

Characters of Healing; Images of Life

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Spring 2010

(or 4707, give or take a few years . . .)

Lessons of the Wood Element -

The Changes and Challenges of Life bring forth and require new growth. That, as they say, "Just Is". So in aspiring to live life well, the question becomes- "*How do we grow and change so that we create a life closer to our hearts desire?*" With that question in mind, let's explore four of the characters related to the Wood Element and how they can help us craft answers to the changes and the challenges life brings -

木

Mu/ Wood - a pictograph of a tree. In this picture we see roots 乚 growing into the earth, gathering water and nourishment; a trunk 丨 rising to the sky, receiving air, light and warmth; and branches 一 of the tree growing and spreading wide. Trees, and the wood in us interacts with earth and sky, and thus grow and branch out to the world. *Connecting with the earth through our diet and by grounded, "rooted" activity (such as walking in the woods), along with connecting with the sky by deeply breathing, and enjoying the Sun's light and warmth, engenders within us the Qi necessary and essential to growth.*

東

Dong/ East - the sun 日 rising behind our tree 木, light shining through its branches. The sun rising in the east enlivens the day. Invigorating rays of light stream deep into the forest, stirring the life within. *The imagery calls us to attend to the wonder of each day and to let light shine through us, to awaken us. Take the time to watch the sunrise someday soon!*

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Chun/ Spring - the sun 日 under our tree 木 and other vegetation 艹. Here, after a long winter, the Spring sun warms the soil, quickening life. Plants large and small burst forth with new, luxuriant growth. *Nature walk time again! Look about, notice Spring in you and all around you!*

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The frenetic growth and change of Spring can lead to the challenges of constraint, frustration and anger (the emotion of the Wood Element) –

怒 Nu/ Anger – the character shows a slave girl, 奴 (女 woman with a hand 又 holding her down . . .), above the Heart 心. The combined character 怒, often translated as Anger, is in different contexts translated as to sprout; to put forth with vigor; to spring up. In the context of a seedling sprouting, 奴 is the energy that the seed exerts to break out of its casing and grow towards the light.

Exercise your right to move and express, release your constraints, air your frustrations, allow new life to breakthrough!

Other characters, similar in structure to 怒 provide interesting ideas about how to work with the energies/emotions the Wood Element & Spring can bring forth –

恕 Shu/ Forgiveness – the hand holding the woman down is replaced by a mouth 口. Constraint, frustration, and anger given voice, release bond up energy and allow the cleansing of forgiveness. *Speak your heart, speak your mind, then forgive and allow the energies of life to flow forward. . .*

努 Nu/ Exert Oneself – Xin 心, the Heart at the base of the Nu 怒 /Anger, is replaced by the character Li 力 (a pictograph of a muscle with it's tendon) meaning “Strength”. This combination of images shows the strength needed for the hard work a slave must endure. It can also indicate the striving required to exert oneself and release the “slavishness” of old thoughts and frustrations. *Making diligent efforts, practicing forgiveness along with strength of character, of heart and mind, is often required to release the constraint, frustration and anger that can arise in challenging times. Exert yourself, work through some of your issues. Strive to forgive others and yourself!*

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Peace

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