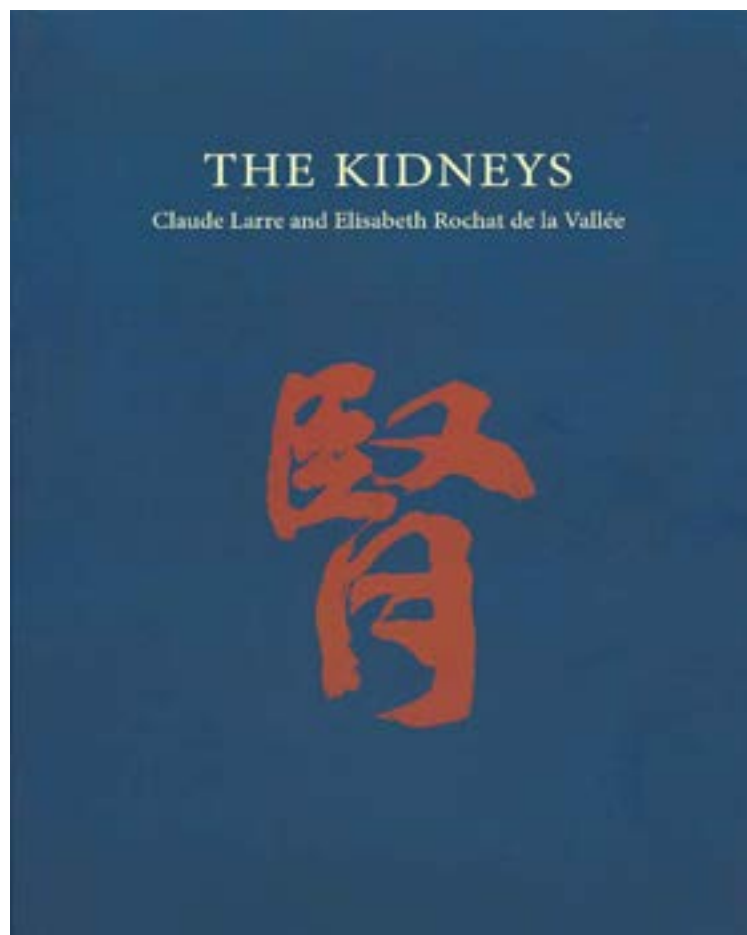




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The Kidneys



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THE KIDNEYS

Claude Larre and Elisabeth Rochat de la Vallée



CONTENTS

The character for the kidneys	1
Su wen chapter 52	4
Ling shu chapter 29	6
Nan jing difficulty 36	9
Nan jing difficulty 39	14
Ling shu chapter 2	18
Ling shu chapter 8	23
Su wen chapter 1: Life Cycles	37
Su wen chapter 8: The Power to Arouse	47
Su wen chapter 2: The Four Seasons	49
Su wen chapter 9: The Power to Store	51
Su wen chapter 5: The Five Element Resonances	54
Conclusion	93
APPENDIX	97
Extract from the Neijing Jingyi	98
Functions of the Kidneys	99
Extract from the Zhong Yiji Quli Lun	104
Kidney Pathology	106
INDEX	111

sun because the ascending movement is connected with the left and the descending movement with the right. The sun rises on the left and sets on the right.

The third couple is spleen and stomach, where the spleen is the messenger and the stomach is the market place. In chapter 52, the order of presentation is first the liver and lung which relate to the daily movement of life with the rising and setting sun, then the axis of heart and kidneys with something expanding and contracting and which relates to *biao li* (表 裡), and finally spleen and stomach in the central position with the spleen as a kind of intermediary or go-between acting among all the others, and stomach like a market place through which all the requirements for nourishment and maintenance pass.

But for the kidneys the important thing to remember is the mastering of the internal structuration of the body, *li* (裡), and its centripetal and retracting downward movement.

LING SHU CHAPTER 29

Elisabeth Rochat: The quotation runs:

'With the kidneys the power of mastering is turned to the exterior (*wai* 外), by that man can hear from far away.'

The power of the kidneys, which is like the foundation of life and which holds the valuable aspects of life very firmly, also has the capacity to spread right up to the exterior and to grasp sound from far away. You know that in terms of orifices the kidneys open to the ear.

This seems a contradiction in light of the previous text. Are the kidneys mastering the movement towards the interior or to the exterior? This is just one example of the ambivalent presentation of the kidneys in all the classical Chinese medical texts.

Claude Larre: What we call an ambiguity or ambivalence here is sheer nonsense for the Chinese because they are talking about movement. When things are dead or still they are either this or that, but when things are in motion they are necessarily contradictory. They are not contradictory one to the other - but to the state when they are not moving. When things are moving they must have those two aspects. Where motion is concerned there is no ambiguity or ambivalence, that only enters when the movement stops.

Question: Is this two-way movement at all similar to that of the lung?

THE KIDNEYS

Transcribed and edited from a seminar given in London by Claude Larre and Elisabeth Rochat de la Vallée in 1987, the value of these teachings has not diminished with time. The insight and understanding of the authors continue to illuminate the theory and practice of Chinese medicine in the West. Since Claude Larre's death in 2001, the Chinese Medicine from the Classics series stands as a testament to the authentic and eloquent voice of one of the most significant teachers of Chinese philosophy of the past decades.

Rooted in Elisabeth Rochat's deep knowledge of the Chinese medical texts, this book provides an understanding of the function of the kidneys as the origin and basis of life, sustainer of the five zang and container of the double power of yin and yang. It assesses the five element resonances of the north and the winter, as well as the ability of the kidneys to store and maintain the essences.

'The Chinese concept of the north reflects the double power of the kidneys, the unity of life but also the seeds of diversity.'
Elisabeth Rochat de la Vallée



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