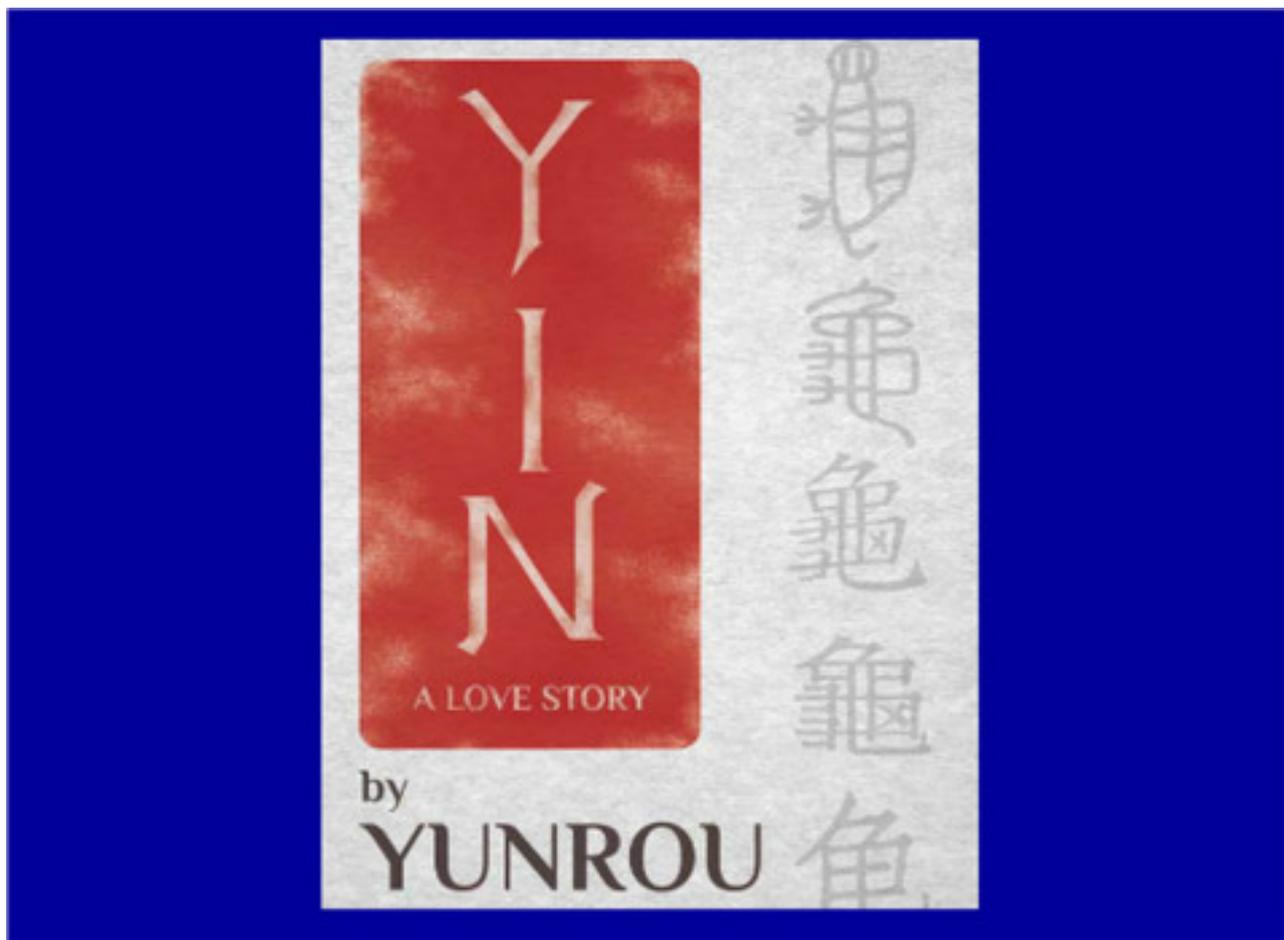


Yin: an exotic thriller with a profound message

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Yin is a fiction loosely based on the life and teachings of legendary **Laozi**, an ancient Chinese sage who was credited for authoring **Dao De Jin (or Tao Te Ching)**. Fascinatingly, this novel was written mostly from a first person perspective of Yin, a female protagonist who was a tortoise with a little sarcasm from a volcanic Galapagos island and later transformed into an astonishing looking South American beauty. Influenced by the writings of magical realism, award-winning author and **Tai Chi** (Taiji) Master **Arthur Rosenfeld** (aka Daoist Monk Yunrou) wrote this romance in two tracks of timelines that are approximately 2,500 years apart but progress simultaneously in a charming fashion and finally come together with an unexpected ending.



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Like Confucius, Laozi was one of the greatest philosophers whose influence has lasted throughout the Chinese history for the past 2,500 years. There were eras that Confucianism was abandoned and even prohibited because its principles did not support the ruler's political agenda. The same was true for Laozi's Daoism. Regardless, both Confucianism and Daoism survived tumultuous times and are

flourishing in the 21st century, in both the east and west. Unlike Confucius who was a prolific writer and authored major classics of hundreds of thousands of words, Laozi was a man of few words and only wrote *Dao De Jin* of five thousand characters. Since there were few official records on Laozi's life, scholars in China and overseas think that Laozi might be a fabled figure; hence, there have been tall tales about Laozi and many tend to be mystical in nature. Based on few known aspects of Laozi, Rosenfeld took the liberty and let his muse to weave a beautiful romance that depicts who Laozi was and most importantly what Daoism stands for. Arthur did a good job writing about Chinese history, culture, and geography, save some expressions used in the book, that were not true reflections of how ancient Chinese people spoke. Understandably, the turtle wasn't Chinese and its comments actually inoculated some humor into the story.

Book of Changes (Yijing or I Ching) is the bedrock of all Chinese [philosophy](#). Its Yin and Yang theory dominates the entire cultural spectrum and is the foundation of Daoism. Yin represents soft and feminine while Yang represents strong and masculine. In Arthur's mind, Laozi wanted to find a perfect Yin to complement his Yang to reach a well-balanced state of Tai Chi. The female tortoise was a soulmate that Laozi was longing for because Yin not only understood human beings' thinking but was also able to articulate her mind to communicate with Laozi by their silent language. Owing to her organized mind, Yin helped to capsule Laozi's wisdom into poetic phrases of *Dao De Jing*. The opening sentence of *Tao De Jing* is "*Dao Ke Dao Fei Chang Dao*" or "if you can put words around the omnipresent law of the nature, then the words cannot represent the law". It seems paradoxical or even ridiculous that Laozi bothered to pen *Dao De Jing* if he truly believed "*Dao Ke Dao Fei Chung Dao*". In the novel, Master Rosenfeld brilliantly designed an episode that convinced readers why Laozi produced *Dao De Jing*.

Born to a prominent Jewish family in New York, Arthur Rosenfeld had a broad education in diverse subjects. A graduate of the Russian and Eastern European Studies program at Yale University, he also completed graduate work in veterinary medicine at Cornell University, Biology and Zoology at University of California Santa Barbara and in the Writing Program at University of California San Diego. Outside the regular academic system, he has studied Chinese martial arts, culture, history, and Daoism both in the U.S. and China. In 2012, he was ordained as a Daoist monk in China and last year he was bestowed with the title of Daoist Priest. It is intriguing to see how Arthur employed his profound knowledge in Daoism, history, culture, medicine, and zoology along with his incredible imagination to create a riveting novel about Laozi life in the first track. In the second track, Arthur tells a thrilling story of a high-speed chase with cutting-edge technologies of smart phone, GPS, infrared, cyber hacking, drone, airship, nanotechnology, and more. While we marvel at the dazzling developments of modern society, Arthur pinpoints issues of morality, income equality, abuse of power, and pollution. Unlike others who criticize the modern society and romanticize the past, Arthur is honest and realistic. From both tracks, we realize problems and issues of different times; nevertheless, there are commonalities in both.

Today the earth is over-excavated, over-polluted, and over-heated to meet insatiable needs. Wars against humanity are fought for more land and resources and some are under the façade of national pride, religion, security and ideology. Maybe Daoism's respect of the nature and humanity and the "less is more" attitude can be a beacon. With that, I appreciate Arthur's book of *Yin*.

SUGGESTED LINKS

- **An inspiring chat with Arthur Rosenfeld on Tai Chi**
- **The Science of Tai Chi**
- **Recommended: "Tai Chi: The Perfect Exercise"**
- **Chojun: a good read**
- **Tai Chi Chuan or Tai Chi Dao**



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