

# Spirit of stone: technical considerations in the treatment of the Jade Body<sup>1</sup>

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The early Imperial period was a time of rapid change in medical ideas and practices in China. Manuscripts and artifacts excavated from tombs of the second century B.C. along the Yangtze river valley bring fresh insights into some of the processes involved in medical innovation in the early centuries of the empire. Through examining exorcistic practices and petty surgery to the refinement of a body sustained and nourished by physiological essences, this paper describes recurring patterns found in the changing medical techniques associated with stone, be that lancets, hot pressing stones or mineral prescription. After the transition to a culture of applying fine metal acupuncture needles, vestiges of these treatments found in early Chinese stone culture remain enshrined in both theory and practice of canonical medicine.

*Maishu* 脈書 (The Book of Channels) is a bamboo manuscript which was buried c. 186 B.C. and recovered in 1983–84 from the Zhangjiashan burial site in modern Hubei. Collectively its some six texts make up the earliest extant treatise to set out the principles and practice of acumoxa. *Maishu* (2) describes the passage of eleven *mai* 脈 ‘channels’ that traverse the body from the limbs to the torso and head—a concept fundamental to the development of the classical medical theory that was formulated in Han times.<sup>2</sup> *Maishu* (4) then promotes exercise and diet as a way of cultivating the *yuti* 玉體 ‘jade body’.<sup>3</sup>

Now the reason that flowing water does not stagnate and a door that pivots does not get woodworm is because of movement. When there is movement then it fills the four limbs and empties the five viscera, when the five viscera are empty then the ‘jade body’ will benefit. Now one who rides in a

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<sup>2</sup> I follow Harper, who divides *Maishu* into six core texts which he describes as ‘ailment list’, ‘eleven vessels’, ‘five signs of death’, ‘care of the body’, ‘six constituents’ and ‘vessels and vapor’. His titles indicate well the content of each text. See *Early Chinese medical literature: the Mawangdui medical manuscripts* (London: Kegan Paul International) (The Sir Henry Wellcome Asian Series), 1998, 31. The word *mai* is difficult to translate; Harper translates it as ‘vessel’, which draws out the early association with the arteriovenous system. See Donald Harper, *Early Chinese medical literature*, 76–95. I prefer to follow the contemporary analogy with *du* 澗 ‘channel’ or ‘canal’ found in the *Maishu* 脈書 (channel, document). See Jiangling Zhangjiashan Hanjian zhengli xiaozu, ‘Jiangling Zhangjiashan Hanjian (*Maishu*) shiwen’, 江陵張家山漢簡脈書釋文 (hereafter ‘*Maishu* shiwen’), *Wenwu* 1989, 7, 74. The translation ‘channel’ also serves to emphasize the relationship of the *mai* to the superficial anatomical channels as defined by muscle and bone, as they were understood before the more elaborate theories of the *jingluo* and *jingmai* found in the *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經 (Yellow Emperor’s inner canon; see notes 21 and 79 below). *Jingluo* or *jingmai* have been variously translated as ‘conduit’, ‘meridian’, ‘circulation tract’, etc. See Nathan Sivin, *Traditional medicine in contemporary China* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1987), 34, 122 n.11; and Paul Unschuld, *Medicine in China: a history of ideas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 75, 81–3.

<sup>3</sup> ‘*Maishu* shiwen’, 74. On the dating of the Zhangjiashan tomb in Hubei and the identity of its occupant, see Zhangjiashan Hanmu zhujian zhengli xiaozu, ‘Jiangling Zhangjiashan Hanjian gaishu’ 江陵張家山漢簡概述, *Wenwu* 1985, 1, 9–15.

carriage and eats meat, must (fast and purify themselves?)<sup>4</sup> in Spring and Autumn. If they do not (fast and purify themselves?) then the *mai* will rot and cause death.<sup>5</sup>

In the few references to a 'jade body' in the received literature from Warring States and Han times we find a vision of perfection, or the body of a beautiful woman.<sup>6</sup> But in the case of the *Maishu* acumoxa texts this perfect body is a physiological entity with a technical reality that borrows from ideas originating in self-cultivation culture.

In the *Maishu* (4) quotation above we find that movement 'fills the four limbs and empties the five viscera'. Techniques of breath-cultivation and therapeutic gymnastics in late Warring States and early Imperial literature often echo and sometimes subvert these priorities: there is breathing and dispersing *qi* 氣 (the fundamental stuff of life) outwards into the limbs or, in contrast, filling the body and inner bowels through the orifices. The following quotation from Mawangdui *Shiwen* 十問 (Ten Questions) promotes both techniques:

The way to breathe *qi*: it must reach to the extremities ... Breathing must be deep and sustained. Fresh *qi* is easy to hold on to, *qi* that has been kept over night is ageing, fresh *qi* creates long life. The one who is good at putting the *qi* in order causes the *qi* that has been kept overnight to disperse during the night and fresh *qi* to collect in the morning by penetrating the nine orifices and filling the six cavities.<sup>7</sup>

Many early breathing techniques also involve holding the breath and contracting the anus to move inner *qi*.<sup>8</sup>

Western Han breath- and sexual-cultivation texts generally conceive of the body as a physiological entity made up of the triad *qi*, *shen* 神 (a manifestation of the 'spirits') and *jing* 精 'essences'.<sup>9</sup> A technique found in both breath and sexual-cultivation, *yubi* 玉閉 'the jade closure' refers to sealing these fluids and essences.<sup>10</sup> Here the Mawangdui text, *Shiwen*, describes how to sustain vigour, and ensure longevity by absorbing a woman's essences into the body.

In the cultivation of lengthening life secretly use the jade closure. At that moment when the jade closure opens, the illumination of the spirit arrives and accumulates. As it accumulates, it will be manifest. When the jade closure firms the essence, this will make the jade spring imperturbable. Then the hundred afflictions will not increase and thus you can live long.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>4</sup> 治 is not attested in received literature, but from the context and the shape of the graph, which depicts water and a mouth-like opening, we may assume that it refers to some kind of technique to remedy a sedentary life and over-eating.

<sup>5</sup> 'Maishu shiwen', 74.

<sup>6</sup> Collected in *Morohashi*, vol. 7, 803.

<sup>7</sup> *Mawangdui Hanmu boshu*, vol. 4, 147.

<sup>8</sup> These are described in Donald Harper, 'The bellows technique in *Laozi* V and Warring States macrobiotic hygiene', *Early China* 21, 1995.

<sup>9</sup> *Jing* may refer to the finest *qi*, to reproductive essences, often manifest as semen.

<sup>10</sup> *Bi* 閉 'closure' in later Daoist literature emphasizes the act of enclosing an inner space and containing and accumulating the body's essences within. See, for example, *Mawangdui Hanmu boshu*, vol. 4, 146.

<sup>11</sup> Also translated in Harper, *Early Chinese medical literature*, 390–91 and n.2. The Mawangdui burial mound is located in the north-eastern section of Changsha 長沙, Hunan, formerly the Western Han Kingdom of Changsha, and was excavated in the early 1970s. It contains three tombs. Tombs no. 1 and no. 2 belonged to the Lord of Dai, Li Cang 利蒼, and his wife (who was buried in tomb no. 1). Tomb no. 3, from which the manuscripts were excavated, was occupied by one of their sons, who died in 168 B.C. at the age of about thirty. For the excavation report see Hunansheng bowuguan and Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo, 'Changsha Mawangdui er, sanhao Hanmu fajue jianbao' 長沙馬王堆二·三號漢墓發掘簡報, *Wenwu* 1974, 7, 39–48. Details of the find are also given in the introduction to *Mawangdui Hanmu boshu*, vol. 1. See Harper, *Early Chinese medical literature*, 4 regarding the wooden tablet in Mawangdui tomb no. 3 that records the burial date. *Mawangdui Hanmu boshu*, vol. 4, 131–41.



We will see in the course of this paper that techniques to lead *qi* to the limbs as well as the intention of enhancing *qi*, *shen* and *jing* established in early self-cultivation remain enshrined in transmitted medical literature and surviving traditions of medical practice.

Despite the fact that *Maishu* (4) recommends movement and diet as ways of caring for the *mai* of the 'jade body', *Maishu* is not a treatise on self-cultivation. It simply uses self-cultivation priorities to model new medical techniques. After *Maishu* (4) there is a short text differentiating body constituents, followed by *Maishu* (6), which gives us the earliest extant reference to acupuncture (inasmuch as acupuncture can be defined as body piercing to normalize the flow of *qi*).

The channels are values by the sages. As for *qi*, it benefits the lower body and harms the upper; follows heat and distances coolness. So, the sages cool the head and warm the feet. Those who treat illness take the surplus and supplement the insufficiency. So if *qi* goes up, not down, then when you see the channel that has over-reached itself, apply one cauterisation where it meets the articulation. When the illness is intense then apply another cauterisation at a place two *cun* 寸 above the articulation. When the *qi* rises at one moment and falls in the next pierce it with a stone lancet at the back of the knee and the elbow.

Thus, the sage physician draws *qi* down and out through the limbs by applying cautery and a stone lancet to open the channels at the joints. Here we have the technical elements of self-cultivation embraced within new medical ways to project *qi* away from the head and body towards the limbs. On the first impression there seems to be a contradiction between the crude nature of the intervention (surgery with stone) and the object of intervention (*qi*). But this would be to underestimate the potency of stone in early Chinese medical culture.

### *Spirit of stone*

What, then, was stone in early Chinese culture? With the pervasive influence of *wuxing* 五行 'five agent' (wood, fire, earth, metal and water) theories of generation and conquest in Han political, philosophical and scientific thought it is easy to overlook the importance of the agent *shi* 'stone' 石 in early Chinese attitudes to the mysteries of life and death.<sup>12</sup> The 石神 'Stone Spirit' itself was one of seven medical treatises given to the former Han physician Chunyu Yi 淳于意 (fl. 154 B.C.) by his teacher Yang Qing 陽慶 and recorded in *Shiji* 史記 'The Record of the Historian', but it is no longer extant.<sup>13</sup> Probably Chunyu Yi's text was a treatise on *yaoshi* 藥石 'mineral drugs', as distinct from either needling stones or plant products. Chunyu Yi criticizes his

<sup>12</sup> Stone as a generative force and, unusually, as aligned with the *wuxing* 'five agents' of water, wood, metal, earth and fire, is evident in the *Tai chanshu* 胎產書 (Book of the Generation of the Fetus), one of the silk manuscripts excavated from the Mawangdui burial site. Translated in Harper, *Early Chinese medical literature*, 371–84. *Wuxing* has been variously translated as 'five agents', 'five phases', 'five processes' or 'five elements'. The five '*xing*' are not equivalent to the elements of early Western philosophic thought. The translation 'elements' suggests a material constituent and lacks the dynamic of quality and movement inherent in the early concept of *xing*. 'Phases' concentrates exclusively on the division of time and the passage of the seasons—and 'process' seems to bring a mechanistic quality to what is fundamentally a natural metaphor. 'Agents' refers generally to their influence in a process in a general sense and avoids the pitfalls of time and substance inherent in the other translations. See the discussion in Angus Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: philosophical argument in ancient China*. (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1999), 340–56.

<sup>13</sup> *Shiji* 105, 2798. References to (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962).

colleague Sui 遂, physician to the King of Qi 齊, who takes the potent, heating prescription *wushi* 五石 ‘five stones’ when it is contra-indicated. Sui’s death from ingrowing abscesses is consistent with long-term arsenic poisoning, arsenic being one likely constituent of *wushi*.

The Han élite frequently took minerals such as lead, mercury, cinnabar and arsenic to preserve their bodies, if not also for pleasure. In death ritual, knowledge of the disinfecting and rot-preventing function of cinnabar is apparent in neolithic corpses found buried in thick layers of cinnabar. Some Han corpses have been found stuffed with cinnabar and with death shrouds soaked in it.<sup>14</sup> Yet other stones, such as the five coloured stones buried with the King of Nanyue 南越, could confer the power of permanence and preservation from their very presence in the tomb.<sup>15</sup> Interred stones and ores undoubtedly had a demon-quelling influence.<sup>16</sup>

Stone, and jade in its own distinctive way, determined a sacred space wherein the body would not decay. The corpses of Prince Liu Sheng 劉勝 (d. 113 B.C.) and his wife Dou Wan 竇綰 were protected with several layers of jade; jade orifice plugs and jade *bi* (originally forming part of some kind of shroud) were followed by a complete jade armoury for the body. Their coffins were also lined with jade. Finally, placed between two of Liu Sheng’s coffins, there was a small, seated jade figure inscribed with the words *gu yu ren* 古玉人 ‘ancient jade person’, surely the most distinctive image of the potential for Liu Sheng’s immortality.<sup>17</sup> *Yuyi* 玉衣 ‘jade funerary clothing’ was in use as early as the Eastern Zhou period and it seems likely that by Han times the image of the élite ‘body of jade’ was embedded in popular imagination.<sup>18</sup>

Thus jade, as the most refined form of stone, became a metaphor for physical immortality. Lesser stones could cut, cool and hot press the body; some could also be a dwelling place for spirits, a protective and generative force as well as a stimulant in mineral form.<sup>19</sup> By the second century B.C. all these qualities accumulated to the concept of medical stone and came to bear on the transformation of medical technology using *bian* 砭 and/or 鍼石 *zhenshi* and *chan* 鑱, different kinds of lancing stones.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Traces of all these minerals were found in the corpse of the near perfectly preserved countess of Dai, buried in the Mawangdui burial mound in 168 B.C. See Li Ling 李零, ‘Shiti fang gu, yejing he liandan’ 尸體防腐·冶金和煉丹 in *Wenwu tianqi* 1992, 4, 17–18.

<sup>15</sup> Scattered in an orderly fashion around the King of Nanyue’s Han tomb (c. B.C. 122) were all kinds of medicinal minerals. Most unusually, at the base of the southern wall on the western side of the coffin chamber, were five coloured stones. *Xihan Nanyuewang mu, shang* 西漢南越王墓上 (Beijing: Wenwuchubanshe, 1994), 141.

<sup>16</sup> An inscription on a pottery vessel of Eastern Han date (193 A.D.) reads: ‘(Let) those who practise the Dao bury five stones whose essences will pacify the tomb (and thus) benefit sons and grandsons’. tr. Carole Morgan, ‘Inscribed stones’, in *T’oung-pao* 82, 1996, 338–9 and *Wenwu* 1980, 1, 95. See also Wang Yucheng 王育成, ‘Dong Han daofu shili’ 東漢道符釋例 in *Kaogu xuebao* 1991, 1, 54.

<sup>17</sup> All mentions of *yuren* 玉人 in the received literature up until the end of the Western Han period refer to jade workers, rather than people of jade.

<sup>18</sup> I am indebted to Donald Harper for pointing out the jade suit discovered in tomb D9M1 at a Wu 吳 site in Suzhou at Zhen shan 真山. See *Zhenshan dong Zhou mudi* 真山東周墓地, Suzhou bowuguan (Beijing: Wenwu, 1999). It had been thought that body suits were first used between the time of the Han emperors Jingdi 景帝 and Wudi 武帝 and there are none recovered from after the third year of the *huangchu* 黃初 reign of the Wei king Wendi 文帝. See *Mancheng Hanmu fajue baogao*, (Beijing: Wenwu, 1980), 378, Lu Zhaoyin 盧兆蔭, ‘Shi lun liang Han de yuyi’, *Wenwu* 89, 10, 51–8 and ‘zai lun liang Han de yuyi’ *Kaogu*, 81.1, 60–7.

<sup>19</sup> According to the *Shiji* and *Hanshu* 漢書 ‘Book of the Han’ biographies, Zhang Liang’s 張良 (d. 187 B.C.) natural patience and respect were severely tested by an old man who turned out to be the manifestation of a stone spirit, normally resident in a yellow stone beneath Jibei Gucheng 濟北穀城山 mountain. Zhang Liang’s biography is *Shiji* 55, 2034–5 and 2046. See also *Hanshu* (Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 2024 and 2037.

<sup>20</sup> *Zhen* 箴 ‘needle’ is a common variant of *zhen* 針 (鍼) ‘needle’. These graphs bear the bamboo (*zhu* 竹) and metal (*jin* 金) radicals respectively, but this does not necessarily indicate the type of material used to produce the instruments. If we understand *zhenshi* 針石 as ‘needling



Medical tools and techniques found in late Warring States and Western Han textual and archaeological records fall naturally into four areas; firstly we will consider the atropaic qualities of medical stones, secondly the evidence of tools used for surgery, then that for hot pressing, cautery and massage. Finally, in the transition to using fine metal needles, we will see vestiges of treatments found in early Chinese stone culture in the formation of classical Chinese acupuncture.<sup>21</sup>

#### *Atropaic medical stones*

Shang burial sites at Yinxu 殷墟 and Anyang 安陽 have yielded jade arrows which were probably useless for hunting and warfare but which more likely played a role in ritual. Scholars have speculated about their use in medicine generally, although it is difficult to determine a function except, perhaps, aiming at exorcising illness entities in the body.<sup>22</sup> A much-quoted account in *Zuozhuan* describes attacking an illness that has lodged in the body. The sixth-century B.C. physician Yihuan 醫緩 states that an illness entity is situated:

above the region of the diaphragm and below the region of the heart, if you attack it will not work, if you try to penetrate you will not get through, medicine will not reach to it.<sup>23</sup>

The patient had dreamt of two men, personifying the illness, hiding from the physician within his body. Lu and Needham used this quotation to suggest that acupuncture was practised in the sixth century B.C. But since the terminology of the effect 'reaching' its target is not exclusive to acupuncture, and is

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stones' then the metal radical in 'needle' is clearly irrelevant and may, in any case be a later variant. The most comprehensive discussions of *bian* and related subjects are in Ma Jixing and Zhou Shirong 周世蓉, 'Kaogu fajuezhong suojian bianshi de chubu tansuo', *Wenwu* 1978, 11, 80–82, and Yamada Keiji, *The origins of acupuncture, moxibustion and decoction* (Kyoto: International Research Centre for Japanese Studies, 1998).

<sup>21</sup> *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經 is the work most famous for the exposition of classical acumoxa theories. It is a corpus now extant in three recensions, the *Taisu* 太素 (Great Basis), the *Suwen* 素問 (Plain Questions) and the *Lingshu* 靈樞 (Divine Pivot). For the latter two texts I will refer to the *Sibu Beiyao* editions. Each of these is a compilation of small texts dealing with separate topics which may reflect the thinking in a distinct medical lineage. It is thought that the earliest texts were set down during the first or at the earliest the second century B.C. Collectively they represent the kind of debate through which classical medical concepts matured. For an extended discussion of the development of medical theories in China based on a clarification of the formation of the *Huangdi neijing* see Yamada Keiji: 'The formation of the *Huang-ti nei-ching*', in *Acta Asiatica* 36, 1979, 67–89.

<sup>22</sup> Bronze and bone arrowheads and needles are commonly found in Shang burial sites. Needham's note: Cf. *NCNA Chinese Bulletin*, 29 June 1961. For bone needles of the Shang period, considered to be hairpins, see Anon 195 pl. 35, figs 3–7, pl. 36 fig. 5. (Summarized in Gwei-Djen Lu and Joseph Needham, *Celestial lancets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 72–3). Shang arrowheads come in four basic types—the thin *bi* 匕 (spoon) shaped, the flat headed, the three-faceted blade and the conical. Ye Youxin 葉又新 speculates that these arrowheads are similar to four of the nine needles described in *Lingshu* 1, 'Jiuzhen shieryuan' 九針十二原 ('Nine needles and twelve sources'—a treatise that describes nine different kinds of needles and their uses) as well as to needles referred to as *jiantou zhen* 箭頭針, 'arrowhead needles' found in later medical literature. SBBY, vol. 205, fasc. 1, 1–4. Ye Youxin, 'Shishi Dong Han huaxiangshi shang kehua de yizhen' 試釋東漢畫象石上刻劃的醫針 in *Shangdong zhongyi xueyuan xuebao* 1981, 3, 62 cites the Ming compilation by Yang Jizhou 楊績洲, *Zhenjiu dacheng* 針灸大成 and *Yizong jinjian* 醫宗金鑑, a Qing work edited by Wu Qian 吳謙.

<sup>23</sup> *Zuo Zhuan*, Chenggong 10. See *Zuoshi chunqiu shizhu* 左氏春秋譯注 (Jilin: Jilin wenshi chubanshe, 1995), 426. *Zuo Zhuan* is a commentary on *Chunqiu* which records affairs of state between the eighth and fifth centuries B.C. This statement is recorded for the date of 580 B.C. Its authorship and authenticity are, however, uncertain. Opinions differ widely, placing some parts as early as the fifth century B.C. to the whole work being a first or second century B.C. forgery. See the discussion in Anne Cheng, 'Ch'un ch'iu, Kung yang, Ku liang and T'ao chuan' in Michael Loewe (ed.) *Early Chinese texts—a bibliographical guide*, (Berkeley, CA: Society for the Study of Early China, 1993), 67–77. See also the discussion in Yamada Keiji, *The origins of acupuncture*, 4–5.

certainly not corroborated in a similar context in other medical writings of the period, the claim cannot be substantiated.<sup>24</sup>

More convincing evidence of atropaic medical tools comes from a number of prescriptions from *Wushier bingfang* 五十二病方 '52 Remedies', the longest medical text excavated from the Mawangdui site. One remedy for inguinal swelling requires arrows to be shot from a peach wood bow.<sup>25</sup> Another, for the ailment *long* 癰, involves incantation, the Pace of Yu, a ritual step, controlling the spirits with a stone and beating the patient over the head with an iron mallet:

On the sixteenth day of the month when the moon first begins to deteriorate, perform the Pace of Yu thrice. Say 'Moon is matched against sun' and 'Sun is matched against moon'—three times each. 'Father is perverse, Mother is strong. Like other people they bore Sons, and only bore inguinal swelling bulges. Perverseness desist. Grasp the hammering stone and strike your Mother'. Immediately, exorcistically beat and hammer the person twice seven times with an iron mallet. Do it at sunrise, and have the person with inguinal swelling face east.<sup>26</sup>

With an increased vulnerability to spirits and demons beyond death, stones and pottery tiles interred along with other mortuary items may well have had an atropaic medical function. One intricately engraved pottery tile, which Chinese historians often link to early hot pressing techniques, was excavated from a Warring States tomb in Hebei, Yi 易 county (see figure 1). On the front at the top is a six-pointed star formation set into a circle, towards the handle end is the upper body of a man with two arms raised. His lower body on the handle end is damaged. Just above each of his hands and with one foot pointing towards the figure's head are two leopard or dragon-like beasts in profile, upside-down with their tongues sticking out. On the back are the body and legs of another scaly dragon. Unfortunately its head is damaged. The dragon design has led scholars to associate the figure on the tile with the *yushi* 雨師 'Rain Master', for dragons were thought to be rain-makers. Shi Shuqing quotes the *Shanhai jing*: 'the Rain Master ... in his two hands grasps a snake, at the left ear there is a black snake and at the right ear there is a red snake', and a number of commentaries, to demonstrate that the Rain Master was an important figure in Warring States and Han ritual. *Han Feizi* states: 'when the Yellow emperor was with the ghosts and spirits on Tai mountain, Wind Uncle went ahead and cleared the way and the Rain Master washed the road'.<sup>27</sup>

Chinese medical historians have suggested that the tile, being flat and oval and fitting neatly into the palm of the hand, is a good size for massage or hot pressing.<sup>28</sup> Its lavish decoration suggests that it also had a role in assisting ritual incantation, perhaps in ridding the patient of disease, as we have seen in the *Wushier bingfang* remedy quoted above. We can assume that the tile carried the power of the 'Rain Master' and his techniques into the tomb and

<sup>24</sup> See Lu and Needham, *Celestial lancets*, 79. It is not clear in the text whether or not the physician intended to use an instrument to pierce the illness.

<sup>25</sup> *Mawangdui Hanmu boshu*, vol. 4, 52. tr. Harper, *Early Chinese medical literature*, 261.

<sup>26</sup> *Long* 癰 is a sub-category of inguinal swellings which refers to some kind of prostration. tr. Harper, *Early Chinese medical literature*, 261.

<sup>27</sup> Shi Shuqing 史樹青, 'Gudai keji shiwu sikao' 古代科技事物四考, in *Wenwu* 1962.3, 47–48. *Hanfeizi jian* 3, pian 10 'shi guo' 十過. SBBY, vol. 173, fasc. 1, 3b.

<sup>28</sup> This tile and two others from the same site were originally thought to be some kind of unfired cosmetic or cleansing utensil for scrubbing the skin, with related medical functions. See An Zhimin 安志敏 'Gudai de caomian taoju' 古代的糞面陶具, *Kaoguxuebao* 1957, 4. Shi Shuqing reinterprets them as *bianshi*. Shi Shuqing, 'Gudai keji shiwu sikao', 47.



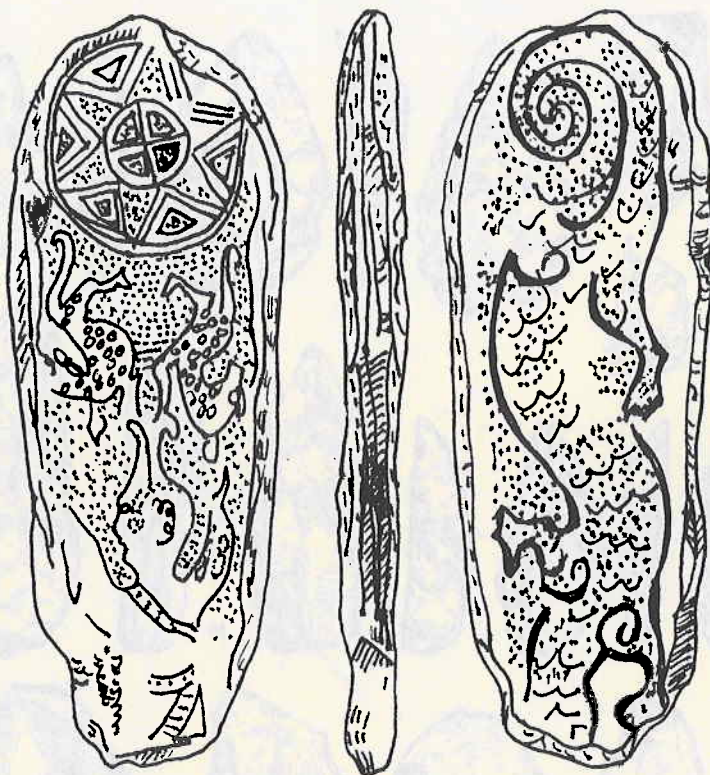


FIG. 1. The Rain Master stone from *Wenwu* 1962, 3.

could, just like the five coloured stones from the tomb of the King of Nanyue, serve to draw a boundary around the corpse and protect the body in death.

#### *Stone surgical tools*

Many discussions of the origins of acupuncture begin by isolating very early evidence for the activity of body piercing, perhaps the most striking image associated with the therapy.<sup>29</sup> Archaeological remains of sharp pointed instruments may infer the practice of body piercing.<sup>30</sup> In general, however, these

<sup>29</sup> Many Shang sites have yielded stones that would be adequate for body piercing. Excavations from tomb 211 at Erligang 二里剛, Zhengzhou, for example, have uncovered many sharp stones and bone instruments such as *ge* blades, which could easily have had a medical purpose. Jade *ge* have also been excavated from the tomb of Fu Hao 婦好, consort of the Shang king Wu Ding 武丁 (c. 1200 B.C.) at Anyang. See *Yinxu Fu Hao mu* 殷墟婦好墓 (Wenwu chubanshe, 1980 and 1984), pl. 107–114. See also Jiangsusheng wenwu gongzuo dui, 江蘇省文物工作隊 'Jiangsu wujiang meiyang xinshiqi shidai yizhi' 江蘇吳江梅堰新石器時代遺址, *Kaogu* 1963, 6, 309–12. For bone needles see Henansheng wenhuaju wenwu gongzuodui diyidui, 河南省文化居文物工作隊第一隊 'Zhengzhou Shangdai yizhi de fajue' 鄭州商代遺址的發掘, *Kaogu xuebao* 1957, 1, 60.

<sup>30</sup> See Ma Jixing and Zhou Shirong, 'Kaogu fajuezhong suojian bianshi de chubu tansuo'. Ma Jixing, 'Taixicun Shangmuzhong chutu de yiliao qiju bianlian' 台西商王墓中出土的醫器砭鏃, *Wenwu*, 1979, 6, 54–7 and the excavation report of Qigucheng bowuguan, *Linzi Shangwang mudi* 臨淄商王墓地 (Qilu: Qilu shushe, 1997), 175–82 and pl. IX and fig. 9. Lu and Needham, *Celestial lancets*, 69–77 summarize the archaeological evidence available up to 1980. They compare the archaeological finds to an interpretation of textual evidence that places the earliest references to acupuncture needles in the *Shanhaijing* and the earliest references to acupuncture therapy in *Zuo Zhuan*. The textual arguments are generally unconvincing. In three articles Ye Youxin speculates about the relationship between archaeological finds and later textual sources, in particular the nine types of needles described

