

## MERIDIAN HEALTH ALMANAC

## A Monthly Guide to Wellness in our Dynamic Universe

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www.moonandlotus.com kquale@moonandlotus.com

## CONNECTED FROM STARS TO MERIDIANS

## Introduction and Acknowledgments

As above, so below. In holographic fashion, the stars in the sky have energies that are mirrored in places on earth, in the months of the year, and in the meridian flows of our bodies. Classical wisdom schools in ancient

China and in many other cultures have given us maps to



Sombrero Galaxy Photo by John Hayes

show how our universe is intimately connected with every cell of our bodies.

As you look through the pages of this Meridian Health Almanac, you will discover images, metaphors and connections that can inspire you in your personal health on all levels. Each lunar month of the year has a special energetic nature and relates to an energy (qi) meridian and its associated organ network in the body. The meridians are active life force energies that manifest in the physical, mental and spiritual levels of our being. You can tune in each month and use these guidelines to increase your level of awareness and get tips that can improve your physical health, mental outlook and spiritual perspective. For therapists or practitioners of Chinese medicine, your wealth of information for assessment and healing will increase

The information in this e-book teaches you how the ancients of China made the complex universe easy to understand in a highly systematized way, for everything from farming to healing. Their observations were first systematized in the *I Ching* (Yijing) or *Book of Changes* (see Appendix B for more about the yijing).

The contents of the Meridian Health Almanac are based on the research of Heiner Fruehauf, Ph.D. LAc, who has studied Chinese classics and symbolism since 1980. In the last 20 years Heiner has done specific research and translations of the holographic nature of the meridians and the twelve earthly branches that is represented in this almanac. He has made the translations accessible to the public and to practitioners of Chinese medicine through his website, <a href="https://www.classicalchinesemedicine.org">www.classicalchinesemedicine.org</a>. A copy of Heiner's holomap, which is a graphic representation of his research and teaching, is included in this booklet for your reference (Appendix A). See his website for more information and join the Associates Forum for access to all the articles and video lectures

Another source of the information in this booklet comes from Heiner's podcasts on True Nature Radio about the meridians and their healing correlations. In these podcasts Heiner teamed with Laurie Regan, ND, Ph.D., naturopathic physician and dean of the Classical Chinese Medicine program at the Natural University of Natural Medicine (NUNM) in Portland, Oregon. These podcasts were designed for the public to show how classic information is still applicable today.

I have also added insights from my own clinical practice and study, to bring you both an interesting read, and health practices to help integrate the material into your life and health. Health practices follow each section.

Kamala Quale

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## THE BODY CLOCK

Most people have heard of our circadian rhythm. It is the 24-hour cycle of day and night in the body that influences when we sleep, awaken and eat. Our circadian rhythm, also called our body clock, is influenced by natural rhythms like sunrise and sunset as well as the rhythm of nature and the moon in each month of the year and in the seasonal flow. Chinese medicine teaches that in each 2-hour segment of the 24-hour cycle, energy concentrates in one of the twelve primary meridians. It then moves from that one into the next and the next in a spiraled flow that traverses the body from head to foot 3 times in 24 hours.



The flow begins in the yin Lung meridian, from 3-5 am, which starts on the chest and travels to the hand where it flows into the yang Large Intestine meridian, from 5-7am. The Large Intestine travels up the arm and shoulder to reach the face at the edge of the nostrils. There in the cheekbone, it connects to the yang Stomach meridian, from 7-9am. The Stomach channel travels through the jaw, down the neck and front of the chest to the outside of the quadricep muscle of the leg, and on the lateral side of

the shin to the foot. At the foot it connects to the yin Spleen meridian which travels up the inside of the leg and onto the front of the abdomen and then to the chest, where it connects with the yin Heart meridian in the armpit area.

Beginning in the chest and circling back to it, these four meridians finish the first cycle. The Lung, Large Intestine, Stomach and Spleen meridians all function to nourish the physical body with air and food. The two yin meridians of these four are the Lung and Spleen. The two yang are the Large Intestine and Stomach. When combined in this yin-yin, yang-yang way, they are called hand and foot partners and are considered extensions of each other.

The next set of four organ meridian systems are the Heart, Small Intestine, Bladder and Kidney. These four nourish the spiritual body, nervous system and brain. The final set of four are the Pericardium, Triple Warmer, Gall Bladder and Liver which nourish human relationship and moving forward towards a common goal.

In this booklet we will follow the sequence of the meridians in the order of the body clock. This order comes from their pairing with each of the twelve lunar months of the year, which in turn are related to one of the hexagrams of the Yijing, or Book of Changes. This is called the system of the twelve earthly branches. For more info about the Yijing see appendix A.

#### TWO DIFFERENT SYSTEMS

The sequence of meridians as described in the body clock is only one of the ways in which meridians are paired. Perhaps the most well-known is the yin-yang pairing of the meridians according to the Five Phase Element system. Here the Lung and Large Intestine are the yin-yang

pair associated with the Metal element, and the Stomach and Spleen are the meridians of the Earth element.

The time of year for some of the organ meridian networks in the twelve earthly branches is different from the Fire Phase Element system. For instance, the Lung is associated with the first lunar month, which puts it in early spring in the system of the twelve earthly branches, and it is associated with autumn in the Five Phase Element system. Although this may at first seem confusing, when you understand the thinking behind each system, you can find the similarities and enrich the tapestry of symbolism and function you have for each meridian.

## HOW TO USE THIS HEALTH ALMANAC

## For everyone:

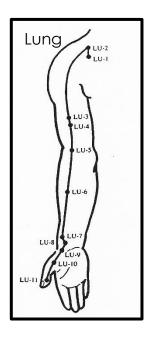
- 1. Use this book as a description of how each month brings a new energetic focus that can help you align with the flow of the universe as we know it. Let it improve the quality of your life and guide your actions, interactions, and decisions.
- Read the descriptions of the functions, energy dynamics, and images associated with the
  organ meridian network. Do some self-assessment. Which meridians and months do you
  really resonate with? Which ones feel balanced in you and which ones need strengthening
  or aligning within yourself.
- 3. At the beginning of each month, re-read the section for the meridian network that is in the spotlight. During the month notice anything in nature, society, or personal interactions that seem aligned with this natural evolution of energy, and which do not. Pay special attention to the Health Practices section and see what you can incorporate in your life that month.
- 4. Look at the meridian route and tap or massage its pathway and points during the month. If any places or points are tense or sore, spend a little extra time with massage to ease it. Attend to the physical organ system that goes with the meridian, i.e. lungs, large intestine, stomach etc. Smile with that organ frequently that month. Nourish it with good food and/or exercise.
- 5. Pay special attention to any disturbing moods or emotions come up during the month, and to what kind of events or relationship issues bring them up. Breathe and be with whatever comes up and ask some deeper questions like, do I have a need that I am not attending to? Is there a way that I am reacting from a habitual pattern that no longer serves me? Is there anything about the guidance given for the month that can help me self-correct?

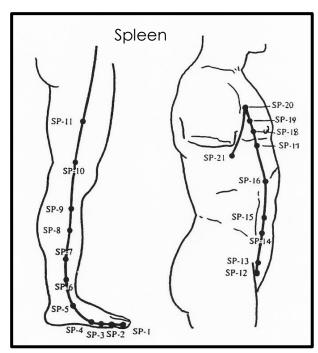
## For health care professionals:

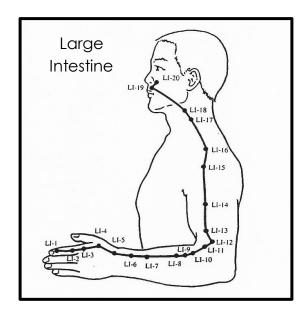
- 6. All the above, and in addition you can use this classic wisdom to inform your work with clients. Think of clients who fit the description of that meridian, or official. Write down how the person manifests the balanced and imbalanced aspects.
- 7. Decide how you might connect with your client by relating some of the information and imagery that you think may be important to the issues they are facing.
- 8. Read over the Healing Practices section for that meridian(s) and ask yourself how you can support your client in moving towards these points. Listen for and affirm inner strength and direction when your client expresses it.

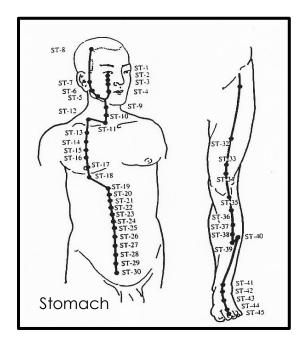
## FOUR MERIDIANS TO NOURISH THE PHYSICAL BODY

The 24-hour cycle of energy flow begins in the Lung meridian network. From there it proceeds to the Large Intestine, Stomach and Spleen meridians. These meridians function to provide air, food and the elimination of waste after birth. This is called post-natal nourishment. They provide nourishment on the physical level and promote the growth of the ego and individuality on the level of the psyche.







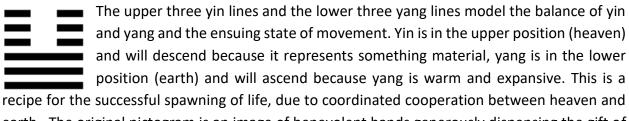


## LUNG - IN CHARGE OF QI

#### MISSION STATEMENT

As the first meridian in the body clock biorhythm, the job of the Lung is to provide vital energy (qi), maintain internal order and rhythm, and regulate the immune system. A baby's post-natal nourishment begins with its first breath. The regular flow of respiration is an example of the way the Lung maintains order and rhythm in the body and connects us with space and time. According to Chinese medicine, the Lung protects the surface of the body including skin and lymph with wei qi, or defensive energy. Strong wei qi protects the part of our immune system that keeps out external pathogens like viruses. On the level of virtue, our expressions of selflessness and dedication to help humanity are part of the Lung function.

HEXAGRAM 11 - TAI, "Peace"



earth. The original pictogram is an image of benevolent hands generously dispensing the gift of life-sustaining water in a downward direction. <sup>1</sup>

TIME OF DAY: 3 a.m. – 5 a.m.

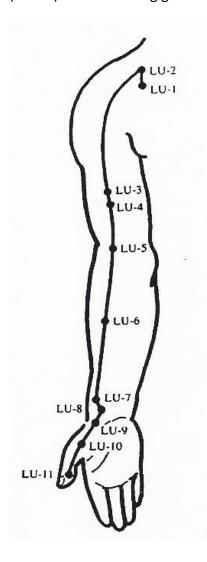
This is the time before sunrise when all is most quiet. Nature is preparing for sunrise and so can we. If you are up during this time, try meditating. Follow your breath and let go into the surrounding peace and quiet. You and the universe are one.

MONTH OF THE YEAR: February 5 – March 5

In the system of the twelve earthly branches, the Lung is associated with the first lunisolar month that begins approximately February 5 to March 5. The lunisolar calendar combines the lunar months with the solar calendar. The change in the month always starts about the 5<sup>th</sup>.

In the western Zodiac, this time correlates to the signs of Aquarius and Pisces. Just like 3am-5am is the quiet time before sunrise, in the first lunar month, nature is quiet and is also being pressurized for the burst of energy that comes with the spring (vernal) equinox. The theme of this time of year is the return of water. Ice is melting, but nature is still holding back while the yang solar energy moves forward. Nature is still cold and dark; pressurized but not leaping forward quite yet. Likewise, with the inhale, our bodies are pressurized. The pressure gives strength to the exhale which facilitates the voice and disperses energy downward and outward to the periphery to protect the surface of the body and moistens the skin.<sup>2</sup> The Chinese medicine classic, the Nei Jing, says the Lung is the upper source of water.

The Organ networks are part of a complex web of symbolic markers and descriptions. The Lung is associated with the phase element Metal in the law of the Five Elements, together with the Large Intestine meridian. Metal is associated with the falling powers of autumn when nature begins to turn inward. At the same time, the Lung appears first, before spring bursts out, in the more complex system of the twelve earthly branches. This system connects the months of the lunar year to the meridians and the body-clock, the bio-rhythmic 24-cycle of qi movement through the meridians in the body. We can think of the Lung as having both a wood/spring and metal/fall aspect. It has the pressurizing, pushing forward movement of spring/wood time (inhale) and the letting go and going inward energy of fall/metal time (exhale).



### MERIDIAN ROUTE

The Lung is a yin meridian with 11 points. It influences the upper outer chest as well as the lungs. The external route of the Lung meridian starts under the clavicle in the first rib space and then runs along the inside of the arm on the thumb side to the elbow, wrist, palm of hand and ends at the cuticle on the inner side of the thumb nail. Along the route are specific points of lowered electrical resistance. Stimulating these points with either the hands or needles creates both local and systemic effects.

#### **ORGAN MERIDIAN NETWORK**

In addition to the external routes shown in the diagrams in this book, there are other branches of the meridians that are internal and link one to another. The internal branches go to the inner organs associated with the meridian. In this case to the lung and the large intestine, which is the paired organ in the five-element system. In addition, each yin meridian system and its yang meridian partner is associated with a sensory organ, body tissue, emotion, function in mind and spirit. Thus, it is called an organ meridian network. These functions may or may not be the same as the functions we correlate to an organ in western medicine. The Lung and Large Intestine organ meridian networks include:

- Nose
- Skin
- Grief
- Instinctive functions- respiration, immune system (Po)



#### QI – VITALITY, LIFE ENERGY

The Lung organ meridian system oversees the gathering and dispersing of qi (vital life force) in the body through the function of respiration. Qi is movement, and movement is the foundation of life as we know it. Therefore, everything has qi as part of its inherent nature. When qi expands it becomes space (yang), when it contracts it becomes matter (yin). Qi is called one of our three inner treasures. The other two are jing, or essence, stored by the Kidney and shen, or spirit, stored by the Heart.

The upper lines in the symbol for qi mean that qi comes from above. The line that extends downward means that qi comes from below. The radical to the left of the downward line means rice. This signifies that qi is a staple source of nourishment.

Chinese medicine practitioners describe the different functions of qi and call it by specific names. Here are some of the things qi does in the body:

- Moves and circulates structural body substances like blood, fluids, and the growth process
- Warms the layers of the body
- Creates a protective shield against external pathogens
- Stabilizes and holds structural organs in place
- Provides the metabolic agent for organ function, I.e. blood production, digestion, elimination

### SYMBOLS FOR THE LUNG

Symbols are used to describe things that are hard to describe in other ways. For the meridians they give us a larger sense of what the ancients were trying to convey about the manifestations of the meridian on all levels of being. Here are some symbols for the Lung organ meridian network.

- Tiger
- Pure light, white light (like sun shining on snow on a mountain top)
- Mountain, a high place that communicates with heaven and distributes water downward to nourish creeks, streams, ponds, rivers, and the earth below.
- Pure sound
- Fresh, crisp air
- Pristine landscape
- Sensitivity
- Honor, principle, and a moral code



ANIMAL: Tiger

The tiger is symbolic of the Lung organ network. By noting the characteristics of tigers, we get an idea of what classical thinkers in Chinese medicine attributed to the power of the Lung in the body. In a singular image, the tiger contains, in truly holographic fashion, almost

everything that could be considered relevant for a comprehensive account of the Lung function."3

- The chief of earth-bound (and mountain) animals
- Likes to be positioned high but remain firmly connected to the earth
- Lives in the wilderness, the outermost layer of human space, i.e. the rain forest, which in Chinese texts is often represented as the body hair, the outermost layer of the body.
- Emblem for beauty, looks, appearance; the lung oversees the skin
- Stands for strength, weaponry (claws, roar, ferociousness) and protection
- Signifies power, authority, and severity (one of the few animals that kill humans).
   Severity is often associated with the Fall season (Metal element), as is justice, vengeance, and the law
- Tigers need "breathing space," and roam and defend vast territories
- Tiger is an emblem of status, as well as confidence of knowing one's rank and place.
- Tigers exhibit sexual prowess and their body parts are treasured aphrodisiacs.
- They have strong bones, beautiful fur, both are symbols of strength and beauty.

## **HEALTHY INNER TIGER**

When we have a healthy tiger and Lung function inside we have:

- Power, physical vitality, and are fully embodied maybe ferocious
- Authority, status, charisma, confidence, good sense of self-worth, command respect, have a sense of nobility
- Bound to earth but yearn for heaven
- Radiant complexion, attractive appearance
- Strong immune system and a clear sense of personal and professional boundaries
- The strong yang qualities are balanced by yin ones like patience, quietude, solitude

## **UNHEALTHY INNER TIGER**

When we have a weak Tiger inside and weak Lung function we can have:

- Physical weakness, reduced immunity, slow reactivity, feeble voice, pale complexion
- Inability to defend against all types of invasive challenges, including viral attacks
- Lack of boundaries; let things get "under the skin."
- Poor growth of body hair

- Inability to breath, claustrophobic, sense of impinged freedom
- Lack of self-worth; physical, social and financial impotence
- Inability to establish oneself and find one's place in society
- Sense of being an outcast and not belonging
- Morally ambiguous, without clear sense of right and wrong but also a stickler for rules, rigid and inflexible.
- Superficiality and obsession with expensive jewelry, clothes, other material trophies
- A desire for vengefulness, obsession with weapons
- Sensation of being unsafe and ill at ease: anxiety, feeling overwhelmed, unsafe, alone or having no place, no power, no money, no peace.
- Grouchiness, moaning and groaning, self-pity
- Disregard for nature, resulting in the destruction of wild spaces and extinction of animal species.<sup>4</sup>

#### ARCHETYPE

When we talk about archetypes associated with the meridians we are describing overall energies that characterize people and behavior patterns. Chinese medicine practitioners are looking for these overall patterns to help assess and treat stress and illness. You can assess yourself by noticing if anything about the strong and weak aspects of the Lung, or the archetype descriptions resonate with you. All of us are a mix of the strong and weak aspects of the Lung. However, some people exhibit Lung characteristics very strongly in their constitution, preferences, and behavior.



One example is a person who resonates with love for the energy of nature in its pure form. This person may be a defender of the environment, someone who loves to hike, garden or landscape. Lung energy figures highly in someone who is very interested in justice and fairness, perhaps the head of an organization with the power to delegate,

and a person who exudes natural authority.

A person with strong Lung energy often has a lot of vitality and keeps busy. S/he can be a good communicator, may have a brilliant mind, and may be aristocratic or aloof in style. Someone who is impeccably dressed, is a good organizer and has a lot of influence over others, may be showing a Lung strong Lung preference.

The lung type likes beauty and perfection and may become overly perfectionistic with high ideals they cannot live up to. They may feel that they or others are never good enough, or that the grass is always greener on the other side. Sensitive, smart, perfectionistic and a little reserved, they may feel like a loner and have trouble connecting to others and to their own feelings.

When we are off balance in the Lung energy we may be overly judgmental, critical, sarcastic, and cynical. We may rile at what is unfair without moving to change it; become overly self-involved, or self-pitying and melancholic.

Honor, bravery, and betrayal are themes for the Lung meridian. A classic example of this is the code of the Samurai warriors who would rather die than go against their word.

## **EMOTION:** Grief

The Lung is classically associated with grief. The function of grief is to help us let go. Grief is appropriate when we experience significant loss; of a loved one, or a job, etc. Working through grief is a process that can take longer than might be expected. Each person works through it in her/his own way. It can be triggered and emerge at times when you thought you were past it. Sometimes it seems your friends or family are ready for you to be over your grief faster than you are. This can lead to relational tension. You may feel that you should not show your grief to others and you may even hide it from yourself. If you repress grief you may become melancholy, disappointed, depressed, self-pitying, angry. With time and natural expression, grief will open to other feelings of acceptance and peace.



Personal rituals can help. Funerals and memorial services are examples of rituals that we do as a community to help us bring closure and a place for wailing and crying. Other examples of special rituals we can do for ourselves are: lighting a candle each day for a loved one, having a special place, like an ancestral altar, where you can put pictures, candles, journal entries etc. Whenever we can become aware of the deeper issues that the grief is triggering for

us, we get closer to understanding what we might need or want that will help us move through the process. We can ask, how is my soul speaking to me?

Grief and anger often go hand and hand. There are five stages named in the grieving process: shock, denial, anger, bargaining, acceptance. They don't necessarily come in order. We can vacillate amongst them. Respect your own process, even if it doesn't meet the expectation of others. If you feel, intuitively, that you are stuck in the grieving cycle, seek professional counseling.

Grief and love are both associated with the chest and heart center. When we feel the love we have for the person or thing we have lost, the feeling can move quickly to grief. Love helps us feel connected, and grief is accompanied by the feelings of loss and emptiness. The more we can stay with the feeling of love and connection, often the sooner we can reach a place of acceptance. Although there is always physical loss, the heart can find its own ways to peace.

#### HEALTH PRACTICES

- Have realistic expectations of yourself and others. With mindfulness and understanding, get to know yourself and your family themes through the lens of archetype. This can help lower personal expectations that are unrealistic, and bring balance to feelings of selfimportance, and lack of self-worth.
- Honor, respect and clear communication are hallmarks of a healthy Lung energy. Give
  these qualities to yourself and extend them to someone today who may need it. This
  could be your pets, people on the street, your partner or children, your boss or an elder.
  Watch the response you get. Like flowers, we open and show our inner beauty in the right
  environment.
- 3. Seek out pure air, open spaces, and mountains to increase your energy, clear your mind and find your inspiration.
- 4. Treasure your love of nature and the environment and do something to take care of it.
- 5. Clean your internal environment with skin brushing, hydrotherapy, sauna with cold shower. These are all great for the skin, lymph, immune system, and detox.
- 6. Watch movies about travel and adventure. Let yourself cry during sad movies if that helps you release, and avoid grief-stricken movies if you are stuck in a grief spiral.

<sup>1</sup> Heiner Fruehauf, "The Science of Symbols, Exploring a Forgotten Gateway to Chines Medicine," Pt 1

<sup>2</sup> Heiner Fruehauf, podcast on Lung, True Nature Radio

<sup>3</sup> Text taken from "The Lung and the Tiger Image: An Example of Decoding the Symbolic Record of Chinese Medicine," by Heiner Fruehauf. www.classicalchinesemedicine.org
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