

Week 6: Collecting Heaven and Earth

This week we are going to dive deeper into Yin and Yang Theory. Heaven and Earth relate to yang and yin, with Heaven being yang and earth being yin.

Yang and yin are the first division of Wu Ji, which describes the divine realm. Words cannot describe, but only point to the magnitude, the emptiness, the nothingness of the divine realm. This is what we attempt to achieve when we stand in Wu Ji posture.

Yin and yang have been at the forefront of Chinese philosophy for centuries. To understand yin and yang theory (for “Western-minds”), it is necessary to grasp the concept that everything is not what it seems. Realize that every phenomenon in the multi-Universe is an expression of Qi, and is itself and its contrary at the same time. The root of yin is within yang and the root of yang is within yin. Therefore, a table can be square and non-square at the same time. [This is a paradigm shift for most of us!]

Yin and yang are essentially an expression of duality, which we see, feel and experience all the time. It is a language to discuss the alternation and fluctuation of all things at any moment, in any time. Every phenomenon in the multi-Universe is an interchange of cyclical movement of yin and yang. It is the motivating force to change, transform and restore. Through this study, we realize that all things are always in a certain stage of flux and movement, and that nothing is a static state of “50-50.”

Here is a quick history of the discovery of this philosophy. The earliest origin of yin and yang is said to have come from ancient Chinese farmers who were sages. They observed the cyclic alternation of night (yin) and day (yang), which led to the first observation that there are two cyclical poles corresponding to every phenomenon.

These ancient sages conceived heaven (yang) as a round vault and earth (yin) as flat. Therefore a circle is yang compared to a square, which is yin. They concluded that heaven (yang) contains the sun, moon and stars (which is the basis for the Chinese lunar calendar), and relates to earth (yin) which contains time, earth and space. Since the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, east is yang compared to west, which would be yin. In Chinese cosmology, the compass direction was developed assuming that the practitioner faces south, making left yang and right yin.

There is some conflicting information pertaining to right and left sides of the body being yin or yang. From our studies, the left side of the body being yang compared to the right side being yin is based upon the physiology of the natural flow of Qi in the body, our body’s connection to nature and our body’s behavior according to the seasons.

As the sun (or heaven) increases and as we head into the springtime, so the yang energy increases on the left side of the body. Similarly, as we transition into autumn, yin energy starts to rise and affects the channels on the right side of the body.

We see this in the yearly calendar and in the daily cycles. Yang energy is at its highest from sunrise to noon. This rising yang energy affects the left side of the body. It is beneficial for a person to be asleep in bed before 11:00 p.m. because this is when the sun is underneath the earth. The sun’s energy travels through the earth which is yin affecting the channels on the right side of the body which nourishes our essence, which is also yin. In Chinese medicine the liver receives this yin energy from the earth, during

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the time period of 11:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. to restore the yin. Sleep allows this yin or life-essence to nourish the brain.

Here's the fun part. Although the left side of the body is yang, the left pulses relating to the internal organs are yin (yin = relating to blood and fluids). These pulses on the left wrist connect to the left kidney, which is also yin. Similarly, the pulses on the right wrist connect to the right kidney, which is yang (yang = relating to Qi and the transformation to produce and circulate Qi throughout the body). The left kidney (yin) is responsible for the cooling essence of the body, while the right kidney (yang) is responsible for the heat to help in transformation and circulation.

If a practitioner is treating the liver, located on the right side of the abdominal cavity, it is recommended to focus on acu-points located on the left foot or lower leg, opposite of where the organ is located. If you think about it, the body is a perfect reflection of the Tai Chi (or Yin and Yang) symbol because the seed of yin is present in yang and vice versa.