



Fall: Letting Go With Breath

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 By [Dr. Melissa Carr, B.Sc., Dr.TCM](#) • October 31st, 2011 • 7083 Views


One of the key principles of yoga is a focus on breath. Of course we know that breathing is vital to living.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), "Qi" (pronounced "chee") is often translated as "energy," but sometimes also as "air" or "gas" or "life." The original character for Qi was three wavy lines, like the breath you see on a cold day. There are actually many kinds of Qi--Qi you are born with, Qi you acquire via food, and Qi from breath, just to name a few. This last one, Qi you breathe in, is called Kong Qi.

Kong Qi is processed by the lungs in TCM, just as it is biologically. But unlike the

teachings of western medical practice, the TCM Lungs* and Large Intestines are paired organs.

One of the principle concepts of TCM is the 5 elements diagnostic system. TCM recognizes 5 seasons: winter, spring, summer, late summer, and fall. Each season is represented by a pair of organ systems: Kidney/Bladder, Liver/Gallbladder, Heart/Small Intestines, Spleen/Stomach, and Lungs/Large Intestines.

Fall relates to the energy of the Lungs and Large Intestines. They are paired organs in the way that they are both organs of elimination. We eliminate digestive waste via the large intestines and respiratory waste (CO2) via the lungs. Seasonally, fall is the time of harvest. It is a time when trees start to let go of their leaves and crops of fruits, vegetables, and grains are gathered in preparation for the winter. "Letting go" are key words for the fall season and this fits with TCM's principles of seasonal energies.

Yoga is often a practice of letting go. One of the key ways of doing this is through the breath. Breathe in, breathe out. Though sometimes the emphasis may be placed on one part of the breath over the other, such as the tension-releasing breath out during Lion's Breath, the focus is usually on equanimity in the breath.

Ujjayi breathing is one such equal breath. Ujjayi breathing is said to strengthen the lungs, help with focus, and detoxify the body. The breath in should be the same strength and duration as the breath out.

Bringing TCM and Yoga practices together, fall is an ideal time to be reminded of the power of the breath. Breathe in Kong Qi to vitalize the body and mind. Breathe out to let go of waste and unneeded blockages.

** To clarify the differentiation between the Traditional Chinese Medicine organ...*

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