

West on the Wheel Acupressure

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Chinese Five Elements:

The Season of Water

by Karen Shaw

This is a brief article on the water element. The water element is one of the aspects of the five elements in the Chinese medical system. I am a practitioner of acupressure, which is a hands-on method of bodywork, focused on the Chinese medical system. In the Chinese tradition, the five elements—Metal, Water, Wood, Fire and Earth—are the dynamic qualities of Nature in life. Each element is ever-present, and basic to life. The elements are our deepest connection to Nature, the most embodied state of Nature that we experience.

I want to discuss the Water element in this article, because we are in the Water time of year. With each element, we have a season to which it pertains, as well as all the qualities that that season holds. Water is Winter, Wood is Spring, Fire is Summer, Earth is Late Summer; Metal is Autumn, and then we return again to Water/ Winter, and so on as a continuous flow from one season to the next. What I find most interesting is not only the physical aspect, but also the day-to-day manifestation of the Water element in our daily lives. I offer this for your information, your

greater understanding, your increased awareness of your own life and of all life around you.

There are two organs in the body governed by the Water element: the Bladder and the Kidneys. The Bladder Meridian Pathway begins at the inner aspect of the eye, flows up over the head, down the back and legs to the little toe. The Kidney Meridian Pathway begins at the bottom of the foot, travels up the inside of the legs and front of the body, ending just under the collar bone. The *Chi* energy flows through these Meridians, with Bladder from 3 to 5 pm, then to

Kidney at 5 to 7pm.

The Kidneys are considered “The Root of Life” in Chinese medicine. This is because the Kidneys are the first aspect of physical life to manifest; in the Kidneys are stored the pre-heaven *Chi*, derived from the Essences of one mother and father, and “The Gift of Anterior Heaven,” which is the Primary Essence ensuring the continuation of Life. The Kidneys are the foundation of Yin and Yang in the body; Kidney Yin is the foundation substance for Birth, for Growth and Reproduction, while Kidney Yang is the motive force of all physiological processes. The Kidneys are also the origin of Water and of Fire in the body, and are referred to in part as the “Gate of Vitality,” the physiological Fire essential to Life. The Fire of The Gate of Vitality provides heat for all the bodily functions as well as for the Kidney Essence itself; Kidney Essence determines our basic constitution, strength and vitality; it is what produces marrow to nourish the skeletal structure including bones, teeth, hair, spinal cord and brain. Vital Kidney Essence shows outwardly as keen mental clarity, concentration, memory, as well as sexual vitality and fertility.

The time of year corresponding with Water is Winter. In Nature, Winter is the deepest, most inward time; all the energy has gone within

and is at rest. Notice all the trees with no leaves, or the animals that hibernate, for example. Most temperatures are cold or even freezing; there are clouds, fog, rain, trickling streams, raging rivers, quiet ponds, frozen lakes, crashing ocean waves. There is stillness of waiting; the calm before the storm; the Long Sleep of Winter; the seeds underground just there for now... waiting deeply within. There is little or no movement... Waiting.

Within the Water aspect are the seeds of what will become in our lives within the coming year. It could be a child, a goal, an idea, a dream, a destiny. It begins as a seed with an outcome all its own, and this is within us, waiting. This is our time to give it space to BE, a time of inquiry and deep listening. Like the Water, we are deep and full of possibilities, full of potentials.

If we are in rhythm with the nature of Water, we can cultivate stillness, and flow with trust in the Now. If we are not in rhythm with the Water, we may feel fearful, overwhelmed and exhausted. If we are in rhythm with the Water element, then what we do flows out of who we are. The Water element holds our will power, determination and focus; it holds the seeds of our life’s purpose within it.

How can we use this knowledge to benefit our day-to-day experiences in business? I can recognize that being still and being quiet with a client or a

coworker who is fearful and exhausted will bring relief and understanding. Anyone can practice deep listening any time we are being spoken to, making sure we have really heard what was being said.

We can increase our awareness of our own manifestation of our Water within us; are we calm and quiet, or are we rough from the wind? As the Water element, we cannot be contained, but we can flow and meander through our day, rather than drown in all that is in our path. We can warm someone who is ice cold, we can cool someone who is red hot; we can each bring warmth to one another through laughter and playfulness; we can remember that within the waiting, we are gathering strength for ourselves and the balance of the Earth.



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Mission: To the best of my ability, being calm in center, open and gentle in heart, hold the space to allow the vast, powerful, gentle, healing modality of Acupressure to flow through me to others, two-legged and four-legged, bringing balance, integrity, harmony and oneness to our relationship with Mother Earth, ourselves and all our relations.