



MUSE PORTRAIT

采访/Yanling 整理/Wei



FROM BIOCHEMISTRY TO WUSHU

从微观看世界到宏观看自己

叶慧文是出生在马来西亚的华裔。

她在成长历程中深受中国传统文化影响后在澳大利亚攻读生物化学。商业策略家，生物医学科学家，武术教练，风水大师，这些看似风马牛不相及的职业，在叶慧文的身上却以一种奇妙的方式融为一体。我很难想象，她是如何在显微镜下观察细胞体，在商场上指点江山，又能挥舞宝剑，又能手持罗盘研究风水走向。毕竟，这些似乎历来都被视为男性专属，又似乎相互不买账的领域。而叶慧文却能之间自由帷幄。从解剖干细胞到解密风水，知名学者叶慧文带我们走入中国传统五术包罗万象的神秘世界。

From dissecting stem cells to demystifying feng shui, successful female scientist Boon Yap writes about the all-encompassing traditional practice of Five Skills (五术).

Think of a bio-medical research scientist, internationally successful business strategist, martial arts instructor and feng shui master. It's hard to find someone who fits all the above descriptions until you meet Ms Yap Hwee Boon. Even then, it's hard to imagine her scrutinizing cells under a microscope, formulating business strategies, wielding a sword and checking directions with a luopan (Chinese compass). After all, men have traditionally dominated these fields. Affectionately known as Boon Now an accredited feng shui instructor, she consults in feng shui around the world and conducts courses, alongside her international biomedical consultancy work.



也许正是由于远离故土，东南亚的华人对中国传统文化反而更加眷恋不舍。我的少年时代是在马来西亚渡过的。在成长的历程中所接触到的中国文化，无论是传统佳节，精神传承或武术气功，处处都感受着山、医、命、卜、相五术的精义。之后在澳大利亚所接受的西式教育，又让我深深为现代科学纯粹的理性力量所震慑。

近年来从事科研和尖端生物医学专业的经历满足了我对西方科学智慧的渴求，我开始继而转向东方的神秘玄学，在自身阴阳相济的历程中寻求生命的平衡。通过对风水和武术以外更广阔的五术真义的探索，我渴望能够发掘和汲取传统文化精华，为当代社会所用。

很多对我的西方科学背景和东方哲学观有所了解的人都为这看似矛盾的结合大感不解。他们问我如何处理二者的冲突，我的回答是：冲突并不存在，不仅如此，胸怀两种截然不同的世界观能让我以一种开放的怀疑态度深入这个领域。血液里的中国文化遗产赋予了我对于东方理念法则的直觉上的理解和认同，西方教育背景则给了我对其进行分析量化的能力，以求最终能达成心愿，让古老智慧得以在更广阔的世界里得到发扬光大。

中国传统五术之说乃历代先哲术士对万物规律数千年的观察和实践积累所得。既然科学是建立在观察、分析、推测和实验基础上的系统清晰的理论总和，那么五术之中的所蕴藏的智慧也理应同科学的方法论一脉相承。

罗素说得好，任何一种观点，无论在它所处的时代看似多么博大精深，也绝不等同于真理。在西方科学的眼中，不仅对于已知现象的求证是必需的，而正是我们对于未知现象的认可才让实验性探索逐步趋向真理。就五术的部分学说而言，尤其是相术，由于过多的未知变量的存在和其可控性的缺失，因此不可能对其进行真正意义上的实验求证。这和解剖学类似，许多举足轻重的发现都是经由广泛缜密的观察获得，而非实验结果。以“气”为例，这种无所不在的能量既是物质的内在属性，又是外界的生命力量，现行西方科学（牛顿学说）无法为其下定义，但同时这个概念又可以延伸至电磁和天体引力的学科领域，从而与科学才有了交集。“气”是验证五术功效的



基本概念之一，它正如万有引力，我们无法直接推测其根源。但通过中医针灸和风水增进人体健康的成功案例无不在证实这种能量的存在。还是用万有引力的比方，我们只有万有引力定律，却无万有引力理论。万有引力是自然规律的一部分，气也同样是哲学体系中自然规律的一部分，只是人类知识的局限让我们尚未找到有效的量化工具，无法为其建立一套予以诠释的理论系统。

此外，起源和发展于西方世界的现代科学哲学同含蓄晦涩的古老中国传统智慧也有隔阂。上文提到的五术中的许多基本概念和法则都同西方社会的金科玉律相去甚远。它们有基于肉眼所无法观察到的，却在中国传统世界观里毋庸置疑的各种现象，这让我们不得不重新审视：试图用当今西方科学体系来囊括中国哲学智慧所蕴含的真知灼见，这种行为本身是否可行？

中国传统智慧中充盈着令当今西方科学体系捉襟见肘的理念和法则。传统的科学中语汇、计算、测量单位、工具、技巧以及它对于中国哲学原理的了解之局限，让我们不得不怀疑它的文化适用性，是否能放之四海而皆准。

然而，真正的科学家不会为科学的局限性所束缚。感谢他们为人类开启了一扇又一扇发现之窗。在最近的三十年里量子力学的发展让它和传统东方智慧找到了汇合点，从而激发了科学界和更多领域的学者开始重新审视科学的定义。而我们一直在寻找的答案是否早已蕴藏在先人阐述“天道”的古老中国哲学智慧之中，则是我上下求索的目标。

叶慧文

出生在马来西亚的华裔，她在成长历程中深受风水和武术的影响。如今的叶慧文不仅从事国际生物医学咨询，还为她遍布全球的客户提供风水咨询和课程服务。

Boon is of Chinese descent and a Malaysian abroad. She is brought up in an environment of feng shui and kung fu. Now an accredited feng shui instructor, she consults in feng shui around the world and conducts courses, alongside her international biomedical consultancy work.



SCIENCE IS THE WEST'S RECENT MECHANISM FOR QUESTIONING LIFE. THE FIVE SKILLS IS THE CHINESE MECHANISM FOR LIVING LIFE.

Despite, or because of, growing up physically estranged from the land of our culture, the Chinese Diaspora in S.E. Asia tends to cling more fervently to our tradition. Thus I grew up surrounded by the Five Skills that revealed itself in all manner of cultural practices involving traditional festivals, spirituality and martial arts of my youth in Malaysia, yet I was schooled and revealed very much in the pure sciences of a Western education system in Australia.

In recent years having satisfied my passion for Western scientific wisdom first as a research scientist then as a professional in pioneering biomedical sciences, I began to seek life balance through my passion for Eastern esoteric wisdom - my personal journey of Yin and Yang. Extending my knowledge beyond Feng Shui and martial arts into the other aspects the Five Skills has impassioned a desire in me to rekindle this amazing treasure and reinterpret it for our modern times, so others too can benefit from this wonderful wisdom.

Those who are aware of the dual nature of my passions are often perplexed by this unusual mix of Western scientific background and Eastern Chinese philosophical outlook. They have asked how I reconcile the contradiction. My answer is there is no contradiction. On the contrary, it is beneficial to have both worldviews as I approach the field with "open skepticism"; my Chinese heritage opens my mind to an intuitive understanding of the Eastern concepts and principles, my Western education equips me with the ability to evaluate, then ultimately the wish to communicate this wisdom to the world at large.

Knowledge contained in the Traditional Chinese Five Skills stems from several millennia of accumulated observations and practical experience from sages that understood the way of the world. Since science is the systematic and formulated

knowledge gained in a variety of ways including observation, analysis, speculation, and experimentation, the knowledge contained in the Five Skills were developed consistent with scientific methodology.

Bertrand Russell had pointed out that, insight, no matter how seemingly profound at the time, does not guarantee truth. In the eyes of Western science, empirical testing of what one knows is not only required, but it is knowing what one does not know that drives experimental investigation towards truth. For some of the Five Skills disciplines, especially Imagery that concerns direct and verifiable observation of the natural world, true experimentation is not possible because of too many unknown variables plus the inability to control variables. This is similar in astronomy, whereby many fundamental discoveries were induced from extensive observations rather than experiments.

Take the concept of "Qi", the all pervading energy that is an intrinsic property of matter and extrinsic life-force that is indefinable by conventional Western science (Newtonian Science), yet at the same time could be extended to include electromagnetism and perhaps the gravitational pull of celestial bodies, that are somewhat definable by science. The concept of Qi is fundamental to the validity of outcome benefits from the Five Skills. Like gravity, we cannot directly measure or speculate about its cause. But accumulated evidence of the benefits of positive Qi from successful acupuncture treatment in Medicine, and the correct Feng Shui alignment to alleviate good health outcomes in Imagery, validate and substantiate such a force exist. So to use the analogy of gravity, there is a Law of Gravity, but no Theory of Gravity. Similarly, as gravity is a pattern of nature, so is the principle of Qi a pattern of nature according to Chinese philosophy. But we

have no Theory of Qi because our knowledge at this stage is insufficient to explain the phenomenon and there is as yet no instrument that is able to measure it.

Additionally, the philosophy of science developed in the West is rather removed from the implicit forms of knowledge from which ancient traditional Chinese wisdoms are based. Many of the concepts and principles that form the foundation of the Five Skills as mentioned above are beyond everyday Western paradigms. The fact that they are based in phenomena that are completely invisible to observation and yet still very much part of nature in the Chinese worldview, begs the question whether conventional Western science should even be used for verifying the truth behind the essence that form Chinese philosophical wisdom.

Chinese traditional wisdom about with laws and concepts that have raised questions that conventional Western science cannot answer. Conventional science is limited by its capacity in language, mathematics, units of measurement, tools and technology that measure these units, and finally explicit knowledge of the principles of Chinese philosophy, suggesting perhaps that it may be too culture specific to be of relevance.

However, true scientists are not confined by this thinking, and they are the ones we have to thank for the great leaps in discoveries. The past 30 years has witnessed the convergence of the field of quantum mechanics to explain and draw many parallels between it and traditional Eastern wisdoms. This movement is beginning to inspire the scientific and greater community at large to rethink the meaning of science. As for me, my attempt is to discover if the answer has always been there- Chinese philosophical wisdom, the ancients' answer to the "Meaning of Life and the Universe".