



The Dance of Yin and Yang

Balancing Masculine and Feminine Energies Within

Denise Frer Ed.D., HTCP

More than two-thousand years ago, the Chinese put together all they knew about nature, man, and the universe into a system for improving the health of the human body.

According to the theory, the living human being is in a constant state of change as explained through the theory of yin and yang, which appeared in written form around 700 BC.

According to the theory, nature expresses itself in an endless cycle of opposites such as day and night, moisture and dryness, heat and cold, and activity and rest. The morning fog (yin) is dissipated by the heat of the sun (yang); the forest fire (yang) is extinguished by the rainstorm (yin); the darkness of night (yin) is replaced by the light of day (yang). Yin creates yang; yang creates yin. There is a mechanism of balance in nature and in the human body. When the body gets too cold due to exposure, the muscles shiver to generate heat.

Everything in health can be expressed as the opposition of yin and yang. Yin and yang are interdependent and neither has any meaning without the other. All disease patterns pass through Yin and Yang phases until resolved.

The circular fish tail in the Yin/Yang symbol shows that yin and yang are flowing and always changing. Yin functions are nourishing, building, and relaxing. Yang is energizing, warming, and stimulating. Yin is substance to the body; like a log is to a fire. Yang is the fire (energy) that is fueled by Yin. It is necessary to first rebuild the Yin so that the Yang energy can burn long and bright. There can be no Yin without Yang and there is no Yang without Yin.

The concept of gender to Chinese thinkers involves female and male. The deeply rooted gender connotations recognize the interplay between male and female. Yang and yin are not exclusively defined as “male” and “female,” and either sex can be considered yin or yang within a given context depending on the

relation to one another. Yin refers to the female and yang to the male. While gender remains fixed, their coupling with yin and yang is not.

The original meaning of yin and yang had little to do with gender differences. Yin and yang are speaking to the relationship between genders, and not to physical natures. Yin and yang traits are used to describe the broad difference between males and females as they interact with one another. Having men be yang in relation to women who are yin.

Today, it is advantageous to avoid any reference to social inequality and to focus on the complementary nature of male and female characteristics. Gender is not something static or unchangeable. Natural human tendencies are not simply inherent, they can grow and be refined. Chinese philosophy emphasizes the differences between males and females and that each has their own aspects, which are complementary and can form a harmonious whole.

The nature of men and women in Chinese philosophy is not only based on physiological characteristics and differences but is also the embodiment of yin and yang forces in gender. We all have feminine (yin) and masculine (yang) energies in us. It does not matter whether we are male or female.

The ancient Chinese symbol shows the union of opposites—the masculine and feminine energies present in all of us. Yin is the feminine life force of harmony, relaxation, rest, and intuition. Yang energy is active, linear, structured, and forward-moving. We need both forces to move and be active as much as we need rest and rejuvenation. Yin and yang are interdependent and neither has any meaning without the other.

There are basic mechanisms of balance in the human body. If you have a sprained ankle; first the ankle is hot and inflamed. This yang condition moves to yin, the swelling goes down and the ankle becomes chill.

If a person who eats cold food (yin) on a cold damp

day (yin) may experience excessive mucus (yin). A person who performs strenuous activity (yang) on a hot day (yang) might experience dehydration with a fever (yang).

Yin functions are nourishing, building, and relaxing, and relates to the structure and substance of the organs. Yang is energizing, warming, and stimulating, and relates to the function of the organs. Traditional Chinese Medical Theory dictates that all the energies in the body must be balanced to one another for there to be good health and vitality; so, yin (substance) must be balanced with yang (organs) and must harmoniously work together. For example, the kidneys' role is to transport the body's water to every cell, every corner of the mind, body, and spirit. If the water isn't distributed or distributed evenly to irrigate our cells, tissues, joints, thoughts/ideas, and our souls then the kidney yin is deficient or depleted.

A person can experience hot flashes and night sweats, as occurs in menopause when estrogen (yin) levels decline. This is due to insufficient moisture (yin) to keep the metabolic fire (yang) which keeps the body warm, under control.

An imbalance of yin and yang accounts for the development and emergence of all disease. Disease should be treated according to their yin and yang nature. Life is a series of polarities, a constant balancing act. We need both yin and yang masculine and feminine, body and mind. We need to tap into both forces to bring greater awareness and insight into our daily lives, healing, and recovery. €

Resources:

- URL:<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S09789792959197999959>
- Tai Lahans L.A.C., M.TCM, M.Ed., Integrating Convention and Chinese Medicine in Cancer Care, 2007
- <https://iiep.utm.edu/gender-in-chinese-philosophy/#:-text=The%20...er%20Scripture%20the.inferior%2C%20still%2Cand%20gentle>
- Frer, Denise Ed.D., Ancient Chinese Medicine Five Elements Theory for Healing



Author Denise Frer can be reached at denise@drdenisefrer.com