

Summary of Chapter 3 of the Sù Wèn

Shēng Qì Tōng Tiān Lùn – On the Human Vital Energy Connecting with Nature

Literature used: Nelson, Liansheng Wu and Andrew, Qi Wu, Yellow Empero's Canon Internal Medicine [2]

Paragraph 1

Universe	Human being
Nine states (Ji, Yan, Qing, Xu, Yang, Jing, Yu, Liang, Yong)	Nine orifices (two ears, two eyes, two nostrils, one mouth; two Yin orifices)
Five musical tones	Five solid organs for storing mental activities (Gān stores Hún, Xīn stores Shén, Pí stores Yì, Fèi stores Pò, Shèn stores Zhì)
Twelve solar terms	Twelve channels (twelve joints: elbows, wrists, knees, ankles, shoulders, hips [4:p8])
Yīn – Yáng	Yīn – Yáng

A Human being is a small universe.

Life depends on five: the survival of a man depends on the Yīn and Yáng Qì and depends on the five elements.

Qì depends on the three: the five elements on earth correspond to the three Yīn (Hán-cold, Zào-dryness, Shī-wetness) and the three Yáng (Fēng-wind, Huǒ-fire, Shǔ-summer heat).

According to [4:p8]: The universal yin and yang transform into the five earthly transformative energies, also know as the five elemental phases that also correspond to the three yin and three yang of the universe. These six atmospheric influences govern the weather patterns that reflect in changes in our planetary ecology. If people violate or disrupt this natural order, then pathogenic forces will have an opportunity to cause damage to the body.

Paragraph 2

Human Qì ←connected with→ universal Qì when adapting to the sequence and variations of the four seasons.

Bodily Yáng Qì is substantial and can adapt to the sequence and variations of the four seasons. Keep your Jīng and Qì in concert with the Yáng Qì of heaven.

Paragraph 3

Yáng Qì in human body = sun in the sky.

i.e. bodily health depends on the clear and floating of Yáng Qì (protects). Unceasing operation of heaven depends on the brightness of the sun. The sun is the ultimate Yáng. The heavenly energy of the sun, Yáng Qì, surrounds the earth.

Paragraph 4

When man is invaded by	then
Hán – cold	Be disquieted and restless, Shén and Qì excrete outside, Yáng Qì becomes unstable.
Rè – heat	Be sweating a lot, irritable, breathe rapidly with noise. Syndromes of short breath, gasp, thirst, polylogia, body is hot. Can only be dispersed by perspiration. [4:p9] Qì will escape. [4] also includes summer heat here.
Shī – wetness	One's head will feel heavy like wrapped. Prolonged Shī will turn to Rè. Eliminate in time, otherwise Rè will hurt Yīn Xuè to cause malnourishment to the tendons → large tendons = rigid, contract, cramps; small tendons = flaccid. [4:p9] loss of mobility, spasms, atrophy.
Fēng – wind (see note below)	Swelling, four extremities will be swelling alternately (shows exhaustion of Yáng Qì).

Note: the Chinese text says [2]: 因于气，为肿，(yīn yú qì, wéi zhǒng, ...) Lit: cause in qì, means swelling, ...

So, no word about wind. [4:p9] writes: A blockage of qì due to deficiency...

Paragraph 5

When one	then
is over-worked	Yáng Qì in body becomes hyperactive, excretes outside causing exhaustion of Yīn. If disease = protracted, and weather = hot in summer, then disease of anterior Jue. Characteristics: deafness, blurred vision. [4:p9] Jian Jue syndrome, syncope caused by the consumption of Yīn fluids.
indulges in extreme anger (great rage)	Yáng Qì will rush upward when one is in a great rage, taking the Xuè with it. If Xuè stagnates in chest, then physique and the vital energy will become obstructed. The confusion of vital energy and Xuè is called syncope due to emotional upset. [4:p9] ...obstructing blood flow in the head, resulting in syncope. Bo Jue, syncope due to a battle between Qì and Xuè.
tendons become damaged	they loose their elasticity and contractibility; thus mobility becomes impaired.
is sweating on only one side of the body (see note below)	warning sign of Pian Ku, hemiplegia.
is sweating and pores are	Shī can invade causing Zuo Fei – rash, dermatitis, furuncle.

open	Prickly heat [2].
is consuming large amounts of rich, greasy food	can induce Ding Chuan, larger lesions with pus. [2] cellulites.
sits or lies against the wind after heavy exertion and sweating	Fēng and Hán can invade the skin, causing Zha, or red spots on the nose. If accumulated over a long period, there will be Zuo Chuang, lesions on the buttocks and in the rectal area, with ulcerations and boils.

Note: [2] writes: if one side of the body of a man is usually obstructed and no sweat appears when one should perspire.

Paragraph 6

Yáng Qì transforms Jīng to nourish Shén and harmonizes with Yíng Qì to sustain the tendons.

When	then
Skin pores lose regulating function and pathogenic Hán can enter	Yáng Qì becomes obstructed or damaged. Tendons will then lose their source of nourishment. Body becomes stiff and movement is difficult and painful.
pathogenic Hán enters channels [4:p10] Hán penetrates to Xuè level	causes stagnation of Xuè. [4:p10] bruising will be seen and will lead to Lou, perforated scrofula of the neck. At muscle level, lesions and wounds will not close or heal properly.
Qì of channel system is Xū, Hán will invade Zàng and Fǔ. (see note below)	moves through the circulation into the organs, it will manifest as fear, fright, or startling nightmares. Syndromes of timorousness (Xīn), timidness (Gān).
Hán-evil is present and the Yíng Qì is blocked in the muscles	Yong Zhong, suppurative swelling with cysts and pus conditions will manifest.
weak person sweats excessively, Fēng and Hán can obstruct the pores, and fluids will accumulate in the muscle level	Shū-transporting points will be closed and cause Rè stagnated in it. When both Rè and Hán attack simultaneously, wind-type malaria will happen. [4:p10] Shū-transporting points can become blocked, causing Feng Nui, wind malaria with alternating chills and fever, headache, and irritability.

Note: [4:p10] writes: when cold invades through the shu-transporting points ... continues to move through the circulation into the organs.

Paragraph 7

Fēng-Wind is the main source of various diseases.

If one is centered and the emotions are clear and calm, Qì is abundant and resistance is strong.

Paragraph 8

When pathogenic Fēng remains in the body for a long time, then
it will transform, internalize, and stagnate to the point where the flow of Qì is
impaired,
from top to bottom, side to side, between Yīn and Yáng.

Even the most accomplished doctor finds it difficult to remedy this condition.

When Yáng Qì is stuck:

- purge with herbs
- sedate promptly with acupuncture.

Sun begins to rise at dawn. Yáng Qì begins to move to the outer body, the pores open.
Peak of Yáng Qì is at noon. Advisable to relax and stay quiet so that the Yáng Qì does not
escape.

As sun sets, Yáng Qì moves inward, pores begin to close. Do not engage in strenuous
physical activity. Do not expose oneself to Hán, Shī, mist, or dew.

Follow the natural order of Yáng Qì as it rises, peaks, and sets. The body will stay healthy and
will not be invaded by pathogenic factors causing disease.

Paragraph 9

Yīn is the Jīng of the organs and the fountain of Qì.

Yáng protects the exterior against pathogens.

If Yáng has activities outside, then Yīn will correspond from inside.

If Yīn = insufficient and Yáng = excessive, causes Yīn inferior to Yáng (Yīn fails to contain
Yáng), then flow in channels will become rapid, causing Yáng Qì to become excessive and
reckless.

If Yáng = insufficient and Yīn = excessive, causes Yáng inferior to Yīn (Yáng Qì = Xū,
unable to counterbalance Yīn), then communication between five Zàng becomes disrupted
(stagnates) and the nine orifices become obstructed.

You stay healthy if the Yīn and Yáng energies are in harmony.

Paragraph 10

When Fēng invades the body, Jīng and Xuè * will suffer severe damage. As Xuè is stored in Gān, when damaged it will not nourish Gān.

If one overeats, then muscles and blood vessels of Wèi and intestines (Cháng) over-expand and suffer from food retention. The tendons will become loose. This leads to dysentery and hemorrhoids.

When liquor is taken excessively (overindulgence in alcohol), then (Fèi) Qì will run up reversely. ([4:p11] cause the energy to rise to the head).

When too much sexual intercourse, then Shèn Qì will be drained, causing damage and degeneration of the lower back. Also the body will draw Qì from the bones and marrow.

* The Chinese characters [2] do not reveal the mention of Xuè. But both [2] and [4] mention Xuè in their translations.

Paragraph 11

The key to mastering health is to regulate the Yīn and the Yáng of the body.

If Yáng = excessive, and loses its function of defending outside, then Yīn will become consumed and dies out.

If Yīn and Yáng separate, Jīng and Shén will also leave each other.

So, it is important to keep them balanced, harmonious.

Paragraph 12

When

- one is attacked by Fēng and exposed to dew/fog → condition of Hán and Rè will occur. (dew/fog = Yīn-evil producing Hán, Fēng = Yáng-evil producing Rè).
- body is hurt by Fēng-evil in spring and
 - disease comes on immediately, then exogenous disease.
 - disease does not come on immediately but retains inside, then it will attack Pí, causing diarrhea, indigestion, and food retention.
- body is hurt by Shǔ (summer-heat) evil in summer and
 - disease comes on immediately, then summer-heat disease.
 - disease does not come on immediately but incubates inside, then malaria will occur in autumn.
- body is hurt by Shī evil and it accumulates in Fèi in autumn, then
 - if Shī-evil breaks out internally, cough will occur in winter.
 - if it breaks out externally, then tendons = weak and flaccid to form cold limbs with flaccidity in the winter.

- body is hurt by Hán-evil in winter and
 - disease comes on immediately, then exogenous Hán-evil disease.
 - disease does not come on immediately and Hán-evil incubates inside, then Hán-evil will turn into seasonal febrile disease when the Yáng energy ascends in spring.

[4:p12] The seasonal changes can cause damage to the organs if one is not careful and strong.

Paragraph 13

The source and preservation of the Yīn come from the five flavors of food in the diet, but improper use of the five flavors may also injure the five Zàng.

Taste	When too much
Sour acts on Gān	May cause overactivity of Gān and underactivity of Pí. It will make Gān to have too much liquid (Gān qì yǐ jīn). Gān will overact on Pí.
Salty acts on Shèn	Can weaken the bones and cause contracture and atrophy of the muscles. Xīn-Qì will stagnate. Shèn-water is abundant to override Xīn-fire.
Sweet acts on Pí	Property of sweet taste is sluggish and greasy. Can disturb Xīn Qì, causing it to become restless and congested. Dyspnea. When Pí is abnormal, it will restrict Shèn-water which turns the face black.
Bitter acts on Xīn	When Xīn-fire is hurt, Pí is not moistened (fire fails to warm the earth). Pí cannot transform and transport food, causes Wèi to become too dry causing distension.
Acrid acts on Fèi	Fèi Qì becomes abundant and restricts Gān (wood). The muscles and tendons may become scattered. Jīng Shén nǎi yāng: essence and spirit will be consumed.

So, one should be mindful of what one consumes.

Bibliography

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- [3] Unschuld, P., *Huang Di Nei Jing, nature, knowledge, imagery in an ancient Chinese medical text*, University of California Press, 2003.
- [4] Maoshing Ni, *The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine*, Shambala, 1995.