

The Secret Treatise of the Spiritual Orchid



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This is the complete text of Nei jing Su wen, chapter 8
(The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine, ~240 B.C.)
translated by Claude Larre & Elisabeth Rochat de la Vallee © Monkey Press, 1987

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Huang di asked: I wish to be instructed on the relative charges of the twelve zang and their relative ranks.

Qi Bo replied: What a vast question! If you allow me, let us go over it all.

The heart holds the office of lord and sovereign.
The radiance of the spirits stems from it.

The lungs hold the office of minister and chancellor.
The regulation of the life-giving network stems from it.

The liver holds the office of general of the armed forces.
Assessment of circumstances and conception of plans stem from it.

The gallbladder is responsible for what is just and exact.
Determination and decision stem from it.

Tan zhong has the charge of resident as well as envoy.
Elation and joy stem from it.

The spleen and stomach are responsible for the storehouses and granaries.
The five tastes stem from them.

The large intestine is responsible for transit.
The residue from transformed substances stems from it.

The small intestine is responsible for receiving and making things thrive.
Transformed substances stem from it.

The kidneys are responsible for the creation of power.
Skill and ability stem from them.

The triple heater is responsible for the opening up of passages and irrigation.
The regulation of fluids stems from it.

The bladder is responsible for regions and cities. It stores the body fluids.
The transformations of the qi then give out their power.

These twelve charges form an interdependent group that allows of no failing.

If then the sovereign radiates (virtue), those under him will be at peace. From this the nurturing of life will give longevity, from generation to generation, and the empire will radiate with a great light. But if the sovereign does not radiate (virtue) the twelve charges will be in danger, which will cause the closing and blocking of the ways, finally stopping communication and the body will be seriously injured. From this, the nurturing of life will sink into disaster. Everything that lives under heaven will be threatened in its ancestral line with the greatest of dangers. Take care, I repeat, take good care!

The supreme Way is in the imperceptible, change and transformation without end! Who then would know its origin? Alas, it disappears and one searches anxiously for it. Who then would know the essential? Oh, the anguish of actual situations! Who then will know how to act properly?

Countless appearances and disappearances, out of which come forth the finest threads, fine threads that multiply until you can weigh and measure them. By the thousand and ten thousand they increase and grow, from development and growth creating the bodily form, governed by rules.

Huang di concluded: The teaching on the brilliant radiance of the essences and the conduct of the great saints has just been expounded. So to treat the declaration and elucidation of this great teaching with the respect it deserves, after purification and exorcism, an auspicious day will be chosen.

Huang di then had the fates consulted. A favorable and auspicious day was chosen, and they then proceeded to the Chamber of the Spiritual Orchid to deposit the teaching and to ensure its true transmission.