

## Snow on the Roof but Fire in the Furnace

I don't know about you, but I really don't like Winter: Dark, cold mornings, lack of energy and shorter days. I find it really difficult to find the energy to drag myself out of bed. Instead, the duvet is pulled tighter around me and I have a tug of war with my conscience; ("just another five minutes - no, you will be late - another five minutes won't hurt, but you know how much you hate rushing around....."). I think the bears have the best idea, *sleep through it!*

Traditional Chinese Medicine takes the essence of ancient Chinese philosophy, the yin and Yang theory, the five elements' theory and the theory of correspondence between man and Universe. Over thousands of years, people of ancient China recognised that Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water, are the five indispensable materials in human life and are in a constant state of motion and change. This is known as the "Five Element Theory".

Winter is the season of the Water Element, which corresponds to the energy of the kidneys. The Kidneys are the core of the Yin and Yang in the body, (like the root of the tree). The Kidney Yin will moisten and nurture all the organs, particularly the Lungs, Heart and Kidney. The Kidney Yang will help to warm the Heart and Spleen.

It is important therefore to keep your home a warm and relaxing place to be during the winter months. Use the bears' example, conserve your Kidney energy. When we are cold, our system contracts, therefore our blood and Qi cannot circulate in the way that it should giving rise to aches, pains and tiredness. Eat warm cooked foods - root vegetables, onions, garlic, soups and stews. Avoid raw, cold foods - salads, ice cream, dairy and raw vegetables.

Have you heard the saying; "I feel chilled to the bone"? The Kidneys actually dominates reproduction, growth and development and rule the bones. The Kidneys produce the marrow which in turn is responsible for creating and supporting the bones. Insufficient Kidney "Jing" can produce weak legs and knees, brittle bones, or stiffness of the spine and troublesome teeth. The Kidney Qi goes through the ear, therefore many hearing problems are treated through the Kidneys.

An understanding of the interconnections between the organs and meridians will enable an Acupuncturist to decide on an appropriate point prescription and apply them to individuals. Each individual will require a slightly different treatment but the ultimate goal is to rebalance and harmonise the body's Yin and Yang:

Insufficient activity of the Kidney Yang would be tonified to avoid the lack of sexual energy. A collection of excess fluids (oedema) must be drained. Lack of Qi in the lungs must be replenished to avoid us continuously catching colds. Qi movement must flow in the correct direction - If the Qi of the Spleen descends instead of ascends, it will cause diarrhoea and therefore must be lifted. Qi of the stomach must descend - ascending stomach Qi will cause nausea and therefore must be sent back down. Stagnant Qi must be moved - reckless Qi must be stabilised. Too much cold in the Kidneys must be warmed. Too much heat in the lungs must be cooled....

Therefore, as well as acupuncture to help you through the winter months, keep warm, relaxed, eat warming cooked foods and preserve that all important Kidney energy! If you do feel the need to seek advice, and you venture out into the cold, you will always find a very warm welcome at my clinic. As long as you follow these very simple rules, it doesn't matter if there is snow on the roof, because there will always be fire in the furnace. Have a very Happy New Year!

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