

# Nourishing Your Righteous Qi

by Shoshanna Katzman



Establishing right living habits is at the core of preventing disease and dysfunction according to the principles of Chinese medicine.



**T**he primary goal of this ancient healing paradigm is not to regulate what is already chaotic, nor treat what is already diseased, but rather to regulate and balance chaos before it begins to develop. It highlights the importance of prevention and staying balanced to ensure a long and healthy life. This means treating disease or imbalance energetically prior to their developing as a physical manifestation or structural change. Chinese medicine, moreover, focuses on supporting the innate

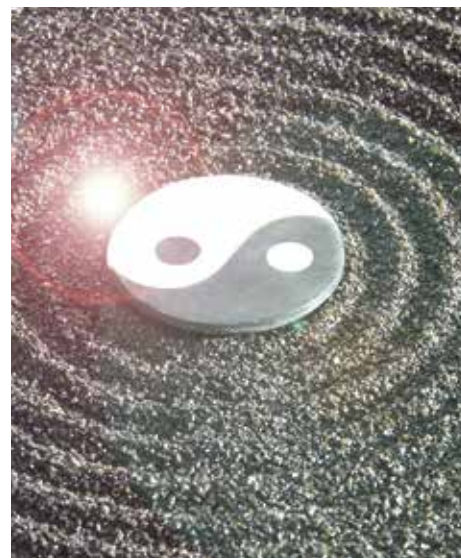
healing capacity held within each person described as “enhancing the righteous” and traditionally known as “Fu Zheng”.

Making conscious life choices in the spirit of establishing right living habits is an excellent place to start. Sensible and balanced decisions in daily life builds, cultivates and protects the body’s vital substances, rather than squandering them through over-work and over-indulgence. This begins with making the best choices possible about food, drink, work, exercise, play, sleep, rest and sex. Taking the long-range effects of each choice into consideration is essential, rather than allowing oneself to be misguided by immediate gratification. It is an approach to health and healing that embraces the Dàoist principle of “maintaining balance in all things.”

The following discussion between the Yellow Emperor and physician Chi Po in the first chapter of the Neijing which is an ancient Chinese medicine text sheds light on the importance of prevention for health and longevity: The Yellow Emperor asked: “I heard ancient people were able to live to one hundred years and still be the same as when young. But nowadays, when fifty years old, our activities decrease. How is this? Is it due to the times, or have humans lost something?”

Applying the principles of yin and yang to behavior and lifestyle modifications is a mainstay for attaining everlasting health. According to the Neijing “to follow (the laws of) yin and yang means life; to act contrary to (the laws of yin and yang) means death.” The following provides some practical ways to create yin/yang balance (yin qualities are listed first and both are italicized):

- Avoid foods and environments that are too cold or too hot for your constitution.
- Display a good mix between introverted and extroverted behavior.
- Manifest balance between your feminine and masculine aspects.
- Honor internal feelings and express them on the outside with appropriateness.
- Be passive when necessary and step forward with deliberate action when needed.
- Sit quietly in reflection during dark moments while cherishing lightness as it rises.



## “Dig a well before you are thirsty.”

— Ancient Chinese health proverb

- Find peace in being sedentary and enjoy increased activity as it takes place.
- Practice conservation when energy is deficient and use it wisely when excessive.

Work toward achieving these goals to the best of your ability. Be patient and trust in the innate wisdom of your body, mind and spirit while remembering that achieving balance is a dynamic process. A key takeaway here is for you to do your best to follow the Chinese health proverb to always: “Dig a well before you are thirsty”.

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