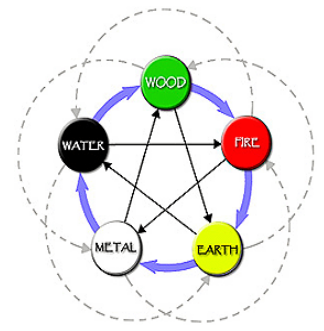


Five Element Theory

The Wu Hsing model is ingrained in Chinese philosophy, medicine & martial arts. In the diagram to the right we see the creative cycle. Water creates wood, wood creates fire, fire creates earth, earth creates metal and metal creates water. The creative cycle depicts a never ending generative process. The destructive cycle depicts earth destroying water, water destroying fire, fire destroying metal, metal destroying wood and wood destroying earth. The study of these relationships and correspondences associated with this model can become very deep. The martial arts Bagwa Chung & Hsing Yi and Traditional Chinese Medicine utilize the Wu Hsing theory extensively.



Traditionally one learned about these five elements by following the seasons of the year. The physical techniques came about through a desire to express the attitude of each of these elements through various postures. The destructive cycle in martial art terms is thought of as conquering.

These elements are the basic form of all internal and external kung fu. They also are the key for diagnosis and treatment in Chinese medicine.

Knowing these basic five elements one can immediately recognize each in any style and determine the weaknesses and strengths of a style by the amount of emphasis on a particular element or element combination. An example of this principle is the emphasis on the element “water” in the Tai Chi forms. To counter the fluidity of Tai Chi one would root in a “Earth” posture while blocking or striking. General Yue Fei’s theses on Hsing Yi explains the five phases in depth “The five phases are Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth. The heart belongs to fire, spleen to earth, the liver belongs to wood, the lungs to metal and the kidney’s to water. Hsing Yi Chuan adopts them as its name and uses them to strengthen the internal and modify the external”.

Your Health and Five Element Theory

The best way to become familiar with Five Element Theory and its health-related relationships is to refer to the Five Element chart regularly to determine which element is associated with any symptom or discomfort you're experiencing.

For example, if you are crying a lot, or feeling sad, referring to the Five Element chart will tell you that these are "metal" characteristics, which indicate a potential Lung imbalance. Having this information enables you to start taking steps to balance your energy and protect your health.

For this example, some things you could do include:

- Avoid eating spicy foods: And, as part of your diet and nutrition plan, find out about recipes that support your lungs.
- Practice Chi Kung exercises that strengthen and balance the chi flowing to your lungs.
- Schedule an appointment to receive an acupuncture or acupressure treatment, along with a prescribed herbal formula, to balance and strengthen the chi (energy) in your lungs and related organs.

As you become more familiar with Five Element patterns and relationships you'll come to know, through personal experience, the value of this road map for health.

The following are examples of diagnostic tools used by traditional Chinese doctors. The six pulses of your wrist are one way to determine the health of someone. Observation is also a basic tool used in Chinese medicine. For instance, if a Chinese doctor talked to a person and the person responded in a loud voice, had a green pallor to his fingernails, had a sour taste in his mouth, and was angered easily. The doctor could feel that there was an imbalance in the wood element of that person.

Generating Energy (Chi)

Based on Five Element Theory, each elemental force generates or creates the next element in a creative sequence.

For example:

- Water generates wood. Rain nourishes a tree.
- Wood generates fire. Burning wood generates fire.
- Fire generates earth. Ash is created from the fire.
- Earth generates metal. Metal is mined from the earth.
- Metal generates water. Water condenses on metal.

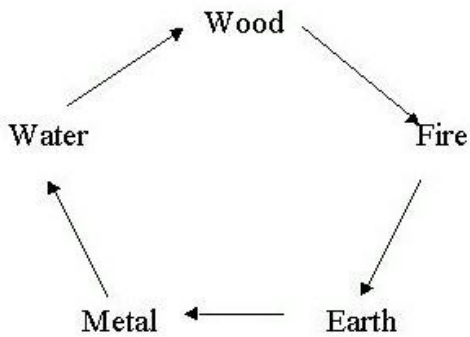


Figure 1. *Cycle of Generation*

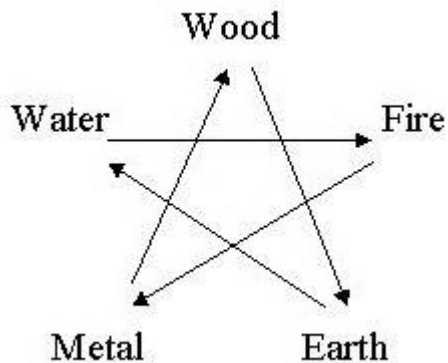
When applying this "supportive relationship" to the human body, we see that each internal organ embodies the energetic qualities of the element it's related to. Each organ is responsible for providing the energy needed by the next organ in the generative cycle.

For example:

- Kidney (water element) supports the Liver (wood element).
- Liver (wood element) supports the Heart (fire element).
- Heart (fire element) supports the Spleen (earth element).
- Spleen (earth element) supports the Lung (metal element).
- Lung (metal element) supports the Kidney (water element).

Regulating Energy (Chi)

Based on Five Element Theory, each elemental force is also associated with another element which it is responsible for controlling or regulating.



For example:

- Water controls fire. Water puts fire out.
- Wood controls earth. Tree roots hold clods of earth.
- Fire controls metal. Fire can melt metal.
- Earth controls water. A pond holds water.
- Metal controls wood. An ax cuts wood.

Figure 2. *Cycle of Regulation*

When applying this "regulating relationship" to the human body, we see that each internal organ embodies the energetic qualities of the element it's related to. Each organ is responsible for providing energy to regulate or control excesses or deficiencies in the energy of the organ it's associated with in this cycle.

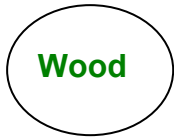
For example:

- Lung (metal element) controls Liver (wood element).
- Heart (fire element) controls Lung (metal element).
- Kidney (water element) controls Heart (fire element).
- Spleen (earth element) controls Kidney (water element).
- Liver (wood element) controls Spleen (earth element).

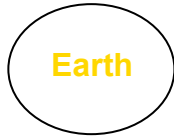
In summary, your internal organs play a dual role in promoting and maintaining your health: generating and regulating energy for each other. Each organ passes energy to the organ it supports, and, when necessary, controls imbalances in the energy of the organ which it regulates.

The Five Elements

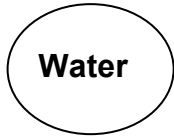
1. Yin Organ –Liver
2. Yang Organ—Gall bladder
3. Season—Spring
4. Weather—wind
5. Color—Green
6. Direction—East
7. Emotion—Anger
8. Sound—Shout
9. Flavor—Sour
10. Sense organ—Eyes
11. Smell—Rancid
12. Martial Arts Movement—Retreat, Beng Chuan (Crushing (arrow) fist)
13. Weapon—Staff
14. Animal—Leopard



1. Yin Organ –Spleen
2. Yang Organ—Stomach
3. Season—Late Summer
4. Weather—Humid
5. Color—Yellow
6. Direction—Center
7. Emotion—Sadness
8. Sound—Sing
9. Flavor—Sweet
10. Sense organ—Mouth
11. Smell—Fragrant
12. Martial Arts Movement—Center, balance, Heng Chuan (Crossing fist)
13. Weapon—Hand
14. Animal—Snake



1. Yin Organ –Kidney
2. Yang Organ—Urinary bladder
3. Season—Winter
4. Weather—Cold
5. Color—Black
6. Direction—North
7. Emotion—Fear
8. Sound—Groaning
9. Flavor—Salty
10. Sense organ—Ears
11. Smell—Putrid
12. Martial Arts Movement—Gaze left, Tzuann Chuan (Drilling fist)
13. Weapon—Sword
14. Animal—Dragon



1. Yin Organ –Heart, small intestine
2. Yang Organ—Pericardium, triple heater
3. Season—Summer
4. Weather—Hot
5. Color—Red
6. Direction—South
7. Emotion—Joy
8. Sound—Laughter
9. Flavor—Bitter
10. Sense organ—Tongue
11. Smell—Scorched
12. Martial Arts Movement—Gaze right, Pau Chuan (Pounding (Cannon) Fist)
13. Weapon—Spear
14. Animal—Tiger



1. Yin Organ –Lung
2. Yang Organ—Colon
3. Season—Fall
4. Weather—Dryness
5. Color—White
6. Direction—West
7. Emotion—Grief
8. Sound—Weep
9. Flavor—Pungent
10. Sense organ—Nose
11. Smell—Rank
12. Martial Arts Movement—Advance, Pi Chuan (Splitting fist)
13. Weapon—Knife
14. Animal—Crane

