

## It's All in the Balance - Feng Shui and Ayurveda

*Inside/out and Outside/in – 'till you don't know which your in!*

This is a story about balance: two different and ancient systems, one working from the inside/out and the other from outside/in; each yielding the same revelation: that when you achieve balance on the inside, the outside is altered, and, vice-versa, when the energy is balanced on the outside, in your external environment, it creates a sense of inner balance.

Conversely, when we are *out of balance* internally, the external world reflects this back to us, and when there is an imbalance in the external environment, this too is reflected in how we feel internally, whether or not we are conscious of it.

Whichever place you start (from the inside or the outside), there comes an exquisite point where there is neither inside nor outside but simply an experience of yourself as part of a much larger Whole: the membrane of separation dissolves in the arising balance.

One of the most profound processes to help your physical body regain balance with an accompanying sense of over all inner balance and well-being is cleansing and detoxifying. An equally powerful process, ostensibly for the external environment that brings astounding inner balance is Feng Shui, a Chinese system for balancing the energy ("chi") in your environment to enhance the quality of your life. One process is about cleansing, beginning with the colon, and the other about balancing the energies in a room, house or even outdoors to bring about a sense of well being and harmony. What could these two processes possibly have in common?

Recently I moved into a new office space in Murphys, a lovely large well proportioned room with two windows, lots of light, a place for my Kirlian photography dark room, its own entrance to the suite's bathroom – everything I needed to function easily and smoothly, and for clients to feel comfortable and relaxed.

But somehow, after a few months of arranging and rearranging the things I need in there (I do have a fair amount of small tools and other paraphernalia, such as colorpuncture light pens, small brain wave machines (that doesn't mean for small brains!) aromatherapy oils, etc. that need to be accessible) I began to feel that the energy in the room just wasn't settling down exactly. It was light, open, and spacious and yet there was subtle unrest, and a lack of warmth. Each day as I moved around the massage table, I would gaze in various directions with an eye to what could be altered to change the overall feeling in the space.

Basically, I wanted anyone who walked through the door to have an immediate sense of "ah, I can relax and let down my shoulders." This room seemed to feel exhilarating, inspiring, alive, but lacked a feeling of relaxation and calm... an apt reflection of its owner perhaps?

In former offices I had applied the principles of Feng Shui gleaned from several books that describe the "bagua" and the balancing of the five elements – wood, fire, earth, metal and water. The words Feng Shui translate to "wind" and "water". The bagua is a way of viewing your house or an individual room in a grid of 8 sections around a

center (earth) that symbolize significant areas of your life such as love relationships, money, knowledge and self-cultivation, and health and family. The baguas have a relationship to the elements, and one can work to balance the elements and strengthen the bagua through the choice of shapes, colors, patterns and symbolic objects.

While my previous offices lent themselves easily to the grid one superimposes on the floor plan, such that the books could go in the “knowledge/self-cultivation” (wisdom) corner, the spiritually related things in the spiritual corner, the clients chair in the relationships corner etc., the configuration in my new space wasn’t that way. There were other factors dictating the location and organization of things, regardless of the bagua, but when my dirty laundry basket ended up in my “prosperity” corner, I decided it was time to call in a Feng Shui consultant!

Now here’s where the perennial lesson of the difference between *knowing* about something and *experiencing* it happened yet again. Christina Jantzen of Sutter Creek arrived for a consultation. We spent a good hour on a space of about 250sq.ft.

Her first observation was the dominant element of metal because the walls are grey, the trim white (both colors associated with metal), the carpet a light enough beige to qualify as white, on top of which rested several rocks and crystals (also metal) in one area, and the two wicker chairs for my client and me to sit in were also white and grey! Now without incriminating *myself* in any way...the inner trait of metal happens to be *mental*.

“So how do you balance all this metal?” was the obvious question.

“Fire. Fire melts metal” came the answer. Fire can be brought into the space as it is represented in Nature by sunlight (which was abundant with the shades completely up), the color red (which figured prominently in two paintings in the room, one of which contained triangular shapes, also fire) and any fire-related symbolic objects such as candles, colors in the red spectrum, and lighting.

We both looked at the two grey and white wicker chairs.

“Those were given to me, and I like them better than the other chairs I had in here which were too square, dark, and an ugly color,” I said thinking that since the grey and white happened to match the wall colors, they sort of fit, even though the style was a bit garden-like for an office space.

“Well, perhaps you could put some red cushions on them. That would change them quite a bit, and a “throw” with some earth tones.

“You could also add a few red candles here and there,” pointing to the alter space between the windows, and the baker’s rack which held supplies (many little bottles and miscellaneous objects) on the opposite wall.

So with metal balanced by those suggestions, there was no avoiding the next most obvious issue, much to my chagrin. As Christina’s eyes gently surveyed the four walls of the room, she simply observed with a neutral tone that there was a rather continuous line of things on the floor. Between the chairs and table to the left of the entrance, the altar on the next wall, with minerals and rocks on the floor, the laundry basket in the corner, my work table, a bookshelf, and finally, the baker’s rack, there was virtually no floor space that wasn’t occupied with something. And secondly, with the exception of the baker’s rack, everything was about the same height, creating an absence of much upward energy.

There were also too many little things visible to the eye, and piles of articles, brochures and such on the floor...Realizing I may be paying a consultant to be my mother and tell me to clean up my room, I quickly scanned each wall, ledge and windowsill for what could go...*besides* the laundry basket.

We talked about every detail, perhaps some of the little stuff that is clutter to the eye could disappear into a cabinet with a door, or drawers. But that was actually *adding* something when I was trying to eliminate. Of course, the piles of paper, the satchel, any other stuff on the floor that was unnecessary could be cleaned up, and perhaps the small things on shelves, windowsills and mantel could be clustered so as to make space in between things rather than a line of little things without a break. "Makes sense to me." I'm thinking to myself.

The center of the room, where my massage table is placed, is "earth" in the bagua grid. "That seems good," I reflect to myself, "nice and grounded." Christina suggests adding an earth colored rug in this center, rectangular or square as that is the shape associated with earth.

"I can do that," I replied, mentally placing a tan rectangular jute rug I have in that area with a new feeling of excitement about how my room was shaping up, at least in our imaginations.

So with a list of many easy and quick things I could do immediately, and a few more challenging things that would require shopping, such as the right red cushions to make those chairs work better, possibly a cabinet to rid the space of the clutter of little bottles and equipment, maybe a "throw" to bring some earth energy to those too white chairs as well, I felt ready to transform my space and see if the end result really did create a different feeling experience.

As we concluded, Christina asked if I always had the shades completely up. "Yes", I replied, "it's great light in here". Since we are on the second floor, and there are curtains on the lower half of the windows for a feeling of privacy (even though nobody is walking around on the roofs across the way to see in anyway), there's no reason to pull the shades down. "Hmmm, that's true," Christina responded thoughtfully, but still when I have a massage I might like it a little darker, more relaxing. It's kind of a time to be inward."

I had to reflect upon that. Yes, on one level there is an inward process of relaxation, but then, too, much of my work is about bringing things to consciousness, *to the light*. That is, in fact, what separates my work from basic massage therapy: the intention *through* massage therapy and bodywork, is more about clearing out old energies and allowing awareness and insights to *come to light*, to create a change, than creating a cocoon with palliative measures to help a person cope with the stress of their life for another week, unchanged.

I was realizing how much *I* really like light, and how that is reflected in the work I do and how I do it. But my room is for both me (if I feel good in the space, my work will benefit) *and* for those who come to be supported in their own process of healing and growth, and perhaps a little softer light creates a more relaxed space for that to happen.

Christina slowly pulled the shade just halfway down the upper window. My first reaction was that the room seemed too dim for me, but much better for my clients.

“Just try it for a few days, and see how you feel,” Christina counseled. And with that, we left the room, said goodbye, unaware then that a process was about to begin that changed more than my room.

Immediately, I went out to pick up red candles, and a few other things Christina suggested. Later that day, when I followed up on another of her suggestions to hang a few of my credentials on the “career” part of the bagua, I noticed that the black frames that held them added something, surprisingly. I looked around and realized there wasn’t any black in the room until then, and adding that little bit of black seemed to do something. It gave an experience of something definite and grounded. I liked looking at that wall, and it wasn’t about viewing my accomplishments, it was the impact of black.

By the end of the day, I had cleaned all the paper piles and other items off the floor and removed anything that was not essential, scanning every shelf and ledge for which items could go, and “grouping” the rest. As I left for the day, I could already feel the significant difference those small changes made most of all the impact of being absolutely discriminating about anything out of order or extraneous, any extra decorative or symbolic items, favorite small bowls that were pretty but not needed, a vase etc. I was beginning to develop “Feng Shui eyes” that could no longer ignore any loose ends, and that perceive much more clearly how my environment speaks. I felt inspired!

As the next few weeks passed, I continued to notice even more details that could be simplified or moved out of sight, and I was also becoming aware of a different feeling inside. I had more energy toward my work and the future, a desire to have each session be balanced, impeccable. Even the beautiful but non-functioning Kwan Yin fountain that I’d repeatedly tried to fix to no avail, suddenly was easy to repair as I quickly saw that the pump was not connected properly!

I was still intending to go shopping for the cushions and cabinet when Christina called to see how I was doing. She must have sensed it might be awhile before I managed to follow up on the shopping end, and kindly offered to accompany me, saying she herself had a few things to look for.

There we were looking at red cushions...not the right size, not the right style for wicker chairs etc. Some “maybes” but nothing really *spoke*. Same with the cabinet ideas. We’d surveyed two stores and I had not purchased anything, not even a small glass vase on our list, although we’d seen several that would suffice. We did find some beautiful red poppies which we’d discussed earlier for my prosperity corner.

As we were walking along to check out another store for pillows, I said, “You know Christina, I have often thought it would be nice to have just one really nice, comfortable chair for my client, and I can lean against my massage table for short conversations or wheel over the small chair I use when I work sometimes, for anything more in depth. Let’s just get rid of the wicker chairs.”

Immediately Christina’s whole demeanor changed, as her face relaxed and lit up. We both suddenly felt lighter, like skipping almost. “Wow, what a difference that made when you said that,” Christina remarked.

“Sometimes we spend so much energy working *around* the problem. We spend so much time and energy tip-toeing around the flaw, rather than deal with it directly. Everything we’re doing is to try and balance the impact of those chairs.” She spoke this

revelation as if distilled fresh in this instance, although likely it is one she has experienced with Feng Shui many times before.

At this moment, I felt like jumping up and down. “What an insight about everything that is” I exclaimed. “I mean this applies to *everything!* Look at relationships...how often we think, maybe if I just work more at this other thing over here, cook more special food, pay more attention to this or that, things will be better rather than really deal directly with what is not working.

Now we were both nearly euphoric, as Christina commented on how much more energy and movement there was as soon as I said “get rid of the chairs”, and we began to envision my whole space anew. It was true.

As we walked toward a place to eat lunch, having decided to take a break to celebrate our breakthrough, nourish ourselves, and re-vision the new direction this room was taking, now that the chairs were out, I reflected on how often it is that we hold on to something that we don't completely love, just because someone gave it to us and we “should make use of it”. We “make do” with things without fully realizing the impact or cost of doing so. Just how much energy is sub-consciously tied up in things that don't really satisfy or inspire us! How much energy was suddenly available when we named the problem, and changed direction.

For Christina the lesson was about how her endeavor to work with what people already have can make her too hesitant to suggest a change, if it was not something the person truly loved. She described a whole bedroom she'd helped a client with, choosing curtains, a matching ensemble of bedspread, shams, curtains, even an upholstered headboard to work around a dated high-low brown carpet the woman already had in that room. In the end, when the woman experienced the impact of the new décor, the carpet had to go anyway.

Beyond the importance of addressing the flaw rather than working around it lay the even deeper issue of how often the end result of any endeavor suffers when we sacrifice honesty and our commitment to the quality of the end result to the values of being “*nice*”, fair, and considerate of other's feelings.

By now the lessons of Feng Shui were piling up, and were all *adding* up to self empowerment - the power and willingness to choose what you want, to *vision* what you want rather than operate from default by living with whatever comes your way. I was slowly becoming aware that whatever I was doing with my room was really about materializing other changes in my life: translating thoughts I've had about my work itself, and who I am in it into ways of doing things differently, being different from the inside about how I go about my work. Something was going on that felt like a renewal and rebirth of what goes on *in that room* and in my life.

We headed toward a consignment/new furniture store Christina frequented, and, as it turned out, the denouement of the day's expedition. Within a short period of time, we'd found the perfect chair and a black Chinese cabinet with drawers in which to hide some of my tools of the trade. As soon as the decision to buy these was made, everyone in the store was gathering around us saying how much they liked these items and wanted to buy them. We loaded the items into my car and drove back home envisioning my place of work in a whole new light. I could hardly wait to paint the legs of my new chair black, along with a simple wooden stool I'd found to support a round glass table top. Both black and the glass bring in the element of water.

Following a flurry of black painting activity (even my white bookshelf was transformed by black to match my new cabinet), I carried my new chair, cabinet, black stool, red poppies, new earth colored “throw” for the chair up the stairs in such anticipation I managed to get them through doorways that under any other circumstance would be too narrow. Voila! The subtle light, the bright red poppies and living energy of the tall palm in yes, my prosperity corner, the welcoming and grounding chair for my clients (and for *me* as well) “all brought together with the throw” (which has become Christina’s and my Feng Shui “phrase de jour”) all together vibrate the love and attention born from the process as a whole to achieve balance.

As the space all came together in its new energy, I did too. So many things I had wished to be different in the course of my day’s work began to change. Less stress, less time pressure, more enjoyment of what *is* happening rather than self-criticism for what cannot be fit into the time frame, no more trying to do too much. Everyday that I work in that space, I feel uplifted, inspired and yet calm, secure in myself, and in complete harmony with my purpose for being there.

At a recent Open House for Inner Space, our collective office which includes four other practitioners, people seemed to gravitate to this space and return to it, conscious or not of the power of subtle energies to create a feeling of warmth, peace, harmony and yet, *aliveness!* “This room feels so good” our guests were saying as they looked around, almost as if trying to find and name the ultimate source of their experience.

While I set out to work externally, to create an environment for my workplace, there is no doubt that the process became *internal* with powerful ripples through my life as a whole. My “Feng Shui eyes” extend into the other places I inhabit, and into other sensibilities and care about myself and my world. I could feel Feng Shui unfolding like a lotus flower into a life long journey of living in harmony with Nature and also *my* nature.

Throughout the years, one way I have honored a new cycle as Nature’s seasons change, is to experience a process of cleansing as a way of “cleaning house”. I usually have an intention to both put some things – patterns, fixations, projects - to rest or completion (“let go” in other words) and also to recommit or bring forth new activities or attitudes (renewal and regeneration).

While cleansing involves changes in my diet, intake of specialized herbal supplements to literally clean out my body, the process has always been about signaling a positive change on all levels, physical, emotional and spiritual, a sort of inner Feng Shui. I’ve done 3 day cleanses, week long and even a three week fast. Cleanses are not necessarily fasts, however. One can eat lighter foods, consume fresh organic vegetable juices, drink water, take herbal and psyllium supplements and spend more time at a slower pace, giving oneself the opportunity to reflect, meditate, generally take more conscious care of oneself. Basically the intention is to give your body a rest from digestion so it can catch up on ridding the body of accumulated toxins and restore balance to the functions of the body. That achieved, one always experiences an improved state of mind and energy.

Immediately after my “Feng Shui experience” in honor of spring, one of the most auspicious times to undertake a cleansing process, I began “Panchakarma”, a powerful detoxifying, rebalancing and regenerating process within the larger Ayurvedic system from India. “Ayurveda” means the “science of life” and is a complete system for living that includes not only diet, but yoga, meditation, and a comprehensive philosophy of balance on all levels of life.

In Ayurveda, there is the basic concept of “balancing the “doshas”. “Doshas” are constitutional body types and associated temperaments, “Vata” (Air and Space), “Pitta” (Fire/Water) and “Kapha” (Water/Earth), each with particular physical, emotional/psychological and spiritual qualities, or attributes. The seasons, the stages of life, and certain foods all have correlations with the doshas. When we are not living in balance, we begin to develop a particular type of imbalance or “derangement” of one or more of the doshas which will ultimately lead to dis-ease.

Imbalances can come from eating improper foods, an absence of self-care, any excesses, seasonal changes, and the stress we allow in our daily life that can create an accumulation of toxins in the body and mind. For example, when “vata” with the attribute of “movement” (air and space) becomes out of balance, it becomes confusion, poor memory and manifests in digestive problems. As a society which collectively operates in a stressful pattern at a fast pace that tends to ignore the natural rhythms of healthy living, most people suffer from some level of a “vata disturbance”, regardless of our individual doshas. Individually we may also be out of balance in other ways based on our personal constitutions and natural inclinations; hence the importance of listening to your own body, your personal reactions to foods and life experiences, and honoring your whole being by making appropriate choices through knowing what you need as an individual.

Once again the qualitative difference between *knowing about* something and *experiencing* it was mine to appreciate. While I’ve know enough conceptually about Ayurveda to know my “dosha” and those of my friends, (and could readily correlate the respective “derangements”), my familiarity with the system was mostly with Ayurvedic concepts, philosophy, and cooking or medicinal herbs.

Having experienced the power of cleansing in general, over many seasons, my decision to do the Ayurvedic version of the cleansing process, Panchakarma, was a leap from concept to practice. Pancha (five) karma (actions, process) is a cleansing process that consists of specific types of treatments that are balancing to the body, mind and emotions. One should undertake this only with an Ayurvedic specialist as it is tailored to the individual, and it requires a week of preparation – “Purvakarma”.

The place I chose, Blue-Sage Sanctuary, outside of Nevada City, is truly a private sanctuary intended specifically for individualized healing, working with only one or two people at a time. Stewarded by Ragaia Belavoric, the land, its flowing waters and all who perform the various treatments there hold a sensitive and wise space for one’s personal healing journey

Purvakarma prepares your body for the core treatments performed to calm, stimulate, or balance the “doshas” and eliminate excesses in the body. One begins to lighten up on the food (eliminate meat, dairy, alcohol, coffee), drink ghee (clarified butter) in warm water or herbal tea with digestive herbs (“dapana”) every morning, prepare “kitchadi” (a blend of mung beans and basmati rice) as your staple food for the next 3 weeks, precede each meal with dapana, begin a regimen of self-massage with

warm sesame oil, and allot dedicated time for yoga or stretching, and meditation. Already, for most of us, this period represents a significant refocusing of attention to how we nourish ourselves in every way. Nourishment becomes more than the food we eat as the importance of time with oneself in massage, yoga and meditation are valued ways to nourish one's well being.

The preparation of your body (and your mind) with easier to digest food and slowing down your pace to have more reflective time, allows one to receive the optimal benefits from the deeper cleansing treatments of Panchakarma that follow. The primary purpose of the core treatments is to move toxins from the cells of the body into the gastrointestinal tract from which they can then be eliminated. By restoring balance with the primary forces of the doshas, the elimination of wastes becomes an incidental result.

The core treatments of Panchakarma include: daily vigorous and rhythmic massage, unique to Ayurveda, (often performed by two people) with specifically selected oils and aromatic herbs to move energy and toxins (Abhyanga); the pouring of a decoction of oil and herbs onto the forehead and hair/scalp (Shirodhara); medicated enemas (Basti) to remove wastes from the intestines; an herbal steam (Swedana) to relax and continue to release toxins through the skin; and various other selected treatments, such as herbally induced purgation or nasal cleanse (Nasya) based upon individual conditions. Since the nose is a direct channel to the brain, this treatment not only helps sinus and related issues, but unblocks the passageway for the breath, our “inspire-ation” to affect our consciousness.

As the treatments worked their magic, each day I could feel the old pattern of overfilling everything from cooking pots to my daily schedule give way to more space just to be - to sit in Nature. Curious how I resist this space as if any empty moment threatens boredom, when my experience in actuality is so rich with peace!

The beauty of Ayurveda is that it is a profound all-encompassing system of living, over 5000 years old, in which the knowledge about the needs of our physical bodies is just one petal of the unfolding Lotus flower. When one begins to regain balance at the very fundamental level of diet and the physical body, there is a natural flow beyond food choices to those that affect our emotional and spiritual bodies as well. In fact they truly cannot be separated, as we learn to *manage* our energies on all levels. I said “*manage*” our energies which implies taking responsibility for our energy by *choosing* how we live (our food, our schedules, our foci, our activities, exercise, meditation) rather than being at the mercy of whatever we feel as a result of poor or unconscious choices, or failure to choose at all!

While Panchakarma may be the ultimate, most in-depth, comprehensive, and surprisingly gentle way to integrate cleansing into your own regimen for health and disease prevention (or in relation to many illnesses), some form of detoxification and cleansing is a keystone to health and well-being. It is “a given” that your commitment of time, energy and focus, will definitely result in “a cleaner machine”, a calm and more balanced energy, temporary weight loss, greater awareness of how much time, energy and focus we usually have on food, and daily insights about your particular patterns - eating and emotional.

What is not acknowledged so clearly, however, is how much cleaning out your colon has to do with Consciousness! More direct and immediately effective than any metaphysical or spiritual reading I do in my life, *colon-cleansing changes consciousness*. Colors in Nature are more vivid, one's state of mind and energy is calm yet awake, aware, and gently focused. For me, its greatest gift is this surprising and welcomed predominant awareness of Love - love for the moment, love for what is around me, love for myself and love for others, as I am more in my true Nature and therefore can better see another's. While this won't stop me from reading things that inspire me, it simply stands as a revelation of how interconnected every part of me is and that unless you "clean out the basement" once in awhile, (Feng Shui considers the colon the "garage", where we store all our junk), and recommit to making the choices that keep it clean, all the grand thoughts and ideas that perennially float through the upper stories sit on a toxic foundation!

Amazing as this shift in consciousness seems to me, each time I re-discover the "colon connection", there's a kind of inherent logic to this when you think about it. The primary process of a cleanse is detoxification, followed later by more restoring and regenerating phases. As my body rids itself of all the toxins from the air, electronic environments, food and stress, I rid myself of worry, stored resentments, unexpressed anger and frustrations or disappointments. As emotional pollution clears, our true Nature shines through just as the sun breaks through the clouds.

Through my experience of the processes of Feng Shui and Panchakarma, the word "balance" is no longer the rather nebulous, all purpose word often used in the healing realms (as in "this balances your energies") and has become rich, meaningful, and *fundamental* to living in harmony. These experiences have deepened my understanding and appreciation of the relationship between balance and results; that is, what happens as a result of achieving or working toward balance in some area whether it be your body, a relationship, a physical space like your house or your office, or areas of your life such as work and family, work and fun, work and...(remember...balance!)

I've come to understand balance, not as a thing you can set out to achieve directly – like today I'm going to clean the garage or pay all my bills. Balance is a subtle thing that *arises* as a result of many conscious choices we make. It is like courting the Muse that brings the poem. I can strive to write a poem, or cultivate the place in me that is creative, from which the poem is born. Since the source of dis-ease is an imbalance of one sort or another, when we cultivate and/or restore balance, we are not treating symptoms but getting to the cause of the symptoms and their prevention. The urge to clean up your room or loose weight is our system as an organism seeking balance without our awareness, necessarily, of the deeper need.

How my body or my office space feels is the result of paying attention to many details and making choices that ultimately allow an energy to be present. As I pay attention to my living patterns, diet, exercise, time to reflect and rest, *choosing* where I focus my energy and attention, the result is more than the sum of all these "little"

decisions. From balance comes something even more important - harmony, a higher vibration and attunement of ourselves with our world.

The goal may be like the North Star – it is not about arriving, but a guide that increases the quality of your life. Few of us may maintain such a disciplined stable routine 100% of the time, certainly not I, however there is no doubt that the experience of “heading that direction” awakens awareness and commitment to living *toward* balance, and a new respect for the value of its pursuit.

The essence of both Ayurveda and Feng Shui has many teachings in common: There is **Intention** behind the action. The desire might be for a more beautiful body or room, but underneath is the intention of one’s “wise-self” to create balance.

Our **environment**, external and internal, is a **reflection of our consciousness** and **also the creator of it**. Cleaning up your colon, or your garage, creates change!

**Awareness of what your environment is expressing to you** is important.

Feng Shui relates to the seen (water) and the unseen (wind), the conscious and the sub-conscious, the inner world and the outer world. In Ayurveda one’s awareness of what foods and activities support balance (or create imbalance) is essential to the choices we make in both our inner and outer worlds.

**Balance needs space.** The Ayurvedic principle, that after a meal our stomach should be 1/3 food, 1/3 liquid, and 1/3 empty for the digestive fires to work properly, conveys the importance of space, a hallmark of the natural laws of Feng Shui.

**The attention to detail honors life** and in so doing, **we honor ourselves**. From inside to outside, from microcosm to macrocosm, there is a beautiful message for us about self-love and about the laws of balance in these ancient practices that can help us de-clutter our lives, our colons and our consciousness, to make our lives more *empty*, *more spacious*, not more *full*!

**Living in harmony with Nature is basic.** Our outer surroundings and inner rhythms can take their cue from Nature when we live in relation to seasonal changes, and cycles of life. While spring is an optimal time to do a cleanse (as is late fall), it is good as the seasons change to align ourselves with Nature. As we move into the season of summer and increasing heat, foods that cool are more harmonious (more balancing) than the heavier foods of fall and winter. Eating what is *in season locally* is the best choice for balance not only in your physical body, but the “body politic”.

It is also beneficial to think in terms of balancing the inherent heat of the season, which is the Pitta time of year, by taking special care to not increase the heat by baking in the sun and doing athletic activities in the heat of the day, especially for Pitta individuals. Irritability and anger, which relates to the liver, are the result of excess heat. Cooling your head in some flowing water may be the best antidote.

While each change of the season brings increased vulnerability to disease, it also offers the opportunity to “clean up our act” from spring cleaning and seed planting, summer’s action and growth, fall’s releasing and harvesting, to winter’s nesting and resting. Nature is the Master teacher in the cultivation of balance. The power of both Feng Shui and Ayurvedic principles lies in the understanding and living according to the laws of Nature. The balance and harmony that comes forth from our practicing these principles is magic, and, according to Dion Fortune, “magic is the art of changing

consciousness at will”. Indeed, it is in cultivating balance that our consciousness changes without any effort to change it, and it becomes a consciousness with no inside or outside. As the macrocosm and microcosm reflect one another as Wholeness, each part of the other, we (our consciousness) can be *anywhere, everywhere* – from the colon to the cosmos, with love!

P.S. While writing about how attention to detail balances energy which creates a consciousness, I thought of new local businesses that epitomize this experience and/or support it: Yoga classes at Tranquility on Main Street in Murphys, Outer Isle food distribution of locally procured organic produce and other items; Mineral, an inspiring dining experience that nourishes the soul as well as the body; Harmon Gardens, with artful locally grown flower arrangements with a “Feng Shui” touch; and see the new Directory in this issue for all the health practitioners who work with balance in one way or another!