

## ***The Lung and the Tiger Image: An Example of Decoding the Symbolic Record of Chinese Medicine***



***Heiner Fruehauf***

*The six vibrational patterns of the universe establish both yin and yang channel systems in the human body. These are thus directly associated with the twelve months of the year, the twelve earthly branches, the twelve divisions of the sky, the twelve rivers, and the twelve time periods of the day. The twelve channels, therefore, represent the concrete way in which the organ systems of the human body are receiving, and are in resonance with, the Dao of heaven.*

–Huangdi neijing lingshu, chapter 11

**I**n the ancient Chinese holomap that interrelates microcosm and macrocosm, the functional network of the Lung is associated with the first month of spring in the Chinese calendar (approximately February 5 – March 4).<sup>1</sup> According to the approach I initially outlined in the article “The Science of Symbols,”<sup>2</sup> all properties of the first month of spring are therefore a direct clue for the definition of the complex physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual functions of the Lung in the microcosm of the human body. The information below may serve as an example as to how much detailed information about an organ network can be

gleaned from examining just a single one of the many symbolic markers associated with a specific time of the year. Furthermore, how this information can be utilized to bring into sharper (and clinically extremely relevant) focus the complex and multi-dimensional type of information once associated with the traditional Chinese organ networks—the definition of which has become extremely blurry, generalized, and simplistic in the eyes of most modern-day Oriental medicine practitioners. In this particular case, a host of valuable details about the physiology and pathology of the Lung network is revealed by focusing on one of many symbols associated with the first month of spring—the image of the tiger.

Ancient Chinese texts describe the properties and functions of the first month of spring in a variety of ways: a) description of natural phenomena occurring during *zhengyue* (the first month; literally, month of the right beginning); b) description

of the symbolic content associated with the related earthly branch, *yin*; c) description of the symbolic content of the related tidal hexagram, *tai* (hexagram 11); d) description of the related vibrational frequency in nature, the “pitch standard” *taicu*; e) description of the natural phenomena occurring during the related two seasonal nodes of agricultural activity, *lichun* (Beginning of Spring) and *yushui* (Rain Water).

In addition, some of these rubrics have spawned exegetic subcategories that further enlarge the etymological word field associated with the first month of spring, and by extension, the Lung. This is a typical feature of ancient symbolism, which is best exemplified by the method of the *Yijing*, wherein one layer of symbolic representation is enhanced by another, and yet another. In the case of the *Yijing*, hexagrams are further explained by pictograms, which in turn are further elucidated by number; all three of these are annotated by text, which is further

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