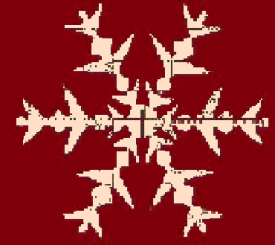
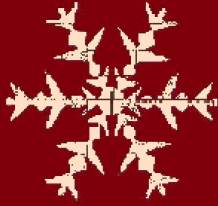


# The Dragontree Newsletter



## Winter

Welcome, our damp friends and clients, to another Portland winter. While Portland's soggy climate isn't exactly a white wonderland, it's just right for a discussion of Eastern thoughts on winter. What winter represents is so vital and yet so absent from most Americans' lives.

In Chinese Five Element theory, winter is related to the Water element. Water represents resources, reserves, and potential – like a well or a spring. The presence of water is the potential for life to develop. Winter, in the same way, is a time of *potential* energy – when the water in many places is frozen, the outward activity of plants and animals is minimal, life is hidden. Winter is the time of year when stored reserves are most important, because fewer resources are available outdoors. Historically, this has been a time to sleep more, and rely on our stores of food and fuel to get us through the season.

Ayurvedic (Indian) medicine considers winter the season of *kapha* – one of three primal components of the human mind and body. *Kapha* is also associated with water. As *kapha* pertains to our ability to accumulate, store, and bulk up, it naturally fits in with the Chinese concepts above. Our *kapha* is what gives the mind and body water's qualities of suppleness and flow. The *kapha* time of year is best used to save up energy.

Daoist philosophy sees each season as representing one of the critical steps in any cycle or project. The seasons mimic the life of an organism, a creative endeavor, or a business venture. These seasonal dynamics can be seen clearly in the life of a plant: In winter, plants are mostly dormant. Their energy is stored in their roots or seeds, resting in the cold ground. Spring awakens this potential energy. Shoots pop up everywhere and plants have direction and drive. Summer brings the pinnacle of growth and flowering. The cool nights of late summer ripen grains and fruits, ushering in the harvest period. In fall, leaves are shed, and the remnants of the past year's growth return to the earth to fortify the soil. Finally, in winter again, plants become still.

Each idea begins in its "winter" as potential energy, a seed. In its spring, the idea grows into a plan; structure and direction are established. Momentum picks up in its summer and the idea reaches its greatest expanse. In late summer, the idea achieves maturation and it yields a return – the harvest. In its fall, the material developments of this cycle give way to a recognition of the deeper richness of the experience itself. We remember the essence that existed before and throughout this cycle. Back in winter again, it is necessary to rest before the cycle starts over.

When we're out of balance, we tend to skip over seasons or to chronically get stuck in one seasonal phase. Our modern lifestyle deprives many of us of any real winter. We love new projects and planning (spring) and fervent growth and expansion (summer). We even like to dwell on how good the past was (fall), but we hate to stop completely (winter).

In humans, the "resources" water represents are encompassed in the Chinese concept of *jing* and the Ayurvedic concept of *ojas* or "essence" – the unreplenishable allotment of life we're all born with. Our lifestyle strongly influences how long our *jing/ojas* will last. As our *jing/ojas* runs out, we start to age and eventually we die. When we allow life to flow (like water) in its own natural way – not attempting to

manipulate it, not fighting it, not pushing it – it flows (and our *jing/ojas* lasts) a very long time. But when we're always running (whether mentally or physically), when we live life without regard for how much energy we actually have, how much sleep we get, or how well we eat, we burn our *jing/ojas* up faster. When we use stimulants, like coffee and sugar, we convert our deep reserves into short-term energy we can use right now. In Western terms, this concept equates to the use of our nervous and endocrine systems, and especially the adrenal glands, which squeeze out stress hormones to help us cope. Adrenal fatigue is an American epidemic.

Sometimes water is a rushing river. Other times it's a placid lake. Each form has its time and place. When fear comes up (the emotion of the water element), we tend to *run* – like a river. It is underlying fear that makes us feel there's a tremendous amount to get done, we have to do it all, and we'll never be on top of it. Our ultimate fear is of running out of resources, running out of the things that make life good, and running out of life itself. But, paradoxically, when we run, we miss out on enjoying these things because we're always thinking about what's next. The reason we get sick more in winter is mainly because we are violating a natural dynamic. The world around us is darker, it has turned inward and reduced its ambitions, but we refuse to go along with this flow.

The best thing we can do for ourselves is to incorporate “winter” into every day, making space for stillness throughout our lives. Meditation, restorative yoga, qi gong, breathing, and tai chi are ideal practices. Watching TV and movies, reading, socializing, and being on the computer don't count. While sleep is important, it doesn't count as cultivating stillness either. The stillness we need is on all levels, and mostly on the mental level. The gift we need to give ourselves is that of cultivating stillness in *waking life*, so we can learn to bring a peaceful foundation into all the chaotic and dramatic situations we encounter.

## **Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine at the DragonTree**

The guest author of this month's newsletter, DragonTree acupuncturist and herbalist, Peter Borten, helps people attain physical and emotional health with effective, natural methods. He loves traditional Chinese medicine because it is both poetic and scientific.

Chinese medicine has thrived for thousands of years because of its elegance and potency as a complete system of healing. Its aim is to bring into balance the cause of any disturbances to our health – to treat the whole person, not just the symptoms.

Our life energy (Qi) can be directed through hundreds of distinct points on the body, each of which has a specific action on the body, mind, and spirit. In the art of acupuncture, extremely fine needles are inserted at these points to produce a therapeutic effect.

A personalized herbal formula (of usually 6-12 herbs) is about as effective as a comparable pharmaceutical drug, with the advantage of supporting your core vitality. Many herbal formulas (including ones Peter prescribes daily) have been used continually, unchanged for 2000 years – simply because they work.

Peter received his B.S. in botany from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He moved to Portland to attend Oregon College of Oriental Medicine, where he studied acupuncture, herbal medicine, nutrition, massage, and Qi Gong. Peter also has extensive training in classical Five Element acupuncture – a form specifically for addressing the spiritual and emotional origins of disease. He now teaches at Lewis & Clark College, has a private practice, and maintains a pharmacy of over 250 raw herbs at The DragonTree.

## **January Special**

**Start relaxing with a warm milk foot bath, followed by an hour Swedish massage by one of our talented massage therapists, then rejuvenate your skin with a custom facial.**

**\$160**

# Valentines Day Specials

February 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>

Bring your sweetie and indulge in some romantic relaxation complete with complimentary champagne and chocolate.

**Lovers Delight: Start with a chocolate aromatherapy foot bath and 20 minute head, neck, and shoulder massage followed by a 20 minute foot massage and complete with a warm paraffin dip for your feet.**

**\$160 per couple**

**Cupids couples massage: Enjoy a warm honey foot bath and then retreat to your private candle lit massage room for an hour Swedish massage beside your loved one.**

**\$185 per couple**

We also offer all of our regular Sangha room treatments that are perfect for the couple that wants to sit back, be pampered, and enjoy eachother.

**Make your reservations soon, as we tend to fill up fast!**

## February Special

**Begin the journey towards relaxation with a warm honey foot bath and 10 minute hand massage, then enjoy a 20 minute foot massage. Next, let us melt away your stress with a 30 minute full body massage. Finally, refresh your skin with a mini – facial from one of our skin care experts.**

**\$125**

Specials are can not be combined with any other offers or discounts.

### More Dragontree news:

The Dragontree is excited to announce that we will be hosting monthly events as a way to bring together community to relax and enjoy life. Everyone is invited, but you must RSVP as all of the events will include spa treatments as well. You can find listings of the events at The Dragontree, in these newsletters, or on our website (when our new website is up).

### March

*Thursday March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 5 – 7pm*

The DragonTree foot salon and book club will kick off its seasonal meetings with discussion and fun over She's All Eyes, Memoirs of an Irish-American daughter by Maura McIvor-Conlon, a longtime, loyal patron of the DragonTree. We are pleased to bring people together to appreciate her writing.

The cost of this event is \$60 and includes a complimentary glass of wine, chocolate nibbles, and a sweet and simple bath and massage combination. The book is available at Portland bookstores. There is a sample copy at the spa.

Please RSVP for this event by March15th. This event has a maximum of 12 guests.

**April**

*Friday April 21<sup>st</sup>, 6 -9pm*

This month join us for an Oregon wine tasting from a local vineyard and winery and light tapas fare from Bar Pastiche while getting your feet pampered with a Sweet and Simple bath and massage combination.

5% of the proceeds of this event, and any additional donations made at the event, will be donated to a local nonprofit organization or charity chosen by the guests.

Cost of \$70 includes wine tasting, tapas, and spa treatment.

Please RSVP for this event by April 15<sup>th</sup>.

**We look forward to seeing you soon!**

**The Dragontree - 2768 NW Thurman - (503) 221 4123**

**[www.thedragontree.com](http://www.thedragontree.com)**

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**If you have already done this and have continued to receive our newsletter – we sincerely apologize as we have had some system malfunctions.**

**We will do everything that we can to make sure that you are off our list for good.**