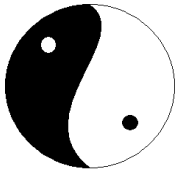


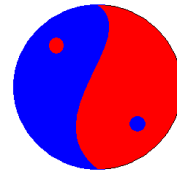
Spring Moffitt
OM Theory I
Spring 2006
5/20/2006
Casual letter

Hey Sarah,

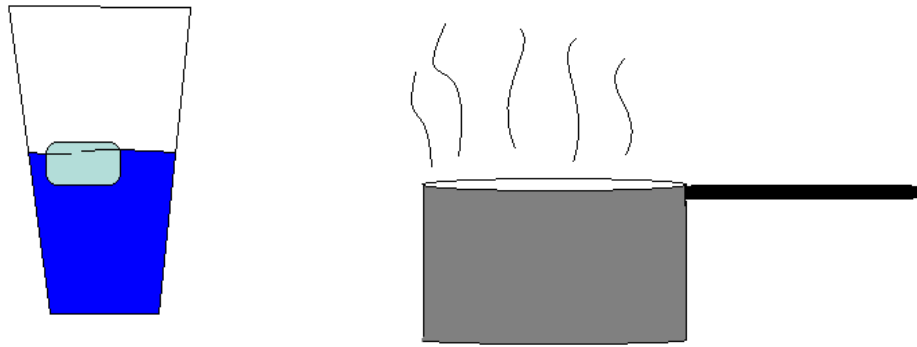
How are ya Chiquita? Hope you are doing fantastic. So, did I tell you? I went back to school and I am learning all kinds of nifty things. I really enjoy the organ systems and pairs and how they function to keep the body in balance. I know that you are familiar with the functions and how the organs work together in western medicine. The concept is very similar in Chinese medicine, but there are several variations as this medicine model is grounded in the ancient cultural concepts of china.



The original yin/yang was actually blue and red to denote the dynamic of the fire and water elements. I'll tell you about those in another time.

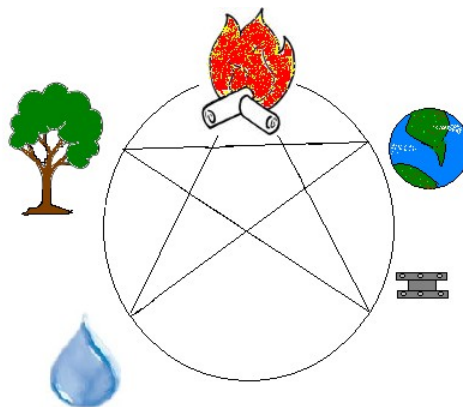


In Chinese medicine, things are categorized according to their characteristics. There are a couple of categories. I know that you have heard of yin and yang. The basic idea is that everything is both yin and yang, but can be considered yin or yang in relationship to something else. Things that are more dark, feminine, wet, cold, or heavy are yin while things that are bright, masculine, hot, or light are yang. Ok, so let's say the water in a glass when compared to water that makes up an ice cube would be yang; however that same glass of water when compared to water molecules in steam vapor would then be yin. Yin and yang should always be balanced with each other. It is neat to try and figure out how to classify things because you start to look at them a little more carefully. Like I had a cough, well usually a cough is a cough and it just sucks, so whatever; but now I stop and think about things like the quality and characteristics of the cough. It sort of makes me more aware of the things around me in life.



Anyway, the organs are also classified into the yin and yang categories. While all of the organs in the body are important and are recognized as part of the whole body, they look at them a little different and focus on twelve organs. The hollow organs are the yang organs; these include mostly the digestive organs that connect the body with the outside world. They are stomach, small intestine, large intestine, urinary bladder, and gall bladder. The yin organs are the spleen, heart, liver, lungs, and kidneys. The Chinese also classify the pericardium and something called the San Jiao (triple burner) as organs. Each yin organ then gets paired together through another classification system with a yang organ.

The Chinese also classify things by five elements. These five elements are: fire, earth, metal, water, and wood. The heart, small intestine, pericardium, and san Jiao are all attributed to the fire element. The spleen and stomach are connected with the earth element. The liver and gall bladder are linked to the element of wood. The kidney and urinary bladder of course go with water, while the lungs and large intestines are classified with metal. Of course there is a lot more information about the elements and the role they play in the classification system of this modality, but I'll tell you about them some other time. That way I have something to talk to you about next time too. Right now I am just going to focus on the organs, because that is a lot of information by itself anyway.



It is very interesting to note that many of the functions of organs match to that of their counter parts in western medicine and at the same time don't. The organs don't just have a physical function such as pumping the blood, but emotional, spiritual and psychological functions as well. I can see the parallel between the two systems and can even figure out some of the other aspects as having a relation to some of the hormones that are affected by the organ systems. It's not exact of course, but I am trying to explain things to you and I know how logical and set in science you are. The thing that intrigues me the most is how old this medicine system is and how it seems so impossible that many of the functions they attribute to the organs could have been conceived so long ago with so little technology. Sometimes I wonder if the things we know today aren't just re-discoveries of things that were once common knowledge and how far we seem to have fallen behind. It seems the more technology we have the more we find that ancient knowledge really did hold water. I can't help but wonder how.

The lungs, of course, work in respiration. Taking air into the body is part of the process of gathering qi from outside sources to help sustain your existence. The lungs are then said to govern qi. Qi itself has a few functions, one of which is that it is the force that moves blood through the blood vessels in the body. The lungs influence bodily fluids this can be comparable to working with the kidneys to produce ACE and angiotensin to regulate vasoconstriction and the retention of sodium and fluids. the skin.

The heart governs the blood and controls the blood vessels, which can be seen in western medicine with its function of pumping the blood through the vessels and its role in the regulation of blood pressure. The heart is said to control sweat this can be paralleled to colloid osmotic pressure and the amount of water that moves into the blood vessels vs. the interstitial tissue space. The heart also houses the "shen" which is that part that connects your emotions with your thoughts.

The liver stores the blood which one of its function in the western version as well. sinews. smooth flow of qi.

The spleen holds blood and influences bodily fluids-job in fetal hematopoiesis and filtering blood and the storage of blood in the venous sinuses. muscles.

The kidneys store the essence and influence bodily fluids-the renin/ angiotensin cycles, nephrons and glomerular filtration dilution/ concentration of urine. bones.

The pericardium protects the heart

The large intestine

The small intestine

The gall bladder

The stomach

The urinary bladder

The san Jiao

Love ya doll. Take care of yourself.

Always,

Spring E.