



Tai Chi, Qigong, and Daoist Philosophy

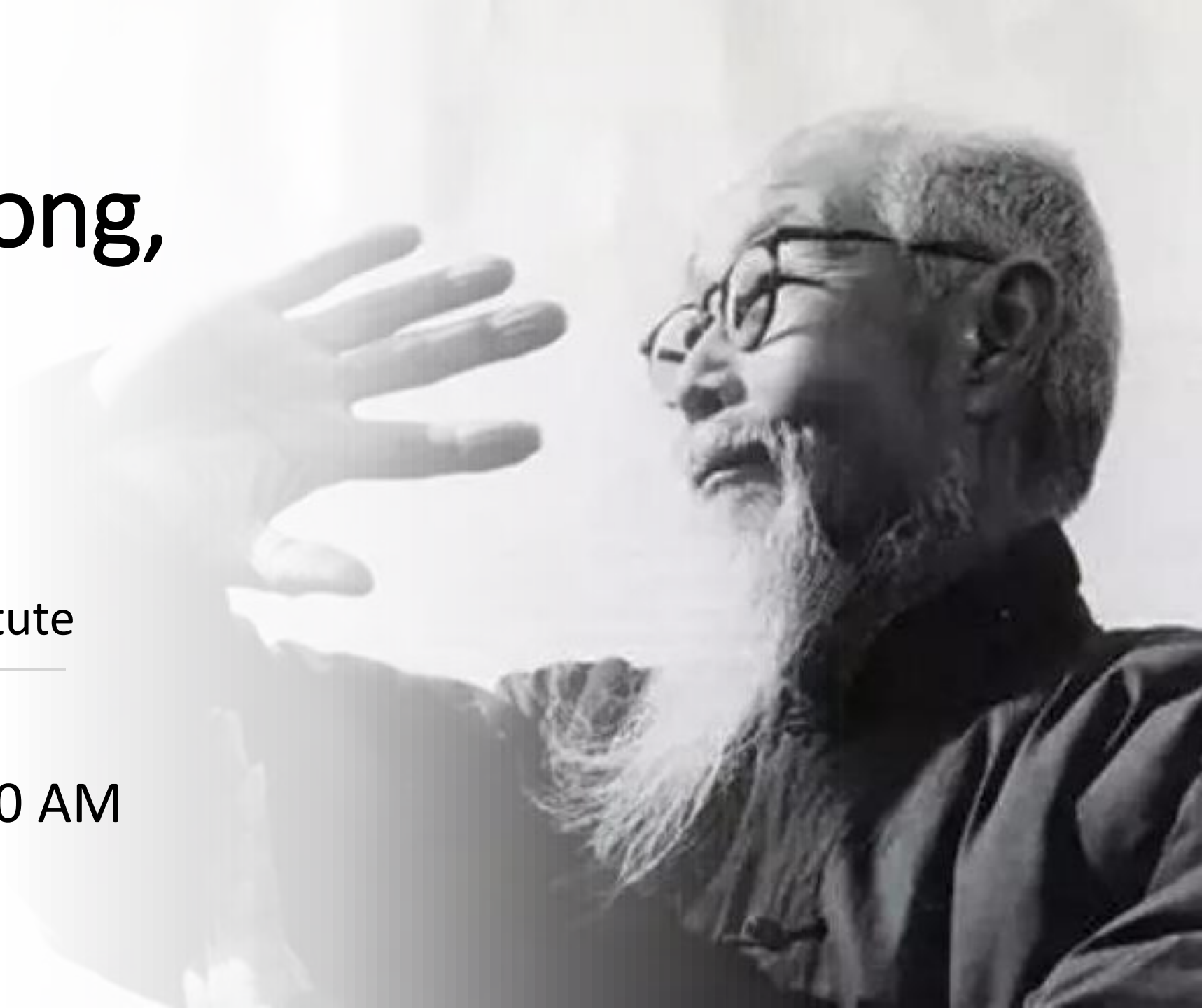
Workshop for
Lifetime Learning Institute

Dr. Dawn H. Li

2/16/2024, 10-11:30 AM



LOTUS LEAF



Preparatory Exercise

Connect: fly like an eagle --Raise arms at your sides, breathing in and out

Remove stiffness:

- Swing side to side to loosen your shoulders and waist
- Gently bend down and let your arms hang
- Stand and shake the whole body, gently lifting your heels if you can

Slowly close



Contents

1. “The name that can be named is not the eternal name”
 - The “spaces” and “holes”
 - Yin Yang mindset
 - East vs West; East meets West
 - Dawn’s journey
2. The Art of Qigong
 - Three Treasures; What is Qigong
 - Body as a Garden not a Machine
 - Inner medicine and Qi cultivation
 - Sample Qigong forms
 - Exercise: How we apply Qigong principles to standing, walking, moving, and being
3. **The Art of Tai Chi (Session 2)**
 - What is Tai Chi?
 - Stance
 - Balance
 - Circular movements
 - Sample Tai Chi forms
 - Exercise: How we apply Tai Chi principles to standing, walking, moving, and being
4. **Daoist Philosophy (Session 2)**
 - Cosmology: Wuji, Dao, Yin Yang, Ba Guan, I Ching
 - Healing: Five elements and their correspondences
 - Ideal: Balance and harmony
5. **Daoist Way of Life**
 - Daily practice guide: 24-Hour Body Clock (Circadian rhythm)
 - Year-round practice guide: 24 Solar Terms (Seasonal adaptation)
6. 21-Day Qigong Challenge
 - 21 Days of Qigong
 - Classes, events, and online resources
 - Teachers and books
7. A Few Takeaways
8. Questions





1. “The name that can be named is not the eternal name”

- The “spaces” and “holes”
- Yin Yang mindset
- East vs West
- East meets West
- Dawn’s journey

Look at your
hand. What
do you see?



Not just empty spaces, but
energy or vital force flows
everywhere, in the external
space and within us

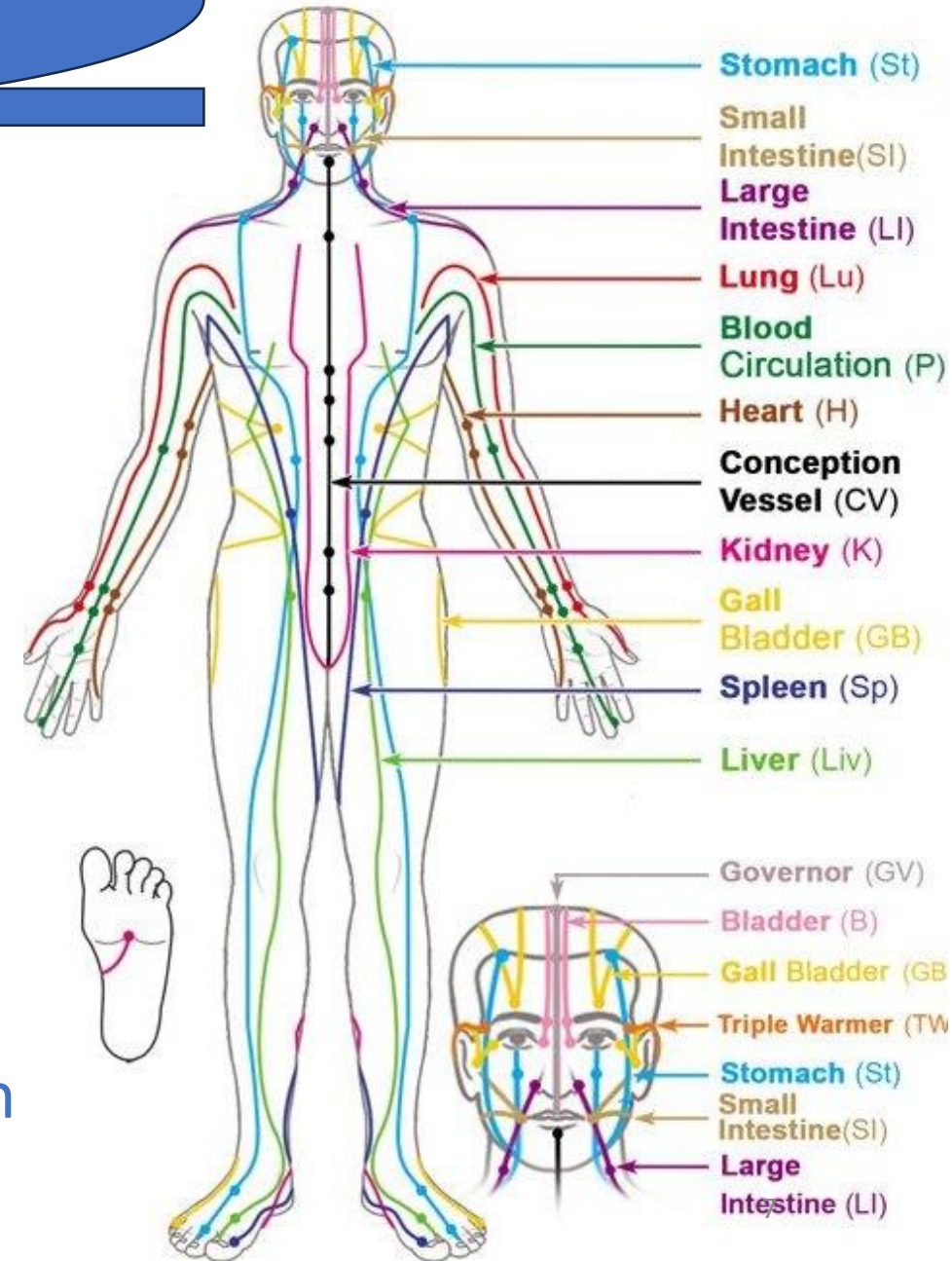
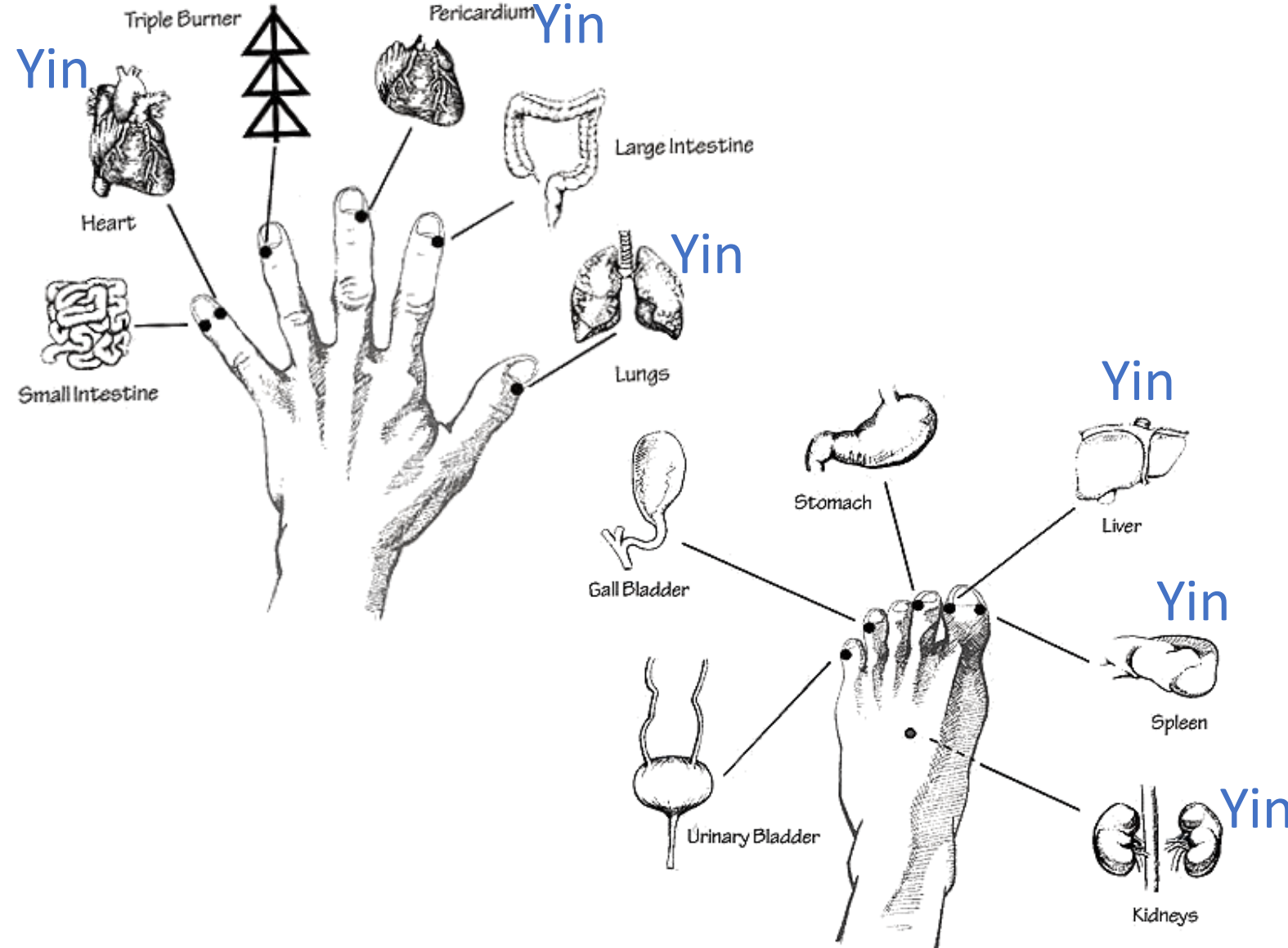


And feet
too!

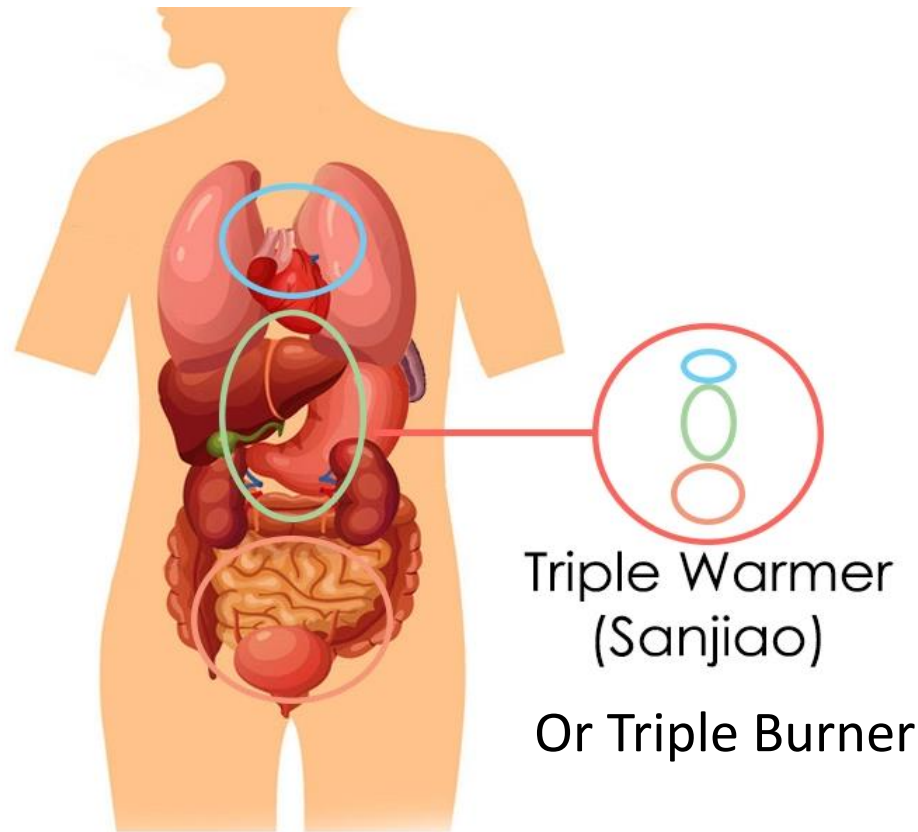


And fingers and feet connect the entire body through energy channels called meridians!

Meridians



The ancient Chinese even created an “organ,” from a cluster of organs that have combined Qi flow! The organs are composed of those “spaces” between the upper, middle and lower chest organs in our body



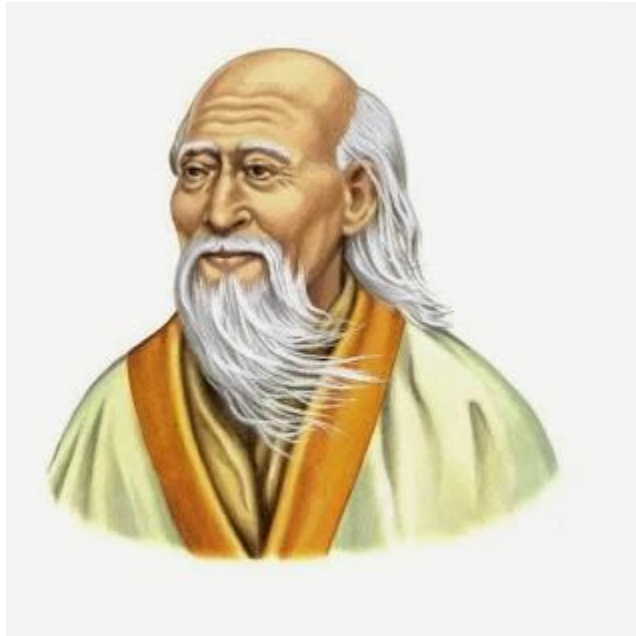
- Upper Burner: heart and lungs
- Middle Burner: stomach and spleen
- Lower Burner: liver, kidneys, large intestine, small intestine, and bladder

“Usefulness comes from what is not there”

Chinese medicine focuses on the function of organs and not organs themselves.

**“Shape clay into a vessel;
It is the space within that makes it useful.
Cut doors and windows for a room;
It is the holes which make it useful.
Therefore, benefit comes from what is there;
Usefulness from what is not there.”**

----Laozi, *Tao Te Ching* verse 11 (5th century B.C.)



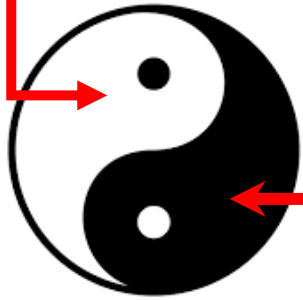
(Daoist beliefs existed long before Laozi’s book
Tao Te Ching)



Bowl | China | Neolithic period, Majiayao culture (ca. 3300–2050 B.C.)

The Yin Yang Mindset

“What is there”



Clockwise

“What is not there”

It is not yin and yang. It is yin yang – one thing not two!!!



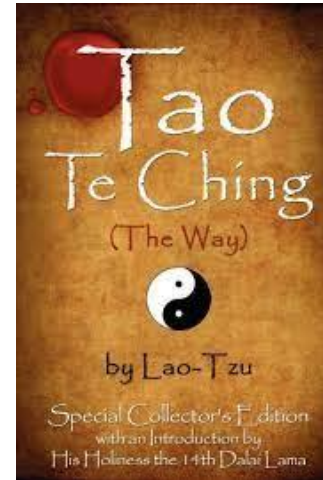
“You must be shapeless, formless, like water. When you pour water in a cup, it becomes the cup. When you pour water in a bottle, it becomes the bottle. When you pour water in a teapot, it becomes the teapot. Water can drip and it can crash. Become like water my friend.”

--- Bruce Lee 10

East vs West

Modern Chinese Philosopher Dr. Feng You Lan “Short History of Chinese Philosophy”:

Suppose philosophy is a building. Western philosophers are concerned with the structure of the building -- pillars and beams; Chinese philosophers with the empty space and the flow of energy.



*This refers to **Daoist philosophy**. Daoist philosophy has shaped all aspects of ancient Chinese / east Asian civilization -- culture, arts, literature, medicine, architecture, and more.*

Workouts



East meets West Washington DC



Designed by Maya Lin (1982)

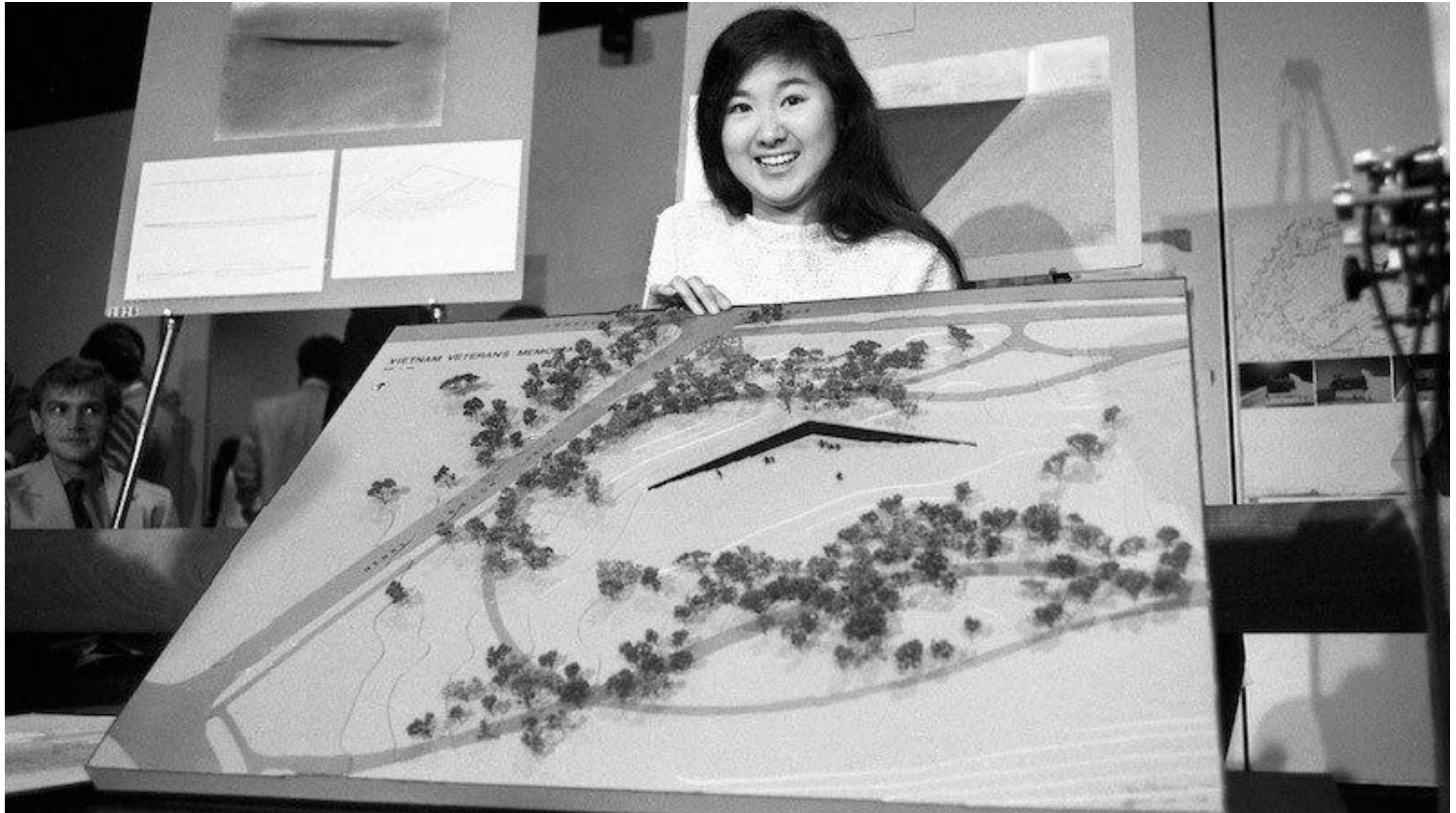


Designed by I. M. Pei (1978)

Vietnam Veterans Memorial



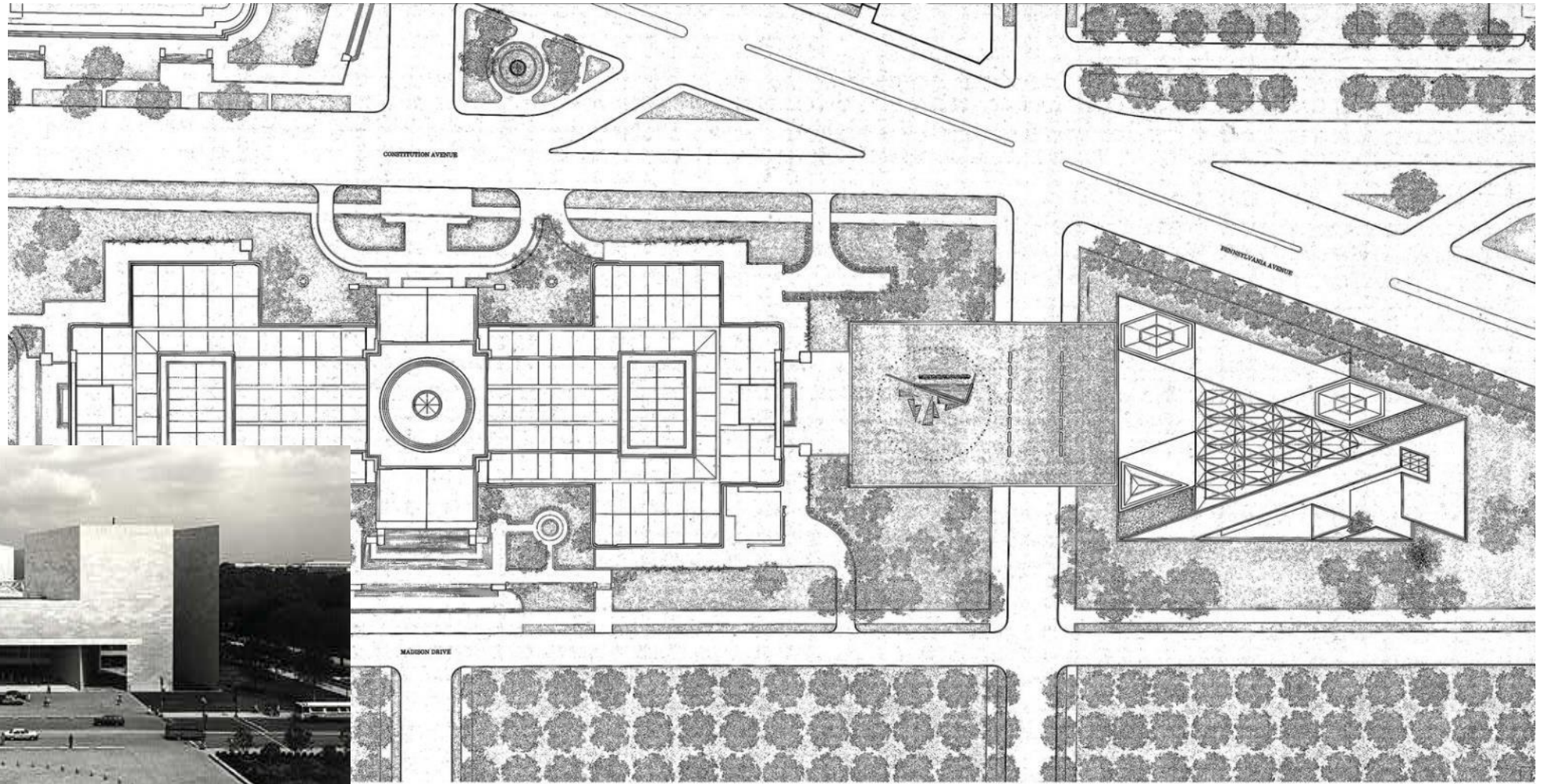
Vietnam Veterans Memorial (Class Project by 21-Year-Old Maya Lin)



East and West Art Galleries, Washington DC



East and West Art Galleries, Washington DC



Dawn's Journey

Qigong and Tai Chi guided me from vulnerability to inner wisdom



20s Health improved by Tai Chi and Qigong (Disciple of Intelligent Qigong and Tunan Tai Chi; received Chinese Medicine Certificate)

Late 40s & 50s, reversed diabetes whole person health, acupuncture study at MUIH, teach Qigong and Tai Chi; formed Lotus Leaf LLC to promote Tai Chi, Qigong, and natural healing



Born with weak constitution



PhD
In literature
religion,
cultural
studies
MS in
technology

Mid 40s,
diabetes
diagnosis
from
overwork and
overeating



50s. yoga, dance, and traditional world movement arts



Goal:
Healthy,
joyful to
100

Exercise

Connect: Stand centered
between heaven and earth

Finetune triple burner: Two
hands holding up the sky

Breathe deeper: draw the
bow and open the chest

Improve digestion:
Separating the earth and sky

Close





2. The Art of Qigong

- Three Treasures
- The concept of Qi
- Body as a Garden not a Machine
- Inner Medicine and Qi Cultivation
- Sample Qigong Forms
- Exercise: How we apply Qigong principles to standing, walking, moving, and being

Inner “Medicine” and Qi Cultivation

Qi is one of the three treasures of a human being:

1. Jing (body, genetic foundation, essence of life)
2. **Qi (breath, energy, life force)**
3. Shen (spirit)



Three Treasures -- Jing, Qi, Shen

What is Qigong?

Qi: Pronounced as “chee” as in “cheese”, is the vital life force that flows through the universe and our body

Qi types: Yuan (primordial) qi and food qi

Gong: work, cultivation, same word as in “gong fu”

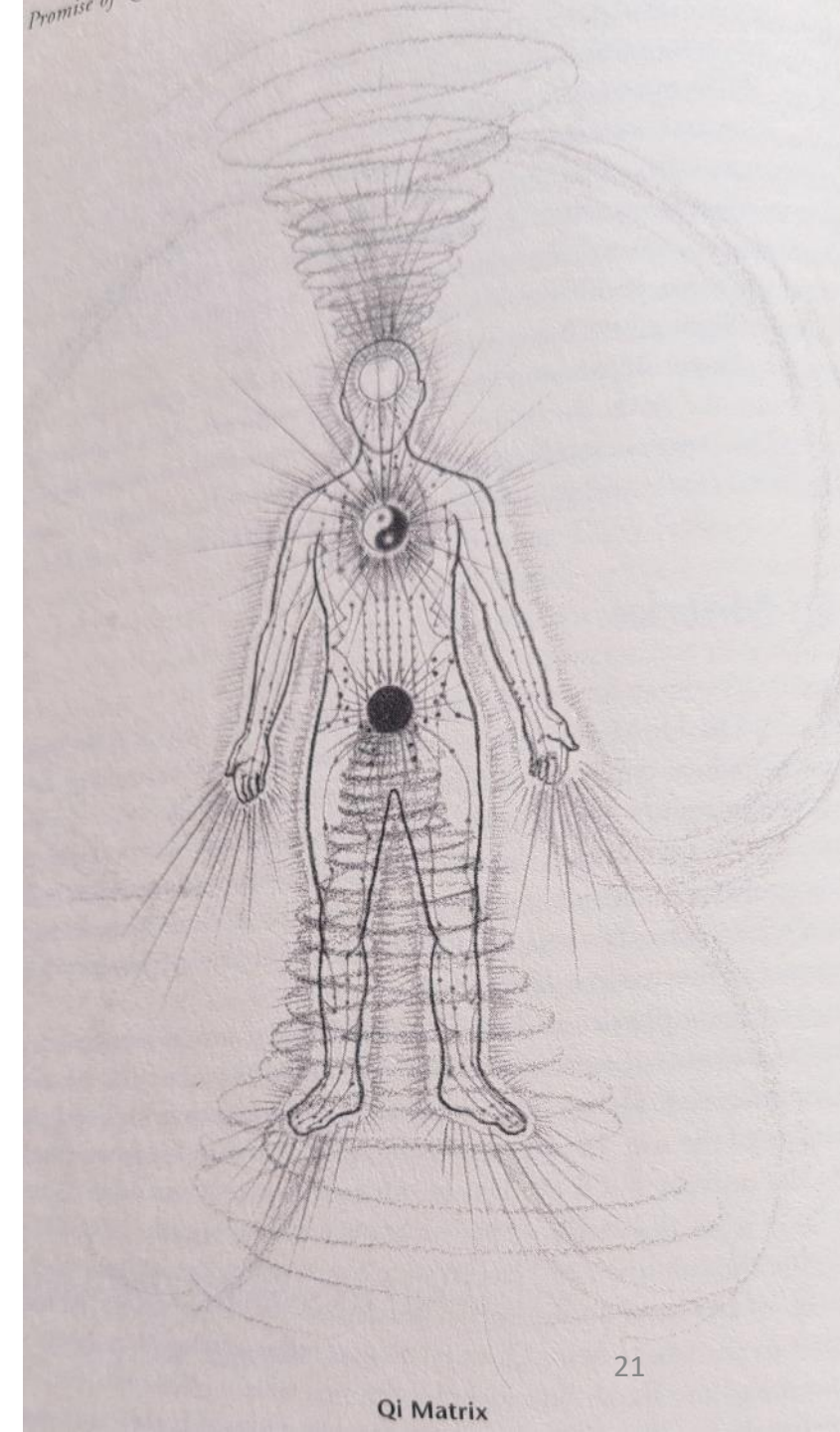
气功 (Simplified Chinese):

氣功 (Traditional Chinese)

炁功 (Old Chinese term, referring to yuan or original qi)

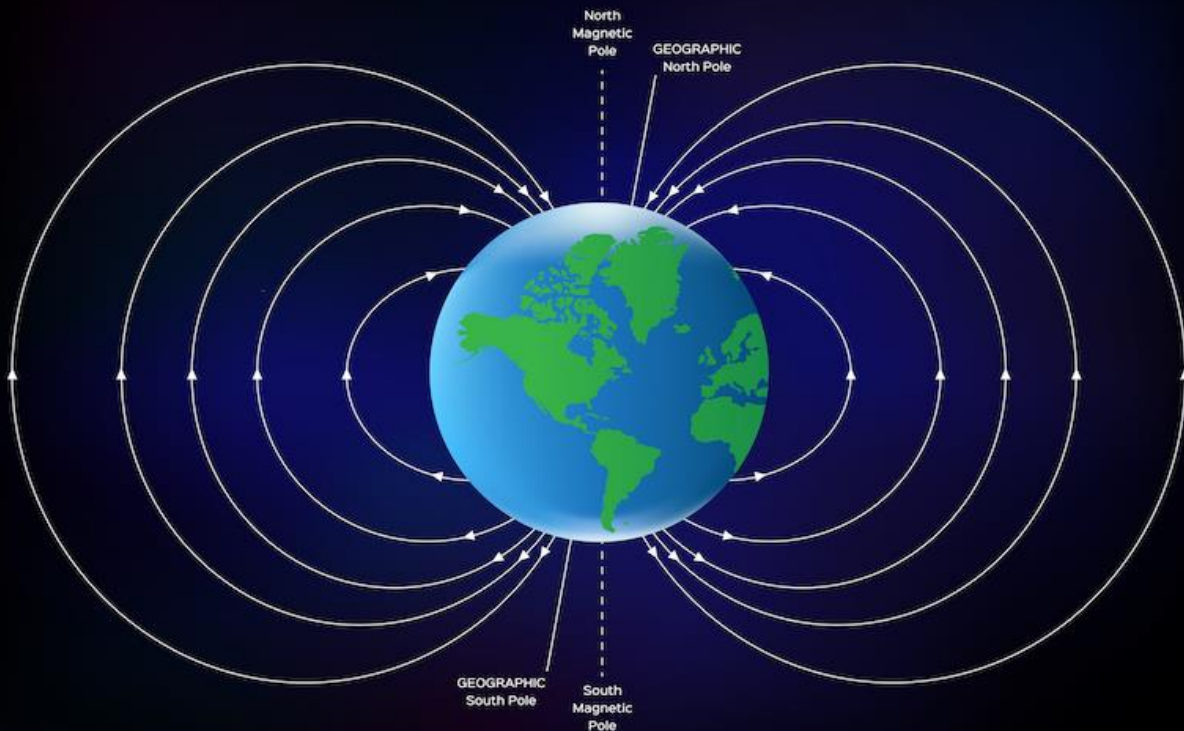
**Qigong is the Cultivation of Qi.
Qigong is also called Daoyin.**

Qi
功



The “empty” space is not empty! It is filled with vital force, or energy -- an electromagnetic field

earth magnetic field



The nervous system acts as an antenna, which responds to the magnetic fields produced by the hearts of other individuals. Researchers call this "energetic communication."



“Everything is energy and that's all there is to it.”

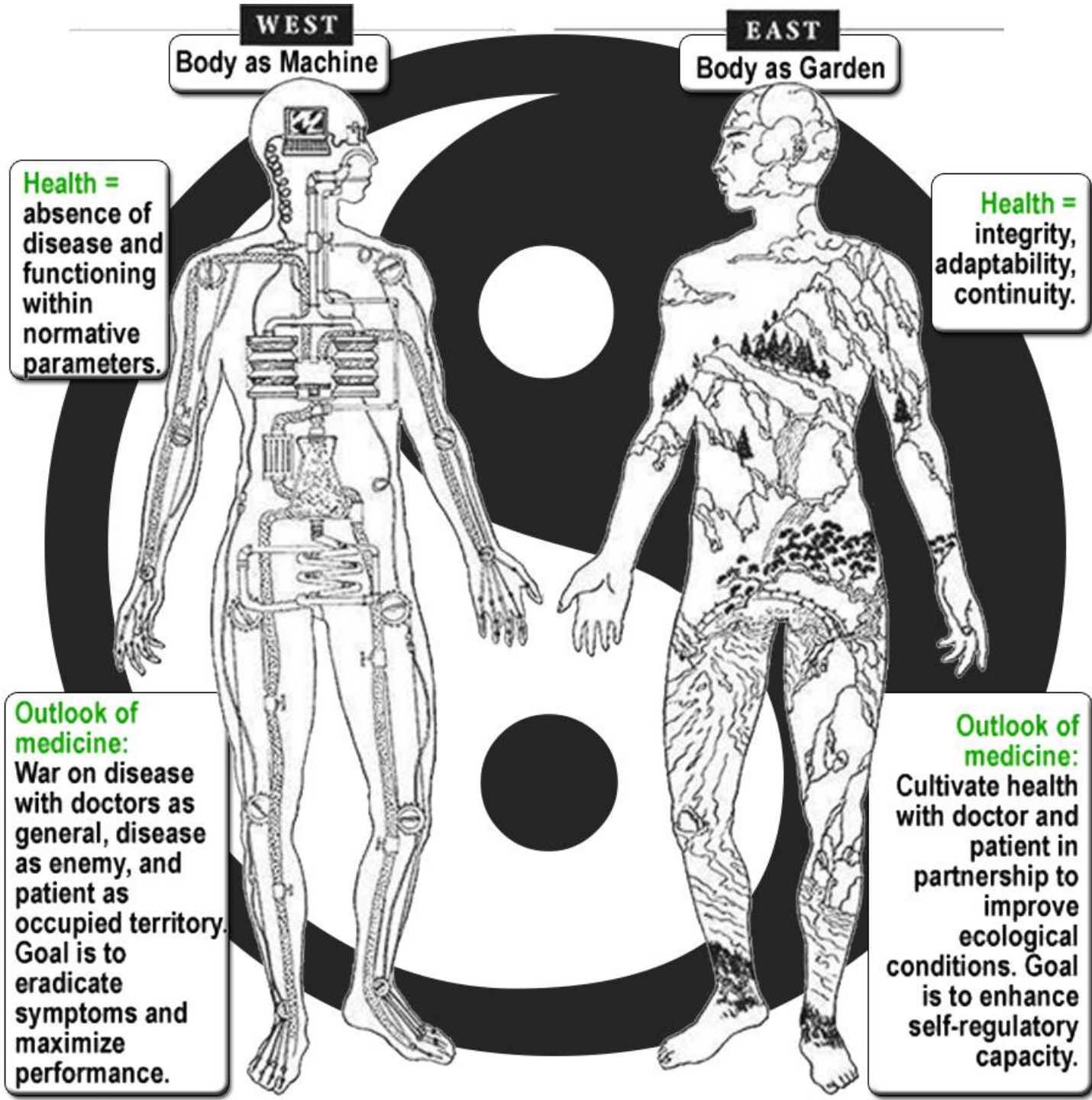
---Albert Einstein

“If you want to find the secrets of the universe, think in terms of energy, frequency and vibration.”

---Nikola Tesla

Medicine

East vs West



The Body as a Garden / Landscape

Qi flows inside of us, energizing, nourishing, and supporting every cell, tissue, muscle, organ and gland in our body.

Our body also connects to and exchanges with the Qi outside.

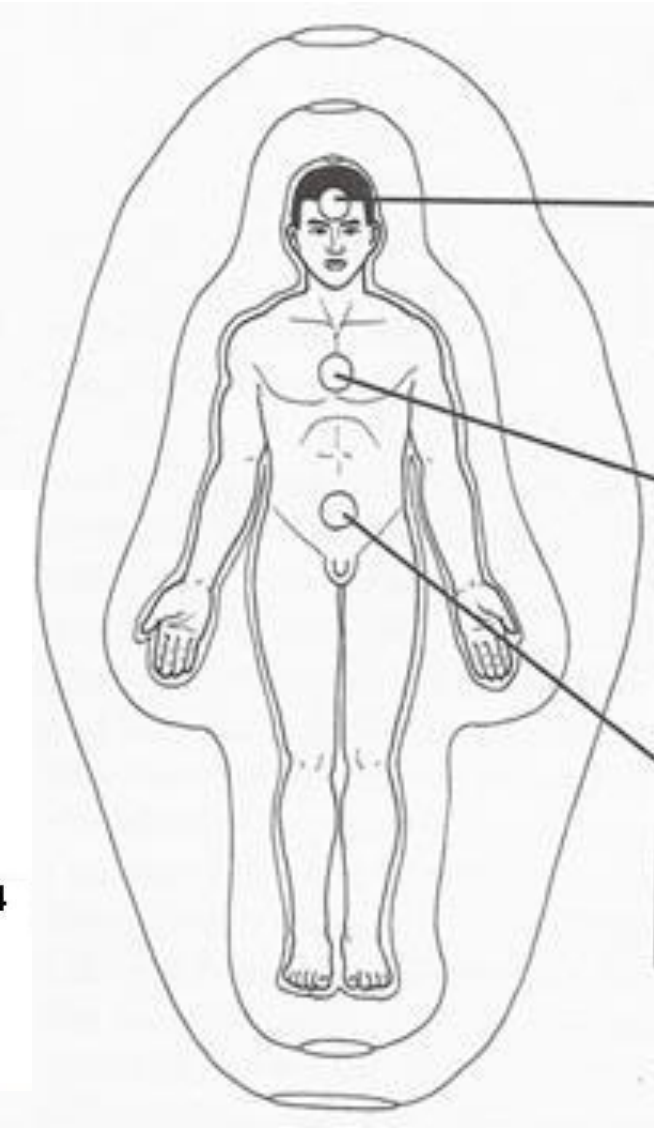
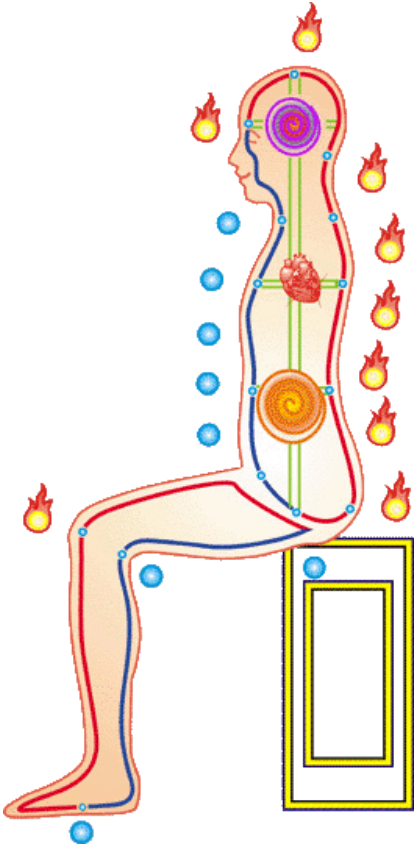
Humans are the microcosm of the macrocosm. Each of us is not a drop of ocean. We are an entire ocean in a drop.



A Daoist "inner landscape" diagram of the human body illustrating Neidan 'internal alchemy', Wu Xing, Yin and Yang, and Chinese mythology

Illustration of meditation from Tang dynasty (618-907 A.D.)

Dantian / Dan Tian –
Elixir Field or Qi
Reservoir;
Microcosmic Orbit



Upper Dantian

Middle Dantian

Lower Dantian
(frequently
called the
Dantian)

Three Dantians: Upper,
Middle, Lower Dantian

Qigong Standing Pose:
Open your qi or energy gates to promote maximum energy flow



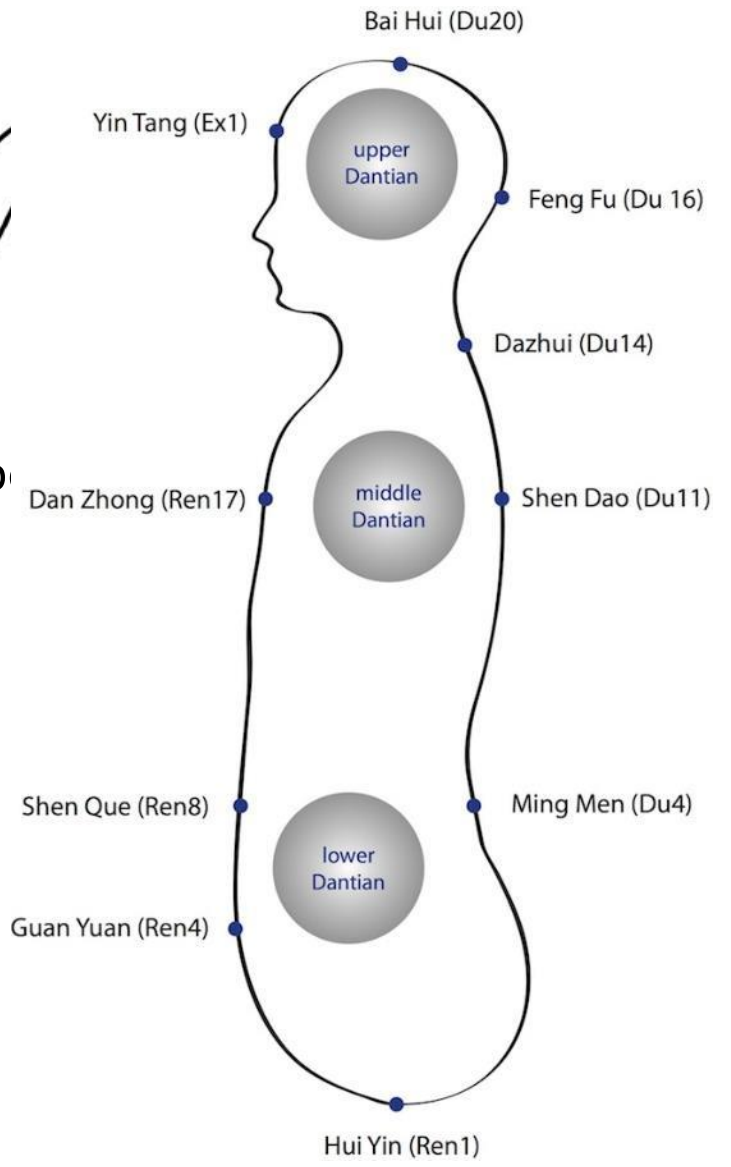
Labor Palace Acupoint



Hundred Convergence Acupoint

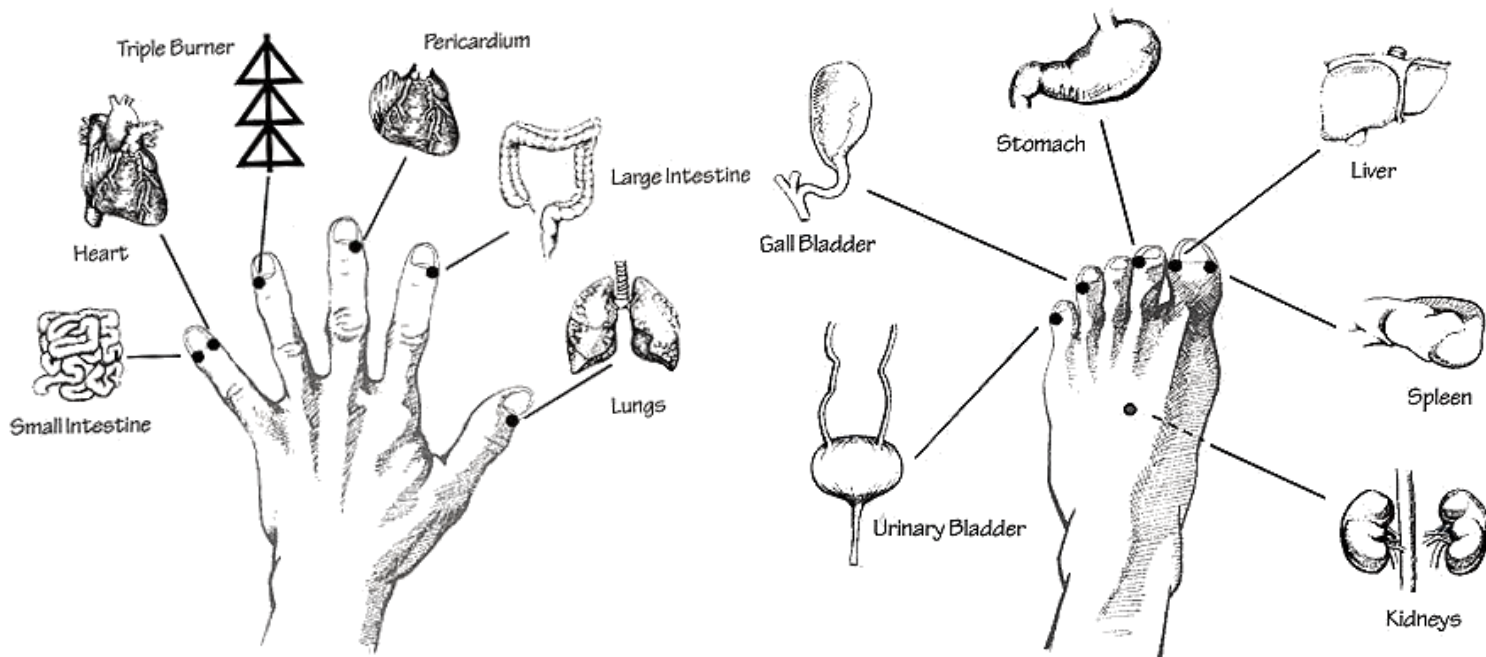


Bubbling Spring Acupoint

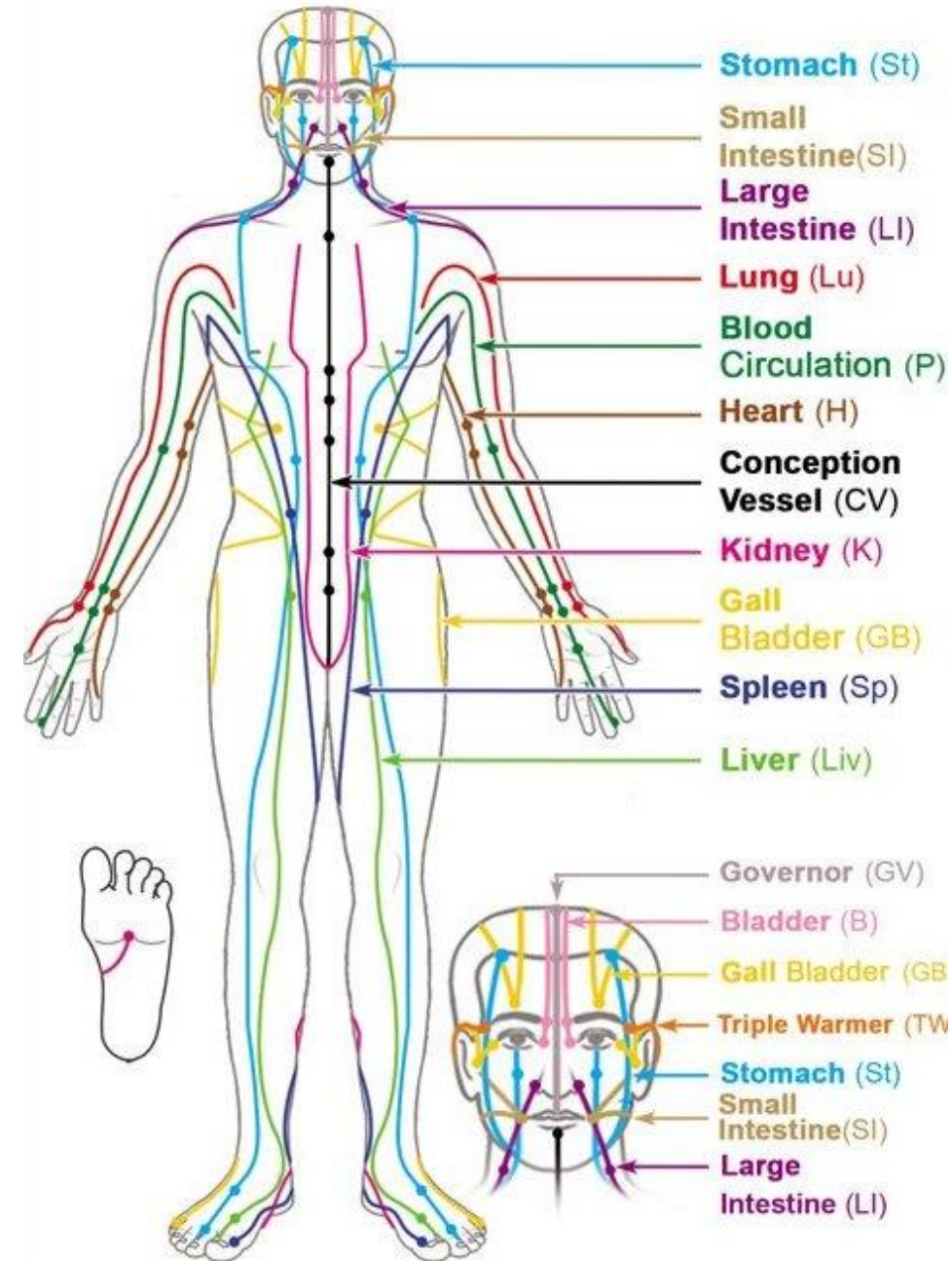


12 Meridians or energy channels start from our hands and feet and run through our entire body. They take on yin yang qualities. For example, lung meridian is yin and is paired with large intestine meridian. Your organs are not “lonely”/ “isolated”.

Imagine them connected in a harmonious orchestra and you are the conductor of these organs that give you this beautiful dynamic body filled with energy!

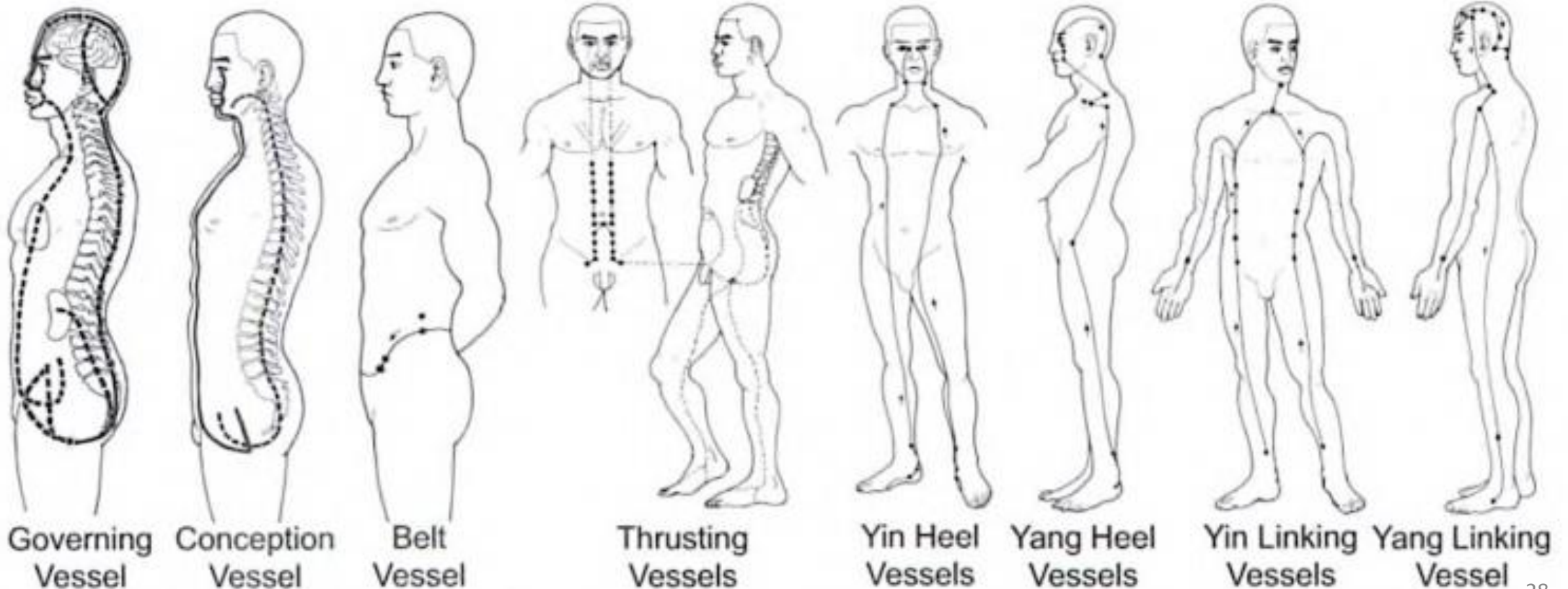


Meridians

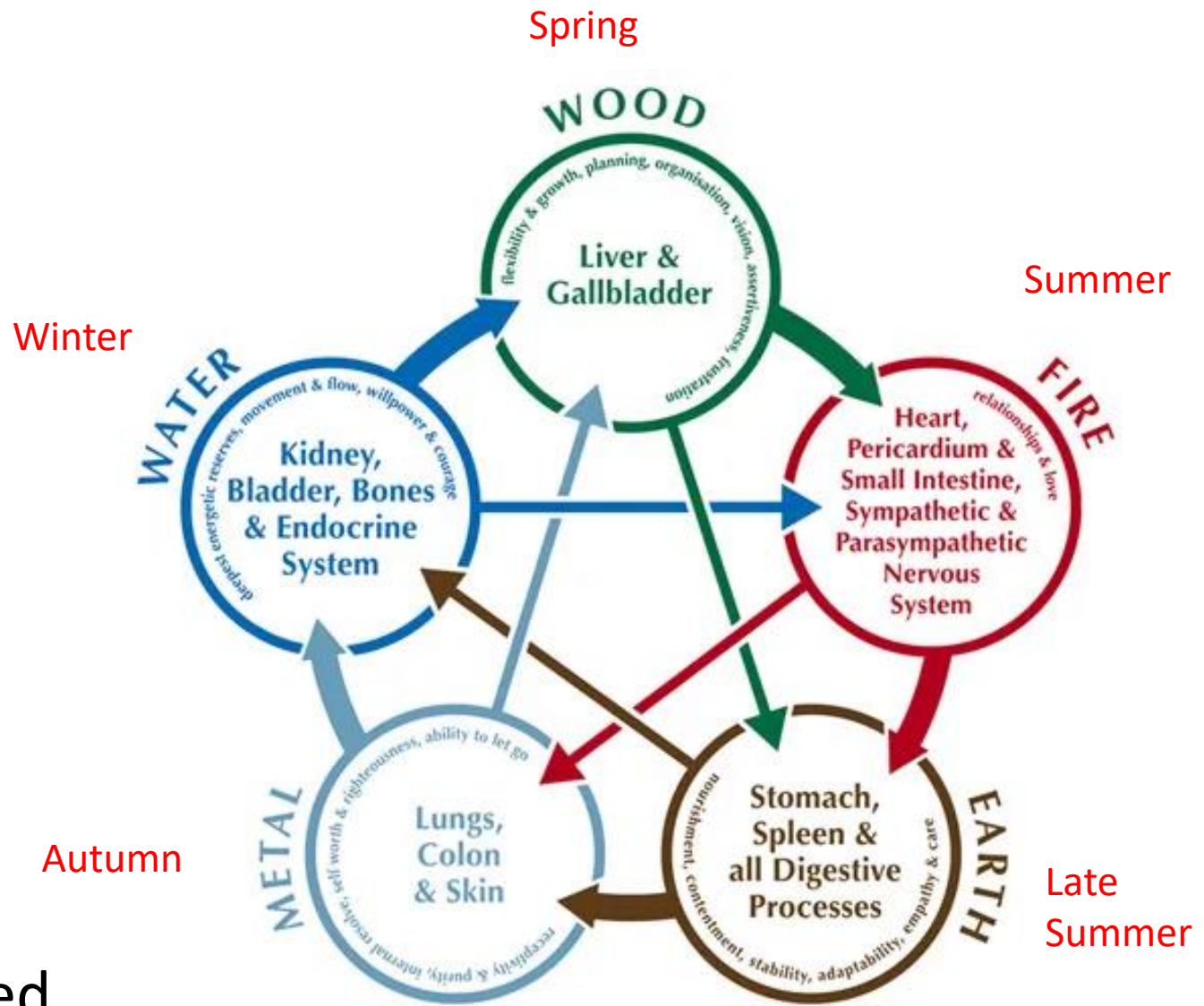


See with your mind's eye your 8 extraordinary energy channels, or meridians. They are pathways of energy (qi) that run deep within our bodies and supply the 12 regular meridians with qi and blood, supporting our DNA or genetic heritage. These are our energy distribution vessels!

See them all connected when you walk, move or do Qigong and Tai Chi!



Seasonal Energies and Corresponding Essential Elements and Inner Organs



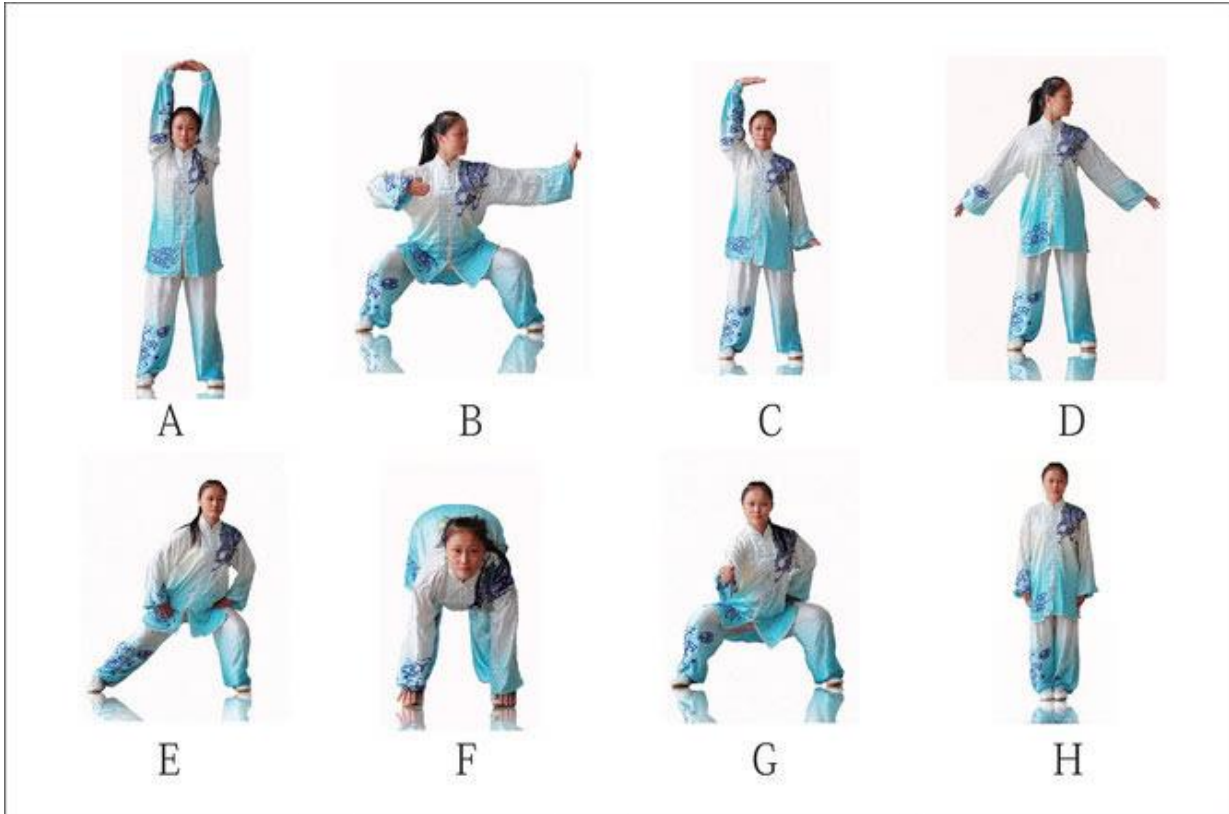
When harmony is achieved
The body will heal itself

Qi Conductor -- I am the
conductor of
my own life force!



Healer Within

Sample Qigong Form #1: Ba Duan Jin: Eight Pieces of Brocade



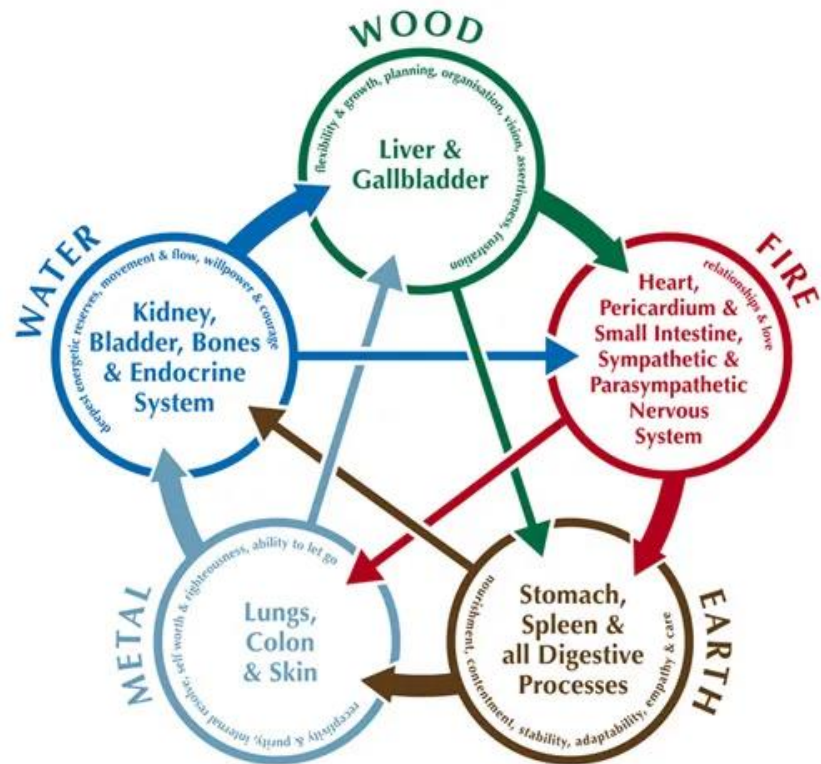
**Watch Qigong
Video**

**Shaolin Monk
Shi Heng Yi**
performs Eight
Pieces of
Brocade or Ba
Duan Jin
(Start from 0.39)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpN3AcXLSSk>

Sample Qigong Form #2: Five Elements Qigong



Watch Qigong Video

Damo Mitchell

performs Wu Xin or Five Elements Qigong (Start from 0.12)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SW9RVpg8SJg>

*Qigong --
Mawangdui
Daoyin Shu*

The Qigong form called *Mawangdui Daoyin Shu* (the Banner of King Ma's Mound) was found near the city of Changsha, China in one of three extraordinarily well-preserved tombs dating back to **168 B.C.**

Sample Qigong Form #3: *Mawangdui Daoyin Shu*



Qigong movements from the tomb drawings:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ApyLPziFs8&t=498s>

Exercise: Qi Awareness

Hands and Feet Reunite!

Can you tell where these individuals have focused their qi in these three pictures?

Just give TLC to
your hard
working toes!



Exercise: Feel and harmonize Qi

- **Standing** – Feel the earth and sky, feel your whole person breathing as one, be aware of the space around you (breathing slows down)
- **Walking** – Maintain the same feeling and connection as standing, centered and relaxed, balancing and harmonizing your movements with your surroundings
- **Moving** -- Feel your Qi in your hands and then bring that awareness to your whole body in all your movements. Serving teacups qigong (optional)
- **(Optional) Five Elements Qigong** (do water and wood movements)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SW9RVpg8SJg>
- **(Optional) Ba Duan Jin** (do first three movements)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpN3AcXLSSk>
- **Being** – Be aware of your Qi and the harmony at all times to prevent falls, injuries in sports; avoid overextending yourself in work, relationships, and life



Tai Chi and Qigong Health Benefits

- Low impact workouts beneficial to anyone at any age
- Boost energy and increase vitality
- Prevent falls and increase balance
- Lower your blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol levels
- Strengthen your immune system
- Become more creative
- Become calmer, more playful and joyful
- Obtain optimal health
- And live longer!

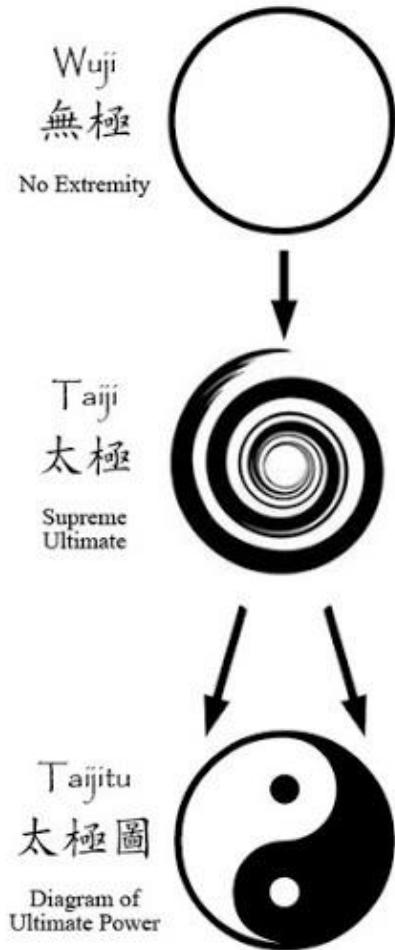




3. The Art of Tai Chi

- What is Tai Chi?
- Stance
- Balance
- Circular movements
- Sample Tai Chi Forms
- Exercise: How we apply Tai Chi principles to standing, walking (backwards), moving, and being

What is Tai Chi?



Taiji or Tai Chi is the transformative force that gives birth to Yin Yang!



Dynamic Yin Yang movements balance and transform our body-qi-spirit!

Taijiquan: Chinese pinyin meaning “supreme ultimate fist”

Also known as Tai Chi Chuan, Tai Chi, or t'ai chi ch'uan (Wade-Giles romanization)

Tai Chi is a specialized form of Qigong with martial applications. It is the most popular form of Qigong.

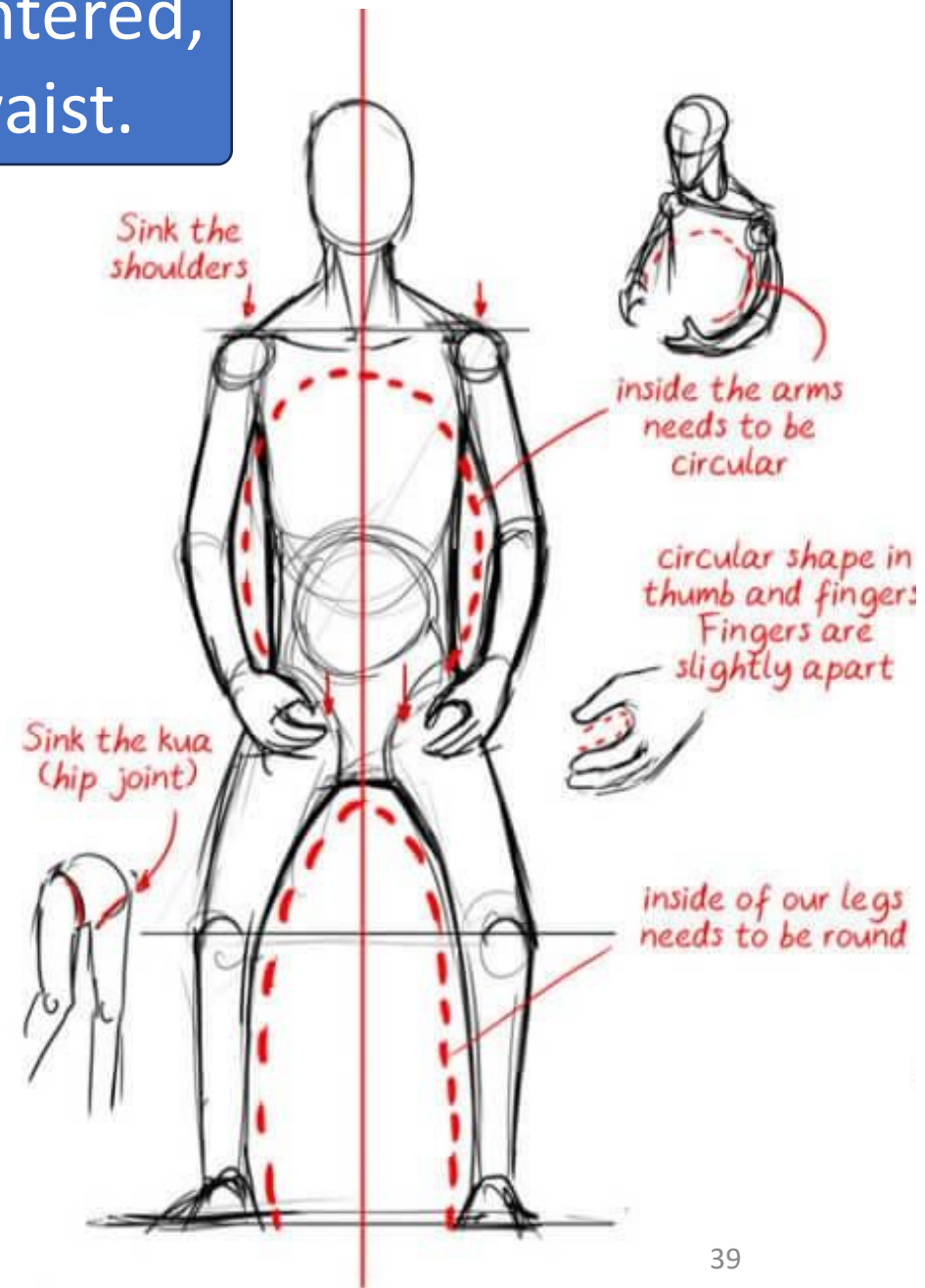
Posture is critical in Tai Chi. Tai Chi stance is centered, grounded, with the tiger back and the bear waist.



Let your back be strong like the tiger



Let your waist be relaxed like the bear

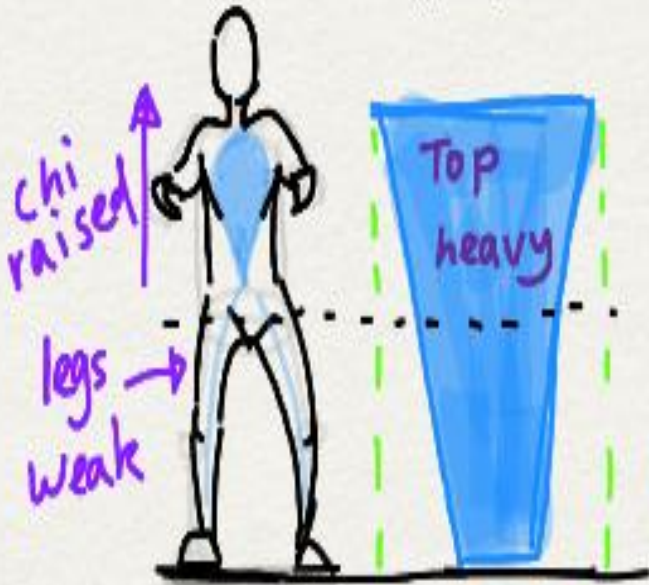


Zhan Zhuang / Standing

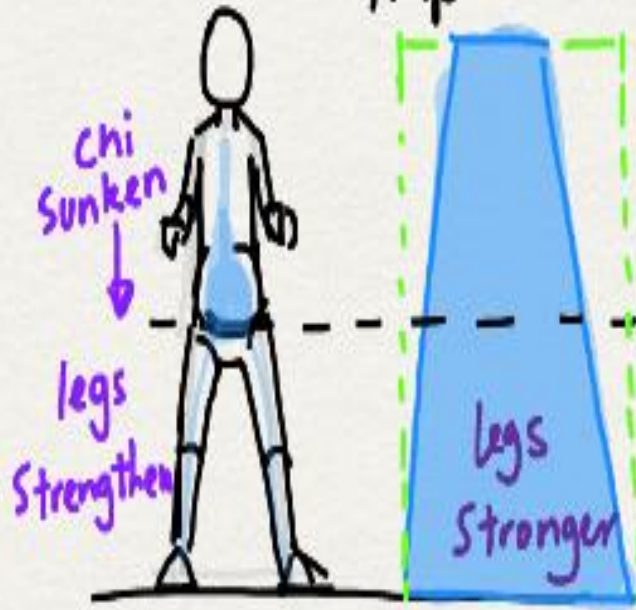
Tai Chi – How do you gain balance?

Beginning Stage of practice

Balance is weak



Balance improved



Balance's stronger



Balance all over



“Move like a cat” – always alert and mindful

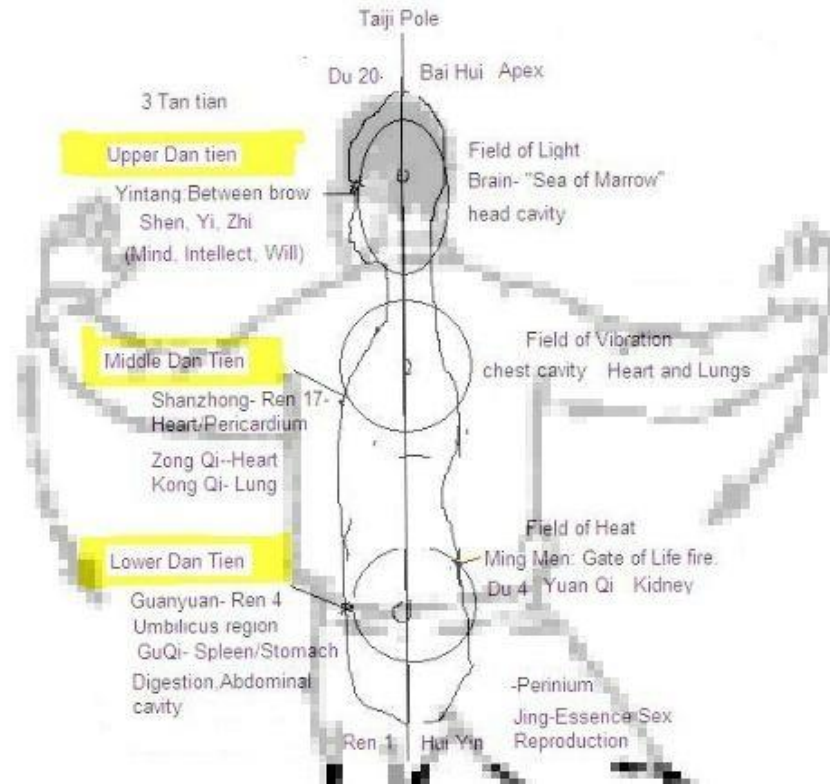
Move like a wheel (Yin Yang Wheel) with dantian as your center



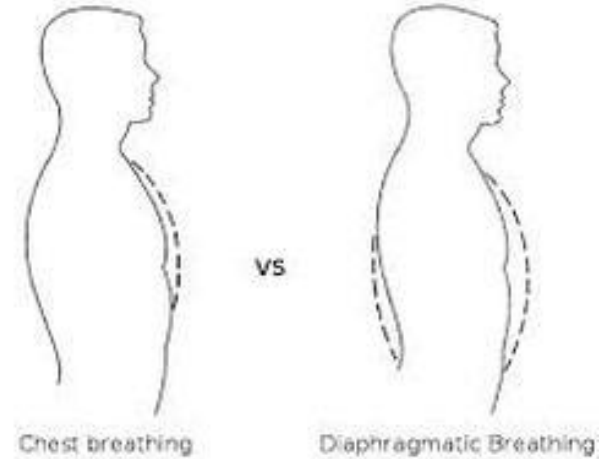
Stand straight like a tree



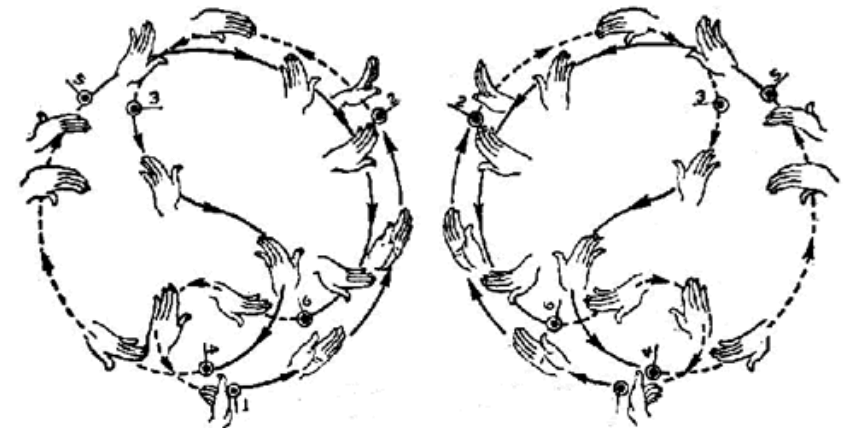
Move like a cat (light)



Spiral movement (silk reeling) follows the life force and body mechanics. It builds inner strength and power



Breathe from your dantian



Thumb curved with fingers slightly apart
(right hand and left hand move in different directions)

Sample Tai Chi Form #1

24 Form Yang Style Tai Chi



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4Vlw41R-PU>

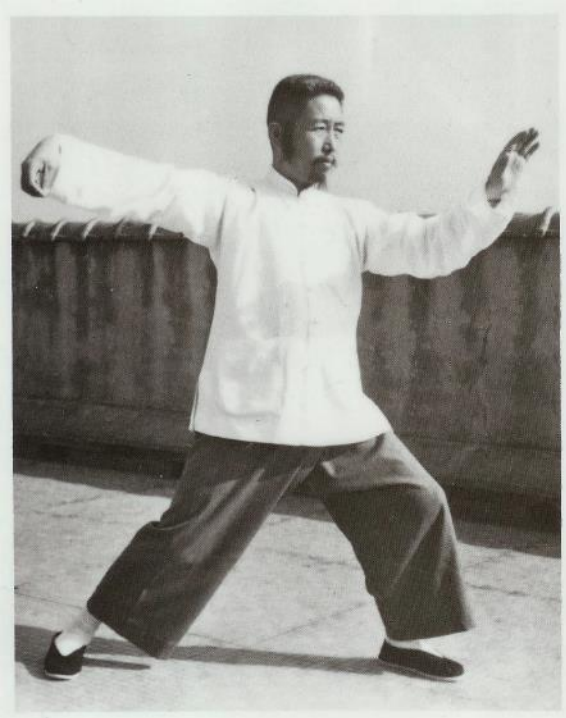
**WATCH
TAI CHI
VIDEO**

Amin Wu
performs
24 Form
Yang Style
("Princess of
Tai Chi"):

(6 minutes)

Sample Tai Chi Form #2

Cheng Man Ching 37 Form



Grandmaster Cheng Man Ching



**Watch Tai Chi
Video**

**Cheng Man
Ching performs
37 form
(8.12 minute)**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_BKwlpOAKk&t=34s

Sample Tai Chi Form #3

Tunan Tai Chi



Grandmaster Wu Tunan



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXZwVLjTzC0>

Watch Tai Chi Video

Wu Tunan
performs Tunan
Tai Chi
at age 100
(Opening
ceremony of the
1st International
Tai Chi Chuan
Competition in
Wuhan, China,
April 1984
(Start from 0.18, 1
minute)

Sample Tai Chi: Partner Tai Chi / Pushing Hands

Non-competitive *Tai Chi*
practice with a *partner*

“Tai Chi for Two”

These exercises include techniques in simple pushing and yielding, rooting and strengthening, and both choreographed and free-form movements

They stimulate dynamic balance, improve reflexes, and train your ability to neutralize and issue energetic attacks



Exercise: Tai Chi

Standing - Tai Chi stances (zhanzhuang, bow stance, horse stance, empty/cat stance); yin yang legs

Walking – Connected, forward and backwards

Moving - Hold and rotate the yin yang ball;
sinking your qi to lower dantian

- Wave hands like clouds

- Golden rooster stands on one leg

Being – Maintain sense of flow, balance and harmony in your workouts, relationships, work, and life.





4. Daoist Philosophy

- Cosmology: Wuji, Dao, Yin Yang, Ba Guan, I Ching
- Healing: Five Elements and their Correspondences
- Ideal: Balance and Harmony

Dao/Tao

Chinese character
for Dao / Tao
("path" on the left,
above the path on
the right, "head")

道

Yin Yang Symbol

陰陽



Old
Logo



**Question: In which
directions do these yin
yang symbols move?**



Wuji, Dao, Yin Yang, Ba Gua

“Tao gives birth to One,
One gives birth to Two,
The Two gives birth to Three,
The Three gives birth to all universal things.
All universal things shoulder the Yin and embrace the Yang.
The Yin and Yang mingle and mix with each other to beget the
harmony.” **Lao Tze: *Tao Te Ching* verse 42**

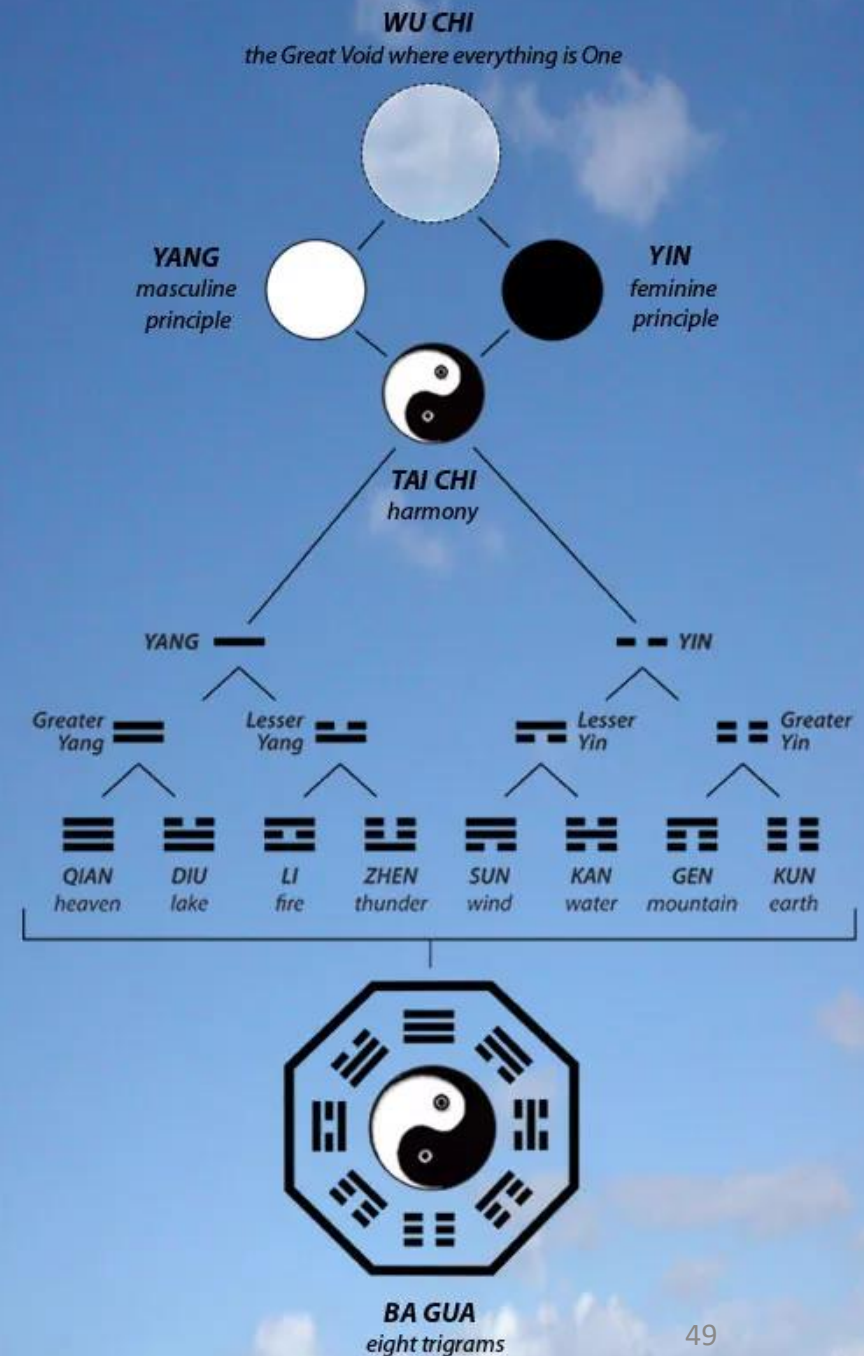
Wu Chi: Nothingness, great void

Tai Chi: supreme ultimate, state of undifferentiated absolute and infinite potential

Yin Yang: Opposite and interconnected forces

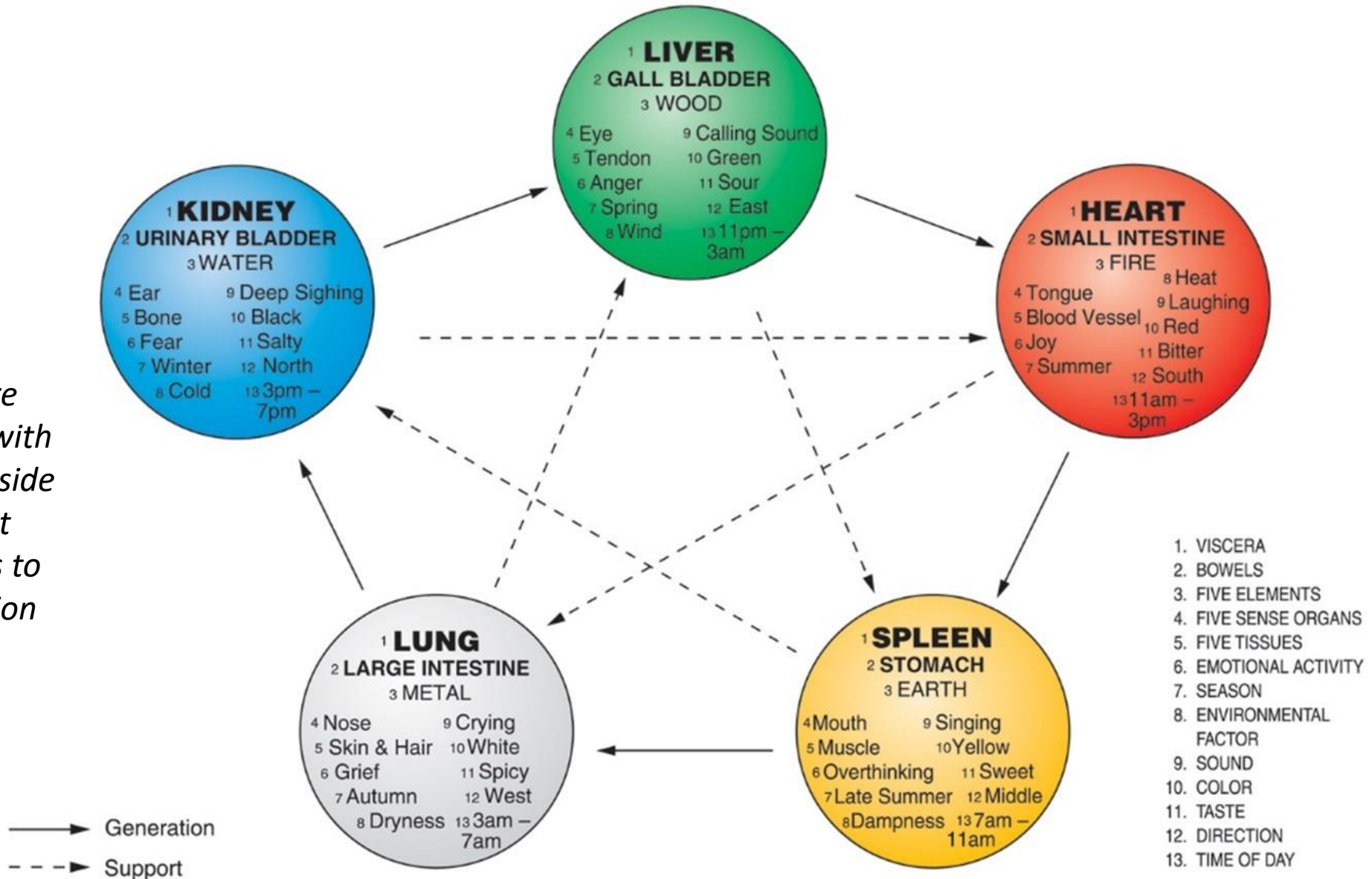
Ba Gua -- Eight Trigrams (*sky, earth, thunder, wind, water, fire, mountain and lake*)

Yi Ching – Book of Changes (64 Hexagrams)



Wu Xing (Five Phases /Elements) and Correspondences; Balance and Harmony

Emotions are associated with organs. Outside environment corresponds to inner situation



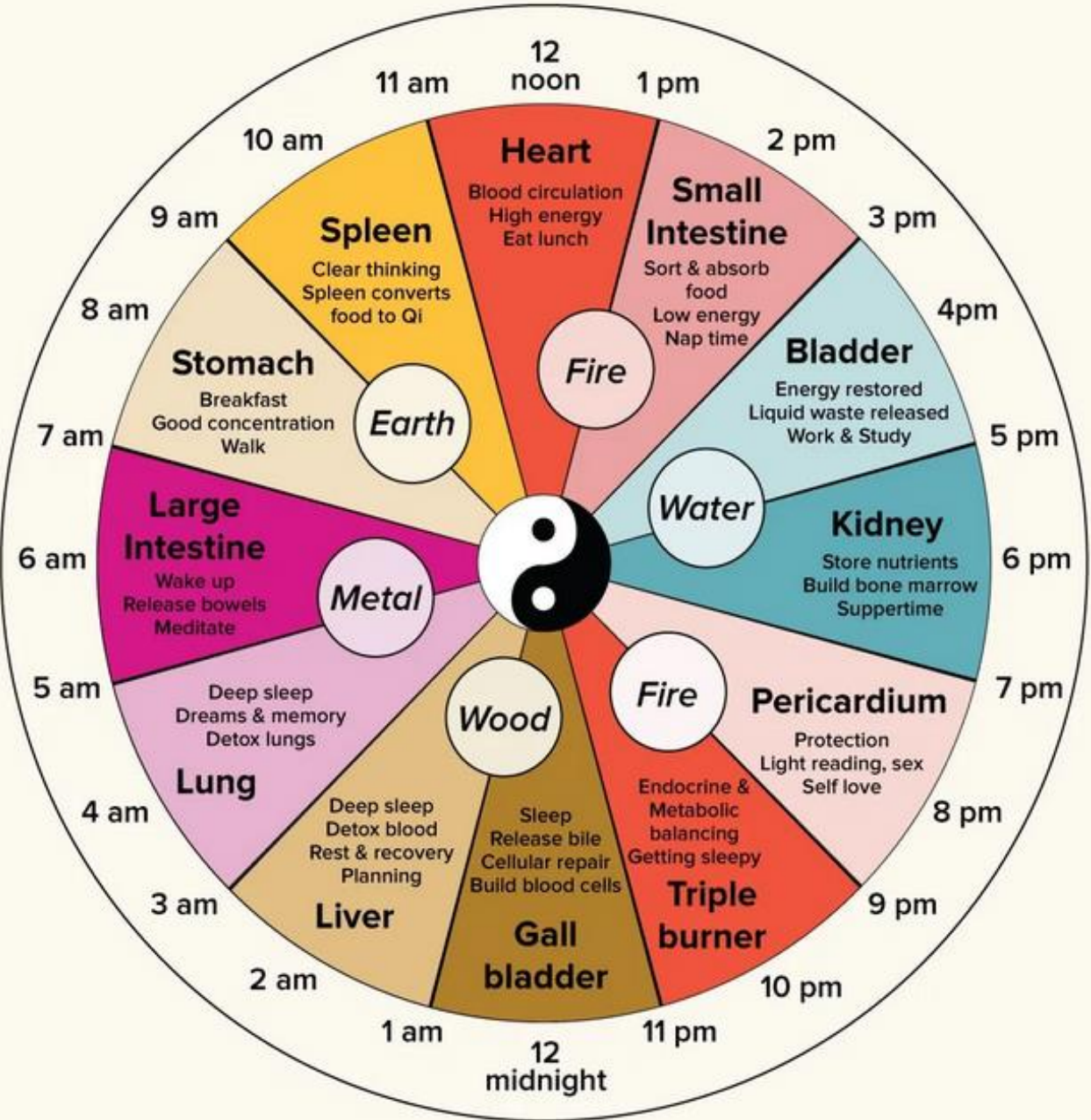


5. Daoist Way of Life

- Daily practice guide: 24-Hour Body Clock (Circadian rhythm)
- Year-round practice guide: 24 Solar Terms (Seasonal Adaptation)

DAILY PRACTICE GUIDE

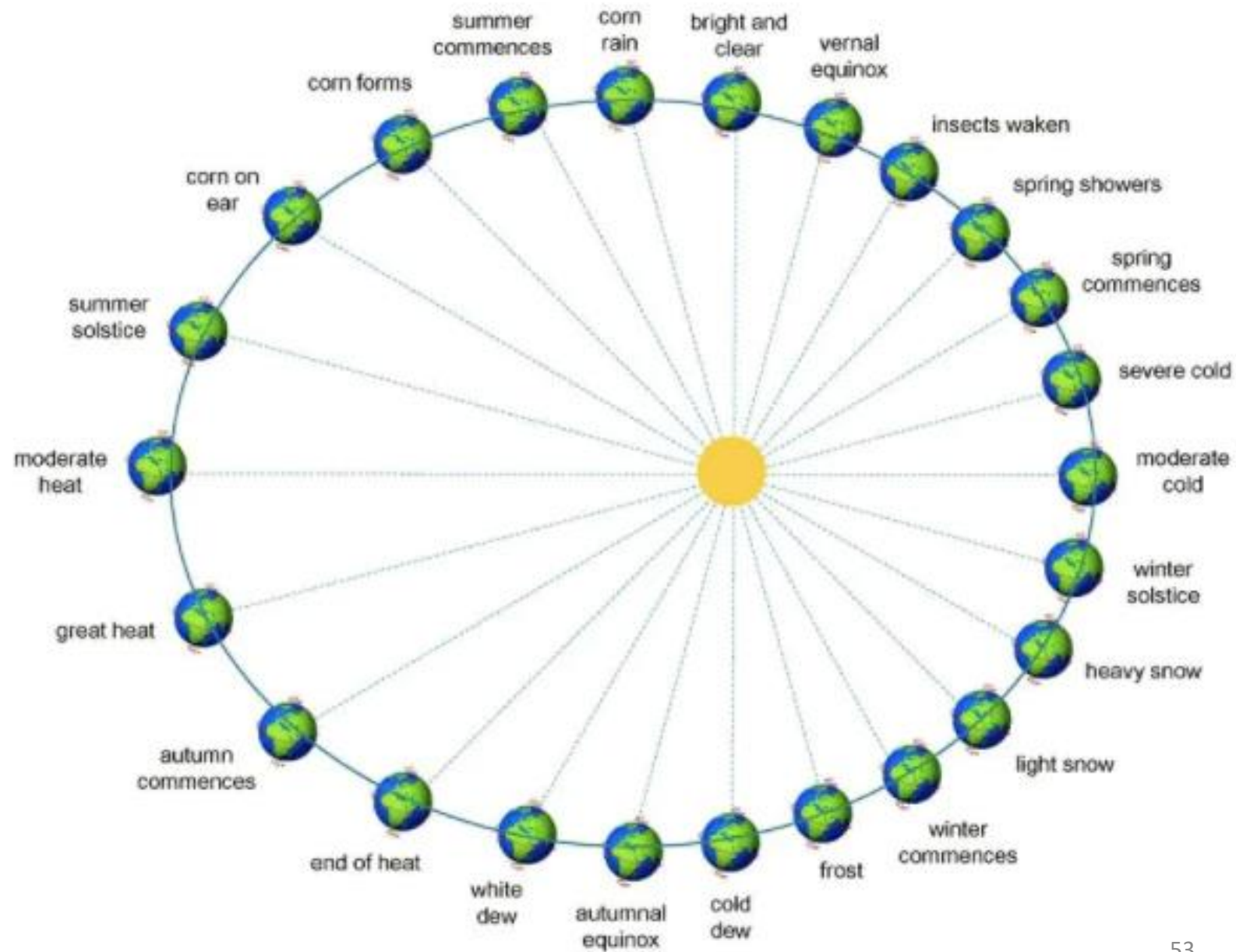
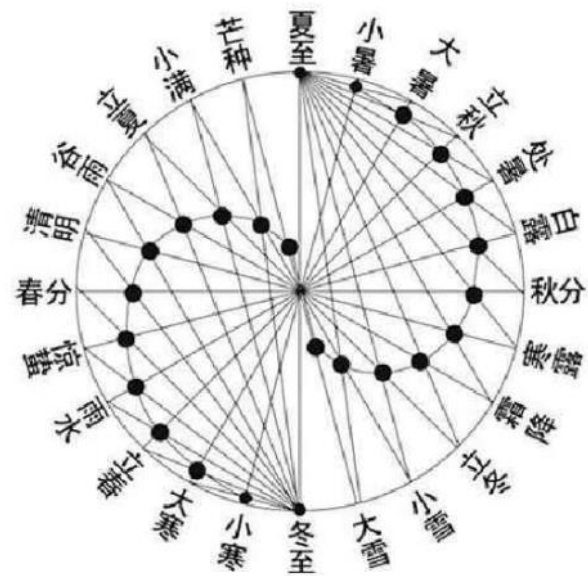
CHINESE 24-HOUR BODY CLOCK



















Follow the rhythm of life for our daily living

By embracing the concept of the Chinese body clock, we potentially make the most of our organs and bodily functions when they're at their peak.

Year-round Practice according to 24 Solar Terms



Five Flavors of Traditional Chinese Food

| Flavor  | Element  | Organs  | Effects  | Food Examples  |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| Sour | Wood  | Liver & Gall bladder | Helps to control qi and blood, retains body fluids to stop heavy sweating, helps relieve loose stools; dries mucous and dampness | Lemon, lime, oranges, tomatoes, pineapple, olives, pomegranate, loquat, apple cider vinegar  |
| Bitter | Fire  | Heart & Small intestines | Clears heat, dries dampness, helps detox, stimulates appetite, helps with urination and bowel movements. | Bitter melon, tea, asparagus, celery, parsley, dandelion; many leafy greens such as, kale, arugula, lettuce, broccoli  |
| Sweet | Earth  | Stomach, Spleen & Pancreas | Nourishes qi; helps with dryness and lubricates body, helps with constipation. Too much sweet creates dampness. | Many grains, fruits, and vegetables: rice, apples, corn, carrots, pumpkins, soybeans, sweet potato, potato, peas, peanuts, honey, dates  |
| Pungent/ Spicy | Metal  | Lungs & Large intestine | Promotes blood and qi circulation. Stimulates appetite. Warming and drying. Too much creates excess heat and dissipates qi. | Onions, leeks, scallions, chives, garlic, fresh ginger, chili peppers, cinnamon, wasabi  |
| Salty | Water  | Bladder & Kidneys | Dissolves stagnation, softens stool (relieves constipation), nourishes blood, detox the body. Too much creates excess dampness. | Anything from the sea, such as seaweed, kelp, and sea salt. Miso and pickles are also salty.  Foods that are a little salty include millet, barley, parsley, celery  |

Five Spice Power!

Exercise

Draw a big Yin Yang symbol

Put what aspects of Tai Chi/Qigong you do well in Yang and what you need to improve in Yin

If you have not started these Tai Chi or Qigong, put Start Today in Yang, and your obstacles and how you will overcome them in Yin





6. 21-Day Challenge

- 21 Days of Qigong
- Classes, events, online resources
- Teachers and books

21-Day Qigong Challenge for Self Practice

1. Would you like a 21-Day Qigong Challenge to jumpstart your self practice? If you do, send an email to me and I will send you the program.
2. Find a partner to practice this program with you.
3. Keep a journal noting your progress and questions.
4. Ask your practice partner to take pictures of you during the 21 days for improvement.

After 21 days, you are welcome to request an evaluation from me. Send a request to me at dawnlidc@gmail.com .

Tai Chi and Qigong DMV Classes, Events, and Resources



One World ... One Breath

- Local Recreation Centers (DMV)
- Martial Arts Studios (DMV)
- NOVA Community Colleges (Northern VA)
- Workhouse Arts Center Art of Movement (Lorton, VA)
- World Tai Chi and Qigong Day on the last Saturday of April:
<https://www.worldtaichiday.org/> (Bill and Angela Douglas)
- Annual International Daoist Conferences (Livia Kohn) and more

Resources

- Tai Chi Foundation: <https://www.taichifoundation.org/>
- World Tai Chi and Qigong Day:
<https://www.worldtaichiday.org/> (Bill and Angela Douglas)
- The Physiology of Tai Chi and Qigong:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJRtZAwVwgo>
- Qi Institute: <https://www.qigonginstitute.org/>
- Qi Encyclopedia: <http://qi-encyclopedia.com/>
- Harvard Medical School:
<https://www.qigonginstitute.org/category/68/harvard-medical-school-endorses-qigong-and-tai-chi>

Tai Chi and Qigong Teachers and Books

- Yang Jwing Ming: *Taijiquan Theory*
- Roger Jahnke: *The Healing Promise of Qi, The Healer Within*
- Deng Ming Dao: *Everyday Dao*
- Ken Cohn: *The Way of Qigong*
- Damo Mitchell: *A Comprehensive Guide to Daoist Nei Gong (Internal Alchemy)*
- Lee Holden: *DVD Qigong and Tai Chi*
- Shi Heng Yi: *Videos of Qigong*
- Livia Kohn: *Science and the Dao*
- Nan Lu: *Digesting the Universe: A Revolutionary Framework for Healthy Metabolism Function*



7. A Few Takeaways

- Remember correct posture, natural flowing movements and consistent inside and out when you do Tai Chi or Qigong.
- Use qigong and tai chi principles to everyday life: walking, moving, dancing, swimming, golfing, etc.
- Relax and let your energy flow. Gently open your energy gates and connect the energy channels.
- Be aware of your Qi and balance motion with stillness. Qigong offers a quick boost of energy. However, if you are tired (or qi depleted), stop exercising, just sit down or lie down and meditate. The Yin will catch up with you and take too long to resume your Yang. In other words, no extremes in life.
- Learn to conserve your qi/energy. Do not spread out too far or wide (or spread thin); always maintain the wholeness of your body. Do smaller movements when necessary.
- Harmony inside you and outside, with others and the universe!



8. Questions?

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Exercise

Integration and Closing

Heel clicking to cure a hundred
diseases

Closing

