KIDNEY ESSENCE AND THE HUMAN BODY
An Exploration of Chinese Embryology

First, there is essence, the intertwining of yin and yang that makes up all things. It has, this time manifested as a human, the ultimate meeting of heaven (yang) and earth (yin). The essence, as a manifestation from earlier existence through the continuing cycle of death and rebirth, gains its new chamber, the kidney, which retains it and allows it to slowly emerge in form. From this precious chamber sprouts the skeleton, and within the spine, the spinal cord and brain and from the brain the retina and hearing mechanism. Within the bones is the marrow which generates blood. Also from the kidney emerges the reproductive organs, so as to help assure another part of the linkage between earlier existence and later existence. The kidney has the nature of and is the source of water. From the kidney rises the water vapors that fill the sky and cover it with clouds. From the clouds come the falling rains. From the kidney emerges the bladder which contains the returning water and then drains it.

The hearing mechanism responds to the universal sounds, which reverberate through the water, and from this vibration of the water there develops the liver, which is the nature of wood. The liver stores the blood generated by the marrow, and sprouts the tendons and ligaments from the edges of the bones. It produces the eyes that attach to the retina.

The liver is the source of wind. The wind disperses the water vapors and clouds and lets spaces develop, through which the great yang, the sun, can shine and the wood can grow. The penetrating and reflecting light enters through the eyes and the images then restrain or agitate the wind. The blood is dried by the wind and the dried blood is drained into the gallbladder.

The sight mechanism responds to universal signs, which provide the initial spark that is whipped by the wind to generate the heart, which is of the nature of fire. The heart circulates the blood and opens to the mind so that the wind may generate its own signs. From the heart sprouts the blood vessels through which the blood circulates, and there develops the tongue which will allow the human to communicate the images of the mind.

The fire generates heat, which is carried by the water and wind and dispersed through the three heated spaces, the upper body, the middle body, and the lower body. The heart is in the upper body, the liver is in the middle body, and the kidney is in the lower body.

From the tongue there develops the ability to taste and the desire to take in food: from that desire emerges the spleen, which is of the nature of earth. The spleen takes from the food the clear essence.
(Qi) which is used to replenish the blood that has dried, and to produce the flesh and muscles that attach to the tendons, and to circulate the moisture that has been warmed by the heart and the kidney. From the spleen develops the mouth to take in the food and the stomach in which the food is briefly stored and then prepared for the body.

The spleen has the nature of earth which is moist and heavy; the earth forms ponds and streams and rivers and oceans. The wetness is cold, but the fire of the sun is warm, and so there is balance. But it is a dynamic balance—with movement. The movement is made possible by the muscles empowered by the spleen and the extracted essence of food. The food, like the earth, is heavy; the yin and yang of the body desires balance, so from the spleen which is the nature of earth, arises the lungs. The lungs take in the air, which is light, and which invigorates the heavy qi with light qi. The lungs generate the nose to help bring in the air and the fragrances it carries.

The lungs have the nature of metal. Metal, which is the condensation of materials within the earth, helps the water vapors to return to the kidney, to assure that the entire organism is maintained through recycling of the essences. The lungs sit on the top of the organs and protect them from the outside forces. They produce the defensive qi that keeps out unfavorable external influences penetrating from the surface (yang) to the interior (yin) and from the upper body (yang) to the lower body (yin). They expand and contract and help to bring in the favorable influences and to expel the unfavorable. In this, the metal helps the spleen, especially as it needs assistance in expelling the waste from food through the intestine.

From the beautiful and pungent fragrances, especially, but also from the sight, sound, taste, feel, and speech, the human body is attracted to another human body and the kidney essence of the male is merged with the kidney essence of the female to produce the new human body. The new human body, which has the nature of substance, attracts the floating spirit which has no substance but which needs a place to rest. The spirit entices the blending of the particular human bodies to meet its direction in the new life, still dependent on the actions of the earlier life.

In the blending of spiritual direction and human material essence, the process continues.