

# The Cycles of Life

by Shoshanna Katzman

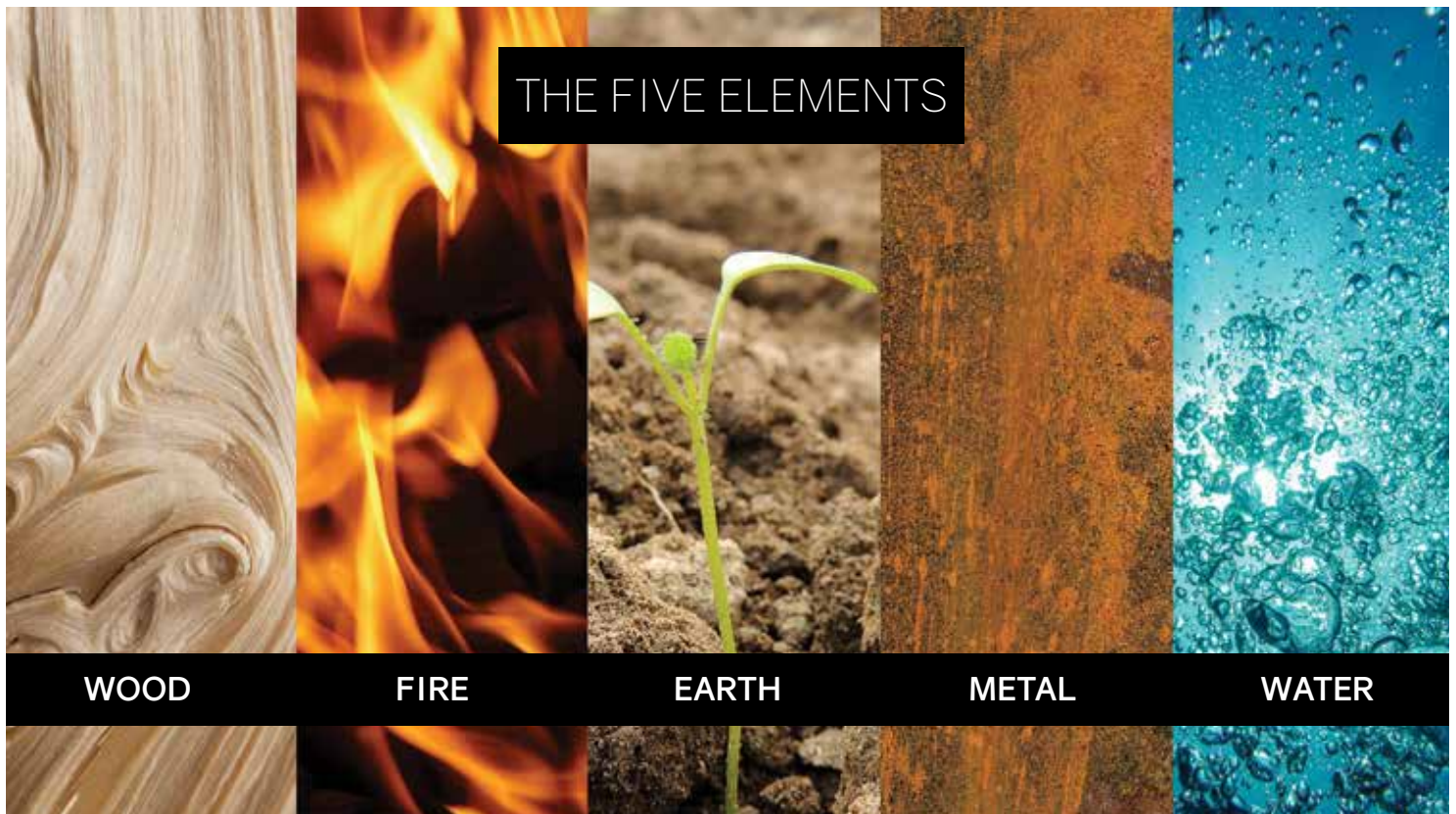


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Chinese medicine wisdom teaches us that everything in life has a cycle. The Five Elements (fire, earth, metal, water and wood) transition into one another nourishing and controlling each other in set patterns. Then there are the Three Treasures of jing (vital essence), qi (vital energy) and shen (spirit) that are mutually supportive as they transition into one another. The polar opposites of yin-yang wax and wane as they move throughout the changing of seasons – whereby spring relates to birth, summer to openness and growth, autumn to retraction, and winter to storage.

As in nature, human beings have their own rhythm and shift accordingly. Chinese medicine teaches that females and males transition through life in cycles of seven and eight years, respectively. This provides a framework for the process of aging at various stages of life and how it may affect health – with jing providing the impetus, the energy for moving harmoniously throughout the cycles of life.

*A prime example is how women become more yang as menstruation stops due to being able to conserve blood (as a form of jing). And how men become more yin as they age due to their sperm (as a form of jing) losing its yang vitality of youth.*

Evolutionary in nature, jing is passed down from one's parents during conception. How much essence a person possesses is further determined by their mother's nutritional, lifestyle, and environmental factors during pregnancy along with their birthing process. It can

be thought of as the juice contained within a person's life-long battery. This vitality juice is said to be a finite resource that needs to be protected, conserved, and preserved.

Making smart lifestyle choices that include high quality food and drink in proper amounts, monitoring levels of stress, and being careful about indulging in too much sex is a good place to start. Otherwise, precious jing resources become squandered. Jing is also depleted by traumatic experiences such as a difficult childbirth, accidents, loss, or abuse. With this knowledge, a person can choose to follow specific practices, seek out holistic treatments, modify their lifestyle, and work toward creating the most balanced, centered, and peaceful way of living possible.

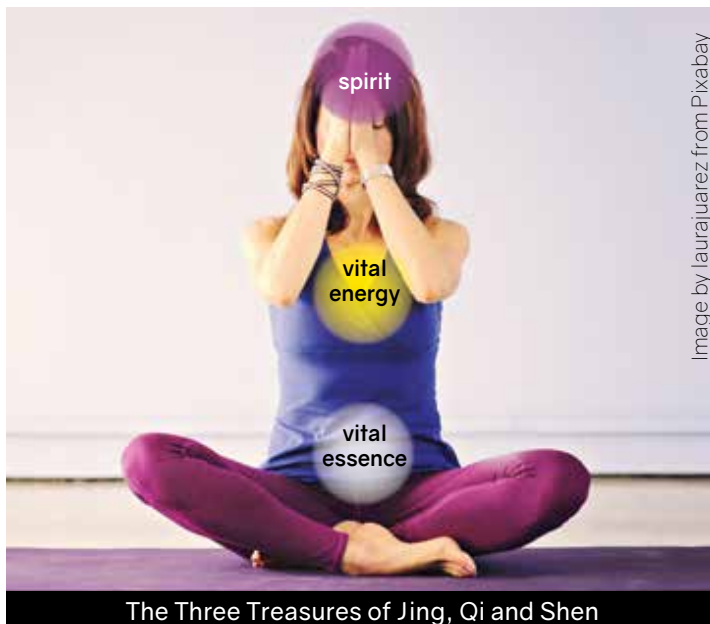
Chinese medicine offers acupuncture, herbal formulations, Tuina massage,

dietary and lifestyle recommendations, and Taiji and Qigong exercise. They also help with stress management, balance emotions, reduce anxiety, promote internal awareness, and foster deeper understanding of life's many circumstances. This simple jing nourishing exercise can be practiced a few minutes each day:

*Sit on a comfortable chair with feet flat on the floor. Lift the crown of your head up toward the sky, maintain an upright back, and place palms over your lower belly. Quiet your mind and focus where your jing resides – three inches below your umbilicus and inside your abdominal cavity. Then with mouth closed, take three deep breaths into your lower belly – expanding on the inhale and deflating your belly upon the exhale. Simultaneously, use the intent of your mind to nourish your jing. When three breaths are complete, take a moment to reflect on how you feel. Then get up, shake yourself off, and get on with the rest of your day.*

There is no greater time than now to become more introspective about how you have been living your life. This includes seeking greater insight and understanding about how your actions have been impacting your health. The goal is to bring forth a more balanced cycle of behavior filled with greater compassion and love. The approaching time of winter is perfect for such an endeavor, readying you for the new burst of energy in the spring.

*Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S. has been director of Red Bank Acupuncture & Wellness Center (www.healing4u.com) for 35 years in Shrewsbury, NJ providing acupuncture, Chinese herbal consultation along with Taiji and Qigong private and group classes. She is author of "Qigong for Staying Young: A Simple 20-Minute Workout to Cultivate Your Vital Energy", co-author of "Feeling Light: The Holistic Solution to Permanent Weight Loss and Wellness" and recently released "Center of Power: Life Mastery through Taiji" a comprehensive online curriculum (www.yourcenterofpower.com). For more information call or text 732.758.1800.*



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