Last night, my husband and I went to Yin Yoga.

If you've never tried Yin yoga, I love it. It's very slow. We hold the poses for about 3 to 5 minutes. And it's the opposite of what we do usually for sports, because we both love to hike, mountain bike, run, play tennis, which is very young in nature.

Yin yoga is the opposite, it's all about balance. Today, we are going to talk about the Yin Yang theory according to Chinese medicine, how to use it in clinical practice, and what is the depth of this amazing theory which can be used with everything and every phenomenon all over the universe.

Welcome to Acupro, a show dedicated to making Chinese medicine and acupuncture easy to grasp and fun to learn.

Hi, I'm your host, Clara Cohen. I support practitioners and students like you in changing the world one patient at a time. My goal is to share my passion for TCM and empower you to achieve superior patient care.

I love to showcase the amazing benefits of acupuncture, because after all, acupuncture rocks!

With seeing the Yin Yang symbol, a lot of people see the symbol and it's everywhere. When I was in yin yoga last night, the symbol is in the room with candles. A lot of people have necklaces and that symbol is everywhere.

Do people actually understand the full meaning of this symbol?

I wanted to start by talking about the words Yin and Yang, because we're so used to utilize those two words. We don't think behind it. Yin and Yang are actually Chinese words. They are Pinyin, which means they come from characters. And they're pronounced Yin and Yang, the best we can, because my pronunciation of Mandarin is not good at all.

They are Chinese words, and the reason it's not translated, it's because Yin and Yang are a concept. This is a concept, a theory, a concept. And you can't translate a concept. This is the same with Qi. We can say, "Oh, it's energy."

But Qi is a concept, so we can't really call it energy, right?

It's part of energy, but that's not what it is only. So Yin and Yang is two Chinese words that represent a symbol and that represents a theory that is not translatable, because it's a concept. Does that make sense? That's the first thing I want to start with.

The Symbol itself

We're going to look at the symbol itself. I wanted to start with was not just the symbol, but the characters because like I said, the Yin and Yang words are coming from characters in Chinese, right?

And you probably know this, but I love Chinese characters because they depict. They show a picture, they show art. We look at them and we see just strokes, but actually they always depict an image. So with the Yin and Yang. When you look at the Yin side and the Yang side, or the Yin and Yang characters, they're the same.

They represent a mountain, a slope, or a hill. And then on one side, you have the Yin symbol, which means that's the **shady part of the mountain**. On the other side, you have the Yang symbol, which represents the **sunny part of the mountain**. The character shows you that they are light and dark and the symbol is often represented with black and white and it's light and dark, right?

Every phenomenon, everything that happens depends on the balance of Yin and Yang.

The symbol shows exactly what Yin and Yang is about. First, it shows that there's **two sides**. They look opposite, black and white, right? It shows little seeds within. Each side, right? You have the little black within the white and then vice versa.

It shows that there is a little seed, which means nothing is totally Yin or nothing is totally Yang. Also, it shows that they're a part of a whole. They assemble like a puzzle, right? Together, we put them together and they become a whole.

Which means they can't live without the other. It's a balance between the two.

The symbol itself, we present everything that we're going to discuss today and how they figure this whole Yin Yang Theory. Which starts from the I Ching Book. Which was ~700 BC, which started talking about Yin and Yang, specifically the Bagua or the Trigrams, which represent Yin and Yang with a full line or broken line. If you've never heard of the I Ching check it out because it's really the basics of Yin Yang theory.

When we look at the Yin and Yang, we have to think first of all that.

Everything pertains to Yin or Yang in relationship to something else.

For example, I would not compare an orange with a table. They have nothing in common. There's nothing to compare, right?

It's always when we look at two different entities. Nothing is Yin and nothing is Yang. Nothing. Which is quite interesting that way, right? It just depends on what you compare it to.

I'm going to look at the example of water.

Water is neither Yin, neither Yang

Now, if you compare water to steam, because steam is warmer, and anything that's warmer is more Yang. Then if you compare it to steam, water is Yin, but steam is Yang.

So now water is Yin, compared to steam. However, if we compare water to ice, because ice is more Yin in nature, anything that's colder is more Yin in nature. If you compare water to ice, now water is Yin. And I says Yin. So see how water can be Yin and Yang depending on what we compare it to.

I think it's the same in personality. If I compare myself to my husband, I am introverted. I know most people think, "What?!" Because he's very on fire, like he's full of energy, he's really Yang compared to me.

I'm much more Yin compared to him. However, I would be Yang compared to a friend of mine who's very shy, very introverted very quiet, very calm. Now I'm becoming Yang compared to her. Nothing is Yin or Yang, we understand that.

It always depends on what we compare it to.

When we look at Yin and Yang, **they are opposite**. Night is opposite of day. Winter is opposite of summer, you look at opposition. Right and left, above and below, front and back. This is always an opposition, but, again, it's relative. To what you compare it to.

The Yin Yang theory from the beginning. How did they decide to take Yin and make it dark, the moon and Yang, the sun, and the day. How did they pick a side?

What happens is, most of this is always trial and error.

Farmers decided that there was a time during the day where they were very active, and then during the night they were resting.

So anything that's more active, that's **more energetic**, it's gonna be more Yang. Anything that's more dark, that's more cold, that's more rest, which means **quiet time** that is more Yin.

So it's looking at two different kind of things, fire and water. Upward and downward, Fire is warm, so it's more Yang. It goes up, so upward is Yang. Water is more Yin, and it goes down, so down or downward is Yin. Make sense?

One cannot exist without the other

That makes it simple when we look at opposition. There would be no day without night, there would be no Summer without Winter. I want to always remind people that often people will tell me, or students will ask the question.

Here in Canada, so we have the four seasons, we have day and night. But let's say you are in Alaska, or in the North Pole, or the South Pole, right? That's not going to be the same. Again,

the interconnectivity or the interdependence is the same. The North Pole needs a South Pole. That's always been the case, right?

So when you look at people in Alaska in the summer, for example, they have daytime forever, it never gets super dark at all. It stays 24 hours sunshine. However, in the South Pole, everything is in the dark. It's dark for months and then you reverse it. And then in winter, Alaska or the North Pole is completely dark, while in the South, it is not. It's very interesting to see that there's always a balance.

Doesn't matter where you live, there's always a balance.

The season may look differently, the change may look different. It's the same thing. That makes sense? So they obviously depend on each other, matter and energy. Energy is Yang because it's movement. Matter is Yin because it's structure.

It's like physiology and anatomy. We have our anatomy, which is Yin, so our structure and physiology is how all this anatomy is working to be able to have this beautiful, healthy body that we have been given so that's Yang.

Physiology is much more Yang because there's lots of movement. The digestive system is functioning and it's going and doing its thing. That's physiology that's Yang. However, it depends on the structure of the organ. Yin, like all the organs that allow this to happen, expansion, contraction, anything that grows and expands is Yang. Anything that contracts and comes in is Yin, interior is Yin, exterior is Yang. The skin and everything that's on the surface of us is more Yang compared to the inside of us, like our organs.

When we look at organs, they depend on each other.

The Gallbladder depends on the Liver and vice versa.

So front and back. Why is back Yang and front Yin? Because, again, it goes back to the farmers. When they were outside, they were always bent down, to do whatever they were doing for their farming. The sun always hit their back first, the head and the back was hit by the sun.

It's very much more Yang, so the back is going to be more Yang, while the front's going to be more Yin. The head is always more Yang. Because it is closer to the sun, it is closer to the top, and it's in the upper part, right? Anything that's up is going to be more Yang, anything that's lower is going to be more Yin.

Earth is supposed to be grounding and Yin, this is why Kidney 1, is the best grounding point.

Because that's the only point that is on the sole of the foot. And that, when we put our feet flat on the ground, outside on the grass, we're grounding ourselves, and we are becoming Yin, we're calming ourselves.

The most Yang point is DU 20, the opposite.

See, there's always opposition.

It's always opposition and DU 20, DU Meridian is a Yang meridian while Kidney 1 or Kidney Meridian is a Yin Meridian, so DU 20 is the highest point. Du 20 is the closest to the sky the sun.

Same thing we have the most Yang point at the top. That's literally the highest point. Which means anything at the top like the head is more Yang. All the meridians that reach the head are Yang Meridians.

No Yin Meridian reaches the head, they stay on the body.

The Sympathetic Central Nervous System is Yang

It's all about action, activity, fight or flight. That's what most patients that come and see us are in a state of a sympathetic state when they get acupuncture. The idea behind **doing a treatment of acupuncture is to put the patient in a parasympathetic state, which is a rest.**

Rest and recover, so rest and recover would be more Yin, more calm. So that's more Yin. And then sympathetic is more Yang.

Now, the masculine and the feminine. This is always very interesting, just because there's so much to unpack on that subject, when it is Yin and Yang. At the biological level, if you compare men and women, men have much more testosterone, so they have much more Yang. They're much more energetic. Fire.

Women are more estrogen bound, right? They have tendency to relate to blood because they bleed every month, which is more Yin in nature.

So we usually say feminine is Yin and masculine is Yang

However, it doesn't mean that every man, biological man and biological woman, are yin and yang. It just depends what you compare it to.

If you're comparing two women, one might, might have more masculine energy and one may have more feminine energy and same with men, right? So it's always what you compare, it's not absolute.

It's never ever absolute with Yin and Yang

Another thing about the Yin Yang theory is the mutual conception.

And that has to do with a quantitative change. It's the adjustment constant of Yin and Yang. This is why when there's too much Yin, or not enough Yang, or too much Yang, not enough Yin, we need to balance. That's what acupuncture does. What do I always say to people when they ask me does acupuncture cure this or cure that?

I always say acupuncture does not cure anything.

It does not treat or cure anything, it literally nudges the body to self regulate. Acupuncture helps the body to balance itself. The body is going to do the work because the body is amazing. When there's an imbalance between Yin and Yang within the body, acupuncture is going to help it.

Seasons changes, like becomes warmer and then becomes colder, that's a quantitative change, right? It is going to change constantly when we are children. We are very young, you have so much energy when you're young. Then slowly, midlife. Depending where you are in your life, midlife, you start to get a little bit more Yin. Then you're going towards the end of your life, which is much more Yin. So birth is yang, death is yin. However, within that lifespan, we're going to have a lot of Yin and Yang change as well.

The other part of the Yin Yang is looking at the inter-transformation

For an egg to hatch, it needs warmth. Otherwise, it's not going to happen. There's always condition that has to be there in order for change to occur. So change can be good, like heat helps the little baby chick come out and hatch, so that's a good change.

The yin and yang part of everything. When we go out and party all night and then the next day, we have a hangover and we're laying in bed the whole day. That change is not that great, so Yin and Yang can transform into each other all the time.

It will change and it could be a good positive change or it could be a lesson learned in life, right? But no matter what, **change is constan**t.

There's always the seed of Yin within Yang and Yang within Yin

And that's why the symbol shows that you can constantly rotate between the in and out. Just like day and night, every single day it changes and every single night it changes. The body is the same.

So if you look at today, it's a beautiful sunny day in Vancouver because it rains a lot here.

It's sunny, so sun is Yang, but everywhere there's shade. Shade of the building, shade of the tree, there's shade everywhere. That's Yin. So even though it's a sunny day, the shade is the little seed of Yin. Within the sunny day Yang at night often.

I was in Iceland last year. Love Iceland. Iceland had at nighttime, the stars. They were magnificent and you see the Northern Lights as well. Nighttime is very Yin, but suddenly you see all the Northern lights and that's Yang . So that's Yang within Yin, because Yin is the night, makes sense?

This is comparing Yin and Yang in a basis of Chinese medicine, right?

Deficiency and Excess

So cold is more Yin, heat is more Yang. We know that. That's the basics. Now deficiency and excess. This is what I always have to really reinforce with students. **Deficiency is Yin, Excess is Yang**. Does that mean that every deficiency is Yin? No. Does that mean every excess is Yang? No. It's when you compare the two.

Deficiency versus Excess. If you're comparing two deficiencies or two excess, then that changes. It's what we talked about when we talked about water versus ice and versus steam earlier. Chronic versus acute, same thing.

Chronic as Yin, acute as Yang

However, doesn't mean that all chronic disorders are Yin, or acute or Yang. It's when you compare the two. Always.

All Yin meridians are in the front, except Stomach, and all Yang meridians are in the back or lateral.

So lateral and back is always Yang, and then front, and medial, is always Yin. However, the only Yang meridian that's in the front is the Stomach. That's a question I get all the time, and I remember when I learned all the meridians, I thought I didn't understand.

The Stomach is supposed to be Yang, but it's in the front.

Why? Because if you look at the Stomach, even though they put it in the Yang organs and Yang energy and Yang meridian, it is very Yin in nature. It's the most Yin of all Yang organs and the most Yin of all Yang meridians.

Spleen energy is Yin. However, Spleen's function, or one of the functions, is to transform and transport the food to make nutrients. That's a Yang energy, that's the digestive system, physiology. However, the Spleen is also in charge of producing blood, and blood is very much Yin in nature. So each organ, even though you compare them to the opposite, like Spleen and Stomach, they are not just Yin.

They are Yin compared to the Yang pertaining organ, but within themselves, they have two things that are going to be Yin and Yang. This is really what I want to reinforce today.

Nothing is yin, nothing is yang. It's always what you compare it to, and everything has Yin and Yang within.

Chinese Medicine Made Easy

Diagnosis has to be the hardest part of Chinese medicine. We always say there is no wrong treatment in TCM, only the wrong diagnosis. This is why I created my second book, Chinese Medicine Made Easy, to make it easy to grasp using a lot of colorful visuals. I have included all Chinese Medicine foundations, Yin Yang Theory, Five Elements, Zang Fu Organ, all of it.

All diagnosis, of course, including tongue and pulse. Practice case studies to help you improve your skills, as well as give you access to my online fillable intake form to use with your own patients. You can download the digital version on any device, and it comes with many video links to complement it.

Or, if like me, you like to read a real book, the hard copy ships all over the world. Before you invest in this book, **you can download a sample of it** to make sure that the format of the book is everything you were looking for. Because I want to make sure that you are absolutely benefiting from it.

Listen to what people have to say about my green book, Chinese Medicine Made Easy:

"The more I read, the more I like this book. It is simple to follow, all information is super organized with great Pictures makes memorizing a lot easier. This book will definitely make my learning a lot more productive."

"So happy to hear that you've done it again. You are amazing. I wish we had your resources 20 years ago, back in TCM school."

This also makes my day because this is why I do what I've been doing with Acupro Academy for quite a few years now, to support everyone.

The whole point of Yin and Yang

Or specifically in Chinese medicine, is we want to keep homeostasis, or balance. We want to balance everything.

So there's going to be shift all the time. We have stress, we have lifestyle, we have trauma. There events that happen that are going to put us out of balance.

The idea is to try to get back into this homeostasis or balance of Yin and Yang as fast as possible. Because if we leave it longer and longer, there's going to be more and more imbalance between the two and that's going to be taking much longer to repair and to get back into that homeostasis.

That's why it's really important to do preventative medicine. **TCM is strong is preventative medicine.** We do things to prevent our body to get out of balance as much as we can. When we do this, we keep the shift.

What happens when we're out of balance

So let's look at what happened when we're out of balance, if there is an imbalance, four things can happen. Either we have an excess of Yang, too much Yang in the body, yoo much energy, too much Yang, too much expansion, too much heat.

Or, we have too much Yin. Too much cold, too much stagnation, too much Yin. Excess Yin. The other two things that can happen is we don't have enough Yang. We are depleted in Yang, we don't have enough fire in us. It's like the temperature, right? We feel cold all the time, or we don't have enough Yin.

Yin is the cold side of it. It's our cooling system. Sometimes we don't have that cooling system and we feel hot all the time. So that's deficiency of Yin. Either **we can have excess or deficiency of either Yin and Yang.**

Excess of Yang

So let's start with excess of Yang. If we have too much Yang, that means we have too much heat in the body and heat rises. It goes up, so it's very much a Yang issue. We may feel hot all the time during the day. Sweat profusely. We may have high fever if it's acute.

If it's chronic, we could have a thirst for cold drinks. And we're gonna gulp and gulp for cold drinks. We can have a red tongue, a rapid pulse. There could be red face as well, we're gonna have anger and emotion that arise, In general, if there is issue with bowel movement (when there is excess Yang or excess heat) there's going to be very smelly stools. When there is smelly stools, there's always excess heat.

Deficiency of Yin

Now, let's look at the other one, which would be the Deficiency of yin. So Yin is our cooling system. If it's deficient, and we don't have enough cooling system, like your AC in your house is not working, your house is going to get hot.

So if you don't have AC, you're going to get hot. How do we compare and how we differentiate Yin deficiency, not enough cooling system, and we feel hot.

With Yang excess, when we have too much heat and we feel hot. The treatment is not gonna be the same. If we have excess heat, excess fire in our body. We're going to get rid of the excess, to clear the heat. But if we're Yin deficient, we don't have enough cooling system.

It's broken. The AC is down. We need to fix it, nourish it, repair it. To tonify it. It's a very different treatment. We need to differentiate the two. When I was talking about the Yang excess, I said we're thirsty for cold drinks and we gulp. With Yin deficiency, we're still thirsty, but we sip.

Yang excess and the Yin deficiency may have constipation and if they do, Yang excess, when they have a bowel movement, it's going to be big, smelly, large amount.

With Yin deficiency patients, it's going to be smaller. Little rabbit pellets, little sheep pellets, dry, small amount.

Think of Yin deficiency small symptoms, Yang excess, big symptoms.

Yang excess people will have a red face. We said anger, red face. Yin deficiency will have irritability, so not as much as anger , and just red cheeks. Instead of red face. Big versus small. That gives you an idea.

When it comes to Yang excess, we're gonna have sweating profusely during the day, or easily sweating every time we're hot. With Yin deficiency, it only happens at night. The sweating is going to happen at night and not the whole night. Just by little times, right?

This is why menopausal women are becoming Yin deficient as they get older. And so they start having night sweat this is very common in older women specifically.

Let's look at the opposite.

Yin Excess versus Yang Deficiency

There's Excess cold in your body, excess Yin, excess cold, because Yin is cold in nature. So think of when there's excess cold, it creates ice in the body and ice is static. It's not movement, right?When we have excess cold, it stops blood circulation.

So excess Yin always creates not only cold symptoms, but pain. Because it stops blood circulation, and when there is blood stasis in TCM, it's always pain. When we have excess Yin, we have pain that is going to be local. Local pain.

Yin Excess Examples

For example, dysmenorrhea. The pain is on the lower abdominal region. We have cramps, but if we put a heating pad over it, we start to feel better. It's cold pain, not just pain that's fixed and local. That pain feels better when we put heat on it and we know there is excess cold because the heat Makes it better. It increased circulation and breaks the ice or melts the ice, right?

Raynaud's disease, Raynaud's is very local. It's the fingers, the tip of the fingers. Very cold, right? We want to put heat on it.

There's a blood circulation issue. So it's local excess cold.

Yang Deficiency

So let's look at the Yang deficiency. Yang is heat. If we don't have enough heat in the body, we are Yang deficient. Not enough heat, we're gonna feel cold. So versus the one earlier, what did we say? We said Yin excess it's cold, but it's local, fixed, and it creates pain.

Yang deficiency, the person is cold all over the body. They're the people that want a blanket. They want to be covered up, they love saunas, love warm food and warm drinks, and they're always cold. The Yang deficiency, the person is cold all over because they have no fire. They have no libido. Libido, sex drive, is fire, it's about creation. Low libido, they are fatigued, no fire, no energy. It's no energy. They feel cold all the time.

Those are the main symptoms, give you an idea of the difference between Yang deficiency versus Yin.

It's always good to compare the two, and because in clinical practice, we are going to treat this very differently.

With Yin excess, we are going to warm the person, of course, but break the ice.

So we need to improve blood circulation, we need to move blood. Scatter the cold or get rid of the cold and we need to warm the person or the area. While the Yang deficiency, we're going to warm up the person with an inside. So lots of soup and stews and teas, right? Coming from the inside because their whole body is cold.

And we want to avoid all the cold outside factors like walking bare feet, like not covering our body with enough clothes. Then we are going to tonify the Yang, do moxa and make sure that we really bring the young up and nourish and warm the young. So it's very different treatment. That's why it's important to make the distinction between those two.

I wanted to look at the Yin and Yang theory because I think it's such an important basic theory about everything that we do in clinical practice.

Thank you so much for spending your time with me today. I truly hope you benefited from this episode and I would love for you to share it with a friend that may benefit from it as well. Follow the show, leave a review, and if you want more, go to my website acuproacademy.com. I have tons of resources there with treatment protocols, case study, free courses, and so much more.

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