

YIN - YANG & the Oriental THEORY of CREATION

Thesis by:

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Introduction:

Back in **1995** I was required to attend a 4-week Police Sergeants qualifying course held at the Royal New Zealand Police College in Porirua, WELLINGTON.

As part of the requirements of the course the attendees were given 7 days to prepare and plan a 40-minute lecture on a subject of the attendee's choice. This was then to be presented to the Sergeants Course members which could also include some practical activity.

I was then a 4th Dan Black belt in ITF Taekwon-Do, so I selected something from a Martial Art perspective that I felt would be easy for me to prepare and to present in the short period of time required.

To this end, I visited the library at the Police College and did research on the Oriental Yin – Yang principles and reviewed several Martial Art magazines and documents on the subject.

My final presentation was well received by the Sergeants Course attendees and the instructors. I was able to run a small practical session using attendees to demonstrate some of these principles of Yin & Yang and how to deal with aggressive, violent, or disturbed people.

THE ORIENTAL THEORY OF CREATION.

Back in the beginning of time we are led to believe our World – ‘Earth’ was created from what is known as the Big Bang. The best-supported theory of our universe's origin centres on an event known as **the big bang**. (An exploding Star) This theory was born of the observation that other galaxies are moving away from our own at great speed in all directions, as if they had all been propelled by an ancient explosive force.

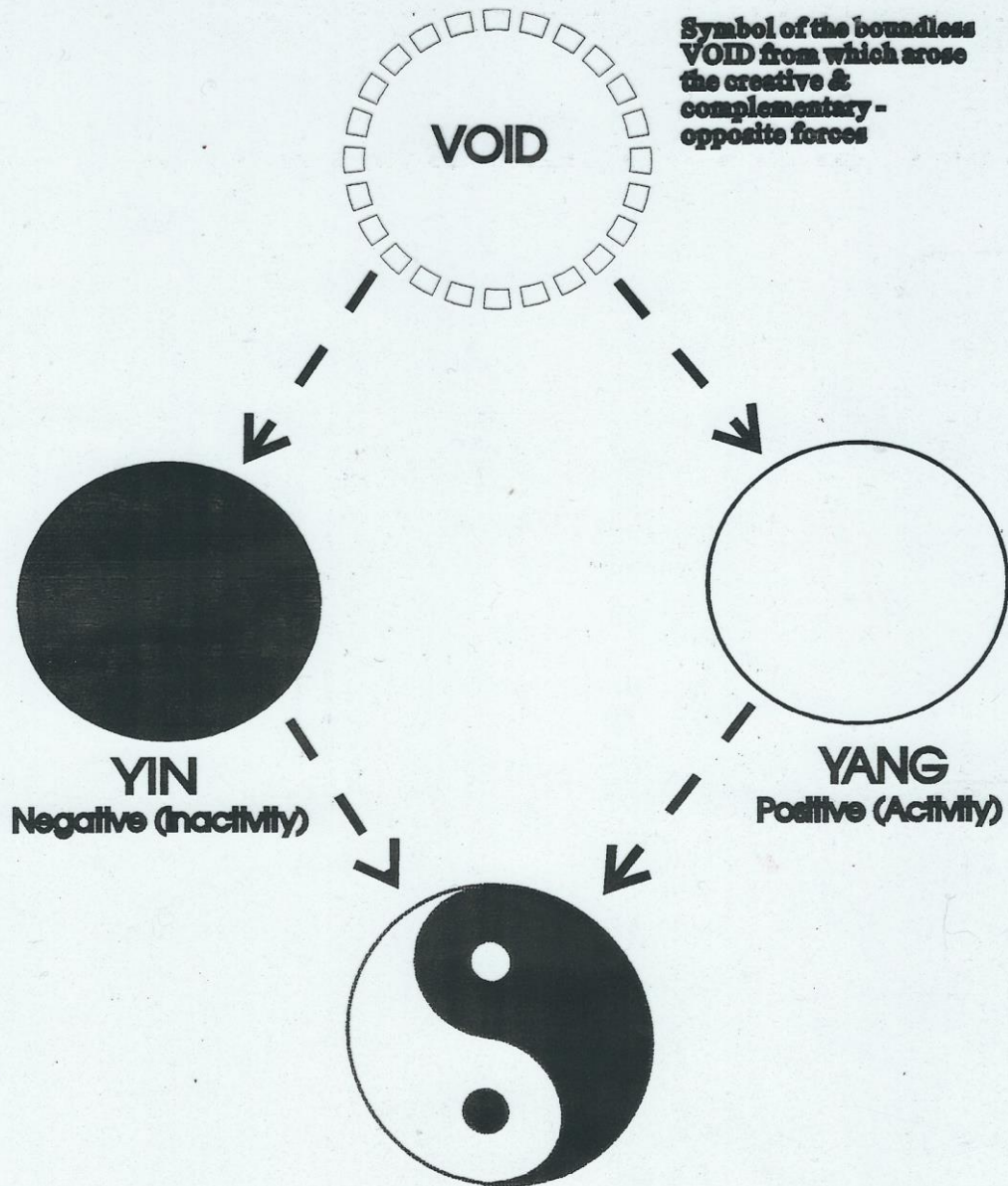
[Origins of the universe, explained - National Geographic](https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article)

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article>

So, for what began as a VOID, an empty space, therefore for things to come together and form a whole or a solid object i.e. Planets, it needed a negative or inactive part (YIN) and a positive or active part (YANG).

See the example on following illustration.

The Oriental THEORY OF CREATION



FIRE WOOD EARTH METAL WATER
(5 Basic elements)

THE Yin – Yang SYMBOL

This symbol is seen throughout the Eastern/Oriental world and is representative of two opposing forces flowing into one another in a continuous state of change. It is also seen as part of the South Korean Flag, the birthplace of Taekwon-Do.



The elements of the flag symbolise the dual forces of nature. The red and blue circle in the middle of the flag is called taegeuk in Korean (t'ai chi in Chinese), which, translated literally, means "supreme ultimate." The circle is divided into two parts, each of which resembles a comma. The upper, red part represents the forces of **yang** (yang in Chinese as well), and the lower, blue part represents the forces of um (**yin** in Chinese).

In our Natural World everything has a complementary or opposite component. For example - COLD and HOT, NIGHT and DAY, FEMALE and MALE, STILLNESS and MOTION, SOFT and HARD. This list can go on and on. In the Martial Arts we also have TENSION and RELAXATION to assist in the execution of techniques to give self-control and impact power.

Although many changes occur in Nature, HARMONY is established through the balance of YIN - YANG. When we, as humans are **not balanced** then disorder can occur. **Equilibrium**, one of the 5 elements of the Taekwon-Do theory of power is of utmost importance. (As written by General Choi in his Condensed Encyclopedia of Taekwon-Do pg. 54. Without proper equilibrium any physical action like, speed and reaction force would be limited.

YIN - YANG are not labelled as Good and Bad. They have a 'Creative Relationship'. They are constantly changing, with one never existing in isolation from the other.

Yin-Yang represents a dynamic balance of opposing but complementary and interconnected forces, known as chi (Chinese) or Ki. More on this aspect later...

In short, the ancient yin-yang principle observes that in all aspects of the physical world, there is duality. Therefore, there is also an element of the nonphysical world—that which we do not see but feel and sense—that surrounds us at all times.

It's impossible to know the true origin of yin-yang, though symbols representing yin-yang were present during the Neolithic period (3400 B.C.). Yin-yang is also represented in the [*I Ching*](#), or

The Book of Changes, a Chinese divination text that dates back to 1000–750 B.C. and is still used today.

This theory appears in literature during the Yin and Zhou dynasties (1047–256 B.C.), an influential period known as the start of Confucianism and Daoism. As such, the yin and yang theory are rooted in many schools of thought, and you can find examples of it everywhere.

Of note the circular part has no beginning or ending therefore it is a continuing cycle or force and the sinewave part between Black and White indicates that there is give and take flowing action between the elements of Yin and Yang. The opposite-coloured dots indicate that within Yin there is also some Yang and within Yang there is also Yin.

From the interaction of YIN - YANG arose the **5 Basic Elements**

FIRE - WATER – EARTH – METAL – WOOD.

These elements can exist complementary to each other, or they can work against each other and destroy themselves. For example:

WOOD occupies the EARTH
EARTH soaks up the WATER
WATER douses the FIRE
FIRE melts the METAL
METAL cuts the WOOD

All things we do in life and all things that happen in life are governed somehow by the law of Yin and Yang. Eg. Wet and Dry and Hot and Cold, Black and White, Up and Down, Soft and Hard, Negative and Positive. Etc.

The Yin-Yang theory and its applications to Martial Arts

The **Yīn-Yáng Theory** emerged in Chinese thought from the observation of nature. This theory postulates the existence of **two complementary principles** that are present in all that exists. These principles were called *yīn*, "dark", and *yáng*, "luminous"; they are not to be understood as two different natures but as two aspects of the same thing.

The concepts of *yīn* and *yáng* are useful when describing the functioning of phenomena. To formulate them, the Chinese relied mainly on the observation of the relationship between light and shadow, usually explained using the example of the two sides of a hill: the sunny side, *yáng*, and the shadowed side, *yīn*. Visualizing this hill, we can understand that *yīn* and *yáng* are not opposing forces but two aspects of the same reality; **they do not exist independently, but in relation to each other**. Shadow exists because there is light, and vice versa.

The ancients understood the **universe as a manifestation of change**, and everything that exists is because of the interaction between these two polar opposites.

From this simile of the hill, opposed attributes were associated to each of these polarities: the **yīn** as dark, cold, feminine, soft, curved, rounded, Earth, moon, soft, wet; the **yáng** as luminous, hot, masculine, hard, straight, angular, Heaven, sun, rough, dry...

In the ancient sexual rituals of rural China, held during the equinoxes, the men stood on the sunny side of the valley and called the women, who responded from the shadowed side. That is why it was said that "yáng calls and yīn responds".

The Yīn-Yáng theory also establishes **certain laws in the relationship of these two principles**:

1. All existing things have a yīn aspect and a yáng aspect. In all the existing we can find opposing aspects that we can classify as yīn or yáng.

2. Each aspect yīn or yáng can also be divided into yīn or yáng. The day, which is considered yáng in relation to night, can be divided into morning (yáng) and evening (yīn).

3. Yīn and yáng have the same origin and are mutually generated. Both are inseparable from each other and form the basis of their opposite. In a world without light (yáng), there would be nothing that we could call darkness (yīn), since the latter is defined in terms of the first: darkness is the lack of light.

4. Yīn and yáng mutually inhibit each other, are constantly changing and their increases and decreases are correlated. When one grows, the other decreases, and vice versa. During the day, as the sun rises, the light increases (yáng) and consequently the darkness (yīn) decreases, and vice versa. It is impossible for both poles to grow or decrease at the same time. On the other hand, this change is constant and does not stop at any time.

5. Yīn and yáng transform each other. When the sun is at its highest, yáng is at its maximum and yīn is at its minimum; from that moment the yáng begins to diminish and the yīn to grow, until the opposite point is reached, where the process will be reverted again.

From these laws, the existence of a **balance between yīn and yáng** emerges. When one increases, the other decreases, and vice versa, **without there being an absolute predominance of one over the other**. This is indeed the essence of life: Change.

We must keep in mind that yīn and yáng **are not intrinsic characteristics of things**, but only concepts or labels that the Chinese used to explain the world around them. Through them the natural changes were explained: the alternation of day and night, health and illness, life and death. Therefore, the Chinese do not say that "this is yīn" or "this is yáng", but that "belongs" to yīn or yáng.

This theory was subsequently applied to **Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)**, to classify body parts and physiological functions, and to explain the functioning of the human body in terms of health and disease. Health and illness are not to be understood as absolute realities but

relative, and are governed by the same principles: they are constantly changing; when one grows, the other decreases, etc.

The YIN – YANG Theory in MARTIAL ARTS.

Martial Arts are a discipline that uses the body as the main instrument for self-defense or combat. In the realm of the body, the Yīn-Yáng Theory is applied to the **classification of the different parts of the body and movements:**

Yīn	Yang
Back of the body.	Front of body.
Upper part of the body	Lower part of body.
External part of the body	Internal part of body
Yīn	Yang
Stillness	Movement
Relaxation	Tension
Flexion	Extension
Contraction	Expansion
Expiration	Inspiration
Downward	Upward
Defending	Attacking
Closing	Opening
Internal	External

Having this classification in mind can help us **understand the dynamics of martial practice.** The most notorious feature of Kung Fu is the use of any advantage that can be drawn on the opponent **to achieve the highest efficiency with the lowest energy expenditure.** This can be also said for many other Martial Art systems/styles, both hard or soft.

The Yīn and the Yáng have to work in balance.

The most classic example would be the way to deal with an attack. If before the hits (yáng) that approach always defend with hard blockages (also yáng), the result will be, if not an injury, at least the premature exhaustion. If we face the blows with yīn blocks, softer, that **deflect the blow instead of hitting it directly**, we will be making better use of our energies.

Chinese Martial Arts are based on **using the force of the opponent against himself, instead of opposing it.** The absolute yīn in this case would be to leave the opponent's attack line so that his blow finds only the void and, if possible, hit or drag him in the same direction of his movement.

In Taekwon-Do we have elements of soft, slow, hard and fast movements and these combined can make actions very efficient, explosive, effective and dynamic.

To give another example of application of the Yīn-Yáng theory to martial arts. In ITF Taekwon-Do our Guarding Block position can sometimes show too much tension. If held in this state for too long the practitioner would soon be exhausted by the existing tension. This is a clear example of excess of **yáng**.

The same thing would happen with an excess of **yīn**: if we are too relaxed, we will not be able to defend ourselves. **Relaxation and tension must follow the natural course of yīn and yáng**: tense at the moment of striking, just at the moment when the weapon (Tul) is going to hit and relax immediately after the blow, always alternating, **seeking a harmonious balance**.

In the same way, we could look for many other examples, but it is important to insist again that yīn and yáng are not absolute but relative qualities, and that they are only concepts that we can use to classify aspects of reality, as in this case we have classified actions and movements of the body, and not intrinsic characteristics.

The essence of all this is the search for balance and naturalness, so that we can get the most out of our energy to be effective in the technique when we practice the Martial Arts.

Chi (Ki) the Life Force

The Universe, Humanity & Nature are greatly influenced by ‘Chi’ (Chinese) or Ki (Korean).

Ki permeates all matter and is regarded as the essential life force of all living things.

Ki literally means air, breath, energy, vapour, gas. Philosophically it can be defined as intrinsic energy, biophysical energy, or the **Life Force**

It is viewed in the Orient as an invisible energy force which circulates through the body to give life.

The source of Ki is nurtured from about the area of **the naval**. (The umbilical link to our birth mother.

Ki is activated from and directed by **the Mind** and is responsible for all the movements of the body.

When the flow of Ki is strong, we are healthy
If the flow is blocked in any area, there becomes an imbalance in Yin and Yang.
We can then become ill.
Death occurs when the flow of Ki stops completely.

Ki (Chi), the life force, is incorporated in the names of other Martial Arts like Aiki-Do, Hap Ki Do and Tai Chi Chuan.

Since the mind controls the body, anything that enters, even momentarily into the mind, has an effect on the body. Let the Mind direct the movement. Don't let action precede the Mind.

VISUALISATION – RELAXATION - CALMNESS

(Extracts from TAI CHI – QUGONG by Master Gary Khor)

THEORY OF NON-DISSENSION

Non-dissension - Dictionary meaning:

To be able to negate a difference of opinion which has arisen out of anger or dissatisfaction? i.e. In a domestic dispute or other conflict situations.

It is to do with the ability of maintaining an inner CALMNESS. (RELAXATION)

This is easy to say but to many it would be hard to do. By trying to do deep breaths and allowing the heart rate to slow, can help keep a person's mind open and clear.

1. By being calm in an angry or violent situation, one can project a calmness to the agitated person. i.e., Calmness can calm another. If you show any anger this will only aggravate and possibly inflame the situation.
2. An important principle is knowing when to stop rather than overdoing things.
“When your work is done, then withdraw!
That is the way to peace, harmony and heaven” LAO TSU (Philosopher)
3. Do nothing that conflicts with the natural way. “Bend with the wind and become part of it rather than attempting to resist it. “Be like water”. ‘A quote from Bruce Lee.
4. Lead the opponent into submission rather than forcing them into submission.
5. FORCE can always oppose FORCE.
FORCE cannot oppose CALMNESS (Relaxation)

“Winning without fighting is the noblest aim. The best fighter is he who brings his opponents to his knees without a fight”

Sun TZU (Chinese Philosopher) said some 2,400 years ago. (The ART OF WAR)

IN CONCLUSION:

Through this study of the Yin & Yang principles it had stirred my curiosity into the **why** and **how** we can use these principles for our own inner spiritual, mental and physical development, not only for use in the Martial Arts but for all of what life and nature can throw at us. We as humans need to '**Adapt**'.

My Taekwon-Do training and instructing was with me throughout my entire 30yrs of front-line Policing in New Zealand and it has helped me in resolving many, many confrontational and life-threatening situations.

I dedicate this Thesis to:

1. Our late Founder General Choi Hong Hi 9th Dan (1918 – 2002)
2. The late Grandmaster Tran Trieu Quan 9th Dan (1952 – 2010) R.I.P.

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