

# “Secrets of the I Ching” Part I of II

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The following article is an excerpt from the book, “Secrets of I Ching” (not yet published in English), by Joseph K. Kim, L. Ac., OMD, Ph.D. and David Lee, MD, OMD, Ph.D. The book was originally published as “Science and Tao of I Ching” in Korea in 2002.

## SASANG MEDICINE – Part I

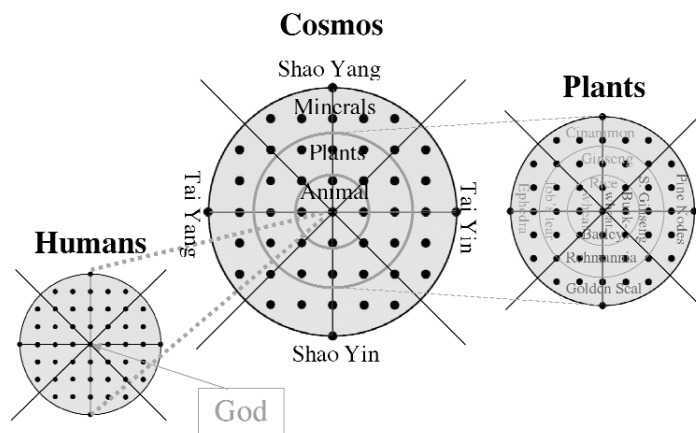
**D**r. Jae Ma Lee revolutionized traditional eastern medicine with his creation of Sasang Medicine approximately one hundred years ago in Korea. Sasang Medicine is a form of constitutional medicine that determines a person’s body type based on his or her physical and mental characteristics. Specific treatments are applied based upon this determination.

Traditional eastern medicine classifies the signs and symptoms of a disease by what is known as “syndrome differentiation” or “pattern identification.” In contrast, Sasang Medicine focuses first on differentiating a person’s constitution, or body type, before taking into account syndrome differentiation. This is the reason Traditional Eastern Medicine is called “Syndrome Medicine,” and Sasang Medicine is called “Constitutional Medicine.” Both medicines can also be distinguished in terms of the Western medical divisions of the causes of disease. Western medicine separates pathological causes into hereditary factors and environmental factors. According to this mode of thought, Traditional Eastern Medicine primarily deals with environmental factors, while Sasang Medicine emphasizes hereditary factors.

Sasang Medicine is theoretically consistent with the principles of the I Ching. Clinically, it has the advantage of preventing illnesses by correcting the imbalances within each body type prior to their onset.

## The Cosmological View of Sasang Medicine

The cosmological view of Sasang Medicine is identical to that found in the I Ching. The essential concept is that all things in nature possess variations of Yin and Yang. (Fig. 1) Among these things, minerals have the greatest variation, some having a great amount of Yin and a small amount of Yang, while others have a great amount of Yang and little Yin. Among the minerals, sulfur, which can readily turn into fire, is significantly more Yang than Yin. In contrast, mercury, which is very heavy and cold, is significantly more Yin than Yang.



Since life is basically a “balancing act,” any sustained extreme of Yin or Yang destroys it. Therefore, those having extreme variations in Yin and Yang, like minerals, cannot support life. Living organisms, by nature, must have a lesser variation in Yin and Yang than minerals, or else they would be unable to sustain life.

In the analysis of things in nature, life has less of a variation of Yin and Yang. Although this degree varies among animals, they always contain more Yang than Yin. Chinese restaurants often display Zodiac charts in which you can see the 12 animals of the Chinese horoscope. Among these 12 animals, the horse has the highest

degree of Yang (and less Yin), whereas the rat has the lowest degree of Yang (and the most Yin).

On the other hand, plants retain more Yin than Yang. This is because, while animals move actively, plants do not. Plants, like animals, also have variable ratios of how much more Yin than Yang they contain. For example, ginseng, an herb that invigorates metabolism, has a relatively lower amount of Yin in comparison to moss that grows in cold, damp regions.

Humans have the least variation in Yin and Yang when compared to animals and plants. Therefore, among all things in nature, organisms have less of a variation in Yin and

Yang than minerals, while animals have less of a variation in Yin and Yang than plants. In fact, humans are relatively close to a 50:50 ratio, allowing us to maintain a near perfect harmony and balance of Yin and Yang.

What some biologists call evolution is nothing more than the progression of a substance from a greater to lesser variation of Yin and Yang, or from extremes of Yin and Yang to Yin-Yang balance.

In Sasang Medicine, a person who is perfectly harmonized in Yin and Yang is called a Sage or Enlightened Being, and is considered a god. God is a perfect harmonization of Yin and Yang, completely unbiased, without greed or desire for particular things. Partiality or prejudice only appears in beings of Yin and Yang imbalance. This imbalance creates desire, and desire creates sin, suffering and disease. With this in mind, God suffers no diseases and can live forever.

Although human beings have less of a variation than other animals, they still maintain some imbalances in Yin and Yang. Thus, human beings have desires, which in turn create sin, suffering and disease. Just as a cracked record album wobbles on a record player, human beings live their lives to an imperfect tune. Ultimately, the variation of Yin and Yang in humans is inherited.

Because human beings do not embody the perfect balance of Yin and Yang, regardless of how healthy a person may be, he or she is still predisposed for certain diseases. Although a standard Western medical exam might not reveal any abnormalities, it does not eliminate the possibility of disease. Western medical exams cannot accurately measure the tilt of Yin and Yang within a person. Therefore, they cannot predict diseases that may arise in the future, nor can they perceive diseases that may exist at a sub-clinical level. Even if a person has a great imbalance of Yin and Yang (for example, a 40:60 ratio), if the disease does not clearly manifest, western medical examinations will show nothing. For example, it takes approximately five years for a single cell of certain types of cancer to develop and ten years for the tumors to grow one centimeter, big enough to be detected by an MRI's measuring unit of one cubic centimeter. This means that the diagnosis of cancer can only be made after 15 years of continued imbalance in Yin and Yang. By the time a single cancer cell is detected, tens or hundreds of cancer cells may have already metastasized to other places in the body through the blood or lymph vessels.

Absolute health can only result through the determination and adjustment of the body's fundamental Yin and Yang imbalance. The diagnostic methods of Sasang Medicine can illuminate this path to health. According to Sasang Medicine, people who constitutionally have more Yin than Yang are called Yin type persons, and those who have more Yang than Yin are called Yang type persons. Yin persons who show a tendency to gradually accumulate Yin are called *Taiyin* (☷), while those whose Yin starts to decrease after initially having a

large quantity are called *Shaoyin* (☵). Yang persons who show a tendency to gradually increase their Yang are called *Taiyang* (☰), while those whose Yang starts to decrease after having an initially large quantity are called *Shaoyang* (☱).

Sasang Medicine takes full advantage of the different energetic tilts of things in nature. If a virus with a 40:60 variance of Yin to Yang invades and upsets the homeostasis of the body, Sasang Medicine can restore balance by offering medicine or food with the opposite (60:40) variance. Almost any substance can be used as medicine to cure disease because all things in nature have uniquely differing tilts of Yin and Yang. Foods have little variation in Yin and Yang and do not cause dramatic changes in physiology. Nevertheless, they should be eaten in accordance to individual body types since the ingredients we use as food (plants and animals) have a greater imbalance of Yin and Yang than the human body. For example, Yang foods taken in large quantities over time can bring Yin persons to balance as effectively as any medicine. However, in order to harmonize Yin and Yang in the shortest amount of time possible, medicines of a mineral origin should be taken, as they have a greater tilt in Yin and Yang.

In traditional Eastern medicine, there is no real distinction between foods, medicines, and toxic substances, because they all exist along a continuum. Substances that have little tilt in Yin and Yang (such that they do not greatly change the Yin and Yang of humans when eaten daily) are considered food. Substances that have a greater tilt in Yin and Yang, able to cause greater changes in the tilt of Yin and Yang within humans are considered to be medicines. Lastly, substances that have an extreme tilt in Yin and Yang, enough to tilt the Yin and Yang of humans into irreparable imbalance (capable of killing quickly, as a result), are considered toxins or poisons.

Grains may serve as a staple in everyone's diet, since they have the least amount of Yin and Yang tilt among all plants. As rice has a Shaoyang nature, it

can supplement the lack of Yang in Shaoyins, whereas wheat's Taiyang nature may supplement the lack of Yang in Taiyins. Barley has a Shaoyin nature and can supplement the deficient Yin of Shaoyangs. Buckwheat has a Taiyin nature, so it can supplement the lack of Yin in Taiyangs.

Foods are not the only means of treatment used in Sasang Medicine. Various types of stimulation have a Yin and Yang tilt as well. For example, different sounds may be used to regulate the imbalances of each body type. So may light, smell, tactile sensations, temperature, seasons, and the four emotions of joy, anger, sadness, and pleasure. In truth, all matter or phenomenon that we can (and those that we cannot) conceive have a tilt of Yin and Yang, and can be used to regulate a person's constitutional imbalances.

**To be Continued: Part II of this article will be on the external appearance of Sasang body types.**

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