

Or why cook up a chicken soup in this season ?

Of the Earth Element Period of Change between 12 – 22 March;

though now a little late ... *See Note Page 4

Two week previous I was planning to discuss how to move into Spring. The fact that traditionally there would be a lacking of food for some period of a week or more when those foods stored in the jordkällare / earth cellar had about come to an end and one waited for nature to give the first growths in the forest.

Growth would only become possible from the period ' *tjällossning* ', when the last of the surface frost melts providing the fluid as the nutrition for the dormant seeds to begin sprouting.

' **And then the cold came back** ' (please say in a dramatic Star Wars type voice)

which is always pretty confusing for all of nature: trees, plants; bees, birds, animals; and us humans !

The air has felt like Spring, but there is still cold, even minus degrees, even during the days. And then more snow. This is not abnormal, in itself, even for these parts of Sweden during this time of the year.

However, as ever, the questioning to ourselves is:

' how do we keep balance in our health and well-being '

or more specifically:

' how do we make alignment between *Heaven* and *Earth* '

(remembering our philosophy of *Tian, Di, Ren; Heaven, Earth, Human*)

The answer, (with snow fluttering past the window this morning, some frost on the car this night) is: ' **Chicken Soup** '. But, do please make a vegetarian version if that is your flavour. *And here is some blab of explanation:*

As the body moves out of winter, one wishes to clear the body from fats, toxins and heat collected during that period. The suggestion would be to eat more light foods: minimising meats, fats, proteins and the such for a period of upto 10 days.

This would prepare the body for the freshness of the Spring Qi and the type of foods soon available. Remembering that the primary path to health is to make 'balance' or rather 'alignment' with the outer energies of Heaven and Earth ... season, climates, weather, energies.

One has sensed the Qi of Spring coming from Heaven: this is the change in the air: vitality, feeling, smell. This is the movement, or expression, of the Solar Qi (of Heaven) into the Human Realm, before it is further embraced by the Earth Realm which responds back, evident when one can observe the change in the nature, growth and activity in fauna and flora.

It was actually a bit late, as one is hoping to feel it even if just for a day or two on 5th February : period of Beginning of Spring in the 24 Solar Qi. It did seem to show then but did appear in the middle of the next period and was present in the air in the sunshine of the day, even with the cold and chill.

With such cold becoming present, one realised it was not time yet to clear the body. One cannot clear fat from the body, eat a low fat-protein diet, when the body needs to make warmth due to minus degrees outside during the daytime.

So, what the body needs is food, which is nutritious, light, warming, with the type of fat, which is easily accessible, but also more readily metabolises. And the food most suited is : Chicken !! plus some root vegetables.

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Winter - Spring Chicken Soup Recipe ... enough for 3 – 4 days; 3rd day of eating, still going 😊

Meat

Whole Chicken	Chose a 'Majskyckling', which I think has more nutrition, less antibiotics etc. used and maybe kept in a slightly better environment ?
Vegetarian alternative	Seitan + Onions fried in Roasted Sesame Oil with Genmai Miso * Result should be sweet from the onions and salty from the Miso. You will be making a vegetable soup, as below and adding this at the end.

Root Vegetables

Red Onions	using the last from Winter storage
Carrots	from south Sweden
Parsnips	" " "
Hokkaido Pumpkin	using the last from Winter storage
Potatoes	from south Sweden

Other Vegetables

Kale	source ?
Black Fungus or Wood Ear Mushroom	This is special Chinese Mushroom. You could use a local Swedish, picked and <u>dried</u> last year e.g. Svart Trumpetsvamp eller Svart Kantarell

Cooking Herbs, as tonics and digestive aids

Fresh Ginger	Moves digestion, warms, breaks down fats, gives flavour
Cooking Liquorice	Stomach Qi ? use instead Fennel Bulb
Da Zao : Red Dates	Spleen Qi, Digestive Fluids ? use instead Dates from palm
Korean Cooking Ginseng	Tonifies Qi and Immunity, Warms ? use instead root of RosenRot

Seasoning & Oil

Korean Roasted Sesame Oil	This is slightly hotter (than Japanese) in effect but with lighter flavour, so goes better with the Red Onions
Japanese Hatcho Miso	Choosing a heavier Miso to balance the upward nature of the Cooking Ginseng Miso Varieties

Notes

* Seitan Dish

Roasted Sesame Oil	use Japanese for the flavour; less heat needed as you are frying
Yellow Onions	difficult to merge the stronger flavour of Red Onions with the slight sourness of Seitan (dependent upon brand or home-made)
Miso	seitan is made from wheat gluten, one uses a lighter miso to balance this

Understanding the Chicken Soup

One is choosing a whole chicken, cooked for a longer period of 3 – 4 hours, plus root vegetables: plus some Fresh Ginger or other suitable warming spices (not chilli !!! Maybe black pepper ?)

Whole chicken = nutrition.

Length of time = heat into the dish

Vegetables = adds other nourishment.

Ginger = warming, supports digestion + immunity

Energetically

Chicken is related to the Element of Wood or Wind, this is the quality of change. One uses this food during periods of change for oneself; but also, when the weather is changeable outside.

If the nature of the outer (environmental) Qi is changeable, one makes alignment by making ones own inner Qi that same nature – by eating foods which have that same quality.

But within a period of change (what is) also required is the quality of stability. Unbridled change, with no continued pattern, would become as chaos or a perpetuation of that one energetic quality. These qualities of both stability and transformation are representative of **the Earth Element**, which is then the energetic phase between seasons, providing the sub-strata for change.

This Earth phase is the period of 10 days as the ending of the previous season, which is the 12th – 22nd March for movement from Winter to Spring, though it is expressing itself late this year, as one sees with the frost in the ground, the tight, bite of cold still in the air.

Once again, transferring these energetics of Elements and climates into foods. The qualities of stability of the Earth Element are found in such round vegetables as potatoes and (solid-meat) pumpkins etc. and those root vegetables as carrots and parsnips etc.. The first category helping maintain positioning through being more 'centring` and the second through being more 'rooting`.

So, by using Chicken for change, plus Round and Root Vegetables for Stability (and transformation), on an energetic level one cooks a dish to enable you to maintain alignment (= to maintain health) during the changeover of season; even when it is quite 'disruptive to normal timing and patterns` as it is this year.

The other ingredients of the dish are those which help *attune the dish to this particular seasonal changeover, even adjusting for the specific weather at that time*. Obviously there are 4 major seasonal change over periods within the Western Solar Calendar (Winter → Spring → Summer → Autumn → Winter), each being of a very different character.

However, the teaching is that one can use the same basic dish: Whole Chicken, plus *suitable seasonal root vegetables to direct or strengthen the action of the dish according to the requirements asked by the seasons and climates of that time of the year by adding other ingredients, especially different fungi, fruits, herbs and spices*.

In our Winter – Spring Seasonal Dish, with continued frosty weather, we are using:

- Kale, Fungus, Dates, Liquorice for extra nourishment
- Ginger, Ginseng, Roasted Sesame Oils for warmth and stimulation, internal and outer
- Root Vegetables and Heavy Miso for seasonal compatibility

The vegetarian version:

- Frying the Seitan with onion and miso separately to add strength, fat & more heat to the body.

And in your own recipe, using those Vegetables to which you are accustomed, together with Mushrooms, Herbs or Spices suited to your own bodily needs, vectors, warmth of metabolism.

Learning to do this is to enter into a world of magic and wonder and will lead one:

- a) from knowing how to create one's health in a more simple way through the usage of foods and simple 'cooking herbs seasonally
- b) to healing deeper issues through understanding the energetics of foods and healing herbs and herbal strategies
- c) to the more specific alchemical functioning of specific foods and 'upper grade herbs, such as within Stone Medicine for personal transformation and inner development 😊

This is also the reasoning one is making **Porridge or Jook** ('Medicinal Porridge', with added foods, herbs or spices) as one's breakfast food. Using rice as a basis, one is able to readily change the porridge to suit according to the season, weather, personal humour and physical needs on a daily basis.

Remembering that one can add whatever foods one wishes: meats, vegetables, legumes, fruits, nuts etc.; with whichever cooking style according to your own tastes and constitution. Even changing the base grain from season to season.

This is a training in personal body → bodily needs → senses awareness, directing one to learn flexibility in daily eating habits as the core to creating, directing and maintaining personal health as one learns to align eating habits with both outer environment and inner needs and feelings.

Here is the link to the PDF: [Pathways to Health I](#), for the *very few* of you who have not adopted this strategy towards health care after my repeated suggestion during the last 3 decades 😊.

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*** Getting your timing correct (this year).**

As the movement into Spring is not clearly defined this year (in the area in which I live); one needs to make a judgement for oneself when 'the Spring will arrive'.

One is wishing to have some awareness of when there will be a change to the time when the first new growth will show itself, so that one calculates back about 10 days and from that period onwards can begin one's own body – mind cleansing.

To begin too early, one will open and cool the body too quickly, with the possibility of allowing the cold and seasonal diseases to come it, (even the COVID to return); **to begin too late**, one would have lost the chance to cleanse and the winter 'toxins' will become the diseases of the Spring.

Respiratory Allergies to all different types of pollen are an example of the such. Heat collected within the system during Winter, which now create a hyper-reactive (over-sensitive) internal environment which reacts to the minimal of stimulation. (and remember, one of the specific remedies for this was to open and cleanse the body during the winter with regular sauna).

So, when is this time ? It is from that period of ' *tjällossning* ', when the last of the surface frost melts providing the fluid for the nutrition and in the following days in which the first growth appears.

It is after then that one will be able to have new edible growth: *Björksav* (Birch Sap) as the sap of the tree rises upwards; *Granskott* (Spruce Sprouts) for tea; shoots and flowers of the *Maskros* (Dandelion) and then other plants. (notably, this is already happening further south in Skåne).

If one has lived in an area for some years and familiar with the environment from taking regular walks within the forest, one might well be attuned to the subtle signs which will tell you that within a certain period of days the first growth appears. **Calculate back** from that time and begin your 10 days of cleansing.

If not familiar with the area, a bit of guessing and feeling into the local environment and *please begin regular walks in preparation for the next seasons and next year !!*

And whilst it is still chilly and frosty, some days of chicken soup to keep the body strong!

This information is a little more specific for those who are ready for it

Alchemy of Tea

Again, the difficulty is how to change from one season to the next and especially during this year in which the cold of frost and the snow have returned.

During the snowy cold of winter, you would have been using **Shu Pu Erh** and some strongly roasted Oolong, such as 3-day Charcoal Roasted to maintain heat in the Lower Tan Tien.

With the Spring Qi in the air, but the frost on the ground, it is not quite the time to move over to **Green Tea**, Cleansing Teas (i.e. **Sheng Pu Erh**) or even **Dragon Well**.

However, I have noticed due to that upward Qi quality, I have not wished to 'sink my Qi' into the Lower Body too much. It felt too strong and at the same time there is a lot of contained heat. That is especially from those **Shu cakes** which are a little more rough in fermentation and texture or those which I picked up 15 years ago during travels in the countryside in China.

(This was from a small table in a market place in a small town, I imagine from the local farmer; some of the best, *hottest*, Pu Erh I have drunk !!)

Instead, my bodily Qi wished to shift over to **Roasted Oolong**. I have been choosing those grown at higher altitudes, the '**High Mountain**' from different sources, at the moment preferring the more **Heavy Roasted**, whilst I awake with frost on the ground. Though already today, when it was just over zero at plus degrees, favoured a **Light Roast**.

Remembering, that the creation of health is by the '*daily alignment of ones inner Qi with that of the outer environment*' and one achieves this through the daily subtle changes in the different types of foods or liquids. It is ideal to have a range of different 'roast-strengths' to accommodate for these gradual and variable changes of a Spring such as this.

One might seek something a little more stimulating for one's morning tea, especially if rising early to go working. **Long Jing (Dragon Well)** is a possibility due to the heat, generated by the drying-cooking on the wok. But for myself it is rising the Qi a little too much whilst there is still yin-fluid still crystallised in the ground (the frost); which indicates that the Yin of the LTT'ien is still to be supported.

I might try a **Sencha**, which has a higher content of caffeine for waking the morning Qi and is still warming, the heat coming from the same wok process. This has less energetic body than the **Long Jing** (so does not ask the LTT'ien Qi to rise) and being Japanese is more sophisticated, less rough in its overall Qi. This more subtle effect on the bodily Qi, means it will raise Yang Qi to the head, but without moving Lower Body Qi.

I would not, however, use **Gyokuro** which tends to be warmer, stronger and is too complex for the morning; especially compared to **Sencha**.

One could use **Gunpowder Tea**, it is good for a body or mind wake-up with high caffeine and usually being very warming. It tends to be more rough in effect, so I would tend to use it if going out to do physical work in the morning; so is less suited for mental work, inside.

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Moving into the Spring and Cleansing

Sheng (Raw) Pu Erh is the tea to use for cleansing. Obviously, avoid young **1 (- 2 year) old** as it tends to be too bitter.

The bitterness cleanses more harshly and the more toxic qualities of heat and phlegm in the Gall Bladder or Small Intestine / Heart System; even those with emotional content. So, this is more towards a medicine and needs to be brewed and drunk with much more attention.

To cleanse the Liver and Large Intestine / Lung system of stagnation, (and less toxic) qualities of heat, damp and even phlegm from the diet and internalisation of the Winter **2 - 3 (even - 5) year old** cakes are most ideal.

Older cakes will not be suited, as the more mature leaves have themselves become more 'earthy' or composted through maturing and so have considerably less cleansing action; dependent upon the brand and processing.

Either use as a beverage during the day with a normal, less protein-fat diet during this period.

Or, drink as a whole brew or at least a good cup in the morning on empty stomach together with a strategy of lighter eating for a deep cleanse.

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Black Tea

Lapsang Souchong has been well suited for this type of harsh winter – cold rains, biting winds, intermittent periods of snow with chilly ice. Very warming due to the process of smoke-drying over (pinewood)fires, which makes it rugged around the edges in its characteristic taste. It provides both a deeper internal warmth and stimulation, as well as warmth and support to the outer immunity.

Yunnan is more round in flavour and effect. Still warming, but with more depth, it enters more readily into the LTT'ien. This is both a good tea during the winter, an alternative to the Lapsang and more suited to all ages and taste-buds, and also during this intermediary period into Spring.

Earl Grey is obviously that to be chosen to support digestion, the added rind of Bergamot (either as an essential oil or as pieces of the dried skin) having the quality of 'stimulating the Stomach Qi and breaking down fats' within Chinese Medicine Herbology.

By adding more of the dried herb, oneself, one can increase this effect and so also use it as a cleanse during this period; though it will work on fats, but obviously not be cooling.

Russian Tea is ideal for icy mornings when there is still frost on the ground; as is **Scottish Morning Tea**. Please try them and see the very opposite characters. The almost harsh rigidity of the Russian, compared to the more full flavoured, almost playful quality of the Scottish.

I have often used an **Irish Breakfast Tea** when having a 'full, fatty English Breakfast' on Sunday mornings during the Winter, as it seems to support the ingestion of such fried, fatty proteins 😊.

Those are the variety of Black Teas I used during the Winter. I generally do not use Black Tea during Spring or Summer unless there are particularly cold, rainy or windy days and then just for a shorter period of 1 – 3 days.

The heat in these teas will too easily mis-align one's Qi during the normal weather of those seasons as their vortex is up and outward, and not needing extra push or over-heating that these contain.

As the seasons move into mid → late Autumn one can begin to introduce them once again, dependent upon how strongly and when the morning and evening coolness arrives.

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Qi Gong

The approach to Qi Gong would follow the same strategy as above: Stabilising Root, Securing Centre and Supporting the outer Qi for adaptability and immunity.

Notes

- One will use repetitions of 9, 27 or 81 breathes
- Remembering that once one has made the structure (which takes `100 days`), one can use just a short inhalation + directed intention to send the effect through the previously formed `Qi circuit`.
- As one builds the reserves of Qi within these circuits or meridian pathways (which you have now self-created or self-directed; remembering that meridians develop according to function activated through interactive experience). One can achieve the required effect quickly and with few breathes, essentially by `clicking in` to the Heavenly – Earthly Qi and instantaneously directing into the Human Level of your own body.
- Until then, you must mechanically repeat to make the pathways and patterns ... but do it now, in preparation for the next season or the next year 😊

The Practice

- Gather Qi into the LTT'ien from both Heaven and Earth, ensuring it circulates around Dai Mai
Do 3 x the amount of breathes you intend for each further step of the exercise
(i.e. if you plan on 9 breathes for each step: now do 3 x 9 or 3 x 81 etc.)

This will build and stabilise the root. Now you do not need to become tired.

- Circulate the Qi around Du Mai and then Ren Mai : the Microcosmic Orbit
- Then, circulate from Ren 1 (perineum), into the Chong Mai. So, the Qi goes: Du – Ren – Chong. When you get upto DU 20, allow the Qi to flow down again to Ren 1.

This means there are two circuits happening simultaneously: Du – Ren and up & down Chong.

This will secure the centre. Now you will not become seriously unwell.

- Focus into the LTT'ien, gathering the Qi
- Breathe the Qi up into the Lungs, and allow a mist like energy to dissipate around the whole body
Also do this stage 3 x the amount of the other steps
- Make completion by, gathering the Qi into your root; then securing the Du – Ren – Chong circuit.

This Supports the outer Qi for adaptability and immunity. Now you will not become sick from Colds, bacterial or viral; nor from the COVID virus.

Please do this for 100 days.

Then you will have it in the body for the change of each season.

And, you do not need to become unwell or tired again 😊

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Then some babble on other modalities for those interested in the such

Essential Oils

Using Carrier Oils for massage or an Essential Oil Blend for aligning the soul from one season to the next can be very helpful if that is the medium with which you resonate.

The Massage Oils to be used during this transformation period would be:

- Jojoba as general Earth Element for transformation / stability
- Arnica Wood Element, with healing of Physical Earth Element
- Rosehip " " , with healing Emotional Wood
- Raspberry " " , with underlying heat issues

The Carrier Oils as a basis for a Blend are

- Jojoba Earth Element, transformation / stability
- Virgen Olive Oil " " , stability

- Hazelnut Earth Element, plus mental structure, i.e. with need for direction
- Pomegranate " " , plus Earth Emotional Healing
- Safflower " " , plus Mental Clarity of IEE Fire

- Carrot Wood Element, Qi plus support for change to next season
- Elderberry Wood Element, Qi plus emotional support
- Blackberry Wood Element, Qi plus IIE Earth to support change.

- Milk Thistle Yang Wood Element, to push through change

My choice of Essential Oils for transformation from Winter season to Spring is based upon the Innate Elemental Energy (IEE) of the Transformative Seasonal Qi combined with the New Seasonal Qi. That is the:

- **Qi of Liver** as the Transformative Qi, *with Innate Elemental Energy of **Earth***;
- **Qi of Lung and Colon** as the Seasonal Qi of Spring, *with IEE of **Wood*** (obviously)

So, Oils which resonate those Elementals quality according to :

- Part of Plant as source **Earth** being Root or Stem / Wood; **Wood** being Branches and Leaves
- Aromas **Earth being** Herbaceous & Woody/Earthy
Wood being Citrus & Herbaceous; some Camphoraceous, as Eucalyptus
- 'Flavour` * **Earth** being Sweet, Bland; even Spicy ; **Wood** being Sour, even Astringent.

* A categorisation from Chinese Herbal Medicine used to denote the Energetic Vectors of substances in other Mediums, such as Oils and Stones which themselves obviously do not have a flavour as classification.

The Essential Oils are picked for the individual patient are those relating to **Earth Element** and **Wood Element** according to that which suits constitution, the life purpose during the coming seasonal period, the emotional state plus any symptomology.

E.g. using **Aquamarine** as Principle Stone together with **Phantom Quartz** as Associate, plus Aventurine (as a Green-Blue Jasper to clear) or **Yellow Tiger's Eye** (as a striated Agate to cleanse) as **Transformative Stone** one would clear the psycho-spiritual energies from the Winter slumbers.

Add some **Topaz** to tune up the `Upper Palace` (the Third Eye in common language); or use a small **Green Jade Tablet** for direction of purpose for this whole year. Other coloured Jades for more specific `prayers or affirmations` and then relate usage to the Moon phases.

Or even more subtle

If you wish to become even more subtle in application, you will wish to engender that quality of `stable change for transformation` during the 18 day period. Use stones of a **Yellow and Red Colour** for that Qi, with Green (for outer) or Yellow (for inner) for the specific period of Winter moving into Spring. Then move onto your Spring Tonic ☺

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Maybe that is enough for today ?

I wrote quickly, so hopefully not too many typos or incoherent sentences

Daoist-Doc



'Sitting quietly, doing nothing

Spring comes, the grass grows of itself`

Chang Xuan Ren 暢玄人

www.PurpleOnyx.net