

## **Wind, Heat, Chi and Blood:**

### **Basic concepts in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)**

**Chi (Qi):** energy, life force, activity of our organs and organ systems

**Blood:** coolant and lubricant, carries energy to all organs, nourishes and lubricates joints, tendons, and ligaments

**Yang:** upward hollow energy of activity, manifests as excess, heat, expansion, function

**Yin:** downward dense energy of structure, manifests as cold, contraction, deficiency, substance

**Jing:** Essence, life candle of our bodies inherited from parents

### **Natural phenomena, and pathogens (Xie Chi), that can impact health:**

**Heat:** consumes Yin and Chi, leads to inflammation

**Cold:** damages Yang and Chi, leads to stagnation

**Dampness:** impairs flow of Chi, leads to obstruction of channels with phlegm

**Dryness:** impacts Yin, leads to insufficient nourishment of tendons/ligaments, and frictional heat

**Wind:** damages Blood, leads to itching, scratching, shaking, trembling, seizures.

### **5 Element System of describing the world within and around us:**

**Wood:** element associated with Spring, growth/rebirth, trees, color green, sour taste. Wood element in our bodies is contained and controlled by Liver (LIV). Individuals with wood constitution are good leaders who care about the good of the group the most, they are decisive and dominant (General). They use eyes (windows to the liver) and hands/feet (limbs and roots of the trees) to exert control on world around them. They are nourished by Water, and controlled by Metal. Signs of imbalance include anger, red eyes, dry hands and feet/unhealthy nails, disease of tendons and ligaments, poor stamina. Common clinical problems:

*LIV Blood deficiency: dry skin and feet, poor stamina, dry tendons/ligaments*

*LIV Yin deficiency: red skin and eyes, heat/hot flushes*

*-with Wind: itching, shaking, trembling, seizures*

**Fire:** *element associated with Summer, love, laughter, happiness, color red, bitter taste. Fire resides in Heart (HT) and Triple Heater (TH), the latter refers to heart's ability to correctly disperse Blood and Qi throughout the body. Fire individuals are regal and dominate the company, they make the party and everyone must hear their laughter (Emperor/Princess). They get depressed easily if there is no audience. They use tongue and speech to influence their surroundings. Fire is fueled by Wood, controlled by Water. Common clinical problems:*

*HT Qi deficiency: heart disease, congestive heart failure*

*HT Blood deficiency: insomnia, anxiety/phobias, depression*

**Earth:** *element of late Summer or Harvest Summer, reaping, storing the fruits of the summer's labor, color orange, sweet taste, Spleen (SP) which roughly translates into a sum digestive processes. Earth individual are natural care takers, they are always there to provide for others. They use their lips and sense of taste well, warmth of the home Fire nourishes them, but they are easily subdued by Wood. Think of what happens to your digestion if you are hyper, anxious or angry (traits of imbalanced Liver). Common problems:*

*SP Qi deficiency (usually causing Dampness): diarrhea (watery, yellow), weight loss, general weakness (most of our postnatal energy comes from Spleen Qi, generated by Gu Qi which is extracted from food). Think how weak you feel when your digestion is off*

*Bleeding, prolapse, hernia: Spleen energy holds things in their vessels (blood vessels, cavities)*

*SP Excess: obesity*

**Metal:** *element of Autumn/Fall, thinking and preparing for cold winter, silver or gray color, burned/singed taste, Lung (LU). Metal personality is an aloof thinker/philosopher that must figure out why, often with black strong shiny hair/coat and dense muscular body. Mentally composed and calculated Lung reaches out with nose and a sense of smell, the strongest and wisest of the senses. Metal comes from Earth, but can be melted by Fire. Common problems:*

*LU Wind Heat/Cold: upper respiratory infections, sinusitis, sore throat*

*LU Yin deficiency: chronic URI/pneumonia*

*LU Qi deficiency: chronic cough/asthma*

**Water:** *dominant element of Winter, subdued and fearful of its survival. Color associated with this element is black, taste is salty, Kidney (KI). Water personalities are quiet types, often fearful and snappy when cornered. Ears and hearing are it's sensory outlets, but so is the pupil (dark center) of the eyes. Kidney controls bones, teeth, joints and bone marrow (brain and spinal cord), front and back door (urinary and anal sphincter, and stores our Jing (prenatal or inherited Life Essence). As we get old our joints and hearing don't work as well, our teeth fall out, and we are not as mentally sharp. Think of a fearful cat under the bed with giant pupils staring at you, he will not lash out until you reach out to grab him. Water is channeled and supported by Metal, controlled by river banks of Earth. Common problems:*

*KI Yin deficiency: joint inflammation, heat, excess urination and drinking*

*KI Yang deficiency: slow metabolism, thyroid disease, cognitive dysfunction*

*Jl Jing deficiency: stunted growth, developmental abnormalities, joint dysplasia, weak teeth*

*Liver, Heart/Triple Heater, Spleen, Lung, and Kidneys are solid, or Yin organs Their Yang (function, expulsion/excretion) counterparts are Gall Bladder (GB), Pericardium/Small Intestine (PC/SI), Stomach (ST), Large Intestine (LI), and Bladder (BL). Even though Yin organs are called 'wife' organs, they wear the pants in the relationship as they are solid, hold things, and actually generate or process various substances in the body. Yin organs often get depleted by overworking or poor nourishment, deficiencies are much more common than excesses in hollow, venting 'husband' Yang organs. There are acupuncture points, called connecting points, which can be used to shunt energy from wife to husband organ in order to restore Yin/Yang balance.*

### **Clinical approach to TCM: Utilizing all aspects for maximum benefit:**

- Nutrition: *fresh foods (balanced home-made diet, raw and whole foods), avoiding processed foods.*
- Acupuncture/acupressure: *initial series of treatments to achieve lasting and consistent results, followed by 'tune-ups' as needed. Great for clearing acute symptoms such as pain or GI upset.*
- Tui-Na: *useful at-home technique of reinforcing effects of acupuncture, requires some training.*
- Herbs: *plant/animal/mineral concentrates (ground herbs, granules, capsules, tea pills) with potent physiological effect. Some work fast, some require weeks to observe positive and lasting effects. Selected for individual patients based on unique clinical symptoms and tongue/pulse diagnosis.*
- Qi Gong: *a practice of aligning breath, movement, and awareness for exercise, healing, and meditation; in dogs it is attained by the right level of physical activity and social interaction. Enhances both physical and mental well-being and stimulates healing.*

### **References:**

1. "Four Paws, Five Directions: A Guide to Chinese Medicine for Cats and Dogs" by Cheryl Schwartz and Mark Ed. Schwartz (Jul 1, 1996).
2. "Helping Ourselves: Guide to Traditional Chinese Food Energetics" by Daverick Leggett and Katherine Trenshaw (Oct 1994)

### **Notes:**