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Yin And Yang: The Constancy Of Change

The duality of one

According to Chinese cosmology, and Eastern Mysticism, the fundamental quality of life is nothingness. Only from this state of complete openness can the world of form emerge. The condition of emptiness, in a world of form, is not contradictory. Once absence is acknowledged, presence is implied. By its existence, emptiness implies a “presence” to perceive and hold its “absence.”

We have already seen how dualism was interpreted in the Western worldview. The Cartesian dualism is the model that won-out among many, including Isaac Newton – the “father of modern classical sciences.” In order to resolve the "mind-body problem," the Cartesian dualism established two mutually exclusive worlds: the me that is "inside," and the you (everything else) that is "outside." This position finalized the divorce between science and metaphysics here in the West.

The “problem” of dualism did not exist for the ancient Chinese. Chinese cosmology reveals that it is the nature of the mundane to be transcendental. There is no problem with dualism, it is human nature. There is no need to resolve how two is derived from one, because one does not have a singular existence, another is automatically implied.

This can be misunderstood when describing Tao as “oneness”. There is no singularity in "all is one." There is a cooperative unity of cofactors. Tao is “one” swirling, homeostatic mass of cooperative components. Yin and Yang are self-emergent binary poles which alternate dominance and subordination within this swirling mass of mutual experience. The dualistic reciprocity (or gan ying) of this relationship, establishes a self-sustaining whole. The symbol used to represent this elegant paradox is the Tai Chi, known in the West as the yin/yang symbol.

"Transformation contains both change and stability, plurality and unity, movement and constancy. It has the nature of life, namely, to connect organically the polar opposites, the stumbling blocks of logic, and to unite them in an all embracing rhythm."

~ Lama Govinda ~ “The Radiance Sutras”
**A picture worth ten thousand words**

The Tai Chi embodies the concept, that out of the mystery of emptiness lies the potential of all things. It is illustrated within the dichotomy of the circle, at once expressing both wholeness, and emptiness; a beginning in every end. Feminine in its emptiness and masculine in its perfection. A "circle whose center is everywhere and circumference is nowhere" is a phrase used by many philosophers, spanning diverse cultures, to define God.

Emptiness wants to be filled. From the emptiness of the circle (a state of complete potential) two poles naturally emerge, and yin and yang are manifested. These two complementary opposites are perpetually transmuting, each becoming the inverse at the moment of its highest potency. This concept is visually represented by the black and white portions of the Tai Chi. The black yin portion is seeded with white yang, and the white yang portion, is seeded with black yin, depicting their eternal, cyclic dance of duality.

The self-correcting model of yin and yang has stood the test of time. It is the longest standing, actively used philosophy on earth. All branches of Traditional Chinese Medicine apply the same working knowledge of yin and yang, and use of the five elements. These are the same techniques that ancient Chinese practitioners used thousands of years ago when diagnosing their patients.

"The Great One produces the two poles (heaven and earth), which in turn give rise to the energies of the dark (yin) and the light (yang). These two energies then transform themselves, one rising upwards, and the other descending downwards; they merge again and give rise to form."

~Lu-sih ch’un-ch’iu — Spring and Autumn Annals
The Tai Chi

The image of the Tai Chi illustrates how yin and yang exist in varying degrees of one, in relationship to the other. In this way the symbol suggests that yang cannot exist independently of yin just as yin cannot exist independently of yang. This unity of contrasting forces is the basis of everything that exists in the physical world, indeed, humanity itself is an expression of that duality.

The children of Heaven and Earth

Humanity is the child of yin and yang (or earth and heaven). It is our experience of yin and yang that creates the material world, or “begets the 10,000 things.” This dual nature is our birthright. Our bodies are created through the unity of yin (egg), and yang (sperm).

The dynamics of yin and yang are expressed throughout the course of our lives. Our daily cycle is one of yin (rest), and yang (activity). The passing of night to day, or winter to summer is yin turning to yang. We see dualism all around us, in the momentum of life, and the motionlessness of death. All of life returns to, and is born from the basic components of yin and yang.

"The Tao gave birth to one.
One gave birth to two.
Two gave birth to three.
And three begat the 10,000 things.
The 10,000 things carry yin and embrace yang;
They achieve harmony by combining forces."

~"Tao Te Ching," 42 verse, Lao-Tzu,
"Living the wisdom of the Tao"
Dr. Wayne W. Dyer
S
Radiating Outward

NOON
Peak of Yang

SUNRISE
Rising Yang
Vernal Equinox

E
Upward Rising

Summer Solstice

W
Atumnal Equinox

SUNSET
Yin Rising

Sinking

Winter Solstice

MIDNIGHT
Peak of Yin

Inward, Contracting

N
The permutations of Yin and Yang

The tensions and harmonies that make up the human world are created from the diversity of contrast that expands from the proliferation of yin and yang. “When Lao Tzu speaks of “the ten thousand things” he is referring to the world of our making, the material world. We expand our parameters, as well as the scope of our communities, our world, and the universe, through the experience of diversity, and contrast in our lives.

The idea of dualism is not an unfamiliar concept to Western philosophy. In fact, it pervades ancient cosmologies throughout Europe. Dualism was an important philosophical concept among Greek philosophers. Some Western philosophers have even associated the duality of polar opposites with the very nature of what it is to be human.

As we go through each day, we are sifting through contrast, choosing and reaching beyond our present course. Life flourishes in this rhythm. Lao Tzu said: "Nature does not hurry yet everything is accomplished." Remember this when you feel the urge to accelerate the process of learning, or when you become overwhelmed. When you get lost in your studies of Chinese cosmology, remember that everything comes back to yin and yang. Return to the wisdom of yin and yang for a balanced perspective in your studies, and in your consulting.

Yin And Yang In Your Practice

Dual aspects: keep on the sunny side of ...the hill?

The theory of yin and yang is not a static one. Certainly, we can associate each with particular qualities (yin is cooler, darker, softer, and receptive; yang is hotter, brighter, more solid, and active). But yin and yang can only be understood in relationship to each other.
All methods in feng shui are relational. Therefore we speak of yin and yang in terms of point of view. For example:

- A river is more yang than a mountain which is more yin.
- A room with all (reflective) white walls is yang compared to a room with darker colors (which absorb the light).
- An open living room with sunny south-facing windows is yang compared to a bedroom at the back of the house, with few windows and heavy drapery, which is yin.
- Walking is yang compared to napping.
- The calm ocean is yin compared to the sun, but high tide can be quite yang.

The relational, as well as relative qualities of yin and yang are played out in this classic analogy: Imagine yourself on a warm hillside in the morning sun. You sit, immersed in a good book, and as the morning unfolds, you are unaware of the passing of time, until you notice your patch of sun is moving. The sun moves on its journey westward, and you begin to move too, inching your way across the hill. By afternoon you have migrated all of the way over to the other side of the slope. The conditions on the hillside transformed from yang to yin, but you stayed in the yang rays of the sun.

You had to adjust your position to stay in the warmth of the sun, because it had risen higher in the sky, moving westward. The East side of the hill, where you sat in the morning is still the same slope, but your
perspective of it has changed. You now regarded it as yin, and preferring to experience the warmth of yang, you follow the sun.

Yin and yang represent a process, beyond their descriptive qualities, that inextricably links them to one another. They have no real existence on their own. Similar to Tao, they never actually appear. But they do leave notable traces through cycles of time, as day turns to night or Winter turns to afternoon.

**The exchange of yin and yang in the phenomenal world**

As feng shui practitioners, we are always seeking a balance of yin and yang for our clients. A working understanding of the qualities, and tendencies of yin and yang is an essential skill of a well trained feng shui practitioner. These are relative terms that we will use to compare, and determine what is best for our clients in all situations using any feng shui methodology.

- Yang is the yearning to become that never does.
- Yin is the fulfillment of that yearning through form. Yin is completion, and that is its destruction.
- Yang is easily inspired, it is motivation, the arousal to action.
- Yin gives yang purpose and containment (something or someone to perform the action).
- Form is yin, and functionality is yang.
- The nature of appearance has disappearance in it, and yang is always moving into yin, moving into yang.
- The exchange between form, and action (yin and yang) is what creates the phenomenal world.
Fundamental Manifestations Of Yin And Yang:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>COLORS</th>
<th>SHAPES</th>
<th>ORGANS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YIN</td>
<td>Black Blue Green Brown</td>
<td>Circular Square Oval Wavy Lines Curved Shapes Undulating Meandering</td>
<td>Heart Lungs Spleen Liver Kidneys Pericardium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heavily saturated Dark colors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YANG</td>
<td>Yellow Orange Red White</td>
<td>Rectangular Straight Lines Pyramidal shapes Pointed features like spires Stars Arrows</td>
<td>Small Intestine Large Intestine Stomach Badder Gallbladder Triple Burner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vibrant colors Luminous colors</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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Where we find an over-abundance of yang, (sleeplessness, agitation, red walls in the bedroom) we can balance that excess by adding yin (or removing yang) elements to the surroundings. For example: your client is having problems sleeping through the night. Her bedroom looks out onto an expansive view of the ocean. She says she loves the view, and the sound of the crashing waves, so she leaves the window above her bed open a crack, and rarely closes the sheer curtains. The problem looks like a clear case of yin/yang imbalance. She has created a bedroom environment that has too many yang conditions. We need the safety and support of yin to create a proper sleeping sanctuary.

As relaxing as the ocean may sound during the day, in the vulnerable hours of sleep, when her chi is replenishing, it is too active of a sound for her to maintain a restful nights sleep. The tidal ocean is a yang dimension of yin. It feels relaxing because the breath of the tide is resolving the waves. However in the evening, having the actual ocean just outside her bedroom window is inviting an overabundance of yang. The chi entering the room via the open window also establishes a line of fluctuation over the bed. Movement stimulates the mind, and the nervous system. These conditions make
it nearly impossible for her to fully disengage from her surroundings and relax into the surrender of sleep.

As a course of action: first, we move her bed from under the window (a line of active, yang chi) and suggest she keep it closed while sleeping. Next, to create a more yin space, she will need a heavier window treatment as well. She can open the drapes and enjoy the view during the day, and close the drapes for a restful (yin) retreat at night. There could be many other factors affecting her sleep, but by simply looking at the yin and yang balance in her bedroom, we are able to make some easy suggestions that will likely make a big difference in her sleeping pattern, or lack there of.

Contained within yin and yang is a study of the fundamentals of life. All of life can be understood to come from these two primary poles of existence. There is brilliance in the deceptive simplicity of yin and yang. Be cautious of falling into the abyss of preconception. Use associative thinking to bring you back to a correlative place when you feel your self drifting too far off course, or becoming too conceptual.

Associations of yin and yang are used to describe and understand how to apply this important feng shui principle in your work and in your own life. Because yin and yang are always used in comparison, all associations are relative to the opposite condition.
The Qualities Of Yin And Yang

YIN
- Contracting,
- Still, Downward,
- Inward, Cooling,
- Positive, Father, Heaven, Sperm, Bright,
- Solid, Light, Dry, Sunny side, Odd numbers,
- Animal, Solid line,
- Summer, Front, Soul,
- Essence, Chi,
- Aggressive,
- Social,
- Stimulation,
- Time,
- Occasional.

YANG
- Expanding,
- Moving, Upward,
- Outward, Warming,
- Above, Circulation,
- Outside, Awake, Activity,
- Positive, Father, Heaven, Sperm, Bright,
- Solid, Light, Dry, Sunny side, Odd numbers,
- Animal, Solid line,
- Summer, Front, Soul,
- Essence, Chi,
- Aggressive,
- Social,
- Stimulation,
- Time,
- Occasional.