

Glossary

This is not meant to be a definitive glossary but rather a quick reference to the main usages of the characters which are referenced in my writing. Bear in mind that no Chinese character can be translated accurately to a single English word. This glossary is abstracted from my book, "Nourishing Destiny: The Inner Tradition of Chinese Medicine." No part of it may be quoted or reproduced without a full citation to the author.

bao-yi: 包一 -To embrace the one. Refers to the sage's ability to follow the principles of dao.

Bai Hu Dang: 白虎堂 -Discussions of the White Tiger Hall. A Daoist text written in 79 AD.

Bai Wen Bian: 百問篇 -The Hundred Questions. An alchemical text which focuses on the functional correspondances between humanity and the microcosm. Possibly dates as far back as the Tang dynasty.

ben ming yuan shen: 本命元神 -Primordial spirits of fundamental destiny. The ascended spirits which live in the center of the big dipper and assign a destiny to each individual commensurate with their merit at the moment of conception.

bu-le: 不樂 -Literally: Not joy; sorrow.

chang: 常 -Everlasting, eternal.

chang-dao: 常道 -The eternal virtue and nature of dao.

cheng: 成 -Complete. A characteristic ascribed to the eternal dao in the DDJ.

chong-qi: 冲氣 -The whirling abyss situated between heaven and earth. That which perfectly blends the qualities of these two universal poles so that duality is returned to unity.

dan-tian: 丹 -Cinnabar field. Located below the navel is considered the furnace which empowers alchemical transformation in the individual. Functionally related to the concept of ming-men.

dang: 堂-Palace.

dao: 道-The ultimate principle.

dao-yong: 錫 y o n g -To fuse as in the smelting of metals.

de: 德-Original nature. Virtue. Suggests the notion of intuition: the ability to spontaneously comprehend truth uncolored by the mind's interpretation.

de-qi: 得氣 -To attain qi; the sensation associated with the needling of an acupuncture point.

di: 帝 -Emperor, the polestar.

fa-ming: 發明 -To invent; to produce a thing by illuminating it from the void of dao.

fan: 反 -To return.

fang-ming: 方命- To neglect one's orders or destiny. Refers to Gun's inability to quell the floods.

fu: 復-Yi-jing hexagram 24; the return. Termed by Liu I-ming "the door of life."

fu: 付 -To give.

fu: 符 -A deed in two halves; a Daoist talisman the wearing of which is thought to protect the possessor.

fu: 府 -Treasury, storehouse; the yang organs.

guan: 官-The sum total of an organs sphere of influence. From Chapter eight of the Nei Jing.

guan: 關 -A border pass or customs station. Found in the point names of HP-6 and TH-5.

Gun: 鯀-The mythological figure who failed to quell the floods. The father of Emperor Yu.

Han Fei-Zi: 韓非子-(280?-233 B.C.E.) A philosopher of the Legalist school who wrote the text bearing his name.

hou-tian: 後 —-Later heaven; all that one acquires in life after drawing the first breath.

hu: 忽 -Literally: "change." The emperor of the north sea in the myth of hun-tun.

Huai Nan Zi: 淮南子-An early Daoist text written in the former Han dynasty (122 B.C.E.) by the guests of the court of Liu An, the prince of Huai Nan.

hui: 會-Assembly, meeting.

hun: 魂-The shen associated with the Liver official. In Daoist philosophy the hun is comprised of the jing, qi, and shen. These are termed the "three treasures." Governs the human ascension in life represented by the officials in the left half of the sheng cycle. Upon death the hun is said to leave the body through acupuncture point GV-20 and ascend to heaven. Here it reports on the relative merit of the individual accrued through fulfillment of destiny.

hun: 混 -Chaos, blend; the primordial state of dao where heaven and earth are blended to form a perfect unity which lies beyond human comprehension.

hun-tun: 混沌-The primordial state of dao personified as the emperor of the center in Zhuang Zi.

jing: 精-Essence; the microcosmic representation of dao as undifferentiated potential.

jing-gong: 精宮 -Acupuncture point BL-52 (47). Palace of essence.

jing-shen: 精神-Synonymous with shen-jing.

Karma: From the Sanskrit kri, to do; literally, "deed;" may be taken to signify all that one brings to this life from their past lives and ancestors.

kong: 恐 -Fear; The emotion associated with the Water officials.

Kong Fu Zi: 孔夫子 -Confucious (551-479 B.C.E.)

kun: 坤 -Yi-jing hexagram 2; earth.

kun: 困 -Constraint; Depicts a tree growing within a sealed box.

Kun-lun: 崑崙 -A mountain which in early Chinese myth was thought to be the center of the earth. The earthly representation of the pillar which joins heaven and earth. The home of Xi Wang Mu.

Lao-Zi: 老子 -Daoist philosopher to whom the authorship of the Dao De Jing is ascribed. Means literally “old infant.”

le: 樂 -Music, joy; the emotion associated with the Fire officials

li: 禮 -The virtue associated with the Fire element; propriety. The name of the Yijing hexagram for Fire.

li: 利-Profit, advantage; worldly gain.

lin: 林 -Two trees together; a forest.

ling: 靈 -The yin aspect of spirit which complements shen. The character ling depicts two female shaman performing a ritual to summon rain from heaven. The character gives the notion of the human potency to fulfill destiny and thereby be powerfully effective in influencing heaven to evoke changes in the world.

ling-bao: 靈寶 -A bipartite term signifying the notion of the dao as a treasure existing in both human and heaven. Ling is the heavenly aspect and bao is the earthly aspect identified with jing.

Ling-Xu: 靈樞 -The Spiritual Pivot; A medical text compiled during the Warring States period 480-222 B.C.E..

luan: 亂 -In Daoism the chaos which results in the world after the human fall from original nature and the ensuing institution of society and culture.

mai: 脈 -Meridian, vessel.

Meng-Zi (Mencius): 孟子 -(c. 372-289 B.C.E.) Confucian philosopher who authored the text which bears his name.

ming: 命 -Destiny. One's life mandate which exists as one's personal contract with heaven.

ming: 名 -Personal name.

ming: 明 -Illumination

ming: 冥 -Darkness, obscurity; In religious Daoism and Buddhism refers to the underworld.

ming-men: 命門 -Gate of destiny. The functional concept of a furnace which simultaneously infuses one's complements of primordial yin and yang, early and later heaven, and shen and jing. The furnace which maintains the integrity of the interactions which empower evolution.

mu: 母 -Mother.

Nan-jing: 難經 -The Difficult Classic; Medical text dating to the first century C.E.

nei: 內 -Internal, Inner.

nei-bian: 內篇 -Inner volume. Signifies a work that focuses on the inner aspects of a subject such as spiritual transformation in the discipline of internal alchemy.

Nei Jing Su Wen: 內經素問 -The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine.

nu: 怒 -Anger; the emotion associated with the Wood official.

Pan-gu: 盤古 -The mythological giant who stood on earth and supported heaven. The mythological ancestor of the human race.

po: 魄 -The shen associated with the Lung official. Governs the human descent in life. Upon death the po leaves the body through

the anus to decay in the earth. Consists of the seven emotions: worry, fear, anger, anxiety, joy, grief, and sympathy.

po: 剥 -Yi-jing hexagram 23; Splitting apart. Termed by Liu I-ming “the door of death.”

qi: 氣 -Energy. The motivating force which supports all of life’s functional and physical manifestations.

qi: 泣 -To weep silent tears.

qi-hai: 氣海 -Sea of qi. Depending on the text there are said to be several “sea of qi” located throughout the body. Often synonymous with the Dan-tian. A reserve of qi.

qing-ming: 青冥 -The Bai Wen Bian uses this term to refer to the color of the penetrating fire in the dan-tian.

quian-tian: 前天 -Early heaven. All influences acquired in life prior to the first breath. Includes the notion of karma as well as the modern concept of genetics.

quan: 泉 -A spring gushing out from the ground.

ren: 仁 -The virtue associated with the Wood element; benevolence. Golden gate: the interface between being and non-being; an alternate name for acupuncture point CV-1.

ri: 日 -The sun.

she: 社 -Alter to the spirit of the earth. On the right is the character for spirit on the left is the character for earth.

shen: 神 -The yang aspect of spirit which complements Ling. The spirit associated with the Heart official. The character shen gives the notion of heaven extending itself towards humanity. In the microcosm the shen is that aspect of self that one extends in order to discover and manifest potential (jing and ling). The impulse (lightening in the macrocosm and neural activity in the microcosm) that acts upon potential.

shen: 申 -The terrestrial branch associated with the Metal element.

shen-jing: 神精 -The interpenetration of shen with jing and the empowerment that springs forth.

shen-men: 神門-The name of acupuncture point HT-7, “Spirit Gate.”

shen-ming: 神明 -The bright spiritual influence which radiates from heaven.

Shen Nong Ben Cao: 神農本草 -The Treatise of the Spiritual Farmer. China’s first text on Herbal medicine (circa second century C.E.) attributed to the mythological figure Shen-nong.

shu: 恕 -A virtue associated with the Earth element; reciprocity. According to Legge (1971, p.469): “Making our own feelings the rule for our dealing with others.”

shu: 數 -Literally “numbers;” fate.

shu: 懷 - Literally: “uncertainty.” The emperor of the South sea in the myth of hun-tun.

Shu-jing: 書經 The Book of Documents; one of the Confucian classics.

Shi-jing: 詩經 -The Book of Poetry; one of the Confucian classics.

si: 思 -Sympathy; the emotion associated with the Earth officials.

si: 四 -The number four.

si: 死-Death.

tai-yuan: 太淵 -The name of acupuncture point LU-9; refers to the void between heaven and earth.

tian-ming: 天命 -Destiny, as appointed by heaven.

tai-quan: 太泉-An alternate name for Lung-9 which denotes the origin of a stream.

ting: 聽-To listen.

tong: 通 -To be in communication with, To interpenetrate.

tong shen ming: 通神明 -To be in communication with The bright spiritual influence which radiates from heaven both in the macro- and microcosm.

tou: 頭 -The head.

wai: 外 -External, outer.

wai-bian: 外篇 -Outer volume. Refers to a work that discusses the external application of a discipline such as turning lead into gold in external alchemy. Compare with Nei-bian meaning “inner volume.”

wei: 為 -Being

wei-qi: 衛氣 -Defensive energy.

wu: 巫 -Female shaman.

wu-ji: 無幾 -Without limit.

wu-ming: 無名 -Nameless; not having a personal sense of self as denoted by one's name. A characteristic of the sage and of the dao.

wu-wei: 無為 -Non-being.

wu-xing: 五行 -The Five-transformations or “elements.”

xi: 巫 -Male shaman (when the radical for “standing man” is placed to its left).

xi-qi: 習氣 -Habitual energy. Buddhist concept of vasana which means to “becloud” in the sense that ignorance may obscure one's mind.

Xi Wang Mu: 西王母 -Daoist immortal. The Queen Mother of the West who presides over birth and death.

xian: 仙 -Daoist immortal.

xiang sheng xu: 相生序 -The creation cycle of the Five elements; literally the “mutual production cycle.”

xin: 心 -Heart-mind. In health these two are present as one and empower spontaneity and intuition.

xin: 信 -A virtue associated with the Earth element; faith, trust.

xing: 形 -Form.

xing: 性 -Inborn nature.

xu: 虛 -Emptiness, void.

xu-ji: 虛極 -Pole of emptiness; the central axis around which cosmological transformation occurs.

xue: 血 -Blood, the highest function of which is to empower one to choose vulnerability from a position of strength.

xuan: 玄 -Dark, mysterious; A characteristic of the dao.

xuan-guan: 玄關 -The mysterious pass; the interface between being and non-being.

Xun-Zi: 荀子 -(Born 312 B.C.E.) Confucian author who wrote the text bearing his name.

yang: 陽 -The active principle, complementary in nature to yin. The impulse which acts upon potential.

yang-ming: 陽明 -Refers to the functional relationship between the Stomach and Large Intestine officials.

you-ming: 有名 -To have a personal name and thus to have lost one's original nature.

yi: 義 -The virtue associated with the Metal element; Righteousness, justice.

yi: 意 -The shen associated with the Spleen official. Ideation.

Yi-jing: 易經 -The Book of Change; One of the Confucian classics.

yin: 陰 -That passive principle, complementary in nature to yang.
The potential basis for all of life's manifestations.

ying: 營 -the nourishing aspect of both qi and Blood.

yin-qi: 陰氣 -According to the alchemy of Liu I-ming the mundane conditioning energy of later heaven. This is as compared to yang-qi and, in my own usage, one's original endowment of primordial yin, the yuan-yin.

you: 憂 -Greif; The emotion associated with the Metal officials.

Yu: 禹 -The figure who founded in myth China's first dynasty, the Xia.

yu: 愈 -To heal.

yu: 遇 -To meet.

yuan: 原-Source.

yuan: 淵 -Abyss, the void.

yuan: 元 -Primordial.

yuan: 遠 -Far, distant.

yuan: 原 -Origen.

yuan-qi: 元氣 -Primordial (original) qi.

yuan-yang: 元陽 -One's primordial complement of yang-qi associated with the function of the right Kidney.

yuan-yin: 元陰 -One's primordial complement of yin-qi associated with the function of the left Kidney.

yue: 月 -The moon.

zang: 臧 -Hidden; the yin organs.

zhen: 真 -Upright, correct, authentic; that which is true.

zhen-qi: 真氣 -That qi which supports the human to stand upright between heaven and earth and thus fulfill destiny. That qi which reflects the pristine quality of authentic dao.

Zhang Bu-Duan: Daoist philosopher and alchemist (Yuan dynasty).

zhi: 治 -To treat, to heal, to set in order as Yu did with the floods.

zhi: 智 -The virtue associated with the Water element; wisdom.

zhi: 質 -Substance.

zhi: 志 -Human will. The shen associated with the Kidney official. (369?-286? B.C.E.) Daoist philosopher to whom the text of the same name is ascribed. Literally may be translated as "serious child." Of interest due to the great homur displayed in his writing. The natural spontaneity of primordial dao; that which emerges in ultimate health.

zhi-shi: 志室 -Acupuncture point BL-52 (47). Room of will.

Zhu-Zi: 朱熹 -Confucian philosopher (1130-1200 C.E.).

zhuo: (not shown) -Radical #162; walking. The left half of the character dao.

zong: 宗 -"An ancestral hall, the building from which emanates the influence of the deceased ancestors over their posterity."

zong-qi: 宗氣 -Ancestral qi. That which governs all rhythmic movements in the microcosm such as the Heart beat and the respiratory rhythm.

zu: 祖 -Ancestor, origen, beggining.