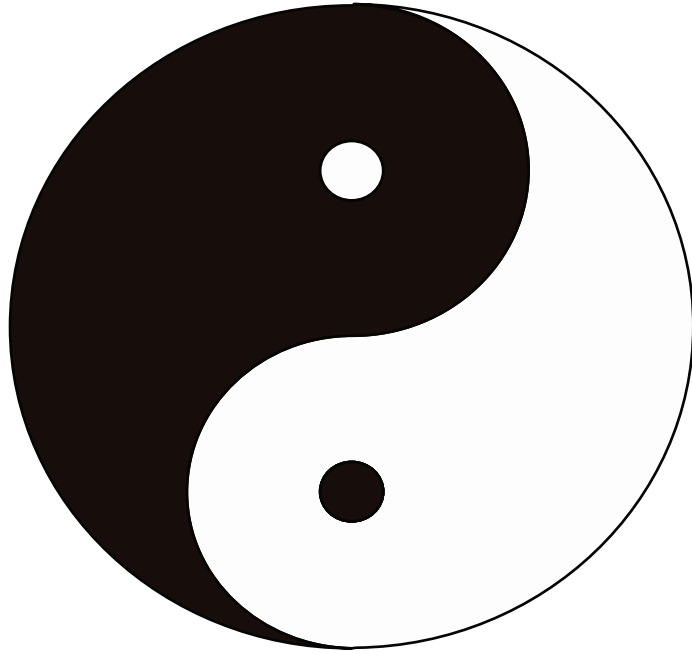


Yin and yang



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Suman Poudel

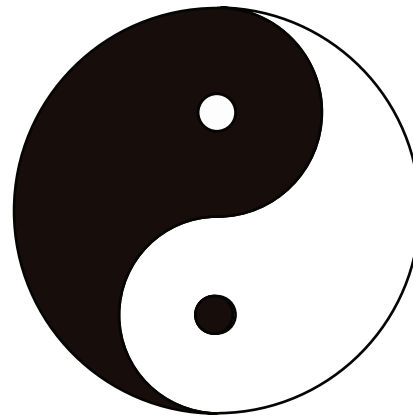
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Overview

In Chinese philosophy, the concept of yin-yang (simplified Chinese traditional Chinese pinyin: yīnyáng), which is often called "yin and yang", is used to describe how opposite or contrary forces are interconnected and interdependent in the natural world; and, how they give rise to each other as they interrelate to one another. Many natural dualities (such as light and dark, high and low, hot and cold, fire and water, life and death, and so on) are thought of as physical manifestations of the yin-yang concept. The concept lies at the origins of many branches of classical Chinese science and philosophy, as well as being a primary guideline of traditional Chinese medicine and a central principle of different forms of Chinese martial arts and exercise, such as baguazhang, taijiquan (t'ai chi), qigong (Chi Kung), and I Ching.



Nature

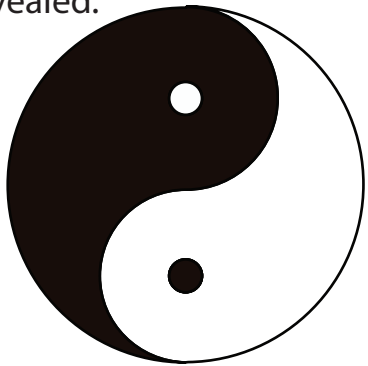
It is impossible to talk about yin or yang without some reference to the opposite, since yin and yang are bound together as parts of a mutual whole (for example, there cannot be the bottom of the foot without the top). A way to illustrate this idea is[citation needed] to postulate the notion of a race with only men or only women; this race would disappear in a single generation. Yet, men and women together create new generations that allow the race they mutually create (and mutually come from) to survive.

Toponymy

Classically, when used in place names, yang refers to the "sunny side." The word 太陽 (simplified 太阳), tàiyáng, refers to the sun, and literally means "great yang." In the northern hemisphere, sunlight comes predominantly from the south, and so the south face of a mountain (or the north face of a river valley) will get more direct sunlight. Therefore, yang means a place is on the south slope of a mountain (or on the north bank of a river valley). For example, Luoyang is on the north bank of the Luo River valley.

Symbolism

Yin is the black side with the white dot on it, and yang is the white side with the black dot on it. The relationship between yin and yang is often described in terms of sunlight playing over a mountain and a valley. Yin (literally the 'shady place' or 'north slope') is the dark area occluded by the mountain's bulk, while yang (literally the 'sunny place' or 'south slope') is the brightly lit portion. As the sun moves across the sky, yin and yang gradually trade places with each other, revealing what was obscured and obscuring what was revealed.



Yin and yang applies to the human body. In traditional Chinese medicine good health is directly related to the balance between yin and yang qualities within oneself.[10] If yin and yang become unbalanced, one of the qualities is considered deficient or has vacuity.

I Ching

In the I Ching, yin and yang are represented by broken and solid lines: yin is broken () and yang is solid (). These are then combined into trigrams, which are more yang or more yin depending on the number of broken and solid lines (e.g., ☰ is heavily yang, while ☷ is heavily yin), and trigrams are combined into hexagrams (e.g., ☰ and ☷). The relative positions and numbers of yin and yang lines within the trigrams determines the meaning of a trigram, and in hexagrams the upper trigram is considered yang with respect to the lower trigram, allowing complex depictions of interrelations.

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Various people have offered different explanations for the name Taijiquan. Some have said: – 'In terms of self-cultivation, one must train from a state of movement of stillness. Taiji not outwardly expressive, as if the yin and yang of Taiji have not yet divided apart.' Others say: 'Every movement of Taijiquan is based on circles, just like the shape of a Taijitu. Therefore, it is called Taijiquan.'

Taijitu

The principle of yin and yang is represented in Taoism by the Taijitu (literally "diagram of the supreme ultimate"). The term is commonly used to mean the simple "divided circle" form, but may refer to any of several schematic diagrams representing these principles, such as the swastika, common to Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. Similar symbols have also appeared in other cultures, such as in Celtic art and Roman shield markings.

Yin and yang transform each other: like an undertow in the ocean, every advance is complemented by a retreat, and every rise transforms into a fall. Thus, a seed will sprout from the earth and grow upwards towards the sky—an intrinsically yang movement. Then, when it reaches its full potential height, it will fall. Also, the growth of the top seeks light, while roots grow in darkness.

