

History and Evolution of Acupuncture

ACUPUNCTURE IN INDIA

Acupuncture has been practised in India for thousands of years as a part of Ayurveda. It is common to see Indian villagers with earrings placed at specific points in the ear, to treat diseases elsewhere in the body. Many villagers also have scars on the abdomen, as a result of cauterization carried out to treat pain in the abdomen. This is similar to moxibustion or heat treatment, which is used in Chinese medicine.

As stated in this verse from Shusrut Samhita

सिराव्यघ्नश्चिकित्सार्घं शल्यतंत्रे प्रकीर्तितः ।
यथा प्रणिहितः सम्यग्बस्तिः काय चिकित्सते ॥
अर्थात् रोगान्ति के लिए सब उपाय एक ओर, अकेला सिरावेघ्न, स्नेहन, स्वेदन एक ओर
अर्थात् अकेला ही सबके समान है ।

Which means that to cure a disease, inducing the method of puncturing, pressuring and heating the body is enough more than any other systems of medicine.

The other systems are part of the Ayurvedic section of Atharva veda and Suchi Veda (Acupuncture) was part of Atharva Veda which also had many other sections like Dhanur Veda etc

Atharva-Veda (Knowledge of Atharvan; a priest's spells of the mystic fire ceremony)

Comprised of the following medical sections

a) Ayur-Veda (science of self/life): Eight Branches (*Ashtanga = Ashta/Anga*)

- i) Internal Medicine (*Kayachikitsa*): prevention, etiology, prognosis, management of disease
- ii) Surgery (*Shalya Tantra*)
- iii) Ear, Nose, Throat, and Eye (*Shalakya Tantra*):
- iv) Pediatrics (*Kaumarbhritya*): preconception, prenatal, postnatal
- v) Toxicology (*Agada Tantra*): purification through external medicine
- vi) Psychiatry (*Bhuta Vidya*)
- vii) Rejuvenation (*Rasayana*): prevention and promotion of health
- viii) Aphrodesiacs (*Vajikarana*): enhancement of sexual vitality

b) Suchi-Veda (science of piercing with a needle) [Skt: to point, or indicate (*suc*): Ayurveda has used bone and bronze needles, which eventually became gold and silver (eg. types of needles: *ara, kuthari, atimukha, badisha*)

Jivaka: product of Takshashila; royal physician of King Bimbisara of Magadha and appointed by the king to be health supervisor for Gautama Buddha and his disciples• According to Chikitsa Vidya: Jivaka, considered a renowned Ayurvedic surgeon, and master acupuncturist, was reputed “to have been born with an acupuncture needle in the right hand and drug container in the left” [symbolic of inner and outer alchemy correlating with fire/masculine and water/feminine sides of the body]

There has been a rich exchange of ideas, philosophy and literature between India and China over thousands of years. Travellers and scholars from India went to China to teach and pilgrims from China came to visit Buddhist shrines and universities in India. This allowed Acupuncture which actually originated in India to spread to China.

In India, Ayurveda was a highly developed and effective system of medicine and Acupuncture was only used for those diseases that did not respond to Ayurveda treatment. As there were thousands of herbs that were effective for different diseases, Acupuncture was not as widely practised in India as it was in some parts of China. As explained earlier, in northwest China, very few herbs were available, so here traditional practitioners developed Acupuncture into a highly advanced science.

With the onset of British rule and their promotion of the Western system of medicine, the art of Acupuncture was largely lost. It was practised only by a few village doctors with a very basic knowledge of certain "effective points" which were passed down from father to son. It is only recently that there has been a resurgence of interest in Acupuncture in India, fuelled by the intense worldwide awareness of its efficacy in curing a multitude of ailments.

The History and Evolution of Acupuncture in China

Acupuncture in China was heavily influenced by the Taoist philosophy & tradition which goes back over 8000 years. The people of this time period would meditate and observe the flow of energy within and without. They also were keen to observe man's relations with nature and the universe. There were many sages of this period, but the most legendary was Fu Hsi, who lived in the Yellow River area of China approximately 8000 years ago. By observing nature, he formulated the first two symbols, a broken line and unbroken line. These symbols represented the two major forces in the universe – creation and reception - and how their interaction forms life. This duality was named yin-yang and they represent the backbone of Chinese Medicine theory and application. Fu Hsi then discovered that when yin-yang fuse, a creative action occurs, and this gives birth to a third aspect.

Fu Hsi then pondered on how this triplicity occurs eight times and this led to the eight trigrams and then 64 hexagrams of the I-Ching (Book of Change). The I-Ching shaped the thinking for years to come and every influential book on Chinese Medicine is based upon its fundamental philosophy.

The primitive society of China is divided into two time periods- The Old Stone Age(10,000 years ago and beyond) and the New Stone Age (10,000-4000 years ago).During the Old Stone Age knives were made of stone and were used for certain medical procedures. During the New Stone Age, stones were refined into fine needles and served as instruments of healing. They were named *bian stone* - which means use of a sharp edged stone to treat disease. Many bian stone needles were excavated from ruins in China dating back to the New Stone Age.

The most significant milestone in the history of Acupuncture occurred during the period of Huang Di -The Yellow Emperor (2697-2597). In a famous dialogue between Huang Di and his physician Qi Bo, they discuss the whole spectrum of the Chinese Medical Arts. These conversations would later become the monumental text - *The Nei Jing (The Yellow Emperors Classic of Internal Medicine)*. The Nei Jing is the earliest book written on Chinese Medicine. It was compiled around 305-204 B.C. and consists of two parts:

1. *The Su Wen (Plain Questions)* -9 volumes - 81 chapters
The Su Wen introduces anatomy and physiology, etiology of disease, pathology, diagnosis, differentiation of syndromes, prevention, yin-yang, five elements, treatment, and man's relationship with nature and the cosmos.
2. *The Ling Shu (Miraculous Pivot, Spiritual Axis)*- 81 Chapters
The Ling Shu's focus is Acupuncture, description of the meridians, functions of the zang-fu organs, nine types of needles, functions of the acupuncture points, needling techniques, types of Qi, location of 160 points.

In approximately 1000 BC, during the Shang Dynasty, hieroglyphs showed evidence of Acupuncture and Moxibustion. Bronze needles were excavated from ruins, but the bian stones remained the main form of needle.

During the Warren States Era (421-221 B.C.) metal needles replaced the bian stones. Four gold needles and five silver needles were found in an ancient tomb dating back to 113B.C. The Miraculous Pivot names nine types of Acupuncture needles. The Historical Records notes many physicians practicing Acupuncture during this time. Another milestone for this period was the compilation of the *Nan Jing (Book of Difficult Questions)*. The Nan Jing discusses five element theory, hara diagnosis, eight extra meridians, and other important topics.

From 260-265 A.D., the famous physician Huang Fu Mi, organized all of the ancient literature into his classic text - *Systematic Classics of Acupuncture and Moxibustion*. The text is twelve volumes and describes 349 Acupuncture points. It is organized according to the theory of: zang fu, Qi and blood, channels and collaterals, acupuncture points, and clinical application. This book is noted to be one of the most influential texts in the history of Chinese Medicine.

Acupuncture was very popular during the Jin, Northern, Southern, Dynasties (265-581A.D.). For generations the Xu Xi family were known as the experts in the art of Acupuncture. During this time period important texts and charts enhanced knowledge and application.

Acupuncture experienced great development during the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) Dynasties. Upon request from the Tang Government (627-649A.D.), the famous physician Zhen Quan revised the important Acupuncture texts and charts. Another famous physician of the time, Sun Simiao, wrote *Prescription with a Thousand Gold for Emergencies* (650-692). This text includes data on Acupuncture from various scholars. During this period Acupuncture became a special branch of medicine and practitioners were named Acupuncturists. Acupuncture schools appeared, and Acupuncture education became part of the Imperial Medical Bureau.

During the Song Dynasty (960-1279), the famous physician Wang Weiyi wrote, *The Illustrated Manual on Points for Acupuncture and Moxibustion*. This book included the description of 657 points. He also casted two bronze statues on which meridians and points were engraved for teaching purposes.

The Ming Dynasty (1568-1644) was the enlightening period for the advancement of Acupuncture. Many new developments included:

1. Revision of the classic texts
2. Refinement of Acupuncture techniques and manipulation
3. Development of Moxa sticks for indirect treatment
4. Development of extra points outside the main meridians
5. The encyclopedic work of 120 volumes- *Principle and Practice of Medicine* was written by the famous physician Wang Gendong
6. 1601 - Yang Jizhou wrote *Zhenjin Dacheng (Principles of Acupuncture and Moxibustion)*. This great treatise on Acupuncture reinforced the principles of the Nei Jing and Nan Jing. This work was the foundation of the teachings of G.Soulie de Morant who introduced Acupuncture into Europe.

From the Qing Dynasty to the Opium Wars (1644-1840), herbal medicine became the main tool of physicians and Acupuncture was suppressed.

Following the Revolution of 1911, Western Medicine was introduced and Acupuncture and Chinese Herbology were suppressed. Due to the large population and need for medical care, Acupuncture and herbs remained popular among the folk people, and the "barefoot doctor" emerged.

Acupuncture was used exclusively during the Long March (1934-35) and despite harsh conditions it helped maintain the health of the army. This led Mao Zedong, the leader of the Communist Party, to see that Acupuncture remained an important element in China's medical system. In 1950 Chairman Mao officially united Traditional Chinese Medicine with Western Medicine, and acupuncture became established in many hospitals. In the same year Comrade Zhu De reinforced Traditional Chinese Medicine with his book *New Acupuncture*.

In the late 1950's to the 1960's Acupuncture research continued with - further study of the ancient texts, clinical effect on various diseases, acupuncture anesthesia, and acupuncture's effect on the internal organs.

From the 1970's to the present, Acupuncture continues to play an important role in China's medical system. China has taken the lead in researching all aspects of acupuncture's application and clinical effects. Although acupuncture has become modernized, it will never lose its connection to a philosophy established thousands of years ago.

ACUPUNCTURE IN THE FAR EAST

Over the years, Acupuncture and Chinese medicine spread beyond the borders of China, to Japan and Korea, where it soon became the accepted form of medicine. Acupuncture was first introduced to these countries around two hundred years before Christ. It only became popular there after the arrival of Buddhism, which reached China about the middle of the first century A.D. Buddhism developed and spread from China to Korea and Japan between 400 A.D. and 800 A.D. Chinese medicine remained popular in Japan till the 16th Century, after which it was gradually overshadowed by influences from the West. Over the next 300 years, Western medicine overshadowed acupuncture in Japan.

In 1884, an attempt was made to wipe out acupuncture from Japan by issuing an edict prohibiting the teaching of acupuncture. This coincided with the inauguration of the medical faculty at Tokyo University. Fortunately this did not stop people from practising acupuncture, which is still practised in Japan along with Western medicine.

ACUPUNCTURE IN THE WEST

One of the first Western countries to show an interest in acupuncture was France. The earliest European books on acupuncture were written in the early years of the 18th century. The two most important were entitled "The Secrets of Chinese Medicine" and the "Perfect Knowledge of the Pulse". These were written by a respected Frenchman who had lived and studied in China, but who withheld his name for fear of ridicule. Acupuncture has been practised sporadically in France over the last 200 years and is now well established.

There were also missionaries from Austria and Germany who went to China in the 17th and 18th centuries and learnt the art of acupuncture. They returned to their own countries and started schools and institutes for acupuncture, some of which flourish to this day.

However, acupuncture did not become popular in the West till the second half of the 20th century. Acupuncture received the attention of the world after President Nixon went to China in 1971 and the journalists accompanying him publicised the practice and efficacy of acupuncture in various American magazines.

Acupuncture is now rapidly gaining popularity and is being practised all over the world. The introduction of modern scientific instruments like lasers and ultrasound and their use by acupuncturists have led to the integration of modern technology with ancient Chinese methods to give us a science that is effective and up to date.

Based on the Electrical Properties of Acupuncture Points

Dr Voll of Germany developed a new system of Acupuncture based on the Chinese system but with some added meridians and set of points . A variety of electrical appliances have been used by acupuncturists to measure and quantify the skin's electrical resistance and conductance over acupuncture points, but one of the most sophisticated, and useful, is the apparatus developed by Dr. Voll in West Germany. He believed that acupuncture points are rather like batteries, and the charge on the acupuncture point ,



represents the state of health (or disease) of the point on the organ or tissue, deep in the body, which it represents. If the stomach is diseased, the points on the stomach channel (the points are on the leg), will have an altered charge or, more exactly, an altered electro-motive force. There is a considerable body of research work that supports these ideas and proves that acupuncture points do have special electrical properties.

Voll's machine acts as a system of diagnosis in that it tells the acupuncturist which points, and therefore which organs, are diseased. It can also be used to make quite specific diagnoses as slight differences in the charge of the point indicate different types of disease processes; furthermore, the acupuncturist can use Voll's machine to treat the altered (diseased) charge. Returning the point to a state of normal charge, or health, is often enough to control and cure the internal disease process.

Dr. Voll's work is firmly grounded in traditional Chinese medicine and can be thought of as a sophisticated 'electric formalization' of traditional Chinese diagnosis and treatment. There are other systems of acupuncture based on the same principle;

Roidaraku, a Japanese system of acupuncture, similar in idea to that of the Voll machine but is less sophisticated. The acupuncture points are measured less specifically but electrical measurements of the points are made and the measurements are used as a basis for therapy.

Acupuncture, like Allopathy, Homeopathy or Ayurveda is a complete system of medicine. Like other systems of medicine it has a treatment for almost every disease and like each of these, it is extremely effective in treating some diseases,

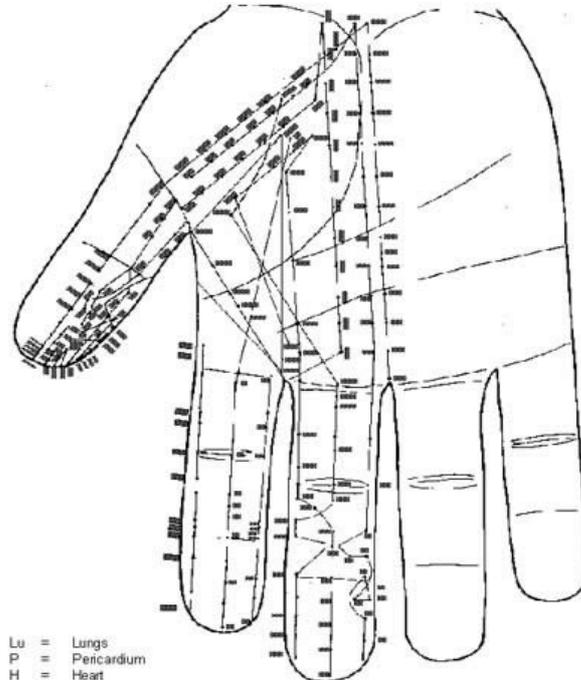
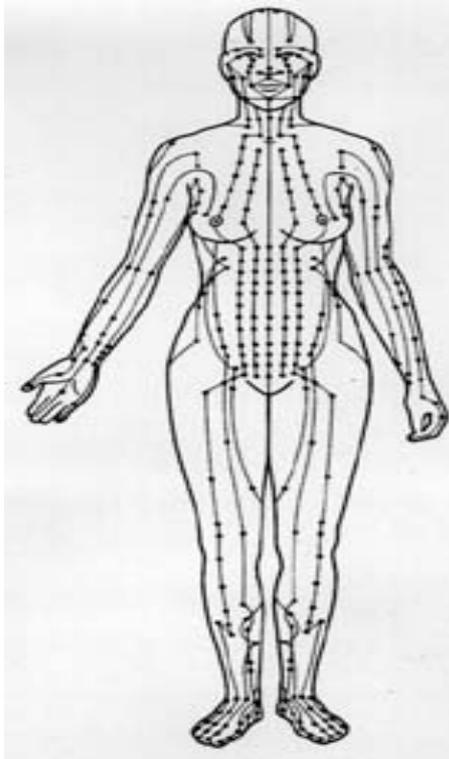
Development of Micro systems

Like all technological advances as one develops more and more one tends towards miniaturisation, Acupuncture as a continually evolving science is no exception.

Acupuncture saw the development of Microsystems where certain small areas of the body came to be used to give treatment to the whole body.

Most notable among these systems were the Ear (Auricular Acupuncture both Chinese and Nogiers), Nose acupuncture, Chinese hand and foot Acupuncture and Scalp Acupuncture. Neurosurgeon Jiao Shun Fa's Scalp Acupuncture was heavily based on the understanding of Modern Medicine as to the areas of the brain that affect the different parts of the body and the overlying scalp was then treated with Acupuncture. This led to a whole new system based on the fusion of Acupuncture with Modern Medicine.

.The Korean contribution to Acupuncture has been the charting of all the Acupuncture points of the body (and with the same effects as the original points) onto the hand. This was later modified by Prof Park Jae Woo and founded as a separate system called Su-Jok acupuncture .



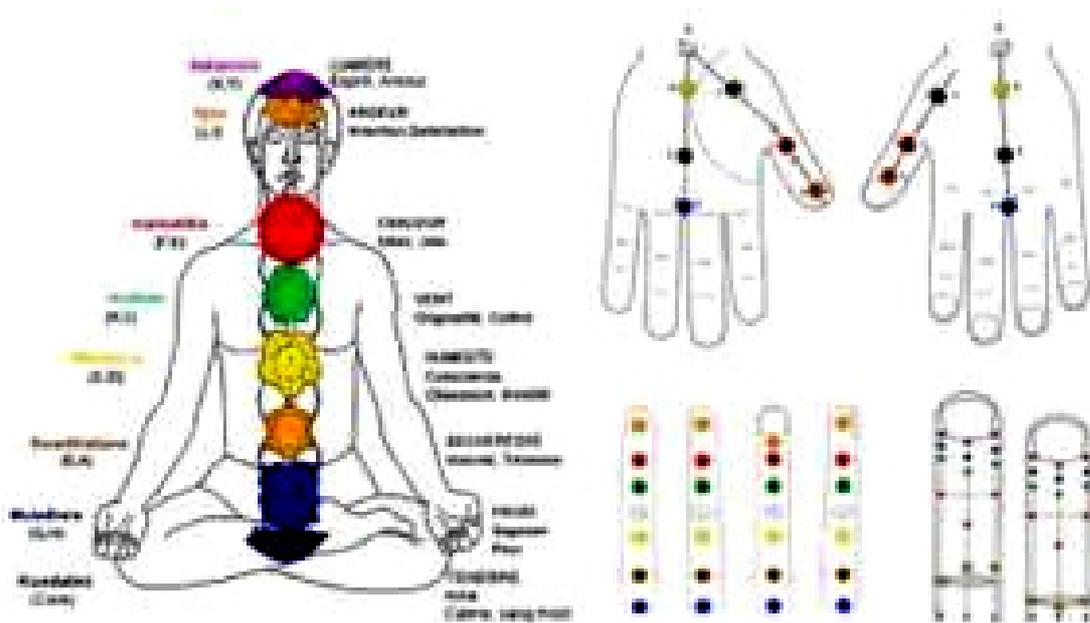
Byol Chart (Yin Side) – Right Hand

In Sujok Acupuncture all meridians and points of the Body are systematically represented on the hand (and feet)

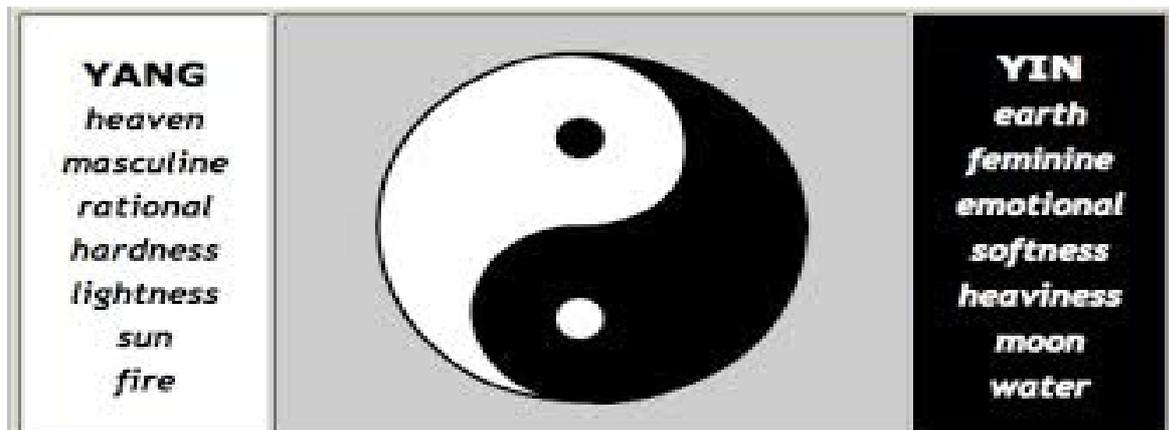
Evolution of Sujok Acupuncture

Su – Jok (Su – hand , Jok – Foot) This system began with incorporating all the meridian points and five elements concept along with the ability to treat any problems using only the hands or feet for therapy . It had the advantage of convenience (undressing of patients not required) and also influencing larger are of body by puncturing a smaller area corresponding to it in the hands or feet .

But it very quickly progressed from 5 elemental energy or 5 ki concept to 6 Ki and then to 8 Ki . The additional 6 th energy was the energy of greater fire which was given the name of Hotness energy and was considered the energy of Brain and Spinal cord (By this time Prof Park had concurred that the Pericardium referred to in the Chinese Acupuncture was actually a misunderstanding and it actually was supposed to refer to Brain , similarly Triple warmer referred to the three divisions of Nervous system the Spinal cord along with the Sympathetic and Para sympathetic .



Later on Chakra Acupuncture appeared in Sujok and the Chakras mentioned in the Yogic texts became amenable to acupuncture treatment . The Six ki energy points were delineated on the chakras and used to influence the Chakras and the organs and endocrine glands governed by those chakras .

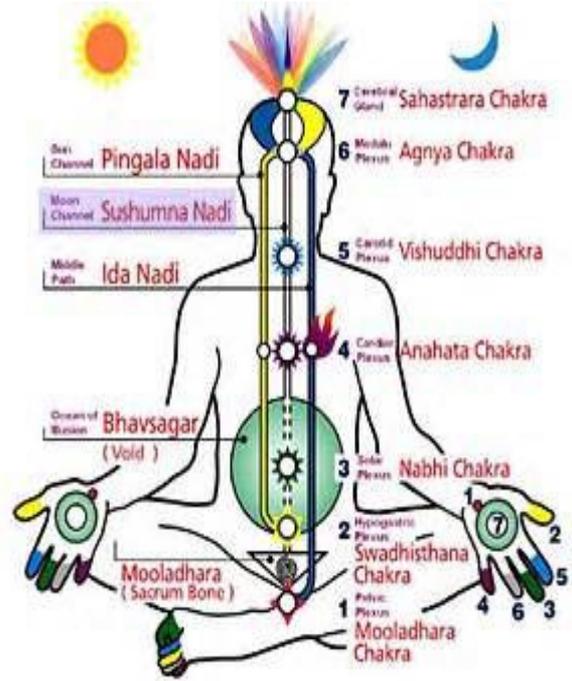
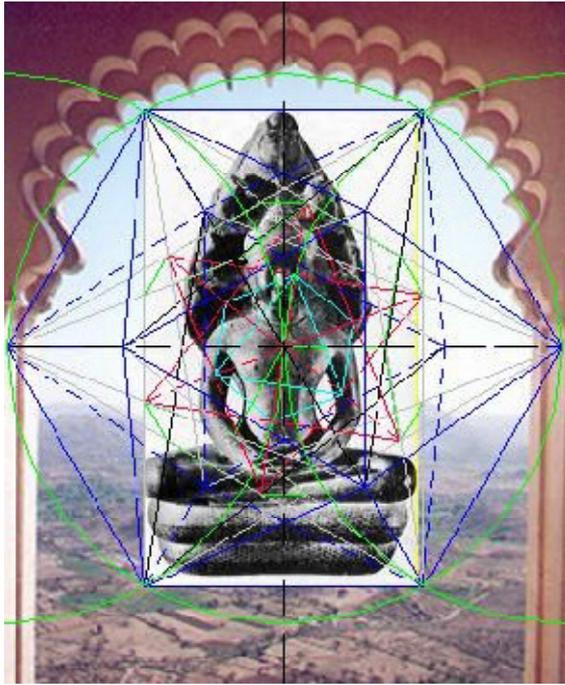


HETERO ↑

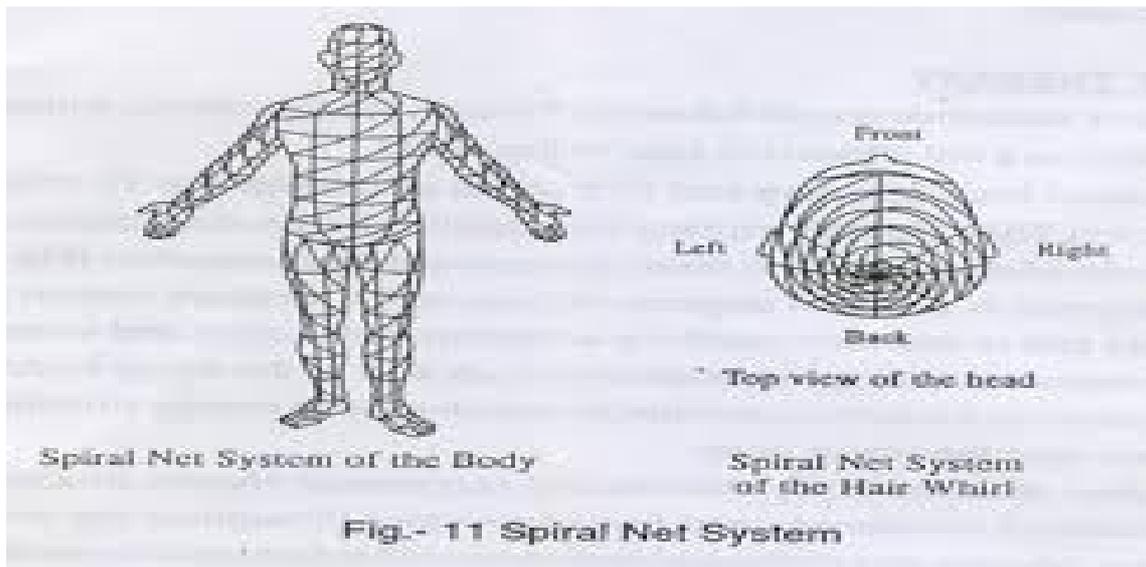
NEUTRO √

HOMO ↓

Further progress took place with the emergence of the concept of Lightness and Darkness energies which are the same as extreme Yang (called hence as Hetero) and extreme Yin (called hence as Homo) . And the in between force that harmonises the Homo and Hetero energies was postulated and named as the Neutro force . This force was represented in the spiral line that separated the Yin and Yang energies in the Tai Chi symbol .

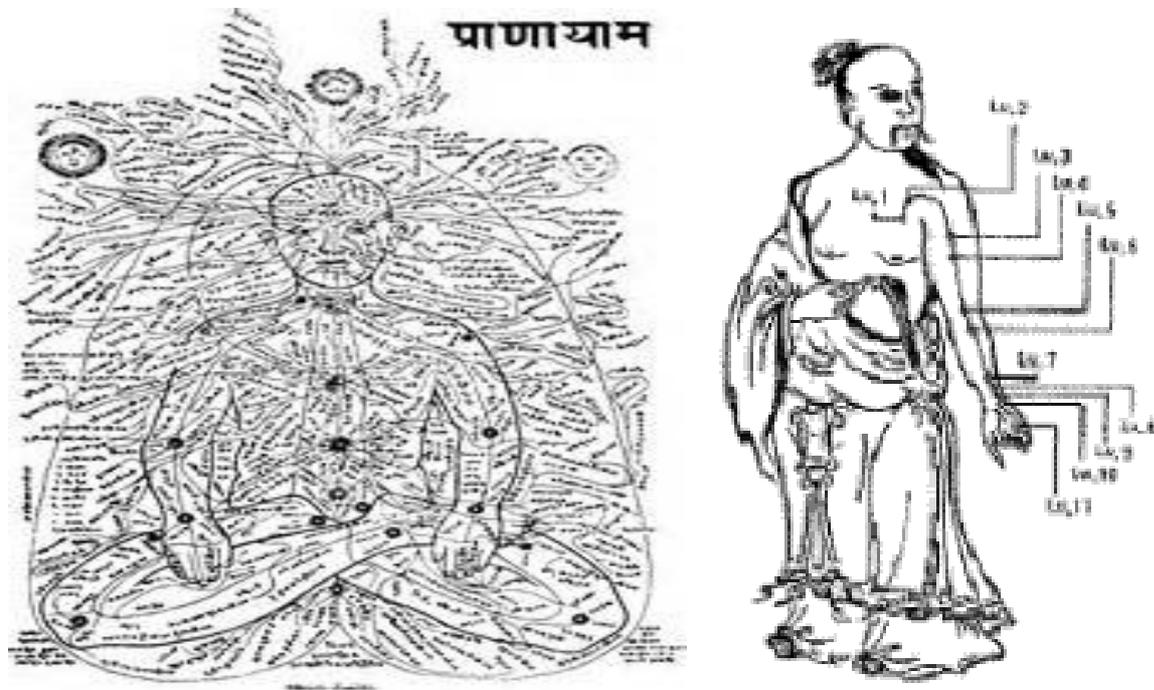


There was further development in the form of additional meridians that ran along the sides and front and back of the body and a new structure was unveiled called the **Diamond structure**. This allowed for the treatment of problems that were not being covered by the traditional Chinese meridians.



Later the concept of Spiral meridians developed which took a tortuous spiral along the body and body parts and was effective especially in diseases which were not generalised, not limited to any portion up down, right, left front back etc, but seemed to cross sides and were in say for example in right groin, left flank then right shoulder and finally left side of head. Such kind of problems were treatable by the spiral meridians.

There is also the concept of Triorigin in which various joint meridian have been identified and marked with 8 Ki points and also Homo , Hetero , Neutro and Neuto points . This helps not only in treatment where single joints are involved ,but also in affecting single organs related to those meridians and correct their energetics esp if there is some condition with extreme Yin (Homo) or extreme Yang (Hetero)



The Ancient Yogic texts have spoken of energy matrix in the body comprising of vortices (7 Chakras) and meridians (thousands of Nadis) .

The Chinese system dealt with 12 principal meridians and 8 extra meridians plus muscle meridians and did wonderfully but now with further progress many more meridians have been recognised and added by the process of continuous evolution . This has given the Acupuncturist an expanded scope in treatment of illnesses hitherto considered beyond the scope of Acupuncture .

Being able to do more and better than before !

Since ‘Change is the only Constant ‘.....’ Lets Change for the Better’

Isn't that - what Evolution is all about !



Dr Yogesh Kodkani MBBS, D, Ac, BTCM, DTCM ,FCAH, CCAH , PG Hom (London),ND . C. Chiro (Sweden)