

Three Yin and Three Yang: Clarifying Zhang Zhongjing's Diagnostic Approach of the Six Confirmations

The key to healing in Chinese medicine is to understand Yin and Yang. The most significant breakthrough of the sages in the Yin and Yang arena was the dividing of the Yin and the Yang into six spheres, or segments – three segments of Yang and three segments of Yin:

Tai Yang (Great Yang)
Yang Ming (Bright Yang)
Shao Yang (Lesser Yang)

Tai Yin (Great Yin)
Shao Yin (Lesser Yin)
Jue Yin (Extinct Yin).

To understand three Yin and three Yang we have to go back to nature, where the most pronounced Yin and Yang cycle is that of the seasons. In the il-

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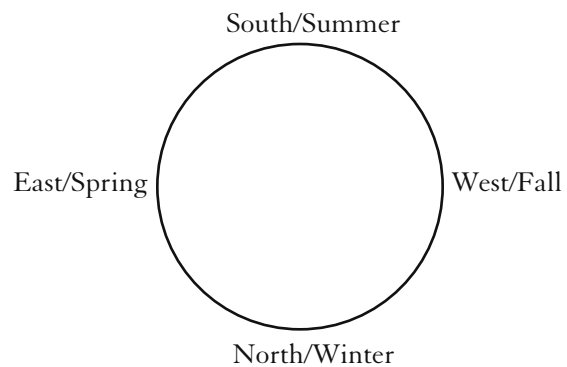
lustration below, please note that 'South' is at the top because in Chinese culture and history, all maps display south at the top.

The spring belongs to the east and the fall belongs to the west. The east is where the sun rises and that is where the energy rises. The east energy is like the spring energy, where the plants are springing upward and the energy is rising. The west is where the sun sets and where the energy descends. The energy of the fall is descending when the leaves are falling back to the ground.

The energy of the universe has four stages. Spring is about birth, summer is about openness/growth, fall is about retraction, and winter is about storage.

In the past 500 to 700 years, some Chinese medicine practitioners with limited understanding

of the ancient ways, and therefore limited understanding into the depth of Yin and Yang, began to categorize the four seasons in a logical way that distorted the course of Chinese medicine history. They



claimed that because spring and summer are about opening up, they represent the Yang energy in nature, while fall and winter represent the Yin energy because they are about retracting and storing. This divided Yin and Yang into two halves, the feminine and the masculine. As western philosophies were introduced into China about 400 years ago, this concept became even more widespread. Today, this idea is taught in acupuncture schools worldwide as the root of Chinese medicine, and it is what I was taught initially. However, after spending thousands of hours learning classical Chinese, and thousands of more hours researching the Chinese medicine classics, I can testify that this is not the case. Yin and Yang must be understood on a deeper level in order for treatment to be more effective.

Open, Close and Pivot

The mechanisms behind these six spheres that make the Yin and Yang energies work are 'open-

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ing', 'closing' and 'pivot.' These three movements act in succession, and together guarantee that life will go on and on without interruption.

The pivot, is where the opening and closing actually takes place. It transforms the action of the energy, motivating the transition of the seasons. A door can be used as a metaphor. It needs a hinge to transform the static state of an unmovable slab of wood into a dynamic state of an opening and closing door. It transforms the door from a pre-heaven state into a post-heaven state. The two pivots are Shao Yang and Shao Yin.

The Tai Yang Phase

The Tai Yang phase is the first phase of the energy transformation and it is also referred to as the birth of Yang energy. Tai Yang has several meanings in the Chinese language. It is called 'Greater Yang' and it is also the Chinese name for the sun. It is a description of the first light on the horizon, seen from the top of the mountain in the early morning hours. It is the representation of birth and the representation of life. As long as there is expansion of energy, it is a time of 'Tai Yang'.

Understanding physical matter is a much simpler process than understanding the energetic process of life. Physical process can be examined and observed under a microscope. With energy, or at least life force energy, comprehension requires a depth of thinking. The deeper the thought, the more you can understand life. When you understand life, you understand illness and you are able to restore health. You are able to understand infertility and restore fertility.

In this process of gaining depth, we will describe the Tai Yang from different angles. By combining all of these angles, we will understand Tai Yang in a variety of ways simultaneously.

The first angle is the birth concept. It is where the first Yang (or great Yang or Tai Yang) is first born at midnight, or the time of Zi, in the middle of winter when there is no moon. It stretches until Wu, which is noon or the middle of summer or full moon. It represents the time stretching from the moment we are conceived to our adulthood or

mid-years. In other words, it is the first half of all life as we know it, which is why Zhang Zhongjing dedicates half of his life work to Tai Yang.

The second angle to take in understanding Tai Yang is to look at its energetical qualities. The Yellow Emperor describes these as "cold" and as "water."

My teacher, Professor Liu Lihong, describes in his book *Sikao zhongyi* the importance of water. Without water, there is no life. What is the relationship between water, cold and the Tai Yang? Liu Lihong explained the Tai Yang as the opening up of energy. What happens to water when the energy opens up or warms up? It evaporates skyward, or heavenward, where the cold atmosphere—cold energy—forces it back down to earth in the form of rain. When The Yellow Emperor describes Tai Yang as cold and water, he is referring to this phenomenon of water circulation that allows life on earth.

The third path to take in understanding Tai Yang is to relate it to the two organs that compose the Tai Yang sphere in the body - the bladder and small intestines. These two organs, in the Chinese medical system, are the organs responsible for water metabolism. The small intestines digest the water and the bladder controls the excretion of excess water. If the water metabolism is impaired, it is mainly because the Tai Yang system has a problem.

An impaired water metabolism affects our fertility. Part of the Tai Yang phenomenon is to help the water be distributed throughout the body in a proper and adequate way, areas with too much water sent to areas in need.

This stands in contrast to today's understanding of drinking and hydration. The trend today is to drink as much as possible in order to keep hydrated. As a child growing up, I don't recall seeing anybody walking with a water bottle on the street, and today it seems that a water bottle is part of everyday existence. When we constantly drink water, however, the Tai Yang organs are engaged in an excessive fashion. The bladder and small intestine are under extreme stress. On the other hand, some

people don't have time to drink even if they are thirsty, and this will cause a different set of problems. For normal Tai Yang water metabolism, we should strive for balance in drinking water. There is no such thing as one size fits all, so each individual must find their own balance.

The fourth way to understand Tai Yang is to study the two meridians that compose the Tai Yang sphere – the bladder meridian, which is the most important, and the small intestine meridian. The bladder meridian starts at the inner cantus of the eye, runs along the top of the head and then down the center of the back along both sides of the spine. It then continues to flow down the posterior side of both legs until it reaches the lateral side of both little toes. It is the longest meridian, and the only one out of the 12 that is distributed exclusively on the posterior (back) side of our body.

The Yellow Emperor states that the reason the Tai Yang relates to the entire posterior side of our body is that in ancient times, when the people plowed the fields, their front side faced the earth, or Yin energy, while their back side faced the sun, or Yang energy.

When the Tai Yang is obstructed, the Yang energy cannot open up. If the Yang energy is only partially present when spring arrives, the flowers will seem poor and tired. It would be the same for us if the Yang energy does not open far enough when we wake up in the morning. We feel lethargic and tired.

Because Tai Yang represents the sun, a warming force and source of light, we find it more difficult to wake-up in colder weather. This is why The Yellow Emperor recommends less sleep in the summer than in the winter. Also, when the body encounters a burst of cold energy, such as when walking into a very cold air conditioned office in the middle of summer, the opening of the Yang is obstructed. This will often result in chills or catching a cold. We may experience a headache and/or a stiff neck because the bladder meridian, running along the neck and head, is obstructed. We feel chills because the Yang energy can't open up to warm the body.

To remedy this obstruction, we must use warm herbs, such as cinnamon and Ma Huang. These herbs can be ingested until minor perspiration appears. In other words, the best way to recover from a cold is to help the Yang expand, but to stop before sweating begins. As Zhongjing writes, "*If the patient sweats like dripping water, he will never recover*" because the Yang will become deficient. This is because the body seeks harmony and balance. Opening too much will cause profuse perspiration. The Yang will lose strength, the ailment becoming stronger.

The Yellow Emperor notes that the Tai Yang enters and exits the body through the center of the chest. When we take Western medication for the common cold, most of us experience the cold moving into the chest and then turning into a lingering cough. In this, we have not solved the obstruction of the Yang mechanism, we have simply pushed it a layer deeper. The enter and exit mechanism has been obstructed. The same thing happens with the use of cold herbs to treat the common cold.

If warm herbs are not used, then ingesting a hot rice soup and lying down under blankets to rest should clear out the cold within a day or two. If you do not rest, keep warm, and drink warm soups, then the cold will move into the chest, obstructing the Yang and developing into a far worse situation. It will then be difficult to avoid western drugs or a sinus infection. Every action that we do to help preserve the Yang will help us become closer to fertility.

Tai Yang, like all six spheres, has a root, a manifestation and a center. The root of Tai Yang is cold, because it starts at Zi, or midnight/midwinter, which is the coldest time. The manifestation is hot because the Yang is the opening of the hot energy until it reaches Wu- noon/mid-summer. The center of Tai Yang – where it connects to the internal body – is the Shao Yin sphere.

The Shao Yin is where all fertility happens. When the Tai Yang is obstructed, the Shao Yin suffers the consequences. In today's modern medicine of separating and differentiating one disease from another, the common cold is completely inconse-

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quential to fertility. In Chinese medicine of unification and harmony, when the Yang mechanism is obstructed, the Shao Yin and fertility will suffer. Problems with the Yang mechanism are of course not only a consequence of the common cold but rather to a variety of factors and situations that impact the Tai Yang channel. If this channel is kept open, the chances for fertility will greatly appreciate.

It is important to avoid overstimulation of the Tai Yang. Although it may feel like we are stimulating the Yang energy, such as when we go to a great party and stay out late, this can lead to exhausting the energy. The extra stimulation that we all experience from work, TV, driving a car etc..., as well as exposure to cold foods and cold drugs, is making our Yang energy much more deficient than in the past. What's more, practices like Qi Gong and meditation, used in the past in China to keep the Yang intact, are no longer in widespread use.

To achieve fertility, it is important to begin modifying behavior and customs. For example, next time you feel as if you'd like an iced drink, ask yourself if you could do without it.

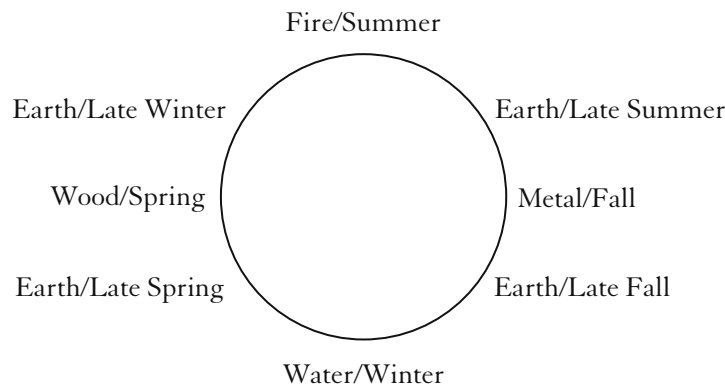
A fifth aspect of the Tai Yang is the time when the energy is best open to a remedy for any imbalance. With Tai Yang, it includes the three months of summer on the lunar calendar, as well as 9 AM until 3:00 PM, when the Yang energy is at its most open state.

The Yang Ming Phase

The Yang Ming phase is the part of the Yang mechanism responsible for the closing down of the energy. It prevents the Yang from staying open forever. It has a protective action in preserving the Yang, ensuring its retraction into a storage phase. Farm-

ers are well aware of the fact that if the winter is warm, the growing season the following year will be poor. The same is the case if we don't sleep well at night, or don't sleep long enough. The following day our energy level is weak.

The Yang Ming sphere occupies the time from Wu until Zi, from noon until midnight, and from the mid-summer, when the Yang energy is at its most opened up, until the mid-winter, when it is completely stored. It is the part of our life from adulthood to death.



As for its energetical qualities, The Yellow Emperor describes Yang Ming as "Dry" and as "Metal".

There are two different types of dryness, a real dryness and an apparent dryness. Liu Lihong uses the example of wet laundry. What happens to wet laundry when you put it in the dryer? The laundry becomes dry. But what happens to the water? It evaporates and transitions to a different place. If the dryer is in a closed laundry room, you'll see the steam on the windows or the walls. The same is true when we boil water. It evaporates until there is no water left in the pot and the pot is dry.

This is one kind of dryness – local, or apparent dryness. It is the result of the transformation of water from one state into a different state.

As for a true dryness of water, let's look at what happens to water in the dead of winter when the weather is freezing. The water becomes solid as ice. If we take a block of ice, can we pour it into a cup? We can't. But if we add Yang energy to it, such as heat, the ice will melt and become water again. The dryness of the water without the Yang energy is a true dryness of water.

When The Yellow Emperor describes the Yang Ming as dry, he refers to true dryness and not

apparent dryness. He refers to the state where the Yang energy is moving into storage. The inborn ability of Yang Ming is to transform the Yang energy in the water into storage.

Why is the Yang Ming quality similar to the metal quality? It is because the metal is heavy and descending. It's an element that belongs to the autumn, and in a daily cycle, to the afternoon and evening hours. It belongs to the time of Shen, You and Xu, when the energy is at its strongest descent.

The third concept of Yang Ming is in relation to the organs of the body, specifically the stomach and large intestines, two organs which break down and expel the food we eat. These are both downward actions. The food's energy and nutrients come from heaven. We extract all the Yang energy from what we eat and drink so our life can go on. We allow all the turbid Yin and substance of the food to descend and be expelled as feces.

The fourth angle to take when approaching Yang Ming is its meridians. The large intestine meridian, which starts at the index finger, runs along the medial side of the arm and reaches the face from both sides at the nose, and the stomach meridian, which starts at the face and runs downward along the front of the body until it reaches the tip of the second toe.

The Yang Ming meridians, then, cover the whole front, or anterior, side of our body. Between the Tai Yang and Yang Ming, the entire Yang energy is circulating up along the back and down along the front of the body. If both channels are working properly, we will feel energized and vital, and our health will be maintained.

The fifth concept of Yang Ming is the unlocking time from Shen until Xu. In the yearly cycle, these are the three fall months of the lunar calendar. In the daily cycle, it represents from 3:00 until 9:00 PM, when the descending Yang energy is at its most potent action.

When the Yang Ming becomes obstructed, the stomach and large intestines are full, bringing on possible constipation. The obstruction can occur from eating food that creates local heat, such as

oily, greasy foods. It can also be created by unnatural foods, such as modern processed food, artificial sweeteners, coloring, preservatives, soft drinks etc. Common symptoms associated with constipation are shortness of breath, as well as insomnia due to the Yang's inability to go into storage at night. When the body can expel all unnecessary materials, a healthy state of Yang energy can be maintained. If the Yang cannot go into storage at night, it will bring on difficulty in sleeping.

The Yang Ming does not become obstructed with real dryness, when the Yang in the water is closing (cooling) into a storage phase. With an apparent, or local, dryness, the bowels become dry and constipated. Zhongjing describes the symptoms associated with this pattern as heavy perspiration, a rise in temperature, a red face, and an intense, surging pulse. Heavy perspiration is the result of the body fluids evaporating out of the body like the wet laundry in the dryer. Feeling hot, as well as having a red face and an overactive pulse, are all signs of too much heat or the inability of the Yang to cool down. This will cause the Yang Ming to become dry and constipated, obstructing the Yang Ming downward cooling movement.

The Yellow Emperor suggests that the Yang Ming should be remedied from its center, which is Tai Yin "Damp" and "Earth". We should use moistening or dampness, or as Zhongjing suggests, a clearing of the heat, with the use of purgatives and cold herbs. He also warns that as soon as the bowels restore their function, purgatives must immediately be stopped. This is because purgative and cold herbs damage the Yang energy, and with that, the life force. It is only a temporary localized heat that needs to be cleared so the Yang Ming can descend.

It should be noted that not all constipation is a Yang Ming issue, and other forms of the condition are not accompanied by perspiration, feeling hot and having a red face. This constipation is generally Yang deficiency related and belongs in the Shao Yin sphere. In Ancient China, one could only use purgatives if it was a Yang Ming related problem and only for a short period of time. If it was a Yang

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deficiency constipation issue, the Yang energy has to be strengthened, not purged.

With regard to the insomnia symptom associated with the Yang Ming obstruction, sleep medication will not solve the problem, as it deals solely with the symptom and not with the cause. Instead of the Yang energy closing down, it is scattered as it is with anesthesia. It may seem like a peaceful sleep, but it is a completely different state of energy. When one awakens from anesthesia, the Yang energy is completely exhausted, not rejuvenated. When insomnia is caused by a Yang Ming obstruction, removing this obstruction will bring on sleep.

The Shao Yang Phase

Shao Yang is described metaphorically by The Yellow Emperor as a pivot. It is the door hinge that allows the opening and closing of the Yang energy. We can see the Yang energy expression in its different phases of birth, growth, retraction and storage – the growth of the plants coming out of the earth, the leaves budding from the tree branches - but we can't see the energy itself. It is like a seed of a plant, so small that if we drop it to the ground, we may not be able to find it again, but yet if we stick it in the ground, it may sprout a huge tree. The energy and potency – the Yang – is invisible, yet it is there.

The energy without the seed, or without the Yin matter, will not work, and the seed without its energy will not work either. It is only when the seed and its energy are combined that we can get this life effect. It is only when the heaven's pure Yang has some Yin substance within that we get this fire which is characteristic of Shao Yang. It is the pivot that allows the Tai Yang and Yang Ming to continue and circulate. It is the force and quality that allows the Yang mechanism to repeatedly open and close without exhaustion.

In the Chinese earliest Daoist work "Dao De Jing" the author Lao Zi writes: "Dao gives birth to one. One gives birth to two. Two give birth to three. Three give birth to the ten thousand things". When we have two actions like opening and closing, this by itself is not enough to make life happen,

for there is no continuation. One cycle must open a new cycle, or we cannot call it life.

Let's take an apple tree. The tree grows and bears apples. The apples ripen and fall to the ground. If the apples do not contain seeds, it will not give birth to other apple trees. This is what Lao Zi means by saying one gives birth to two, two give birth to three, and that the third element is what ensures the ten thousand things to flourish.

The Shao Yang sphere ensures the continuation of life. It ensures that when we go to sleep at night, we will wake up in the morning to a new day, and that when our Yang energy is consumed during the day, we will retreat to sleep to recharge. It ensures that this life cycle of Yang energy will go on and on until at one point in our lives it will be time for it to stop. It also has a crucial relationship with our fertility, which is what insures a new generation, via its relationship with the Yin pivot, Shao Yin.

The second aspect of Shao Yang is its energetical qualities. The Yellow Emperor describes the Shao Yang as "Minister Fire".

What is the importance of fire in our lives? Electricity is a form of fire. Combustion in engines is a form of fire. We use fire for cooking. We use fire to keep us warm in winter. We use fire to keep us cool in summer. We use fire to light the night and to operate our computers. The use of fire is what separates us from the animal kingdom.



In the book of changes (Yi Jing), the trigram for heaven, Qian – is three Yang lines. It is pure Yang energy. At this state of energy there is still no life to talk about. The same is true with the earth trigram Kun These are three broken Yin lines representing pure Yin substance without energy... and no life. Only when substance and energy meet – when earth and heaven meet – and exchange essence, is life formed.

The fire trigram, Li, has two solid Yang lines, one at the top and one at the bottom. In between the two Yang lines there is one broken Yin line. Fire is Yang energy above and it is Yang energy below, but embedded in the Yang energy is a Yin substance. Let's take for example the fire in engine combustion. The fire is fueled by the gasoline. Without this substance, there is no fire. The same is true with



cooking on the stove. The fire is there because gas is burning. When we burn a fire in a fireplace, there is wood within that allows this fire to burn.

In the Water trigram, the pure Yin substance, represented by the upper and lower lines, receives energy from heaven, which is represented by the Yang line in the middle. This makes a lifeless substance into water. We have discussed previously what happens to water if we remove the Yang out of it. It becomes ice.

Shao Yang, the pivot of the Yang mechanism, is described as 'Minister's Fire,' while the pivot of the Yin mechanism, Shao Yin, is described as 'Emperor's Fire.' These two types of fire complement each other. A scholar from the Jin Yuan dynasties (1200 AD) Zhu Danxi, and his followers, in an effort to explain why we have disease, erroneously theorized that since we have one water and two fires, the Yin is always deficient, and the Yang is always in excess.

A minister in a government is an individual who is engaged on a daily basis with the details of running the country, and generally has direct contact with the citizens. An emperor, on the other hand, stays in the palace and has the function of overseeing the big picture.

The minister fire of the Shao Yang is the fire which is actively engaged with all the body's functions, and specifically with the opening and closing of the Yang energy. It is the fire that warms up the body. It is the fire that gives us the appropriate en-

ergy to wake up in the morning and to go to sleep at night. It is the energy that allows us to hear, see, smell, drink, eat, walk, run, write, read, talk, and laugh. It is the physical fire that makes us function.

The third aspect of Shao Yang is its organs, the gallbladder and the Triple Burner. In Chinese medicine anatomy, these two organs are in a very special, often misunderstood category. The Chinese medicine anatomy contains eleven organs – Six Fu Yang organs and five Zang Yin organs. The Fu organs are hollow and allow movement of turbid matter to pass through. The stomach, small intestines, large intestines, bladder, triple burner and gallbladder fall into this category. The five Zang organs store essence and do not allow movement through them. The heart, lungs, kidneys, liver and spleen, are in the zang family. The gallbladder is in a special category because it stores bile and it releases it for digestion. It has the function of a Yang organ and of a Yin organ simultaneously. It is called an extraordinary organ.

San Jiao, or the triple burner, is unique in that it is the only 'organ' in the Chinese medicine anatomy which is not a physical organ, but is pure function. Containing three 'burners' which transmit the minister life's fire throughout the entire body, it also provides the passageway for body fluids to be distributed. The upper burner includes the lungs, heart and brain, and is the root of our spirit. The lower burner includes the kidneys and liver and is the root of our essence and substance. The middle burner, the root of our post-heaven life, includes the spleen and stomach, and is where the food and liquid come into our body and give us the life force or the fire we need.

The fourth aspect of Shao Yang is its meridians, the Triple Burner meridian and the gallbladder meridian. The triple burner meridian starts at the ring finger, travels upward through the center of the arm between the Tai Yang and Yang Ming channels, and then runs along the side of the neck and the side of the head. The gall bladder meridian runs along the side of the head, down along the side of the rib cage and the side of the legs until reach-

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ing the fourth toe. When a man or woman stands upright with his or her arms relaxed at both sides of the body, both meridians run exactly on both sides of the body between the front, which is the Yang Ming channel, and the rear, the Tai Yang channel. The Shao Yang, then, is the connecting factor between the opening upwards of Tai Yang and the closing downwards of the Yang Ming.

Nature designed each and every aspect of our body with a specific function. We need the Shao Yang pivot to make opening and closing work. We need this Yin matter within the Yang energy, or in other words we need this minister fire distributed on the side meridians of gall bladder and triple burner to make the Yang mechanism work.

It is on the sides because Yin matter goes downwards and Yang energy goes upwards. When tending to a campfire, we generally adjust the logs, or add more logs, from the side, because the fire flares upwards and we'll be burned if we're above it. When we want to adjust the Yin 'logs' that will cause the Yang fire to change, we have to do it from the side. We are not affected by the Yin and we are not affected by the Yang. This is the concept of the Shao Yang meridian distributed on both sides of the body.

The fifth aspect of Shao Yang is the time for unlocking, or remedying, which includes the times of Yin, Mao and Chen. These times make up the daily cycle from 3 AM until 9 AM, and represent the three months of spring in the Chinese lunar calendar. It is a time of "kindling warmth" as opposed to the summer's robust fire, a very gentle warmth that spreads around in nature, causing the plants to spring from the ground and the birds to emerge.

The Yang energy of Shao Yang is a gentle fire that promotes growth and development. It is different than the pathological fire we have seen in the Yang Ming section that can cause dryness and constipation. The gall bladder releases bile which aids in digestion and is the warmth needed for metabolism. In Chinese medicine, the five flavors (bitter, sweet, pungent, salty and sour) belong to the five elements, the bitter taste belonging to fire. It is not a coincidence that the bile is bitter and that it is

stored in the gall bladder. It is the minister fire or the kindling warmth that is needed for our metabolism and it is achieved with the help of this bile.

The spring and the early morning hours possess this unique quality of light warmth. It is the energy in nature that promotes a healthy Shao Yang function, and is the reason why Chinese medicine recommends consuming the day's main meal in the morning, a light meal at lunch and a small snack for dinner. The morning warmth is what aids the metabolism and digestion. Eating large dinners and small breakfasts will cause the Yang mechanism to suffer greatly, and is one reason why maintaining the wrong eating habits will cause disharmony even if one is eating healthy foods.

When the Shao Yang becomes obstructed, the opening and closing will become obstructed. With a door, if the hinge is rusted one may experience difficulty opening or closing it. The Shao Yang is, as discussed before, a third dimension helping the Tai Yang opening and the Yang Ming closing, and difficulties are expressed as a Tai Yang malfunction or a Yang Ming malfunction. So for example, if the Shao Yang's kindling warmth (minister fire) is unable to assist in the Yang Ming's closing down, then local heat will accumulate in the Yang Ming, creating apparent dryness (which is the pathological dryness caused by local heat) in the bowels, resulting in constipation. This is described as a *bing bing*, or a mutual disease, of Shao Yang and Yang Ming. An imbalance in the Shao Yang may cause a bitter taste in the mouth, a dry throat, and blurry eyes. Bitter is the flavor of fire, dryness the pathology which is caused by fire, and blurriness the result of flaring fire or pathological fire. Shao Yang problems, then, are caused by fire. By fire, of course, we do not mean a minister's or 'kindling wood' fire, which is just warm enough to help metabolism but is not too hot to obstruct it.

As Liu Lihong explains, there are three organs which are most prone to opening and closing. The mouth opens and closes for Yang (talking) and for Yin (receiving and chewing food). The throat opens and closes for Yang (breathing) and for Yin (swallowing food, drinks and saliva). The eyes open and

close for Yang (to catch daylight and vision) and for Yin (to allow Yin storage and tears). If the pivot or the hinge is obstructed, the opening and closing will suffer. The Yang energy is obstructed and the result is pathological heat or not enough warmth. The action needed is to harmonize.

Another main symptom of the Shao Yang disease is an alternating cold and hot feeling, frequently experienced after taking fertility drugs. Pre-menopause symptoms such as hot flashes can at times fall under this category as well. Other symptoms include pains along the sides of the body, or a headache on one side of the head, signaling an obstruction of the Shao Yang meridians, as well as decreased appetite and nausea due to need of the spleen energy to ascend and the needs of the stomach's energy to descend. The Shao Yang minister fire needs to harmonize this upwards and downward separation.

Zhongjing's description of a decrease in appetite and nausea was "sitting quietly and not wishing to eat," which is a reference to the Yang mechanism connecting with the emotions. Energy disharmony can be brought about by emotions. Certainly, anxiety associated with the inability to conceive can have a negative effect on fertility.

Most body functions require harmonizing, and need the Shao Yang's minister fire to help. This includes, of course, the reproductive organs of both women and men. Shao Yang's root is fire (minister fire), its manifestation is hot as it harmonizes the Yang energy, and its center is Jue Yin, which we will discuss under a following section and includes the liver organ, a major player in fertility. The Shao Yang harmonizing function is closely related to the liver function of harmonizing and soothing the blood. This plays an important role in creating or preventing our fertility and reproduction.

It is important for us to understand that there is connectedness between all aspects of our energy, and that any action we take has an impact on our health and fertility. It is not only ovaries or uterus lining problems that are related to our fertility. What we eat, how we sleep, and how we medicate all impact different aspects of our energy.

Tai Yin Phase

Before we begin our discussion of Tai Yin, which is the first phase of Yin, it is important that we analyze the Chinese characters of Yin and Yang. As previously discussed, each part of a character symbolizes a specific idea the Chinese sages wanted to express, and combination of parts in each character also express ideas.

陽 陰

The Yin and Yang characters are identical on the left, but different on the right.

The right section of the Yang character has three parts. The upper part is a sun in the sky. The middle part is the line under the sun, which rep-



resents the earth. The third part is the lines under the earth, which represent the sun rays of light and warmth. This character stands for the Yang energy, or the outdoors. When one goes outside into the sunshine, one feels the Yang energy. It is a life



giving light and warmth.

The right section of the Yin character also has three parts. The upper part is a roof of a house. The middle part is a person sitting in the house. The bottom part is the steam coming out of cooked rice or cooked food. The Yin character represents the Yin energy, which is indoors, and has to do with our physical body or with physical matter. The bot-

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tom part represents the presence of energy which is hot in nature, but is not coming directly from the sun. It is coming from elements that were derived from the earth with the sun's help like rice, water and wood to burn the fire etc.

When we compare both characters, we see that we are dealing with two different states of energy. In the Yang character, the sun rays go downwards, while in the Yin character the steam is going upwards. Yang has less matter and more energy, and gives us the force for life. Yin has more matter and less energy and gives us the energy associated with matter, which is needed for life as well. In Chinese medicine, physical matter which is living, such as body tissues, bones, and muscles, is in a state of condensed energy. It is not the same as the Yang energy that we cannot see. It is physical matter but it contains energy within.

Both Yin and Yang characters have a section on the left side representing a hill or a mound. The hill is where the earth is swollen like a pregnant



woman, and is the place where the earth is growing closer to the heavens. It is a symbol of the heaven and earth exchanging energies, and the symbol of life and future generations.

This hill to the left summarizes the characters of Yin and Yang. Be it physical living matter or invisible life's energy, they both represent the exchange of heaven and earth, they are both living, they are both needed for life, and they are both warm. The life force, be it outside or inside the body, is all warm. The Yang energy and the Yin matter must all contain this warmth which is the root of life.

Cold is not Yin, rather it is the absence of Yang energy. When the night is cold it is because the sun is absent, not because the moon is radiating cold toward the earth. So when we truly want to understand Yin and Yang, we have to understand this

hot and cold concept. As we've noted, both pivots of the Yin and Yang (Shao Yin and Shao Yang) are fire –The Shao Yang is minister's fire and the Shao Yin is emperor's fire. This is exactly the description of the warmth within the Yang and the warmth within the Yin.

When we reach the Tai Yin, or the Yin within Yin, we have reached the physical living organism. The Tai Yin is where physically living matter interacts with other physically living matter. For example, the living parts of food and drink (nutrients) interact with the Tai Yin spleen organ. Air that we breathe interacts with the Tai Yin lung organ. Water is the embodiment of the Yin state. It has life in it because it has warmth, or Yang energy, within. The warmer the water, the more life there is to it. The Tai Yin anchors the Yang energy into the body. Without it, the Yang would float away.

The second aspect of Tai Yin is its energetical qualities, described by The Yellow Emperor as "Damp" and "Earth". We have described earth already in earlier chapters, represented by the Kun trigram which contains three broken lines with no Yang energy within. This is the expression of solid matter. It symbolizes the body's tissues, such as the bones, flesh, skin and inner organs. The earth, of course, has additional meaning, because it is where all living things spring out. Earth is closely related to water and dampness. The ancient character for damp, Shi, is:



The character Shi has four parts. On the left side, the three lines represent water. Then at the top we have the sun. In the middle we have a character that represents mystery, and at the bottom we have the character representing the earth. The entire character combination pictures a situation where the sun is shining on the earth, and while it is doing so, something mysterious about the in-

teraction causes the water to evaporate and become dampness.

The third aspect of Tai Yin is its organs – the spleen and the lungs. The spleen is responsible for receiving the Yang energy from food and drink. This is referred to as the root of the post-heaven energy – where we get our energy after we're born. When we choose the foods that we eat, it is important to consider whether or not it contains Yang, or heaven energy. Food that has heaven energy is normally food that is produced by heaven and earth – natural food. When food is harvested, its natural instinct is to perish, because once it is removed from nature its Yin matter and Yang energy want to separate. Today, the food industry processes and packages food in a way that enables it to stay on the shelf for many months. It is sometimes difficult to say whether or not this packaged food is alive, but at best it is not as alive as it could be. From the Tai Yin perspective, the recent trend toward consuming more locally grown, fresh food is very wise.

The lungs, as is the spleen, are responsible for the post-heaven energy we receive into our body after we are born, as opposed to the energy we receive from our mother while in the womb. The lungs are responsible for taking the heaven's Yang from the air and inserting it into our body as we breathe. The spleen is receiving the Yang within Yin, or in other words, it receives the Yang energy which is embedded in the food, while the lungs receive the Yang within Yang, the pure Yang energy in the air which is completely invisible. Both Tai Yin organs receive the Yang energy in its different forms and then insert it into our body's physical matter.

Again, the Tai Yin sphere is responsible for anchoring the Yang energy into physical matter. The spleen belongs to the earth element and the lungs belong to the metal element. The metal in its natural state is concealed within the earth, meaning that metal and earth are closely related.

Another function of the lungs, as described by The Yellow Emperor, is to rule the Qi —and the Jie (joints)—. The characters Qi and Jie can also mean time periods. One Jie is 15 days, and one Qi is 15 days. Together in Chinese, the words Jie Qi

translates to the four seasons and their 24 Qi segments we discussed before. The lungs control our ability to conform to the changing seasons and to benefit from each season's energy. They control and nourish the skin and body hair, because they regulate the Qi and the Jie, the interaction with the seasons changing around us.

The fourth aspect of Tai Yin is its meridians – the spleen meridian and the lungs meridian. When a person stands upright with both hands to the sides of the body, the Tai Yin meridians are distributed along the inside of the arms and legs (medial side). Their location on the body facilitates the job of the meridians, which is to bring the condensed Yang energy into the body tissues, or in other words, to bring the Yang within Yin or the Yang within the matter into the body.

The fifth aspect of Tai Yin is the unlocking time, which are Hai, Zi and Chou. These times represent the three months of winter in the lunar calendar, and in the daily cycle they are from 9 PM until 3 AM.

In order to understand this fifth aspect thoroughly, it is important to understand the three Yin spheres, which are much more closely related than the Yang spheres, and very often are interchangeable. What's more, the three Yin meridians can be difficult to separate. This is because the Yin mechanism, while still opening, closing and pivoting, occurs inside the yin material.

Hai, Zi and Chou are the times during the energy cycle where the Yang energy is in its most stored state – where it is the most invisible. Of course, when we're in the dead of winter or the middle of the night, it doesn't mean that the Yang energy has disappeared, only that it's in storage. When we are sleeping, we are in a living Yin state, the Yang energy having contracted but still residing within the body. This is why we naturally feel colder when we sleep and must cover ourselves with a blanket. In Chinese medicine, the time from 9:00 PM until midnight is when the body rejuvenates its blood (material). If we sleep at this time, our blood will be vigorous and many of our ailments solved, including fertility. The first thing that an infertility

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patient needs to consider is to change sleeping patterns. Going to bed at 9:00 PM for several months will greatly increase the chance of conception.

The time of Hai (9:00-11:00 PM) is when the Yin is pure and the Yang is in complete storage. The time of Zi, one hour before midnight, is where the first Yang – the Tai Yang - is born. The Yang then grows during the time of Chou (1:00-3:00 AM). The reason why sleep is so important is that when the Yang rises within the Yin, it is like the steam elevating from the cooked rice. It is giving us life inside the house, or in other words giving us life inside our body. It is important to sleep at the right time so the body becomes harmonious with nature.

When we have an obstruction of the Tai Yin sphere, sleep is a remedy. Symptoms associated with this obstruction generally begin with the abdomen – the center of the body that belongs to the earth - feeling full or bloated, signaling that the Yang is not transforming the Yin harmoniously. When a woman feels bloated during the menses period, it is because the Tai Yin is not harmonious. When an infertility patient receives medication, the abrupt stimulation of Yang brings the Tai Yin into disharmony, a bloated feeling often resulting. In Western medicine, this is referred to as a 'side effect'. In Chinese medicine, this phenomenon is a 'disharmony.'

Pain in the abdomen is the result of cold, which as stated before, signifies the absence of Yang – where the Yang energy does not transform the Yin substance and (Yin) energy and the Yin becomes obstructed. Pain in Chinese is Teng Tong 疼痛. Each character in Teng Tong has two parts. The part on the left, showing a person lying on a bed, represents disease. The right part in Teng is the character Dong, which is winter, when the Yang energy is stored, the weather is cold, and the Yin can't transform. On the right side of the 'Tong' character, is Yong, which signifies a path or a way. This embodies the meaning that if something is obstructed, it will become painful.

In our daily lives, when we drink cold drinks, eat cold foods, consume cold herbs and cold medications, this will lead to the obstruction of Tai Yin. Preserving the Yang energy of the spleen (Tai Yin)

is the most important factor in the treatment of any disease.

In addition, in Tai Yin obstruction, the food will not stay down and the person will throw up. This shows that obstruction in Tai Yin is caused by cold (Yang absence). The Yang cannot warm the earth and food metabolism stops.

Shao Yin Phase

Shao Yin is the pivot of the Yin mechanism, and is closely related to the Tai Yin, and in fact could be said to be inseparable. When we discussed the character for dampness, we mentioned the mysterious element within it. With our analysis of the Shao Yin, we will attempt to unveil this mystery.

As we've discussed previously, water and earth, as well as water and fire, need the Yang energy in order to create life. The Shao Yin is the embodiment of all this. The essence of the pure Yin (earth) and the pure Yang (heaven), the living Yin (water) and the living Yang (fire) is all within the Shao Yin. The interaction between heaven and earth in our body, and the way water and fire complement each other in our body, are all functions of the Shao Yin, or in other words, the Yin mechanism's pivot. The 'mysterious' part of the character for dampness is related to the Shao Yin ability to orchestrate this harmony between Yin and Yang.

In Chinese medicine, a person's actions and events over a lifetime are all consequential to his or her Shao Yin sphere and reproductive ability. This includes long-time eating habits, sleeping habits, and the way in which ailments have been treated. It even includes how the individual's parents ate and slept and treated ailments before he or she was even born.

The second aspect of Shao Yin is its energetical qualities. The Yellow Emperor refers to the Shao Yin as 'Emperor's fire'. The leader or the emperor of a country is the figure that unites the whole country. The Emperor Fire in our body is the sphere that makes our body and emotions to be one unit and not many scattered pieces. The reason that we have two kinds of fire in the six spheres is that the Shao Yang fire warms up the body, while

the Shao Yin fire lights up the body. The emperor fire represents the brightness of the light.

The third aspect of Shao Yin is its organs, the kidneys and heart. The kidneys belong to the water element, while the heart belongs to the fire element. This of course represents the water and fire interaction within our body as described previously in our introduction to Shao Yin.

In the body, the heart is like the emperor. It is the organ that allows this unity in the body. ‘The Yellow Emperor’ describes the heart as the emperor where Shen Ming comes out”. Shen means ‘spirit/soul’, while Ming translates to clear. Loosely translated, the above statement means that the heart is where the spirit becomes clear.

“The Yellow Emperor” describes the Shen/spirit as *“The vast interaction of heaven and earth where the human spirit penetrates.”* It also states: *“Spirit in heaven is wind and in the earth it is wood, in heaven it is heat and in the earth it is fire, in heaven it is mist and in earth it is dirt (earth from the five elements), in heaven it is dryness and in earth it is metal, in heaven it is cold while in earth it is water.”* This is the description of the five elements in nature as related to the spirit.

The spirit in heaven and earth represents the energetical qualities of each of the six spheres. The Tai Yang sphere is cold and water, the Jue Yin sphere is wind and wood, the Yang Ming is dryness and metal. Tai Yin is earth and mist. Only Shao Yang and Shao Yin unite into one category where one is heat and one is fire, which as we’ve just explained, are the two aspects of the same fire – heat and light. Both statements of The Yellow Emperor describe the spirit as a pathway between heaven, earth and man, or between Yin, Yang and man. The spirit is the mechanism connecting us to heaven and earth. It is the mechanism and unifying factor that connects us to nature, allowing the Yang (heaven) and Yin (earth) to interact within our bodies.

When the Yin and Yang separate at death we say that the spirit has departed. So what do we mean when we say that the spirit is clear? Let us look into the character Ming. The character Ming

(clear) in Chinese is composed of two parts. The left side represents the sun, while the right side represents the moon. When we look to the heavens during the day and night, the most clearly visible objects are the sun and the moon. What is visible is their light.

The statement that the heart is where the spirit is clear means that the heart is where the spirit sees everything. The emperor fire is the light that is needed for the spirit to see what is happening in every part of the body. All ailments are caused by the spirit that is not clear because it is in the dark and cannot see.

Western medications such as pain relievers are actually a hindrance to solving the root problem of any physical issue because they remove the light from the spirit in order to relieve the symptoms. The emperor can no longer see what is happening in his kingdom. When it comes to infertility procedures, if a patient who undergoes IVF treatments doesn’t feel side effects such as hot flashes, weight gain, or abdominal distension and bleeding, it is because the spirit is now clouded and medication side effects are masked. Therefore, the spirit is not clear and the emperor fire is not shining the light that it should.

The heart organ is the most important organ and it contains the most important function in our body. Without it, the body cannot see and repair ailments, connect to the nature around us, or connect to heaven and earth. The body’s Yin and Yang energies are in chaos. In Chinese medicine, the heart fire combined with the kidney Yang is called ‘True Yang’.

The kidneys belong to the water element. The water, as discussed previously, interacts with fire to create life. The Yellow Emperor states: “The kidneys are the officer of Qiang. It is where cleverness comes from.” The Emperor goes on to state that: “The kidneys control hibernation. They are the root of storage. They are the place of essence.”

Qiang has two meanings. It translates to ‘rice worm,’ which resembles a male’s penis, and is the Emperor’s way of describing the kidneys’ control of the reproductive organs (male and female). The

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second meaning of Qiang is strength. Let's look at the character Qiang 強. The left part represents a bow (as in bow and arrow). The right section has a worm at the bottom and a big mouth on top, representing a worm with a big head. The bow is a symbol for true strength. It is a weapon that is hard and soft at the same time. It has the strength of steel, yet it flexes when it is shot. The male genitalia can also be flexible and stiff, and this ability to transform is what The Yellow Emperor refers to as cleverness. That 'the kidneys are the officer of Qiang' means that the kidneys, which belong to the water element, rule this quality of maintaining a hardness and softness at the same time. This quality, however, cannot be separated from the heart.

The heart is where the spirit becomes clear and the kidneys control the hard and soft of the genitalia. These are the preliminary conditions for reproduction. When the male and female become intimate, the emotions are even. If the male stimulation or anxiety is too great, he will not experience erection, and if there is lack of desire or not enough stimulation, he will also fail to achieve erection. The same is true with the female arousal. Too much and too little are both counterproductive. The heart is where the spirit resides and the emotions are kept in check. When the spirit is calm and the emotions content, or when there is love in the air, the emperor fire can go down to the kidneys and warm up the kidneys' water. The kidneys' water will allow the Qiang to bend and straighten and reproduction to take place.

In contrast, IVF and timing ovulation, instead of warming the heart's emotions, is cooling the fire off. It separates the heart's fire from the kidney's water.

The Yellow Emperor states: "*The kidneys control hibernation. They are the root of storage. They are the place of essence.*" Hibernation, storage and essence are three layers of the same thing. Hibernation is when we sleep and recharge our energy for the next day. Storage is the storage of the Yang energy in the physical matter, or what we call Yin energy. Essence is the unification of energy into the matter forming one seed that can give life to an-

other cycle. The Shao Yin is the sphere where we recharge our energy, it is the sphere where the energy stores in physical matter (Yin energy) and it is the sphere where the seed for a new life is created. The kidneys belong to water. The water trigram has two broken lines and one solid line in between.

The essence in the water is the Yang energy (solid line). We call this 'one true Yang'. In Chinese medicine, this is the most precious substance/energy of our lives. If one wastes it, one's life is wasted and future generations are wasted as well. Our goal with Chinese medicine is to restore this one true Yang. It is to restore the energy for the following generations.

Preserving hibernation is when we sleep well. Preserving the Yin energy is when we don't harm the Yang energy, and we don't harm the Yang energy if we follow the guidelines of Tai Yang, Yang Ming, Shao Yang and Tai Yin. Preserving the essence is when we follow the guidelines of Shao Yin. We nourish the emperor's fire of the heart (emotions and clear state of mind) and we keep the one true Yang of the kidneys.

Regarding the effects of steroid use, Liu Li-hong maintains that it unleashes the true Yang in the kidneys, the body healing as if with a miracle. But the Yang is depleted – it is consumed. With hormone stimulation in fertility treatments, it is a similar situation in that the Yang in the kidneys becomes depleted. This depletion is antithetical to conception. As The Yellow Emperor said: "The Yin and Yang must harmonize. This will give birth to an offspring". If the Yang is depleted and can't be harmonized with the Yin, this will cause infertility.

The fourth aspect of Shao Yin is its meridians of the kidneys and heart. When one stands upright with hands to the side, palms touching thighs and the feet close together, the Shao Yin meridians run along the inside of the body on the posterior side (the inside of the arms and legs but close to the back). The inside of the body is Yin and the posterior part is Yang, thus it is the Yang within the Yin. The heart and kidneys meridians start in concealed areas under the feet and under the arm pits, thus

their origin is concealed in the pre-heaven. In other words the Shao Yin energy comes from our parents, so we can't see its beginning.

The fifth aspect of Shao Yin is the unlocking time, which extends from Zi until Yin, from 11:00 PM until 5:00 AM., overlapping with the Tai Yin times of Zi and Chou. This explains the closeness between Shao Yin and Tai Yin, and therefore the closeness between the earth and the water.

The Shao Yin starts at Zi which is the birth of Yang. It is the one true Yang within the water – the Yang energy that gives life to the water. Chou and Yin are the growth of Yang into two and into three. Lao Zi says: One gives birth to two. Two give birth to three and three gives birth to the myriad things. The Shao Yin progress of one, two and three is a full body of Yang within Yin. It is what we call an emperor fire. It is a full heaven trigram (three solid lines) within the Yin. It is the Yang within Yin.

Shao Yin is the embodiment of heaven and earth interacting within our body. It is the kidney water and heart fire in our body that act like the heaven and earth in nature. The Shao Yin, like the Shao Yang, is the pivot, and the pivot belongs to fire, the driving force behind the Yin and behind the Yang. In the Yin mechanism, the fire is less warming than in the Yang mechanism, yet it is a full body of Yang within the Yin that drives the Yin mechanism into change. That is why the unlocking time of the Shao Yin is entirely within the Yang growth phase. When the Shao Yin becomes obstructed, the pulse is thin and small and the body wants to sleep but cannot. The heart feels irritable, urination is clear and frequent, and thirst is pronounced.

With regard to the heart feeling 'irritable,' it is important to analyze the Chinese character Fan 煩 (irritable). The left part represents fire while the right section represents a head. The fire or heat comes up to the head, bringing on irritability.

This fire needs to descend into the kidneys and not ascend to warm up the body. Ascending fire is the minister fire of Shao Yang, which moves the entire Yang mechanism. The Shao Yin fire is a descending fire connecting the emperor into the water, or as we described it before, it is the 'one true

Yang' of the water. This is like the sunshine lighting downwards onto the earth. The sunlight is not lighting upwards. This is the pivot fire of the Yin mechanism – the energy that is imbedded in the physical matter. This is the rooting of the energy into the matter. When this fire doesn't root into the body, there are two main symptoms that arise: the person is very tired but is unable to fall asleep. The second symptom is internal irritability. These symptoms occur because the fire can't connect with the water.

This fire and water connection happens in the Shao Yin in the middle of the night when we sleep. In nature it happens in the middle of winter when everything is hibernating. The emperor fire is resting in the water, which in Chinese medicine we refer to as "the dragon is resting in the water". This sounds a little too picturesque but it is meaningful, nevertheless. In Chinese myth, the dragon is the mightiest creature that flies in the highest heavens and dives into the deepest seas. Its movement is agile and clever. The dragon in the water is this phenomenal Yang energy in the water that gives it life and recreates life over and over again.

When we sleep, the dragon or emperor fire descends into the water. This allows a restful sleep and vigorous energy the following day. During the day, an individual's spirit is visible, and if the spirit is lacking, the person looks tired and the light in his eyes is turned off. No vibrant spirit, or metaphorically speaking, no dragon, is showing itself. During the night when we sleep, the dragon goes to rest in the deep sea, or in the water, or in the north, or in the kidneys (these are all synonyms from a Chinese medicine point of view). When we objectively consider the different states of mind during active day and sleepy night, we can clearly see the difference. Additional symptoms of the Shao Yin imbalance include frequent urination of clear urine. This has to do with the Yang's failure to warm up the kidneys. When Yang is too intense, the kidneys warming up too much, the urine turns yellow, but when Yang is lacking, the urine is clear. There is no heat in the urine.

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The most important symptom in the Shao Yin is the thin and small pulse, which is again a problem of water and fire. Fire is the energy and water is the substance. The most 'water-like' substance in our body is blood, as it fills the veins and arteries. If the blood (water) is missing, the pulse will be thin. This is in contrast to a full-bodied pulse where the blood is ample. A small pulse is a fire problem, or to be more accurate, an emperor fire problem. How is it an emperor fire problem?

First, let's consider the minister fire, which must warm the body. When there is too much warmth, the pulse turns rapid and when there is lack of warmth (or cold) the pulse turns slow. This is because warmth and Yang accelerates the water, while cold slows it down.

Zhongjing, in his description of the pulse, does not mention a slow pulse, he rather describes it as thin and small. The pulse within our body is the embodiment of life. When someone faints and we want to check that he or she is alive, we check the pulse.

From this we can understand that the cycle of every heart beat in a pulse is similar to every day's cycle. It is similar to every year's cycle. Each pulse has a spring, summer, fall and winter. There is a cyclical and repetitive movement to it. The winter is the water or the blood of the pulse. It is the Yin energy of the pulse. The spring, summer and fall are the Yang energy of the pulse. The Yang energy of the three seasons is long when compared to the winter season.

In each heartbeat, one should feel a long spring, summer and fall pulse. If the pulse is short it means that the Yang or emperor fire mechanism of the kidneys is in decline. It is the heart's spirit which harmonizes the seasons and the body. When a person's heart fire is healthy and the kidney's true Yang is strong, the pulse is long.

Infertility is to a large degree a Shao Yin problem. The emperor fire does not warm the kidney's True Yang. The spirit does not store in the essence. The energy does not root in the matter. The common symptoms that I encounter with most infertility patients are Shao Yin symptoms of

Yang deficiency such as cold hands and feet, or a cold nose, while others feel hot flashes and night sweats. There is not enough warm (Yang) energy to warm you up.

How can we understand hot flashes and night sweats as Yang deficiency? Zheng Qinan explains it as follows: Yang deficiency has straight and odd symptoms. Straight symptoms are cold feet, cold hands, pale face etc. There are, however, odd symptoms like red face and feeling hot. This is because the water contains the pre-heaven Yang. When the Yang is deficient, the water overflows and carries the original Yang with it upwards. The original Yang (emperor fire) should go downwards to warm the water, however when it is deficient it cannot go downwards and it floats upwards instead. This will give rise to symptoms such as hot flashes and night sweats. When the true Yang is strong again, the Yang will root into the water and it will not float upwards.

In my practice, I see that hot flashes and night sweats of the Yang deficiency type can be alleviated rather quickly with very hot herbs. Furthermore, the worse the night sweats and hot flashes, the hotter the herbal formula needs to be. This is in order to save the Birthing Yang from separating. What is the main cause of infertility then? The true Yang in the water is deficient and the emperor fire is too weak to descend.

In my experience, patients who have never used fertility drugs or birth control pills restore their true Yang and emperor fire rather quickly and easily. Patients who have used fertility drugs and birth control pills restore the water's true Yang with great difficulty.

Lack of true Yang explains why many IVF cycles fail, despite a successful embryo transfer. It also explains most "unexplained" infertility.

Jue Yin Phase

Jue (diminished) Yin is the last sphere of the Yin mechanism. It is where the Tai Yin and Shao Yin come to an end, enabling the Yang to flourish. While the Tai Yin is true Yin and the Shao Yin is the Yang within the Yin, the Jue Yin is the Yin

within the Yang. The closing of the Jue Yin finds itself entirely within the Yang realm.

When we compare the three Yin phases to fertility and reproduction, the Tai Yin is the creation of the sperm and egg, the Shao Yin is the conception and creation of a new life, while the Jue Yin is the development of the fetus within the mother. The Jue Yin is already a new life separated from the previous cycle (from the parents) and yet it is still connected to the mother and not truly independent. It is only when the baby is born into his independent life that the Jue Yin phase has finished its work and is an entirely independent new cycle.

The second aspect of Jue Yin is its energetical qualities. The Yellow Emperor describes the Jue Yin as Wind and Wood. The character of wind 風 is composed of two parts. The outer encasing character is called Fan and its meaning is ‘altogether’ or ‘all’. The inner character is a worm, the same worm we had in the character Qiang in the previous Shao Yin discussion. Together the meaning is that the wind is giving birth to all types of worms. It is explained in The Yellow Emperor that ‘worms’ here mean all living animals, including humans.

The character Chong 蟲 (worm) has in the center a mouth with a vertical line in it. This represents a man or an animal. When we extend this line upwards, it is as if we reach to the heavens, and when we extend the line downward, we reach to the earth. This represents the connection of all living things to heaven and earth. At the bottom there are two feet, signifying a human.

The character Fan 凡 (all) has two parts as well. The outer encasing suggests ‘containing everything’ while inside there is the character Yi (one) which suggests unity. Combining all the different parts of the character Feng (wind), the meaning of wind suggests a unity of all living things between heaven and earth.

Indeed, the Chinese sages said ‘the wind is the messenger of heaven and earth’. This meant that all living things, humans included, are the messengers of heaven and earth. Human beings in par-

ticular were considered the mirror of heaven and earth interaction. They are the embodiment of Yin and Yang and the embodiment of life. Jue Yin, being the life already created but not yet separated from its parent, is best described by wind. What is the quality that describes this fetal phase so well? It is wood.

Wood has several meanings. Let’s look at the character Mu 木 (wood). The horizontal line is the earth and the vertical line is a plant sprouting out of the ground. The two oblique lines are the roots of the plant under the ground. This describes all life forms that spring out of the earth, including humans and animals, as we are all nourished by the earth’s pure Yin energy. In ancient China, there was no separation between man and nature. Nature was man and man was nature.

Wood is a quality that springs out of the earth and rises toward the heavens. This is a quality that changes the egg and sperm into a baby. The Yellow Emperor describes the wood quality as “to bend and to straighten.” or the ability to change from one state to another. The wood quality assists the male genitalia in becoming hard and soft when needed, and also explains the ability of the embryo to straighten from a very curled position into a fetus, and then into a baby. The character Mu (wood) also best describes the phase where the energy has roots in the Yin under the earth, but at the same time starts a new life in the Yang above the earth.

What is the connection between wind and wood? The Yellow Emperor says “the east gives birth to wind and the wind gives birth to wood”. The east, the wind, and the wood are three different layers of the same thing. The east is where the sun, or the Yang energy, rises or comes out of the earth. This Yang energy gives birth to wind, which represents all the living things on earth. The living things (wind) give birth to wood, to reproduction, and ultimately to the next generation. Wind and wood cannot be separated. Life and reproduction cannot be separated.

The Tai Yin and Shao Yin “come into extinction,” as The Yellow Emperor says, by the birth of a new life, or by the wind giving birth to the wood.

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Jue Yin is important to solving infertility because it allows us to understand miscarriages and the health of the fetus.

The third aspect of Jue Yin is its organs, the liver and the pericardium, a double walled sac that contains the heart and the roots of the great vessels. The Yellow Emperor calls the pericardium “the walls surrounding the emperor (heart)”. When pathological energy attacks the heart, the pericardium will receive it first as to protect the emperor. In reality, the pericardium has a deeper meaning and we should look into it further. Why wasn't the pericardium separated from the heart in ancient times? It was very strange that there were 12 meridians including a pericardium meridian, but there was no pericardium organ. They were six Yin meridians, but only five Yin organs. What was the reason for this odd phenomenon?

To understand , let's look into the Chinese characters to find some clues. The character Xin Bao 心包 (pericardium) is composed of two characters. The character on the left is heart (Xin) and the one on the right is a case or a sac (Bao). Combined together, pericardium is the case surrounding the heart. From this initial assessment we can see that the heart and the pericardium (sac around the heart) are very closely related. If we look further we can see that the character Bao (sac) on the right has two parts to it; an upper part and a lower part. We will discuss this character shortly.

Let's look first at the Chinese characters for all the Yin organs: spleen, lungs, kidneys, liver and heart. Except for the heart, they all carry the flesh radical 月 within the character, meaning that the character has something to do with the physical body or our flesh (脾, 肺, 肾, 肝) .

Why doesn't the heart character 心 carry the flesh section? The heart is the emperor fire. It is the light that shines within the body, the organ that belongs to fire, and as such can ascend to the heavens because it has very little physical matter but is full of energy. Of the five elements, wood, metal, water, earth and fire, it is the only element able to ascend, while all the others descend due to heavy physical matter and gravity which pull them down.

By ascending to heaven, fire can connect the earth material to the heaven's energy. The heart belongs to fire as well. It has the least matter and most energy. It is where our spirit dwells, and where our energy connects the earth to heaven. Yet, isn't there a physical blood pump we call the heart? In my opinion, this is the pericardium. The heart muscle and the heart sac make-up the pericardium. Shan Zhong 膻中 is what The Yellow Emperor calls the physical organ of the heart (pericardium and heart muscle combined).

The character to the left is Shan (some pronounce it Dan) and the character to the right is Zhong (meaning 'center'). Zhong contains a vertical line going through a mouth. This is again the idea of connecting heaven and earth within the person (the mouth is a person). So when The Yellow Emperor says that the physical blood pump is Shan Zhong, his first meaning is that the blood pump has something to do with connecting heaven and earth, which is life.

The character Shan on the left has two parts. The first is Rou (flesh), indicating this is a Yin organ composed of physical matter. The right section of Shan is composed of a roof on the top, a double-walled structure in the middle, and a sun rising over the horizon at the bottom. The roof means that this entity is covering all of the organs in the body. The double walled structure means that this entity is the most protected and revered in the whole body. The sun rising over the horizon means the birth of life, when a new cycle has started or when a baby has emerged from the womb. So The Yellow Emperor is describing the pericardium/physical heart as the most important (roof), the most protected (double walled) and the beginning of life (sunrise over the horizon).

Furthermore, the pericardium (Xin Bao) has an additional meaning, which will help us understand why originally the pericardium was not a separate entity from the heart. It will also help us understand why the pericardium is a Jue Yin, or the fetal part of the Yin. Examining the character Bao 包 (sac):

The top part is Bao and it means to wrap around, while the bottom part is called Si and it means ‘fetus’. Looking at the ancient character of Bao, one can see the fetus inside the belly.

So when we think about the heart ‘sac’ (peri-



cardium), we are focusing on a fetus. When a baby is not yet born, it is inseparable from its mother. The Jue Yin is the ‘extinction’ of the Yin into a new life, ‘extinction’ here meaning new birth.

The Yellow Emperor says: “*When the Yin reaches its highest peak, the Yang is born*”. The cycle of Yin and Yang, or the cycle of life and birth, is happening all the time. It happens in a woman’s life span when she gives birth to a child. It happens in a year’s span, when winter gives birth to spring. It happens in the span of a day, when night gives birth to the morning, and it also happens within a heart-beat. When the heart beats once, it is a new life that was just born. It is a new push of blood and energy into our body. What happens when the heart stops beating? There is no birth anymore. There is not another life in another beat. There is no additional cycle of life. When we refer to the heart sac and the fetus in the sac, we mean the heart muscles pumping the blood and energy to allow us ‘life’. It is a description of how our life is continuing. The pericardium is not a mere muscle like the muscles of the leg. It is the organ with which the spirit connects, where heaven and earth pump life into our body.

The Yellow Emperor goes further to describe the Shan Zhong (center of the chest/pericardium) as the “faithful minister” – the one who obeys the emperor without deviation. It is the faithful blood pump that never fails us.

The liver is analogized by The Yellow Emperor as the army general and the organ from which thinking and planning emerge. The liver functions are important for our life in the same way that an

army general is important to the army. If the general thinks and plans strategically and thoroughly, his army will be victorious in a time of war.

As opposed to the other organs, which are necessary in a time of peace, the liver is necessary in a time of war within the body. A state of war exists when the Yin phase (storage) wants to transform into a Yang phase (expansion). In our daily life, a state of war exists every morning when we wake up, when sleep changes into awakening. In nature, a state of war exists when winter hibernation turns into spring’s life and prosperity. The Yang energy wants to separate, but the Yin energy wants things to stay together. This war between the Yin wishes and the Yang wishes is called Jue Yin. The liver is the general who has to plan how to win this war. If the liver fails in planning this transition, the war will be lost, and the body will not wake up in the morning. If the liver fails to plan, no baby will be born. A pregnancy is a war over the baby’s continued attachment to the mother or separating from her. If the liver function fails due to poor planning, and the baby separates too early, there will be a miscarriage. If the baby does not separate at term, a still birth will occur.

In Chinese history, the ultimate victory is to defeat the opponent before the war has even started. This is achieved with a well-planned strategy. In our daily life, a healthy liver delivers a well planned strategy for a seamless transition from Yin into Yang. If the liver is unhealthy, the planning will be poor and we will be in pain and misery, and a woman will certainly have difficulty in maintaining a pregnancy or having a healthy baby.

The Yellow Emperor states: “*The liver harmonizes the tendons and ligaments, and its function is to straighten and bend,*” meaning that the liver is concerned with the flexibility we have in our body, especially in the joints. The liver function allows us to bend forward and sideways, and to stretch and bend our arms, hands, fingers and knees. We previously mentioned the wood element and its function to ‘straighten and bend’ as related to the male genitalia. A poor diet, inadequate sleep, excessive stress, or the taking of medication, will damage the liver.

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The army's general can no longer plan effectively. Pregnancy will be harmed.

The Yellow Emperor goes on to state that: "When a person lies down, the liver receives the blood and the person's eyesight is clear. When the feet receive the blood, he can walk. When the hands receive the blood, he can grasp." This refers to the all-important liver function of regulating the blood system in the body. This is different from blood circulation, but rather the harmony of Yin and Yang.

The color of blood is red, which belongs to the fire element, while the consistency of the blood is fluid, which belongs to the water element. Together they are life. When the blood reaches the feet, life has reached the feet, and the person can walk. When blood reaches the hands, life has reached the hands and a person can grasp. When the life force, or the correct combination of Yin and Yang energy, reaches any particular part of the body, this part will function. Of course, this goes for the uterus, ovaries and fallopian tubes too. To achieve this harmony, we must first harmonize the liver.

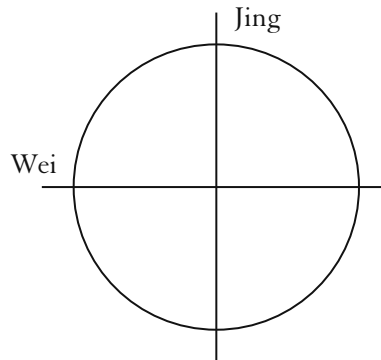
The emperor's second statement also explains that when a person is lying down, the liver receives the blood and the person's eyesight is clear. The simple meaning here is that when a person is active, blood flows out of the liver to the body, and when the person is lying down, or resting, the excess blood in the body returns into the liver for storage.

As for clear eyesight, I don't believe 'The Yellow Emperor' is referring to blood circulation here, but rather about life. For this discussion I would like to introduce another concept of ancient Chinese medicine – Jing and Wei.

Jing is the vertical line that connects heaven and earth, water and fire, and Yin and Yang. Wei is an additional aspect that connects all things among themselves – one human to another, an animal to another, a tree pollinating with another tree. With reference to the Jing and human beings, the person is standing upright with his head in the heaven and his feet on the ground. His spirit is connected to the heavens while his body is material and connected with the earth. The human being is composed of heaven and earth, and is a third unique phenome-

non, which is heaven and earth combined. It is Yin and Yang combined, which is life.

With Wei, however, the person is lying down in the animalistic posture, the posture taken when a couple lies together to conceive a new life, or when a person goes to sleep trying to conceive a



new life for the next day. What makes us different from animals is that instead of remaining in wei, we shift from wei to jing. This also shows a greater responsibility for human beings in this world, and why we are able to save or destroy it.

When the The Yellow Emperor states that the liver receives the blood when the person is lying down, he is referring to the wei position. The liver is receiving the life force when the person is creating a new life. The liver is the army general and should plan how this will happen, but in order to do so, the eyes must be clear. When the energy goes into the liver for procreation, the vision must be clear for the sperm to know which egg to visit, and the egg to know which sperm to receive.

The Yellow Emperor goes onto state that "all channels (meridians and blood vessels) belong to the eyes". The simple meaning here is that many meridians go through or connect to the eyes. However, the eyes, able to tell good from bad, are related to all organs of the body, not just to the liver. Any harm to the body – any illness or injury to the body - will make the eyes not clear, obstructing the liver's ability to harmonize the Yin and the Yang in order to create a new life. Pregnancy will be impossible to sustain. This is how the liver is related to the Jue Yin phase of creating a new life.

The fourth aspect of Jue Yin is the liver and

pericardium meridians, running along the middle of the median side of our arms and legs. Standing upright with both palms attached to the sides of the thighs and with both feet close together, the Jue Yin meridian runs in the inside of the arms and legs in the middle (not leaning to the front or rear). They are parallel to the Shao Yang meridians in the sense that they run in the center of the arms and legs. What is interesting about the liver meridian is that it starts on top of the foot, which is Yang in nature, runs upwards through an area of the inner leg which is Yin in nature, and terminates where it distributes close to the gall bladder Shao Yang meridian. It runs from Yang, through the deepest Yin and ends up at Yang.

The meridians of Jue Yin bring us to another discussion about the connection of wind-wood and the minister fire, and how together they create life. The Yellow Emperor says that a fierce fire will consume the energy while mild warmth will nourish the energy. This is related to the ability of wind to create new life, which does not happen in either extreme heat or cold, but rather in comfortable warm spring weather. Without the warmth of the minister fire, the new life will not have the Yang energy needed to evolve itself.

The Yellow Emperor says that the Yang is born so the Yin can flourish. “Yang energy is like the relationship of the sun to heaven. If the sun loses its place in the heaven, life will stop and the greatness of life is gone. So when the sky is turning, the sun must shine. This is the reason that the Yang is above and protecting us from the outside.”

In this statement, the Emperor explains the importance of Yang energy as the source of life. In the body, even though the Yin is crucial for life, the Yang is the source of life. Waking up in the morning is the Yang energy. Creating a baby from an egg and sperm is Yang energy. The Yellow Emperor says that the Yang energy of our body is like the sun in the sky and that is the reason why the Yang is above and protecting us from the outside. The sun in the sky is crucial for life in the same way that the Yang energy is crucial for our life. The Yang is defending us from ailments and it is nourishing our life.

As stated before, it is important to preserve Yang energy. The sun will never stop shining, but our Yang can be finished because we belong to earth. The energy in our material is borrowed from heaven. If we preserve the Yang, we will live longer, healthier lives and be able to give this Yang ‘seed of life’ to a new generation.

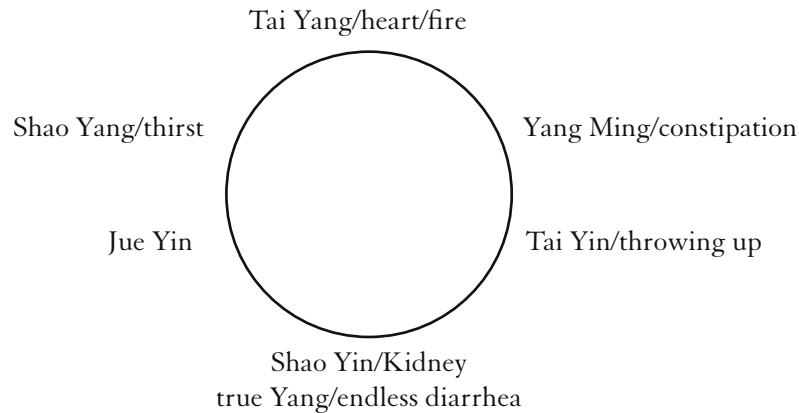
It is interesting to note that the liver meridian is circulating through the genitalia and the reproductive organs. Since one of Jue Yin’s main functions is to allow a new life to develop, it makes perfect sense that the Jue Yin meridian will nourish the reproductive organs. The liver meridian has internal pathways that circulate all the way to the crown of the head, which is the most Yang area of our body. This shows again the distribution of the liver function from the Yin to the Yang. Chinese medicine sees the Jue Yin and liver as the transformation of the old Yin to the new Yang.

The fifth aspect of Jue Yin is the unlocking time, from Chou through Yin and into Mao, which is from 1:00 AM until 7:00 AM. The character of Chou shows a hand which is tied down, Yin is two hands straightening an arrow, while Mao depicts the killing of an animal as a sacrifice.

The progress in the Jue Yin is explained by these three meanings. The first step of Jue Yin is tied to the previous Yin and cannot move into the new life. The second step is the army general planning and taking measures for moving into the new life. The third step is the extinction of the old cycle and the beginning of the new cycle. Killing an animal as a sacrifice means transforming the matter/flesh of the animal into heaven energy, which is different than eating the animal and descending it into the earth via a bowel movement. The action of sacrifice was viewed in ancient times as complete selflessness, required for giving up the old life or the old Yin and starting a new life with a new Yang.

The Yellow Emperor says that the Jue Yin is where the Yin is extinct and the Yang rising. The Yang refers to the center of Jue Yin, which is the warmth of Shao Yang that is rising. The times of Chou, Yin and Mao best describe the extinction of the night and the birth of the day. It best describes

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the extinction of winter and birth of spring. This is the best time to treat a Jue Yin ailment.

What happens when the Jue Yin becomes obstructed? The Yellow Emperor and Zhang Zhongjing both maintain that the wind is the root of the hundred diseases, which means all diseases. It is also, as previously explained, the process of creating a new life, which shows itself every morning when we wake up, with every new Spring, with every heart beat, as well as when a woman becomes pregnant and gives birth. Wind is the process of the Yang energy emerging out of the Yin. When the Yang does not emerge out of the Yin appropriately, we can say that the wind has a problem, and this is what is referred to as “the wind gives rise to the hundred diseases.”

Zhongjing says that symptoms for a Jue Yin illness include Xiao Ke (thirst), hunger with no desire to eat and vomiting of worms when one does eat, as well as a hot and painful heart, meaning a heart attack. He also says that if the patient purges downwards with cold herbs, there will be endless diarrhea.

These symptoms have confused many practitioners over the centuries, as they are very odd and confusing, as well as very infrequently observed. However, why did The Yellow Emperor say that the wind is the root of the hundred diseases? Shouldn't the wind, being the Jue Yin energy, give rise to ailments in the Tai Yin or Yang Ming spheres? It definitely should.

Zhongjing describes here a variety of sample symptoms giving rise to ailments of the other five spheres. Let's look at our circle again.

When we analyze these symptoms, we get an explanation of Zhongjing's assertion about 'wind giving rise to the hundred diseases'. The thirst, as Chen Xiuyuan said, is the Shao Yang fire, the center or the core of Jue Yin. We have explained before that the fire of Shao Yang is most needed by the Jue Yin to allow the Yang to grow and the Yin to become extinct. When the Shao Yang fire within the Jue Yin is too strong, the patient will become very thirsty.

The second symptom arises when the energy pounds against the heart, which becomes 'hot and painful.' When we set up the five Yin organs around the circle, the heart, or fire element is at the top, or in the south. This corresponds to noon, the time of Tai Yang. What Zhongjing means by this energy pounding against the heart is that the Jue Yin energy rushes upwards abnormally into the Tai Yang sphere. Remember that the Tai Yang opens up the Yang energy from the coldness of midnight until the warmth of midday, and that this opening must be gradual. The Tai Yang goes in and out through the chest. When this opening is abrupt, the Yang energy rushes toward the fire of midday – toward the Tai Yang or the heart or the south. In this case, the energy is pounding against the heart, resulting in a hot and painful heart.

The Chinese characters for pain are Teng 疼 and Tong 痛. Both characters Teng and Tong have an outer part, which represents an illness, as well as an inner segment that represents an additional meaning. Teng has an inner component that represents winter, meaning that when there is cold obstructing the energy, there is pain. With Tong, the right component means ‘to pass through’. When the energy cannot pass through – when it is obstructed – there is pain. So Teng and Tong are two kinds of pain derived from different causes. The one is from cold and the other is from external factors, such as an accident. Both are the result of an obstruction in energy flow.

Zhongjing uses the character Teng (cold pains) to indicate that the heart can become hot and painful. The Tai Yang manifestation is hot but its root is cold, and the Tai Yang energy is cold and water. However, the Tai Yang is the opening of the Yang mechanism and it deals with warmth too. The one is the root while the other is the manifestation. The heart feels Teng (cold pains) and hot is a description of a Tai Yang illness. In this illness, the root and manifestation of the Tai Yang are impaired. If you go back to the Tai Yang discussion and look for the different illnesses that can rise from a Tai Yang disharmony, these are all included in the statement ‘the heart feels hot and (cold) pain’.

The third symptom of the Jue Yin illness is the feeling of hunger without the desire to eat. This is a Yang Ming problem of constipation, derived from local heat that creates dryness in the bowels. The Yang Ming is composed of the stomach and large intestines. When there is heat in the stomach, the person is hungry and when there is heat in the large intestines, the person is constipated. If the abdomen feels full from constipation, there is no desire to put more food into the stomach, even if the stomach fire causes a hunger sensation. Zhongjing explains that when the wind cannot give birth to a new Yang, not only will the Tai Yang opening suffer, the Yang Ming closing down will suffer as well. There will be adverse heat in the Yang Ming when it actually needs to cool down.

The fourth symptom Zhongjing describes is

‘eating will cause the patient to throw up worms’. This is a Tai Yin problem. If you return to our Tai Yin discussion, you will find that one of the Tai Yin illnesses is ‘the food will not come down and the person will throw up’. This is because the Yang energy does not warm the earth (spleen), causing a cold obstruction of the spleen. If food is ingested, it will be vomited out.

The fifth symptom is endless diarrhea, the result of purging the patient with cold herbs. This means that the true Yang of the kidneys is deficient when the Jue Yin is diseased. With the use of cold herbs to purge downwards, the Yang energy of the kidneys will collapse and the body will be unable to hold in the bowels. As we’ve noted, the Shao Yin is where the Yang is first born and grows into two Yang lines and then into three Yang lines, which represents the full body of Yang, or the heaven trigram. The motion of growing and increasing Yang is upwards. Endless diarrhea means that the kidney Yang is not growing upwards, but is instead collapsing downwards. This is again a Shao Yin problem caused by the Jue Yin wind. The general cannot plan how to bring the Yang energy back and the war of life will be lost.

The wind is the root of the hundred diseases. If we can keep our wind healthy and unobstructed, all minor problems that come our way will be solved naturally by our body. There will be no need for over the counter, under the counter or behind the counter medications.

Our Yang energy goal is to harmonize with the surrounding nature so the Yin energy will not be affected. When the Yang energy fails or becomes exhausted, the Yin energy is impacted. The first line of Yin energy to be effected is the Tai Yin spleen, which is still a simple problem. Strengthening the spleen will put you right back on a healthy course. Beyond that, advancing pathology into the Shao Yin and Jue Yin is very difficult and complicated, and will normally happen with the very elderly, where energy has been exhausted and the body’s defenses are absent or low. Then, pathological progression into the core of life can be present. What I find alarming is that so many young people today

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have Shao Yin and Jue Yin syndromes – chronic diseases such as heart problems, diabetes and cancer.

Most infertility patients are Tai Yin patients. Their bodies still work well at the core, yet something is missing which can easily be fixed. Other patients that I see, unfortunately, do belong to the Shao Yin-Jue Yin pattern of disharmony, generally due to the consumption of excessive Western medications. These compounds invade the core of life, or into what Chinese medicine calls 'wind,' and disharmonize it.

This article represents the draft of a chapter from Yaron Seidman's book Hunyuan—Breaking the Infertility Code (Lifetime Media) that will be published in September 2009

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