

Human Life, Core Energetics and Chinese Medicine

Marcos Freire Jr., M.D.

Both Chinese medicine and Core Energetics are pathways in my personal and professional evolution and I can find many similarities between them. Independently, each can express a very intimate understanding of human life. Together they complement each other and give mutual support in an approach towards health and evolution.

Taoism, the Chinese philosophy on which Chinese medicine is based, believes in the unity of the universe. That is to say that everything is linked together in a single phenomenon. This is the absolute world, named Tao by the Chinese. This world is a single entity that has no limits or parts. As is well known, the Taoist philosophy always depicts a universe divided into two parts, *the yin* and *the yang*. This is the simplest way of dividing the universe, because you need only one boundary to set the two sides apart.

Through the act of dividing, humankind creates the relative world. Some characteristics of this relativity are: the creation of the ego (a division between the world and me), an evolution towards complexity, specialization, precision, accumulation, cause and effect, past and future. This relativity is dealt with by the process of analysis through reason and thoughts which are based on words that are themselves divisions.

In the absolute world there is no precision and a mystery always remains. It can not be accessed by words but by the transcendence of the ego. Intuition of and synchronicity with the present facts through the process of synthesis seems to be a more appropriate form of approaching it.

Here I would like to stay with the relative world, that of analytical theories, since the absolute world can only be experienced. The Tao which is talked about is not the real Tao, says Lao Tse, the most famous Taoist poet, in his book, *Tao Te King*.

Let's stay with the simple questions. One broad division of the universe that many cultures have made, is the division between heaven and earth. This division is very notable both in Taoism and the Core Energetics and this will be our link between them.

We are in between heaven and earth. From the Taoist point of view, every living phenomenon is created by the union of the heaven and earth. To be alive, every being must allow the heavenly nature to flow downward to the ground and at the same time allow the earthly nature to flow upward like a gushing spring to the sky. (Gushing spring is the name of the first point of the kidney meridian located in the sole of the feet.)

Each life form is a different combination of these two energies. Human beings have a very special way of connecting heaven and earth, perhaps the most complex. In other words we are the life form that allows most flux in between heaven and earth.

In order to be able to analyze the human body, we divide it into parts. The expression of heaven and earth in human life can be seen and theorized in many ways, depending on the point of view.

For instance, heaven can be seen as the upper part of the body (this part has more movements, can see and irradiate light, hear and emit sounds, think, exchange air—all heavenly characteristics) and opposing this, earth can be seen as the lower part of the body. The pelvis is where life comes from, not only on terms of reproduction but also in terms of personal physical growth and development. This lower part of the body also has legs, which are what connects us to the ground. These bodily characteristics are more dense and material than the heavenly characteristics of the upper body: as earth is more dense and material than the immateriality of the heavens.

Chinese medicine represents this polarity heaven/earth (or *yang/yin*) in the human being as fire in the upper part of the body, especially in the chest, and water in the pelvis. This creates a passage from heaven to fire, to water, to earth and vice versa. Chinese medicine also goes further and describes the channels through which these fluxes occur.

A more refined perception of the above is a point of view that divides the human body into three parts: head, chest (with the arms) and pelvis (with the legs). It identifies each one of these parts with the "fundamental substances" of the human being: spirit, energy and essence (not the same essence we talk of in Core Energetics, but more like *essence*, the French word for fuel). This point of view does not invalidate the previous one, but rather enlarges and refines it. It creates the possibility of comparing human life to a lit candle whereby the wax corresponds to the essence, the flame to the energy and the light to the spirit. It also expresses the following passage from heaven to earth: heaven-[^]spint[^]-energy-[^]essence-[^]earth. This again goes from

immateriality to materiality and vice versa.

Considering now Core Energetics and the “map of personality” we can also see a graded passage in between the heaven/earth polarity, this time not divided into two or three levels but into five levels: heaven⁺-+spirituality<-*-will-*->mind⁺<->emotions-*-->-body<-> earth.

“Consciousness” and “energy” that permeate all levels can be seen as qualities from heaven and earth respectively. Consciousness descends from the sky, permeates all the levels and plunges into the earth, whereas energy emerges from the ground and springs up all the levels towards the sky. This vision would add some elements such as heaven and earth, and the main directions of their nature’s flow to the map of personality. The diagram would be something like this:

HEAVEN

EARTH

This is just a point of view about human life and doesn't purport to be an absolute truth but simply one theory to guide an approach toward the health of human beings and other life forms on this planet.

During the workshop, these explanations were followed by the practice of some traditional Taoist exercises, named *Qigong*, which have been developed over the last five thousand years. They are well known for the specific virtues they bring to those who practice them, especially for promoting and increasing the contact with heaven and earth and their flow through the human body.

We concentrate mostly on two of these exercises. One is called "the heavenly shower" and the other "the root respiration". They include not just physical postures and movements but also the conduction of the proprioception (called an "inner look" in Chinese medicine) by the use of the "will of the heart" and the "will of the mind".

So, as we can see, there's a very close link between the levels of personality and some concepts from Chinese medicine. These are such concepts as essence, love and consciousness through the will of the heart and mind, spirit, energy and, obviously, Chinese medicine also talks about all emotions.

The exercises were preceded by a self-massage to the acupoints, something which can be very helpful for working with the seven levels of the muscular armouring. This opens another link between Chinese medicine and core Energetics.

The feedback from the participants during and after the workshop was very enthusiastic in both the theoretical and practical aspects, with people feeling much more energized and conscious than they were before.

However, one question remains to be answered—how does Chinese medicine deal with the personality?—given that Chinese medicine does not deal with the personality, the answer might be by integrating Core Energetics into it and vice versa. Both have so many rich complementary aspects that can facilitate one another in the process of bringing longevity to human life, in order to seek pleasure, spiritual evolution and union with the universe.

