

The Caduceus, Chakras, Acupuncture and Healing: Part One

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Anyone will undoubtedly recognize the illustration in figure one, as the caduceus, or what has been internationally accepted as the symbol of medicine. Even though it is universally associated with the modern medical profession, its use has ancient derivatives.

When one understands and appreciates its significance, the caduceus carries more meaning to the professions of acupuncture and chiropractic than allopathic medicine. Understanding the close relationship of the ancient Sanskrit meaning of the caduceus to these two dynamic professions may be one of the most significant healing revelations of one's career.



Figure 1: The caduceus: from *Sacred Mirrors* by Alex Grey. Used by permission. In

Greek mythology, Hermes (Mercury) among other duties was known as the messenger and the deliverer of information. The staff of Hermes, the double-coiled serpent around a staff, became the symbol adopted by 17th-century printers, who were also known as deliverers of messages.

In the 19th century, a well-known medical publisher began to display the caduceus prominently on its textbooks because of its long association with printing. In America, these published medical textbooks established an association between medicine and the caduceus. When the U.S. Army Medical Corps adopted the caduceus logo in 1902, replacing the cross, it became firmly implanted as the symbol of medicine as opposed to its earlier representation of communication and wisdom.

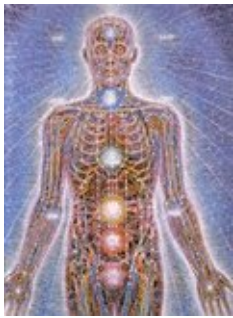


Figure 2: The "psychic energy system:" from *Sacred Mirrors* by Alex Grey. Used by permission. Hermes was also known as one who delivered the souls of the departed to the underworld, and is classically known as the patron of thieves. In Greek mythology, he is often associated with wealth and business. Many medical physicians over the years have become less than accepting of the caduceus as a symbol of medicine; because of its relationship with Hermes, they did not want the perceived association with death, trickery and the accumulation of wealth. The American Medical Association and other medical establishments such as Blue Cross/Blue Shield have adopted the staff of Aesculapius: a single snake coiled around a cypress branch. This was done possibly to distance itself from the double-snake caduceus of Hermes and because of its historic significance to healing in Greek mythology.

According to Greek mythology, the god Apollo in a jealous rage killed his unfaithful mortal mistress Coronis. When Apollo realized she was pregnant with his son, he called upon Hermes to deliver the child while her body lay on the funeral pyre. The child was Aesculapius.

Chiron, the wise centaur and healer (who arguably has a connection with "chiropractic" in name only), was called to instruct Aesculapius in healing since his father, Apollo, was the god of health. Eventually he became the god of medicine, with his own cult, temples and rituals. Hippocrates, the father of Western medicine, was a 20th-generation member of the cult of Aesculapius.

Various explanations throughout history suggest the staff of Aesculapius is associated with rebirth (represented by the snake) and strength (represented by a cypress branch). Hermes, on the other hand, allegedly received the double snake on the staff as his symbol while he was delivering an enlightened message. On the way, he came across two snakes fighting and struggling with one another. When he placed a stick between them to separate them, they stopped fighting and coiled around the staff. It is unclear how this symbol became associated with Hermes as opposed to other tales of his being.

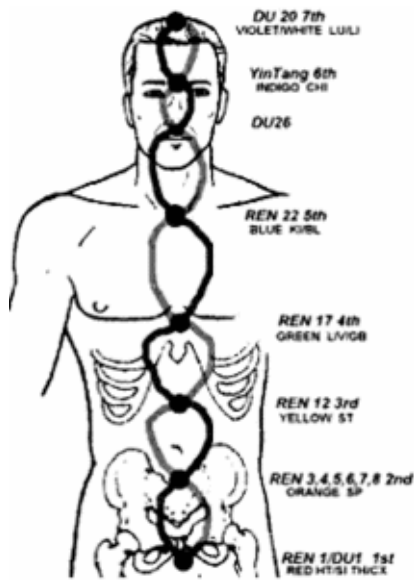


Figure 3: Throughout the world’s religious and mythical history,

serpents and staffs have always had a close association. The symbols of serpents and birds have likewise played a powerful role. The origin of *kung fu* refers to a folktale of a Buddhist monk (some versions say nun) who observed a crane fighting a snake and designed exercises to emulate their motions. In Buddhist folklore, Buddha once meditated under the tree of the serpent king. When a rainstorm threatened to drench Buddha, a giant cobra wrapped himself around Buddha’s body seven times and opened his hood to keep him dry.

The pharaohs of ancient Egypt wore the trademark of the vulture and the cobra. The coiled serpent worn on the foreheads of the pharaohs represented divine, fire which originated at the base of the spine and ascended toward the head. This represents the *kundalini*, which is illustrated by the coiled snake coursing up the spine.

In the medical practices of India and southern Asia, the *kundalini* (energy system) has been represented for centuries by double-coiled snakes coursing up a single staff (as in figure one). This representation has absolutely no relationship to Hermes and Greek myth. It has been said that the philosophy of India and Southwest Asia (including Thailand) preceded Greek legend by up to 1,000 years. The double serpent on the staff was solely a representation of the *kundalini* coursing up the body from the perineum and sacrum to the crown of the head. This symbol has extremely important correspondences to the practice of acupuncture and chiropractic, when utilized and practiced in a therapeutic sense.

The two snakes are representations of the spinal tracts known as the **ida** and the **pingala**. The ida is the yin energy (negative), whereas the pingala is yang (positive). These snakes are coiled around what is referred to as the *sushumna*, or main spinal tract or cord. Each time the snakes cross each other as they entwine, coiling up the body, represents the location of a *chakra*. Chakras are the primary centers of electromagnetic energy in the body. The crossing of the serpents occurs seven times, thus the seven chakras. The wings at the top of the staff in actuality represent the seventh chakra. Ren 26, even though not an official chakra, plays an extremely important role in chakra healing.

The illustration of the chakra and acupuncture meridian system, or "psychic energy system" by Alex Grey (see figure two) in his classic book *Sacred Mirrors*, may well be one of the most accurate representations of the acupuncture energy system ever illustrated in acupuncture's long history. Very little is ever mentioned of the chakra system in either ancient or contemporary Chinese acupuncture texts; however, it is mentioned often in master-to-student education, especially through Southwest and Southeast Asia. It was in Southwest Asia around the borders of Tibet where I was first introduced to this concept. I learned more about it later in Cambodia and Thailand (Burma).

The chakras have been described as where the *qi* energy circulating throughout the meridian system originates. It takes air, food, water, and sensory and intellectual stimuli to manufacture and replenish *qi*. The chakras are responsible for meridian energy distribution. They are of incredible significance in healing, as they are the primary electromagnetic energy system of the body.

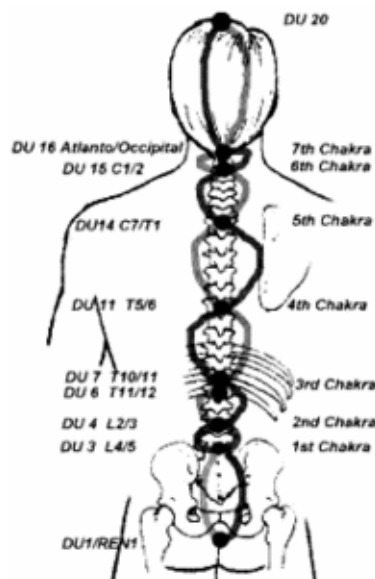


Figure 4: The individual circular rotations of chakras are associated with specific frequencies measured through both color and sound. The colors associated with the Five Elements

have specific relationships to each chakra. Thus, the color blue, associated with the fifth chakra at Ren 22 has a specific relationship with the Water element, namely Bladder and Kidney, whereas the fourth chakra, associated with the color and frequency of Green and located on the sternum at Ren 17, is obviously associated with the Wood element, or Liver and Gallbladder.

One of the most significant healing factors of chakras is the fact that their electromagnetic energy is located not on the anterior of the body as generally illustrated, but in the middle of the body, and they communicate to both the front and back - thus, yin and yang. This spinal connection may explain many of the almost miraculous clinical results reported throughout the history of chiropractic as DCs adjust these critical areas of the spine, where the chakras communicate to the posterior intervertebrally. Acupuncturists worldwide likewise utilize these important therapeutic acupuncture points frequently in treatment, with stunning success.

The number of severe and disabling health conditions that may be treated with the awareness of the meridian system and the chakras has few equals throughout the healing professions. It is truly incredible. When one develops an awareness of the caduceus, the chakras and specific acupoints along with the knowledge gained from electro-meridian imaging (EMI) diagnosis as reported in previous issues, it will create an entirely new dimension of clinical response never before seen in conventional acupuncture.

Figures three and four show the relationship of the chakras to the ida and the pingala, and their relationship to specific landmark acupuncture points. Many conclusions will be drawn by practitioners reading this article pertaining to application. Many will also report literally outrageous clinical results with what you will glean from this paper, even though, due to space limitations in editorial content, I cannot fully describe the clinical applications of this work. You will read about such clinical applications in the second part of this series.

Clip out, save and study figures three and four, and you'll realize a picture truly is worth a thousand words. Compare the double-coiled serpent on the staff in the caduceus to the trajectory of the *kundalini* and *qi* systems of the body. Relate this entire concept to the chakra system in figure two. You will be delighted at what will be revealed to you by simply studying this chart. I will expound on clinical applications in my next article. These charts will not be reprinted in the next article be sure to save these for part two.

In a related note, I will be presenting a special program on electro-meridian imaging along with the relationship to the chakras at the Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Alliance's 10th annual conference and expo in Safety Harbor, Florida, May 2-5. This is an event you will definitely want to attend. Watch for announcements or drop me a line for the schedule. See you there!

Click [here](#) for more information about John Amaro, LAc, Dipl. Ac. (NCCAOM), FIAMA, DC.



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