

ENERGY

Meditation and the Traditions of East Asian Healing The idea of the body, which has been cherished in the East Asian tradition, is based on the philosophy of self-cultivation - derived mainly from the experience obtained through meditation. In Buddhism, Daoism and Shintoism, meditation is a technique for observing and becoming attuned to the intricate workings of the life-supporting energy system that exists beyond or beneath the psych-physiological activity of the living human body.

The East Asian meditational perspective is that of the "flowing body." The body is likened to a river whose water is in pristine condition and transparent. However, this cannot be seen by the naked eye, or be detected anatomically as blood vessels and nerve fibers can. The body that flows is invisible to the senses in everyday life, and most of us are relatively unconscious of it. It can, however, be detected through the heightened state of awareness during meditation. An advanced meditator can become aware of a subtle **flow of energy through his or her body**. This energy is called ki in Japanese and qi in Chinese. Ki is the source from which both the psychological and physiological merge.

Ki-energy is that which is tapped through acupuncture, as **ki-energy flows through a network of circuits or "ki-meridians" beneath the skin**. Acupuncture medicine maintains that absorption and release of ki-energy occurs – for most of us – unconsciously, between the flowing body and its surroundings.

Another idea of the body, which is relevant for religious healing, is the concept of the spirit-body. **Whereas the flowing body is confined to the immediate ambiance of the physical body, the spirit-body has not spatial or temporal bounds.**

According to East Asian tradition, then, healing occurs in several ways: (1) religious healing, (2) acupuncture, (3) visualization and (4) enlightenment.

In religious healing in the East Asian tradition, a pathological condition is regarded as a necessary step on the way to spiritual growth. It strengthens the living psycho-physiological body and prepares it for encounters with spirit-bodies, and eventually for emancipation from this world. The conditions that call for religious healing are functional in nature, and not organic.

Acupuncture medicine is particularly effective in treating both functional and chronic disease. It works to free ki-energy, which has become stagnant in the body. The stagnation causes an excess or lack of ki-energy.

Visualization or Curative Images involves healing through manipulation of the flowing body and spirit-body by means of an image-experience. One learns to experience a "sacred" image, initially by creating it in one's own psyche. Using this method, self-healing occurs in the course of a spiritual journey.

Enlightenment is a third kind of religious healing which is the karmic reconfiguration of the karmic body. This idea is based on the Indian belief that a human being comes into the world by virtue of his or her own karma, and dies in virtue of the same. This kind of healing, however, is reserved for those who have achieved true enlightenment or "satori." Healing of this type is linked with the creative power to impact a change in the psycho-physical world, something that is still a mystery to us. The individual, who seeks healing, is prescribed daily prayer and meditation, along with strengthening of faith in order to achieve spiritual growth.

The East Asian traditions of meditation and related healing practices transform one's everyday mode of

consciousness so that he or she can become one with the creative activity of nature and awaken in themselves a natural healing power.

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