

Introduction to Traditional Chinese Medicine

In traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) there is no separation between the physical body, the mind, and the spirit. Each acupuncture point needled and every herbal formula taken is meant to address the individual's unique patterns of disharmony on the levels of the physical, the emotional, the mental, and the spiritual. The guiding principles of TCM were developed by ancient practitioners over 2,000 years ago through observation of nature. From observation and experience over centuries the art of Chinese medicine evolved. The history and concepts of TCM are rich and complex. In this workshop we will first briefly discuss the historical context of TCM and then the following fundamental concepts:

- Yin & Yang
- Vital Substances and the 3 Treasures
- Taoist Descent of Being
- 5 Elements
- 8 Principles
- Causes of Disease
- 12 Main Channels
- 8 Extra Channels

For a brief outline of the history of TCM, see Appendix I. For a list of resources used in preparing this workshop, please see the Appendix II.

“The tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao.
The name that can be named is not the eternal Name.

The unnamable is the eternally real.
Naming is the origin of all particular things.

Free from desire, you realize the mystery.
Caught in desire, you see only the manifestations.

Yet mystery and manifestations arise from the same source.
This source is called darkness.

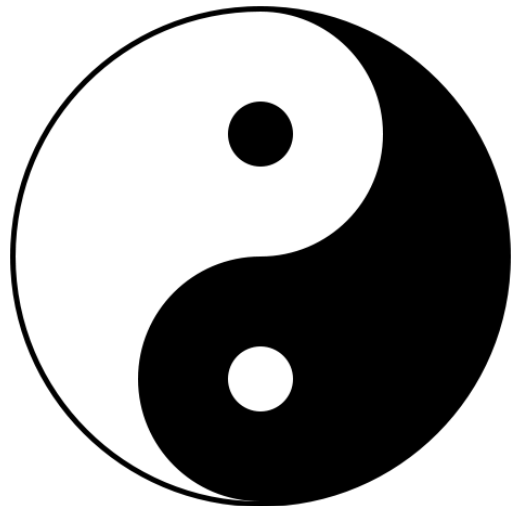
Darkness within darkness.
The gateway to all understanding.”

First poem of the Tao Te Ching (Book of the Way) attributed to Lao-tzu circa 551-479 BCE as translated by Stephen Mitchell.









Yin & Yang

The Chinese characters for yin & yang represent the shady side (yin) and the sunny side of a mountain (yang). The concept of the inter-relationship of yin & yang is illustrated in the following well known 'tai chi' symbol:



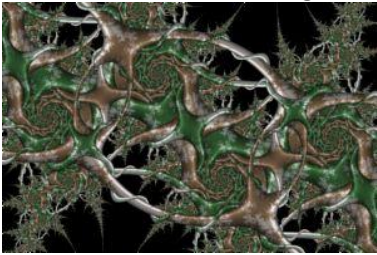
In TCM every phenomenon results from the interaction of yin and yang. The relation of yin and yang is constantly changing. The seed of potential to change into the other is always present. This is why in the above symbol you see smaller spheres of the opposite color within each fish-shaped swirl. There is no Platonic ideal of 'perfection' or belief in 'black & white' in TCM; only the constant transformation of yin and yang.

Some correspondences for yin & yang are as follows:

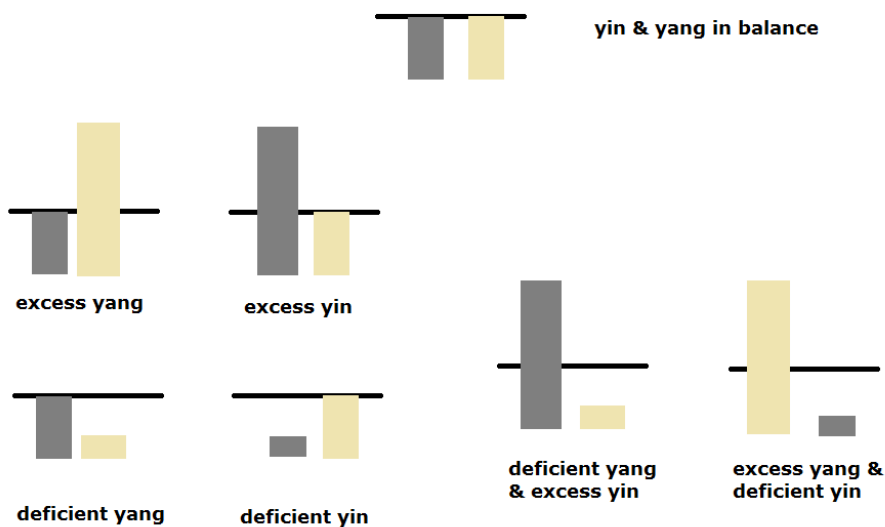
	 Yang		 Yin	
	1		0	
	Masculine		Feminine	
	Active		Restful	
	Outward		Inward	
	Light		Dark	
	Warm		Cool	
	Weightless		Heavy	
	Ascending		Descending	
	Configurative		Substantial	
4 stages	Yang Within Yin (Growth of Yang) 	Yang Within Yang (Maximum Yang) 	Yin Within Yang (Growth of Yin) 	Yin Within Yin (Maximum Yin) 
Time	Second half of night	Morning	Afternoon	First half of night
Season	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Direction	East	South	West	North



The main aspects of yin and yang are:

1	Opposition	Tension that motivates creation, sustenance, and destruction
2	Interdependence	Balance of opposing forces that requires each other to exist
3	Mutual consumption	Continuous re-adjustment of relative levels of yin-yang
4	Inter-transformation	<p>Non-random change of yin <-> yang under 2 conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change takes place when internal conditions are ripe (potential exists) • Time <p>For example: To hatch an egg you apply heat over time; you would not apply heat to a stone and expect to hatch a chick because the potential of hatching does not exist within a stone and you would not expect a chick to hatch immediately upon application of heat. From experience and observation you would determine the average amount of time required to hatch a chick.</p>
5	Infinite divisibility	<p>No matter how small (micro) or how large (macro) there is always the interplay of yin and yang. "As above so below" the nature of reality is fractal. "fractal is a never-ending pattern. Fractals are infinitely complex patterns that are self-similar across different scales. They are created by repeating a simple process over and over in an ongoing feedback loop. Driven by recursion, fractals are images of dynamic systems – the pictures of Chaos." From fractalfoundation.org/resources/what-are-fractals/</p> 

The understanding of yin & yang is the foundation for TCM and it is the first of many 'lens' that are applied to understand why an individual is not healthy. The ways that yin and yang can become imbalanced form the basis for understanding a TCM assessment (or 'pattern of disharmony') and are illustrated by the graphics below:



Vital Substances and the 3 Treasures

Whereas the interaction of yin and yang create phenomena, phenomena are created out of 'qi'. You can think of qi as the fabric of the universe. In terms of modern physics, qi would be vibration. In Chinese the character for qi is written as steam rising out of a cauldron above a burning fire. In relation to blood, qi is yang and blood is yin. The saying in TCM is that 'Qi is the commander of blood and blood is the mother of qi.' Qi & blood go together. Qi manifests in various ways to make up all the fluids in the body. TCM is concerned with the appropriate production of qi, its proper distribution throughout the body and in what direction the qi is flowing. Blocked or stagnant qi is what creates pain and disease. Therefore, ensuring you have enough qi, that it is where it ought to be, and that it is flowing in the proper direction equals normal healthy body function given your Jing.

Vital Substance	<i>Jing</i> (Essence)	<i>Qi</i>	Blood	Body Fluids	<i>Shen</i> (Spirit)
Major Organ	Kidney	Lung	Liver	Spleen	Heart

The 3 Treasures are qi, shen, and jing. The goal of practicing qi gong is to 'refine, firm, conserve' your jing, then convert it into qi, and lead the qi to your head to nourish your shen.

Jing

Jing can be a verb, noun, adjective depending on how it is used. The gist is that jing is essential, pure, refined, and good. In TCM, the jing most often discussed is that which you receive from your mother and father at the time of conception and is called yuan jing (source jing, original jing, pre-natal jing, pre-Heaven essence). Pre-natal jing is stored in your kidneys at birth and is your genetic inheritance. Pre-natal jing controls the developmental processes of your body from birth, to maturing, reproducing, and aging – ultimately your overall health. Pre-natal jing is the foundation of yin and yang in the body and you have a finite amount & quality that you inherited from your parents. How well you use your pre-natal jing in terms of lifestyle choices like diet and exercise determines how quickly you age and whether you improve the quality of jing you inherited, for example by practicing qi gong.

Qi

As stated earlier, qi is the fabric of reality. In Western terms of physics, call it energy. In TCM, the qi in the body that animates us and gives us the capacity to get work done is called Upright, Normal or True Qi. Upright Qi comes from three sources:

- Pre-natal jing (in this context Yuan Qi)
- Metabolism of food (Food Qi)
- Breathing (Air Qi)

The quality of the air you breathe and the food you eat directly impacts your Upright Qi.

Qi has 5 main functions in the body:

1. Enables all movement and accompanies all movement
2. Protects the body
3. Motivation behind transformation
4. Holds the vital substances and organs in place
5. Warms the body



Shen

Shen is difficult to translate and can also mean many things such as spirit, supernatural, divine, immortal. In terms of qi gong practice a person whose shen has attained enlightenment like the Buddha is then called ling. In TCM each of the 5 yin organs house a shen or spirit. The Heart, who is considered the 'Supreme Controller' or 'Emperor/Empress' houses Shen. It is the Shen of the Heart that is the space or empty void from within which Tao expresses itself and it is the Shen to which the other four spirits of the yin organs are meant to bow. When this does not happen, imbalance occurs (shen disturbance). Shen is the seat of compassion, love, consciousness, and memory.

The 5 spirits are as follows:

Chinese Name	Translated Name	Yin Organ	Element	Characteristics
Shen		Heart	Fire	Compassionate, awake
Hun	Soul	Liver	Wood	Visionary, goal oriented, plans, projects
Yi	Intellect	Spleen	Earth	Perceives, concentrates, contemplates
Po	Body	Lung	Metal	Senses, feels
Zhi	Will	Kidney	Water	Driving force

Think of each of these spirits as a unique vibration or resonance that interact to create an individual life.

Shen	Fire	Love & connect appropriately with others in this life
Hun	Wood	Manifest your soul's purpose in this life
Yi	Earth	Recognize & meet your needs and support others in doing the same in this ecology
Po	Metal	Appreciate the beauty of this life as it will pass
Zhi	Water	Persevere in this life



Taoist Descent of Being

The only thing between Heaven and Earth is law and energy.

德 Virtue (Teh)
 Taoism

The Taoist Descent Of Being

nothingness

emanation/manifestation

existence as to know it

(Without Limit)
 Wu Chi (Limit)
 無極



陽 MOTION YANG

陰 QUIESCENCE YIN

T'ai Chi (Great Limit)
 太極



The Manifest Universe
 4 stages of Yin & Yang



Earth = center (human) pole + 4 directions = 6 entries between Heaven & Earth

Fig 35A FCM p. 62

SIX ENERGIES Acupuncture evolves from this



FIVE ELEMENTS Five Elemental Energies



EIGHT TRIGRAMS Ba-Kua Chang evolves from this

Hexadecimal mathematics - computer assembly language

THE SIXTY FOUR HEXAGRAMS THE TEN THOUSAND THINGS Experiential Universe

I CHING

Fibonacci sequence

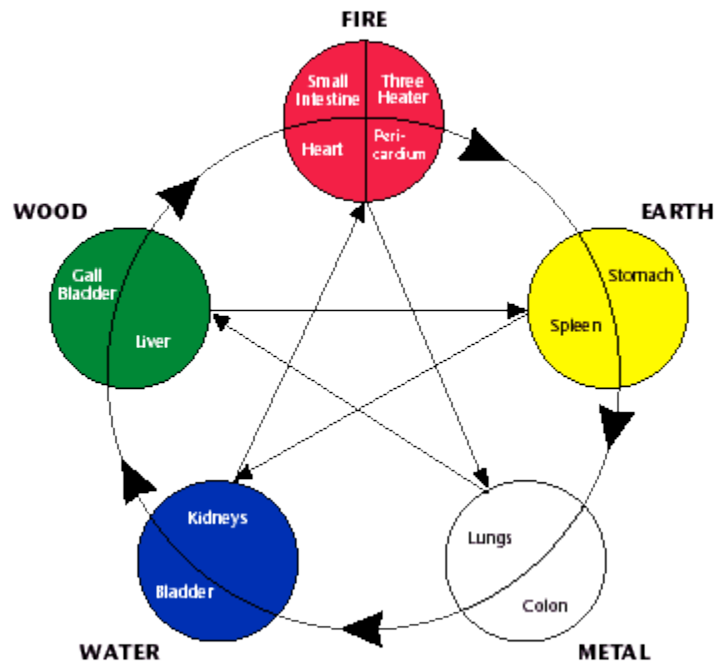
1
 2
 3
 2 opposites + harmonizer = 3 Laws
 3 Measures:
 - Qi
 - Jin
 - Shen
 5
 8
 13
 21
 34
 55
 89
 144
 233
 377
 610
 987
 1597
 2584
 4181
 6768
 10946
 17713
 28657
 46370
 75085
 121455
 196410
 317815
 514229
 832040
 1346269
 2178309
 3542248
 5720557
 9272796
 14961355
 24214708
 39186057
 63401355
 102573212
 166987169
 270154381
 437141550
 707305731
 1144447281
 1851742811
 2996149582
 4847892393
 7844039775
 12691728128
 20535768003
 33225490181
 53755168009
 87080907190
 140814185199
 227895082389
 368709267588
 596614349787
 965323517376
 1561937867165
 2527261484941
 4089199352106
 6616460837047
 10707621519153
 17323811346200
 28031432865353
 45355244211553
 73386677076906
 118763919542499
 192149690519405
 310913510061904
 503063401581309
 814076911643213
 1317140412224522
 2131706813816831
 3448847226041353
 5580554039858184
 9029361255884015
 14609915295742200
 23638576551620385
 38248491847408585
 61887468400028970
 100135960349657955
 162023452297086930
 262163412646714905
 424189373046382880
 686353285745997785
 1110542658792680665
 1806895944538678450
 2917438603331359135
 4724334547870037585
 7641873151408716720
 12366208000278754305
 20018081147148691890
 32384289147427408615
 52402370294576100505
 84786651441724799400
 137189021639101899915
 221975673110826600320
 359164694749928499435
 581140367860755100755
 940316061570681701190
 1521456429431436802145
 2461772591002118503340
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 27300958855174154599785
 44173889088483395405500
 71474847943657549005285
 115648737022041743505070
 187122625965719292510355
 302771363008761036015440
 490000000000000000000000

AFA



5 Elements

	Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
Basic Qualities	Can be bent & straightened	Flares upwards	Permits sowing, growing & reaping	Can be molded and can harden	Moistens downwards
Movement	Expansion	Upwards	Center	Contraction	Downward
Seasons	Spring	Summer	Late summer	Autbirthumn	Winter
Direction	East	South	Center	West	North
Development	Birth	Growth	Transformation	Harvest	Storage
Power	Initiate	Mature	Decrease	Balance	Emphasize
Spirit	Hun	Shen	Yi	Po	Zhi
Yin Organs	Liver	Heart & Pericardium	Spleen	Lung	Kidney
Yang Organ	Gallbladder	Small Intesting & Triple Heater	Stomach	Colon	Urinary Bladder
Color	Green	Red	Orange/Yellow	White	Black/Blue
Sound	Shouting	Laughing	Singing	Weeping	Groaning
Smell	Rancid	Scorched	Fragrant	Rotten	Putrid
Emotion	Anger	Joy (Mania)	Pensiveness	Grief	Fear
Taste	Sour	Bitter	Sweet	Pungent	Salty
Tissues	Sinews	Blood vessels	Muscles	Skin	Bones
Sense organ	Eyes	Tongue	Mouth/lips	Nose	Ears
Climate	Wind	Heat	Dampness	Dryness	Cold



TCM Perspective on the Causes of Disease

The causes of disease are essentially ways in which your body's qi becomes impaired. TCM has long considered emotional, mental, and spiritual difficulties to be a major cause of disease.

- 7 Emotions: joy, overthinking, worry, sadness, fear, fright & anger
- 6 Climactic Factors: heat, fire, dryness, wind, cold & damp
- Poisoning: insect, snake & animal bites – nowadays toxic overload
- Trauma/injury
- Wrong treatment

Diet & Exercise

'Everything in moderation, nothing in excess' Confucius

- Hydration
- Nutrition
- Exercise/Rest
- Human connection/life purpose

12 Main Channels

Qi moves through the body like water. Think of the acupuncture channels as rivers of qi running along the fascia in the body. Every cell is animated by qi. In TCM an organ like the gallbladder is an energetic entity with certain functions and characteristics regardless of whether or not you have had your physical gallbladder removed, in TCM you still have a Gallbladder (with initial capitalization indicating the energetic entity).

Of course the first classification of the 12 main channels is into yin and yang:

- Yin
 - Liver, Spleen, Kidney: begin feet -> end torso
 - Heart, Pericardium, Lung: begin torso -> end hands
- Yang
 - Gallbladder, Stomach, Urinary Bladder: begin face -> end feet
 - Triple Heater, Colon, Small Intestine: begin hands -> end face

Qi moves through the body like waves and these waves ebb and flow in certain acupuncture channels and their associated organs at certain times. There is a deep pathway associated with an organ and a superficial pathway. The pathways that are needed are the superficial pathways and are known as the acupuncture channels. There are 12 main channels that describe three complete circuits of qi in the body from the chest down the arm to the hand; (switching from yin-yang at the fingertips) from the hand back up the arm to the face (yang-yang); going down the torso to the foot (switching from yang-yin at the toes) and back to chest.

	Chest ----->	Hand ----->	Face ----->	Chest
1 st Circuit	Lung	Colon	Stomach	Spleen
2 nd Circuit	Heart	Small Intestine	Urinary Bladder	Kidney
3 rd Circuit	Pericardium	Triple Heater	Gallbladder	Liver



This daily flow of qi is shown below. The time period cited below is the time when the qi is at its' peak in the channel:

Channel	Peak Time
Lung	3-5am
Colon	5-7am
Stomach	7-9am
Spleen	9-11am
Heart	11am-1pm
Small Intestine	1-3pm
Urinary Bladder	3-5pm
Kidney	5-7pm
Pericardium	7-9pm
Triple Heater	9-11pm
Gallbladder	11pm-1am
Liver	1-3am

8 Extra Channels

Only the Conception Vessel (CV) and the Governing Vessel (GV) have acupuncture points of their own running along the midline in the front (CV) and the back (GV). The other extra channels use points on the one or more of the 12 main channels.

- Conception Vessel (CV)
- Governing Vessel (GV)
- Penetrating Vessel
- Girdling Vessel
- Yin Linking
- Yang Linking
- Yin Motility
- Yang Motility



Appendix I

Brief Overview of Traditional Chinese Medical History (from AFEA notes)

Prehistory

- Pan Gu – primordial being who evolved from chaos and who transformed into the entire creation
- Shamanic healers called Wu were ‘women who bring down spirits’; Wu used bells, drums, knives, medicines, and chants in their work sometimes inflicting torture on themselves and their patients. Treatment could be fatal to both.

Langshan Culture: 2500 BCE

- Shen Nong, the forefather of Chinese medicine is said to have taught the people how to raise crops, domesticate animals, and identify medicinal plants.
- Huang Ti, the Yellow Emperor is said to have existed. The Yellow Emperor is a legendary figure and is considered to be the ancestor of the Chinese people and author of the ancient medicinal classic *The Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Internal Medicine*.
- Fu Xi, legendary author of the I Ching existed. Fu Xi is attributed with inventing the calendar, musical instruments and taught the people how to hunt and fish.

From 2852 BCE to 1911 CE numerable dynastic periods in China occurred. The highlights below emphasize significant events and the actual writing down of manuscripts important to TCM.

- Shang Dynasty, 1766-1122 BCE: first known written medical records on tortoise shell and animal bones. Archeological findings also include crude bones and stone acupuncture needles.
- Zhou Dynasty, 1122-256 BCE:
 - *Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Internal Medicine (Huang Ti Neijing)* written down; format of the Neijing is a conversation between the Yellow Emperor and Qi Bo, another legendary founder of Chinese medicine.
 - Confucius (551-479BCE) and possibly Lao-Tzu, to whom the Yao Te Ching is attributed
- Han Dynasty, 206 BCE- 220 CE:
 - *The Classic of Difficulties (Nanjing)* is compiled which addresses difficult passages in the *Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Internal Medicine*.
 - *Treatise on Febrile Diseases (Shang Han Cu Ping Lun)* by Zhang Zhongjing is still considered to be one of the primary texts on herbal medicine. Basics of TCM theory are firmly in place.
 - Hua Tou (110-207 CE) China’s first surgeon



- Three Kingdoms 285-297 CE
 - Wang Suho arranged the *Treatise on Febrile Diseases (Shang Han Cu Ping Lun)* into 2 texts: *Treatise on Febrile Diseases (Shang Han Lun)* and the *Summaries of Household Remedies (Chin Kuei Yao Lueh)* to address epidemics of the time. The 6 Stage theory of treating febrile disease comes from the Shang Han Lun and is still used today.
 - *The Book of Acupuncture Fundamentals (Chia I Jing)* attributed to Haungfu Mi.
- Southern & Northern Dynasties 317-589 CE
 - Tao Hongjing compiled the *Divine Husbandman's Classic of the Materia Medica (Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing)* which was originally attributed to Shen Nong.
- Sui Dynasty 589-618 CE
 - Sun Simiao wrote *Thousand Golden Prescriptions for Medical Emergencies (Pei Chi Chien Chin Yao Fang)* and the *Golden Supplementary Prescriptions (Chien Chin I Fang)*. Sun Simiao wrote the equivalent of the Hippocratic oath.
 - Founding of the Imperial Medical College with acupuncture as a unit in the medical department.
- Song Dynasty 960-1279 CE
 - *Illustrated Manual on Points for Acupuncture and Moxibustion Shown on a Bronze Figure (Tongren Shuxue Zhenjiu Tujing)* by Wang Weiyi; these are 2 nearly life size bronze statues depicting the acupuncture points and channels.
 - Founding of an official agency to supply and dispense herbal medicine
- Qing Dynasty 1644-1911 CE
 - Chinese medicine spreads to Europe with the publications in France in 1671 of *Secrets de la Medicine des Chinois*.
- Republic of China 1911-1949 CE
 - TCM prohibited in 1929.
- People's Republic of China 1949 – present
 - Rebirth of TCM, Mao basically got the most renowned acupuncturists and herbalists of the time in one place and made them codify their knowledge into what is now modern TCM.
 - 1950s research into the use of acupuncture for anesthesia begins & ear acupuncture is expanded in China from knowledge received from Europe.
 - President Richard Nixon visits China in 1971 which initiates growth of TCM in US.



Appendix II

Online Resources

- Academy for Five Element Acupuncture: www.acupuncturist.edu
- Lonny Jarrett, L Ac: www.nourishingdestiny.com
- Thea Elijah, L Ac: www.perennialmedicine.com

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