

The Essential Text of Chinese Health and Healing is written in the form of a dialog between the Huang Di the Yellow Emperor and his acupuncturist, Qi Bo. This edited translation contains excerpts of the first chapters.

The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine (the Neijing Suwen)

~240 B.C.

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further edited by Paul Farago

Preface

Why did scientific and industrial revolutions not occur in China, despite many advances prior to those of the West? One of the key reasons is that Chinese science and technology always functioned within a philosophy that recognized the importance of balance and harmony between human beings and the environment.

Without sensitive regard to the larger scheme of the universal law, modern science and technology will continue to produce, as part of its welcome advances, disturbances to all life on earth. In the modern age the East can offer the West a philosophy of balance and harmony that is urgently needed, even necessary, for the survival of human civilization. No other Chinese source of this wisdom is as complete as the Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine, or the Neijing.

The authorship of the monumental classic was attributed to the great Huang Di, the Yellow Emperor, who reigned during the middle of the third century BC. The Chinese refer to themselves as the descendants of Huang Di, who is the symbol of the vital spirit of Chinese civilization. The Neijing is actually two works: the Suwen, "Questions of Organic and Fundamental Nature", and the Lingshu, "Classic of Acupuncture", a technical book on acupuncture and moxibustion. Historically, the Neijing refers to the Suwen alone.

The Neijing is one of the most important classics of Taoism. First, it gives a holistic picture of human life. It does not separate external changes - geographic, climatic, and seasonal, for instance - from internal changes such as emotions and our responses to them. It tells how our way of life and our environment affect our health. Without going into detail, the book articulates a treasure of ancient knowledge concerning the natural way to health, implying that all phenomena of the world stimulate, tonify, subdue, or depress one's natural life force.

Much practical advice is offered on how to maintain balance by revealing the inner workings of the universal law. The environment, way of life, and the spirit all contribute to the quality of human existence. The essence can be best summed from this passage: "Health and well-being can be achieved only by remaining centered in spirit, guarding against the squandering of energy, promoting the constant flow of qi and blood, maintaining harmonious balance of yin and yang, adapting to the changing seasonal and yearly macrocosmic influences, and nourishing one's self preventively. This is the way to a long and happy life."

The Neijing presents broad concepts and is often brief with details. There is much to be gained by understanding it from a perspective of openness as it generously shares the wisdom imparted from an ancient tradition benefiting the health and lives of humankind. Chinese medicine has changed little from the time the Neijing was written. Its natural therapies and preventive approaches are ever as effective and even more pertinent in today's drug-oriented medical climate. While showing us that from the microcosm of human life we may learn the vast and profound realities of the macrocosm, it offers a heartfelt and viable approach in the perception and treatment of illness.

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Chapter 1: THE UNIVERSAL TRUTH

In ancient times the Yellow Emperor, Huang Di, was known to have been a child prodigy. As he grew he showed himself to be sincere, wise, honest and compassionate. He became very learned and developed keen powers for observing nature. His people recognized him as a natural leader and chose him as their emperor.

During his reign, Huang Di had discussions concerning medicine, health, lifestyle, nutrition, Taoist cosmology with his ministers, including Qi Bo, and others. Their first conversation began with Huang Di asking, "I've heard that in the days of old everyone lived one hundred years without showing the usual signs of aging. In our time, however, people age prematurely, living only fifty years. Is this due to a change in the environment, or is it because people have lost the correct way of life?"

Qi Bo replied, "In the past, people practiced the Tao, the Way of Life. They understood the principle of balance as represented by the transformations of the energies of the universe. They formulated exercises to promote energy flow to harmonize themselves with the universe. They ate a balanced diet at regular times, arose and retired at regular hours, avoided oversteering their bodies and minds, and refrained from overindulgence of all kinds. They maintained well-being of body and mind; thus, it is not surprising that they lived over one hundred years."

"These days, people have changed their way of life. They drink wine as though it were water, indulge excessively in destructive activities, drain their jing - the body's essence that is stored in the Kidneys - and deplete their qi. They do not know the secret of conserving their energy and vitality. Seeking emotional excitement and momentary pleasures, people disregard the natural rhythm of the universe. They fail to regulate their lifestyle and diet, and sleep improperly. So it is not surprising that they look old at fifty and die soon after."

"The accomplished ones, of ancient times, advised people how to guard themselves against disease-causing factors. On the mental level, one should remain calm and avoid excessive desires and fantasies, recognizing and maintaining the natural purity and clarity of the mind. When internal energies are able to circulate smoothly and freely, and the energy of the mind is not scattered, but is focused and concentrated, illness and disease can be avoided."

"Previously, people led a calm and honest existence, detached from undue desire and ambition; they lived with an untainted conscience and without fear. They were active, but never depleted themselves. Because they lived simply, they knew contentment, as reflected in their diet of basic but nourishing foods, and clothing that was appropriate to the season but never luxurious. Since they were happy in their position in life, they did not feel jealousy or greed. They had compassion for others and were helpful and honest, free from destructive habits. They remained unshakable and unswayed by temptations, and they were able to stay centered even when adversity arose. They treated others justly, regardless of their level of intelligence or position."

Huang Di asked, "I've heard of people in ancient times, spoken of as the immortals, who knew the secrets of the universe and held the world in the palm of their hands. They extracted essence from nature and practiced Qi Gong and various stretching and breathing exercises, and visualizations, to integrate body, mind and spirit. They remained undisturbed and thus attained extraordinary levels of accomplishment. Can you tell me about them?"

Qi Bo responded, "The immortals kept their mental energies focused and refined, and harmonized their bodies with the environment. So they did not show typical signs of aging and were able to live beyond their biological limitations.

"Not so long ago there were people known as achieved beings who had true virtue, understood the Way of Life, and were able to adapt to and harmonize with the universe and the seasons. They too were able to keep their mental energy through proper concentration.

"These achieved beings did not live like ordinary humans, who tended to be hard on

themselves. They were able to travel freely to different times and places since they were not governed by conventional views of time and space. Their sense of perceptions were supernormal, going far beyond the sight and hearing of ordinary humans. They were also able to preserve their life spans and live in full health, just as the immortals did.

“There was a third type of a person, known as the sage. The sages lived peacefully under Heaven and Earth, following the rhythms of the planet and the universe. They adapted to society without being swayed by fashions and trends. They were free from emotional extremes and lived a balanced, contented existence. Their outward appearance, behavior and thinking did not reflect the conflicting norms of society. the sages appeared busy but were never depleted. Internally they did not overburden themselves. they abided in calmness, recognizing the empty nature of existence. The sages lived over one hundred years because they did not scatter or disperse their energies.

“A fourth type were the natural people who followed the Tao, the Way of Life, and were called naturalists. They lived in accordance with the rhythmic patters of the seasons: Heaven and Earth, moon, sun and stars. They aspired to follow the way of the ancient times, choosing not to lead excessive lifestyles. They, too, lived plainly and and enjoyed long life.”

Chapter 2: THE ART OF LIFE THROUGH THE SEASONS

Huang Di said, "The months of the Spring season bring about the revitalization of all things in nature. It is the time of birth. This is when Heaven and Earth are reborn. During this season it is advisable to retire early and arise early. Also, go walking in order to absorb the fresh, invigorating energy. Since this is the season in which the universal energy begins anew and rejuvenates, one should attempt to correspond to it directly by being open and unsuppressed, both physically and emotionally.

"On the physical level is good to exercise more frequently and wear loose-fitting clothing. This is the time to do stretching exercises to loosen up the tendons and muscles. Emotionally, it is good to develop equanimity. This is because Spring is the season of the Liver, and indulgence in anger, frustration, depression, sadness, or excess emotion can injure the Liver. Furthermore, violating the natural order of Spring will cause cold disease, illness inflicted by atmospheric cold, during summer.

"In the months of Summer there is an abundance of sunshine and rain. The Heavenly energy descends, and the Earthly energy rises. When these energies merge there is an intimate connection between Heaven and Earth. As a result, plants mature and animals, flowers and fruit appear abundantly.

"One may retire somewhat later at this time of year, while still arising early. One should refrain from anger and stay physically active, to keep the skin breathing and to prevent the qi from stagnating. One can indulge a bit more than in other seasons, but should not overindulge. Emotionally, it is important to be happy and easygoing and not hold grudges, so that the energy can flow freely and communicate between the external and internal. In this way, illness may be averted in the Fall. The Summer season of Fire and Heart also encompasses late Summer, which corresponds to the Earth element. Problems in the Summer will cause injury to the heart and will manifest in the Fall.

"In the months of Fall all things in nature reach their full maturity. The grains ripen and harvesting occurs. The Heavenly energy cools, as does the weather. The wind begins to stir. This is the changing or pivoting point when the active phase (yang) turns into its opposite, the passive phase (yin). One should retire with the sunset and arise with the dawn. Just as the weather in Fall turns harsh, so does the emotional climate. It is therefore important to remain calm and peaceful, refraining from excess sadness so that one can make the transition to Winter smoothly. This is the time to gather one's spirit and energy, be more focused, and not allow desires to run wild. One must keep the Lung energy full, clean, and quiet. This means practicing breathing exercises to enhance Lung qi. Also, one should refrain from grief, the emotion of the Lung. This will prevent Kidney or digestive problems in the Winter. If this natural order is violated, damage will occur to the Lungs, resulting in diarrhea with undigested food in Winter. This compromises the body's ability to store in Winter.

"During the Winter months all things in nature wither, hide, return home, and enter a resting period, just as lakes and rivers freeze and snow falls. This is a time when yin dominates yang. Therefore one should refrain from overusing the yang energy. Retire early and get up with the sunrise, which is later in Winter. Desires and mental activity should be kept quiet and subdued, as if keeping a happy secret. Stay warm, avoid the cold, and keep the skin covered. Avoid sweating. The theory of the Winter season is one of conservation and storage. Without such practice the result will be injury to the Kidney energy. This will cause weakness, shrinking of muscles, and coldness; then the body loses its ability to open and move about in the Spring.

"So the full cycle can be seen. Spring is the beginning of things, when the energy should be kept open and fluid; Summer opens up further into an exchange or communication between internal and external energies; in the Fall it is important to conserve; finally the Winter is dominated by storage of energy.

Huang Di continued, "The Heavenly energy is bright and clear, continually circulates, and

has great virtue. This is because it does not radiate its brilliance, for if it did proclaim itself, neither the sun nor the moon would be visible. People should follow the virtuous way of Heaven, not exposing their true energy. In this way they will not lose it or be subject to attacks of evil energies, which produce illness in the body. If the body is attacked by evil energy, its own energy will become stuck, just as when the clouds cover the sky, obscuring the sun and moon and causing darkness.

“The Heavenly energy naturally circulates and communicates with the Earth’s energy. The Heavenly energy descends and the Earthly energy rises. When this intimate interaction takes place and those energies merge, the result is a balance of sunshine and rain, wind and frost, and the seasons. If the Heavenly energy becomes stuck, sunshine and rain cannot come forth. Without them, all living things cease to be nourished and lose their vitality, and imbalance manifests as storms and hurricanes; severe and harsh weather that disrupts the natural order, causing chaos and destruction.

“In the past the sages were able to observe the signs and adapt themselves to these natural phenomena so that they were unaffected by the external influences, and were able to live long lives. If one does not follow the play of the elemental energies according to the seasons, the Liver energy will stagnate, resulting in illness in the Spring. In Summer, the Heart energy becomes empty and the yang energy is exhausted. During the Fall there will be congestion of the Lung energy. In Winter the Kidney will be drained of its reserves.

“The transformation of passive and active, of yin and yang, in the seasons is the basis of the growth and destruction of life. The sages were able to cultivate the yang energy in Spring and Summer and conserve the yin energy in Fall and Winter. By following the universal order, growth can occur naturally. If this natural order is disregarded, the root of one’s life will be damaged and one’s true energy will decline.

“Therefore, the change of yin and yang through the four seasons is the root of life, growth, reproduction, aging, and destruction. By respecting this natural law it is possible to live free from illness. The sages have followed this, and the foolish people have not.

“In the old days the sages treated disease by preventing illness before it began, just as a good government or emperor was able to take the necessary steps to avert war. Treating an illness after it has begun is like suppressing revolt after it has broken out. If someone digs a well only when thirsty, or forges weapons only after becoming engaged in battle, one cannot help but ask: Aren’t these actions too late?”

Chapter 3: THE UNION OF HEAVEN AND HUMAN BEINGS

Huang Di said, "From ancient times it has been recognized that there is an intimate relationship between the activity of humans and their natural environment. The root of all life is yin and yang; this includes everything in the universe, with heaven above and earth below, within the four directions and the nine continents. In the human body there are the nine openings - ears, eyes, nostrils, mouth, anus, and urethra; the five "zang" organs - kidneys, liver, heart, spleen and lungs; the twelve joints - elbows, wrists, knees, ankles, shoulders and hips - which are all connected with the qi of the universe. The universal yin and yang transform into the five earthly transformative energies, also known as the five elemental phases - Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water.

"These five elemental phases also correspond to the three yin and the three yang of the universe. These are the six atmospheric influences that govern the weather patterns that reflect in changes in our planet's ecology. If people violate or disrupt this natural order, then pathogenic forces will have an opportunity to cause damage to the body.

"The yang qi of the body is like the Sun. If the Sun loses its brilliance, all things on Earth become inactive. The Sun is the ultimate yang. This heavenly energy of the Sun surrounds the Earth. And in the body, this means that the yang qi circulates around the center or core and has the function of protecting the body.

Huang Di continued, "Living in a cold climate, one must take care with one's activities. Just as people indoors are protected from the weather, the yang qi acts as the walls in a house to protect the body. It is important to be aware, and not allow any openings; pathogenic energy cannot invade if the castle doors are closed.

"During the Winter, if one lives improperly, giving into impulsive desires and emotions such as anger and irritability, the spirit becomes restless, causing the yang qi to disperse at the surface. At this point the yang qi can no longer control the openings of the body. The result will be an outpouring of the qi, and subsequent vulnerability to invasions.

"In the Summer, if too much sweating occurs in the heat, the qi will escape, the breath will become coarse and rapid, and one will feel irritable. This happens when heat attacks the exterior. If Summer heat attacks and enters the interior, it will affect the mind and spirit, causing confusion, mumbling and fever. For relief, the pores must be opened to release the heat.

"When damp invades the body, the head will feel heavy and swollen, as if tightly bandaged. The large muscles will cramp and the small muscles and tendons will slacken, resulting in loss of mobility, spasms and growing weakness. A blockage of qi due to deficiency will cause the hands and feet to swell, and impaired movement. This indicates the exhaustion of the yang qi.

"When one is depleted and overworked, the yang will overheat. This will eventually deplete the yin, and the jing/essence. Should this continue into the Summer, the body fluids and yin will dry up. This causes blurred vision and ear congestion. If one then indulges in extreme anger, it will force the energy to flow recklessly, obstructing the blood flow to the head. When this type of blockage takes place, it is due to a battle between qi and blood.

"The yang qi transforms the jing/essence to nourish the shen/spirit and harmonizes with the ying qi to sustain the tendons. Should the skin's pores lose their regulating function, the pathogenic cold can enter, and the yang qi becomes obstructed or damaged. Tendons will lose their source of nourishment and the body will become stiff. Movement will become painful.

"If the pathogenic cold penetrates deeper to the blood level, bruising will be seen. When cold invades through the points of the acupuncture meridians and continues to move through the circulation into the organs, it will show up as fear, fright or startling nightmares.

"Pathogenic wind is the root of all evil. However, if one is centered and the emotions are

clear and calm, energy is abundant and resistance is strong; even when confronted with the force of the most powerful, viscous wind, one will not be invaded. When it remains in the body for a long time, pathogenic wind will transform, internalize and stagnate to the point where the flow of qi is impaired, from top to bottom, side to side, or between yin and yang. Even the most accomplished doctor finds it difficult to remedy this situation.

“The yang qi moves like the Sun. As the Sun begins to rise at dawn, the yang qi begins to move to the outer body, and the pores open. The peak of the yang qi is at noon, and when the yang qi is most active it is advisable to relax and stay quiet so the yang qi does not escape. As the Sun sets, the yang qi moves inward and the pores begin to close. At this time it is harmful to engage in strenuous physical activity or expose oneself to cold, damp, mist or fog. If one violates the natural order of the yang qi as it rises, peaks and sets, the body will gradually be weakened by pathogenic factors and be subject to disease and degeneration.

Qi Bo added to the discussion: “Yin is the essence of the organs and the fountain of the qi. Yang protects the body against pathogens and makes the muscles work. When the yin fails to contain the yang, the flow in the channels will become rapid, causing the yang qi to become excessive and reckless. If the yang qi is deficient and unable to counterbalance the yin, communication between the internal organs will be disrupted, and the nine openings will not function. The sages, who understood the principles of yin and yang, were able to let their bodies perform all functions harmoniously. When yin and yang are balanced, the five zang organs function appropriately together; all energy flows smoothly, the muscles and bones are abundant and strong, qi and blood follow the right path, internal and external correspond correctly, vision is clear and hearing is acute. Thus the zhen qi, or true qi, becomes unshakable, and pathogens cannot invade.

“The key to mastering health is to regulate the yin and the yang of the body. If the yin and yang balance is disrupted, it is like going through a year with Spring but no Winter, or Winter but no Summer. When the yang is excessive and cannot contain itself, the yin will become consumed. Only when yin remains calm and harmonious will the yang qi be contained and not be overly expansive. The spirit will be normal and the mind clear. If the yin and yang separate, the jing/essence and the shen/spirit will also leave each other.

“The source and preservation of yin come from the five flavors of food in the diet, but improper use of the five flavors may also injure the five zang organs. Too much sour taste may cause overactivity of the Liver and underactivity of the Spleen. Too much salty taste can weaken the bones and muscles, and stagnate the Heart qi. Too much sweet taste can disturb the Heart qi, causing it to become restless and congested, as well as cause imbalance in the Kidney energy. Too much bitter taste disrupts the Spleen’s ability to transform and transport food, and causes the Stomach to digest poorly, and swell.

“Therefore, one should be mindful of what one consumes to insure proper growth, reproduction, and development of bones, tendons, ligaments, and meridians of acupuncture. This will help generate the smooth flow of qi and blood, enabling one to live to a ripe age.”

Chapter 4: THE TRUTH FROM THE GOLDEN CHAMBER

Huang Di said, "In nature there are eight types of wind, and within the body's channels and meridians there are five types of wind. What do they mean?"

Qi Bo answered, "The eight types of wind that occur in nature are abnormal and pathogenic winds, which cause disease. These can affect the body's channels and meridians, producing five types of internal wind that damage their corresponding organs. These internal winds are Liver, Heart, Lung, Kidney, and Spleen wind. They are caused by abnormal changes in the four seasons. For example, consider the "grandparental" relationships between the five elements in a circle, forming a "star" pattern. Wood controls Earth, so Spring overacts on Late Summer. Earth controls Water, so Late Summer overacts on Winter. Water controls Fire, so Winter overacts on Summer. Fire controls Metal so Summer overacts on Fall. And Metal controls Wood, so Fall overacts on Spring. This represents the "control cycle" of the five element interactions in nature.

"The corresponding organs and seasons for these elements are: Wood - Liver - Spring, Fire - Heart - Summer, Earth - Spleen - Late Summer, Metal - Lungs - Fall and Water - Kidneys - Winter. During the Spring, the weather and environmental conditions can affect the Liver, while in the Summer, the Heart can be affected, and so forth.

"If Spring overacts on Late Summer, the weather is abnormal, with spring weather then occurring in Late Summer. The body's reaction to this is excessive Liver - Wood energy that overacts on the Spleen - Earth.

"When the Late Summer overacts on Winter to create the weather of Late Summer in Winter, the Spleen - Earth energy will overact on the Kidneys - Water.

"If Winter overacts on Summer, there will be cold spells of Winter during Summer. The Kidneys - Water will then become excessive and put out the Heart - Fire.

"When Summer overacts on Fall and there is Summer weather in Fall, this will cause the Heart - Fire to flare up and attack the Lungs - Metal.

"When Fall overacts on Spring the Spring will be very dry and windy as in Fall. Thus the Lungs - Metal will become overactive and impede the function of the Liver - Wood.

"When the seasons do not follow their natural cycle - Spring, Summer, Late Summer, Fall and Winter - with the appropriate weather patterns and energetic transformations, then colds, flu and various illnesses will result.

"The sage knows that the jing/essence is the most precious substance in the body. Like the root of a tree, it should be protected and hidden from 'thieves' during Spring. If one does not sweat and cool off during the hot Summer, illnesses will develop in the ensuing Fall. It is therefore essential to protect the jing/essence by observing and adapting to the seasonal rhythms.

"It is said that there is yin within yang, and yang within yin. The day is considered yang, while the night is yin. This is further differentiated as follows: sunrise to noon is yang within yang. Noon to sunset is yin within yang. Twilight to midnight is yin within yin, midnight to sunrise is yang within yin.

"This kind of classification can also be applied to the human body. The outside of the body is considered yang, while the inside is yin. The back is yang and the front is yin. The upper half of the body is yang while the lower half is yin. In terms of the zang fu organs, the Heart, Liver, Spleen, Lungs and Kidneys are the zang organs since they are yin in nature and their function is transformation and storage. The Gallbladder, Stomach, Large Intestine, Small Intestine, Bladder, and Sanjiao (the Triple Heater, or three body cavities responsible for fluid metabolism) are the six fu or hollow organs, and they are considered yang. Their function is reception and passage. The concept of yin within yin and yang within yang can be understood when and where disease occurs.

For instance, an illness of Winter occurs in the yin part of the body, a Summer illness in the yang part; a Spring disease in the yin part and a Fall disease in the yang part. One will then treat with acupuncture points according to the location of the disease.

“To further categorize, the chest area is considered yang, while the abdomen is yin. The Heart and Lungs are therefore yang types of zang organs. The Heart is yang within yang, while the Lungs are yin within yang. Below the diaphragm in the abdomen we have the yin zang organs: Liver, Spleen and Kidneys. The Kidneys are yin within yin. The Liver is yang within yin, and the Spleen is utmost yin within yin. This classification helps one to understand the relative relationships between the organs and the body as a whole in terms of location, function, and nature of each organ.

Huang Di inquired, “The five zang organs correspond to the seasons. Do they each have other correspondences, and how do these effect the energy flow?”

Qi Bo replied, “In the east we have the green color, an energy that corresponds to the Liver. The Liver energy opens to the eyes. Illness may manifest as a startling, fright, or shock. The natural elements related to this are grass and trees, the flavor is sour, the animal is the chicken, the grain is wheat, the planet is Jupiter, the number is 5, the smell is rancid, the season is Spring, the energy is ascending, and the area affected is the head. The Liver controls the tendons.”

Qi Bo then listed the five elements and their corresponding natures.

	WATER	WOOD	FIRE	EARTH	METAL
SEASON	Winter	Spring	Summer	Late Summer	Fall
COLOR	Blue/Black	Green	Red	Yellow	White
ODOR	Putrid	Rancid	Scorched	Fragrant	Rotten
SOUND	Groan	Shout	Laugh	Sing	Weep
EMOTION	Fear	Anger	Joy	Sympathy	Grief
POSITIVE ASPECT	Courage	Bursting Forth	Love	Thoughtfulness	Spirituality, Nonattachment
POWER	Emphasis	Birth & Growth	Mature	Decrease	Balance
PERIOD OF CLIMATE	Closing, Storing	Beginning, developing	Luxurious Growth	Abundance	Tranquility of Conduct
DIRECTION	Cold	Wind	Heat	Humidity	Dryness
YIN OFFICIAL	North	East	South	Center	West
YANG OFFICIAL	Kidney	Liver	Heart, Heart Protector	Spleen	Lungs
SENSE ORGAN	Bladder	Gall Bladder	Small Intestine, Sanjiao	Stomach	Colon
ORIFICE	Ears	Eyes	Tongue	Mouth	Nose
FORTIFIES EXTERNAL MANIFESTATION	Lower Orifices	Eyes	Ears	Mouth	Nose
FLAVOR	Bones & Joints	Tendons, Ligaments	Pulse, Veins, Arteries	Flesh, Muscles	Skin
FLUID SECRETION	Head Hair	Nails	Complexion	Lips	Body Hair
SPIRITUAL RESOURCE	Salty	Sour	Bitter	Sweet	Pungent
TASK	Saliva	Tears	Perspiration	Saliva	Mucous
RESOLUTION	Will (Zhi)	Soul (Hun)	Spirit (Shen)	Thought (Yi)	Animal Spirit (Po)
GRAIN & VEGETABLE	Find Inner Strength	Creativity	Compassion	Caring	Find Meaning, Inspiration
	Faith	Forgiveness	Surrender of Ego	Service	Companionship
	Beans, Peas, Leeks	Wheat, Mallow	Glutinous Millet, Greens	Millet, Scallions	Rice, Onions

Qi Bo added, “An effective doctor is able to observe the changes and transformations of the five zang and the six fu organs. He knows the corresponding external factors and transformational energies, the yin and yang, the six atmospheric influences of heat, cold, wind, damp, dryness, and summer heat. The accomplished doctor is able to follow illnesses both on the surface and internally, and the direction and progression of a disease. All these correspondences will aid the doctor in effectively diagnosing and dispensing treatment to the patient. This is the Tao, the Way of Life.

“The Tao is precious and is not to be passed on unless a student is sincere and compassionate toward human suffering. Only in this way can the great tradition remain pure and virtuous.”

Chapter 5: THE MANIFESTATION OF YIN AND YANG FROM THE MACROCOSM TO THE MICROCOSM

Huang Di said, "The law of yin and yang is the natural order of the universe, the foundation of all things, mother of all changes, the root of life and death. In healing, one must grasp the root of the disharmony, which is always subject to the law of yin and yang.

"In the universe, the pure yang qi ascends to converge and form heaven, while the thicker yin qi descends and condenses to form earth. Yin is passive and quiet, while the nature of yang is active and noisy. Yang is responsible for expanding and yin is responsible for contracting, containing, and consolidating. Yang is the energy, the vital force, the potential, while yin is the substance, the foundation, the mother that gives rise to all this potential.

"The earthly qi evaporates to form the clouds, and when the clouds meet with the heavenly qi, rain is produced. Similarly, in the human body, pure yang qi reaches the sensory orifices, allowing one to see, hear, smell, taste, feel, and decipher all information so that the shen/spirit can remain clear and centered.

Huang Di continued, "In nature, we have the four seasons and the five energetic transformations of Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water. Their changes and transformations produce cold, summer heat, dampness, dryness and wind. The weather, in turn, affects every living creature in the natural world and forms the foundation for birth, growth, maturation and death.

"In the human body there are the zang organs of the Liver, Heart, Spleen, Lung and Kidneys. The qi of the five zang organs forms the five spirits and gives rise to the five emotions. The spirit of the Heart is known as the shen, which rules mental and creative functions. The spirit of the Liver, the hun, rules the nervous system and gives rise to extrasensory perception. The spirit of the Lungs, or po, rules the animalistic instincts, physical strength, and stamina. The spirit of the Kidneys, the zhi, rules the will, drive, ambition, and survival instinct.

"Overindulgence in the five emotions - happiness, anger, sadness, worry or fear, and fright - can create imbalances. Emotions can injure the qi, while seasonal elements can attack the body. Sudden anger damages the yin qi; becoming easily excited or overjoyed will damage the yang qi. This causes the qi to rebel and rise to the head, squeezing the shen out of the Heart and allowing it to float away. Failing to regulate one's emotions can be likened to Summer and Winter failing to regulate each other, threatening life itself.

Huang Di then asked, "I have heard that in ancient times, persons educated in medicine emphasized the physical body by differentiating the zang fu, understood the distribution and function of channels and meridians, and gave names to the points of qi, or acupuncture points. In the muscles and spaces between the muscles and the joints can be found the points that connect the meridians. The meridians are further coupled as yin/yang pairs. Everything is distributed perfectly, corresponding to the yin and the yang and the four seasons in harmony with the universe. Is what the ancient ones said accurate?"

Qi Bo answered, "With the arrival of Spring the weather warms the earth. All plants begin to sprout and put forth green leaves, so the color associated with the Spring is green. Since most fruits and trees are immature and unripe at this time, their taste is sour. This sour taste can strengthen the Liver. The Liver connects with the eyes through its channels.

"During Spring the subtlety and vastness of the universe, the intelligence and intuition of the human being, the ability of earth to produce unmeasurable diversity, the natural movement of the wind, and the upward motion of all plants, collectively produce the movement of the tendons, the color green, the shouting of the voice, the cramps and spasms, the eyes, the sour taste, and the angry emotions. These are all associated with the Liver, since the Liver is responsible for maintaining the orderly routine flow of energy, and its nature is movement and expansion.

"Anger can injure the Liver, but sadness (the emotion of Fire) can relieve anger. In Summer, the weather is generally hot, and when there is extreme heat it produces Fire, which can burn and char things, producing the bitter taste. Bitter-tasting substances can clear the Heart. the Heart governs the blood, the Fire of the Heart produces the Earth, the Heart opens to the tongue, and therefore subtle changes in the Heart can be reflected in the tongue.

"The hot weather, the Fire on the planet, the blood vessels, the color red, laughter, and joy are all related to the Heart. The Heart, or Fire element, manifests emotionally as joy, but too much joy can cause a depletion of the Heart qi. This can be counterbalanced by fear (the emotion of the Water element.) Pathogenic qi can invade the Heart via the Heart Protector, injuring Heart qi. Cold and cooling herbs can be useful to counteract this condition. Consuming overly bitter foods can have a harmful effect on the Heart qi, but salty foods (the taste of the Water element) can be used to balance the excess bitter.

Chapter 6: THE INTERPLAY OF YIN AND YANG

Huang Di said, "I understand that heaven and the Sun are considered yang, and earth and the moon are considered yin. Because of the natural movement of heaven and earth and the sun and moon, we experience a change of long months and short months and go through 365 days, which form one year on the calendar. The energy flow within the human body through the channels corresponds to this. Can you elaborate further?"

Qi Bo answered, "The reaches of heaven and earth and yin and yang are vast, and ultimately everything in the universe can be classified into the polarity of yin and yang.

"Yin and yang are not absolute, but their principle never changes. The law that governs does not falter, although everything around it changes according to the point of reference. For example, before the birth of all things and creatures above the ground, the living potential resided in the place of yin. Once it was born and appeared above ground, this phenomenon was called yang within yin. It was after birth or post-heaven that the yang qi enabled everything to grow.

"Yin provides form. Yang enables growth. Warmth of the Spring gives rise to birth, the Fire of Summer fuels rapid growth and development, the coolness of Fall matures all and provides harvest, and the coldness of Winter forces inactivity and storing. This is the rhythmic change of nature. If the four seasons become disrupted, the weather becomes unpredictable and the energies of the universe will lose their normalcy. This principles also applies to the body."

Huang Di then said, "I wish to year you expound on the separation and the union of the three yang."

Qi Bo replied, "The sage stands facing south. In front of him is guang ming or broad expanse, in back of him is tai chong or great fall. Traveling in this lower region of tai chong is a channel called shaoyin or minor yin. Above this is the taiyang or major yang/bladder channel. The lower part of the taiyang/bladder channel begins at the outside of the small toe at the point zhiyin (B67). The upper part connects with jingming (B1) in the face near the eyes.

"The taiyang/bladder channel is coupled with the shaoyin/kidney channel. The taiyang/bladder is lateral is exposed to the sun and is considered external. The shaoyin is medial and is in the shade and is considered internal. We call this yang within yin.

"Now let us take a look at the upper part of the body. The upper is yang and is called guang ming. The lower is yin and is called taiyin or major yin. Anterior to the taiyin area is the yangming or moderate yang. The most distal point on the yangming/stomach channel ends on the tip of the second toe at the lidui (ST45) point. Because the yangming is the exterior that is exposed to the sun, relative to the taiyin, it is also called yang within yin.

"The interior of the body is yin. Just exterior to that gives rise to the minor yang, as it is gradually exposed to the sun. This is called shaoyang., which is the pivot between the interior and the exterior. The shaoyang/gallbladder channel begins at the zhuqiaoyin point (G44). Jueyin is the extreme of yin and the end of yin, and it gives birth to the beginning of yang. We call this shaoyang within yin. Now we should differentiate and summarize the three yang channels.

"Taiyang is on the surface, and its nature is open and expansive; it is the outside. the yangming is internal and its action is storing; thus it is the house. The shaoyang, which is between the internal and external, acts as a bridge and is considered the hinge between interior and exterior. The three yang, however, do not act separately, but rather in unison. So, collectively we call them one yang."

Huang Di asked, "What about the separation and the union of the three yin?"

Qi Bo replied, "The outside is yang and the inside is yin; that has been established. What is inside consists of the three yin. The taiyin/spleen is medial and is in the shade. This channel begins

on the side of the big toe at the point yinbai (SP1). It is called yin within yin. Behind the taiyin there is the shaoyin/kidney channel, which begins at the bottom of the foot at yongchuan (K1) point. It is considered the shaoyin within yin.

“Anterior to shaoyin we have jueyin or extreme yin. The jueyin/liver channel begins on the other side of the big toe at the point dadun (LV1). Surrounded and preceded by two yin channels, the jueyin is the most yin of the yin channels. Thus it is called jueyin of the yin, the extreme yin.

“In summary, we can say that the taiyin is the most superficial of the three yin channels, and its nature is expansive. The jueyin is the deepest inside the yin. Its nature is that of storing and thus is considered the house. The shaoyin is in between, and acts to connect and is considered the hinge or door. The three yin must also work in unison. Collectively, too, these are considered one yin.

“So you have one yin and one yang. The qi of the yin and of the yang move unobstructed throughout the entire body. This is because of the interplay of yin and yang and the relationship of the exterior and interior.”

Chapter 7: FURTHER DISCOURSE ON YIN AND YANG

Chapter 8: THE SACRED TEACHINGS (THE SECRET TREATISE OF THE SPIRITUAL ORCHID)

Huang Di asked Qi Bo, "Can you please tell me the functions and the relationships of the twelve zang fu organs and their meridians?"

Qi Bo replied, "Your question is very precise and I will try to answer you as precisely as you asked. The Heart is the sovereign of all organs and represents the consciousness of one's being. It is responsible for intelligence, wisdom, and spiritual transformation. The Lung is the advisor. It helps the Heart in regulating the body's qi. The Liver is like the general, courageous and smart. The Gallbladder is like a judge for its power of discernment. The Heart Protector is like the court jester who makes the king laugh, bringing forth joy. The Stomach and Spleen are like warehouses where one stores all the food and essences. They digest, absorb, and extract the food and nutrients. The Large Intestine is responsible for transportation of all thickened substances. All waste products go through this organ. The Small Intestine receives the food that has been digested by the Spleen and Stomach and further extracts, absorbs, and distributes it throughout the body, all the while separating the clear and pure from the thick and impure. The Kidneys store the vitality and mobilize the four extremities. They also aid the memory, willpower, and coordination. The Sanjiao promotes the transformation and transportation of water and fluids throughout the body. The Bladder is where the water converges and where, after having been activated by the qi, its is eliminated. So these twelve zang and fu organs must work together harmoniously, just like a kingdom.

"However, decision-making is the King's job. If the spirit is clear, all the functions of the other organs will be normal. It is in this way that one's life is preserved and perpetuated, just as a country becomes prosperous when all its people are fulfilling their duties. If the spirit is disturbed and unclear, the other organs will not function properly. This creates damage. The pathways and roads along which the qi flows will become blocked and health will suffer. The citizens of the Kingdom will also suffer. These are the relationships of a Kingdom.

Qi Bo continued, "The principles of healing and medicine in general are difficult to grasp because many changes occur in illness, and the healing process must adapt to that. It becomes difficult to know the root. The origin of illness can be so small and vague, in fact, so elusive, but the illness can still become substantial over time."

As Qi Bo spoke of the subtlety and difficulty of medicine and healing, Huang Di exclaimed, "Aha! I finally understand the intricacies and the essence of healing. I cannot receive this treasure carelessly. I must pick the best day and time to receive and store this knowledge. I must put this in my secret chamber and pass it down for future generations."