

Principles of Macrobiotics, Part 1

from *Online Macrobiotic Dictionary*

Carl Ferré

The Foundation is working on a dictionary of terms used in macrobiotic practice. The idea for such a dictionary was first proposed in 1979 by then-editor of *Macrobiotics Today*, Sandy Rothman, who continues to help with the project by pointing out entries that need greater clarity. The size and scope of the dictionary project has grown over the years and currently has over 1,200 projected entries.

Our intention is to publish an article in each issue of *Macrobiotics Today* beginning with selected listings on the philosophical basis of macrobiotic thinking—Oneness, the order of the universe, and the unifying principle. The second installment will cover the stages of judgment and balance and change. Future issues will cover health and sickness, dietary principles, way of life suggestions, and values. A few entries include a quote from George Ohsawa.

We plan to make the dictionary available online for free with a request for donations if people find it useful and/or want to help with the project. Another way readers can help is to offer suggestions for additional listings or changes to current ones. If



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all goes as planned, the first part of the dictionary will be online by the end of 2018. For this installment, we have altered the alphabetical order to give a better understanding of the principles.

ORDER OF THE UNIVERSE

Order of the Universe: Macrobiotic philosophy begins with the concept that everything emanates from the Infinite (Oneness) in an or-

derly progression that is knowable. This progression is the order of the universe, tracing the transformation from Universal Life (the Infinite) to individual life in seven worlds or steps in which each world creates and nourishes each subsequent one. The seven worlds are: Infinity, polarity, vibration, pre-atomic, elements, vegetal, and animal. See also *Seven Laws of the Order of the Universe*.

1. Infinite World (Infinity): The unlimited, boundless, endless, invisible, and unmeasurable primal source of all things, including humankind. Other names for the Infinite World include: Infinity, Infinite Pure Expansion, Oneness, God, Spirit, Nature, the Tao, Taikyoku, Perfect Consciousness, Ether-Universe, Instinct-Intuition, Supreme Judgment, and Seventh Heaven. Since all things and people are considered to be created and continually nourished by the same source, everyone and everything is connected.

2. Polarity, World of: The foundation of the relative world due to the polarization of the Infinite into yin (expansion) and yang (contraction). These two arms are both antagonistic and complementary to each other.

The interplay between them is the origin of magnetism. It is the beginning of pulsation and life itself as these two energies intersect and collide with each other. Thus, yin-yang interaction is the foundation of the finite world (worlds two through seven).

3. Vibration, World of: The beginning of the production of energy and origin of electricity as yin and yang continue to interact with each other and waves such as light and sound waves are created. Antagonisms and complementaries include visible and invisible radiation, hot and cold rays, dynamic and stimulating rays (yellow, orange, red) and static and calming rays (green, blue, indigo, violet), and infrared and ultraviolet radiation.

4. Pre-Atomic World: The beginning of all subatomic particles as the two arms of Oneness continue to interact not only with each other but also with the waves of the world of vibration. Examples of antagonisms and complementaries include centrifugal and centripetal force and solid and gaseous.

5. Elements, World of: The world of elements evolves from subatomic particles and is the beginning of atoms, stars, and millions of solar systems. Antagonisms and complementaries include mountain and river, land and sea, air and earth, polar and tropical regions, hot and cold, day and night, and surface and center of Earth. Worlds two through five comprise the inorganic world.

6. Vegetal (Plant) World: The beginning of the organic world and all viruses, bacteria, and vegetables is born from the inorganic world of elements, earth, water, and air. This transition occurs by spontaneous generation. The main characteristic of the vegetal world is that all plants have chlorophyll, making them green. Antagonisms and complementaries

include grass and tree, trunk and branch, branch and leaf, flower and seed (or fruit), cell and organ, germ and soma cells.

7. Animal World: The beginning of animals, including humans, as the magnesium in chlorophyll is replaced by iron in the creation of hemoglobin—the essence of blood (red). Antagonisms and complementaries include white and red corpuscles, bone and flesh, man and woman, governors and governed, worker and capitalist, work and rest, love and hate, war and peace, sickness and health, and life and death.

Spiral, Logarithmic: A variant of diagramming the continuity of the Infinite World with the finite (relative) worlds showing there is no boundary between any of the worlds and that

the order of the universe is a polarizable monism. Because the origin of all things is considered to be infinite, the finite worlds (two through seven) also are created and continually nourished at infinite speed.

Nonduality: Macrobiotics is a nondual philosophy that literally means “not two.” It is opposed to dualism—the view that two substances (matter and spirit for example) are completely separate from each other. This idea negates monism—the theory that there is only one entity or principle that is the basis of reality. This Oneness produces all things through the interactions of connected yet opposing forces or tendencies.

Truth: That which does not change. The only thing that doesn’t change in

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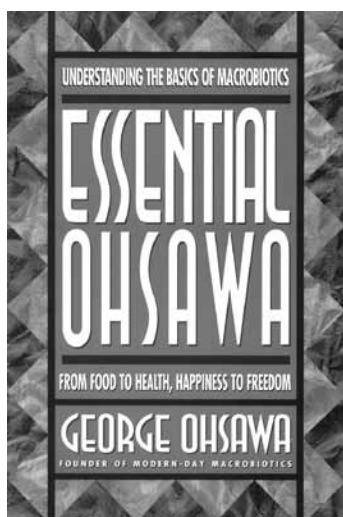
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the finite (relative) world is the fact that everything changes, the implication being that the Infinite World is the real, true One.

Visible and Invisible Worlds: Science separates matter (the visible) and spirit (the invisible) and begins with what is knowable, measurable, and verifiable. Macrobiotics begins with the Infinite that is unknowable, unmeasurable, and beyond sensory verification, uniting matter/body and spirit. “Both ‘visible’ and ‘invisible’ exist, the former measurable in the phenomena of the world we can see, the latter hidden beyond the reach of instruments. The kings of the world of ‘visibility’ are matter, force, and war, while those of the world of ‘invisibility’ are spirit, acceptance, and peace. The goal of the world of ‘visibility’ is relative (satisfaction of desires), while that of the world of ‘invisibility’ is absolute (awareness of Oneness).” (*Essential Ohsawa*, 173)

SEVEN LAWS

Seven Laws of the Order of the Universe: Seven laws or principles that form the basis for all laws of physical nature. These principles do not change and thus work in both the finite and infinite worlds. They may be used to resolve all conflicts by understanding that antagonisms are also complementary. The seven laws are:

1. Inversion, Principle of: “What has a beginning has an end.” This principle negates the law of identity and contradiction in time. Individual life begins at birth and will end at some time. In a similar way, a sickness that begins one day will end in the future. This law is another way to say that everything in life changes over time. See Logic, Aristotelian.

2. Front/Back, Principle of: “What has a front has a back.” This

principle negates the law of identity and contradiction in space. Everything that exists has an opposite that is also complementary. The front is perceived as positive or useful while the back is perceived as negative or a shortcoming. An example is a medication (front) and its side effects (back). See Logic, Aristotelian.

3. Difference, Principle of: “There is nothing identical.” This principle negates the law of identity. Even though there are countless stars in the universe and trillions of cells in one's body, each is unique—for one thing, no two things can occupy the same space at the same time. See Logic, Aristotelian.

4. Balance, Principle of: “The bigger the front, the bigger the back.” This principle negates the law of the excluded middle. This law is similar to the saying that something is too good to be true and the scientific principle that every action creates an equal and opposite reaction. An example is nuclear energy—a great front in the production of energy but a great back in terms of an accident or fallout. See Logic, Aristotelian.

5. Nondual origin, Principle of: “Every antagonism is complementary.” This principle negates formal logic. All things are constantly in motion and thus changing due to the interplay of opposites. This law is another way of saying that everything changes and to look for both sides of every situation. See Logic, Aristotelian.

6. Polarization, Principle of: “Yin and Yang are the classifications of all polarization. They are antagonistic and complementary.” This principle is the foundation of the universal dialectic logic. There is nothing that is complementary without antagonism. Yin and yang are the two arms of Oneness (Infinity) that create,

sustain, destroy, and produce anew everything that exists in the finite world. Without conflict harmony has no meaning. Without contradiction there is no agreement.

7. Polarizable Monism, Principle of: “Yin and Yang are the two arms of One (Infinity).” The unchanging, limitless, constant, and omnipotent world of Oneness produces and nourishes all things both physical and spiritual. Laws one through six are experienced by the five senses and may be analyzed by the mind or scientific instruments. In contrast, the seventh law is a sketch of the ultimate cause of the universe itself.

TWELVE THEOREMS OF THE UNIFYING PRINCIPLE

Unifying (Unique) Principle: The unifying principle of yin and yang is a set of theorems used as tools to make daily decisions and shows that all apparent opposites are complementary; that is, connected. One can focus on either side of any pair or on the unification of them. The Unifying Principle is also called “the law of change” that governs all phenomena, visible and invisible. Evidence of this law is seen as opposites turn into each other; for examples, night becoming day, sickness becoming health, ignorance becoming wisdom, and so on—and all vice versa. The twelve theorems are:

1. “Yin and Yang are two poles which enter into play when the infinite expansion manifests itself at the point of bifurcation (divided into two branches).” This is the beginning of the finite world as Infinity (nonduality) becomes two (duality). In other words, for anything to exist, its opposite must also exist.

2. “Yin and Yang are produced continually by the transcendental expansion.” The finite world is depen-

dent on Infinity (Oneness) for its continuous existence. Without the fundamental forces of opposition (yin and yang), nothing, including life, would be possible.

3. “Yin is centrifugal. Yang is centripetal. Yin and Yang produce energy.” Yin activity is the outward, centrifugal force and produces expansion, lightness, cold, and so on. Yang activity is the inward, centrifugal force and produces contraction, heaviness, heat, and so on.

4. “Yin attracts Yang. Yang attracts Yin.” Everything is attracted to its opposite. Someone who is more yin will be attracted to people and things that are more yang, and vice versa.

5. “Yin and Yang combined in variable proportion produce all phenomena.” An infinite variety of combinations and proportions of yin and yang produces energy and all other things, both visible and invisible.

6. “All phenomena are ephemeral, being of infinitely complex constitutions and constantly changing Yin and Yang components. Everything is without rest.” Everything is constantly changing its yin and yang characteristics—everything is restless. What is more yin one day can become more yang the next, and vice versa.

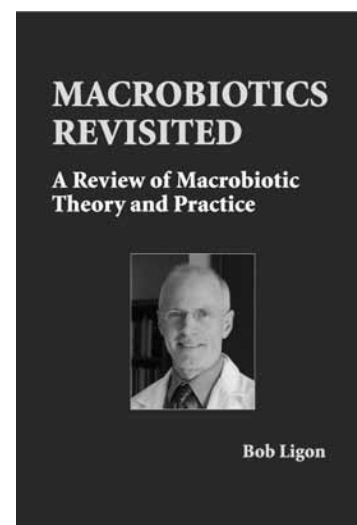
7. “Nothing is totally Yin or totally Yang, even in the most apparently simple phenomenon. Everything contains a polarity at every stage of its composition.” Everything in this finite world is composed of both yin characteristics and yang characteristics. There is nothing that is all yin or all yang. In other words, yin and yang are not absolute qualities; they are relative qualities.

8. “Nothing is neutral. Yin or Yang is in excess in every case.” If the yin characteristics dominate, then

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the thing is called “more yin.” If the yang characteristics dominate, then the thing is called “more yang.”

9. “The force of attraction is proportional to the difference of the Yin and Yang components.” Two things that are far apart in terms of yin and yang force will have a much greater affinity than two things that are closer together in terms of yin and yang force.

10. “Yin repels Yin and Yang repels Yang. The repulsion is inversely proportional to the difference of the Yin and Yang forces.” The more alike two things are in terms of yin and yang force, the more they will repel each other. The farther apart they are, the weaker the repulsion.

11. “With time and space, Yin produces Yang, and Yang produces Yin.” At the extremity of development, something that is moving in the yin direction will begin moving

in the yang direction, and vice versa. At some point in the depth of winter (more yin), the seasons begin to move toward summer (more yang).

12. “Every physical body is Yang at its center and Yin toward the surface.” The surface (periphery) of everything is more yin and the center of the same thing is more yang, because yin is the representation of the outward force and yang is the representation of the inward force.

Yin-Yang: name given to the two poles/arms (complementary opposites) of the One Infinity that allows the invisible world to manifest as the visible finite world. It is a very useful tool, like a magic compass, because the interaction of yin-yang influences the destiny of all persons and things. See page 18 of this issue for sample macrobiotic yin-yang classifications of various opposites.

Yin: Expansive, having an expansive nature or effect. ‘Yinnize,’ ‘yinnization.’ Opposite of and complementary to yang. Something is “more yin” if its yin (centrifugal, outward) force exceeds its yang (centripetal, inward) force. “Centrifugal yin produces: cold (slackening of the components’ movement); dilation; expansion; lightness (thus, the tendency to go upward); enlargement; tall, thin, vertical forms.” (*Essential Ohsawa*, 107)

Yang: Contractive, having a contractive nature or effect. ‘Yangize,’ ‘yangization.’ Opposite of and complementary to yin. Something is “more yang” if its yang (centripetal, inward) force exceeds its yin (centrifugal, outward) force. “Centripetal yang produces the following phenomena: heat (thus, the activity of the molecular components); constriction;

density; heaviness (thus, the tendency to go downward); flattened, low, horizontal forms. (*Essential Ohsawa*, 107-108.)

Compass, Magic or Universal: Ohsawa’s term for the unifying principle of yin-yang, providing a method for making decisions and pointing the way toward awareness of one’s connection with Oneness (Infinity).

Justice, Absolute: The impartial law that applies to all that exists and that leads to deserved punishment for violations of the order of the universe or the just reward for following it.

Evolution, Natural Order of: The macrobiotic theory of evolution begins with the concept of polarized monism (Oneness) and the idea that there is nothing that is all yin or all yang (theorem 7). All things are the sum total of the interactions of yin-yang in infinitely varied proportions and follow the seven laws of the order of the universe and twelve theorems of the unifying principle. The natural order that all things follow is that yin and yang follow each other forever.

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