

Chinese Medicine Revisited

A Western View of Chinese Medicine

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Peter Firebrace – graduated in Acupuncture from the International College of Oriental Medicine in England, then did further studies with the European School of Acupuncture in



Paris and the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Chengdu, China. He has also studied Chinese language and philosophy with the Ricci Institute in Paris. Past Principal of ICOM, he is a co-founder of Monkey Press which produces the “Chinese Medicine from the Classics” series, co-author of “A Guide to Acupuncture”, he has produced educational DVDs on the “Roots of Chinese Medicine” and “The Body Map of Chinese Medicine”, a book of related poems entitled “Cloud Falls Rap” and two albums of songs and music videos on Chinese medical and Daoist themes, “Sea Gong” and “Chinese Medicine Blues”.

Peter Firebrace currently practices in London and teaches internationally.

Phillip Haas – studied anthropology in particular exploring the traditional Mayan medicine. He later trained in Chinese Medicine at the Academy or Chinese Healing Arts in Switzerland



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Dr. Hamid Montakab – graduated from the Medical School of Paris and further did his residency in surgery and Gynaecology. He concurrently completed a degree program in Acupuncture at the AFA School in Paris, after



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Between 1980-85 Hamid practiced in America, obtaining the Oregon Acupuncture Board and the National Acupuncture

Board (NCCA). Later, he completed trainings in Chinese Herbal Medicine, Osteopathy and Visceral Osteopathy in Europe. Since 1985 he has been practicing and lecturing in Switzerland, France and Germany.

Dr. Montakab was commissioned by the Swiss National Science Foundation to conduct a scientific research study on Acupuncture and Insomnia. He has also done a smaller study on Acupuncture in Atopic Dermatitis at the Geneva University Hospital. Dr. Montakab was the co-founder of the Swiss Professional Organisation for TCM (SBO-TCM) and it's president from 1995 till 2000.

With his wife Solange, they founded the Academy of Chinese Healing Arts in Switzerland in 1986. With his background in Eastern and Western medical practices, and his exposure to the practice of Chinese Medicine in Europe, China and America, he brings his students the combined sum of his experiences in the field of Traditional as well as Classical Chinese Medicine.

Dr. Montakab is the author of "Treatment of Acute ankle sprains with Acupuncture" (1977 thesis); compilation of "The Diagnostic chart in TCM" (1978); "Pulse Diagnosis in Chinese Medicine (1980); Acupuncture & Insomnia (1990 study); co-author of *Stresskrankheiten* (Elsevier 2006). His two recent books: "Acupuncture for Insomnia; Sleep and dreams in Chinese medicine (Thieme, 2012) and "Acupuncture Point and Channel Energetics; Bridging the Gap" (Kiener 2014) have been received with great acclaim. He currently practices in Savièse- Switzerland and teaches internationally.

Solange Montakab-Pont – trained as a Yoga instructor and later studied Naturopathy, Auriculo-therapy, Acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine in Switzerland and in



France. She did further trainings in Osteopathy and Visceral Osteopathy in France. For decades, she practiced *Qi Gong* and meditation, in particular the Daoist and Buddhist approaches. Her particular interest in human psychology led her to the study of a variety of psychotherapeutic methods such as re-birthing, de-hypnotherapy, trans-personal psychotherapy. Inspired by these Eastern and Western methods, she has created her own personal brand of working with patients that she has named "Psycho-energetics". Solange Montakab was the co-founder of the Academy of Chinese Healing Arts and co-author of "Acupuncture for Insomnia". Currently she practices TCM in her private practice in Savièse and is a senior teacher at Chiway Academy of Asian medicine in Winterthur.

Bernhard Nessensohn – studied Natural Healing in Germany and later graduated in Acupuncture from the Academy of Chinese Healing Arts in Switzerland as well as a teacher's training in *Qi Gong* and Psychosomatics under master Li. He further completed courses in



5-Element and Stems and Branches Acupuncture in Holland with J. Duveen and P. van Kervel as well as *Taiji* with master Fei. He was a board member of the SBO-TCM, and currently is a senior teacher and lecturer at the Academy of Asian medicine in Winterthur. Bernhard Nessensohn has his own private practice in TCM in Heiden, as well as in Holland, where he also teaches *Qi Gong* and *Taiji*.

Christine Reist – graduated in Acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Medicine from the Academy of Chinese Healing Arts in Switzerland. Her studies in sinology, social sciences and



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Foreword

Chinese medicine peaked in popularity in the West in the past half a century, greatly due to its integrative approach, in which the totality of the person is taken into consideration, thus making it a complete holistic medicine. This contrasts with the Western allopathic medicine, which has been consistently dividing the body into parts and specialities and separating the human body from its mind and soul.

The rift between the physical and the subtle, very typical of the modern belief system, has occurred in spite of the fact that most ancient medicines around the world understood and even emphasised body, mind and soul unity as well as considering the human as an integral part of nature.

Today, Chinese medicine together with the Hindu Ayurvedic medicine, are probably the oldest surviving medical practices in the world. Although both medicines have been traced back to 5000 BC, and might have at times influenced each other, Chinese medicine spread not only to the far East, but also to Persia in medieval times and to Europe, in particular to France, as early as the 17th and 18th centuries. So much so that WHO statistics at the end of the 20th century showed that the various methods of Chinese medicine were the most utilised forms of medical practice around the world.

Over the centuries, Chinese Medicine developed a variety of healing modalities, the best known being acupuncture and herbalism, alongside massage, bone setting, diet as well as self-cultivation energy exercises.

The principles that underline Chinese medicine and the Chinese thought system are fundamentally the same. The overall worldview and understanding of cyclical and seasonal evolutions, natural life transformations and changes, as well as notions of health and disease, were reflected in all aspects of the ancient Chinese life style, and may be even found today in Chinese astrology (*Ba Zhi*), geomancy (*Feng Shui*), and a popular form of fortune telling (*Yi Jing*). The more scientific forms of *Ba Zhi*, *Feng Shui* and *Yi Jing* have been integrated into Chinese medical practices.

Philosophical and spiritual aspects of Chinese medicine find their roots in the teachings of three contemporaneous masters, Laozi, Confucius and Buddha. Deep understanding of the human being and what causes disease, led the early Chinese to look at inner causative factors, emotions and mental states. Today, any of the Chinese medical methods may be applied individually and even symptomatically without necessarily involving the mental-emotional aspects of a patient. But judging from the ancient texts and teachings, the superior doctors and healers considered the human being in his or her totality, integrating all three dimensions: physical, energetic and psychological. This may also explain the emphasis on self-transformational practices and especially the cultivation of the mind, often stressed in the older texts. Western modern theories in psychology and psychotherapy, have very definitely contributed to a better understanding of the Chinese an-

cient concepts, and they have the advantage of offering the Western therapist more adept tools in dealing with such problems.

Ancient Chinese medicine relied on a sophisticated diagnostic system, mostly developed to predict an imbalance in order to prevent disease. This preventative strategy in medicine was praised as being superior to actually treating a manifested disease.

In the past decades Chinese medicine has come to be known as “TCM” (Traditional Chinese Medicine), a term coined during the early years of Communist China, to distinguish it from Western allopathic medicine. Many of the ancient theories and concepts were purged out in an attempt to make Chinese Medicine more scientific and more “medicalised”. For example in earlier TCM text-books, all references to the psyche the spirit and the shamanic backgrounds of acupuncture were filtered out, reducing acupuncture to a mere reflex therapy. On the other hand, the European tradition, which had been influenced originally by Classical Chinese Medicine (CCM), allowed for a certain preservation of the tradition. Fortunately today in China the ancient roots of Chinese medicine are being re-considered. In the past 40 years many of the classical Chinese medical texts have been translated and commented, thus bridging the past with the present.

In the West, the Chinese medical concepts found a common ground of comprehension in France and in Germany in Hahnemann’s homeopathic theories. In the early 1900’s many homeopathic doctors in France took readily to acupuncture thus creating a European brand of acupuncture. Both, homeopa-

thy and acupuncture are considered “vibrational/energy” medicines and both approach the human being in a multi-dimensional manner. As such both have been strongly opposed and contested by main-line allopathic medicine as not having a material and scientific base. Furthermore the ancient and foreign language and concepts of Chinese medicine have made it difficult for the modern Western physician to accept and to incorporate it into the Western therapeutic arsenal. In spite of scores of scientific studies, demonstrating the effectiveness of acupuncture, the Western medical body remains sceptical (Appendix: pages 479 to 519).

Today we are at an exciting turning point, where nuclear physics and Western medical technologies are capable of demonstrating not only the veracity of the ancient Chinese concepts, but even the physical reality of acupuncture channels and points (Appendix: pages 479 to 519).

It is my strong belief that in the very near future, Chinese medicine will become part of integrated medical practices. The main debate should not revolve around the opposition of the Eastern and Western medical approaches, but it should rather explore the areas of efficiency of each method and select the most appropriate, least harmful and most economic therapeutic approach for the patient (page 417).

The application of superior Western technologies can only be enriched by the deeper Oriental vision and understanding of the human nature, thus combining intelligence with wisdom, beautifully represented in the Chinese parable of the union of Fire and Water.

Preface

This book is the result of 40 years practicing and teaching Chinese medicine. It is a reflection of my own struggles caused by my previous Western materialistic medical background trying to grasp the Chinese energetic concepts. In extension it also reflects the difficulties of Western students to grasp a totally different thought system. In the early 70's there were very few text-books available to the Western student, they were either technical manuals on acupuncture or herbs, or else translations of ancient philosophical or spiritual texts, almost incomprehensible to a 20th century Western mind. Teaching and answering questions on these at first alien concepts forced me to deepen my own understanding of these ideas. At times this was only made possible by integrating them into my own daily life.

I have to admit that although I have been submerged in Chinese medicine and the oriental concepts and studied and practiced many of its methods now for many years, I still feel like a beginner and I know that I will never stop learning. I am grateful to all my students for stimulating me to deepen my search and understanding, and I hope that, even in a minute way, I may contribute to help others along the same path.

The concepts presented in this text have three origins: the written ancient Chinese sources; the oral tradition as transmitted by Daoist Master J. Yuen and the French tradition.

This book addresses the Western practitioner and as such attempts to demystify and explain the oriental concepts in a lan-

guage more adapted to a Western way of thinking. It constitutes a very comprehensive text for the beginner and a solid introduction for the lay person. But it may also be an excellent reference manual for the practitioner as many theories and concepts, missing in various Eastern or Western publications, have been included and discussed.

The book is broken down into six sections:

- Part I: describes the oriental vision, the notion of *Qi*≈Energy and covers all the basic Chinese dialectical systems.
- Part II: explores the physical and energetic structure of the body, the organ systems, as well as the process of energy production and energy circulation.
- Part III: studies the concept of health and disease and explores the causes of disease
- Part IV: is an in-depth study of the art of diagnosis, including the classical “Four pillars” in diagnosis, but also describes the morpho-psychological assessments.
- Part V: is an overview of all the therapeutic methods used in Chinese medicine and presented by various practitioners in their respective fields of expertise: acupuncture, other auxiliary methods, herbs and diet, *Tuina* massage, *Qi Gong*, and the cultivation of the mind.
- Part VI: Explores some additional methods applied in Chinese medicine: such as *Yi Jing*; *Ba Zhi* and *Gan Zhi*≈Astrology, and *Feng Shui*≈Geomancy.

Additionally the Appendix includes:

- An extensive chapter covering the most recent scientific studies and discoveries in the domains of Chinese medicine, in particular acupuncture. This section could be of particular interest for various specialists and MD's.
- A brief historical overview of Chinese medicine in China and in Europe.
- A Glossary of Chinese medical terms used in this manual.

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How to read this book

More often than not, the translations used in the West for Chinese medical terms are misleading or confusing. In this text, attempts have been made to address this issue. The Chinese terms have been designated in Pinyin with their most common translation as well as the Chinese ideogram. To avoid further confusion, Chinese organ

names have been capitalized to distinguish them from common Western anatomical terms, for example “Liver” relates to the Chinese physiological concept, whereas “liver” is the Western anatomical organ. The same applies to the Chinese concepts of “Heat, Cold, Damp ...” as opposed to actual climatic heat, cold or dampness.

Introduction

Historical Background

The theoretical concepts of Chinese medicine are an integral part of the Chinese history and cannot be separated from the 5000 year old myths and legends that surround its origins. Historically speaking, no written document has been dated with certainty prior to the 12th century BC. It can be said that Chinese medicine, as we know it today, has three origins: the historical records partly lost in the mists of legend, the written tradition, and the oral transmission.

On one hand there are the legends of the three Emperors: Fu Xi, circa 2900 BC, inventor of the “Trigrams” and rudimentary writing, instigator of the rites of marriage. Followed by Shen Nong, estimated around 2800 BC, named the “Divine labourer”, who instructed on the use of the plough and the hoe in agriculture, and to who is attributed the knowledge about plants and herbal medicine.

The third Emperor is Huang Di, estimated around the 26th century BC, the organiser of the state and the government, who refined writing and would be the author of the oldest medical classic the *Nei Jing Su Wen* (Fig. 01).

On the other hand there are the classical texts, the oldest being the *Huang Di Nei Jing* known as the Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Internal Medicine. Historians are still debating about the period of composition of the *Nei Jing* that could be anytime between 1000 and 200 BC. The legend has it that the *Nei Jing* consisted of four books: the *Su Wen*≈Simple Questions on general

concepts of Chinese Medicine, and the *Ling Shu*≈Spiritual Axis, which describes the primary and secondary channels of Acupuncture. Two other books have been lost: the *Tai Shu* and the *Ming Tang*. The *Nei Jing* together with the third century BC *Nan Jing* and the first century AD *Shang Han Lun*, constitute the backbone of Chinese medical literature and thought.

Between the two, the oral transmission, passed from master to disciple, that has reached the present times, and is often disputed by sinologists as not having a written proof.

To complicate matters further, as Chinese medicine evolved, and as new theories and concepts were added, out of deference for the ancients, the older concepts were not removed. As a result the present time students and practitioners find themselves struggling with concepts that overlap, differ or sometimes even seem to contradict one another.

The Oriental vision – West versus East

When the Western scientific medicine encountered the ancient Chinese healing tradition, it had no choice but to term it “empirical”, going even to the extend of attributing the discovery of acupuncture and the complex channel pathways to pure chance.

I believe that between the mystical and mythical origins attributed to god-like personalities and the accidental discovery of an extremely complex system, there could be another possible explanation.

What could be the reason that would explain that the Chinese discovered and de-



Fig. 01 The three mythical emperors: Huang Di (left), Fuxi (centre), Shen Nong (right).

- veloped numerous technologies centuries before the West, as an example:
- Agricultural technologies over 2000 years before the same were applied in the West,
- The processing of iron steel, the printing press, and the compass almost 1400 years before the West,
- Discovery of the blood circulation system, 1800 years before Harvey,

- The various concepts about the human physiology and the interactions between the psyche and the soma, and the deep understanding about the origins of disease, prognosis and treatment,
- Emphasis on prevention, with attempts at vaccination as early as the second century,
- And most relevantly, the discovery of the binary language 27 centuries before the West invented the computer language.

I truly do not believe that the above discoveries are due to supra-human qualities but rather a different way of looking at the world we live in, a totally different conception of reality.

The Oxford Dictionary defines reality as “the state of things as they actually exist.” In its largest sense, this includes everything that is, whether or not it is observable or comprehensible. On a much broader and more subjective level, private experiences and the personal interpretation of events shape reality as seen by one individual. This is called phenomenological reality.

Historically in the West, reality was based on facts. A fact is an observed phenomenon in the natural world that is perceived as an elemental principle. It is rarely one that can be subject to personal interpretation. And yet facts such as “the earth is flat” or that “the sun is at the centre of the universe”, for centuries dominated man’s perceptions and definitions of what is real. Today, the most pertinent of these facts could be said to be the “solid” nature of matter. Even though today we know that the smallest constituent of matter, the atom, is made of primarily empty space or void, our age-old condi-

tioning does not allow us to perceive it other than solid. Physicists have calculated that if the empty space in the biggest building in the world would be removed from it, the remaining matter would not be larger than a nut, weighing billions of tons!

The oriental and specifically the Chinese age old vision of the human being and the world, is based on a uniting and globalizing principle, with an analogical approach to phenomena, whereas the Western approach is based on separating and analyzing the phenomena situated on a same plane. The oriental approach is therefore much more intellectual and intuitive in nature, where symbols take an important place. Even the Chinese language and writing, the “ideograms”, demonstrate this point. On the opposite the Western vision is much more scientific and technological, relying more on the visible rather than the occult.

It is often deeper to know why something is true rather than to have a proof that it is true.

A. Zee

In quantum physics, Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle led the nuclear physicist Amit Goswami to assume that no reality exists independently of our own consciousness as observer. Whether this is true or not, this line of thinking brings us back to the ancient philosophical systems such as Buddhism or Daoism, which state that life, as we conceive it, is but an illusion. This illusion is created by the mind, which perceives the natural phenomena and interprets them according to the socio-cultural conditioning. This social framework gives a semblance of coherence and maintains

mental sanity, but in exchange prevents one from conceiving the “impossible”.

In the West, great breakthroughs in science could only occur when an individual managed to break away from the established frame-works of thinking, such as with Galileo, Newton or Einstein.

Therefore to understand Chinese medicine and the ancient Chinese vision, it is imperative to adopt a global and analogical approach, where symbols take on a crucial importance, and where numbers become symbols.

*When the finger points to the moon,
look at the moon not at the finger*

Zen saying

Numbers have the great advantage of having a universal symbolism that goes beyond the barriers of culture and language, and as Pythagores would put it:

*Evolution is the law of life
Numbers are the law of the universe,
Unity is the law of god.*

I Principles of Chinese Medical Thought

1.1 Microcosm-Macrocosm

In the Chinese vision, the human is a reflection of the universe. The Chinese refer to the human being as *Ren* 人 “Man or Human”.

The laws which govern the universe “macrocosm”, also govern the human “microcosm”, thus to understand humanity we can study the world that surrounds us.

...as above, so below

Hermes Trisgemenis

Life, as we experience it, is the result of the interaction of two opposite forces, symbolised by “Heaven and Earth” within a “Time” and “Space” framework.

The universe is a dynamic system within which all phenomena are inter-dependent.

This dynamic system, the macrocosm, is in constant change, but there is a self-regulating mechanism, which maintains equilibrium and harmony.

The human in the world is like a microcosm within a macrocosm. The humans are

submitted to the same constant external changes, and their self-regulating mechanisms, by constant adaptation, spontaneously maintaining a state of balance and health or “ease”, the so-called “homeostasis”.

A loss of this adaptation will cause “dis-balance” and “dis-ease”.

We cannot study humans and their states of Health and Disease, without considering the world that surrounds them. This then, is the basis of “holistic medicine”.

The variations of the macrocosm, are mainly experienced as the cycles of day and night, the seasons and the climates. In humans these variations are described as the changes in their vital activities or vital substances, called the movements of “Qi” (energy).

Know thyself and you will know the universe and the Gods.

Socrates

1.2 The Substance of the Universe: Energy “Qi” (气/氣)

The universe and its multitude of manifestations are expressions of variations and movements of a vital substance called “Qi”.

Between Heaven and Earth, there is Qi and the Law.

All phenomena in the universe, as well as all the states in human beings are expressions of this vital substance “Qi”, in various

degrees of movement and of concentration.

A concentration-densification of Qi, produces the material state, its dispersion-rarefaction produces the immaterial, the subtle or invisible state. A clear example may be observed in the various states of water, which is fluid in its normal state, becomes ice when concentrated and made

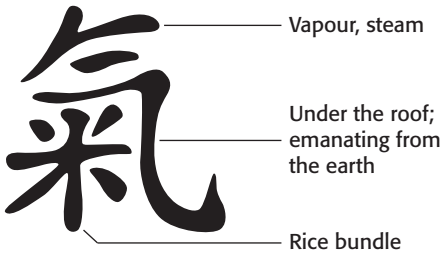


Figure 1.1 The ideogram of *Qi* represents the steam that rises when rice is cooked. Evoking the idea of transformation of visible matter into invisible vapour under the influence of fire.

dense, or vapour when it is dispersed and rarefied (Fig. 1.2).

Qi has been translated as vital force, energy, material force, vapour, emanation, fluid, life spirit, ether, etc.

In Chinese understanding, life is a materialisation of *Qi* and death is a dispersion or de-materialisation of *Qi*.

Humans are subject to the interaction of two opposite and complementary forces, represented by the concept of “Heaven and Earth”.

Here “Heaven” symbolises all, more subtle energies, and “Earth” represents all that is material.

We always study humans in this three dimensional system:

- the subtle: the mind, the spirit,
- the fluid: the emotions, the energies,
- the material: the body.

These are the states of “*Qi*”, in constant change, manifesting differently (Fig. 1.3).

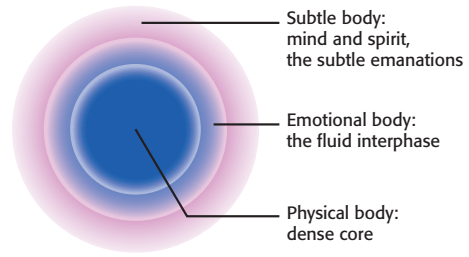


Figure 1.3 The three dimensions of the body.

Matter is condensed *Qi*, spirit is non-substantial *Qi*, in between we have the flowing *Qi* that we refer to simply as *Qi* ≈ Energy. The body itself is made of different degrees of density: bones, muscles, fluids and even electro-magnetic fields.

On the one side there is the body, which is the condensed aspect of *Qi* and on the other side there is the spirit that we can refer to as the mind or mental activities, resulting from neuro-hormonal impulses, hence much less condensed. Between the two extremes there are the emotions which are much more subtle than the body, yet less subtle than the spirit-mind.

In Chinese medicine, the body, the emotions and the mind are aspects and manifestations of the same *Qi*, and cannot be considered separately.

Qi changes its form, and is given a different name, but ultimately all is a manifestation of the same “substance”, the same *Qi*.

The variations of *Qi* follow certain laws. These laws are given as basic principles, in the form of dialectical systems:

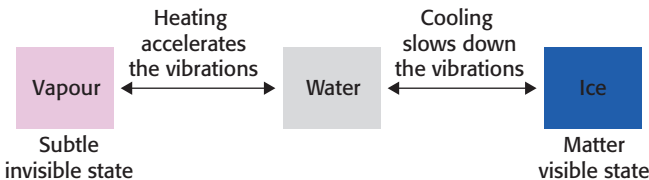


Figure 1.2 The three states of water, solid-liquid-vapour, represent the states of *Qi*.

- The “*Yin-Yang*” system studies the interaction of the subtle and the material.
- The “Heaven-Human-Earth” system, considers 3 states in all that exists.
- The “4 phases”, are explaining the basic changes in the variation of *Qi*.
- The “5 movements”, describe the 5 dynamic aspects of *Qi* in the universe and in the human being.
- The “6 energies”, state all the possible variations of *Qi*: the 3 intensities of each *Yin* or *Yang* principle.

It is interesting to note that in modern nuclear physics, Einstein’s theories, relating matter to energy, had already demonstrated that the state of matter changes with the speed of vibration. For decades, physicists have been attempting to reconcile quantum mechanics and general relativity and have proposed the “String theory”, a mathematical model that may describes all fundamental forces and forms of matter, a concept that the ancient Chinese termed as “*Qi*”.

2.1 1 (Yi —) Creation, “The human in the image of the Dao”

To comprehend the Chinese thought and the Daoist vision, it is essential to understand the symbolic meaning of the various dialectical systems.

The wisdom of the ancients has been passed down to us in a series of symbols.

In fact, numbers, before being used for counting and arithmetic, were universal symbols found in all ancient philosophical systems, and interestingly have the same metaphorical representations.

The Void

The concept of the Void is of capital importance in oriental and in particular in the Chinese, Daoistic principles (► chap. 22.2). It is considered the origin and the term of all form of creation, the space where *Qi* changes form and mutates.

*The fullness is the appearance of a form,
It is the void of the form that gives its
utility.*

Lao Zi

The void is not the absence of something, but instead it is where the creative forces meet, it is the void at the centre that gives the wheel its utility (Fig. 2.1). The silent space between the notes that makes a musical harmony and the empty space between the letters that constitutes the word.

As was mentioned before, in nuclear physics, it is the empty space between the atomic particles that gives the form to matter, and the space between the molecules, that defines the state of matter as solid, liquid or gas.

Creation, Tai Ji, Dao

The Primordial Chaos ≈ *Wu Ji* 無極, is the state before creation, formless, boundless and infinite; it is assimilated with the concept of Void.

The appearance of a centre puts order into the disorder. Different terms refer to this centre: *Zhong Ji* ≈ Central Ridge 中極, or polar star is the organising centre, also referred to as *Tai Ji* ≈ Supreme Ridge or Great Pole 太極.

Hence the symbolism of number “one” as being the origin of creation as it contains all other numbers, and that all numbers are mere expressions of one.

This order separates above from below, light from dark, heaven from earth, or *Yang* from *Yin*.

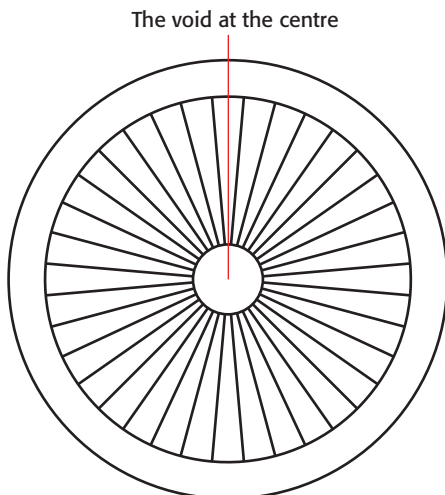


Figure 2.1 The void at the centre of the wheel

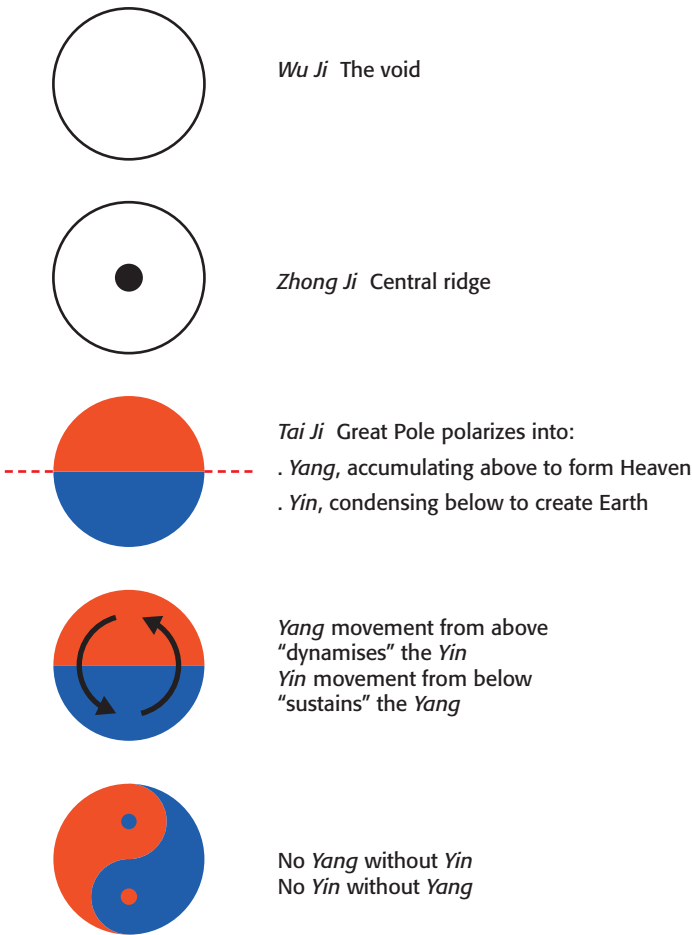


Figure 2.2 Stages of creation.

*Heaven was created by an accumulation of Yang, the element of light,
 Earth was created by an accumulation of Yin, the element of darkness.*

Su Wen, chap.5

The combined movements of *Yin* and *Yang* define the basic rhythms of life, in the image of a spiral movement with the two opposite, centrifugal and centripetal movements. In the Chinese concept, life and all transformations evolve in a spiral form. This model, also present in the West, is quite apparent in

nature, having inspired the 300 BC Euclidean concept of the "Golden mean, or ratio" also called the "Divine proportion" (Fig. 2.3–2.4). It is therefore not surprising that the basic constituent of living organisms, the DNA, has a spiral structure.

The passage or way from the original chaos to the manifested order is known as *Dao* 道 (or *Tao*)≈Path (Fig. 2.5). Thus it is said that the *Dao* has no definition, the *Dao* that is defined is not the *Dao*. *Dao* is pure potentiality and as Lao Zi points out in *Dao De Jing* (or *Taoteking*) (chap. 42);

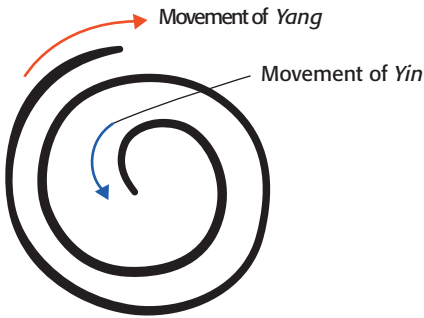


Figure 2.3 The Spiral of Life; *Yang* expands from the centre, *Yin* condenses towards the centre.

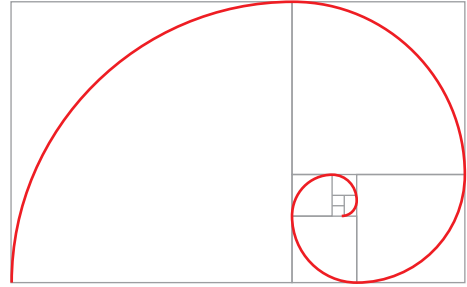


Figure 2.4 The Golden mean or Golden Ratio ($\Phi = 1.618...$) applied to the spiral (Fibonacci spiral).

Dao generates the One. One gives birth to Two.

Two gives birth to Three.

Three gives birth to all things

The Dao that can be told is not the eternal Dao.

The name that can be named is not the eternal name.

Lao Zi, Dao De Jing

Humans as part of creation are subject to an order and cannot comprehend the notion of chaos. Humans as manifested beings are under the law of duality and can only have a taste of unity, but not reside in it.

With the body, Unity cannot be realised;

but without the body, the Dao may not be experienced.

Daoism is not a religion, rather a thought system. According to this philosophical concept our origin is a mystery that we may ponder over but not fully comprehend as long as we are in this limited physical body.

The revelation that all things previously believed to be different are actually one, is an insight found in various mystical traditions such as Tantric Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, Zen and Sufism, amongst others.

A very similar concept existed in the West, attributed to Aristotle, according to whom the Chaos or Prima Materia is separated into an active principle, the soul, and a passive principle, the body. The two opposites need to reunite to form the magical child in an alchemical ritual. The creation of the cosmos and the personified “Self”, was said to require the intervention of a demiurge. This notion was contested by the church and replaced by the notion of an omnipotent God.

The theories about creation are equally found in the Big Bang cosmological model explaining the development of the universe.



Figure 2.5 Dao, the Path as indicated by the Principle.

2.2 2 (Er 二) Duality: Yin and Yang

The *Yin-Yang* theory is a symbolic and dialectical system signifying that nature and existence are dual. This concept constitutes the core of not only Chinese medicine, but also the Chinese culture and in general the oriental vision. It represents probably the most important difference between the oriental and Western way of understanding the world. In the West, the deductive logic of the early Greek philosophers, such as Plato and especially his student Aristotle, lead to opposing contrary phenomena. This analytical and therefore reductive way of thinking has dominated the Western mind ever since. The basic premise in the Chinese concept of the world, is that opposites are complementary, that one could not exist without the other. In the Daoist vision, two is not the double of one but rather a distinction within the one. In other words each aspect of duality *Yin-Yang*, not only contains the opposite but is also the originator of the opposite (see below).

Observing nature, and the cyclic changes of day and night, obviously led the early

thinkers to understand life and all phenomena as a permanent flow or movement between two opposite poles.

This explains the ideograms representing *Yin* and *Yang* in relation to darkness and light (Fig. 2.6).

Tai Ji≈Supreme Ridge polarises the primordial chaos into *Yang*, the subtle and volatile, and *Yin*, the more dense and heavy.

Therefore, life is made of a dense “material” and a subtle “immaterial” energetic part.

Existence is made of two opposite, but complementary principles.

The Laws of Yin and Yang

The ancient and well-known symbol of *Tai Ji* representing a circle made up of two interwoven spirals is actually symbolising the four basic laws of *Yin* and *Yang*. This plain image, with its harmonious beauty and elegant simplicity, conveys the most fundamental laws that govern human beings and the universe, and that constitute the very

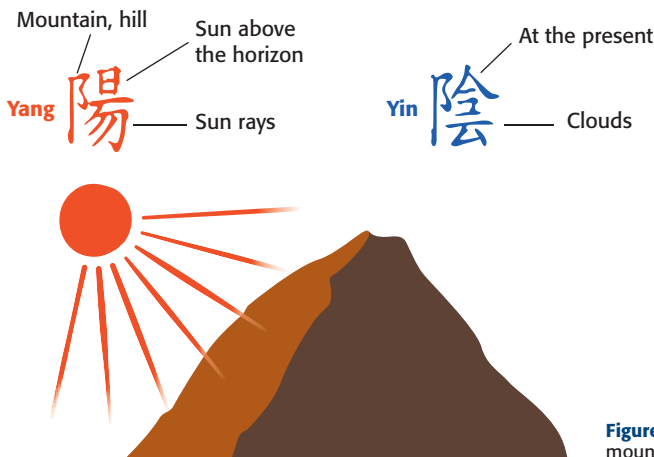


Figure 2.6 *Yang*, the sunny side of the mountain; *Yin*, the shady side.

In general the human being is more *Yang* during the day and more *Yin* at night. The equilibrium of *Yin* and *Yang*, therefore, is not static but dynamic in “space” and in “time”.

2

The 8 Diagnostic Principles

This is the most important diagnostic tool in Chinese medicine and is applicable in every situation.

Every symptom has to be analysed separately according to these 8 principles. This analysis is done by the classical Chinese diagnosis (observing, listening, smelling and touching), although not every symptom might have all of the characteristics:

- **Yin-Yang:** defines the sum total of the manifestation, and as seen above, it narrows down the investigation. The clinical manifestation, no matter how complex, can always be classified as *Yin* or *Yang*. Pathological phenomena are classified as *Yin* when there is more *Yin* than *Yang*, as is the case when there is coldness, wetness, softness, slowness, quietness, or mass. Symptoms are classified *Yang*, when *Yang* is stronger than *Yin*, manifesting with heat, redness, dryness, hardness, excitement, rapidity and expansion.
- **Biao-Li** (Surface/ Interior): situates the location of the disease, its origin, its evolution and the prognosis. The *Biao-Li* concept is difficult to translate as it refers not quite to surface and depth which are expressed by the *Wai* and *Nei* concepts, but rather to the outer layer and its lining. As for a coat that has two functions: the outer layer functions mainly as windbreaker and water repellent, whereas the inner lining is mainly

for warmth. Similarly the *Biao* concept is referring to the outer energetic structures rich in *Wei Qi*, namely the *Pi Bou*≈Skin zones, and the *Jing Jin*≈Sinew channels. Here *Wei Qi*≈Defensive energy concentrates to protect against external climatic aggressions, mainly the Wind and the Cold. The *Jing*≈Primary channels and the blood vessels, which carry the *Ying*≈Nourishing energy to support the *Wei Qi*, constitute the lining “*Li*” with the exception of the *Zu Tai Yang* (Bladder) channel, which also belongs to the *Biao*. A “*Biao*” pathology, is considered acute, caused by external causes, and would be easy to treat. A pathology that has progressed to the “*Li*”, could then progress to the inside “*Nei*” and affect the organs, become chronic and potentially more severe.

- **Hot-Cold:** defines mainly the nature of the disease and its clinical manifestation such as heat, acceleration, redness, dryness etc.. It is also often used to confirm the *Yin-Yang* categorization: a *Yin* condition gets better with heat and worse with cold; a *Yang* symptom gets better with cold and worse with heat.
- **Excess-Deficiency** (*Shi-Xu*≈Repletion-vacuity): is a very important concept in diagnosis. On the one hand evaluating the state of a *Yin* or *Yang* condition, that is, whether a *Yang* state is due to *Yang* repletion or to *Yin* vacuity, or if a *Yin* state is due to *Yin* repletion or rather *Yang* vacuity. This assessment is of course of capital importance as it leads to a totally different therapeutic approach, to supplement (tonify) a vacuity or to reduce (disperse) repletion. On the other hand the *Shi*≈Excess and *Xu*≈De-

ficient notion also explores the presence of an external pathogenic factor (excess/ repletion) and the weakness of the True energy (deficiency/ vacuity). Normally the term “Excess” should only refer to an excess of one of the “6 evils”: Wind, Cold, Heat, Fire, Dampness and Dryness, although in most literature this term is equally used for excessive conditions arising from internal causes, such as stagnations or emotions. A balanced system does not produce excessive energy, so in conditions of apparent excess such as in hyperactivity, either the controlling system is not functioning (deficiency), or the energy is not flowing freely and is accumulating in one area (stagnation). In other words “Stagnation” is the internal equivalent of “Excess”.

Applying the 8 Principles to a symptom such as pain is very interesting, as a lot of information may be gathered directly; for example a *Yang* type headache gets worse with heat or bright light; a deficiency/vacuity pain gets better with pressure, whereas an excess type pain gets worse with pressure; a stagnation gets better with movement or heat and worse with rest or cold.

In certain pathological conditions such as in organic diseases, mechanical (osteopathic) dysfunctions, tumours, scar tissues or certain neurological diseases, the symptom may not give a coherent pattern according to the 8 diagnostic principles, for example a pain that gets worse with both heat and cold, or both with rest and activity.

2.3 3 (San 三) Trilogy: Heaven – Human – Earth

According to this dialectical system, “Heaven” represents the *Yang* energies, “Earth” represents the *Yin*; and “Human” symbolises all that is created, or in other words the interaction between *Yin* and *Yang* and all of the possible combinations.

*The pure and lucid element of light represents Heaven,
the turbid element of darkness represents Earth.*

Su Wen, chap.5

Everything in creation is covered by Heaven and supported by Earth.

Su Wen, chap.6

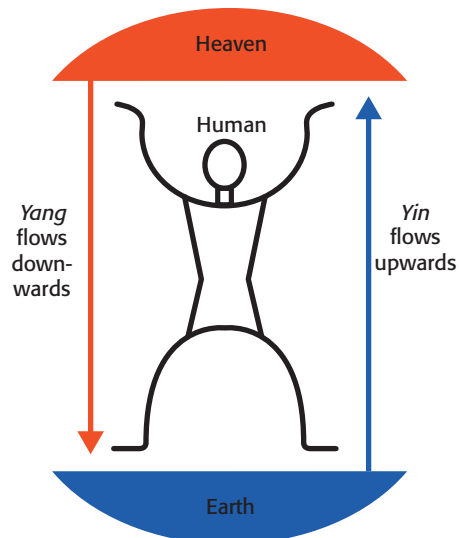


Figure 2.9 Trilogy: Heaven – Human – Earth.

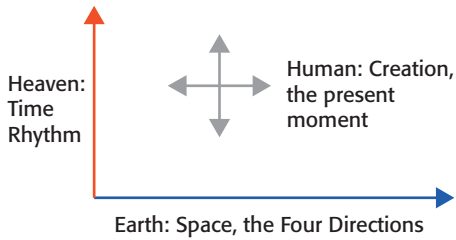


Figure 2.10 Heaven – Human – Earth. Time – Space – Creation.

Heaven and Earth are the first *Yin* and *Yang* couple, they constitute the initial state of existence, setting forth the minimum conditions for existence defined by a “moment” in time and space (Fig. 2.10).

Heaven represents time, the basic rhythm of life: day-night, seasons, etc.

Earth represents the space where time could be perceived: the four directions.

Heaven is symbolised by a circle, whereas Earth is oriented in relation to a centre in four directions, hence the symbol of the square (Fig. 2.11).

This analogy is to be found in all aspects of the Chinese vision and daily life, even symbolised in the form of the ancient Chinese coins with a square hole in the middle.

Anatomically the head, which is round, represents the Heaven, and the body with its square form, represents the Earth.

Heaven, the ultimate Yang principle, initiates life.

Earth, as the Yin principle receives and nourishes life.

The human being, symbolising manifested life, is defined by the interaction of time and space, of Heaven and Earth.

- *Tian* (天): Heaven
- *Ren* (人): Human
- *Di* (地): Earth

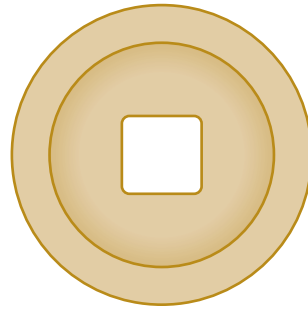


Figure 2.11 Chinese coin: Heaven – Earth.

Human, together with Heaven and Earth represents a trinity or a trilogy called the three *Cai* 才, translated as the “Active agents of the universe”.

Where Duality represents the two poles or principles, three is the number representing actual creation or existence, as we perceive it. This concept of trilogy can be found in many Eastern or Western traditions at the origin of creation. In the Hindu tradition, Brahma, the God of creation has two other aspects, Vishnu and Shiva. In the Egyptian mythology Atum, the creator became three by giving birth to Shu and Tefnut, to originate life. The Hebrew Qabalah places Kether at the origin materialising as Chokmah, the male principle, and Binah, the female principle. In the middle-eastern religious metaphors, the creation of humanity started with Adam and Eve having tasted the forbidden fruit, the third element and their consequent expulsion from the Garden of Eden. And again in Christianity, the concept of trinity, at the origin, could be a reference to the same numerical symbolism.

In Daoism, this point is very clearly underlined:

The Dao gives birth to “One”. “One” gives birth to “Two”.

2.4 4 (Si 四,): The Four Phases 四時 and the Five Elements (4 + 1)

Four is a further important figure relating to a division of each principle of *Yin* and *Yang*, the four territories or directions and the four seasons. Four is therefore symbolic of form, of what is material, hence the Earth (► Fig. 2.12)

Life is movement, and every movement has four strong moments or phases, the bi-phasic movements or oscillations when related to *Yin* and *Yang*, would represent a growing phase of *Yang*, a maximum expansion of *Yang*, a growing phase of *Yin* and a

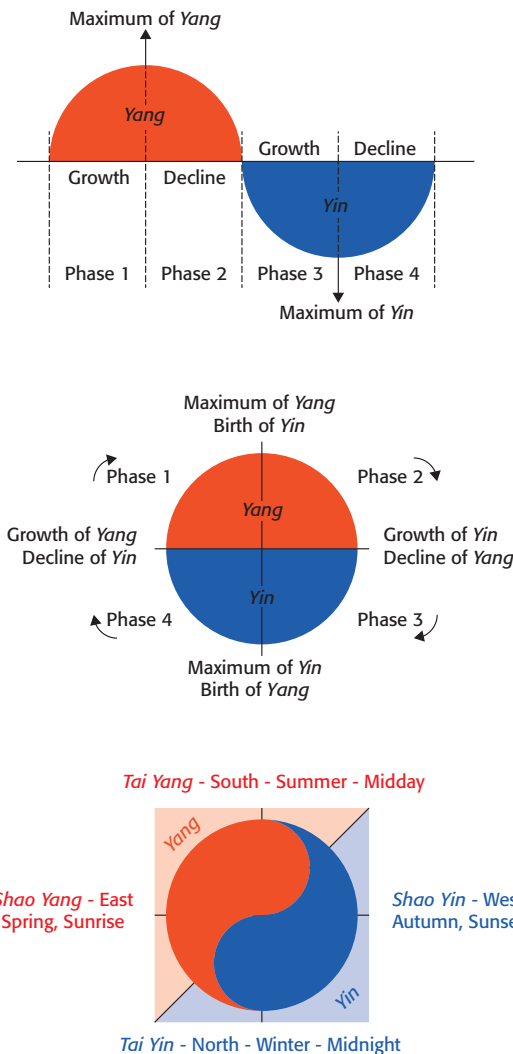


Figure 2.12 Four Phases, four Directions: *Tai Yang*/ South, *Shao Yin*/ West, *Tai Yin*/ North, *Shao Yang*/ East.

maximum concentration of *Yin*. The four phases are clearly represented in the *Tai Ji* model.

These four strong moments *Si Shi* 四時 are:

- In the day/night cycle: sunrise, midday, sunset and midnight.
- In the cycle of the year they are: spring, summer, fall and winter.
- In the evolution of life they are: birth, maturity, old age and death.

These four “moments” are represented by the first polarization of *Yin* and *Yang* in to a *Shao*≈Lesser and *Tai*≈Supreme *Yin* and a *Shao*≈Lesser and *Tai*≈Supreme *Yang*.

Four is also the number representing the Earth’s four directions in relation to a cen-

tre. Historically, mythical animals, protectors of the four orients, represented the four directions (► Fig. 2.13):

- The *Qing Long*≈Green Dragon 青龙; symbol of the *Dong*≈East 东 and of benevolence
- The *Zhu Qiao*≈Red Bird 朱雀 or Phoenix, symbol of the *Nan*≈South 南 and of radiance and joy of life
- The *Bai Hu*≈White Tiger 白虎, symbol of the *Xi*≈West 西 and of virtue
- The *Xuan Wu*≈Dark warrior 玄武 or *Gui Xian*≈Black Turtle, symbol of the *Bei*≈North 北 and of wisdom

In the Chinese tradition, the “wise man”, stands in the centre facing the South, North is behind him, East and the rising sun on



Figure 2.13 Ancient mirror with the four mythical creatures.

his left and West and the setting sun on his right. This “correct” positioning of the human body, explains the fact that the left side of the body is considered *Yang* and the right side is *Yin*. In *Feng Shui*≈Wind and Water (Chinese Geomancy), consideration of these positions is of primary importance.

The addition of a centre to these four directions produces the five fixed positions in space and time, referred to as the Five Elements (► Fig. 2.14). Five is considered to be

the crossing between Heaven and Earth. In this manner all *Yang* and *Yin* phenomena gather around a centre, called the “organising centre”. This centre is the organiser of life and of the human body.

- South, symbolised by the Fire element, represents expansion
- North, symbolised by the Water element, represents internalisation
- East, represented by the Wood element and evokes exteriorisation
- West, symbolised by the Metal element, represents interiorisation
- The Earth element is placed in the centre, symbol of transformation

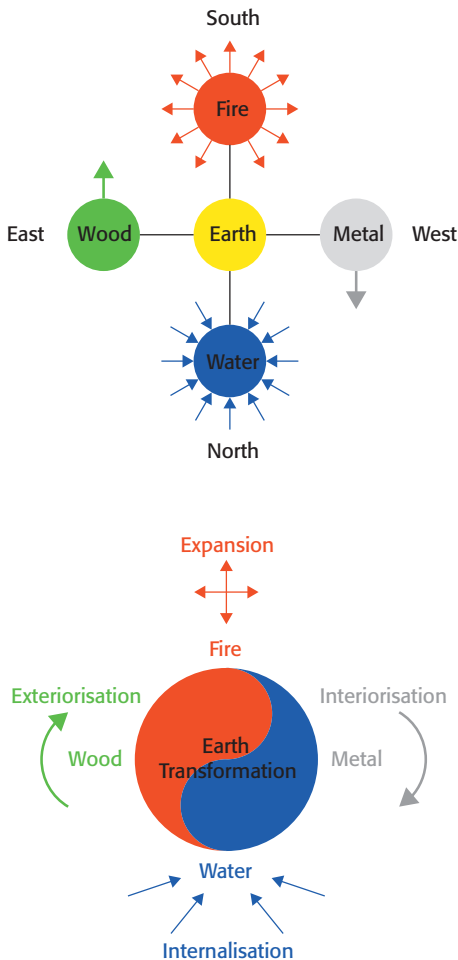


Figure 2.14 The Five Elements, the directions, and their respective movements.

In Chinese thought, this model represents the structure of the universe and of all things. That means that any cycle, be it day and night, the seasons or life cycles, or other phenomena in the universe contain these four phases, hence the term of “Internal Structure” given to this model of the Five elements.

The analogy is found in the ideogram the Chinese have used to represent their country China, or *Zhong Guo*≈Central Empire: 中國.

The empire is structured in the model of the universe. The individual is also structured in the same way. Human-microcosm is in the image of the universe-macrocosm.

This model is further used to represent the order of creation, starting with Water as base, then Fire, followed by Wood and Metal. The Earth is placed in the centre. (► Fig. 2.15).

Here the importance of the Water element as base and source of life is underlined. This organisation represents the cre-

ration of the body from the spirit, through which the body returns to the earth and the spirit is free for a new re-birth. There is no specific season for the Earth phase, but it is customary to associate the 18 intermediary days between two seasons to the Earth element. In the West, some authors have proposed a fifth season, calling it the Indian summer to complete the Five elements. Personally I do not adhere to this idea.

A simple image that may help visualise these four types of energy would be the watering hose (► Fig. 2.17):

- Water comes out of the nozzle with force and an outward momentum, this is the Wood Phase

- Water then spreads out and up, the Fire Phase
- The water reaches a maximum height and width and starts to fall back down, represented by the Metal
- To finally gather on and seep in to the ground, symbolized by the Water phase.

In this “Cosmogenic” model each phase is balanced by another:

- The out going energies of Wood are countered by the inward gathering of Metal
- The expansive and centrifugal movement of Fire is limited by the condensing centripetal movement of Water.
- The Earth phase allows the transformation between each movement.

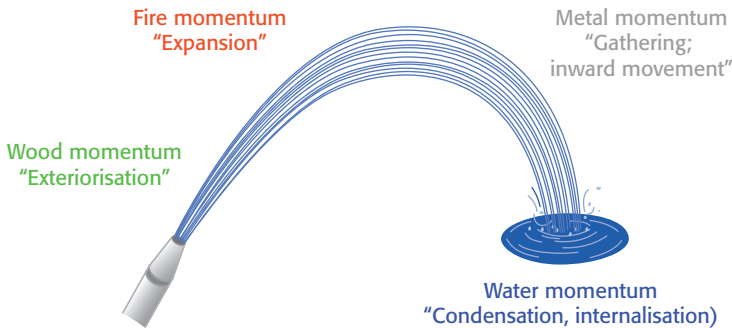


Figure 2.17 The four momentums of water reflecting the Four Phases.

2.5 5 (Wu 五) The Five Moving Forces 五行 (3 + 2)

Wu Xing ≈ Five movements has also been translated as the five moving forces five agents, or five phases, or more commonly as the five elements.

This dialectical model represents five categories of phenomena in the world and

within the human being. The phenomena in each category have in common certain structural, energetic or relational characteristics. As the human being is in the image of the universe, the internal physiological and organic functions, have energetic anal-

ogies with the external phenomena, hence the “Correspondence system”, a term which is often attributed to this model.

The *Wu Xing*≈Five Moving forces, is the most original and widely utilised system in the Chinese tradition. Already described in the *Nei Jing*, the concept was initially used in astrology and predictions and was not applied to medicine until the 11th century AD.

The *Wu Xing* categorisation is based upon five types of mobile force, in permanent interaction with one another to ensure equilibrium in nature and in mankind. The *Wu Xing*≈Five movements should not be considered individually but as a whole with their constant interactions and relations.

Sheng≈Creation cycle

The Chinese describe these five movements in an order representing the creation *Sheng* cycle:

- Wood≈*Mu* 木
- Fire≈*Huo* 火
- Earth≈*Tu* 土 (a different concept from Earth≈*Di* 地 as in the pair Heaven and Earth, *Tu* represents the soil when *Di* is more the earth planet itself)
- Metal≈*Jin* 金
- Water≈*Shui* 水

This cycle is represented on a circle, a perpetual and reproductive cycle. It is said that each element is producing, engendering or nourishing the following element. Hence each element acts as the “mother” of the following element that represents the son. This relationship is called the mother-son relationship (Fig. 2.18):

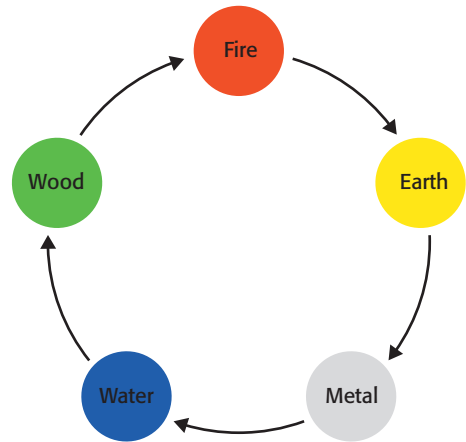


Figure 2.18 *Sheng*≈Creation/nourishment cycle.

- Wood nourishes or engenders the Fire, Wood is the mother of Fire, Fire is the son of Wood
- Fire in turn engenders Earth, Fire is the mother of Earth, and Earth is the son of Fire.

In medicine, this relationship is used when supplementing an element or an organ. For example the Metal/ Lung is supported to supplement the Water/ Kidney.

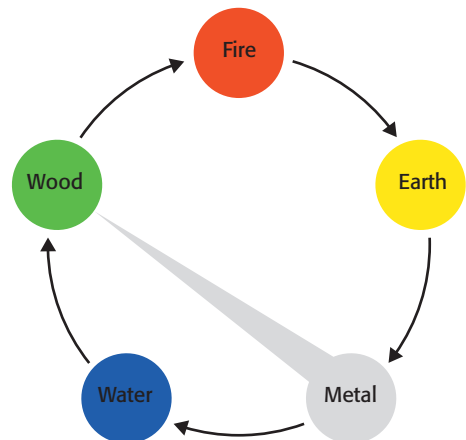


Figure 2.19 *Ke*≈Controlling cycle.

Table 2.2 The Five Phase correspondence system

Phase	Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
Correspondence to the Four phases					
Evolution	Birth	Growth	Transition	Decline	Death
Direction	East	South	Centre	West	North
Season	Spring	Summer	Change of season	Autumn	Winter
Day and night	Sunrise	Midday	–	Sunset	Midnight
Correspondence to the Five Movements					
Movement	Mobilization	Expansion	Transformation	Condensation	Coherence
Climate	Wind	Heat	Dampness	Dryness	Cold
Colour	Green	Red	Yellow	White	Black
Smell	Rancid	Burnt	Fragrant	Acrid	Rotten
Taste	Sour	Bitter	Sweet	Spicy	Salty
Zang: Yang organ	Liver	Heart	Spleen	Lung	Kidney
Fu: Yin organ	Gallbladder	Small Intestine	Stomach	Large Intestine	Bladder
Sensory system	Sight	Speech	Taste	Smell	Hearing
Opening	Genitals	Mouth/ eye	Mouth	Nose	Urethra
Body layer and function	Tendons, mobility	Vessels, pulse	Flesh, muscle mass	Skin, body hair	Bones, marrow
Body part	Neck, shoulder, breast, genitals	Pulse, blood vessels	Abdomen, digestion	Mucous membranes, skin	Lumbar, knees, ankles
Manifesting	Nails	Complexion	Lips	Body hair	Hair
Voice	Shouting	Laughing	Singing	Moaning	Groaning
Fluid	Tears	Sweat	Saliva	Mucous	Urine
Quality	Friendliness, flexibility	Happiness, joy, liveliness, compassion	Sympathy, caring, nourishing	Being in touch; empathy	Courage, character, will power
Emotion	Anger, rage, reactivity	Excitement, pleasure	Worry, obsession	Sadness, grief	Fear
Mental function	Imagination, Ideas, dreams	Intelligence, Coherence, memory	Logic, analysis, synthesis, memory, ideas	Precision, introspection	Will, coherence, memory
Spiritual	Intuition	Enlightenment	Contemplation	Witnessing	Wisdom
Spirit	<i>Hun</i>	<i>Shen</i>	<i>Yi</i>	<i>Po</i>	<i>Zhi</i>
Musical note	<i>Shu or Jiao</i>	<i>Zhi</i>	<i>Gong</i>	<i>Shang</i>	<i>Yu</i>
Planet	Jupiter	Mars	Saturn	Venus	Mercury
Cereal	Wheat, barley	Buckwheat, red millet	Yellow millet, sticky rice	Rice, oats	Soya, Beans
Vegetable	Green peas	Turnip	Potato, pumpkin	Onion, radish	Leeks
Animal	Chicken	Lamb	Beef	Horse	Pork
Fruit	Prunes	Apricot	Melon	Peach	Dates

II Physical and Energetic Structure of the Body

The ancient Chinese, similarly to most oriental and Western civilizations, had a respect for the body and would not indulge in post-mortem dissections, hence the limited and quite sketchy knowledge of physical anatomy. What little they knew was from observing the insides of animals or of hu-

mans after injury. On the other hand they had an incredible insight into the physiological and energetic workings of the body and of the mind. The physical body was often looked at symbolically and seen as a reflection of the universal laws.

3.1 Head, Trunk and Neck

Humans are in the image of the universe. Heaven is symbolised by a circle and Earth by a square.

The head is round and represents Heaven, the most *Yang* part of the human being. All *Yang* channels reach and meet at the head. The head is the seat of the subtlest energies, the mental and the spiritual. The heavenly palace of the envoy of heaven, *Xin*≈Heart, the emperor, is located behind the third eye, when its earthly palace is in the chest. The human being communicates with the world through its portals and sensory organs. Seven of the nine portals are located in the head, as well as all five sensory organs: sight, hearing, smell, taste and speech.

The trunk is square, representing the Earth. All *Yin* channels converge and meet at the trunk. The trunk is the residence of all of the officials, the *Zang* organs: Heart, Lung, Spleen, Liver and Kidney, and the *Fu* organs: the Stomach, Small Intestine, Large intestine, Gallbladder and Bladder. The trunk is where all physiological processes take place: production of the Five Substances, *Qi*≈Energy, *Xue*≈Blood, *Jinye*≈Body fluids, *Jing*≈Essence and *Shen*≈Spirit/mind.

The trunk is sub-divided in to three sections: the upper, middle and lower heating areas known as the Triple Warmer (or Heater).

The neck is the passage between the human's Heaven, the head and the Earth, the trunk of the body, where *Yang* energies of heaven descend and the *Yin* energies of Earth ascend. There is a phenomenon of "conversion" that takes place at the area of the neck. On the material level, the cerebral nerve fibers cross over, the left brain controlling the right side of the body and vice versa. Energetically, a similar conversion occurs mainly involving the *Yang Ming* level. In fact, both the arm *Yang Ming*-Large Intestine Primary and Sinew channels, as well as the leg *Yang Ming*-Stomach Luo≈Connecting channel cross over to the opposite side. This crossing over is also observed with the leg *Shao Yang*-Gallbladder Sinew channel. Most of the "Windows of Heaven" points are located on the neck, regulating the passages of the vital substances to the head and the interaction of humans with the world (Fig. 3.1).

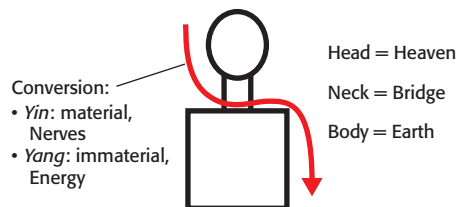


Figure 3.1 Head, Body and Neck; Conversion.

3.2 Four Limbs

The human stands with arms raised to Heaven to receive the *Yang* energies from above. The *Yin* energies of Earth ascend through the feet. *Yin* and *Yang* channels

meet and change polarities at the extremities, finger and toe tips.

Each limb is further sub-divided into three sections.

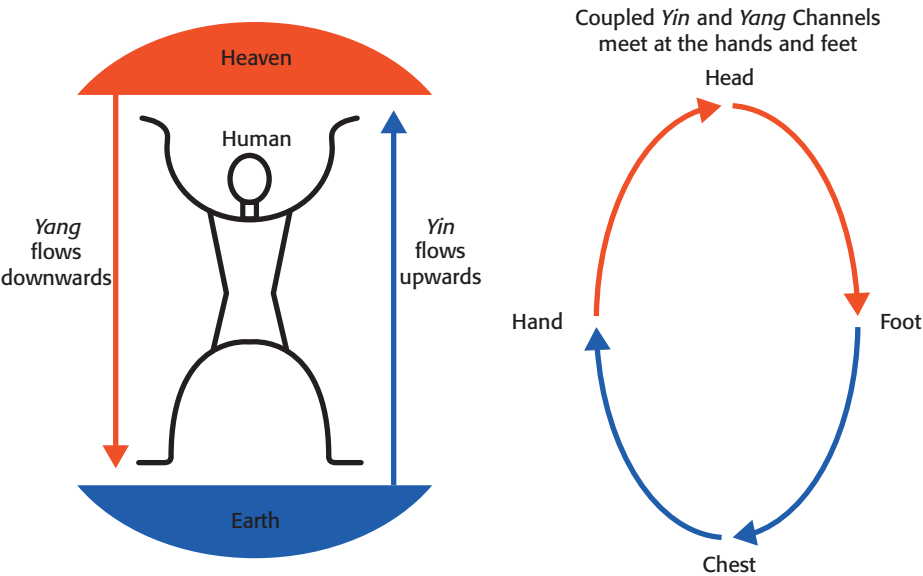


Figure 3.2 The 4 limbs and the circulation of channels.

3.3 Ten Officials

The body, in the image of the state, is governed and managed by ten administrators also called officials. They are responsible for governing the body in accordance with the “universal order”. These ten organs maintain life by producing the five substances, managing and adapting the energies to the outer changes, and fulfilling the human destiny. Five of the organs are considered *Yin*, *Zang*≈Organs and five are *Yang*, *Fu*≈Bowels. They constitute *Yin-Yang* couples, complementing each other in their functions (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 *Yin-Yang*-couples of the ten organs

Yin, Zang	Yang, Fu
Liver	Gallbladder
Heart	Small Intestine
Spleen/ Pancreas	Stomach
Lung	Large Intestine
Kidney	Bladder

■ *Zang*≈Organs are defined as being “full”, not necessarily from a structural and anatomic perspective, but rather as organs that store and conserve the vital *Qi* and essences. They are *Yin*.

Table 3.3: Comparative Physiology of the Lung (Fei 肺)

Chinese Lung functions	Western physiology	Linking the two concepts
The “State minister”: in charge of policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The first independent action of the new-bornAfter the heart-beat, breathing defines life	“Prana”- breath links the microcosm to the macrocosm
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Governs breathingMaster of Qi	The alveoli allow the release of CO ₂ and the absorption of O ₂	The triple warmer system requires O ₂ to produce Qi≈Energy
Supplying Qi to Blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In-breath allows blood to flow from the heart to the lung to be oxygenatedOut-breath pushes blood out into the heart	Breathing energizes blood and clears the toxins
Regulate the water passages: Upper source of fluids	By releasing carbolic acid, lungs also release fluids	Relation between Lung and Spleen <i>Tai Yin</i> to transform Dampness
Govern the skin and the mucus membranes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Skin complements the release of CO₂ and the absorption of O₂Excess fluids are released through the skin	Skin vitality depends on the skin’s fluid content
Opens into the nose	Embryological connection between intestines, lung and the nose	Breathing starts at the nose

The Kidney or Kidneys (Shen 腎)

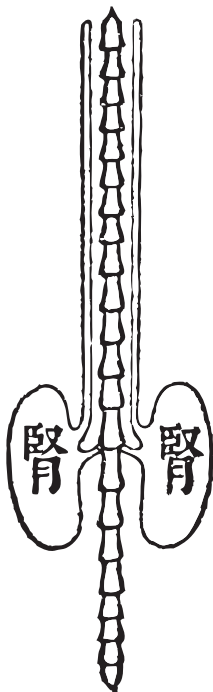


Figure 3.11 Kidneys (Shen) (Zhen Jiu Da Cheng).

The only pair organ in the Chinese system, not because there are two kidneys, but because they have two distinct functions: Kidney *Yin* and Kidney *Yang*.

The Kidneys are considered the “Germ of Creation” or the “Root of Life”. They are in charge of the creative forces on all levels: physical, mental and spiritual. The Kidney is considered the “Counsellor to the emperor”. Although the Kidneys have a *Yin* and a *Yang* aspect, overall the Kidney is classified as *Zang* and *Yin* in the Chinese organ system and coupled with Bladder, its *Fu*≈Bowel. As the Kidney represents the most malleable aspect of the body, the fluids, as well as the densest structure, the skeleton, it is related to the Water phase that symbolizes structure and coherence.

The functions of the Kidneys

The Kidneys differ from the other organs in Chinese medicine, as they present a *Yin*

and *Yang* aspect as well as *Qi* function and a reservoir for *Jing*.

■ “Root of Pre-Heaven *Qi*”: The Kidneys have the charge of storing and safe-guarding the pre-natal energies, the *Yuan*≈Source *Qi* and the parental *Jing*≈Essence *Qi*. In the Chinese concept, there are three constituent or original energies: *Yuan*≈Source *Qi*, *Jing*≈Essence and *Zong*≈Ancestral *Qi*, referred to as “Pre-heaven”, “Anterior Heaven” or pre-natal energies.

- *Yuan Qi* supplies the “Spark of life”, it is the life principle that is going to manifest through the Heart as “Source of life” defining the desire to live, and through the Kidneys as the “Will to Live”. *Yuan Qi* will constitute the *Yang* of the Kidney, Kidney Fire. Kidney Fire will later become the root of all transformative and physiological functions of the body.
- *Jing Qi* is the parental *Jing*≈Essence that may be assimilated in modern times to the chromosomal inheritance, responsible for the constitution and the form. The *Jing Qi* controls growth and sexual maturation, and defines the constitutional strength and vitality. At puberty the Kidneys start producing the individual’s own *Jing Qi*.
- *Zong*≈Ancestral *Qi* is the cosmic *Qi* at the time of conception, which is believed to carry the destiny or mandate of the person.

■ After birth, the combined inherited *Yuan Qi* and *Jing Qi*, are referred to as *Dong Qi*≈Moving *Qi* between the kid-

neys, and are located in the lower abdomen, an area called lower *Dan Tian*, signifying the alchemical cinnabar chamber, known as the “*Hara*” in the Japanese tradition. In alchemical and meditative practices, this is the first area where energy is concentrated and transformed. The original *Yuan Qi* is considered the source of the “True Fire”, it may be accessed by two points (► Fig. 3.12):

- The area between the two Kidneys called *Ming Men*, translated as Gate of Vitality, Gate of Life or Life Mandate, DM-4.
- On the lower abdomen, *Guan-Yuan*, Barrier of the *Yuan Qi*, RM-4.

The Fire of *Ming Men* is the source of Fire of the whole body, it concentrates in the lower parts and is the root of Kidney *Yang*, it is referred to as “Fire Minister” (in continuity with *Xin Bao*≈Pericardium). This Fire migrates during the foetal phase from the lower heating centre, which will later

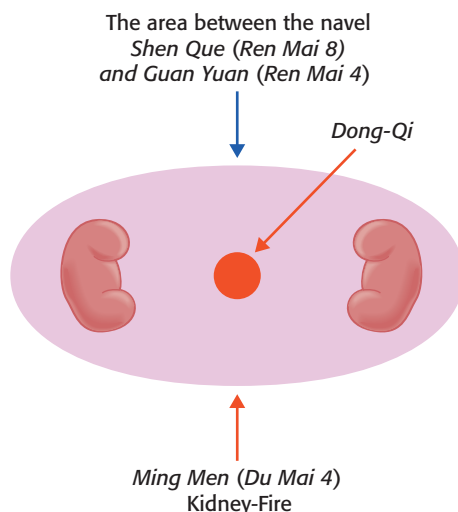


Figure 3.12 Kidneys, *Dong Qi* and *Ming Men*, Kidney-Fire.

constitute the Kidney-Fire, to form the middle-heating centre, the digestive Fire of Spleen and Stomach, and further to the upper heating centre, to provide the Heart-Fire (► Fig. 3.13).

In Post-Heaven or post natal energetics, the Kidney *Jing*, is subjected to the Kidney-Fire to produce Kidney *Qi*, in the image of a candle: the wax, *Yin*, represents Kidney *Jing*, the flame, *Yang*, is Kidney-Fire, the emanating light represents Kidney *Qi*. The *Qi* thus produced in the lower parts, ascends the back via the *Du Mai*≈Governing channel, itself rooted in the *Dong Qi*≈Moving *Qi* between the Kidneys. *Du Mai* distributes this *Qi* to the *Zu Tai Yang*-Bladder channel, situated parallel and on each side of *Du Mai*. The *Qi* accumulates in certain points of the Bladder channel called Back *Shu*≈Transport points, from where the energy is transported to all of the *Zang* and *Fu* organs and via their respective primary channels to all the parts of the body (Fig. 3.14). The dissemination of *Jing*≈Essence to the various *Zang-Fu* is not quite even. The body disseminates to the organs

according to the pre-programmed constitution, that is, the inherited constitutional energies. For example a Wood type constitution, receives more energy at *Ganshu* BL-18, the Liver Back-*Shu* point, and *Danshu* BL-19, the Gallbladder Back-*Shu*.

This process of transformation of *Jing* into *Qi*, and its subsequent distribution to the *Zang-Fu* is known as the Triple Warmer process which is responsible for the production of the three substances by the Stomach and Spleen, referred to as white, grey and red substances, in the form of *Qi*, comprised of *Ying*≈Nourishing and *Wei*≈Defensive energies, *Jin Ye*≈Body fluids and *Xue*≈Blood. (► chap. 4.4)

Jing also generates the bone via the marrow and it nourishes the brain, hence maintaining the Curious-*Fu* organs.

Furthermore the transformation and distribution of the original *Yuan*≈Source *Qi* from the area of the lower *Tan Tian*, via the *Du Mai* to the Bladder channel's back *Shu*≈Transport points and to the various *Zang-Fu*, is reflected on the *Yuan*≈Source point of the corresponding primary channels,

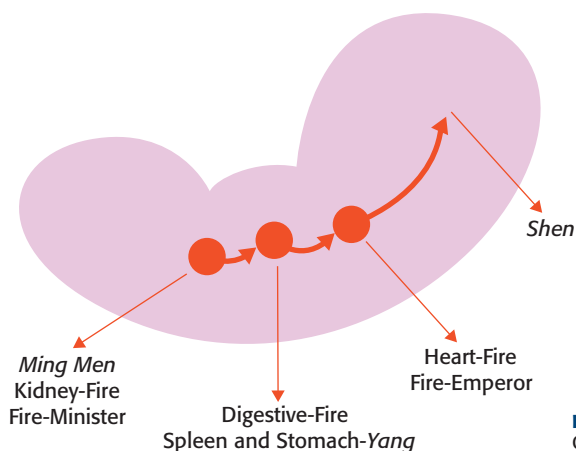


Figure 3.13 *Ming Men*, the migration of the Original Fire, 3 Fire centres.

hence their name. In fact, when stimulated, the *Yuan*-source points direct the produced *Qi* in the Triple warmer towards the corresponding organ and channel system.

- “Root of *Yin* and *Yang*”: The Kidneys constitute the foundation of the entire *Yin* functions and substances, and the *Yang* functions and motive forces. Besides all the fluids of the body Kidney *Yin* represents the *Jing*≈Essence, the structure and the skeleton, but also the vital force and stamina. The relation between Kidney *Yin* and Heart in the *Ke*≈Control cycle helps to keep the Fire Phase and the Heart in check, acting as the cooling element. On the other hand

Kidney *Yang* is an extension of *Yuan Qi*, the original Fire, and sustains all of the vital functions of the body such as reproduction, digestion, blood circulation and the mental functions. Because of their interdependent relationship: Kidney *Yin* is the material base for Kidney *Yang*, and Kidney *Yang* provides the motive force, the “Heat” for the *Yin*.

- The Kidneys are also called the origin of “Water and Fire”. This further explains the close connection between the Kidneys and the Heart.
- Storage of Essence, *Jing Qi* and sexuality: this is the *Jing Qi* produced by the Triple Warmer and stored by the Kidneys. This Essence controls the various stages of development: growth of bones, teeth, uterus, and the stages of reproduction, sexual maturity, birth, menopause and andropause etc. This evolution follows a cycle of 7 for women and 8 for men. Kidney Essence “*Jing Qi*” is part of the *Yin* aspect of the Kidneys, and since the *Yin* nourishes *Yang*, Kidney Essence produces Kidney *Qi* and there is thus a connection between *Jing Qi* and vitality, will power, fertility and sexuality.
- Production of Bones and Marrow: The production and quality of bones, marrow and teeth depends on the strength of Kidney *Jing*. Marrow has a different significance in Chinese Medicine. It is the substance that fills up the bones, the spinal cord and the brain; hence it contributes to mental strength, which depends on the Kidneys.
- Control of Water passages: The Kidney is in charge of controlling the separation of pure and impure fluids in the lower Triple Warmer, and the excretion of the

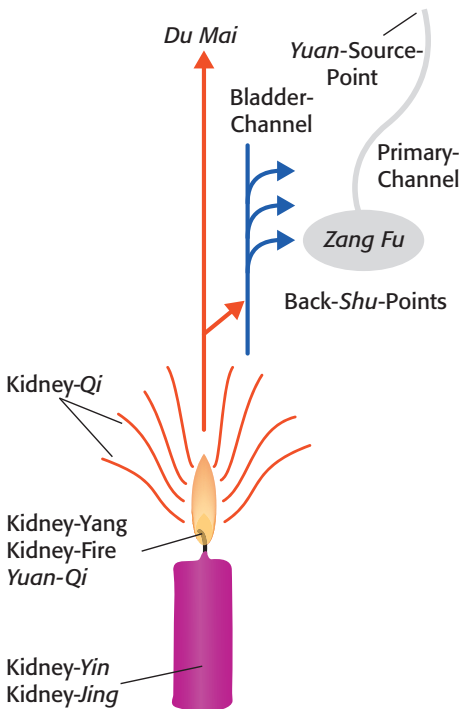


Figure 3.14 Dissemination of *Yuan Qi* from the lower Triple Warmer.

impure by the Bladder and the Intestines. Hence the term of the “Lower source of fluids” (► chap. 4.4).

- Control of the lower orifices: Kidney Qi controls the genito-urinary orifices and the anus. The *Zu Jue Yin*-Liver channel equally controls the outer genitalia.
- Reception of Lung Qi: Kidneys receive and hold (grasp) the pure Qi of air that the Lung sends down. In practice some asthmatic conditions and breathing difficulties are due to the incapacity of the Kidney to grasp the Lung Qi.
- Maintain the Hair: quantity, quality and colour of hair are dependent on Kidney Jing. Hair quality also depends on the skin’s nourishment by fluids (Lung) and Blood (Liver).

- Open into the Ears: hearing depends on the Essence “Jing” of the Kidneys, although external ear pathologies, such as otitis reflect on the local channels.
- Residence of “Zhi”, which is the spirit responsible for the Creative Forces and the Will Power, and is often called the “Germ of Creation”. The Zhi is also representing the strength of character, the will to live, courage, and sometimes called the “reservoir of desires”. Where Shen represents intelligence, Zhi symbolises wisdom, hence its title of the “Counsellor to the emperor”.

Modern Western physiology and in particular embryology may explain many of the ancient Chinese concepts pertaining to the Kidneys (Shen 腎) (► Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Comparative Physiology of the Kidneys (Shen 腎)

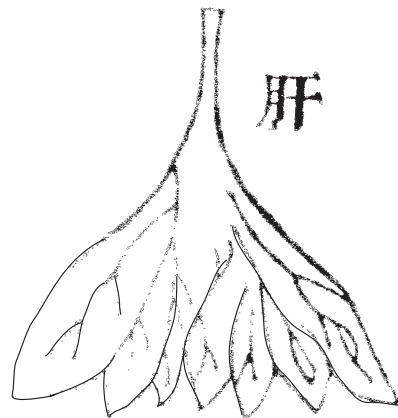
Chinese Kidney functions	Western physiology	Linking the two concepts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The “Councillor to the Emperor” ■ Connection between the Heart and the Kidney (<i>Shao Yin</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Embryological connection between heart and kidney (retro-peritoneal space) ■ Adrenal medulla issued from the “neural crest” cells (<i>Jing</i>); cortex from mesoderm ■ Kidneys control heartbeat and blood pressure (production of renin and aldosterone) 	Relation between the kidneys, adrenals and the heart; the Kidney controlling the Heart (<i>Ke</i> cycle); <i>Shao Yin</i> axis
Root of Yin and Yang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Adrenaline (<i>Yang</i>): increases heart contractions; air intake by the lungs and fight-flight reflex in the brain (stress) ■ Cortisol (<i>Yin</i>): holds fluids, draws from reserves (muscle and bone), increases blood sugar and white blood cells 	Relation between adrenaline and cortisol in response to stress or danger
Storage of <i>Jing</i> ≈Essence (reproductive energy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Embryological connection between the primitive kidneys and the ovaries and testis (<i>Jing</i>) ■ Production of testosterone and oestrogen by the adrenal cortex 	<i>Ming Men</i> : responsible for sexuality

Table 3.4: Comparative Physiology of the Kidneys (Shen 肾)

Chinese Kidney functions	Western physiology	Linking the two concepts
Control of Water passages: “Lower Source of Fluids”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kidney nephrons as filtration units maintain the pH, and the fluid levels via the sodium and potassium balance Water retention via aldosterone 	Kidney adapting the fluid levels in relation to body needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governing the Marrow Controlling bones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of red blood cells in the marrow via erythropoietin produced in the kidneys Release of white blood cells via cortisol Bone production via calcitriol (Vit. D), and calcium and phosphate metabolism 	Bone density and marrow production in relation to Kidney- <i>Jing</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reception of Lung Qi Water overflowing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kidneys produce renin which activates the lung’s production of angiotensin Water retention (aldosterone) causing lung oedema 	Relation between Kidneys and Lung; (skin vitality through the skin’s fluid content)
Controlling the lower orifices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ureter, the bladder and urinary functions Pelvic, vaginal and rectal connections via the testicular, ovarian and sacral arteries 	Kidney Qi controls the lower sphincters
Residence of <i>Zhi</i> ≈Willpower	Willpower and risk-taking capacity are enhanced by dopamine mainly produced by the adrenal medulla	<i>Zhi</i> defines the strength of character
Opening in to the ears	The bones of the ear issue from the “neural crest” cells (<i>Jing</i>)	<i>Jing</i> defines the ability to hear
Maintain hair	The pigment cells issue from the “neural crest” cells (<i>Jing</i>)	<i>Jing</i> defines the quality of hair and aging

Overview of Kidney Functions

- Root of Inherited-Pre-Heaven Qi
- Root of Yin and Yang
- Storage of *Jing*≈Essence; responsible for sexuality
- Production of Bones and Marrow
- Control of Water passages: “Lower Source of Fluids”
- Controlling the lower orifices
- Reception of Lung Qi
- Maintain the Hair
- Opening into the ears
- Residence of *Zhi*≈Will power

The Liver (Gan 肝)**Figure 3.15** Liver (Gan) (Zhen Jiu Da Cheng).

The Liver is considered the “General of the armies” in charge of planning and strategies. The general has the role of protecting the borders, by the strategic placing of the army and thus maintaining the limits and, at the time of war, deploying the army to protect the state and the emperor. It is said that there are three kinds of generals, one that loses the war, he is usually decapitated; one that wins a battle after fighting, he has little merit, then there is the good general who wins the war without fighting a battle, he is to be praised. This analogy applied to the defensive mechanisms of the body, represented by the concept of *Wei Qi*, indicates that the Liver is in charge of managing and mobilising *Wei Qi*. In fact many of the pathologies implicating the immune system, such as immune deficiency, auto-immunity, and hyper-reactivity (as in allergies), concern dysfunctions of the Liver. It is important to remember that the Liver only manages and mobilises the *Wei*≈Defensive energy, the latter is produced by the Triple Warmer, Stomach and Spleen in particular and diffused by the Lung to the surface. It is the agility of the army that guarantees the integrity of the borders. A good general plans his strategies and is subservient to the emperor and does not rebel. The Liver is also in charge of “becoming”, one’s projects and evolutions on all levels: physical (about 500 biochemical functions), psychological (resolution, prevention), and spiritual (rebirth).

By its dynamism and mobility the Liver and its *Fu*≈Bowel the Gallbladder are related to the Wood phase.

The functions of the Liver

- Responsible for the free flow of *Qi*: this is the most important function of the Liver. It ensures the smooth, free, relaxed and easy flow of *Qi*. Its function of mobilising and moving out, of expanding and dispersing, affects the movements of *Qi* in all parts of the body and on all levels:
 - Digestive processes and energy production: the Liver allows Stomach *Qi* to move down and aids the Spleen to move the pure energies upwards. This function is aided by the Gallbladder that stores and secretes the bile.
 - Mobilisation of *Wei Qi*≈Defensive energy: the Liver manages and moves the *Wei Qi* to where it is needed.
 - The smooth expression of emotions and management of emotional reactions also depend on the free flowing of Liver *Qi*. Although, as discussed above, the Heart in particular the *Shen* is responsible for the harmony of the emotions, it is the Liver that helps in the proper expression of the emotions, avoiding repression and limiting excessive outbursts. The Liver entertains with the Heart, in the Five phases, a *Sheng*≈Nourishing relation, “mother-son”. The Liver-Blood, nourishes the Heart-Blood. As seen above, the *Shen* has an intimate connection to *Xue*≈Blood, further explaining the role of the Liver in emotional matters. Furthermore the Liver and the Pericardium channels constitute the lower and upper portions of the same *Jue Yin* level. As *Xin Bao*≈Pericardium deals with all human interactions and emotions, the role of the Liver be-

■ Elimination: in the lower warmer, of the “impure”.

Please see Triple Warmer-Energy production for detailed description (► Part IV).

Overview of Triple Warmer Functions

- Absorption: food, water and air
- Transformation
- Elimination

3.4 Six “Extraordinary” or “Curious” Fu (Qi Heng Zhi Fu 奇恒之腑)

These organs are considered extraordinary due to their structure as well as their particular functions. On a structural level, they present the characteristics of both *Zang* and *Fu*. In fact, they are full and preserve essence as do the *Zang*, but are also hollow as a *Fu* and have the capacity to contain, but do not receive nor eliminate. On a functional level they are extraordinary because they form the link between Pre- and Post-Heaven, and are responsible for the creation and continuation of life, and of transformation on the three levels. They do not have a *Yin-Yang* or a *Biao-Li* coupling, but are rather in relation with the three transformational centres, the *Dan Tian*. The upper *Dan Tian* corresponds to the head containing the brain, the middle *Dan Tian*, containing the Heart, and the lower *Dan Tian*, housing the uterus. In the Daoist esoteric traditions these three areas or fields allow the transformation and refinement of the lower basic human energies in to higher spiritual aspects. The term *Dan Tian* was translated by the French authors to “Cinnabar” a red mercury sulphide believed by the medieval alchemists to transform base metals into gold. These three centres contain the organs responsible for the human being’s continuity, both on a physical as well as on a spiritual level. From the tripartition, Heaven-Man-Earth system dialectics,

these three centres conserve the “Three Treasures”, *Shen*, *Qi* and *Jing*, and are further protected by the three bony structures, the skull, thorax and pelvis (Fig. 3.25).

The formation of these extraordinary organs precedes that of the *Zang* and the *Fu*, this was described in the following manner:

from the “Vital Substances”, the Brain and the Marrow are created; then the Bones form a support for the Brain and Marrow; the Vessels nourish the body and then the Gallbladder and the Uterus appear.

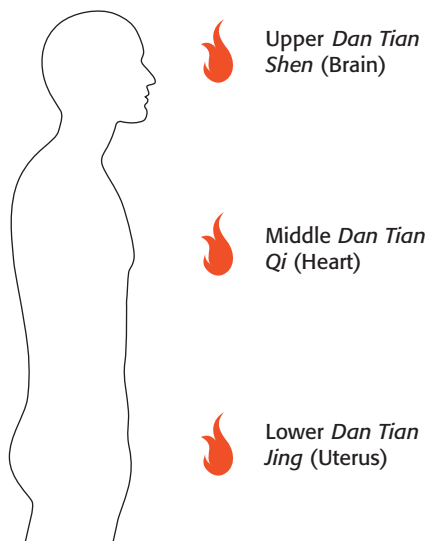


Figure 3.25 The three *Dan Tian* (Cinnabar Chambers).

They are all directly or indirectly related to the Kidneys.

The Brain (Nao 脑)

The Brain is produced and maintained by Kidney *Jing*, and is called the “Sea of Marrow”. It is like a crossroad between the inside and the outside and is the site of integration, equilibrium, thinking, recapitulation and memory.

The Brain is considered the depository of the “Universal Law” and is the “Spiritual Matrix”.

The function of the brain greatly depends on *Xue*≈Blood and the Heart.

The Marrow (Sui 髓)

The marrow is also produced from Kidney *Jing*≈Essence, and pertains to the spinal cord, the brain and the bone marrow.

The function of the Marrow is to transmit central information, the “Universal Law”, that is deposited in the Brain, to the whole body, via the bone marrow, Blood, and the spinal cord, the nervous system.

The Bones (Gu 骨)

The Bones are the symbol of immortality. They store the Marrow and form the material web or frame for the process of life:

- Material frame: The three bony structures, skull, thorax and pelvis, mediated by the spine. The function of the three bony structure is to protect the “Three Treasures”: *Shen*, *Qi* and *Jing* (Fig. 3.26).
- Immaterial web: the channel system.

The Vessels (Mai 脉)

The term *Mai* refers not only to the vascular system but also seems to include the channel systems.

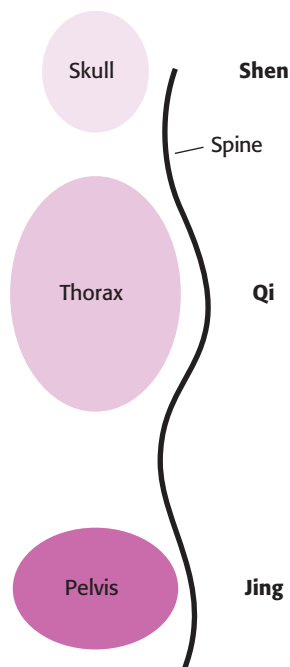


Figure 3.26 Bony structures and the three Treasures.

The blood vessels form a material base whereas the channels form an immaterial framework or web in which life may develop.

The Heart controls the Blood vessels. In fact, in the embryological development of the human being, the heart is the first *Zang*≈Organ to develop.

In Chinese medicine, the channel system is designated by several terms, *Jing*≈River, *Luo*≈Connecting channel and *Mai*≈Vessel. The term *Mai* is only used for the *Luo* channels, which contain the superficial blood circulation, and for the Eight Extraordinary vessels, that are responsible for the unfolding of life.

The Gallbladder (Dan 胆)

As discussed above, the Gallbladder is a strange *Fu* organ, storing essence and re-

sponsible for the “Central Rectitude/righteousness or integrity”. It maintains authenticity and conformity in accordance to the “Universal Mandate” transmitted to “Ming Men” and actualised in the Uterus.

The Uterus (Nu Zi Bao 女子胞)

The Uterus is the root of life, where the entity develops on all levels:

- Physical, the foetus
- Energetic, the *Dan Tian* or *Hara*
- Spiritual, the Daoist embryo

The physical uterus is in charge of the menstrual cycle and of conception. It is closely related to the Kidneys, via the extraordinary vessels in particular the *Ren Mai*≈Conception vessel and the *Chong Mai*≈Penetrating vessel, and depends also on the state of Blood, which in turn is regulated primarily by the Liver, the Spleen and the Heart.

Relation to Western physiology

In relation to Western physiology, these six organs may be assimilated to various systemic functions (► Table 3.12):

Table 3.12 The Six Extraordinary *Fu* in relation to Western physiology.

Extraordinary Fu	Western anatomic and physiological function
Brain	Central nervous system
Marrow	Haematopoietic system
Bones	Electrolytic system
Vessels	Vascular system
Gallbladder	Hepato-portal system
Uterus	Genito-reproductive system

Hamid D. Montakab M.D. combines his Western medical and surgical back-ground with over 30 years of Chinese medicine and acupuncture practice and teaching. In his unique approach, further enriched by his exposure to various Eastern and Western healing methods and osteopathy, he brings a deeper understanding and clarity to many of the complex Chinese medical theories. His previous publications: *Acupuncture and Insomnia/ Sleep and Dreams in Chinese Medicine* 2011 (Thieme); and *Bridging the Gap/ Acupuncture Point and Channel Energetics* 2014 (Kiener); have received great acclaim by both the traditional (TCM) as well as the classical (CCM) Chinese medical practitioners.



CHINESE MEDICINE REVISITED

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This book explores the fundamental theories of Chinese Medicine as seen by an MD, trained both in Western and oriental Medicines. The principals of the Chinese Medical thought and the various dialectical systems are explained and de-mystified. The physical and especially the energetic structure of the body, the channel systems, the notions of health and disease, the very original Chinese diagnostic system, are all explored and developed in a practical manner, with emphasis on constitutional and temperamental evaluations.

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The book is very well referenced and documented and even additionally contains an extensive section on "Evidence based Acupuncture".

By its thoroughness and simplicity, this book offers an excellent tool for the beginner as well as the advanced practitioner, and could even be recommended as an in-depth introduction for the lay-person.