

## News Spring 2019

Dear Practitioner,

We hope that you enjoy our Spring newsletter. There are a number of informative articles in this newsletter. The article on sinus allergies will remind you that while working with patients complaining of allergy symptoms, your results will improve when you address the root constitutional issues. There is also a great article on using essential oils to support the menstrual cycle, as well as one on the mystery of the *sanjiao*.

We encourage you to support your state professional AOM association and that you, in turn, encourage your colleagues to be active. It is critical that we are engaged in order to help create a better future for our profession.

The first national meeting of the **American Society of Acupuncturists (ASA)** is May 30-June 2, 2019, with a day on Capitol Hill on Monday, June 3. Please consider joining this historic event! You can find information on the ASA website: [www.asacu.org](http://www.asacu.org).

This newsletter, past newsletters, and the many papers that we have published over the years are posted on our website. Many practitioners have praised our publications as a great resource in their practice.

We greatly appreciate your business, support, and all of your communication, comments, and feedback.

Sincerely,

John Scott, DOM and Lorena Monda, DOM



## CHINESE MEDICINE & SINUS ALLERGIES

BY JOHN SCOTT, DOM

I am writing this article in the hopes that it will act as a reminder to practitioners treating sinus allergies that they can achieve superior results if they address the root as well as the manifestations. Quite often when treating sinus allergies, the immediate focus is on symptom relief—a branch treatment. In Chinese medicine, we don't treat the allergen; we treat a weakness or an imbalance in the system. Since in Chinese medicine there are no isolated systems, we look for the different patterns involved in this particular disharmony.

Allergies represent an attempt by the body to enclose potentially harmful foreign substances. Stress is an important factor. When an individual is under increased stress they are more likely to be reactive in general. Once this foreign substance elicits an allergic

response—such as itching, swelling or sneezing—and a pattern of such response is established, it is thereafter deemed an allergen. An allergen can be anything that triggers an allergic reaction: foods, pollen, mold, chemicals, even a family member! Of course, certain substances are more likely than others to cause reactivity. Here in the New Mexico desert, we have airborne pollens from juniper/cedar, mulberry, cottonwood, chamisa, and tumbleweed (to name a few of the heavy hitters). In addition to airborne substances, certain damp foods like wheat and dairy have large, difficult-to-assimilate proteins, which can cause more irritation than other substances.

In my practice, the underlying constitutional issues I see that are most often out of balance are from the liver/kidney systems. There are two primary patterns that I see with environmental allergies; stress is a factor in both of these presentations.

## WIND-COLD PRESENTATION

This type of allergic presentation is characterized by clear, copious, nasal drainage. There may also be sneezing, sniffing, post-nasal drip, fatigue, feeling chilled, a weak lower back, or lower back pain. The root cause is often adrenal exhaustion, and kidney yang or qi deficiency.



- The tongue will be pale, maybe swollen.
- The pulse will be weak and/or deep, especially in the proximal position on the right wrist.

## Herbal Treatment

**Xanthium & Magnolia Formula** to address the allergic symptoms.

**For the root: Nourish Essence Formula** is a good formula to work on the pattern underlying the allergies. It has a number of astringent herbs that help to dry excessive fluids, as well as supporting the kidneys and the adrenal glands.

**Essential Yang Formula** is an excellent formula for supporting the kidney yang.

Other Chinese formulas that support kidney qi and yang are *Ba Wei Di Huang Wan* and *You Gui Wan*.

## Acupuncture Treatment

**Ear Acupuncture Points:** Suprarenal gland, kidney, endocrine, lung, inner nose

**Acupuncture points:** Fuliu (Ki 7), Zusanli (St 36), Hegu (LI 4), Lieque (Lu 7). Additional point possibilities: Shangjuxu (St 37), Shanglian (LI 9), Shousanli (LI 10), Shenshu (UB 23), Fengmen (UB 12), Feishu (UB 13), Gaohuangshu (UB 43)

**Moxibustion:** Mingmen (Du 4), Shenshu (UB 23), Qihai (Ren 6), Guanyuan (Ren 4)

## WIND-HEAT PRESENTATION

This pattern is characterized by inflammation and heat symptoms. The patient will have sinus congestion and/or inflammation, headaches, burning eyes. If there is phlegm, it will be yellow or green for more than just the first nose blow of the morning. The most common root cause of this is an imbalance in the liver and/or gallbladder meridians; a close second is heat in the lung meridian. Addressing the liver and gallbladder channels will provide a treatment that will be more effective than just a branch treatment. This will greatly assist the body in coping and clearing the inflammatory response to environmental irritants like pollen.

• The tongue will be red and there may be scalloped edges. There may also be a yellow coat.

• The pulse will be tight and perhaps rapid or wiry.

## Herbal Treatment

The formula of choice for symptom relief is **Jade Screen & Xanthium Formula**. **Xanthium Nasal Formula** is appropriate when there is copious yellow phlegm. **Jade Screen & Xanthium Formula** can be used as a preventative throughout the patient's allergic season or just when symptoms arise.

**For the root:** The formulas that I recommend to address the constitutional issues are **Free and Easy Wanderer Plus** or **Bupluerum and Tang Kuei Formula**. **Free and Easy Wanderer Plus** is also a very good formula for chemical sensitivities.

## Acupuncture Treatment

**Ear Acupuncture Points:** Liver, kidney, endocrine, lung, inner nose

**Acupuncture points:** Zhaohai (Ki 6), Zusanli (St 36), Hegu (LI 4), Lieque (Lu 7), Taichong (Liv 3), Xingjian (Liv 2), Extra points Yintang, Pitung, Zanzhu (UB 2) Chai Pai. Additional point possibilities: Fengmen (UB 12), Feishu (UB 13), Gaohuangshu (UB 43), Ganshu (UB 18), Danshu (UB 19)

Zhaohai (Ki 6) and Lieque (Lu 7) are used as a combination for sinus congestion, inflammation, headaches and burning eyes. Use Zhaohai (Ki 6) first, followed by Lieque (Lu 7). Leave in for about an hour then remove and replace in opposite order for five minutes. Using gold needles for this treatment increases the effectiveness.

There can, of course, be other patterns a patient may present with besides these two. Please consider other constitutional factors and possibilities. Just keep in mind that you will get fantastic results—and even lessen or eliminate allergies for that patient in future seasons when you support the constitution and treat the root in addition to the branch symptoms.



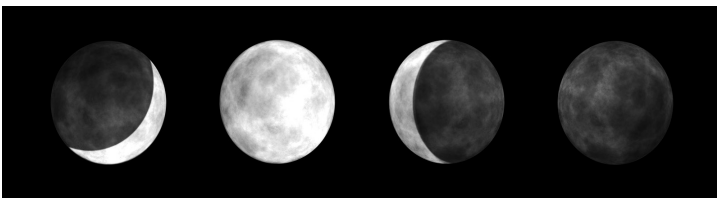


## Exploring the Use of Essential Oils to Support the 5 Phases of the Menstrual Cycle

By DONNA KEEFE, LAC

The specialty of gynecology is a perfect place to consider using essential oils. It allows for the *jing*/essence of the plants to resonate with the *jing*/essence in our bodies, creating a vibrational current that connects us to past and future generations. Treating women from a Chinese medicine perspective is quite intriguing, since during a woman's menstruating years there are clear energetic differences during various phases of her cycle. This perspective gives the practitioner windows of opportunity to support the energetics that should naturally be happening throughout the menses, and to intervene and treat when imbalances occur.

Now, with essential oils produced from Chinese medicinal plants available from Chinese medicine practitioner Evelyn Robert's **Alchemica Botanica** line, we are able to apply the principles of Chinese herbal medicine to the clinical use of essential oils.



Yuejing, translated as 'lunar cycle,' is also the name that represents the menstrual cycle. Like a lunar cycle, a normal or regular menstrual cycle tends to be 28 days. The most common way to look at the menstrual cycle in Traditional Chinese Medicine—as well as western allopathic medicine—is a model broken up into four phases or weeks, which helps the practitioner easily delineate where in the cycle they should emphasize nourishing yin and blood, tonifying qi or supporting yang, in order to best support normal physiological functioning. The understanding of how the Eight Extraordinary Vessels are activated and energized during each phase is also helpful when we consider unlocking and working with these vessels to treat any constitutional imbalances that may be contributing to pathological processes.

Understanding the Song Dynasty model developed by Chen Zi Ming, later popularized by Xue Ji, and in modern times, shared through the teachings of Jeffrey Yuen, can give you a deeper appreciation for the physiological changes that are occurring throughout the cycle and an understanding of which elements

are in control of those changes. This allows us to investigate each phase to see where the imbalances are occurring most prominently, based on pulse presentation and symptomology. A woman's pulses will reflect subtle changes in accordance with these phases and give clues to proper treatment unique to each phase. The treatment provided would either be designed to support the phase or to treat the pathology that is occurring (or rooted) in a particular phase. It is important to see the patient weekly throughout the cycle to be able to assess the various phases. This enables the practitioner to create deeper story lines and treatment possibilities that match the individual's actual experiences in life.

This discussion will include only the blood aspect of the model, which gives us a foundation for an approach to the specialty of gynecology. For this gynecology model, the five elemental phases relating to the creation cycle are actually sequenced in the reverse order of the creation cycle. This reversed sequence is a metaphor for the existence of immortality. The ability to have a child can be considered an opportunity to create a legacy, which allows our *jing* to continue into future generations. So, with the existence of the menstrual cycle comes the miraculous form of creation from prenatal development to postnatal existence and beyond.

### THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE AND THE FIVE PHASES

The menstrual cycle journey begins in the center with the earth element, which is where blood is produced in the stomach. Then with the help of the spleen's ascension, it is sent to the fire element where the heart transforms it into the "red substance." Now that blood has been abundantly created and begins to circulate, the wood element will provide the container to store it or utilize it on demand. If demands are not in excess of the availability of the liver's blood then the blood is transformed and sent as *jing*/essence to the water element or kidneys, which either allows for the accumulation of blood in the uterus to support conception and fetal development, or releases the blood with the help of the metal element and the lung's ability to descend qi and propel the blood out of the uterus for menses to begin.

Herbal essential oil strategies for each phase of the menses, applied to points that energetically support those phases, can be a powerful addition to one's gynecology practice. These essential oils can be applied individually or combined and used as a blend with a carrier oil as a more gentle and long-term approach.

## Earth

The earth energetic is dominant, starting at day 5 and continuing through day 13, which is when the menstrual flow ends and emphasis on the nourishment or production of blood is most prominent. According to the Song Dynasty Tai Ping Imperial Academy's teaching formula, *Si Wu Tang*, the herb that best represents the production of blood during this phase is **dan gui** (angelica sinensis), which is available as an essential oil that can be applied, for example, to Sp 8. This application helps support the rebuilding of blood as it relates to the uterus and the development of the endometrium.

## Fire

The fire energetic is prominent from days 10-16. At this time the heart is in control of the movement of blood, which is best represented by the essential oil of **chuan xiong** (ligusticum wallichii). **Chuan xiong** oil can be applied to P 6 in preparation for the next step, which is a wood/liver phase. If bleeding or spotting occurs at this time, it may be a situation where the pericardium is signifying that, due to heart fire or agitation of the spirit, this may not be the best time to support egg and lining nourishment for future development. In this phase, **bai zi ren** (biota seed) is a good addition alone and can be blended with others throughout the next cycle.

## Wood

During days 13-19 the wood/liver energetics, having received the pericardium's blood, become the vessel to store the blood; it will also use its qi to promote ovulation. **Bai shao** (white peony) is the representative herb, but another essential oil, such as **xiang fu** (cyperus) can be applied on Liv 5, a *luo* point, if moving blood is the priority. If storage of blood is more important, then use **wu wei zi** (schisandra) on Liv 8 or Liv 13.

## Water

In this phase, during days 19-28, the blood that is being stored by the liver is transformed into *jing*/essence for consolidation in order to be captured by the kidneys. **Shu di huang** (radix rehmannia) is the herb in *Si Wu Tang* that represents this step, although other essential oils that support the kidneys, such as **ai ye** (folium artemisiae argyi), fennel, or florals such as rose and jasmine, can be used on the lower *ren mai* points, Ki 13 or a distal kidney point like Ki 5 along with St 25 to regulate the cycle.

## Metal

If conception does not occur, then metal, in control from days 1-5, propels menstrual blood out to the exterior. The lung's descent can be supported by adding **hou po** (magnolia bark) to the blend if there is any delay. If there is a history of *bi tong* (nasal obstruction), then I like to use

**bai yu lan ye** (magnolia officinalis folium) at LI 20 during this time or any time throughout the cycle if congestion occurs and interrupts the onset of menses.

During the cycle, while one phase overlaps and communicates with the next, a blend can be utilized with other essential oils that have similar energetics as the herbs found in *Si Wu Tang*. While creating a blend, an increased percentage of the individual oil needed, based on excess, stagnation, or deficiency at a particular phase, can be best determined by pulse presentation.



## ALCHEMICA BOTANICA ESSENTIAL OIL BLENDS

Alchemica Botanica has introduced essential oil blends, which include **Menses**, closely representative of *Si Wu Tang*, and **PMS** that can be used most effectively during the Wood to water to metal phases, which corresponds to the luteal phase or second half of the cycle. This is the time from ovulation to blood flow when conception or pregnancy has not occurred. If fertility is the goal, then a strong blood-moving formula should be used only prior to ovulation. The concept of nourishing and holding, post ovulation, for fertility purposes is when oils such as **wu wei zi** (schisandrae) and cypress or its family of pines can be used. The white pine and black spruce oils are aromatically attractive and very supportive of the metal element and its relationship to the kidneys. Application to Lu 9 or St 9 is helpful for attracting fertility. If a patient tends to regularly get an external attack at the onset of menses, considering that this is the time that the lungs need to be strong in order to propel the menses out to the exterior, then Alchemica Botanica's **Wind Cold** blend can be applied to Lu 1, Lu 9 or UB 13. Warming Lu 9 with ginger gives the lungs strength to move blood. There is also a **Wind Heat** blend that one should have on hand in case the cold quickly transforms to heat.

## ENDOMETRIOSIS

Endometriosis is disruptive to the regularity of the menstrual cycle and a leading cause of infertility. A favorite application of mine for endometriosis is sprinkling 5 drops of **ru xiang** (frankincense), along with **chuan xiong** (ligusticum wallichii) and **dang gui** (angelica sinensis) onto cotton pads soaked with castor oil and applying over the lower abdomen with heat for 30-45 minutes. If pregnancy is not a concern, then this is best done from ovulation (wood phase) through menses (metal phase). If menses is blocked and delayed, then **hou po** (magnolia



bark) can be added at this time under the rib cage.

According to Jeffrey Yuen, using essential oils to activate the acupuncture points and meridians is a modality that allows for lingering reminders of what we are trying to accomplish in our lives. Those daily reminders, or an application method related to the divergent channels (recommended as 3 days on and 3 days off) allow base note oil essences and aromas from our extensive collection of root herbs to continue to resonate and send messages to the body, mind, and spirit in a very friendly and unique way. This powerful approach gives support and direction while trying to complete our curriculum here on earth.

**Donna Keefe** has been the Clinical Director of Acupuncture Center of La Jolla since 1989. She has served as faculty at the San Diego campus of Pacific College of Oriental Medicine for 17 years and also adjunct faculty at Daoist Traditions in Asheville, NC for five years. Donna has traveled the world studying with Jeffrey Yuen for over 20 years and integrates his teachings into her deep interest of Gynecology and Reproductive Medicine. Donna can be reached at [dkeefe@MyAcupuncturist.com](mailto:dkeefe@MyAcupuncturist.com).

## Mysteries of the Sānjiāo

BY WILLIAM MORRIS, LAC

Over the millennia, various schools of thought have employed the strategy of three burners. This brings a complex history to the idea of the *sānjiāo*. In English, *sānjiāo* can be translated as the triple burner, triple heater, or triple warmer.

The triple warmer function is seen differently depending on context. Thus, *sānjiāo* may refer to a channel, a region, water transportation and transformation, or a disease process. I discuss here the potential uses for each. These are my own opinions, based on 39 years of experience as a white male practitioner in North America. I apply Ding family transmission through Shen and Hammer, conventional TCM thought, and my own work, a reconstruction of classical literature for contemporary practice. None of these sources authorize what I am saying here but me.

### THE SĀNJIĀO(三焦) AS THE UNKNOWN

The *sānjiāo* has a name but no place. In addition to a systemic phenomenon, I interpret a paradoxical state of being, which can be linked to existential concerns. The fiery yang aspect of the *sānjiāo* connects with those in our social systems, particularly through SJ 5 as *wài guān* (外关), the outer pass or exterior gate. In addition to the anatomical and physiological field effects of this point, it involves opening and closing to others. Thus, problems of isolation can be influenced through this channel.

All channels and points affect the psychosocial realm.

The *sānjiāo*, however, gains primacy vis-à-vis its placement as a yang channel in the upper body that is fire: a yang expression located within the yang of yang. It is here that we reach out to others. And it is here that I use more cinnamon (*gui zhi*) than peony (*bai shao*) in a formula to open the external gate.

The upper, middle and lower 'cinnabar fields,' or *dāntián* (丹田), are located similarly to the *sānjiāo*, in the regions of the abdomen, heart, and brain, and having no substance, they are the fields of inner space employed in Daoist cultivation practices.

The pulse as an expression of the heart and circulatory systems has a direct link to spirit and may be used as a tool for guiding practices of consciousness in addition to evaluation of the terrain for the purposes of remediation. The upper *dāntián* is located between the eyebrows; its pulse is in the middle of the distal pulse positions. The middle *dāntián* is located at the solar plexus; its pulse is in the middle of the middle position and may be palpated just distal to that. The lower *dāntián* is located below or behind the navel, in the middle of the proximal positions. The pulse is palpated for the array of images that arise during the practitioner-client dialog. When prescribing herbs, each quality is accounted for in the formula to create a specific formula that is validated via the other signs and symptoms.

The lower cinnabar field is the original *dāntián* and is linked with what Ted Kaptchuk translated as 'the gate of destiny' *mìngmén* (命门). It resides behind the umbilicus and between the kidneys. The middle cinnabar field is located at the center of the chest. It is the seat of qì (气) or breath. The upper *dāntián* is located in the region of the brain and is the seat of spirit (*shén* 神).

Lastly, the unknown feature of the triple burner is at the life gate whereby the return to source is accomplished. The emergence from the kidneys into 'form and being' extends from the kidneys distally along the pulses of the left wrist and returns to source along the positions of the right wrist. The right proximal position serves the return to the deep waters and that which is unknowable in the depths of the unity field, accessed through the portal of the life gate.

### BODY FLUID CIRCULATION AND THE SĀNJIĀO

The *sānjiāo* provides a connection between particular organs via its presence through the "extra-cellular matrix" which is the space between the tissues, organs, and cells. The status can be evaluated by the presence of what Leon Hammer calls the 'cotton pulse.' It is often present with a deep pulse. Certain family tradition offshoots of the Menghe-Ding current, such as the Tian-Zeng lineage use the term 'soggy' to describe this pulse. For them, soggy refers more to a deep or cotton pulse rather than the image that Li Shi-zhen describes which is like a thread

floating upon water—where there is no root.

The connection between the *sānjiāo* and the lymphatic system can be seen in conditions of fluid retention and edema. The lymph system is a circulatory return which drains fluid from tissues and allows distribution of immune cells throughout all three burners. Lack of exercise, hypothyroidism, and obesity can lead to congested lymph return. More severe lymphatic obstruction can be caused by surgeries, injuries, radiation, tumors and infections, which causes the more extreme condition of lymphedema. Dry brushing is an excellent solution to this problem along with circulatory massage, exercise, and regular sweating.

Water metabolism is affected by the lung in the upper burner, spleen in the middle, and the kidneys in the lower. If the pulse is deep in one of these three burners, there is a suggestion of damp accumulation with poor fluid transportation. When the pulse is deep in more than one burner, the *sānjiāo* is implicated. My favorite formula, if it fits, is Poria and Atractylodes Decoction (*Líng Guì Zhú Gān Tāng*). This formula is appropriate in the context of qi and yang depletion leading to damp accumulation.

According to most *materia medica*, there are three herbs that specifically enter the *sānjiāo*. They can be added to a formula that deals with the general concerns one is treating throughout and between the burners.

<i>Chai Hu</i> (Bupleuri radix)	pungent bitter cold	Liv, SJ, GB, P	Opens the surface, relaxes stagnant liver qi, resolves <i>shaoyang</i> heat, dispels rash
<i>Zhi Zi</i> (Gardenia jasminoides fructus)	bitter cold	Ht, Liv, St, SJ	Drains three <i>jiao</i> damp- heat, cools blood, clears heat, purges fire, drains damp, calms irritability
<i>Qing Hao</i> (Artemisia apeacea annua)	pungent bitter cold	Lu, K GB, SJ	Clears summer and defi- ciency heat, cools blood, stops bleeding, antiamoebic

**Table 1. Agents that enter the *sānjiāo*.**

In addition, liquidambar fruit (*lù lù tóng*) will open the diaphragm and the free flow between the middle and upper burners. For this, the pulse is tense and full between the middle and distal position. If the pulse between the middle and proximal positions is tense and full, then the middle and lower burners may have a problem with communication; consider trichosanthes fruit (*guā lóu*).

### THE SĀNJIĀO AS A CHANNEL

As a channel, the *sānjiāo* travels along the sagittal plane along the flexor surface of the arm, the shoulder, and sides of the neck and cranium. It then travels deep into the heart and the three burners. It is used to treat the

tissues located along its trajectory.

These include tissues of the arm, shoulder, neck, cranium, throat, ears and eyes, heart and abdomen.

In relationship to the pericardium as an internal-external axis of ministerial fire, the *sānjiāo* has root within the *yuan* qi. As such, the mystical correlations in the depths, at the source of being, are accessed.

### THE SĀNJIĀO AS AN EXISTENTIAL EXPERIENCE

Here, I discuss the *sānjiāo* as an exploration of ministerial fire in the right proximal pulse position. The ministerial fire serves the enlightened and awakened features of the heart as imperial fire. Thus, from the depths of water and the unconscious, the ministerial fire links to the substrate of universal fire in the source as an intrinsic network of being throughout creation.

This discussion is seeded in dialogues I participated in during the early 1980s. I do not have sources nor do I recollect with whom I had these conversations. This manner of thought has, however, affected my practice since that time.

The pericardium is known as the *xīn bāo* (心包) or heart wrapping. It is in a yin-yang relationship with the *sānjiāo*. They are both fire channels in the upper body, relating in a sense, to heaven. There, the pericardium operates as yin within yang. Similarly, the *sānjiāo* channel serves yang within yin.

There is a paradox implicit within these thoughts about the pericardium-triple burner axis, since the *sānjiāo* is a water expression of fire while the pericardium is fire. Thus, the yang channel becomes yin and the yin channel becomes yang. This connects with the *yuán qì* (原气) expression from within the unity field of the *wújí* (無極). This *wújí* can be considered as that which is beyond occurrence. The consequent division of yin and yang may be viewed as water and fire, which relates to the nature of the *sānjiāo* and pericardium.

Practical applications of the pulse in the right proximal pulse position are many. Here, we explore it using a two-depth pulse method as described in the *Nanjing*. I use the right proximal position to evaluate a relationship to source. This pulse position allows the practitioner to envision through the ‘eyes in the fingers’ the client’s connection to source and therefore, primordial yin and yang. Disorders of human experience range between the physical terrain and eco-psycho-social concerns that extend from social systems to an ecology that includes the constellations according to the Yellow Emperor’s Classic chapters on the *wei* qi.

As the individual expresses concerns anywhere from existential dilemma to spiritual crisis to full on unity field consciousness, the right proximal position is an excellent

place to explore. It provides insight into the capacity to 'return to source' vis-à-vis the pulse qualities that arise during the dialog.

If the pulse in the right proximal position is too deep and weak to serve a reasonable assessment, consider treatment with moxa at SJ4 (*yáng chí* 阳池), other interventions such as acupuncture, and stimulation with the Acutonics® Sun tuning fork. The only herb in Bensky that references the source qi is ginseng radix (*rén shēn*).

Once the yin or the yang channel of ministerial fire has been selected (pericardium or *sānjiāo*), explore the five directions of the compass method for the greatest fullness at the respective depth in order to discern which transport point to treat. Just as the pulse is laid out, wood is fuller in the left aspect of the position. Metal is fuller in the right aspect of the position. Fire is fuller in the distal, water is fuller in the proximal, and earth is fuller in the middle of the position.

The right proximal position is used here for discerning and clarifying the client's relationship to source. In addition to the compass, one may choose to look at what I call the five fundamental qualities. Fire is urgent, wood is tense, metal is floating, water is deep, and earth is slippery. (Please see Table 2.)

Agent	Pulse	Color	Sound	Mission
Fire	Urgent	Red	Laughter	Connect
Earth	Slippery	Yellow	Melodic	Care
Metal	Floating	White	Whisper	Principles
Water	Deep	Black	Groan	Wisdom
Wood	Tense	Green	Shout	Achieve

**Table 2.**

The constitution can be seen at the level of five movements or *wǔxíng* (五行). After the division of yin and yang from the source within the *wújí* (無極), various iterations of two and three emerge, as five. I use the color of the face, the sound of the voice, and the life purpose as the most reliable tools for classifying the soul at the level of the *wǔxíng*.

I assess the constitution, which may require inquiry into past situations so as to decompensate from the current state. I then select the point upon the pericardium or the *sānjiāo* which corresponds to the constitution.

Let's say the person has an existential crisis in the sense of disconnection from self—choose the interior—the pericardium. As they speak of their childhood experiences, they are trying to connect with me, make me laugh, pulse arrives quickly (it is urgent) and there is a red tone to the face and temporal area. I use the fire point on the pericardium PC 8 (*láo gong* 劳宫) for this.


The pulse method I am presenting here for assessing the right proximal position as it relates to the problem of retreat into source, should be performed with due consideration for the entirety of the signs and symptoms. As tense pulse sensations arise, select qi regulators and agents that open the surface. This causes vasodilation and a tense pulse will relax. If a slippery pulse emerges in the proximal right position while the client relays existential concerns, add an agent that drains damp-heat to the formula. If the pulse sinks, drain damp; and if the pulse floats during the interview, relieve the surface with either warming or cooling agents that open the surface. If the pulse becomes urgent, gently clear heat. If the pulse slows, or moves in an arc from side to side, use warming agents. If the pulse goes absent or loses root, boost qi. If the pulse becomes very thin, nourish blood. If the pulse becomes weak and urgent, supplement yin. The formula is constructed by matching the degree of presence that each of these qualities demonstrates during the course of the interview.

Each of the points along the channel pathway correlates with a particular agent (*xíng*). At the level of source of creation, the divisions of reality into the five-fold nature of being speak to our humanity. It ties to a deep cosmological turn from within the source of being at the unity field level. As one becomes two, so also, two begets three and their relationship is five. Thus, the five agents correlate with being and time in the spin from the deepest source. This provides access to a constitutional presentation according to the intersection of time and space, represented as the five transformations and divisions. Thus, for the fire person, we may use the fire point upon the *sānjiāo* channel as a form of connection into the source of that person's being.

In closing, the *sānjiāo* has space for the due consideration of spirit. The most important feature of the *sānjiāo* in a spiritual frame will tend to the return to source as an unveiling of the great mystery, which the ministerial fire protects. On the physical level, the trajectory of the channel and its connections throughout the body are treated. The tasks of fluid transformation in each of the three bodily regions is, of course, fundamental.

**Will Morris** has a PhD with a dissertation focused on pulse diagnosis. He has 38 years of experience with more than 50,000 patient visits using the pulse as the primary guiding light. He is a co-author of Li Shi Zhen Pulse Studies: An Illustrated Guide, which explores the center of Chinese pulse diagnostic discourse. His forthcoming book, NeoClassical Pulse Diagnosis is scheduled for release in the fall of 2019.



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September 21-22, 2019

**DESIGNING MEALS FOR PATIENTS: MATCHING DIAGNOSIS WITH DIET IN CHINESE MEDICINE**

13 CEUs/PDAs (Pending)

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# DIETARY MEDICINE: THE BIG PICTURE

By Andrew Sterman

Recently our two kids, 15 and 12, posed a serious question during a road trip—earnest words from the backseat. “Mom, Dad, what are the ten most important herbs for us to have with us when we go away to college, and what foods should we be able to cook to keep ourselves healthy?” It’s a classic ‘desert island’ question: What’s most important for our personal survival?

My writing focuses on food as medicine rather than the herbal side of the question, but in truth there’s little difference. A good answer to any “What do I need” question must include two aspects:

- What is basic for health that everyone should know how to support?
- What personal issues tend to arise? In other words, what are your familiar health tendencies that you should be skilled at handling?

Everyone needs to have an appetite, to digest food well, and to have at least reasonably well-synchronized contributions from the stomach, pancreas-spleen, liver, gallbladder, and lungs. Further, kidney yang qi needs to be supported and kidney yin protected. Small intestine needs to carry out its many functions, and elimination needs to be effective and untroubled.

Then, we need to be honest about our tendencies. Are we subject to headaches or migraines, respiratory infections, reflux, constipation, insomnia, joint soreness, kidney stones, or, are we concerned about dampness and excess weight (or eating disorders)? Our personal ‘desert island playbook’ needs to cover basics while leaving room for personal tendencies we haven’t yet fully solved.

Personal specifics can’t be foreseen here, so let’s focus on a few sample recipes to fulfill basic functions. Each recipe needs to be easy to make, taste good enough to repeat happily, be economical, look nice enough to share with guests, and be flexible enough to adapt with the seasons and the changing needs of health. Although not arbitrary, a desert island list will always leave out more than it includes. As you playfully make your own list, be sure to think it through and be able to justify your dishes with sound dietary theory. Here are a few of my suggestions.

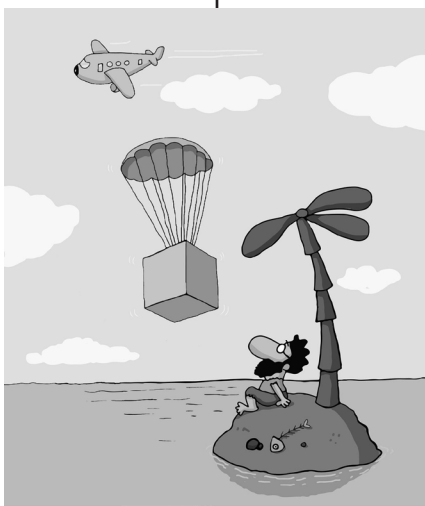
## Open the Stomach: Soups Can Be Appetizers

Many problems can be avoided or resolved by the skillful use of true appetizers. What is needed is to open the stomach (*kai wei*), which starts with restoring stomach qi descension, supporting stomach moistness, and clearing possible food stagnation. Here is a recipe for basic lentil soup that can double as appetizer or main course.

### Recipe: Lentil Soup

leek 1 medium, white portion only  
carrot 2 medium or 1 large  
celery 2 stalks  
olive oil 2 Tbsp

brown lentils 1 cup  
small French lentils 1/2 cup  
red lentils 1/2 cup  
parsley 1 bunch  
cumin seed 3/4 tsp  
star anise 3 star pods  
green cardamom 5 pods  
ground cinnamon 1/2 tsp  
grated fresh ginger 1 tsp  
sea salt to taste (reserve until end)  
juice of 1 lime  
black (*shanxi*) vinegar or red wine vinegar to taste, perhaps  
2 Tbsp  
water 2 quarts, more as needed



Dice the leek, carrot, and celery. Add to a large soup pot with a splash of olive oil. Cook until slightly softened, about 5 minutes.

Lentils need to be sorted for possible stones and washed; do both steps carefully, then add them to the pot, stir in over medium heat.

Add half of each of the spices. Put the other half in a small saucepan but do not turn on.

After allowing the lentils to warm, add the water, bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer, and cook until lentils are soft, about 45 minutes. The red lentils will nearly dissolve, thickening the soup. If you choose to use only brown lentils, partially smooth the soup with a hand-held blender. The goal is to partially purée the soup while leaving plenty of discernible lentils intact.

Before serving, add salt, lime juice and vinegar. Warm the remaining spices in the small pan (no oil is needed), then add them to the soup pot. This step insures that the spice presence is both deep (the long-cooked spices) and vivid (the late addition spices). Chop the parsley, add to the soup. Serve.

Serve a small cup as an appetizer, to wake digestion and help open the stomach. The soup will be even tastier when reheated a day or two later.

Lentils provide a descending energetic to clear food stagnation, a function strengthened by the carrots. The long-cooking is soothing to stomach and pancreas-spleen. Soup provides hydration for the stomach more effectively than drinking water, since moist foods linger in the stomach, providing their hydration much longer than drinks do (although ample water is always essential). The spices warm digestion without irritating it.

## We Need to Soothe Digestion and Strengthen Pancreas-Spleen

Desert island foraging would force us to eat some things that might upset our digestion just to survive. Finding meals on the run in the modern town, city (or college food hall) can present equally daunting challenges, although of a different sort. We need to know how to soothe and support pancreas-spleen function to protect digestion.

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### Recipe: Toasted Millet

Wash 1 cup raw millet to serve four people. Wash by flooding the millet in a pot with cool water, draining water over the side, repeating three or more times until the water runs clear. Then strain the millet. Once washed and strained, return the millet to the pot, turn heat to high. Stir steadily without oil or water to dry it. Dry roast until the millet tans slightly and offers a pleasant aroma. Then, add a fat such as butter or olive oil. Coat each grain with the oil, reducing heat to low (the pot will remain quite hot, however). Carefully add water (I sometimes use hot water from the tea kettle to move things along), mindful to avoid any spatter, check that heat is low, then cook as rice: 1.75 cups water to 1 cup millet, cover on simmer, don't stir, steam for 15-20 minutes then allow to rest, undisturbed and still covered for 5-10 minutes. Serve as the base of a meal with green vegetables, root vegetables, proteins, etc.

Millet is classified as sweet and salty in taste, neutral in thermo-static influence with affinity for pancreas-spleen, stomach, lung and kidney. (The salty 'taste' is an easy way to remember the kidney affinity and does not mean that the plain grain has a salty taste to the tongue, although there can be a pleasant 'mineral' taste and tongue feel.) It markedly benefits the small intestine as well. Millet supports regulated hormones, helps build bones, is easy to digest and is always a whole grain. Most people would benefit from having millet more often.

### We Need to Build Blood

Everyone needs a few meals in their repertoire that clearly help build and invigorate blood. The easiest way is with beef soup or stew, but vegetarian options are also definitely possible.

### Recipe: Simple Beef Stew

beef chuck or sirloin 1 pound, trimmed and cut into 1 inch cubes  
grapeseed oil 3-5 Tbsp  
red wine 1 cup  
black (*shanxi*) or balsamic vinegar 2 Tbsp  
leek 1 large leek, white part only, trimmed and sliced finely  
carrot 3 large or 5 medium, washed, trimmed, and cut into 1/2 inch sections (do not peel organic carrots)  
celery 2 stalks, trimmed and cut into 1/4 inch slices  
dried mushrooms half a handful  
bone broth (homemade or commercial) 3 cups  
bay leaves 2 (be sure to remove them before serving)  
star anise 2 star pods  
cinnamon 1 tsp  
salt 2 tsp or to taste

Soak the dried mushrooms in a bowl with warm water.

Dry the beef chunks with paper or kitchen towel, salt lightly, add to a hot pot with warmed oil. Do not crowd the meat in the pan; allow the pieces to brown by leaving space and keeping heat sufficiently high. Working in batches, turn to brown all sides before removing to a plate while browning the rest.

With all the meat removed from the pot, add the leek, carrots, celery, bay leaf, star anise and cinnamon. Stir occasionally until the aromatic greens have softened, about five minutes. Leek invigorates blood, the gentle sweetness and descending energy of the carrot soothes stomach and supports peristalsis, while the celery provides ascending directionality and a note of coolness to balance an otherwise warming dish.

It's essential to invigorate blood through these moving vegetables while building blood to avoid stagnation and heaviness.

When the vegetables have just begun to soften, add the wine and vinegar, stir to deglaze, then return the meat to the pot. Remove the mushrooms from their soaking liquid, chop them to match the carrots or celery size. Add them to the pot along with most of their soaking liquid (avoid adding any gritty bits at the bottom of the soaking bowl). Add the bone or beef stock. Bring to an active simmer but avoid full boiling.

Simmer for 90 minutes, covered, skimming and removing foam from time to time if needed. Taste for salt, add water if stew seems dry. Serve with rice, noodles, or bread (gluten-free if appropriate), along with steamed greens.

### A Vegetarian Way to Build Blood: Beets (Two Methods)

For oven-roasted beets, wash beets with skin on, wrap in aluminum foil, bake for 40-60 minutes in a 375° or 400° F oven. When cooked (unwrap one, test with a knife for tenderness but not mushiness), unwrap the beets, hold them one at a time under cool running water. The peel will fall away with gentle rubbing. The water allows you to manage the hot beet, but it won't cool the inside. Gather the peeled beets to a cutting board. Slice or chunk, serve warm with drizzle of good olive oil, pinch of good salt, and some fresh dill. If needed, return them to the oven to stay warm while the rest of dinner is underway. Beets have traditionally been used for building blood and supporting liver function. In a confirmation of the obvious law of signature, nutrition science has named at least several essential liver compounds after beets: the betaine group.

Raw beets can also be peeled before roasting, quartered, dressed with olive oil and salt, and baked uncovered in a 400° F oven to include more kidney support through cooking method.

For quick vinegar beets, cover raw beets (unpeeled) with water, boil until tender, about 30 minutes. When cool enough to handle, remove the ends and peel the beets with a sharp knife (the same running water method works well here). Cut into sections, dress with apple cider vinegar and olive oil (equal amounts), pinch of sea salt, and cracked fresh pepper. Serve warm or room temperature (store for up to a week in the refrigerator).

As mentioned in the stew recipe above, when building blood we must also insure that blood is invigorated to avoid stagnation. Leek was used in the stew, adding fresh dill fulfills that function well with beets.

Another major function of the liver is storing blood. If blood is being produced but is failing to be stored, use vinegar, either with quick vinegar beets or fully pickled beets. Alternate vinegar beets with sweet-tart berries such as blueberries to include this function consistently without tiring unduly of one dish.

### Soothe Digestion (again)

As described above, grains such as rice or millet are important to nourish stomach yin, anchor the diet, and when toasted, also to tonify the upholding aspect of pancreas-spleen qi. Soups and stews insure hydration while clearing food stagnation, providing easy-to-digest nutrients, while helping to build blood. But we also need dishes that attend to modern problems of the intestines themselves. No matter how much focus Chinese medicine gives to spleen, stomach, liver, and gall bladder, it is in the intestines where separation and assimilation take place. Today's standard diet and

common medications challenge the small intestine in ways that were unheard of in earlier times (with the exception of parasitic disease). Everyone should know how to cook in order to protect the heart of digestion: the small intestine.

### **Recipe: Zucchini with Goji Berries & Tree Ears**

zucchini 2-3 medium, 4 if small  
goji berries 1 handful (12-24 berries)  
tree ear dried mushrooms 1/4 cup, dry  
mirin or rice wine 1/4 cup  
grapeseed oil (or other seed oil) 1 Tbsp  
organic cornstarch or kuzu powder 1 Tbsp  
scallion 1-2, trimmed, chopped  
fresh ginger 2 slices, slivered  
sea salt chef's pinch

Soak the dried 'tree ear' mushrooms in warm water. When soft, remove, rinse, and slice as desired (finely or casually).

Wash the zucchini, trim the tops and bottoms, cut across into three sections, quarter those sections lengthwise.

In a pan or pot, add the oil over medium high heat. Add the goji berries, then the rice wine (substitute any dry white wine). Add the ginger slivers, softened tree ears, sliced scallion, and the zucchini.

Be careful not to overcook—perhaps 5 minutes is enough, so the zucchini is tender but not too soft. Throw in a pinch of good salt.

Meanwhile, mix the cornstarch or kuzu powder in a small cup with just enough water to make a slurry. (These thickening agents must never be added to a pan without being mixed with cool water first.) Drizzle gradually into the pan in order to thicken the pan sauce. (All the mixture may not be needed.) Allow the pan to come to a gentle bubble to activate thickening. The liquid should thicken enough to hang onto the zucchini as a sauce without being 'gloppy'. If the sauce becomes too thick, simply thin it with a bit of water.

Add a splash of toasted sesame oil.

Serve as a vegetable side dish with rice or other grain.

Traditionally, this dish is made with 'fuzzy melon', a fresh gourd that has yet to appear beyond Chinatown markets or a selection of organic farms. Zucchini substitutes very well.

### **Give the Liver a Break (once in a while!)**

Dietary paleontologists point out that the relatively large human liver was important for successfully eating semi-toxic foods in the wild. Modern experts inform us that today's foods are very low in naturally occurring toxicity but that we retain powerfully capable livers specifically for the college years. Maybe so, but fried foods, pizza, sweets, reliance on coffee, and indulgence with alcohol can lead to liver constraint, a condition that is nearly epidemic in first world adults of all ages. Everyone should know how to cook meals that help the liver and gall bladder soften and relax, a key point in conditions ranging from hangover to migraines, habitual irritation, high blood pressure, alternating constipation with diarrhea, indigestion and reflux, PMS, hyperactive type learning disabilities, heart palpitations, and sleeping problems.

### **Recipe: Snow Peas sautéed with Bean Sprouts**

snow peas 2 cups  
mung bean sprouts 2 cups

fresh ginger two slices, slivered  
scallions 2-3  
high-heat oil splash or two  
salt pinch

Wash and trim the snow peas. Rinse the bean sprouts under cool water.

In a hot pan, add a splash or two of high-heat oil such as organic peanut or grapeseed oil, then add the sliced fresh ginger and the scallions. Add a pinch of salt, stir.

Quickly, add the snow peas and the bean sprouts, stir into the oil with the ginger and scallion. Cook over fairly high heat until the bean sprouts wilt and the snow peas turn bright green, perhaps 3-5 minutes (You can add one or two tablespoons of water to prevent burning if needed.) Add another pinch of salt and serve with rice or millet as the basis of a meal. Serves 2-4.

Snow peas have a liver affinity and a mild diuretic quality; bean sprouts clear toxins and help cool exacerbated livers and gall bladders. Ginger warms digestion, a good idea accompanying cooling foods. Sautéing is the cooking method that works most directly with liver energetics, helping to focus the dish. For options, add mushrooms, use tamari in place of salt, or, for another approach, use medium heat and olive oil.

### **Nourishing Kidney Yin**

Digestion is the center of all health, and all digestion relies upon the kidneys, just as a kitchen flame relies upon the pilot light hidden within. Everyone should be comfortable cooking dishes that support both kidney yin and kidney yang.

Actually, cooking isn't always necessary. Make a kidney yin trail mix by combining fresh walnuts, dried figs and coconut flakes. Walnuts are a 'kidney nut'; figs and coconut enliven the snack while helping clear the lower burner in order to prevent the rich walnuts from causing stagnation.

For a decadent treat: throw the same nut-fruit mixture into a pan with a bit of butter, a spoonful of honey and enough sesame seeds to coat evenly. Sesame seeds are a classic kidney yin food—especially black sesame seeds. (Remember the lentil soup recommended above to open the stomach as an appetizer? You can make the same soup with black beans in place of lentils for a delicious and powerful kidney yin meal.)

In today's world, nearly everyone could benefit from nourishing kidney yin through good cooking. Stress is high, sleep is short, and many people follow 'low-fat' or 'no-fat' advice hoping to lose weight or in fear of heart disease, inadvertently disrupting hormonal balances. Good oils are needed to build hormones. If we don't eat good oils (including cholesterol) it can be difficult to meet the stress of modern living. This can lead to craving for any fat source (fried foods, pizza, ice cream, chocolate, etc.) Dieting won't help much here—the body will hold onto any yin substance it can with the intensity of survival. Undisciplined dieting is unsuccessful, while strict dieting often leads to deficiencies (and further hormonal imbalance) without the dieter losing weight in the desired places. Although it may be counterintuitive, a diet rich in good oils (such as those found in nuts, seeds, eggs, olive oil, avocados, and animal fat in reasoned amounts) can protect against heart disease, weight gain, and the hormonal imbalance problems that are rapidly increasing today.



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One of the principal stress hormones is cortisol, produced by the adrenal glands that sit atop the kidneys. This brings us to cooking for kidney yang, which can be closely associated with adrenal functions. As mentioned above, kidney yang is like a pilot light necessary for proper function of the organs of digestion themselves—the stomach, pancreas-spleen, and intestines. When kidney yang is low, digestion cannot be strong, which then calls more urgently for support from kidney yang, leading to a spiral of fatigue and the craving for sweets and caffeine. Resolving this cycle is essential. Treating adrenal exhaustion—to use the more common term—requires more than good meals. Like everything else, we want to address its causes, which include lack of quality sleep, sleep not synchronized with the cycle of day and night (in other words, staying up late and sleeping into the day), stress, long-standing feelings of fear or sudden experiences of shock, over-stimulation through caffeine or relentless attention to digital screens, along with, of course, poor diet. Since kidney yang is the spark beneath all good health, improvement here supports improvement in all parts of life.

To be sure, there are times when complex medical treatments are required. But how often does a patient arrive who is genuinely well-rested, well-hydrated, and skillfully well-fed? Once those criteria are met, most conditions would harmonize themselves while those that don't can be treated more quickly and with more long-lasting success.

Kidney yang naturally improves if kidney yin is nourished, and since kidney yin is associated with the relatively thick, dense bodily aspects of *jing*-essence, we need to cultivate diet and lifestyle for a sustained period, classically said to be 100 days. In earlier times that may have been conducted on retreat, but for modern people leading busy lives, at least we can spend three months without coffee, alcohol, chocolate, or sweets. (Sugar is a direct stimulant to insulin and to adrenal hormones.) This will help sleep automatically, making the idea of going to bed by around 10pm possible and welcome. This could be called a modern 'retreat', to which can be added individual health needs such as abstaining from gluten, dairy, overly-spicy foods. When the causes of exhaustion are solved, dietary support for kidney yang finally can be recommended without such meals being used just to keep the spiral aloft.

Animal food can be important for kidney yang support, if properly used. Pork has a kidney affinity, but its fat and relatively cool nature aims it more to kidney yin support. For kidney yang, use duck. It is rich in highly-digestible fat like pork, but obviously more ambitious, with long-distance flying, indicating more yang qi influence as a food. Game meats even more precisely support kidney yang qi, specifically venison (Think of how vigilant and alert deer are in the wild. Or, use the yang shellfish: shrimp, crab, and lobster. These common foods are high in fat (supporting hormone production) and are so yang that they are contra-indicated for anyone with dermatological issues. For a simple dish to support kidney yang, sauté shrimp with fermented black bean sauce.

### Recipe: Shrimp with Fermented Black Beans

shrimp 1.5 pounds medium size  
scallions 2-3, sliced coarsely  
garlic 1 clove, peeled and sliced  
fresh ginger 3 slices, finely slivered  
five spice powder 1/4 tsp  
grapeseed oil (or organic peanut oil) 2 Tbsp

fermented black beans 2 Tbsp, soaked & rinsed, whole or chopped  
tamari 1/4 cup  
rice wine 1/2 cup  
organic corn starch 1 Tbsp, mixed with cool water  
dried black mushrooms 1/4 cup, soaked and chopped coarsely  
fresh cilantro a few sprigs per person as garnish

*Soak the mushrooms in a bowl of warm water. Soak the dried fermented beans in a separate bowl of water. (This can be done well in advance.) Heat a large heavy pan (or wok). Add the grapeseed or other high-heat cooking oil, ginger slivers, garlic, scallion and the five spice powder. Add the soaked fermented black beans (whole, mashed, or chopped, as you like, but do not add the soaking liquid). Add the softened and sliced black mushrooms (without their soaking water) and the shrimp. Toss in the hot oil.*

*After a moment, splash in the tamari and the cooking wine. As soon as the shrimp have turned pinkish-red and most of the alcohol has evaporated (4-5 minutes), add the dissolved cornstarch (or kuzu) and stir. As soon as the cornstarch has bubbled and thickened the sauce, the dish is ready. Adjust with more dissolved cornstarch if thin, or open with a splash of water if too thick. Add the cilantro, then serve immediately with steamed rice and green vegetable.*

### Make Your Own List of Important Dishes to Reflect Important Strategies

You can't take everything you might want with you to a desert island (or to college). The recipes here are just suggestions. I hope everyone is energized to make their own list. The main point is that if options were limited, each choice would matter in a new way. Our health is, in a real sense, a record of the choices we make; any way we can awaken to the importance of our daily choices becomes the personal cornerstone of our healing. Whether you are a teenager fantasizing about being grown up or an adult renewing your health, our food choices are a primary practice.

Everyone can benefit from taking a new look at their own home cooking playbook from a food energetics point of view. It's not just favorite tastes, nor is it simply providing enough proteins, carbs, oils, vitamins and minerals. Feed all the parts of yourself intelligently and skillfully. Good taste is built in to meals that truly match the needs of body and spirit.

**Andrew Sterman** is author of *Welcoming Food: A Guide to Diet as Medicine for Home Cooks and Other Healers* (Classical Wellness Press, New York, available Spring 2019). Based in New York City, Andrew works with clients in the areas of dietary therapy, medical qigong and meditation. Andrew entered Chinese medicine through qigong and taiji in 1988. He began studying the healing potential of food at the same time by enrolling at the Natural Gourmet Cookery School. Seeking to deepen his understanding of food energetics, Andrew began formal study of Chinese herbal medicine, diagnostics, medical theory, and dietary therapy with Master Jeffrey Yuen in 2001. Andrew's parallel career as a professional musician enables him to travel extensively and learn from chefs of many cultures, further inspiring him to discover unique ways to incorporate food and healing into daily cooking routines. At home, Andrew cooks for his wife, author and acupuncturist Ann Cecil-Sterman, and their two children. Visit [AndrewStermanFood](http://AndrewStermanFood.com) on the web.