

## The Vital Force: Energy in Healing

The essential role of energy in health and healing is recognised and utilised widely throughout many different cultures and branches of medicine around the world. It is almost universally accepted that the body is governed by some kind of energetic life force. The Chinese call this Qi (Chi), Eastern Indians call it Prana, Tibetans call it Lung, Ancient Greeks name it Pneuma and in modern medicine it is referred to as 'vitality' (Sacred Healing 1999; Your Body's Energy 1998).

Western scientists have also recognised aspects of energy in the body in electrical and chemical forms and they have utilised this in the diagnosis of patients in the form of electrocardiograms, electroencephalographs and more of the like. However, they are yet to deeply appreciate the crucial importance of the body's vital force and incorporate this holistically into their practice.

According to Mitchell (1998), the "Vital Force" is an essential inner energy which flows throughout the entire body. The fluidity and consistency of the flow of this energy is what maintains perfect health in the physical body. This fluidity is maintained by keeping mental, spiritual, emotional and physical attributes in balance. An imbalance in the equilibrium of this energy is said to leave the body open to illness and disease.

The physical body itself is also surrounded by many other layers of subtle energy: etheric, astral, mental and higher spiritual energies. Each of these also contribute to our overall health, each relating to different aspects of our existence and each vulnerable to imbalances and therefore illness (Gerber, 2000).

Many branches of complementary medicine harness the concept of the Vital Force and its relative energy systems when diagnosing and treating patients. They base their principles and philosophies upon aiming to amend the energy levels of an ailing client in order for their bodies to be able to heal themselves.

Traditional Chinese Medicine is a remedial system which does exactly this. Practitioners of this ancient form of healing base their beliefs on and work around the principles of both Yin and Yang and the Vital Force, which they commonly know as Qi or Chi. Chi is known to flow through the 12 major and 8 secondary meridian channels which correspond to relative organ systems. Illness occurs due to an excess or lack of chi in one particular area. Yin and Yang operate on the same principals: if they become unbalanced, with one lacking or being in excess of the other for a prolonged period, illness inevitably follows (Acupuncture Today, 2006).

The method of correcting this imbalance in the body's vital energy according to Traditional Chinese Medicine can involve many different components such as diet, supplementary herbs, exercise, massage and/or a change in lifestyle, but acupuncture is perhaps the most characteristic approach used. Acupuncture is an age old process of inserting long, thin needles directly into specific "acupoints" along the associated meridian. By inserting these metal conductors into our chemical bodies, electricity is generated and the chi is stimulated to continue its flow. This vital energy is then able to effectively balance itself throughout the associated organs where blockages or lack of energy existed, allowing the body to heal itself. The renewed balance in the vital energy of the body may even allow other ailments, besides the one being treated, to be cured (Alternative Medicine Foundation 2006; California State Oriental Medicine Association n.d.; Sacred Healing 1999). This is a perfect example of the essential role of the body's own vital energy in the healing process. Once the chi is properly distributed and free of

any blockages, the body is able to heal itself and also help prevent further illness.

Besides the meridians which carry energy throughout our entire body, there are other stores of energy in the body called chakras. Meaning 'wheel', the chakras are seven areas of concentrated whirling energy aligned along the centre of the body, the first being at the base of the spine, then the sacrum, solar plexus, heart, throat, brow and the seventh located at the crown of the head. These centres supply energy to their related organs (Feinstein 2005; Colour Therapy Healing 2004).

Colour therapy is a technique which utilises the energy of the chakras to help maintain optimum health. As each colour has its own specific vibrational frequency, each of the seven colours holds an affinity to each of the seven chakras. The specific colours can be used to bring the chakras and therefore our overall vital force back into alignment, assisting in the healing process (Colour Therapy Healing 2004).

Coloured crystals may also be used to assist in the colour therapy process. Crystals are known to have an ability to amplify subtle energies of the body and so may be used in conjunction with colour therapy to enhance (amplify) its effect. Coloured gemstones are also used in the healing process as they are related to the seven chakras and their associated organs. They can be used by being placed upon each of the chakras whilst the patient lies still for 20-45 minutes or they may be ingested. They are prepared for ingestion by placing them in water in the sunlight so that their vibrational energy can be imprinted into the water. In this way they help the body to heal and balance its energies on a vibrational level (Gerber, 2000)

Colorpuncture is a form of colour therapy, which, like acupuncture, works with the meridians instead of the chakras. Rays of a prescribed pattern of colour, corresponding to the particular ailment, are projected and focused onto a relative set of acupoints along the meridian line. The different frequencies of each colour affect the type of energetic information they project. It has recently been acknowledged that light is the means by which cells communicate information with each other. Therefore, by allowing light to be carried through the meridians and penetrated into the cells, intra-cellular communication is enhanced and the body is better able to repair both at a physical and a vibrational level (Colorpuncture n.d., Yoga and Reflexology Studios 2005).

Another common form of energy healing is homeopathy. The pioneer of homeopathy, Samuel Hahnemann was also one to recognise the importance of the body's energy systems in health and healing. In the text 'Mind Body Spirit' (2001), author Jane Alexander explains that Hahnemann developed this unique branch of medicine based upon the principle that like cures like. By administering a patient an extremely dilute dose of a similar ailment to that which is trying to be cured, the body's defences are stimulated to come forward and cure the original illness.

Through experimentation Hahnemann discovered that the more dilute his herbal solutions were the greater effect they had. The dilution process is a specific one where the original substance, be it plant, animal or mineral product, is "potentized". That is, at each dilution in water the concoction is shaken vigorously or "succussed" (Baggott 1999).

It is said that at each succussion the energy of the original substance is transferred to the water in which it is held, so even though the end result may include very little to none of the original substance, its energy remains in the water in which it was diluted and is able to have a beneficial effect on the human body at a vibrational level (Alexander 2001).

Flower essences work on a very similar level. First recognised by Edward Bach in the

early 1900's, flowers were found to have an astounding impact on a person's psych, emotions and therefore overall wellbeing. Initially used to treat negative emotions, flower therapy has since expanded to include treatment for not only anxiety, fear and stress but also negative behavioural habits, and many physical problems including hormonal issues and migraines. They are also used to help boost the immune system (Baggott 1999).

The most common method of preparing the essences is the same as that of gemstone therapy and comparable to that of homeopathy in that the flower itself is not actually used. The fresh flowers are placed in water in a clear glass bowl and left in the sun from early morning for several hours. The sunlight allows the flower's energy to transfer into the water, enabling the water to then be mixed with alcohol (brandy) and turned into a tincture for medicinal use (Gerber, 2000).

This mystical healing power comes from each flower's specific vibrational qualities which correspond to the frequencies of our own vibrational energy as humans. The essences enforce the realignment of our vital energy, giving us strength to either prevent illness or fight it (Baggott 1999).

These methods of healing utilising the vital energy of our bodies have been in use for centuries and are still used today in many branches of complementary medicine. Their continued use is a prime example that they have a beneficial effect on our health system and that the Vital Force does indeed have a significant impact on our health and therefore the overall healing process.

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Leila DiQuinzio  
106881  
Naturopathy  
Southern School of Natural Therapies,  
Fitzroy, VIC