# Foreword



The author of this book stood out from the many students I have taught. What made him remarkable was the extraordinarily heartfelt interest and curiosity with which he pursued his study of Chinese Medicine and its pertinent classical texts. It is highly commendable that he placed such importance on the classics, especially given their deteriorating status and the popular disregard for the great writings of the ancients. In a time when these important medical classics have been gradually downgraded to elective courses in prominent medical universities, it is this passionate pursuit of his studies that I find most gratifying.

The author's ardent study of the classics has brought him close to the limits of the current understanding of Chinese Medicine classics, and this is amply evidenced in the pages of this manuscript. I am convinced that, having read this book, the reader will have a similar impression. Just as the author of this book says, the study of the classics serves as the foundation of the study of Chinese Medicine, and there is still nothing that can adequately substitute for this foundation. For this reason, if one desires to learn Chinese Medicine well, if one desires to attain the utmost heights of what this branch of learning has to offer, then one must emphasize the classical texts, its very foundation. "If you want to cross the sea to a distant shore, only a boat can take you there." This is something both ancient and modern masters alike have recognized as a necessity. There is no other way.

What sort of book is the *Shanghanlun* (Treatise on Cold Damage[1])? It is

1 For better readability, classical Chinese texts in later occurrences are referred to by their translations in italics (*Treatise on Cold Damage* in this case). Where the translation of a classical Chinese text is long, an abbreviated translation, also in italics, will be employed for later mentions of the work.

a monumental medical work that serves as a link between the past and the future; it is almost universally esteemed by the most eminent physicians as a most important piece of classical writing; it is "an axe that can fell a mountain"; it is a springboard into the Dao; and it is, most importantly in my estimation, a treatise that expounds upon the many difficult and complicated pathological conditions one may encounter as a physician. The importance of the *Treatise on Cold Damage* to Chinese Medicine is beyond doubt.

The *Treatise on Cold Damage*'s unique significance in this branch of knowledge has led it to become, at all times and in all places, a focus of attention for Chinese Medicine physicians. As far as the textual merits of the *Treatise on Cold Damage* go, members of Chinese Medicine circles still sigh with admiration and say that it is good beyond comparison. And yet, this author has produced a rare piece of writing in which profound meanings from the classics are handled in a simple, straightforward, and absorbing manner that is both unassuming and pleasant. Confucius said, "Youths are to be regarded with respect—who knows whether they might exceed their forebears?" These words are worth keeping in mind as we read this book.

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# Introduction



Liu Lihong, the indefatigable discoverer and preserver of lost traditions in the field of classical Chinese medicine has done it again: The latest book created under his patronage lifts an important esoteric acupuncture lineage out of obscurity and presents it to us in complete and accessible form. It features a passionate and clinically relevant synthesis of his discipleship with Yang Zhenhai, one of the last remaining master practitioners of Daoist acupuncture in mainland China. Dr. Liu's selection of this specific tradition for conscientious study and stewardship is once again based on affirmative answers to two essential questions: Is this lineage compelled by the objective to address the root of disease and vitalize the innate healing forces of the human body? Does the carrier of this lineage transmit his knowledge in a virtuous way? He thus promotes yet another holistic medical system that radically contrasts the current penchant for symptom-oriented procedures. Once again, he advocates for time-honored ethical principles at a time when even the sacred task of healing has all too often become a mission in self-indulgence. These criteria have defined Liu Lihong's relentless search for the heart of Chinese medicine during the last three decades, driving his commitment to become the promoter of a diverse spectrum of healing traditions that exemplify the classical standards of Chinese medicine.

What is the force within us that heals? Where is it located? How do we diagnose it when compromised? And how do we best regulate it with minimal intervention when treatment becomes necessary? Such are the fundamental queries put forth in these pages by Yang Zhenhai and Liu Lihong, who are now at the forefront of an international discourse on the definition and clinical significance of classical Chinese medicine. Dr. Liu,

together with his internal medicine mentor Lu Chonghan, had previously elucidated the pivotal importance of yang Qi in *Fuyang jiangji* (Lectures on Supporting Yang). *The Yellow Emperor's Inner Transmission of Acupuncture* goes a step further by exploring the location of this life force, and the most direct way to access it through the practice of acupuncture. It can be said that the entire system of Inner Needling revolves around the vital Chinese medicine concept of the center (*zhong* 中). Considering the close etymological relationship of the Chinese terms *zhong* and *nei* 內, the original book title *Huangdi neizhen* 黃帝內針 could theoretically be rendered as *The Yellow Emperor's Acupuncture System to Awaken the Central Healing Force.*

The following represents my own analysis of the concept of the center in the worldview of ancient China. I hope that it can serve to support this book's premise that all Chinese wisdom traditions, especially the domain of medicine, revolve around the essential concept of a central unifying force.

## Yin and Yang

At first glance, Chinese culture and Chinese medicine appear to be all about *yin* and *yang*, featuring an all-encompassing cosmology that describes the external world in terms of polar forces and opposite phenomena. As modern practitioners, we understand the concept that all of the world's opposing states are locked in an eternal dance that seeks balance, harmony and integration, and even define our medicine as a balance restoring modality. However, we often overlook the inner meaning and ultimate purpose of this dynamic interplay. Classical Chinese texts, in contrast, tend to focus much less on the multicolored spectrum of the world's outer phenomena, and much more on the unity seeking momentum inherent in the centripetal interaction of *yin* and *yang*.

The Confucian scholar Dong Zhongshu (179–104 BC), writing during the Western Han dynasty around the formative time of the *Huangdi neijing* (The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine), made yin-yang theory the focal point of his signature work, *Chunqiu fanlu* (Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals). At first glance, he presents the conventional understanding of yin and yang that the profession of Chinese medicine is still embracing today. In the chapter "Jiyi" (Basic Concepts), he states:

> All phenomena have an opposite pole fitted to them: Where there is up there is down; where there is left there is right; where there is front there is back; where there is surface there is interior. Every beautiful act is necessarily matched by evil; every moment of ease by difficulty; every impulse of joy by spurts of anger; every cold spell by waves of heat; and the light of every day by the darkness of night. Such is the nature of the paired world. Yin is paired with yang, the husband is the mate of the wife, the son the analogue of the father, and the minister the complement to the ruler. There is nothing in this world that exists outside of this pairing of polar opposites, and none of these pairs is outside the realm of yin and yang. . . . The ruler is yang, the minister is yin; the father is yang, the son is yin; the husband is yang, the wife is yin.[1]

## Oneness

This frame of reference featuring a polar world wherein every phenomenon can be described in terms of yin and yang appeared early on in China's oldest text, the *Yijing* (Classic of Changes). It is important to note, however, that the cosmology of the *Yijing* postulates the birth of a binary world from a state of undifferentiated oneness. Decoding the terminology of the *Yijing*, the following five stages of cosmogenic emergence can be identified:

- Dao 道: The prenatal oceanic origin, wherein all things exist in their potentiality, yet in a still undifferentiated state; associated with the phase element Water.
- Qi 氣: The creative urge of the universe to express its agency in physical form; associated with the phase element Wood.
- Xiang 象 (Image): The emergence of postnatal phenomena as imaginary patterns; associated with the phase element Fire.
- Xing 形 (Shape): The evolution of the world into physical shapes; associated with the phase element Earth.



1 See chapter 53 of the *Chunqiu fanlu* (Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals), in vol. 17 of the imperial *Siku quanshu* (Complete Library in Four Branches of Literature) edition, no page numbers.

**The Energy Matter Continuum**


- Qi 器 (Form): The structuring of all things into three-dimensional form; associated with the phase element Metal.[2]

This cosmological worldview of the *Yijing* links the spheres of the manifest and the non-manifest in one of the most enduring descriptions of our world's holistic essence. All classical descriptions of yin and yang originate here, including those proffered in the main classic of Chinese medicine, the *Huangdi neijing*. Although often misunderstood and mistranslated, a careful philological rendering of the *Neijing*'s most relevant yin-yang passage reveals the original emphasis on the unified origins of the antithetical universe surrounding us. The all-important term *shen* 神 (unified, invisible and mysterious source) is introduced here as a counterpoint to the dualism of postnatal reality:

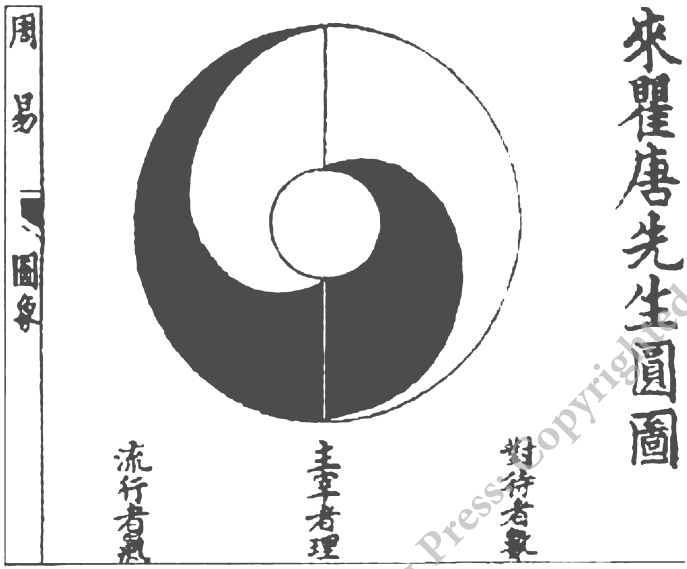
> Yin and yang are [everything]: the Dao of Heaven and Earth, the warp and woof of all physical phenomena, the mother and father of the cycle of change and transformation, the root and origin of life and death; and yet they form but a playing field for the mysterious process of visible manifestations emerging from an invisible center (*shenming zhi fu* 神明之府).[3]



2 For a more detailed analysis of this particular aspect of *Yijing* cosmology, see Lifang Qu and Mary Garvey, "Chinese Medicine and the Yi Jing's Epistemic Methodology," in *Australian Journal of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine* 3.1 (2008): 17–23; and Heiner Fruehauf, "Zoujin gulao kexue 'jingdian zhongyi' de hexin linian he lishi beijing" (Classical Chinese Medicine: An Introduction to the Foundational Concepts and Historical Circumstance of an Ancient Science), in Steve Xue, ed., *Zhenghe yixue yu kangfu* (Shenzhen: Haitian, 2018), pp. 57–144.

3 See chapter 5 of the *Suwen* (Plain Questions) section of the *Huangdi neijing* entitled "Yin yang yingxiang dalun" (Great Treatise on the Corresponding Manifestations of Yin and Yang), in Nanjing Zhongyi Xueyuan, ed., *Huangdi neijing suwen yishi* (An Annotated Text With Translation of the Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine: Plain Questions) (Shanghai: Shanghai Kexue Jishu Chubanshe, 1991), p. 37.

**Lai Zhide's Taiji Diagram** 來知德太極圖






According to this design, the postnatal yin-yang sphere emerged from the undifferentiated monad of the Dao, hurled into binary existence from the universe's invisible core in centrifugal fashion. Once materialized, all polar opposites continue to reflect their inherent quality of unity. As Dong Zhongshu elaborates in the chapter "Tiandao wu er" (The Dao of Nature is Indivisible):

> The established way of Nature is such that opposite entities do not arise from two different sources, therefore they are called One. One and not two—such is the stratagem of Nature.[4]

## Love

This innate memory of their uniform origin, reflected in every aspect of traditional Chinese culture, furthermore predisposes all polar opposites to be attracted to each other—so they can follow their constitutional

4 See chapter 51 of the *Chunqiu fanlu*, in vol. 17 of the imperial *Siku quanshu* edition, no page numbers.

momentum to merge into one and thereby return to their original state of unity. The cosmological terminology of ancient China thus represents a kind of sexual spirituality: The yin-yang model describes the phenomenology of the material world in terms of the dynamics between two sex partners, emphasizing the aspect of compelling attraction between two magnetic poles as well as the inevitable result of fusing into one. In the words of Dong Zhongshu: "The yin and yang of Heaven and earth are like man and woman, and a man and woman in the realm of humanity can be described in terms of yin and yang."[5] Or in the more straightforward language of the *Taiping jing* (Classic of Heavenly Peace), a Daoist text from the Eastern Han dynasty: "One yin and one yang: Nature manifested from them a man and a woman with a desire for each other, and it is for this reason that there is reproduction and life."[6]

In the *Yijing* itself, this sexual interpretation of reality is expressed via the thorough merging of yin and yang lines into 64 hexagrams that symbolize the various phenomena of the postnatal realm. On a more particular level, it is Hexagram 31 (Xian 咸: "Attraction") that stands out as an overt label for the magnetic attraction between polar entities. The positioning of its lines ("lake / younger daughter" over "mountain / younger son") evokes the image of first love between a young girl and a young boy, the intensity of "feeling" (*gan* 感) for each other, and the all-encompassing desire to merge into one. The etymology of this hexagram is especially significant for concrete yin-yang application in the field of Chinese medicine, insofar as *xian* 咸 is the functional signifier of the ancient character for acupuncture needle, *zhen* 鍼. More details concerning the practical ramifications of acupuncture needling indicated by the design of this character will be introduced in chapter 3 of this book.



5 See chapter 77 of the *Chunqiu fanlu* entitled "Xuntian zhi dao" (The Path of Acting in Accordance with Heaven), in vol. 17 of the imperial *Siku quanshu* edition, no page numbers.

6 See chapter 44 of the *Taiping jing* (The Classic of Heavenly Peace), in Shanghai Shudian, comp., *Daozang* (Repository of Daoist Works), 36 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai Chubanshe, 1994), vol. 24, p. 387.