

Homeopathy and Energy

This is the first half of a two-part article. In it I want to explore our 'lost' heritage – the Indo-European energy model – and its gifts and implications for homeopathy.

Ever since I was young I have been fascinated by the idea of subtle energy. I can remember as a child discovering a book on yoga, and being fascinated by the descriptions of the chakras, and exotic and mysterious sounding things such as 'prana' and 'kundalini'. In my early twenties this eventually led to my studying polarity therapy. For those who don't know polarity therapy was founded by Dr. Randolph Stone, an osteopath, chiropractor and naturopath, who also became fascinated by subtle energy. He was looking for a kind of 'unified field theory' of healing. This would be a meta-model that would explain how all our various therapies work, and put them into a context with each other. He found his answers in studying the energy model that underlies the Indian system of Ayurvedic philosophy (the word ayurveda means 'life knowledge'). In doing so he put together a holistic system of treatment that involved bodywork, diet, naturopathic measures, exercise and attitudinal change.

I had been working with polarity therapy for a while when I came across homeopathy. When I heard about the process of homeopathic dilution it immediately struck me that homeopathy was a system of energy medicine. I thought 'Wow! This is another way of working with energy!'. I was really excited - being a Sulphur I like to know how things fit together. So I would ask homeopaths "Where is your model of energy? How do you understand how remedies work?". What astonished me was, at that time, most homeopaths seemed not to have even thought about how the remedies work, let alone about the human energy system. Of course what they did do is point me towards point me towards Hahnemann's concept of the 'vital force'. Now I do not wish to offend anyone here (remember I am a homeopath and love homeopathy!) but what I discovered astonished me even more. For a system of medicine that only makes sense if one takes on board the concept of energy, there was remarkably little energy theory. Certainly compared to systems like Ayurvedic medicine or Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) which have incredibly detailed and sophisticated energy theory, homeopathy seemed very lacking. So I began to teach the energy theory I knew to homeopaths. At the time when I asked groups of homeopaths how they thought the remedies worked I used to get blank looks. Over the last ten years or so this has certainly changed and now when I go into a new group of homeopaths and ask the same question it is noticeable that people have at least already given this some thought. The answers people give are usually along the lines of, 'energy', 'life force', and 'resonance'. However when I press them further to explain actually what they mean by these terms people run out of ideas within minutes! And that is just about how remedies work. If I go on to ask how exactly they think the vital force operates within the human body, generally people haven't a clue. There is generally little understanding of what exactly the vital force is, or what it does; of exactly what energy is; of what the human energy body is; or of what the relationship is between the energy and physical bodies.

We did once have a detailed understanding of energy in the west. When I was studying polarity therapy I was taught that Dr. Stone found the energy model in India, and brought it back to the west. Now I had already studied the Chinese energy model, and when doing so I definitely had a sense of learning something that was from another culture. However my experience of learning the energy theory behind polarity therapy was very different indeed. I had a sense of uncovering, of remembering, something that was already familiar to me somehow. Intrigued by this, over the next few years I studied different energy systems. What I found was remarkable common threads running through different cultures and periods of time. If one strips away cultural variations, one is left with a core energy model. Or, in fact, two core energy models. One is the Chinese system, practiced in China (obviously!), Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Korea and Taiwan. It is the system that uses the meridians and the five elements of Metal, Wood, Fire, Water and Earth. The other is the Indo-European energy model, so called because it originated somewhere within the Indo-European region. It is based upon the Chakras and the five elements of Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth. It is worth

noting here that while most people think of the Chakras as Indian, they are also used other cultures as far afield as the Inca Shamans in South America¹. This model is practiced from Tibet and Mongolia through to the Indian subcontinent the Middle East, Europe, North Africa and the Americas. This is a huge area. An interesting fact for homeopaths here is that this area coincides with those cultures who used Fly Agaric mushroom, known to us as the homeopathic remedy Agaricus. Some sources believe that the Ayurvedic texts were dictated by the god Soma. Priests used to commune with the god by the ritual use of Agaricus. This area is also the region that Shamanism has been practiced in. Shamans also understand the five elements (sometimes referred to by shamans as the five directions of North, South, East, West and Inner). We know from cave paintings that Shamanism has been practiced for at least 30,000 years and is probably much older still. It is our oldest system of knowledge.

The energy model is our birthright. It is what our ancestors would of known and understood for hundreds upon hundreds of generations. It is also what has underpinned formal healing systems including ancient Greek and Egyptian medicine. With the rise of Christianity it became suppressed along with most of our herbal knowledge. Practitioners were persecuted². The knowledge went underground and survived in secret Gnostic sects (gnosis, meaning hidden knowledge). It enjoyed a rebirth in the Middle Ages as humoral medicine, thanks largely to Thomas Aquinas' revival of Greek philosophy³. It faded again during the so-called 'Age of Enlightenment', with the rise of scientific rationality. Most recently it has started to emerge again with the growth of 'New Age' philosophy. However there is nothing New Age about it, and in fact it has never completely gone away. For example our language is full of elemental wisdom. We talk about 'head in the clouds', 'feet of clay', 'stuck in the mud', 'all fired up', 'airy fairy', 'wishy washy' to name but a few of hundreds of examples. Clients and students already know (even if they don't know that they know) what an airy person is like. Or a fiery, watery or earthy person. In doing brainstorms with groups when teaching, people uncover very detailed knowledge about the elemental types, even down to organ weaknesses and disease predispositions.

So what can knowing the model do for homeopathy? As well as explaining how homeopathy works, a conscious knowledge of the model makes remedy selection easier and can even open up whole new avenues of treatment. It can make learning remedies easier as once you understand the energetic essence of a remedy most of it's symptoms become predictable and make sense. In fact, the implications for homeopathy are actually vast, too vast to fully explore here. So I am going to concentrate on two areas, one is the five element theory and the other is the relationship between energy and matter. Also by knowing the clear simple truths about how energy works we become less prone to superstition and clutter in homeopathy (when I first came to homeopathy I was astonished at how many rules there were, some of which were clearly nonsense if one understood energy theory).

Let me give a simple example then of elemental diagnosis. A client came to me who had recurrent serious kidney infections that were getting progressively worse. She was thin, almost wasting away and with no energy. She was a homeopath herself and for many years had been treated by homeopaths including some very famous ones. She said that she felt that she was slowly dying and that the homeopathic treatment was missing something fundamental. In taking her case I noted that she had a medical history of eczema, asthma, and IBS. All of these had previously been successfully 'treated' homoeopathically in the past. Emotionally she was very prone to anxiety and fear, and had a lot of basic survival issues (always a sense of lack; money worries; a sense of not really belonging or being welcome anywhere).

To do an elemental analysis of any case is extremely simple (once you know how!). Each element is responsible for the building and maintenance of specific organs and systems in the body. So where as to find the right homeopathic remedy with a symptom like eczema we need to know the concomitants, location, aetiology, modalities etc etc, to do an elemental analysis we simply need to

know where the symptom is. The whys and wherefores of why a particular organ belongs to a particular element is way beyond the scope of this article but the knowledge does exist, mapped out in detail. To summarise it:-

Ether: The whole body especially throat, thyroid and joints. All emotions, grief.

Air: Skin, kidneys, intestines, lungs, nerves and heart. Anxiety. Thin body-type.

Fire: Brain, liver, stomach, pancreas, gall bladder, heart. Anger and power issues. Medium or athletic body-type.

Water: Reproductive organs, breasts, lungs, kidneys, lymph, heart. Addictions, sexual issues, guilt. Rounded or fleshy body-type.

Earth: Skeletal structure, intestines, adrenals. Fear, survival issues. Solid body-type.

In the next article I will include more detailed information on this relationship between body parts and the elements.

Arranging the client's symptoms under the elements gives us:-

Ether: Anxiety.

Air: Kidneys, skin (eczema), lungs (asthma), intestines (IBS). Anxiety. Body-type.

Fire: None.

Water: Lungs (asthma).

Earth: Intestines (IBS). Fear, survival issues.

We then need to assess what is happening overall with her elements. A common mistake here is to think that because an element has either no or few symptoms it must be lacking. Remember that what we have written down here are symptoms. An element with no symptoms is fine! What she did have is a clear underlying imbalance of the air element. Almost by definition it is also common for airy people to lack earth (the two elements are in many ways opposites). She clearly exhibited a lack of earth; her lack of grounding came across clearly in when you met her, and matches her symptoms. In fact, peoples symptoms nearly always match their elemental imbalance, since it is the elemental imbalance that creates much of the symptoms. The physical body is built according to the elemental blueprint. This is to the extent that once you learn to read the body you could predict most of what a client's symptoms are.

Coming back to the case example a simple elemental analysis is that the client is excessively airy and lacks earth. This fundamental underlying imbalance had never been directly treated. The homeopathic treatment, even though some of it had been what we would call constitutional treatment, had in fact only been palliating in acute episodes. She had had all the indicated homeopathic remedies. Homeopathy had successfully treated the acutes, but the underlying imbalance had continued to develop and was now potentially life threatening.

So how can we treat this case energetically? To explain this I need to outline a further piece of the energy model. This is best illustrated by looking at the creation of the Universe (!). Physicist currently believe that the Universe was created by the explosion of a singularity – the so called Big Bang theory. Initially the movement away from the centre of explosion consisted of waves of pure energy. As these waves imperceptibly slowed down, they organised themselves into individual photons – literally little packages of light. As these photons slowed down they split forming particles with mass and charge – mostly protons and electrons. The protons and electrons then paired up, forming hydrogen gas. The gas collected into individual stars which eventually exploded, throwing out quantities of all the other chemical elements. These chemical elements then start to combine, creating entirely new substances. With carbon these new molecules can be increasingly complex and form the building blocks of life itself. We are, literally, made of stardust, which itself is slowed-down light.

So what is happening here is as energy moves from fast to slow we see the emergence of physical matter and increasing complexity: the movement from singularity to diversity. Conversely if we take some complex matter and speed it up again (i.e. add energy to it) the complexities start to break down and in the end we are left with uniformity. There is a spectrum from fast-vibration (singularity, uniform, non-material) through to slow-vibration (diverse, complex, physical). In the energy model this process is understood to extend further back than what we can physically observe – into the realm of subtle energy. In other words, there are further realms before energy manifests in the physical universe. Modern physics has just recently caught up with this (for instance some physicists now believe that the singularity that created the Universe was itself created by the collision of two ‘membranes’ in the eleventh dimension!).

All this gives us a practical map for understanding remedies. There is a lot of theory we could go into here but for the purposes of this article we'll just look at three simple categories:-

1. Fast-vibration remedies. These are remedies made from pure energy. They include colour remedies and sound remedies. Also in this category we can put gem elixirs and flower remedies given that they are made with the etheric imprint of the substance (rather than a tincture of the physical substance itself).
2. Mid-vibration remedies. These are remedies prepared from physical substances which are then potentised to enhance their vibrational rate. This of course includes most homeopathic remedies, and spagiric tinctures.
3. Slow-vibration remedies. These are remedies prepared from physical substances without vibrational enhancement. This group includes herbs, nutritional supplements and indeed allopathic drugs.

As I said the energy model provides us with much more detailed mapping than this. But this will suffice for the purposes of the case example.

One of the things having and energy model gives us is an understanding of how different therapeutic interventions fit together. For instance a TCM practitioner may prescribe a combination of acupuncture, herbs, dietary measures and meditation practice, all based on the underlying energy diagnosis. Similarly an ayurvedic practitioner may prescribe dietary advice, herbs, yoga and even homeopathic remedies, again based on the energetic diagnosis. If we look again at the case example we can see that her previous treatments have all been at the mid-vibrational level. When treatment is only palliating or only partially successful what the energy model shows is that we may need to come in at a different vibrational level. With my client what she was lacking was earth – slow vibration. This is why the traditional treatment had only been palliating. My first prescription for her was to build her up at this fundamental, earthy level. I prescribed a building diet (rather than a cleansing diet, which would have finished her off!). This consisted of an almost macrobiotic style diet, lots of cooked warm building foods. I also prescribed nutritional supplements particularly lots of minerals. For herbs, the energy model opens up a whole new understanding. What she needed was herbs that are building, not cleansing. This includes nutritive herbs such as oats and marshmallow. With her I actually used a ready made formula for ‘substance depletion’ (briefly, thin and ungrounded constitution)⁴.

“But this isn't homeopathy” some people will now be crying. If so, I can only suggest you go back to the Organon and just look at just how many times Hahnemann states the need for dietary treatment. In fact he includes environmental factors (including faulty nutrition) as being one of the three possible causes of chronic disease (aphorism #77), the other two being miasm (#78) and drug induced (#74). His approach to diet is, of course, coloured by the times and location he wrote in, and so has a western naturopathic slant to it. I have no doubt that in another time or culture, his dietary advice would have been different. The fact is though that he saw attention to diet as important. He does of course advocate not using herbs with strong medicinal action whilst taking homeopathic remedies. This potentially raises the vexed question of single remedy homeopathy or

complex homeopathy. Personally I have gradually become more and more comfortable with complex prescribing, and now have no problem with giving more than one remedy at the same time, or of combining herbal and homeopathic treatments. However that is how I personally work. There is nothing inherent in the energy model that necessitates working like this. It would be perfectly possible to do one thing at a time, prescribing the herbs and dietary changes first and then the homeopathic treatment.

Other people may object to using herbs at all. However there is a great and long tradition of using mother tinctures in homeopathy. What the energy model gives us is a framework to do this in an intelligent, highly effective and integrated manner.

In any case what is really important here, the only thing that is really important here, is the patient's health. What happened was she came back a month later saying that she felt better than she had done in years. My next prescription was to continue the diet, nutritional and herbal support, and now to introduce some tissue salts (Silica, Calc Phos and Kali Phos), to continue to build at an earthy level.

The other area which she had not been treated in was fast vibration remedies. There are two major things we can do here. The first is to directly work with the underlying energy imbalance. The five elements (ether, air, fire, water, earth) originate from five centres in the body – the five lower chakras. The chakras resonate with colour frequencies. The traditional correspondences are:

- Crown – Violet
- Brow – Indigo
- Throat – Blue/Turquoise – Ether
- Heart – Green - Air
- Solar Plexus – Yellow - Fire
- Sacral – Orange - Water
- Base – Red - Earth

This is based on the understanding that as the chakras represent a spectrum of energy moving from fast to slow, in seven divisions, so there will be a harmonic resonance the colour spectrum, which also represents a movement from fast to slow in seven divisions. These correspondences seem to be the most widely used, appearing in several different cultures and periods of time. Occasionally one comes across other systems of colour-chakra correspondences. Particularly I am aware that the Guild use a different system⁵. What is important is to use the system that you are comfortable with. For myself, I use the correspondences I have listed above, and use the Ambika Wauters' colour remedies, since they were made with these correspondences in mind. These are homeopathic remedies and have undergone Hahnemannian provings⁶. They are available from Helios pharmacy⁷. I do use the Guild colours, but I treat them remedies in their own right. But equally you could use a different system – the principle of directly treating the chakra imbalance is what is important.

Whilst on the subject of different models, I would also point out that if you are more familiar with or prefer the Chinese element system, you could instead use that system to do your energy diagnosis. The principle would be the same. What would then be needed would be to work out the remedy correspondences to develop a practical application.

Coming back to the chakras, another way of directly treating them is to use sound remedies. In this case the correspondences are: Middle C = base, D = sacral, E = solar plexus, F - heart, G = throat, A = brow, B = crown⁸. I have a set of these, made by placing water in Tibetan singing bowls. Each bowl is tuned to a particular note. The bowls are played, and then the water is preserved with alcohol, similar to how a flower essence is made. They can be prescribed similarly to flower essences (indeed I often include them in flower essence combinations for clients). A further way of directly working with the chakras, for those who are comfortable using remedy simulators, would be to use

the chakras themselves as remedies. Machines such as the McGerck come with rates for the chakras, which can be used in the same way as the colour or sound remedies.

So for my client, on the second session I also prescribed Red 12c t.d.s. to help build and feed her earth chakra and element. Later on with her I used periodic doses of Green 1m, and then 10m, to balance the overactive air chakra.

One thing that is important to note here is that the remedies used to treat the underlying elemental/chakra imbalance will usually need persistent treatment (similar, say, to treating a miasm). Exactly how long for is impossible to say, in the same way that we can not really say how long it takes to treat a miasm; it depends on the client. An individual's fundamental elemental imbalance is only very rarely going to change forever with a single dose of a remedy. With this client, she was on Red for many months, starting at 12c, then moving to 30c t.d.s. once the 12c seemed to no longer be effective.

Something that can really help here in treating the element imbalance is the second thing we can do at the fast vibrational level – that is to address the reasons why the client's elements have become imbalanced in the first place. With respect to my client, she had been the unplanned and unwanted child of emotionally abusive parents. Essentially she had received the message from childhood that it was not safe to be here. She became ungrounded as a response. Core beliefs such as these respond very well to treatment with well-chosen flower essences and gem elixirs, since these remedies focus primarily on thoughts and emotions. There are many sets of flower remedies available now. It is simply a question of choosing a set, or sets, that you feel drawn to. Spread through the different sets there are many different flower remedies that would have been appropriate for my client. What I wish to get across here is not about which actual flower essences or gem elixirs I used. Rather I wish to convey the idea (and usefulness) of using such essences to deal with core beliefs that are a maintaining cause in disease.

Along the way, she still needed traditional homeopathic remedies too. The difference being that she felt that these now held far better than they had done in the past. She began to gain healthy weight and became much more grounded and less fearful. During this process she learnt a lot about herself. Particularly she became aware of how being airy and ungrounded was her habitual response to stress, about the ways in which she kept herself airy, and about what being ungrounded was costing her. After a year of treatment she left, saying that she felt better than she ever had done in her life. Ten years on, and she remains much more grounded, and has had no further major air illnesses.

This has been a brief introduction into what is a large subject. I hope it has at least given you some idea of some of the possibilities that the energy model opens up. In the next issue of the magazine I will unpack a detailed case, to give a more in-depth illustration of the method in action.

Footnotes

1. Villoldo, Alberto (2000) Shaman, Healer, Sage : How to Heal Yourself and Others with the Energy Medicine of the Americas. Bantam Books.
2. There is a good discussion of this in Achterberg, Jeanne (1985) Imagery in Healing: Shamanism and Modern Medicine. Shambhala Publications.
3. An interesting discussion on the four humours is Gullan-Whur, Margaret (1987) The Four Elements: The traditional idea of the humours and why they are still relevant. Century Hutchinson.
4. Over the years I have developed herbal formulae based on the Indo-European energy model. If you want information on these, please contact me directly. Recently these became commercially available ready made in tincture form, 100% organic, from The Bushy Tail Remedy Company, Tel: 0845 456 0145, www.bushytail-online.com

5. Evans, Madeline (2000) Meditative Provings: Notes on the meditative provings of new remedies. The Rose Press.
6. Wauters, Ambika (1999) Homeopathic Colour Remedies. The Crossing Press.
7. Helios Homoeopathic Pharmacy 97 Camden Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2QR, UK. Telephone (01892) 536393 (24hr) / (01892) 537254 (9:45am-5:30pm) Fax (01892) 546850.
8. I do not know of a commercial source of sound remedies at present. If anyone does know of a source, I would be grateful for the information, and will include it in the next article.