Summary of Chapter 11 of the Sù Wèn

Wǔ Zàng Bié Lùn – The Different Functions Between the Hollow Organs and the Extraordinary Hollow Organs for Digestion and Elimination (short: Further discourse of the five zang viscera)

Paragraph 1

Huáng Dì wants to know more about the solid and hollow organs (Zàng and Fŭ).

Paragraph 2

Extraordinary Fŭ organs
- Brain
- Bones
- Blood Vessels
- Uterus
- Dĕn

Hollow containers that store substantial substances. They store essence.

Born from Earthly Qi

Fŭ organs for Digestion and Elimination
- Wĕi
- Dà Chăng
- Xiăo Chăng
- Săn Jiăo
- Păng Guăng

Receive the turbid Qi from the five Zàng

Generated by Heavenly Qi

Their function is to transport rather than store (like that of heavenly circulation of continuous flow).

That is, to digest, absorb and transport the food. They are often full, but do not store.

"palaces of transportation."

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The rectum/anus** is the 6th hollow organ and works by eliminating, so that waste does not become stored in the body.
The five Zàng are filled, but never full.

Notes:
* Wu [2] Chinese text does not say if this essence is Jing.
Chinese text: "jiē cáng yǔ yīn ér xiàng yǔ dì": "all store in Yin and shape in earth"

** Maoshing Ni [4: 46] writes "hunmen, which is the rectum."
Wu [2] writes "The anus, which is supposed to be the 6th hollow organ also has a function of preventing the dross to remain in the body long." Wu [2] writes in the Chinese text Pò mén (魄门). That is, the gate of the Inferior Spirit, which is indeed the anus.
Hūnmén (魂门), the gate of the Soul, the rectum. In Sù Wèn 11, the anus is the correct translation.
Pò leaves the body through the anus when a person dies. Pò is the bond with your ancestors.

Paragraph 3

"From palpating the pulse at the radial position, how can one know the subtleties and conditions of the five Zàng organs?"

Wèi (Stomach) = sea of water and source of six Fǔ. All the five tastes (foodstuff) enter the mouth and are stored in the stomach.
The Pí digests and transports it to nourish Xuè and Qi of the Zàng organs.
The radial pulse belongs to Shǒu Tàiyǐn Fěi Jīng, and is dominating all the pulses. All Qi of Zàng Fǔ come from Wèi, and their variations are reflected in the radial pulse.
The five smells (foul, scorched, sweet, stink, rancid) enter the nose and are stored in Xīn and Fèi*. These are really the five Qi of environmental energy that we breathe in. If illness occurs in Xīn or Fèi, it will manifest in the nose.

When one treats a disease, then:
- first know stool and urine conditions,
- differentiate the pulse patterns,
- observe accurately the patient's emotional, psychological, and spiritual states and other physical manifestations.

Notes:
Paragraph 4

If the patient:
- is superstitious and does not believe in medicine,
- or refuses to be treated by acupuncture,
- or refuses any treatment
then, no matter what the practitioner does, the patient will not get well.

"This is evidence that healing actually comes from within", writes Maoshing Ni [4: 47]. But does the above statement suggest that?

Bibliography