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**The Heart in lingshu chapter 8**



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Aidenbachstr. 78, 81379 München

Tel.: + 49 89 7499-156, Fax: + 49 89 7499-157

Email: [info@naturmed.de](mailto:info@naturmed.de), Web: <http://www.naturmed.de>

# THE HEART

IN LING SHU CHAPTER 8



CLAUDE LARRE AND ELISABETH ROCHAT DE LA VALLÉE

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We have chosen to study chapter 8 of the Lingshu because in our work we find that we always come back to the same chapters. There are 81 chapters in the Lingshu, in the Suwen, in the Nanjing and in the Laozi. But in certain chapters the systematic presentation is so well co-ordinated that knowing a short section of certain chapters well, gives an additional insight which may be used everywhere.

#### THE CHARACTERS FOR LINGSHU

Elisabeth Rochat: We will start with this chapter, Lingshu chapter 8, Benshen (本神). But first let us take a look at the characters Lingshu (靈樞) which form the name of the second part of the Neijing. Ling (靈) represents the influences that fall from above like rain. The lower section depicts three people who are exclaiming and asking for rain, the squares are three mouths [cf. Wieger, Chinese Characters, Lesson 72K].

Most often *ling* (靈) implies an influence that is received from heaven, or from the spirits, *shen* (神). *Ling* are also terraces or places that are raised up, and it is to these places that you go to observe heaven, to receive influences from heaven, or to create the right conditions to receive the influences of heaven. If you receive heavenly influences but are not capable of understanding and containing them, then that will do more harm than good. So within this character is the suggestion that there has to be a good correspondence between what is given and what is received.

靈樞

## CHINESE MEDICINE FROM THE CLASSICS

# THE HEART

### IN LING SHU CHAPTER 8

The foundations of Chinese medicine were laid down in the Huangdi neijing and its commentaries. The work of sinologists Claude Larre and Elisabeth Rochat de la Vallée allows us access to these classical origins of Chinese medicine. Claude Larre's profound understanding of the philosophical and cultural background and Elisabeth Rochat's thorough knowledge of the medical texts provide a unique insight into the the minds of the classical authors. Their teaching is often at its best when working with a specific text, and here the text of Neijing lingshu chapter 8 provides insight into the heart as the centre of life within a human being. As the text unfolds it describes the emergence of life as an interaction between qi, jing (essences) and shen (spirit); it introduces the different aspects of spirit, hun and po, yi (intent) and zhi (will), and their development through thought and reflection to wisdom.

**CLAUDE LARRE** s.j. studied in Beijing and Shanghai and also lived in Japan and Vietnam for many years. He gained his PhD from the University of Paris for his study of the Chinese classics. He was the founder of the Ricci Institute and the European School of Acupuncture.

**ELISABETH ROCHAT DE LA VALLÉE** holds degrees in Philosophy, the Classics and Chinese studies. She worked with Claude Larre for over 25 years and has exceptional knowledge of the Chinese medical classics. Based at the European School of Acupuncture in Paris, she lectures internationally.

*'The true role or function of the spirits is to give us specific guidance for every moment, for every circumstance of our present daily life.'*

Claude Larre



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