

True Nature, Human Destiny and the Seven Levels of Judgment

General Cause of Disease

On the most basic level of traditional Chinese medical theory, disease results when the separate "parts" of an organism are disconnected from the whole due to a disruption in the flow of life energy or *ch'i* (see *AES #1*). On a deeper level, each individual organism is seen as a part of a larger whole which is the universe itself. In ancient Chinese philosophy, this connection was called a person's "True or Original Nature" and was thought to be important enough to cause disease, if it were ever lost.

This process, in which matter and spirit lose their original unity, creates a sense of emptiness and loss as a sense of separation from the whole occurs. According to the ancient Chinese, this separation can be restored through the harmonization of the Five Phases (see *AES #3*), particularly through the conscious development and unification of Wood and Metal and their corresponding virtues of Compassion (*Jen* 仁) and Judgment (*I* 意). This harmonization results in what is called "the fulfillment of human Destiny." Acupuncture plays a large role in the development of these virtues and the fulfillment of Destiny as well, especially when performed by someone whose skill is based on this intention.

Destiny and Yin-Yang 命陰陽

In order to understand how the separation and healing of one's Original Nature can occur, early Chinese thinkers started with an observation that life was created by the mutual penetration of spirit and matter which they called Heaven and Earth. Heaven was viewed as all *yang* (expansion) and Earth, all *yin* (contraction). The penetration of Heaven by Earth created *yin* in *yang*, which they called Fire. Inversely, the penetration of Earth by Heaven produced *yang* in *yin*, which they called Water. In Five Phase thinking, Water represents the sum total of one's Heavenly, spiritual and prenatal potential, whereas Fire represents the complete fulfillment of that potential in earthly life.

The idea of the Water Phase representing *yang* within *yin* was first discussed in the *I Ching*, attributed to King Wen of the early Chou dynasty (1122-225 BC), where it was also associated with what was called the Mandate of Heaven (*T'ien-ming* 天命). The Mandate of Heaven was the means by which the emperor received material authority to rule on earth from his spiritual source in Heaven. Since the Chinese word for mandate, *ming* 命, refers to a command by which the emperor must respond, the Heavenly Mandate later became a symbol for the *yang* spark of life within each individual that is his unique Destiny (*ming* 命) to fulfill.

Destiny and the Five Phases 命五行

According to the Five Phases, there is both a dominant and vertical, as well as a supportive and horizontal *yin-yang* polarity. The vertical pole is formed by Water and Fire, and represents the two stages where Destiny is received and fulfilled. The horizontal pole is formed by the two phases of Wood and Metal and is the active means by which this function occurs. The most important function of Wood and Metal in relationship to a person's "True Nature" and Destiny is their role in the establishment and development of boundaries.

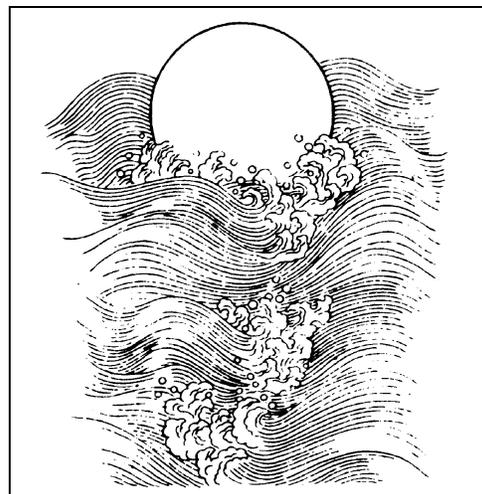
The assertive force of Wood ensures that the Destiny acquired from Heaven at birth unfolds from within and extends outward in an ongoing expansion. When man listens to the inner voice of his True Nature, the expanding force of Destiny will propel him into the proper course of action.

Since Destiny was originally posited by Heaven, the ancient Chinese realized that Heaven will continue to support man's efforts to fulfill his destiny by providing the appropriate external circumstances which will favor its manifestation. However, if one does not take the steps necessary to manifest Destiny, universal forces will not have a means to act; the flow of *ch'i* will be disrupted, and one will lose the original connection to Heaven (spirit), which is his very source of Being. The accompanying disharmony will then manifest through war, accident or disease. The assertive forces of Wood are then challenged to establish boundaries against these forces. Psychological examples might be "saying no," shouting, or anger directed toward an aggressor.

Whereas Wood sets boundaries against the encroachment of external factors, Metal evolves them beyond the limitation placed on the body at birth to include more and more of the external world. In response to the possibility of

either Heaven's support of a person's true nature and Destiny or the disharmony resulting when he does not, it is necessary to develop the positive qualities of the Metal Phase which is Judgment, or in the Chinese, *I* 儀. In concert, Wood and Metal work on the physiological level through their mutual influence on the immune system. Wood ensures that destructive organisms are kept at bay, while Metal allows us to remain open to outside influences in a discriminating way.

The sun rising from the sea: Symbol of Fire within Water



Compassion and Judgment 仁儀

As we manifest personal Destinies in concert with our fellow man, the Wood Phase manifests its virtue through Compassion (*Jen*) and is complemented by the virtue of the Metal Phase, Judgment (*I* 儀). In Chinese, the word *Jen* 仁 is also approximated by its translation as Humanity, Love and Kindness. The ideograph, *Jen* 仁, depicts two people next to each other. Through its association with Wood, this picture takes on the meaning of "how" people "should" extend themselves to one another in a mutually supportive way.

In contrast, the word *I* 儀 depicts an ancient sacrifice. In order to develop Judgment, one has to sacrifice the "thrust" of Desire by putting it in an appropriate context. When this context not only supports one's personal Good, but the Good of All, it can be said that integration of the "Seven Levels" (see below) has been achieved and Destiny is being fulfilled.

The Wood Phase assures the assertion of our inborn Destiny given to us at birth by Heaven. This is our spiritual nature. Heaven responds by providing whatever we need to fulfill our Destiny. The Metal Phase allows us to assimilate the external environment including the response of Heaven's blessings in a way that keeps us on the proper track and aligned with our Original Nature.

Whereas it takes three stages (self, other, and harmony between the two) for *Jen*/Compassion to manifest as the virtue of Wood, the development of *I*/Judgment takes seven levels to complete the virtue of Metal. These correspond to the seven sense organs of the face which, in Chinese mythology, symbolize sensory awareness in general, and our connection to the external physical world; thus there are seven levels of Judgment. Each level represents a stage in the process of extending our assimilative capacity beyond our skin and into the Universe from which we came.

The Seven Levels of Judgment

The Seven Levels of Judgment is a map showing us how to incorporate the entire Universe in a way that nourishes our True Nature as opposed to our illusory and separate selves. We begin the first level physically as an infant and progress through each succeeding level as we progress through material life and pass through maturity in our return to spirit.

The Seven Levels of Judgment described by George Ohsawa in *The Book of Judgment* (1966, p. 143) are: 1)mechanical, 2)sensory, 3)sentimental, 4)intellectual, 5)social, 6)ideological, and 7)Supreme.

1) Mechanical

The mechanical level represents the most basic level of judgment and is the first level of extension beyond the skin. This level is based on availability in the immediate environment, and is indispensable because it represents the attainability of desire.

However, failure to incorporate other levels reflects a certain infant mentality. Stay where you're at, don't rock the boat, love the one you're with, and eat what is in front of you are common examples.

2) Sensorial

The sensory level opens us beyond the blind mechanics of survival. At this level we begin to develop a sense of belonging in the Universe, as we can now discriminate between the pleasant and the unpleasant.

If it tastes good, eat it, is the motto here for the selection of food, as well as relationships.

3) Sentimental

At the Sentimental level, the visceral responsiveness of the first two levels now includes emotion. Sentimental judgment gives us our first glimpse of self as something beyond the pure physical.

Ice cream and alcohol are representative foods at the Sentimental level because of their association with feelings and emotional attachments.

4) Intellectual

The intellectual level allows us to extend ourselves not only with our bodies, but with our minds. Here we can develop concepts in order to separate the useful from the useless and the harmless from the harmful. Science has become highly developed in the present age for making these discriminations.

When we choose brown rice because it has all of its vitamins and minerals intact and in the right proportion in the germ and bran, we are exercising the Intellectual level of Judgment. We might also choose a mate based on common interests or intellectual compatibilities.

5) Social

The social level is based on morals and economics, where the good of all becomes integrated with individual need. Judgment on this level might be choosing whole grains over meat because it is a more globally sustainable food (see *Diet for a Small Planet* by Francis Moore Lappe). We would choose a mate based on their moral values.

6) Ideological

The ideological level synthesizes Intellectual and Social judgment, so that rationality is applied in complex systems to create a world view. *Yin/Yang*, the Five Phases, and Western systems such as capitalism, communism, socialism, etc. are examples of the Ideological level. Personal and often subconscious belief systems, such as I don't deserve to be happy, or healthy, or wealthy; I have it all coming to me, etc. can also be considered ideological systems.

7) Supreme

Supreme judgment is the goal of balancing the Five Phases, especially Wood and Metal, in the manifestation and fulfillment of Destiny. Supreme judgment serves to blend instinct with the rational mind in order to create the higher knowledge of intuition. Supreme judgment integrates the preceding six while transcending them all in the spontaneous affirmation of the one within the whole and the inherent unity of self and other.

Conclusion

Manifesting Destiny, expressing ourselves as we are, sometimes in the face of adversity, while developing Judgment, is not always easy. Both require effort and practice. The traditional application of acupuncture, through its harmonious effect on the Five Phases is supportive to the fulfillment of human Destiny through both the development of Compassion and Judgment.

Staying in touch with our True Nature (true self) throughout our life experience, ensures that our Destiny will be fulfilled in accordance with the blessings (i.e. Mandate) of Heaven. In this way, the ancient Chinese foresaw the restoration of original unity for mankind. When part and whole, self and other, individual and universe, or as the ancient Chinese called it, Heaven, Earth, and Humanity, are reconnected, *ch'i*, can flow unimpeded. Health and well-being are the side-effects of a well-integrated person who, when experiencing healing at this fundamental level, knows that because of this, other people and even the universe begin to heal as well.

