

meditation, planning and projection. We can find in this spreading out far and powerfully the expression of what we later call the *yang* of the spleen, the ability to distribute and transport and so on. You can understand now why, when in pathological terms we say the *yang* of the spleen is insufficient, thought and reflection are disturbed and weak. It is exactly the contrary of being able to go far and powerfully. If the *yin* of the spleen essences is not sufficient then thinking is poor and you lose your memory because there is no longer the presentation of something to the spirit of the heart, and the spleen is no longer able to give or to maintain forms in thinking, such as ideas and memories.

*Obsessive thought injures the spleen*

*Anger prevails over obsessive thought*

思傷脾  
怒心勝思

At the end of Su wen chapter 5 we have the pathological aspect of thought. When thought is unable to go far and powerfully it turns around, and in this case obsessive thought injures the spleen. There is no distribution, there is no giving

earth element is to give form by transformation. So it is exactly the same for the spleen inside the body.

*Earth gives rise to the sweet*

土  
生  
甘

We saw previously the relationship between earth and sweet: that earth produces sweet in that the earth producing cereals, and all kinds of food, produces at the same time the well-harmonized composition of the qi of food. That is the basic meaning of what is sweet. It is by the function of earth simmering things together that we have sweet. Sweet, as a taste, is here at the highest level, it is like a basic structure which appears between heaven and earth (earth with the meaning of *di*, 地). For this reason, 'sweet produces the spleen'.

*Sweet gives rise to the spleen*

甘  
生  
脾

maintain every part of the body and the *zang*.

The stomach is like a market because it receives the five grains and helps with the transmission of the *qi* of the spleen to nourish the five *zang*. A market is a place of commerce or a fairground, where merchants bring things and sell them, and other people leave the market with the things they have bought. It is a place for exchange, for transformation or transportation. It is the place where all things can be gathered to be exchanged or to participate in the maintenance of life for each family, each person and so on. To be like a market has a resemblance to being a sea.

#### LING SHU CHAPTER 17

*'When the qi of the spleen is in free communication with the mouth, the spleen is in harmony and the mouth can distinguish the five grains, wu gu (五穀).'*

*Elisabeth Rochat:* This means that through the *qi* of the spleen, through its good state and harmonization, we are able to recognize what food we have in our mouth, and we can distinguish and know the five grains. In this chapter of the Ling shu it is by the activity and action of the *qi* of the heart that we can distinguish the five tastes. It is exactly as if the tastes were the inner structure of food, and we need the *qi* of the heart to penetrate to the interior of another thing. But