

**SESSION 11 MEDIEVAL CHINESE FORM OF
GENDER, SEX AND SEXUALITY**

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CONCEPT OF YIN-YANG AND CHINESE UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER AND SEX

- ❖ To understand of Chinese approach of gender, sex and sexuality, the concepts of yin and yang have to be examined first.
- ❖ **One cannot understand gender** in China without a understanding of the concepts of yin and yang.
- ❖ **One cannot understand Chinese attitude on sex and sexuality** without understanding the concept of yin and yang to be interpreted by both Confucianism and Daoism.
- ❖ **One cannot understanding of Chinese understanding of both gender and sex relationship** without a understanding of Confucian and Daoist interpretations of Yin and Yang and their actual influence in Chinese society.

WHAT IS YIN AND YANG

Yin and Yang are the two most important concepts for Chinese understanding the world.

Yang

positive
sun
light
heaven
active
fire
above
heat
Generation
WAKE



Yin

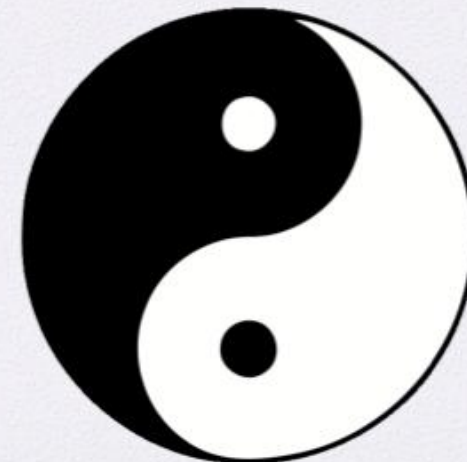
negative
moon
dark
earth
passive
water
below
cold
Growth
SLEEP



Yin & Yang

Yin

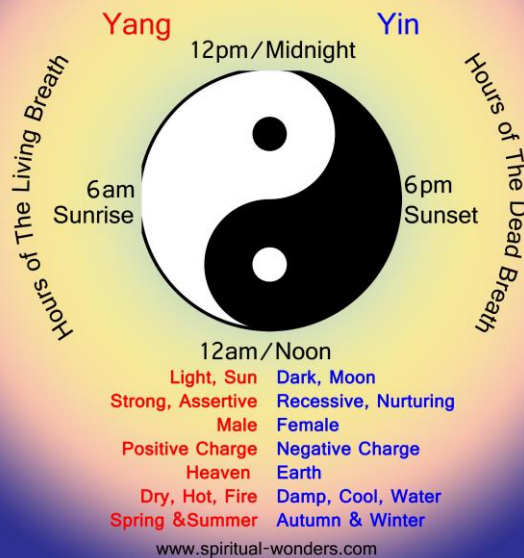
Small
Feminine
Cold
Subtle
Textured
Rough
Quiet
Old
Dirty
Slow
Calm
Curvy



Yang

Large
Masculine
Hot
Bold
Plain
Smooth
Loud
New
Clean
Fast
Active
Straight

Act in Harmony with the Cycle of the Day to Increase Your Energy



The Wu Ji or still point.
The calm in the midst of
the storm. Stillness in
movement.

The outer circle indicates
that all things are made
up of yin and yang

These dots indicate that
there is no absolute yin
or yang, each contains
the germ of the other

Moving around the
circle shows the
natural cycle from
yin to yang and
back to yin again

YIN AND YANG OF SELF DEVELOPMENT

Uncomfortable
feelings, low
self-esteem, distrust,
anger, fear, frustration,
inner resistance,
sadness, jealousy,
being stifled, not
expressive

Fully experiencing
and expressing and
re-integrating the
"yin" is the foundation
to cultivate the "yang"

All self-improvement
has to start with this. If we
build "yang" without
integrating the "yin", we
become neurotic.

Examples: Energy
listening, body-impulse
listening, body-work



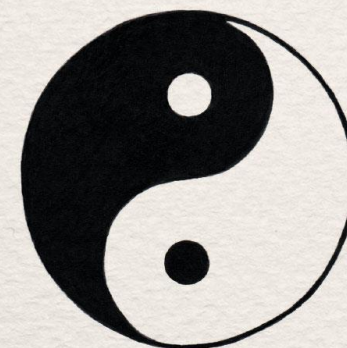
Daily practice in the two
spiritual disciplines of "yin"
and "yang" is the key to deep
personal transformation.

Courage, self-esteem,
happiness, joy,
confidence, trust,
being grounded, being
centered, firm, strong,
improvement, fearless,
fun, humor, free,
unstifled, expressive

Once we've integrated
the "yin", we can practice
the "yang". Both have to
be practiced daily to
create "Holiness" (being
whole as a human)

Practicing the "yang" is
the expression of primal
joy and life energy, primal
trust in one's existence

Examples: Affirmations,
reframing, hypnotherapy,
cultivating self-esteem



yin yang

The ancient symbol of harmony
reminds us that life is a balancing act
and most fulfilling when we learn
to embrace its dualities:

the ups & downs
good times & bad
joys & challenges

CONFUCIAN UNDERSTANDING OF YIN AND YANG

- ❖ Yang is heaven/sky = above = supreme = leading position = outsider
- ❖ Yin is earth = below = submission = passive and following = insider



APPLICATION OF CONFUCIAN UNDERSTANDING OF YIN-YANG IN GENDER IN TRADITIONAL CHINESE SOCIETY

- ❖ Male = Yang = heaven above = supreme in status = leading in action = work at outside for social and political fields
- ❖ Female = Yin = earth below = low in position = following/submission in action = work within household
- ❖ 在家从父 at home as a daughter, girls should follow their father
- ❖ 出嫁从夫, after marriage, as a wife one should follow her husband
- ❖ 夫死从子 after her husband dead, as a widow mother, one should follow her son.

APPLICATION OF CONFUCIAN UNDERSTANDING OF YIN-YANG IN
SEX AND SEXUALITY IN TRADITIONAL CHINESE SOCIETY

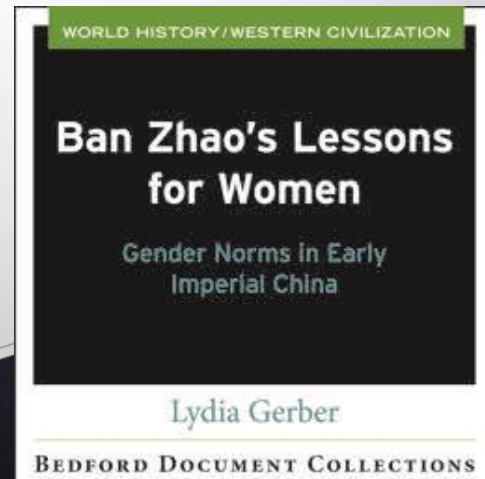
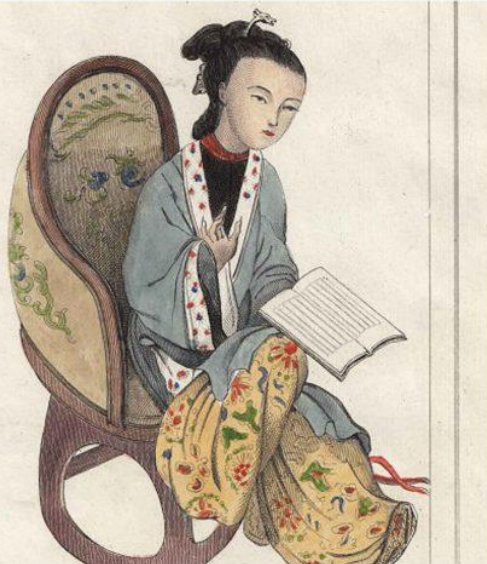
- ❖ To keep her virginity as a girl, and chastity as a wife or a lady, is essential for keep her and her family in honour and dignity.
- ❖ To be a prostitute, or a sex worker will be kept in the lowest rank in society.
- ❖ In sexual relationship with her husband or sex partner (in case of prostitute), female should be always in a following position rather than leading position
- ❖ Sex is for producing heirs of family chain, not for pleasure. So, as a wife, her virtue is more important than her beauty and good looking.
- ❖ Noted: the 4 virtues for female are: 妇德 Virtue, 妇言 language、 妇容 appearance、 妇功 merits

THE 4 VIRTUES OF FEMALE

- ❖ 四德 the 4 virtues appeared in *The Rites of Zhou* 周礼 (Session of Internal govern 内宰 of the Chapter entitled as Heavenly Officials 天官)
- ❖ 内宰 is an official title for instructors who teaching ladies who living in the palace for their virtues as a female.
- ❖ The 4 virtues of female (四德) refer to 德 **virtue** (personal virtue which can establish one as a moral model)、言 **speaking Manner** (a proper manner one can use the right words and appreciate knowledge to speak to different people in different times)、
- ❖ 容 **appearance** (dignified, steady, civilized appearance manner) and
- ❖ 功 **merits** (to have a functional way of successful running a household 治家之道: including 相夫教子 (assessing husband in career and educate children)、尊老爱幼 (Respect the elderly and love to the youngsters) and 勤俭节约 (industrious in household works, frugal in family operation, economize and save in daily life)

BAN ZHAO (班昭49-120CE) 'S 女诫 (WOMEN'S COMMANDMENTS)

- ❖ Ban Zhao extended this four virtues of women into a detail and practical guidance book for women: 《女诫》 (*Women's commandments/ Lessons for Women*).
- ❖ This number 1 of the 4 books (《女诫》、《内训》 Internal Instruction、《女论语》 Analects for Women、《女范捷录》 Recording of Fanjie for Women) for women , which includes 7 chapters (卑弱、夫妇、敬慎、妇行、专心、曲从和叔妹), is the most influential book before the communist China, and the first book girls need to study on.
- ❖ [Ban Zhao, Early Female Confucian Scholar and Intriguing Woman \(markcarlson-ghost.com\)](http://markcarlson-ghost.com)



I have noticed that the gentlemen of today understand only that a wife must be governed and that one's dignity must be preserved, and for this reason they instruct their sons and test their reading ability. But they completely ignore the fact that a husband and master must be served and ritual duties must be performed

但教男而不教女，不亦蔽于彼此之数乎！《礼》，八岁始教之书，十五而至于学矣。独不可依此以为则哉！

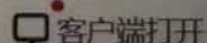
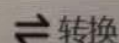
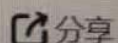
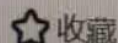
Does not instructing only the sons and not the daughters betray a total ignorance of the different norms governing the one and the other? According to the Rites, children should be taught to read and write when they are eight years old, and at fifteen they should be sent to school. Cannot we simply make this the general rule?

阴阳殊性，男女异行。阳以刚为德，阴以柔为用，男以强为贵，女以弱为美。故鄙谚有云：“生男如狼，犹恐其尪；生女如鼠，犹恐其虎。”

As Yin and Yang are not of the same nature, so man and woman have different characteristics. The distinctive quality of the Yang is rigidity; the function of the Yin is yielding. Man is honored for strength; a woman is beautiful on account of her gentleness. Hence there arose the common saying: "A man though born like a wolf may, it is feared, become a weak monstrosity; a woman though born like a mouse may, it is feared, become a tiger.".....

妇行第四。女有四行，一曰妇德，二曰妇言，三曰妇容，四曰妇功。夫云妇德，不必才明绝异也；妇言，不必辩口利辞也；妇容，不必颜色美丽也；妇功，不必工巧过人也。

Woman ought to have four qualifications: (1) womanly virtue; (2) womanly words; (3) womanly bearing; and (4) womanly work. Now what is called womanly virtue need not be brilliant ability, exceptionally different from others. Womanly words need be neither clever in debate nor keen in conversation. Womanly appearance requires neither a pretty nor a perfect face and form. Womanly work need not be work done more skillfully than that of others.



work need not be work done more skillfully than that of others

清闲贞静，守节整齐，行己有耻，动静有法，是谓妇德。

To guard carefully her chastity; to control circumspectly her behavior; in every motion to exhibit modesty; and to model each act on the best usage, this is womanly virtue.

择辞而说，不道恶语，时然后言，不厌于人，是谓妇言。

To choose her words with care; to avoid vulgar language; to speak at appropriate times; and nor to weary others with much conversation, may be called the characteristics of womanly words

盥浣尘秽，服饰鲜洁，沐浴以时，身不垢辱，是谓妇容。

To wash and scrub filth away; to keep clothes and ornaments fresh and clean; to wash the head and bathe the body regularly, and to keep the person free from disgraceful filth, may be called the characteristics of womanly bearing.

专心纺绩，不好戏笑，洁齐酒食，以奉宾客，是谓妇功。

With whole-hearted devotion to sew and to weave; to love not gossip and silly laughter; in cleanliness and order to prepare the wine and food for serving guests, may be called the characteristics of womanly work.

此四者，女人之大德，而不可乏之者也。然为之甚易，唯在存心耳。古人有言：“仁远乎哉？我欲仁，而仁斯至矣。”此之谓也。

These four qualifications characterize the greatest virtue of a woman. No woman can afford to be without them. In fact they are very easy to possess if a woman only treasure them in her heart. The ancients had a saying: "Is love afar off? If I desire love, then love is at hand!" So can it be said of

BAN ZHAO'S ACHIEVEMENT IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FIELDS

- ❖ 班昭 Ban zhao(45 ~ 117) was the daughter of Ban Biao班彪 who was the historian who start to write 《汉书》 the history of Han dynasty and the sister of Ban Gu班固 (32-92 CE, The famous historian who complete the most of the writing of 《汉书》) The History of Han and Ban Chao班超(32-102) who was the most famous warrior of East Han Dynasty.
- ❖ She marries Cao Shishu at 14 years old, but her husband died in early. She lived alone for most her life without her husband.
- ❖ She completed the writing and final editing *the History of Han* 汉书》 which was not yet finished by her brother Ban Gu.
- ❖ In the period of He Emperor of the Han dynasty, she was invited to the palace to teach the Queen and other high ranks wives of the emperor as their teacher and be entitled as Grant Master (大家)
- ❖ She lived in the time when Confucianism has become dominant ideology of Chinese society and Daoism has faded out from early Han pollical governing policy under the name of skills of Yellow Emperor and Laozi, while Daoist Religion had formed but not yet become an influential power.
- ❖ So we can see the important influence of Confucianism in her writing but also a hint of Daoist influence.

WHAT WE CAN LEARN

- ❖ From Ban Zhao's *Lessons for Women* it can be seen that
- ❖ 1. although the submission, yielding, soft, humble aspects of women are emphasized, a both side effort for family life is suggested.
- ❖ 2. Education of women is also suggested in The second lesson on proper marriage: Ban Zhao underscored the Confucian notion that a husband was to control his wife and a wife was to serve her husband. But she argued that if a girl was not educated like a boy, how would she know how to properly serve? Ban Zhao appeared to be trying to empower women without challenging prevailing social norms.

DAOIST UNDERSTANDING OF YIN AND YANG

- ❖ Although Yin and Yang are opposite forces with different functions and characteristics which made them different from each other, yet they are equal in both function and position, one cannot use good-bad, right and wrong to judge either of them
- ❖ They are both important for the development and sustainability of a being or a creation.
- ❖ They connected to each other and can be transformed into each other.
- ❖ They are always embraced the party and cannot exist without each other.



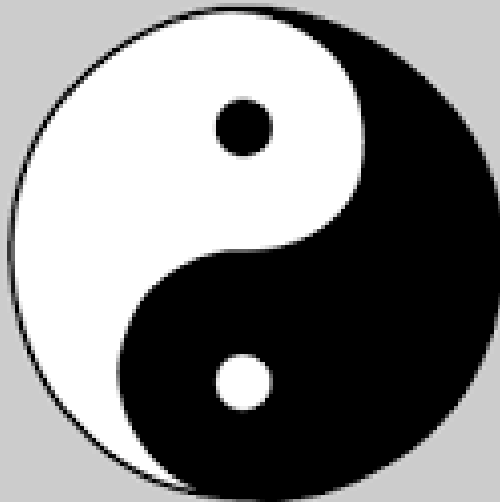
APPLICATION OF DAOIST UNDERSTANDING OF YIN-YANG IN CHINESE UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER

- ❖ Yin as the representation of femininity and female and therefore with characteristics of soft, gentle, weak, quiet, stillness, tranquil, detail, delicacy, flexibility, plain; as the representation of mother having characteristics such as support, compassion, unconditional love, yielding, creativity, creation
- ❖ Yang as the representation of masculinity and male with characteristics of hard, brave, action, unchangeable, unstable, violate, straight, aggressive; as the representation of father with characteristics as leading, generated, stern, rigorous, strict, sharp, harsh, protect



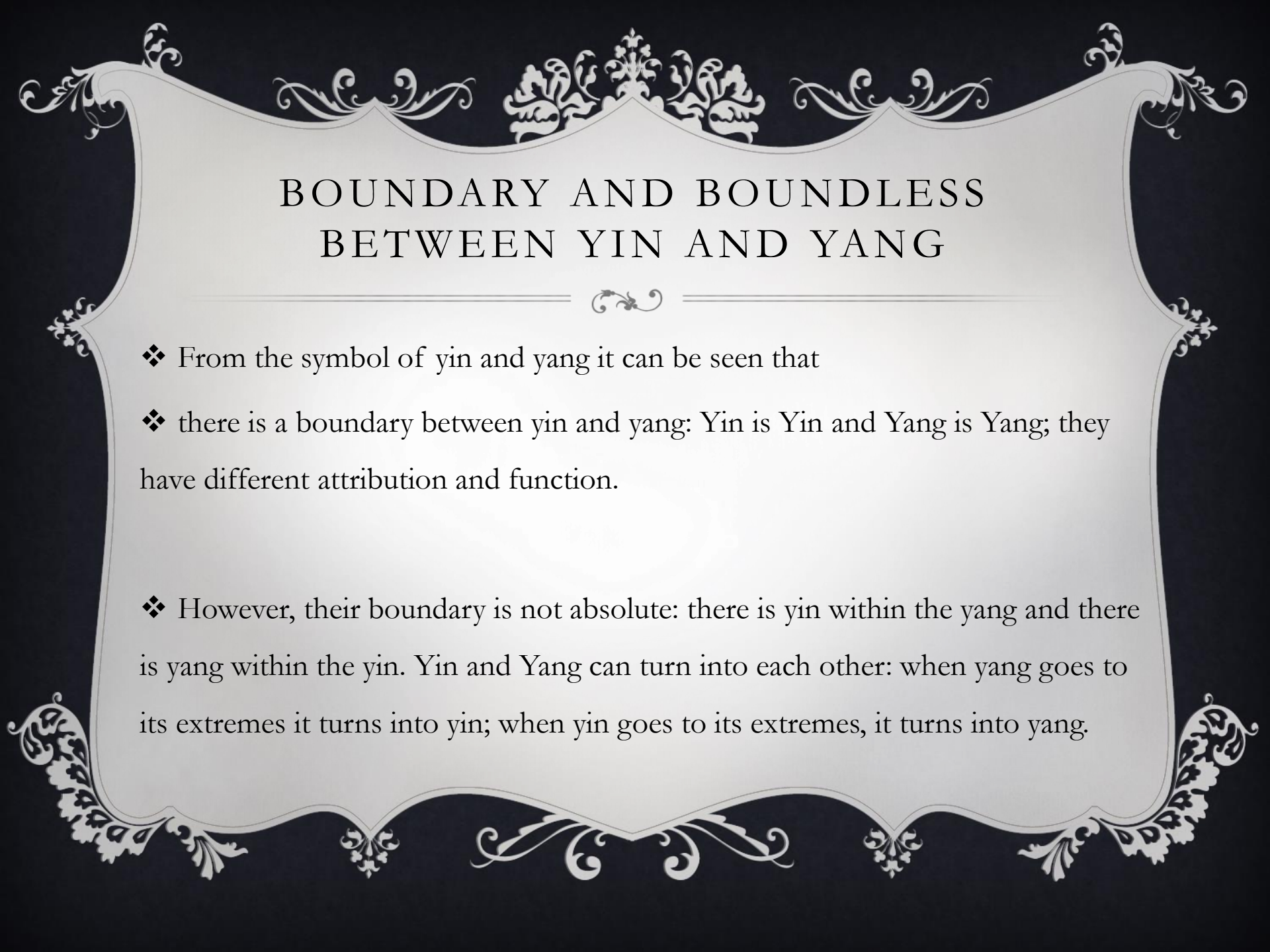
YANG

*heaven
 masculine
 rational
 hardness
 lightness
 sun
 fire*



YIN

*earth
 feminine
 emotional
 softness
 heaviness
 moon
 water*



BOUNDARY AND BOUNDLESS BETWEEN YIN AND YANG

- ❖ From the symbol of yin and yang it can be seen that
- ❖ there is a boundary between yin and yang: Yin is Yin and Yang is Yang; they have different attribution and function.
- ❖ However, their boundary is not absolute: there is yin within the yang and there is yang within the yin. Yin and Yang can turn into each other: when yang goes to its extremes it turns into yin; when yin goes to its extremes, it turns into yang.

DAOIST ATTITUDE ON GENDER AND SEX

- ❖ Boundary in both gender and sex is a human made concept, and in natural reality, both genders have their own moment in both time and space.
- ❖ Applying such an idea into understanding of gender, it could suggest that both genders should be given equal respectable position and treatment, no gender is less important than the other.
- ❖ Applying such an idea into understanding of sex, both sides of sex partner should be considered by each other in both health benefits and physical and psychological pleasure.

房中术 TECHNIQUE / SKILLS OF BEDCHAMBERS

- ❖ Daoist view on Sex and Sexuality: sense of equality, which lead two results:
- ❖ 1. to ensure the pleasure of sex partner;
- ❖ 2. important tool for gaining and keeping one's health through sex conducts.

Skills of Bedchamber and Daoist longevity and immortality cultivation:

- ❖ Taoist sexual practices (房中术; 房中術; *fángzhōngshù*; 'arts of the bedchamber') are also known as "Joining Energy" or "The Joining of the Essences".
- ❖ Practitioners believe that by performing these sexual arts, one can stay in good health, and attain longevity or spiritual advancement.
- ❖ **Noted:** **1.** This exercise is only popular in a period time from Han Dynasty 220BCE to 220 - Tang Dynasty 618- 907) and **2.** This is a skill of nourishing of life not a skill of immortality cultivation, so not practiced by Daoist practitioners who aimed to immortality cultivation, especially the Quan Zhen Daoists who living in a fulltime monastery life .

HISTORY OF TEXTS OF SKILLS OF BEDCHAMBER

- ❖ Some Taoist sects during the Han dynasty performed sexual intercourse as a spiritual practice, called “Héqì” (合氣, “Joining Energy”).
- ❖ The first sexual texts that survive today are those found at the Mawangdui. While Taoism had not yet fully evolved as a philosophy at this time, these texts shared some remarkable similarities with later Tang dynasty texts, such as the Ishinpō (醫心方). The sexual arts arguably reached their climax between the end of the Han dynasty and the end of the Tang dynasty.
- ❖ After 1000 AD, Confucian restraining attitudes towards sexuality became stronger, so that by the beginning of the Qing dynasty in 1644, sex was a taboo topic in public life. These Confucians alleged that the separation of genders in most social activities existed 2,000 years ago and suppressed the sexual arts. Because of the taboo surrounding sex, there was much censoring done during the Qing in literature, and the sexual arts disappeared in public life.
- ❖ As a result, some of the texts survived only in Japan, and most scholars had no idea that such a different concept of sex existed in early China.

THE CONTENT OF SKILLS OF BEDCHAMBER

- ❖ Fangzhongshu techniques deal for the most part with **sexual skills, methods and techniques** with regard to **intercourse between men and women**.
- ❖ The basic concepts cover sexual harmony and how to reach it, attention for flirting and foreplay before sex, and artistic ability in sexual behavior.
- ❖ It is claimed that the real meaning of the Fangzhongshu is not so much the sexual arts itself but using sexual activity to stay in good health, retain and produce Jing (a nutritive essence and one of the so-called Three Treasures Jing, Qi and Shen), promote Life Energy (Qi essence) and longevity, and grow in Spiritual Wisdom (Shen essence).
- ❖ However, as it has been mentioned, it is not practised in the main Daoist religious tradition, especially in completed reality tradition.

FANGZHONGSHU AND INDIAN *KAMA SUTRA* TEXTS

- ❖ In fact, the Fangzhongshu has a lot in common with the well-known ancient Indian *Kama Sutra* texts.
- ❖ It also contains many directives and techniques for treatments that cure erectile dysfunction, premature ejaculation, anejaculation, and other kinds of sexual dysfunction or problems.
- ❖ Fangzhongshu describes a large number of special sexual positions that serve to cure or prevent illnesses and discomforts.

Sexual Fluids and Life Energy

- ❖ Practitioners of this skills always believe that there is a connect between the loss of ejaculatory fluids and the loss of vital life force and energy, which will result in premature aging, illnesses, and general fatigue. Thus, it's believed that decreasing the frequency of – or even totally avoiding – ejaculation is essential to preserve life essence. Yet, female orgasms, on the other hand, are claimed to be spiritually energizing, and not draining.
- ❖ Accordingly, **different methods to control ejaculation** were developed (such as: pulling out immediately before an orgasm, certain breathing and focusing techniques, or applying pressure on the perineum and thereby retaining the sperm).
- ❖ Another important idea is that **the union of a man and a woman (i.e. lovemaking) can result in the creation of sexual energy and Jing essence**, which in its turn can be **transformed into Qi to replenish Life Force**. This process is called *Sexual Alchemy*. Now, by having as much sex as possible one has the opportunity to transform more Jing and experience many health benefits.
- ❖ The Fangzhongshu is certainly not only for men. **Women should be stimulated and pleased also in order to be able to benefit from the sexual act**. If sex is performed in this manner, **women can create more Jing, benefitting both men and women**.

Qigong and Sex 1

❖ **Sexual QiGong is a newly developed modern form of skills of bedchamber . It claims that**

❖ Sexual Qigong – sometimes also referred to as Sexual Kung Fu – is by many regarded as an inner form of Qigong and suitable for both men and women.

❖ It's based on the idea of cultivating our powerful sexual energy and (re)direct it to create better physical health, prolong life, improve vitality and creativity, and refine sexuality into more spiritual realms.

❖ It's also used to heal sexual or genital problems, like erectile dysfunction, premature ejaculation, difficult (sexual) relationships, low libido, prostate problems, energetic blockages of reproduction organs, PMS (Premenstrual Syndrome), and menstrual problems, among other health issues.

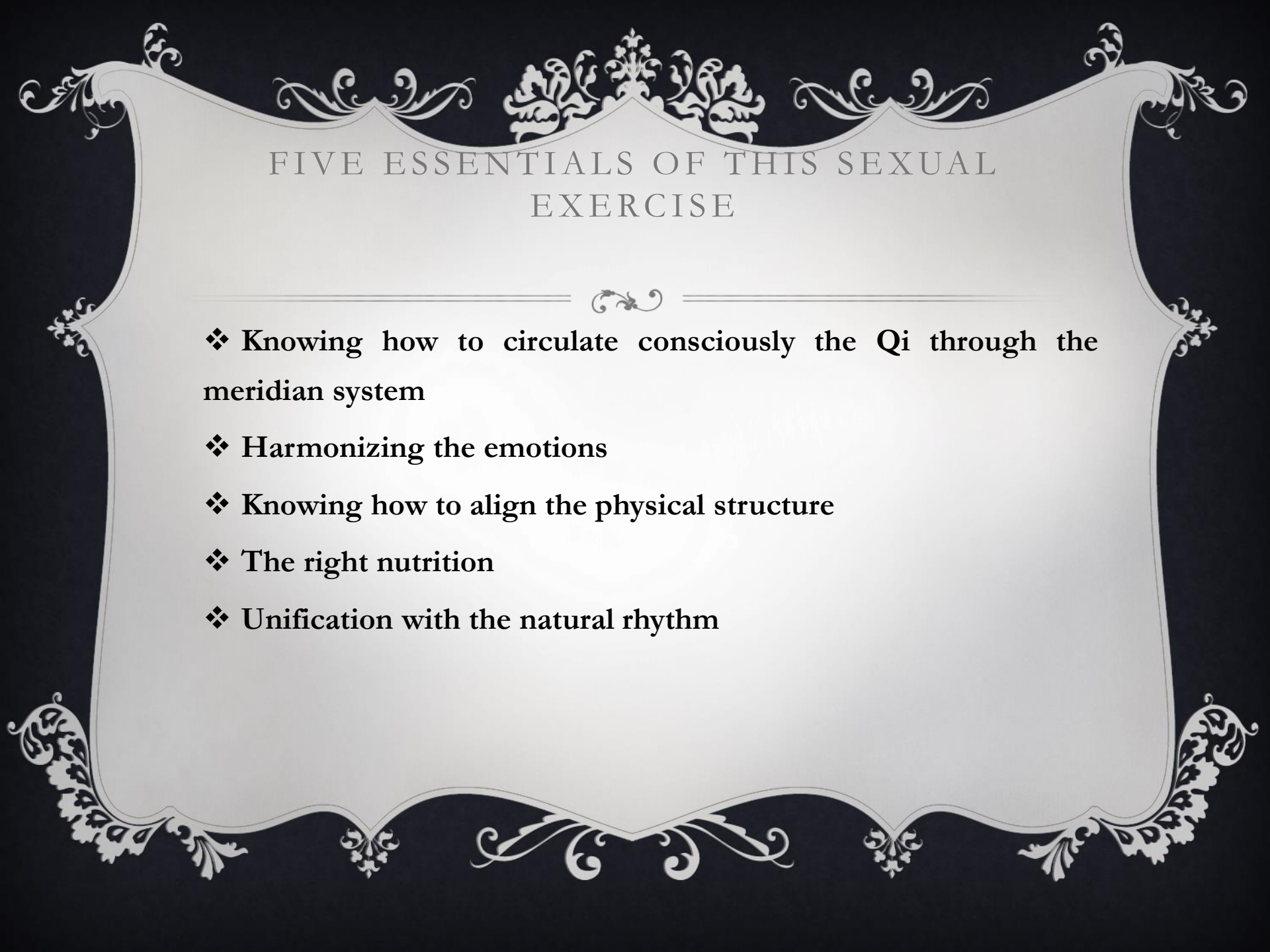
❖ Additionally, it's also exercised to have a better sex-life and better sexual vitality and 'performance,' for instance to become multi-orgasmic in one's sexual relationships.

❖ The art of Sexual Qigong boasts advanced exercises and techniques, including meditation practices – for both individuals and couples – which are specifically designed to cultivate, store and redirect sexual energies.

Qigong and Sex 2

Qigong, also written as Chi Kung, is an ancient Chinese tradition and art that has its focus on cultivating, circulating, and harmonizing so-called Qi or Life Energy with the primary purpose to become stronger, to heal yourself, and to increase wisdom and spiritual knowledge.

- ❖ The Qigong exercise system consists of sets of coordinated body postures, movements, breathing, and meditation. People practice it across China and worldwide in many countries for fitness, recreation, relaxation, self-healing and moral self-cultivation, preventive, alternative and complementary medicine, for meditation, promoting spirituality, and for martial arts training.
- ❖ With its origins in ancient Chinese culture and going back at least thousand years, a very broad variety of Qigong forms and styles have developed which – on top level – perhaps can best be segmented in *inner* (nei) and *outer* (wei) forms of Qigong.
- ❖ For instance, in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Qigong is used for preventive and curative treatments, in Confucianism to support longevity and improve morality, in Daoism (Taoism) and Buddhism it's part of meditative practices, and in the martial arts it's used to improve combat competencies.
- ❖ Today, Qigong training, exercises and practices often integrate many other ancient Chinese or Taoist practices into the art, such as Neidan or Inner Alchemy, Zhan Zhuang or Standing Meditation, and Tao Yin or Taoist Yoga, to name a few.



FIVE ESSENTIALS OF THIS SEXUAL EXERCISE

- ❖ Knowing how to circulate consciously the Qi through the meridian system
- ❖ Harmonizing the emotions
- ❖ Knowing how to align the physical structure
- ❖ The right nutrition
- ❖ Unification with the natural rhythm

SEX IN EARLY CHINESE LITERATURE - 1500 BC TO 770 BC

- ❖ In early Chinese literature, sexual acts had metaphorical imagery.
- ❖ "Clouds" in literature referred to a woman's ova and vaginal secretions.
- ❖ "Rain" referred to a man's emission of semen.
- ❖ <https://bigeye.com/sexeducation/ancientchina.html>

SEX HISTORY: CHOU DYNASTY - 770 BC TO 222 BC

- ❖ They divided men and women into the yin and the yang.
- ❖ Women were said to have an unexhaustable supply of yin essence. While men had a limited supply of yang.
- ❖ **It was forbidden for men to use up their yang essence without acquiring plenty of yin essence.** That meant that before a man was allowed to ejaculate, he had to prolong it, making a woman orgasm several times to acquire her yin essence.
- ❖ If a man ejaculated or used up his yang essence without taking any yin essence it was said to cause him health problems and even death.

- ❖ **Masturbation by men** was seen as unhealthy and forbidden, for it was said to cause a complete loss of his vital yang essence.

- ❖ **Women could masturbate freely** as they were said to have an unlimited yin. Medical texts only warned women against masturbation with foreign objects which were believed to injure the womb and internal sexual organs. Nocturnal emissions or 'wet dreams' that men had were seen as a health problem for men.

HOMOSEXUALITY IN ZHOU DYNASTY

❖ During Zhou time, female homosexuality was widespread, but male homosexuality was rare.

❖ **Male homosexuality was forbidden** because it was considered a complete loss of yang essence on the part of both men.

❖ Meanwhile, since women were said to have an unlimited yin essence, there was no loss of yin in female homosexual relations.

❖ Not until the Han dynasty did male homosexuality figures reach the same standard as among other societies.

PROSTITUTION IN ZHOU

- ❖ At first, prostitution was accepted by the Chinese. Men thought that they could gain more yin from prostitutes than from normal women. They believed that since such women had sex with so many men, that they had acquired more yang essence from them, thus, they could give a patron more yang essence than he had lost.
- ❖ However, Chinese medicine began to identify prostitutes with many diseases at an early stage in human history and they began warning men against them.

Sex in Xin (CH'IN)新 DYNASTY - 9 TO 24 AD

❖ The Ch'in Dynasty was a very shorted lived dynasty normally did not counted as an independent dynasty as it was only shifted force from Eastern Han to the Western Han Dynasty. However, sex culture in this period was totally shifted Confucianist culture where Women were placed in an inferior position to men.

1. All physical contact between men and women was confined to marriage and their bedroom or a couch. After leaving the bedroom or couch, there was to be no physical contact between husbands and wives.
2. The sex act in itself was looked upon as a sort of sin by Confucianism. Sex was only for procreation and to provide a sacred family life.
3. Men were allowed to see concubines and there was an entire set of Confucianist rules for concubines, such as grooming rules.
4. A man's concubine was not allowed to stay in bed after the sex act.
5. Even if the concubine was age 50, the man was supposed to have sex with his concubine every five days.

Sex in LATER HAN DYNASTY (Eastern Han Dynasty) – 25 AD TO 220 AD

- ❖ By this point in time, Daoism was now an organized religion with its own church and priests.

❖ New sexual texts began to surface such as *The Handbook of the Plain Girl* 素女 and *The Art of the Bedchamber* 房中术.

❖ Both texts referred to a Yellow Emperor, who was attempting to live a long, healthy life and obtain a form of immortality through sex.

❖ Emphasis was placed on breathing techniques during sex to prolong a man's orgasm to make a woman orgasm several times to gain her yin essence.

New metaphors and symbolism evolved in literature to show men and women and their sexuality:

- ❖ The color red was female, a crucible, the ova, her cinnabar (vulva).
- ❖ The color white became symbolic of men and their semen.
- ❖ The White Tiger 白虎 was symbolic of men and the Green Dragon 青龙 was symbolic of women.

**THREE KINGDOMS & SIX DYNASTIES ,
221 AD TO 590 AD**

❖ During this time frame there were many conflicts between different cultures and the ruling classes during the wars.



There was intermixing between Taoist doctrines, Confucian doctrines and Buddhist doctrines.

SUI DYNASTY - 590 AD TO 618 AD

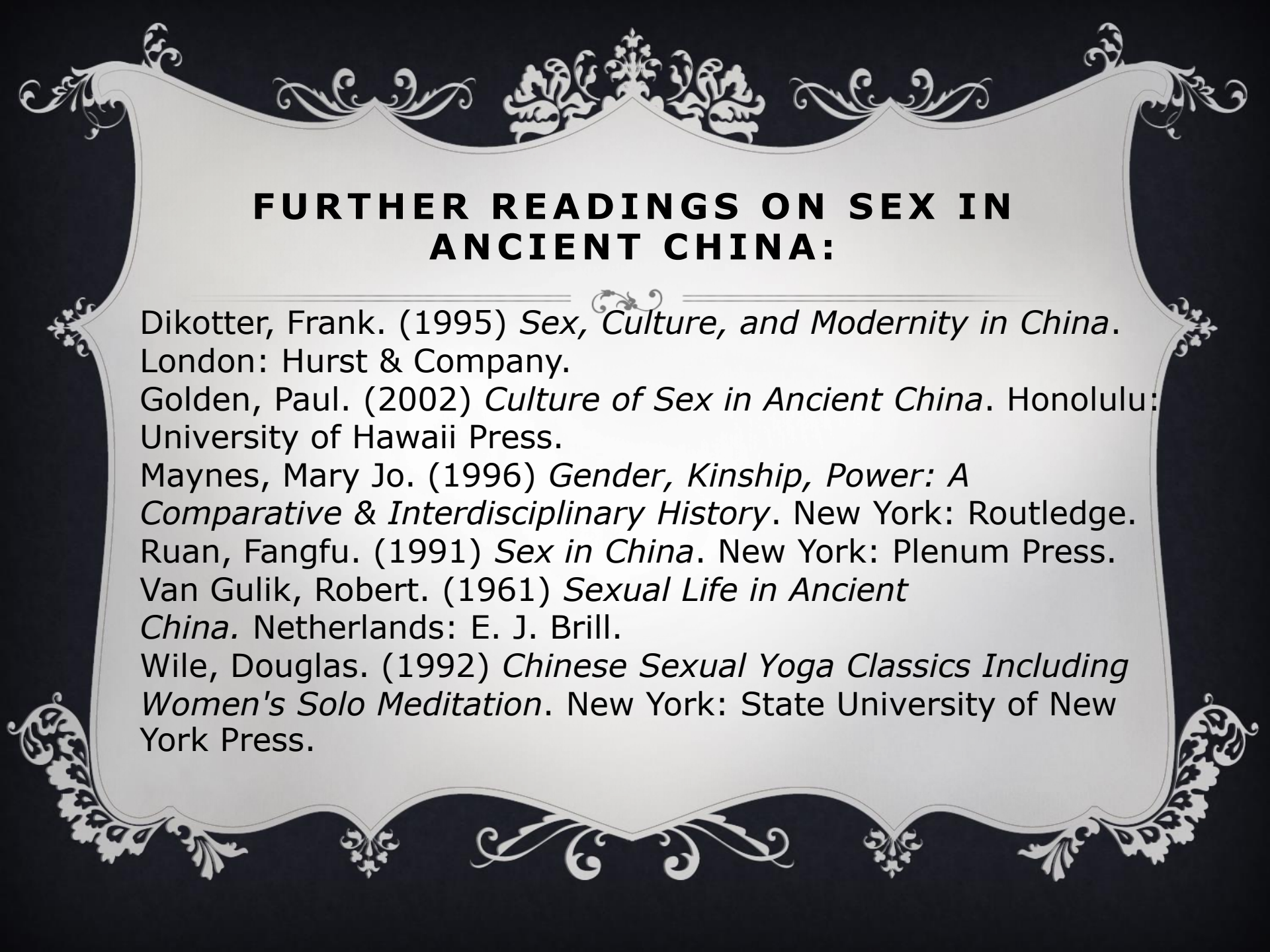
❖ Once again, China returned to the Daoist doctrines and new sexual literature and manuals began to flourish.

❖ Such texts included the following: *The Secret Methods of the Plain Girl*, *Handbook of Sex of the Dark Girl*, *Recipes of the Plain Girl*, *Secret Prescriptions for the Bedchamber*, *Principles of Nurturing*, *Ishimpo*, *Secrets of the Jade Chamber*

Many of the texts continue the sexual instruction to the Yellow Emperor, trying to tell him how to obtain a long, immortal healthy life, by having many sexual relations with many women gaining their yin essence without expending his yang essence, or prolonging his orgasms/ejaculation.

❖ All of the texts are very detailed and each has unique sets of sexual positions with animal-like names for each individual sex position.

❖ Sex was seen as a cure-all for every health ailment that a man had, and different sexual positions were given as prescriptions to cure these ailments.



FURTHER READINGS ON SEX IN ANCIENT CHINA:

Dikotter, Frank. (1995) *Sex, Culture, and Modernity in China*. London: Hurst & Company.

Golden, Paul. (2002) *Culture of Sex in Ancient China*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Maynes, Mary Jo. (1996) *Gender, Kinship, Power: A Comparative & Interdisciplinary History*. New York: Routledge.

Ruan, Fangfu. (1991) *Sex in China*. New York: Plenum Press.

Van Gulik, Robert. (1961) *Sexual Life in Ancient China*. Netherlands: E. J. Brill.

Wile, Douglas. (1992) *Chinese Sexual Yoga Classics Including Women's Solo Meditation*. New York: State University of New York Press.

CLASSIC CHINESE EROTICA: FICTION

- ❖ Erotica was present in the form of fiction (both full-length novels and short stories) and poetry, erotic art in the form of very practical "pillow books", and taoist treatises on effective sexual techniques for "maximizing life energies".
- ❖ The best known erotic novel, by far, is the "The Golden Lotus", which Pearl S. Buck called "China's greatest novel of physical love".
- ❖ However, the classical Chinese erotic novels should not be confused with pornography. If one removed the sexually explicit passages of "The Golden Lotus", we would still have a great novel of manners, one of whose hallmark attributes is the level of detail that the author infused on the novel.



金瓶梅

The Golden Lotus

[Buy @Amazon.com](#) Written by Lanling Xiaoxiao Sheng

Translated by Clement Egerton

Tuttle Classics, 2011

Rating: ★★★★★

The best known Chinese erotic novel is based on a major expansion of a side story of the Water Margin. The story is about Hsi-meng Ching, a rich man with four wives who sets out to acquire wives number 5 and 6. This book was often banned in China for being too sexually explicit. Westerners were not free from self-censorship, though. When Clement Egerton's first published his translation, he rendered all the sexual passages in Latin. Fortunately, the whole work is now available in English. The newer and better translation is by David Tod Roy.

The Fountainhead of Chinese Erotica:

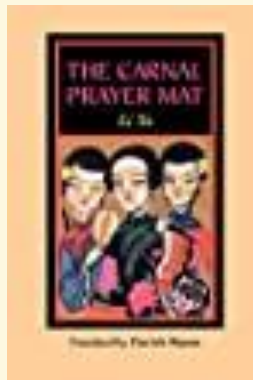
The Lord of Perfect Satisfaction

Translated by Charles E. Stone

University of Hawaii Press, 2003

271 pages

This short novel tells the story of infamous Tang Empress Wu Zetian, the only Chinese empress to actually rule China on her own. (Other empresses ruled but ostensibly only as regents to a child emperor.) The novel was famous for being the first one to depict sexuality in a very graphic manner, thus serving as the prototype for all the ones that followed.



Rating: ★★★★★

肉蒲團

The Carnal Prayer Mat

Written by Li Yu in 1657

Translated by Patrick Hanan

University of Hawaii Press,
1996

336 pages

This masterpiece is an erotic satire disguised as a moralistic tale. The story is about a scholar who wants to become a monk but not before he has married the prettiest girl around. Wanting to seduce a beautiful woman who happens to be married to a well-endowed stud, he resorts to extreme measures to be competitive. He undergoes surgery to replace his penis with that of a dog, an amazing plot turn considering that the story was written in the 17th century, long before plastic surgery was invented. The story is sexy, imaginative, takes many unexpected turns and, best of all, is outrageously funny. Each chapter ends with a short critique presumably written by a third-party reviewer but quite likely were written by the author himself to add even more to the humor. The Sex and Zen movie was loosely based on the book.



Rating: ★★★★★

A translation of half the stories of *Shi'er Lou*, a book of short stories by the author of The Carnal Prayer Mat. The translation takes its title from the first story, in which a scholar uses a new technology from the West, a telescope, to spy on his neighbors. With his new found knowledge he proceeds to woo the girl and convince the girl's father of that the marriage is predestined. The other stories are equally unconventional and fun.

十二樓

A Tower for the Summer Heat

Written by Li Yu, 1657

Translated by Patrick Hanan

Columbia University Press, 1998

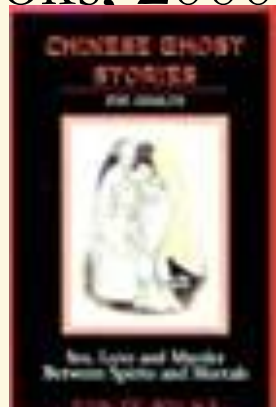
256 pages

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Chinese Ghost Stories for Adults: Sex, Love, and Murder between Spirits and Mortals

Written by Pu Sung-Ling
(1640-1715)

Translated by Tom Ma
Barricade Books, 2000
214 pages



This is a translation of selected stories from the Liao Tsai Chih Yi, a classic from 18th century containing over 400 short stories Pu Sung-Ling is China's master storyteller whose stories, usually full of supernatural beings and events, reveal a Taoist nonconformist attitude in the midst of Confucian society.