

The following concepts are essential in **Myoku**. Some of them are from martial arts, others are from Zen philosophy and quantum theory. I want here to give you a general understanding of them to help you grasp the essence of Myoku training. Your understanding of these concepts will change with time and will powerfully deepen your journey.



NOW

“Now” has nothing to do with the linear time (past, present, future). It is more like a **state of mind**. “Now” is beyond the “present”, it is a dimension. In the Now, our mind expands, our consciousness expands, and we equally feel the expansion of our “Self”. There is no past or future, only the moment we breathe in and out. Re-read that sentence. In that state of mind, all opposites / dualities in our mind collapse into Oneness – and all makes sense. We, then, experience the world through a different consciousness of our 5 senses. We experience true peacefulness from within, not because nature is quiet and calming. In the Now, we feel our connection with the universe. “Now” is simply a gate opening to another level of consciousness. Then, we have to cultivate this “state of mind” if we want to reach enlightenment. Accessing this gate is not easy, but the gate is right there in front of us. We need to walk through it.

While in the Now, we can still think of the future appointment or the past movie we saw but we do not attach/identify with the past or future. Being in the Now means being fully there in the moment we are experiencing: if we are drinking tea, we do not project ourselves into the past (what someone said to us before the tea) or in what it will be later (when we speak to the person again). The moment we drink tea is the feeling of the tea on our lips, in our throat, its perfume, etc. as if there were nothing else at that moment. Re-read that sentence. **Our consciousness is in that single moment.** And in that moment,

anything / everything can happen! This is why in order to be in the Now we need to be grounded, centered. If we are not in our body, how can we feel the moment we are in? Learn to be in every atom of your body. Be aware of yourself on that level. Because, in the end, there is no time & space parameters in the universe. Time & space are only parameters by which our binary mind thinks.

We all have experienced the Now at some moments without knowing what it was. The point is to be aware of that experience and emphasize it more and more in our life. We must live beyond duality – in the Oneness – if we want to stop the suffering we experience (physical, emotional, existential, social, political, etc.).

Zen reflection: “This moment is very important. It has everything in it. In this moment there is infinite time, infinite space. In this moment there is truth...This moment has everything. Also, this moment has nothing. If you attain this moment you attain everything.” Zen master Seung Sahn.

Gravity

“Now” and “gravity” are tightly linked like the two sides of a coin. In the Now, you control your gravity and you are centered/grounded. In the Now, you control your own space-time reality. And gravity is precisely the field of consciousness around us that combines time and space into Oneness. Understand the 3 levels of gravity:

(i) Gravity is one of the 4 forces in the universe and nature along with *electromagnetism*, and the *nuclear strong force* and *weak force*. Gravity is the weakest of all, but we powerfully feel it in our everyday life. It is with us, supports us. We bathe in it as it gives us our existence in this dimension. Without it we die. Being One with our gravity (centered/grounded) is empowering.

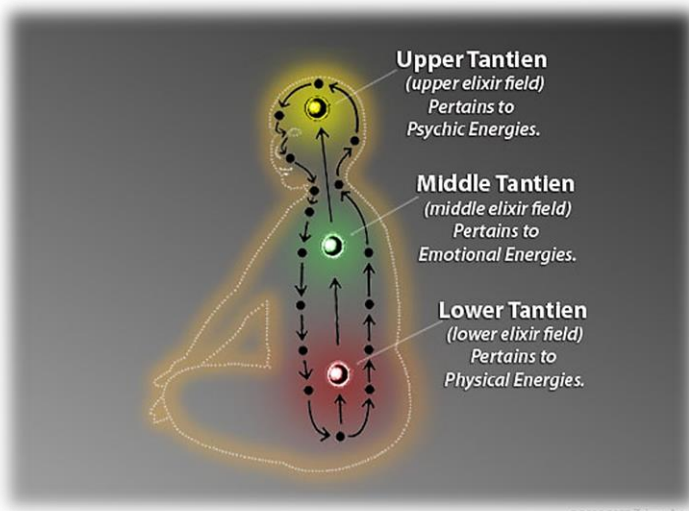
(ii) Einstein’s gravity is a fabric of space-time as a dimension of existence, the fabric of the universe. It connects everything together and nothing can exist outside of it. Time and space are one and the same: a change of « time » creates a change in « space. » But time and space are only axes of representation by which we think, as Einstein explained. They are not the reality of the universe. Time and space are like the “Now.” They are a dimension of existence, or a state of mind. The more you control your breath in the Now, the more you control your space-time reality.



(iii) Quantum physics reaches spirituality: Space-time dimension is a field of consciousness all around us and in the universe. As a matter of fact, we are made of this consciousness. If we reach our true Self and move our mind beyond duality, we become One with this ultimate consciousness.

As such, never underestimate gravity and its empowerment. It all starts with being centered and grounded in our consciousness. Breathe-in, hold, breathe-out and feel the difference. The breath is what connects our mind and body.

A Zen reflection: If you throw a pebble in a pond, the pebble hits the surface and sinks as it generates ripples over the pond. If you are the pebble, you keep your centeredness as you sink but expand your mind with the ripples. This is the combination of time and space in the NOW. But do not think about it; just train to attain it, as we say in Zen.



Chi

Chi (Chinese) or **ki** (Japanese) is pure energy found everywhere: in the universe, the stars and planets, as forces of nature on earth, in the weather, in the stones, the rivers, the mountains, the fruits, the living organisms, atoms, etc. Chi can also be interpreted as vitality or strength: from Chinese medicine to feng shui, you may hear that your blood lacks chi, the wind has a strong chi, or the design in the room blocks the circulation of chi. However, chi takes a different form whether we refer to organic or inorganic matter.

According to Qi Gong and Eastern philosophies, there are 3 types of Chi: (i) in the Heaven (universe); (ii) in Nature (wind, food, rivers/lakes, etc.); (iii) and in the human body. In turn, in the human body, there are 3 centers of Chi: lower tantien or sacral level (most known), middle tantien or the heart level, and

upper tantien or the third eye level. These 3 centers of chi overlap with the chakras in the Hindu system. In Myoku, the standing & moving meditation techniques aim at connecting those three centers of chi. Chi centers have to be open and connected in harmony in order to allow the flowing of consciousness in the body and proper circulation of energy in every cell of the body. Once the three centers are aligned and in harmony, you are connected with Earth and Heaven (below and above) and are powerfully centered. Know yourself, know your body, control your chi, be One with your true self.

Chi is pure energy. In order to be in touch with it, you do not force your muscles or practice “secret” movements. You simply let go all tension in your body, practice a deep and slow breathing technique, and empty your mind. What is left is then a simple **vibration** that you can magnify with your breath. Very simple principle, is it not? But like most things in Zen, simplicity is the hardest thing to reach, and yet, the most powerful way to exist.

A Zen reflection: We are alive thanks to the stars. In the later stage of their life (or explosion into supernova), stars turn simple elements into more complex elements such as iron and, thus, give the building blocks for life the way we know it on Earth. We are literally made of stars’ dust. So, when we say “Be One with the universe,” we really mean it. Reconnect! Tap into that energy. Be One.

Omote /Ura

Omote in Japanese is the visible, the obvious, the given, or what is easily reachable. It also refers to the common/basic understanding of a concept or a situation. **Ura** is the hidden, the secret, the invisible, or the reverse. And in specific situations, it also refers to the esoteric understanding of a concept or a situation. Remember that even if things seem opposed on the surface (omote), they are deeply connected on another level (ura). Omote/Ura is about **Perception**, beyond seeing with your eyes in a strict sense.

In the Japanese culture, omote/ura is present everywhere. In the time of samurais, the sword carried 2 sides: omote, the side of the blade facing away (obvious), and ura, the side of the blade facing inward, toward the body (secret) – the samurai’s secret move is on the ura side of the blade. During a tea ceremony, those outside the tea hut see only the gestural and the regular practice (ordinary as omote). But those inside the hut experience a different reality as the sunlight coming in through the lattice-work windows (or dividers) creates patterns of shadow and light that enlighten the guests at the tea ceremony (hidden as ura).

In martial arts, and in the context of kata, we say that a mere observer only sees the combat techniques put together (omote), while for the performer (from within), the kata is a perfect harmony of mind-body, a control of chi and gravity, and a beautiful synchronization of breath and movements. The performer of the kata strives to empty her/his mind and become One with the kata itself – pure transcendence (ura). And Myoku is about being in touch with one’s true Self, the ura side of you.



A Zen story: everyday, a young disciple would walk across a small garden on his way home after training. One day, he notices a beautiful flower and thanks it for blooming in his garden. But the flower has always been there; he simply never noticed it until the day he changed level of consciousness in his training. The flower was “hidden” (ura) in his reality but had been there all along.



Yin/Yang

Yin and **yang** are Taoist concepts widely known but very often misunderstood. From an Eastern perspective, yin and yang are fundamental **forces** in the universe and nature, and constantly in motion. In fact, their dynamic creates the chi. They always work together to create harmony and balance. They are opposite forces but not to be understood in a binary opposition of good/bad or strong/weak. They are simply polarities like + and – with no ideological implication such as “male/female”. Yin and yang are interdependent just like the *breath-in* and the *breath-out* in the cycle of breath but cannot exist alone. For every expansion there is a contraction first.

Yin and yang are not absolute, they do not have “content or meaning” as such. They are relativistic in a context. As an example, water can be liquid, ice or vapor. Vapor is yang in comparison to liquid (yin), but liquid is yang in comparison to ice (yin). In Chinese medicine, the front of the body is yin, the back is yang while the upper chest is yang, the abdomen is yin, and so forth.

The day is yang, the night is yin, therefore dusk and dawn are powerful states of energy when yin and yang transform into one another. As such, in the yin-yang symbol, there is a seed of yang in the yin category, and there is a seed of yin in the yang category. N.B.: Eastern philosophy focuses on **harmony**, the Western metaphysics emphasizes the **difference**. This is perhaps why we, Westerners, have difficulties understanding Eastern concepts of reality. Our reality is still Cartesian – binary (even if we speak of quantum theory), Eastern reality is Taoist (unity rules the universe).

Finally, power in your movements (yang) come from the stillness of your mind (yin). A kata starts toward East (yang) and ends West (yin). Conscious training in martial arts sets you on a perfect journey of mind-body through yin and yang in the Now.

A Zen reflection: We all are enlightened beings. We simply do not know/see it because we are blinded by our Ego. The journey we step on is about reconnecting with our true “Self” and be One again. Start your journey now!

Opposites / Binary Mind

As a reminder, nature and the universe are not binary. Only our human mind is. What does it mean? Opposites do exist in nature and in the universe as forces such as the negative and positive poles of a magnet. They are forces generating movement and changes in the universe and nature. If all were negative or positive, there would be no movement, no life, and the planet would not even be rotating. Opposite forces are essential and “neutral” in value. But if they carry any ideological value or judgment they become “binary oppositions” such as good/bad, right/wrong, etc. Human societies have created their reality based upon this binary view and from which nothing can exist. A binary mind generates suffering on many levels. Even our Western languages are based upon a binary mindset that has shaped our reality and existence. This is the reason why in order to “heal” and find peacefulness and Oneness, we need to transcend the dualistic / binary view of life, nature, and of ourselves. We need to break free from the “illusion” of this reality.



Imagine if we were raised in a society that did not see the rising / setting of the sun but on the contrary emphasized the rotation of the planet in a harmonious and steady fashion. Our consciousness and sense of unity would be more developed. After all, the sun does not disappear at night, we simply move away from the sun exposure. Do not underestimate this very simple example. Even a slight change of perception can generate an expansion of your mind. And this is the goal of Myoku training: to raise your consciousness.

A Zen reflection: “Many times we want to get something from practice, but enlightenment means to lose everything, not to get anything. You have to be prepared for that. You have to be ready to lose everything, to lose all illusions about yourself”
Zen master Bon Shim