

ANCIENT WISDOM, **MODERN KITCHEN**

*Recipes from the East for Health,
Healing, and Long Life*

Yuan Wang, Warren Sheir, and Mika Ono

Da Capo

LIFE
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PRAISE FOR ANCIENT WISDOM, MODERN KITCHEN

“We have a lot to learn from how other cultures approach health and medicine. *Ancient Wisdom, Modern Kitchen* not only offers mouth-watering Asian recipes and lore about food, it also provides a new way to look at what makes up a healthy diet—a refreshing antidote to the way many of us in America eat today.”

—Paul W. Miller, MD, adjunct professor,
Exercise and Nutritional Science Department, San Diego State University

“I have been waiting for this book for 20 years. Finally, respected authorities in the field, Dr. Yuan Wang and Warren Sheir, LAc, have written a book on food therapy with writer Mika Ono that will appeal to both practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine and anyone who is interested in harnessing an Eastern approach to the power of food for better health.”

—Jack Miller, LAc, MA (Education),
president of Pacific College of Oriental Medicine

“Part cookbook, part introduction to Chinese medicine, *Ancient Wisdom, Modern Kitchen* embraces a holistic approach to food that is second nature in China and essential to medical practice there. I will be sharing this exceptional work with both my patients and colleagues.”

—Guohui Liu, MS, MB/BS, LAc, faculty member at
Oregon College of Oriental Medicine and National College of Naturopathic Medicine,
and author of Warm Pathogen Diseases



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饮食保健

PREFACE

THREE PATHS TO THE HEALING POWER OF FOOD

Although we have dramatically different backgrounds, the three authors of this book have all come to embrace the potential of food to promote health and healing. Here are our stories.

YUAN'S STORY

I LEARNED TO COOK from my mother, who came from a large and ancient family in southern China. She was in charge of cooking for the family, and, as the oldest daughter, I would help by peeling the garlic, cleaning the vegetables, and keeping her company while she worked. We enjoyed preparing meals together for the whole family—often dozens of people.

My mother was also a Chinese medical doctor. When I was a teenager I developed skin problems that Western medicine couldn't diagnose. I suffered until I started taking a traditional herb preparation that completely cleared up the condition. When it was time to pursue my education, my mother told me, "Chinese medicine makes a lot of good sense. You will be able to help people." It was easy to take her advice, because I was fascinated by traditional Chinese medicine and had seen for myself what kind of relief it could bring.

I studied at Chengdu College of Traditional Chinese Medicine for a bachelor's degree, then at the Tianjin Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine for a master's. Mao's Cultural Revolution meant that all high school students were required to spend time in the countryside. For me, this part worked out well, and I spent four years learning about local plants and herbal medicine, which supplemented my textbook and clinical work.

I went on to become a lecturer, researcher, and physician-in-charge for the Departments of Internal Medicine, Kidney Diseases, Digestive Diseases, and the Research Institute of Blood Diseases at the Chengdu Traditional Chinese Medicine Hospital. I also participated on research teams investigating stroke, cancer, diabetes, and menstrual disorders. I helped design course curricula and textbooks for the Chengdu College of Traditional Chinese Medicine, was on the editorial board of Great China Encyclopedia Column of Medicine, and published a number of academic articles.

In 1995, I moved to the United States, although I still go back to China to visit my mother (who is still cooking fabulous meals). After teaching at the International Institute of Chinese Medicine

Santa Fe for five years, I moved to San Diego, California, where I now teach at the Pacific College of Oriental Medicine and see patients in my private practice, The Source, in Poway.

Many of my patients suffer from one of the “high three”: high blood pressure, high glucose levels, or high cholesterol. These conditions, so widespread in the West, are all related to diet, and eating right can pave the way to better health. One of the questions I hear most frequently in my practice is “What should I eat?” We have written this book to help answer that question.

WARREN’S STORY

I AM THE CULINARY REBEL IN MY FAMILY (okay, my family calls me a “picky eater,” especially given my long-standing intolerance of dairy). As soon as I left for college, I realized the world of food was at my fingertips—I could eat whatever I wanted! When I was a kid, I used to sneak jelly doughnuts from the bakery, a dozen at a time, when my mother wasn’t looking. But in college I found something much better—macrobiotics, an approach toward food developed by Japanese educator George Ohsawa (1893-1966).

I became fascinated by the connection between health and diet. To me, it made complete sense that what you put in your body would affect how you felt. I took workshops from macrobiotic leaders Michio Kushi, Herman Aihara, and Noburo Muramoto, who spoke on the benefits of a traditional Japanese diet of whole grains, seaweed, and vegetables, as well as the medicinal effects of various foods. My commitment to whole foods and fresh produce was enhanced by my involvement in the very early days of Eden Foods (back when it was just two rooms upstairs from a bicycle shop) and my work in a number of high-end restaurants, including that of renowned chef Rick Bayless, whose artistry and respect for fresh ingredients has remained an inspiration.

During those many years as a “starving” student at the Cleveland Institute of Music/Case Western Reserve University, then as a “starving” musician, I ate extraordinarily well! I found that contrary to common opinion (and the insinuations of ads for packaged foods) it is not expensive or time-consuming to eat fresh, healthy food. Over the years, I have come to apply macrobiotics much less strictly, but still embrace its principles of a largely plant-based and whole-grain diet. I don’t think it’s an accident that the Japanese have one of the longest life spans in the world, and I worry about the effects on health of the unprecedented consumption of refined and processed foods in the West.

As a student and then faculty member at the Pacific College of Oriental Medicine in San Diego, I gained a Chinese perspective on food and healing, including the theoretical constructs behind Chinese medicine (also influential in other parts of Asia) and a broader knowledge of medicinal herbs and their applications.

I still eat better than almost anyone I know. The recipes in this book are some of my favorites, drawing on the Chinese tradition of healing herbs, a Japanese aesthetic of simplicity, and an American sense of convenience, practicality, and fun. Bon appétit!

MIKA’S STORY

IT TOOK SOME THIRTY-FIVE YEARS for the world to catch up with my father. In 1970, I moved the family from a gray suburb to a semirural area outside of Toronto, Canada (Laskey Village between King City and Nobleton, for those who know that part of the world), where he set up a garden—not just any garden but a front fence to back fence $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre plot with different varieties of tomatoes, beans, pumpkin, squash, lettuce, chard, potatoes, corn, strawberries, dill, mint, basil, mizuna, burdock, and whatever caught his fancy in the seed catalog.

Every spring, when he wasn't teaching or working in his vision research lab at York University or on sabbatical in Japan, he would rototill, plant, compost, and weed, and the garden would return the favor by producing its bounty—a little different every year depending on what my father had been inspired to plant, the weather, and who had the upper hand for the moment in the long-running battle between ingenious squirrels and ingenious gardeners. We kept Rhode Island Red hens, which would loudly proclaim their accomplishment to the world every time they laid another fresh, brown egg, and a pony would sometimes help “mow” the lawn. My mother was very much part of this scene as well, cooking, freezing, and pickling the harvest, and embracing the virtues of organic whole foods at a time when the idea was considered controversial.

Of course, as a kid with fresh produce and whole foods flowing into the family kitchen, I took this for granted and the big city seemed more appealing. There was little in the general culture to convince me otherwise.

But the tide has now turned, and, in this age that has become ever more dominated by processed foods and supermarkets, a connection to the earth and to fresh produce has become a rarity. Some young people are taking up natural food production as a cause and a number of popular books are exploring just how far we have drifted from our food sources, the negative effects of this divide on our body and our planet, and what we should do to remedy this condition.

Here, the Asian tradition has something to say. Because balance in our body and with the seasons has been a central tenet of Asian thought for millennia, I believe this is a fruitful direction to look for transplants to grow a more wholesome, healthful, and fulfilling Western lifestyle. Yoga, meditation, and acupuncture have already become commonplace in the West. The kitchen is the next frontier.

医食同源

INTRODUCTION:

DELICIOUS RECIPES, HEALTHY LIFE

EASTERN TRADITIONS are now part of the Western lifestyle. We go to yoga classes after work to relax, use feng shui to create a welcoming space in our living room, and consult an acupuncturist to relieve our lingering shoulder pain. Yet parts of the Eastern tradition are still to be discovered in the West. One of these is the potential of Chinese herbs and other natural foods to promote health and longevity through everyday cooking.

The recipes in this book are simple and easy to prepare. They comprise healthy East Asian dishes such as egg-drop herbal soup—still largely unknown in the West, but begging to cross the cultural divide—as well as recipes that might seem familiar, but that have an unexpected twist, such as oatmeal with walnuts and goji berries or chicken soup with ginseng. Drawing on family recipes, years of study of traditional Chinese medicine at institutions in China and in the United States, and my experience in treating patients in a traditional Chinese medical clinic, we want to put healthy recipes at your fingertips to enhance your life, promote a sense of well-being, and increase your longevity.

ADD EAST AND WEST, STIR VIGOROUSLY

FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, the Chinese have been seeking the secret to health and healing. Unlike in the West, traditional Chinese medicine makes no clear distinction between food and medicine. As the Chinese say, food and medicine are from same source (*yi shi tong yuan*). Respect for the healing properties of food is woven into the fabric of everyday cuisine. Although some herbs are particularly potent and used only for severe illnesses, many herbs and other beneficial ingredients are as common in Chinese cuisine as ketchup and mustard are in America.

The West has its own home remedies. We prepare chicken soup when we have a stuffy nose, reach for a drink of ginger ale to soothe an upset stomach, warm up milk to lull us back to sleep in the middle of the night, and tell our children to eat their vegetables “because they are good for you.” We marvel when the latest scientific study comes out supporting these remedies, and, in the meantime, save these foods and beverages through sickness and health.

Recently, the idea of selecting foods for their specific healthful properties has become even more popular in the West, as “superfoods” or “functional foods”—which offer benefits beyond basic

nutrition—have caught on. Already gracing the aisles of natural food stores are goji berries, so products, and green tea—all part of the East Asian healing and culinary traditions.

Traditional Chinese medicine celebrates the relationship between food and health. Instead of a few simple home remedies, the tradition offers a highly developed system of using the intrinsic properties of different herbs and foods to maximize each individual's well-being in a changing environment by enhancing the body's own natural powers for health, healing, and rejuvenation. In this tradition, modern science is lending support to ancient notions of the healing properties of many traditional Chinese ingredients—cinnamon, curcumin, and ginger, to name only a few.

In China, a respect for the power of food seems to be everywhere. Whole restaurants—perhaps analogous to American juice bars or establishments offering California cuisine—specialize in preparing dishes for their healing properties. In one such restaurant in Sichuan Province, for example, big jars of herbs line the entranceway, while families of young and old alike gather around tables ordering favorite dishes to heal their ills and enhance their well-being. In Japan, this tradition of cooking with healing foods and herbs is called *yakuzen*.

For specific ailments and more serious conditions, the system of traditional medicine is widespread and well accepted in many parts of Asia. Thousands of practitioners each year, mostly in China, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan, but now also in the United States, Canada, Europe, and other parts of the world, train in the use of herbs and acupuncture—the two major instruments in Chinese medicine's toolbox—in large schools of traditional medicine, research institutes, and teaching hospitals. Currently, some fifty schools of traditional Chinese medicine have been accredited or are in the process of accreditation in the United States and Canada.

In China, clinics specializing in traditional medicine coexist side-by-side with Western-style clinics, sometimes even in different wings of the same hospital. Patients feel free to take advantage of both traditions; for example, someone with cancer might undergo chemotherapy but also use traditional herbs to help manage side effects, such as nausea, and to increase the body's immunity to fight off disease.

Similarly, this book embraces a holistic approach in which a perspective from the East works hand-in-hand with Western medicine. Both traditions have much to learn from each other. Whereas Western medicine tends to treat the body like a machine, Eastern medicine approaches it more as a garden, to be tended rather than engineered. Eastern medicine shines in disease prevention; Western medicine's strengths lie in acute care. We believe that the best Chinese medicine is practiced with an awareness of what is going on in Western medicine. Similarly, the best Western medicine draws on a more Eastern respect for the importance of prevention, the body's own healing powers, and the complexity of individuals acting in their environment.

None of the recipes in this book are intended as a substitute for consulting with a physician. Instead, this book offers a window into a different tradition of health and healing to support your efforts to remain vital and well.

BALANCE - THE MISSING INGREDIENT

WHAT UNDERLIES THE EAST ASIAN approach to herbal cooking?

Balance and interrelatedness rule. In this tradition, herbal healing and cooking seek to bring balance to our meals, and thus to our body and mind.

And in the West? Unfortunately, balance is often the first casualty in the single-minded pursuit of another goal, usually weight loss. Who hasn't tried the grapefruit diet, the cabbage soup diet, the carb-free diet, the fat-free diet, or another such diet that includes restrictions from entire food groups? Yes, you will probably lose weight (at least temporarily) if you eat nothing but grapefruit. But will you be healthier? Extend your life span? Increase your sense of well-being? Or in the end, will you simply shudder at the thought of facing another darned citrus?

Vitamins and other supplements are another popular form of "insurance" in the West for those concerned with health, and, depending on circumstances, these may have something to offer. However, it's easy to get lulled into a false sense of security. Taking a handful of supplements every morning doesn't mean you are getting what you need in the form your body needs it. You still face the challenge of eating well.

The East Asian tradition offers another way—one based on whole foods and herbs, in rich variety. All foods, flavors, colors, and temperatures have their time and place on the table. No single ingredient is vilified, nor consumed to excess. The key is that the pieces work together as part of a whole.

In addition, foods can bring the individual in harmony with natural cycles and other parts of the environment, as the act of eating is in itself a regular and profound interaction with one's surroundings. Certain seasonal dishes can bring a person in line with the time of year. Particular foods are thought to counteract an individual's own personal tendency toward, say, lethargy or restlessness. Different dishes are recommended for different phases of a woman's monthly cycle. And our best choices change as we age. The East Asian view of the body as an ever-changing ecosystem goes hand-in-hand with a dynamic approach to food and health.

DEEP ROOTS, FLOWERING BRANCHES

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE IS based on a coherent system of thought refined by critical thinking and clinical observation throughout the millennia, from contributions by Taoist hermits seeking the ultimate goal of immortality to modern-day scientists illuminating the effects of herbal substances. Traditional Chinese medicine originated in China, as the name would suggest, then spread through East Asia to countries that include Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, where it not only influenced the approach to food and medicine in these regions, but was also enriched by local ingredients, preferences, and culture.

In the earliest times, in Asia (like most of the world) people believed that disease was caused by evil spirits or angry ancestors. However, like Hippocrates of ancient Greece, who rejected the idea that supernatural forces caused illness, early Chinese scholars began to consider the revolutionary idea that health and sickness could be explained by natural laws and observable phenomena.

By the time of the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 CE) and the Three Kingdoms Period (220-280 CE)

scholars were contributing important classics to the field of traditional Chinese medicine. The works include the *Divine Farmer's Materia Medica (Shen Nong Ben Cao)*, which describes more than 365 medical substances, one for each day of the year, as well as the *Treatise on Cold Diseases (Shan Han Lun)*, the first major prescription manual, and *The Essentials from the Golden Cabinet (Jin Gu Yao Lue)*, both written by Zhang Zhong Jing. *The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine (Huang Di Nei Jing)* laid out the philosophical foundations of traditional Chinese medicine. In later centuries, other key contributors, such as Sun Si Miao and Li Shi Zhen, followed.

The philosophy of Chinese medicine spread to neighboring Korea and Japan in the sixth and seventh centuries, as government envoys exchanged medicine as well as diplomacy. By 702 CE, the Japanese government was so taken with the Chinese approach, it issued an imperial order to copy the Tang Dynasty's medical educational system. Later, the Japanese standardized and simplified Chinese herb therapies into a system known as *kampo* (occasionally *kanpo*; literally “Han (Chinese) people prescription”), which is currently integrated into the Japanese national health-care system. Chinese medical thought also had great influence on the area now known as Vietnam, and traditional medicine in that region (dubbed “Dong Y” in the seventeenth century to distinguish it from Western medicine) coevolved with and contributed to Chinese practice.

China's exchange with surrounding regions was a two-way street. Many herbs in the Chinese herb medicine cabinet can be traced to an origin outside the country, and the famed Silk Road brought fruits, vegetables, spices, and herbs to China—and to Chinese medicine—that are now an integral part of this tradition.

Today, throughout East Asia, herbal medicine accounts for more than one billion clinical visits a year, according to Tufts University School of Medicine's Evidence-Based Approach to Complementary and Alternative Medicine group, overshadowing other traditional approaches such as acupuncture and massage. Out of some ten thousand herbs officially described and classified, a few hundred have become first-line therapies, usually prescribed in specific combinations thought to create unique therapeutic effects.

Food therapy is often used to support herbal treatments, and to continue the treatment after the course of herbal therapy is done. Foods and dishes targeting a specific problem are often eaten regularly for a few days or a few weeks to support the body's healing process, then included in the diet occasionally to prevent future recurrences.

While herbal medical practice has been more or less standardized within some regions, therapeutic foods are another matter. Partly because East Asia—and China itself—covers such a vast area, healing dishes are influenced by local variation, family tradition, the availability of ingredients, and the whims of the cook. Nevertheless, this general approach expresses the principles of traditional East Asian medicine and a consistent underlying approach toward food.

CHINESE MEDICINE IN A NUTSHELL

THE BIG PICTURE of what East Asian herbal medicine has to offer us today is easy to grasp—rich tradition of healing and clinical observation, a variety of herbs and foods, a philosophy of balance, an emphasis on context, and a respect for individual differences. While Eastern and Western

systems both look for natural phenomena to explain illness, Western medicine today relies heavily on microscopic observations and biochemistry, whereas East Asian medicine depends on an approach based on context and examination of the patient as a whole.

Westerners who are curious about the particulars of an East Asian approach should get ready for a mind-opening experience. Some central concepts of Chinese medicine make sense according to our worldview, but others challenge us to see the world from a completely fresh perspective. In many ways, entering the world of traditional Chinese medicine is like learning a foreign language. When you learn a language, say, French, you also learn a whole new way of thinking. You may encounter phrases that are difficult to translate literally, such as “*Zut alors!*” or “*Vive la difference* .” The same is true for the language of traditional Chinese medicine.

To learn to “speak” traditional Chinese medicine, it helps to know a few central concepts. These include: yin and yang, vital substances, the five elements, and the six evils. Sound intriguing?

Yin and Yang:

Dynamic Harmony

You’ll probably recognize the symbol of yin and yang, now commonplace in the West. The differing areas of the circle underline the importance of seeing parts in relation to the whole, and express the dynamic ebb and flow between complementary opposites. Keep in mind that yin and yang do not express a simple duality—instead, both yin and yang are rooted in each other and contain a piece of each other; there is no up without down, no man without woman, no back without front. A reference to yin and yang is found in the *I Ching (Book of Changes)* as early as 700 BCE.

Yin and yang reflect the natural world, as in the interplay between high tide and low tide or day and night. Yin—whose character originally meant the shady side of the slope—is associated with cold, interior, moisture, density, stillness, downward movement, and substance. Yang—whose character originally meant the sunny side of a slope—relates to heat, exterior, dryness, movement, upward motion, and function.

In Chinese medicine, yin and yang offer one of the most important touchstones for understanding health and disease. Health and well-being flourish when yin and yang are in balance. But if there’s too much yin in the body, a person will come down with an illness that involves weakness, slowness, coldness, or lethargy. If there’s too much yang, an individual is susceptible to illnesses expressed with quick, forceful movement, heat, or hyperactivity. Chinese medicine advises that an excess of yin should be countered with more yang, and vice versa. Also, a deficiency of yin should be addressed by supplementing yin; a deficiency of yang should be addressed by supplementing yang.

In this tradition, one way to restore balance to the body is through diet. So, if you feel weak, yang dishes (such as Longevity Mushrooms with *He Shou Wu*) may be therapeutic; if you are tense or hyperactive, yin dishes (such as Breathe-Easy Fritillaria Pear) may help. The proper balance of yin and yang promotes and restores health, helping your body ward off disease.

Vital Substances:

Wellsprings of Health

According to traditional Chinese medicine, several “vital substances”—qi, Blood, *jing*, and body fluids—are also wellsprings of health.

Qi (pronounced “chee”) is another ancient and central concept in Chinese philosophy. While difficult to translate, qi can be understood as the life force or energy flowing through all things, the basic substance of the universe. Its ideograph can mean “vapor,” “steam,” or “uncooked rice”—tying this idea back to food, a major source of qi. Qi circulates in channels called meridians on the body surface, as well as in pathways inside the body. According to the Chinese worldview, illnesses take hold when the flow of qi is disturbed, unbalanced, or blocked. To restore health, Chinese medical practitioners seek to free and realign the flow of qi, with acupuncture or with herbs and food.

Blood, which is propelled by qi, is also vital, circulating through the body to nourish organs, skin, muscles, tendons, and bones, as well as to support memory and mental activities. In the Chinese tradition, much importance is placed on replenishing Blood lost due to injury, menses, or childbirth. This is accomplished with appropriate food and herbs. Proper flow of Blood is also important.

Jing, or essence, refers to a refined and precious substance that forms the organic basis for all life. *Jing* influences our constitution, reproduction, growth, and development—and our longevity. *Jing* comes in (at least) two forms, prenatal *jing* and postnatal *jing*. Traditional Chinese medical practitioners advise you to conserve your prenatal *jing* as much as possible, as everyone is endowed with a fixed amount. You can use yours judiciously by approaching life’s activities—including diet, work, and sexual activity—with balance and moderation to prolong your mental and physical health. Postnatal *jing* can be enhanced by eating the proper diet.

Last (and, in fact, probably least on the hierarchy of importance according to Chinese medicine) is body fluid, a substance roughly translated as body fluid, which includes saliva, gastric fluid, joint cavity fluids, tears, sweat, urine, and so on. Derived from food and drink, body fluid serves to warm and nourish the muscles, moisten the skin, lubricate the joints, moisten the orifices, and surround the brain. One type of disharmony of the fluids is expressed by dryness of the skin and eyes.

Chinese medical practitioners will look to certain foods and herbs to help enhance and direct the vital substances, according to the needs of each individual. Dishes such as Classic Chinese Ginseng Chicken Soup or Fish Dish for Vigor can help strengthen qi. Dishes such as Five-Spice Powder Chicken or Wasabi Fish Cooked in Sake will move the qi, countering qi stagnation. Other foods and herbs are considered especially effective for nourishing or moving the Blood, for example those in Triple-Mushroom Mélange and Steadying Spinach Egg Drop Soup, respectively. If body fluids are depleted, preparations such as Five-Fruit Dessert Potage, Simple Peach Kantan, or watermelon juice can help.

The Five Organs:

The Dance of Life

To help understand the body, traditional Chinese medical practitioners draw on a view of dynamic, interrelated systems that reflect other relationships found in nature. In the natural world, Chinese philosophers identified five elements (also known as “five phases”)—wood, fire, earth, metal, and water—which support or restrain each other in continuous patterns.

As in the game of Rock-Paper-Scissors, each element has its strengths and weaknesses in relation to other elements. Water can put out Fire; Fire melts Metal; Metal (as in a saw) can cut Wood; Wood (as in a shovel) can overcome Earth; and Earth (as in a dam) can divert Water. Or, expressed in a different sequence, Water nurtures Wood (as in trees); Wood can be used to make Fire; Fire generates Earth (ashes); Earth brings forth Metal; and Metal, when heated, produces Water (steam). Many other aspects of the world are explained with similar dynamics, including the five tastes (sour, bitter, sweet, spicy, and salty), the five colors (blue-green, red, yellow, white, and black), and the five emotions (anger, joy, worry, grief, and fear).

In the body, five “organs”—the Liver, Heart, Spleen, Lung, and Kidney—also coexist and provide support or restraint for each other’s functions. Even though similar words are used in Western medicine, keep in mind that in Chinese medicine these terms refer less to the physical organs themselves, and more to the nature they embody and their influence on the system as a whole. Here are some of the contributions of each organ:

CHART: THE IMPORTANCE OF FIVE

ELEMENT	WOOD	FIRE	EARTH	METAL	WATER
SEASON	SPRING	SUMMER	LATE SUMMER	AUTUMN	WINTER
CLIMATE	WIND	HEAT	DAMPNESS	DRYNESS	COLD
TASTE	SOUR	BITTER	SWEET	SPICY	SALTY
COLOR	GREEN/BLUE	RED	YELLOW	WHITE	BLACK
EMOTION	ANGER	JOY	WORRY	GRIEF	FEAR
YIN ORGAN	LIVER	HEART	SPLEEN	LUNG	KIDNEY
YANG ORGAN	GALL BLADDER	SMALL INTESTINE	STOMACH	LARGE INTESTINE	BLADDER
SENSORY PART	EYES	TONGUE	MOUTH	NOSE	EARS
TISSUE	TENDONS	BLOOD VESSELS	FLESH	SKIN	BONES

- **THE LIVER** ensures the smooth flow of qi throughout the body, controls and nourishes the tendons and ligaments, and stores and regulates the Blood. Symptoms such as muscle spasms, dry eyes, and blurry vision are associated with problems with the Liver.
- **THE HEART** governs the Blood and blood vessels, as well as the consciousness and spirit. Symptoms such as insomnia and dream-disturbed sleep as well as palpitations and poor circulation are associated with problems with the Heart.
- **THE SPLEEN** oversees digestion, controls the muscles and limbs, and houses the intellect. Symptoms such as lack of appetite, obesity, weakness, and fatigue are associated with dysfunction of the Spleen.
- **THE LUNGS** govern qi, control respiration, direct the passage of water, and relate to the hair.

skin, and pores. Symptoms such as cough, nasal congestion, a hoarse voice, sweating irregularities, and skin rashes are associated with problems with the Lungs.

- **THE KIDNEYS** store essence, govern human reproduction, growth, and development, control water metabolism, and produce bone marrow. Symptoms such as brittle bones, poor hearing, urinary problems, and premature aging are associated with malfunctions of the Kidneys.

When these systems work well individually and are in balance with one another, health and vitality flourish.

In Chinese medicine, the five elements and their relationships can help guide food choices for your health and well-being. The tastes, colors, and properties of foods and herbs can support their counterparts in the body. For example, in the Wood sphere, leafy green vegetables can support the influence of the Liver, and its domain of the eyes, tendons, and ligaments. In the Metal sphere, foods such as pears can support and soothe the functions of the Lungs. In the Fire domain, meat and other foods can strengthen the Heart and enhance its influence in the body. In the Earth domain, foods such as buckwheat can support the Spleen and its functions regulating energy. And in the Water sphere, foods such as seaweed can influence the Kidneys and their connections to the bladder, bones, and ears, and to longevity.

The Six Evils:

Trouble at Your Door

No, the six evils aren't your relatives from New Jersey (at least not in this book). In Chinese medicine, the six evils, also sometimes translated as the "six pernicious influences" or the "six pathogenic factors," are environmental forces that can spring from inside or outside the body to play a part in disease. If your body is weakened by imbalance, you become susceptible to the harmful effects of one or more of these influences.

The six evils are:

- **WIND.** Analogous to wind in nature, the concept of Wind in Chinese medicine embodies movement and change. Diseases caused by Wind often have migratory symptoms, sudden onset, and rapid progression, or other features associated with movement such as spasms, tremors, twitching, or dizziness. These diseases tend to affect the upper and outer parts of the body. Wind, prominent in the spring but appearing in any season, is the one evil that rarely appears by itself. Instead, it promotes the invasion of the body by one of the other influences.
- **COLD.** Like cold in nature, Cold in Chinese medicine is associated with contraction, obstruction, slower movement, and underactivity. An individual influenced by Cold will feel cold and will typically seek warmth with sweaters or blankets. To the observer, this person's body may appear pale and feel cold to the touch. Cold, which often appears in the winter but is not limited to this season, is associated with symptoms such as chills, headache, and body aches. Cold can lead to pain, which tends to be sharp or cramping.
- **HEAT.** Most closely associated with summer, Heat (also known as Fire) can take hold and

produce symptoms such as high fever, a red face, red eyes, thirst, dark urine, inflammation, and reddish eruptions of the skin. Heat is often associated with problems of the upper body such as headaches. Like Wind, Heat causes movement, but Heat's movement has a sudden and abrupt quality, associated with states like delirium and irritability.

- **DAMPNESS.** Like damp weather and sometimes associated with it, in Chinese medicine Dampness is heavy, wet, and turbid. Diseases caused by Damp tend to linger and be difficult to cure. Like Cold, Dampness can cause pain, but Damp pain is heavy and protracted, rather than sharp and cramping. Damp is associated with sticky secretions and tends to attack lower portions of the body. Damp disorders can include water retention (edema), especially in the legs or abdomen, as well as indigestion and diarrhea.
- **DRYNESS.** Sometimes appearing with Heat or Cold, dryness is associated with dehydration and scant body fluids. Its symptoms can include dry nostrils, lips, and skin. Dryness can affect the Lung, for example as a dry cough, asthma, or chest pain.
- **SUMMER HEAT.** Summer Heat occurs only in summer with exposure to extreme heat. Its symptoms may include sudden high fever, heavy sweating, exhaustion, dry mouth, and thirst.

How can you ward off these evils? Food and herbs provide some help.

Promote Healing, Avoid Harm

In contrast to Western medicine, which tends to view food through the lens of protein, fat, carbohydrate, and vitamin content, traditional Chinese medicine looks at food according to properties that include temperature, taste, and function. These qualities can help guide the selection of the best foods and herbs to eat depending on your condition, your constitution, and your environment, as well as which are best to avoid.

Temperature is front and center. This includes both the physical temperature of the food (piping hot or ice cold) and the thermal effects on the body (increasing metabolism until you break a sweat or cooling until you feel the tingle of chills). On the warmer end of the spectrum are foods and herbs such as ginger, chili peppers, cinnamon, turmeric, nutmeg, green onions, and walnuts. On the cooler end of the spectrum are foods and herbs such as peppermint, citrus, tofu, milk, lettuce, cucumber, and tomato. (While across East Asia there is general agreement on the temperature classification of most ingredients, there also can be regional differences. For example, peach is sometimes classified as cool and sometimes as warm.) Cooking methods can influence the nature of the end product. Blanching, steaming, pickling, and boiling have a cooling influence, whereas grilling, frying, roasting, smoking, searing, simmering, and cooking with alcohol make a dish more warm.

Hot and warm foods dispel Cold, warm the interior, and fortify yang. Cold and cool foods clear Heat, relieve toxicity, and enrich yin. Neutral foods moderate the effects of either. To restore balance, someone experiencing an attack of Cold would want to choose warm and warming dishes, such as a steaming bowl of chicken ginger soup, and avoid foods that generate more Cold, such as chilled lettuce, ice water, and frozen desserts. Likewise, someone experiencing too much Heat would want to restore balance by choosing cooling foods, such as a cucumber salad, and by avoiding those that are warming.

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