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May 2011 Newsletter

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Spring, Liver Qi

Quick Note: *I'll be opening up extra hours on Tuesday and Thursday mornings starting in June! Appointments will start at 9am on those days.*

Single Session \$80.00 (\$70 for students and seniors, and Kuk Sool Won students)

Three Month Plan \$425 (\$325 with times restricted to Monday through Thurs 10:30am-3:45pm)

Income-based, sliding scale treatments available from 10:30am to 3:45pm.

Now, back to your normally scheduled newsletter.....

Ah, Spring is here! Spring enlivens us with a refreshing rush of vitality and motion after the quiet Winter's long suspension of energy. Like bamboo shoots, growing tall and fast, all walks of life mimic that bloom of rapid awakening with the coming of Spring. It is to the seasons as the early morning is to the day.

In Chinese Medicine, the Spring season governs the meridians of the Liver and Gall Bladder, which are closely related and work together as a team. The Liver is the traffic director of all other organs in the body. When Liver Qi is in a healthy balance, the organ functions like a good bass player in a band; keeping rhythm, tempo and flow in check for the rest of the body systems. We feel a sense of calm and cool in handling life's little stresses when the Liver Qi is well maintained. An unhealthy Liver is like a drill sergeant who brings his job home to the family where it does not belong. This imbalance in Liver Qi manifests in the patient as tightness, tension and frustration or gruffness. For optimal health and prosperity, all organisms require adaptability as an essential skill, and the Qi of the Liver is the key in humans to keeping that flexibility accessible.

The Gall Bladder is the vent for excess heat in the liver. Being the traffic director, the Liver is sometimes forced to channel more energy from other systems than it can handle at one time. When this occurs, and an excess of heat accumulates in the liver and the Gall Bladder kicks in to release that heat. When Gall Bladder can't do its job properly, the heat stagnates in the liver, eventually developing into disease, suffering, anger and explosiveness.

Mirroring the observable processes in nature that occur during Spring, like flowers blooming and seeds sprouting, the qi of the Liver and Gall Bladder spark our creative processes. The Liver is the origin of inspiration. The Gall Bladder then initiates the executive planning toward carrying out the creative task at hand. Liver supplies the vision; Gall Bladder makes a mental to-do list for completion. Sadly, without healthy flow of Liver and Gall Bladder qi, we lose our ability to conceive of and prepare for any creative endeavor. This in turn, inhibits our contribution of unique gifts to society. We as a culture, in a broad sense, tend to linger in the realm of the Springtime/Liver Qi energetic spectrum. We expect growth, production and newness to continue without slowing or ceasing. While the energy of Spring is nice, it is not sustainable forever. At some point, harvest time must come. This expectation quickly transforms to frustration, when our bodies refuse the endless pace of "go! go! go!".

Chronic stagnation of Liver Qi can cause symptoms of:

- Insomnia, depression, moodiness
- jaw tightness, spasms, eye pain
- gynecological symptoms of cramping, heavy flow, clots, infertility and irregular cycle
- hypertension, heart attack, stroke
- and lack of creative vision, feeling "stuck"

Modern illnesses associated with the Liver meridian include fibromyalgia, IBS, Chron's, and even allergies. Almost all Pharmaceutical drugs force a heavier workload upon the Liver, taxing it and acting as dangerous toxins. Herbs and plants, especially the green ones, on the other hand, are (almost all) wonderful Liver helpers.

Chronic Liver stagnation can be contagious. When we live with or are close to someone with a Liver Qi stagnation, we tend to immediately react to his or her tension by becoming tense. The Qi of the Liver has a very strong vibration. Take care of yourself this Spring, and if you're feeling a little grumpy or rigid, maybe it's time for some acupuncture.

Cleansing

There is a lot said about cleansing, and if you are paying attention, you'll be hearing more about it this time of year than any other time. If you are going to do a cleanse, spring is the right time to do it. You might call it call it spring cleaning for the body, a chance to flush out toxins, to clean the blood, etc. Here are some things I would like you to know:

1. There is no scientific research that supports theories that cleansing supports health. However, there is some very good evidence that calorie restricted diets lead to longer lives. Those of us who have done cleansing, usually come away with a sense of improved health. The basic idea is that the body's processes of elimination, from the cellular level, to the liver, kidney and intestines, to the actual bowel movement, cannot keep up with the amount of food the modern human eats on a daily basis. Not to mention that those things we eat aren't always actually food, but instead processed, denatured, food-like product. So a cleanse, either by fasting, diet or supplements,

gives your body a boost in cleaning itself out.

2. Cleansing can be done by fasting. Just drink water and don't eat. However, this can be difficult on the body and spirit, and several juice cleanses have emerged to smooth out the rough edges of this kind of cleanse (i.e. "The Master Cleanse"). These are the more extreme cleanses, and are the kind I used to do as a teenager. Now that I can't take days off to sit and meditate and go for slow contemplative walks, I have come to appreciate the slower kind of cleanse, where you adjust your diet to eating only simple and pure foods, that don't congest, but help the cleansing processes of the body (i.e. www.howhealthworks.com).

There is another kind of cleanse that involves buying lots of supplements, and maybe protein powders. I have the least experience with and the most distrust of these types of cleanses. They often are made with processed products, may still have fillers, dyes, preservatives, etc. I think they often make claims that they don't have the research to support. If I were to do one of these, I would probably go with Standard Process's version, since in general I trust their research and quality of product (ps. I can order that for you, probably at a better price than retail, if you decide to go that way.)

3. All things considered, I find myself wanting to encourage most people to try the cleansing food route. You could think of it as short term veganism. (Though not all vegan foods are cleansing!) Here's a [recipe](#) from my friend, Amanda Love the wholistic nutritionalist.

On the topic of food and diet...here's an article covering the same information that was in the video about the toxic effects of sugar on the body. It's long, but in a written instead of video feedback (with less organic chemistry thrown in).

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/17/magazine/mag-17Sugar-t.html>

Martial Arts and Self Defence

Monday evenings at 6pm I am teaching a martial arts and self defence class for men and women.

There are a few spots open, and you can try out a class for free! You don't have to have previous experience, or even be in shape (we'll work on that in class).

Studying and practicing martial arts helps with confidence, internal tranquility while under stress, and gives you exercise while developing your balance, coordination, and challenging your mind.

Email and let me know if you'd like to make a class.

Other Classes and Events

Amanda Love, is a whole foods nutritionist

Recently there have been several articles on research indicting that fat is not only not bad for us, but how it's presence protects organs, and how it is refined sugar, stripped from it's natural state, that is the culprit behind much of the illness formerly attributed to fat. Just this week, there is research indicating that low salt diets have NOT worked to improve health!

Amanda, trained not just in the perspective of Pitchford's Healing with Whole Foods, but also in the tradition of Weston Price and Sally Fallon, has been telling me all of this for years.

Go to her [website](#) for recipes, consulting, and classes should be coming in June.

Devon Hornby runs the Tao Health Clinic, and teaches tai chi and qi gong

Integral chuan is a form of internal development based on tai chi, meditation, yiquan and qigong as taught by Sifu Fong Ha. These highly revered Chinese arts foster profound levels of strength, well-being and personal transformation. Classes are fun, challenging and above all rewarding. Classes are Mondays at Third Coast Martial Arts (8108 Mesa Drive) from 11:30 am to 12:30pm and monthly practice intensives are held at the Austin Center for Holistic Healing (5515 Balcones Drive) on the first Saturday of the month from noon until around 6pm. More information at: www.taohealthclinic.com

AOMA

My alma mater be having the following classes and events open to the general public (not just acupuncture students)...

- an East West Forum on Death and Dying coming up on May 18th <https://aoma.edu/community-classes/east-west-forum/> and
- a qigong for breast health class on May 15 and
- Taiji Shen Gong with Master Li May 21-22 <https://aoma.edu/community-classes/qigong-classes/>

They keep their classes and events posted at <https://aoma.edu/community-classes/> or on their calendar, <https://aoma.edu/calendar>

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