

∞ 2. Acupuncture ∞

The ancient Taoist "cosmic scientists" discovered through their highly developed insight that there is essentially one primal cosmic energy. In the stillness of the unmanifest aspect of the universe, the primal cosmic energy expresses a state of oneness. As it extends itself in the process of creation, its movement causes the polarization of the one primal energy, giving birth to duality. The polar aspects of the effects thus created were designated as yin and yang. Yin and yang have many translations, such as the two sides of positive and negative, expansion and contraction, construction and destruction, masculine and feminine. Yin and yang are not two separate energies or activities. The activity of one is inherently contained within and created by the other. For example, a symphony is composed not only of musical sounds, but the silent pauses between the sounds are also intrinsic aspects of the composition. In the English language, the contradictory sense of positive and negative is strong. But in the Chinese way of thinking yin and yang unite themselves, and through this union the existence of all things is made possible. If one side is excessive, its state of balance is lost, thereby creating the possibility of destruction.

Nature is energy. The entire world is composed of formed and unformed energy. Even space is made up of different kinds of energy. Energy is simply all there is. Although conceptually we talk about fields of energy, capacities of energy and forms of energy, classifying and categorizing them as different matters, in reality the entirety of nature is one energy, one life. We are small lives. This is the basic understanding of the ancient developed ones.

In the physics of the worlds, ether or functional energy is the senior and most subtle of the gross elements, which also include solid, liquid, fiery, and gaseous substances (the ancient esoteric elements of earth, water, fire, and air). Ether, the most subtle state of gross or material appearance, is the all-pervading element of the physical universe, analogous to space itself. The etheric dimension of force or manifest light pervades and surrounds our universe and every physical body. It is the field of energy, magnetism, and space in which the lower or grosser elements function. Thus, your "etheric body" is the specific concentration of force associated with and surrounding-permeating your physical body. It serves as a conduit for the forces of universal light and energy to the physical body.

In practical terms of daily experience, the etheric aspect of the being is our emotional-sexual, feeling nature. The etheric body functions through and corresponds to the nervous system. Functioning as a medium between the conscious mind and the physical being, it controls the distribution and use of energy and emotion. It is the dimension of vitality or Life-Force. We feel the etheric dimension of life not only as vital energy and power and magnetic-gravitational forces, but also as the endless play of emotional polarization, positive and negative, to others, objects, the world itself, everything that arises.

"Prana" is a Sanskrit term meaning "life-energy" or life-force. In yogic esoteric teachings, "prana" is also a specific technical name for one of a number of forms of etheric energy in the bodily being. The term here more generally, in reference to the whole dimension of living energy that pervades and sustains the physical and vital processes of Man. Thus, "prana" is the manifest life-energy. It is an aspect of the Transcendental Current of Life, which is All-Pervading, but also Eternal - but manifest or "pranic" energies are only temporary phenomena of the Realm of Nature.

The whole universe is a big nuclear reaction furnace in which energy transformations are constantly taking place. Non-being becomes being. Being becomes non-being. This results from the constant transformation, sublimation, evolution, or devolution of energy. Through objective understanding, one can see that it is necessary to make subjective effort to consciously adjust oneself in order to achieve and maintain harmony, balance and progressive evolution. The whole human body, like the universe, is also like an alchemical furnace in which energy changes and transformations are continually taking place.

We can make our body into a small workshop of the universal process of energy transformation by subtly adjusting our own internal energies. In this way, we may gain the self-mastery necessary to dissolve our apparent physical bondage. When certain terms and environmental conditions are present, specific results must appear. This is the basis of all experimental science. As far as the human external form is concerned, since it is already completely formed, we are limited in our ability to change and improve it. However, everyday, even every minute, the inside of the body is constantly working and changing.

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The energy produced within us has three manifestations: physical essence, as gross energy; mind, as refined energy; and spirit, as subtle energy. These correspond with the three general manifestations of universal energy. They are essentially one energy, existing in grosser or finer states. The normal order of energy development is from the lower to the higher. The energy arrangement of a highly evolved being is for the spirit to control the mind, and the mind to control the physical energy. However, the opposite order predominates in the majority of the world's creature, with physical desire controlling the mind and the mind overpowering the spirit. Consequently, much confusion abounds and man-made disasters are prevalent.

Spirit is the manifestation of high energy as heaven within us. Our physical essence, which produces our vital power, is the physical energy in our body, which represents the earth. Our mind can develop in the time/space context to make social relationships and things of that nature. This is the human level of existence, the human energy structure. The human body is a combination of heaven or "spirit", human being or "mind," and earth or "body" in one great unity, an exact microcosm of the harmonious universe. It can be a small workshop of the subtle power which operates as the subtle performer of the universe.

The purpose of meditation is to refine our energy. It is to refine desire to become wisdom, refine physical essence to become mental power, and ultimately, to refine one's high level mental power to become spirit. This spirit can unite with the immortal divine nature of the universe. One can achieve immortality by using one's own spirit to thrust through the illusion of duality of the physical realm and thereby unite with the eternally unfolding universe.

Established by Congress in 1992, The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine conducts and funds research to determine the effectiveness of alternative and nontraditional health-care practices, such as acupuncture, homeopathy, hypnosis, herbal medicine, and biofeedback. It funds ten specialized offices throughout the United States that investigate the use of alternative treatments for specific diseases and health conditions. The center does not endorse alternative therapies; it encourages discussion between practitioners of alternative medicine and traditional medical professionals. The center distributes information about alternative and complementary medicine to the public, media, and health-care professionals.

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National Institutes of Health

Consensus Development Conference Statement

November 3-5, 1997

NIH Consensus statements and State-of-the-Science statements (formerly known as technology assessment statements) are prepared by a non-advocate, non-Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) panels, based on (1) presentations by investigators working in areas relevant to the consensus questions during a 2-day public session; (2) questions and statements from conference attendees during open discussion periods that are part of the public session; and (3) closed deliberations by the panel during the remainder of the second day and morning of the third. This statement is an independent report of the panel and is not a policy statement of the NIH or the Federal Government.

The statement reflects the panel's assessment of medical knowledge available at the time the statement was written. Thus, it provides a "snapshot in time" of the state of knowledge on the conference topic. When reading the statement, keep in mind that new knowledge is inevitably accumulating through medical research.

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Introduction

Acupuncture is a component of the health care system of China that can be traced back for at least 2,500 years. The general theory of acupuncture is based on the premise that there are patterns of energy flow (Qi) through the body that are essential for health. Disruptions of this flow are believed to be responsible for disease. Acupuncture may correct imbalances of flow at identifiable points close to the skin. The practice of acupuncture to treat identifiable pathophysiological conditions in American medicine was rare until the visit of President Nixon to China in 1972. Since that time, there has been an explosion of interest in the United States and Europe in the application of the technique of acupuncture to Western medicine.

Participants

A non-Federal, non-advocate, 12-member panel representing the fields of acupuncture, pain, psychology, psychiatry, physical medicine and rehabilitation, drug abuse, family practice, internal medicine, health policy, epidemiology, statistics, physiology, biophysics, and the public. In addition, 25 experts from these same fields presented data to the panel and a conference audience of 1,200.

Evidence

The literature was searched through Medline, and an extensive bibliography of references was provided to the panel and the conference audience. Experts prepared abstracts with relevant citations from the literature. Scientific evidence was given precedence over clinical anecdotal experience.

Consensus Process

The panel, answering predefined questions, developed their conclusions based on the scientific evidence presented in open forum and the scientific literature. The panel composed a draft statement, which was read in its entirety and circulated to the experts and the audience for comment. Thereafter, the panel resolved conflicting recommendations and released a revised statement at the end of the conference. The panel finalized the revisions within a few weeks after the conference. The draft statement was made available on the World Wide Web immediately following its release at the conference and was updated with the panel's final revisions.

Conclusions

Acupuncture as a therapeutic intervention is widely practiced in the United States. While there have been many studies of its potential usefulness, many of these studies provide equivocal results because of design, sample size, and other factors. The issue is further complicated by inherent difficulties in the use of appropriate controls, such as placebos and sham acupuncture groups. However, promising results have emerged, for example, showing efficacy of acupuncture in adult postoperative and chemotherapy nausea and vomiting and in postoperative dental pain. There are other situations such as addiction, stroke rehabilitation, headache, menstrual cramps, tennis elbow, fibromyalgia, myofascial pain, osteoarthritis, low back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, and asthma, in which acupuncture may be useful as an adjunct treatment or an acceptable alternative or be included in a comprehensive management program. Further research is likely to uncover additional areas where acupuncture interventions will be useful.

Acupuncture has been used by millions of American patients and performed by thousands of physicians, dentists, acupuncturists, and other practitioners for relief or prevention of pain and for a variety of health conditions. After reviewing the existing body of knowledge, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently removed acupuncture needles from the category of "experimental medical devices" and now regulates them just as it does other devices, such as surgical scalpels and hypodermic syringes, under good manufacturing practices and single-use standards of sterility.

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Over the years, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has funded a variety of research projects on acupuncture, including studies on the mechanisms by which acupuncture may produce its effects, as well as clinical trials and other studies. There is also a considerable body of international literature on the risks and benefits of acupuncture, and the World Health Organization lists a variety of medical conditions that may benefit from the use of acupuncture or moxibustion. Such applications include prevention and treatment of nausea and vomiting; treatment of pain and addictions to alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; treatment of pulmonary problems such as asthma and bronchitis; and rehabilitation from neurological damage such as that caused by stroke.

The degeneration of the body is accelerated when one's inner true SELF becomes so identified and associated with the physical body-brain that it (the true spiritual self) forgets that it is a universal being and becomes dependent on the physical body-brain and senses for information. This contraction of the universal SELF (Soul, Holy Spirit, The Inner You) from the universal state of mind to the limited psychological personality state of be-ing causes the body (Gross Energy) to be cut off and distorts its natural alignment to the etheric and astral dimensions (Subtle Energy). In ancient text this subtle supporting energy was called MANNA, or the Bread of Heaven; PRANA, from Hinduism; ETHER from the Greek; and CHI from Taoism.

True acupuncture is not the research and study of energy "IN" the body, but is the research and study of energy "AS" the physical human body.

Energy

The Subtle Essence of All Creation

Vital energy or chi, as the ancient developed ones in the Integral Way referred to it, is formless, elusive and without tangible qualities, yet it is the subtle breath of life which permeates and vivifies the entire universe. We live in an environment of energy which envelopes and permeates us. Just as a fish is unmindful of the fact that it lives in water, we too are unaware of the vast, inexhaustible sea of energy which supports our lives. Chi gives birth to life; it is the generative force of the whole universe. The natural environment functions as the cosmic womb in which all manifestations of the universe are conceived and brought forth. Everything that exists in the universe is a manifestation or projection of that energy, in grosser or finer states, higher or lower frequencies of vibration. In order to gain mastery over our lives, it is necessary to have a basic understanding of the nature of energy and cosmic principles of energy manifestation which influence us.

The principles which govern the energy formations and activities of the universe as a whole are the same principles which apply to any single part of the universe. From the smallest cell or atomic particle described in biology or physics, to the events of human history, even to the movement of the galaxies through space, all existence is regulated by the same cosmic principles. This includes all things regardless of their degree of completeness or incompleteness, or whether they die or exist eternally. Thus, by understanding the cycles of energy movement and evolution which occur both internally and externally, we gain insight into the very nature of the entire universe. By the same token, through studying the nature of the external universe, we gain insight into our own true nature. By familiarizing ourselves with the laws of nature, we may reconnect with our own true nature and thereby attract and evoke the response of positive universal energy.

Ancient sages described the movement and cyclic phases of energy evolution through the polar combination of yin and yang and the wu-hsing. The yin/yang system provides a basis for the analysis of all phenomena into complementary groups. The wu-hsing, which is frequently referred to as the five element system or the five forces is a schema used to describe cyclic processes into five temporally and qualitatively distinct parts.

The *Yellow Emperor's Internal Book* is the collection of ancient life knowledge in relationship to nature. It contains two parts: *Su Wen*, the first part, describes the natural foundation of life. *Ling Shu*, the second part, discusses knowledge specific to acupuncture. *Su Wen*, as the foundation, covers a broader scope.

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If the formula $E=MC^2$ means that EVERYTHING with mass is energy, does this also include the human body with all of its internal organs including the brain?

Note: In every dictionary, the word MEDITATE is always "allied" with the word MEDICAL, i.e., to cure or, a remedy.