

Philosophy of **Oriental** **Medicine**

Key to your personal judging ability

George Ohsawa

George Ohsawa Macrobiotic Foundation
Chico, California

Other books by George Ohsawa in English include: *The Book of Judo* (formerly published as *The Art of Peace*); *Cancer and the Philosophy of the Far East* (formerly published as *Macrobiotics The Way of Healing*); *Essential Ohsawa*; *Gandhi, the Eternal Youth*; *Jack and Mitie*; *Macrobiotic Guidebook for Living*; *Macrobiotics: An Invitation to Health and Happiness*; *Order of the Universe*; *The Unique Principle*; *You Are All Sanpaku*; and *Zen Macrobiotics*. Contact the publisher at the address below for a complete list of available titles.

This book is made possible through a generous donation from: A Taste of Health—producer of Holistic Holiday at Sea.

Typing by Alice Salinero
Cover design by Carl Campbell and Carl Ferré

First English Edition 1960
Seventh Edition (newly revised) 1980
Eighth Edition 1991

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George Ohsawa Macrobiotic Foundation
PO Box 3998, Chico, California 95927-3998
530-566-9765; fax 530-566-9768; gomf@earthlink.net

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 91-76486
ISBN 978-0-918860-52-1

Preface

The writing of this book took place first in Dr. Albert Schweitzer's hospital at Lambarene, French Equatorial Africa (November 1st to December 31st, 1956) and then (January 1st to the 13th, 1956) in the same aged Protestant Mission station house at Andende where Schweitzer began his work in the year 1913. I contemplated now and again the scenery of this very picturesque country... the Ogooue River dotted by small pirogues (dugout canoes)... the brilliant green surroundings...

My purpose in writing has been:

- (1) To present the Unique Principle—the dialectical, universal, simple, useful foundation of science and philosophy of all great religions and of all Far Eastern civilization;
- (2) To show the biological, psychological, medical, educational, sociological and logical application of the Unique Principle;
- (3) To represent Far Eastern medicine (in particular) in the light of the Unique Principle;
- (4) To reveal the Unique Principle in all its glory as the principle of infinite freedom and eternal peace.

The Unique Principle of the Far East is exceeding simple and extraordinarily practical. Anyone can understand it in a few hours and use it immediately in everyday life because it embraces the universal logic, dialectics. It is a very practical universal compass.

According to the Unique Principle, the greatest thing in life is faith. Internally, this faith is a clairvoyance (the opposite of *credo quia absurdum est*—the belief in something sheerly because it is so incredible) which clearly sees and comprehends everything through

infinite time and space. Externally, it is a manifestation of universal love or supreme judgment, embracing all antagonisms and transforming them into oneness, distributing the eternal joy of life to all, forever. It is the kind of faith that sends the mountain into the sea. And it is the truth that insures infinite freedom, eternal happiness, and absolute justice.

Ever since the publication of my first book in French, *Le Principe Unique de la Science et de la Philosophie d'Extreme-Orient* (Vrin, Paris, 1930), I have worked in one direction—toward universal understanding.

At the end of my sixtieth year (October, 1953), I left Japan forever to visit my friends and to see the great men of the world who I believed would understand the Unique Principle and its practical application.

I deeply hope that the Unique Principle will become as well known as the art of flower arrangement, Chinese medicine, acupuncture, bonsai, bonkei (bonsai landscaping), Zen Buddhism, and the theory of judo-aiki that I imported into Europe thirty-eight years ago.

It has been difficult for Westerners to understand the Unique Principle because its utter simplicity was either too difficult or at first glance too absurd and not acceptable to the Occidental mentality (the antithesis of the Oriental). My life work, nevertheless, is helping our Occidental brothers and sisters to understand the importance of our thousands-of-years-old dialectics, so practical and so useful in everyone's daily life.

To the end of my life I will travel with my wife, teaching the way to the mastery of this practical dialectics, this universal logic—the order of the universe—for it is the key to the Kingdom of Heaven. It can establish infinite freedom, eternal happiness, and absolute justice everywhere.

We shall continue to demonstrate the macrobiotic preparation of delicious and aesthetic meals that cure all illnesses (present or future) and at the same time ensure everyone's longevity and youthfulness at small expense and with no special training.

We are entirely at your disposal. Send me all questions and objections... I will answer them as soon as possible wherever I am in this world.

– *George Ohsawa*
January 18, 1956

Preface to the Eighth Edition

Since George Ohsawa printed and brought it from Japan to New York in 1961, *The Book of Judgment* (originally called *The Philosophy of Oriental Medicine*) has been one of the best macrobiotic books. Written in the analytical style, it is accepted by many without fanatic sentiment. It has been a helpful guidebook for introducing macrobiotic ideas and has given spiritual support in this confused world.

The Book of Judgment became out of print following the dissolution of its last publisher (the Ohsawa Foundation of Los Angeles), and in 1980 we made the decision to publish and keep this great book in circulation. Sandy Rothman and I worked together to clarify misleading passages and to simplify and change some words, sections, and headings. As a result, I believe this volume is much easier to read than previous editions.

For this, the eighth edition, we have changed the title back to Ohsawa's original title.

I appreciate the efforts of the following, without whom this publication would not have materialized: Sandy Rothman, editing; Carl Ferré, design and production; Carl Campbell, cover design; Sylvia Zuck, typing.

– Herman Aihara, President
George Ohsawa Macrobiotic Foundation

INTRODUCTION

The Physics and Metaphysics of Yin and Yang

The Unique Principle of Far Eastern philosophy, the very basic unique foundation of all our cultures, including medicine, is definitive. However, its translation and interpretation may be either physical or metaphysical.

At the beginning, over four thousand years ago, the Unique Principle was a physical dialectics. Later, metaphysical commentators and interpreters, such as Confucius, twisted or complicated the explanation of it. Then the physicians did the same. Here lies the reason for the confusion and uncertainty beclouding the philosophy and medicine of the Far East.

The Far Eastern peoples, always referred to as spiritual, metaphysical, or primitive, use a quite peculiar language; they inhabit an infinite, eternal, and absolute world, and in consequence their tongues are indefinite, uncertain, and extremely simple, but deep and often lacking in clarity. The Chinese and Japanese languages (the Easternmost ones) lack the notions of time, number, and sex. (As a matter of fact, according to my method, you can learn colloquial and pure Japanese in four hours. It is the easiest language that I know of in the whole world.) This factor has also unquestionably contributed to the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the philosophy of the Far East.

In the beginning, over four thousand years ago, the sky, or infinite space, was considered the supreme yin symbol, and the earth, the supreme yang symbol. The sky, being infinite space, the boundless expansion, was considered the representative of yin, the cen-

trifugal force. The earth, on the contrary, was considered yang, the centripetal force.

Later, metaphysicians described the sky as the generator of all the phenomena and beings in the world, including all celestial bodies (the major force, or supreme divinity), and they classified it as yang. The earth was considered yin.

Metaphysically speaking, the sky, infinite space, may be called yang, the greatest producer. In the physical sense, however, the sky—infinite space, the boundless expansion—may be called yin, the greatest entropical passiveness. From this point of view, the earth is compact and yang.

In old Chinese medicine, the small intestine, bladder, stomach, large intestine, etc., are classified as yang while the heart, kidneys, pancreas, liver, etc., are classified as yin. This is a *metaphysical classification*. Physically speaking, this must be reversed: all empty organs are yin, as they are passive and receptive; all solid organs, with density and compactness, are yang. (The stomach, intestines, bladder, lungs, etc., are yin; the liver, kidneys, heart, pancreas, etc., are yang.)

We are living in a scientific and physical era. We therefore need a physical, up-to-date classification to unify terminology for the introduction of the Unique Principle into all the natural sciences, in addition to medicine, and all the cultural sciences as well. Most of all, it is necessary in the formation of fundamental concepts for a world government.

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