

THE FIVE ELEMENTS



In traditional Chinese Medicine the five elements are used to describe the physical world. The elements are: **Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water.** Together they explain how everything on earth is connected and how it impacts each other.

Everything created in nature and the material world belongs to an element and the elements affect both our organs and our emotions. Through the elements we can gain a deeper understanding of ourselves, nature and the universe we live in.

Every element is connected to, and controls, one or more organs in our body and our emotional state. Every element is attributed a color, a latitude on the surface of the Earth, and a season. China has five seasons. Every element also constitutes a YANG and a YIN Meridian (more on this in the meridian system).

TCM is all about seeking balance. Balance in our body, our mind and in nature among all living things. There is balance within each element but the element also help balance each other. Feng Shui is a method used to balance your home using the elements.

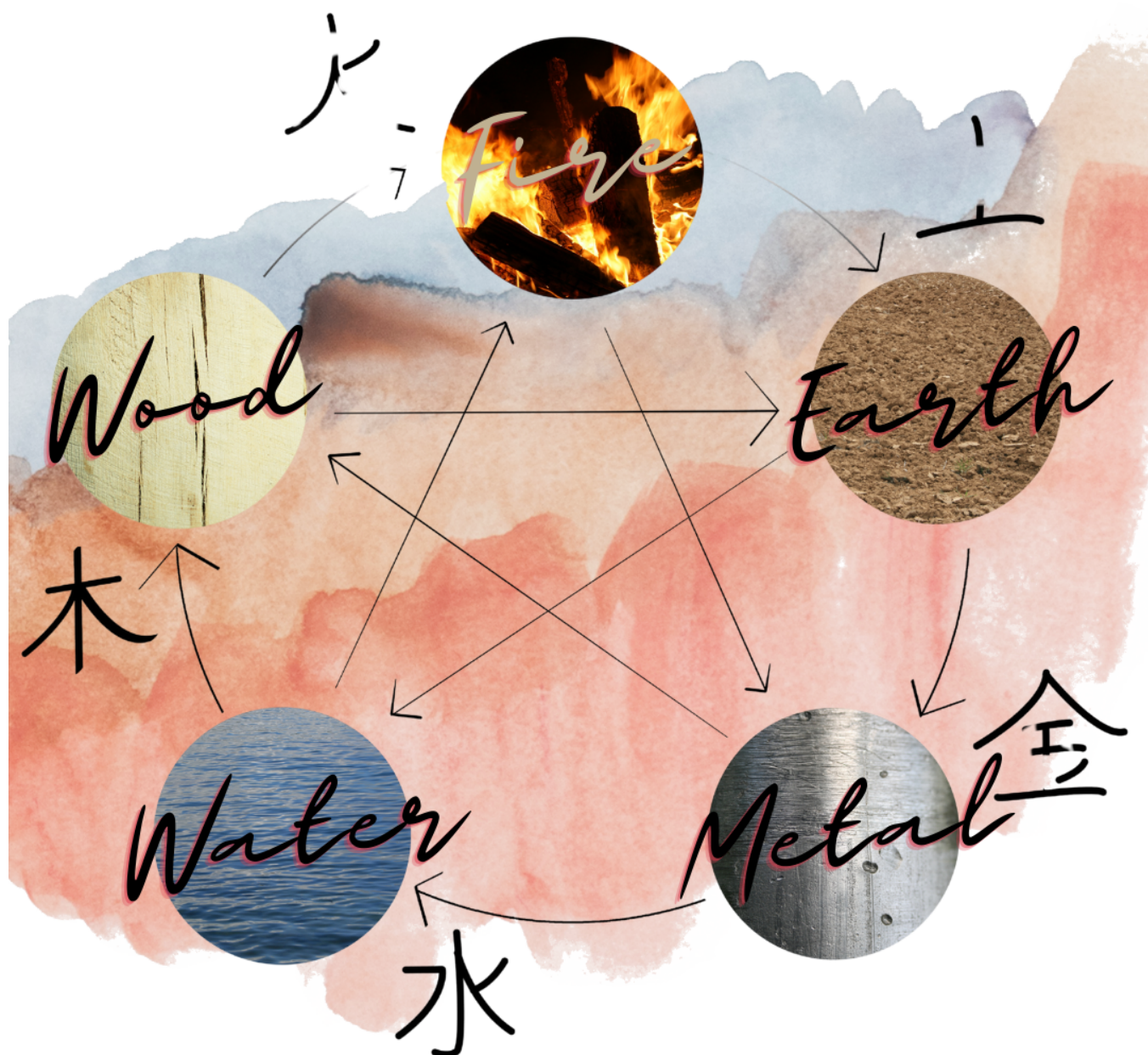
All the elements are represented within us but one can be more (or less) dominant. Our state of balance changes overtime due to a variety of things like physical aging and from growing more wise from life experience. Some people may have one or two elements that are dominant while others have an even distribution of characteristics within all five elements.

Every element is connected to certain emotions. While there are positive and negative emotions, all emotions are necessary and good. Maintaining balance is required so that negative emotions do not overrun your life. We need to be able to feel anger but it's not healthy to carry it for a long time. In the same way, we need to be able to feel sorrow and sadness but if we don't find balance in order to break the pattern, it can become destructive to our well being.

Every element shapes your physical body. The elements that dominate an individuals being will affect and shape their physiology

By discovering and exploring the elements within our selves, what balances us, and what brings us out of balance, we can use the five elements as a part of our journey to develop a deeper relationship with ourselves and understand ourselves better. For example, you may finally realize why you tend to react in a certain way in a certain situation, or why you become unbalanced around some people and not others.

See how the elements relate to each other:



Follow the arrows, nature and seasons:

FIRE is the peak of **SUMMER** when nature is in full bloom. **EARTH** follows as the leaves are falling from the trees and we enter the season of **FALL**.

In late fall and **EARLY WINTER** everything cools down and stiffens like **METAL**. Winter and **LATE WINTER** turns everything to snow and ice that eventually will melt and bring **SPRING**, new growth and new life - **WOOD**.

The arrows inside the circles show how the elements control each other. **FIRE** controls **METAL** etc.

We can use the knowledge and philosophy behind the elements when creating and sequencing our yin yoga classes.

Here are some suggestions:

- Focus on one single element during a whole class or workshop.
- Include all the elements in a longer class
- Have one element to symbolize movement and another stillness.

Since every element is connected to two meridians you can choose yin positions that align with your theme.

Below you'll find an overview of each element. There is so much more to say about each element so if you want to dive deeper, be on the look out for an upcoming course on the elements.

Wood

Season: Spring

Color: Green

Meridians: Liver & Gall Bladder

Manifests: Purification, detox, taking action and starting up!

Imbalance: Anger, irritation, burn out, trouble with boundaries

Balanced by: Let go of demands and prestige, just be, clean the clutter and make small goals.

Fire

Season: Peak Summer

Color: Red

Meridians: Heart & Small Intestine

Manifests: Presence, Joy, Love, sparks of life

Imbalance: Anger, irritation, prestige, over heated

Balanced by: Close relationships, water, being outdoors when it rains, touch and intimacy.

Earth

Season: Late summer

Color: Yellow, Brown

Meridians: Spleen & Stomach

Manifests: Grounding, Stability, Taking care of others, Sympathy and Compassion

Balances the other elements.

Imbalance: Shut down, Emptiness, Stomach issues, Worried and Over protective

Balanced by: Ending relationships that steal energy, Saying no, Physical activity

Metal

Season: Fall

Color: White, Purple

Meridians: Lung & Large Intestines

Manifests: Strength and structure, fairness, integrity and quality

Imbalance: Sorrow, self doubt, exaggerated perfectionism, low self esteem

Balanced by: Spend time in nature, Meditation, Organize one's home, Practice letting go.

Water

Season: winter

Color: Blue, Black

Meridians: Kidney & Gall Bladder

Manifests: wisdom, knowledge and insight. Trust, inspiration, Living life to the fullest.

Imbalance: Negative, restless, closed, insecure, fear and anxiety, guilt, sleep deprivation, poor appetite.

Balanced by: Stillness and quietness - time to think and reflect. Spirituality. Complete one thing at a time

Sources:

<http://musicacupuncture.com>

The Five Elements - Dondi Dahlin

Vägen till Qi - Matthew Sweigart.