

# Attuning with Fall – Fall Chronobiology

By Bill Wright, L.Ac., DNBAO  
Fall 2003

Harmony and balance are central to Chinese Medical thinking, and to stay healthy and balanced it's helpful to harmonize ourselves with the seasonal changes throughout the year; a concept known as Chronobiology. The basic idea is that all things on the physical planet come into being through certain predictable phases, a concept known as "the five phases, aka. The five elements". Fall is represented in the Metal Phase (harvest, gathering and pulling inward, storage, decay, rotting, discipline, spiritual/religious pursuits, wizingening).

September 23<sup>rd</sup>, the autumnal equinox is the high point of Fall so it's a perfect time to start strengthening and harmonizing with the qualities of the season. There are five levels Chinese Medicine works to restore balance and optimize health: Diet, Exercise, Stress Management (Meditation), Acupuncture (physical medicine), and Herbology.

## Diet

The Fall season is a wonderful time for our diets due to the harvest abundance, cooked foods are starting to become appealing again with cooler temperatures on the rise, so to speak, and the main flavor of the season is pungent (all the flavors are said to nourish and, "enter" the various organs in the body, the pungent flavor enters the Lung and Colon system - the organs associated with the Metal Phase). All pungent foods such as hot peppers and chilies can be used to protect the lungs, but at least some white pungents should be included because this color specifically affects the Metal Phase organs. These include members of the onion family, especially garlic, also turnip, ginger, horseradish, cabbage\*, radish\*, daikon radish\*, and white peppercorn\*. Cooling foods denoted by "\*" should be used if there are any heat or deficiency of yin heat signs (yellow sputum, sensation of heat in the body, red face, sore throat, hot palms and soles, night sweats, low grade fever). Eating these pungent foods raw maximizes their dispersing effect. They are still potent, however, when slightly cooked, and this is a better preparation method for those who have signs of deficiency. Mucilaginous foods are important for mucus membrane renewal of the lungs and colon, a traditional tea drunk this time of year for this purpose is a decoction of: One part fennel seed (*Foeniculum vulgare*), One part fenugreek seed (*Tigonella foenumgraecum*), One part flax seed (*Linum usitatissimum*), One part nettle leaf (*Urtica urens*), and .25 part licorice root (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*). This formula is used for four weeks as an autumn tonic for the lungs, colon, and mucus membranes; it is also used as an excellent nutritive blend during fasting.<sup>1</sup>

## Exercise

Exercises from the Chinese Medical tradition focus on movement from Tai Chi Chuan and Qi Gong. For the lungs and colon a simple exercise is deep abdominal breathing with the breath originating at a spot a few inches below the navel and at the end of the exhale bringing this spot back towards the spine; not sucking in the low abdomen with force, but

---

<sup>1</sup> Healing with Whole Foods, Paul Pitchford. North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, CA, p. 312.

# Attuning with Fall – Fall Chronobiology

By Bill Wright, L.Ac., DNBAO  
Fall 2003

making sure to empty completely. Doing this while pulling up gently on the perineum, or muscles of the pelvic floor help to fill the lungs completely increasing their capacity for deep nourishing breathing, massages the colon and helps relax the mind.

## Stress Management

After many years of studying various forms of meditation, and movement meditation, I've come to realize that meditation need not necessarily be based on any technique or form because meditation itself is intrinsic and fundamental to our nature as human-*Beings*.

A simple question such as, “who is it that is aware” can become a powerful place to open to a deep and profound presence of being that is intrinsic; deep relaxation, stillness, joy, and deep abiding peace are by-products of our intrinsic being . Techniques are usually aimed at ‘attaining’ these by-products, we have to ask, “am I sure that the peace, joy, happiness, etc... I'm seeking isn't all ready present”.

It's not helpful with inquiry to start mining thought in our heads to find the answer; instead it is with receptivity to the essence of our being that we rest, resting as that essence itself. The goal is to see how the truth of our being is in relationship to what is happening in the moment - every moment. Life itself gives us the opportunity to see what is truly important, essential, and enduring – a gift we all get to open.

## Physical Medicine

Acupuncture and Herbal therapy, the last two branches of Chinese Medicine, are the main tools, but not the only tools, used by a character like myself who has the training and a license to practice Chinese Medicine in California. There are many traditional herbal formulas that I use to help the body harmonize, balance and strengthen; many have been in use for thousands of years. The formulas are matched to your individual constitution and clinical presentation (ie. Signs and symptoms) so it's difficult to make appropriate suggestions without doing a proper examination. I'm open for a free consultation in person or over the phone to see if Chinese Medicine might offer the right tools for you to heal, balance and reach your full potential.