

Edward Esko
Yin Yang Primer



**A GUIDE TO THE UNIFYING PRINCIPLE OF
HEALTH, PEACE, AND FREEDOM**

Yin Yang Primer

Chapter One: Commonality & Difference

“An understanding of commonality and difference is essential not only in personal health, but in world peace. In order to realize world peace, we must unite behind the factors all human beings share, while respecting the endless diversity of human experience.”

All things share the same essential nature. Let us take as examples a pencil, desk, book, and plant. Each exists within time and space; they have this in common.

Since they exist here and now, on earth at the present time, they share a tiny segment of the infinity of time and space. They have a form, and that form is defined by shape, size, color, weight, density, and other characteristics.

These objects are composed of elements. Elements are formed by the union of electrons, protons, and other pre-atomic particles. Pre-atomic particles are made up of energy. They are not solid. As a Buddhist sutra states, “form is emptiness, and emptiness form.”

Everything is ultimately energy. The atoms that make up each object are in a constant state of motion. Each object ultimately changes. All things are ephemeral, existing for a brief moment within the endless ocean of time.

Attributes such as these are common to all things, from galaxies to atoms, stars to cells, mist to ice crystals, and elephants to bacteria.

All things share a common origin the universe and pass through a life cycle defined by a beginning, middle, and end, followed by a new beginning in a different form. Everything is changing.

At the same time, no two things are identical. Each thing or being is a unique manifestation of the universe. Perfect “sameness” does not exist, nor does perfect symmetry.

To prove this to yourself, stand in front of a mirror with a blank piece of paper. Cover the right half of your face and look closely at the left. Then cover the left and observe the right. You may be shocked to see how different each side of your face is.

Things exist within time and space, yet no two things occupy the same position in time and space. While all physical objects are made of atoms and molecules, the number and combination of atoms and molecules in each is unique.

Let us return to the pencil, desk, book, and plant. We see that although they have color, texture, shape, density, and weight, these attributes are different in each. Although they are produced by elements found on earth, the elements that comprise each are different.

The process in which each came into being is also unique. The pencil, table, and book are man made, while the plant is created by nature. Each man made object is made of wood, yet each is made of wood from a different tree. Each object has a use, yet each is used differently. Each has value, the value of each is different.

Human beings are perfect examples of the principle of commonness and difference. If we compare two people, we see they look alike and move in a similar way. People share functions such as breathing, eating, discharging waste, sleeping, and reproduction.

They have a similar life cycle, beginning with birth, proceeding through growth, maturity, old age, and ending at death. They have a mother, father, and ancestors stretching back through time.

Moreover, if we compare two people, we see they share a common environment within a common time period. They have been exposed to the values, concepts, and lifestyles that characterize civilization. They have read many of the same books, seen the same movies, watched the same television programs, and eaten the same foods.

All people have physical needs for food, clothing, shelter, activity, and rest, and emotional needs for love, acceptance, and friendship. Everyone has a physical and spiritual nature. We all seek happiness and fulfillment.

At the same time, each person is unique. Each is born at a different time and in a different place, and each has a different size, weight, body build, hair color, and genetic makeup. Everyone's face is unique to him or her, as are facial expressions and mannerisms.

Although we share basic functions, each of us has individual appetites and preferences. Each person breathes in a different way, pursues a different type of activity, and needs a specific amount of rest.

Although the pattern of life is potentially the same for everyone, the way this pattern plays out differs from person to person.

We share a common environment, yet each of us occupies a different part of that environment. Time and space are unique to each individual. Although we have the same sense organs, each of us perceives the environment from our own perspective.

Everyone has a life dream, but that dream is highly personal.

Our dream is the result of the influence that each of us receives from our family background and environment. And although the

pursuit of happiness is common to everyone, we all have our own definition of happiness.

We can sum up by saying, “although we are all in the same boat, each passenger in the boat is different.”

Our discussion now brings us to principles which express the truth of commonality and difference:

Commonality:

1. Everything is a manifestation of one infinite universe. (All beings and things share a common origin, the universe itself.)
2. Everything changes. (Nothing is static. The universe is infinitely dynamic. All beings and things are constantly changing, they go through a process of creation, existence, and dissolution. Change is the only constant.)
3. What has a beginning has an end. (Nothing is permanent; all beings and things eventually change form and emerge as something new. This process is without beginning or end.)

Difference:

4. There is nothing identical. (Even though all beings and things share a common origin and process of change, everything continually appears, changes form, and reappears in a way that is unique.)

An understanding of commonness and difference is essential not only in creating personal health, but in creating world peace. In order to realize world peace, we must unite behind the factors all human beings share, while respecting the endless diversity of human experience.

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Chapter Two: Complementary Opposites

Everything exists because of complementary opposites. A chair, for example, is made of legs that project downward and a seat that faces upward. Each section of the chair and the chair as a whole contains an upper and lower part, a left and right side, a top and bottom, and an inside and outside.

The opposites, or polarities, in each pair complement one another. Each pair of opposites is complementary to the others. Together they form the unity that makes up the chair.

Consider the polarities in a book. Books are composed of an outside and inside, a cover and contents. The front and back covers complement one another: the front is usually bold and direct, while the back is understated and detailed. When we open the book, it divides into left and right hand pages, and each page has a front and a backside.

The book is itself defined by the polarity between its left and right and upper and lower borders, its first and last pages, its beginning and end. Each page contains numerous complementary opposites.

The pages contain text and illustrations, printed type and blank space, headings and text, words and punctuation, letters and numbers, vowels and consonants, nouns and verbs, and subjects and objects.

The law of economics, which governs the production and distribution of books, is driven by polarities. Economic activity is driven by the interplay between supply and demand, income and expense, and producer and consumer. In order to compete successfully, producers must keep their costs as low as possible, while charging the highest price for their products.

Consumers are the polar opposite of producers. They would like to see producers spend as much as possible producing high-quality goods while paying as little as possible for them. The relationship between producer and consumer is good example of the complementarities existing between opposites. Both have the opposite orientation, yet both need each other.

Books, like everything else, do not exist in isolation. They exist in relation to other things and to the environment in general. These relationships are defined by complementary opposites. If we compare books, we see that some are thick, others thin, some are colorful, others plain, some are large, others small, some are interesting, others dull, some are read by many people, others by few.

Complementary opposites also distinguish books from other objects, and make books and other things distinct from the environment as a whole.

The biological world exists because of polarity. Complementary distinctions exist between plants and animals, more developed and less developed species, and creatures that live in water and those living on land.

Some species lay eggs, others carry their young inside their bodies, some eat plants, others are carnivorous, and some, like giant redwoods, live for centuries, while others, such as fruit flies, live for only several hours.

Polarities exist within the structure and function of each living thing. If we take the human body as an example, we see that it has a left and right side, an upper and lower portion, a front and back, an inside and outside.

The twin branches of the autonomic nervous system the sympathetic and parasympathetic work in an antagonistic, yet complementary manner to control the body's automatic functions.

The endocrine system operates in a similar way. The pancreas secretes insulin, which lowers the blood sugar level, and also secretes anti-insulin, which causes it to rise.

Polarity exists at every level of biological organization. The bloodstream is counterbalanced by the lymph stream, estrogen by testosterone, DNA by RNA, red blood cells by white blood cells, growth-enhancing genes by growth-suppressing genes, activating neurotransmitters by inhibiting neurotransmitters, collagen by elastin, and sodium ions by potassium ions, and so on throughout the body.

Complementary opposites exist in movement and function. Walking involves up and down, forward and backward, and left and right motions. As one leg is lifted up, the other is pushed down. As one leg moves forward, the opposite arm moves backward, and so on in a series of alternating movements.

In any action, certain parts of the body are engaged in active movement, while others remain relatively still; certain parts lead, while others follow; certain muscles expand, while others contract.

Periods of active movement alternate with periods of rest.

Moment to moment, we breathe in and breathe out, as the movements of the heart, lungs, and digestive organs alternate between expansion and contraction, activation and inhibition.

In the morning we get up, and at night we lie down. When we speak, our voice alternates between high and low tones, rapid and slow speech, and periods of sound and silence.

When we write, our hand moves up and down, we press the pen to the paper and then raise it, we begin sentences and then complete them, and move from left to right across the page. One hand holds the pen, the other supports the paper.

The rhythms of daily life waking and sleeping, appetite and fullness, movement and rest are animated by polarity, as are relationships between people.

Some people are male, others female, some are large, others small, some are thin, others heavy, some are fair skinned, others have dark skin. Some people are intellectual, others physical, some are blonde, others brunette, some are born in the spring, others in the fall.

Complementary opposites provide the basis for comparisons between people, and underlie the relationship between self and other, I and the universe, and humanity and nature. They are at the root of all perception and evaluation.

All things are composed of polarities, and polarities define the relationships between things. Reality is a unified field of countless interrelationships, all of which are defined by polarity. Polarities, or complementary opposites, are a common factor unifying all of existence.

Review your life. See how it continually alternates between complementary opposites. At certain times we feel active and energetic, at others, quiet and peaceful. At certain periods we feel positive, at others, negative. We experience health and sickness, success and failure, coming together and separation.

These alternating patterns are not unique to human beings, but occur throughout the universe. They represent the order of nature

itself.

These examples bring us to principles that express the truth of complementary opposites:

1. What has a front has a back. (Everything is composed of complementary opposites; all things have their opposite, which is at the same time complementary. Things cannot exist without their opposite. Commonness is the reverse side of difference, and vice-versa.)
2. The bigger the front, the bigger the back. (The more polarized something is, the more it creates its opposite.)
3. All antagonisms are complementary. (Complementary opposites support each other; both are necessary to the whole. Unity is complementary to diversity; diversity is complementary to unity.)

Together with the four principles presented in Chapter One, these principles comprise seven universal principles or common truths that govern all things.

Try making a list of the complementary opposites in your environment, including the objects in your home. Complementary opposites are everywhere and in everything. They provide the foundation for existence in our relative, ever-changing world.

An understanding of complementary/opposites is essential for world peace. The knowledge that all antagonisms are complementary can lead humanity beyond struggle and toward all-embracing unity.

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Chapter Three: Yin and Yang

If we consider the complementary opposites in ourselves and the world around us, we notice certain correspondences between them. These correspondences make it possible to categorize them in a consistent manner.

Using the earth as our common frame of reference, let us evaluate the polarity existing between up and down and horizontal and vertical.

Movement in an upward direction means movement away from the earth, while downward movement implies movement toward the earth. (The distinction between up and down exists only in relation to physical bodies, such as stars and planets. There is no “up” or “down” in space.)

If something has a vertical form, a greater portion of its mass extends upward away from the earth, while if something has a horizontal form; a greater portion of its mass lies closer to the earth. Upward movement gives rise to vertical forms, while downward movement gives rise to horizontal forms.

If we view the earth from a distance, we see that the center of the earth corresponds to the inside, while the surface or periphery corresponds to the outside. Downward movement means movement in an inward direction toward the center of the earth, while upward movement implies movement in an outward direction away from the center and toward the periphery.

Thus we can link these pairs of opposites as follows:

upward
vertical

downward
horizontal

outward movement
periphery (outside)

inward movement
center (inside)

When something expands, it increases in size, and when it contracts, it becomes smaller. Largeness is a property of expansion, and smallness a property of contraction. If we relate these attributes to position, expanding force tends to push things toward the outside or periphery, while contracting force causes things to gather toward the center.

Upward movement is actually outward or expanding motion away from the earth, while downward movement is actually a form of contracting motion toward the earth. Largeness and expansion are therefore consistent with the characteristics listed at right, while smallness and contraction are consistent with those listed at left.

If we add these new attributes to our list, our classification is as follows (for convenience, the attributes on the left are listed as “alpha” and those on the right as “omega,” using the Greek terms that denote complementary opposites):

ALPHA

upward movement (up)
vertical
inward movement
periphery (outside)
large
expansion

OMEGA

downward movement (down)
horizontal
outward movement
center (inside)
small
contraction

Now that expansion and contraction have been added to our list, it is easy to place other complementary attributes in either category. When things absorb water, for example, they expand and become larger, and when they dry out, they contract and shrink. Wetness can be included under Alpha, and dryness under Omega.

As things expand, they become lighter and less dense, and when they contract, they become increasingly dense and heavy. Density and heaviness can thus be grouped under Omega, while lightness can be classified under Alpha.

Because solids are dense and heavy in comparison to liquids or gases, we would classify them under Omega. Liquids and gases are lighter and more diffuse, and are thus classified under Alpha.

Heat is a property of contracting force or movement, while cold is a property of expansion. Space, which is infinitely expanded, is cold, while heat is a product of highly condensed stars and planets. Contact produces heat; separation produces coldness.

Space is also dark. Brightness is a characteristic of condensed points known as stars. Heat and brightness can be classified under Omega, while coldness and darkness match the characteristics under Alpha.

The complementary opposites that comprise reality are actually of two primal forces. Attributes such as temperature, weight, structure, form, position, and wavelength yield numerous complementary tendencies that display a stronger tendency either toward expansive force, or toward contractive force. Thousands of years ago in China, these primal forces were given the names yin and yang.

Yin refers to the primal force of expansion (centrifugal force) found throughout the universe, and corresponds to the attributes listed in the Alpha column.

Yang refers to the primal force of contraction (centripetal force) found throughout the universe, and corresponds to the attributes listed under Omega.

Although the terms yin and yang were first used in China, an understanding of complementary opposites is not limited to Oriental countries. A similar idea can be found in many cultures throughout the world.

In the table below, we classify a variety of complementary attributes into yin and yang. There are many ways to classify things into complementary categories, and this chart represents only one way on the definition of yin and yang established above.

Yin and yang are not absolute, if anything, they are absolutely relative. All things are composed of both, so nothing is entirely yin or entirely yang. Things are not yin or yang of themselves, but only in relation to other things.

Yin and yang can be expressed by using the terms heaven and earth. Heaven is yin or expanded, while the earth is relatively tiny, compact, and yang. However, even though its form is yin, heaven generates contracting spirals, similar to the way that cold (also yin) causes things to contract.

Contracting spirals become more and more condensed. As they make the transition from energy to matter, they give rise to pre-atomic particles and atoms, creating stars, planets, and other material objects. Heaven's energy appears on our planet as a contractive, centripetal, downward force (yang). Heaven's force causes the earth to rotate.

Meanwhile, because the earth rotates, it gives off a stream of expansive, centrifugal, upward force (yin). Earth's force creates energy that expands upward and outward, moving back toward heaven.

Human beings exist as the balancing point between these two primal energies.

Our depiction of heaven's force as yang and earth's force as yin is the same as that found in The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine. This classic Chinese text was composed thousands of years ago. It provided the foundation for Chinese medicine. In it the sky or heaven is described as yang, while the earth is described as yin. An identical depiction appears in the I Ching, or Book of Changes, the ancient Chinese text on the order of the universe and human destiny.

Examples of Yin and Yang

YIN	YANG
Centrifugal force	Centripetal force
Expansion	Contraction
Diffusion	Fusion
Dispersion	Assimilation
Separation	Gathering
Decomposition	Organization
Inactive, slower	Active, faster
Short wave	Long wave
Ascent and vertical	Descent and horizontal
Outward, peripheral	Inward and central
Lighter	Heavier
Colder	Hotter
Darker	Brighter
Wetter	Drier
Thinner	Thicker
Larger	Smaller
Fragile	Sturdy
Longer	Shorter
Electron	Proton
Tropical products	Cold climate products
Vegetable	Animal
Female	Male

Hollow organs

Gentle

Mental activity

Universal

Future

Spiritual

Space

Solid organs

Aggressive

Physical activity

Specific

Past

Material

Time

Remember that yin and yang are relative. What is yin from one point of view may be yang from another, and vice-versa. As we can see, how we label things depends on what criteria we use.

The study of yin and yang encourages us to become broadminded and flexible; to view life from a holistic perspective. There is no fixed interpretation of these eternal, yet ever-changing laws. Yin and yang enable us to see both sides of any issue and appreciate and embrace opposite points of view. The unifying principle of yin and yang can guide humanity toward harmony and peace.

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Chapter Four: Yin and Yang Divide Endlessly

From the one come two, and from two come the many. Let us turn to the human body as an example.

The upper regions of the body are yin, while the lower regions are yang. Yet each region is made up of yin and yang in the form of soft and hard parts, peripheral and central regions, expanded and contracted organs.

Two complementary streams of bodily fluid-the bloodstream (yang) and the lymph stream (yin)-circulate through both regions. Blood is composed of formed elements, which are yang or solid, and yin liquid or plasma.

The formed elements include red blood cells, which are yang or compact, and white blood cells, which are yin or expanded. Red blood cells are made up of both yin and yang. Each cell contains a yin cell membrane and a yang cell body, and is composed of hemoglobin, a yang protein containing iron, and yin phospholipids. (Hemoglobin comprises 60 to 80 percent of the solid portion of the cell; therefore, red blood cells are on the whole yang.) Hemoglobin is itself composed of a yang iron-containing portion (hematin), and a yin simple protein (globin).

All things in a given category can be arranged in a continuum, or spectrum, that appears between the primal forces of yin and yang. Any given category of things can be related to other categories and to the environment as a whole according to yin and yang.

Our environment on earth offers a clear example of a yin-yang spectrum. Below we arrange the key features of the earth and its environment in a spectrum from yang (most condensed) to yin (most expanded):

Yang Core Mantle Crust Water Air Ions Vibration Yin

The color spectrum offers another example of this principle. Clear light polarizes into the seven colors of the spectrum, and these can be classified from yang (long wave) to yin (short wave):

Yang Red Orange Brown Yellow Green Blue Violet Yin

Yin and yang exist at every level of life, from the macrocosmic to the microcosmic, within our outer and inner environments.

Human beings exist as a yang, contracted center within the yin, expanded environment of the earth. However, the earth is part of a much larger unit, the solar system, and is yang or compact in relation to this expanded outer environment.

The solar system is, in turn, compact and tiny in relation to the Milky Way. And, as large as it is, the galaxy is actually an infinitesimally small point within the universe as a whole.

Our internal environment is structured in a similar way. Organs are dense and compact (yang) in relation to the environment of the body as a whole (yin). Each organ, in turn, provides the expanded environment for billions of tiny cells. Each cell, in turn, serves as the expanded environment for the nucleus, while the nucleus serves as the expanded environment for DNA and RNA. Each strand of DNA is a macrocosmic environment for individual molecules of protein and carbohydrate, and these are yin in relation to individual atoms.

Atoms, which are composed largely of empty space, provide the yin, expanded environment within which pre-atomic particles, such as protons and electrons, exist.

Inner and outer, above and below, macrocosm and microcosm:
Everywhere we look we find yin and yang.

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Yin Yang Primer

Chapter Five: Opposites Attract

Yin and yang are not static, but always changing. Everything is constantly in motion. Motion and change are governed by the attraction of opposites. Yin attracts yang, and yang attracts yin. The attraction of opposites occurs everywhere, at all levels of life. It is the underlying force that animates life itself.

Atoms are formed by the attraction between protons and electrons, or the attraction existing between plus and minus. A similar attraction causes atoms to combine and form molecules. Common salt offers a good example.

Sodium is yang or contractive, while chlorine is yin or expansive. They are strongly polarized, and therefore strongly attracted. When they combine, sodium atoms become even more yang by giving up an electron (yin) to an atom of chlorine, causing the chlorine atom to become even more yin. The sodium atoms then take on a positive charge, while the chlorine atoms become negatively charged. These oppositely charged atoms, or ions, bond with tremendous force, forming stable molecules of salt.

In each molecule of water, two atoms of hydrogen (yang) share electrons with an atom of oxygen (yin). These polarized molecules link up with other molecules when the positively charged hydrogen nuclei of one molecule link up with the negatively charged electrons in the oxygen atom of a neighboring molecule. These hydrogen bonds are strong and are responsible for the tight cohesiveness of water.

DNA, the basic building block of life, is formed through the bonding and building up of basic organic compounds that occur because of mutual attraction. DNA is constructed of four nucleotide bases: adenosine, thymidine, guanine, and cytosine.

Just like the positive and negative poles of a magnet, these bases bond into pairs because of mutual affinity. Thymidine is especially complementary to adenosine, and always pairs with it. Guanine is strongly polarized with cytosine, and always links up with it. Each strand of DNA is held together by hydrogen bonds existing between the bases.

Hormones secreted by the endocrine glands circulate freely throughout the bloodstream, yet only affect specific “target” organs. These effects are due to the attraction of opposites.

The attraction between hormone and receptor is highly specific: the molecules of a particular hormone match receptors on the cells of its “target” organ in the way that a key fits a lock. If a hormone does not match a particular receptor, it continues circulating until it finds the receptor that complements it most perfectly.

Hormones are either yin or yang, activating or inhibiting. Adrenalin, yang hormone, binds only with the yin receptors that specifically match it.

Human appetites are based on the attraction of opposites. When we are hungry, we are attracted to food; when active, we are attracted to rest; when lonely, we are attracted to companionship; when stressed, we are attracted to relaxation; and when overworked, we are attracted to leisure.

Sex offers a dynamic expression of this principle.

Men and women have opposite energies; men receive a stronger charge of heaven’s downward force, and women, a stronger charge of earth’s rising energy. Estrogen, the primary female hormone is yin. It produces the softer and more expansive female form.

Testosterone, the male hormone, is yang. It causes the male body to develop a more compact form.

The attraction between heaven's force (yang) and earth's force (yin) is the invisible force behind love and sexuality. Love is another word for the attraction of opposites.

Reproductive cells - the egg and sperm - are strongly polarized and strongly attracted. Even though women are on the whole more yin than men, the human ovum is concentrated and strongly yang. Sperm are created through a process of differentiation and are strongly yin. (Only one egg is released at a time; several hundred million sperm are discharged in one ejaculation.)

The egg and sperm are so strongly polarized that their union results in more than just a simple combination, in which two opposites join but retain their separate identities. The union of egg and sperm results in a complete fusion in which both lose their individual identities and merge into an entirely new being that blends the qualities of both into one.

The attraction of opposites produces dramatic new results. When egg and sperm unite, they begin a creative process that results in a new human being. When a man and a woman unite in love, their unity transcends the individuality of each.

When oxygen combines with hydrogen, these two elements create a new substance – water - that bears little resemblance to the invisible gases that create it. When yin and yang unite, yin becomes less yin, and yang becomes less yang.

The degree of attraction depends on the degree of polarity. The more strongly polarized things are, the more strongly they are attracted, and the more they change once they unite with their opposite.

The attraction of opposites is universal. Love is universal. It is the invisible force that animates the whole universe. A popular song once stated, "love makes the world go 'round.'" These words reveal a universal truth.

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Chapter Six: Likes Repel

Just as opposites attract, likes repel. Yin repels yin; yang repels yang. The force of attraction is yang it represents coming together of opposites. The force of repulsion is yin; it results in the separation or coming apart of likes.

Two positive poles repel each other, as do two negative poles. Bright colors, which are yang, reflect sunlight, while yin dark colors absorb it. Animals, which are yang in relation to plants, breathe in oxygen, a yin gas, while breathing out yang carbon dioxide.

Being yin, plants perform the opposite function: they absorb carbon dioxide and repel oxygen. The movement of heat follows the same pattern. Heat is repelled by itself: it flows from hotter objects to colder ones. Moreover, substances that are yang have a greater resistance to heat (also yang) than yin substances.

Metals, which are solid and yang, have higher melting temperatures than yin liquids or gases. When you boil an egg, heat, which is yang, is readily attracted to the egg white, which is yin. Heat is less attracted to the yolk, which is also yang. The white of the egg thus cooks more rapidly than the yolk.

In order to overcome the natural resistance of the yolk (yang) to heat (yang), you must add another yang factor. When you boil the egg for more than three minutes, time (yang), plus heat (yang), creates a doubly yang influence that overcomes the yolk's resistance. Relative to this much stronger yang influence, the yolk becomes yin. Its resistance breaks down and the heat penetrates and cooks it.

As long as two likes are equally matched, friction or resistance occurs. When one becomes much stronger, resistance is overcome and replaced by attraction. We can state this way: large yang attracts small yang; large yin attracts small yin.

Hammering a nail into wood offers another example. Physical objects are condensed, solid, and yang. By themselves, the nail and wood repel one another. No two objects can occupy the same space. In order to overcome this natural resistance, and drive the nail into the wood, we must increase the yang power of the nail.

Hammering accomplishes this. When we strike the nail with a hammer, we concentrate force (yang) to a condensed point at the tip of the nail (yang.) The wood thus becomes yin in relation to the nail and accepts it. With each strike of the hammer (yang), the nail is driven deeper into the wood.

War offers a tragic example of the repulsion of likes. War can be either physical (yang) or ideological (yin.) In the case of physical conflict, opposing armies (yang) are attracted to the same goal, usually territory or space (yin.) Since both cannot occupy the same space, they clash (yang repels yang.) The conflict continues as long as both sides are equally matched.

However, if one side is stronger (yang), the other side becomes yin in relation to it. At that point, the weaker side surrenders (yin). The resulting harmony between yin and yang causes the conflict to cease and peace to be restored.

Attraction and repulsion operate at the microscopic level. The body's immune response is animated by the polarity between self and non-self. Immune cells are attracted to substances that are "non-self," and aim at neutralizing the polarity these substances have with the body's cells.

When yang antibodies coat a yin virus, they reverse the polarity of its receptors, causing it to become more yang. As a result, rather than being attracted to the body's cells, which are also yang, the virus is repelled. The reversal of polarity renders the virus inactive by interfering with its ability to bind with cells.

Attraction and repulsion are influenced by time. Once opposites bond, they start to change. They become more like each other. Once men and women marry, the husband tends to become yin or domestic, while the wife becomes yang or assertive. They take on characteristics of the other. Over time, the polarity that brought them together becomes milder.

Sex illustrates this clearly. A man and a woman cannot continue having sex indefinitely. They need to take a break in order to recharge their energies. Separation allows a man to regain his masculinity and a woman her femininity. After a period of separation, they are again attracted to one another.

Parents and children are attracted to each other because of the strong polarity existing between them, and are united by bonds of love and affection. However, as children grow, they become more like their parents and the natural attraction between parents and children becomes less, often changing to repulsion. That is why grown children leave home and seek an independent life in the outside world.

Whenever we are attracted to something, we are at the same time repelled (or less attracted) by something else. Whatever it is we seek, be it food, health, rest, companionship, adventure, or success, is making balance with our present condition.

We are attracted to what we lack, and are repelled by what we have. When we are hungry, we eat, and when we are full, we stop

eating. If we are active, we are attracted to rest. After a period of rest, we seek new activity.

Attraction and repulsion continuously alternate, creating perpetual cycles of movement and change. Yin changes into yang, and yang changes into yin. The alternating pulse exists everywhere, from the life cycle of cells to the life cycle of galaxies, and from the rhythm of the tides to the rhythm of the heart.

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Chapter Seven: Extremes Change Into Their Opposites

Once an article appeared in the press that examined the lives of people who had each won a million dollars in the lottery. In each case, this sudden good fortune led to a series of disasters, tragedies, and ultimately unhappiness. Each of the winners stated that he or she was much happier before winning the lottery.

Experiences such as these show that good fortune and bad fortune are essentially relative. Also, when things become extreme in any direction, they tend to change into their opposite. (These experiences are also examples of “what has a front has a back,” and “the bigger the front, the bigger the back.”)

On the earth, heaven’s yang energy produces centripetal force, contraction, inward motion, density, pressure, mass, and solidity. Upon reaching its extreme point, it gives rise to heat. Heat, in turn produces yin in the form of centrifugal force, expansion, outward motion, less density, lack of pressure, decomposition, and diffusion. Ultimately, it gives rise to cold, which in turn causes contraction.

At the extremity, yin changes into yang and yang changes into yin.

Water offers a perfect example. At any moment, water exists in a variety of forms. Think of the placid stillness of a pond and compare that to the active rush of water down a mountain stream. Then consider ice crystals, and compare them to invisible molecules of water vapor. In all of these appearances, we are still talking about the same substance water.

Water in its various forms is not static. It is constantly moving and changing. Water is like a phantom that appears and disappears. One moment you see it, and in the next, you do not. In one

incarnation, it may appear calm and peaceful; in the next, turbulent and powerful.

In all of its forms and changes, water follows the movement of yin and yang. It cycles between the opposite poles of expansion (water vapor) and contraction (ground water and ice), or between upward and downward movement. These movements are typical of cycles found everywhere.

The movement of the earth around the sun follows the same pattern. The earth's revolution gives rise to two polar opposites winter, which is cold, dark, and yin, and summer, which is bright, hot, and yang.

Yin and yang then divide so that four seasons are produced. Spring is the early stage of summer (large yang), and we can label it small or young yang. Autumn is the early stage of winter (large yin), and we can call it small or young yin.

Small yang eventually develops into large yang, and small yin becomes large yin. Each season divides into an early and late stage, such as early summer and late summer. These subdivisions yield a total of eight stages in the yearly cycle.

The point at which seasonal energy changes from yin to yang and yang to yin occurs at the Solstice. At the Winter Solstice, yin reaches its peak and begins changing back toward yang. Days become longer and nights become shorter. At the Summer Solstice, yang reaches its peak and starts to change back toward yin. Days become shorter and nights become longer.

The daily cycle offers another example. The greatest polarity in the daily cycle is that between night (large yin) and day (large yang). Morning represents the early stage of day and corresponds to small yang. Evening is the early stage of night, and represents small yin.

Each of the four stages then divides into an early and late stage, and this produces a total of eight stages in the daily cycle. It is not until yin reaches a peak in deep night that energy begins to move in the opposite direction. (The darkest hour is just before dawn.) It is not until mid-day (great yang) that energy changes back toward yin.

These cycles show how yin and yang subdivide. In both cycles, one movement (e.g., the revolution of the earth around the sun or the rotation of the earth on its axis) gives rise to a cycle based on the alternation between polarized opposites. These opposite poles divide into two, and each of these divides into two.

This process occurs in the dimension of space as well as in the dimension of time, giving rise to the cardinal directions. In the spatial realm, one universe divides into two polar opposites, which we label North (large yin) and South (large yang.) West, the direction of sunset, corresponds to small yin, while East, the direction of sunrise, corresponds to small yang, yielding four cardinal directions.

Each of the four cardinal directions then divides again into two, producing the directions Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, and Northwest, thus totaling eight cardinal directions.

An understanding of this process lies at the heart of Oriental cosmologies, including those of Buddhism and the I Ching. The I Ching explains the universal process of change in sixty-four stages.

In the I Ching, the eight stages described above are divided again, yielding sixteen stages, and again, yielding thirty-two stages, and once again, producing sixty-four clearly defined stages of change.

Each stage is represented by a symbol, or hexagram, made up of six lines. The hexagram for heaven (great yang) is represented by six solid lines. The hexagram for earth (great yin) is composed of six divided lines. The remaining sixty-two hexagrams are composed of varying combinations of both solid and divided lines, and represent all the possible combinations that exist between great yang and great yin.

Each hexagram has a specific interpretation (many of which were written by Confucius), and each is given a descriptive name, such as “the Creative,” or “the Receptive.”

By consulting the I Ching, a person can determine at which stage in the universal cycle a specific undertaking or event is situated. He or she can also gain insight into how a specific situation might change in the future.

Western thinkers, including those of ancient Greece, were aware that the natural world, including the world of human affairs, was governed by cosmic cycles. The goddess Fortune was depicted as turning a huge cosmic wheel, the “wheel of fortune.” The Greeks believed cosmic cycles governed human destiny.

The ancient view of time was cyclic, not linear. Modern science has replaced the cyclic view of time with the notion of time as a linear. Science assumes the universe began at some fixed point, such as the “big bang,” rather than seeing the process of creation, destruction, and new creation as a repeating cycle.

In reality, the flow of time is neither circular nor linear. Time unfolds in the form of a spiral. The spiral model explains why things are always new and fresh; yet change according to a repeating pattern. Every day is a new day; yet the pattern of day and night remains the same. Every year is a new year; yet the changing of the seasons continues year in and year out.

This alternating rhythm is found everywhere; from the waxing and waning of the moon to the changing of the seasons. Our lives are no exception. Attraction changes into repulsion; repulsion gives way to fresh new attraction.

We can only eat so much meat before we lose our appetite for animal food and become vegetarian. We can only pursue material wealth for so long before we lose interest and start to seek spiritual development. (Conversely, our pursuit of spiritual development can continue for only so long before we begin seeking material security.) We can only tolerate so much physical exertion before we collapse from exhaustion.

Everything has a limit. Every action has an opposite reaction. Opposites attract. What we seek, we become. All things eventually change into their opposites.

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Yin Yang Primer

Chapter Eight: The Five Transformations

The changing of the seasons provides a familiar example of a universal cycle. In the spring, planetary energy reawakens. Plants grow; buds and leaves appear on trees, and flowers blossom. Animals become active; for many, spring is the annual mating season. Frogs begin chirping, and robins and other birds return from the tropics.

People spend time outdoors, doing yard work, spring cleaning, and enjoying the sunshine and warm weather. Farmers plant their crops, and families plant their gardens.

Baseball, a more yin, warm weather sport, begins its season. Easter, the spring celebration of Christianity, commemorates resurrection and rebirth.

These changes are examples of upward expansive energy. In Oriental philosophy, spring energy was called “tree nature.”

Energy continues in a yin direction during the spring. It reaches a peak in summer. The plant and animal kingdoms are fully alive. Vegetation that was dormant in winter is now in full bloom. Seeds planted in spring now yield mature plants. Birds, animals, and insects are fully active, and lush growth dominates the landscape.

With longer days and shorter nights, people spend a lot of time outdoors. Summer is the time of vacation and relaxation. People are attracted to the water (yin), and swim and water ski, both of which require buoyancy (yin.) They attend open-air concerts and eat outdoors at picnics. The Fourth of July, that quintessential American summer holiday, centers on fireworks launched into the night sky.

In Oriental philosophy, the energy of summer was called “fire nature.”

Once it reaches the peak of expansion, planetary energy begins to move in the opposite direction. Energy starts to move downward and inward. This occurs during the period known as late summer. Plants become drier and more contracted, as the growth of summer comes to an end. Leaves change from green (yin) to yellow, brown, and red (yang.) Crickets appear and their song heralds the end of summer. Squirrels gather acorns in preparation for winter.

Farmers get ready to harvest their crops, children return to school, and people become busier and more serious than they were during the summer. Football, a more yang cold weather sport, begins its season.

In Oriental philosophy, the energy of late summer was named “soil nature.”

Nature’s contraction continues through the autumn, peaking at Winter Solstice. In harmony with nature, farmers gather the autumn harvest; grass and other plants become brown and dry, leaves dry up and fall to the ground. Trees appear contracted and bare. Plants store energy in their roots. Insects disappear, birds fly south, and animals go into hibernation. Ponds and lakes freeze over.

Days become shorter, nights longer. People huddle before a fire and drink hot cider. Ice hockey, a very yang winter sport, begins its season.

Autumn is the time of harvest celebrations, symbolized by American Thanksgiving, during which time families gather to share food and give thanks. At Winter Solstice, when contracting

energy reaches a peak, people celebrate by staging festivals of light, including Hanukkah and Christmas.

In Oriental philosophy, energy of autumn was named “metal nature.”

Following the Solstice, days become longer, and nights shorter. Nature begins its gradual movement toward expansion. Cold temperatures offset this somewhat, so that in winter, the earth’s energy tends to “float” back and forth between expansion and contraction, in the way ice floats to the top of a lake. People either stay indoor, or are attracted to the mountains where they enjoy downhill skiing and other yang pursuits. Others seek balance by going to warmer climates.

On the surface, energy appears dormant and frozen. However, below the surface, energy is gathering, waiting to burst forth with the coming of spring.

In Oriental philosophy, the energy of winter was named “water nature.”

The procession of the seasons is an example of the universal alternation between yin and yang. The cycle has five stages:

1. Upward energy, or tree nature;
2. Actively expanding energy, or fire nature;
3. Downward energy, or soil nature;
4. Gathering, condensed energy, or metal nature;
5. Floating energy, or water nature.

This universal cycle is referred to as the five transformations.

The cycle of day and night offers another example. Morning corresponds to upward or tree energy. In the morning we get up

and begin the day's activity. Noon is the time of fire energy, and this is the most active time of day. Afternoon corresponds to downward, soil energy, evening to condensed metal energy, and night to floating water energy. At night, contracting energy causes us to lie down and sleep, or "float away."

As we see, our environment constantly cycles back and forth between yin and yang, or expansion and contraction. The five transformations offer a way to understand this universal process.

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Yin Yang Primer

Chapter Nine: Ancient Origins

An ancient, historical reference to the five transformations can be found in the Nei Ching, or Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine. In this Chinese text, foods, organs, seasons, and other phenomena are classified according to these five stages.

For thousands of years, acupuncturists, herbalists, and others skilled in traditional Chinese medicine have utilized the five transformations in the diagnosis and treatment of illness.

In the Nei Ching, bodily organs are listed in pairs, with solid and compact organs (yang) matched with hollow and expanded ones (yin.)

The lungs and large intestine form one pair. The lungs have a dense and compact structure (they are filled with air sacs and blood vessels), and are classified as yang. The large intestine is a long, hollow tube, and is classified as yin.

These organs process the outer environment in the form of air, food, and water. The lungs are yang, and process gas (yin), while the yin large intestine processes solids and liquids (yang).

The heart and small intestine are also classified as a pair. Their complementarities can be seen in their position in the body. The heart is located in the upper body, and the small intestine in the lower. Complementarities are also apparent in their structure. The heart is a compact muscle (yang) and the small intestine, an extended hollow tube (yin.)

The heart and small intestine also function in a complementary manner. The small intestine is the site where nutrients are absorbed

into the bloodstream for distribution by the heart to all the body's cells.

The kidneys and bladder are classified as another complementary pair. The kidneys are solid and compact (yang), and the bladder is hollow and expanded (yin). The kidneys filter the blood and produce urine, and the bladder is the site in which urine is stored before being discharged.

The spleen and pancreas share blood and energy streams and in Oriental medicine, are considered as a unit. Both are complementary to the stomach. The spleen and pancreas have a dense, compact form (yang), and the stomach a hollow and expanded structure (yin.) Once again, these organs function in a complementary way; for example, the pancreas secretes yang digestive juices that complement the yin acids secreted by the stomach.

The liver and gallbladder comprised another complementary pair. The liver is compact (yang), and the gallbladder is a hollow sac (yin). The liver secretes bile. The gallbladder stores bile and discharges it into the small intestine.

Each pair of organs corresponds to a stage in the five transformations. The liver and gallbladder are examples of upward/tree energy; the heart and small intestine, active/fire energy; the spleen, pancreas, and stomach, downward/soil energy; the lungs and large intestine, condensed/metal energy; and the kidneys and bladder, floating/ water energy.

This classification was first recorded in the Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine. However, the Yellow Emperor's Classic omits any explanation of why the organs are classified in this manner. The key to why the organs are classified as such can

be found in understanding the way in which the energies of yin and yang appear in the body.

Upward energy, or earth's force, is stronger on the right side of the body. Downward energy, or heaven's force, is stronger on the left.

We can see the predominance of upward/earth's force in the ascending colon (located on the right) and the functions of the right hemisphere of the brain. The right hemisphere is the source of yin artistic thinking, a function animated by earth's rising power.

The predominance of downward/heaven's force is seen in the descending colon and the functions of the brain's left hemisphere. The left hemisphere is where yang analytical thinking is produced, and that function is produced by heaven's concentrating force.

Upward/earth's force nourishes the liver and gallbladder. Downward/heaven's force nourishes the spleen/pancreas and stomach. Compare the structure and functions of the liver (right side) and the pancreas (left side.)

The liver is a large organ that expands upward like a tree with many branches. The pancreas is smaller, flatter, and positioned lower in the body. When the liver is active, it releases glycogen into the bloodstream. Glycogen is converted into glucose, raising the level of blood sugar and producing a surge of energy.

When the pancreas is active, it releases insulin. This yang hormone has the opposite effect. It lowers blood sugar and stabilizes the body's energy.

The liver and gallbladder are classified in the upward/tree category, while the spleen (also on the left side), pancreas, and stomach (which arches toward the left) are classified in the downward/soil category.

Energy radiates outward from the body's central core to the periphery of the body, along meridians or energy channels. The meridians branch inward, giving rise to smaller and smaller subdivisions. At the end of each subdivision is a living cell. Each cell is animated by the life energy it receives through these channels.

The source of life energy is the central energy core, which is ultimately charged by heaven and earth. Each cell is directly charged by cosmic forces, as well as by energy in the form of nourishment received through the bloodstream. This latter stream of energy originates with food.

Heaven and earth charge the body in an alternating pulse. Expanding and contracting rhythms animate all of the body's functions, from organ/systems to cells.

Nowhere is this seen more dearly than in the expansion and contraction of the heart, an organ positioned in the region of the highly charged heart chakra. The heart's position to the left of the central core enables it to receive a strong charge of downward/heaven's force. It is this force that enables it to contract with such power.

The pulse of life is also reflected in the movements of the small intestine. The small intestine is the site where nutrients are absorbed through the microscopic villi that coat its inner lining. From here they are eventually disbursed to all of the body's cells. The villi continually expand and contract, and move from side to side. At the center of the small intestine is a highly charged energy center that animates all of these functions.

The heart and small intestine are classified in the active/fire energy category. Both organs receive energy directly from the body's

central energy core. It is from this central core that life energy radiates outward to the entire body. The very active functions of the heart and small intestine reflect the high-energy state of fire energy.

The lungs and large intestine are classified in the condensed/ metal category. The lungs are densely packed with air sacs and blood vessels. When they expand, they attract oxygen, which is yin. When they contract, they squeeze out and expel carbon dioxide, which is yang.

In the lower body, the ascending colon extends upward on the right side. The transverse colon extends laterally, and the descending colon extends down the left side. The large intestine is about 1.5 meters in length, yet it is confined to a smaller space.

The kidneys are positioned in the middle of the body toward the back. The right kidney is charged by earth's rising force, the left, by heaven's descending energy. The kidneys balance or "float" between the forces of heaven and earth, and are classified in the floating/ water energy category, along with their complementary organ, the bladder.

As we can see, the five transformations offer a comprehensive view of the body and its structure and functions.

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Yin Yang Primer

Chapter Ten: Food as Medicine

Yin and yang and the five transformations govern our inner and outer environments. Food is the bridge between the two.

Every day, we take in the condensed essence of the environment in the form of food. We use food to create our internal environment. Foods are the product of the same cycles that govern our inner and outer environments. If we select food wisely, our diet can help us achieve harmony with the environment. If our food choices are unwise, our diet causes us to lose harmony with the environment.

From the beginning, cereal grains and beans have been humanity's principal foods. They match our long and convoluted digestive tract and the structure of our teeth, the majority of which are constructed for crushing and grinding plant fibers. Until the modern age, cultures throughout the world respected human biological needs by maintaining cereal grains and soy and other beans as their primary foods.

Each of these foods has a unique quality of energy, and these energies correspond to the five transformations. Barley and wheat are classified in the upward/tree category. When ripe, these plants stand straight up. The head projects upward, with tassels extending toward the sky.

Compared to other grains, barley and wheat have a light expansive quality. Adding them to brown rice produces a lighter, fluffier dish. Barley tea cools the body and aids in the discharge of animal food. It helps dissolve hardened deposits throughout the body. Many varieties of barley and wheat are planted in the fall and harvested in spring. The energy of rye and oats is similar to that of barley and wheat, and these grains are also classified in the upward/tree category.

The expansive energy in corn is more powerful than that of barley and wheat. Corn is like a summer grass that grows tall and extends toward heaven. Corn is traditionally harvested in summer. Many varieties of corn have an expansive sweet taste. Adding it to dishes produces a light expansive quality.

Corn is also popped on top of the stove until the energy of each kernel expands and bursts forth. Corn silk, the delicate hair that appears at the top of each ear of corn, is good for dissolving hardened fat and cholesterol deposits. Corn is classified in the active/fire category.

The energy of millet is opposite to that of barley and wheat. Grains of millet are yellow or red (both yang colors) and have a round shape. They are hard and tiny. When ripe, the grains bend down toward the earth. The most alkaline of the grains, millet is classified in the downward/soil category.

Rice is traditionally harvested in autumn. When ripe, the rice plant bends toward the earth. Brown rice, especially short grain rice, readily absorbs and harmonizes the energy of other grains, beans, and other foods. Brown rice serves as a “magnet” grain to which other foods are added. Rice is classified in the condensed/metal category.

Buckwheat is the hardest of the grains and grows easily in cold climates. It is classified in the floating/water category. In Japan, buckwheat is used to make thin noodles called soba. Soba were traditionally eaten in northern regions, while wheat noodles, called udon, were eaten in the south. Noodles made with a high percentage of buckwheat flour were traditionally eaten at New Year's during the winter/water season.

Beans are also classified in the floating/water category, as are bean products such as tofu. Tofu contains a higher proportion of water than the soybeans from which it is made, and is stored in water. Tofu has a “transparent” quality that resembles water. It has little taste of its own and tends to take on the flavors of the other foods with which it is cooked.

The classification of foods according to their energetic characteristics also extends to vegetables of land and sea.

Aside from providing many essential nutrients, vegetables complement the concentrated energy of grains and beans and are ideal as secondary foods in the human diet. Vegetables can be classified in the following categories:

1. Upward/tree: leafy greens, including the edible tops of roots such as daikon, turnip, dandelion, and carrot, plus broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, scallion, and chive;
2. Expansive/fire: expanded leafy greens, such as collard greens, mustard greens, and Chinese cabbage, in which the root portion is generally not eaten, plus summer vegetables such as cucumber, celery, and summer squash;
3. Downward/soil: vegetables with a more contracted round shape such as squash, pumpkin, cabbage, and onion;
4. Condensed/metal: root vegetables such as carrot, burdock, turnip, daikon, dandelion, and lotus;
5. Floating/water: edible sea vegetables such as wakame, nori, hiziki, agar, sea palm, and others.

Cooking changes the energy of food. It alters the way food affects us. Through cooking, we can adjust the energy of food to make it more yin or more yang.

Cooking for a short time over a high flame activates and releases energy. Cooking for a longer time over a low flame concentrates energy. These opposite approaches give rise to five categories of cooking that correspond to the five transformations.

Quick steaming accelerates upward/tree energy. Steam is produced by the boiling of water, and moves in an upward direction. Leafy greens are charged by upward energy, and are often cooked this way.

Pickling involves the breakdown and release of energy through fermentation. Pickling, especially quick-pickling, is classified in the upward/tree category.

Blanching, quick-sautéing, stir-frying, and deep-frying utilize intense heat and energy. Foods are exposed to a high flame for short periods of time. These methods are classified in the active/fire category. When foods are cooked this way, they become strongly energized.

In contrast to these energy-activating methods are cooking styles that utilize a lower flame and longer cooking times. Stew is an example, as are the methods used to boil whole grains. In stew, grains, beans, vegetables, and other foods are slowly cooked until they are thoroughly blended.

When whole grains are boiled, they are cooked over a slow flame with a lid on the pot. These cooking methods concentrate energy and are classified in the downward/soil category.

Pressure-cooking is a concentrated form of boiling. Grains, beans, and other foods are boiled in a tightly sealed pot under pressure (yang.) Pressure-cooking is classified in the condensed/metal category.

Baking and broiling cause foods to become drier and harder. Baking takes place in a yang, enclosed space (an oven), and causes food to have a drying and tightening effect on the body. These methods produce strong contractive effects and are also classified in the condensed/metal category.

In between cooking styles that activate or concentrate energy is another method that incorporates aspects of both. In this method, foods are cooked in plenty of water. This method is known as soup. By adjusting ingredients and cooking times, soups can be made to produce lighter, more expansive effects, or heavier, more concentrated effects. Soup is classified in the floating/water category.

In the next chapter, we will see how the five transformations can help us gain a clear understanding of health and sickness.

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Yin Yang Primer

Chapter Eleven: Understanding Health

Health is the state in which our inner environment changes in accord with the cycles of our planetary environment. Our planetary environment is vastly larger and more powerful than we are as individuals. The planetary environment does not need to adapt to us; our task is to adapt to it.

Every day, we wake up in the morning, become active, and rest at night. If we oppose this cycle by sleeping during the day and being active at night, we eventually become sick. We can only resist the rotation of the earth for so long before our energy becomes depleted and we lose our health.

Sickness is the state in which the microcosm opposes the macrocosm. The recovery of health is the process in which we bring our microcosm into alignment with the environment, or macrocosm.

Health can be accomplished in a number of ways, for example, by resting when we are exhausted, by adjusting our thinking and lifestyle to achieve greater harmony with our surroundings, and by adjusting our diet to make balance with our environment.

Yin and yang and the five transformations unify humanity and nature. They are the basis for a truly holistic approach to living on planet earth.

Health and healing originate in the concept of wholeness. Being whole implies that we embrace and balance the complementary energies of yin and yang, including the stages of energy, which they produce.

Food is the bridge between our inner and outer worlds. In selecting foods for health, it is essential that we balance yin and yang by incorporating foods that correspond to each of the five stages. Variety in food selection and cooking methods is the practical means to achieve such balance.

It is also important to be mindful of seasonal and daily changes, and to adjust our cooking and selection of foods to harmonize with them.

An understanding of how foods reflect the energy of the environment and how they interact with the energy of the body enables us to apply certain foods and cooking methods to strengthen bodily organs and functions by emphasizing the foods of a certain transformation in order to nourish the organs of that transformation.

It also enables us to offset symptoms, by applying foods and remedies with energies that are opposite to those of the symptom.

Yin and yang and the five transformations are the key to health and healing. They are the foundation of a way of living in harmony with nature; a way of living that can guide humanity toward genuine health and peace.

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Yin Yang Primer

Chapter Twelve: Spirals of Life

All movement occurs in spirals. Yin and yang appear in the form of spirals of moving energy. Spirals are visible throughout nature, from the shape of galaxies to the formation of electrons. The spiral explains the genesis or creation of the universe.

In the infinite ocean of the universe, beyond time and space, two opposite poles arise, which we call yin and yang. Yin and yang give birth to energy and movement, causing spirals to appear like whirlpools in a stream. These spirals wind inward, so that energy condenses into matter, giving rise to our physical universe.

When a spiral reaches its condensed center, it begins to expand, eventually dissolving into the infinite ocean from which it came.

Two forces govern spirals: the condensing force that causes them to form (yang), and the expanding force that causes them to dissolve (yin.)

Yin and yang are the origin of time and space, and time and space are the origin of our relative, ever changing world.

All things exist within the matrix of time and space, and, like the universe in which they appear, are themselves constituted as spirals. And, like the universe itself, all things follow the spiral of change and development, continually appearing (yang), disappearing (yin), and reappearing in a new form.

We call the creation of the universe “spiralgenesis.” The process of spiralgenesis occurs in seven stages:

1. One infinity (the eternally non-manifest or non-being; the source of all manifestation and all being.)

2. Polarization (the two primary forces that give rise to being or manifestation.)
3. Energy (the first appearance of being; endless movement in the form of contracting and expanding spirals.)
4. Pre-atomic particles (condensed spirals of energy that take the form of electrons, protons, etc.)
5. Elements (further condensed and complex spirals of energy.)
6. Plant life (further complex, self-replicating spirals of energy.)
7. Animal life, and ultimately human beings (the most condensed, complex, and free of all energy spirals.)

When we view spiralgenesis from a human perspective, we can say that we attract or take in the various forms of our environment. We eat plants and elements in the form of food and water. We breathe air and absorb solar energy and other forms of light and radiation. We take in yin and yang in the form of heaven and earth's forces, and these are actually complementary expressions of one infinite force.

We can also look at spiralgenesis from the opposite point of view. When we see it from the perspective of totality, it can be said that infinity changes into each of these worlds, ultimately taking human form.

The world we inhabit is the condensed form of infinity. Infinity is the expanded form of our world. Infinity moves at absolute speed, beyond space and time, yin and yang. Movement at infinite speed also equals absolute stillness. Infinity is the constant and

unchanging source of the spiral, and exists both within and outside of it.

The relative world is the world of spiral motion. It changes constantly and is governed by yin and yang, the unchanging order of change. Absolute and relative are not separate. One is the continuation of the other.

Infinity is the origin of our relative world. Infinity did not create our world; it is constantly becoming or changing into our world, a process without beginning or end.

The process of spiralgenesis, in which the large becomes small, the infinite produces relative forms, is yang. Humans are the center of that universal process, having passed through and assimilated all previous worlds.

Human life represents an ending and a beginning: the conclusion of spiralgenesis and the beginning of spiralconsciousness. Like the cereal grains that are the food of their species, human beings are both the fruit and the seed of a cosmic process.

Spiralconsciousness is the yin, expanding process in which a human being returns to and merges with infinity. That process continues beyond our physical life. From the human perspective, spiralgenesis is the visible front, and spiralconsciousness, the invisible back.

All great spiritual teachers and guides were aware of the universal spiral. Spiralconsciousness enabled these teachers to realize their unity with God or infinity. It pointed the way toward life eternal and the development of consciousness through the worlds of matter and spirit. Spiralconsciousness opens the possibility of endless spiritual evolution, leading to absolute freedom.

In the new millennium, we have the opportunity to unite behind a common awareness of spiralgenesis, spiralconsciousness, and the order of change that governs both. Spiralawareness and yin yang consciousness can be available to everyone.

The simple, yet universal, laws of change are humanity's magic carpet, Aladdin's lamp, and Holy Grail. They are the key to health, peace, and happiness in this world and in all worlds to come.

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