



Fifteen Minutes to Health

FIFTEEN MINUTES TO HEALTH



Four Directions Tai-Chi Form aka Five Elements Tai-Chi

**Enjoy this short, compact, and integrative Tai-Chi form
Experience increased stamina, inner calm and balance
from practicing it regularly**



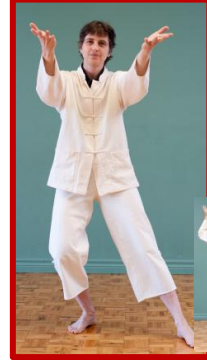
Stand in Wuji 1- Commencement of Tai-Chi



Prepare for the Push



2- Push



3- Splash



Turn (3/4 to the left)



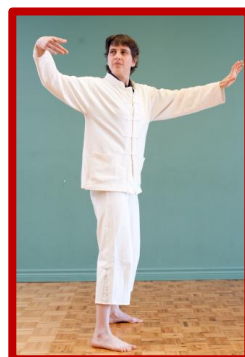
Open your Wings



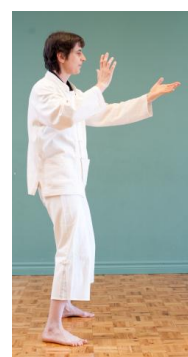
Balle au centre



Right hand holds the ball, left hand pushes the ball



4- Repulse the monkey, Right



and Left



Balle au centre



Squeeze the ball into your chest, and release it



5- Scoop down



Big arms circle out, cross forearms (right under left), hug a ball at chest level, let your arms come down your thighs



A Word of Caution

- This tutorial is for people who attended the Fifteen Minutes to Health program, level I
- Please do not attempt to perform this Tai-Chi form if you have not participated in this class or if you are not an advanced Tai-Chi practitioner
- Always stay within your comfort zone, do not push yourself
- Make sure you apply the Empty-Full principle we practiced in class: only move or rotate a foot that is completely empty of weight. In particular you may hurt your knee if you were doing the $\frac{3}{4}$ turn with residual weight on the turning leg
- Enjoy this wonderful routine.
- Thank you !

Tips to Learn the Four Direction Tai-Chi Form

- To learn and practice the Four Directions Tai-Chi form, first practice each individual move and repeat it several times (see slides below)
- Then practice all moves one after the other, without the turning step. Just slide your right foot back while doing the “Splash” move with your arms.
- Then practice the turning step without any arm movements. Focus on where each turn will take you aka focus on making $\frac{3}{4}$ of a turn each time.
- Finally practice the entire form, repeating each cycle of 5 moves in the four directions until you come back to your original position
- After a few months, you may even try to do the form leftward ie starting the push by sliding the left foot forward, turning $\frac{3}{4}$ turn to the right, left hand hold the ball first, scoop down with left hand under right.
- Enjoy!

Premise: our Vital Force - Qi

- According to Chinese view of human physiology, harmonious flow of Qi, our vital force, is essential to good health.
- Qi is also spelt Chi (or Ki in Japanese translations)
- Qi is pronounced “tchi”
- Qi is not water but can be compared to water: it can be condensed and material like ice, it can be fluid like water, it can be immaterial and light like steam.
- Like water in seas and lakes, Qi can be stored in reservoirs or internal organs; like rivers it flows along channels in the body called Qi meridians; like clouds and steam it manifests in non material aspects of our physiology like thoughts and emotions
- When practiced regularly the Four Directions Tai-Chi forms promotes harmonious flow of Qi in our body-mind, balancing Internal Organs function, promoting calm and inner balance, increasing our vital force and stamina



Stand in Wuji

WuJi Position



Assume the Wuji position for 3 breaths or more

Stand straight and relaxed
Feet shoulders or hips width apart
Feet parallel
Arms and shoulders relaxed
Knees not locked, slightly bent
Head suspended from above, and low back relaxed (open your low back).
Breathe calmly from your belly.

(Note that my right foot is not parallel as my right hip tends to be stiff, but try to have both feet parallel as much as you can without any strain)

Move 1: Commencement of Tai-Chi

Repeat 6 times

From Wuji, pull your fingers and shoulders gently down, then release. Raise your arms in front of you: shoulders, elbows and wrists are lazy and relaxed, wrists are leading up as if attached by a string, and arms float upwards.

When the arms are at shoulders' height, imagine your wrists are pulled forward, and let your arms fall down the front as if the air was resisting, relaxing the shoulders, elbows and wrists.



Commencement
of Tai-Chi





Prepare for the Push

Transition: Prepare for the Push

You will push with your right foot forward, and need to get prepared. In this drill you prepare, step forward and then come back. This is about practicing the weight shifts without the actual push.

Following the “Empty & Full” principle, you should only move a leg if it is completely empty of all weight: so there will be a weight shift first and only then a heel rotation or a step from the empty leg you are moving.

- From Wuji, shift your weight completely onto the right leg,
 - Pivot your left empty foot 30 degrees to the outside,
 - Shift all your weight onto the left leg,
 - Slide the right empty foot forward keeping it parallel (unlike the picture),
- Then rise your arms in front of you.

Bring the arms down, slide your right foot back, shift your weight onto the right leg, pivot the left foot to bring it parallel to the right.

Repeat 6 times



Move 2: Push (incl. Prepare for the Push, Push, and Push Back)

Repeat 6 times



1- Prepare for the Push - Do as in the previous slide and prepare for the push: from Wuji shift your weight to the right, pivot the left heel 30 degrees, shift your weight to the left leg, rise your arms, slide your right foot forward. Your weight is still 100% on the left leg.



2- Push – Bend your elbows slightly. Shift your weight progressively forward onto the right leg and pretend you are pushing into a wall (or an opponent). Do not push too far, keep 40% of your weight on the left leg.

3- Push Back– Leave your hands where they are, as if they were on a wall. Shift your weight 100 % on the back leg. Bring your arms down, slide your right empty foot back. Shift your weight on the right leg, rotate the left heel to make it parallel. Shift your weight 50/50% on each leg, in Wuji.

Move 3: Splash

Repeat 6 times

Sorry, no picture available.

- From Wuji, rise your arms in front of you like in Commencement of TaiChi.
- When your hands are at shoulders' height, reverse your palms: palms up.
- Splash yourself with an imaginary bucket of water from each hand: bring your palms towards you and let them flow along your sides: side of the face, side of the torso, and down to the side of your hips.
- While your hands move down along your side, they make a rotation inwards. So at the end of the move your hands face away from your hips and back and your shoulders are very slightly inwardly rotated.
- Start again by rising your hands like in Commencement of TaiChi, and repeat the splash arm move.

Turn, $\frac{3}{4}$ turn left

Repeat 4 times



Practice the $\frac{3}{4}$ stepping without the arms (unlike on the pictures):

1. Only with your feet, prepare for the push, and push. Shift your weight back 100% onto the left leg
2. Make sure your right leg is completely empty, pivot around the right hip and heel inward
3. Shift your weight progressively onto the right hip, knee and heel (keep the knee bent and make sure there is no torque on your knee)
4. Release your left foot which should now be 100% empty, pivot outwards
5. Bring your left heel to the right foot, shift your weight progressively onto the left hip, knee and heel
6. Swing your right foot to complete $\frac{3}{4}$ of a turn, release the left foot, adjust both feet to be back in Wuji

Transition: Open your Wings



Open your Wings



Repeat 6 times

From Wuji, rise your arms to each side, up to shoulder height.

Shoulders, elbows and wrists stay lazy and relaxed. Wrists are leading.

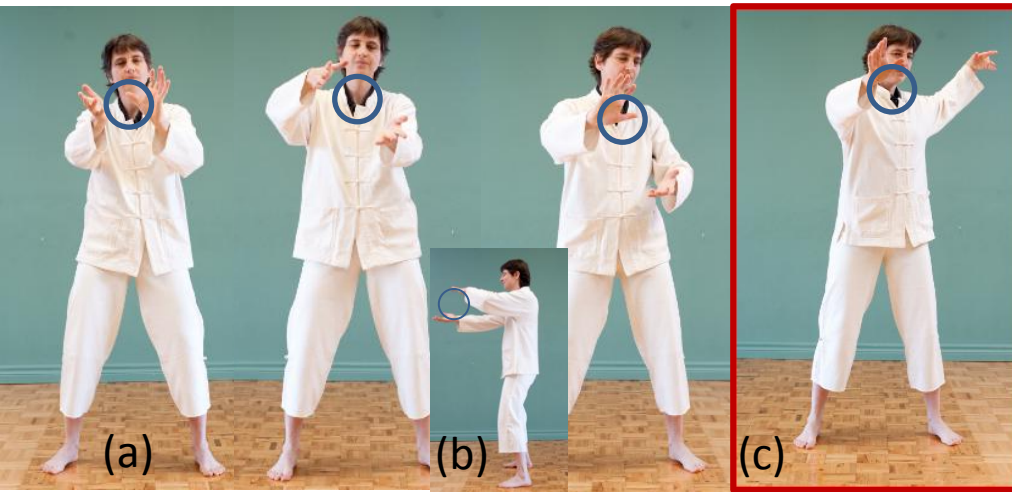
Then bring your arms down to your sides.

Start again.



Move 4: Repulse the Monkey

Repeat 2x3 times, on both side



1- Repulse the Monkey, Right – (a) Grab an imaginary ball in front of you aka “Balle au Centre”. (b) Hold the ball with your right palm up. (c) Push the ball with your left hand, and drop the right. Crawl with your right arm down and up (lazy shoulder rotation to the side more than to the back). When your right arm is somewhat behind and up, reverse your left palm so that the left hand holds the ball. (d) Push the ball with your right hand.



2- Repulse the Monkey, Left – Same move on the left side. (e) Continue to push the ball with the right hand. Drop the left arm down and crawl. (f) Reverse the right palm up to hold the ball. Push the ball with the left hand. Balle au Centre. Start again Repulse Monkey Right, etc

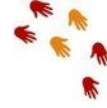
Move 5: Scoop Down

Repeat 6 times

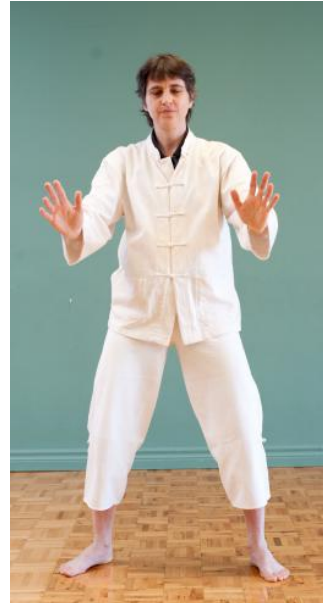


From Balle au Centre, bring the ball into your chest at heart level. Squeeze a large imaginary ball against your chest and release the squeeze. Let your arms expand to the sides. Make a circle with your arms out & down and scoop down. Do not bend your torso forward, keep your back vertical. It is OK to stay fairly high – it actually absolutely does not matter how low or high you go, as long as your back stays vertical. Continue circling with your arms. Come up and expand your arms up and to the sides. Finish circling out and down. Start again.

Concluding Movement with your Arms



After Scoop Down, cross your forearms right under left, hug a big ball at chest level, open your arms at shoulder width, drop your arms down your thighs



Do the same arm movement as Commencement of Tai-Chi, as a conclusion of this cycle of five moves.

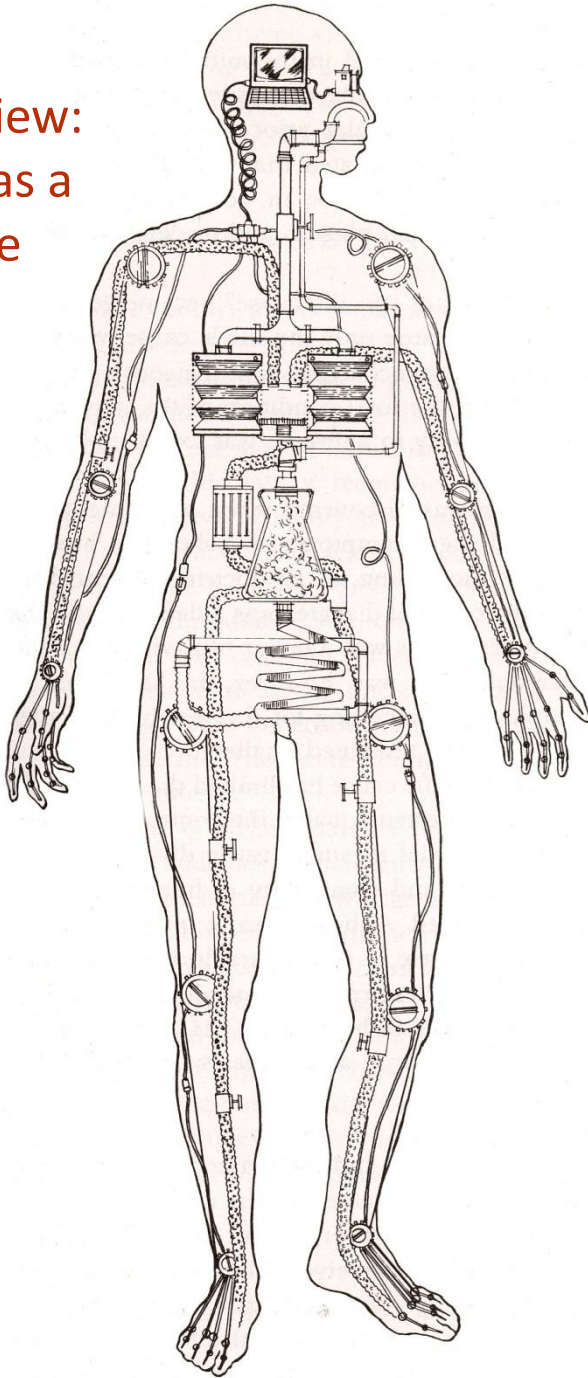
Then start the next cycle which means you are repeating Commencement of Tai-Chi a second time as the beginning of the next cycle



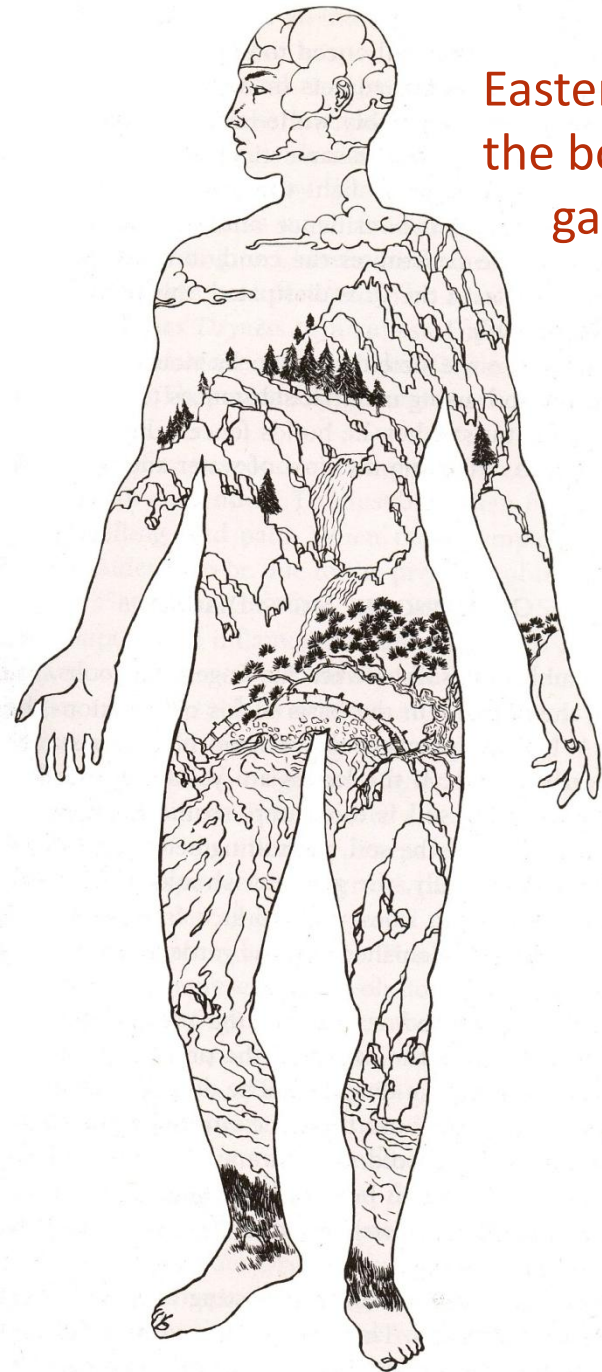
Five Elements in Chinese Medicine

- A natural cyclic rhythm that governs life and health
- Elements are actually phases, or stages of cycles, rather than fixed states
- Elements correspond to seasons, and as Man is between Heaven and Earth, elements also correspond to body functions as well as emotions, like an entire ecological system in harmony within us

Western view:
the body as a
machine

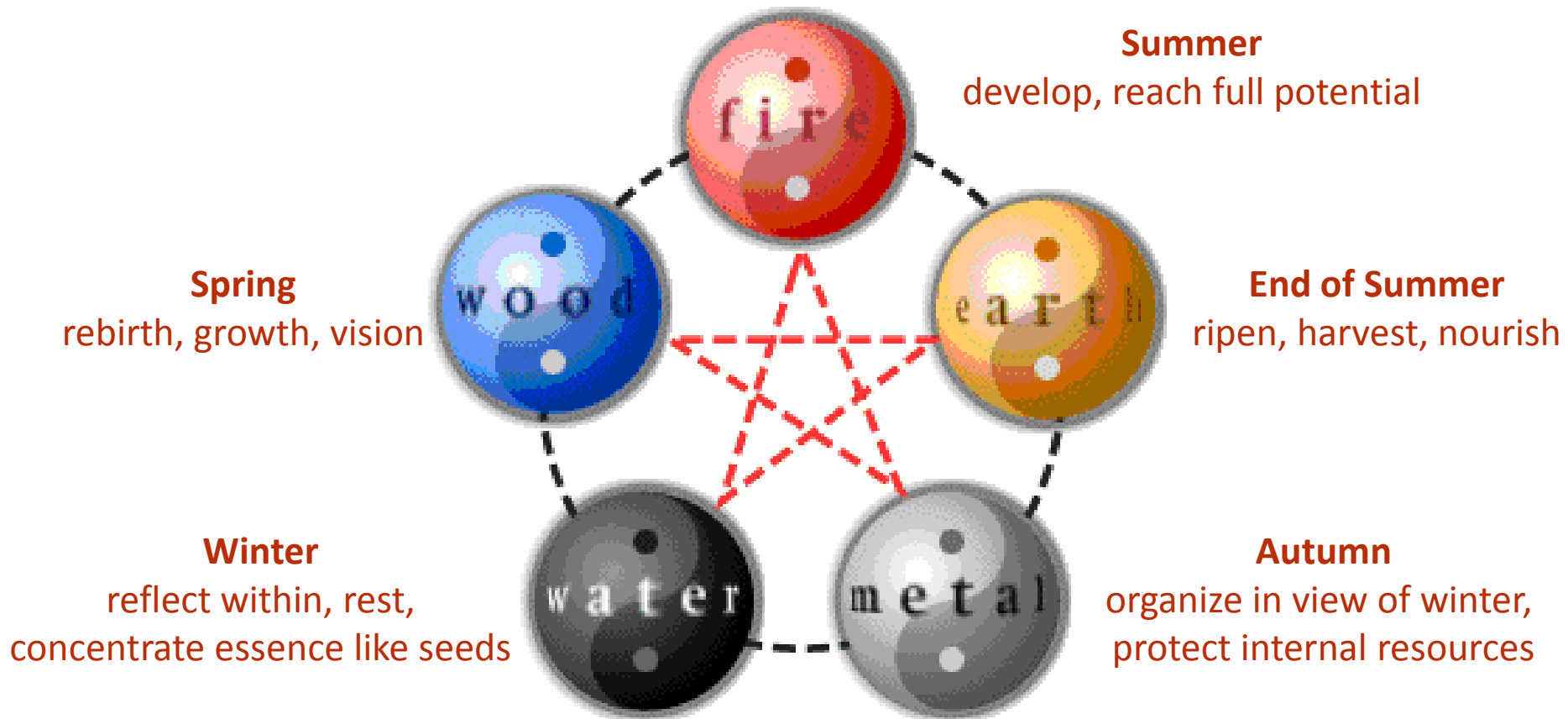


Eastern view:
the body as a
garden



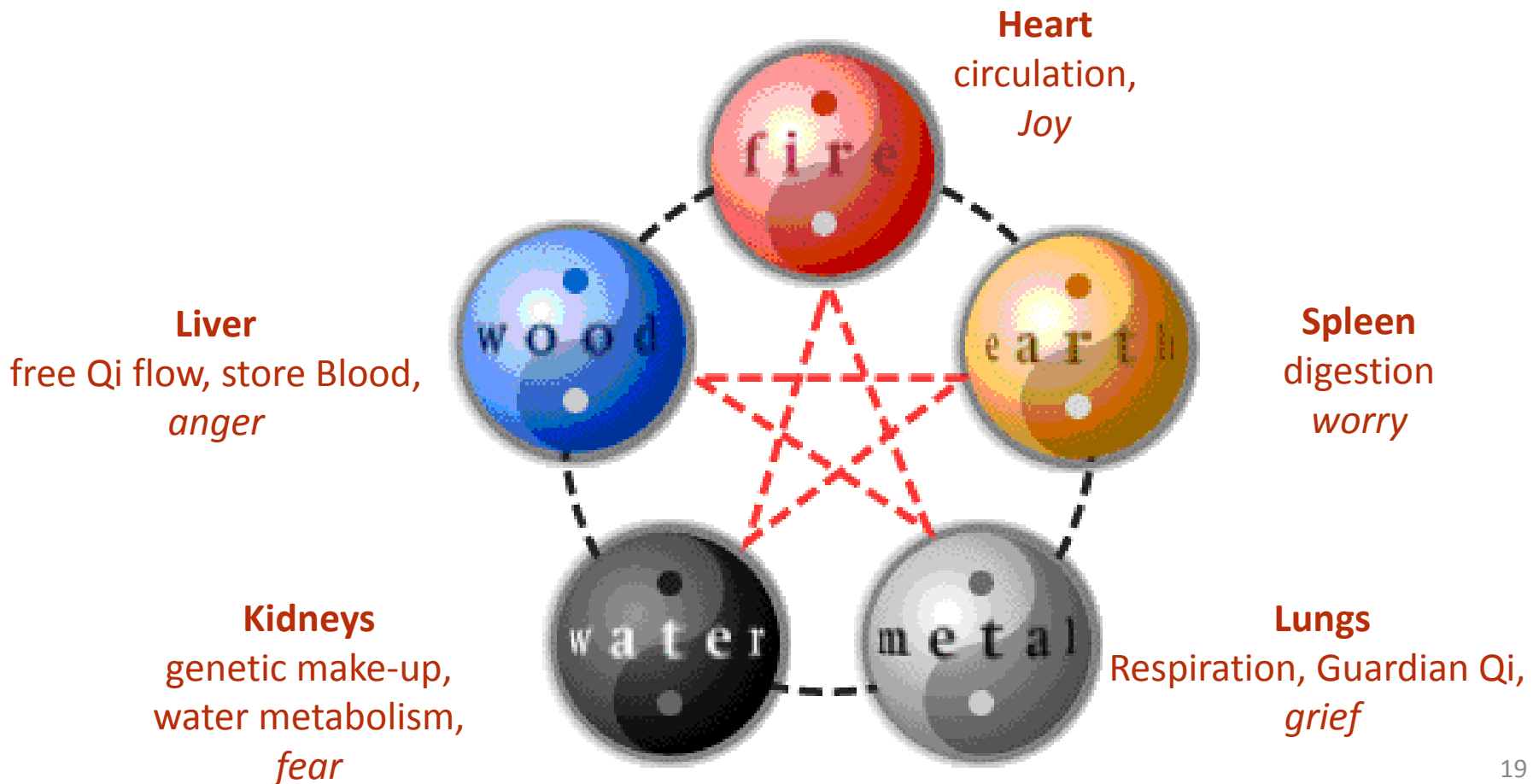
Man between Heaven and Earth

- Man needs to be in harmony with natural cycles, in particular the seasons



Man between Heaven and Earth

- Elements / Phases and their body-mind correspondence



Four Directions Tai-Chi and the Five Elements

Fire



5- Scoop down
and arm circles
like fireworks

Earth



1- Commencement
of Tai-Chi

Metal



2- Push

Five Elements Tai-Chi Form

Water



3- Splash

Wood



4- Repulse the
monkey