùn: On Cold Damage/Translation and Commentaries*, by Craig Mitchell, Féng Yè and Nigel Wiseman, Brookline, MA: Paradigm publications, 1999).

¹¹⁸ *Lingshu jing jiaoshi*, vol. 1, "Xieqi zangfu bingxing, 4" (邪氣臟腑病形第四, Formation of disorders caused by the invasion of viscera and residences by heteropathy, Section 4," p. 93.

| | | | | |
|--------|----------------|--------|---|--|
| Spleen | Camp <i>qi</i> | Intent | The four limbs are useless, and the five viscera are not in peace | Neither menses nor urine flow freely |
| Lung | <i>Qi</i> | Vigor | The nose will be blocked. The breath- <i>qi</i> will not flow freely, with shortness of breath- <i>qi</i> | Coughing loudly, a feeling of fullness in the chest, and breathing with the face directed upward |
| Kidney | Essence | Mind | Receding <i>qi</i> | The abdomen will be distended. The five viscera are not in peace. |

In other words, when doctors talked about “laughing,” they saw it as a sound that revealed the emotion of joy and happiness. Since it was a sound, it was obviously not a quiet smile but a laugh in which a person exhaled *qi*. Compared with ancient ritual classics that concerned whether people showed their teeth while laughing, the medical texts paid more attention to whether laughing was accompanied by sounds.¹¹⁹ A joyous emotion could certainly be expressed through a happy sound, but if the laughing was not controllable, it needed to be treated. Doctors also regarded excessive joy or sudden joy to be indicative of illnesses. As mentioned above, the *Neijing (Inner Canon)* claims that laughing became unstoppable when there was a surplus of the spirit and a fullness of the heart *qi*, apparently juxtaposing laughing with joy whilst opposing it to sorrow, and considering that the joy linked to laughing might sometimes be excessive. Also, the seventh-century *Bingyuanlun* states that a patient with spleen malaria may have an abnormal tendency to be excessively angry or happy. It claimed that, “speaking seriously and laughing by oneself” was symptomatic of the spleen disease, while a patient who had kidney malaria might “laugh with his mouth wide open.” Moreover, invaded by evil spirits or having had sexual intercourse with ghosts, women might experience the emotions of sorrow and joy intermittently, and would cry and laugh alternately. All of these notions show that such patients were not considered ill because they could not help but utter the sound, but because their joy was excessive and unexpected.

Table 4: Correlations between the five viscera and human emotions

(From “Comprehensive Discourse on Phenomena Corresponding to *Yin* and *Yang*, 5” in the *Basic Questions*)

| Direction | East | South | Center | West | North |
|-----------|------|-------|--------|------|-------|
|-----------|------|-------|--------|------|-------|

¹¹⁹ Ancient ritualist canons prescribe that one should not laugh to show one’s teeth if one’s parents are ill. See *Yili*, vol. 40, p.473, and *Liji* (禮記, *Book of Rites*) (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1955), vol. 2, p. 43.

Kong Yingda’s (孔穎達, 574-648) annotation in *Liji*, vol. 7, p. 129 claims, “In general, if one laughs out loud, the roots of his teeth will show; if one laughs moderately, only his teeth will show; and if one smiles subtly, his teeth will not show at all”; and that a gentleman only “smiles subtly when happiness arrives.” The point that these ritual classics make a distinction between “big” and “small” laughing on the basis of whether one’s teeth show or not suggests that, on the one hand, the emphasis of these classics is not on the sounds of laughter and, on the other, these texts do not think highly of laughing.

| | | | | | |
|----------------|------------|------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Heaven | Wind | Heat | Dampness | Dryness | Cold |
| Earth | Wood | Fire | Soil | Metal | Water |
| Physique | Sinews | Vessels | Flesh | Skin and body hair | Bone |
| Viscera | Liver | Heart | Spleen | Lungs | Kidneys |
| Colors | Greenish | Red | Yellow | White | Black |
| Tones | <i>Jue</i> | <i>Zhi</i> | <i>Gong</i> | <i>Shang</i> | <i>Yu</i> |
| Voices | Shouting | Laughing | Singing | Weeping | Groaning |
| Movements | Grasping | Anxiety | Hiccuping | Coughing | Shivering |
| Orifices | Eyes | Tongue | Mouth | Nose | Ears |
| Flavors | Sour | Bitter | Sweet | Acrid | Salty |
| States of mind | Anger | Joy | Pensiveness | Anxiety | Fear |

On the other hand, in the accounts of unstoppable laughter when a patient was experiencing pain caused by an infliction of the heart vessels, the medical texts tended to separate laughing from emotions of joy and happiness. Furthermore, in their descriptions of the symptoms of poisoning or stroke, the medical texts did not mention a patient's emotions. If a patient was experiencing bodily pains or was paralyzed in all four limbs, what exactly was the "laughing" that a doctor observed? This seems to relate to a kind of facial expression that involved movements of the cheeks and jowls, and was accompanied by noises.¹²⁰

3.2 Laughing as an appearance that involves facial movements

When doctors described a patient who was not necessarily joyful or happy as being "apt to laugh unstoppably," they seemed to be capturing some kind of facial expression or behavior that could not be controlled by the patient themselves. Take, for example, the only two extant Han-Tang anecdotes about inappropriate laughing caused by madness. The records do not particularly pay attention to whether the people involved were joyful and happy or not. In the Han anecdote, in order to relinquish his noble title to his elder brother, Wei Xuancheng 韋玄成 "pretends to be manic." One of the symptoms he faked was urinating while lying in bed and another was "laughing suddenly and talking nonsense." He hoped to demonstrate that he was unfit for the title by laughing unduly. Yet, although he performed well, most scholar-officials still suspected that the reason he was doing so was to give up the noble title to his elder brother. In the end, his attempt was in vain after an investigation conducted by the court proved that he was only faking

¹²⁰ Nonetheless, the description that patients with paralysis might experience such intense happiness that the corners of their mouth might move as if they were smiling also appeared in Darwin's works. See Charles Darwin, *The Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals, with a preface by Margaret Mead* (New York: Specially pub. For the Brunswick Subscription Co. by D. Appleton & co., 1915) p. 203. I thank Dr. Wang Wenji for providing the information on this source. Furthermore, patients suffering from epileptic diseases in the brain may also laugh endlessly. See Provine, *Laughter: A Scientific Investigation*, p. 154.

the illness.¹²¹ As mentioned above, the *Lingshu* and the *Nanjing* used laughing and crying to distinguish between mania and withdrawal; it was not until the *Jiayijing* that the two criteria were mixed together. The reason why the ancient medical classics claimed that manic people tended to laugh and sing inappropriately was because such patients were seen to be in high spirits. This anecdote shows that, at least until the Han, people still associated laughing with mania (rather than withdrawal).

However, laughing caused by madness did not necessarily mean that someone was feeling happy. An anecdote from the *Minghuang zalu* 明皇雜錄 (Miscellaneous records of the Tang Emperor Xuanzong) seems to indicate this:

During the Kaiyuan period (713–740), there was a famous doctor, Ji Ming 紀明, who was from the Wu area. He once taught some secret tips to the hermit Zhou Guang 周廣, claiming that one could know a patient's illness simply by observing his appearance and the ways in which he talked and laughed. What he described was very detailed, and he could diagnose before symptoms emerged. Zhou's fame reached the emperor, who summoned him to the capital, asking him to diagnose patients in the imperial harem. There was this palace lady who laughed, sang, wept, and cried everyday during sunset, as if she was suffering from mania. In addition, her feet could not touch the ground. Zhou looked at her and said, "She must have fallen on the ground when she exerted her strength after a big meal." Then Zhou gave her a mica decoction (*Yunmutang* 雲母湯) to drink, and asked her to sleep soundly. After she woke up, the illness was gone. When asked about it, she answered, "The other day we were having a three-day festival to celebrate Princess Taihua's birthday, and the palace was filled with sounds of songs and wind instruments. I was a main singer, and I was afraid that my voice would not be clear, so I ate a lot of pig knuckle soup and got very full. Then I sang at the banquet. After I had finished, I felt heat arising in my chest. I descended from a high place after playing on the observation platform. When I was only halfway through the stairs, I was hit by someone from behind and fell. I didn't come around for a long time, and from then on suffered from mania, and my feet could not touch the ground." The emperor was very impressed.¹²²

According to the *Miscellaneous Records of the Tang Emperor Xuanzong*, this palace lady had become ill due to her inappropriate diet and behavior, and her symptoms included having "laughed, sang, wept, and cried" every day, as well as "her feet could not touch the ground." The former were similar to the symptoms of madness that ancient medical classics describe. However, these classics do not mention whether such bouts of alternating sounds are temporally regular. While this patient was apt to laugh, she did not show any joy or happy emotion. The doctor in the story treated the patient with a mica (*yunmu*) decoction. According to *Shennong bencao jing* 神

¹²¹ Ban Gu (班固, 32-92), *Hanshu* (漢書, *History of the Former Han*) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962) vol. 73, "The Biography of Wei Xuancheng 韋玄成," pp. 3108-3109. For a discussion on the significance of this faked illness, see Li Jianmin, "Handai yibing yanjiu" (漢代移病研究, Beware of Pity: The Rhetoric of Illness in Han China), *Xin Shi Xue* 12.4(2001), p. 1-24.

¹²² Zheng Chuhui (鄭處誨, ca. 9th century), *Minghuang zalu* (明皇雜錄, *Miscellaneous Records of the Tang Emperor Xuanzong*) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1994), "Yiwen, 48, Zhou Guang zhi yishu" (逸文·四八·周廣之醫術, *Legendary Anecdotes: Section 48, Medical Expertise of Zhou Guang*," p. 54. Also see *Bencao gangmu*, vol. 8, "Jin shi" (金石, *The Category of Metals, Stones and Minerals*), the entry of 'Yunmu' (雲母, *Muscovite/Muscovitum*), p. 509, quoting Tang Shenwei (唐慎微, ca. 11th century).

農本草經 (The divine farmer's materia medica), *yunmu* "is sweet, plain and nontoxic. It improves the dead muscle on a body's surface. It treats febrile diseases caused by wind, with chills, fevers and vertigo as if the patient is on a boat or cart. It disperses pathogenic factors, pacifies the five viscera, reinforces sperm and improves eyesight. Long-time use of the drug makes one feel happy and enjoy a long life."¹²³ This account does not mention if it was effective for treating mania, but claims that it would rid of the heteropathy *qi*, calm the five viscera, and treat skin and dead flesh on a body. Perhaps this is why the famous doctor used it to treat the palace patient. The "dead muscle on a body's surface" that *yunmu* was supposed to heal may have referred to the problems that had made the lady's feet too weak to touch the ground, but it may also have included laughing, singing, weeping, and crying. If it was just used to resolve the feet issue, then laughing may have not concerned the doctor here. It would be similar to what was mentioned earlier—how the Dunhuang text *The Auxiliary Guides to Treat Visceras and Residences with Drugs* listed laughing in its descriptions of symptoms but did not specify how effective its recommended cure of a "heart-releasing decoction" was. If the "dead muscle on a body's surface" here indeed included the daily noises, then what the doctor observed as laughing in this case may have actually been the palace lady's involuntary facial movements.

Laughing unstopably does not necessarily mean that someone is feeling happy. The patients described in *Bingyuanlun* claimed that pain extended to their torso and limbs, while *Qianjinfang* holds that patients who had suffered from a stroke may laugh endlessly and their four limbs be paralyzed. The woman patient described in the *Taiping Shenghuifang* might still "laugh excessively" while she was suffering depletion due to menstruation or childbirth. It is therefore evident that the "laughing" described in these cases when a person was in pain or losing his/her senses did not relate to feelings of happiness. Rather, it was most likely a kind of facial expression or bodily movement that involved both muscle and skin. The ancient Chinese may not have had a comparable concept of muscle to that in Western anatomy, but they could still see that human actions involved movements of the head, face, limbs and body.¹²⁴ Yet, in traditional Chinese medicine, these movements were primarily understood as being carried out by the flow of *qi*. Thus, laughing, whether caused by strong and happy emotions, or as an uncontrollable bodily reaction, indicated the circulation of *qi* and, sometimes, its loss.

4. Laughing, *qi*, and life nourishment

Many scholars have studied the body conception of *qi* in traditional Chinese medicine. Based upon the view that this *qi* connected the inner and the outer, as well as nature and human, laughing was not only perceived as a sound or facial expression, but also as indicating the flow of *qi*. This becomes clear if we look at contemporary interpretations of "unlocking the jowl" (*jiēyī* 解

¹²³ Tao Hongjing (陶弘景, 452-536), *Bencao jing jizhu* (本草經集注, *Collective Annotations of Materia Medica*), Shang Zhijun 尚志鈞 and Shang Yuansheng 尚元勝, eds. (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1994), vol. 2, "Yushi sanpin, shangpin, Yunmu" (玉石三品·上品·雲母, Three classes of jade stone: first class: muscovite), p. 134.

¹²⁴ For discussion of the history of Western medical views on muscles, and its difference from Chinese medicine, see Kuriyama, *The Expressiveness of the Body and the Divergence of Greek and Chinese Medicine*, Chapter 3 "Muscularity and Identity," pp. 111-152.

頤). In order to avoid “losing the essence and wasting the *qi*” (*wangjing feiqi* 亡精費氣), traditional doctors not only suggested that people should avoid laughing too much while recuperating from an injury, but also advised refraining from laughing in general to remain in good health.

4.1 Joy leads to the relaxation of the *qi*, and can cause a dislocated jaw

If people were apt to laugh endlessly, they might end up like Lu Yun, who lost his balance and fell into water; they may also laugh so hard that their lower jaw was dislocated. What later medical texts called “*jieyi*” (unlocking the jaw) is not found in those from early imperial China. However, this term has been used as an adjective ever since the Han. “The Biography of Kuang Heng 匡衡” in the *Hanshu* (漢書, *History of the Former Han*) mentions that Kuang’s comments on the *Shijing* (詩經, *Classics of Odes*) could unlock people’s jaws. Ru Chun 如淳 from the third century noted in his annotation that “[This means it] makes people laugh without being able to stop.”¹²⁵ Later scholars, however, had a different understanding of the phrase. Zhou Mi (周密, 1232–1298) interpreted the meaning of “*jieyi*” in his *Qidong yeyu* 齊東野語 (Wild talk from East of the Qi) as follows:

Kuang Heng was enthusiastic about learning, and was unusually energetic. Scholars said, “Do not comment on the *Classics of Odes*, Kuang Heng is coming. When Kuang comments on the *Classics of Odes*, he unlocks people’s jaws.” That is to say, he was so good at commentating that he made his listeners feel so happy so their jaws were unlocked. Till this day, we describe a person overwhelmed by joy as “unable to close his jaws.” That is what it meant. Our contemporary Sheng Du 盛度 passed the highest level of the Civil Service Exam as the second top examinee; his father was so overwhelmed by joy that he unlocked his jaws and died. When Fan Ji 樊紀 of Qishan County passed the Civil Service Exam, his father was also so happy that his jaws were dislocated, and he uttered sounds like those of a broken urn. According to the medical classics, “Joy leads to relaxation of the *qi*, which may cause jaw dislocation.” This surely is not a joking matter.¹²⁶

It seems that Zhou Mi tended to believe the story about Kuang Heng. On the one hand, he gave two contemporary examples to show that overwhelming joy could cause dislocated jaws that resulted in either death or injury. On the other hand, he cited medical texts to explain that the reason was because “Joy leads to relaxation of the *qi*.” However, *Miscellaneous Records of the Bean Garden* 菽園雜記 (*Shuyuan zaji*) by Lu Rong 陸容 of the Ming dynasty disagreed. Lu claimed in his work that, “In the stories about Sheng and Fan, the strange [thing] was caused by rare ecstasy; how could this extremity happen to Kuang’s listeners?”¹²⁷ That is, Lu held that the term “unlocking the jaws” was only used to describe Kuang Heng’s ability to comment, not to indicate that the listeners’ jaws had been disjoined by intense laughing.

¹²⁵ *Hanshu*, vol. 81, p. 3331.

¹²⁶ Zhou Mi (周密, 1232–1298), *Qidong yeyu*, (齊東野語, *Wild Talk from East of the Qi*) ed. Zhang Maopeng 張茂鵬 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), vol. 6, p. 102.

¹²⁷ Lu Rong (陸容, 1436–1494), *Shuyuan zaji* (菽園雜記, *Miscellaneous Records of the Bean Garden*) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), vol. 13, pp. 158–159.

When used as an adjective, since the Han dynasty the term “*jieyi*” has mainly been employed to describe pleasant literature. “The Biography of Confucian Scholars” (*rulin zhuan*, 儒林傳) in the *Jinshu* uses the phrase “*jieyi feibian* 解頤飛辯 (flying debates that disjoint the jaws) to describe the literary trend after the Han.¹²⁸ Liu Yao 劉杳 of the Liang (502–557) composed two *zan* proses and sent them to Shen Yue (沈約, 441–513) for his comments. In his reply, Shen Yue praised Liu Yao’s writing as “[being able to] unlock one’s jaws and cure one’s illness (*jieyi yuji* 解頤愈疾).”¹²⁹ Emperor Zhong of the Western Liang (555–587) was said to have been able to comment on *Laozi* with debates and satire that would “make listeners look at one another and unlock their jaws (*xianggu jieyi* 相顧解頤).”¹³⁰ At the command of the crown prince, Lu Yu of the Chen dynasty (557–589) copied and compiled literary classics, dying before he had completed the task. The crown prince mourned his death, claiming that Lu Yu was so erudite that people who knew about him were convinced by his points, and those who listened to him “unlocked their jaws” (*tingzhe jieyi* 聽者解頤).¹³¹ That is to say, his exemplary writings and speeches could make people so joyful that, instead of just giving approving smiles, they might burst into violent laughter that could dislocate their jaws. “The Monographs of Books” (*Jingji zhi*, 經籍志) in the *Suishu* (隋書, *Book of Sui*) includes the two volumes of *Jieyi* 解頤 by Yang Jiesong 陽玠松. These are juxtaposed with *Xiaoyuan* 笑苑 and *Shishuo* 世說 under the category “*Xiaoshuo* 小說 (short stories).”¹³² In other words, *jieyi* was always related to laughing. Although its effects may have been embarrassing, it often involved joyous situations.

Nonetheless, the word “*jieyi*” is not found in the extant medical texts from between the Han and the Tang dynasties. *Jieyi* as a symptom that required medical treatment seems to first appear in *Yi shuo* (醫說, *On Medicine*) by Zhang Gao (張杲, 1149–1227). To treat a dislocated jaw, the Song dynasty doctor advised that “one should not push it up; rather, one should use *nanxing* 南星 powder blended with ginger juice, and rub the mixture on the patient’s cheeks. The dislocated jaw will return to its place overnight.”¹³³ *Tian nanxing* (天南星, Jack-in-the-pulpit tuber) was also known as *huzhang* 虎掌 (tiger claw). According to *The Divine Farmer’s Materia Medica*, “it is good for relieving heart pain and dissolving stagnation of pathogenic cold and heat, accumulation and assemblage, and abdominal mass. It treats tendons damaged by contraction or paralysis. It facilitates the water duct.”¹³⁴ Su Song 蘇頌 of the Song dynasty wrote that, “People of the Tang dynasty often used it to treat strokes and poisonous saliva, and people from the later periods

¹²⁸ *Jinshu*, vol. 91, p. 2367.

¹²⁹ Yao Cha (姚察, 533–606) and Yao Silian (姚思廉, 557–637) eds., *Liangshu* (梁書, *Book of the Liang*) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), vol. 50, pp. 715–716.

¹³⁰ *Taiping yulan*, vol. 615, p. 2895b, quoting *Liangshu*. But *Liangshu*, vol. 5, p. 134, recording this event does not specify the emperor’s sarcastic style that made the listeners laugh outloud.

¹³¹ Yao Cha and Yao Silian, eds., *Chenshu* (陳書, *Book of the Chen*) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), vol. 34, pp. 463–464.

¹³² Wei Zheng (魏徵, 580–643) and Zhangsun Wuji (長孫無忌, 594–659) eds., *Suishu* (隋書, *Book of the Sui*) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), vol. 34, p. 1011.

¹³³ *Bencao gangmu*, vol. 17, “Caobu, 6” (草部六, The Category of Herbs, 6), ‘Huzhang/Tian nanxing’ (虎掌 天南星, Tiger Claw, Jack-in-the-pulpit tuber), p. 1190.

¹³⁴ *Bencao jing jizhu*, vol. 5, “Caomu xiapin” (草木下品, Herbs and Trees, Inferior Class), ‘Huzhang’ (虎掌, Tiger claw), p. 373.

adopted the prescription, but called it by another name.”¹³⁵ Li Shizhen claimed, in his *Bencao gangmu* (本草綱目, *The Compendium of Materia Medica*), that “*Huzhang*, also known as *Tiannanxing*, functions on the lung vessels of the hand major *yin* and spleen vessel of the foot major *yin*. It is pungent in taste and tingling, therefore is good for dispersing invasions of pathogenic wind and for dissolving blood stasis. It is warm and drying in quality, therefore it can overcome humidity and get rid of profuse saliva. It is intense in quality and toxicity, therefore it can attack accumulation and eliminate swelling, it is good for treating skew mouth and ulcerous tongue.”¹³⁶

From the perspective of modern anatomy, violent laughing could result in a dislocated jaw because the joints and bones had become misplaced. However, traditional Chinese people had their own way of looking at this. To explain how someone’s ecstasy may lead to a dislocated jaw, Zhou Mi asserts that it was because “joy relaxes the *qi*.” His statement does not mention laughing, only explaining the cause from the perspective of *qi*. It overlooks the facial expressions and body movements that Ru Chun associated with “unstoppable laughing” and does not include any comments on muscles or bones. Zhang Gao suggested that *tian nanxing* (jack-in-the-pulpit tuber) should be applied to return the disjointed lower jaw back to its original place. Also, Li Shizhen’s emphasis was not on physical therapy, which aimed to move the joint back, but on theories of *qi* that stressed the importance of getting rid of accumulation and enhancing circulation. If we look at extant medical texts, the view that “joy relaxes the *qi*” first appears in “Discourse on Pain” in the *Suwen*, which juxtaposes the view that “joy relaxes the *qi*” with eight other causes of illnesses:

The Yellow Emperor says, “Good! I know that the hundred diseases are generated by *qi*. When one is angry, one’s *qi* rises. When one is joyous, one’s *qi* relaxes. When one is sad, one’s *qi* dissipates. When one is afraid, one’s *qi* reduces. In the case of cold, one’s *qi* collects; in the case of heat, one’s *qi* flows out. When one is frightened, one’s *qi* is in disorder. When one is exhausted, one’s *qi* is wasted. When one is pensive, one’s *qi* lumps together. These nine *qi* are not identical. Which diseases generate these situations?”¹³⁷

A modern annotation to the *Suwen* explains that all these nine *qi* phenomena refer to illnesses, and that the word “relaxes” refers to being “slowly dispersed without being able to gather back.”¹³⁸ The above quote does not suggest that the relaxation of *qi* would lead to a dislocated jaw. In addition, to answer the Yellow Emperor’s question about the pathological mechanism of *qi*, Qibo 岐伯 replied, “When one is joyous, one’s *qi* is in harmony and one’s mind is unimpeded. The camp *qi* and the guard *qi* pass freely. Hence, the *qi* relaxes.”¹³⁹ The other eight phenomena

¹³⁵ *Bencao gangmu*, vol. 17, p. 1185.

¹³⁶ *Bencao gangmu*, vol. 17, p. 1187. Modern research on Chinese herbs has pointed out that traditional medical texts contained at least five pinellia plants labeled as “Tiger claw” or “Tian nanxing.” Ingredients from these plants may function to treat symptoms related to shock and to get rid of sputum. See Research Institute of Pharmacy, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences ed., *Zhongyao zhi* (中藥誌) (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1982), “Tian nanxing,” pp. 25-37.

¹³⁷ *Huangdi neijing suwen jiaozhu*, vol. 11, “Jutonglun, 39” (舉痛論第三十九, Discourse on Pain, 39), p. 510.

¹³⁸ *Huangdi neijing suwen jiaozhu*, vol. 11, “Discourse on Pain,” p. 511, Note 3.

¹³⁹ *Huangdi neijing suwen jiaozhu*, vol. 11, “Discourse on Pain, section 39,” pp. 510-511: “Qibo says, ‘When one is angry, the *qi* moves contrary to its regular course. In severe cases, patients spit blood and there is outflow of undigested food. Hence, the *qi* rises. When one is joyous, the *qi* is in harmony and the mind is unimpeded. The camp *qi* and the guard *qi* pass freely. Hence, the *qi* relaxes. When one is sad, the heart connection is tense. The lobes of the lung spread open and rise and the upper burner is impassable. The camp *qi* and the

may have led to various symptoms such as hematemesis, vomiting, asthma, and perspiration. Compared to these, *qi*-relaxation induced by joy did not actually seem to be such a bad thing.

Although Chao Yuanfang agreed, in his *Bingyuanlun*, with the view that “all illnesses result from the *qi*,” and he copied the pathological mechanism that the *Suwen* used to describe the nine phenomena, he did not elucidate why the *qi*-relaxation induced by joy was a bad thing.¹⁴⁰ In his *Xiaopin fang* 小品方 (Small recipes) Chen Yanzhi 陳延之 of the Liu-Song period (420–479) elucidated how various *qi* may harm the body. When Chen prescribed a “seven *qi* pill” (*qiqiwan* 七氣丸), which comprised seventeen ingredients including rhubarb, he identified different problems with the seven *qi* of coldness, anger, joy, anxiety, resentment, worry, and heat:

The seven *qi* pill is intended to treat the seven *qi*, which include the *qi* of coldness, the *qi* of anger, the *qi* of joy, the *qi* of anxiety, the *qi* of resentment, the *qi* of worry, and the *qi* of heat. All these seven *qi* can cause illnesses through accumulation. They become so hardened as if they have rotted in the abdomen. The patient suffers from heartache and feels agitated and resentful, unable to eat or drink. The illness comes and goes sporadically, and each bout is accompanied by violent pain. The *qi* of coldness causes vomiting and the feeling of fullness in the stomach. The *qi* of heat causes a feeling of confusion, and the patient feels dizzy and often loses his essence. The *qi* of anger is overwhelming, upwardly shaking the heart with heated sickness; the patient’s breath becomes short and almost stops, and he is restless. The *qi* of resentment gathers under the heart, causing the loss of appetite. The one suffering from the *qi* of joy cannot walk fast or stand for a long time. The one suffering the *qi* of anxiety cannot take up hard labor, and he becomes uneasy when lying down. The one suffering from the *qi* of worry is forgetful; if he leaves something around, he will not remember where he has put it; his limbs become swollen and cannot be lifted. The pill can also cure the invasion of wind in women who leave bed too early after having given birth.¹⁴¹

Here Chen Yanzhi’s view that the *qi* of joy could affect one’s ability to walk and stand seems to echo the symptoms of “singing, laughing, weeping, and crying” and “her feet could not touch the ground” that were mentioned above when discussing mania. However, Chen Yanzhi does not mention if joy relaxed *qi*, and he considered the *qi* of joy to be no more serious than the other six type of *qi*. Still, in the medical accounts from the Han to Tang, “the *qi* of joy” does not seem to

guard *qi* do not disperse. Heat *qi* is in the center. Hence the *qi* dissipates. When one is in fear, the essence withdraws. When it withdraws, the upper burner becomes closed. When it is closed, the *qi* turns back. When it turns back, the lower burner becomes distended. Hence the *qi* does not move. When one is cold, the interstice structures close and the *qi* does not move. Hence, the *qi* collects. When one is hot, the interstice structures open and the camp *qi* and guard *qi* pass through. Sweat flows out profusely. Hence, *qi* flows out. When one is frightened, the heart has nothing to lean on, the spirit has nowhere to return, and one’s deliberations have nowhere to settle. Hence, the *qi* is in disorder. When one is exhausted, one’s breath is panting and sweat leaves the body. Both inside and outside, the limits are exceeded. Hence, the *qi* is wasted. When one is pensive, the heart has a place to be, the spirit has a place to turn to and the proper *qi* stays at one location and does not move. Hence the *qi* lumps together.” For this translation, I have consulted Unschuld, *Huangdi neijing Suwen* vol1. Chapter 39, “Discourse on Pain,” p.594-597.

¹⁴⁰ *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu*, vol. 13, “qibing zhuhou · Shangqihou” (氣病諸候 · 上氣候, Symptoms of the Diseases of the Qi: Upper Qi Symptoms), p. 391.

¹⁴¹ For the “seven *qi* pill”, see Chen Yanzhi 陳延之, annotated by Gao Wenzhu 高文鑄, *Xiaopin fang* 小品方 (Beijing: Zhongguo zhongyiyao chubanshe, 1995), pp. 36-37, also cited in Tanba Yasuyori, *Ishinpo*, vol. 10.

be anything positive, and nor does laughing. In fact, when treating physical wounds, most medical accounts warn against talking and laughing:

Geshifang 葛氏方 (*Recipes of Mr. Ge*) says: he who suffers from physical wounds should not get angry, talk loudly, laugh out loud, think about coitus, exert physical strength, eat too much salty or sour food, drink, or eat hot soup. All these will increase the pain. He can only return to his old habits about a hundred days or even half a year after the wound heals.¹⁴²

In its treatment of mouth injuries and harelips, *Geshifang* warns that a patient should avoid “talking and laughing out loud” for a hundred days.¹⁴³ In treating hernia caused by lifting heavy weights, it also claims that, during convalescence, patients should not talk, laugh or do anything to exert their physical strength.¹⁴⁴ *Qianjinfang* holds a similar view, stating even more emphatically that a patient who is recovering from an injury “should not lift weights, speak loudly, talk angrily, or laugh out loud.”¹⁴⁵ Two aspects explain these warnings. One the one hand, patients should refrain from all these actions to avoid further tearing their wound, and helping it to heal better. On the other hand, it was not only to preserve their body structure and the functions of their organs, but also to “store up the *qi*.” In such accounts, talking and laughing were often juxtaposed, showing that laughing was not only an acoustical activity but also a physical movement that affected people’s facial expressions as well as the *qi* in their viscera. Just like other acts that are accompanied by sound – such as shouting, crying, singing, and groaning – laughing, through inhalation and exhalation of the *qi*, was believed to have an impact on the five viscera, which is why a patient should be particularly careful about it.

4.2 Laughing less to nourish one’s life

Talking and laughing are activities that engage a lot of energy. Therefore, many ancient medical texts stress that laughing too much is not appropriate and might hinder the cultivation of one’s health. The *Lingshu* claims that, “Those who are happy and joyous, their spirit will disperse and no longer be stored.” It further states that, “The lung: excessive joy and happiness will harm its vigor (*po* 魄), and a harmed *po* might lead to madness.”¹⁴⁶ Evidently, joyous laughing was not

¹⁴² *Ishinpo*, vol. 18, p. 14b, “Zhi jinchiang jinji, 13” (禁金創禁忌第十三, Forbiddenness to cure the incised wound, Section 13”. Similar recipes from Mr. Ge were also quoted in Wang Tao, *Waitai miyao*, vol. 29, p. 784b.

¹⁴³ *Ishinpo*, vol. 5, p. 33b, “Zhi chunxinpo fang, 41” (治唇掀破方第四十一, Prescription for mouth injuries caused by heat, section 41” citing the *Geshi fang*. A case of such treatment was recorded in Fang Xuanling, *Jinshu*, vol. 85, pp. 2217-2218. It says that a certain Mr. Wei Yongzhi was born with a cleft lip and felt ugly. He heard that Yin Zhongkan, the Regional Inspector of Jing, had a famous physician on his staff that could cure him. He visited Yin and was introduced to the physician. After the physician repaired his mouth, Wei was asked to “eat porridge for a hundred days, and not to talk or laugh.” Wei obeyed the directions until he was completely healed.

¹⁴⁴ *Ishinpo*, vol. 7, p. 9ab, “Zhi yintui fang, 8” (治陰頹方第八, Prescription for hernia, Section 8), citing *Geshi fang*.

¹⁴⁵ *Beiji qianjin yaofang*, vol. 24, p. 443a. *Qianjin yifang*, vol. 28, “Zhenjiu, part 2” (針灸下, Acupuncture and Moxibustion, Part 2,” p. 800, “Rectal prolapse, Section 7,” also holds: “should not physically exert himself, service hardly, talk loud, burst into anger, laugh outloud.”

¹⁴⁶ *Lingshu jing jiaoshi*, vol. 2, “Ben Shen, 8” (本神第八, The Original Shen, Section 8), pp. 177 and 179.

necessarily healthier than emotions such as fear, anger, sorrow or worry, and therefore was not particularly favored by classical medical experts. According to Ge Hong, excessive joy and happiness were harmful, and talking and laughing for a long time were also bad. He compared the activity with the following: “thinking beyond what one’s talents can reach,” “lifting a weight that is beyond one’s capacity,” “being sorrowing and pining away,” “being desirous,” “having an irregular bedtime,” “exerting oneself at archery,” “being drunk and vomiting,” “lying down after a big meal,” “jumping while walking and breathing hard,” and “lacking coital harmony.” All of these were considered harmful for nurturing good health.¹⁴⁷ *Yangsheng fang* 養生方 (Recipes for life nourishment) from the Six Dynasties claimed that: “laughing too much causes the displacement of the kidney and pain in the lower back,” and was therefore the origin of “qi illness.”¹⁴⁸ In sum, *Bingyuanlun* by Chao Yuanfang of the Sui dynasty, *Qianjinfang* by Sun Simiao of the Tang dynasty, and *Waitai miyao* 外台秘要 (Essential secrets of the imperial library) by Wang Tao all cautioned against laughing too much, claiming that “excessive laughing would twist the kidney and cause pain in the lower back.”¹⁴⁹

Quoting an earlier text, the *Shaoyou jing* 少有經 (Canon of fewness), Zhang Zhan 張湛 of the Northern Wei (386–534) suggested in his *Yangsheng yaoji* 養生要集 (Essential collection for life nourishment) that one should “practice fewness [moderation] in twelve aspects”:

[One should practice] fewness in thinking, in yearning, in desiring, in working, in talking, in laughing, in worrying, in feeling happy, in feeling joyous, in feeling angry, in having hobbies, and in having dislikes. These twelve “fewnesses” are the principles of life nourishment. Thinking too much will drain one’s spirit and yearning too much will weaken one’s will. Desiring too much will hurt one’s wisdom, and working too much will exhaust one’s physics. Talking too much will disturb the *qi*, and laughing too much will harm the viscera. Worrying too much will absorb the heart, and excessive happiness will lead one’s intent to overflow. Excessive joy will result in confusion, and excessive anger will unsettle the vessels. Having too many hobbies will make one obsessive, and having too many dislikes will make one feel anxious all the time without a moment of joy. If one does not get rid of the twelve “too muches,” one is bound to lose one’s life. The one who is neither too “few” nor too “much” is approaching immortality.¹⁵⁰

Here being “neither too few nor too much” was regarded as the benchmark people should use to adjust their emotions, including joyous laughing. Medical prescriptions that stressed life nourishment advocated overcoming “negative emotions” such as being pensive, desirous,

¹⁴⁷ Ge Hong, edited by Wang Ming 王明, *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* (抱朴子內篇校釋, Master who Embraces Simplicity) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), “Jiyan” (極言, Mighty talks, Section 13), p. 223.

¹⁴⁸ *Ishinpo*, vol. 6, “Zhi cuyaotong fang, 7” (治卒腰痛方第七, Prescription for treating sudden waist pain, Section 7), p. 12a quotes *Yangsheng fang* 養生方. *Yangsheng fang* is not recorded in the book catalogues in the standard histories of *Suishu*, *Jiu Tangshu* or *Xin Tangshu*. A certain *Yangxingfang* 養性方 is however recorded in the 9th *Nihonkoku genzaisho mokuroku* (日本國見在書目錄, Catalogue of Contemporary Japanese Books) and some scholars hold that it may be the Chinese *Yangsheng fang*. See Ota Tenrei 太田典禮, Li Yongzhi trans. Zhang Liwen proofread, *Yixinfang zhongriwen jieshuo* (醫心方中日文解說, Chinese and Japanese explanations of Yixinfang), “Yinyongshu jieshuo” (引用書解說, References introduction), p. 21.

¹⁴⁹ *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu*, vol. 5, p. 144. *Waitai miyao*, vol. 17, p. 467a; here it quotes *Bingyuan lun*, and claims that the view from the *Qianjinfang* is the same.

¹⁵⁰ *Ishinpo*, vol. 27, “The Cultivation of Life: The Body, Section 1,” p. 2b.

worrisome, and resentful. In addition, they also recommended avoiding excessive talking, laughing, and feeling joyous and happy, which may disturb the *qi*, harmed the viscera, overwhelm one's intent, and even cause confusion. People were advised to abide by these rules in everyday life, and pay special attention to these aspects if they wanted to nurture their life to reach immortality. Tao Hongjing warned that, "both joy and anger hurt our will, while sorrow and sadness harm our character," regarding these emotions as the primary enemy for Daoist practitioners.¹⁵¹ The monk-physician Tan Luan (476–542, 曇鸞) held that the four major "disorders" could be divided into two groups: those caused by outside factors, and those by inside factors. Coldness, heat, hunger, weakness, satiation, exhaustion, and exertion were outside factors, while fame, profit, joy, anger, sound, sight, taste, flavor, thought, and worry were the inside factors.¹⁵² In addition, the *Yangsheng yaoji* claims that:

If one takes up complete fasting by living only on *qi* and talisman powers, then one must live serenely in a remote area. He must be calm and peaceful, and cannot let anyone offend or startle him. If not, he may lose his mind... Excessive talking, laughing, and physical activities may lead to the loss of essence and waste of the *qi*, and should be seriously avoided.¹⁵³

To juxtapose talking and laughing, the *Shaoyoujing* claims that talking too much will disturb the *qi*, and laughing too much will hurt the viscera. Here "disturbing the *qi*" may either describe the way a person has difficulty breathing or the flow in his/her body is affected; both are harmful to one's health. While the *Shaoyoujing* does not specify which viscera will be affected by excessive laughing, another text cited in the *Yangsheng yaoji*, the *Zhongjing* (中經, *Canon of Mediums*), believes that it will harm the lungs and kidney:

The Canon of Mediums claims that one should refrain from talking and laughing and keep one's voice low. Voices are often raised when one debates, argues, satirizes, and gossips. When one encounters such a situation, one should try to be modest and not to compete with others. If one talks and laughs too much, one's lungs and kidney will be harmed, and one's spirit disturbed."¹⁵⁴

Judging by the correlation presented in the *Lingshu*,¹⁵⁵ what the *Canon of Mediums* is cautioning against here are the depletion of the *qi*, which is paired with the lungs, and the exhaustion of *jing*, which is paired with the kidney, and it therefore echoes the concerns raised in the *Canon of Fewness*. To put both statements in the context of life nourishment, a disturbed mind

¹⁵¹ Tao Hongjing, *Zhengao* 真誥 (Shanghai: Shangwu yingshuguan, 1939), vol. 5 "Zhenmingshou, 甄命授", p. 66.

¹⁵² Zhang Junfang (張君房, ca. 1001), *Yunji qiqian* (雲笈七籤, *Seven Tablets in the Cloudy Satchel*) (Shanghai: Hanfenlou reprint of the Ming Qingzhenguan version, 1929), vol. 59. *Yunji qiqian* is quoting *Tanluan fashi tiaopi fa* (曇鸞法師調氣法, *Master Tanluan's Methods to Adjust the Qi*).

¹⁵³ *Ishinpo*, vol. 27, "Yangsheng, Yongqi, 4" (養生·用氣第四, *The Cultivation of Life: The Use of the Qi*, Section 4), p. 21b.

¹⁵⁴ *Ishinpo*, vol. 27, "Yangsheng, yanyu, 8" (養生·言語第八, *The Cultivation of Life: Speeches*, Section 8), p. 27b.

¹⁵⁵ *Huangdi neijing suwen jiaozhu*, vol. 20, "Wuchangzheng dalunpian, 70," (五常政大論篇, *Comprehensive Discourse on the Five Regular Policies*, Section 70), pp. 926-927. Here I have consulted Unschuld's translation of the title, see *Huangdi neijing Suwen* vol.2. p.285

was perceived as being triggered by emotional changes, and the way to avoid excessive emotions was “not to compete with others.” In other words, the best course of action was to avoid problematic human interactions. Sun Simiao, in his treatise on life nourishment, set out the methods to achieve exactly this.

Sun Simiao believed that the secret of life nourishment depended upon a way of life in which “one often modestly exerts oneself, but never does so in an exhaustive way.” This applied not only to the body, but also one’s emotions. A person should not walk, stand, sit, lie down, look, or listen excessively; moreover, one should always avoid being pensive, sorrowful, desirous, and resentful. Not just extreme anger and fear, but also undue talking and laughing should be shied away from. Sun agreed with Ge Hong’s views by warning against excessive joy and happiness, as well as talking and laughing for too long.¹⁵⁶ He also echoed the *Canon of Fewness* by insisting on the “twelve fewnesses,” considering that excessive talking, laughing and thinking would cut short one’s life expectancy.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, he asserted that life nourishment entailed carefully choosing the right time and space for talking and laughing: one should not talk and laugh too much while lying in bed, or talk while walking, or talking out loud against cold air. These precautions all aimed to prevent “the loss of *qi*,” and were consistent with the concerns raised in the above-mentioned *Yangsheng yaoji*.¹⁵⁸ In order to avoid excessive talking and laughing to preserve the essence and the *qi*, it was considered advisable to refrain from human interactions. Sun Simiao maintained that, in order to nourish one’s life, one should live in a reclusive fashion, “having one’s sons take care of the household without oneself being concerned with family issues.” Furthermore, he deemed it better to live alone, fifty or a hundred *li* away from home, with only one or two disciples to take care of one’s daily chores. If visitors came for an outing, the farthest distance one walked around should be limited to “a hundred steps” away from the house and, if the visitors just came to chat, one should be careful to ensure that “the conversation will be kept succinct and interesting, without becoming excessive.”¹⁵⁹ In order to achieve longevity, he asserted that one needed not only “fewness,” but even “nothingness.” That is to say, one should eventually eschew all social activities and eradicate all emotions if possible:

The way to cultivate longevity is to avoid the following: action and exertion, lifting heavy things, walking fast, joy and anger, looking too much, listening too much, concentrating too much, thinking too much, sighing, shouting, groaning, singing, crying, feeling sorrowful, feeling mournful, going to weddings or funerals, hosting visitors, attending banquets, and

¹⁵⁶ *Qianjin fang*, vol. 27, “Yangxing · Yangxingxu, 1” (養性 · 養性序第一, The Cultivation of Nature: Preface to the Cultivation of Nature, Section 1), p. 477b.

¹⁵⁷ *Qianjin fang*, vol. 27, “Yangxing · Daolin yangxing, 2” (養性 · 道林養性第二, The Cultivation of Nature: Daoist Cultivation of Nature, Section 2), p. 478b.

¹⁵⁸ *Qianjin fang*, vol. 27, “Yangxing · Daolin Yangxing, 2” p. 479b: “One should not speak while sleeping. The five viscera are like bells, which cannot make a sound if they are not hung up. One should not speak while walking and, if one wants to speak, he has to stop walking first, for speaking while walking may lead to the loss of *qi*. On the winter solstice day, one can converse but not talk. To talk is to utter words spontaneously while to converse is to answer others. If someone is speaking to you, you have to answer. That is, one should not talk, but even if one needs to converse, one should still refrain from opening one’s mouth widely to avoid contracting a cold”.

¹⁵⁹ *Qianjin yifang*, vol. 14, “Tuiju, Yangxing, 5” (退居 · 養性第五, Retirement: The Cultivation of Nature, Section 5), p. 400.

drinking to one's content. If one can abide by these rules, one will not suffer from illnesses and can achieve longevity with a clear mind.¹⁶⁰

In sum, both the medical canons from antiquity and the medical experts of early imperial China agreed that, in order to nourish one's life, it was important to always refrain from excessive talking and laughing as well as any related joyous emotions. They agreed that, while unstoppable laughing was surely a disorder that needed treatment, usual laughing out loud should also be contained. Those who wanted to achieve longevity should treat joyous laughing just as they treated sorrowful weeping and angry shouting—avoiding them all.

5. Conclusion: a culture of life nourishment that considers all emotions inadvisable and laughing futile

While Lu Yun's uncontrollable laughing did not result in heartache or paralysis, and it was not diagnosed or treated by doctors, it was still referred to as a "laughing disorder" by Lu Ji. This chapter began with the anecdote about Lu Yun, with the aim to investigate the ways in which ancient medical classics and medieval prescriptions diagnosed and treated laughter-related disorders. This study has found that, in the course of history, laughing was regarded more and more as a symptom and treated as a sign in the diagnosis of illnesses. While the ancient medical classics mainly cited heart *qi* problems and mania-madness as the reasons for incessant laughing, medical texts between the third and the seventh centuries listed a variety of issues that were liable to lead to laughing, including withdrawal-madness or poisoning, as well as malaria in the viscera. The medical prescriptions from the Tang-Song periods spilt a lot of ink on women's laughing disorders, which they alleged were caused by having sexual intercourse with ghosts or by the strain of childbirth. To treat various illnesses that involved unstoppable laughing, medical experts suggested methods such as needling to release blood, acupuncture to readjust the flow of *qi*, moxibustion to exorcise ghosts, and herbal medicine, sometimes cooked with different kinds of meats.

The laughing that doctors observed in patients was either the sound uttered as an expression of joyous and happy emotion, or facial expressions involving the opening of the mouth and other bodily movements. In either case, the body conception established since the Han dynasty saw laughing as resulting not from the movement of muscles and bones, but from the action of *qi*. Some modern research points out that human beings mainly exhale while laughing, which is quite different from chimpanzees' laughter, that engages both exhalation and inhalation (see Figure 3). It proposes that such a difference explains why human beings can speak, while chimpanzees cannot.¹⁶¹ Although traditional medical texts never associated laughing with the ability to speak, prescriptions on life nourishment did juxtapose talking and laughing and held that, in order to cultivate longevity, people should do both modestly so as to not "lose essence

¹⁶⁰ *Qianjin yifang*, vol. 12, "Yangxing, Yangxing dali, 3" (養性·養性大例第三, The Cultivation of Nature: Grand Examples of Cultivation Methods, Section 3), pp. 366-367.

¹⁶¹ For more discussion, see Provine, *Laughter: A Scientific Investigation*, Chapter 5 "Chimpanzee Laughter, Speech Evolution, and Paleohumorology," pp. 75-98. See Figure 3 for the different ways to produce sounds when human beings and chimpanzees laugh.

and the *qi*." Literati from the thirteenth century even claimed that, "joy relaxes the *qi*, making one's lower jaw disjointed."

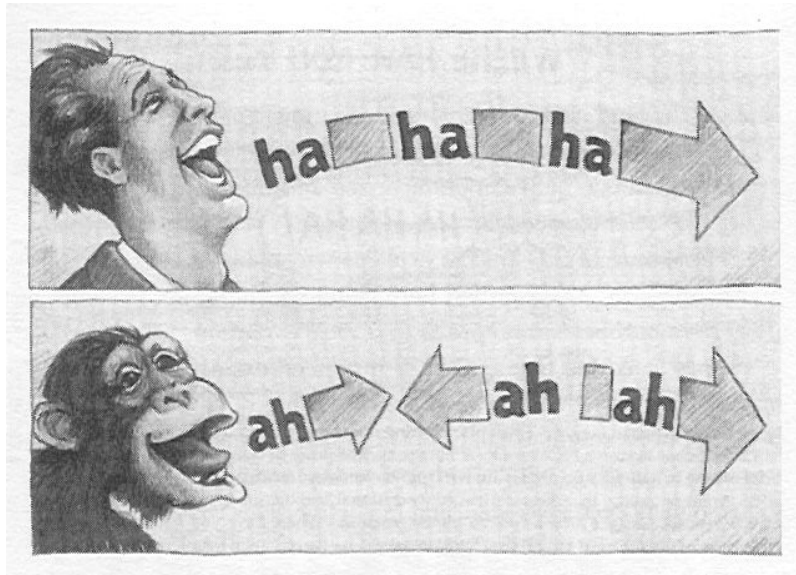


Figure 3: Difference in laughter between humans and chimpanzees
(From Robert R. Provine, *Laughter: A Scientific Investigation*, p. 82.)

Medical texts since ancient times have considered laughing as a normal expression and body movement. The *Qianjinfang* holds that, "a baby's pupils form sixty days after its birth, and it starts to giggle in response to others."¹⁶² *Taiping Shenghuifang* points out further that a baby's laughter confirms that it recognizes people.¹⁶³ Here laughing is used to signal a developmental stage when the ability to interact with people was acquired. However, medical texts from early China through the medieval period contained almost no positive accounts about laughing, which often appeared as a symptom. Prescriptions on life nourishment went further, even dissuading people from laughing on a daily basis. Although Shen Yue uses the phrase "to unlock one's jaws to cure one's illness" to praise someone's writing, no medical case in which laughing was used as a method to treat patients appears until the twelfth century. Zhang Zihé (張子和, 1156–1228) records two such cases in his *Shixing sanliao* 十形三療 (Ten forms and three therapies). In one case, upon hearing the news of his father's death of, a patient cried sorrowfully, and his heart ached. After a month, a lump was formed, and no medicine was able to cure it. Seeing that there was a shaman around, Zhang Zihé "mimics him and utters crazy words to entertain the patient, who starts to laugh so hard that he has to turn his back to face the wall. One or two days after this, the lump below his heart disappears."¹⁶⁴ In another case, a woman lost her appetite and became irritable. The symptoms persisted for six months, and doctors were unable to cure her. Zhang

¹⁶² *Qianjin fang*, vol. 5, p. 73b; *Qianjin yifang*, vol. 11, p. 311.

¹⁶³ *Taiping shenghui fang*, vol. 82, "Xiaore shouqifa" (小兒受氣法, Invasions of Children by the Qi," p. 8068.

¹⁶⁴ *Rumen shiqin*, vol. 7, "Shixing sanliao, 2" (十形三療二, Ten Forms and Three Therapies, Part 2), 'Neishangxing, yinyojiekuai, 100' (內傷形·因憂結塊一百, The Form of Inner Harms: Lumps Resulting from Anxiety, 100), p. 206.

Zihe claimed that this could not be treated with any medicine, and he asked two prostitutes to “wear rouge powder and pretend to be actors.” Upon seeing this, the woman laughed out loud. The next day, Zhang asked the prostitutes to wrestle with each other as a show, and this made the woman laugh again. Within a few days, the sick woman’s anger had decreased while her appetite increased, and she was cured without taking medicine. To conclude the case, Zhang Zihé notes that she later gave birth to a son.¹⁶⁵ To explain the reasoning behind his action, Zhang Zihé claims that, “The *Neijing* says that sorrow makes the *qi* congeal, while joy harmonizes the vessels. It also points out that joy overcomes sorrow.”¹⁶⁶ Nonetheless, as mentioned above, the *Lingshu* avers that joy dispersed the spirit and was therefore not desirable. *Suwen* also asserts that the five elements overcame one another, and joy overcame anxiety, not sorrow nor anger, which differed from Zhang Zihé’s proposal.¹⁶⁷ Interestingly, a commentary at the end of the second case states that, “It is important for doctors to be talented. Without talents, how can they respond to the infinite changes [arising in cases]?” Apparently, this kind of emotional therapy, though with canonical bases, also involved Zhang Zihé’s own innovation.¹⁶⁸ In fact, after Zhang Zihé very few medical texts include cases in which doctors applied laughing to treat disorders, as Zhang had.¹⁶⁹

Actually, the belief that all emotions were inadvisable and laughing was not beneficial was not limited to the medical world. Daoist theories on life nourishment had held such a view since

¹⁶⁵ *Rumen shiqin*, vol. 7, “Ten Forms and Three Therapies” ‘Neishangxing, Bingnu bushi, 101’ (內傷形·病怒不食一百一, The Form of Inner Harms: Sickly Loss of Appetite Resulting from Anger), p. 207. I have discussed elsewhere the traditional Chinese medical conception of the female body, by looking at its function of reproduction. Among these, the view that a female patient’s ability to produce children is often used as evidence of a full recovery. The fact that Zhang Zihé claims that this woman patient “gave birth to a son” is such an example. For a further discussion of the relationship between childbirth, illness, and the female body, see Jender Lee, “Gender and Medicine in Tang China,” *Asia Major* 16.2(2003), pp. 1-32.

¹⁶⁶ *Rumen shiqin*, vol. 7, “Ten Forms and Three Therapies: The Form of Inner Harms: Lumps Resulting from Anxiety,” p. 206.

¹⁶⁷ In order to elucidate how “sorrow” and “pensiveness” interact with one another according to medical classics, *Huangdi neijing suwen jiaozhu*, p. 80 holds that: “If we speak of sorrow, it is because sorrow can overcome anger; and if we raise the question of pensiveness, it is because it is the core of the spleen.” Of the five emotions, sorrow overcomes anger; fear overcomes joy; anger overcomes pensiveness; joy overcomes anxiety; and pensiveness overcomes fear.

¹⁶⁸ *Rumen shiqin*, vol. 7, “Ten Forms and Three Therapies: The Form of Inner Harms: Sickly Loss of Appetite Resulting from Anger), p. 207. However, as footnote 51 cited, in another medical case, Zhang Zihé used salt to treat laughing disorders, rather than relying on the theory that the five emotions overcome one another (e.g. fear overcomes joy). Therefore, while Zhang Zihé’s interpretation of heart diseases included the element of fire, and his attitude toward endless laughing may have incorporated traditional medical views, only the cases in which he used laughing to treat other illnesses reveal that his attitude toward joyous laughing was different from his predecessors. On the canonical basis of emotional therapy, see Nathan Sivin, “Emotional Counter-Therapy,” in Nathan Sivin, *Medicine, Philosophy and Religion in Ancient China: Researches and Reflections* (Hampshire: Variorum, 1995), part 2, pp. 1-19.

¹⁶⁹ Emotional therapy was applied in various cases after Zhang Zihé, however few involved laughing as treatment. In physicians’ collections from late imperial China, several cases mentioned that patients suffering from incessant laughing were cured by other strong emotions. However, although some did mention joy, hardly any included laughter as a cure. For related cases and discussion, see Hsiu-fen Chen, “Emotional Therapy and Talking Cures in Late Imperial China,” in Howard Chiang ed., *Psychiatry and Chinese History* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2014), pp. 37-54, 218-221. Zhu Su, *Puji fang*, vol. 259, “Shizhi men” (食治門, Treatment with Food), p. 4371, ‘Shizhi yizhou’ (食治飴粥, Treating with Congee) suggests using yams, millets, red rice and white rice to make congee for life nourishment, asserting that, “the fantastic fragrance and singular taste of congee will make one refreshed and joyous, and the joy will relax the *qi*.” This positive perception of joy slowing down the flow of the *qi* is actually one of the few such cases recorded in traditional medical texts.

antiquity. According to *Zhuangzi* 莊子, “One who is extremely joyful will do harm to one’s *yang* element, while one who is extremely angry will do harm to one’s *yin* element.”¹⁷⁰ He also claims that “sorrow and happiness hurt one’s virtue; joy and anger is harmful to the Way; if one has too many likes and dislikes, one risks losing one’s virtue. Therefore, if one’s heart is not concerned with sorrow or joy, one can be said to have achieved virtue.”¹⁷¹ The ancient scholar considered that dislike, desire, joy, anger, sorrow, and happiness were all harmful to virtue,¹⁷² and therefore should never enter one’s mind.¹⁷³ If people were compliant with times and situations, then neither sorrow nor joy would be able to get into their head.¹⁷⁴ *Guanzi* 管子 asserts that, if people could divest themselves of sorrow, happiness, joy, anger, desire, and the longing for profits, then their heart would rest in peace.¹⁷⁵ *Huainanzi* 淮南子 further associates emotional changes with health and illness, holding that, “Violent anger ruins the *yin*; extreme joy collapses the *yang*. The suppression of vital energy brings on dumbness; fear and terror bring on madness. When you are worried, aggrieved, or enraged, sickness will increasingly develop. When likes and dislikes abundantly pile up, misfortunes will successively follow.”¹⁷⁶ Since the third century on, practitioners of life nourishment such as Ji Kang 嵇康 (223–263) also sought to attain a state in which “likes and dislikes do not haunt one’s emotions, and sorrow and joy do not linger in one’s intentions.” In such a state, people would remain so peaceful that nothing could disturb them, and the *qi* in their body would be harmonious and calm.¹⁷⁷ Ji Kang held that ordinary people were unaware of the severity of “allowing joy and anger to get in the way of the straight *qi*, allowing thoughts and worries to waste their spirit, and allowing sorrow and happiness to harm their calmness and purity.”¹⁷⁸ He concluded that it was impossible for people to achieve longevity without getting rid of joy and anger to calm their spirit and *qi*.¹⁷⁹

Similar statements appeared repeatedly in later works about nurturing health. Not only did life-nourishment experts in medieval China inherit these views, so did medical texts published in the Song and Ming dynasties.¹⁸⁰ In his *Yishuo*, Zhang Gao warned against joy and anger, for the

¹⁷⁰ Zhuangzhou (莊周, ca. 370-287BCE), *Zhuangzi jishi* (莊子集釋, Compiled Annotations of Master Zhuang), compiled by Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩, and edited by Wang Xiaoyu 王孝魚 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), vol. 4b, “Zaiyou” (在宥, Unconstraint, Section 11, p. 365.

¹⁷¹ *Zhuangzi jishi*, vol. 6a, “Keyi” (刻意, Restraint, Section 15), p. 542.

¹⁷² *Zhuangzi jishi*, vol. 8a, “Gengsang chu 庚桑楚, Section 23,” P. 810.

¹⁷³ *Zhuangzi jishi*, vol. 7b, “Tian Zifang 田子方, Section 21,” p. 714.

¹⁷⁴ *Zhuangzi jishi*, vol. 2a, “Yangshengzhu, Section 2,” (養生主, Nourishing the Lord of Life), p. 128; vol. 3a, “Dazongshi, 6” (大宗師第六, Great Master, Section 6), p. 260.

¹⁷⁵ Guan Zhong (管仲, ?-645BCE), *Guanzi* 管子 (Taipei: Taiwan zhonghua shuju, 1970), vol. 16, “Neiyeyi, 49” (內業第四十九, Inner Business, Section 49), p. 1b (185).

¹⁷⁶ Liu An (劉安, 179-122BCE), *Huainanzi* 淮南子, annotated edit. Gao You (高誘, ca. 200) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1989), vol. 1, “Yuandaopian” (原道篇, Treatise on Originating in the Way), p. 12. I have consulted the English version of this paragraph. See John Major et al, *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China*, (New York: Columbia University, 2010), “Originating in the Way,” p.66.

¹⁷⁷ Ji Kang (嵇康, ca. 223-263), *Jizhongsan ji* (嵇中散集, Collection of Courtier Ji) (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1936), vol. 3, “Yangsheng lun” (養生論, Treatise on Life Nourishment), p. 3b.

¹⁷⁸ *Jizhongsan ji*, vol. 3, “Treatise on Life Cultivation,” p. 4a.

¹⁷⁹ *Jizhongsan ji*, vol. 4, “Da nanyangsheng lun” (答難養生論, Reply to the Treatise on the Difficulty of Life Nourishment), p. 10b.

¹⁸⁰ Yunji qiqian, vol. 62 quotes *Gupo fuqi qinxing yaojue wendafa* (姑婆服氣親行要訣問答法): “Joy and anger destroy the soul (*hun*) while haste and shock destroy the vigor (*po*).” Also, in vol. 91, *Jiushou* (九守, Nine

sake of preserving the fundamental *qi*. Allegedly quoting from Sun Simiao, Zhang claimed that, “excessive laughing hurts the viscera, excessive happiness leads to excessive talking, and excessive joy causes confusion.”¹⁸¹ The Song dynasty physician Ren Yuanshou 任元受 once claimed that his old mother’s illnesses were caused “either by drinking and eating, or by dryness and dampness, or by undue talking, or by worry and overjoy.”¹⁸² *Shesheng yaolu* 攝生要錄 (Important record for life protection) by Shen Shi 沈仕 from the late Ming (1368–1644) inherited medical views of early imperial China, observing that “one must preserve one’s essence and *qi* while talking and laughing. Excessive laughing may twist the kidney and cause pain in the lower back, while excessive talking is harmful to the spirit.”¹⁸³ Most of these texts quoted and copied from one another, without significantly revising their opinions, and as this chapter points out, since the early imperial period, medical texts increasingly treated laughing as either a symptom of an illness or a problem to be dealt with. While the traditional Chinese view of life nourishment saw sorrow, worry, fear and anger in a negative light, it did not view joyous and happy laughing positively either.¹⁸⁴

The medical attitude toward laughing did not change until the modern period. A twentieth-century doctor, Ding Fubao (丁福保, 1874–1952), quoted a New York scientific journal on the advantages and disadvantages of emotions, and proposed something that was perhaps unprecedented in Chinese history:

One feels sorrow when he suffers and one laughs when he is happy. Everyone knows that sorrow is harmful; what people do not know is that joyous laughing is most beneficial. Now there are scientists who research and conclude that, as long as it is not excessive, laughing can replenish the brain, activate one’s sinews and vessels, relieve the blood and *qi*, and help the digestion, and therefore is better than any medicine. Now some people are so serious that they forbid their children from laughing, and this indeed smothers the vitality of the children. As for adults, whether laborers or intellectuals, whoever wants to be free from illnesses should spend some time everyday resting, playing and laughing. If one worries all the time,

Defenses), pp. 7-10: “If one can reach a state of being without happiness, then there is no unhappiness either, and this is also a state of ultimate happiness... Therefore, if there is no joy, there will be neither anger nor hardship.” These claims resonate with the Daoist conception of life nourishment since ancient China.

¹⁸¹ See Zhang Gao, *Yishuo* (醫說, On Medicine) (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, reprint of the *Wenyuange siku quanshu*, vols. 193-194, 1983), vol. 9, pp. 7-10, entries of “Sunzhenren Yangshengming” (孫真人養生銘, Sun Simiao’s Life Nourishment Inscriptions), “Sunzhenren yangsheng zajue” (孫真人養生雜訣, Miscellaneous Tips on Life Nourishment from Sun Simiao,) and “Sunzhenren shireduo” (孫真人十二多, The Twelve Abundances of Sun Simiao,) etc.

¹⁸² See Chen Zhi (陳直, ca. 1080), added by Zhou Xuan (鄒鉉, ca. 14th C.), *Shouqin yanglao xinshu* (壽親養老新書, New Book on Parents’ Longevity and Old Life Nourishment), (Cuilangangan congshu 翠琅玕館叢書, 1915), vol. 4, “Gujin jiayan shanxing qishireshi” (古今嘉言善行七十二事, Seventy-Two Old and New Kind Words and Good Acts), p. 8.

¹⁸³ See Shen Shi (沈仕, circa. 1621-1644), *Shesheng yaolu* (攝生要錄, Essential Collection for Life Nourishment) (Shanghai: Shanghai yuwen chubanshe, reprint of the *Gujin congshu* series, 1991), “On Laughing,” pp. 1-4.

¹⁸⁴ In fact, the Six dynasties not only witnessed political upheals and constant warfare which led to catastrophic casualties, but also saw heated debates about the ritualistic details of mourning to determine human relations within aristocratic families. In other words, crying and its related behaviors may have become a highly visible expression of emotions that people were discussing seriously and attempting to regulate. Laughing was different. In addition to the medical perceptions of laughing and its related emotions explored in this chapter, there are still many other aspects of laughing and joyous emotions that need to be investigated further, in order to understand the history of emotions in early imperial China.

one will have no fun, and I know that one not only cannot achieve longevity, but also cannot avoid illnesses.¹⁸⁵

Nowadays we all believe that joy nourishes life, considering that positive emotions are good for your health. Some people even suggest that we should laugh out loud several times a day, not only to help physical fitness but also to achieve longevity.¹⁸⁶ Even though serious psychological and neurological studies cannot decide through what mechanism laughing can benefit one's physicality, modern medicine is not against using frequent joyous laughing to maintain a pleasant mental state.¹⁸⁷ In this sense, the change in attitude toward laughing and emotional expressions serves as an indicator for how modern people have broken away from a very long tradition.¹⁸⁸

Acknowledgements

Part of this chapter was presented at a monthly meeting held by the Research Group of Health and Healing in the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica on November 20, 2001. During the heated discussion, Drs. Lin Fushi, Li Jianmin, Chiu Pengsheng, Huang Kewu, and Chen Zhaoming all offered important comments and precious information. During the writing and revision, Drs. Liao Yuqun, Lei Xianglin (Sean), Wang Wenji, Chen Yingye and two anonymous reviewers from the *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica* (BIHP) also provided significant suggestions. I would also like to thank Ms. Xie Yating and Ms. Tseng Lingyi (Linda So) for their help in preparing the manuscript. An earlier version of this chapter appeared as an article in the *BIHP* 75.1 (2004): 99-149. The English version was translated by Dr. Jie Guo, edited by Dr. Marta Hanson, and updated and revised by the author.

¹⁸⁵ See Ding Fubao (丁福保, 1874-1952), *Xinding disiban weishengxue wenda* (新訂第四版衛生學問答, Questions and Answers on the Study of Hygiene, 4th Edition) (Shanghai: Guangye shuju, 1902), p. 48. My thanks to Prof. Sean Hsiang-lin Lei for providing the information.

¹⁸⁶ Claims that laughter is good for one's health can be found in various popular medical magazines. Similar information is also accessible through medical websites, and seems to have become accepted as common sense by modern individuals. See some latest link at <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/laughter-is-the-best-medicine.htm>

¹⁸⁷ For a detailed discussion, see Provine, *Laughter: A Scientific Investigation*, Chapter 9 "Laughing Your Way to Health," pp. 189-208.

¹⁸⁸ In medieval Europe some people, influenced by the apocalyptic views of Christianity, did not think highly of joyous laughing either. Whether traditional Western medicine regarded laughing as beneficial to health remains to be investigated. For a discussion of traditional European attitudes toward laughing, see Barry Sanders, *Sudden Glory: Laughter as Subversive History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

References

A. Primary Sources

- Anonymous, *Yili* (儀禮). 1981. In *Shisanjing zhushu ben* (十三經注疏本). Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan.
- Ban Gu (班固, 32–92). 1962. *Han Shu* 漢書 (History of the former Han). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju
- Chen Shou (陳壽, 233–297). 1959. *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (Records of the three kingdoms). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju
- Chen Yanzhi (陳延之, ca. 5th century.), annotated by Gao Wenzhu (高文鑄). 1995. *Xiaopin fang* (小品方). Beijing: Zhongguo zhongyiyao chubanshe.
- Chen Zhi (陳直, ca. 1080), added by Zhou Xuan (鄒鉉, ca. 14th C.). 1915. *Shouqin yanglao xinshu* 壽親養老新書 (New book on parents' longevity and old life nourishment). Guangzhou: Cuilangguan congshu 翠琅玕館叢書.
- Chao Yuanfang (巢元方, ca. 610). 1991. Ding Guangdi (丁光迪) annotated, *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu* 諸病源候論校注 (On the origins and symptoms of diseases with annotations). Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe.
- Dai Sheng (戴聖, ca. 1st century. BCE) ed. 1955. *Liji* 禮記 (Book of rites). Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan.
- Darwin, Charles. 1915. *The Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals, with a preface by Margaret Mead*. New York: Specially published for the Brunswick Subscription Co. by D. Appleton & Co.
- Ding Fubao (丁福保, 1874–1952). 1902. *Xinding disiban weishengxue wenda* 新訂第四版衛生學問答 (Questions and answers on the study of hygiene, 4th Edition). Shanghai: Guangye shuju.
- Fang Xuanlin (房玄齡, 579–648), et al. 1974. *Jinshu* (晉書, Book of Jin). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Ge Hong (葛洪, 284–364). 1994. *Zhouhou beji fang* 肘後備急方 (Handbook of recipes for emergencies). Changsha: Yuelu shushe.
- Ge Hong, Wang Ming (王明) eds. 1985. *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 抱朴子內篇校釋 (Master who embraces simplicity, the inner volume, with annotations). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Guan Zhong (管仲, ?–645BCE). 1970. *Guanzi* (管子). Taipei: Taiwan zhonghua shuju.
- Guo Aichun (郭霽春) ed. 1992. *Huangdi neijing suwen jiaozhu* 黃帝內經素問校注 (The Yellow Emperor's Inner canon with annotations). Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe.
- Hebei Medical College ed. 1982. *Lingshujing jiaoshi* (靈樞經校釋, The divine pivot with annotations). Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe.
- Hua Shou (滑壽, 1304–1386). 1985. *Nanjing benyi* (難經本義, Original meanings of the classic of difficulties). Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi,
- Huang Longxiang (黃龍祥) ed. 1988. *Huangdi mingtang jing jijiao* 黃帝明堂經輯校 (The Yellow Emperor's canon of the bright hall with annotations). Beijing: zhongguo yiyao keji chubanshe.
- Huangfu Mi (皇甫謐, 214–282). *Huangdi zhenjiu jiyajing* 黃帝針灸甲乙經 (A-B classic of acupuncture and moxibustion of the Yellow Emperor), in Chen Zhenxiang (陳振相) and Song Guimei (宋貴美), eds. 1995. *Zhongyi shida jingdian quanlu* 中醫十大經典全錄 (Comprehensive collection of ten greatest Chinese medical canons). Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe.
- Ji Kang (嵇康, ca. 223–263). 1936. *Jizhongsan ji* 嵇中散集 (Collection of courtier Ji). Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju.
- Kim Ye-mong (金禮蒙, 15th century). 1981–1982. *Euibang yuchui* 醫方類聚 (Categorized collection of medical recipes). Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe.
- Li Shizhen (李時珍, 1518–1593). 1975–1981. *Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目 (Compendium of materia medica). Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe.
- Li Shizhen, 2003. *Compendium of Materia Medica: Bencao Gangmu* compiled, translated and annotated by Luo Xiwen. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press.

- Ling Yaoxing (凌耀星), ed. 1991. *Nanjing jiaozhu* 難經校注 (The classic of difficult issues with annotations). Beijing: Renmin weisheng bubanshe.
- Liu An (劉安, 179–122BCE). 1989. *Huangnanzi* 淮南子 (Master south of the Huai), annotated by Gao You (高誘, ca. 200). Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe.
- Liu Yiqing (劉義慶, 403–444), annotated by Liu Xiaobiao (劉孝標, 462–521), commented by Yu Jiayi (余嘉錫, 1884–1955). 1993. *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (A new account of tales of the world). Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe.
- Lu Rong (陸容, 1436–1494). 1985. *Shuyuan zaji* 菽園雜記 (Miscellaneous records of the Bean Garden). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Lü Buwei (呂不韋, 292–235BCE). 1983. *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (Spring and autumn annals by Mr. Lü). Taipei: Shijie shuju.
- Ouyang Xun (歐陽詢, 557–641). 1999. *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 (Categorized collection of literature). Wang Shaoying (汪紹楹) annotated Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, .
- Pausanias (ca. 110–180). 1971. *Guide To Greece, vol. I: Central Greece*, P. Levi trans. Baltimore: Penguin.
- Shen Shi (沈仕, circa. 1621–1644). 1991. *Shesheng yaolu* 攝生要錄 (Essential collection for life nourishment). Shanghai: Shanghai yiwen chubanshe, reprint of the Gujin congshu series.
- Sun Simiao (孫思邈, 581–682). 1849. *Beiji qianjin yaofang* 備急千金要方 (Essential recipes worth a thousand gold for emergencies). Taipei: Hongye shuju reprint of the Edo edition of the Song woodblock version.
- Sun Simiao. 1999. *Qianjin yifang jiaozhu* 千金翼方校注 (Supplement to recipes worth a thousand gold with annotations), annotated and edited by Zhu Bangxian (朱邦賢), Chen Wenguo (陳文國), Bao Rongfen, Fang Lixing, Chen Xiao, Hu Dongpei,. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe.
- Tanba Yasuyori (丹波康賴, 912–995). 1982. *Ishinpo* 醫心方 (Essential Formulas of Medicine), Taipei: Xinwenfeng reprint of the Japanese 1854 Ansei edition.
- Tao Hongjing (陶弘景, 452–536). 1994. *Bencao jing jizhu* 本草經集注 (Collective annotations of materia medica), Shang Zhijun (尚志鈞) and Shang Yuansheng (尚元勝), eds. Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe.
- Tao Hongjing. 1939. *Zhengao* (真誥). Shanghai: Shangwu yingshuguan.
- Tao Hongjing. 1998. *Fuxingjue zangfu yongyao fayao* 輔行訣臟腑用藥法要 (The auxiliary guides to treat viscera and residences with drugs), in Ma Jixing (馬繼興, 1925–2019), Wang Shumin, Tao Guangzhen, and Fan Feilun eds. *Dunhuang yiyao wenxian jijiao* 敦煌醫藥文獻輯校 (Edited collection of Dunhuang medical documents). Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe.
- Tuo Tuo (脫脫, 1314–1356). 1985. *Songshi* 宋史 (History of the Song dynasty). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Wang Tao (王燾, 670–755). 1985. *Waitai miyao* 外台秘要 (Essential secrets of the palace library). Taipei: Guoli zhongguo yiyao yanjiusuo, reprint of the Xin'an Cheng jingtong edition.
- Wang Huaiyin (王懷隱, ca. 925–997). 1980. *Taiping shenghui fang* 太平聖惠方 (Imperial grace formularies of the Taiping era). Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi.
- Wang Mingqing (王明清, ca. 12thC–13thC). 1961. *Huizhulu* (揮塵錄). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Wei Zheng (魏徵, 580–643) and Zhangsun Wuji (長孫無忌, 594–659) eds. 1973. *Suishu* 隋書 (Book of the Sui). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Yao Cha (姚察, 533–606) and Yao Silian (姚思廉, 557–637) eds. 1973. *Liangshu* 梁書 (Book of the Liang). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Yao Cha and Yao Silian eds. 1972. *Chenshu* 陳書 (Book of the Chen). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Zhang Congzheng (張從正, ca. 1151–1231). 1994. *Rumen shiqin* 儒門事親 (A scholar's service to his parents), in *Zihe Yiji* 子和醫集 (Compilation of Zhang Zihe's medicine). Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe.

- Zhang Gao (張杲, 1149–1227). 1983. *Yishuo* 醫說 (On medicine). Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, reprint of the Wenyuange siku quanshu, vols. 193–194.
- Zhang Junfang (張君房, ca. 1001). 1929. *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 (Seven tablets in the cloudy satchel). Shanghai: Hanfenlou reprint of the Ming Qingzhenguan version.
- Zhang Zhongjing (張仲景, 150–219). 1990. *Shanghan lun* 傷寒論 (Treatise on cold damage disorders). Taipei: Zhiyin chubanshe.
- Zhang Zhongjing (aka. Chang Chung-ching). 1999. *Shāng-hán-lùn: On Cold Damage/Translation and Commentaries*, by Craig Mitchell, Féng Yè and Nigel Wiseman. Brookline, MA: Paradigm Publications.
- Zhang Zhongjing au. Annotated with treatises by Xu Zhongke (徐忠可, 17th Century), proofread by Deng Mingzhong (鄧明仲) and Zhang Jiali (張家禮). 1993. *Jinkui yaoliè lunzhu* 金匱要略論註 (Essentials of the golden casket with annotations). Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe.
- Zhao Ji (趙佶, 1082–1135) ed. 1962. *Shengji zonglu* 聖濟總錄 (General record of imperial relief). Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe.
- Zheng Chuhui (鄭處誨, ca. 9th century). 1994. *Minghuang zalu* 明皇雜錄 (Miscellaneous records of the Tang Emperor Xuanzong). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Zhou Mi (周密, 1232–1298). 1983. *Qidong yeyu* 齊東野語 (Wild talk from east of the Qi) ed. Zhang Maopeng (張茂鵬). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Zhu Su (朱橚, 1361–1425). 1959. *Puji fang* 普濟方 (Recipes of universal help). Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe.
- Zhuangzhou (莊周, ca. 370–287BCE). 1995. *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋 (Compiled Annotations of Master Zhuang), compiled by Guo Qingfan (郭慶藩), and edited by Wang Xiaoyu (王孝魚). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.

B. Secondary Sources

- Chang, Chia-feng (張嘉鳳). 2001. "Jiyi yu xiangran: yi zhubing yuanhou lun wei zhongxin shilun weijin zhi suitang zhijian yijide jibingguan" (疾疫與相染—以諸病源候論為中心試論魏晉至隋唐之間醫籍的疾病觀, The Conceptions of Contagion in Chinese Medicine: A Case from the *Zhubing yuanhou lun*)." *Taida lishi xuebao* (臺大歷史學報, Historical Inquiry) 27: 37–82.
- Chen, Hsiu-fen (陳秀芬). 2010. "Zai Mengmei zhijian: Zhongguo Gudian Yixue duiyu 'Mengyuguijiao' yu Nuxing qingyude Gouxian," (在夢寐之間：中國古典醫學對於「夢與鬼交」與女性情欲的構想, Between Sleep and Dreams: Perceptions of 'Dreaming of Sex with Demons' and Female Sexual Frustration in Pre-modern Chinese Medicine." *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica* (中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊, hereafter cited as BIHP) 81.4: 701–736.
- Chen, Hsiu-fen. 2014. "Emotional Therapy and Talking Cures in Late Imperial China." In *Psychiatry and Chinese History*, edited by Howard Chiang, 37–54, 218–221. London: Pickering and Chatto.
- Du, Zhengsheng (杜正勝). 1991. "Xingtì, jingqì yu hunpo: Zhongguo chuantong duiren renshide xingcheng" (形體、精氣與魂魄：中國傳統對「人」認識的形成, The Body, Vitality, and the Soul: the Understanding of "Self" in Chinese Tradition)." *Xin Shi Xue* (新史學, New History) 2.3: 1–66.
- Ishida, Hidemi. 1981. "Chugoku kodai niokeru seishin situ byoukan" (中国古代における精神疾病観, The conception of mental disorders in traditional China)." *Nippon Chugoku gakkaiho* (日本中国学会報, Bulletin of the Sinological Society of Japan) 33: 29–42.
- Ishida, Hidemi. 2000. "Genkiyaku kō" (見鬼藥考, A study of ghost-seeing medicine)." *Tōhō Shūkyō* (東方宗教, Journal of Eastern Religions) vol. 96 (Kyoto): 38–57.
- Kuriyama, Shigehisa. 1999. *The Expressiveness of the Body and the Divergence of Greek and Chinese Medicine*. Boston: Zone Books.

- Lee, Jen-der. 2003. "Gender and Medicine in Tang China." *Asia Major* 16.2: 1-32.
- Lee, Jen-der. 1997. "Han-Tang zhijian qiuzi yifang shitan: jianlun fukelanshang yu xingbie lunshu" (漢唐之間求子醫方試探：兼論婦科濫觴與性別論述, Reproductive Medicine in Late Antiquity and Early Medieval China: Gender Discourse and the Birth of Gynecology)." *BIHP* 68.2: 283-367.
- Li, Jianmin. 2002. "Aihuo yu tianhuo: jiuliaofa dansheng zhimi" (艾火與天火：灸療法誕生之謎, The Moxa Fire and the Heavenly Fire: Riddles around the Birth of Moxibustion). *The History of Natural Science* 21. 4: 320-331.
- Li, Jianmin. 2002. "Bencao gangmu huobu kaoshi" (本草綱目火部考釋, Fire as Medicine: the "Fire" Section of *Bencao gangmu*). *BIHP* 73.3: 395-442.
- Li, Jianmin. 1999. "Contagion and Its Consequences: Problems of Death Pollution in Ancient China." In *Medicine and the History of the Body*, edited by Yasuo Otsuka and Shizu Sakai. Tokyo: Ishiyaku Euro-America.
- Li, Jianmin. 2001. "Handai yibing yanjiu" (漢代移病研究, Beware of Pity: The Rhetoric of Illness in Han China)." *Xin Shi Xue* 12.4: 1-24.
- Li, Jianmin. 2000. *Sisheng zhiyu: ZhouQinHan maixue zhi yuanliu* (死生之域：周秦漢脈學之源流, *The Realm of Life and Death: Origins of Pulse Studies of the Zhou, Qin and Han Periods*). Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica.
- Li, Xiaoding (李孝定). 1970. *Jiagu wenzi jishi* 甲骨文字集釋 (Collected annotations of oracle bone scripts). Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica.
- Liao, Yuqun (廖育群), 1991. *Qi-Huang yidao* 岐黃醫道 (The medical way of Qibo and Huangdi). Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe.
- Liu An au., translated and edited by John S. Major, Sarah A. Queen, Andrew Seth Meyer, and Harold D. Roth, with additional contributions by Michael Puett and Judson Murray, 2010. *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China*. New York: Columbia University.
- Lu, Shouyan (陸瘦燕) and Zhu, Rugong (朱汝功) au., Wu Shaode, Zhang Shiyi, Wang Zuoliang, Xu Yusheng, Lu Yangyao revised, with diagrams by Zhou Jianqing, [1961] 1999. *Zhenjiu shuxue tupu* 針灸學穴圖譜, (Diagrams of acupuncture-moxibustion points). Shanghai: Kexue jishu chubanshe. Reprint by Taipei: Wenguang tushu youxian gongsi.
- Ma, Jixing (馬繼興). 1992. *Mawangdui guyishu kaoshi* 馬王堆古醫書考釋 (Annotated investigation of the ancient medical documents from Mawangdui). Changsha: Hunan kexue jishu chubanshe.
- Ma, Jixing (馬繼興). 1985. "Yixinfang zhongde guyixue wenxian chutan," (醫心方中的古醫學文獻初探, A Preliminary Investigation of Medical Documents cited in *Yixinfang*), *Nihon ishigaku zasshi* (日本医学史雜誌 *Journal of the Japanese Society for the History of Medicine*. 31.3 (Tokyo): 325-371.
- Ota Tenrei (太田典禮), Izawa Bonjin (伊沢凡人), Okano Masanori (岡野正憲), Koto Shiro (後藤志朗), Nagasawa Moto (長沢元夫), Hattori Toshirō (服部敏良), Muroga Shozo (室賀昭三), Mochizuki Manabu (望月學), Yakazu Keidō (矢數圭堂), Yamada Terutane (山田光胤) eds, translated by Li Yongchi (李永熾) proofread by Zhang Liwen (張禮文). 1982. *Yixinfang zhongriwen jieshuo* 醫心方中日文解說 (Chinese and Japanese explanations of *Yixinfang*). Taipei: Xinwenfeng chubanshe.
- Provine, Robert R. 2000. *Laughter: A Scientific Investigation*. London: Faber and Faber Limited.
- Research Institute of Pharmacy, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences ed. 1982. *Zhongyao zhi* (中藥誌, Records of Chinese Medicinal Drugs). Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe.
- Sanders, Barry. 1995. *Sudden Glory: Laughter as Subversive History*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Sivin, Nathan. 1995. "Emotional Counter-Therapy." In *Medicine, Philosophy and Religion in Ancient China: Researches and Reflections*, edited by Nathan Sivin, part 2, 1-19. Hampshire: Variorum.
- Unschuld, Paul U., Hermann Tessenow, in collaboration with Zheng Jinsheng, trans. and ed. 2011. *Huangdi neijing suwen: An annotated translation of Huang Di's Inner Classic—Basic Questions*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Unschuld, Paul U. trans. and ed., 2016. *Huangdi neijing lingshu: the Ancient Classics on Needle Therapy: the Complete Chinese Text with an Annotated English Translation*. Oakland, California: University of California Press.
- Unschuld, Paul U. trans. and ed. 2016. *Nanjing: the Classic of Difficult Issues: with Commentaries from Chinese and Japanese Authors from the Third to the Twentieth Centuries: the Complete Chinese Text with an Annotated Translation*. Oakland, California: University of California Press.
- Zhou Zhangfa 周長發. 1985. "Zhongyi jingshenbingxue fazhanshilue" (中醫精神病學發展史略, A brief history of chinese medicine for mental disorders). *Zhonghua yishi zazhi* (中華醫史雜誌 *Chinese Journal of Medical History*. 15.3: 144-147.