

# THE NATURE OF THE *PO* AND LUNG PATTERN DISHARMONIES

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## *Po*, CORPOREAL SOUL

The *po* is part of the five *shen*, the five spiritual aspects of an individual: the *hun*, *po*, *yi*, *zhi*, and *shen*, that correspond with the liver, lung, spleen, kidney, and heart respectively. The *po* is related to the metal element and resides in the lungs. It is defined as the part of the soul that is connected to the body. This is in opposition to the *hun*, which is identified as the ethereal soul. Together, the *hun* and *po* are the two aspects of the soul, intertwined like yin and yang. The *hun* represents the yang and nonphysical aspect of the soul and the *po* represents the yin and physical aspect of the soul.

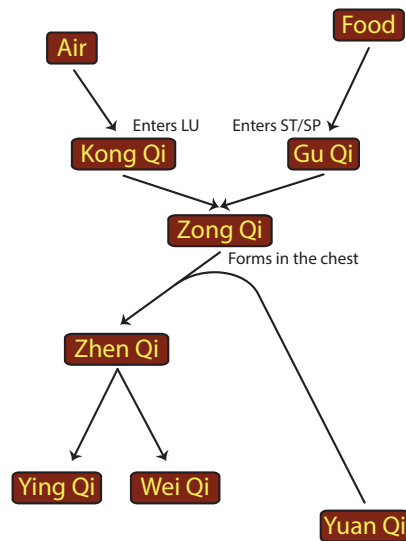
The *po* is also known as the corporeal soul, with a strong connection to the physical world and the body. It is closely linked to *jing*. The *Ling Shu* (The Spiritual Pivot) states “that which enters and exits with essence is called the corporeal soul.” The *po* arises from the mother at conception and stays with the body upon death. It is the organizational principle of life for the body, and, along with the *jing*, is responsible for the physical development during gestation, with the *po* providing the *jing* with movement and direction. The *po* is considered the life force of the body. As the *jing* diminishes with age, so does the *po*; and when death occurs, the *po* is “silenced.”

In the *Lei Jing* (The Classified Canon) Zhang Jie-Bin states “That the function of the corporeal soul is to enable the body to move and perform its function.” The *po* is responsible for the body’s basic regulatory activities and functions. While this encompasses all physiological functions, it can easily be viewed as autonomic functions, like respiration, heart rate, blood pressure, perspiration, digestion, etc. Being that the *po* is housed in the lung, breathing is considered the manifestation of *po*.

The *po* is also responsible for physical movement, coordination and balance, and has a strong connection with the senses. The *po* is especially associated with hearing, sight, smell, and touch; including pain. When the *po* is in balance, hearing, sight, and smell are sharp, and the tactile sense of touch is acute. The decline of the senses occurs as one ages. This is due to the decline of kidney *jing* as well as the decline of the *po*. The perception of physical pain and itching is defined by Zhang Jie-Bin in the *Lie Jing* (The Classified Canon). In it he states that “pain and itching are felt by it (the *po*).” This is evidence of the *po*’s close connection with the sensory receptors of the skin. Another example of this connection can be summed up by an excerpt from *The Psyche in Chinese Medicine* by Giovanni Maciocia: “The *po*, being closely related to the body, is the first to be affected when needles are inserted: the almost immediate feeling of relaxation following the insertion of needles is due to the unwinding of the *po*. Through it, the mind, *hun*, *yi*, *zhi* are all affected.”

The psychosocial aspect of the *po* is the individual. Psychological feelings are inward and private, and deep seated emotions that have not come to consciousness. The *po* is affected by all emotions, but especially worry, grief, and sadness. These emotions are associated with and stem from the individual’s inability to deal with loss, and thus manifesting as repressed grief and sadness.

The *po* is also known as the animal soul. This brings forth the idea of basic or primal instincts, and can be seen in the body’s basic physiological functioning that was discussed earlier. But it can also be discussed in relation to physical and material needs, by collecting and holding onto what is needed to survive while releasing objects that are of no benefit. This is discernment, a quality of the *po*, where instinct and judgment occur within and in relation to the surrounding world. Another trait of the animal soul is the ability to experience emotion and pain without dwelling upon that experience. This can be further defined by stating that the *po*’s ability to separate from and not attach importance or meaning to the pain optimizes the body’s functioning. The *po* is associated with a single lifetime and with it a connection to the experiences at that particular moment in space and time.



## DISHARMONIES OF THE *Po*

There is a close relationship between the *po*, the lung, and the skin; and as such, emotional issues, respiratory issues, and dermatological issues are the conditions that arise most with *po* involvement. These issues can arise individually or in conjunction with each other at the same time. They can also give rise to one another. An example of this would be how emotional disturbances can lead to skin outbreaks like eczema and how people who suffer from eczema can develop asthma. While it is important to see the interrelationship between these issues, when treating these disorders it is best to focus on the primary condition.

Disharmonies of the *po* usually present as either an over-contraction or over-expansion of the *po*, and as mentioned above, mainly manifest as emotional, respiratory, or skin disorders. An excessive inward or contractive movement of the *po* presents as a suppression of emotions. This suppression is often an unexpressed grief which constricts the *po* and most commonly manifests emotionally as depression and sadness. It can also be seen in a person who is withdrawn from life or relationships, stuck in negative repetitive behavior, has difficulty letting go, or seen with mental confusion or forgetfulness. It can manifest physically as breathing problems like dyspnea and wheezing, or as skin conditions like rashes or eczema. This contraction can also bring about qi stagnation,

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and over time can contribute to the formation of breast lumps.

As the *po* is naturally in a slightly contractive state, any expansion of the *po* is considered to be an excess. The uncontrolled outward expansion of the *po* can present emotionally as feelings of anxiousness, obsession, or excessive worry. Respiratory issues present as difficult breathing, wheezing, or cough. Dermatological issues that arise will present as intense itchy or painfully itchy rashes.

### Treatment

When deciding on an herbal treatment for the over-contraction of the *po*, it is important to use the signs and symptoms of *po* contraction in conjunction with an OM *zang-fu* diagnosis to confirm the correct formula. **Pinellia and Magnolia Bark Formula** (*Ban Xia Hou Po Tang*) and **Bupleurum and Tang Kuei Formula** (*Xiao Yao San*) can be effective for treating over-contraction of the *po*, and are especially good for emotional issues. **Pinellia and Magnolia Bark Formula** (*Ban Xia Hou Po Tang*) is a very important formula to restore proper qi flow. The formula brightens moods and emotional states, which can bring about a reversal of the excessive inward movement. It treats inward contraction and withdrawal from life seen as an inability to go out and undertake activities alone. **Bupleurum and Tang Kuei Formula** (*Xiao Yao San*) also addresses emotional issues manifesting as sudden mood changes that don't easily subside, often with a difficulty of letting go. There can be a sense or feeling that everything weighs heavily on the mind. And there is often a repetitive aspect to the emotional state. For skin conditions, Tangkuei and Arctium Formula (*Xiao Feng San*, KPC 2610) can be used by itself or added to **Bupleurum and Tang Kuei Formula** (*Xiao Yao San*). **Pinellia and Magnolia Bark Formula** (*Ban Xia Hou Po Tang*) may also be used for respiratory issues. Other good formulas to consider for respiratory issues are **Restore the Lung Formula** (*Bu Fei Tang*) or **Ling Zhi Lung Formula** (*Ling Zhi Fei Pian*). A good acupuncture treatment protocol for contraction of the *po* consists of LU 3, LU 7, PC 6, KI 3, LR 3, RN 17, and ST 36. LU 7 and LU 3 are the principal points to soothe and calm the *po*. While UB 42 is named the "*po* door", it is not commonly used to treat conditions of the *po* in modern times.

Breathing and meditation exercises that bring awareness to the inward movement of breath can be a beneficial treatment therapy. Meditation links breathing with the *po*, and this practice calms the *po*. Inhaling to retain nourishment and exhaling what is no longer useful is at the essence of the *po*.

For herbal formulas that treat the outward expansion of the *po*, again it is important to confirm the formula with an Oriental Medicine diagnosis. **Peaceful Spirit Formula** (*Yang Xin Ning Shen Wan*) is a good formula for emotional disorders due to the expansion of the *po*. For skin conditions, combine **Heavenly Emperor's Formula** (*Tian Wang Bu Xin Dan*) with Tangkuei and Arctium Formula (*Xiao Feng San*, KPC 2610). For respiratory issues, further refinement of a pattern according to OM theory is necessary, but a formula like **Ling Zhi Lung Formula** (*Ling Zhi Fei Pian*) may be appropriate. A good acupuncture treatment protocol for the

expansion of the *po* consists of LU 5, LU 7, PC 7, SJ 6, and RN 17.

### THE LUNG

The lung is the main organ addressed when conditions occur that affect respiration or exterior invasions like colds or allergies. Many of the basic concepts, theories, and functions that we use today for the lung date back to the *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen* and the *Nan Jing*. The concepts are discussed below.

### The Lung Rules Qi

The lung rules the qi. It is responsible for respiration and for the production of true qi or *zhen* qi. The understanding of how the lung governs respiration is similar to that of Western Medicine where the lung inhales oxygen and exhales carbon dioxide. In Chinese Medicine, it is viewed as the lung bringing in the clean air, the pure qi, which is exchanged for the turbid air, the impure qi, and expelled. When the lung is in balance, respiration is smooth and regular. If the lung is deficient, respiration becomes impaired resulting in difficult breathing, shortness of breath, and wheezing.

The *Su Wen* states that "true qi is the product of that which is received from heaven combined with food qi, and which makes the body full." The classical physiology of lung qi states that the lung takes the food qi, or *gu* qi, provided by the spleen and stomach and combines it with pure air qi or *kong* qi in the chest cavity to form gathering qi or *zong* qi. *Zong* qi regulates the passive movements of the lung and heart. The *zong* qi, with the help of *yuan* qi from the kidney, is transformed into true qi or *zhen* qi. The *zhen* qi circulates throughout the body in the form of defensive qi or *wei* qi, which protects and warms the exterior, but also circulates as nutritive qi, or *ying* qi, to nourish the internal organs. With this physiological picture it is easy to recognize how all the types of qi are ruled by the lung.

### Dispersion and Descending Functions of the Lung

The lung is responsible for descending and dispersing qi and body fluids throughout the body in order to nourish and moisten the organs, meridians, muscles, skin, and hair. The lung is known as the "lid of the yin organs" since it resides in the upper burner, located above all other yin organs in the body. Because of its placement there is a natural descending action. Nutrients that have entered the stomach are separated, the pure qi goes to the spleen and then up to the lungs to be disseminated and circulated throughout the body. The lung descends qi down to the kidney where the kidney stores the qi. Failure of the lung to descend the qi or the kidney to grasp and anchor the qi can result in rebellious qi, which impairs respiration, resulting in cough, wheeze, and shortness of breath. If the lung fails to descend nutrients, they can congeal, causing phlegm accumulation, which manifests as cough, wheezing, difficult breathing, and tight chest. These two functions, dispersion and descent, act together and each effect the other. An example of this would be when the lung qi fails to disperse to the exterior, a wind invasion can attack the lungs, this in turn can inhibit the descending function, resulting in cough and asthma.

## THE METAL PHASE

Organ	Lung, large intestine
Sense	Smell
Sense Organ	Nose
Tissue	Skin and body hair
Emotions when balanced	Discernment, strength, sustainability
Emotions when excess	Rigid, order
Emotions when deficient	Sadness, grief
Vocal quality	Sobbing
Flavor	Pungent, spicy
Odor	Putrid, raw, rotten
Body fluid	Nasal mucous
Pathogen	Dryness
Color	White
Season	Fall
Development stage	Harvest, retirement
Direction	West
Position	Right
Body position	Laying down
Numbers	4,9
Office	Architect, organizer
Duty	Creating order
Virtue	Vitality
Psyche	Po, corporeal soul

### The Lung Regulates Water Passages

The lung has two ways in which it moves water throughout the body: descent and dissemination. The lung is known as the “upper source of water” or “origin of water.” Its descending function carries water to the kidney, which then goes on to the urinary bladder to be discharged from the body. This prevents accumulation of water in the body. If this function is inhibited, edema and urinary retention can occur. The second way the lung regulates water passages is through its disseminating function: circulating the water as a vapor throughout, lubricating the body, especially to the skin and pores, where it is used to moisten the skin, then excreted as sweat. If the lung is deficient and the disseminating function becomes impaired, then excessive or spontaneous sweating can occur.

### The Lung Dominates the Exterior and Wei Qi

The lung is called the “tender organ” or “delicate organ.” It is the only yin organ with direct contact to the outside and is therefore extremely vulnerable to attack by external pathogenic influences. The lung governs the skin and body hair by dispersing nutrients, qi, and body fluids to the body’s surface. This is done through the lung’s disseminating function, which enters the space between skin and muscles known as the *cou li*. This is considered the energetic level where *wei qi* circulates, warms, and protects the body, which in turn moistens the skin and regulates the opening and closing of pores. External pathogenic influences attack

and penetrate this layer first. When balanced, these influences cannot penetrate. If the lung is deficient and fails to spread the *wei qi*, external invasions and inability to control sweating will result.

### The Lung Governs Channels and Blood Vessels

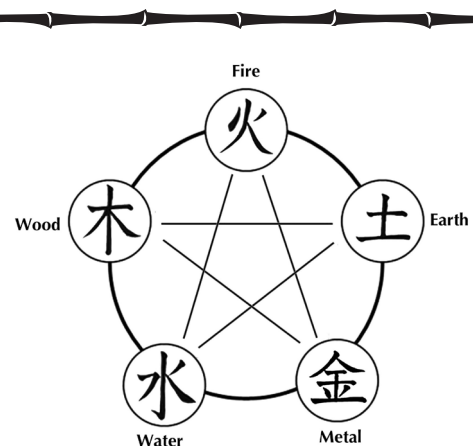
Lung and heart are mutually linked for proper functioning. Lung governs qi in the meridians as well as the qi that moves the blood in the vessels; the heart governs blood, which nourishes the qi. When the organs are harmonious, there is good blood circulation. If the lung is deficient, the lung qi will be unable to move the blood, resulting in poor circulation, which manifests as cold extremities, especially the hands.

### The Lung Opens to the Nose and Connects with the Throat

The lung is the only *zang* organ with direct connection with the outside. When the lung is in balance, the sense of smell is acute and fragrances can be clearly distinguished. The contact with the exterior makes the lung susceptible to external pathogenic invasions and when these invasions occur, it affects the nose and manifests as nasal congestion and discharge. The throat is governed by the lung and again can be easily affected by external influences causing sore throat and loss of voice.

### The Lung Connects with the Large Intestine

The lung has a meridian connection with the large intestine. This is a yin/yang, internal/external pairing. The lung provides the movement behind the large intestine’s primary function: to discard waste. Constipation may be due to qi deficiency, resulting in an inability to provide movement. It may also be due to dryness, associated with the lung’s inability to moisten and regulate water passages.



As *po* manifests, *jing* appears.  
 Because of *jing*, *hun* manifests.  
*Hun* causes the birth of *shen*,  
 because of *shen*,  
 consciousness comes forth,  
 because of consciousness, the *po* is brought forth again.  
*Hun* and *po*, yang and yin, and five phases are endless  
 cycles, only the achieved can escape it.  
 ~ Master Hu



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### LUNG PATTERN DISHARMONIES

Lung Patterns	Manifestations	Tongue	Pulse	Acupuncture	Herbal Formula
Wind-cold attack	Cold, chills, fever, whole body aches, nasal congestion	Thin, white coat	Floating, tight	GB 20, LU 7, LI 4, DU 14, UB 12, UB 13	<b>Cinnamon Twig Formula</b> ( <i>Gui Zhi Tang</i> )
Wind-heat attack	Sore throat, fever, chills, sweating, yellow sputum	Thin, yellow coat	Floating, rapid	LI 11, LI 4, SJ 5, DU 14, GB 20, UB 12	<b>Yin Chiao Formula</b> ( <i>Yin Qiao San</i> )
Lung heat	Cough usually w/thick, yellow sputum, scanty, dark urine, constipation, chest tightness or pain	Red with thin, yellow coat	Rapid	LU 10, LU 5, DU 14, UB 13, LI 4, RN 17	<b>Mulberry and Lycium Formula</b> ( <i>Xie Bai San</i> ) or <b>Viola Clear Fire Formula</b> ( <i>Di Ding Qing Huo Pian</i> )
Lung dryness	Dry cough w/little sputum, dry skin, mouth and nose	Red, dry, yellow coat	Thin, rapid	LU 9, SP 6, LU 5, KI 6, LI 11, LI 4, DU 14	<b>Lily Presere Metal Formula</b> ( <i>Bai He Gu Jin Tang</i> )
Lung qi deficiency	Aversion to wind, shortness of breath, spontaneous sweating	Pale with a thin, white coat	Weak	UB 13, UB 43, LU 7, LU 9, ST 36, SP 6	<b>Restore the Lung Formula</b> ( <i>Bu Fei Tang</i> )
Lung yin deficiency	Hoarse voice, night sweats, insomnia, dry cough with scanty or blood tinged sputum	Red with little or no coat, cracks	Thin, rapid	LU 9, LU 5, UB 13, UB 43, SP 6, KI 3, KI 6	<b>Lily Preserve Metal Formula</b> ( <i>Bai He Gu Jin Tang</i> ) or <b>Eight Immortals Formula</b> ( <i>Ba Xian Chang Shou Wan</i> )
Multi-Organ Patterns	Manifestations	Tongue	Pulse	Acupuncture	Herbal Fomula
Lung / kidney yin deficiency	Chronic cough with little sputum, dry mouth and throat, low back pain, night sweats, hot flashes, afternoon fever, constipation	Red tongue with little or no coat	Thin, rapid	LU 9, LU 5, KI 3, KI 6, SP 6	<b>Eight Immortals Formula</b> ( <i>Ba Xian Chang Shou Wan</i> )
Lung / spleen qi deficiency	Weak voice, weak cough with sputum, shortness of breath, wheezing, poor appetite, abdominal distention, fatigue	Pale tongue with thin, white coat	Weak	UB 13, SP 3, SP 6, LU 9, ST 36, UB 20	<b>Six Gentlemen Formula</b> ( <i>Liu Jun Zi Tang</i> ) or <b>Ginseng and Astragalus Formula</b> ( <i>Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang</i> )
Lung / heart qi deficiency	Weak voice, weak cough, shortness of breath, dyspnea, palpitations, chest tightness or discomfort	Pale	Weak	HT 7, LU 9, UB 13, UB 15, PC 6, CV 17	<b>Baked Licorice Formula</b> ( <i>Zhi Gan Cao Tang</i> )

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