

ORIENTAL MEDICAL COSMOLOGY

The unity of Spirit or DAO was bifurcated into 'heaven and earth', or the material universe. We can view this as a Yin-Yang polarity, whose interaction manifested, and continues to manifest, the so-called 'ten thousand things'. Chinese medical philosophers further classified the ten thousand things of the universe into the FIVE ELEMENTS of Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water.

The outer arrows on your REGENERATION picture shows how the seasons, the cycles of a twenty-four hour day, organs and even skin changes, grows, matures and regenerates. The five elements are further broken down into the twelve meridians or rivers of the body (in ancient China there were twelve major rivers), the eight reservoirs of the body's electro-magnetic field and the classic three hundred and sixty-five acupuncture points.

Each element is the center of a web of relationships for categories of other reflections of nature's laws. Each element corresponds with a season, a climate, a stage of growth and development, a color, an organ, a tissue, an emotion, a sound, a taste, a direction and environmental factor, to all aspects of the natural and synthetic worlds. Thus, the parts of the eye can be broken into five elements, as can the periodic table. It provides a convenient method by which we can identify, classify and understand our world. The five elements are always in motion, generating or giving birth to another as parent to child or controlling each other as one stronger than another, or relating to one another as would a husband and wife.

A seasonal example in nature is seen as a forest pine tree uses winter rainwater to nourish new growth in the spring to develop and fully mature during the summer months. In the fall season the needles and cones drop to the forest floor and the tree will rest during the dark of winter to be nourished again by the moisture of winter rains and snow to start its spring growth cycle again.

A climate may be deficient or excessive. An emotion expressed or hidden. A skin dysfunction may be manifest or latent. Our bodies also go through seasonal changes, although many have forgotten this connection while living far from nature in a modern world.

Within the body, the liver-gall bladder complex provides energy for life by purifying the blood, regulating tendon strength, governing the liveliness and clarity of the eyes while strengthening the heart. A spring wind blows from the east; the color of new growth is green as is the color of bile. When ones lies supine to sleep the blood 'flows back to the liver', allowing the stored sugars from the peripheral tissues to be moved back into the blood stream so one wakes refreshed, ready for a productive day (creativity is said to stem from the liver). If one stays up past one a.m., the portion of the two-hour horary cycle when blood

'should' be flowing back into the liver, blood sugar may be insufficient in the morning and one is 'tired'. Habitually slow to wake may indicate the liver needs cleansing, best performed in the spring. Since the wood element represents the morning, the skin cells of the face need cleansing at this time by using cleansing, astringing and tonifying products.

The heart and endocrine system govern the pH of the blood and circulation and metabolism of each and every cell, whether skin, nerve or organ, and it strengthens the stomach. It is associated with the tongue and blood vessels, and with the laughter and joy of the summer's warmth flooding toward the poles from the fire of the equator's heat. The fire element is represented by the daylight hours of metabolic activity during which time the pH of an individual cell along with its blood chemistry and temperature assures its very health, survival and appearance. The technical term for this is homeostasis, the narrow limits within which cells must operate to ensure health and survival.

The stomach and pancreas rule digestion, assuring that the fifteen trillion cells that comprise the body get the nutrition they need. By harmonizing and balancing digestive processes, it also strengthens the lungs. The mouth and lips produce happiness by taking in good tasting food and by speaking kind words and singing God's praise. The stomach and pancreas like sweet corn and grains like millet in late summer to nourish muscles. The earth element has great effects on the other four elements for without food we cannot exist.

The lungs and large intestines rule the skin and body hair, govern breathing and detoxification of lungs, skin and bowels while strengthening the kidneys. Sadness, grief, sorrow and despair are emotions associated with the lung-large intestines and one could view a smoking habit or cocaine usage as an inferior way to strengthen the lung function. Hot tobacco smoke will irritate/stimulate the lungs for about three seconds, then depleting the meridian flow. Cocaine lasts about forty-five minutes before depleting the system. Superficially, impurities of the skin can be removed with scrubs and seaweed masks while an impacted colon can be partially detoxed with bentonite clay.

The kidneys, bladder, adrenal glands and reproductive organs rule water circulation and lymphatic drainage, without which it would be impossible to survive. This group strengthens the liver and represents the ears, bones and spine and is injured by a cold winter wind. It expresses itself through fear and/or willfulness. It is the seat of our genetics, the depositor of DNA.