



Balancing the Earth Element

The Earth element relates to the season of Late Summer. If any dance was to capture the essence of Wu Tao this is the one. Earth is our physical home. It reflects our bodies as the home for our spirit. It is the manifestation of life force in form and as such it embodies the feminine principle completely. In all its beauty and wonder, the earth as manifestation of Life Energy invites us to rest in her and to give thanks for the bounty that Life brings us in all ways. In Chinese Medicine it is the time of harvest. Its nature is still and receptive, opening to and receiving what Life has to offer.

The benefits of embodying this element are profound. A sense of gratitude immediately opens us to Life's gifts in whatever form they present. Gratitude allows space for deep connection to life, through trust, to emerge. Bliss is found in this state. It is where we realises our oneness with Life and its flow and can open ourselves completely to its expression through us.

Out of balance, the energy of earth manifests as worry and obsessive thought as the mind which feel itself as separate from life attempts to control the inflow and outflow of energy in life. This imbalance shows itself in how we nourish ourselves in all areas. Physically, we may focus on food, taking in too much for our needs or not enough depending on our patterns around physical nourishment. Emotionally, we may give ourselves away through loving others too much or alternatively not offering enough love and support. Both these patterns come from a sense of deprivation of love and energy. Love is what Life energy feels like when it flows from our heart and spirit.

The Earth Dance in Wu Tao is a dance of prayerful gratitude. As we do the simple movement sequence to each direction we surrender inwardly to the stream of Life and open up to receive her gifts as they flow to us through every opportunity, challenge and manifestation of Life experience. It is impossible to resist life from this place! A deep sense of peace begins to permeate one's whole being and flows into all we do. Here, we are one with the very flow of life itself, and harmony and balance are restored.

When we are connected to the Earth element our body and spirit can be fully integrated and the inner marriage of Yin and Yang occurs. We are gifted with the power to manifest our fullest potential as spirit filled human beings. We see Life is all its magnificent glory and we respect Life force in all things. It is impossible to act out of ignorance, for being at One with the Earth in this way brings about a state of compassion for all beings and all life.



To bring yourself into balance with the Earth element

- Wear Yellow or orange.
- Give thanks for everything in your life, often.
- Nourish, love, nurture, support and believe in yourself. (just as a mother would take care of her child).
- Eat warm and nourishing foods.

Ask yourself these questions:

What do I have gratitude for?

What do I love?

Where am I going?

The Earth Dance in Wu Tao

The purpose of the Earth dance is to place you firmly in your centre, where you can be in the stream of Life and experience a natural flow of being. In the earth dance, you give thanks for what you have in your life, what lives within you – your beauty and gifts, and for what flows towards you. You are working on the Stomach and Spleen channels which flow up the front of your body. Opening and stretching these channels will improve your digestion and still the mind.

Points to remember when doing the Earth Dance.

- Visualise yourself being carried along by the river.
- Generate a sense of gratitude.
- Pull up your body from soles of feet, to the top of your head.
- When bending and stretching knees, keep knees over toes.
- Keep moving throughout the dance, not stopping in any one position.

Food for the Earth Element

Earth corresponds to the season of late-summer. It is harvest time when the trees, plants and vines are laden with fruit waiting to be picked. It is a time of abundance, where one reaps the benefit of what has been sown in the previous months.

Foods that harmonise and centre are good for the earth element and the organs it governs, the Stomach and Spleen. These include those foods that have a mildly sweet flavour, orange or yellow vegetables and fruits and foods that are round when whole. Most grains are sweet, as are carrots, pumpkin, sweet potato, papaya, apricots, peaches, pears, beetroot, potatoes, mushroom, grapes, tomatoes, figs, almonds, coconut and sesame seeds.

The Spleen and Stomach are responsible for the digestion, transformation and distribution of food and nutrients.

Too much raw and cold foods damage the digestive fire of the Spleen which can cause Dampness.

Symptoms of dampness in the Spleen include lack of appetite, bloating, diarrhoea and a heavy sensation in the head.

Mucous-forming foods and very sweet foods can also contribute to Dampness in the body. Dampness combined with Heat, Wind or Cold can result in chronic conditions which are difficult to treat such as cancer, chronic fatigue, arthritis and multiple sclerosis.

Recipes

Sweet Potato Mash

Warming and naturally sweet, this is excellent for tonifying the spleen. It is delicious served with grilled fish or chicken.

Peel and chop 1-2 large orange sweet potatoes. (1 large potato will serve 2 people).

Place in pot and cover with water.

Add 2cm grated fresh ginger to water.

Boil until sweet potatoes are cooked.

Drain off excess water.

Mash, adding soy or tamari to taste.

Serve as a side dish.

Red Lentil Soup

250gms red lentils

1 onion

50grms butter.

2 stick celery

1 tspn cumin

½ tspn paprika

2 eggs.

1 litre chicken stock/vege stock or water.

1 tblspn plain flour.

Chop onion and celery and fry in 25 gms butter. Add the lentils which have been washed and drained thoroughly. Stir until the lentils are coated with the butter. Add the stock and bring to the boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes or until the lentils are cooked. Add more stock/water if needed. Puree lentils.

In a separate saucepan, heat 25gms butter and add flour, cook for 1 minute.

Beat egg yolks, add a little of sauce, stir and then return to the sauce.

Stir sauce into lentils and gently heat.

Add lemon juice and season to taste.

This soup is delicious when served with a crusty loaf of sourdough rye bread and a bowl of greek yoghurt combined with chopped parsley.



Song of the Earth

Home, sweet home.
I have arrived!
The earth welcomes me
Nurtures and heals me.
Where else would I rather be?
I have surrendered and I am here.
No where else to go
But here.
No one else to be
But me.
I am carried along
in the flow of the Great Mother energy
Knowing no boundaries.
Mind is still and empty.
Deep Peace prevails.
Life continues
I am one with it all
She carries me along and my path unfolds
I trust completely the process of life
I am home and free.