PART I

Characters

Introduction

Influences on the Development of Point Names

The cultural milieu in which Chinese point nomenclature evolved reflects the pervasive philosophical and metaphysical world view supported by the pillars of Taoism and Confucianism. It includes a veneration for custom and history, a propensity to observe and correlate the phenomena of nature, and a long medical tradition of apprenticeship and secret teaching.

The Taoist view of man as a microcosmic representation of the universe, the Confucian edicts of social form and propriety, and the observation of and dependence on nature characteristic of China's agrarian society are reflected in Chinese medicine as a whole, and specifically in the selection of point names. The careful observation of the geophysical characteristics of the earth, the cycles of the seasons, the stars, the heavens, helped develop a medical language of metaphor and imagery replete with words that mirrored these cosmologic, geographic, and sociologic phenomena: pathogens termed wind, cold, heat, dryness, damp, fire and summerheat perturb a body that is described in terms of seas, valleys, rivers, channels. Stars and constellations serve as guideposts, and divinities haunt each region. Emperors and ministers rule the land, distributing grain and protecting the borders. With heaven above and earth below, man was viewed as a flowing intercourse of yin and yang

represents the sound *jiǔ*. As a character in its own right, 久 *jiǔ* means "for an extended period of time," a notion that has little or nothing to do with moxibustion. The fact that it shares the same sound as 灸 suggests that it was incorporated for its sound rather than its meaning.

Radicals

Each character has one element that is called its radical, comprising the essential category of meaning. The term "radical," which means literally "of the root," is of primary importance in the discussion of the structure of Chinese characters. The ability to recognize some of the more common radicals will greatly enhance the benefit that the student derives from the study of the acupuncture point names. There are 214 radicals all told. Following is a discussion of 22 that occur frequently in characters relating to Chinese medicine.

The fire radical, 火 *huǒ*

This radical is a character in its own right and is a picture of a flame. As might be expected, this radical lends a meaning of heat to characters of which it is a part. It is sometimes written as four dots at the bottom of a character. In some such cases, it originally represented not fire but the legs of an animal. Examples of characters with the fire radical are 炮 *pào*, to roast; 熱 *rè*, heat; 煩 *fán*, annoyed, vexed; 烏 *wū*, a crow, or black; 烤 *kǎo*, to bake or roast; 燒 *shāo*, to burn; and 灸 *jiǔ*, moxibustion. The character 火 *huǒ* represents the fire phase of the five phases.

The earth radical, 土 *tǔ*

This radical is also its own character and represents earth in the five phases. It also means land or soil. The top horizontal line represents the surface of the earth while the bottom line is the rock below the earth. The vertical line is a

symbol for the life that the earth produces. Examples of characters with the earth radical include: 堅 *jiān,* durable; 增 *zēng,* to increase; and 墟 *xū,* ruins.

The metal radical, 金 *jīn*

This radical is its own character and represents the metal phase of the five phases. It can refer specifically to gold or to metal in general. The top portion of the character is a modified form of the character 今 *jīn* and is in this case a phonetic element. The lower portion is a pictograph of two nuggets of gold lying beneath the earth (土). Characters that contain this radical are usually related to metal in some way: 針 *zhēn,* needle; 銅 *tóng,* copper or bronze; and 錢 *qián,* money.

The water radical, 水 *shuǐ*

This character represents the water phase of the five phases. In its radical form it generally appears as three dots on the left side of characters that represent bodies of water or are related to water or fluids in some way. Examples include: 池 *chí* , pool or pond; 海 *hǎi,* sea; and 漿 *jiāng,* thick liquid.

The wood radical, 木 *mù*

This character is a pictograph of a tree and represents the wood phase of the five phases. Most characters that contain a wood radical are related to wood or trees, but in some cases the connections are more abstract. This radical is usually found on the left of a character, but is sometimes printed underneath. The following characters contain the wood radical: 根 *gēn,* root; 森 *sēn,* forest; 樞 *shū,* pivot; 橫 *héng,* horizontal; and 榮 *róng,* glorious or luxuriant.

The hand radical, 手 *shǒu*

This radical is most often seen in its alternate form with only two crosswise strokes, as in the left-hand portion of the character 扶 *fú*, to support. It is a pictorial representation of a hand and is thus a part of characters that relate to the hand itself or to actions that can be performed by the hand. Examples of this radical are: 找 *zhǎo*, to search; 打 *dǎ*, to hit; 推 *tuī*, to push; and 掌 *zhǎng*, the palm of the hand. Note that in the last example the primary form of the radical is used.

The mouth radical, 口 *kǒu*

This character is usually found on the left or in the middle of characters in which it is a radical. Because it is a picture of a mouth it often implies a relationship to speaking, eating, or making sounds. Examples include: 句 *jù*, a sentence; 問 *wèn*, to ask; 吃 *chī*, to eat; 吐 *tù*, to vomit, to spit up; and 叫 *jiào*, to call out.

The heart radical, 心 *xīn*

This character is a stylized pictograph of a heart. Characters in which 心 is a radical carry meanings that relate to the heart, mind and emotions. This radical is usually found on the left side of the character in its altered form, as the following examples show: 情 *qíng*, feeling, emotion; or 怕 *pà*, to fear. When in its unaltered form it is generally found at the bottom of a character. Examples of characters containing the heart radical are: 思 *sī*, to contemplate; 恨 *hèn*, to hate; 悶 *mēn*, feeling of oppression; 怒 *nù*, anger; 意 *yì*, thought or meaning; 念 *niàn*, to ponder; 忘 *wàng*, to forget; and 志 *zhì*, will.

The person radical, 人 *rén*

This character is a stick picture of a person. As a radical it is generally found on the left of the character in its alternate form as seen in the examples below. Though it often brings a connotation of person to characters for which it is a radical, the simplicity of the character has led to it becoming a derived form of what were once other elements. This radical is also used to indicate male as opposed to female in characters that require gender clarification. The characters that follow contain the person radical: 他 *tā*, he; 仁 *rén*, benevolence; 什 *shé*, what; 便 *biàn*, convenient; and 住 *zhù*, to reside.

The sun radical, 日 *rì*

The character 日 *rì* is a pictograph of the sun. It is often found as a radical in words that are related to the sun or, by extension, time or brightness. Some examples are: 星 *xīng*, star; 暫 *zhàn*, temporarily; 暮 *mù*, sunset; 早 *zǎo*, early; and 明 *míng*, bright, clear or light.

The moon radical, 月 *yuè*

This character is a pictograph of a crescent moon. It is found in characters that have to do with moonlight or the passage of time (months). It is not a common radical but is included here to differentiate it from the flesh radical discussed next. An example of the moon (or month) radical is 期 *qí*, time period.

The flesh radical, 肉 *rù*

This character represents meat or muscle. When functioning as a radical it is usually written as 月 and is thus easily confused with the moon radical. Since only a few characters contain the moon radical it is usually safe to assume

that most characters that involve 月 as an element are related to flesh in some way. Furthermore, the moon radical is found on the right of a character while the flesh radical is found on the left or bottom. Characters containing this radical include: 胃 *wèi,* stomach; 肝 *gān,* liver; 腕 *wàn,* wrist; 脊 *jí* , spine; and 肩 *jiān,* shoulder.

The disease radical, 疒 *chuāng*

This radical was originally a pictorial representation of a person in bed. It is found on the outside of most characters relating to illness. Some examples are: 病 *bìng,* disease; 痹 *bì* , bi (blockage and pain); 瘡 *chuāng,* sore or ulcer; 療 *liáo,* to cure; and 疤 *bā,* a scar. The disease radical is not used as a character itself, it is always combined with other components.

The gate radical, 門 *mén*

This character is a picture of a double door that opens in the middle. It is used as a radical in many characters that have meanings related to gates or openings or extended meanings such as to open or close. Some examples are: 關 *guān,* a pass, to shut, relationship; 開 *kāi,* to open, to start; 闕 *què,* gate tower, a mistake; and 間 *jiān,* a space, between.

The bone radical, 骨 *gǔ*

This character means bone and is often used as a radical in characters that relate to the skeleton. It is almost always on the left of the character. Examples include: 體 *tǐ,* body; and 髎 *liáo,* bone-hole;

The head radical, 頁 *yè*

When used alone this character means a page of a book, but as a radical it represents the head. It usually occurs on

the right side of characters. Examples of characters containing this radical are: 頂 *dǐng,* a summit; 頭 *tóu,* head; 顱 *lú*, skull; and 額 *è,* forehead.

The bamboo radical, 竹 *zhú*

This character appears as a radical at the top of characters in slightly altered form. 筆 *bǐ,* pen; and 管 *guǎn,* tube or pipe are examples of this radical.

The silk radical, 糸 *mì*

This character, when used as a radical, appears generally on the left of characters, although it is sometimes printed underneath. Examples are: 細 *xì*, fine, minute, detailed; 素 *sù*, plain, simple.

The grass radical, 艸 *cǎo.*

This character appears as a radical in altered form at the top of characters, much like two "+" signs side by side. Examples are: 艾 *ài,* moxa; 芽 *yá*, a sprout; 茶 *chá*, tea.

The ear radical, 耳 *ěr*

This character appears as a radical either on the left or at the bottom of characters. Examples are: 聯 *lián,* to unite, to connect; 聽 *tīng,* to listen; 聲 *shēng,* sound, voice.

The word radical, 言 *yán*

This character appears as a radical most commonly on the left side of characters, though it is sometimes found underneath. Examples are: 說 *shuō,* to speak, to say; 請 *qǐng,* to invite; 警 *jǐng,* to alert, to warn.

The rock radical, 石 *shí*

This character appears as a radical most often at the left of and sometimes underneath characters. 砂 *shā,* sand, gravel; 破 *pò,* to break, are examples.

The student of Chinese medicine will find that these twenty-two radicals provide a good basis for approximating meanings or achieving general associations for unfamiliar characters.

Character Categories

When studying Chinese characters it is helpful to be familiar with the six categories of characters. The reader who wishes to gain a deeper understanding of the origins and relations of the various alternate names for the acupuncture points will find these categories especially useful. These include imitative symbols, indicative symbols, logical combinations, phonetic components, false borrowing and extended interpretation. Each is discussed separately below.

Imitative Symbols

Characters that resemble in form the thing that they represent are called imitative symbols. Examples are: 木 *mù,* tree; 門 *mén,* door; and 弓 *gōng,* archer's bow.

Indicative Symbols

These are characters that represent concepts or actions. For example, the character 旦 *dàn,* meaning sunrise, is a picture of the sun, (日) rising over the horizon (一). The characters 上 *shàng* and 下 *xià* are also indicative symbols, deriving their respective meanings of above and below by depicting objects above and below the horizon.

Logical Combinations

Characters in this category are formed by combining characters from the above two categories in such a way that a new concept or object is expressed. The character 男 *nán,* meaning man, is a good example. It is made up of the characters 田 *tián,* meaning field, and 力 *lì*, meaning strength. 男 *nán* then comes to mean man through the idea that a man is one who uses his strength working the fields. Examples of logical combinations include: 林 *lín,* which is formed of two wood (木 *mù*) radicals side by side and means forest, and 炎 *yán,* two fires (火 *huǒ*) one atop the other, meaning burning hot.

Phonetic Compounds

These are characters made up of a radical combined with an element that provides a cue for the pronunciation of the character. The character 揚 yáng, which means to raise up, is composed of the hand radical (手 *shǒu*) on the left and the character 昜 *yáng,* which means bright or glorious, on the right. The hand radical provides the meaning for the character, as the hand is often the motivating force behind a lifting action. The addition of 昜 *yáng* on the right side serves only to lend its sound to the character and has no bearing whatsoever on its meaning.

Often a phonetic element contributes only the final part of its sound to a character. Therefore, in the characters 腸 *cháng* (intestine) and 湯 *tāng* (soup, decoction), the phonetic 昜 *yáng* represents only the final sound "ang" of the characters, while the initial "y" sound in 昜 *yáng* has been changed to the sound "ch" in 腸 *cháng* and "t" in 湯 *tāng.*

In rarer cases a phonetic element contributes meaning as well as sound to a character. For example, the character 陽 *yáng,* the complement of *yīn,* is composed of the radical

that means a pile of earth on the left and the phonetic element 昜 *yáng* on the right. As stated above, 昜 , when standing alone as a character, can mean bright. Thus it can be seen that 昜 lends meaning as well as sound to the character 陽 , which originally meant the sunny side of a hill.

Secondly, sound changes, which occur in all languages with the passage of time, have wreaked considerable havoc on the Chinese phonetic system. Unfortunately, this damage is most pronounced in the Mandarin dialect of northern China, which pinyin romanization transcribes. The student who is unaware of this problem may wonder why 河 is pronounced *hé* when the character that acts as its phonetic component, 可, is pronounced *kě*. The answer lies in the assumption that the two characters were originally pronounced in the same way, and that the pronunciation of one has changed. The original identity of sound, partially destroyed in Mandarin, has nevertheless been preserved by Cantonese, in which both characters are pronounced *hé*. In many instances, the sound changes that have occurred in northern China, while affecting initial sounds, have spared the final sounds. Focusing attention on the final sounds will often reveal this, as the above example shows: the "k" and "h" indicate a sound change, though the final sound "e" is preserved.

The above four categories explain the composition of original characters. The following two categories relate to the expression of new ideas using already established characters.

False Borrowing

When a character takes on a meaning that was not originally its own, it is referred to as false borrowing. This can occur through erroneous substitution of one character for another, or by the intentional use of an already existing character to express the meaning of a word that previously existed only in the spoken language. In the latter case

characters of the same pronunciation as the spoken words were borrowed to represent new meanings.

Extended Interpretation

A character whose meaning is derived, metaphorical, adapted or figurative belongs to the category of extended interpretation. For example, the character 尊 *zūn* was originally a pictorial representation of two hands offering forth some wine. By extension it has come to mean to honor or respect.

Characters and Meaning

Certain aspects of the Chinese language make the interpretation of ancient Chinese writings, including the point names, particularly difficult. The two aspects of Chinese that prove most troublesome in this respect are the numerous grammatical roles that single characters can assume and the multitude of meanings inherent in a given character.

In Chinese, unlike European languages, parts of speech are not clearly distinguished. Take for example the character 中 *zhōng*. As an adjective this character means central, as a noun it means center, and as a verb, to strike (i.e., in the center). The grammatical function of characters and the relationships between the concepts they represent are determined largely by context. This presents particular problems in terms of the point names, as they are presented with no context other than that we know they are names of points. Take for example Lung One, which in Chinese is called 中府 *zhōng fǔ*. Owing to lack of context, the intended grammatical function of the character 中 *zhōng* is unclear. It could conceivably be an adjective, a noun or a verb. Thus, the name could be interpreted as meaning "central treasury," "center's treasury," "center of the treasury," or even "strike the treasury." While the last possibility can be eliminated due to illogic, plausible explanations can be offered for each of the other three.

subject to the influences of the five phases and inseparable from the Tao itself.

Even the Chinese concept of an acupuncture point is different from a Westerner's, a difference manifest in the words used to express the concept. The word "point" indicates a linear coordinate, i.e., the intersection of two lines, a dot on the skin suitable for the insertion of needles or the application of some other stimulation. The Chinese character for acupuncture point, 穴 *xuè*, brings to mind an altogether different picture. This character means "cave" or "hole." The meaning is clear from the two parts of the character: the top portion represents a roof, while the bottom portion is a character in its own right, meaning to divide or remove. The combined meaning of the two parts is a dwelling that is made by removing dirt or rocks, i.e., a cave, a hole, a den. Thus we can see that in this case, as in many others, the meanings of Chinese characters bring us to a greater understanding of the concepts of acupuncture.

Traditionally, knowledge of Chinese medicine was handed down from father to son, teacher to apprentice. Memorization of the classics was required, and point names containing mnemonic symbols aided the retention of important information about the point. Point names might also contain hidden meanings known only to students or apprentices of a particular master. In this way, the point names helped to keep a master's secrets safe from other practitioners, and thus protected his income. Though it is not always possible to determine with great surety the reason for the choice of a point name, hints about the location and function of the point were embedded in the name. The point names are thus poetic; they are only fully understood through patient effort to assimilate the intricacies of their veiled meanings. With time and study the point names become more than labels; they become guides to the understanding of the points and the system of medicine that named them.

Chinese point names, as they evolved over the centuries, did provide particular benefits. They allowed the point-

A character can take on not only numerous grammatical roles, but numerous meanings and nuances as well. This is a result of the long history of the Chinese language and the tendency of the characters to take on extended meanings. The looseness of Chinese syntax and the wide range of meanings associated with a given character mean that almost any point name could be rendered in a host of different ways in English. Take again the example of Lung One, 中府 *zhōng fǔ*. The character 府 *fǔ*, though always used as a noun, can take on meanings as various as "treasury," "storehouse," "mansion," or "prefecture." This name could be rendered as Central Treasury, Central Storehouse, Central Mansion, Center's Prefecture, Center's Treasury, Center's Storehouse, Center's Mansion, Center's Prefecture etc.

In many cases, it is difficult to decide which rendering comes closest to the meaning originally intended. It is sometimes impossible to find a phrase in English that will cover more than one of the completely different possible interpretations. For example, in the Chinese point name for Liver Five, 蠡溝 *lí gōu*, the character 蠡 (pronounced both *lí* and *lǐ*) can represent either a wood-boring insect or a gourd, and the character 溝 *gōu* can mean a ditch, a canal or a gutter. Since no single English word expresses the many meanings implied by the two Chinese characters, renderings as different as Woodworm Canal and Gourd Ditch can be equally justified.

Since innumerable interpretations of the point names are possible, the reader is encouraged to explore the various possibilities and create renderings that meet his or her own needs. By no means should the renderings given in this or any other text be taken as the only correct interpretations. Attempts to translate or to learn a "one and only" rendering will result in the loss of insight, information, and understanding.

channel system to grow and change without fundamentally changing the names and principles set down in the classics, and thus satisfied the conservative nature of the culture. The inherent ambiguity of the point names lent an air of mystery to the healing arts and aided in preserving the secrets of the masters. In addition, the point names revealed important information about the points and imbued them with a poetic spirit that evoked a multitude of valuable associations.

Point Name Taxonomy

For the clinician, much of the value of the point names lies in their didactic and mnemonic qualities. The point names either tell us something about the points or remind us of something that we already know. This information is conveyed through the name in either a concrete or abstract manner, and generally falls into one of four categories: function, location, five-phase, yin-yang association, or channel relationship.

Point names categorized by function include names that refer directly to the function of a point and names that imply function by indicating the special point grouping to which a point belongs. When referring directly to the function of a point, the reference can be concrete, as in Tear Container (ST-1), or more abstract, as in Four Whites (ST-2). The names that indicate special point groupings can also be either concrete or abstract, as exemplified in the names Yin Cleft (HT-6, cleft-xi point of the heart channel), or Woodworm Canal (LV-5, connecting-luo point of the liver channel).

Locational point names, by far the most common, may refer either to the area where a point is located or the position that the patient must assume for treatment. For example, Wrist Bone (SI-4) is a reference to the precise location of a point. Crouching Rabbit (ST-32) refers to the location

of the point on the part of the thigh where the bulging muscle resembles a crouching rabbit.

Reference to yin and yang in a point name is straightforward, such as Instep Yang (BL-50). Concrete reference may also be given to a five-phase relationship, such as Water Spring (KI-5). More abstract are point names that imply a five-phase association through reference to a color associated with a phase, such as Guarding White (LU-4).

Point names may often serve to remind the practitioner of the channel to which a point belongs. Earth Granary (ST-4), for example, recalls the stomach channel because the stomach is the "granary organ" and is associated with the earth phase. In a more abstract manner the name Central Treasury (LU-1) indicates that the point is the intersection-jiaohui point of the lung (treasury) and stomach (center) channels. Point names may have other functions such as recalling prohibitions for a point, as in Arm Five Li (LI-13), which, if needled, damages the qi of the five wards or interiors (viscera).

Usually two or more functions can be cited for a given point name. For example, the name Ear Gate (TB-21) is both functional and locational because it refers to the point's effectiveness in the treatment of ear disease, as well as the point's location at the front of the ear. The name Yin Cleft (HT-6) recalls that the point is located on the yin side of the arm, that it belongs to the shao yin channel, and that it is in the cleft-xi point of that channel. This point name is thus locational and functional and at the same time recalls the point's relationship to its home channel.

Though Chinese sources disagree on the number of classifications of point names, many texts do make an effort to categorize the names. The fourteen categories that follow are representative of the Chinese system, and include clarifying examples. Readers may note that further information may be gleaned by reference to **Appendix A, Glossary of Single Characters.**

Sample Categorizations	
Yin, Yang & Five Phases	
Yin	Yin Intersection (CV-7) Yin Market (ST-33)
Yang	Yang Valley (SI-5) Yang Mound Spring (GB-34)
Five Phases	Yellow Emperor (SP-4) Lesser Shang (LU-11)
Organs, Qi and Blood	
Organ names	Heart Shu (BL-15) Gallbladder Shu (BL-19)
Organ functions	Spirit Hall (BL-44)
Qi	Sea of Qi (CV-6) Origin Pass (CV-4)
Blood	Sea of Blood (SP-10)
Channels	
Channel Pathway	Eyebrow Ascension (BL-3)
Channel Intersections	Hundred Convergences (GV-20) Three Yin Intersection (SP-6)
Channel Name	Girdling Vessel (GB-26)
Periodic Qi Flow	Extending Vessel (BL-62)
Location & Function	
Point Function	Wind Pool (GB-20) Bright Eyes (BL-1)
Anatomy	Breast Center (ST-17) Jade Pillow (BL-9)
Locational Hints	Winnower Gate (SP-11) Standing by White (LU-4)
Body Measurements	Cubit Marsh (LU-5) Foot Three Li (ST-36)
Astronomic, Meteorologic & Geographic Associations	
Astronomic	Sun and Moon (GB-24) Celestial Pivot (ST-25)
Meteorologic	Wind Mansion (GV-16) Cloud Gate (LU-2)
Geographic	Mountain Support (BL-57) Outer Mound (ST-26)
Water-related phenomenon	Branch Ditch (TB-6) Shining Sea (KI-6)
Place names	Metal Gate (BL-63) Shang Hill (SP-5)

Numeric & Trigrammatic Relationships	
Numeric	Second Space (LI-2) Fifth Place (BL-5)
Trigrammatic	Severe Mouth (ST-45)
Architectural Structures	
Gate Tower	Great Gate Tower (CV-14)
Palace	Purple Palace (CV-19)
Storeroom	Storeroom (ST-14)
Granary	Stomach Granary (BL-50)
Abode	Qi Abode (ST-11) Bowel Abode (SP-13)
Hall	Jade Hall (CV-18)
Chamber	Will Chamber (BL-52)
Corridor	Corridor Walk (KI-22)
Court (Courtyard)	Spirit Court (GV-24) Central Courtyard (CV-16)
Window	Eye Window (GB-16) Celestial Window (SI-16)
Gate	Wind Gate (BL-12) Spirit Gate (HT-7)
Door	Qi Door (ST-13)
Space	Unyielding Space (GV-18) Second Space (LI-2)
Places of Activity	
Metropolises	Great Metropolis (SP-2) Yin Metropolis (KI-19)
Markets	Wind Market (GB-31) Yin Market (ST-33)
Countryside (Village)	Chest Village (SP-19)
Li (Ward or District)	Foot Three Li (ST-36) Connecting Li (HT-5)
Path	Spirit Path (GV-11) Linking Path (GB-28)
Pass	Yang Pass (GB-3) Outer Pass (TB-5)
Plants, Animals & Objects	
Plants	Grain Bone-Hole (LI-19)
Animals	Crouching Rabbit (ST-32)
Objects	Celestial Tripod (LI-17)
Characters	Celestial Pivot (ST-25) Inner Courtyard (ST-44)

The reader should note that alternate point names usually come from schools and traditions whose practice styles have faded from use in modern China. The main point names used in this book are a standard set of names adopted by most Chinese texts. GV-2 and GB-39 are the only points that have more than one name in most modern books. In contrast, the *Great Compendium of Acupuncture and Moxibustion* (1601), in a chapter entitled "Points that have Various Names" lists 88 points that have two names, 26 points that have three names, eight points that have four names, two points that have five names and two points that have six names. The listing in that book was compiled from the *Glorious Anthology of Acupuncture* and reflects only the alternate names from certain books and traditions. If all the alternate names ever coined were included, the list would be considerably longer.

Frequently, alternate names were the result of erroneous written transcription. Mistranscriptions due to printer error, for example, are not uncommon. In the *Thousand Gold Piece Prescriptions,* the author, Sun Si Miao, calls LI-14 頭沖 *tóu chōng,* Head Surge. In the book he wrote fifty years later, the *Supplemented Thousand Gold Piece Prescriptions,* LI-14 is named 頸沖 *jǐng chōng,* Neck Surge. Presumably, the latter name was the result of a mistranscription by the printer owing to the similarity of the characters for neck and head, 頸 and 頭, although it is also possible that the former name was incorrect and Sun Si Miao corrected the error in the latter book. Alternate names that resulted from this type of mistranscription are easy to recognize because the characters of various names for the same point are similar in appearance.

Mistranscriptions due to mistakes in verbal transmission also occurred. Some were attributable to the scribe who, while recording the words of the teacher, mistook the teacher's intended word for a homophone. This resulted in point names of the same pronunciation represented by different characters and therefore different meanings. The second type resulted

when a scribe understood what word the teacher was saying but couldn't remember how to write the proper character. He then substituted a character that was similar in either sound or construction to the correct one. The alternate names that resulted from this type of mistranscription are similar to the original name in pronunciation and/or appearance.

Some schools of acupuncture gave the points different names either to distinguish the school or to maintain secret traditions. These point names are recognizable by their lack of resemblance to the other names for the same point. They are found in books that expound a particular school of thought. Perhaps most obvious among this type of point name are the thirteen ghost points. The earliest extant recording of these points as a group is that given by Sun Si Miao in the *Thousand Gold Piece Prescriptions.* They were based on an earlier list from the Song Dynasty and were specifically intended for the treatment of ghost diseases, i.e. diseases where the patient behaves as if possessed by a ghost. Each of the ghost points thus has an alternate name that includes the word "ghost," for example, Ghost Heart (PC-7) and Ghost Pillow (GV-14).

Other alternate names come directly from the classics. An alternate name for ST-25, Large Intestine Mu, owes its existence to a passage in the *Classic of Difficult Issues* that describes ST-25 as being the alarm-mu point of the large intestine. Because the Chinese revered classical texts, later writers adopted this description as a name for the point.

Readers who wish to discover the origins of alternate names may compare the pinyin and the characters, thus discerning similarities and connections. This type of investigation often reveals a great deal about the primary point name or about the point itself, especially if studied in conjunction with the function, treatment scope and location of the point. Study of the alternate names provides a broader terrain in which to explore the primary point names as a means to understanding the points themselves.

A Brief Discussion of Chinese Characters

Before embarking on an exploration into the Chinese names of the acupuncture points, it is best that the reader have some familiarity with the construction of Chinese characters. Certain characters and parts of characters should be recognizable in order to derive the greatest benefit from the text. The following discussion is intended to provide the reader with enough information to make reading the explanations of point names a richer and more satisfying experience.

The simplest Chinese characters are stylized images of the things they represent. For example, the Chinese character 日 *rì*, which means the sun, was originally written as a circle with a dot in the middle. It was later squared for ease of writing and the dot extended to a line for clarity. The character 月 *yuè*, meaning moon, similarly derives from a picture of the crescent moon.

The vast majority of characters are not composed of one element as in the examples above, but of two or more. For instance, the characters 日 and 月 are combined to form 明 *míng*, meaning bright, clear or light.

In characters consisting of more than one element, one element is the radical while the other element or elements are additional meaning components or characters borrowed only for their sound. Characters that are used as sound elements within other characters are called phonetic elements. Returning to the example of 明 *míng*, 日 is the radical while 月 is an additional meaning component. In 灸 *jiǔ*, meaning moxibustion, 火 is the radical while the element 久 simply