

# Yin, Yang and Tai Chi

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## **The concept of Yin and Yang**

Yin and Yang are words in Chinese philosophy that describe everything in the universe. The concept of Yin and Yang has been embedded in Chinese culture since its early history. It forms the foundation of Chinese philosophy, religion, medicine, art, military affairs, augury and even people's daily life. Heaven and Earth, Sun and Moon, Day and Night, Hot and Cold, Male and Female; basically, Yin and Yang can be seen as two opposite polarities: the Negative and the Positive.

Traditionally we use a divided line to represent Yin:



and a solid line to represent Yang:



Everyone and everything, including the universe, contains Yin and Yang. According to the concept of Yin and Yang, the moon is Yin and the sun is Yang; the female is Yin and the male is Yang; calmness is Yin and movement is Yang. If the two forces in a country are balanced, then the country is prosperous and strong; when the forces are unbalanced, then the country becomes weak and chaotic. Corruption will flood into the ruling machine; people will lose their freedom and become enslaved. When people finally rebel and overthrow the bad ruler, the good Chi will return and history will repeat itself.

When you practice Tai Chi, a slow moving inner martial arts, the palm facing down is a Yin hand, and the palm facing up is a Yang hand. When a Tai Chi sword is in your hand, the blade facing down is called the Yin blade and the blade facing up is the Yang blade.

Yin and Yang continue to change, and the universe keeps changing with it. To remain healthy, your internal Yin and Yang must be balanced. Since balance

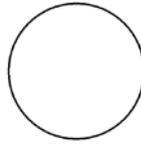
can only be maintained for a limited period of time, you have to constantly use a combination of healthy diet, exercise, meditation or medicine to achieve your body's inner balance of Yin and Yang (the Chi).

### **The Tao Concept**

The Tao produced the One,  
The One produced the Two,  
The Two produced the Three  
and the Three produced All Things.  
– Tao Te Ching

In traditional Chinese philosophy, Tao (or Dao) is the Way, or the Path. Tao is the Wu Chi (No Polarity, the Chi); it is the state before creation or change.

An empty circle can be used to represent the Wu Chi:



Within the boundary of the circle is our universe. The emptiness represents that there is "nothing" in this universe.

When the Tao started to change it produced the One.

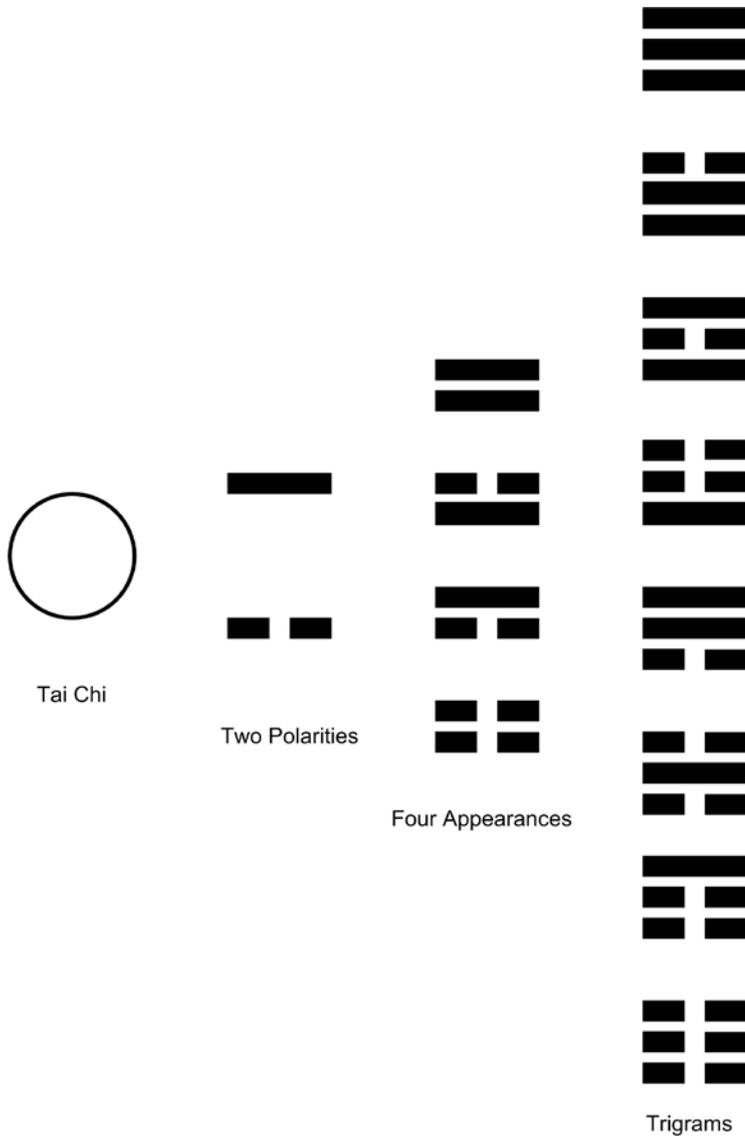
The One is the Tai Chi. When the change continues, the One produced the Two. The Two is the Two Polarities, Yin and Yang. The black means Yin and the white means Yang.



The Three is next, and it is All Things.

In the book of I Ching (the Book of Change), the Tao is described in much more detail. "I" is pronounced Yi, and means "change."

The “I” produced the Tai Chi and creates the Two Polarities;  
 the Two Polarities creates the Four Appearances;  
 the Four Appearances creates the Trigrams.  
 – I Ching



To read these lines, start from the bottom left, move up and to the right. The Two Polarities mentioned in both excerpts are the Yin and the Yang.

The Four Appearances are the Old Yin, Young Yang, Young Yin and Old Yang. They can also mean Winter, Spring, Autumn and Summer, the four seasons.

The Trigrams may be the oldest representation of the binary system. If we read the Yin line (the single dashed line) as the number 0 and the Yang line as the number 1 (the single solid line), then the final eight trigrams can be read as the

binary numbers: 000, 001, 010, 011, 100, 101, 110 and 111. If we convert them to the decimal number system, we get the numbers 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

### Tai Chi

Tai Chi is a Chinese philosophical belief. Tai Chi is the origin of All Things before the change of Yin and Yang, or before the Creation.

“Tai” in Chinese, means highest, greatest, or remotest. “Chi” in this context, is the Chinese word for extreme, pole or polarity, and does not connote the same “Chi” (a different Chinese word with similar pronunciation) that indicates the energy force inside you.

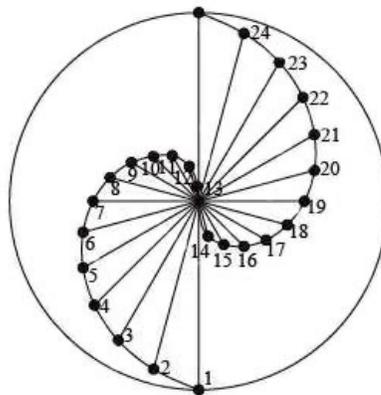
A typical Tai Chi representation look like the following symbol:



The little dots within the Yin (black) and Yang (white) areas symbolize that the Yin embraces Yang and the Yang carries Yin.

This symbol represents a dynamic Tai Chi that keeps changing. This symbol also represents the integration between our world and our universe. Our universe keeps changing and our living world keeps changing.

If you trace the annual shadow movements of a Sun Dial you will get the same pattern as the Tai Chi symbol.



The numbers in the above drawing are the 24 traditional Chinese Solar Terms of a year.

### **Yin, Yang and Health**

According to traditional Chinese medical theory every sickness and health problem we have is due to the imbalance of Yin and Yang inside our body. When the Yin and Yang of one organ becomes imbalanced, it will affect the whole body system. We will have abnormal symptoms and we will become sick.

Herbal medicines, Tui-Na (massage), acupuncture, and a special diet are common treatments for our illness. We are part of Nature and treatment for illness should follow the same concept. Usually the herbal medicine for an illness is created according to a particular formula using different herbs. It targets the illness and balances other parts of our body at the same time. When acupuncture is the way to treat our illness, more than one acupuncture point will be selected, depending on the illness, to re-balance different organs and to follow our inner Chi's flow. Our Chi flows along many meridians, or channels, inside our body. At certain times during the day our Chi will reach certain places in our body. Selecting the acupuncture point according to our bio-clock achieves the best result.

Yin and Yang keeps changing whether in a macro-environment or in a micro-environment. For a healthy and happy life we need to keep the Yin and Yang balanced. May the Force be with you (The Force is the good "Chi".)