

Hello all,

Welcome to the May COHERENCE Newsletter. This month we conclude our series on meditation with the article *Meditation And The Meridians* where we explore traditional Chinese medicine’s *jing luo* – acupuncture’s “points” and “meridians”, and how they were originally conceived, a matter that I consider to be one of the world’s greatest medical mysteries.

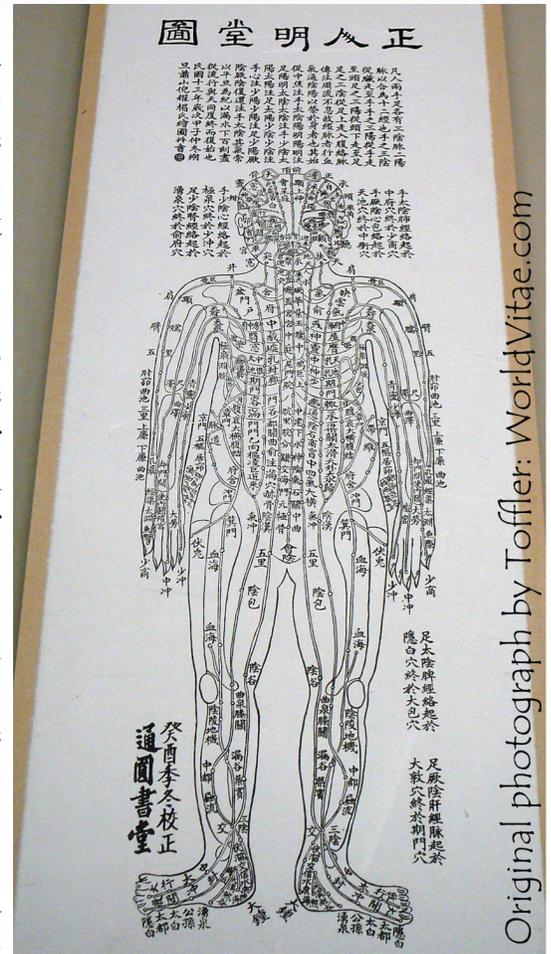
I hope you enjoyed *The Spontaneous Kriya*, last month’s COHERENCE Newsletter where I discuss the meditative conditions that promote the spontaneous kriya as well as offer a short video of what the kriya looks like “in action”. March and April newsletters established a necessary foundation for this month's topic, both theoretically and experientially.

Many Eastern cultures have some description of anatomical pathways that are believed to distribute “life force”, “qi”, “prana”, or energy throughout the body. Allusions to these channels can be found in the ancient artworks of China, India, Tibet, Thailand, and other Eastern countries.

This being said, China must be credited with documenting and systematizing them as a formal scheme of medicine, this process having begun with the Yellow Emperor, circa 2500 BCE or before, it being foundational to the discipline of traditional Chinese medicine as practiced around the world today. The Yellow Emperor’s Classic on the practice of traditional Chinese medicine is generally considered to be the oldest medical textbook in existence.

Knowledge of the *jing luo* is very ancient, half the age of civilization, but how was this elaborate network and its many paths and points apprehended in the first place? It isn’t tangible. It cannot be seen. Did the ancient ones possess an awareness that we do not? A few articles I’ve read suggest that the meridians and acupuncture itself is all *imaginary* and works on the basis of placebo.

The truth of the matter is that direct perception of the *jing luo* is an esoteric matter, i.e. meridians can be perceived, but only by way of an arcane exercise, a meditative method that not only leads one to directly experience the sensation of the pathways and energy flowing through them, but also of the energetic world around us – these notions holding a central place in Taoist thought. The practice involves a very precise posture, breathing, and mental focus, one with which the ancients of China and India were *definitely* very familiar. Last month’s newsletter covered postural and breathing requisites. The only additional requirement is mental focus on the navel – the point from which the entire body emerged – the “Life Stem”. The comprehensive practice leading to this awareness is known as “Wuji Qi Gong”, which we describe in the book: *Wuji Qi Gong And The Secret Of Immortality* (Elliott & Lin, Swanstone Press, 2010).



The Jing Luo  
Acupuncture’s Points and Meridians



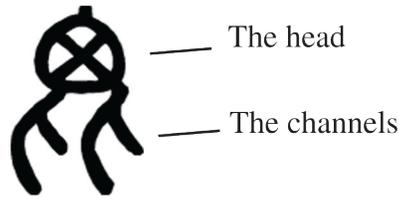
Photograph by Stephen Elliott

In yogic parlance, the practice is meditation on the Manipura chakra. Patanjali's Yoga Sutras (Mauryan period, circa 300 BCE) say,

*A knowledge of the particular structure of the body arises in an ascetic who meditates on the circle of the navel.*

Patanjali is referring to awareness of the pranic channels and centers, Ayurveda mentioning 72,000 such "nadis".

We know that China's sages knew of this method because of the ancient Chinese character for navel "pi"(pronounced "be"):



The character has the meaning, "The point with which the head is supposed to be in constant communication via channels in which qi circulates". (The contemporary Chinese character for navel no longer has this meaning.)

In [Wuji Qi Gong And The Secret Of Immortality](#) we theorize that this practice reaches back to the time of legendary emperor immortal Fu Xi (circa 5000 BCE), Fu Xi very cleverly documenting *the secret* in the mysterious Bagua or 8 trigrams of the *Yi Jing*.

Avalokiteshvara Guanyin depicting navel, chakras, channels, & circulations

Above is a relatively recent cloisonné statue of Avalokiteshvara Guanyin, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, the most popular Bodhisattva in China. She is identified by the small seated Buddha on her crown. Her left hand forms Abhayamudra.

While the statue depicts many chakras and centers, the jewelled naval clearly depicts its esoteric significance, this being that with the practice of meditation with the mind affixed on the navel comes an awareness of the other chakras, channels, and circulations. With this awareness comes a mental sense of quietude, comfort, peacefulness, and lack of fear - hence Guanyin's gesture of reassurance.

Realization of the meridians comes about after a few months of practice and continues to grow with time. Eventually, there is a very clear sensation that each time we exhale, the qi in the body moves through the meridians. I have come to the clear perception that the "Life Stem", invisible though it be, continues to nourish us. When we inhale life force is drawn through the stem like the body is a lotus. When we exhale, that life force is circulated throughout the body via the meridians.

Thank you for your interest and consideration,

Stephen Elliott, COHERENCE

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