



LIVING MEDICINES

Founded by

David Kukkola & Tamara Wolfson, L.Ac.

December 2010

In This Issue:

- The Twelve-Day Winter Ceremony
- Giving
- Winter: Season of Storage
- Healing with Food
- Book Pics
- Herb of the Month
- Chinese Dietary Therapy



Turtle Lodge – My Prayer

by David Kukkola



To the dreams and dreamers, the wanderers and nomads, to justice and freedom that awaits us, we send our prayers. Come home to the small wooden lodge nestled amidst the mighty oaks, the fragrant bays, as they bend downwards to listen to our stories, songs of praise, and unlimited possibilities. Come home and rest your weary limbs in the darkness of her womb and the warmth of her fire. The sacred space of the Turtle Lodge has been safely born.*

OLD TRADITIONS – MODERN TIMES A Twelve-Day Winter Ceremony

By Tamara Wolfson

Rooted in the twelve days of Yule-tide, this is an ancient midwinter celebration that has been a traditional ceremony honoring the sacred female at a time when the darkness of winter has overcome the light. The ceremony begins with Mothers-Night, Mōdraniht (Old English, "Night of the Mothers") on December 20th, the night before the shortest day and the longest night (winter solstice) and lasts twelve nights ending with New Years Day.



These twelve nights have been an honored window of time set apart between the old year and the new, in which the greatest workings are begun and the greatest destiny turned. At this juncture in time, the ancestral forces maintain the greatest might. It is a time of the year when our deceased Ancestors are closest to us; this is when the dead are more active than any other time of year. "These times are inter-calendarary periods in Celtic and Teutonic year-reckoning, the paradoxical 'time between the times' when the crack appears and the paths between the worlds are laid open. They are periods of 'ritual reversal' when the dead enter the world of the living and the living enter the world of the dead."

continued on page 2

The traditional Yule of Northern Europe is associated with the Wild Hunt. The story of the hunt is quite varied throughout Europe and the world and has been associated with great leaders from King Arthur to Theodoric the Great, and in the Far East, Lord Shiva. We will pick up the story as it is associated with the Norse god Woden, or Odinn who has also been linked to the original concept, the Father of Winter and the Father Christmas, as he rides with his consort, the Goddess Frige.

For twelve days, Odinn leads the spirits of humans, horses and dogs through the skies looking for the newly deceased. He is the God who is said to have given the first humans both their soul and spirit power. In addition, there is a connection with the Christ story of "the hanging lord" as Christ was said to hang from the cross and Odinn hung on Yggdrasil (the Yule tree) with a spear wound in his side gazing down in a quest for knowledge. For Nine days and nights he hung there, "Neither horn they upheld nor handed me bread, I looked below me – aloud I cried- caught up the runes, caught them up wailing, thence to the ground fell again" (Havamal, Rune Poem, Hollander). This is how the runes and their potent, primal metaphysical forms were first taken up. Odinn also sacrificed his eye in exchange for a drink from Mimir's Well, a well providing deep wisdom. Odinn's mythic life offers a constant example of the insatiable thirst for powerful knowledge and the willingness to make great sacrifices for it.

Father of Winter

"Wôld, Wôld, Wôld!"

Heaven's giant knows what happens,

Looking down from heaven,

Providing full jugs and sheaves.

Many a plant grows in the woods.



He is not born and grows not old.

"Wôld, Wôld,

Wôld!"

Grimm



Frige, Wóden's wife is the most powerful Anglo-Saxon Goddess. She was a figure of wisdom like her husband. She was all knowing and was said to know the "fates" of all men and things, though she never speaks of them. She is Queen of Asgardr, the "peace weavers," and was central to the elimination of discord. She is associated with spinning and weaving and perhaps was thought of as spinning the thread of each life and weaving it into the web of Destiny. She may also have been associated with maternity, water and ponds and snow. She also represented all the phases of womanhood and was depicted as an old woman, a beautiful young girl in white, a fertility Goddess dressed in straw accompanied by women with sickles, in addition to a beautiful woman with a hollowed out tree for a back. She was associated with the Wood Wives, and other spirits of the wood. She was also Goddess of the witches, who flew over Walpurgis to a mountain peak where they danced, shape shifted, flew and knew the use of potions, knots and spells.



The "Wild" in the idea of the hunt has created quite a history of fear with demons and ghouls riding on shadow beasts seeking the dead and creating terror, however I believe the true meaning was more likely attributed to ecstatic trance and spirit flight and the use of donning animal skins to assist in manifesting animal energies and shapeshifting during rituals honoring Frige and Odinn in hopes of receiving direct transmission from them for the development of both truth knowledge and wisdom.

The Twelve Day Yule Celebration

The time of the Wild Hunt is when the dead walk within the world of the living. For this reason, it is a clear time to honor our ancestors. It is a time for great feasting, thankfulness and the honoring the Goddess Frige and Odinn to offer us wisdom and prosperity in the coming year. The Yule Tree is the symbol of life; it's the Great tree Yggdrasil and so the evergreen tree helps to remind us of the "green" life within, as it last through the dark winters and emerges in the spring.

The twelve nights are semblances of the twelve months of the year past. One way to acknowledge the past year is to offer up an ancestor's plate from any feasts you may have, or even simply from your afternoon meals during the twelve nights. Telling family stories around a hearth, looking through picture albums and honoring them ceremonially are all ways to warm our spirits during this cold time of year.

The celebration can center around the creating of an evergreen altar made in the center of the dinner table or anyplace sacred in the house. Wreathes

with lit candles during the cold and dark December days serve as a sign of hope for the future warmth and extended-sunlight days of Spring. In Scandinavia during winter, lighted candles

were placed around a wheel, and prayers were offered to the God of light to turn "the wheel of the earth" back toward the sun to lengthen the days and restore warmth. By the Middle Ages, the Christians adapted this tradition and used Advent wreathes as part of their spiritual preparation for Christmas. The wreath is made of various evergreens, signifying continuous life. The wreath is most appropriately lit and prayers spoken at dinner-time before the eating of the meal.

continues on next page

Wreath Making (Symbol of the Yule Tree) and Altar Ideas

Create a Ring or Wheel of Various Types of Evergreens

Here are some additional ideas and their symbolism:

Bayberry - good fortune and wealth

Evergreens - everlasting life, eternity, repels negativity

Holly - everlasting life, protects against negativity, renewed direction in life

Ivy - immortality

Cedar, strength and healing

Mistletoe - fertility, healing, protection

Pine Cones, Nuts, or Seedpods -
endurance, longevity

Cloves - repel negativity and hostility

Ginger - love, wealth, success, power

Myrrh - protection, purification

Nutmeg - clairvoyance

Rosemary - love, purification,
protection, intellectualism

Saffron - healing, clairvoyance and
purification

Valerian - harmony and love

Wintergreen - healing and protection

Laurel - victory

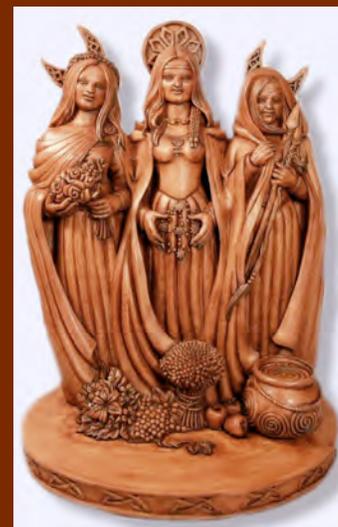
Blood-Red Berries - fertility and new life



Wishes with plant medicines wrapped within can be written in parchment and placed on the wreaths. An old Pagan tradition involves hanging these from holly branches. The herbs are placed inside of small sachet bags. Crystals can be wrapped in gold or silver colored wire or in net fabric.

Ancient altars and wreaths incorporated three goddess figures:

Loose hair female with a headband to represent maidenhood, a central figure holding a basket of fruit in her lap for fertility and a female with snakes may refer to an association with the souls of the dead or the underworld.



I recommend the placing of Five Sacred Candles around the wreath.

Candles serve as powerful symbols of spiritual light in the darkness and of the faith that the light will prevail. Four different colored candles representing the four directions are to be placed according the appropriate directions with one green candle in the center.

The North Candle: White, The Warrior

Representing the wisdom of our elders, it can energize, harmonize, heal, and expand capabilities, bring clarity, offer brilliance and light, endless potential, ever-changing, purity, spirituality, greater attainments in life, truth, power of a higher nature, wholeness, sincerity, spiritual undertakings/guidance, direction to the right paths, calmness, seeing past illusions

The South Candle: Red, The Teacher

Representing learning, knowledge, longevity, heart, warmth-emotions, life force, the sacred, preservation, breaking through mental conditioning, creating rapid change, empowering action, energizing, passion, career goals, lust, survival, driving force, creating heat, high



action, physical love, health, strength, sexual potency, courage, willpower, conquering fear or laziness

The East Candle: Yellow, The Healer

Representing dawn of new day, illumination, inspiration, eagle, willpower, manifests creative energy on a physical plane, lifts depression, memory, imagination, accelerates learning, breaks mental blocks, activity, sunlight, creative energy, power of mind, sudden changes, intellect, power of the mind, confidence, gentle persuasion, action, attraction, concentration

The West Candle: Black, The Visionary

Representing the setting sun, water, introspection, self examination, reflection, bear wisdom, general defense and protection, releasing, grounding, focusing, calming, shapeshifting, steadying, solidity, sleep, rest

The Central Candle: Green, For Balance

Representing balance, harmony, vigor, action, healing, strengthens heart and ability to love, generosity, prosperity, nurturing, cooling, calming, marriage, relationships, creativity, balance, fertility, growth, Mother Earth, personal goals, abundance, money, good fortune, wealth, success, renewal.

continued on page 10

Giving

by David Kukkola

"We had the experience but missed the meaning" – T.S. Eliot

The virtue of Giving seems to have been forgotten or side-stepped in our self-improvement and personal growth movement. A hidden selfishness embedded in manic peak experiences has swallowed many of those who desire a more soulful experience in this literal world. Our egocentricity, our over inflated ego, with its desire for increased centralization of power, continues to look for new territory or people to conquer, claim, and control. This growing centralization and inflation of the ego is reflected back to us by our current political and economic systems, with Goliath-like corporations annihilating all of our small ma and pa stores and businesses of yesterday. "All about me" is the modern day mantra as our families, schools, health care, and environment crumble in its wake.



The Ancients spoke of Giving from a different perspective. It has been said that there are three inter-related vessels: the Self, the Family, and the Community. This *trilogia* is the fabric of each one of our lives. Giving is an innate response and honors these sacred vessels. With an inner mulling of how my actions will affect the balance of these well-worn vessels, I respond cautiously and thoughtfully. My sense of belonging is enhanced from this time-honored place.

Contained within this interior space, I discover other personalities. The universal ideas of Commitment, Obligation, and Responsibility reside here within me. I find the virtue of Sacrifice, not in the image of the heroic ego or martyr, but rather in the sense of giving up something of myself for something more worthy or more important. The ancient structures of Family and Community are preserved and furthered when I allow myself the time to reflect on their significance and the consequences of my actions.

In regards to the Self, another question is raised, "Who or what has been forgotten and needs to be remembered?" The who or what may reside in the realm of the Ancestors, or the mythic Gods and Goddesses with their richly varied personalities. This is in stark contrast to transcendental or humanistic psychology that preaches, "All is good!," with an

accentuation and focus on our endless wants and needs, beyond the fundamental, in a futile attempt to solve our misery and put an end to our complaints.

The soul has withered under the weight and pressure of the giant "I". Buried deep in the substrata of the "I", the soul, also known as the psyche, will erupt when repressed, and expose ghastly behavior and eternal pathologies. We read about these fragments of our personalities that have been repressed on the front pages of our newspapers every morning. We are souls and our voices will be heard!

The Self, dating back through antiquity, has been spoken of in terms of "the many". What was mine shrunk as I came to understand that the "me" was pale in comparison to the all that I am. The many personalities that have appeared in my consciousness and my dreams have shaped my life and gave me some understanding of the reality of this world. Giving, one of these personalities we seem to share in common, has been cherished and considered a revered action in the making of the soul. The discovery and enhancement of the Self was realized through the Giving to "the many," and included the Family and the Community.

Giving, a sacred act, comes without conditions or expectations. When we give from the heart, this action, which began with a fantasy or image, is the return. This is the vivifying of the soul!

William Stafford, in *At Fourth and Main in Liberal, Kansas*, 1932, writes:

*An instant sprang at me, a winter instant,
a thin gray panel of evening. Slanted
shadows leaned from a line of trees where rain
had slicked the sidewalk. No one was there-
it was only a quick flash of a scene,
unplanned, without connection to anything
that meant more than itself, but I carried it
onward like a gift from a child who knows
that the giving is what is important, the paper, the
ribbon, the holding of breath and surprise, the friends
around, and God holding it out to you, even a rock
or a slice of evening, and behind it the whole world.**

Winter - Season of Storage

ELEMENT: WATER, THE INNER SEA

by Tamara Wolfson

Standing on the beach early one December morning as gigantic waves like galloping horses charged onto the shore, I was struck by the immense power, grace and sense of freshness so naturally generated by the ocean. The element of water, is in fact, the most common substance on earth without which, there would be no life. It's role as the great purifier and heat stabilizer for both the earth and our bodies is a key function of water from a scientific perspective and also a Chinese medical perspective.

Our bodies are composed of between 65-70% water which is responsible for the absorption of our nutrients, blood circulation and the prevention of blood thickening, for waste removal, cleansing skin and hair, muscle movement, joint lubrication and temperature control. Each day, approximately 2.5 quarts of water are removed from our bodies via tear glands, perspiration, urination and the act of breathing. All our water passes through the two master filtering systems of the kidneys and is cleaned 15 times a day. There is no permanent water in our body. In approximately two-three weeks, we completely replace or exchange our body's water with that of the environment and it is in the perpetual motion of water within our body and the world around us that the earth and our bodies are cleaned. In addition, the total supply of water on our earth is a constant. It has been hypothesized that our water system is about the same as it was three billion years ago, endlessly exchanged and recycled between all the plants, animals and waters of the world. Amazing!

Chinese medical thinking utilizes a system of correspondences which attempts to categorize and qualify the creation, control, destruction and interrelationship of all things in the universe. Being that the foundation of Chinese thought is dialectical in nature, this system was called Wu Xing, the Five Phases of Change, the Five Transformations or Five Element Theory. These five quintessential processes are divided into the elements: Fire, Earth, Metal, Water and Wood. Winter is associated with the Water element. It occurs in our area during the months of November, December and January. It is a time of storage and consolidation, a time to rest in a state of potential energy and in preparation for the kinetic activity of spring. It is a time for contemplation and integration of all the years movements and changes. It is a time associated with death itself. Water is the element associated with the deepest aspects of the human mind, body, and spirit. In the darkest hours comes the light of

hope, faith and awakening qualities held by each of the other elements, water serves as the foundation for the entire body. *



Our Book Pics

Coyote Blue

by Christopher Moore

A story of the Divine Trickster Coyote, with his twisted lessons to be learned, disruptive and chaotic and some good chuckles in between. A story of a Crow Indian who flees Montana, finds himself in Los Angeles, and then his world turns upside down when he meets a fat white guy in his Caddy, and then a blonde bombshell. A rowdy hilarious classic!

American Indian Myths and Legends

by Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz

A magnificent collection of over 160 Turtle Island tales and myths that takes you into the heart and soul of Native American culture. This book should be read by the fireside with your children, one legend at a time!

Resistance, Rebellion, and Death

by Albert Camus

"A writer cannot serve today those who make history; he must serve those who are subject to it." This book of twenty three political essays reveals Camus' deep commitment to freedom and justice, exposing the cancers of capital punishment and colonialism.

Bones of the Master

by George Crane

I took off my gloves and held Tsung Tsai's hand. They were dead flesh, cold and hard....Tsung Tsai, take my jacket, please." I asked without any hope.....

This is a beautiful true story of a Buddhist monk and his commitment to his teacher. I found this book hard to put down!

Healing with Food

The Root Medicine for a Modern World Health Crisis

by Tamara Wolfson

Whole food, produced without chemicals and cruelty, be it fruit or fish, is the most powerful and fundamental source of medicine for the human body. It is the primary source of rejuvenation, purification, regulation, balance, strength and healing for every aspect of the mind, the body, its spirit and the earth itself. As the earth and the beings who inhabit it share the same basic elemental resources, what befalls the earth, befalls the beings of the earth and what heals the earth, heals its creatures. It is therefore of utmost urgency for the health of both the earth and the people who inhabit it to reconsider how and what we are eating and to take decisive action toward a more sustainable, harmonious future.

In order to restore our relationships with food, we need more than the latest fad super diet based on counting calories and numbers as the means for dietary healing. Our relationship to food and how it's produced has eroded so severely, that food diversity is seriously endangered. Our food standards have dropped so low that processed, fast food has become a significant path for nutritional intake for a majority of Americans. These issues are monumental for both agriculture and for human health. We are now facing an international dietary crisis. As the westernization of food and what John Robbins calls the "Great American Food Machine" infiltrates our national food resources and the international food market, epidemics of both obesity and diabetes are rapidly soaring not only here at home but abroad as well. According to the 1999-2000 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), "The prevalence of overweight and obesity is increasing worldwide at an alarming rate in both developing and developed countries. Environmental and behavioral changes brought about by economic development, modernization, and urbanization have been linked to the rise in global obesity."

Here at home:

Approximately 127 million adults in the U.S. are overweight (2/3 of adults), 60 million obese, and 9 million severely obese according to data from the 1999-2000 NHANES.

Approximately 30.3 percent of children (ages 6 to 11) are overweight and 15.3 percent are obese. For adolescents (ages 12 to 19), 30.4 percent are overweight and 15.5 percent are obese.

Less than half of U.S. adults have a healthy weight.

Obesity is on the verge of surpassing smoking as #1 cause of preventable death.

17 million people in the U.S. have type 2 diabetes, accounting for more than 90 percent of diabetes cases. An additional 20 million have impaired glucose tolerance, sometimes called pre-diabetes, which is a strong risk factor for developing diabetes later in life. An estimated 70 percent of diabetes risk in the U.S. can be attributed to excess weight.

To inspire the renewal of our connection to whole food, we need to become more conscious of what we are facing personally, professionally and politically, and to begin a movement of change that begins with each of us as individuals. Changing our relationship to food is as psychologically and socially profound as changing how we choose to love ourselves. Our food choices are rooted in our childhood. They connect us to our families, our friends and the memories of our entire life. Great and terrible meals mark phases in our lives and developments in our relationships with others. I have heard one great chef note that the modern definition of famine is not based in food availability but in that of the heart. As we have moved away from a family meal, from cooking, eating and sharing our daily stories together, we have sacrificed intimacy and fertilized isolation and depression. It is therefore important to note that the most effective path to inspire change in this aspect of an individual's life must include a rediscovery of the inherent joy in eating. Clearly some important components to healing would include using organic whole foods produced as local as possible, sharing meals, telling stories and creating a personal dietary culture rich in meaning.

Chinese medicine has a rich body of information about food, its energetics and medicinal nature to share and inspire our diets with. Chinese medicine is beautiful in its ability to reframe the concepts associated with digestive disturbances and dietary habits into workable psychological paradigms that can create enough conceptual space for people to



reassess their relationships with food. Chinese medicine can categorize food as tonics, which can support the optimal functioning of a body, as phlegm resolving, as diuretics, as carminatives and diaphoretic in addition to noting the toxic effects of food. People must begin to understand this relationship with food, that there is a relationship with food that goes beyond filling our somatic gas tank with any fuel that will make it go in the moment. We need to reawaken a sense of how our bodies change through the seasons, with age and during times of illness. We need to learn about what foods to eat and what to avoid and when so as to promote the greatest health and balance. Chinese medicine can offer a terrific framework for these necessary changes.

We can begin to address issues of diet using a few simple and powerful guidelines. Firstly, from a Chinese theoretical perspective, using a Five Phase or Five Travels approach to seasonal eating can be quite helpful. According to this system of thought, each season is associated with both a food flavor and an organ system. The web of the body is held in balance through a moving constellation of creation and control mechanisms. During each rotation of change through the elemental phases, the peak strength of the matching organ system with its corresponding taste and season also changes. When a particular elemental phase is engaged and is at its strongest activity, it is important in Chinese dietary therapy, to not over-consume the flavor of that system. Doing so could project that aspect of the body into an excessive state and create imbalance in the body. Instead, eating the flavor of the element for which the active phase may insult, thus protecting it and giving it strength, is the best strategy for optimal health through the seasons.

Here are some ideas according to the the system of Five Flavors in Chinese Medicine and eating according to the seasons:

Winter: Eat more bitter foods, less salty

Spring: Eat more naturally sweet foods, less sour

Summer: Eat more pungent foods, less bitter

Late Summer: Eat more salty foods, less sweet

Autumn: Eat more sour foods, less pungent

Our Seasonal Winter Foods

Apple, cranberry, date, mandarin orange, tangelo, tangerine, kiwi, kumquat, navel orange, pomegranate, persimmon, quince, grapes, mineolas, grapefruit, pear, avocado, olives, kuri squash, butternut, kabocha, dumpling squash, spaghetti squash, acorn squash, pumpkin, sweet potato, carrot, yellow finn & butterball potato, string bean, mushrooms, artichoke, collards, leaf lettuce, mustard greens, radish, horseradish, spinach, swiss chard, kale, celery, green onion, leek, onion, raddichio, arugula, beet, cabbage, nappa, bok choy, green and red cabbage, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, turnip, rutabaga, parsnip, celery root, garlic, ginger, sunchoke, burdock, lamb, duck, goose, venison, beef, bone marrow, chicken, crab, rockfish, tuna, sardines, anchovies, oysters, clams, mussels, trout, salmon, rosehips, seaweed, nuts, pumpkin seeds, chestnut, walnut, acorn, dairy products, whole grains, alcohol, millet, barley, black beans *



Stuffed Shiitake Mushrooms in Ginger Broth

25 small shiitake mushrooms

¼ cup dried tree ear mushrooms

1 bunch cilantro

1 shallot

1/2 cup pine nuts

1 clove sauteed garlic

2 Tbsp. tofu

freshly ground white pepper

vegetable stock

2 Tbsp. ginger root

1 cup slivered carrot

1 cup slivered parsnip

1 cup soaked arame

1 cup grated daikon

1 bunch scallions

tamari to taste

sesame oil



1. Boil water; soak cloud ear mushrooms for 15 minutes until soft. Trim and mince.

2. Clean cilantro. Mince ½ of bunch and add to cloud ear mushrooms...place some whole leaves aside for garnish.

3. Grind pine nuts and tofu in food processor until smooth and add to mushroom mixture with minced shallots, garlic and pepper.

4. Sauté minced ginger and 1/2 the scallion in sesame oil. Add 9 cups of stock to the ginger, simmer 15 minutes. Fill each mushroom with pine nut mixture and steam separately 3-4 minutes.

5. Divide among 8 bowls the carrot, parsnip, seaweed, and daikon, fill with broth and gently transfer five mushrooms to each bowls, Garnish with scallion and whole cilantro leaves.

Our Herb Pick: Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

History

This fragrant perennial evergreen, native to the Mediterranean region, commonly called the "Rose of the Sea" or the "Dew of the Sea", has a fondness for the ocean breeze, mist, and the ocean's temperament. From Portugal to Sicily, the folklore of Rosemary is filled with stories that associate it with the little people, elves, or fairies. Said to be governed by the brilliant white star, Alphecca (in the constellation Corona Borealis), the ancient Greeks and Romans used rosemary medicinally as a smudge for protection and Moon-ruled water imbalances of the physical body. Rosemary, considered by the ancients as an emblem of remembrance and the symbol of immortality, was often found at weddings, so that the vows would be remembered and fidelity preserved; as well as at funerals, so one would not be forgotten. In recent times it is used to enhance the memory and stimulate the brain, improve digestion and alleviate fatigue. Rosemary's western therapeutic qualities: sedative, diuretic, aromatic digestive, antispasmodic and antiseptic.

1. Put a sprig of rosemary on your ear the next time you are trying to memorize something or attempting to think clearly.
2. Emotionally, our mood is brightened and uplifted when fresh sprigs of rosemary are placed on the chest region of the heart.
3. A freshly brewed pot of rosemary tea can be used for headaches and nervous disorders.
4. Externally, the oil of rosemary is widely used on the scalp to reduce skin disorders and stimulate hair growth.

How to Grow Rosemary

Rosemary is usually propagated by cuttings. Snip off about a 3 inch cutting from the new growth of an established plant. Remove the pine like needles from the bottom about one inch up. Place the stem in a pot containing peat moss like organic soil. Firm down the soil (this is where many people fail)!! Place the pot in a warm spot with indirect sunlight and moisten. Mist the cuttings daily and water the soil when almost dry. In about 3 weeks the roots will be established and you can transplant the rosemary outside in the garden on in large containers. Pinch off the top of the plant to encourage branching. Make sure the plant has plenty of sun, good drainage, and good air circulation. Fertilize it every spring with some fish/kelp emulsion and a light application of well composted chicken manure!

How to Use Rosemary

Rosemary, an aromatic herb, is a must have with lamb. It goes well with other meats, including cornish game hens, poultry, and beef. Most recipes call for the leaves. Simply snip of a small branch, wash, and remove the leaves from the stem. For stews (lamb stew is one of my favorites), add the whole sprig and remove it before serving. Next time you make an omelet or frittata, add some rosemary. This makes my mouth water just writing about it! For those of you who like something to dip your bread into, try a puree of rosemary leaves, a clove of garlic, and organic olive oil!

Warning: Essential, distilled rosemary oil, (not not to be confused with flavored cooking oils), should never be taken internally. It is poisonous in strong doses. Be sure to consult your physician before attempting any medicinal use of any herb, spice or other home remedy. *



© www.123rf.com

Chinese Dietary Therapy: A Historical Perspective

by Tamara Wolfson

In Chinese medicine the origin of our Qi and Blood stem directly from the Spleen and Stomach, hence diet and digestion are a fundamental component of maintaining health. Historically, the first recorded statements concerning food are found in the Nei Jing and are based on Five Element theory. Chapter 23 of the *Su Wen* states,

*"Travels of five flavors: sour travels to the Liver, pungent travels to the Lungs, bitter travels to the Heart, salt travels to the Kidneys, sweet travels to the Spleen, and these are called the five entering routes."*¹

Chapter 78 of the *Ling Shu* says this of the five entering routes:

*"Five travels: sour travels to the tendons, pungent travels to the Qi, bitter travels to the Blood, salt travels to the bones, sweet travels to the flesh. Such are called the five travels...Only a diet comprised of all five flavors-sweet, bitter, pungent, sour and salty, can keep the bones straight, the sinews supple, the Qi and Blood flowing, the pores closed, and the functioning of the five major organs coordinated and balanced harmoniously. Conversely, persistent addiction to a certain flavor will lead to its accumulation within the body and, in the course of time, will result in loss of balance of the organs and bowels."*²

It also describes pathology associated with an overindulgence of the five flavors:

"Too much sour causes Liver Qi repletion with consequent Spleen Qi exhaustion. Too much salt taxes the Qi of the large bones and withers the flesh in addition to repressing Heart Qi. Too much sweet causes Heart Qi to be full and stuffy, the facial color blackish, and the Kidney Qi not balanced. Too much bitter causes the Spleen Qi to lose its moisture and the Stomach to become too broad or distended. And too much acrid and pungent causes the sinews to be slack and the vessels stopped up while the spirit suffers disaster...If too much salt is eaten, the pulse will be sluggish and the complexion will lose its vitality. Too much bitter will cause the skin to dry and the hair to fall. Too much sour and the Liver will produce too much saliva, which in turn will stifle the functioning of the Spleen. Too much salt and the bones will become weak, the muscles and flesh will wither and the functions of the Heart will be suppressed. If sweet exceeds the other tastes, the function of the Heart will cause difficult breathing and chest distention, a black

*color will appear, and the kidneys will become imbalanced. If bitter exceeds the other tastes, the function of the Spleen will not be able to transfer fluids and the function of the Stomach will be too tense. If spice exceeds the other tastes, then the muscles and pulse will become slack and the Spirit will be injured."*³

In A.D. 203, the *Taisho Tripitaka: Canon of Buddhist Writings in Chinese* was translated into Chinese from Sanskrit. This doctrine discusses potential sources of

illness and specifically lists as the words of the Buddha, nine causes for a premature and unexpected end to human life. Interestingly, five of those nine causes are related to food.

They are:

"Eating what should not be eaten" which refers to eating things repugnant to the sense, eating out of balance with the season and eating

directly after finishing a meal.

"Immoderate eating" a habit of over-consumption, or eating beyond what one needs.

"eating contrary to custom" which means eating at odd hours and eating too much of a strange food in an unfamiliar culture.

"Failure to discharge the old before the arrival of the new" which means preventing the normal release of stool and urine, preventing a belch, vomit or wind."⁴

The importance of dietary therapy was clearly illustrated in the statements attributed to Sun Si Miao. Sun Si Miao (581-682A.D.) authored the famous *Treatise on Alchemy*, the *Dan Jing Yao Jiu*, and in regards to food, said, "that when a person is sick, the doctor should first regulate the patient's diet and lifestyle. In most cases, these changes alone are enough to effect a cure over time. He said that only if changes in diet and lifestyle are not enough, should the doctor administer other interventions such as internal medicine and acupuncture."⁵

In the Sung dynasty, "diet and the study of medicine were virtually indistinguishable."⁶ This time period was sparked by an enthusiasm for new tastes, ingredients and dishes and the book *Liang-fang*, or "Good Recipes" could also be read as "Good Prescriptions". The distinction between what constituted healthy food and medicine was very



difficult to define and being a time marked by curiosity and experimentation, many new substances were tried and in some cases, like that of mercury, led to the demise of the taster. During this time period the relationship between food and herbal decoctions such as the "secret-of-Yang pill," "the four divine pills for regulating the humors" and "powder of cinnabar" were all part of a common everyday approach to diet.

Concepts of what constituted the ideal diet were continuously debated for what seemed healthy for one person was problematic for the next. What was agreed upon was that there were many considerations involved in determining a person's optimal diet. Issues such as demographics, astrological relationships and an individual's constitution were all-important factors. In addition, there were a few universal dietary guidelines that were emphasized during that time. Many common foods were seen as having a possible injurious action upon the body but if eaten in moderation, were not harmful. Over-consumption and gluttony were not only devalued from a medical perspective but within the framework of Confucian philosophy, were certainly viewed as being inappropriate.

There was an emphasis on the natural aspect of food. Eating foods according to the proper season was important and also eating foods personally grown was seen as a superior dietary activity. There was an attempt to de-emphasize the rich and varied food of the city official and promote the simple meals of the mountain villager. Philosophically, it seems important to note that this emphasis on the simple and natural diet was in and of itself the intellectuals attempt to align themselves with the Confucian doctrines of social concerns, ethics and humility. Additionally, this naturalness included the idea of eating all edible plants, roots and mushrooms gathered in the local area and mountain regions. It included foods easily accessible and also a style of cooking that allowed for the foods inherent "clarity" to express itself. Meals which were simple yet elegant provided a sense of balance between food, man/woman, his/her environment and heaven.

It is no surprise that during this time, a great physician Li DongYuan wrote the *Wei Pi Lun*, "The Treatise on the Spleen and Stomach" and founded one of the great schools of Chinese medical thought based on the function of the Middle Burner. He basically postulated that the health of the Spleen and Stomach is a primary consideration in the comprehension of health and pathology because all postnatal Qi is dependent upon its function. From this perspective, food is elevated to a very important position in relationship to health and consequently should be regarded and treasured as medicine.

According to Chang in *Food in Chinese Culture*, the most important advance in medicine during the Yuan period to be in the arena of dietary medicine. Namely, the publication of the *Yin-shan cheng-yao*, "Principles of Correct Diet" of 1330, written by Hu Ssu-hui. The essence of this document was "



Many diseases can be cured by diet alone" and one main focus of the book was on supplementing deficiencies through diet.

For over two thousand years, Chinese dietary therapy has evolved into a comprehensive system for determining optimal nourishment for our bodies. Divided into two categories, health preservation and remedial therapy, specific foods may be selected to both support the individuals Righteous Qi and avoided to prevent further damage. Clearly, the greatest Chinese physicians commented on and added to this basic theory of nutrition with great texts of dietary theory and food categorization.

In addition to the Chinese theoretical basis for diet, we must consider a renewed consciousness around what and how we are choosing the foods we purchase. We must take into consideration sustainable agriculture techniques and a purchasing model which includes supporting our local farmers. We need to consume as much local, organic, fresh food as we can. Food that is free of as much toxicity as possible must be the ultimate goal of every individual to ensure the best health for our families and ourselves. Foods produced with respect for our water resources and those produced with practices that contribute to healthy soils and work in harmony with the ecosystem are the foods we want to eat. We must consider biodiversity as a significant issue and support the farmers who are saving and protecting our precious seeds. Slow food practices must be re-embraced, from production to the table if we are to heal the earth and ourselves. The issues are complex but the solution can be as simple as biting into the first delightfully sweet, organic strawberry of the season, allowing the joy of that flavor to fill your whole body, and giving thanks for a beautiful life. Food is an amazing gift! ✨

1 Prince Wen Hui's *Cook Chinese Dietary Therapy*, Flaws & Wolfe, p.15, 1983.

2 Prince Wen Hui's *Cook Chinese Dietary Therapy*, Flaws & Wolfe, 1983.

3 Prince Wen Hui's *Cook Chinese Dietary Therapy*, Flaws & Wolfe, 1983.

4 *Medicine in China*, Unschuld, p.311, 1985.

5 *The Tao of Healthy Eating*, Flaws, p.1, 1997.

6 *Food in Chinese Culture*, Chang, p.171, 1977.

A Twelve-Day Winter Ceremony *continued from page 3*

Lighting each of the sacred candles and acknowledging the energetic properties that each of the five candles hold. One honors the ancient ones and the female energies of Frige and God Oddin, keeper of wisdom and knowledge.



Offer gifts for each of the twelve nights and enjoy each other!

This elemental prayer may be spoken when the candles are lit. It is to be spoken as the first prayer on each of the 12 days prior to the prayer of the day. It honors the 5 sacred elements.



As I Light this Flame...

May the air carry and guide your spirit gently,

May the fire transform and awaken your soul,

May the water wash you free of pain, suffering and sorrow,

May the earth give you strength and courage,

May the wheel turn and bring you freedom!

Day 1: Mothers-Night Prayer



Beginning on December 20th, Mothers-Night, the first night of Yule and the night before the Winter Solstice, Frige and the female energies and ancestors are the clear focus of any

ceremonial workings to be done this day. Think about what lies dormant in your own life and soul and consider what may bloom a few months from now.

Cold and dark, this time of year, the earth lies dormant, awaiting the return of the sun, and with it, life.

Far beneath the frozen surface, a heartbeat waits, until the moment is right, to spring.

*Frigg bless ye merry Heathen Folk
On this a Yuletide day
Remember Balder fair and bright
Will be reborn of light
To guide us through the darkened night
And give us hope and joy*

*Ohhh tidings of hope and of joy,
Hope and of joy,*

*Ohhh tidings of hope and of joy.
The Solstice night is long and dark*

*The Wild Hunt it will ride
Odhinn leads the frenzied host
Across the Northern skies
To cleanse the last of barren land
And guide the dead back home*

*Ohhh tidings to the wandering dead,
Wandering dead,*

Ohhh tidings to the wandering dead.

*The flame and fire flicker bright
Upon the sacred hearth
To scratch a spell and runic tell
Of this year's fortune's worth
Oh Heimdall guide the sons of man
That they should tarry not*

*Ohhh tidings to the sons of Rig,
Sons of Rig,*

*Ohhh tidings to the sons of Rig.
The sacred boar is settled now
Upon the holy feast
Lay your hand and give the oath
Upon the hallowed beast*

*It is your honour and your word
In Asgard that is heard*

*Ohhh tidings to the gods all high,
Gods all high,*

Ohhh tidings to the gods all high.

© M Odinsdatter (Ve Vindhler) 2008

Day 2: Prayer to the Growing Sun

*The sun returns! The light returns!
The earth begins to warm once more!
The time of darkness has passed,
and a path of light begins the new day.
Welcome, welcome, the heat of the sun,
blessing us all with its rays.*

*The Coming of the Light
In this darkest coldest night,
Gather in with kith and kin.*

*Light the need-fire, burning bright;
Kindled by the flame within.
Hear the mighty hoofbeats' thunder
As the wild hunt rules the night;
Fear not the sound of Sleipnir's passing;
Hail the coming of the light!*



*Celebrate the great wheel's turning
In this darkest, coldest night;*

*With the yule log brightly burning,
Sing, and praise the coming light!*

*Gather round the hearty table,
We have laid a harvest feast.
Fortified against the darkness,
Light is rising from the east.*

*Raise the horn in merry toasting,
Feast and greet the coming light.
Sing wassail with kith and kindred,
Praise the passing of the night.*

*Hail, wassail to friend and family,
Frith and troth on this dark night;
We are all one with kith and kinsmen-
Hail the coming of the light!*

© Lavrans Karl Reimer-Mølle

Day 3: Prayer to the Goddess

*O! Mighty goddess, in silvery ice,
watching over us as we sleep,
a layer of shining white,
covering the earth each
night,
frost on the world and
in the soul,
we thank you for
visiting us.*



*Because of you, we seek warmth
in the comfort of our homes and hearths.*

Day 4: Prayer of Thankfulness

Yule should be a time of joy and happiness, but for many people it can be stressful. This is a season to take a moment and be thankful for the blessings you have, and to take a moment to remember those less fortunate.

*I am grateful for that which I have.
I am not sorrowful for that which I do not.
I have more than others, less than some,
but regardless,
I am blessed with what is mine.*

Day 5: Prayer for the Year to Change

"Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky. The flying cloud, the frosty light; The year is dying in the night; Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new, Ring happy bells, across the snow: The year is going, let him go, Ring out the false, ring in the true."

Alfred Lord Tennyson

Day 6: Celtic Blessing

May the light of the soul guide you. May the light of your soul bless the work that you do with the secret love and warmth in your heart. May you see in what you do the beauty of your own soul. May the sacredness of your work bring healing, light and renewal to those who work with you ad to those who see and receive your work. May your work never weary you. May it release within you wellsprings of refreshment, inspiration and excitement. May you be present in what you do. May you never become lost in bland absences. May the day never burden. May dawn find you awake and alert, approaching your new day with dreams, possibilities and promises. May evening find you gracious and fulfilled. May you go into night blessed, sheltered and protected. May you soul calm, console and renew you.

Day 7: Nordic Yule Blessing

Yule is a time to set aside animosity between yourself and others. The Norsemen had a tradition that enemies

who met under a bough of mistletoe were obligated to lay down their arms. Set aside your differences for a moment and rest in a space of peace for all.

*Beneath the tree of light and life, a blessing at this season of Jul!
To all that sit at my hearth, today we are brothers and sisters, we are family, and I drink to your health!
Today is a day to offer hospitality to all that cross my threshold in the name of the season.*

Day 8: Winter Prayer

*From the reaches of the north,
A place of cold beauty,
Comes to us the first winter storm.
Wind whipping, flakes flying,
The snow has fallen upon the earth,
Keeping us close, keeping us together,
Wrapped up as everything
Sleeps beneath a blanket of white.*



Day 9: Prayer to Honor the Old Gods

*The Holly King is gone, and the Oak King reigns
Yule is the time of the old winter Gods!
Hail to Baldur! To Saturn! To Odin!
Hail to Ameratsu! To Demeter!
Hail to Ra! To Horus!
Hail to Frigga, Minerva Sulis, and Cailleach Bheur!*

It is their season, and high in the heavens, May they grant us their blessings this winter day.

Day 10: Celtic Winter Blessing

The Celtic people knew the importance of the solstice. Although the Yule season marks the middle of winter, colder times were still to come. It was important to put



aside staple foods for the coming months, because it would be many months before spring. Consider, what have placed in keeping for the winter, both material goods and spiritual.

The food is put away for the winter, the crops are set aside to feed us, the cattle are come down from their fields, and the sheep are in from the pasture.

The land is cold, the sea is stormy, the sky is gray.

The nights are dark, but we have our family, kin and clan around the heart, Staying warm in the midst of darkness, our spirit and love a flame, a beacon burning brightly in the night.

Day 11: Blessing of the Darkness

In the middle of winter, it's hard to remember sometimes that light is coming back to earth. However, despite the gray, cloudy days, we know that soon, the sun will return. Keep this in mind during those dreary days when it seems winter will never end.

Evening

*The sky puts on the darkening blue coat
Held for it by a row of ancient trees;
You watch: and the lands grow distant in your sight,
One journeying to heaven, one that falls;*

*And leave you,
Not at home in either one, not quite so still and dark as the darkened houses,
Not calling to eternity with the passion of what becomes
A star each night, and rises;*

continued on next page

*And leave you (inexpressibly to unravel)
Your life, with its immensity and fear,
So that, now bounded, now immeasurable,
It is alternately stone in you and star.*

Rilke Maria Rainer

Day 12: Prayer for the New Year

Twelfth Night, New Year's Eve is the last of the twelve night celebrations and it is a time for merriment, reflections on the past year and oaths, personal agreements and resolutions. Twelfth Night is the time to look ahead and plan and pray for the New Year and the accomplishments you desire to make. Go placidly amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.

As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story. Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexatious to the spirit.

If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism. Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love, for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment, it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be. And whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

Max Ehrman

contact:

Tamara: 415-378-1666
tamara@elderroot.com

David: 415-317-7032
dksaami@mac.com

www.livingmedicines.com

The Common Well / Living Medicines
85 Bolinas Road
Fairfax 94930

Low Cost Clinic Hours: Walk-Ins Welcome!

MONDAY 9am - 7pm
Shiatsu David

Combination Session
with David & Tamara Available

TUESDAY 9am - 2pm
Acupuncture Tamara

THURSDAY 2pm - 6pm
Acupuncture Tamara

FRIDAY 3pm - 7pm
Shiatsu David

Combination Session with
David & Tamara Available

SATURDAY 2pm - 6pm
Acupuncture Tamara

