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Greetings,

I hope your summer is going well. Earlier this month we had a fantastic program with Elisabeth Rochat de la Vallee. She will be back on November 12th for our classical Chinese medicine study group and for a public presentation. I'll have more details on the topic, times, etc as we get a little closer.

As usual, we have all of our regular programs happening, including the ongoing Medical Qigong group and the classical Chinese Medicine study group. We are also going to be having a special program on "The Late Summer and Early Autumn in Classical Chinese Medicine: Harvesting the Inspiration of the Spirits" later in August. This program is free for members. This will follow along the lines of our winter and spring programs that we have done over this past year. However, I am opening this program up to non-members who can attend for \$25, which will go towards supporting our low-income programs. I have more details below.

The main article for this newsletter is "Cultivating Qi." This is a huge theme that lies at the heart of much of traditional Chinese culture, medicine and art - it starts with the basic idea that the quality of our thoughts, emotions and physical functioning is directly related to the quality of our qi.

Membership Story

The membership program here provides funding for Traditional Chinese Medicine services and herbs for those that wouldn't otherwise have access to this important system of health care.

B. was first diagnosed with a serious disease several years ago. After multiple operations he was fairly stable, but quite depleted and not able to work. He had worked with Traditional Chinese Medicine in the past and it had helped him tremendously, but at this point he had virtually no income and felt it was not something that he could pursue, even though he needed the help. Thanks to our membership program he is now getting care here and taking an individualized herbal formula that is rebuilding his strength (which he is feeling more and more). He is very grateful and asked that I pass that along - so, if you are a member, thank you! If not please consider joining or looking at one of the other following ways to support these programs at the Center.

In addition to the membership, we have also had someone recently provide a scholarship so that several people could attend the recent classes with Elisabeth Rochat. Others have donated specifically to support our intern program and give additional educational opportunities to our interns here.

Another option is to make a one time or ongoing donation to support our low-income programs - it is not necessary to sign up for the whole membership to make a big difference for those that otherwise would not have access to high quality care. Some people have requested that we just add a \$5 donation when they order herbs each time in order to help out. You can help support positive change in someone's life!

[For more information on our Membership Program click here](#)

Late Summer and Early Autumn in Classical Chinese Medicine: Harvesting the Inspiration of the Spirits

August 25th from 10:00am-11:30am

Free for Members

Non-members: \$25
registration fees support our low income programs

Jade Cloud Green Tea will be served along with a presentation on the qi of the summertime and early autumn, including the nature of the heart and the lungs, the *shen* (spirits), *hun* ("ethereal soul") and *po* ("corporeal soul") and simple, traditional guidelines for preparing for the coming season.

Please email or call (707) 763-8040 for more information or to confirm your place in the program.

Cultivating Qi

Within Traditional Chinese Medicine, one of the most fundamental concepts is that the quality of our emotions and the quality of our physiological functioning are directly dependent (or one could even see, are the same as) the quality of our qi. From this idea we can see that our emotional state will affect our physiological state and the physiological state will affect the emotional state. And all of this is at the level of the qi. So, if we want to change the emotional or physiological processes of the body, we need to look at the qi.

From a modern Western view, qi can seem a little bit difficult to understand, as the term encompasses many things, depending on the context. Qi can refer to things as diverse as weather patterns, seasons, emotions, physiological processes, the breath and so on. Of course, all of these things have something in common and that is the two fold idea of 1) the influence of one thing on another and 2) the implication of how processes are carried out or function. In a very general way we can think about qi as a way to describe the processes of nature or the processes of life, the way that things relate and influence one another. One traditional image of this is the current and movement of a stream - the current is what makes the stream what it is; it is the qi of the stream. Without movement there is no longer a stream, simply standing water.

Because of the idea that the quality of qi dictates the quality of our thoughts, emotions and physical processes, qi cultivation is very important within traditional Chinese culture. It is not so much a matter of "well, I know I should eat right to be healthy," as it is the understanding that the renewal and maintenance of the qi, and thus my life, is directly related to the quality of food that I take in. Of course, it is not just food, but everything that we take in, from the air and environment, the people around us, the things that we read or watch and the types of activities that we enjoy. I talk about qigong so much because this is a direct way to cultivate or influence the quality of our qi.

All of these things have an effect on us, an influence on how our qi, body and mind will respond to the changes that are around us. There are many ways to cultivate our qi. However, most of them revolve around the most fundamental rhythms and processes of the body. This doesn't have to be esoteric or complicated. In fact, a lot of it is very simple and we can accomplish this through following the seasonal changes in the natural world, which we are deeply connected with, whether we are aware of it or not. The basic rhythm of everything is in two parts: yin yang. This basic rhythm can be doubled, giving us the movement of the qi as expressed in the four seasons and four directions. This pattern of four consists of birth/growth (spring), fullness (summer), drawing in/harvest (autumn) and containment/storage (winter). This can be applied to any movement, from the movement of the sun throughout the day, to the basic rhythm of a human life to the movement of a wave in the ocean.

Following this can begin as simply as observing nature. Nature reminds us of our own nature, and it is our nature that places us within the natural order and allows to participate more fully in all of the movements of life. In connecting to nature we are connecting to the rhythm of life inside of us. Watch the sunrise or sunset as often as you can. Notice the greater seasonal changes in light and temperature and change your activities accordingly. Just like everything else in nature, increase your activity as the light and the warmth increase and slow down as the light and warmth declines.

Eat regularly through the day, enjoying the foods that are available and in season. Move physically during your day: walk, carry things, get comfortable moving outdoors. Whether it is in the depths of nature or on the sidewalk, expand your awareness to include the movements of nature that are around you and that you are already participating in. Spend time exercising throughout the week as well as practicing qigong daily. Practice embracing your fears, anxiety and discomfort, and using them as powerful resources for the body. All of these things (although this by no means an exhaustive list) will cultivate your qi.

The more we cultivate qi, the more we are able to respond in a naturally efficient manner to the

challenging circumstances that come up in life...

[Read the complete article in our member section - for more information click here.](#)

[Direct link to the full article for members here.](#)

As always, please contact me with any thoughts or questions.

All my best,
Sean

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