

INTRODUCTION

HUANG DI NEI JING 黃帝內經

(The Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor)

IN THIS TUTORIAL...

- Introduction of the book
- A brief discussion of the 1st chapter
- Group discussion on:
 - 1) Four Seasons and the Human Body (Worksheets provided)
 - 2) Yin and Yang in *Huang di nei jing*
 - 3) What is Qi 气?
- Conclusion

About the book...

- Authorship

Unknown. Could be a compilation of several fragmentary texts of several authors.

- Date of completion

Exact time unknown. Book was first written no earlier than 4th century B.C. and completed in 3rd century A.D.).

The present edition of the text (that we are using) was compiled in the 11th century A.D.

■ The structure of the *Huang di nei jing*

Divided into two parts:

Su wen 素問 (Basic Questions)—9 *juan* 卷 (volumes/chapters)

Ling shu 灵枢 (Spiritual Pivot)—9 *juan* 卷

■ Content focus

Su wen—Anatomy, Physiology, and Therapy

Ling shu—Meridians and Accupoints

- *Huang di nei jing: Su wen Chapter 1*

In former times there was Huang Di.

When he came to life, he had magic power like a spirit.

While he was [still] weak , he could speak.

While he was [still] young , he was quick of apprehension.

After he had grown up, he was sincere and skillfull.

After he had matured , he ascended to heaven.

Now, he asked the Heavenly Teacher:

“I have heard that the people of high antiquity,
in [the sequence of] spring and autumn, all exceeded one hundred
years.

But in their movements and activities there was no weakening.

As for the people of today, after one half of a hundred years, the
movements and activities of all of them weaken.

Is this because the times are different?

Or is it that the people have lost this [ability]?”

Qi Bo responded:

“The people of high antiquity, those who knew the Way [Dao]
they modeled [their behavior] on yin and yang and
they complied with the arts and the calculations.

[Their] eating and drinking was moderate.

[Their] rising and resting had regularity.

They did not tax [themselves] with meaningless work.

Hence, they were able to keep physical appearance and spirit together,
and to exhaust the years [allotted by] heaven.

Their life span exceeded one hundred years before they departed.

The fact that people of today are different is because they take wine as an [ordinary] beverage,
and they adopt absurd [behavior] as regular [behavior].

They are drunk when they enter the [women's] chambers.

Through their lust they exhaust their essence [*jing*],
through their wastefulness they dissipate their true [*qi*].

What was the Yellow Emperor's concern in his conversation with his adviser?

“The formation of vessel theory (*mai li* 脉理) and of the yin-yang (阴阳) and five-agents (*wu xing* 五行) doctrines of **systematic correspondence** was part of a wide-ranging intellectual movement in Chinese natural philosophy whose beginnings can be seen in the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C.”

- Paul Unschuld

Huang di nei jing was written around the same time when its authors were convinced by the above set of fairly understandable natural laws.

- Underlying Philosophy of *Huang di nei jing*

Combining the views of different schools, Su Wen relies exclusively on natural law as conceptualised in “Yin” & “Yang” and Five Agents doctrines to define health and disease, and repeatedly emphasises personal responsibility for the length and quality of one's life.

READING TEXT

CHAPTER 2

COMPREHENSIVE DISCOURSE ON REGULATING THE SPIRIT
[IN ACCORDANCE WITH] THE QI OF THE FOUR [SEASONS]

Discussion Question One

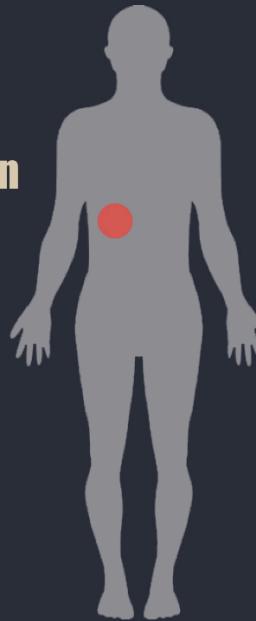
How do the different seasons correspond and relate to the human body?

CHAPTER 2

The three months of spring, they denote **effusion and spreading**.
Heaven and earth together **generate life**; the myriad beings flourish.
Go to **rest late** at night and **rise early**.
Move through the courtyard with long strides.
Dishevel the hair and relax the physical appearance,
thereby cause the mind [to orient itself on] life.
Give life and **do not kill**.
Give and **do not take**.
Reward and **do not punish**.
This is correspondence with the qi of spring and it is the way to nourish
life. Opposing it harms the **liver**.
In summer, this causes changes to cold,
and there is little to support growth.

SPRING

- **Maintain Generation**

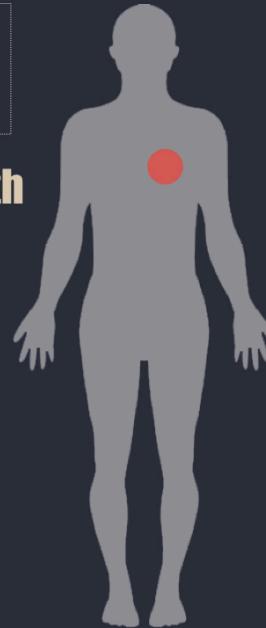


CHAPTER 2

The three months of summer, they denote **opulence** and **blossoming**.
The qi of heaven and earth interact and the myriad beings bloom and **bear fruit**.
Go to rest late at night and rise early.
Never get enough of the sun.
Let the mind **have no anger**.
Stimulate beauty and have your elegance perfected.
Cause the qi to flow away.
As if that what you loved were **located outside**.
This is correspondence with the qi of summer and it is the way to nourish growth.
Opposing it harms the **heart**.
In autumn this causes **jie** and **malaria**, and there is little to support gathering.
Multiple disease [develops] at winter solstice.

SUMMER

- **Maintain Growth**



CHAPTER 2

The three months of autumn, they denote taking in and **balance**.

The qi of heaven becomes tense. The qi of the earth becomes bright.

Go to **rest early and rise early**.

Get up together with the chicken.

Let the mind be **peaceful** and tranquil,

so as to temper the punishment carried out in autumn.

Collect the spirit qi and cause the **autumn qi to be balanced**.

Do not direct your mind to the outside and cause the lung qi to be clear.

This is correspondence with the qi of autumn and it is the way to nourish gathering.

Opposing it harms the **lung**.

In winter this causes outflow of [undigested] food and there is little to support storage.

AUTUMN

- **Maintain Balance**



CHAPTER 2

The three months of winter; they denote **securing and storing**.

The water is frozen and the earth breaks open.

Do not disturb the **yang [qi]**.

Go to rest early and rise late.

You must wait for the sun to shine.

Let the mind enter a state as if hidden, {as if shut in}

as if you had secret intentions; as if you already had made gains.

Avoid cold and **seek warmth** and do not [allow sweat] to flow away through the skin.

This would cause the **qi** to be carried away quickly.

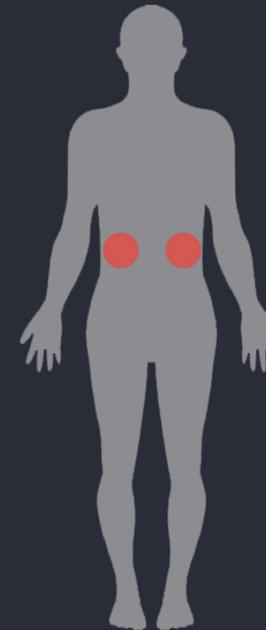
This is correspondence with the **qi** of winter and it is the way of nourishing storage.

Opposing it harms the **kidneys**.

In spring this causes limpness with receding [qi]. and there is little to support generation.

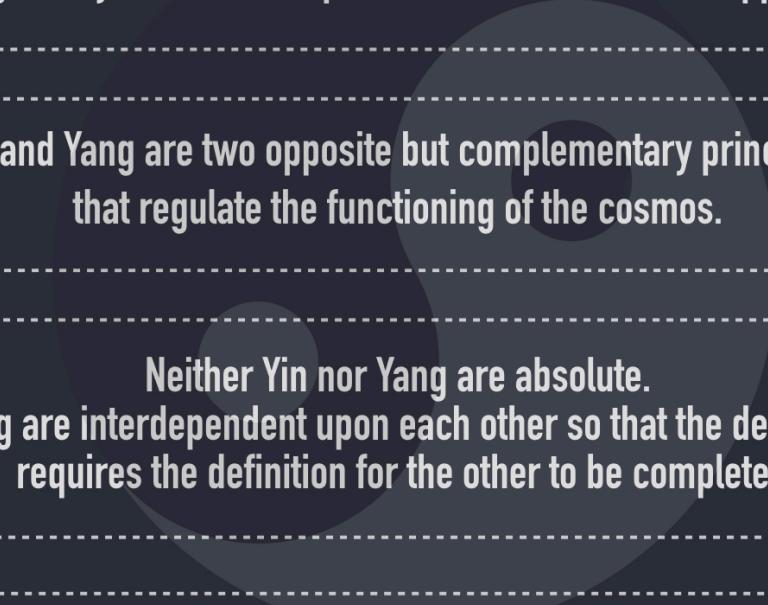
WINTER

- To Preserve



DISCUSSION QUESTION TWO

How is the concept of yin-yang reflected in
this chapter?



The Yin Yang theory holds that all phenomena consist of two opposite aspects

**Yin and Yang are two opposite but complementary principles
that regulate the functioning of the cosmos.**

**Neither Yin nor Yang are absolute.
Yin and Yang are interdependent upon each other so that the definition of one
requires the definition for the other to be complete.**

Their balance is essential to health and harmony

Yang 阳

Day

Spring

Summer

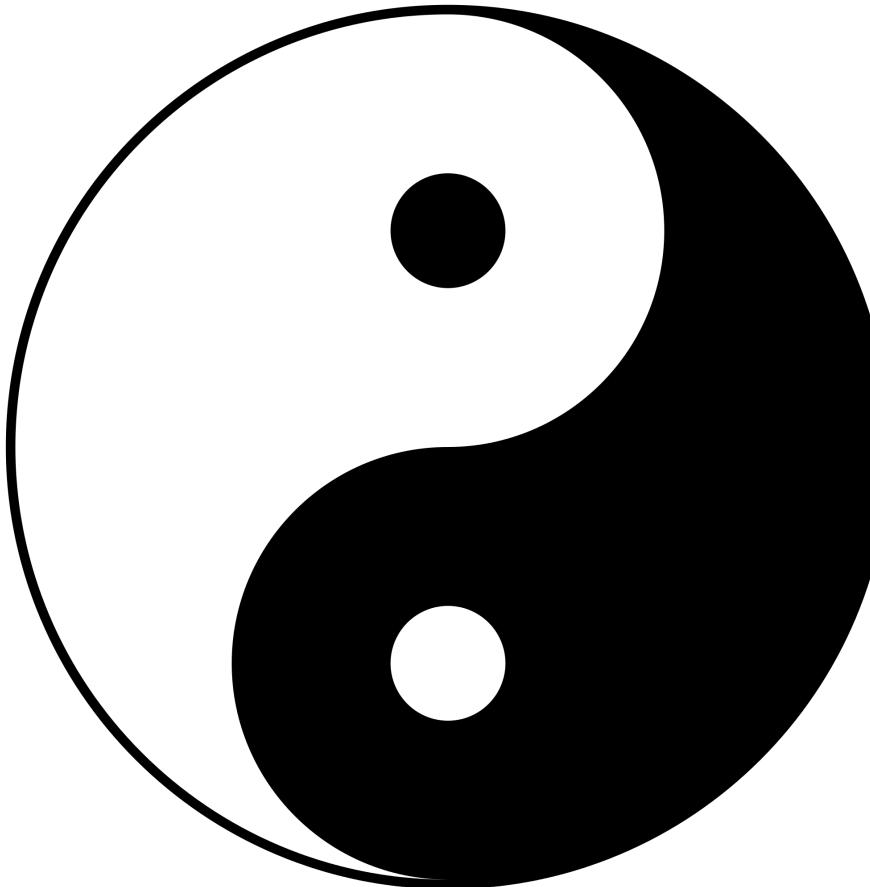
Anger

Heart

Liver

Upper Body

Male



Yin 阴

Night

Autumn

Winter

Calm

Lungs

Kidneys

Lower Body

Female

Nothing is totally Yang or totally Yin. Just as the state of total Yin is reached, Yang begins to increase. Change is constant.

DISCUSSION QUESTION THREE

What is your understanding of the concept
of qi 氣 found in the chapter?

The qi of heaven is that which is clear and pure, lustrous and brilliant.
[Heaven] stores [its] virtue without end.
Hence, it does not [let its virtue] move downwards.
When heaven were to shine, then sun and moon would not shine, and evil
would harm the orifices.
As for yang qi, when it is obstructed,
as for the qi of the earth, when its brilliance is covered,
then clouds and fog are not clear.
As a result, corresponding above, white dew fails to descend.
Interaction fails to manifest itself.
The life of the myriad beings, hence, no [longer] receives any bestowals.
When there are no bestowals, then many eminent trees die.

Greek— *haima* and *pneuma*
Chinese—xue 血 and *qi* 气

Beginning in 6th century B.C., ancient Greek philosophers spoke of pneuma as the primordial stuff pervading the universe, constantly moving and that, through conglomeration and dispersion, forms all things.

Compare to the Chinese?

Hence,
yin [qi], yang [qi], and the four seasons,
they constitute end and begin of the myriad beings,
they are the basis of death and life.
Opposing them results in catastrophe and harms life.
If one follows them, severe diseases will not emerge.
This is called “to achieve the Way.”

CHAPTER 2

Qi is the source of all movement of the body

Qi protects the body against pathological factors

Qi is the source of production and transformation of blood, tears, sweat, and urine

Qi governs over the body's ability to retain substances such as blood

Qi warms the body

What is the conclusion of Chapter 2 of Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor?

是故圣人不治已病，治未病，不治已乱，治未乱，此之谓也。

夫病已成而后药之，乱已成而后治之，譬犹渴而穿井，斗而铸锥，不亦晚乎？

Hence, [when it is said] “the sages did not treat those already ill, but treated those not yet ill,

They did not put in order what was already in disorder, but put in order what was not yet in disorder,”

then this means just the same.

Now, when drugs are employed for therapy only after a disease has become fully

developed,

when [attempts at] restoring order are initiated only after disorder has fully

developed,

this is as if a well were dug when one is thirsty,

and as if weapons were cast when the fight is on.

Would this not be too late, too?

CHAPTER 2

The relation between human health and the four seasons

I

II

Points out that going against seasonal change patterns is a cause for disease, further emphasising the importance of the concept of prevention.

III

How the balance of Qi [chi] and Yin Yang directly impacts health.