

5

The Five Transformation Phases

Wǔ Xíng

五行

The Transformation From Four to Five: From Space to Time

The transformation from four to five
is a transformation from static space – ground
to space in movement

The fifth Element is like an axis
around which space moves
creating movement in space – time
therefore the number five
is a model of movement and change

Along with the Elements of
Fire Water Wood and Metal
the fifth Element is Earth

Earth is the Element that stabilizes
mediates and harmonizes

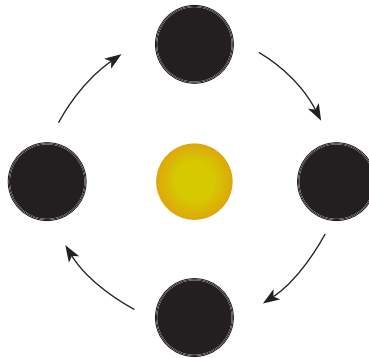
Earth at the center constitutes an axis
that facilitates movement

Earth is the linking center that enables transformation – change



The keyword for the number
five and the model of the Five
Phases is :

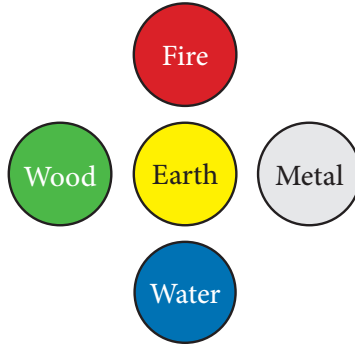
Change – Transformation



The transformation from space (4) to time (5)

Earth at the Center

Earth is the harmonizing and stabilizing Element
it is located between Fire and Water
and between Wood and Metal
its natural location is in the center

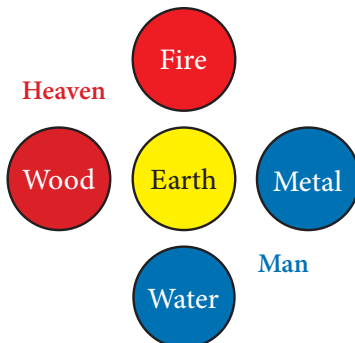


The Model of Three as Reflected in the Model of Five

The model of three developed out of the model of two – Yin and Yang
Three is the border and the middle between Yin and Yang

The two Yang Elements – Wood and Fire
are associated with Heaven

The two Yin Elements – Metal and Water
are associated with Man
and Earth is in the center

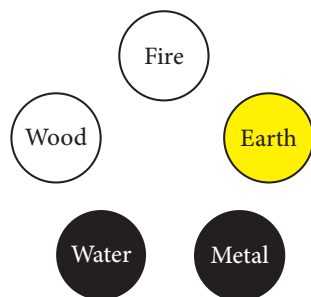


The Five Phases – The Five Elements

Positioning Earth after the Fire Element
and before the Metal Element
completes the arrangement of the Five Elements
in a cyclical order known as the Five Phases

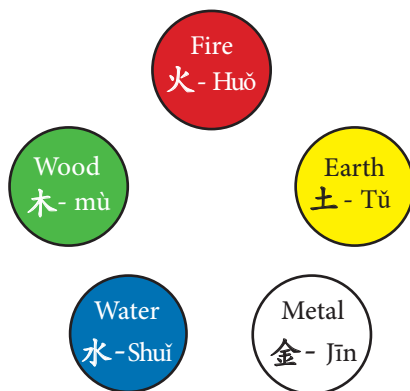
Earth is located after Fire and before Metal
because the cycle of the Five Phases
begins with Small Yang – Wood

Wood and Fire are the two Yang Elements
Metal and Water are the Yin Elements of the cycle
and therefore Earth is located between the two



The Five Phases reflect five points of reference
in the cyclical process of transition from Yin to Yang
and Yang to Yin

Phase is a term that denotes change
as part of a cyclical process
and is therefore better suited
however it is sometimes easier terminologically
to use the term Element



Phase of Wood

木行

Mù Xíng

The first and basic essence of the Phase of Wood
is expansion – growth

:Wood Qi is accentuated

- ☯ In spring
- ☯ In the morning
- ☯ In children
- ☯ In seedlings
- ☯ In muscles
- ☯ In tendons and ligaments
- ☯ In anger
- ☯ In curiosity
- ☯ In action
- ☯ In the color green
- ☯ In sour flavor

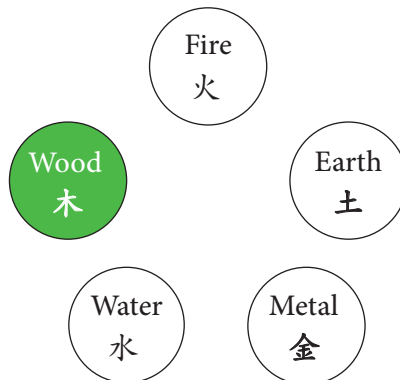


Keywords for the Phase of
Wood are:

Expansion – Growth

Its energetic movement is outward

According to the model of the Five Phases
every part or process reflecting expansion and growth
is associated with Wood



Phase of Fire

火行

Huǒ Xíng

The first and basic essence of the Phase of Fire
is energeticness
in this sense the Phase of Fire is analogous to Great Yang

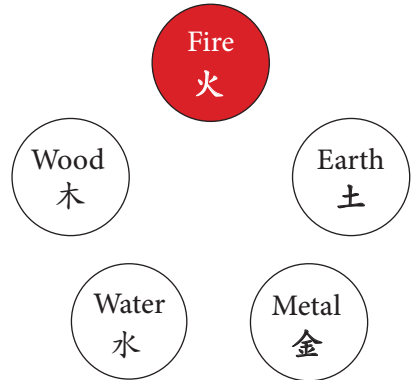
The Phase of Fire reflects
the Yang-most pole of the cycle

Relative to the Phase of Wood which is the beginning of Yang
the Phase of Fire is the height of Yang

In humans – Fire is conscious awareness

Fire Qi is accentuated:

- ☯ In summer
- ☯ At noon
- ☯ In youth
- ☯ In flowers
- ☯ In blood vessels
- ☯ In joy
- ☯ In spirituality
- ☯ In the connection to Heaven
- ☯ In the color red
- ☯ In bitter flavor



Its energetic movement is upward

According to the model of the Five Phases
every part or process that reflects energy
is classified as Fire



Keywords for the
Phase of Fire:

Energeticness – Height

“The Fire and Water Elements are classified into Yin and Yang in such a way that Fire is Yang and Water is Yin. The active part of the body is Yang, and the nourishing or material part of the body is Yin.”

Su Wen, chapter 26 (26 AD).

Phase of Earth

土行

Tǔ Xíng

The essence of Earth Qi is connection

Earth Qi links

amalgamates and harmonizes

unifies and brings together

Based on the connection

change and assimilation

it facilitates transformation

In the model of the Five Phases Earth Qi

connects the four other Phases

and facilitates constant change from Yin to Yang

In every phenomena Earth Qi reflects

the component that connects and assimilates

and facilitates change by means of connection

The Phase of Earth is neutral on the Heavenly level

however on the level of Earth and Man it is Yin

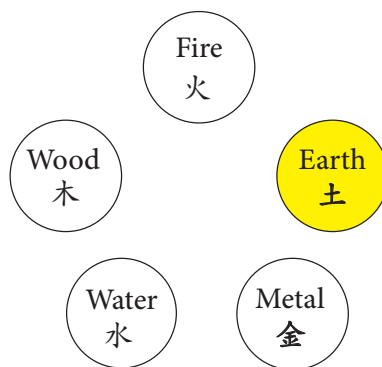
Earth reflects our connection

to life nature and physicality

therefore on the planet Earth

Earth's frequency

has an emphasized Yin orientation



Earth Qi is accentuated:

- ☯ In transitional seasons
- ☯ In the afternoon
- ☯ In adolescence
- ☯ In fruit
- ☯ In body mass
- ☯ In concern and empathy
- ☯ In sweet flavor
- ☯ In the color yellow

Secondary qualities of Earth Qi are:

- ☯ Centering
- ☯ Acceptance
- ☯ Softness
- ☯ Absorption
- ☯ Holding
- ☯ Nourishment
- ☯ Dampness

Its energetic movement is toward the center or in all directions



Keywords for the
Phase of Wood are:

Connection - Transformation

Phase of Metal

金行

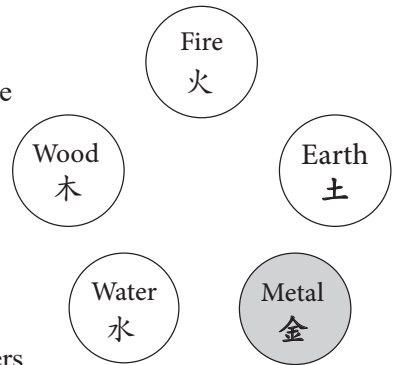
Jin Xíng

The energetic essence of the Phase of Metal is **convergence**
convergence is Yin in essence
and therefore the Phase of Metal belongs to the Yin section
of the circle of the Five Phases
along with the Phase of Water

In autumn we observe energetic convergence
the hours of daylight grow shorter
and plants converge and shed their leaves

Convergence results in isolation
from the surroundings
each part converges within itself
in this way it creates separation – a **border**

Convergence results in the creation of borders
and then order



As the Water Element and the Fire Element balance one another
so do the Wood Element and the Metal Element
Wood is responsible for expansion
and Metal is responsible for convergence

Skin is associated with Metal
because it physically separates
humans from their surroundings

Metal Qi is emphasized:

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| ☯ In autumn | ☯ In sadness and bereavement |
| ☯ In the evening | ☯ In order |
| ☯ In older age | ☯ In rigidity |
| ☯ In rotting fruit | ☯ In the color white |
| ☯ In skin | ☯ In spicy flavor |

Its energetic movement is inward



Keywords for the Phase of
Metal:

Convergence – Border

Phase of Water

水行

Shuǐ Xíng

Water Qi reflects the height of convergence:

Yin

solidification

and physicality

As Fire Qi reflects the height of energy

Water Qi reflects the height of materiality

The Water Element reflects material

but also basic power

the power that facilitates action

passive power

potential power

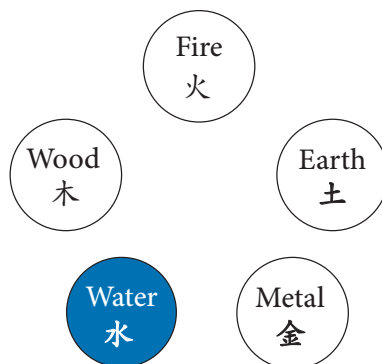
A seed can lie waiting for millennia
and the moment the conditions are ripe
its potential Qi is realized

Water can wait millennia behind a wall
and begin to flow the moment it is possible

Water Qi is emphasized:

- ☯ In winter
- ☯ At night
- ☯ In old age
- ☯ In seeds
- ☯ In fear – which is the basic emotion of survival
- ☯ In perseverance
- ☯ In will power
- ☯ In the color black (Blue)
- ☯ In salty flavor

Its energetic movement is downward



Keywords for the
Phase of Water:

Material – Passivity

The Sheng (Generating) Cycle and the Ke (Control) Cycle

Heavenly Qi is stable and permanent
the forces operating in Heaven are forces of control
for the purpose of maintaining order and stability

On Earth Qi develops and changes
and the constant change from Yin to Yang needs to be ignited
therefore the forces on the Earth level
are forces of generating and nourishment

Man is influenced by Heaven and Earth
therefore the Qi in man conducts itself
according to the Sheng Cycle
and according to the Ke Cycle

The Sheng Cycle contains a quantitative flow of Qi
whereas the Ke Cycle has a qualitative influence on Qi

The quantitative flow that is characteristic of the Sheng Cycle
is manifested in general strengthening
and additional movement

For example:
Stimulation of the Metal Element
brings additional Qi to the Water Element

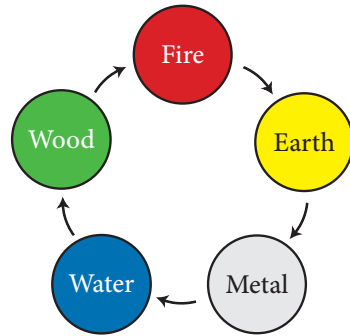
The change that occurs in the Ke Cycle
changes the quality of the Qi being controlled

For example:
when Metal controls Wood
it restrains the expansion of Wood
which is Wood's fundamental quality

The Sheng Cycle
 相生
 Xiāng Shēng

As a mother nourishes her child
 every Element
 nourishes the Element that follows it

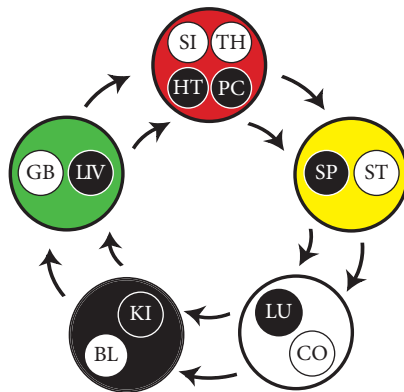
Water nourishes Wood
 Wood nourishes Fire
 Fire nourishes Earth
 Earth nourishes Metal
 and Metal nourishes Water



Su Wen¹, chapter 7 (26 AD).

The Sheng Cycle at the Organ Level²

In the Sheng Cycle at the organ level
 Yin organs strengthen Yin organs
 and Yang organs strengthen Yang organs



1- For more on the Su Wen, see p. 219.

2- See: The Ten Organs, p. 85.

The Ke Cycle

相克

Xiāng Kè

The grandmother disciplines her grandson
therefore the mother's mother restrains

According to this model:

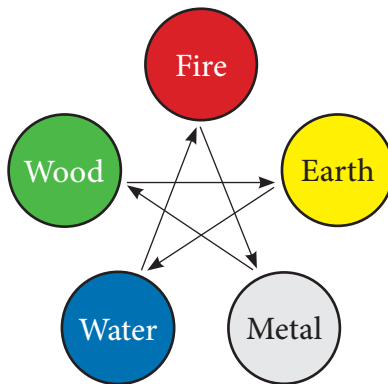
Metal restrains Wood

Wood restrains Earth

Earth restrains Water

Water restrains Fire

and Fire restrains Metal



Su Wen, chapter 7 (26 AD).

The Five Viscera

五臟

Wǔ Zàng

According to the model of the Five Phases
Heavenly Qi¹ is divided into five different frequencies

Five organs in the human body
serve as receivers
of all five types of Heavenly Qi

These five organs
are internal organs

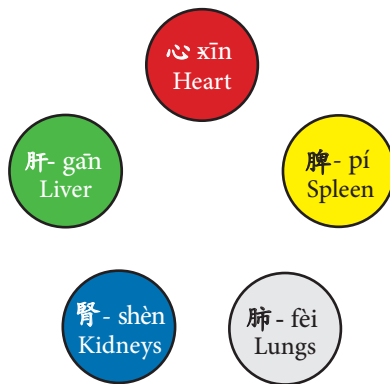
The Liver (LIV) reflects Wood Qi in humans

The Heart (HT) reflects Fire Qi in humans

The Spleen (SP) reflects Earth Qi in humans

The Lungs (LU) reflect Metal Qi in humans

And the Kidneys (KI) reflect Water Qi in humans



Su Wen², chapter 4 (26 AD).

1- See: Qi, p. 32.

2- For more on the Su Wen, see p. 219.

The Ten Organs

Each of the five Yin organs has a Yang paired organ
the connection is energetic and not always anatomical

The Yin organs deal with material and are referred to as full

The Yang organs are referred to as hollow
anatomically they are all shaped like a tube or a bag and conduct material

The Gall Bladder - GB

The GB is the paired organ of the Liver (LIV)
in association with the Wood Element
and represents the Yang of Wood

The Small Intestine - SI

The SI is the paired organ of the Heart (HT)
in association with the Fire Element
and represents the Yang of Fire

The Stomach - ST

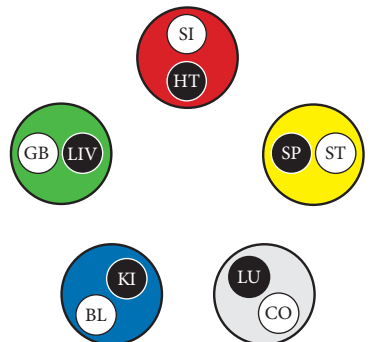
The ST is the paired organ of the Spleen (SP)
in association with the Earth Element
and represents the Yang of Earth

The Colon (Large Intestine) - CO

The CO is the paired organ of the Lungs (LU)
in association with the Metal Element
and represents the Yang of Metal

The Bladder - BL

The BL is the paired organ of the Kidneys (KI)
in association with the Water Element
and represents the Yang of Water



The Five Phases

Phase	Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
Keywords	Expansion	Height of Energy	Connection Transformation	Convergence Border	Passive matter
Yin/Yang	Small Yang	Great Yang	Yin	Small Yin	Great Yin
Movement	Outward	Upward	Toward Center	Inward	Downward
Stage of Life	Childhood	Youth	Adulthood	Old Age	Death
Color	Green	Red	Yellow	White	Black/ Blue
Yin Organ	Liver	Heart	Spleen	Lungs	Kidneys
Yang Organ	Gall Bladder	Small Intestine	Stomach	Large Intestine	Bladder
Season	Spring	Summer	Late Summer	Autumn	Winter
Part of Day	Morning	Noon	Afternoon	Evening	Night
Stage of Plant Life	Sprout	Flower	Fruit	Rotting Fruit	Seed
Direction	East	South	Center	West	North
Emotion	Anger	Joy	Empathy	Sadness	Fear
Body Tissue	Muscles and Tendons	Blood Vessels	Body Mass	Skin	Bones
Flavor	Sour	Bitter	Sweet	Spicy	Salty
Planet	Jupiter	Mars	Saturn	Venus	Mercury

The Five Spirits

五神

Wǔ Shén

Chapter 23 of the Su Wen¹
addresses the relationship among the five full organs
and the five types of souls or consciousness

The HT stores the Shen

The Shen represents all the mental functions of human beings

The SP stores Yi

The Yi is responsible for the power of thought
and the processing of information

The LU store Po

Po represents the physical conduct of the body

The KI store Zhi

Zhi represents will aspiration and the survival instinct

The LIV stores Hun

Po represents creativity curiosity and dreaming
supersensual perception
and the connection to the worlds that lie beyond



1- For more on the Su Wen, see p. 219.

The Five Planets

五星

Wǔ Xīng

The five planets are the planets that are visible to the naked eye

Chapter 69 of the Su Wen explains the division of the planets according to the Five Phases the planets' impact on the climate and illnesses that were common at the time

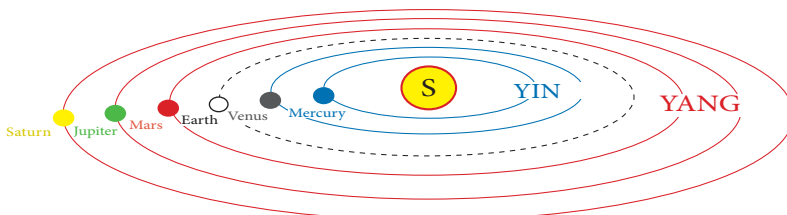
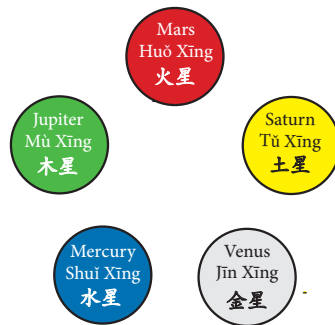
The planets located between the Earth and the Sun are the Yin planets (Venus – Metal and Mercury – Water) and the planets located beyond Earth and further away from the sun are the Yang planets (Jupiter – Wood and Mars – Fire)

The planet Earth is located at the center and connects the two planets that are more Yin in character with the two planets that are more Yang in character

At the far end of the solar system is Saturn
Saturn is associated with Earth
and is located between the solar system and the cosmos

Between Pre-Heaven and Post-Heaven Earth serves to mediate and connect

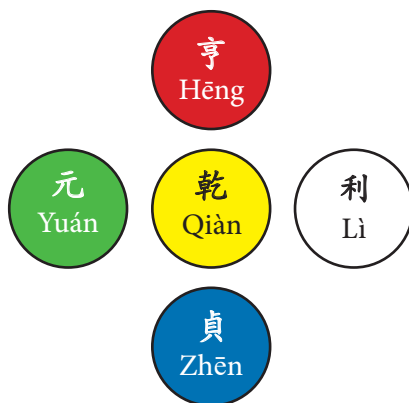
There is no evidence of this in the ancient texts but it is consistent with the energetic approach of Chinese cosmology



The Five Heavenly Emanations

The five Emanations reflect
the energetic movement of Heavenly Qi
from Heaven to Earth and to Man

The original model is of Four Emanations¹
The fifth Emanation represents Earth
and is a later addition



The Four Emanations and Qian

1- See: The Four Emanations, p. 65.

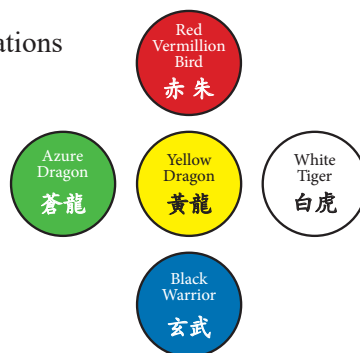
The Four Gaurdians of the Four Directions

四象

Sì Xiàng

The four mythological animals depict the impact of the Five Heavenly Emanations on Man and on Earth in a variety of realms

These imaginary animals reflect the influence of the Qi of the Five Phases on every level beginning with the planets useful astrology the seasons of the year and the five geographical regions of China



Shan Hai Jing¹ (200 BC).

Originally the idea was linked to the Four Emanations and was later adapted to the model of the Five Phases so that its addition was to the center – to Earth the Yellow Dragon

The animals are:

The Red Bird of fire is associated with the Fire Element and lives in the South

The White Tiger is associated with the Metal Element and lives in the west

The Black Warrior – a Black Tortoise with a snake entwined around it is associated with the Water Element and lives in the north

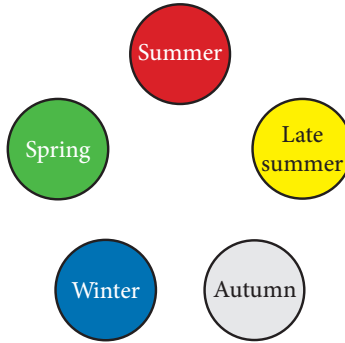
The Green Dragon is associated with the Wood Element and lives in the east

The Yellow Dragon is associated with the Earth Element and lives in the center

1- The Shan Hai Jing is a second century BC book that discussed the geography and the mythology of China. Its author is unknown.

The Five Seasons

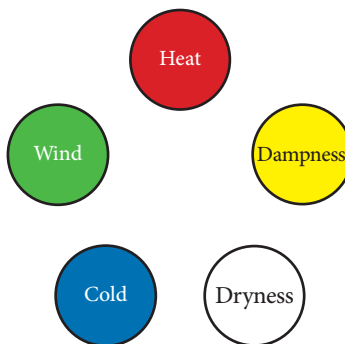
五季
Wǔ Jì



Su Wen, chapter 69 (26 AD).

The Five Climates

五氣
Wǔ Qì



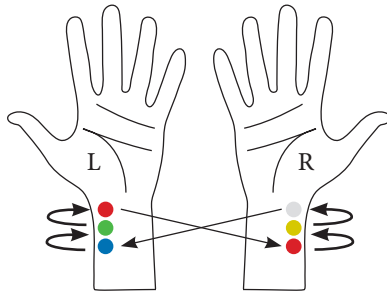
Su Wen, chapter 69 (26 AD).

Reflection of the Five Phases in the Pulse Positions

The order of the pulse positions is synchronized with the order of the Five Phases in accordance with both the Sheng Cycle and the Ke Cycle

In the Sheng Cycle

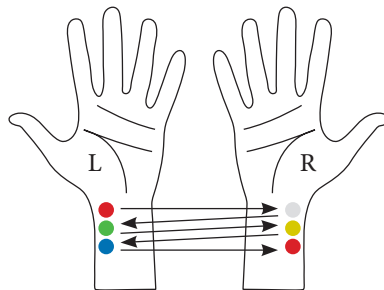
The movement between the left arm and the right arm is reversed the Yin left hand reflects the ascent from Yin to Yang - Water Wood Fire whereas the Yang right hand reflects the descent from Yang to Yin – Fire Earth Metal



Reflection of the pulse positions in the Sheng Cycle

In the Ke Cycle

The movement is from one hand to the other Fire - Metal - Wood - Earth - Water and again Fire



Reflection of the pulse positions in the Ke Cycle