

# Attuning with Winter – Winter Chronobiology

By Bill Wright, L.Ac., DNBAO

January 15, 2004

The holiday season, “the season to be jolly”, has come and gone, and it’s definitely not time to stop feeling joy and peace. Are you ready to manifest that list of New Year’s resolutions? Chinese Medicine (CM) has a few secrets up its sleeves that will be helpful for your resolve, and help you experience joy all through the year. CM advocates harmonizing with the energetic qualities of this time of year, being more inward and moving from above ground to the roots below. It’s the time of year to slow down, sleep longer, take it easy, try to do less, and as I like to tell my patients, “error on the side of rest, and enjoy the stillness intrinsic in all of us”. CM teaches us that the Water phase of Winter nourishes the Wood phase of Spring (refer to any basic text on CM to learn more about the five phase aka five element theory); deep rest and stillness during the water phase/winter is a necessary part of divine order for the energies of Spring to fully blossom: creativity, new growth, birthing of thought and intention, and manifesting *RESOLUTIONS*. Without nourishing our ‘water’ qualities, the ‘wood’ qualities will lack the resolve necessary for them to fully manifest, and further, many imbalances can show up in spring as a consequence of not harmonizing ourselves with the gifts of deep rejuvenation.

The water phase/winter corresponds to the Kidney/Adrenal system which is known in Chinese Medicine (CM) as, “the palace of fire and water”. Another way to say it would be that this system is the root of the yin (secure, peaceful, quiet) and yang (energetic, active, outward) energies in our bodies. For example, the hormones produced by this organ system help us maintain our energy levels through the day, and also help to maintain healthy levels of the sex hormones: testosterone, and estrogens. These hormones serve many vital functions in the body from maintaining healthy bone and lean muscle mass to keeping us feeling vital and energetic.

A healthy kidney/adrenal system also manifests on an emotional level as being fearless, or having an appropriate amount of fear, and not being run by fear throughout our daily lives. The emotion of fear limits our ability to experience joy, the two never occur in the same moment. When fear starts to predominate it weakens the kidney/adrenal system, which spirals us into becoming more fearful. In CM we treat the kidney/adrenal system through diet, meditation, tai chi chuan and qi gong exercises, as well as Acupuncture and Herbology to help this system rejuvenate; the fears limiting our joy naturally transform.

CM also states that every organ system manifests a different, “organ vitality”. The organ vitality of the kidney/adrenal system gives us our capacity for... “WILLPOWER” or “DRIVE”. Harmonizing with this season by recharging our batteries with stillness and rest can be just the thing we need to help make all those new years resolutions manifest successfully, and help us live through the expansive phases of spring and summer with less fear and more joy.

Here is an excerpt from a poem entitled, “My Secret Is Silence” by a mystic poet named Adayashanti that beautifully points to the stillness that is intrinsic in us all, and to the qualities of the water phase/winter:

The waves of mind  
Demand so much of Silence.  
But She does not talk back  
Does not give answers nor arguments.

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She is the hidden author of every thought

Every feeling

Every moment.

Silence<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> My Secret is silence – poetry and sayings of Adayashanti, pp. 30-31, Copyright 2003 by Adayashanti, Open Gate Publishing, Los Gatos, CA

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