

The Origen of the twelve optimal stances - Six arm and six foot positions

by Doshu Nils Volden. 8. Dan Acudo ryu

One of the main focuses within Martial arts is the Stances. Only when the position of the arms and feet are in harmony you will find maximum speed, force and effect. A stance are the way the body is accommodated when attacking or defending itself to aggregate maximum force. Often we focus on the positions of the feet. The four feet basics: Open or close feet, long or short feet stance, high or low center of gravity, and weighted or unweight feet. Different martial art has different ideas about five basics depending on their philosophy and nature. Sometimes we find differences between training, fighting and demonstration. ALL styles have the stance in common. All styles use the same muscles and have to follow the same laws of movement. The natural path of movement is the same for all.

One of the first things we learn in life is to use our eyes, hands and feet correctly. It is only one way to walk and one way to jump; the rest is just a matter of style. In most of our activities we depend on our muscular skeleton apparatus. Our muscles are sets of muscles and function in pair of muscles; pulling around our bones to make us move and to do things. You never use only ONE isolated muscle; you depend on the interaction between several muscles. Some muscles dominate a movement, some will support your movements and some depend on the movement of other muscles to function. To be able to move some muscles have to contract and others need to relax.

If you decide to perform a specific movement, you have to prepare the involved muscles before executing the movement. When a muscle contract then its antagonist needs to relax; a muscle is Yang the corresponding opposite need to be Yin; they are interconnected. Chinese medicine explains this as the interaction of Yin and Yang. The muscles function in a system, a circuit. A decision to move starts in the mind. Shen (the mind) sends the muscles a signal. It exist a pattern - a system where this signal runs. This is the system we are going to unclove in this article.

It is IMPOSSIBLE to intent a move without preparing the involved muscles for their action or relaxation. Once we had to activate our muscles, strengthen them and coordinate them with our balance; automatize. All movement is congenital. Muscular movement is our inborn ability to move built into our muscular system and nervous system. You prepare your muscle, but your muscle act as in your forefathers; indicating that all people move in the same way. This means that all are the same, all moves in the same way, and both black belts and beginners have the same basic moves and positions.

Movements are universal, and if we manage to decode movements, to read them, we might predict a move before it comes or see weaknesses in movements and positions; through making our movements and stances to perfection. One muscle will follow naturally others, and as a result we get a system - movements. Systems can be read because they give signals and clues. Through understanding biomechanics we will perfectionate our own martial art positions, kata, create a deeper understanding about why the hands and feet are placed like they are, and grow as martial artists.

Chinese medicine divides the body into 12 muscle regions or tendino muscular meridians (TMM). Chinese medicine states that the body is a collection of energy frequently named as Qi or Chi. This Qi circulates in the meridians. The distinct Qi that circulates within the TMM gives us the possibility for movement. This Qi that circulates within the TMM is called for Wei qi. Wei qi are Qi (energy) and Xue (blood) that nourish our cells and to protect us against invasion of exogenous pathogen factors (EPF). TMM is very similar to the regular meridians speaking about localization, amount, names and organ relation overlap. On the hand we got three Yin TMM and three Yang TMM, and on the feet we got three Yin TMM and three Yang TMM. These twelve TMMs are giving us our basic muscular movements under the guidance of Shen, our mind. All movements are considered as natural and in bodily harmony.

We have three connected TMM pairs of the hands and three of the feet that work in a Yin-yang pattern. If one is in a Yang state, the other one is always in a Yin state; three basic hand movements and three basic feet movements. Remember the interconnection between the muscles – if one is tense the other is relaxed. If you spot the left hand position you will automatically know the right hand position; making it possible to predict the next hand move. Look at the hands in this photo of Bruce Lee and Mike Tyson. Their hands are in classical positions: Bruce Lee – Right lung TMM and left large intestine TMM. Mike Tyson – Right San Jiao TMM and left Pericardium TMM. Mike Tyson in an active Yang and Bruce Lee in a passive/ waiting Yin (just waiting to explode).



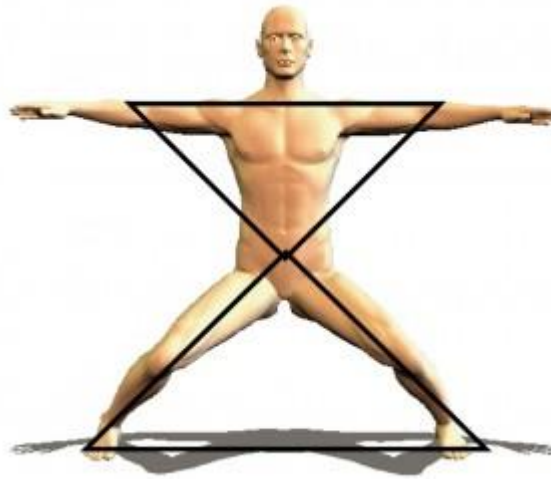
Observing the feet of the opponent we will be able to predict movements. The left foot position will give information of the right foot position. Knowing the position of a foot you might predict the next move. The upper and lower body coexists in a cyclical connection where the position of the hands gives the position of the feet, and vice versa. Look at the positions of Tony Jaa, Jackie Chan and Jet

Lee. It is not a coincidence that the hand and foot positions are like this. Ultimate martial artists predict the next move of the opponent. Practice creates an intuitive relation interpretation of movements. You see the opponent and immediately know the strong foot and the strong hand; you predict the moves of the opponent.



Center of Gravity

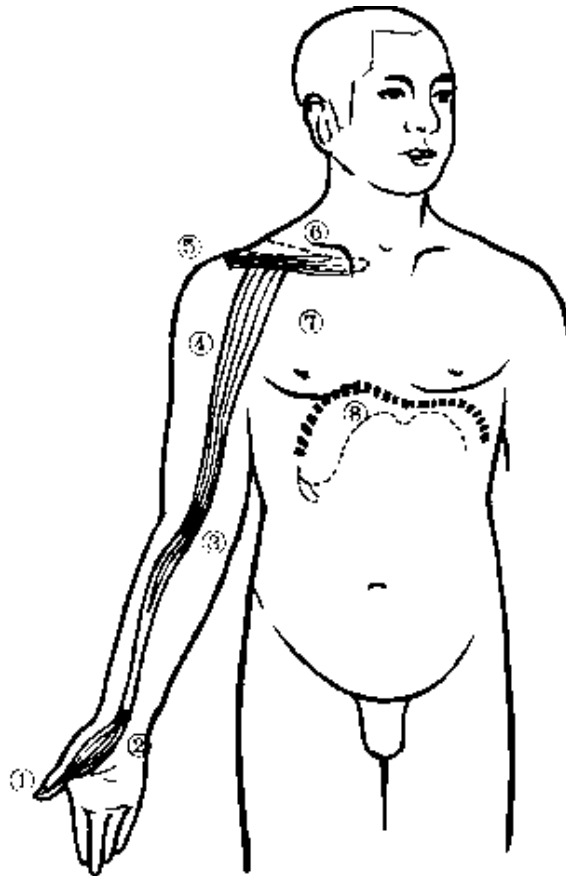
Center of gravity is an imaginary point on the body that moved according to your position. If your weight are on your feet your center of gravity are located under your umbilicus. If your weight is on your hands the center of gravity moves up to the chest area. Chinese medicine name this spot for Dantian; a name very famous in Tai chi. Martial arts are very focused on the center of gravity, but there is much more to focus on.



The Twelve TMMs

ARM

The First pair is Lung TMM (Yin) and Large intestine TMM (Yang)



Lung TMM

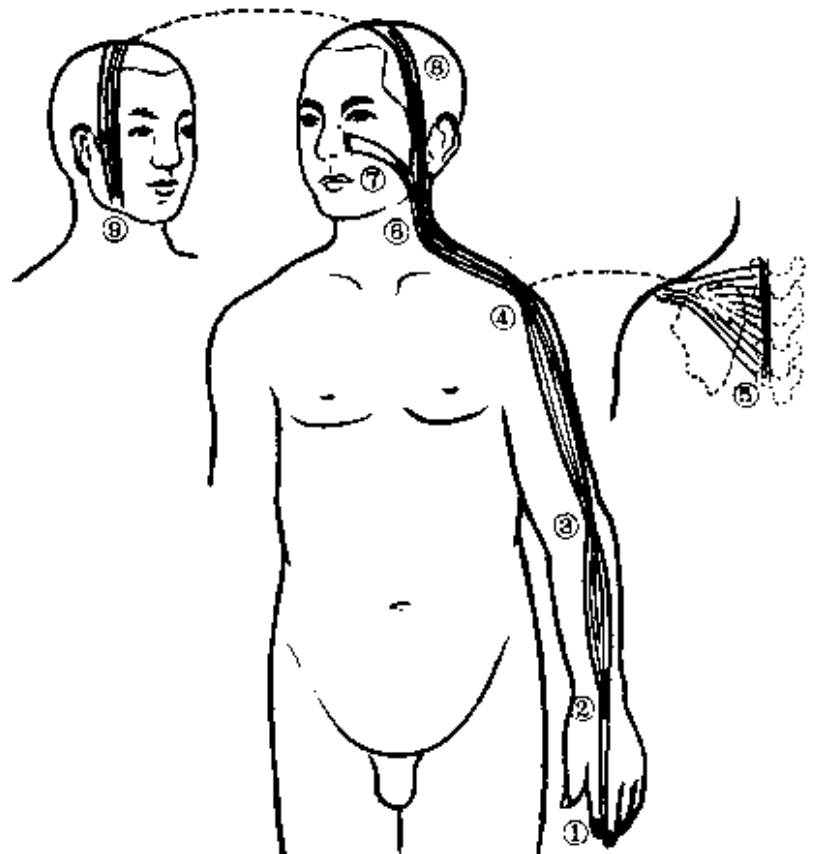
Lung TMM is also called the muscular region of Hand Tai Yin.

Trajectory: This muscular meridian starts on the thumb and goes centripetal to the wrist. From there this TMM runs lateral to the radial artery and connects at the elbow. From there it goes upwards and connects again with the clavicle. Internally we find relations with the diaphragm and the lower ribs.

Movement: The classical Lung TMM movement is quite similar to the hitchhiker thumb in direction to the lateral aspect of the shoulder.

Lung TMM Basic position





Large intestine TMM

Large intestine TMM is also called the muscular region of Hand Yang Ming.

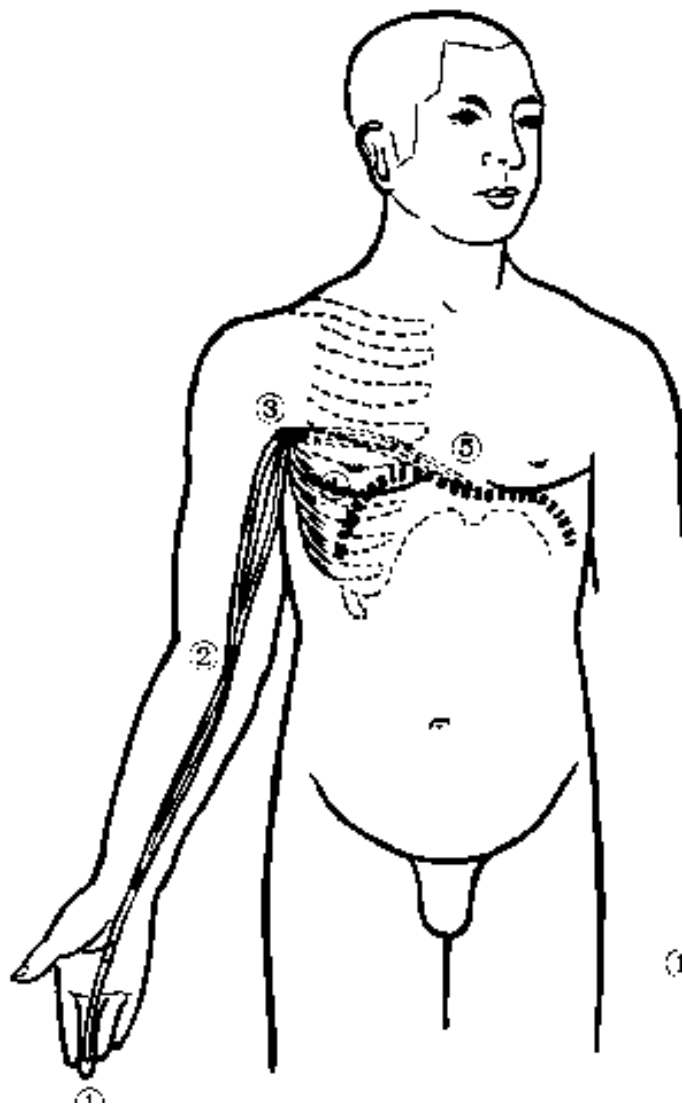
Trajectory: This muscular meridian starts on the index finger runs centripetal to the wrist. From there it runs to the elbow large intestine 15 and up to the shoulder. The TMM separates there one branch goes to the scapula and connects to the spine (Th1-Th5). The other branch runs up the neck and connects under the nose and the other branch runs up from the jaw following the masseter muscle up and down the same muscle on the other side.

Movement: The classical Large intestine TMM movement is like making a light forward spiral movement with a lateral direction following the index finger.

Large intestine TMM Basic position



The Second pair is Pericardium TMM (Yin) and San Jiao TMM (Yang)



Pericardium TMM

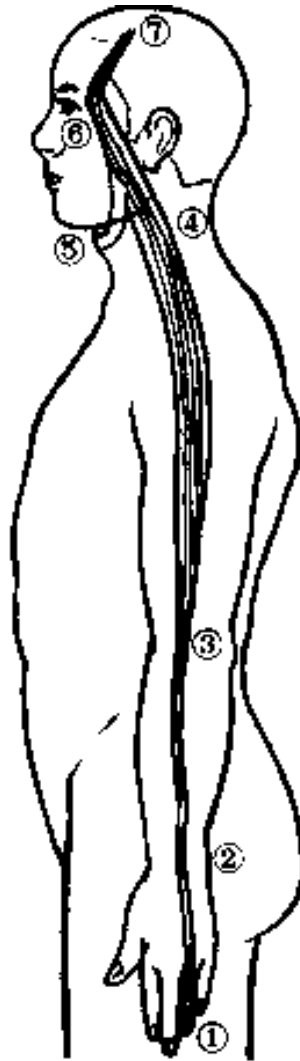
Pericardium TMM is also called the muscular region of Hand Jue Yin.

Trajectory: This muscular meridian starts on the middle finger runs centripetal to the wrist. From there it runs to the medial part of the elbow. The TMM continues upwards and finishes in a separation in the axilla. One branch goes to the front and back of the ribs, and another branch runs over the chest to the diaphragm.

Movement: The classical Pericardium TMM movement is pulling the elbow straight backwards and the fist up to the shoulder/ hip region.

Pericardium TMM Basic position





San Jiao TMM

San Jiao TMM is also called the muscular region of Hand Shao Yang.

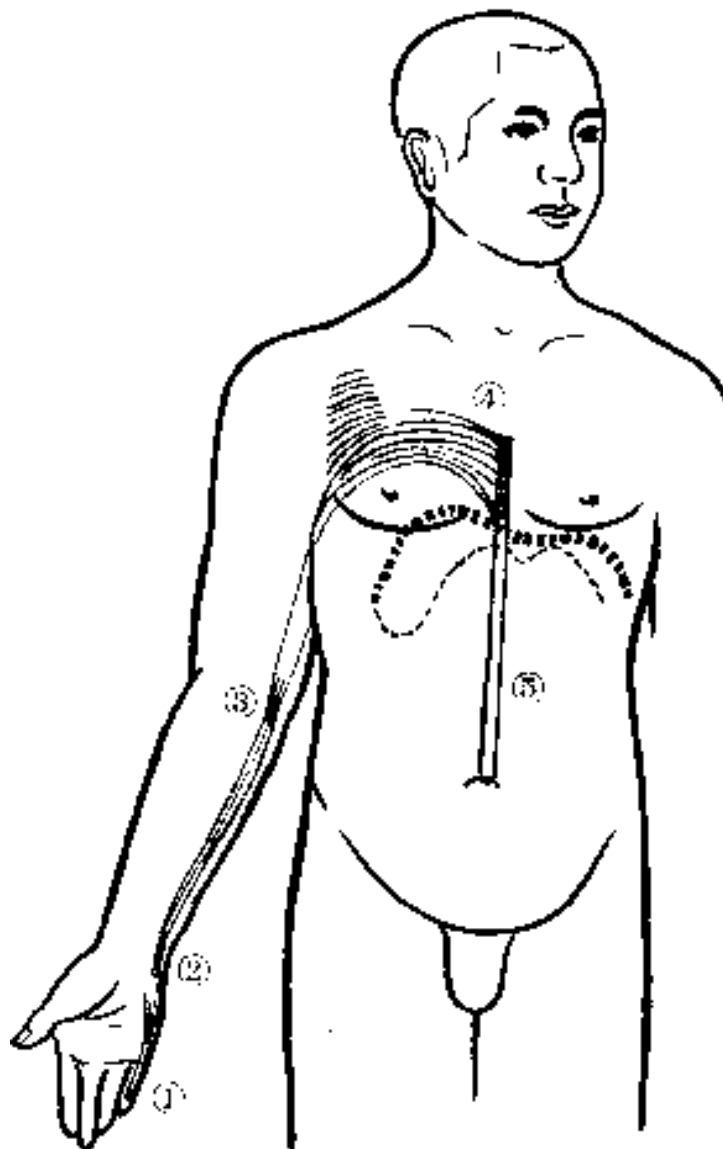
Trajectory: This muscular meridian starts on the ring finger runs centripetal to the wrist. From there it runs to the elbow and up to the posterior part of the shoulder, covers the scapula and runs up to the neck. On the head it divides in multiple smaller muscles that run around the ear and in front of the ear. San Jiao TMM converges with Small intestine TMM on the head.

Movement: The classical San Jiao TMM movement is like making a light forward spiral movement with a medial direction following the ring finger; like a front strike.

San Jiao TMM Basic position



The Third pair: Heart TMM (Yin) and Small intestine TMM (Yang)



Heart TMM

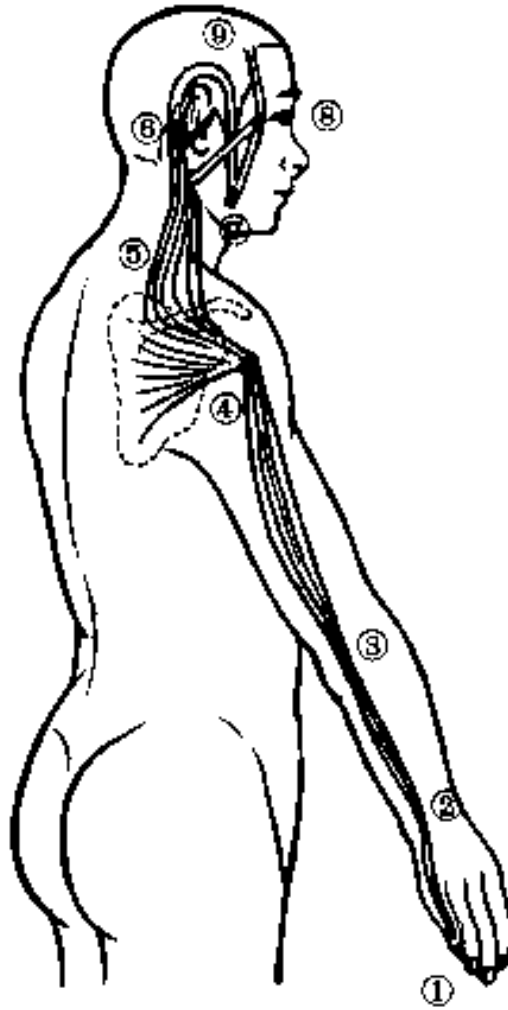
Heart TMM is also called the muscular region of Hand Shao Yin.

Trajectory: This muscular meridian starts on the little finger run centripetal to the wrist. From there it runs on the medial side of the underarm to the elbow up to the axilla. One branch goes to the chest muscle down to diaphragm and the umbilicus.

Movement: The classical Heart TMM movement is a rotation of the underarm where the little finger touches your chest; like you are saluting the flag with your hand on the heart region with palm up.

Heart TMM Basic position





Small intestine TMM

Small intestine TMM is also called the muscular region of Hand Tai Yang.

Trajectory: This muscular meridian starts on the little finger run centripetal to the wrist. From there it runs on the lateral side of the forearm to the elbow and up to the posterior part of the shoulder. The TMM separates there one branch goes to the scapula. The other branch runs up the neck and connects with the Urinary bladder TMM in the neck. Another branch goes around the ear and finishes in front of the ear with a connection between the mandible and the outer cantus of the eye.

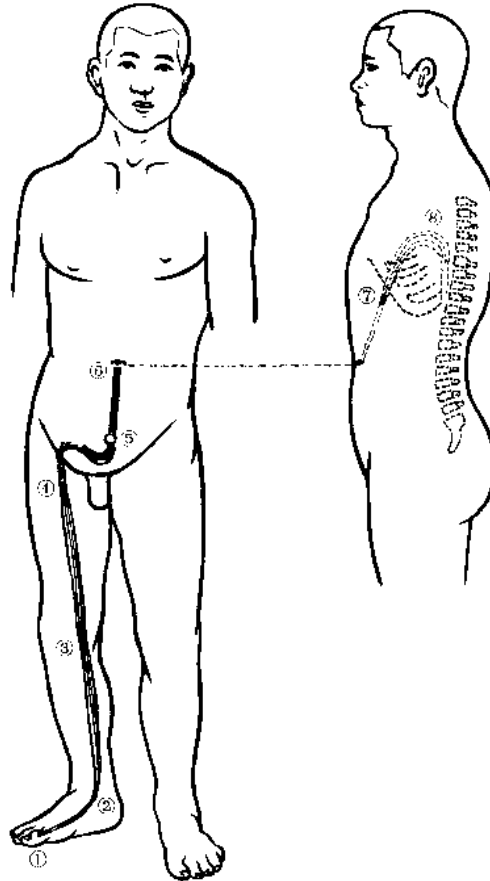
Movement: The classical Small intestine TMM movement is like making a light forward spiral movement with a knife hand. First you move your hand in a light circle with a medial direction pointing your hand to the side of your body. When the circle comes up on the lateral part you have the correct move. It is like drawing a circle in front with the little finger with a straight hand.

Small intestine TMM Basic position



FEET

The First pair: Spleen TMM (Yin) and Stomach TMM (Yang)



Spleen TMM

Spleen TMM is also called the muscular region of Foot Tai Yin.

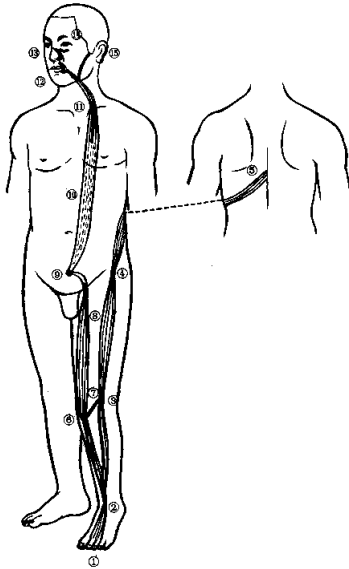
Trajectory: This muscular meridian starts on the big toe and run centripetal to the internal malleolus. From there it runs on the lateral side of the leg to the knee. From the knee it crosses up to the hip. The TMM continues to the external genitalia and up to the umbilicus. From the umbilicus it goes up to the abdominal area, connects to the ribs and finishes in the spine (Th 6-Th12).

Movement: The classical Spleen TMM movement is like a small kick on a football with the direction of the inside of the big toe. The knee will be a little bent slightly upwards and medial.

Spleen and Small intestine TMM Basic position



Right foot Spleen TMM and left foot Stomach TMM



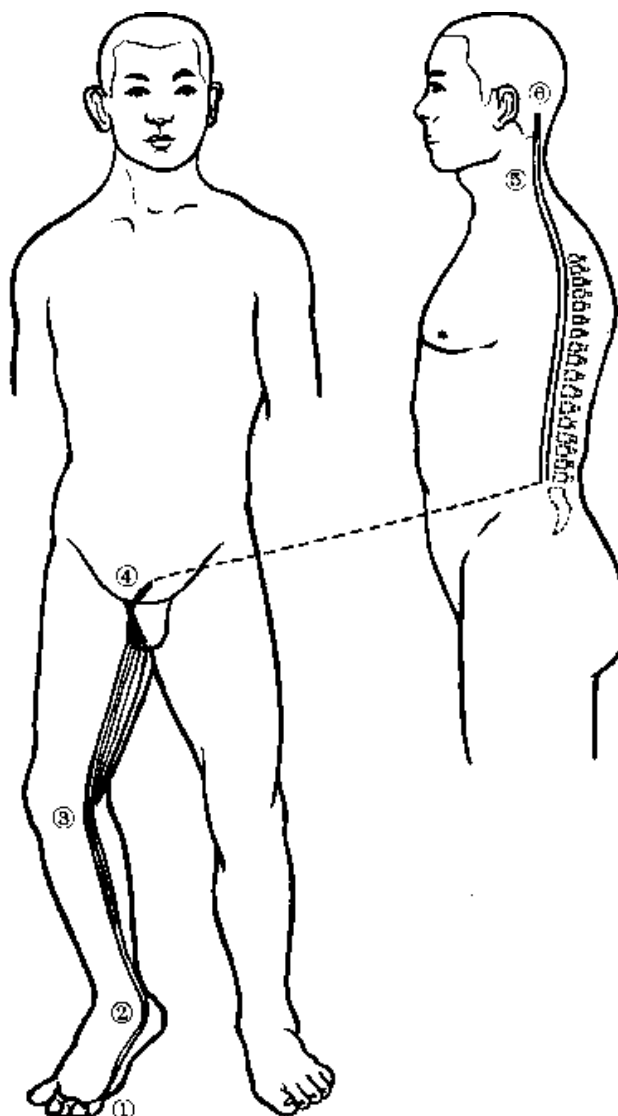
Stomach TMM

Stomach TMM is also called the muscular region of Foot Yang Ming.

Trajectory: This muscular meridian starts on the three middle toes run centripetal to the dorsum of the ankle joint. From there it runs on each side of the tibia up to the knee. The lateral branch continues directly up to the hip. From the hip it goes directly up to the spine and connects between the shoulder blades. The medial branch goes from the knee up to the genital region and connects in the pelvic region. From the pelvic it goes up the abdomen and passes deep inside the chest muscle and connects on the medial part of the clavicle. From there it goes up the neck to the mandible divide in two branches. One runs to the ear and the other runs to the mouth and the lateral aspect of the nose and under the eye.

Movement: The classical Stomach TMM movement is like making a forward kick with the body slightly bent forward.

The second pair: Kidney TMM (Yin) and Urinary bladder TMM (Yang)



Kidney TMM

Kidney TMM is also called the muscular region of Foot Shao Yin.

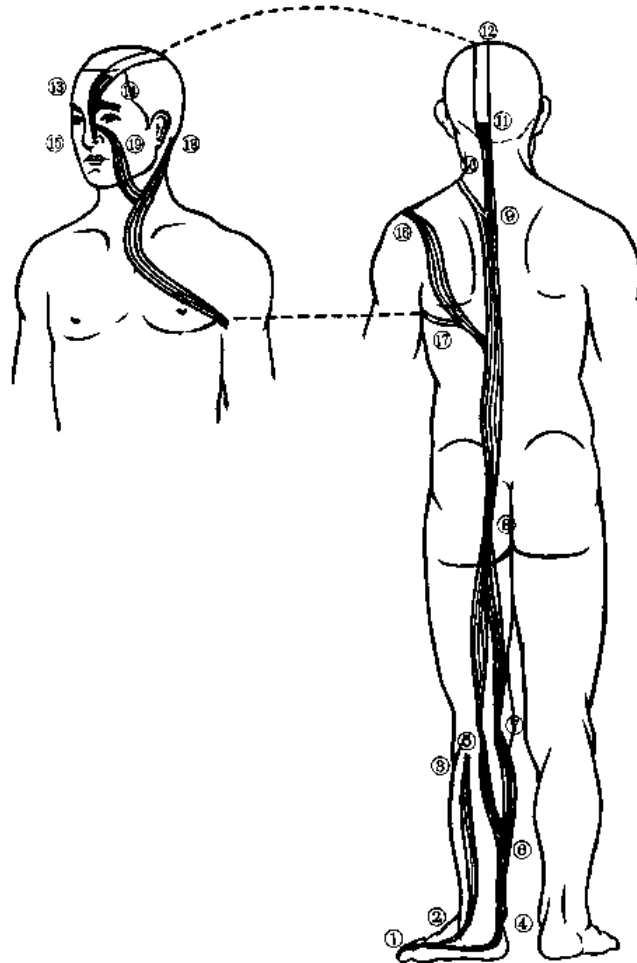
Trajectory: This muscular meridian starts under the little toe (together with Foot Tai yin) run centripetal to the internal malleolus. From there it runs on the medial side of the leg to the medial aspect of the knee. From the knee the TMM run up to the genitals. From the genitals the TMM go deep and parallel with the anterior part of the spine up to the occipital bone.

Movement: The classical Kidney TMM movement is like making a small step behind the foot that carries your weight.

Kidney and Urinary bladder TMM Basic position



Right foot Urinary bladder TMM and left foot Kidney TMM



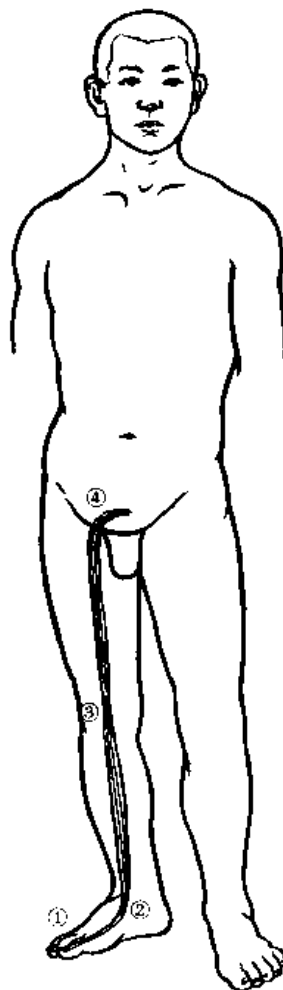
Urinary bladder TMM

Urinary bladder TMM is also called the muscular region of Foot Tai Yang.

Trajectory: This muscular meridian starts on the little toe and separates in two branches. The first branch runs on the lateral part of the leg up to the knee. The second branch runs to the acupuncture point urinary bladder 57. On that point it separates in two branches centripetal that run in the two muscles that naturally run centripetal up to the knee and further up to the gluteal region. From the gathering of the muscles they run together beside the spine up to the neck over the head inside the eye and down beside the mouth and to the neck. In the middle of the back, around the 10th thoracic vertebra a branch go to the lateral side. Under the scapula it divides into two parts. One part run under the scapula and connects behind the acupuncture point San Jiao 14. The other branch runs under the arm to the front under the chest muscle to the acupuncture point kidney 27. From the point the TMM run around the neck over and behind and reunite with the TMM close to the acupuncture point Du14.

Movement: The classical Urinary bladder TMM movement is a side kick.

The third pair: Liver TMM (Yin) and Gall bladder TMM (Yang)



Liver TMM

Liver TMM is also called the muscular region of Foot Jue Yin.

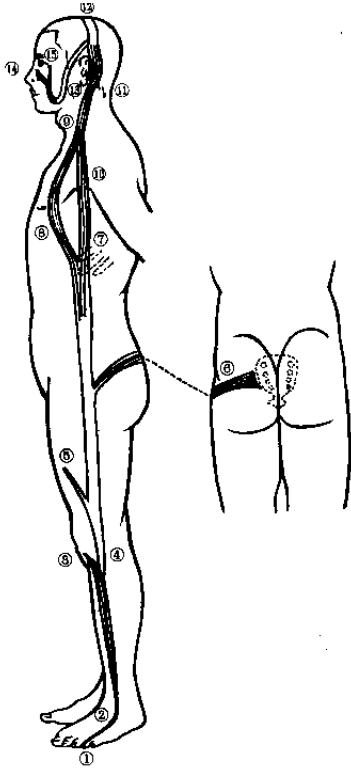
Trajectory: This muscular meridian starts on the big toe run centripetal to the internal malleolus. From there it runs on the medial side of the leg up to the knee and up to the genital area

Movement: The classical Liver TMM movement is like a small kick on a football with the big toe; slightly similar to the Spleen TMM movement. Sometimes a Liver TMM movement might be seen as an inward circular kick.

Liver and Gall bladder TMM Basic position



Right foot Liver TMM and left foot Gall bladder TMM



Gall bladder TMM

Gall bladder TMM is also called the muscular region of Foot Shao Yang.

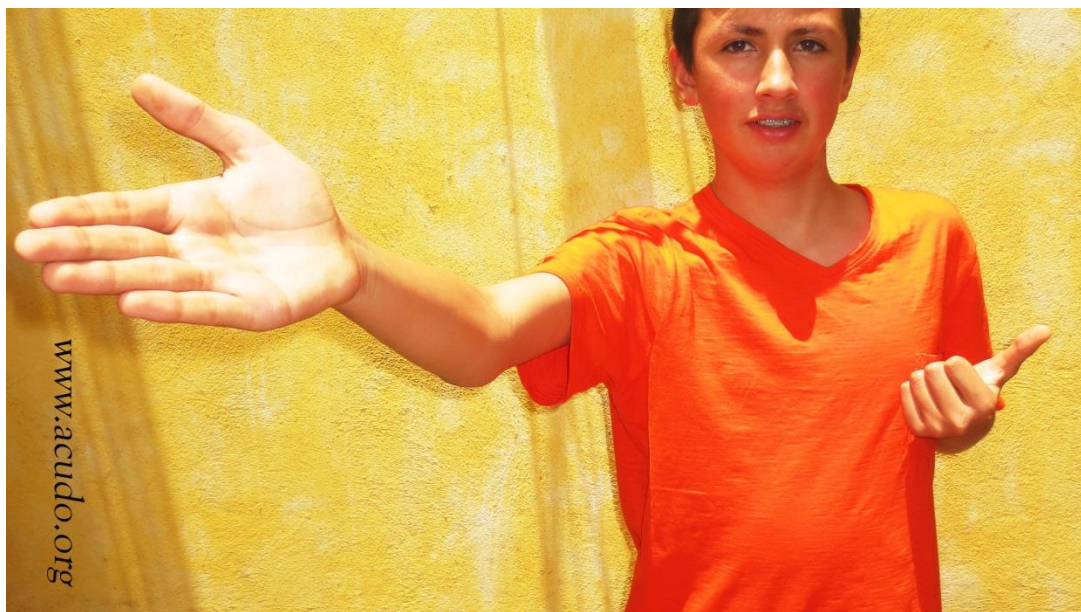
Trajectory: This muscular meridian starts on the fourth toe run centripetal to the external malleolus. From there it runs on the lateral side of tibia to the knee. From the knee the TMM run straight up the thigh on the lateral side. On the hip a branch go back to the sacral bone and connects there. The TMM continues up from the hip bone to the ribs (9-10) there it separate in two branches. One goes in front and under the chest muscle to meet with the other branch who continued straight up to the acupuncture point stomach 12 where they meet. The TMM goes over the neck and to the direction of the occiput region. Here the TMM run up to the top of the head. Over the ear a branch goes off to the front of the ear and down to the mandible and under the eye.

Movement: The classical Gall bladder TMM movement is a circular lateral directed kick in front of your body.

The pairs of the hand

Our TMM of the hands are grouped in Yin and Yang. It is always a Yin TMM together with a Yang TMM. A Yang will normally be together with a Yin. The pairs are like mentioned before in Yin and Yang or Zang and Fu if you prefer.

- Lung TMM – Large intestine TMM



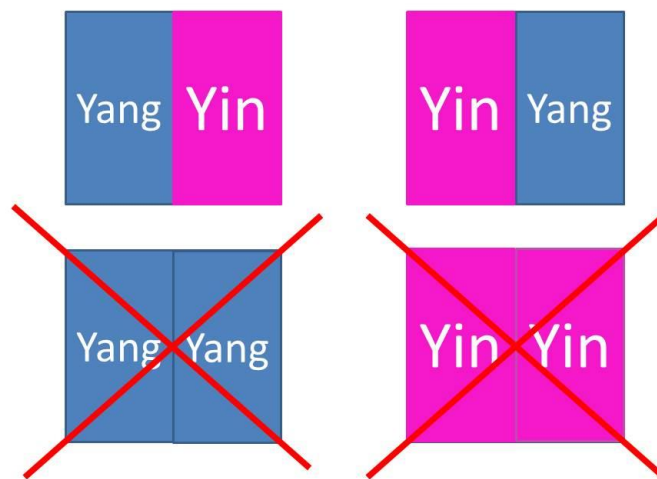
- Pericardium TMM – San Jiao TMM



- Heart TMM – Small intestine TMM



These paired TMMs have a strong tendency to be used together. Normally we find the interaction between the left and right side of our body to be the most central here. A Lung TMM on the right side will often have a Large intestine TMM on the left side. This three pairs tend to appear at the same time on the left/ right side. When these pairs act together we get the strongest fit; fast, strong and coordinated. Normally Yang is the attentive, active and strong. Yin is the defensive, passive and weak.



The three hand positions



The pairs of the feet

Our TMM of our feet are grouped in Yin and Yang. It is always a Yin TMM together with a Yang TMM. The pairs are like mentioned before. The use of this pairs follows the same concept as on the hands.

- Spleen TMM – Stomach TMM



- Kidney TMM – Urinary bladder TMM



- Liver TMM – Gall bladder TMM

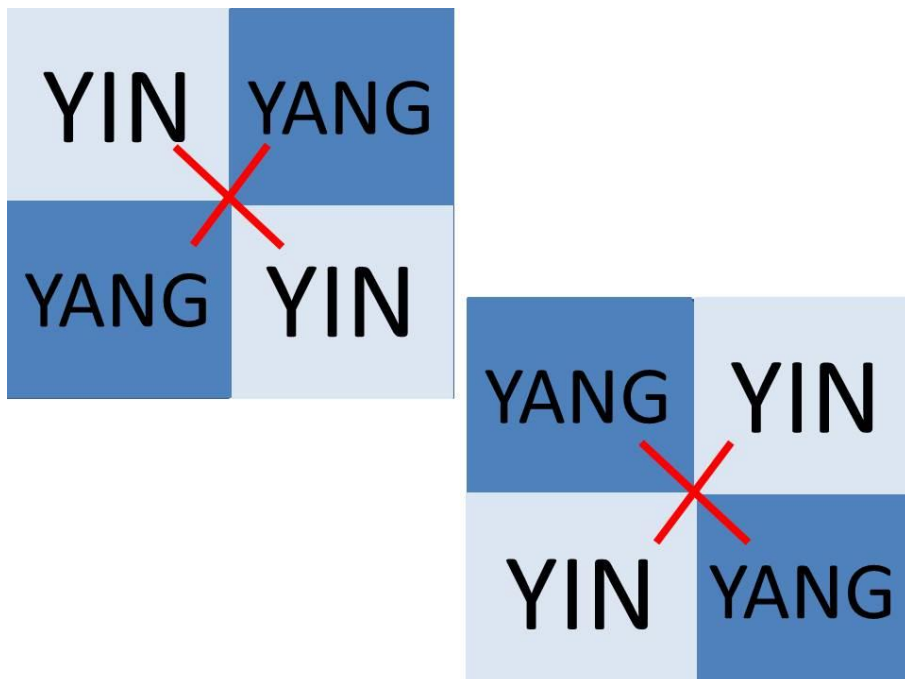
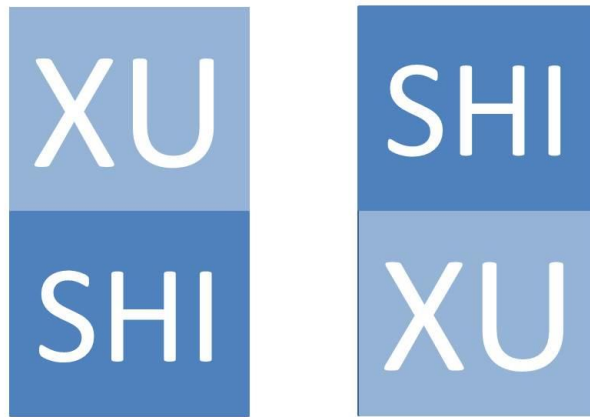


The three foot positions



Upper and lower coordination

We find that the TMM of the hand and feet have a way to interconnect. On the hands we have right hand and left hand are interconnected as for example lung TMM movement on right side and a large intestine TMM movement on the left side. Making right Yang and left Yin in its very core. The feet have the same system, but right side will not be Yang up and down at the same time or Yin for that sake. The example above will be followed by a Yin right foot and Yang left foot; giving us the following calculus: Yang right hand – Yin left hand – Yin right foot – Yang left foot. The most common position of the feet in this example is Stomach TMM movement left foot and Spleen TMM movement right foot.



The normal coordination pairs:

Set 1:

- Hand: Lung TMM – Large intestine TMM
- Foot: Stomach TMM - Spleen TMM

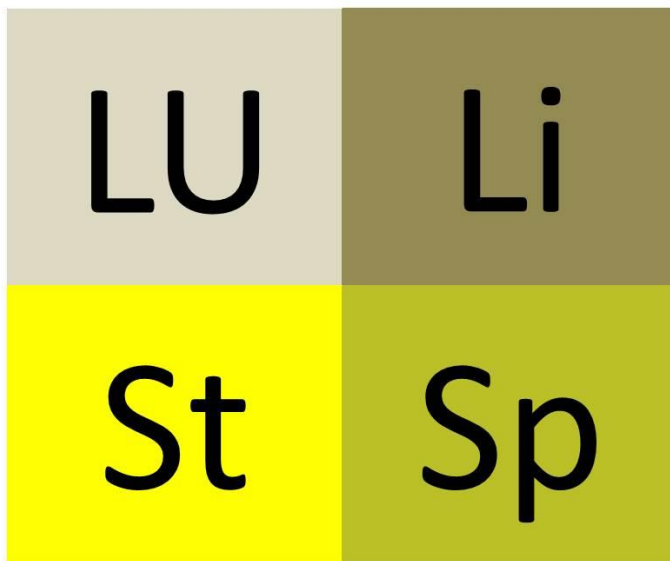


FOTO POSISJON SET 1

Set 2:

- Hand: Heart TMM – Small intestine TMM
- Foot: Urinary bladder TMM – Kidney TMM



FOTO POSISJON SET 2

Set 3:

- Hand: Pericardium TMM – San Jiao TMM
- Foot: Gall bladder TMM – Liver TMM

FOTO POSISJON SET 3



When Shen send its qi to a TMM on the hand we find the TMM to become stronger and the related TMM weaker. This might be seen as Yang = active and Yin = passive. The qi will also activate the related foot TMM and reduce the activity in the cupped foot TMM. TMM might be active or passive depending on the other TMM. When a TMM reaches its maximum it will gradually become weaker, and the related TMM will start growing stronger. This transition is related to the fourth Yin/ yang law; intertransformation.

Do not forget that it exist Yang xu TMM, weak active and Yin shi TMM, strong passive. This is possible errors in the analysis, but they occur rarely and are relatively easy to spot.

The sequence of TMM movements

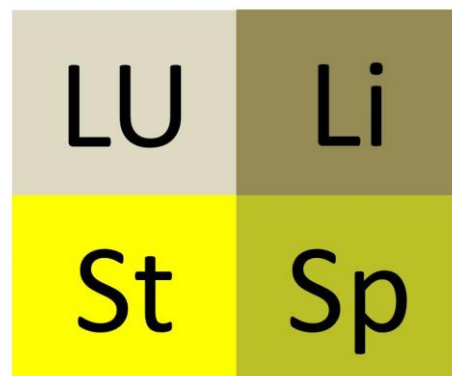
Let us start with the basic position and work from there to make everything easier to understand. Notice the change of hand and the change of feet is independent in the change between sets (set 1, set 2 and set 3)

Starting position:

- Right Hand: Lung TMM
- Left Hand: Large intestine TMM
- Right Foot: Stomach TMM
- Left Foot: Spleen TMM

NOTE: Change Right – Left to gain power!

FOTO POSISJON START



First change of position – Neutral - Yin:

- Right Hand: Large intestine TMM
- Left Hand: Heart TMM
- Right Foot: Spleen TMM
- Left Foot: Urinary bladder TMM

FOTO POSISJON FØRSTE BYTTE



Second position:

- Right Hand: Heart TMM
- Left Hand: Small intestine TMM
- Right Foot: Urinary bladder TMM
- Left Foot: Kidney TMM

NOTE: Change Right – Left to gain power!

FOTO POSISJON ANDRE POSISJON



Second change of position – Neutral - Yang:

- Right Hand: Small intestine TMM
- Left Hand: Pericardium TMM
- Right Foot: Kidney TMM
- Left Foot: Gall bladder TMM

FOTO POSISJON ANDRE BYTTE



Third position:

- Right Hand: Pericardium TMM
 - Left Hand: San Jiao TMM
 - Right Foot: Gall bladder TMM
 - Left Foot: Liver TMM
- NOTE: Change Right – Left to gain power!

FOTO POSISJON TREDJE POSISJON



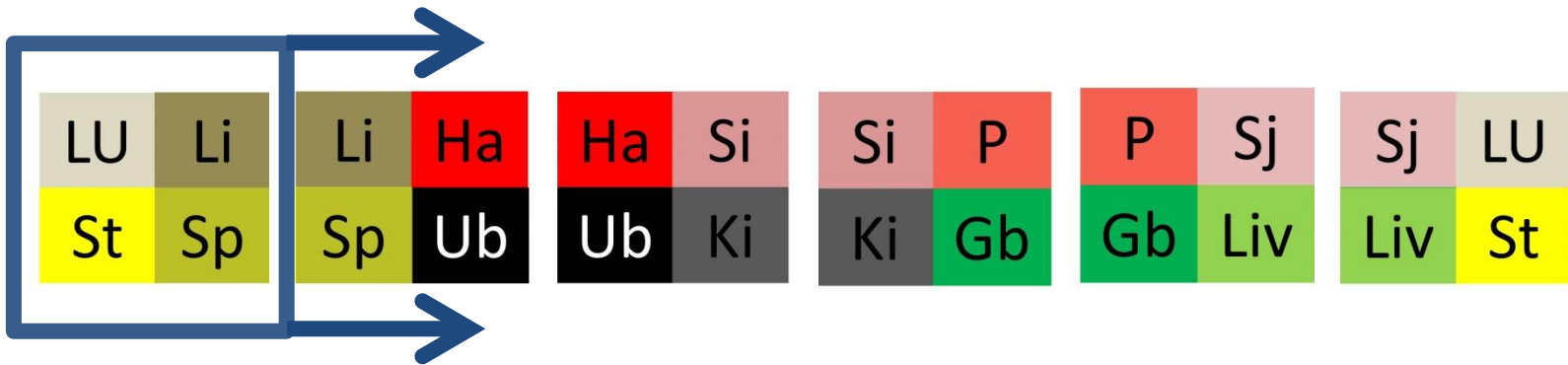
Third change of position – Neutral - Yang:

- Right Hand: San Jiao TMM
- Left Hand: Lung TMM
- Right Foot: Liver TMM
- Left Foot: Stomach TMM

FOTO POSISJON TREDJE BYTTE



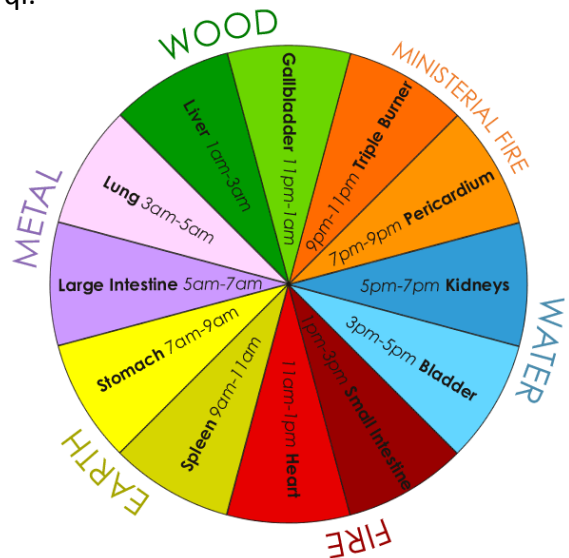
The steps of development



The flow of movement

The flow of movement is the natural sequence the qi circulates in the TMM. In a way this is the TMM you should move to get maximum qi.

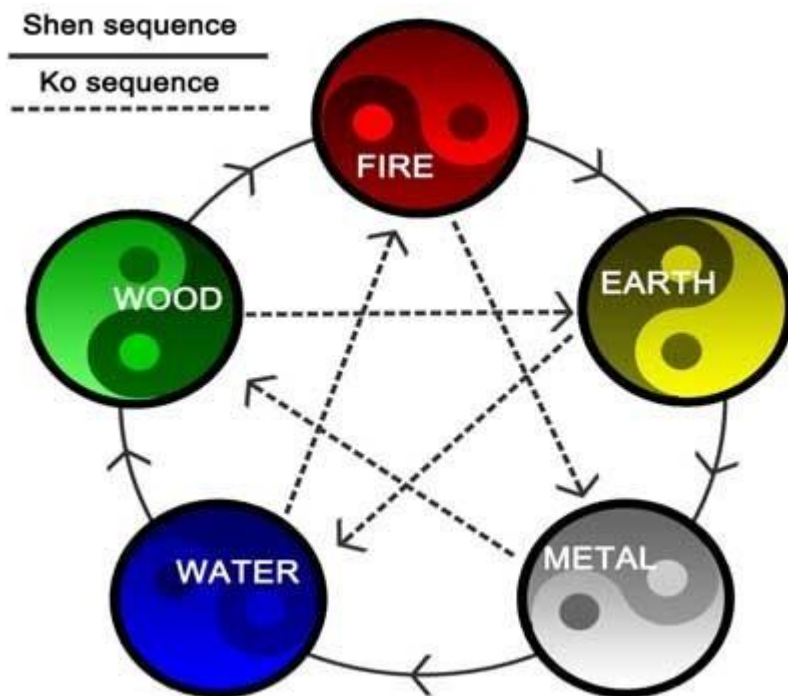
1. Lung
2. Large intestine
3. Stomach
4. Spleen
5. Heart
6. Small intestine
7. Urinary bladder
8. Kidney
9. Pericardium
10. San Jiao
11. Gall bladder
12. Liver



To train this cycle it is favorable to start with #1 and work through to #12. Start with the right side and move the hand or feet to the left as you progress. Take your time. The second and third lap feels better. Then you get the hang of it. Chinese medicine explain the circulation of Qi in the organ wheel.

Generating

This is a way to gain more power to an intended technique. Here new follow the sheng cycle. That in short this is the five elements: Wood – Fire – Earth – Metal – Water. Depending on where you start you have to select the TMM that lies before to gain maximum power in your technique.



For example you want to hit with a San Jiao TMM technique. Then you need to consider that San Jiao TMM is a part of the Fire element, making you select the Wood element that lies before in the Sheng cycle. Giving you the understanding of a good old front strike lays in the feet and more correctly liver - and gall bladder TMM.

Hands to make strikes stronger do not function outside its pair.

Inhibiting

This is a way to lose power to an intended technique. Here new follow the Ko cycle. That in short this is the five elements: Wood – Earth – Water – Fire – Metal. Depending on where you start you have to avoid the TMM that lies before or that counter acts in your intended technique.

For example you want to hit with a San Jiao TMM technique in this example also. Then you need to consider that San Jiao TMM is a part of the Fire element, making you avoid the Water element that lies before in the Ko cycle. Making you understand that a wrong positioning of your feet might create or totally destroy a good old front strike, and more correctly kidney - and urinary bladder TMM. Hands will also disturb the good technique.

Hand TMM positions

HAND	Fire	Fire	Metal
	Heart	Pericardium	Lung
	Small intestine	San Jiao	Large intestine



Foot TMM positions

FOOT	Wood	Earth	Water
	Liver	Spleen	Kidney
	Gall bladder	Stomach	Urinary bladder

