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Huang-ti nei-ching su-wen

(Pure Questions from the Yellow Emperor's Scripture of Internal [Therapy])

(from Unschuld, 1985, pp.276-296, 384-385. Appendix: Primary Texts in Translation).

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AUTHOR: Wang Ping (eighth century) and other unknown authors of earlier centuries

[Huang-ti nei-ching su-wen, 1971, Wang Ping et al. Taipei].

1. On the [Preservation of the] True [Influences Endowed by] Heaven in High Antiquity (Shang-ku t'ien chen lun)³⁰

In the distant past lived the Yellow Emperor. When he was born his spirit [was already characterized by an] all-pervading magic force. When still an infant he could already speak. In his youth he demonstrated a keen perceptive faculty. When he reached maturity his character was marked by a deep earnestness. When he reached adulthood he ascended to heaven. He put the following questions to the Celestial Master and spoke: "I have heard that the men of our ancient past experienced spring and autumn for one hundred years with no impairment of their ability to move and act. Today, however, it is so that men must limit their movements and actions after only half of a century. Have the times themselves changed or have men, that this [longevity] has been lost?"

To this Ch'i Po replied: "The men of antiquity understood the tao. [They therefore strove to adapt their existence to] the rules of the yin and yang [duality] and to live in harmony with numerical calculations. Moderation determined the consumption of food and drink; they arose and slept in accordance with a consistent order. No one depleted his strength through unseemly behavior. The men of antiquity thus preserved both body and mind with their full powers and reached the full extent of life accorded by nature. Death occurred only after one hundred years. The men of today are totally different. They prepare their soup with wine, and unseemly conduct has become the rule. They intoxicate themselves with sexual intercourse, and in [satisfying their] carnal appetite, they deplete the essence [of their existence]. Through careless use they squander man's innate original influences. They are ignorant of how to carry a full [vessel without spilling the contents] and do not provide the spirit with proper care at the appropriate time. They strive mightily to give pleasure to the heart, yet they conduct their lives contrary to the goals of true happiness. When the men of today rise or go to sleep, it is not according to a consistent plan. Because of this they must restrict [their movements and actions] after only half of a century.

"Whenever the ancient sages instructed the people, they repeatedly emphasized that evil [influences, which penetrate the body when a] depletion [arises in the organism], and destroyer-wind can be resisted successfully if met in time. He who is serene and free of immoderate desires shall not lose the original influence; he who keeps watch over [his] essence and spirit, does he not fend off all illness? Wherever emotions are disciplined, desires are held in check; wherever the heart lives in peace, man knows no fears. [The men of antiquity who conducted their lives in accordance with such principles]

could place burdens on the body and yet suffer no fatigue. Since the distribution of influences in their body conformed to the laws of nature, they could yield to their desires and still receive that for which they had yearned. For these men, [any] meals provided great pleasure, [any] clothing was a source of happiness, and their customs a cause to rejoice.³¹ Those of a high and low station exchanged no empty flattery; of the people themselves it could be said that they lived in a state of original simplicity. There were therefore no excessive desires to exhaust the eyes, no wantonness to confound the heart. No one, whether he was uneducated or a scholar, whether an exemplary man or a good-for-nothing, had cause to fear anything. In this manner they demonstrated their harmony with the tao. That all were able to live for one hundred years, without having to restrict their movements and conduct, was because their potential (te) remained undiminished and was never threatened."

The Emperor spoke: "When people have grown old, they can no longer have children. Is this because their vital forces are exhausted? I ask myself whether it is related to the length of life allotted by nature."

Ch'i Po replied: "When a girl reaches the age of seven, her kidneys are filled with influences. The teeth are transformed and the hair grows longer. With two times seven years, the girl reaches sexual maturity. The controller vessel is now completely open, and the large throughway conduit is now full. The monthly affair commences to descend and [the girl] is now able to bear children. With three times seven years, influences in the kidneys have reached their [ideal] level, so that the wisdom teeth break through and the body grows to its maximum extent. With four times seven years, the muscles and bones have grown firm. The hair has achieved its full length; the body is firm and robust. With five times seven years, the functions of the yang-brilliance conduit start to diminish; the face begins to dry up, the hair to fall out. With six times seven years, the functions of all three yang conduits in the upper [section of the] body start to decline. The face has completely dried out, the hair turns white. With seven times seven years, the controller vessel is empty, and the large throughway vessel reduces its activity. Sexual potency is exhausted and the conduits in the lower body are now obstructed. The body starts to deteriorate and no children are born.

"When a boy reaches eight years of age, his kidneys are filled with influences. The hair grows and teeth are transformed. With two times eight years, the kidneys overflow with influences and he reaches sexual maturity. Essential influences flow out, and when yin and yang [influences] are united, a man can father children. With three times eight years, influences in the kidneys have reached [their ideal] level; muscles and bones are firm and powerful. The wisdom teeth break through and the body grows to its maximum extent. With four times eight years, muscles and bones are in full possession of all their powers; robustness and vigor mark sinew and flesh. With five times eight years, influences in the kidneys begin to decline, hair falls out and the teeth begin to decay. With six times eight years, yang influences in the upper body diminish to the point of complete exhaustion; the face dries out and the temples turn gray. With seven times eight years, influences in the liver decline; muscles can no longer move and sexual potency is exhausted. Essence is present only in minimal amounts, the kidneys' depot is weakened, and the body has reached a turning point. With eight times eight years, teeth and hair fall out. The kidneys regulate water and store essence from all five depots and six palaces. Whenever the five depots are filled to overflowing, [their influences] can be drained

[through the kidneys. In old age] all five depots lack [influences]; muscles and bones deteriorate; sexual vitality is exhausted, so that the temples turn grey and the body grows heavy. A man no longer walks fully upright, and he can no longer father children."

The Emperor spoke: "But there are also people who are old in years, yet still have children. How is this possible?"

Ch'i Po replied: "These are the people whom nature has granted a longevity that surpasses the normal lifetime. Their influence vessels remain open and their kidneys contain influences in abundance.

Thus, although such [people] are still able to have children, this does not change the fact that in men, at the age of eight times eight, and in women, at the age of seven times seven years, the essence they have received from heaven and earth is completely exhausted."

The Emperor spoke: "But he who lives in full accord with the tao, is he not able to have children at the age of one hundred years?"

Ch'i Po replied: "He who lives in accord with the tao is able to ward off old age and preserve his body with its complete faculties. Although his body has many years behind it, he nonetheless is still able to have children."

The Yellow Emperor spoke: "I have heard there were true men in antiquity. They controlled heaven and earth; all things associated with yin and yang lay in their hands. In both inhaling and exhaling, as well as in [the utilization of their] essential influences, they pursued only one objective—to protect their spirit [from harm]. Their muscles and flesh appeared never to undergo any changes. The length of their life paralleled the existence of heaven and earth; their time on earth knew no end, for they existed in tao. In the middle ages of antiquity came accomplished men. Their potential was unimpaired; they were completely devoted to tao. They lived in full accord with the yin and yang [components of the universe] and in harmony with the four seasons. They left the world and abandoned all customs. They accumulated essence and preserved their spirit in its entirety. They travelled between heaven and earth, seeing and hearing beyond the boundaries of the eight foreign regions. Through their conduct they increased their life span and achieved strength. Ultimately, they, too, attained the state of true men. Next, there were the sages. They lived in harmony with heaven and earth, following the principles of winds from all eight directions. Their needs and desires conformed to the customs of the times; their heart knew neither anger nor vexation. They had no desire to abandon this world, [unclear] yet when they undertook something, they did not wish to follow custom. Externally, they did not exhaust their bodies with any affairs; within, they were not plagued by any brooding. Quietness and contentness became a guiding principle; for them, success meant self-knowledge. For this reason, their bodies experienced no deterioration; essence and spirit remained undissipated. They, too, reached the age of one hundred years. Finally, there were the exemplary men of antiquity. Their [principles of conduct] stood in harmony with heaven and earth. They strove to resemble sun and moon symbolically. They distinguished [the courses of] the constellations, they followed [in their life-style the pattern of] yin and yang, and they differentiated between the four seasons. They hoped to follow the example of high antiquity and establish harmony with the tao. They, too, improved their destiny and achieved longevity."³²

2. Comprehensive Treatise on the Regulation of the Spirit in Accord with the Four Seasons (Szu-ch'i t'iao-shen ta-lun)³³

The three months of spring denote genesis and release. Heaven and earth are renewed in every respect; the ten thousand things blossom forth. [He who desires to order his life in accordance with this season] goes to bed at night and rises early. He moves through the house with powerful strides. His hair hangs freely down the back of his neck; he grants his body the serenity of true relaxation. In this manner he is able to cultivate his mind. To create, not kill; to give, not take away; to reward, but not punish; these are [the actions] in accord with the influences that [embrace men] in the spring, signalling the correct way to bring into existence [all things]. He who acts contrary to these [influences] shall harm his liver. Cold will form within him in summer, and very little remains to accompany him into the period of growth.

The three months of summer denote prosperity and abundance. Heaven and earth exchange their influences; the ten thousand things appear in all their splendor and ripeness. Man goes to bed at night and rises early. He does not avoid the sun and guards his mind from vexation. He strives for consummate radiance and causes his own influences to flow away, as if that which he loves lies outside of himself. These are the [actions] in accord with the influences that [embrace men] in the summer, signalling the correct way to stimulate the growth [of things]. He who acts contrary to these [influences] shall damage his heart. In autumn he shall suffer from fever, and little will remain to accompany him into the period of gathering. Severe illnesses will then occur at the winter solstice. The three months of autumn denote harvesting and weighing [of crops]. The influences of heaven grow violent; influences of the earth turn clear. Man goes to bed early and rises early, together with the fowl. He must be watchful that the mind remains in a state of peace, so as to temper the law of autumn. Man should preserve his spirit and prevent any loss of influence; he must ensure that autumn influences are assimilated in correct proportions. Man no longer directs his mind to phenomena outside of himself, but seeks to clarify influences of the lungs. These are the [actions] in accord with the influences that [embrace men] in the autumn, signaling the correct way to facilitate the gathering [of things]. He who acts contrary to these [influences] shall harm his lungs. Nourishment shall flow away from him in winter, and little will remain to accompany him into the period of storing.

The three months of winter denote securing and storing. Water is frozen and the earth cracks open. Under no circumstances should yang [influences] now be thrown into agitation. Man goes to bed early and does not arise until late; he should wait [before rising] until the sun appears. His mind must remain subdued and imperceptible, as if man had already achieved complete self-knowledge. He avoids cold and seeks out warmth. Influences should not be permitted to flow out through the skin and thus be lost to the extreme. These are the [actions] in accord with the influences that [embrace men] in the winter, signalling the correct way to facilitate the storage [of things]. He who acts contrary to these [influences] shall harm his kidneys and suffer from impaired [virility] in the spring. Little will remain to accompany him into the period of restoration.

The influences of heaven are clear and pure, lustrous and radiant. But [heaven] stores its potential without interruption and does not permit [its light] to reach down. For if the heaven itself were to radiate light, the sun and the moon would be unable to shine. This would allow evil and harmful

agents to occupy the gaps [left by the lack of influences from the sun and moon]. If this were to happen, the yang influences would be shut out [from reaching the earth], and the influences of the earth would be turbid [and unable to rise]. Clouds and fog [that is, influences of the earth] would no longer be pure and, consequently, dew [an influence of heaven] would not descend. All this would indicate that the exchange [of influences of heaven and earth] does not take place and that the existence of the ten thousand things would be cut off from the supply [of these influences]. An interruption in the supply [of influences], however, frequently leads to death, even among those plants renowned [for their longevity]. Harmful influences would not disperse, wind and rain would be unpredictable, white dew would not descend. More and more plants would die off and nothing would remain to blossom [in spring]. Destroyer-winds would strike often, frequently accompanied by sudden rainstorms. He who is unable [in such a situation] to maintain [the influences] of heaven and earth as well as the four seasons in a state of mutual accord, and loses his relationship to the tao, will perish even before he has concluded half [of the time allotted to him by nature]. Only sages are capable of countering even these [irregularities] with proper conduct. Consequently, they do not suffer from unusual illnesses, they do not lose [control over] anything, and their original influence, upon which their existence rests, does not expend itself.

If one acts contrary to the influences of spring, minor-yang [influences] do not arise, influences already in the liver wither.

If one acts contrary to the influences of summer, great-yang [influences] do not develop fully, and influences already in the heart are eroded.

If one acts contrary to the influences of autumn, great-yin [influences] are not accumulated, and influences already in the lungs burn up completely.

If one acts contrary to the influences of winter, minor-yin [influences] are not stored, and influences already in the kidneys withdraw into the depths.

This means, therefore, that the yin and yang influences [sent out by heaven and earth] during the four seasons constitute the fundament and source [of the existence] of all ten thousand things. The wise man thus will nourish himself in spring and summer with yang influences, but in the autumn and winter with yin influences, in accordance with his foundation. He therefore finds himself in complete harmony with the ebb and flow of all existence on the way of life and growth. He who acts contrary to his basic principles brings harm to his source and destroys his original [influences].

This means, then, that the yin and yang [influences] of the four seasons constitute the beginning and end of the ten thousand things and the source of life and death. If one acts contrary to these principles, catastrophes and harm will ensue. If one conducts his life in accordance with these influences, however, he shall avoid unusual illnesses. This is the significance of the motto: "to achieve the tao."

The sages practice the tao in their daily life, the uneducated turn their back to it. To live in harmony with yin and yang [influences] means life; to act contrary to them means death. To follow signifies order, contrary conduct means chaos. To oppose what is appropriate means contrary action, that is, inner opposition. This is the reason the sages do not treat those who have already fallen ill, but rather those who are not yet ill. They do not put [their state] in order when revolt [is underway], but before

an insurrection occurs. This is what is meant. When medicinal therapy is initiated only after someone has fallen ill, when there is an attempt to restore order only after unrest has broken out, it is as though someone has waited to dig a well until he is already weak with thirst, or as if someone begins to forge a spear when the battle is already underway. Is this not too late?³⁴

3. Comprehensive Treatise on the Phenomena Associated with the Categories of Yin and Yang (Yin yang ying-hsiang ta-lun)³⁵

The Yellow Emperor spoke: [The two categories] yin and yang are the underlying principle of heaven and earth; they are the web that holds all ten thousand things secure; they are father and mother to all transformations and alterations; they are the source and beginning of all creating and all killing; they are the palace of spirit-brilliance.

In order to treat illnesses one must penetrate to their source.

Heaven arose out of the accumulation of yang [influences]; the earth arose out of the accumulation of yin [influences]. Yin is tranquility, yang is agitation; yang creates, yin stimulates development; yang kills, yin stores. Yang transforms influences, yin completes form.

When cold reaches its zenith, it creates heat; if heat reaches a zenith, it creates cold. The influences of cold produce turbidity; the influence of heat produces clarity. If clear influences descend in the [body], foods are discharged [undigested]; if turbid influences ascend in the [body], they cause abdominal swelling. Whenever yin and yang [influences] act in such complete contradiction [to their true nature, man] will suffer from this offense against what is proper.

Clear yang [influences] form heaven; turbid yin [influences] constitute earth. The influences of earth ascend and form into clouds; the influences of heaven descend and form rain. Since rain [develops from clouds], its ultimate origin is influences of the earth; since the [formation] of clouds [requires sunlight], their ultimate origin is the influences of heaven.

For this reason, the clear yang [influences] exit the body through the upper openings, while the turbid yin [influences] exit the body through the lower openings. Clear yang [influences] disperse through the skin, while turbid yin [influences] enter the five depots. The clear yang [influences] fill the four extremities, while the turbid yin [influences] enter the six palaces.

Water is yin; fire is yang. Yang [influences] appear as [volatile] influences; yin [influences] appear as [material] flavor. Flavor is dependent upon structure; structure has its origin in [volatile] influence; [volatile] influence arises from essence; essence arises from transformation. [Yet even] essence is nurtured by the transformation of [volatile] influences, and form is nurtured by [material] flavor. Essence arises through transformation; form develops from [volatile] influences. [Material] flavor can harm form; [volatile] influences can harm essence. Essence is transformed into [volatile] influences; thus [volatile influences] can also be harmed by [material] flavor.

[Material] flavor belongs to the yin [category] and exits the body through the lower openings.

[Volatile] influences belong to the yang [category] and exit the body through the upper openings.

That which possesses a strongly developed flavor belongs to yin; that which has a weak flavor belongs to yang-in-yin. That which possesses strongly developed [volatile] influences, belongs to yang; that with weak influences, belongs to yin-in-yang. Strongly developed flavor produces

discharge; weak flavor produces a drainage. Weak influences produce distribution; strongly developed influences lead to the production of heat.

The influences of a powerful fire weaken themselves; the influences of a small fire increase in strength. A powerful fire feeds on influences; the influences feed on a small fire. A strong fire dissipates influences; a small fire stimulates the production of influences.

That possessing acrid and sweet [volatile] influences and [material] flavors and producing dissipation, belongs to yang. That which is sour and bitter and produces discharge or drainage belongs to yin. Whenever the yin component predominates [in the assimilation of influences and flavors], the result is a yang illness. Whenever the yang component predominates, the result is a yin illness. When there is an excess of yang, heat arises [in the body]; when there is an excess of yin, cold arises [in the body]. But violent cold develops into heat; a violent heat, in turn, engenders cold. Cold harms form; heat harms [inner] influences. If these [inner] influences have been injured, pain occurs; if form has been affected, swelling takes place. If pain appears first, followed by swelling, the injury to inner influences has affected form. If, however, swelling appears first, followed by pain, the injury to form has affected the inner influences.

Excessive wind causes motion; excessive heat results in swelling. Excessive drought causes aridity; excessive cold allows [yin influences in the body] to ascend; excessive humidity causes discharge. In nature there are four seasons and five phases. The former bring about genesis, maturity, gathering, and storing. The latter engender cold, heat, drought, moisture, and wind. In man there are five depots, which transform the five influences, producing joy, anger, sadness, sorrow, and fear. Joy and anger can harm influences; cold and heat can damage form. Violent anger injures the yin [components in the organism]; excessive joy impairs the yang [components], causing influences to rise in the body instead of descend; the conduits are filled and their contents leave the body. If joy and anger are not held in moderation, if cold and heat exceed certain limits, life no longer exists on a solid foundation, for strongly developed yin must be transformed into yang; strongly developed yang must be transformed into yin.

Thus it is said: If a person is injured in winter by cold, he will suffer from warmth- illnesses in the spring. If he is injured by wind in the spring, diarrhea will occur in the summer. If he is injured in summer by heat, he will suffer from fever in the autumn. If he is injured in the autumn by humidity, he will cough and gasp in winter.³⁶

4. Additional Treatise on the Five Depots (Wu-tsang pieh-lun)³⁷

The Yellow Emperor asked the following question: "I have heard that some experts of [medical or magic] prescriptions consider the brain and the marrow to be depots and that some regard the intestines and stomach as depots, while still others believe them to be palaces. I should very much like to know how such contradictions could arise. I am not aware of the underlying principle here, and I am keenly interested in what you have to say on this matter."

Ch'i Po replied: "The brain, marrow, vessels, bones, gall, and womb are formed from influences [that man receives] from the earth. They store yin [influences] and correspond to the earth. Thus their function is to store and to prevent discharge. They are called 'extraordinary palaces.' The stomach,

large intestine, small intestine, triple burner, and bladder are formed from influences [that man has received] from heaven. Their influences correspond to heaven. Thus their function is to discharge and not to store. They receive the turbid influences discharged by the five depots. They are called 'palaces that transmit and transform.' Similarly, the anus receives liquids and solids from the five depots but is unable to store them for long.

"The so-called five depots collect essential influences and do not permit them to disperse. It is therefore possible for them to be full but never too full. The six palaces transmit and transform things, but do not store them. It is therefore possible for them to have too much [to handle at one point in time] but never to be full. Consequently, liquid and solid foods enter into the stomach through the mouth and can produce a condition of repletion while the intestines are still empty. As the food continues to descend further in the body, repletion occurs in the intestines while the stomach is now empty. Thus it is said: repletion and yet not full; full and yet no repletion."

The Emperor spoke: "Why do the five depots alone determine [what is felt when the pulse is taken at] the [location designated] 'opening [through which the] influences [can be perceived]?"

Ch'i Po replied: "The stomach is the sea in which liquid and solid foods collect; it is the great source that sustains the six palaces. The five [material] flavors enter through the mouth and are stored in the stomach, from where they then nourish the influences in the five depots. The [location called] 'opening [through which the] influences [can be perceived]' also lies on the] great-yin-[transportation channel, which carries influences to the depots]. This means that all [volatile] influences and [material] flavors destined for the five depots and six palaces originate in the stomach and—following their transformation there—can be felt at the 'influence-opening.' The five [volatile] influences enter through the nose and are stored in the heart and lungs. When the heart and lungs are affected, the nose cannot function properly.

"In treating illnesses, one must examine all aspects visible to the eye; the vessels must be examined [for a depletion or repletion of influences] and the patient's emotions and attitudes as well as [the severity of] his illness must be taken into account. For someone who believes in demons and spirits it is useless to speak of the virtues of a moral life. For someone who opposes treatment with needles and stones it is futile to speak of utmost skills. Anyone who refuses to allow treatment of his illness must not, under any circumstances, be treated, for such an attempt would be a complete failure."³⁸

5. Treatise on the Various Methods of Treatment That Correspond to the Four Cardinal Points (I-fa fang i lun)³⁹

The Yellow Emperor asked the following question: "How is it possible that one and the same illness can be treated with different techniques, and yet in each case a cure is effected?"

Ch'i Po replied: "This is due to geographic circumstances. The regions in the East were the first to be created by heaven and earth. Here lies the land of fish and salt; ocean sands border the water. The people here eat fish and favor salty foods. They live peacefully in their villages and are content with their meals. Fish generate heat in the human body and salt displaces the blood. Thus these people all have a dark complexion and dried-out skin. Their illnesses can be regarded as sores for which stone treatments are the proper therapy. This means that stone therapy originated in the East.

"The West is the land of metals and precious stones, of sand and minerals. Here heaven and earth have bestowed great abundance. The people live in earthen huts; the winds are frequent; the water and the soil are hard and powerful. The people clothe themselves not in silk, but in fur and bast. Their diet is excellent and thus their nutritional health is good. For this reason, evil [influences] are unable to harm the bodies of these people [from outside]; their illnesses arise from within and require treatment with potent drugs. This means that potent drugs originate in the West.

"The North is the region where heaven and earth secure and store. The land there lies at a great elevation, and the people live in earthen huts. The winds blow cold; the land is occasionally covered by ice and snow. The inhabitants live contentedly in the wilderness, and milk forms the basis of their diet. Their illnesses result from the accumulation of cold in the depots; the appropriate therapy is the burning of moxa [on the skin]. This means that moxabustion originates in the North.

"The South is the region where heaven and earth bestow growth and nourishment, and where yang [influences] are present in abundance. The land lies low; water and soil are soft and weak. Fog and dew are frequent. The people favor sour substances, and their foods give off a strong odor. Thus they all have tightly sealed skin and a reddish complexion. They suffer from deformities and paralyses, for which the appropriate therapy is treatment with fine needles. This means that the nine needles originate in the South.

"The land in the center is flat and damp. Here heaven and earth have engendered all things. Accordingly, the diet of the people is diverse and easily obtained. Illnesses therefore frequently consist of weaknesses as well as cold and hot fits. The appropriate treatments for such afflictions are therapeutic exercises and massages. Thus therapeutic gymnastics and massages originate in the central regions.

"The ancient sages developed different therapeutic [procedures] for the treatment [of illnesses], so that each [region] had its corresponding [technique]. From the fact that disparate techniques are utilized and that all illnesses are cured, it is possible to achieve an understanding of the nature of illnesses and the entire complex of therapy."⁴⁰

6. Treatise on Changes in the [Assimilation of] Essence and on the Transformation of Influences (I ching pien ch'i lun)⁴¹

The Yellow Emperor asked the following question: "I have heard that in antiquity the treatment of illnesses consisted solely of changing the [assimilation of] essence and of transforming the influences [within the body]; one was capable of exorcising the cause [of suffering] [chu-yu] and in all cases a cure was effected. Today, however, the patient is treated internally with potent drugs and externally with needles and stones, and yet a cure is achieved only in some cases, while in others, treatment is a total failure. What is the reason for this?"

Ch'i Po replied: "The men in antiquity lived among their animals. They pursued a vigorous and active life, avoiding in this manner the effects of cold. They sought out the shade, thereby avoiding the effects of heat. Their inner life knew no exhaustion from emotions, and their external appearance was unaffected by the civil service bureaucracy. In that peaceful and satisfied world, evil [influences] were unable to penetrate deeply into the body. Potent drugs were therefore unsuited for treatment from

within, and needles and stones were inappropriate for external therapy. Instead, it was possible to effect a cure through changes in the [assimilation on finest matter and through an exorcism of the cause [of illness].

"Today, however, the situation has changed completely. Man's life is marked by suffering within and by the misery of his body without. The harmony between [human conduct] and the four seasons has been lost, and man acts contrary to the laws of cold and hot. Destroyer-wind frequently achieves its objective, and in the morning as well as in the evening those evil [influences that utilize] depletions penetrate into the five depots as well as into the bones and marrow, while simultaneously damaging the body openings, muscles, and skin from the outside. It is therefore inevitable that minor ailments develop into severe illnesses, and that severe illnesses eventually lead to death. Thus an exorcism of the cause is today no longer sufficient to cure illness."⁴²

7. Treatise on the Secrets of Mr. Yü and on the True Depots

(Yü-chi chen-tsang lun)⁴³ (excerpt)

Wind is responsible for many different illnesses. If, for example, wind-cold has penetrated the body, the first symptom is that the fine body hairs of the victim stand erect. The skin seals itself and heat arises. At this stage [wind-cold] can be expelled through sweating. Occasionally, paralysis, loss of feeling, swelling, and pain result. At this point [wind-cold] can still be eliminated with hot compresses, moxabustion, and needles. If no treatment is initiated, the illness penetrates deeper, establishing itself in the lung. It is then called "rheumatism of the lungs" [fei-pi]⁴⁴. [The symptoms are] coughing and upward expulsion of influences. If treatment is not begun at this stage, the lung transmits [wind-cold] further, allowing it to enter the liver. The illness is then called "rheumatism of the liver" [kan-pi], or "reversal" [chüeh].⁴⁵ Pain occurs in the sides and food cannot be retained. At this stage the appropriate therapy is massage and needles. If no treatment is undertaken, the liver conducts [the wind-cold] to the spleen. The illness is then called "spleen-wind." Jaundice occurs, and heat develops in the abdomen. The heart is distressed and one expels yellow matter. The appropriate treatments at this point are massages, drugs, and lavation. If no treatment is undertaken, the spleen conveys [the wind-cold] to the kidneys. The illness is then called "accumulation-affliction" [shan-chia]. Heat accumulates in the lower abdomen and is accompanied by pain. White matter is discharged. Another name for this illness is ku.⁴⁶ At this stage either massages or drugs can be administered. If treatment is not started, the kidneys transmit [the wind-cold] further into the heart. The victim now suffers from violent cramps of the muscles and vessels, and the illness is thus referred to as "twinge-affliction" [ch'e]. At this point moxa should be burned on the skin or drugs administered. If treatment is still not initiated, the victim will succumb after ten days.⁴⁷

8. Treatise on Influences in the Depots as Patterned by [the Normal Progression of] the Seasons (Tsang-ch'i fa-shih lun)⁴⁸ (excerpt)

The Yellow Emperor asked the following question: "If, during medical treatment, one desires to establish correspondences between the body of man, on the one hand, and the regular progression of the four seasons and five phases, on the other hand, how is it possible to act in accordance [with

these principles] and what would be regarded as contrary conduct? I should very much like to learn what determines success and failure in this regard."

Ch'i Po replied: "The five phases are metal, wood, water, fire, and soil. They alternate in succession between a position of pre-eminence and one of insignificance. [This transformation] provides us with an understanding of life and death, an insight into creation and decay, as well as helping us to determine the influences in the five depots, the times during which [an illness] is minor or serious, and the ultimate prognosis for life and death."

The Emperor spoke: "I am eager to hear this!"

Ch'i Po replied: "The liver is ruled by spring. Treatment is carried out primarily over the ceasing-yin and minor-yang [conduits] of the feet. The [corresponding] day is chia-i. When the liver suffers from strain, something sweet must be consumed at once in order to relieve the tension.

"The heart is ruled by summer. Treatment is carried out primarily over the minor-yin and great-yang [conduits] of the hands. The [corresponding] day is ping-ting. When the heart grows sluggish, something sour must be consumed at once in order to restore composure.

"The spleen is ruled by late summer. Treatment is carried out primarily over the great-yin and yang-brilliance [conduits] of the feet. The [corresponding] day is wu-ssu. When the spleen suffers from excessive dampness, something bitter must be consumed at once in order to dry it out.

"The lung is ruled by autumn. Treatment is carried out primarily over the great-yin and yang-brilliance [conduits] of the hands. The [corresponding] day is keng-hsin. When the lungs suffer from ascending or retreating influences, something bitter must be consumed at once in order to divert these influences.

"The kidneys are ruled by winter. Treatment is carried out primarily over the minor-yin and great-yang [conduits] of the feet. The [corresponding] day is jen-k'uei. When the kidneys are dried out, something spicy must be consumed at once in order to restore moisture. In this way the skin is reopened, enabling bodily fluids and influences to flow freely again.

"Illnesses of the liver heal in summer. If a cure is not effected in summer, the condition worsens in autumn. If [the victim] does not succumb in autumn, the illness extends through the winter and recovery occurs in spring. The victim [of such a condition] must not be exposed to wind.

"Victims of a liver ailment recover by ping-ting. If the patient is not cured by this date, [the illness] worsens until keng-hsin. If [the victim] does not succumb at this time, [the illness] extends through jen-k'uei and the patient will rise from the sickbed on chia-i. Those suffering from liver ailments grow mentally alert during the day, reaching a high point in the late afternoon; they lie down to rest at midnight. To achieve a dispersing effect in the liver, it is necessary to consume something spicy at once. Spicy foods replenish [influences in the liver], sour foods discharge them.

"Illnesses of the heart heal in late summer. If a cure is not effected in late summer, the condition worsens in winter. If [the victim] does not succumb in winter, the illness extends through spring, and recovery occurs in summer. The victim [of such a condition] may not consume warm meals nor wear excessively warm clothing.

"Victims of a heart ailment recover by wu-ssu. If the patient is not cured by this date, the [illness] worsens until jen-k'uei. If [the victim] does not succumb at this time, [the illness] extends through

chia-i and the patient will rise from the sickbed on ping-ting. Those suffering from heart ailments grow mentally alert at mid-day, reaching a high point at midnight; they find rest in the early morning. To calm the heart, it is necessary to consume something salty at once. Salty foods replenish [influences in the heart]; sweet foods discharge them.

"Illnesses of the spleen heal in autumn. If a cure is not effected in autumn, the condition worsens in spring. If [the victim] does not succumb in spring, the illness extends through the summer and recovery occurs in late summer. The victim [of such a condition] must not consume warm meals, eat until full, [sit down] on the damp earth, or wear wet clothing.

"Victims of a spleen ailment recover by keng-hsin. If the patient is not cured by this date, [the illness] worsens until chia-i. If [the victim] does not succumb at this time, [the illness] extends through ping-ting, and the patient will rise from the sickbed on wu-ssu. Those suffering from spleen ailments grow mentally alert at sunset, reaching a high point at sunrise; they find rest in the late afternoon. To relieve the strain in the spleen, it is necessary to consume something sweet at once. Bitter foods discharge [influences from the spleen]; sweet foods replenish them.

"Illnesses of the lung heal in winter. If a cure is not effected in winter, the condition worsens in summer. If [the victim] does not succumb in summer, the illness extends through late summer and recovery occurs in autumn. The victim of [such a condition] must not consume cold foods or drinks, nor wear cold clothing.

"Victims of a lung ailment recover by jen-k'uei. If the patient is not cured by this date, [the illness] worsens until ping-ting. If [the victim] does not succumb at this time, [the illness] continues through wu-ssu, and the patient will rise from the sickbed on keng-hsin. Those suffering from lung ailments grow mentally alert in the late afternoon, reaching a high point at midday; they lie down to rest at midnight. To produce a calming effect in the lungs it is necessary to consume something sour at once. Sour foods replenish [influences in the lungs]; spicy foods discharge them.

"Illnesses of the kidneys heal in spring. If a cure is not effected in spring, the condition worsens in late summer. If [the victim] does not succumb in late summer, the illness continues through autumn and recovery occurs in winter. The victim [of such a condition] must avoid hot, burning foods and warm clothing.

"Victims of a kidney ailment recover by chia-i. If the patient is not cured by this date, [the illness] worsens until wu-ssu. If [the victim] does not succumb at this time, [the illness] continues through keng-hsin, and the patient will rise from the sickbed on jen-k'uei. Those suffering from kidney ailments grow mentally alert at midnight, reaching a high point at [unclear]; they lie down to rest in the late afternoon. To fortify the kidneys it is necessary to consume something bitter at once. Bitter foods replenish [influences in the kidneys]; salty foods discharge them.⁴⁹

"The color of the liver is virid; [to counteract the liver's susceptibility to cramps], sweet foods should be consumed. Late maturing rice, beef, dates, and k'uei vegetables are all sweet.

"The color of the heart is red; [to counteract the heart's susceptibility to sluggishness], sour foods should be consumed. Small beans, dog meat, plums, and chives are all sour.

"The color of the lung is white; [to counteract the lungs' susceptibility to ascending influences], bitter foods should be consumed. Wheat, lamb, almonds, and shallots are all bitter.

"The color of the spleen is yellow; [to counteract the spleen's susceptibility to indurations], salty food should be consumed. Large beans, pork, chestnuts, and the huo vegetable are all salty.

"The color of the kidneys is black; [to counteract the kidneys' susceptibility to drying out], spicy foods should be consumed. Yellow millet, chicken, peaches, and onions are spicy.

"Spicy foods disperse; sour foods concentrate; sweet foods relieve; bitter foods fortify; salty foods weaken. Potent drugs attack evil [influences]. The five kinds of grain provide nourishment. The five kinds of fruits provide support. [The flesh] of the five domesticated animals is necessary for well-being. The five kinds of vegetables constitute the conclusion [of the diet].

"He who harmonizes the assimilation of [volatile] influences and the flavors [of foods] within himself shall replenish his essence and maintain his [inner] influences."⁵⁰

9. Blood and Influences, Body and Mind (Hsüeh ch'i hsing chih)⁵¹ (excerpt)

If the body is healthy and the mind suffers, illnesses arise in the vessels. Moxa and needles are the proper treatment.

When both body and mind are healthy, illnesses arise in the flesh. Needles and stones are the proper treatment.

When the body suffers and the mind is healthy, illnesses arise in the muscles. Hot compresses and gymnastic exercises are the proper treatment.

When both the body and the mind suffer, illnesses arise in the throat. Drugs are the proper treatment.

If the body is affected repeatedly by terror and fear, the conduits are obstructed, and illnesses arise in the numbed areas. Massage and medicinal wines are the proper treatment.

These are the five [possible combinations of] body and mind.⁵²

10. On Yao-Illnesses (Yao lun)⁵³

The Yellow Emperor spoke: "All yao-illnesses are caused by wind. In addition, these [illnesses] break out only at certain times. Why is this so?"

Ch'i Po replied: "An outbreak of yao-illness is first visible in the body hair of the victims. If it stands erect, an outbreak will follow immediately. [The victim suffers from] chills so severe that his teeth begin to chatter. At the same time, pain occurs in the hips and back. As soon as the chills diminish, [the victim] feels heat both inside and outside his body. His head begins to ache as though it were about to burst; he is thirsty and yearns for something cold to drink."

The Emperor asked: "Which influence is responsible for these [symptoms]? What is the [underlying] principle here?"

Ch'i Po replied: "Yin and yang influences ascend and descend, falling into mutual conflict. Depletion and repletion also alternate, [reflecting] the mutual displacement of yin and yang [influences]. When yang [influences] enter the yin [conduits], a repletion arises in the yin [conduits], while a depletion occurs in the yang [conduits]. If a depletion strikes the yang-brilliance [conduit] [the patient] will tremble that his teeth chatter; if the great-yang [conduit] is empty pain is felt in the hips, back, head and neck. If all three yang [conduits] are affected simultaneously by a depletion [of influences], an excess arises in the yin [areas]. If, however, there is an excess [of influences] in the yin [conduits],

cold develops in the bones, accompanied by pain. Cold is generated in the body and soon fills the body's central area and moves to the outside of the body. If a repletion [of influences] is present in the yang [conduits], the victim feels external heat. If, in addition, the yin [conduits] are affected by a depletion [of influences], inner heat also develops. If the body suffers from heat both within and without, gasping and thirst result, and the victim yearns for cold liquids. All this is the consequence of summer heat, for during this time an abundance of hot influences is present within the skin yet outside of the stomach and intestines. But this is also where the [body's own] constructive influences are located. As a result of this condition, the victim begins to perspire and [his skin] dries out. As soon as the skin opens [to release perspiration], the influence of autumn is able to penetrate. Sweat is thus expelled and combines with the wind. Another way [for the wind, that is, autumn influence, to enter] occurs during washing with water. During this process water-influence settles in the skin, along with the [body's own] defensive influences. These defensive influences flow in the yang [conduits] during the day and in the yin [conduits] at night. The [invading autumn] influence is now able to break out over the yang [conduits], expanding within the body through the yin [system]. This alternating expansion and contraction [of influences] produces the daily outbreaks [of yao-illnesses]." The Emperor then asked: "How does it come about the outbreaks occur only every other day?" Ch'i Po replied: "[Autumn] influence has now penetrated deep into the body and expands in the yin [areas]. It can only leave [the body] as an influence of the yang [system]. As an evil [influence] in the yin [conduits], it must remain inside the body. Since yin and yang remain in mutual opposition, no exit is possible. Thus the illness breaks out only every other day."

The Yellow Emperor spoke: "This I understand! But when the outbreaks first occur progressively later each day and then progressively earlier, which influence causes this [symptom]?"

Ch'i Po replied: "The [evil] influence [that has penetrated from outside] remains temporarily in the wind palace [located in the back of the head]. From there it descends along the spine. The [body's] defensive influences also collect in great numbers during the course of one day and night in the wind palace. Beginning on the following day, they descend [along with the evil influence], one vertebra each day. Thus an outbreak occurs progressively later. [The influences] remain at first on the spine. Each time that they reach the wind palace, the skin opens up, and [more of] the evil influence enters. This penetration of evil influence triggers the outbreak of the illness. In this way, [the outbreak is] delayed slightly later each day. When [the influences] have left the wind palace, they descend one vertebra daily. After twenty-five days they reach the lowest vertebra. After twenty-six days they penetrate into the spine and are now located in the spine transportation channel, in which they once again ascend. After nine days they then exit again through the broken vessel [located near the right collarbone]. Day after day the influences rise somewhat higher in the body. Consequently, the outbreaks occur progressively earlier each day. That the outbreaks now take place every second day is due to the fact that the evil influence has expanded in the five depots and permeated the diaphragm membrane. In the process, the distance [to the exit] has grown great, and the influence, which has penetrated deeply, moves only slowly [through the body] and is unable to keep up with the defensive influences. Both can no longer exit together; thus outbreaks occur only every second day."⁵⁴

Unschuld's Footnotes (from Unschuld, 1985, pp. 384-385).

30. Parts of this treatise appear also in chap. 2 of the T'ai-su, in chap. 8 of the Ling-shu, and in chap. 6 of the Chia-i ching.
31. See above pp. 103-104. [i.e. in chap. 4, Taoism and Pragmatic Drug Therapy].
32. Huang-ti nei-ching su-wen, 1971, chap. 1, pp. 6a-11a.
33. Compare T'ai-su, chap. 2, and Chia-i ching, chap. 1, for corresponding treatises.
34. Huang-ti nei-ching su-wen, 1971, chap. 1, pp. 11a-14b.
35. The following is an excerpt from a treatise corresponding versions of which appear also in chap. 3 of the T'ai-su and in chap. 6 of the Chia-i ching.
36. Huang-ti nei-ching su-wen, 1971, chap. 2, pp. 1a-3b.
37. Compare T'ai-su, chap. 6, and Chia-i ching, chap. 1, for corresponding treatises.
38. Huang-ti nei-ching su-wen, 1971, chap. 3, pp. 13b-15a.
39. This treatise appears only in the Su-wen.
40. Huang-ti nei-ching su-wen, 1971, chap. 4, pp. 1a-2b.
41. This excerpt appears only in the Su-wen.
42. Huang-ti nei-ching su-wen, 1971, chap. 4, pp. 2b-3a.
43. This excerpt appears only in the Su-wen.
44. The term pi cannot be rendered adequately into English with a colloquial term. Symptoms of pi include weakness of limbs, paralysis, closure of passages. The Ling-shu (see appendix 1.5) defines certain yang-afflictions as "wind" and certain yin-afflictions as pi. I have, tentatively, chosen here the term "rheumatism" because it is a prescientific term indicating that various symptoms are the result of an influx (greek: rheuma) of entities like wind or moisture.
45. The term chüeh refers to the phenomenon that certain influences (primarily cold or yin-influences) ascend in the body, contrary to their proper course. The reason for the application of chüeh in the context here is not clear.
46. The concept of ku appears to have been developed in a magical and demonological context (see section 2.4). Here, the term is applied to an illness caused by wind, the symptoms of which resemble those associated with the demonological concept, that is, swollen abdomen and internal pain.
47. Huang-ti nei-ching su-wen, 1971, chap. 6, pp. 4b-5b.
48. The first, major section of the excerpt quoted here appears only in the Su-wen; a treatise corresponding to the final section beginning with the words "The color of the liver is green" appears in T'ai-su, chap. 2.
49. Huang-ti nei-ching su-wen, 1971, chap. 7, pp. 3b-5b.
50. Ibid., pp. 7b-8a.
51. This excerpt appears only in the Su-wen.
52. Huang-ti nei-ching su-wen, 1971, chap. 7, pp. 12a-12b.
53. This treatise appears only in the Su-wen. Yao-illnesses have been interpreted as referring to malaria; cf. Miyashita 1979.
54. Huang-ti nei-ching su-wen, 1971, chap. 10, pp. 1a-2b.

Huang-ti nei-ching su-wen, 1971, Wang Ping et al. Taipei.