

Energy Play Qigong

Five Element Theory

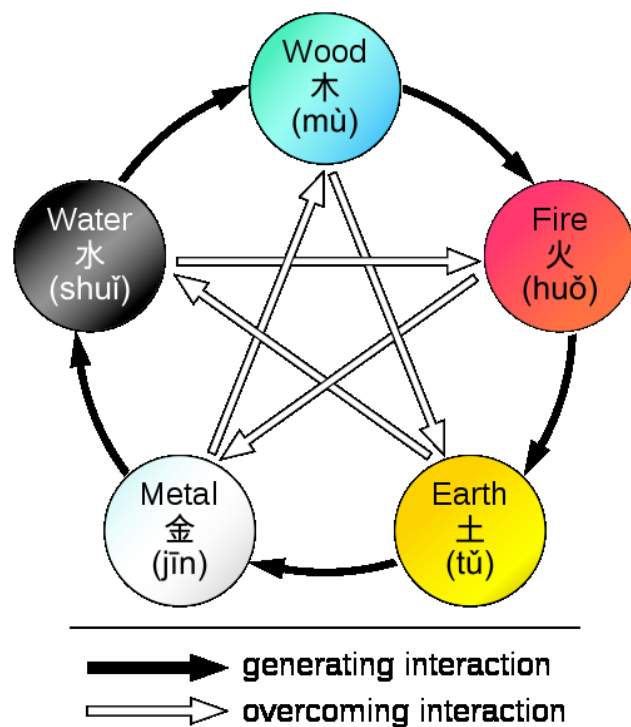
The flow of the seasons, the turning of the tide and the other natural cycles that surround us have been studied and documented for millennia. Five Element Theory is one of the academic structures that help us to understand and discuss aspects of these natural cycles whether it is the passage of the earth around the sun or the internal aspects of our bodies.

A good example of the way that opposing aspects are balanced is found in Western Medicine when heart disease is treated with diuretics: The Heart function is considered to be a Fire aspect and the action of Diuretics is to remove unneeded water from the body. This would be considered a way of balancing the opposing aspects of Fire and Water, excess water would not be beneficial as it would further reduce the Fire aspect.

Within Qigong we explore the nature of each of the five elements and the way in which they interact. Studying these interactions and cycles we can enhance our understanding of the natural flows that exists and ways in which we can achieve greater balance within ourselves and with the world around us.

The diagram below shows the two main relationships that exist between the elements.

- The generative interaction (also called the constructive cycle) demonstrates ways in which elements can be used to build or enhance other elements (e.g. Wood feeds Fire, Fire creates ash which returns to Earth etc.)
- The overcoming interaction (also known as the control cycle) demonstrates ways in which elements can be used to reduce or diminish other elements (e.g. Water quenches Fire, Fire melts Metal, Metal cuts Wood)



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The actual forms that are used to explore the elements vary between different schools of Qigong but the following description gives a feel for some of the important aspects of each element:

Wood Aspect:

Wood forms relate to the growth and potential that is present in the Spring. They are likely to emphasise liver function and may also work the tendons.

Fire Aspect:

Fire forms relate to the blossoming and expansive nature of Summer. The forms embrace the rising, active nature of the element but tend to balance this with either a sinking, drawing down or cooling aspect in order to maintain a degree of balance.

Earth Aspect:

Earth forms relate to a point of balance and therefore tend to either be linked with Harvest or the period between seasons. They generally work with the Stomach function and their balanced nature tends to make them comfortable and easy forms to explore.

Metal Aspect:

Metal relate to the contraction we experience during Autumn. The forms tend to work with ideas around containment and our interaction with the outside world. They have a close relationship with the Lungs, Large Intestine, Skin and the immune system.

Water Aspect:

Water relates to the dormant time of the year, Water's tendency to sink to a point of rest is normally balanced by forms that have an upward spiralling motion and these will tend to emphasise Kidney function and also strengthen the bones.

Classes and workshops are available that explore this powerful and effective approach to qigong and One to One sessions can be arranged via john@energyplay.co.uk.

The diagram used in this article is from [Wikimedia Commons](#)