



## Introduction to Organ Theory

# 脏 相 脏相

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Zang 脏 translates as “hidden,” “inside,” “concealment.” Xiang 相 translates as “appearance,” “manifestation of the hidden form,” “something we can see.” Together we have: “concealment of hidden forms.” This refers to the organs of the 5 phases concealed within the body. Outer manifestations offer clues as to how things are working on the inside. Zang Xiang 脏相 is the study of organ physiology, as reflected in observable characteristics.

Below, you’ll find a chart displaying some basic correspondences for the **5 zang (Yin) organs**. Their paired **fu (Yang) organs** are also listed, as well as the corresponding meridians, or 6 channels (liu jing). These—and the organs themselves—are discussed in much more detail in the rest of this course. This handout is just a taste!

*Before jumping into the chart, a brief overview of some items you’ll find there...*

## 7 EMOTIONS - QI QING 七情

Emotions are movements of Qi; each movement reflects a particular quality and impetus of being. These are natural responses to the external world. When healthy, they transform naturally—we respond, adapt and move on. Each of the 5 zang (Yin) organs has an associated emotion that is an expression of Qi related to that organ's phase. Elisabeth Rochat describes these as “deep propensities and tensions of vitality in each of the 5 zang organs” (2013 Rothenburg Conference). When an emotion enters the Heart, that emotion's associated zang organ responds. For instance, when sadness enters the Heart, the Lung responds. When anger enters the Heart, the Liver responds. (The Heart feels the emotion first.) Thus, the Heart is the overseer of emotions, mind and aspects of thought. In this role, it has a relationship with all other zang.

These 5 emotions are NOT pathological in and of themselves: it is healthy to feel sadness, anger, etc. They become pathological when of excess intensity or unhelpful in manifestation (e.g., if “si” manifests as fixation, obsession or addiction). They are also pathological if they don't fit the situation at hand or if they go on for too long. In such cases, the emotion surpasses the body's ability to respond in a healthy way and to adapt.

If the Heart and shen ming 神明 (“spirit brightness,” or “spiritual intelligence”) is governing the mind and emotions in a balanced, supportive way—a way in tune with the natural order or flow of life and the Universe—emotions are healthy and in balance. Otherwise, disease arises in body and mind.

We also have the emotions of you 忧, “oppression,” and jing 惊, “fright.” These are the only two emotions that are always pathological, by necessity. They are closely related to pre-Heaven and post-Heaven sum totals in the body. You 忧 is an extension of grief and overthinking; it is closely related to the Lung, Spleen and sum total of post-Heaven. You 忧 speaks to despair, suppression of innate aspirations and lack of Yang. Jing 惊 is an extension of fear; it is closely related to the Kidneys, Heart and sum total of pre-Heaven. Jing 惊 speaks to a scattering of self, lack of consolidation and disconnect from one's identity; it may arise in cases of emotional trauma, for instance. Together with the emotions associated with the zang, we have the 7 emotions: qi qing 七情.



**5 WILLS/SPIRITS - WU ZHI/SHEN 五志/神**

The Heart is also associated with the wu zhi—the 5 innate orientations or “wills.” This is the orientation of the emotional-mental-spiritual context. Sometimes these are referred to as the wu shen 五神.

**TISSUE EXTENSION - CHONG 充**

Often translated as “tissue extension,” this is what each zang “fills.” The zang is responsible for its proper functioning and imbues it with nourishment.

**QUINTESSENCE - HUA 华**

Often translated as “flower” (which is the same in pinyin but a different character 花), hua 华 is more accurately captured by the word “quintessence” (the purest distillation). For any zang, it is a tissue always open to inspection, the inspection of which tells us about the organ’s inner health and functioning.

**VIRTUE - DE 得**

Often translated as “virtue” (as in the *Dao De Jing*, or *Tao Te Ching*), this is a quality of Tian (Heaven, the Divine) manifest in a person.



YIN ORGAN <i>Zang</i>	ROOT <i>Ben</i>	OFFICE <i>Guan</i>	STORES (Vital Substances)  HOUSES (Wu Zhi / Shen)	TISSUE  <i>Chong</i>	ORIFICE  SENSE  FLUID	QUINTESSENCE  <i>Hua</i>	EMOTION  <i>Qi Qing</i>	VIRTUE  <i>De</i>	YIN-YANG  (Biao-Li) PAIR	6 CHANNELS  <i>Liu Jing</i>
<b>FEI 肺</b> <i>Lung</i>	Qi 气	Prime Minister  Source of rhythmic order  Has audience with the 100 vessels	Zong Qi 宗气  Po 魄  Corporeal soul, somatic soul, autonomic aspects of body, Yin aspect of the soul  Maciocia: Corporeal soul	Skin Pi 皮	Nose, Smell Bi 鼻  Nasal mucus Ti 涕	Body hair Mao 毛	Bei 悲  Grief, sadness, acceptance  Maciocia: sadness & worry	Qing 清  Clear, pure, chaste, innocent, non-manipulative	Da Chang 大肠  Large Intestine  Office of Transmission & Conduction  Source of change & transformation	Tai Yin (Lung)  Yang Ming (Large Intestine)  Substance transfer
<b>PI 脾</b> <i>Spleen</i>	Hou Tian - Post-Heaven 后天	Office of the Storehouse & Granary  Source of wu wei - the 5 flavours 五味  Responsible for yun hua 运化	Ying 营  Yi 意  Sensory interface with the outside world, the attent, capacity to take in information & discern (also to focus, reflect, concentrate think, study, memorize)  Maciocia: intellect	Muscles & flesh  Ji rou 肌肉	Mouth Kou 口  Lips, palatability Chun 唇  Thin saliva Xian 涎	4 sides of the lips  Chun si bai 唇四白	Si 思  Capacity to make associations, cross-reference, rumination, fixation, obsession, addiction  Maciocia: thinking & pensiveness	Ru 儒  Tolerant, non-discriminating, universally doling out, unconditional nourishment	Wei 胃  Stomach  The origin of fluid, sea of grain  Chief of the fu organs	Tai Yin (Spleen)  Yang Ming (Stomach)  Substance transfer



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<b>XIN 心</b> <i>Heart</i>	Sheng - Life 生	Imperial Command  Site of the Emperor Fire  Source of the shen ming 神明	Shen 神 in the Blood  Spirit-mind, heart-mind, conscious mind, the sum of mental-emotional-spiritual aspects of a person  Maciocia: mind (narrow, pertaining to the Heart); spirit (the sum total of the wu shen/zhi)	Blood vessels Xue Mai 血脉	Sense organ: Tongue She 舌  Sense: Taste  Body opening: Ear Er 耳  Fluid: Sweat Han 汗	Mian 面  Complexion (colour, lustre, expression)	Xi 喜  Joy, elation, overjoy	Xian 显  Authentic, candid, frank, ingenuous	Xiao Chang 小肠  Small Intestine	Shao Yin (Heart)  Tai Yang (Small Intestine)  Awareness transfer
<b>SHEN 肾</b> <i>Kidneys</i>	Xian Tian - Pre-Heaven 先天  Sealing & storing	Office of Erecting Strength  Source of skill & ingenuity	Jing-essence Jing 精  Zhi 志  Will, instinct, capacity to persist & follow through, fortitude, will to stay alive  Maciocia: willpower	Bones Gu 骨	Ear Er 耳  Hearing  Also the 2 Yin orifices Er Yin 二阴  Thick saliva	Head hair Fa 发	Kong 恐  Fright, fear, instinct	Han 寒  Humble from a place of inner security, faith, and knowing true self	Pang Guang 膀胱  Urinary Bladder	Shao Yin (Kidneys)  Tai Yang (Urinary Bladder)  Awareness transfer



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<b>GAN 肝</b> <i>Liver</i>	Ability to use the limbs to the fullest/utmost	Office of the Army General  Source of strategizing & planning	Blood Xue 血  Hun 魂  Ethereal soul, intuition, aspect of the self that knows what we truly need, Yang aspect of the soul  Maciocia: Ethereal soul	Tendons/sinews Jin 筋	Eye, Vision Mu 目  Tears Lei 泪	Nails Zhua 爪	Nu 怒  Anger, conviction, drive	He 和  Harmonizing, benevolent, directed kindness	Dan 胆  Gallbladder  Office of Internal Rectitude 中正  Source of determination & decision making	Jue Yin (Liver)  Shao Yang (Gallbladder)  Directed movement, choice
<b>XINBAO 心胞</b> <i>Pericardium</i>		Office of the Official Envoy (Chen Shi 臣使)  Source of joy & elation  Office of Entering & Exiting of the shen ming 神明  Manifestation of Ming Men Fire above							San Jiao 三焦  Triple Burner  Office of Determining Ditches  Source of the water pathways	Jue Yin (Pericardium)  Shao Yang (Triple Burner)  Directed movement, choice

