

FOUNDATIONS OF HOLISTIC HEALTH

The Effects of Diet on Health & Attitude

by Ali Ansari

PART ONE: UNDERSTANDING ENERGY

The Entirety of Creation is Energy. In order for creation to manifest as we know it, energy is polarized by two enormous forces which are often metaphorically referred to as the left and right hands of God. In the Philosophy of Extreme Oriental Science and Medicine these polarities are referred to as Yin and Yang. Yin represents the force of expansion, and Yang represents the force of contraction. These concepts are most easily understood by an investigation of the earth's centrality in a balance between the two natural gigantic forces that govern all things in the universe as we know it, called centripetal and centrifugal. This balance is most obviously exemplified by the force of gravity, which is called centripetal force because it aims toward the feet and is based upon the static magnetism of inertia. In other words, it exists independently of (and may be the cause of) movement. The second and life giving force is found in motion. When movement is captured by gravity, we get revolution and rotation, otherwise known as centrifugal force. It's like tying a rock to a string and spinning it around your head. The string is gravity, or the centripetal force, and the energy keeping the rock flying is centrifugal force.

The balance of the forces centrifugal and centripetal is what makes life as we know it possible. If the force of gravity were not balanced by the force of motion, the earth would necessarily fall into the sun. If the force of motion were not controlled by the force of gravity, the earth would fly off into space. The force of the earth's revolution around the sun causes it to rotate on its axis, and the closer proximity of the middle of the earth causes it to be warmer and more suitable for life, whereas the relative distance from the sun of the two polar icecaps, both ends of the axis upon which the earth rotates, causes them to be the repositories of cold (icy water), necessary to balance the heat and humidity of the equatorial regions. Hence the earth (and everything on it) exists within a balance of Hot and Cold, and Wet and Dry (the four "humors"). All this is because of the delicate balance of the earth between the two forces, centrifugal and centripetal, the force of Yin and the force of Yang.

Now Yin and Yang are really only two imaginary words designed to describe and encompass the dualistic force involved in all phenomena. They are 'categories', as it were, but they are not separate or divided. Each one is present within the other albeit to varying degrees, thereby making the myriad of 'things' that is available and visible upon and in the earth. This is why, in the Taoist yin-yang symbol (taijitu), in the unity of the circle, we see the dark side heading down with a circle of light within it (portending its past and future), and the light side heading up, with a spot of dark within it (portending its past and future). As indicated by the circle, these two forces comprehend and describe all words and phenomena, as that was their design.

So, all phenomena and things are now understood to be some form of balance between the two opposite but entirely complementary forces, now somewhat understood and referred to as, for lack of better definition, Yin and Yang. Yin represents the centrifugal force of expansion,

and Yang represents the centripetal force of contraction. All things and events are in some way a variation of, included in and governed by, this balance.

Take for example the colors of the rainbow. Which end of the spectrum would you consider to be Yin and which Yang? Consider the more contracted color, closer to the earth, is red, and beyond the visible spectrum it is "infra" red. And the more space-oriented color, closer to the darkness and cold of the outer universe, is violet, and beyond the visible spectrum, "ultra" violet. There is a great deal of insight in this analogy. The hotter, downward more earth and life-oriented color, aiming toward fire and infinite contraction, would be toward the Yang end of the spectrum and the colder, upward, more space-oriented color, aiming toward infinite expansion, would be the Yin.

People, Foods and Illness

People: People are born in various seasons and circumstances, and have been seen to carry the consequences of their births in a likewise similar fourfold fashion with infinite variations. For the most part there is a predominant "humor", and various subdominant ones. Enough said. Just to know that people are different but that their differences can and have been categorized according to this science. In general, men are considered to be more dynamic, Yang, physiologically than women who are considered to be more stable, on the Yin side. Just as the Sun is considered Yang, on fire, full of heat and the source of warmth and activity, the Moon is Yin, cooler and less active in that it is not a source but a reflection of heat and light. So Heat is Yang and Cold is Yin, comparatively. Dry and hot is Yang and wet and moist, water, is Yin. And so it goes.

But people have constitutional propensities which can be observed and taken into consideration when dietary and medical advice is given.

Foods: OK! Take for example the carrot and the coconut. This is the ultimate example and leaves you to fill in all the blanks. The actual analysis of this process is not necessary in that it has been done for you already in the myriad of literature on the subject of Zen Macrobiotics (recommended reading to be included). But, it is of great benefit to understand the process by which these conclusions have been reached.

The carrot is hard, red, straight and downward oriented. (Remind you of men?) It is more susceptible to the centripetal force of gravity. The coconut has a hard shell, is round, white and juicy inside. It is also upwardly oriented and more susceptible to the centrifugal force in that it relates to space. They are the representatives of Yang and Yin respectively in the vegetal world and very briefly exemplify the process by which the spectrum is determined. For further study I refer you to the bibliography to follow.

Disease - Illness - Imbalance: Manifestations of imbalance are myriad. We see them all around us in the forms of physical and mental illnesses - distortion of the natural - and modern medicine is a manifestation of the same phenomenon: ignorance of the natural order of things, which is and has the force of the divine behind it and is therefore unstoppable and the only thing that is REALLY happening. The Taoists call it the Tao and say that to get with it is to have the force on your side and to oppose it is to face certain destruction.

Diseases are also easily categorized and understood in Extreme Oriental Science and Medicine. In terms of Yin and Yang, expansive illnesses are Yin and contractive illnesses are Yang, and here's where the teaching get juicy.

Expansive illnesses are caused by overindulgence of expansive food. Contractive illnesses are caused by an overindulgence of contractive foods. Confused illnesses are caused by overindulgence in both extremes without any sense of balance.

Notice the word "overindulgence" is used three times? Overindulgence comes from fear and ignorance. We are afraid because we are not getting enough of the right kind of guidance and nutrition, and therefore need to keep indulging. We are ignorant for the same reason which only supports the fear. If we knew what to eat and what the principles of health were, we would no longer be afraid, ignorant and needy of overindulgence.

Here's where trust in the knowing of perfection comes in. This is not the ordinary trust where we trust in some unknown force that somehow everything is going to work out. I don't deny that form of trust but that's not what I'm talking about. I'm referring to a form of trust that says a benevolent creation would not leave us without a simple and universally attainable solution to our problems, no matter how deep or complex they may appear to be. That's the trust I'm talking about - a belief that somebody, somewhere, must have some answers. And where better to start looking than in ancient traditions.

Well the Ancient Taoist Tradition speaks of the classification of all things in existence including physical, mental and sociological problems, into categories of imbalance toward one or the other extreme. They also teach that by discovering and applying this balance personally, i.e. healing ourselves, we heal the whole world. OK! So let's suppose I'm sick and grasping at straws. I've discovered that everything everyone in modern medicine offers me is only making things more complicated. Here's an ancient time-tested system that requires of me only some time, study, simplification of life style and modification of detrimental habits. Will I take the advice and follow it? I think so!

Now we get to blood, elements and Ph balance. Human blood has approximately the same Ph balance as sea water. This is roughly stated to be approximately seven to one; seven parts acid (fluid movement, degeneration and transformation) to one part alkaline (static, constructive and basic). The representative element of the Yang side of the spectrum of elements is Sodium, inherent in salt. The representative element of the Yin side of the spectrum of elements is Potassium (potash, think potato, tomato, eggplant, sweet). The relative ration between sodium and potassium in the vegetal world is called the K/Na ratio. K is the symbol for Potassium, Na for Sodium.

And now to rates of regeneration. Opinions vary but they all agree on one thing. The human body regenerates itself and ALL of its myriad parts phenomenally fast, way beyond any previous imagining. This accounts for the phenomenon of healing. So why does degeneration seem to take place so fast in this modern world? Because we're clinging to a status quo, a social norm that requires of us massive consumption of nutritionally dead, commercially processed foods. Our regenerativity is not being supplied properly at all, and therefore cannot function and degenerates. Even so we are still granted innately a fairly long life span but even that can feel like a curse if it is spent simply watching ourselves degenerate while slowly losing the life and wealth we had worked so long and hard for.

What is the missing element here? Could it be a bit of humility? How right is it that human pride and arrogance leads us to our own destruction and to that of everything we've spent our lives for? Can we not believe that a universe of such magnificence provides for our well-being better than we in our own ego-minds can ever imagine, let alone accomplish?

And now we get to the process of regeneration: How does it happen? What actually happens to food when it is ingested? First it is ground down into assimilable substance with chewing and salivation. Then it goes into the stomach for storage and further breakdown from where it passes according to capacity into the long intestine from which it is absorbed directly into the bloodstream and transferred thereby to the various body parts to be changed once again into regenerative cellular structure. However, its regenerative capacity is dependent upon its nutritive quality (nutritional value) in the first place.

The same blood that delivers the nutritive regenerative substances to the cellular structure via the arterial (red) system will then pick up the depleted degenerated cells for elimination through the venous (blue) system. Notice how the arteries (red) are deep and rarely visible whereas the veins (blue) are more external and clearly visible. Remind you of the rainbow? Did you know that the ancient practices of cupping (bloodletting) and the use of leeches for blood purification were only to do with the venous system? It was (and still is, in some circles) thought that letting some of the blue blood out assists the work of the elimination and purification systems in the body.

Redness of arterial blood is the result of the presence of oxygen whereas the blueness in the venous blood is the result of the absence of oxygen and the presence of carbon dioxide on the way for elimination through proper channels. (Further on in this series we will discuss the amazing healing powers of proper breathing.)

Excessive amounts of waste materials create overload and backup in the eliminative organs resulting in storage of waste materials for excessive time in unmoving places. This will eventually cause breakdown of those storage areas and leakage of decomposed waste material into other areas of the body, which causes further complication and degeneration. This is the reason for the increasingly popular use of colonic cleansing in therapeutic treatments. (*Notice the use of the words "excess" and "overindulgence", noted in the previous lesson. In coming lessons we will address the causes and cure for the need to overindulge.*)

There is an ancient wisdom that relates all health problems to impedance in the process of digestion (assimilation and elimination), which implies that given proper time and regenerative nutrition, the human system can process (heal) anything and that optimum health can be restored. Another saying is that with every problem there is a cure, and that there is no incurable illness except death itself. This goes hand-in-hand with a modern psychological finding that relates to psycho-emotional healing (often called processing) as a form of "digestion", needing time and proper regenerative thinking. So let's let this lesson on the effects of diet upon health and attitude be part of the proper regenerative thinking that will contribute to the healing of the psycho-emotional problems that stand in the way of our optimum vitality in health and attitude.

NEXT: Leaving any further discussion of the dilatory effects of excessive intake and improper elimination for the time, let's take a look at the direct effects of nutrition or the lack

thereof on an otherwise normally healthy person. And let's look at it through the medium of understanding Yin and Yang.

PART TWO: UNDERSTANDING HEALING

In Part One, we have mentioned how Yin illnesses can be caused by excessively Yin foods and how Yang conditions can be caused by excessive Yang in the diet. Since all things exist in some form of balance between two forces, there must be some truth to this. And modern commercially raised and processed foods must carry extremes of these energies, since it is the application of extremes that manifest the influences that change things from their natural state to unnatural. The simplest example of this would be the addition of salt and or sugar for flavoring. Salt being a Yang flavor and sweet being a Yin one.

The influence of these extremes extends into the blood through ingestion and manifests as disturbance in the physiological balance of the organism which is first detected in the mind through subtle or not so subtle feelings of distraction, uneasiness, nervous stimulation, agitation or sedation, which sensations are automatically ignored or palliated by means such as aspirins, digestive enzymes, acid reducers, tranquilizers, sedatives or stimulants, all of which are the front line of modern medicine and designed to have you believe that there is something wrong with you, and not with the food that you buy and eat.

Do you ever feel disappointed? Or worse yet, that there should be something in your life (you don't know what), but it's certainly not there? This is the feeling of discontent that your body feels also when it expects you to feed it foods that it can do something constructive with and you don't. All these feelings of imbalance are perfectly natural even though they don't feel particularly good. Nature is always working with flawless precision. Knowing that will help us to establish the relationship between certain things we ingest and our feelings of health.

Given this assumption, it stands to reason that the correction to a Yin condition might be found in a more Yang diet, the eliminating of some of the Yin, and vice versa? Do we not apply alkaline medicines to and 'acid' stomach? But we do not want to be bouncing ourselves back and forth between these extremes like a ping-pong ball. The human blood content is reputed to refresh itself entirely in ten days. If we ate nothing but a single food for ten days, wouldn't our blood, and thereby the state of our entire being, then reflect that? Imagine, if we only knew of a 'perfect' food, or a perfectly balanced diet, and could apply it for as little as ten days, would it not be axiomatic that our organisms would start to establish proper function and we would feel better? And why should we wait 'til we get sick to start searching?

So what is a 'perfect' diet? What is the balancing food? Where do we find what we're looking for in this jungle of worldly things that somehow, we do not want? Is it even possible? In the Philosophy of Extreme Oriental Science and Medicine, natural foods are classified into three categories - grains, vegetables and fruits. And they are further categorized on the Yin-Yang spectrum. Grains (hard, small and dry) are considered Yang compared to vegetables which are considered Yang compared to Fruits, which are considered the most Yin (soft, sweet and wet) of the natural foods. At the extremes of this spectrum we have "extreme" Yang - meats, and "extreme" Yin - Sugars and commercially processed foods, whose Yang qualities are depleted during processing, leaving only a remainder of their Yin qualities. Most modern medicines fall into the extreme Yin category.

So leaving the extremes for a moment, let's investigate the nature of the vegetal world, where the preponderance of nutrition comes from. There are many grains but seven of them stand out as climate dominant. And there are many vegetables, also classifiable into Yin and Yang for the sake of determining the appropriate foods for the appropriate diet for the appropriate physiology needing the appropriate balance or effect. And the same goes for fruits. These classifications are done for the most part according to the individual K/Na ratio of the substance, the lower the Potassium ratio to Sodium, the more Yang and the higher the Potassium ratio to Sodium, the more Yin.

Let's say for the sake of simplicity, that the K/Na ration of grains falls in to 10 to 1 range, that the K/Na ration of vegetables falls in the 100 to 1 range and that the K/Na ration of fruits falls in to 1000 to 1 range. By this one can see how grains are considered more Yang than vegetables or fruits. This means that for one part Sodium (Yang), grains have 10 parts potassium (Yin), vegetables 10 to 100, and fruits 100 to 1000. Now these figures are only representative. To understand it perfectly will require deeper study. But these ratios will suffice for a general comprehension.

We already know the significance of the energies and their place in everything that exists. So now let's see them in foods, then we'll understand their effect upon the human body through the blood and on health and attitude.

If the ideal blood ratio in terms of Ph, or Acid/Alkaline is depicted even approximately as seven to one, then it stands to reason that the foods most approximating this balance would be the most readily assimilable, nutritious and regenerative. Pure water certainly has an alkalinizing effect on the blood and the system. So foods with a low K/Na ration (in the 1 to 10 range) would be best as the preponderance of our diets. Obviously in the summer times we'll want more Yin (cooling) foods. An old saying states "Eat grains with vegetables in the winter time, and vegetables with grains in the summer". Correspondingly, meats will be more welcome in the winter time or in cold climates than in the summer or in warmer climates.

All grains and vegetables and fruits have an ideal climate somewhere on the earth and that is where they grow most abundantly. It is considered conducive to health to eat locally grown, climatologically appropriate foods. The locales of various fruits and vegetables are popularly known, but a lesser known and more demonstrable example might be that of grains. Consider seven major grains, typical and representative of their class, for this understanding. Let's look at Buckwheat, Rye, Wheat, Rice, Barley, Oats and Corn. (Did you not know that corn is a grain, not a vegetable?)

Buckwheat (Kasha) grows in the far North in the extreme of cold climates where the people are Yin (large) and require Yang food (Kasha and meats) to stay alive and warm. Corn, on the other hand, provides moisture and sugar, two cooling Yin qualities, for a people who are small and dark, living in the extreme of heat (Yang). And Rice is predominately a central grain, growing best in the moderate climate in between the extremes of heat and cold. A representative classification of these grains according the K/Na theory shows that organically grown, Short-grain Brown Rice holds the middle ground at seven to one, Buckwheat is more Yang, let us say four to one and Corn more Yin at ten to one. The other grains fit respectively in between. So according to this philosophy, whole grains are the naturally best staple food for the human organism, and brown rice is the most perfectly balanced of the grains.

And look to the natural order of things throughout history for verification of this. Grains are the predominant food. And look, by means of comparison, at their relative absence in the modern American diet, except of course for processed, demineralized wheat, now used almost exclusively in the commercial bread industry.

An optimal human diet should consist of at least 50 – 60 percents whole grains, 30 percent vegetables and beans, and 10 percent, meats and fish, seaweeds, etc. with an almost religious abstinence from caffeine, alcohol, processed refined sugars and white flours, chocolate, candies, sweets and sodas. Where in the course of history were these “foods” ever so predominant as they are in the ‘modern’ world where there is now a proliferation of unknown incurable and ‘expensive’ diseases? What are we not being told and why?

How far away is your daily diet from this ancient and original standard? How far away is your health from optimal?

Everything is Energy. Hopefully this discussion will lead you to further study of this fascinating science. Please locate and read the recommended books. Continuations to this series will be published in future editions of the Healing Arts and can also be found on my website, www.surrenderworks.com.

I offer classes, group discussions and private consultations by appointment. You may call me any time at 618-698-8001. May you experience the Peace of God wherever you may be.

ESSENTIAL RESOURCES - (Read These Books)

“Essential Ohsawa” ed. Carl Ferré

“Nourishing Traditions” by Sally Fallon

“Medical Nemesis” by Ivan Illich

“Confessions of a Medical Heretic”

by Dr. Robert Mendelsohn

“Sugar Blues” by William Dufty

HipChick's Guide to Macrobiotics

<http://www.hipchicksmacrobiotics.com/>

<http://www.surrenderworks.com/healthlinks.html>

(All books available online - “Google” the titles.)