

How to Work With the Energy of Springtime in Our Personal and Spiritual Development

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Seasonal Energies

Like all of the seasons, Springtime has a special energy associated with it. When we understand what energy a season brings we can work with it to understand ourselves better and balance our energy. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) provides a great model by observing nature and applying it with the old adage "as above so below", meaning that what happens in nature (heaven and earth) also happens on the human level.

Springtime is, of course, associated with growth. In spring, energy in trees moves from the roots (where winter energy is stored) upward through the trunk toward the branches and out in the form of leaves. These leaves collect energy from the sun, collecting and distributing it to the rest of the tree. In summary: the *wood* energy of spring gathers energy from the *earth* (roots), is nourished by the heavens (*water / rain*), plans for the future (planting seeds) and looks forward to the summer by collecting sun energy (*fire*).

The Traditional Chinese Medicine Model of Seasonal Energies

So how can understanding this pattern of nature provide benefits to us? First, let's look further into its relation to the TCM model.

In TCM, Springtime is associated with the wood element. Its color is green and is the element between water and fire. It mediates between the two.

Water in TCM is represented by the Kidneys, the root of our system. It represents our will, our genetic inheritance, our unmanifest potential and our inherent wisdom. It holds the blueprint of what we are and who we may become. Fire in TCM represents the Heart, or spirit. It is the spirit which integrates all of the energies we possess and utilizes them as insight. It is our sense of propriety which knows right action and where and when for it to take place. With true integration we are able to radiate like the sun to all around us.

Springtime- The Wood Element

Wood in TCM is represented by the Liver and Gallbladder. The Liver controls the flow of energy in us. It mediates energy between the water and fire elements. Like the xylem and phloem in the trunk of a tree or the stem of a plant, the Liver helps to distribute energy and smooth its flow throughout the body. It harmonizes heavenly energy with earthly energy. It naturally raises our earthly energy, nourished by the will, and brings it through its own evolutionary spirit, in virtue, to the heart.

The Liver also is the energy that provides our vision in the world as we look forward. These plans are based on our own vision of the world. Good vision requires skills in analysis, discernment and judgment. It requires the gradual dissolution of the ego to allow our true selves to operate in the field of the consciousness. To do this requires introspection and looking within by shutting off the senses for a while. By bringing our inner nature upward through the discernment of the Liver we come to better "understand" more of how our ego operates. Even the word "understanding" has the energetic described above. Under (deep, below, inward) and standing (upward movement). This necessarily implies an integration of energy, which is what the liver does- it smoothes and circulates energy throughout the body as needed. Additionally, it is through understanding that we gain the virtue of "insight" which lies in the Heart (Fire element- nourished by the wood element)

The Liver in its upward evolutionary movement not only controls the flow of energy but can transform anger and belligerence into benevolence (integration of duality). The Liver and its natural tendency to go upward abhors stagnation. If we are resentful we are holding on to a negative emotion. This stagnates the liver and over time can cause anger. Anger is only stagnant energy wanting to move up and out of the emotional body. We naturally do not want to hold conflict in our body. The Liver, here, is trying to transform this stuck energy so that it can be moved out of the way. Anger can move us to action if used positively. If its energy is not heeded it can buildup over time, create toxicity on both emotional and physical levels and eventually will be a detriment to our health.

So this is a good time to take some time to look within (go deeper into our roots, our own inherent wisdom) and see what thoughts and emotions are hindering a wider and truer perspective in our lives. What prevents us from transforming old and stagnant energy into something new? What can we discard in our ways of thinking and emotion that can allow our true selves more room to operate? What actions do we habitually commit that compromise our roots and therefore do harm to our own self-esteem, our own growth?

The Gallbladder, also a wood element in TCM, is the energy that gives us the courage to execute and carry out the plans and visions strategized by the Liver. The Liver is the bow, so to speak, and the Gallbladder is the arrow. One can do loads of planning and feel some sense of accomplishment in this area but it is of no avail if one lacks the courage to carry it out. Courage is, in part, dependent on our self-esteem. The Gallbladder empowers us to be decisive when there are alternate possibilities. The Gallbladder integrates the Liver's plan with the wisdom of the Kidney and carries it into action.

Spring Cleaning

On a physical level, clearing out old energy can be seen in the "spring cleaning" phenomenon. Spring is a good time to clear out old energy that stagnates us. This is true on all levels. It is a good time to do a body cleanse (under supervised care). One of the jobs of the liver is to detoxify the blood. A good way to assist the liver in this function is by eating fresh greens and / or juicing them. Dandelion, arugula, and spinach are helpful. Barley grass, spirulina and chlorella are also very good.

Planting Seeds

It is a good time to plant seeds, meet new people make new plans and build new foundations. When we plant seeds in the ground we must first plow the field to house the seed. If over time we have not paid attention to the ground of our being it becomes neglected. It can no longer provide the proper minerals, so to speak, for flourishing and sustaining growth. If communication between our deeper selves and the center of our spirit, the heart, becomes compromised separation occurs. The ego represses the natural flow of this communication to maintain its own existence. This process hardens the soil of our being. The root of the word human comes from "humus". We are earthly beings. When we become hardened or repress our communication with the true self we harden the interface between heaven and earth, the ground of being where we stand. This makes the planting of new seeds a harsher environment in which to flourish. Our ground of being needs to be stirred up, renewed, in order for growth to take place. The word "comfort" comes from the Latin word *confortare*, to strengthen much. Its root is *fortis*, strong. Contrast this definition with today's understanding of the word. In order to strengthen our vision of our selves we need to keep our being in renewal to accept energy from above (our larger place in the universe) and energy from below (our genetic and human evolutionary inheritance).

If you found this article of interest, I would appreciate your feedback (see e-mail and phone at top). I also would consider doing a workshop on all the seasonal energies in more detail. By understanding seasonal energies we can have a better glimpse into all phenomenon, including ourselves.

Also, foods are another way to work with energies of the season. Food is medicine. In TCM foods are grouped according to their flavor and what organs / meridians they work with and what actions they have in the body. If you would like to know more about the energetic properties of foods and diet, again, I would appreciate you letting me know this so that if there is enough interest a workshop or at the very least, another article in the Soul Source newsletter might be appropriate. Also personal consultations are available for those interested on an individual basis.