

Pathways
to
Health & Longevity

Healing Porridge
&
Nourishing Waters

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'Jook' or Healing Porridge

Different types of porridge have been used traditionally in almost all cultures for both nourishment and healing. Such porridge would often be quite liquid, like a soup, made from grains and often with seasonal foods or healing herbs added.

In Asian culture, the basic grain of choice was, obviously, rice. This porridge is called *Congee* (粥) in Cantonese, *Zhou* (粥) or *Jook* (粥) in Mandarin, the inference of meaning depending upon the intended usage and ingredients.

In its simplest form, this healing dish consisted just of rice. It is usually unhusked, that is 'white' and cooked slowly with 7-10 parts water, for a minimum time of 1,5 – 2 hours. All these aspects of preparation ensure the effective breakdown of the elements of the grain and so the easiest assimilation of its nutrients.

Implicit in the knowledge of its preparation was the usage of the element of fire for cooking. This would originally have been wood, then later gas, giving the possibility of extended cooking times, even up to 12 – 36 hours, adding additional water as necessary.

This process gradually renders the basic nutrients from being bound in the physical state into a liquid form, as the essential nutrition passes into the water, and then into the more energetic form of Qi, as the element & vitality of the fire became most predominant.

This is the basic 'fire' of human life, used in this manner to reinvigorate the original, innate vitality or *Yuan Qi* (元氣), of the body. This is also expressed in the etymology of the Chinese character for Qi, energy or vitality 氣 which is showing the steam (vitality or water + heat), arising from the cooking of rice.

The recipe above is the most simple rice soup or *Congee*. This gradually evolved into a more healing form with the addition of seasonal foods or medicinal herbs for added benefit or for specific conditions. In such form, known as *Zhou* or *Jook*, *healing porridge*, a small number, of other ingredients, usually 1 - 3, were added, the rice soup still used as the basis.¹

Modern Usage

Many years of clinical practice have given an understanding of the different usages of these types of porridge and the great benefit such simple food can produce. Based upon the traditional principles, a number of different methods have been developed for the specific health needs of modern patients.

These methods are noted below, with specific recipes in the information notes which follow.

Firstly, as a method of reconditioning the digestive system. Suitable for all types of stomach and intestine problems, but especially of benefit for those with constipation, dryness or burning. The *Simple Congee Recipe* is most suitable.

Second, as a support to harmonise one's vital Qi with the rhythms of the seasonal environment. This is through the addition of seasonal foods & fruits to the *Simple Congee Recipe*. This idea is one of the founding principles of health care & maintenance in Chinese Medicine; discussed already in the *Nei Ching*², which advised the adaptation of all of one's daily habits, including diet, to be 'in tune' with the seasons of nature.³

Third, as a very basic nutritional support for the sick (of all ages), the elderly, those dying, as well as babies.⁴ The *Simple Congee Recipe* is used, with longer cooking times for the sick and elderly.

Fourth, as a medicinal soup through the addition of a few herbs or spices. Those are foods with a more concentrated nutritional content which thus have a specific action within the body. One can seek advices from ones practitioner concerning specific herbs or recipes which are suitable according to your personal constitution or symptom pattern.

Fifth, as a method of 'fasting', through eating a simple and minimal amount of food. The idea is to cleanse and rest the inner organs, both bowels and viscera.

The *Simple Congee Recipe* can be used as the only food, or in combination with e.g. soups or juicing. Shorter periods of 3-5 days can be undertaken oneself; extended periods of up to 10 days should be upon supervision of ones practitioner.

Preparation of *Simple Congee* or Rice Porridge

1 part Rice	Organic White Rice or Sweet/Glutinous White Rice. ⁵
7-10 parts Water	Add water as necessary to maintain fluidity through cooking. The more weak or unstable the physical health, the more important to use pure/natural/mineral water source. Best to avoid unfiltered tap water, even for daily cooking usage
Pinch of Salt	<i>Tip</i> of a teaspoon only. Use sea salt or mountain crystal salt if available
Cooking Pot	Ceramic is best; cast iron also good. Stainless steel possible; aluminium to be avoided. Well fitting lid, best with a ventilation hole.
Cooking Stove	Woodstove is best; gas also very good. Electric & induction give little healing Qi - also avoid for daily cooking. Microwave should not be in your kitchen !!
Cooking Method	Bring slowly to the boil, then simmer. Using a flame spreader is helpful.
Cooking Time	Minimum of 1,5 - 2 hours. One is looking to see the rice 'breaks down' into smaller bits. This is what enables easy assimilation.

Advices for Seasonal Jook or Healing Porridge

The intention of this Jook is as a seasonal medicine, that is to reharmonise oneself with the outer environment. Bringing oneself in tune with the rhythm of nature through seasonal and fresh food is common sense, as well as a primary concept in most natural medicines.

With this intention in mind, one is seeking to choose those foods grown in the particular season to add to the Simple Congee Recipe. Buying fresh produce from local markets and growers should lead one to choose suitable foods.

If possible it is always best to choose organic produce, or that grown with the minimum of chemicals or artificial methods. That is especially in respect of the staple foods of grains and beans. Wild foods will also tend to have the most vitality and fresh *Qi*.

In the theories of CM, the 'Three Heater' organ function divides the body into 3 spheres of activity, each having specific qualities of action and vitality, *Qi*. In this respect each has a different *nature* or energetic quality.⁶

The tables below note the different grains and foods according to season and those most suited to the reharmonising and strengthening of each of the respective Heaters. Further explanation can be given by your practitioner as required for your effective usage.

Cooking Advices

Soak the grains and beans overnight, especially if short term cooking (> 2hours).
Add other ingredients in the last 20 - 30 mins, according to cooking time needed

Cook up a larger amount of Congee for 2 - 3 days usage; warm up a smaller portion as needed, adding different and fresh ingredients for each meal.

Spring

UH	White Rice ⁷	Seeds Fruits & Berries Leaves	Sunflower, Barley Sprouts Birch & Pine Sap; Yoghurt Fresh, Wild, Sour
MH	Sweet Millet	Vegetables	Fresh, Green Vegetables Seasonal e.g. Carrots
LH	Barley	Beans Nuts Fish & Meat	Mung Cashew, Pecan, Pine Chicken

Summer

UH	White Rice Red Quinoa ⁸	Seeds Fruits & Berries Leaves	Sesame, Sunflower Strawberries, Cherries Chicory, Bitter Greens (add at end)
MH	Sweet Millet White Quinoa	Vegetables	Spring & Summer Roots e.g. Carrot Sprouts + short term Pickles
LH	Barley Black Quinoa	Nuts Beans Fish & Meat	Pine Mung, Red Lentils, Lake Fish, Chicken

Autumn

UH	White Rice	Seeds Fruits & Berries Leaves	Pumpkin Apples, Pears, Berries Chard, Dark Green
MH	Sweet Millet	Vegetables	Carrots, Pumpkin (Hokkaido) Suede, Parsnips
LH	Barley	Nuts Beans Fish & Meats	Almonds, Hazel Adzuki, Pinto; Lake Fish Wild Game e.g. Duck, Rabbit

Winter

UH	White Rice	Seeds Fruits & Berries Leaves	Black Sesame Cooked, Jams Chard, Dark Green
MH	Sweet Millet	Vegetables	Carrots, Pumpkin (Hokkaido) Suede, Parsnips
LH	Barley Black Rice ⁹	Nuts Beans Fish & Meats	Walnuts, Brazil Black, Kidney Sea Fish, Salmon (seasonal) Wild Meats e.g. Deer, Bear, Bone Marrow

Simple Herbal Formula for added Nourishment

Madam Wang's 8 Foods Treasure

Dried Red Dates	Dried Figs
Licorice (Honey Roasted)	Peanuts
Dried Longan	Cashews
Wolfberry	Walnut

Equal amounts of all ingredients (approximately; by sight not weight)
Use alternative nuts by availability or season, as required. *But keep 8 ingredients.*

Preparation: Soak for 1 - 2 hours, or over night; best in a glass bowl.

Cook SLOWLY with equal amount of water for 20 - 30 minutes,
or until all ingredients are soft and have released their nourishment.

If possible use a ceramic bowl for cooking; avoid aluminium
Do NOT add salt, sugar or other flavourings !!

Suitable for those: with weakened digestion
needing extra nourishment, e.g. with weak constitution
tiredness from work
needing to regenerate health after sickness

NOT suitable : for infants, babies or children under age 7 - 8
during acute sickness
for those with chronic or congenital digestive problems

If unsure, please contact your practitioner for advices !

The Chinese herbs in this formula are used as nutritional food substances in an Asian kitchen, so are usually available in Asian food stores.

If you can not find them, please consult your practitioner.

Please contact your practitioner for other simple formulas specifically suited to your own constitution and health needs.

Importance of Water in your Diet & how to drink to create Health

The quality of water which one ingests is of primary importance to one's health. The adult body itself comprises of around 70%¹⁰ water and one's daily fluid intake is a source of both vitality and renewal for physical and psychological functions.

In this respect, the quality of water that one chooses to drink can have a profound influence upon one's general health and well being. This will include that used to make beverages e.g. tea or coffee, as well as that used as a basis for any commercially produced drinks.

There are many studies showing that water itself is a vital living organism. All conclude that a primary water quality is essential for personal, organic and planetary health.¹¹

In the world of CM, one not only takes into account the basic vitality, *Qi*, or nutritional value of food and liquid substances. But also other dynamic qualities such as the *directional movement*, the *flavour* and the 'inner nature', e.g. *hot or cold*,¹² and in what manner these will influence the bodily functions.

Energetically, water is neutral in flavour and movement, but is *cold* in respect of its nature, especially when uncooked. Understanding that the human body is warm or hot by nature, 37°C, this *cold nature* is essentially damaging to the body, the inner digestive fire and the function of the 'Three Heaters'.¹³

This is even more so in regards to water, or any other drinks, taken directly from the fridge, chilled or iced. One has now 'reinforced' this basic *inner nature* of *cold* many times and so can directly damage the *inner fire*. Note, as example, one when gets an immediate frontal headache upon drinking iced water - this area corresponds to the Stomach meridian, which is now blocked in its flow causing pain.

The repeated habit of drinking iced and chilled water or other drinks is seen to be one of the primary causes of sickness in relationship to diet in CM. The habit of using non cooked drinking water on a daily basis is seen to cause a gradual weakening of the *bodily fires*.

This does mean that one needs to drink only hot water or drinks.¹⁴ Rather, it is suggested to cook or boil one's drinking water for a short time, about 3,5 - 4 minutes, in order to remove the *cold nature*; allowing it to cool to room temperature or as required for drinking.

One can compare the difference between the two from the feeling in the mouth. The boiled water has a smooth or soft quality, whereas the unboiled water e.g. directly from the tap, will have a hard and rough feeling, this is its *cold nature*.

A further comment should be added concerning the 'efficiency' of the Electric Kettle in boiling water. Actually it does not! It heats the water just momentarily, and rather well below boiling point. Furthermore, it just uses an electrical charge, so no real fire or vitality, to heat the water. This electrifying of the water is also fatally damaging to the body's energetic structure.

So better to leave the electric kettle out of the kitchen! And return to the traditional method of boiling water in a kettle upon the (gas or wood) stove.

A simple method for Wellbeing using natural water

This simple method uses the regulation of ones water intake to help the body rebalance the most basic aspect of its metabolism. Known in CM as the 'Fire - Water' balance, this term describes the interplay of those two basic forces and the relative strength of Heat and Fluids within the functions and tissues of the body.

When one of these becomes 'superior' in its activity, symptoms either of *Fire, Heat, Dryness* or alternatively of *Cold, Cool or excess of Fluid* might occur. These are the causes and precursors of disease which might immediately show as general unease; later manifesting as the symptoms of a specific ailment.

Such imbalances can also contribute to both generalized and specific conditions of acidity within the body. The precursor of all (chronic) diseases from the view of natural medicine

This simple method uses water, a cooling or Yin element to help rebalance.

The simple congee uses the addition of heat, a Yang element, to rebalance and also energise.

Method Drink ½ - 1 Cup of water every hour; a cup size being a normal mug size

Decide the quantity, dependent upon general thirst and body size
At each occasion, if possible, drink the whole amount
Begin with a period of 1 day, continue 2 or 3 days if it feels comfortable

Extended periods of more days are not recommended.
However such periods of 1-3 days can be repeated weekly, until the body becomes aware once again of its own natural rhythm of metabolism

Cooking Gradually bring water to boil, simmer gently for 3,5 - 4 minutes
Leave to cool to room temperature. Store in a glass or ceramic container

Do not use unboiled, chilled, cold, iced or refrigerated water
These are also best avoided within ones normal day to day diet

Water Use the best quality of water available
Ideally a 'natural' form of mineral water; but not carbonated or with additives
'Filtered' Water from e.g. tap water is ok if there is no better source

Diet During this time eat your normal diet, but maybe 2/3 usual amount of food
Be aware of the 'nature' & liquid content of the food; i.e. more heating or cooling, more dry or more fluid

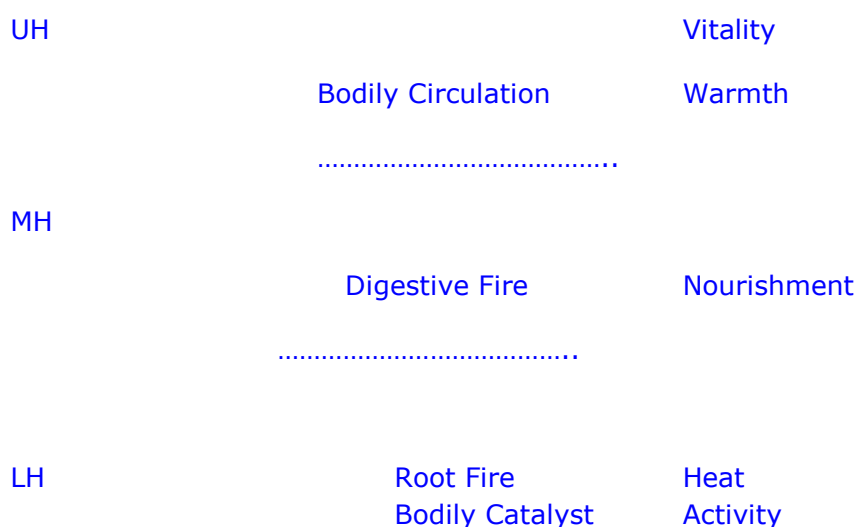
Try to avoid other types of drinks, esp. coffee, pepsi/coke, sugared & carbonated drinks, black, red and spicy teas.
Also any liquids which are chilled, cold, iced or refrigerated.

Energetics of Metabolism

In Chinese Medicine the functions of the digestion, the general metabolism and movement of fluids is controlled by a non-physical organ called the *San Jiao* (三焦) or 'Triple Heater' function (TH).

It directs and harmonizes the basic bodily activities of physical warmth, creation of energy (from food, water & air) and homeostasis. As the name implies, it comprises of three fires or *Three Burning Spaces* acting as both catalysts and transformers with spheres of influence related to the related organ functions.

Anatomically, they are located in the Lower Abdomen/Pelvic Area, Upper Abdomen/Solar Plexus & Thoracic Cage / Chest; respectively as the *Lower, Middle & Upper Heaters* (LH, MH & UH).



The Triple Heater is understood to be the primary organ which regulates the *Fire-Water Balance* within the body. That is the basic movement between Yang & Yin forces, or Heat & Cold, Dry & Moist, Movement & Stillness. Harmonious movement between these two poles creates balance; whilst the imbalance of one over the other gives a relative excess (of *Fire* or *Water*) with symptoms of such nature.

For examples, an excess of *Yang Qi* or *Fire* can give problems of dryness and thirst, hunger and appetite imbalance, heat or inflammation in the digestive system and different forms of rashes and irritation in the skin; as well as an acidic condition within the body.¹

An excess of *Yin Qi* or *Water* can give problems of body fluid metabolism, slowness or weakness of the digestive system, growths and tumours, oedemas, swelling and lumps.

The usage of the *Simple Congee Recipe* is one way to rebalance the harmony of the two. The heat of the cooking process brings vitality to the *Yang Qi*; the fluid nature of the liquid brings coolness and nourishment to the *Yin Qi*. *Congee* is essentially vitality 'soaked' into the fluid.

The Regulation of one's fluid intake, see details, is a method which reharmonises through just fluid intake.

Notes

- ¹ This is to be differentiated from a Herbal Soup or Decoction (Tang 湯), a more complex combination of herbs, boiled just in water.
- ² Nei Ching Su Wen (309-204 BC); The Classic of Internal Medicine : Chap 2
- ³ Further seasonal advices related to behaviours, sexuality, foods, tea etc. from Nei Ching & other Chinese Classics can be found here : www.daoistmedicine.net/content/index.php/medicine
- ⁴ In this case, such porridge must NOT be used as a *total* substitute for breast milk. However, is an *essential* supplement when the greater proportion of the babies milk diet is replaced with powdered milk. Even when reconstituted with water, this milk, retains this dry nature and so has such (drying or heating) effect upon the body with the tendency to cause problems related to digestion, the skin or even the breathing.
- ⁵ White Rice is preferable with infants, in severe sickness, extreme debility & the dying. In all other cases the use of 'Sweet' or Glutinous White Rice will give extra nourishment due to the higher protein content.
- ⁶ For more details, see the page: 'Energetics of Metabolism'.
- ⁷ White Rice is preferable for those with weaker digestive systems; and during summer season. The use of 'Sweet' White Rice, with extra protein content, preferred in Autumn & Winter
- ⁸ Quinoa is best used as 50% mix with other grains.
A touch, i.e. *tip* of a teaspoon, of spice can be used during the summer season.
e.g. UH Chilli, MH Ginger, LH Cinnamon,
- ⁹ Black Rice means Roasted White Rice; if possible use Roasted Glutinous/Sweet White Rice. In this case, it does not mean Wild Rice, which is more suited for Summer season.
- ¹⁰ 99% in utero, 90% at birth, 70% middles ages, 50% older ages.
- ¹¹ <http://www.healing-water.org/>; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viktor_Schauberger;
<http://www.hado-life-europe.com>
- ¹² This is not implying the physical warmth of the food, e.g. if it is raw, cooked or eaten cold, though they do have consequential effect; but rather the inner nature, e.g. Chilli, and spices in general, have *Hot* nature, as does coffee; whereas, cheese has *Cold* nature, as does
- ¹³ Please see 'Energetics of Metabolism' for more details.
- ¹⁴ Though one notices in those countries with hot climates, traditionally the preferred choice of drink is tea - which is drunk warm , but has a cool nature. The drinking of cold and iced liquids is a modern habit, unfortunately, borrowed from western societies; as is coffee, which is on the other extreme, with a *hot* and *firey* nature, and so damaging to the fluid and cooling aspects of the body.
- ¹⁵ Which is the precursor of disease, both local and systemic, from the view of natural medicine.

Please honour the integrity of this work

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One who is free and profound

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