

BUBBLING SPRING

A Quinterly Newsletter
for the Five Element Community of Australia

WINTER 2009

Inaugural Edition



Welcome to the very first edition of Bubbling Spring!

This newsletter arose as a spontaneous idea, bubbling up like irrepressible Qi, as a support for the community of practitioners, students and clients of Five Element Acupressure and Acupuncture in Australia.

The aims of this newsletter are:

- ✳ to remind us of the changing energies of the five seasons, their corresponding Elements, and their impact upon us
- ✳ to create a place of connection for those involved in this remarkable work
- ✳ to provide a forum for sharing information, commentary and personal experience with the Five Elements, in both life and the treatment room.

As this is the first edition, I am providing all the content, but I welcome and encourage contributions from all readers. Please feel free to contribute:

- your illuminating cases
- your personal treatment experiences
- news of upcoming events
- reviews of events, conferences, etc
- book reviews
- scientific studies
- reprints of journal articles, and
- letters to the editor

I hope that as practitioner or client, you will find that these pages enlighten, support, and energise your involvement in Five Element work.

May this fledgling edition, in the course of the seasons, sprout forth, expand, bear fruit, and provide compost for next year's seeds!

John Kirkwood, Editor

*Subscribe, Comment, Submit to john@acupressure.com.au
Deadline Spring edition 14th August 2009*

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GIFTS OF THE ELEMENTS

Deep Listening. The Gift of Water

Certain human characteristics are associated with each Element. The deepest, most real, and most essential of these qualities are the gifts of that Element. When the Water Element is in balance within us, we have access to its gifts, which include Power, Wisdom, Will, Knowing, Stillness, Trust and Patience

The capacity for Deep Listening is also a gift of Water, since hearing is the sense associated with Water, and the ear is its sense organ.

The following historical event shows the tremendous power of deep listening.

In 1986 the Listening Project was begun by a group called Rural Southern Voice for Peace. Its aim was to conduct 'deep listening' interviews in communities where conflict, divisions or disempowerment were weakening efforts for positive change. The organisers wanted to use the power of listening to open people's minds and break down rigid ideas. The 'interviewers' went into small communities in the deep south of the USA where people had very fixed ideas and opinions on certain subjects. These ideas were often very different from those of the interviewers.

The interviewers would go and simply listen to the people in these communities. They

offered their ears and their complete attention, without comment or interruption, putting aside their own ideas and opinions as best they could. They offered deep listening within which to speak.

When this happened, things began to change. Speakers began to think much more about their words, stock phrases were replaced by more considered thoughts, and ideas and opinions began to shift. And for the listeners too, something changed. Their own prejudices and stereotypes began to soften as they listened. Both groups experienced transformation.

This event illustrates the power of the balanced Element. When Water is in balance and our ears, our hearing and our listening are attuned, this balance flows through to all the other Elements. It generates the clearer, more flexible view of balanced Wood; it invites the compassion and open-heartedness of balanced Fire; it brings the understanding and empathy of balanced Earth; and it allows the acknowledgement, respect and acceptance of balanced Metal.

Just as a stuck place in one Element can produce stuck places in other Elements, so too the balancing of one Element produces balance in the others. The opening of one gift is shared around the Five Element cycle, and with all parts of who we are.

THE WINTER SEASON

The season associated with the Water Element is Winter, when Nature draws within. Seeds are stored for the following year, waiting patiently for the time when growth begins again.

When our Water Element is in balance, we feel comfortable with the colder weather, taking the opportunity to do less, and to eat and sleep a little more. We spend time reflecting, and gathering our own resources.

We enjoy the gifts of Water, the ability to trust and to rest, to listen deeply, to have the wisdom of inner knowing, and to conserve resources and gather power.

When our Water is out of balance we struggle with the cold weather, feeling drained and weary to the bone. We lose our will. We are not able to trust in ourselves or the world, and become unsure, anxious and fearful. Our bladder and the kidneys don't function as well and we may suffer from low back pain. Our ears and our hearing may also suffer.

In treating the Water Element, we can treat the Bladder and Kidney meridians, which are the Water meridians and our reservoirs of energy. They are like lakes and rivers storing and carrying our precious Qi.

We can support our Water by getting plenty of sleep and rest, especially in winter, keeping warm, and being sexually moderate. Foods that support Water include small amounts of salty food like seaweed and tamari, fruits and vegetables that are blue or black in colour, and beans. Breathing exercises that bring breath to the belly centre can warm the abdomen and lower back and support the Bladder and Kidney meridians. Massaging the lower back muscles can also invigorate the area.

We can also look at the emotion associated with Water, which is fear. We can consider our relationship to fear and how it affects us. We might ask ourselves what it is that gets in the way of trusting the unfolding flow of our lives. We might consider if we are daredevils, or over-fearful, and why that is. Questions like this can help us understand how we impede the natural flow of our Water.

SEASONINGS



Black Bean Soup

This recipe is a wonderful, hearty winter soup that warms us to our bones. Beans, especially black beans or red kidney beans are supportive of the Water Element. The recipe also contains all five flavours, making a delightful balance for the palate. You can vary the condiments to taste.

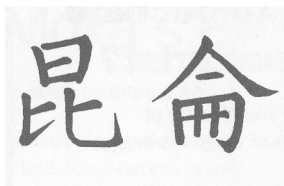
Ingredients

1½ cups dry black beans (or other beans) soaked overnight and cooked until soft.
3 celery sticks including tops
1 large carrot
2 or 3 potatoes
1 small sweet potato
1 cup butternut pumpkin
1 capsicum
2 large leeks
3 teaspoons Asian curry paste
130 mls coconut milk
1 teaspoon tamari
1 dessertspoon honey
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
2 litres filtered water

Combine ingredients in a very large cooking pot, bring to the boil, and simmer for about an hour, stirring occasionally. Allow to sit longer for the flavours to blend, but if you can't wait to warm up, go ahead and start!

MORE to the POINT

Kunlun Mountain



BL60, or 'Kunlun Mountain', is located between the outer ankle bone and the Achilles tendon. It is well known for its use in relieving low back pain, particularly when used in conjunction with the Back Shu points where the pain is occurring. But there is more to this point than that, as Thea Elijah and Tom Gentile reveal in the following article.

Acupuncture points receive their names for a great variety of reasons. Some are named according to their location on the body; some names relate to the functions associated with the point and which organs or meridians are influenced. And some, like Kunlun Mountain (Bladder 60), relate more directly to the culture and geography in which they originate.

Kunlun Mountain is the location of the source of both the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers. Just as the Bladder meridian, where this point is found, is the longest meridian in the body, the Yangtze is the longest river in China. The Yangtze is navigable along its whole length, providing transportation and communication. Because of its ability to contain and offset the irregularities of seasonal rainfall, it is not prone to flooding or drought and is a constant source of irrigation waters. In sharp contrast, the Yellow River, known as "China's Sorrow", has the highest sedimentation rate of all the world's great rivers. Due to the continual build-up of silt, it is treacherous to navigate because of constantly shifting sandbars in what may look like deep water.

With no permanent clear channel, the Yellow River's course continually shifts. It regularly floods its banks. In many areas, people have built dikes higher than the

roofs of their own homes. Eventually the river overflows its banks anyway, flooding the plains for thousands of miles.

In an early myth of a devastating flood, a brother and sister are the sole survivors of humankind. They float in a gourd until they reach Kunlun Mountain which rises above the great waters. Here they establish themselves and, symbolizing primordial yin and yang, they proceed to repopulate the human race.

Kunlun Mountain is also spoken of as the central axis between Heaven and Earth, a pillar of constancy that mediates the forces of yin and yang, Heaven and Earth, flood and drought, death and rebirth. It is the place in ourselves which remains steady (our backbone, our will) to which we can return after overwhelm, to begin anew. It is the fire point on this Winter/Water meridian, burning like a light in the darkness. Kunlun Mountain is the summit from which, aligned with our personal axis, we can generate the self-regulating, self-contained resourcefulness of the Yangtze River. Alternatively, when our experience is more like that of the Yellow River, Kunlun Mountain is the steady, primordial place to which we can always return for rebirth after the flood.

"Kunlun Mountain: Point 60 the Bladder Meridian," by Thea Elijah and Tom Gentile, appeared in the Winter 1995 issue of Quintessence, a publication of the Traditional Acupuncture Institute (now Tai Sophia Institute). Reprinted by permission of Tai Sophia Institute.



Kunlun Mountain

CONFERENCE REPORT



Shiatsu Therapy
Association of Australia

Geoffrey Wilson's presentation
'The Five Spirits of Healing
Restoring Essence'
STAA Conference

One of the luminaries at the STAA Conference at the Michael Centre, Melbourne on 24th May, Geoffrey presented a spirited, interactive lecture on the Five Spirits. These are the primal energies that underpin the Five Elements. What follows is a brief summary of this insightful presentation.

Thousands of years ago, the sages of Oriental Medicine recorded their understanding of the Five Spirits. The Spirits together encompass the totality of our awareness, and both represent and support our soul's journey through life.

When we are in touch with a Spirit, we experience its mental and physical gifts. But when we have lost touch with one (or more) of the Five Spirits, we experience the physical and psychological symptoms flowing from the loss of that Spirit. Thus our symptoms can show us which Spirit or Spirits are blocked in our lives.

Hun, the Spirit of Wood is the messenger of the soul's purpose. It represents our greater soul's vision of the purpose of our life, as distinct from the smaller visions of ego. If we are not in touch with this grand vision, purpose, dream or quest, it manifests as signs and symptoms in the liver, from feelings of frustration to extreme conditions such as Blazing Liver Fire and Stagnant Liver Qi.

Shen, the Spirit of Fire awakens compassion. It relates directly to heart function and to relationships. It also relates to openness to guidance from Spirit. This Spirit is impeded by sentiment, pity, and colluding sympathy. Disorders such as heart and blood flow problems, palpitations, memory loss, sleep problems, anxiety and nervousness are all symptoms that result from loss of contact with the Spirit of Fire.

Yi, the Spirit of Earth engenders manifestation. It supports transformation of life experience into ideas and intentions. What gets in the way of this is worry, obsessive thought, and self absorption. Signs and symptoms that result are eating disorders, muddled or excessive thinking, insufficient movement, over-nurturing of others to avoid the self, inability to implement ideas, and inability to assimilate, to digest, and to cope with life.

Po, the Spirit of Metal is the corporeal soul, and joins body and mind. It is the realm of the body unconscious, the storehouse of identity that is embedded in the muscles, tissues, fascia, nerves and organs of the body. Sorrow and the inability to let go impedes access to this Spirit. 'You have to be cool with endings to be OK about the Now.' Dysfunctions that follow from disconnection with Po are problems with the lungs, colon and skin, lumps and tumours, chronic tension, negativity towards others and psychosomatic symptoms.

Zhi, the Spirit of Water aligns purpose with will. It represents our vitality and our will. Both are drained by fear and desire, while nourishing our dedication and determination increases our connection to Zhi. Problems that arise from disconnection relate to the bladder and kidneys and to our bones.

Geoffrey presented us with one of his cases to illustrate the use and usefulness of this system. His client, a 30 year old woman suffered from PMT, dysmenorrhea, oedema and headaches. This is a case of Liver Qi Stagnation, and suggests loss of the Spirit of Wood. He offered her the perspective that her symptoms were related to loss of contact with the vision and purpose of her life. Inquiry into this then became an effective part of her treatment.



SEASONAL TREATMENT

Do you have symptoms along the Bladder or Kidney meridians, or Bladder or Kidney complaints?

If so, Winter is the most supportive season for treatment of these ills.

When the season changes and a new Element makes its energetic presence felt, the period of transition is the time that our health is most likely to suffer. Each season brings its particular set of health challenges associated with the meridians of the Element of that season. Problems of those organs as well as conditions along the pathways of those meridians tend to show up more in that season.

The good news is that the ambient energy of the season specifically supports the healing of these imbalances.

The Water Element's meridians are Bladder

and Kidney, so Winter tends to bring low back pains and strains, conditions where cold has penetrated the body, bladder or kidney infections, frequent urination, incontinence, night sweats, exhaustion, overwhelm and burnout. Now is the best time to treat these particular complaints with Five Element Acupressure or Acupuncture.

It's said that in ancient China, the Emperor paid his doctors when he was well, but when he fell ill, the doctors weren't paid. Clearly it was in the interests of the doctors to treat the Emperor regularly to ensure his continued good health. This demonstrates the importance that Chinese Medicine placed on preventive health care.

You too can contribute to your wellbeing with ongoing treatment. Scheduling seasonal treatments is one of the best ways of supporting optimum health.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Integrative Acupressure 1

20-21 Aug & 3-4 Sept, 9-5 each day
NHAA 47 South Tce Adelaide
08 8231 4933 to register
Taught by John Kirkwood

FREE TALK

**The Emotions Behind Your illness.
Healing With Five Element Acupressure**
24th August 12.00 – 1.30 pm Drop in event
Quantum Bookstore 113 Melbourne Street,
North Adelaide. 0410 779 159 for info.
Speaker – John Kirkwood
www.acupressure.com.au

Acubalance Series - WATER

5th July 9-5 NHAA 47 South Tce Adelaide
08 8231 4933 to register
Taught by John Kirkwood

Add your event!

Letters to the editor welcome!

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