

## — Myoyin, Qigong & Nidra Series —

# Metal & the Lung Energy

### Introducing *Yin Yang* and the Five Element Theory

The concept of Yin and Yang originated from observing day and night as a cyclical pattern, and is, perhaps, the single most distinctive theory in Traditional Chinese Medicine .

*In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Yin and Yang are understood to be two opposite and interdependent energies at the foundation of health. All aspects of our body, mind and emotions are seen as being interconnected and impacting each other. Illness comes in the form of a deficiency or excess, creating imbalance throughout our systems. TCM aims to bring about balance by nourishing and strengthening deficiency and/or moving and clearing excess.*

*Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water are linked with the seasons and phases of the year in nature (there is an extra season called late summer — a time of stillness and fruition). They are also linked with the organs in our body and with specific emotional strengths and weaknesses. Although we contain all of the five elements, in the way nature contains each of the seasons, one of these elements is particularly significant for us and has been since very early on in life, affecting our view of the world, leading to certain types of mental/emotional patterns and tendencies to certain types of physical illnesses.*

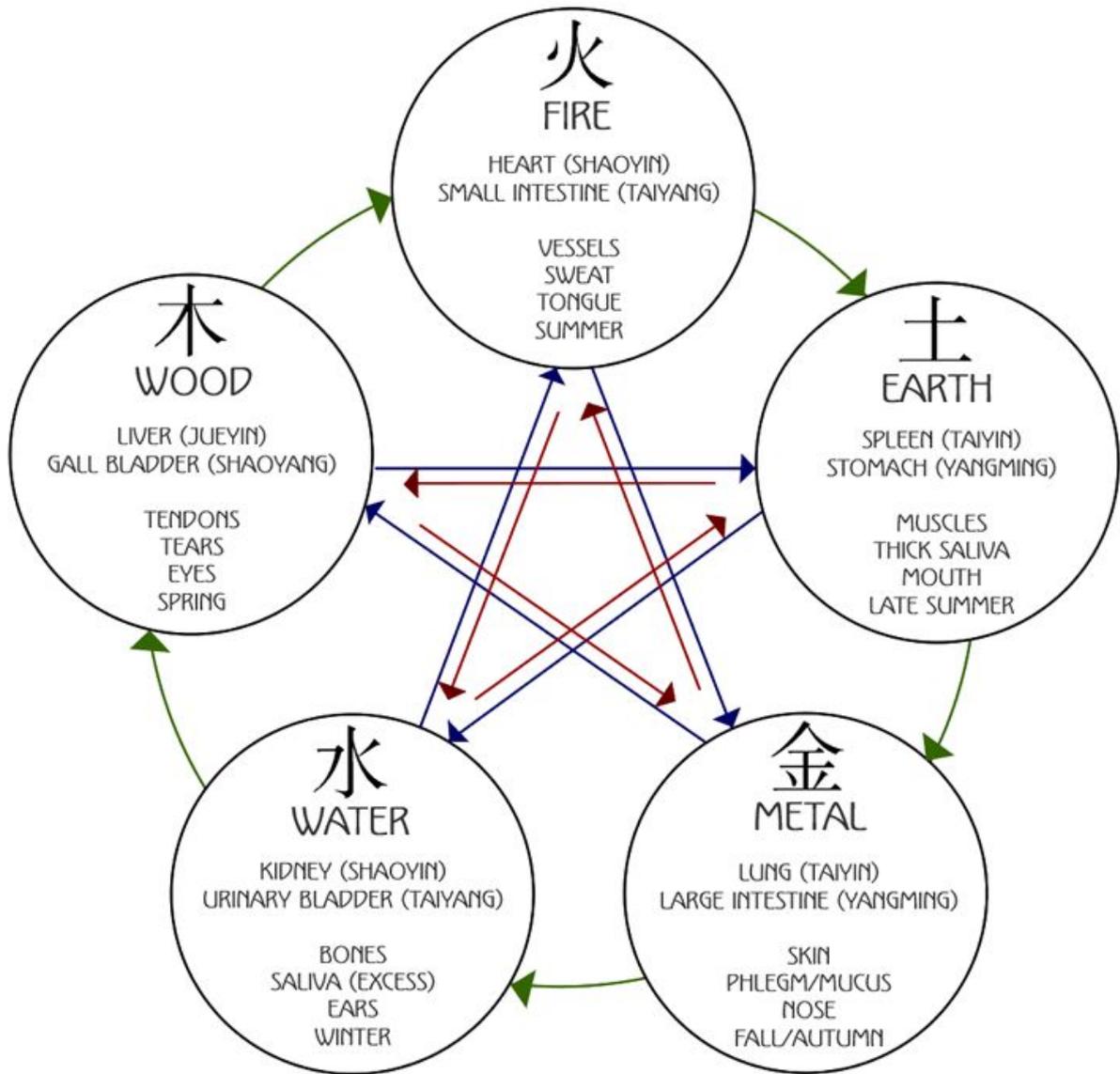
Norman Blair, *Brightening Our Inner Skies — Yin and Yoga.*

For an informative perspective on Yin and Yang, this TED animation by John Bellaimy explains these terms, and how we can achieve a balance of both in our lives:

<http://ed.ted.com/lessons/the-hidden-meanings-of-yin-and-yang-john-bellaimy>.



## The Generating Sequence of the Five Elements — Green Flow



### The Element of Metal and the Lung Energy

In the Five Elements Cycle, the lung energy comes in the autumn and relates to the metal element. It comes after the spleen energy, when the yang has started to descend, and it corresponds to the ascending yin cycle of the Five Elements. Metal relates to our ability to slow down (no one can sustain being active 100% of the time) and see the true value and importance to life.



Autumn is about death and decay, and in a broader sense, this season relates to loss. When there is loss, of any type, there is grief and/or sadness, which show up in the lungs. The lung energy is primary about LETTING GO: without the letting go of the autumnal leaves, there would not be nourishment for winter and growth in spring. In our everyday lives, letting go can help us appreciate all that we have.

In Western medicine, lungs are the primary organ for respiration (the mechanical part of taking air in and out of the body, exchanging oxygen for carbon dioxide at the alveoles). In Chinese medicine, they help the heart regulate the body's qi (pronounced chi), balancing and distributing fluids around the body; weak lungs, on the other hand, can lead to an accumulation of phlegm and mucus. Lungs are considered a delicate organ in Chinese medicine, for they are in direct connection with the external world, thus healthy boundaries are also important with the lung energy.

Lungs are the yin organ of metal; the large intestine is the yang organ of metal, and is responsible for transporting and eliminating waste as stools. In Chinese medicine, the large intestine continues the process of drying started by the lungs, by converting digestive waste from fluid to solids that can be released; it assists the lungs in balancing these fluids; it ensures the purity of qi in the body by removing what is no longer needed in the body.

Metal is solid, dense and structured ( think of a steel sword), having thus the qualities of power, strength and sharpness. People with good "metal" tend to move past the frivolous and get straight to the point; they tend to be determined, assertive and self-reliant; they tend to be clear, motivated and straightforward things and good decision-makers. When there is excess of the metal element, we tend to be harsh and judgemental; where there is deficiency, we tend to feel dull, vague and afraid of being judged.

When the lung energy is out of balance, we may have:

- respiratory problems (eg, asthma);
- skin problems (eg, eczema);
- a poor immune system;
- low energy;
- sadness;



- lack of self-esteem, and be prone to hard judgement.

A well nourished lung energy shows as:

- strong physical vitality;
- strong immunity;
- a powerful voice;
- clear breath;
- bright skin;
- someone who commands respect.

***The strength of the lung energy can be heard in the power of the voice.***

### **How to Nourish the Lungs**

- Regular fresh air.
- Conscious breathwork (eg, yoga, swimming). Singing; voice work.
- Skin brushing.
- Moderate sun bathing.
- A clean the house.
- Valuing who we are, and the environment.
- Setting up boundaries.
- Making sure your home boundaries are also right (fences, security).
- Massaging the arms along the lung meridian; acupressure points lung 1 (1 inch below the end of the collarbones; use opposite middle finger) and lung 9 (on the hollow below the base of the thumb at wrist crease).
- Rubbing vigorously vertebra C7 (big salient bone at the back of the neck), and massaging acupressure point stomach 36 (below the knee, where the fibula splays laterally), to help boost the immune system.
- Include more foods that are cooked slowly for a longer period of time like soups, stews, roasting and baked dishes. These methods create a deeper warmth and supply greater energy.
- Lung nourishing foods include: vegetables that grow underground (onions, carrots, turnips, parsnips, radishes, beets, potatoes, yams, sweet potatoes; this list overlaps with spleen nourishing foods); mushrooms and fungus; meat; pungent



vegetables (scallions, daikon radish, ginger); and spices (cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, anise, mint and lemon balm).

## What is fascia?

*Fascia is a layer of connective tissue that surrounds every muscle, bone, blood vessel, nerve, and organ in the body. It is connected, head-to-toe, without interruption. Every part in the body is connected to every other part by fascia. These connections are like yarn in a sweater. When one connection gets tight, it pulls on the rest of the sweater--the rest of the body.*

*Normal fascia is relaxed. It stretches and moves easily. An injury to your body, scars, and inflammation can cause the fascia to become tight [which] ...can cause a wide range of symptoms including headaches, neck and back pain, decreased ability to move, and decreased flexibility and stability.*

University of Wisconsin Integrative Medicine

## Self-Reflection and Journaling

This is the time to reflect, post-practice, on the effects felt by the practices. Things to jot down may include: the 'internal weather forecast' (thoughts/impressions, emotions, physical sensations) before, during and after the practice; variation/s on the technique and whether they helped; date and time. These notes could be as short as a few keywords or short sentences.



# Class Structure

- 12:00 **Welcome.**  
Introductions: what do you need to let go of?  
Sharing the handouts.
- 12:15 **Abdominal and coherent breathing. (10')**  
**Qigong practices for the stomach and the spleen (30')**
1. Awakening the organs and the meridians.
  2. Shaking the body.
  3. Circling the wrists.
  4. *Rooster spreads its wings* ("front and back strokes with elbows").
  5. Side bends, hips rotations.
  6. Massaging neck (vertebra C7), and acupressure point stomach 36, for immunity
  7. Practice for the lung.
  8. *Touch the sea, look at the sky.*
  9. *Shake the back seven times to eliminate the 100 illnesses.*
  10. Smoothing the qi.
  11. Sealing the energy.
- 12:55 **Lung meridian massage** (with lung points 1 and 9). **(6')**  
**Myofascial release for the lung meridian (20')**.
- 13:25 **Yin Sequence for the lung organ and meridian. (40')**
1. Seiza with hands above the head and softening the arms. (1'-3')
  2. Melting heart (like child's pose but hips over knees), pressing on the floor with the outer thumbs. (3'-5')
  3. Reclined rotation over a bolster, pillow, etc. (5' per side)
  4. Reclined butterfly with arms in cactus shape and rolled towel under the bottom edge of shoulder blades. (3')
  5. Fish pose (from previous pose bring elbows under shoulders, hands by hips). (3')
  6. Caterpillar (forward bend, rounding of the spine). (5')
  7. Shavasana.
- 14:05 **Nidra.**
- 14:25 **Q&A and feedback form:**  
<https://www.yogawithmenchu.com/workshops/workshop-feedback-form>  
∟.
- 14:30 **Good-byes.**

