

Deepening our Connection to Nature, Earth, and Self: Alleviate Stress with Acutonics and The Three Treasures

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Living and working on 35 acres in the mountains of Northern New Mexico, we are fortunate to see and experience the extraordinary benefits of being in the natural world. Growing our own food, walking among the ancient pines, listening to the calls of the birds that stop to drink at the pond, following the tracks of bear, coyotes, and mountain lions along the trails. There is a sense of peace and stillness in these mountains that is deeply renewing. It is also humbling to witness the vast power and wildness, the raw potential and the infinite natural cycles. Our personal experiences are supported by the growing body of research which cites the tremendous benefit of being in the natural world to improve health and well-being. This is something that Taoist philosophers and Oriental Medicine practitioners have known for thousands of years. The natural world and its cycles play a critical role in the development of a balanced and sustainable way of life, a life that is built in harmony and a deep recognition that what is out there in the natural world and the greater cosmos is also within us. We are living at a challenging time. Each day we bear witness to the rising statistics in heart disease, autoimmune disease, obesity, cancer, and depression. At the same time, we are surrounded by daily examples of rapid environmental devastation. This article explores the direct correlation between the stress to our planet and the rise in human distress and stress-related illnesses. Does the disconnection from nature result in a sense of fragmentation that prevents us from being in attunement with our true “Nature,” our true “Self?” Ecotheologian Thomas Berry believes that when we activate modes of being, physical, biological, and psychic, we are able to experience the sacred dimension of the Earth and the greater universe. Each mode of awareness, our individual self, biological self, Earth self, and universe self, help to shape our experience and relationship to Earth (Berry, 2009). These same ideas are contained within the tenets of Taoist philosophy where there is deep recognition of the relationship between heaven, Earth, and humanity. When these are not in proper alignment it may present in physical form as a disconnection among the brain, heart, and kidney energy, in the form of chronic stress. Specific approaches that are designed to reduce the chronic stress response and improve health are presented. These techniques can be applied using acupressure, acupuncture, or through the application of specific sound vibrations to acupuncture points. We place particular emphasis on simple point protocols including the *Three Treasures* and *Buddha’s Triangle*. “The natural world is the larger sacred community to which we belong. To be alienated from this community is to become destitute in all that makes us human. To damage this community is to diminish our own existence.”

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Stress occurs when environmental demands exceed our ability to adapt and cope and results in both physiologically and psychologically measurable events. Small amounts of stress may have positive outcomes, such as arousing us to act when in danger, or helping us become more resilient. However, far too common life events, such as conflicts, unemployment, loss of a loved one, financial concerns, physical or emotional abuse, work or school related challenges, and natural disasters, are serious stressors that can impact a person's health and well-being. Numerous research studies indicate that stress makes us more vulnerable to illness, and also suppresses the immune function (Groer, et al., 2010). Chronic stressors, such as our current global environmental crises, can result in heightened negative emotional states, which lead to high-risk behavior. Ongoing negative emotions increase the risk of disease, including diabetes, depression, and heart disease, and may also impair social relationships (Kendall-Tackett, 2010). In the 1920's, Cannon identified the stress response as part of a unified mind-body system that impacts the sympathetic nervous system. He also made the connections between high levels of stress and our increased susceptibility to disease. As our body responds to a stressor, it engages in what Cannon called the fight or flight response. When the body is threatened, frightened, or responds to an emergency situation, there is sympathetic activity and heightened adrenal activity. Cannon demonstrated that physical and emotional stimuli could reach critical levels of intensity, which had the potential to overwhelm the body's homeostatic mechanism resulting in damage (Baum, 1987). The daily reports and potent visible examples of earthquakes, rising sea levels, and extreme weather that is being experienced globally may well be keeping us in a heightened state of fight or flight.

Hans Selye, expanding on the work of Cannon, attempted to identify and systematize the effects of nonspecific agents on the body's internal systems. He identified a physiological process called the general adaptation syndrome (GAS), which has three phases. The alarm phase includes detection and mobilization, resulting in the secretion of corticosteroids. The second phase is resistance, or a restocking of weapons, and the third phase is exhaustion, where all of the reserves are depleted (Baum, 1987, pp 2-3). As a result of Selye's research, stress was integrated into the study of human physiology and psychology.

When we live in a state of constant stress there are direct biological effects that increase the risk of disease. If the brain perceives danger it engages the sympathetic nervous system, HPA axis, and inflammatory response. The interaction within these systems is bi-directional so that chronic stress and our immune response are inter-connected, increasing the risk of inflammation, neurodegenerative, and autoimmune disease (Groer, et al., 2010, p. 15).

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Evidence of the impact of chronic stress on our physiological and psychological health is growing. Stressed individuals have increased susceptibility to colds and flu, heart disease, weight gain, and depression (Myers, 2010, p. 533). Stress also impacts renal, liver, kidney, and pancreatic functions and contributes to hormonal fluctuations in women (Baum, et al., 1987).

There is a direct correlation between the devastation to our planet and increase in human distress that often leads to depression. E.O. Wilson is credited with identifying the *biophilia hypothesis*, which essentially states that we need and benefit from our relationship to the natural world (Wilson, 1984). Numerous studies have demonstrated the advantages of being in nature and that personal health and well-being profit as a direct result of this contact with the natural world. Exposure to natural environments also supports our ability to recover from stressful events and enhances our ability to recover from illness (Ulrich, et al., 1991). As the natural world on which we depend for our very survival is destroyed, stress leads to distress, and depression. Heightened stress, over an extended period of time, has also been proven to lead to a rise in suicide. One study identified a significant rise in suicide and a 17% increase in depression and anxiety in New Orleans in the four months after Hurricane Katrina (Myers, 2010, p. 530). By 2020 the World Health Organization estimates that depression will be the single greatest cause of disability worldwide.

The relationship between the Earth body and the human body, as one uniquely connected entity, has often been cited by indigenous cultures around the globe. It is a basic tenet of Oriental Medicine, and Taoist philosophy, which recognizes the deep ecological connection between our outer and inner landscapes. The human body mirrors the Earth body, and yet the predominant worldview is not one of cooperation or awareness of this connection but one of domination over nature. Our estrangement from the natural world and our own nature may well be at the root of our psychological and social distress. This deep sense of disconnection can manifest as loss of will or desire. It is as though we do not know our place here on Earth or in the greater universe, what is our true journey, our soul's calling, and reason for being. What is our true nature?

Oriental Medicine has always been a true medicine of the mind, body, and spirit. Rather than chasing individual symptoms, there is an understanding of the deep inter-connections among the physical, emotional, and spiritual. Our responsibility as clinicians is to truly listen, and to recognize these interwoven pieces. Contained within our clients' stories, there is a global intelligence, the ecology of the human body, which relates to the ecology of the Earth body. Perhaps what we are being called to recognize is something that is as basic and deeply

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pervasive as alienation. When we are cut off from the natural world, or witness its destruction, do we lose a part of ourselves? Does this sense of loss result in an overall numbing, increased anxiety, fear, and sorrow? Has our heart strayed? Mencius, a follower of Confucius, said: Sad it is indeed when a person gives up the right road instead of following it and allows their [sic] heart-mind to stray without enough sense to go after it. When one's chickens and dogs stray, one has sense enough to go after them, but not when one's heart strays. — (Lau, 2004)

So our focus for our clients and ourselves amidst the global environmental challenges of these times should be directed toward the strayed heart-mind. Can we help to call it back to life, to understand that recovery of the self and recovery of our planet Earth are one and the same? By fostering a return to center we are embracing the *Wu Qi* and honoring our greater relationship within the cosmos.

For the past seventeen years, through our work with Oriental Medicine, sound therapy, and gems (which represent the integration of sound and light), we have had excellent clinical results ameliorating the symptoms associated with stress. In an Acutonics session, we focus our intention on reconnecting to and aligning the individual with the Earth and the cosmos. A treatment session will generally begin and end with the Ohm tuning forks. Symbolically, and scientifically, they represent the frequency of the Earth travelling around the sun through the four seasons, in its 365-day yearly orbit. It is linked to our ability to create harmony within, and to reconnect to the diverse cultures and species, of all life forms, that populate the Earth, our home. The forks are applied to specific acupuncture points that help to calm and soothe the entire body, unifying mind, body, and spirit with Earth energy.

The end result is a deeper level of internal and external harmony, a true sense of coherence, and a renewed sense of balance. There is a shift in perception of what is within and without; the body, mind, and spirit are able to achieve far greater unity that results in an increased well-being. The Tao is always to be practiced in the midst of daily life. Stop talking about lofty wonders and the empty void. Just carry out the human Tao, and there will be no shame in your heart. When you fulfill your nature, you'll know heaven and earth are the same. — Energy, Vitality, Spirit, Thomas Cleary (1991)

Stress Signs and Symptoms:

Anxiety

Panic attacks

Fright, fear, hopelessness

Depression

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Insomnia

Sleep with nightmares

Restlessness

Irritability

Forgetfulness

Night sweats

Dry mouth

Hearing loss

Memory loss

Increased cortisol levels

Endocrine imbalances

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The concept of mind-body-spirit medicine is deeply embedded in the Taoist and shamanistic understanding of Oriental Medicine. It is found within the powerful triad that is represented by the Three Treasures. The Treasures embody a triplex covenant among heaven, Earth, and humanity. This covenant focuses on nature and the intimate relationship between humanity and the cosmos. The Three Treasures provide a framework to deepen our understanding of the dynamic equilibrium between the natural world and the personal world, which are intermingled. When there is a connection among Earth, nature, and the heavens, our cosmic connection is activated, and we gain access to our heavenly endowed Nature. There is no mutual exclusivity. Rebuilding these powerful access points provides a rich foundation to reduce stress. They invite us to experience that for which the heart yearns, a return to center, the place of promise, home, and hope. When we access and connect The Three Treasures, there is a renewed sense of promise, a rebirth, and remembrance of how it feels to live in balance, health, and harmony. This is true physiological and psychological coherence, resulting in greatly reduced stress.

Manifestations of the Three Treasures

Mind – Body – Spirit

Past – Present — Future

Heart — Kidney— Brain

Upper—Middle — Lower Elixir Fields

Jing — Qi — Shen

Energy — Vitality — Spirit

Heaven — Earth— Humanity

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Outer — Inner — Center

Yin—Yang — Non-duality

Human—Terrestrial—Multidimensional

Stress and the Labyrinth of Life

As practitioners we cannot eradicate the conditions that cause stress, but we can help our clients come into proper relationship with the stressors in their lives. The stress response can be examined with new insights that create awareness of the consonance (harmony) and dissonance (discord) which unfold in our lives. Both are essential—but it is through the journey into relationship and relational elements that we evolve as learning humans in the labyrinth of life. Three Treasures can serve as a gentle reminder of the powerful peak experiences to be found by embracing the natural world, including a sense of euphoria, harmony, and a deeper union with the cosmos.

Finding the Heart Qi

There are numerous interpretations of and ways to discuss *Qi*, but for the purpose of this dialogue let us simplify the conversation. Our heart connects all of the other organs and their spirits through the natural force of our soul, our *Qi*. So when we talk about heart, we have to distinguish the meaning of shen—our original *Shen*, *Yuan Shen*, from personal *shen*, which resides in the heart. This aspect of *shen* affects mental activities, emotions, memory, alertness, consciousness, and sleep. The heart governs blood and its flow to every cell. It represents our divine seed, our internal sun, around which everything circles. In its broader context, the *shen* refers to the complex of our emotional, mental, and spiritual consciousness. It penetrates and influences all of the internal organs, glands, brain, memory, nervous system, senses, emotions, subtle bodies, and our conscious and unconscious thoughts. Since the heart governs consciousness, each of the internal organs houses a part of our consciousness and our spirit. The heart rules and has responsibility for all of the various aspects of our mind, consciousness, and spirit—it is the true mixer. It directs and processes our intention, willpower, thought, memory, and nervous and sensory input.

The Brain, Kidney, Heart Connections

The brain is the sea of blood and marrow (*Jing* essence). It is a curious organ—in a sense an extraterrestrial organ. It stores impressions and blueprints and connects with them through the physical and non-physical realms. These are united with the kidney through *Yuan Qi* and cosmic memory, which connects to the bloodline of history and time. It is through this connection with the heart that essence, the heavenly blueprint, is brought into expression.

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Through the Kidneys there is a remembrance of Earth (kidneys). It is the Kidneys realm to remember both our cosmic identity and our earth identity and essence. The Kidneys store Jing—both cosmic and terrestrial (*yang and yin*). This is essential, for it is where the divine and human will meet and find unique expression in the shen—the heart.

The heart holds the keys to memory. It is the seat of our emotions for not only our experiences in the Earth body, but deeply connects to the memory of our celestial blueprint. This blueprint is imparted from the heavens (interacting with the brain/mind) into the Earth (Kidney) and is in constant communication with these intersecting fields. The heart combines the will of heaven with the will of Earth and expresses it uniquely. It receives *Qi* and information from both elixir fields.

The heart is the mixer—mixer of wounds, pains, and joy. It uses the will of the kidneys informed from the brain, and integrates wisdom, dreams, symbols, and archetypal impressions. Somehow it makes sense of them—makes sense of loss and birth, of sorrow and happiness—of particles and waves, of democrats and republicans, of male and female, of all the disparate parts.

But sometimes it is our fears (kidney) that place judgment and impede the soul's progress. So the heart has a big job—but knows it is not alone. It is in the company of the battery (kidney), and champion of our strong will. When it is in connection with the higher will, it can help the heart express its divine mission, its true song. This is the song of balance and harmony, peace, non-duality, and coherence. It is reconnection with our true nature, our true spirit.

Though there are many external influences that cause stress and numerous techniques to relieve stress, like exercise, meditation, breathing, and connecting with the natural world, these are sensory exercises. They do not acknowledge that the root of stress is often a deep disconnection from spirit, or from our true home, the Earth. We are the Earth and the Earth is a manifestation of humanity; destruction of the Earth and loss of the natural world and habitat create imbalance in our spirit.

The greatest recipe for the reduction of stress is to reconnect with the natural world, which can lead us to a deeper understanding of our own nature, and to keep the Three Treasures balanced and in constant contact with the larger matrix, so that we are able to remember the whole.

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Accessing The Three Treasures

Regardless of where we look when we work with The Three Treasures, we are dealing with the superhighways of the central nervous system, with our psycho-energetic core, and the co-mingling of deep holographic fields, that are braided and integral. It is the axis known as the *Central Channel* that runs between the microcosmic orbit to unify *yin* and *yang* and all polarities. This is the deep multidimensional channel that connects the sacred scriptures of the cosmic and the earthly with our interior awareness. We can distill this into three specific areas that unite the macro and microcosm to provide a deep sense of coherence. The Three Treasures are represented in three specific points of the body. Du 20 (GV 20, *Bai hui*), Gate of the Ancestors, provides access to our heavenly *Qi*; Ren 17 (CV 17, *Shan zhong*), Original Child, Center of Our Inner Storehouse of Light, mediates between heaven and Earth; and Ren 4 (CV 4, *Guan yuan*), Origins Pass or Gateway of Origin, connects with our core, deepening our connection to the Earth.

The contact points of the Three Treasures can be accessed with needles, with touch, or with directed sound and light through the combination of Acutonics Tuning. Alternatively, Ohm Unison or Mars/Venus tuning forks can be used to create balance and provide an opening into the larger hologram. Musically the Mars/Venus tuning forks create a musical 5th, which is a powerful gateway. They also represent a true balance point between *yin* and *yang*, which help to unify the disparate yet complementary aspects within us.

HEAVEN-Shen-Spirit

Heavenly *Qi* is considered the first great force. It is a universal force, a cosmic force. It is incomprehensibly vast, bountiful, and beautiful. It includes the energies of the planets in our solar system and beyond. This first force is about sympathetic resonant physics. It represents the spirit of universal love and connection, which pours forth in generosity and abundance, to the soul, spirit, and *qi* of all sentient beings. This universal force has a special ability to nourish the yang aspect of the spirit and soul.



Contact Point: Du 20 (GV 20, *Bai hui*), Gate of the Ancestors, Hundred Connections, Heaven, the upper elixir field, seat of the spirit, relates to *Shen* and spirit. It calls on the wisdom of the ancients to align us with the harmony of the heavens, providing access to the Music of the Spheres. It relates to the brain, the mind, and the sea of marrow; and it imparts the heavenly given

Jing to the kidneys. This point supports the reconfiguration of chaos into unity, inviting peace,

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calm, and higher perceptions. It calls in the first great force, the force of universal love and connection. It connects to the brain, the endocrine glands, and cosmic energy through the force of our great *Shen*.

Treatment: Apply Ohm Unison or Mars/Venus tuning forks.

HUMANITY-Qi-Energy

The second great force is the energy of our cosmic or higher Self, our individual cosmic *Qi*, our divine spark. These are the particles of sound and light that are present in our essence. They are a part of Nature, in our own nature and our personal *Shen*. This *Qi* is wound into us through a spiral motion, much like the spinning vortices of cosmic dust in the formation of stars and planets and other celestial bodies that are accreting in time. We are cosmic dust formed from the dust motes of the multi-universes. The ancient Taoists and other indigenous cultures perceived this, and modern science has proven it.

These cosmic particles and waves nourish our mind, body, and spirit, and our entire physical structure. Humanity is the highest vibrational genesis of the Cosmic force and can gather in this force through meditative and inner alchemical practices as well as through dreams and creative expression.



Contact Point: Ren 17 (CV 17, *Shan zhong*), Original Child, Center of Our Inner Storehouse of Light. This point is also known as the middle elixir field, the seat of breath, representing the cosmic breath within us. This field incorporates *yin* and *yang qi*. It is the force that mediates between heaven and earth. This is the great mixer. It creates harmony that can be experienced through

the illumination, love, and purity that emanates from the Sun and heavens, and from the modesty, rootedness, balance, and nourishment that comes from the Earth. It is our heart. This is the chalice that mixes and animates the will of heaven and Earth to fulfill our desires and destiny. It connects the heart and all the other organs through the force of our soul as directed by the High Self.

Treatment: Apply the Ohm Unison or Mars/Venus tuning forks.

EARTH-Jing-Essence

The third great force is the Earth force, which includes all the manifest energies of this incredibly diverse and beautiful planet we walk upon, our home. The Earth force includes all the myriad things, plants and the animals, water and minerals, geological formations, oceans

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and mountains, rivers, streams, caves and forests, grasses and meadows. The gravitational fields and inherent magnetosphere and the earthly five elements are powerful aspects and manifestations of the Earth force. All of these energies nourish our physical bodies with *qi*, with potent life force, and supply each and every cell in our bodies with the energy and capacity to self-heal by coming into balance. Earth force has a special ability to nourish the *yin* aspect of the spirit and soul.



Contact Point: Ren 4 (CV 4, *Guan yuan*), Origins Pass or Gateway of Origin, EARTH, the lower elixir field, seat of essence, *Jing*. It is connected to the kidneys, and abdomen, the pelvis and legs—it is Earth centered and gives us deep access into our rich garden of inner essence imprinted from the heavens. It can reach everywhere to nourish and to integrate. It is our root and core, which helps us preserve in our Earth bodies and register the will of heaven.

Treatment: Use Ohm Unison, Ohm Octave, and Mars/Venus tuning forks.