

SESSION2: CHINESE UNDERSTANDING OF YANGSHENG

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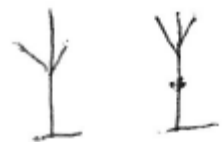
DEFINITION OF YANGSHENG

- ◉ The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions | 1997 | JOHN BOWKER
- ◉ Yang-sheng (Chin., ‘nourishing the body’). Taoist practices, especially through breathing and directing the breath (ch'i) to prolong life and attain immortality.

YANGSHENG IN CHINESE UNDERSTANDING

- ◉ Literally Yangsheng in Chinese is to mean nurturing, cultivation, preservation and protection of life energy
- ◉ Yangsheng in China is a broad concept which includes nurturing and cultivation of one's body and soul/spirit through various practice: passive or initiative
- ◉ It is a systematic practice which can promote one's general well-being and maintain one's physical and mental health in one hand, and on the other hand can assist one to fulfil one's spiritual transcendence

THE ORIGINAL MEANING OF SHENG



Oracle-Bone
inscriptions



Bronze
inscriptions



seal
character

The original writing of sheng in Oracle Bone inscription looks like a new plant to mean new plant or to grow plant.

It has not too much change in the Bronze and Seal inscriptions.

The extended meaning of sheng is to generate and grow of things; to mean to take place, to give birth, to live, to produce, to renew and so on, and to mean all things that opposite to death which is alive.

LIFE AS THE DESTINY OF A LIVING BEING

- Life = Life Span = Fate/Destiny (the time length) of an living creature when it is being alive between its Birth and its Death
- Shengming 生命 belongs to every living being:
- Rensheng 人生: human life
- Chusheng 畜牲 / 畜生: life of animals
- Cao-ben sheng 草本生: life of grass and tree

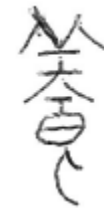
ORIGINAL MEANING OF YANG



Oracle-Bone
inscriptions



Bronze
inscriptions



Seal
character

The original meaning of Yang means to graze sheep, which can be seen From both the oracle Bone and Bronze Inscriptions where looks like a sheep is driving by a hand with a stick in it.

From the Seal Inscription (sheep and food) it can be seen that Yang has changed to indication of food, to mean to feed, to cultivate, to conserve, to nourish, to nurture, to foster, to support, to maintain, to protect, and care of one's health, and to educate.

NOURISHING LIFE (养生) IN CHINESE PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION

- ◉ Chinese Religion as A ‘This World Religion’ and Chinese Philosophy as A Philosophy of Life
- ◉ **Strong Focus of Chinese Religion on Human Secular Life (Three Religions in One):**
- ◉ All Three religion all Put ‘**Morality**’ at the centre of people’s healthy, familial, social, political and spiritual life,
- ◉ **All Three religion put Heavy Emphasis on Yangsheng (Nurturing Life)**
- ◉ Moral healing in Confucianism
- ◉ Spiritual Healing in Buddhism and Daoism
- ◉ Healthy Longevity and immortality cultivation in Daoism

YANGSHENG IN CONFUCIAN UNDERSTANDING

- ◉ Yangsheng is more focus on human society life rather than human individual life
- ◉ How to yangsheng: put emphasis on individual familial, social and political responsibility: sage king 圣君, compassionate father 慈父, filial son 孝子
- ◉ Chanel and methodology of yangsheng: moral deed, appreciated behavior, self sacrifice to fulfill moral duty and greater justice
- ◉
- ◉ Moral healing: self confession to immoral wrong doings and correct them sincerely

XUNZI'S CONVICTION THAT MAN HAD THE ABILITY TO SHAPE THEIR OWN DESTINY

- ◉ He who in his life follows the Dao without prejudice and without doubts, cannot suffer harm from heaven.
- ◉ Floods and droughts will bring him neither hunger nor thirst; cold and heat will not cause him to fall ill.
- ◉ Strange beings can send him no misfortune.
- ◉ But if the fundamental principles [of state] are neglected and outlays are marked by wastefulness, heaven will prevent prosperity.'
- ◉ (xunzi chi-chieh, 1971, p.205)

XUNZI'S UNDERSTANDING OF YANGSHENG

- ◉ If you employ the measure of excellence in every circumstance to control the vital breath and nourish life, you will outlive even Patriarch Peng (who lived over 800 years);
- ◉ and if you use it to cultivate your character and strengthen your self, you will establish a reputation equal to that of Yao or Yu (Two Ancient Sage Kings)

XUNZI: FOLLOWING CEREMONIAL CUSTOMS CAN PROMISE INDIVIDUAL HEALTH AND PROSPERITY

- ◉ If a person utilizes his body and his nature, his insight, understanding and mature consideration in the manner prescribed by custom, order and success will ensure; otherwise, the result is unpredictability and upheaval, idleness and unruliness.
- ◉ If the consumption of food and drink, clothing, lodging at home and outside of the home, as well as movement and rest are carried out in the manner prescribed by custom, one will achieve harmony and order; otherwise one is subject to attack and betrayal, and illness will occur. (xunzi chi-chieh, 1971, p.13-14)

CONFUCIAN UNDERSTANDING OF YANGSHENG

- ◉ In 'Li Lou' Part B of *Mencius*,
- ◉ Mencius uses yangsheng to mean support the life of one's parent(*Mencius*:8.13).
- ◉ Let s prince seek by his excellence to nourish men, and he will be able to subdue the whole empire. (4B:16)

NOURISHING QI OF MENCIUS

- ◉ But there is a development of its life day and night, and in the calm air of the morning, just between night and day, the mind feels in a degree those desires and aversions which are proper to humanity, but the feeling is not strong, and it is fettered and destroyed by what takes place during the day.
- ◉ This fettering taking place again and again: the restorative influence of the night is not sufficient to preserve the proper goodness of the mind; and when this proves insufficient from that of the irrational animals, which when people see, they think that it never has those powers which I assert. But does this condition represent the feelings proper to humanity?
- ◉ Therefore, if it receive its proper nourishment, there is nothing which will not grow. If it lose its proper nourishment, there is nothing which will not decay away.

NOURISHING VAST FLOWING QI

- ◉ Mencius said he is skilled in nourishing his vast flowing Righteous Qi (passion nature). When asked what was it, Mencius replied,
- ◉ It is difficult to describe it. As Qi, it is exceedingly great, and exceedingly strong. If it is nourished by rectitude and sustaining no injury, it then fills up all between heaven and earth.
- ◉ As a Qi, it need to be mated/assisted by righteousness and Dao, otherwise, it will be dispirited. It is produced by the accumulation of righteous deeds, it is not to be obtained by incidental acts of righteousness. If the mind does not feel complacency in the conduct, the Qi becomes disheartened. (2A:2:12-15)

NOURISHING VAST FLOWING QI 2: NOT ASSISTING THE GROWTH OF THE QI

- ◉ Let not the mind forget it, but let there be no assisting the growth of the Qi. Let not be like the man of Sung, who tried to helping the Plant to grow long but pulled it up.
- ◉ ‘There are few in the world who do not deal with their passion nature as if they were assisting the corn to grow long. Some indeed consider it of no benefit to them, and let it alone:
- ◉ They do not weed their corn. They who assist it to grow long, pull out their corn. What they do is not only for no benefit to the Qi, but it also injuries it.
'(2A:2:12-16)

NOURISHING VAST FLOWING QI 3: CULTIVATION OF QI AND MORAL CULTIVATION

- ◉ The will is the leader of the Qi (passion nature). The Qi (passion nature) pervades and animates the body. The will is first and chief, and the Qi (passion nature) is subordinate to it. therefore I say, 'Maintain firm the will, and do no violence to the Qi (passion nature).' (2A:2:9)
- ◉ When it is the will alone which is active, it moves the Qi (passion nature). When it is the Qi (passion nature) alone which is active, it moves the will. For instance now, in the case of a man falling or running; that is from the Qi (passion nature), and yet it moves the mind. (2A:2:10)

YANGSHENG IN CHINESE BUDDHISM

- ◎ 有身则有病，有生就有死，祛病首要是养性
cultivation spirituality is the first important thing for avoiding illness, 长寿秘诀是养心
cultivating mind/heart is the secret weapon for achieving longevity。精神不宁则百邪侵身，休息万念方能益寿延年：
- ◎ 慈悲行善可享受精神快乐compassion and good deed
- ◎ 自在随缘可得心神安逸：following causes- effect by a unrestrained self to achieve a easy mind
- ◎ 忍让持戒可达情绪安详tolerance and following the commandments to achieve tranquil emotion/feeling
- ◎ 放下安心可得心灵坦然lay down all warries and thinking to calm and easy one's heart
- ◎ 精神超脱，唯求心灵空寂，淡化形体存亡
- ◎ 放舍诸缘，休息万念 put down all causes and rest all attachments

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DAOIST YANGSHENG & MODERN SCIENCE

- ◉ Daoist Yangsheng regarding the human body as an organic whole
- ◉ Daoist Yangsheng regarding Life as an unification of the physical body (xing形), the life energy (qi 气) and the spirit/mind/soul (shen神)
- ◉ or the Xing (essence 性) and the Ming (fate of life 命)
- ◉ Daoist and Buddhist Yangsheng's emphasis on the important role of the disposition of mind towards human health
- ◉ Daoist Yangsheng methods and various practical techniques although are not all scientific approved, but all being effective in clinical practice

THE AIM OF YANGSHENG (NOURISHING LIFE)

- ⦿ Not Emphasis on curing sickness or saving lives of those who are with terminal disease, but rather on the prevention and avoidance of conditions that result in illness.
- ⦿ Yangsheng practices aim to maintain harmony between mind and body and to improve and enhance one's internal conditions for one's own physical and spiritual health

THE MAIN FOCUS OF YANGSHENG

- ◉ At the heart of Yangsheng is the attempt to maintain equilibrium in order to improve and enhance the operation of the bodily functions
- ◉ The main focus of Yangsheng is to guide people towards a high quality of life through a good and healthy life style and special technique.

LIFE NURTURED BY YANGSHENG PRACTICE

- ◉ Yangsheng focuses on not only the harmony within the individual human body,
- ◉ but also on the harmony between individual and society, and human society and the natural environment.
- ◉ Zhuangzi: Yangsheng is to whip the sheep who is lagging behind

YANGSHENG AS A DIY HEALTH SELF CARE THEORY AND PRACTICE

- ◉ Daoist Yangsheng focus on self physical and mental health cultivation
- ◉ Daoist yangsheng emphasizes ‘我命在我不在天’ (My life is in my own hands rather than in the hands of God), has a positive attitude on self health care
- ◉ Daoist yangsheng promotes DIY method in maintaining and promoting vitality and energy

POPULAR YANGSHENG EXERCISES IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA

- ◉ Moving Yangsheng Gong (Taiji, Five Animals Frolics, Five Phases Gong, Eight Brocades, jingang gong and longevity yangsheng gong)
- ◉ Quiet Yangsheng Gong (Daoyin: Daoist breath regulation; Standing meditation; Sitting meditation)
- ◉ Daily Life Yangsheng: Wellbeing Life Style (healthy daily routine: habits, walking, sitting, sleeping, sexuality; healthy diet; food medicine)
- ◉ Cultivation of longevity and Immortality: Inner and External Alchemy; Avoiding Grains; Turtle Breath; Embryo Breath; Accumulating Good deed

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE INTERESTED IN DAOIST PHILOSOPHY AND YANGSHENG EXERCISE?

- ◉ Chinese Medicine practitioners
- ◉ Quantum Physicists
- ◉ Environmentalists
- ◉ Feminists
- ◉ longevity practitioners
- ◉ Self care promoter
- ◉ Daoist Alchemists
- ◉ Daoist religious practitioners

YANGSHENG PRACTICE AND AGEING SOCIETY

- ◉ The problem and challenge of the forthcoming ageing society
- ◉ Hospital cost and labour shortage in ageing society
- ◉ What can Daoist possible contribute to the Chinese and worldly ageing society

ANY POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF YANGSHENG TO THE WEST?

- ◉ Holistic Method?
- ◉ Practices through normal daily life?
- ◉ Simple in doing?
- ◉ Cheap in cost?
- ◉ Effective in function ?
- ◉ Especially good at treating chronic disease?

WHY YANGSHENG IS HOT IN CHINA

- ◎ 1. Quality of Life is getting Higher?
- ◎ 2. Hospital Cost is too expensive?
- ◎ 3. Hospital Service is too poor?
- ◎ 4. People desire better and healthier life?
- ◎ 5. People want to control their health by their own hands?
- ◎ 6. Yangsheng is simple and easier to practise?