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BODYFLOWING: 
AN INTEGRATED SOMATIC APPROACH TO 
HEALTH AND WELL BEING 

DISSERTATION 

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for 
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate 
School of The Ohio State University 

By 

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***** 

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this dissertation is to bring together the distinctive, yet complementary philosophies, disciplines and exercises of Chinese holistic and Western Somatic movement systems. The earlier chapters thoroughly examine the various facets of both traditions, with an emphasis on philosophy. (Specific systems researched include Dao-In/An-Chiou, Chi Kung, and Tai Chi Movement from China, and Body-Mind Centering, Laban Movement Analysis/Bartenieffs Fundamentals and Continuum from Somatics). The middle chapters establish a new theoretical basis for combining the disparate approaches, through the shared concept of the "flowing body". The later chapters contain a practical reification of this theory into usable exercises for health and fitness. The dissertation concludes with documented research on the parent systems, and plans for future research on the new system, which is known as Bodyflowing.

This simple natural method is designed to facilitate a preventive strategy for maintaining and improving personal health. It is easy to learn and can be done any time. Drawing from a somatic perspective, Bodyflowing emphasizes a
process of self-awareness and self-care. It can serve, not only as a self-contained, effective method for individuals, but also as a supplementary approach for professional bodywork practitioners. Like its parent systems, *Bodyflowing* utilizes a variety of techniques, including movement, visualized imagery, breath control, sounding, and hands-on bodywork.

*Bodyflowing* will help people circulate and balance flow in their bodies, free themselves from muscular tension and energy blockages, develop their kinesthetic awareness, harmonize the inner and outer universe, and prevent discomfort and disease. *Bodyflowing* is a profound form of meditation, relaxation, self-cultivation and self-realization. It is also an important bridge between the East and the West.
To my Mother, my Wife, and my Daughter
Who supported me throughout this project

And in loving memory of my Father
Who could not be here to see this through
But who will always be with me
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

In today's society, human beings struggle to overcome many modern diseases. High stress, competitive life styles, environmental pollution and an overall lack of physical activity all combine to damage the human ability to maintain immunity (Chopra, 1991; Keable, 1989; Payne, 1995). Although modern medicine can provide a partial solution to this problem, it is hampered by a dualist perspective that ignores the connections between mind and the body (Hanna, 1988; Leder, 1992; Katchmer, 1993; Knaster, 1996).

In the modern society, the demand for efficiency has caused an over-reliance on technology. As a result, contemporary human beings move as little as possible, spending most of our time sitting in automobiles, at desks in front of computer screens and on couches in front of television sets. Many of us
have lost touch with our bodies. We have become so accustomed to an inactive state, that it is only when something goes wrong that we begin to pay attention. If we are not careful, we can fall into a vicious cycle. In this cycle we move less, and consequently become more insensitive to the body's needs and wants; this leads to us doing less for our bodies, and thus having less energy available, which leads us to become even less inclined to activity (Ruhnke & Wurzburger, 1995; Spector & Flock, 1995).

Because of our fast-paced life styles, most of us pay little attention to our bodies, and are unaware of what happens inside ourselves. We ignore the chronic pain that can be caused by habitual muscular tension, mental pressure and emotional problems, and fall prey to a condition that Hanna (1988) calls sensory-motor amnesia (SMA).

The fact is that, during the course of our lives, our sensory-motor systems continually respond to daily stress and traumas with specific muscular reflexes. These reflexes, repeatedly triggered, create habitual muscular contractions, which we cannot voluntarily relax. These muscular contractions have become so deeply involuntary and unconscious that, eventually, we no longer remember how to move about freely. The result is stiffness, soreness, and a restricted range of movement (pp. xii-xiii).

In recent years, body awareness has become regarded as crucial to the solution of this problem. According to the principle of sensory-motor feedback, if
one increases sensory awareness, one will automatically gain more motor control. Thus, the problem of SMA may be resolved by increasing sensory awareness of the body. If one becomes aware of one's own inner world, and draws connections between one's body and mind, one will gain greater control over one's own physical well being.

Because of reliance on modern medicine we have overlooked this potential for natural healing. We have tended to reject or ignore self-care methods because we believe such techniques can be known only by professionals (Feldenkrais, 1977). Most people expect professionals to fix their physical problems and take their pain away. Therefore, they do not feel any need to take responsibility for their own health.

This attitude runs counter to two key concepts of traditional Chinese medicine: that disease is a failure of preventive health care, and that health is a responsibility shared equally by doctor and patient (Reid, 1996). Seeking prevention is a much better path to health and fulfillment than seeking cures. Timely preventive measures can even avert death or chronic disease and disability (Rein, 1993). Unfortunately, good preventive self-care methods are typically ignored in favor of after-the-fact medications. The idea of strengthening the body's natural healing potential as a personal responsibility is rarely taught.
and thus rarely practiced. Instead, we have become almost entirely dependent on doctors to fix our bodies whenever something goes wrong (effectly deferring to a "cult of expertise").

Because people have relied on modern medicine for a long time and ignored the methods that they can employ themselves, they have lost their innate ability to prevent illness. Pachuta (1989) states that

...ancient Chinese medicine was always a system of preventive medicine. In contrast, Western medicine, until very recently, has focused on the treatment of illness and paid little attention to prevention (p. 67).

His recommendation is that Western medical practitioners should incorporate some ideas from Eastern medicine, particularly the idea of prevention. People should take responsibility for their own health instead of putting the burden solely on professional medical care practitioners.

Working with many friends and clients, who usually rely on medicine to reduce the pain and discomfort in their bodies, or who work on machines to increase physical soundness, I found that most of them have rigid bodies and an deficient flow of Chi' in their bodies. They need to find more effective ways to keep their bodies supple, fluid and well toned. Even more importantly, they need to increase body awareness, to discover the sensation of dynamic flow and to
improve sitting, standing and moving in relation to gravity. This dissertation is an attempt to introduce a concept of the body and mind which will lead to a more natural, healthful, integrated way of functioning and thus reduce vulnerability to stress, anxiety and the pressures of daily life.
Theoretical Background

With my Chinese cultural heritage, and training in traditional Chinese "hands-on" work and exercises, I have been deeply influenced by the philosophy of the Tao (the "Way"), the concept of Chi (life energy), and the theory of Yin-Yang (balance between opposing forces). The Chinese recognize the universe as an energy field and all it contains as the manifestation of vital energy in patterns of Yin and Yang. These patterns are called Chi by the Chinese. Chinese medicine views the human body as a collection of Chi cycles (Katchmer, 1993). In Chinese medicine, these combine towards the goal of achieving harmony with nature, through maintaining balance and the flow of Chi.

There are several key points to improving health and becoming a holistic human being. These include balance, following the natural biorhythms, harmonizing the inner and outer Chi, and facilitating the flow of Chi in meridians. Dao-In, An-Chiao, Chi Kung and Tai Chi Chung are typical methods for achieving these objectives (Yang, 1989; Shih, 1994).

Through exploration into Western Somatic theory and practice, however, I have also learned another way to work with the body, utilizing gravity and developmental movement exploration. In this dissertation, after presenting and
analyzing Eastern and Western approaches, I will attempt to render them compatible with each other.

Somatics is a holistic science of human experience and behavior. It sees the human person as a self-aware, self-controlling organism, an organic unity of many functions previously perceived as independent manifestations of body or mind (Hanna, 1994). Somatics emphasizes the body as experienced from within. Somatics creates transformative effects through the development of an awareness of the self, and through a focus on consciousness, and a refinement of bodily patterns. In this way it improves the somatic and organic whole.

The somatic perspective is reflected in the many bodywork systems developed to improve health and positive functioning, including Alexander Technique, Rolfing, Feldenkrais Method, Body-Mind Centering, Hanna Somatic Education, and Continuum. These Western somatic approaches depart from the Eastern emphasis on Chi, and focus on the embodiment of structure and function. Although Eastern and Western systems share the processes of sensing, feeling, moving and communicating during self-exploration/hands-on work, Eastern and Western ways each have their own unique techniques and features (Liu, 1998). After study and review of these strengths, specialties and features, I believe that
Eastern and Western somatic concepts can be combined to form an integrated somatic system.

Western somatic approaches, based on physiology and anatomy, apply sequences of movement, breathing, meditation, imagination, visualization, sounding, and hands-on work to educate and help clients and students (Liu, 1998). Despite their differences, all somaticists emphasize the principle of self-cultivation and self-care. This is the best way to defend and protect the self against disease. Through self-awareness and self-exploration, one can explore the body "from the inside out", thus gaining a deeper sense of listening and overcoming the false separation between body and mind.
Purpose of the Study

Based on the Eastern philosophy of Tao, the principles of Yin-Yang and the concept of Chi, and Western somatic approaches, this study seeks to construct a natural self-cultivating system of health promotion for the general population. This holistic system, which I call Bodyflowing, combines breathing exercises, self-massage, meditation, visualization, sound and movement sequences. Bodyflowing is designed to provide a sequence of practical exercises for maintaining and improving personal health. It also seeks to facilitate self-awareness and somatic knowledge from the inside out. An additional advantage to this system is that the integrated exercises are easy to learn and can be performed alone, and without any special equipment.

Significance of the Study

The Bodyflowing system introduces a Western somatic approach into an Eastern holistic framework. It adapts the somatic first-person viewpoint (which emphasizes self-awareness and self-care) to the traditional Taoist objectives of
enhancing the flow of Chi and bringing the microscopic and macroscopic into harmony.

Unlike traditional Eastern movement forms, which typically initiate in a sitting or standing posture, the movements in the Bodyflowing system start from sitting, standing and supine postures, and apply Western methods of natural movement exploration. The Bodyflowing system has several advantages: It provides a real-world model for integrating Eastern and Western approaches; It provides an opportunity to assess the differences between holistic and somatic techniques, by contrasting the concepts of "flow" and "movement"; Adopting a slow, soft, flowing and relaxing movement style, it offers somaticists and fitness instructors as well, a new way to treat the body and a different design for exercise; It provides a new way to help students increase body awareness and sensitivity, enjoy the pleasures of flowing movement, strengthen their bodies, increase flexibility, develop physical potential and enhance fitness. Because of all these advantages it can be used in isolation, or as an effective complement to the standard approach of bodywork practitioners.
Procedure

To develop Bodyflowing, I began with research into the Chinese holistic way of maintaining health. Through a survey (Chapter 2) of the philosophy of Taoism, and an examination of the concepts of Yin-Yang and Chi, I gained theoretical support for the system. To further ground my ideas, I investigated the Chinese perspective on physiology through a literature review, and through study of the concepts of meridians (energy pathways) and Chi. Further, I drew from my own experience and study of eastern holistic approaches, such as Dao-Yin/An-Chiao (導引按蹤), Chi Kung (氣功) and Tai Chi Chuan (太極拳).

These movement philosophies supported my attempts to develop the new movement system.

Next (Chapter 3), I researched Somatics, the analogous Western system of holistic methods for health. I started by revisiting the body-mind issue in Western philosophy, and clarifying the concept of Somatics, somatic education and the purpose of Somatics. Then, I investigated the literature on Western perspectives of body flow as expressed in different somatic practices. I also participated in many workshops and studied several different somatic systems (including
Continuum, Body-Mind Centering, and Laban Movement Analysis). These movement philosophies also supported the development of my new system.

Based on my theoretical studies and practical experiences both Eastern and Western approaches, I was able to clarify the concept of flow and movement as defined in the East and the West. Then (Chapter 4) I created an integrated philosophy of health, which became the foundation of the Bodyflowing system.

Following the establishment of the theory, I designed the practical movement sequences and self-cultivation exercises (the executive principles, explanations, descriptions and general procedures of which are presented in Chapter Five). I concluded by summarizing my work, and creating recommendations for future research.
Limitations

This study is subject to the following limitations:

1. Due to the writer's own proficiencies, the literature review was limited to works in Chinese or English.

2. The Eastern philosophies and approaches investigated were limited generally to versions found in China (with some suplementary material from Indian Yogic theory).

3. The Western somatic approaches used for this research were limited to Movement Arts and Hands-On Work, which were selected because of their popularity, their personal experience by the writer, and their applicability to the concepts of "flowing" and "water-like" movement exploration.

Definitions

**Body-Mind**: The unity of the body and the mind.

**Somatics**: The study of the body as experienced from within. Facets of Somatics include wholeness, the rediscovery of the unity of body, mind and spirit, and the
dynamic relationships between the self and others, individuals and groups, inner and outer, and public and private.

**Flowing body:** The conception of the body as a living, moving, and flowing organism. There are three important types of flow in the soma: the *flow of Chi*, *the flow of fluid*, and the *flow of happiness and pleasure*.

---

**Endnotes**

1. *Chi* is the Chinese word for "life energy," called *Prana* in India and *Ki* in Japan, means "breath," but also is defined as "a body of energy acting as the medium for carrying consciousness" (Chaney & Messick, 1980). According to Chinese medicine, Chi is the animating power that flows through all living things. The movement of Chi (*Ki* and *Prana*) is based upon intention, and can be regulated in the body and moved by way of mind force (Stein, 1995).

2. Many eastern holistic exercises are formed by applying natural movements, sounds, hands-on techniques and imagination to the concept of Chi. These include *Do-in, Chi Kung*, and *Tai Chi Chuan*. I have been trained in all of the above, as well as in Acupuncture, Acupressure, Shiatsu and Chinese massage.

3. I have personal experience with several types of hands-on bodywork, including Alexander Technique, Body-Mind Centering, Continuum, and Laban Movement Analysis.
CHAPTER 2

CHINESE PHILOSOPHY AND HOLISTIC APPROACHES

This chapter focuses on the many Chinese movement systems that have arisen from the "Tao" (The Way of Nature). The Tao is the most influential concept in Chinese philosophy. It has had a powerful impact, not only on life in general, but also on the practice of medicine and the formation of approaches to movement. The first section of this chapter will describe the Tao, as seen from the perspective of Chinese philosophy. The second section will examine the Tao (and the related concepts of "Chi" and "Yin & Yang") at work in several different movement systems. The final section will analyze these systems for what they can tell us about the concept of "the flowing body."

The Tao, Philosophy and Life

Chinese philosophy considers life as a whole and pays considerable attention to the spiritual transformation of human individuals. Confucianism, Taoism,
Buddhism are the three major schools in Chinese philosophy and have had a profound influence on Chinese civilization and culture. Of these three, I have chosen to focus on Confucianism and Taoism, both of which are indigenous to China (unlike Buddhism, which comes from India).

Taoism is primarily concerned with integrating human existence into the patterns of nature (Jou, 1980; Reid, 1993; Sun, 1996; Yu, 1994), whereas Confucianism emphasizes the cultivation of morality, and is founded on the concept of “the goodness of human nature” (Fung, 1948; Sun, 1996; Yu, 1994). Although their concerns and emphases are different, Taoism and Confucianism are more complementary than competitive (Fung, 1948; Yu, 1994).

Both Taoism and Confucianism share "the concept of a Natural Order from which human beings have fallen out of synchrony" (Khor, 1994, p.30). Both believe that if human beings can reestablish their relationship with this "Order", transcendent experience, knowledge and power will be regained (Fung, 1948; Khor, 1994; Jou, 1980; Reid, 1993; Sun, 1996; Yu, 1994). This means that the Tao (or "Way of Nature") is foundational to both philosophical belief systems. For this reason, the study of the Tao is central to this investigation.

This section of the chapter introduced the basic concept of the Tao, explained Yin and Yang and described the life of Tao.
An Introduction to the Tao

In Taoism, the entire universe is conceived as following a natural pattern of reoccurring cycles, including the change of night to day, the progression of the seasons, and the process of growth and decay. Since human beings are inseparable parts of the universe as a whole, the objective of Taoism is to help human beings emulate the way of nature (Veith, 1949).

The Tao is the origin and founding principle of universe (Fung, 1948; Jou, 1980; Reid, 1993; Sun, 1996; Yu, 1994). It is formless, soundless, and incorporeal (Wu, 1961). In Chapter One of Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu¹ states "The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao". In Chapter Fourteen, he says "Look at it but it cannot be seen... Listen to it but it cannot be heard... Grasp it but it cannot be held... These three are indefinable; therefore they are joined in one" (Feng, 1972; Wu, 1961). In chapter 42 of the Tao Te Ching, the Tao as Origin is addressed:

The Tao gives birth to the One:
The One gives birth to the two;
The Two give birth to the three –
The Three give birth to every living thing.
All things are held in yin, and carry yang:
And they are held together in the Chi of teeming energy.
(Kwok, etc. 1993, p. 110)
In the Chapter 25 of *Tao Te Ching* describes the Tao as real, ineffable, and cosmological in origin:

There was something undefined and yet complete in itself,  
Born before Heaven-and-Earth.  
Silent and boundless, standing alone without change,  
Yet pervading all without fail,  
It may be regarded as the Mother of the world.  
I do not know its name;  
I give it the name “Tao.’  
And, in the absence of a better word, call it “The Great.”

(Wu, 1961, p. 35)

As the supreme and ultimate source of all substance, energy, and awareness, the Tao itself is an undifferentiated continuum, without boundaries in time and space, as infinite, formless, and luminous as awareness itself. It is the source of all things and all things in their essence are one with the Tao.

Explaining the nature and reality of the Tao, *Chuang Tzu* (莊子)says:

In the great beginning, there was non-being. It had neither being nor name. The One originates from it; it has oneness but not yet physical form. When things obtain it and come into existence, that is called virtue (which gives them their individual character). That which is formless is divided (into yin and yang), and from the very beginning going on without interruption is called destiny (ming, fate). Through movement and rest it produces all things. When things are produced in accordance with the principle (Li) of life, there is physical form. When the physical form embodies and preserves the spirit so that all activities follow their own specific principles, that is nature. By cultivating ones nature one will return to virtue. When virtue is
perfect, one will be one with the beginning. Being one with beginning, one becomes vacuous (xu, receptive to all), and being vacuous, one becomes great. one will then be united with the sound and breath of things. When one is united with the sound and breath of things, one is then united with universe. This unity is intimate and seems to be stupid and foolish. This is called profound and secret virtue, this is complete harmony (Chan, 1963, p. 202).

In accordance with the principle of life, things were produced in physical form, and progressed from formless non-being into existence with individual characteristics. Therefore, in the *Huang Ti Nei Ching*², the Tao is rarely discussed alone, but rather in conjunction with the two component parts of the universe, the Yin and the Yang. The Tao manifests within the universe as the interaction these two. (Endo, 1995; Feng & English, 1972; Jou, 1980; Wu, 1961; Yu, 1994). This is similar to the process described in the *I Ching*³ in which the Tao produces the Two Forces (Yin and Yang) and then the myriad objects of the universe. Yin and Yang are generated from one source (the Tao). Yang is active on the surface of existence while Yin exists more deeply as the absolute support of the action of Yang (Veith, 1949; Yang, 1989; Yu, 1994).

In summary the Tao has no form of its own, but consists of all actual and potential principles in its totality. It incorporates both the universal essence and the physical structures of reality (Reid, 1993; Yu, 1994).
Yin and Yang

The ancient Chinese philosophers used the concepts of Yin and Yang to describe all the properties of the universe, including the nature of creation and the mysteries of existence. The I Ching preaches that all created things are born and nurtured by the union of Yin and Yang. Yin and Yang exist as one in their essence, and generate all the manifestations of nature. Because Yin and Yang are explained as the two sides of a single phenomenon, it is also said that these two polarities are never actually fixed (Endo, 1995). According to the Huang Ti Nei Ching:

The principle of Yin and Yang is the basis of entire universe. It is the principle of everything in creation. It brings about the transformation to parenthood; it is the root and source of life and death...

Heaven was created by an accumulation of Yang; the Earth was created by an accumulation of Yin. (Veith, 1949, p. 115)

The ways of Yin and Yang are to the left and to the right. Water and fire are the symbols of Yin and Yang. Yin and Yang are the source of power and the beginning of everything in creation. (p. 116)

Yang ascends to Heaven; Yin descends to Earth. Hence the universe (Heaven and Earth) represents motion and rest, controlled by the wisdom of nature. Nature grants the power to beget and to grow, to harvest and to store, to finish and to begin anew. (p. 125)

The cosmic relationship of Yin and Yang as darkness and light carries over into the physical structure of man. Yin is active within and acts as a guardian of
Yang; Yang is active on the outside and acts as a regulator of Yin (Pachuta, 1989; Veith, 1949). Thus, in regard to the human body, Yin and Yang corresponded to the interior and the surface respectively. Moreover, both elements also exist within the body. Perfect harmony between them grants health; disharmony or preponderance of one element brings disease and death. The dynamic nature of such a harmony is the basis for the idea of the flowing body.

**The Life of Tao**

To live a healthy life, one seeks alignment with the natural flow of existence, and achieves the Taoist objective of longevity as a consequence (Katchmer, 1993). In the *Huang Ti Nei Ching*, Chi Po (a high official at Huang Ti's court) states that:

> In ancient times those people who understood Tao (the way of self cultivation) patterned themselves upon the Yin and the Yang (the two principles in nature) and they lived in harmony with the arts of divination... so as to fulfill their allotted span completely, measuring unto a hundred years before they passed away (Veith, 1949, p. 97).

Balance and harmony are central to the Taoist way of life. Health and longevity depend entirely upon the maintenance of balance in the energies of the vital organs, and harmony between the human body and its natural environment.
Lao Tzu's rendition of the Tao is drawn mainly from the recognition of the soft, yielding ways of nature. The way to balance and harmony is to live in accord rather than in conflict with nature. In his *Tao Te Ching* he recommends that one liken oneself to water. Water is completely fluid, adaptable, and obedient to natural law. By being the same, one lives into the Tao. Those who conform to nature learn how to harness its powers, and therefore flourish and live long. Conversely, those who defy nature, and try to pervert its powers for profit and pleasure, degenerate and die early.

The primary principle of nature is constant change and ceaseless flux. These changes and fluctuations are neither arbitrary nor chaotic. Having a rigid attachment to habitual behavior, material objects, and fixed ideas is contrary to the Tao and blocks one's capacity to adapt to an ever-changing world. Flexibility, spontaneity, and complete freedom of thought and action are the only ways to respond successfully to the constant flux of nature, and thus live in accord with the Tao.

The Tao provides us with all we need to know to live in accord with nature, to benefit from the trinity of heaven, earth, and humanity, and to protect the precious treasures of essence, energy, and spirit upon which our lives depend.
Unfortunately, most people spend their entire lives traveling the path of dissipation, without ever recognizing it as quick journey to the grave. As the sage Lu Tung-pin put it:

The human body is composed entirely of essence, energy, and spirit. If you do not cherish your essence and dissipate it recklessly, it is like pouring water into a cracked cup. Instead of filling the cup, it will leak away until it is depleted to the last drop. If you do not cherish your energy and dissipate it carelessly, it is like putting incense on hot coals and continuously adding fuel to the fire until the incense has burned to ashes. If you do not cherish your spirit and dissipate it indiscriminately, it is like setting a lamp out in the wind unprotected and letting the wind blow on the flame until it is extinguished. (Reid, 1993, p. 9)

The Tao offers a viable alternative to the self-destructive behavior of the modern life-style, a different path that leads to health and longevity, prevents disease and degeneration, cultivates wisdom, and protects the essence, energy and spirit.

According to Tao, it is only by observing, learning from and conducting our lives according to the ways of nature that we can expect to reach a state of fulfillment and peace. You should do nothing that conflicts with the natural way: You should bend with the wind rather than resist it. A dialog between Chi Po and Huang Ti reveals that those who follow the Tao have a long and healthy life.
Chi Po: Those who follow Tao, the Right Way, can escape old age and keep their body in perfect condition. Although they are old in years they are still able to produce offspring.

Huang Ti said: I have heard that in ancient times there were the so-called Spiritual Men (真人); they mastered the Universe and controlled Yin and Yang. They breathed the essence of life, they were independent in preserving, their spirit, and their muscles and flesh remained unchanged. Therefore they could enjoy a long life, just as there is no end for Heaven and Earth. All this was the result of their life in accordance with Tao, the Right Way.

In medieval times there existed the Sapient (圣人); their virtue was preserved and they (unfailingly) upheld Tao, the Right Way. They lived in accord with Yin and Yang, and in harmony with the four seasons. They departed from this world and retired from mundane affairs; they saved their energies, and preserved their spirits completely. They roamed and traveled all over the universe and could see and hear beyond the eight distant places. By all these means they increased their life and strengthened it; and at last they attained the position of the Spiritual Man.

They were succeeded by the Sages (聖人). The Sages attained harmony with Heaven and Earth and followed closely the laws of the eight winds. They were able to adjust their desires to worldly affairs, and within their hearts there was neither hatred nor anger. They did not wish to separate their activities from the world; they could be indifferent to custom. They did not over-exert their bodies at physical labour and they did not over-exert their minds by strenuous meditation. They were not concerned about anything, they regarded inner happiness and peace as fundamental, and contentment as highest achievement. Their bodies could never be harmed and their mental faculties never be dissipated. Thus they could reach the age of one hundred years or more.

They were succeeded by the Men of Excellent Virtue (賢人) who followed the rules of the universe and emulated the sun and the moon, and they also discovered the arrangement of the stars; they could foresee (the workings of) Yin and Yang and obey them; and they could distinguish the four seasons. They followed the ancient times and tried to maintain their harmony with Tao. (In doing so) they increased their age toward a long life.

(Veith, 1949. p. 100-102)
The Tao is a practical and effective way to promote health and prolong life on earth. The Tao teaches us how to approach the source of creation, returning (with full consciousness) to where we once belonged. The Tao points out a simple, pure, and clear way of life on earth, allowing us to enjoy fully the birthrights of corporeal existence.

According to the Tao, disease and degeneration are caused not as much by external invasion as by "letting down one's guard". Germs, toxins, and "evil energies" are ever-present in our environment, but they can only gain entry and cause damage to a body whose immunity and resistance are impaired by negligence and an improper lifestyle. Health and longevity are sustained not by doctors and drugs but by carefully guarding the Tao of life; and the onset of any disease is a clear indication of one's own failure to maintain a strong defensive system.
Chinese Holistic Approaches

Dao-In, An-Chiao, Chi-Kung and Tai-Chi Chuan are the main traditional Chinese systems for maintaining health and longevity. They are methods that utilize one's own efforts through exercise and breathing techniques. Through careful study of these three systems the crucial features of healthy exercise can be isolated.

Each of these techniques is dependent on the manipulation of Chi, a type of life energy generated by the dynamic tension between Yin and Yang. From the Chinese viewpoint, life itself is "all about Chi." Chi is the animating power that flows through all living things. A healthy individual has more than one who is ill, but health is more than an abundance of Chi. Health implies that the Chi in our bodies is clear, rather than polluted and turbid, and that it flows smoothly, like a stream that is neither blocked nor stagnant. For the Chinese, the presence or absence of Chi is (in of itself) the defining characteristic of life.

Dao-In and An-Chiao (導引與按蹠)

Dao-In and An-Chiao (like yoga and Chi-Kung) are methods of maintaining health through one's own efforts with exercise and breathing techniques. They occupy a central place in Asian medicine and emphasize the alignment of life
processes with the source of universal consciousness rather than the curing of diseases (Endo, 1995). The word "Dao" means the opening of channels and facilitation of the movement of Chi along specific routes. "In" means the practice of moving and stretching one's limbs to achieve this purpose. "Dao-In", as a compound term, means the technique of releasing meridian flow through one's own efforts.

"An" is an abbreviation for Anmo or "massage" and "Chiao" is a type of manipulation that resembles the posture-correction techniques of chiropractic and osteopathic medicine (Endo, 1995). The purpose of Dao-In and An-Chiao is to improve the circulation of Chi and to pursue longevity. Dao-In can be performed individually by physical movement, often combined with breathing techniques and visualization, whereas An-Chiao involves massage performed by another person.

The Huang Ti Nei Ching recommends Dao-In to cure chill and fevers, and outlines the objective of Dao-In as becoming like the ancient sages who

...were tranquilly content in nothingness and the true vital force (Zhen Chi) accompanied them always; their vital (original) spirit was preserved within; thus, how could illness come to them? (黄帝內經, chapter 1).

In the writings of Chuang-Tzu (third century B.C.):
...To pant, to puff, to hail, to sip, to spit out the old breath and draw in the new, practicing bear-hangings and bird-stretchings, longevity his only concern such is the life favored by the scholar who practices Dao-In, the man who nourishes his body, who hopes to live to be old as Pengzu, for more than eight hundred years (Watson, 1968, p.167).

The earliest pictures of Dao-In were found in 1973 in the tomb of King Ma (ca. 168 B.C.) at Mawangdui near the city of Changsha, the capital of Hunan Province in China. The painted figures, which are young and old, male and female, rich and poor, represent nearly all the major categories of modern Chi Kung exercises: breathing, stances, movement, and self-massage from standing seated, and supine postures. Several of the figures are bending, stretching, or twisting (Cohen, 1997). There are captions near most of the figures on the chart. Some of the captions are names of animals, including "hawk", "wolf", "crane", "dragon", "cat" and "bear". Other captions describe how to move the body. Some of the captions even reveal the names of specific disorders (such as kidney disease, flatulence, painful knees, lumbago, rheumatism, gastric disturbance, and anxiety) suggesting that specific exercises were used to treat specific illnesses as early as 168 B.C. These exercises may have been commonly known house-hold remedies or, conversely, prescribed specifically by healing specialists.
The "Five Animals" exercise of Hua Tuo is the most popular Dao-In exercise from ancient China. *Hua Tuo* outlined the concepts underlying his form in the *Sanguo Zhi* (Record of the Three Kingdoms 三國誌).

The body needs a certain amount of movement. This movement serves to properly balance right and left, it helps to redistribute and assimilate the various breaths that are issued from the cereals, more than that it causes the blood to circulate properly and prevents the origination of diseases.

The human body is like a door hinge that never comes to rest. This is why Taoists practice gymnastics. They imitate the movements of the bear which hangs itself head-down from a tree, of the owl which keeps turning its head in different ways. They stretch and bend the waist, and move all the joints and muscles of their bodies in order to evade aging.

I myself have developed a series of exercises which I name the Five Animals Pattern. The five animals are the tiger, the deer, the bear, the monkey, and the bird. The practice of the Pattern aids the elimination of diseases and increases the functioning of the lesser members. Whenever a disorder is felt in the body one of the Animals should be practiced until one perspires freely. When perspiration is very strong, one should cover the affected parts of the body with dust. In due course one will find the body lighter, more comfortable and a healthy appetite will return. (Sanguo zhi 29)

Dao-In is commonly associated with An-Chiao (self-massage), which presses and strokes the energy channels to balance the flow of Chi. Just as Dao-In serves to eliminate blockages and coagulations of Chi within the body, An-Chiao helps to open the barriers and smooth the circulation of bodily fluids.
Chi Kung

"Kung" means "work" or "benefits acquired through perseverance and practice." Chi Kung is a holistic system of self-healing exercise and meditation involving healing postures, movement, self-massage, breathing techniques, and meditation. Through these various methods, Chi is accumulated and stored in the body, as if filling a reservoir. By this practice, impure or polluted Chi (the essence of disease) can also be cleansed and refined into pure, healing Chi. When one learns how to work with the life energy and how to control the flow and distribution of Chi, one improves the health and harmony of mind and body (Requena, 1997).

The goal of many Chi Kung practices is to discharge and eliminate the impure Chi in a manner analogous to breathing. Breathing is a process of absorbing a pure source of energy (oxygen) and eliminating an impure variant (carbon dioxide). Like proper breathing, Chi Kung practice can make this exchange more efficient.

Chi is also the life energy present in nature. The earth itself is a living being, moving, changing, breathing, and experiencing the flow of Chi. When we appreciate the beauty of animals, fish, birds, flowers, trees, mountains, the deep
ocean, and floating clouds, we are sensing their Chi and feeling an intuitive unity with them. Human beings, as part of nature, share Chi with the rest of the earth.

The main purpose of the Chi Kung exercises is to regulate the internal functions of the human body. By developing body-consciousness and control over respiration, one learns to move and strengthen the internal Chi, and thus brings self-regulation and self-control to the vital organs (Liu, 1998; Requena, 1997). Chi is the most basic element of life, and good control of Chi circulation inside the body is the most important element in preventing disease and maintaining a good quality of life (Knaster, 1996; Requena, 1997; Yang, 1989 & 1992; 張有勳, 1994).

Chi Kung techniques are mainly divided into three general categories: dynamic or active Chi Kung, still or tranquil Chi Kung, and spontaneous Chi Kung (Berk, 1986; Liu, 1998; Requena, 1997; Yang, 1989). Dynamic (or "external") Chi Kung incorporates a set sequence of movements, which usually imitate or draw from observations of animals. Dynamic Chi Kung is the most popular kind of Chi Kung in both China and the West. The physical movements circulate the Chi, but the mind is quiet, peaceful, and at rest (Liu, 1998). Tranquil (or "internal") Chi Kung focuses on breathing, and the internal motion of the Chi. Spontaneous Chi Kung is the practice of allowing one's own internal Chi flow to spontaneously
move the physical body. This inside-out process deeply increases body awareness (Cohen, 1997; Requena, 1997).

There are three main points in Chi Kung exercise: regulating the body, regulating the mind and regulating the respiration (Khor, 1994). All of these are integrated closely and all affect each other (Shih, 1994).

Proper body alignment is very important in Chi Kung practice. The flow of Chi will be obstructed if the body is incorrectly aligned. During practice, one must learn to walk like the wind, stand like a living plant, sit like a stable block, and lie like a bow while lying on one's side. The whole body must be natural, comfortable and relaxed.

Regulating the mind is chiefly a matter of gaining control over the habits of mental activity and attention that govern the consciousness of the body. Regulating attention allows one to focus the Chi in the Dan-Tien. This point, at the center of the body (below the navel) is always the main locus for focusing the mind and retaining Chi.

Another facet of Chi-Kung is the regulation of respiration. An ancient song says:

The heart rules over the movement of the Chi.
The Chi brings long life.
When long and thread-like, smooth and continuous Breath flows in its circle,
Disease can be removed and life prolonged.
(Shih, 1994, p. 51)
Respiratory exercises in Chi Kung are primarily concerned with abdominal breathing. Slow, smooth, deep and long abdominal breathing helps to calm down the nervous system and in the attainment of inner quiet. It has been developed into many different forms and methods to refine the techniques of breathing, and to further balance the movement of Chi inside and outside the body (Wiley, 1995; Yang, 1989; 張有樺, 1994).

**Tai Chi Movement**

Tai Chi movement has been described as "meditation in motion", as well as being considered a martial-art and a healing art. Tai Chi Movement is a structured sequence of slow and continuous movements, which are designed to relax the whole body, and to develop the body's internal strength, suppleness and stamina (Chuen, 1994; Crompton, 1991; Khor, 1994; Jou, 1980). Tai Chi movements are mainly derived and synthesized from the collective philosophies of ancient martial arts as practiced in China's famous Shaolin temple (Khor, 1994).

Taoism is the major philosophy influencing Tai Chi Movement. According to Lao Tzu and the doctrine of the Tao, there are three major principles that are
central to Tai Chi Movement. First is the doctrine of the "Way of Nature". In the laws of nature, nothing is permanent and everything is forever changing. Therefore, people should do nothing that conflicts with the natural way. Second is the doctrine of Wu Wei ("non-action" or having no specific action), which means doing things for their own sake, rather than for ulterior motives, and knowing when to stop before over-doing things (Khor, 1994, p.31). Third is the doctrine of the "uncarved block," or pure untouched state (Khor, 1994). Human beings are in a pristine state of existence before they are tainted by the environment and society (Khor, 1994; Yu, 1994). These three principles influence the Tai Chi Movement and ensure that each applies the concepts of softness, yielding and non-action.

The philosophy of Tai Chi Movement is revealed in the movement itself, and in the theory of Yin and Yang as expressed in Tai Chi Movement sequences:

One must give up all thoughts and become tranquil. Forget all the rules... One must return to the primal and change the complex to the simple. Pay attention only to the Yin and Yang changes within and without, from action to inaction, and inaction to action. Finally, find how each movement return to its roots (Jou, 1991, p. 111-112).

Tai Chi movements are similar to the motion of water: soft, gentle, slow, continuous, round, smooth and light in quality with no external muscular force.
and no holding of the breath, but with an emphasis on the use of the mind state to direct all movements (Chen, 1947; Delza, 1996; Jou, 1980; Liang, 1977; Maisel, 1963; Mogul, 1980; Tek, 1995). The idea of flow is thoroughly illustrated by the sequences of movement in Tai Chi. The characteristics of Tai Chi movement are bodily expression with no tension, stability through sinking motion, agility, sensitivity and roundness (Tek, 1995).

Tai Chi Movement is mainly rooted in the feet, controlled in the waist and spine (the center of the body) and functions through the fingers (Jou, 1980; Maisel, 1963; Mogul, 1980). When one part moves, the entire body moves, like continuous water (Delza, 1996; Jou, 1980; Kuo, 1994; Liang, 1977). With the qualities of the soft and yielding water, Tai Chi Movement teaches one how to be flexible, patient, gentle and able to let go (Jou, 1980; Lehrhaupt, 1993).

Tai Chi Movement helps one increase internal and external bodily awareness (Bennett, 1992; Delza, 1996; Lehrhaupt, 1993; Liau, 1990; Maisel, 1963), concentration, coordination and inner balance (Chen, 1947; Chuen, 1994; Delza, 1992 & 1996; Kauz, 1974), correct body alignment (Chuen, 1994; Crompton, 1991; Delza, 1992) efficiency of movement (Delza, 1992; Kauz, 1974; Maisel, 1963), and personal holistic harmony (Chen, 1947; Maisel, 1963). Tai Chi is not only a good exercise for mind-body health, healing and self-defense, but its
philosophy, based on the Yin-Yang theory also can be applied to solving the
problems of practical daily life\textsuperscript{10} (Jou, 1980; Lee, M., Lee, E & Johnstone, 1994).

The Flowing Body

In traditional Chinese medicine, the human body is viewed as a microcosmic
mirror of the macrocosmic universe, a whole inner world composed of the same
elements and energies, and subject to the same natural laws, as the external
world and cosmos (Eisenberg, 1985; Endo, 1995; Kaptchuk, 1983; Reid, 1996).
Chinese medicine is primarily concerned with dynamic systems, and with the flow
of energy, and (in this respect) an individual human being is also considered a
dynamic system, a particular constellation of energy (Kaptchuk, 1983). Since all
physical forms are generated by the cosmic force of Chi, it is logical that human
beings would also spring from the mutual activation and transformation of Chi.
The flowing of Chi is the main essence of all living bodies. Therefore the term
"flowing body" is actually a literal description of the body, in relation to the motion
of the Chi.
To contextualize the basic concept of the flowing body (which is a key concept in Eastern holistic approaches) this chapter will first present the image of the body from an Eastern perspective, followed by introductions to the flowing system, Chi, and health.

**The Chinese Image of the Body**

In the Chinese cosmology, all natural phenomena are divided into the physical categories of plant, heat, earth, mineral, and liquid, which correspond to the five natural elements of wood, fire, earth, metal, and water (all phenomena are also divided into Yin and Yang aspects).

The human body is regarded as a microcosm of the natural universe and is therefore governed by the same elements and forces. The organs of the body are also divided into interdependent groups of six Zang (Yin) and six Fu (Yang) organs, each of which also represents one of the five elements and works together with a complementary organ. The organs are all connected by a system of Chi-carrying meridians which enables the whole body to function (Endo, 1995; Ohashi, 1976; Veith, 1949).
The Flowing System

There are two flowing systems in the body: The blood and lymphatic system and the Chi system. In traditional Chinese medicine, the solid organs are not the main focus of treatment and are considered chiefly as containers for Chi and fluid (Ishida, 1989; 石田秀石, 1996). Therefore the practice of medicine focuses on healing the Chi flow that circulates, via the meridians, throughout the body.

There are twelve regular meridians, eight supplementary meridians and fifteen collateral meridians in the human body. These meridians occur in a definite order, and each charts a set course through a specific part of the body. Each of the twelve regular meridians pertains to and connects with one of the twelve organs. A complete cycle can be traced around the body (via the meridians) starting with the Lungs, and finishing with the Liver (Berk, 1986; Eisenberg, 1985; Kaptchuk, 1983; Li & Wei, 1989; Reid, 1996; Shih, 1994). An understanding of the meridians (and their vital function of providing each cell of the body with energy) is a prerequisite for mastery of the techniques of the breathing and meditation in any system of Internal Exercises (as described above).

The means whereby man is created, the means whereby diseases occur, the means whereby man is cured, the means whereby diseases arise: the twelve meridians are the basis for all theory and
Life is All About Chi

To the Chinese, the defining characteristic of life is having Chi, and death is defined as the absence of Chi.

Chi means that which differentiates life from death. To live is to have Chi in every part of your body. To die is to be a body without Chi. For health to be maintained, there must be a balance of Chi, neither too much nor too little (Eisenberg, 1985, p.43).

Every life process is based on the action of Chi. When a person is born, Yin and Yang (which are formed by the motion of the Chi) come together to form a new entity (Feng & English, 1972; Veith, 1949; Wu, 1961). When a person is in good health, the Chi flows smoothly. When a person is sick, the Chi is blocked. When a person reaches old age, the Chi begins to dissipate, starting with the liver, and progressing through the heart, spleen, lungs and kidney. When all the Chi is gone, the person dies. In this way, death is seen as the process of Chi leaving the body (石田秀石, 1996; 黃帝內經).
Chi is Similar to Water

The flow of Chi is like the flow of water.

Chinese doctors and Chi Kung practitioners have traditionally described the behavior of Chi as being similar to water. This is seen in a number of ways. First, just as water flows from higher areas to lower areas, Chi flows from areas of higher potential to areas of lower potential. In this way, Chi balances itself naturally. Second, if muddy water is left undisturbed the sand will settle to the bottom leaving the water above it calm and clear. However, if you stir up the water, the sand will rise up and dirty the water again. This is similar to how when the mind is steady, the Chi will be calm and clear but when the mind is scattered, the Chi will be disturbed and excited. Third, the Chi channels which supply Chi to the entire body are usually compared to rivers, and the vessels which store the Chi are compared to reservoirs. Water and Chi should both flow smoothly and continuously. When a river or channel is obstructed the water/Chi flow will be agitated and uneven. In an obstructed channel, the water/Chi flow will be higher, and may overflow the banks (Yang, 1989, p.37).

Chi is treasured as the primary quality of existence.

The root of the way of life, of birth and change is Chi; the myriad things of heaven and earth all obey this law. Thus Chi in the periphery envelops heaven and earth. Chi in the interior activates them. The source wherefrom the sun, moon, and stars derive their light, the thunder, rain, wind and cloud their being, the four seasons and the myriad things their birth, growth, gathering and storing; all this is brought about by Chi. Man's possession of life is completely dependent upon this Chi (黃帝內經, chapter 5).
Conclusion

As the supreme and ultimate source of all substance, energy, and awareness, the Tao itself is an undifferentiated continuum without boundaries in time and space. The Tao is the original source of all things, including knowledge. The theory of Yin and Yang does not perceive nature as matter. Rather, all things in the natural world are born from the existence of opposition and differentiation. (Endo, 1995)

In practical terms, the Tao manifests within the body as the constant motion of the energy known as Chi. When Chi is blocked or stagnant, the result is disease, and when Chi flows smoothly, the result is health. In this way, the "flowing body" is the foundation of all Chinese medicine. Therefore, the flow of Chi must be understood before one can comprehend the new Bodyflowing system.

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1 Lao Tzu, the pioneer of Taoism, was born in 604 B.C.

2 The *Huang Ti Nei Ching* (Internal Medicine), consisting of two parts, the *Suwen* and *Lingshu*, is the oldest and most important text on Chinese medicine. It is attributed to Huang Ti (c. 2600 B.C.), the Yellow Emperor, one of the most famous of the legendary rulers of China. It is the classic treatise on internal medicine and supposedly the oldest medical book extant (Veith, 1949). In the Nei Ching, one can see how the "Tao" influences the Chinese understanding of illness and health (Sun, 1996).
The I Ching, the book of changes, is the oldest and most basic work of Chinese culture and science.

This alternative path is illustrated by the following story from the Chuang Tzu:

Cook Ting was cutting up an ox for Lord Wen-hui. At every touch of his hand, every heave of his shoulder, every move of his feet, every thrust of his knee—zip! Zoop! He slithered the knife along with a zing, and all was in perfect rhythm, as though he were performing the dance of the Mulberry Grove or keeping time to the Ching-dhou music.

"Ah, this is marvelous!" said Lord Wen-hui. "Imagine skill reaching such heights!" Cook Ting laid down his knife and replied, "What I care about is the Way, which goes beyond skill. When I first began cutting up oxen, all I could see was the ox itself. After three years I no longer saw the whole ox. And now—now I go at it by spirit and don't look with my eyes. Perception and understanding have come to a stop and spirit moves where it wants. I go along with the natural makeup, strike in the big hollows, guide the knife through the big openings, and follow things as they are. So I never touch the smallest ligament or tendon, much less a main joint.

...There is space between the joints, and the blade of knife has really no thickness. If you insert what has no thickness into such spaces, then there's plenty of room—more than enough for the blade to play about it. That's why after nineteen years the blade of my knife is still as good as when it first came from the grindstone.

"However, whenever I come to a complicated place, I size up the difficulties, tell myself to watch out and be careful, keep my eyes on what I'm doing; work very slowly, and move the knife with greatest subtlety, until—flop! the whole thing comes apart like a clod of earth crumbling to the ground. I stand there holding the knife and look all around me, completely satisfied and reluctant to move on, and then I wipe off the knife and put it away."

"Excellent!" said Lord Wen-hui. "I have heard the words of Cook Ting and learned how to care for life" (Watson, 1968, pp.50-51).

Dao-In is the origin of Chi Kung.

Hua Tuo was an outstanding surgeon in the latter part of the Eastern Han Dynasty. He contributed greatly to the development of traditional Chinese medicine. He was also proficient in internal medicine and Chi Kung. He instructed his students to partake in physical training to benefit their health. That is the meaning of the saying, "Running water is never stale, and a door-hinge
never gets worm-eaten.” Accordingly he developed “Imitation of Five Animal exercises,” founded upon his own realization of the essence of Chi Kung (Shih, 1994).

7 In abdominal breathing, one feels the breath is reaching down into the Dan-Tien (丹田), which is the main focus of the body’s Chi field. There are three types of abdominal breathing: natural abdominal breathing; deep abdominal breathing; and pausal abdominal breathing. Each represents a progressively higher level of practice.

8 “Tai Chi Movement” is the term I use for the movement approach that is based on the martial art “Tai Chi Chuan”, which, in turn, is based on the Tai Chi philosophy. Recently, Tai Chi Chuan does not be a fighting style. I would like to call a “movement”.

9 The following is the interpretation and explanation of Tai Chi from the Tai Chi Classics I (太極拳論一):

Tai Chi (太極) is born out of infinity (無極). It is the origin of the Yin and Yang. When Tai Chi is in motion, the Yin and Yang separate; when Tai Chi stops, the Yin and Yang integrate (Derrickson, 1993; Jou, 1980, 177; Liau, 1990; Maisel, 1963).

Tai Chi means ‘the ultimate’. It means improving and progressing toward the unlimited; it means the immense existence and the great eternal (Jou, 1980; Liau, 1990).

10 The philosophy of Tai Chi Movement can be applied to one’s daily life. For example, if a person verbally attacks you, you can respond in many different ways. You may meet resistance with resistance, and respond with your own critique, thus creating conflict and anger. You may retreat from the person’s statement, and accept it with discomfort, once again creating anger. The Tai Chi philosophy provides an alternative to either total attack or total retreat. Its idea of “the Yang among the Yin” teaches you to settle yourself, become aware of what is being said, consider its meaning, and respond smoothly. Then you will softly reject the statement if false, or learn from it if true (Jou, 1980).
CHAPTER 3

THE WESTERN PHILOSOPHY AND SOMATIC APPROACHES

This chapter focuses on the Western discipline known as Somatic Theory. The first section examines the development of traditional Western medicine from Dualist ideas about the mind and body. The second section establishes the origin of Somatics in the philosophical reunification of the body and mind. The third section discusses the general theory, educational practices and overall purpose of Somatics. The fourth section details various Somatic approaches; and the final section examines the concept of the flowing body from a Somatic viewpoint.

Body-Mind Segregation

The mind-body debate has existed for centuries in the West, and different philosophies have staked out many different positions. However, variations of Dualism (which segregates the body and mind into separate and independent entities) have had the strongest implications for Western science, medicine,
research, teaching, curricula, and even interpersonal interactions (Katchmer, 1993; Kleinman, 1972; Thomas, 1983; Rintala, 1991).

Separating the human being into two pieces, Plato (c.428- c.348 B.C.) claimed that man's rational soul is divine, immortal and intellectual, but that the body is a hindrance and limitation to the achievement of wisdom. Physical desire and sensation confuse the soul and interfere with its acquisition of truth and wisdom. Therefore, Plato claimed that it is impossible to attain any pure knowledge through the body (Grube, 1981; Kleinman, 1972; Thomas, 1983; Rintala, 1991).

Rene Descartes elaborated upon this idea by comparing the mind and the body to a sailor and a ship. The sailor (the mind) can decide where to go and give the directions to control the ship, but the ship (the body) can only obey commands from the sailor. Thus, Descartes insisted, the body is subservient to the mind and they are in a master-servant relationship (Baker & Morris, 1996; Cottingham, etc., 1988; Cress, 1993; Thomas, 1983).

George Berkeley (an idealist) was superficially anti-dualist, but continued to reject the reality of a significant mind-body unity. He denied the existence of matter, and thought that nothing can exist, or be known to exist, except in terms of ideas and the minds having them. Even physical objects are actually
collections of mind-dependent ideas. They exist because they are perceived by
the mind. "Matter" is merely a name that we give to certain sets of ideas (Castell,
1983; Kleinman, 1972). Ideas, in turn, only exist if they are perceived. This active
perception is what is called Mind, Spirit, Soul or Self (Kleinman, 1972).

Conversely, Thomas Hobbes (a materialist) claimed that all living organisms
are just complex machines, and that life is only the motion of limbs and organs.
There is no conception in man's mind which does not proceed from the sense
organs. An object of perception is nothing but motion which has entered our
minds. Even emotions, such as sadness, happiness and anger are the result of
chemical reactions inside the body (Castell, 1983).

Conventional Western medicine was affected greatly by the image of
Man-the-Machine. It treats the body purely as a physical entity and prescribes only
physical remedies (Leder, 1992). Anatomy and physiology are the most important
subject areas in medical science. These, along with technological advances (such
as the invention of the microscope and the discovery of bacteria, blood circulation,
anesthesia and antiseptics) led to an increased emphasis on chemical drugs and
mechanical technology in medical treatment (Katchmer, 1993). To generalize, the
body (in the view of conventional Western medicine) is material only (Leder, 1992).
Body-Mind Integration

To settle the metaphysical dispute over the body and mind, the idea of pragmatism was developed. Pragmatic philosophers, such as William James (1842-1910), John Dewey (1859-1952) and Boyd Bode (1873-1953), advanced the idea that beliefs are ruled by action. Thus, knowledge is derived from daily experience, experimental methods and practical efforts, and must be used to solve the practical problems of everyday life (James, 1975; Kleinman, 1972). Because of this, pragmatists strongly advocate learning by doing (which is in accord with the idea of mind-body integration).

Phenomenology is another philosophy which uses the lived-and-ongoing experience as a method to know truth and reality (Thomas, 1983). Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), the father of phenomenology, called for a return to the "things themselves" and emphasized the immediate phenomena which is given to us in experience (Fraleigh, 1996; Kleinman, 1972). In order to explore the nature of consciousness and to reveal the meaning and significance of existence, phenomenologists treat the body as a subject instead of an object, and aim to deepen and enlarge the range of immediate bodily experience (Thomas, 1983). Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) points out that the physiology of the nervous system
cannot explain the experience of one's own body, and that the scientific approach
cannot gain a complete understanding of the movement experience. Because
science is nothing more than a means to view the body as a third-person entity, it
cannot satisfy knowing the body as living experience, or as viewed as
first-person experience. The body cannot be taken as a physical thing; rather it
must be seen as the embodiment of mind or consciousness (Macann, 1993).
Essentially, the phenomenologist contends that a mechanistic view of the body
cannot account for one's experience of it (Kleinman, 1982).

For a phenomenologist, an understanding of the body is tantamount to an
understanding of its existential being in the world. This is entirely different from
the viewing of the body as an object for study. In this view, a person is an
incarnate subject, a unity of physical, biological, and psychological events. In
opposition to Descartes' famous expression "I think, therefore I am", the
phenomenologists' formulation is "I am, therefore I think" (Gerber, 1979, p. 182).
The Study of Somatics

The field of Somatics is a direct descendent of the Pragmatist tradition, and extends the Pragmatic project into the first-person domain (Hanna, 1991). It is also highly influenced by phenomenology. Thomas Hanna (1994), the father of American Somatics, wrote:

Somatology, as a holistic science of human experience and behavior, sees the human person as a self-aware, self-controlling organism, an organic unity of many functions which have traditionally been thought of separately as bodily and mental (Hanna, 1994, p. 5).

Starting from the concept of the "soma," which is the body experienced from within, Hanna defined Somatics as follows:

1. The art and science of the inter-relational process between awareness, biological function and environment, all three factors being understood as a synergistic whole: the field of Somatics.
2. The study of the soma, soma being the biological body of functions by which and through which awareness and environment are mediated. It is understood that the word soma designates any living organism, animal or plant. It is also understood that all such somas have, to some degree, the capacity for awareness of the environment and intentional action in the environment.
3. The common usage of Somatics relates to somas of the human species, whose sensorial and motoria are relatively free from the determination of genetically fixed behavior patterns, thus allowing learning to determine the inter-relational process.
between awareness, biological function and environment (Hanna, 1986, p.4).

Somatics is the field, which studies the soma: namely, the body as perceived from within by first-person perception. When a human being is observed from the outside -- i.e., from a third-person viewpoint-the phenomenon of a human body is perceived. But, when this same human being is observed from the first-person viewpoint of his own proprioceptive senses, a categorically different phenomenon is perceived: the human soma (Hanna, 1992, p.64).

According to Hanna (1991), Somatics is not the study of the soma as an objective body, but as an embodied process of internal awareness. The concept of the soma as a distinct entity emphasizes the individual's processes of internal sensing, and of moving, knowing, and acting as the self. In the Somatic perspective, a soma is "a process of awareness. Each time we bring any aspect of the world into our field of awareness, that aspect becomes incorporated into us" (p. 115).

Even with acceptance of the body/mind unity, the use of separate words ("body" and "mind") to describe aspects of a totality unavoidably creates a dichotomy. Accordingly, F. M. Alexander (1869-1955) used the word "self" to refer to all aspects of the total person, and Moshe Feldenkrais (1992) referred to the "quality of direction of the self". The word "self" avoids the body/mind dichotomy, but it does not adequately describe the entirety of their unity. Therefore Hanna
proposed the term "soma" to denote the self as perceived from within, which he clearly distinguishes from the body as follows:

When a human being is observed from the outside from a third-person viewpoint the phenomenon of a human body is perceived. But, when this same human being is observed from the first-person viewpoint of his own proprioceptive senses, a categorically different phenomenon is perceived: the human soma.... Physiology, for example, takes a third-person view of the human being and sees a body. This body is an objective entity, observable, analyzable, and measurable in the same way as any other object.... From a first-person viewpoint, however, quite different data are observed. The proprioceptive centers communicate and continually feed back a rich display of somatic information which is immediately self-observed as a process that is both unified and ongoing (Hanna, 1986, p. 4-5).

While somatic theorists and practitioners use the term Somatics in many ways, all somatic theory is grounded in this emphasis on the inner proprioceptive perception of the soma.

Several scholars (Green, 1995; Gomez, 1990; Linden, 1994; Moore, 1988) have commented on the opportunity for body awareness and the improvement of inner proprioceptive perception that is available only through the experience of the self from the first-person perspective (which allows for the "listening to" and understanding of one's inner processes and bodily functions).
From the definition and description of Somatics, several main concepts can be derived as follows:

1. The body, mind and spirit are one.
2. The body must be experienced from within.
3. The human being must be observed from a first-person viewpoint.
4. The soma is understood as a first-person experience of the body.
5. The living body is the source of thoughts, feelings and knowledge.
6. The embodiment process is emphasized.
7. Somatics is about "the relationship between and among self and other, individual and group, inner and outer, public and private, and all of the issues arising from these dynamic interactions" (Somatics conference flyer, 2000, Ohio State University).

Somatic Education

Somatic education is focused around the control of various muscle groups and movement patterns (Hanna, 1992). Linden (1994) defines Somatic education as "the educational field which examines the structure and function of the body as process, lived experience, perception and consciousness" (p. 16). Hanna (1977) describes somatic education as dependent on the assumption that "the
human being has evolved as a self-regulating, self-correcting and self-improving organism, who can take over greater somatic self-awareness" (p. 51).

Kleinman (1988) describes the basic elements of somatic education as consisting of "movement and awareness". He advocates a type of somatic education called "kinesthetic phenomenology," and expands education beyond the cognitive realm to encompass the whole of living experience:

Physical education and sport, on the other hand, is capable of offering us a more holistic approach through the development of what may be called a "kinesthetic phenomenology". With experience, wholeness, cultivation, practice, and achievement as our guides, I would like to propose a sport and physical education for the future, a Somatic Education for the 21st century (Kleinman, 1988, p.9).

The general theme of somatic education is the gain of control through gaining awareness of one's bodily processes. Based on the concept that the human being is a soma, which is self-moving, self-sensing and self-integrating, and focusing on the interactions of posture, movement, emotion, thought and self-concept in a practical manner, somatic education helps people to move precisely, gracefully and without strain, live comfortably, safely, creatively and with constant enjoyment.

Somatic educators believe learning and changing are dependent on the conscious awareness of what was previously unconscious. When one becomes
aware of specific body processes, one can gain control over them physically, mentally and emotionally. Based on the concept of experience from within, through the embodiment process, many different somatic techniques have been developed to teach individual somatic skills for greater self-awareness and self-control (in order to make the somatic experience more efficient and less stressful).

The Purpose of Somatics

"Through expansion of inner awareness, we find what has to happen within ourselves to come closer to optimal, free-flowing functioning" (Green, 1995, p.3). By being aware of the first-person experience, we open a very different process for gaining knowledge and understanding of oneself. Through the embodiment process we experience our bodies as the center of our existence. We feel alive, perceiving the state of our bodies as it changes from pleasure to pain, from energy to fatigue, from vitality and excitement to calmness and tranquility. By increasing somatic awareness, every aspect of living is enhanced, which, in turn, engenders a sense of control and accomplishment in life (Green, 1995; Saltonstall, 1988).

According to Gold (1992):
The job of a Hanna Somatic educator is to guide and assist people, through their capacity to feel and to move (intentionally), to become more able actually to do what they intend to do and not to do what they do not intend to do. As they develop that self-mastery, they free themselves of compulsive, historical complications upon their natural grace. Rolfers cultivate balanced movement through the myofascial web; Hanna Somatic Educators cultivate free movement through sensory awareness and mastery of movement (p.38).
Western Somatic Approaches

Hundreds of Somatic approaches have been developed to meet the need of individuals. However, this study examines only three: Body-Mind Centering, Laban Movement Analysis, and Continuum. These were chosen because of their popularity and importance, and because of their applicability to the idea of the flowing body.

Body-Mind Centering:

Body-Mind Centering (BMC) is the name of Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen's comprehensive educational and therapeutic approach to movement and touch, for the release of stress, fear, aches, pains, and restrictive habits/perceptions (Hartley, 1995). Through the active focusing process, the practitioner opens new options in thinking and feeling; and moves with greater ease, coordination, balance, and integration (Hartley, 1995). Thus BMC can help one prevent injuries, face challenges, and expand personal creativity.

The essence of BMC is the idea of following the course of nature, and the work itself is a natural process of evolution (Hartley, 1995). More than a study of human movement, it is an experiential and cognitive journey in understanding the
expression of the mind through the body. It focuses on knowledge gained through experiential anatomy and physiology, and translates the experience of cellular awareness into different body systems through movement and touch (Cohen, 1997, 1994; Hartley, 1995; Gomez, 1992; Grossinger, 1995). Cohen (1997) believes that "movement and touch establish the ground for the development of perception and learning from the other senses" (p. 4). Moreover, movement is the most important skill for survival and helps to establish the process of perception (Cohen, 1997; Smith, 1993).

Hartley (1995), a BMC practitioner, described movement as follows:

Movement in all its variety of forms is an expression of life and is essential to the continuation of life. As I live, I express my life-force in movement; as I move I feel my aliveness. To continue to live I continue to move and change. This life-force moves through us and expresses itself in the breathing of the smallest cell, the unconscious and conscious, subtle and gross movements of body, as well as in the sounds we voice or the thoughts we think (p. xix).

Embodying the structures and function of the body through movement provides human beings with a medium to revisit their bodies and offers many possibilities in movement reeducation, repatterning, growth and change (Cohen, 1997; Gomez, 1986; Hartley, 1995).
Body-Mind Centering has wide applications and offers no fixed rules and procedures but demands that the practitioner and student draw upon their own creativity and personal experience in a way that will be unique for each individual. To support, guide, and orient the unique and evolving process of the moment, Body-Mind Centering offers principles and practical techniques, as well as language and theory based on authentic body experience. It gives a ground based in natural and organic processes from which we can each grow both inward toward a deeper experience of our inner self, and outward toward expression of our unique self in the world (Hartley, 1995, p. xii).

The principles of BMC are based on the natural development and unfolding of potential within the human being. They describe the process by which we continually recreate ourselves in new form and awareness, and thus follow nature’s cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. “Body-Mind Centering concerns itself with the potential for growth, learning, and change inherent in each moment of experience” (p. xx). Through the Process of Body-Mind Centering, “people can inquire within the body, acknowledging and strengthening their own internal rhythms and their connection to universal patterns” (Hartley, 1995, p.xx).

Through the experience of Body-Mind Centering, Hartley (1995) states:

In the Body-Mind Centering approach... My own perspective is that both our physical bodies and the thoughts, feelings, images, and so on that are constantly flowing through our minds are but different expressions of that intangible essence that underlies the flow of our individual lives (p. xxv).
To be aware of and explore the internal micro-movements which underlie our body systems, Cohen developed many embodiment processes for movement education. These include moving, touching, sounding, imagining, somatizing\(^1\), playing with props (such as large balls, stretch bands, sticks, springers, toys and instruments), cellular communication, body-mind mapping and dialogue to create resonance and vibration within the body system (Cohen, 1997; Gomez, 1986; Johnson, 1994; Knaster, 1996).

BMC is divided into several categories: The Body System, Developmental Movement, the Art of Touch and Repatterning, Breathing and Vocalization, and the Dynamics of Perception (Cohen, 1997; Hartley, 1995). With its rich contents, BMC provides a comprehensive educational and therapeutic approach for the learning process of embodiment. By awakening awareness at the cellular level BMC creates an internal "homecoming," and allows us to reexperience the harmonious integration of sensation, feeling, mind and spirit that is ours by birthright. In this way, we can more fully express the creativity within us (Hartley, 1995), relieve many kinds of disabilities, and cultivate sensory, kinesthetic, emotional and cognitive functioning (Murphy, 1992).
Continuum:

According to Emilie Conrad Da'oud, the founder of Continuum, "movement is something we are, rather than something we do." She also says "We are verbs, not nouns" (Knaster, 1996, p.260), "We do not move. We are movement" (Grossinger, 1995, p.357), and "What we call body... is not 'matter' but 'movement'" (p. 360). She developed Continuum as "an approach to the body based on intrinsic felt movement rather than imposed patterned movement" (Grossinger, 1995, p.353). Through Continuum, people experiment with non-patterned, asymmetrical movement to stimulate neurological growth and vibrancy.

The basic premise of Continuum is that an affinity for wave-like motion is fundamental to all living creatures and reflects the aquatic origins of life (Knaster, 1996). Because we carry the movement of water in every cell of our bodies we are always moving. Even when we appear still, there are unobservable micromovements at an internal level. Deep within us a dance is always going on. (Knaster, 1996).

In the book Discovering the Body's Wisdom, Grossinger (1995) describes the movement of Continuum as

...unlike any other somatic form. The body undulates as if an anemone in water. Its solid parts ripple. Ribs become waves.
The spine reverts to a soft notochord. As pulses of energy flow radially outward, front and back are indistinguishable. (p. 354).

From the premise that internal fluid undulations are the primary autonomous movements, Da'oud derives the idea that "wave motion is the essential biological link for all organisms" (Johnson, 1997, p.65). This motion has no inside or outside, no center or direction, and emanates from within the body. It encompasses without specific goals and outcomes, and is self-localizing and self-limiting in its own patterns (Johnson, 1997).

Awareness of ourselves as movement begins with the development of our sensitivity to our intrinsic world. We come to know this subtle world by exploring the mobile diversity of breath, by discovering how sound permeates living tissue, and by experiencing fluidity as a biological link. Continuum practitioners discover cellurally-inspired movements that curve, arc, spiral, and undulate. Through these movements, they recapitulate biological forms and stimulate life processes in organs and skeletal structure (with the potential to affect the aging process).

Continuum is a visionary inquiry into our capacity to participate in the essential biological processes of life. Much of Continuum explores embryogenesis, and thus allows each one of us to enter into the great mystery of creation as an existential and spiritual unfolding. The healing capacities in autonomous movement can even provide those who have been paralyzed with
sensory experiences, and thus reeducate their external ways of moving (Johnson, 1994).

Besides the autonomous movement, different breathing exercises are learned to enrich the breath with a variety of sounds, rhythms and textures in the process of Continuum (Johnson, 1997). Through the practice of sounding, one can stimulate various inner pulses, echo different vibrations, enlarge the wave motions inside the body (Liu, 1998), release physical blockages and inhibitions, free the body's innate expressive potentials, and translate inner movements into dynamic expression (Knaster, 1996). Providing a non-linear biological basis for movement education rather than the mechanistic models common in our society, Continuum uses the primary perceptions of sensation, breath, sound and movement to lead people in subtle and dynamic explorations of beingness (Conrad & Harper, 1997).

Continuum exercises can "help you develop sensitivity to movement at all levels, from the subtlest breath to rapport with others" (Knaster, 1996, p. 261). "Continuum offers an opportunity to let go of fixed cultural imprints and move spontaneously from an inner impulse" (p. 260). Continuum practice can soften and mobilize our bound rigidity and frozen structure (Johnson, 1997). By repatterning the ways of breath and movement, Continuum can be a guide to
freeing movement, "relieve many kind of disabilities, and cultivate sensory, kinesthetic, emotional and cognitive functioning" (Murphy, 1992, p. 414).

In summary, Continuum encourages a rapport with the wisdom that swims in our cells and urges life to unfold. By participating with these fundamental movements, we gain an opportunity to join with the underlying creative matrix, that gave birth to protoplasm, humanity, and galaxies alike. Continuum provides a non-linear biological basis for movement education rather than the mechanistic models prevalent in our society. It develops the experience of sensation which may be a rich source for healing and self-emergence, and increases the mobility of breath, to liberate movement.

Laban Movement Analysis and Bartenieff Fundamentals.

Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) was created by Rudolf Laban (1879-1958) and Bartenieff Fundamentals (BF) was derived from his student Irmgard Bartenieff (1900-1981). LMA, (along with Bartenieff's own system, Bartenieff Fundamentals) provides a useful vocabulary for describing and assessing movement, particularly with regards to qualitative analysis (Bartenieff & Lewis, 1993; Knaster, 1996). Laban and Bartenieff both believed that actions speak louder than words and that movement can reflect both personality and
characteristic style of interaction with others and the environment (Knaster, 1996).

As Laban pointed out, there are differences of intention, choice and degree in body usage, but the components of all body movements are the same (Bartenieff & Lewis, 1993, p. ix). By capturing subtle qualitative changes in human movement (without neglecting an appreciation for underlying motivations), Laban Movement Analysis demonstrates that movement can be accurately named and described (Bartenieff, Davis & Paulay, 1970).

Viewing movement as a meaningful type of human expression, connected with universal and cultural contexts (Maletic, 1987), Laban developed his notation system and movement analysis method based on the basic elements of movement (Maletic, 1987; Groff, 1995; Moore & Yamamoto, 1988).

The principles of movement in LMA are: (1) Movement enables one to realize one's physical potential and (2) Movement characterizes humanity (Herndon, 1989; Thornton, 1971, p. 38). Laban's inquiries into human movement were guided by the following premises:

1. Movement is a process of change.
2. The change is patterned and orderly.
3. Human movement is intentional.
4. The basic elements of movement may be articulated and studied.
5. Movement must nevertheless be approached at multiple levels if it is to be properly understood.

(Moore & Yamamoto, 1988, p.203)

Laban believed that there are three fundamental categories of elements common to all human movements: (1) the use of body, (2) the use of space, and (3) the use of dynamic energy (Bartenieff & Lewis, 1993; Moore and Yamamoto, 1988; Schwartz, 1995). Along with articulations of bodily activation and spatial design, a thorough description of movement includes a record of how it is performed, the "dynamic aspect of movement effort, the common denominator for the various stirrings of the body and mind which become observable in... activity" (Moore and Yamamoto, 1988, p.197).

In terms of notation, LMA focuses on the analysis of four elements: weight, time, space and flow (Bartenieff, Davis & Paulay, 1970; Bartenieff & Lewis, 1993; Maletic, 1987; Scott, 1996). These each have special symbols to illustrate and describe them, and are notated on the following continuums:

- **Effort flow**: free, bound
- **Space factor**: indirect, direct
- **Force factor**: light, strong
- **Time factor**: sustained, sudden

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Through exploration of the body's movement expression in terms of weight, time, space and flow, many phenomena of movement and experience can be studied, understood, described, communicated and recorded.

LMA also provides a marvelous approach for identifying and discovering various movement possibilities from the first person position. As Groff (1995) has written "At the heart of LMA is a recognition that movement is a psycho-physical process, an outward expression of inner intent" (p. 28).

Through the interaction between inner intent and outward expression, LMA enables a person to articulate and clarify "the how" in addition to "the what," by use of its descriptive vocabularies. Statements such as "move with light and sudden timing", "move with sustained and indirect focus", or "move with strong and bound flow in a forward high level" provide any trainer, teacher or practitioner with a powerful means of communication (Thornton, 1971).

Bartenieff (a German dancer and choreographer) applied Laban's work to physical therapy, and helped found the American Dance Therapy Association. Based on the theory behind LMA, Bartenieff Fundamentals (BF) breaks down all movements into six basic movement patterns. BF is an organized system that focuses on movement integration and harmony, and emphasizes body
connections, the center of weight and the relationship between the initiation and the follow through of a given action.

Essentially, BF offers clear conceptual guidance for spatial exploration and intent (Bartenieff & Lewis, 1993). By way of flexion, extension, adduction and abduction on the three-dimensional plane, the six basic exercises (thigh lift, pelvic forward shift, lateral shift, body half, diagonal knee drop, and arm circles, with variations including heel rock, pre-thigh lift and side sweeping on the floor; Bartenieff & Lewis, 1993) in BF stress the relationship between body parts, and a concentration on articulation and internal physiological changes.

Flow is one of the major ideas in the Laban system, and is subdivided into three qualities: continuity, body flow and change in tension (Thoraton, 1971; Groff, 1995). Continuity is located on a continuum from continuous to interrupted. Body flow is distinguished into successive and simultaneous movements, while tension is a measure of the way you control your fluency of movement, from free to bound (Thoraton, 1971; Groff, 1995).
The Flowing Body

By analyzing the theories behind Western Somatic practice, we can discover a new version of the concept of the flowing body. This conception is analogous to the one from the last chapter, but there are distinct differences. The Chinese idea of the flowing body (as shown previously) is based on Chi, whereas the Western conception is derived from the concepts of "autonomous movement", "internal fluid movement", and "water movement."

Autonomous Movement:

According to Hanna, "the living body is a moving body" (Hanna, 1983, p.x). The same idea is expressed by Rolf, when she says "the integrated human being might be defined as a person capable of free flow, free exchange, and free movement, both in the physical body and in emotional expression" (Rolf, 1962, p.63).

At the deepest level of the body, we all experience movement. As Grossinger (1995) writes, "we may think we experience solid skeleton and tissue, but at a deeper level we intuit the tides and pulses of our humoral composition passing along embryogenic pathways" (p. 339). Or, as Rolf says:
Anatomy studies a projection of the static body, but function in the living body requires more than static recognition. Function is movement; movement is life. Movement is the index of life, its outstanding expression. While it is alive, no human or animal body is ever completely still. We see a gull sitting on a buoy; we exclaim over its stillness. Close inspection shows that the bird is not still; he balances and rebalances continuously in an interplay with the rippling water. A human, too, is constantly readjusting by moving himself in one way or another. For example, take respiration. Contrary to the general idea, normal respiration in a balanced body involves movement not merely in the thorax, but from the sacrum all the way up to the cranium. In normal inspiration, the spine lengthens from one end to the other; in expiration, it shortens (Rolf, 1989, p. 153).

Movement is a principal body function, integrated into the expression of everything we do and everything we are (Heller & Henkin, 1995). Thus, to enhance body movement is to enhance human vitality. Hanna (1983) states:

The identification of life with movement can be carried a step further if we entertain the following possibility: If life means movement and death means non-movement, then it may be permissible to think that more movement means more life and that less movement means less life . . . a diminished capacity for movement is equivalent to diminished life. Conversely, . . . to enhance the efficiency of bodily movement is to enhance the vitality of human beings in all of their functions, whether physical, mental, or emotional (p. xi).

The movement in living bodies is autonomous self-movement. "Living bodies are self-moving; they are individual systems of movement, moving in organized,
coordinated, sequential ways." (Hanna, 1983, p. x). Da'oud (1997) also describes autonomous movement, as follows:

I began to see human being as biomorphic – we include all life forms. The movements of these forms went far beyond my dance classes, my nationality, gender, and species description. I had been searching for these "unqualified" movements all of my life (p.61).

Internal Fluid Movement:

If we go a step deeper, we can trace many autonomous movements to their sources in a human being’s internal fluids. These fluids are the transportation system of the body. They underlie presence and transformation and play a major role in creating counterbalances between tension and relaxation, rest and action.

In the book *Wisdom of the Body Moving*, Hartley (1995) states:

Through the cycles of creation and destruction of life forms, this seeking to embody the wholeness of the sphere dances with the necessity of change, of breakdown and renewal, a continual process of re-creation of the old forms into new life. It is the fluids of the body that mediate these processes of transformation, of health, sickness, decay, death, and rebirth (p. 267).

The majority of the elements of the human body are fluid-filled. Even the bones, the body’s most solid components, are filled with liquid marrow (Heller & Henkin, 1995). The bodily fluids are systems through which communication with
(and transformation of) the inner and outer environment of body takes place

(Hartley, 1995). In fact, all of our physical functions and phenomena (including pain and aging) are all related to the fluid flow.

In the course of aging, most of us find ourselves increasingly sedentary and confined, moving less and less. We may claim our static state results from pain, fatigue, or laziness, but which, in fact, comes first? To function properly, the body relies heavily on the movement of fluids, and as rigidity sets in the fluid flow is impaired. It is no wonder that many disease of aging are related to circulatory problems: Arteriosclerosis, embolisms, impaired bowel function, and blocked lymphatic drainage, for example, are all conditions that in one way or another reflect the degeneration of fluid flow (Heller & Henkin, 1995, p.33).

Water Movements:

Water is the life of an organism. All the internal fluids are essentially a single continuous body of water, that changes properties and characteristics as it passes through different membranes, flows through different channels and interacts with different substances (Cohen, 1997)

Within the body we find expressions of all the forms in which water circulates on, in, and around the earth. In us there is the great unbounded ocean of fluid in which all the cells are bathed. There are rivers and streams flowing within the vessels of the veins, arteries, lymphatic, and cerebrospinal fluid channels; there are pools and reservoirs and places where the fluid gushes or trickles like springs, waterfalls, or rain. There
may also be places where the flow is blocked and the fluid stagnates.

The system as a whole has several subsystems, clearly defined fluids, each with its own chemical nature, consistency, function, pathways of flow, and rhythm of movement. However, it is essentially one system, one fluid, capable of transforming from one subsystem to another—from blood to interstitial fluid to lymph and back to blood again (Hartley, 1995, p.268).

Water-based movement had a profound shaping effect on the Continuum system, which was created largely through Da'oud's observations and descriptions of the characteristics of such movement:

If we take into account that a human being is at least 80% water, and has emerged from the undulating, watery environment of the embryo, would it be reasonable to explore internal water motion as a primary movement? I found that undulations were stimulated by breath and sound, seeming to arise from an internal reservoir of primary organismic responses. I came to believe that wave motions are an essential biological link for all organisms. They represent the watery substance of our origin... Life processes flourish in fluid states. (Da'oud, 1997, p. 65)

Watching newborns, I was aware of how fluid their movements were, and how miraculous the process is as they interact with the earth. The earth creates the need for bones and muscles to stabilize their fluidity, so that we can crawl, rise, and walk towards our unknown futures. I began to see that what we were referring to as a body was a multiplicity of movements that were stabilizing in order to function and survive successfully within the earth's atmosphere. (Da'oud, 1997, p. 64)
Water movement is the essential movement in the human body and maintains the harmony in the body.

Using water-based movements has the benefit of toning the body. It brings harmony between emotions and body. Your feelings are allowed to be active and thereby move towards emotional well-being. Areas of your body and mind not usually allowed pleasure are bathed in it (Crisp, 1992, p. 58).

Through sensing and feeling the different dynamics in watering movement, it becomes possible to make a positive change in well-being.

The movement itself will stimulate the flow of the fluids and we can learn from our experience with the different dynamics...Through sensing we can gain insight about our patterns and the choices we are making and can make changes more consciously and specifically. In feeling ourselves moving, we have the experience of releasing the fluids into their natural mode of spontaneous movement and stillness, rhythm, and dance, which is essential for their integration, and our well-being. (Hartley, 1995, p. 272)

A system based on water dynamics moves in a distinctive way --like a river, or tall grass in a breeze, instead of like pistons and cogwheels. Implicit in this characteristic is a wider latitude of movement. A water-based movement system has possibilities for more different kinds of movement (in more directions under more varied circumstances) than does a mechanical system. This latitude is creates greater flexibility. When we are more fluid, we are also more adaptable.
Since life is a process of continual change, fluidity is usually a more successful state (Heller & Henkin, 1995).

For all of these reasons, understanding the Western concept of the flowing body was an important necessity for the creation of the *Bodyflowing* system.

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**Endnote**

1 The word 'somatization' was coined by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen (1997): "I use this word 'somatization' to engage the kinesthetic experience directly, in contrast to 'visualization' which utilizes visual imagery to evoke a kinesthetic experience. Through somatization the body cells are informing the brain as well as the brain informing the cells. I derived this word 'soma' to designate the experienced body in contrast to the objectified body" (p. 1).
CHAPTER 4

EAST MEETS WEST

After having examined Chinese holistic philosophy (Chapter 2) and Western Somatic theory (Chapter 3) separately, the time has come to bring them together, for comparison and contrast. In doing so, we will gain additional insight into the idea of the "flowing body," and the related concepts of flow and movement.

Basic Philosophy

There are basic differences in philosophical attitudes between China and the West. Based on the theory of I-Ching and Yin-Yang, Chinese philosophy began with the paradigm of Chi, and a belief that myriad things in the universe are all in a state of constant change. The Chinese philosophers searched for truth, but not Absolute Truth. Their focus was on the realities of moral behavior
for everyday survival, not on the eternal verities of the universe (Chan, 1963; Katchmer 1993; Schipper, 1993; Smith, 1990; Veith, 1949; Watson, 1968).

Conversely, the West began from the idea of the material body, and from the tendency to avoid change. Western philosophers sought *Absolute Truth* and searched for a permanent foundation more fundamental than change. They established the sciences of physiology and anatomy, and developed the theory of evolution (Johnson, 1994; Katchmer, 1993; Knaster, 1996; Wilber, 1979).

Western scientists started with a mechanical paradigm, based on geometry, and developed a scientific method that relied on predictable results (Katchmer, 1993). Chinese scientists, on the other hand, studied many of the same phenomena (such as wave theory and magnetism) but did not focus on establishing them as quantifiable entities. This difference in approach helps us understand the two cultures' divergent perspectives about nature and the universe (Katchmer, 1993).

In Chinese physiology, the body is full of Chi, and is always moving and changing. The Chi flows along main pathways known as meridians, which are fundamental to the Chinese view of the body. Chi and meridians do not have a counterpart in Western anatomy and physiology, which focus chiefly on organs and physical structures.
Somatic concepts, in some fashion, provide a bridge between Chinese and Western approaches, by focusing on the experience of the body from within, and by advocating a view of the body as a self-sensing, self-changing and self-moving organism, not an object. Based on their analytical study of biology, anatomy and physiology, Somatic practitioners try to embody the structure of the body, reexperience its functions, and explore its natural movements.

Traditional Chinese and modern Somatic approaches are similar, in that they treat the body as a whole, and as a moving process instead of an object. However, with different belief systems and scientific backgrounds, they have different philosophical concepts of the body (Liu, 1998).

**Concept of the Body**

The differences in outlook lead to different conceptions of the body in Chinese and Western medicine. Western physiologists classify the internal organs of the human body into the following categories: The digestive system, the respiratory system, the nervous system, the cardiovascular system, the urinary system, the reproductive system, etc. The digestive system includes the
stomach, the small and large intestines, the liver, the gallbladder and the pancreas. The respiratory system includes the lungs, the diaphragm, and the pharynx. The other organs are similarly apportioned into independently functioning systems, with clear boundaries between each organ and each system.

The Chinese concept of the internal organs is very different. Chinese medicine sees each organ as a complex totality, including a characteristic emotion, mental function, taste, color, season, type of tissue, environmental factor and corresponding sense organ (as well as a physical form and physiological function). There are 12 main organs, including six which have Yin energy, and are thus classified as "Zang," (藏) (internal; liver, heart, spleen, lung, kidney, and sinbao [heart constrictor]) and six organs with Yang energy, classified as "Fu" (腑) (external; gall bladder, small intestine, stomach, large intestine, urinary bladder and sanjiao [triple heater]). Each Zang organ is linked with a corresponding Fu organ, both structurally (through meridians) and functionally (via Chi flow). For example, the heart (circulatory system) links with the small intestine (digestive system) and the lung (respiratory system) is paired with the large intestine (digestive system). In addition, there are two organs, the sanjiao and sinbao, which do not have a physical form, and can not be found in Western
Flow and Movement

Despite the difference in culture and philosophy between the Chinese and the Somatic approach, both have the idea of "the flowing body," a complex concept that can be subdivided into the two facets of "flow" and "movement." Many of the movement systems in both cultures consider the principles of flow-in-the-body and authentic human movement as crucial to maintaining a healthy life. Therefore, in order to gain an integrated understanding of the "flowing body," the next section of this dissertation will present and discuss the concepts of flow and movement.

The Idea of Flow

The word flow evokes a kinetic image of never-ceasing movement, transition, transformation, and evolution. Flow manifests at on a small and large scale, at an individual and a universal level. On a small scale, flow is the total involvement of
the body and mind with a feasible task. On a large scale flow is joy, creativity, and the process of total involvement with life (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). The conception of the universe as being in a constant state of flow is central to this study.

Flow is emphasized both in Chinese and in Somatic movement systems. However, because of their different viewpoints, their descriptions of flow are different. The Chinese view of flow focuses on Chi. Although (for practitioners of Chinese medicine) the circulation of blood flowing in the body is regarded as important, the circulation of Chi (and its balanced flow) is seen as an even more crucial point for survival. On the other hand, the Somatic view of flow focuses on physical bodily fluids, and on the understanding that water represents a large percentage of the body system. Some Somatic practices attempt to embody fluid motion by emulating moving water.

In summary, the Chinese concept of flow, which is based on Chi, differs from the Somatic concept of flow, which is based on bodily fluids. Therefore, for the Chinese, the main purpose for the flowing body is awareness of Chi, but for Somatics, the main focus is gaining awareness of bodily fluids.
The Boundaries of Flow:

In the Chinese conception, there are no actual boundaries for the flow of Chi. Chi can go everywhere and exists both inside and outside of the human body. In addition to flowing between the organs, via meridians, Chi flow also connects the inner world of the body and the outer world of the universe. It is regarded as a means for harmonizing the micro-cosmos with the macro-cosmos.

On the other hand, from the Western point of view, the skin marks a clear boundary for the flow of bodily fluids (which are also bounded by the physical structures inside the body). In particular, there is no way for fluid to connect the inside world with the outside world.

The Utility of Activating Flow

In the Chinese view, it is very important to keep a feeling of balance in Chi movement between the body and the universe. The main purpose for activating flow is to help man live harmoniously with the natural world. When the Chi flows freely and smoothly in the body, it can help prevent disease, and improve self-healing abilities.

The main purpose for activating flow from the western viewpoint is to
reestablish and refine the relationship between the body and the mind. By stimulating the inner sensation of water and fluid flowing within the body, flow helps people to repattern their neural-muscular movement patterns and reduce the unnecessary tension of their bodies. This can make the body less rigid, and improve posture alignment.

The Ways of Activating Flow

There are many different approaches for activating flow, however each (whether Eastern or Western) typically uses sequences of movements towards this end. Other techniques in widespread use (to activate the inner flow of the body) include meditation, imagination, visualization, breathing, sound production, vibration and shaking. In addition to all of the above, Chinese practitioners also focus on manipulation of the meridians and the acupoints (穴道, meridian points).

Conversely, a practice that typically found in the West (but not in the East) is the use of many different props, such as chairs, exploration boards, balls (in various sizes and materials), to facilitate the awareness of bodily fluids. Various games, and types of hands-on work with partners, also play an important role in making muscles more flexible, and activating the flow of the body.

The following chart 4.1 illustrates the clarification of the concept of flow between the Chinese holistic systems and Western somatic system.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Chinese Holistic system</th>
<th>The Somatic system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic philosophy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Scientific background: wave theory &amp; magnetism.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Based on the theories of Tao, Yin-Yang, meridians and Chi.</td>
<td>- Based on the theories of evolution, physiology and anatomy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Scientific background: wave theory &amp; magnetism.</td>
<td>- Scientific background: mechanical theory &amp; geometry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Chi body is a moving and changing body. The body is not a thing but a process.</td>
<td>- The living body (soma) is a self-sensing, self-changing, and self-moving organism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Looks for “reality”.</td>
<td>- Looks for “Truth”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contents Of Flow</strong></td>
<td><strong>Scientific background: mechanical theory &amp; geometry.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Chi (most important)</td>
<td>- Body fluid (85% of the body is water)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Blood and fluid</td>
<td>- Main focus: concrete body fluid awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Main focus: Chi awareness</td>
<td><strong>Boundary of Flow</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boundary of Flow</strong></td>
<td><strong>Bounded by the outer cover of the body—skin.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No boundaries. Chi is everywhere. There is Chi inside and outside of the human body.</td>
<td>- Based on knowledge of physiology and anatomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Many connections between the micro-cosmos and the macro-cosmos through Chi.</td>
<td>- No connection between the inner and outer world of flow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purposes for activating flow</strong></td>
<td><strong>To reestablish and reeducate the relationship between body and mind.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To keep the balance of Chi movement between the body and the universe.</td>
<td>- To reestablish the neural-muscular movement pattern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To cultivate the flow of Chi in the body and help man live harmoniously with the natural world.</td>
<td>- To improve proper posture and reduce the unnecessary tension of the body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To prevent disease and improve the ability of self-healing.</td>
<td>- To offer alternative medical methods and therapies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ways of activating flow</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sequences of movements</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sequences of movements</td>
<td>- Sequences of movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Meditation, Imagination, Visualization</td>
<td>- Meditation, Imagination, Visualization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Breathing, Sounding, Vibrating, Shaking</td>
<td>- Breathing, Sounding, Vibrating, Shaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Work with the meridians and acupoints</td>
<td>- Use of tools and props (chairs, exploration board, balls, different qualities of materials to open the awareness of different fluids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hands-on work (to adjust the flow of Chi)</td>
<td>- Various games or activities (with partner or in a group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hands-on work</td>
<td>- Hands-on work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 4.1: Clarifying the Concept of Flow between the Chinese holistic and Somatic systems

83
The Idea of Movement:

Science has shown that the universe is a place of constant movement (Conrad 1998). To live is to move, but even objects that seem still, such as rocks and mountains, are vibrating (with different rhythms and frequencies) at an atomic level. Movement happens everywhere at all times.

Movement is also very important for health. Both Chinese and Somatic approaches consider movement to be the foundation for maintaining a healthy body. Through the state of movement, one gains a chance to commune with one’s self and one’s soma desires.

The Meaning of Movement:

“Movement is the song of the body” (Scaravelli, 1991, p. 28). This song can tell what is happening to you and what is inside you. For practitioners of Chinese medicine, movement is not only a good process for mind-body health, healing and self-defense, but is also a practical philosophy (based on Yin-Yang) which can be applied to the problems of daily life. By yielding to the environment, instead of struggling and fighting, one becomes humble, flexible, resilient and stable in the relationship with self, others and environment. By harmonizing with
natural body movement (caused by Chi) one can clearly express the quality of life.

Many practitioners of Somatics also advance the view that life is nothing but movement (a perspective which can provide a wonderful path to self-understanding and awareness). When seen through this paradigm, movement can be a form of personal expression. Furthermore, the body has memory, and movement can provide insight into one's past.

Origin:

If life is movement, then it is also true that movement is life, and that the most important movements are all drawn directly from life processes. One example, present in both Chinese and Somatic perspectives, is the natural movement which arises from body-desire (sometimes called "spontaneous" or "autonomous" movement) which is one of the basic origins for all movement systems.

In addition to spontaneous movement, Chinese systems have many other ways of deriving movement from nature. One such practice is the imitation of the natural movement of animals, such as birds, monkeys, tigers, bears and snakes. Another is the observation of the elements of natural landscapes (such as water,
trees, mountains and light). Yet another is the emulation of patterns from the environment, such as the change of seasons. A final method is to take inspiration from one's own individual body (which explains why there are hundreds of different styles of Chi Kung and other holistic exercises).

In Somatic movement systems, most movements originate from the study of the human body, functionally and structurally. Based on this anatomical viewpoint, some movements are developed in relationship to the body structure; some in relationship to the body functions; and some following the principles of biology. The idea of spatial relationships in three dimensions is often the key to developing the exercises.

**Principles:**

The underlying principles of all Chinese movement systems are based on the flow of Chi, and include the following:

1) Movement generally initiates from the spine or *central core* (which is home to two important meridians).

2) It is important to "yield" to the earth in a grounded manner (because the feet play an important role in connecting the Chi of the body with the Chi of the earth).
3) Most movements are grouped in pairs of opposing energy (opening movements with closing movements, upward movements with downward movements, extension movements with flexing movements, etcetera). This follows the concept of Yin and Yang.

4) Circular and spiral movement shapes are favored.

5) The hip and knee joints are slightly bent, so that the movement will be grounded and relaxed.

6) Breath control is the foundation for all movements (because breathing is a constant of human existence, from birth until death).

Somatic approaches also tend to share some basic principles, stemming from the influence of the Laban Movement System, in which human movement is systematically analysed:

1) There are four fundamental elements in movement: weight, time, space and flow, which form the base for movement exploration.

2) In terms of space, the motion of planes in three dimensions is a crucial guide for designing functional movement.
3) From an anatomical viewpoint, the human body has a characteristic way of moving on the earth.

4) The influence of gravity is an important issue in working on body movement.

The Continuum system adds another principle to somatic practice:

5) Water-based motions are an essential biological link for all organisms. (This principle comes from the dual facts that the human body is composed largely of water, and that it has emerged from the watery environment of the womb).

**Purposes**

Both the East and the West use movement as a way of staying healthy. In traditional Chinese systems, movements are designed to regulate the body (through stability, balance and relaxed posture), the mind (through mental quietude, peaceful consciousness and exertion of will) and the process of respiration (through long and deep abdominal breathing) in order to facilitate the flow of Chi. Movement can also be used to connect the Chi inside the body to the Chi outside the body, and to harmonize heaven, earth and the self as one. A final
The purpose for movement is to be aware of the body center and to remain grounded to the earth.

In Somatic practice, movements are designed to help the movers to move properly and effectively through movement analysis. Some movements can stimulate the flow of bodily fluids and help us learn through our resulting experience of fluid dynamics. Other movements improve proper posture and reduce the effects of gravity. Yet other methods (free movement exploration) reestablish and refine the relationship between the body and the mind.

**Feature and Forms**

Most Chinese systems use standing postures, but a few incorporate sitting or reclining postures (generally for older people and patients). They arrange movement sequences in set forms, which may derive from animal imitations, meridian pathways or observations of nature. Some sequences are designed for self-defense and the circulation of Chi. Others envision interactions with the environment, such as moving around a tree, on a rock, or along the bushes.

Breathing movement is a crucial part of all Chinese movement systems. Chinese movement can also include meditation, imagination, visualization, sound production, vibration and spontaneous movement. Other commonly-found
features include the use of weapons (as tools for extending awareness) in martial arts, and the practice of hands-on work to adjust the flow of Chi.

The Somatic approach to form is to apply many different possibilities for movement, in many different kinds of positions. Influenced by the Laban movement system and the concept of gravity, many somatic practitioners follow the theory of kinesiology and the principles of developmental movement to design exercises or guide movement exploration. Thus, Somatic movement sequences tend to be formless and free. Like the Chinese systems, they also apply meditation, imagination, visualization, sound production, vibration and autonomous movement. Somatic practitioners also employ many different props, such as balls, clothes, sticks, scarfs, and many different kinds of materials, to stimulate sensation in the body. They also use various games and activities (alone, with a partner, or in a group) to open awareness and reconstruct the bodily structure and function.
The following chart 4.2 illustrates the clarification of the concept of

*movement* between the Chinese holistic system and the somatic system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Chinese Holistic system</th>
<th>The Somatic system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The chi body is movement itself.</td>
<td>• Life is movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Movement is caused by Chi.</td>
<td>• A way to awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Life is movement.</td>
<td>• Tickets to the past. (Body has memory).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A way to awareness.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tickets to the past. (Body has memory).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Origin</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Imitations of animal movement.</td>
<td>• Anatomical viewpoint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Images of nature scenery, such as water, tree, mountain, ...... .</td>
<td>• Functional viewpoint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Automatic happened.</td>
<td>• Structural viewpoint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Self-defense.</td>
<td>• Images of fluid systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Natural exploration.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principles</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Follow the concept of Yin &amp; Yang: open-close, up-down, forward-backward, full-empty.</td>
<td>• Influenced by the concepts of the Laban system: four basic elements in movement—Weight, time, space, flow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Emphasize the importance of the central core.</td>
<td>• Three dimensions in space: vertical plane, horizontal plane, saggital plane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Connecting the earth and the heaven (the outer universe).</td>
<td>• Harmony with gravity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have circular and spiral tendency in space.</td>
<td>• Water-like movement exploration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be grounded &amp; relaxed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purposes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Open body awareness.</td>
<td>• Open body awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Regulate body (stability, balance and relaxed posture), mind (quiet, peaceful consciousness and will) and respiration (long, deep and thread-like abdominal breathing).</td>
<td>• Improve proper posture and reduce the unnecessary pull of gravity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be aware of body center and grounded to the earth.</td>
<td>• Reconstruct the neural-muscular movement patterns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prevent disease and improve the ability to self-heal.</td>
<td>• Reestablish and reeducate the relationship between body and mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Circulate the Chi in the body.</td>
<td>• Offer alternative medical methods and therapies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Offer alternative medical methods and therapies.</td>
<td>• Help movers to move properly and effectively through movement analysis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(To be continued)
(Chart 4.2: continued)

| Feature & Forms | • Applies mostly standing positions for movements.  
|                | • Most of the movement exercises have a certain form and sequences.  
|                | • Meditation, Imagination, Visualization  
|                | • Sounding, Vibrating  
|                | • Breathing  
|                | • Use of tools (weapons for extending awareness)  
|                | • Hands-on work (to adjust the flow of Chi) |
|                | • Sequences of movements  
|                | • Use of props (balls, different qualities of materials to open body awareness)  
|                | • Various games or activities (with partner or in a group)  
|                | • Hands-on work (open awareness and reconstruct the body's structure and function) |

Chart 4.2: Clarifying the Movement Concept Between The Chinese Holistic and Somatic systems.

By examining Chinese and Somatics views on "flow" and "movement," we gain a better understanding of the "flowing body," which enables us to create a foundational theory for the Bodyflowing movement system.
CHAPTER 5

BODYFLOWING: THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The foundation for Bodyflowing was based on the integration of Chinese and Somatic philosophies (as discussed in the last chapter), expanded by reference to personal practical experiences (in the movement systems of both cultures), and enriched by original theoretical work.

This chapter begins with a description of the three types of flow in the Bodyflowing system. The second section introduces the ten basic principles of the system, and the chapter concludes with the purpose and benefits of Bodyflowing.

The Three Types of Flow

One definition of "flow" is "a state of utter absorption in an activity, an experience so enjoyable that it is continued (for its own sake) even at great cost."
As described by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990), flow is an optimal experience, a state of enhanced consciousness, in which people feel strong, alert, in effortless control, unselfconscious, and at the peak of their abilities.

The research for Bodyflowing revealed three important types of flow in the soma. The first is the flow of Chi (as described in traditional Chinese medicine). The second is the flow of fluid (as seen in Western science and Somatic theory). The final flow is the flow of happiness and pleasure (as developed from an original psychological perspective).

The flow of Chi

The cultivation and employment of Chi or "vital force" is characteristic of Eastern thought. Most Eastern philosophies recognize the universe as an energy field and all it contains as the manifestations of Chi (also called Prana in India and Ki in Japan) in different patterns. They view the human organism as a microcosm of the universe, complete with its own internal heaven and earth, its own climate and seasons, its own cyclic transformations, and its own natural interplay of universal energies.

Chi expresses itself through the "Law of the Five Elements." Called Wu Xing (五行) in Chinese, this expression describes five forms, patterns, or phases that
Chi can assume as it enters the material world. Because change is a basic condition of life, the five elements (earth, fire, water, wood and metal) constantly undergo a dynamic process of cyclic transformation. Because human beings are a microcosm of the universe, the same elements, and their cycles, are also found within us (Claire, 1995).

Chi surrounds and animates us. It circulates through the body and is responsible for protecting each individual from negative external influences, such as bacteria, dampness, and wind. The proper flow of Chi is the crucial factor for health; imbalances and blockages in the Chi flow are the root of all illness. Chi also keeps the organs operating smoothly and maintains the body's internal temperature.

Chi flows throughout the body along specific passageways called meridians. It moves in a prescribed sequence from meridian to meridian and from organ to organ. This flow provides for the constant renewal of energy and nutrients throughout the body.

There are twelve meridians consisting of six pairs. Each pair is made up of one Yin meridian and one Yang meridian. Almost all the meridians are named after organs in the body. This is because the energy within each meridian shares the qualities (and supports the function) of the eponymous organ. The Yin
meridians are called lung, spleen, heart, kidney, sinbao (heart constrictor), and liver. The Yang meridians are large intestine, stomach, small intestine, bladder, sanjiao (triple heater), and gall bladder.

Along each meridian are small areas, or points, called Tsudaos where the energy of the meridian is particularly close to the surface of the skin. These points (which are known as "acupoints" in the West) have been shown to correspond to areas of particularly high electrical conductivity in the body. An acupoint provides a point of direct access to the internal energy system of the body. For this reason, acupoints are sometimes poetically described as windows to the world (Claire, 1995; Goodman, 1990).

If we picture the overall meridian system as a large subway system, then each meridian would be an individual subway line, and each acupoint would be a station. When one manipulates the acupoints, through a practice such as acupresure, one creates better balance in a particular meridian as well as in the entire energy system of the body. The acupoints are often particularly tender or sensitive, and a well-trained practitioner (of one of the Asian hands-on arts) can detect them easily.

The energy of a meridian can be affected at any point along its pathway. Therefore, a therapist can treat a problem area in the head by working with an
acupoint in the foot. Meridians are bilateral, which means each meridian runs on
either side (right and left) of the body. If your right arm is too sore to touch, a
practitioner can treat it by working an acupoint in your left arm.

When Chi circulates smoothly, we are in balance and enjoy harmony with
our surroundings. Imbalance can cause Chi to stagnate in a particular area of the
body. This, in turn, can cause vital energy to back up and become congested
throughout the body. If an imbalance is permitted to remain for an extended
period of time, the condition can grow more serious and progress from emotional
and/or psychological stress to a state of disease within the vital organs. The
all-important role of the therapist is to encourage the restoration of balance in the
receiver's body. This, in turn, leads to inner well being and physical health, which,
from an eastern perspective, are one and the same.

*Bodyflowing* is a method to experience the integration of universal energy
flow and human energy flow. This concept is the fundamental objective of
Chinese religion, philosophy, and art, and the underlying theme and goal for
personal cultivation in all aspects of life.
The Flow of Fluid:

From a scientific perspective, eighty percent of the body is composed of fluid. From a Somatic perspective, the flow of fluid is one of the most important sources of motion. Although most Westerners tend to see bodies as solid, fixed, material objects, they are truly more like rivers, constantly changing and flowing.

The key to understanding the flow of fluid is to let go of the idea of concrete boundaries. As Cohen (1997) has said:

In traditional physiology, the fluids are characterized primarily in isolation from one another. ...In our research in embodiment at the SBMC (System of Body-Mind Centering), we are exploring the dynamic interrelationships between the fluids as one fluid system (p.66).

All the fluids in the body are basically part of one continuous system. From a physiological viewpoint all bodily fluids are variations of water, which changes properties and characteristics as it passes through different membranes, flows through different channels and interacts with different substances. If one perceives the body as full of internal boundaries and impermeable structures (the organs), one is turning oneself into a frozen sculpture. By discarding this concept, one can make the body softer and lessen the blockages in the body.

In actuality, bodily fluids extend everywhere within the body. When people move their bodies, they should be able to feel the resulting water-like flow.
Adopting different positions causes the fluid to change to a new status. To further quote Cohen:

The characteristics of each fluid system relate to a different quality of movement, touch, voice, and state of mind. These relationships can be approached from the aspects of movement, mind states, or from the anatomical and physiological functioning... (Cohen, 1997, p.66).

The fluids are a very important transportation system of the body. They underlie presence and transformation, and play a major role in the overall counterbalancing of tension and relaxation, rest and action. By imagination, one can gain the sense of the fluid in different organs, different body parts, and even different cells (Cohen, 1997). In fact, the fluid flow can actually be influenced by intention and body image.

Some of our personal movement style is a reflection of how we articulate our various fluids inside our bodies. Our fluid propensities also reflect in the activities we choose to engage in, people we like to be with, the type of art we prefer, and our lifestyles. By being aware of the influence of our fluids upon how we perceive and express ourselves, we expand our options, communicate more fully with others, and explore our internal potentials (Cohen, 1997).
The Flow of Happiness and Pleasure

When one achieves harmony and balance in the flow of Chi and fluid, one has the opportunity to experience the third type of flow, the flow of happiness and pleasure. "There are unnumbered kinds of pleasure available in the body... A body in a natural state is a sea of pleasure, even in grievous circumstances" (Conable, 1995, p.28).

To visualize this third flow, picture any image or presence that inspires warmth, peace, and a positive state of mind. When we look at children, we observe a sense of fullness — of intrinsic aliveness, of joy in being — that is not the result of something else. There is a value in being oneself. What happens too often, however, is that we lose track of the joy inside us. We must remember that we ourselves are pleasure, are joy, and are profound significance.

According to psychologists Robert Ornstein and David Sobel, "Every human being possesses an effective internal health maintenance system... guided by pleasure... Our senses do more than send alarms about sporadic hazards. They shepherd us to agreeable experiences that increase survival" (Knaster, 1996, p.13). We learn through pleasure. We heal better under pleasurable conditions. Our brains even come equipped with pleasurable substances (endorphins) (Knaster, 1996).
Lionel Tiger (1992) claims that pleasure is not a luxury but an evolutionary entitlement. We need it the way we need vitamins, water, warmth, conviviality, and carbohydrates. Pleasure was created to mark "which behaviors, emotions, social patterns and patterns of taste served us well during our evolutionary history. They were experienced as pleasures and encoded into our formative genetic codes..." (Tiger, 1992, p.23).

Pleasure and happiness flow from the inner nature through the whole body. When they flow inside the body, they manifest on the face, as a smile or a laugh. Smiling and laughing are a wonderful gift from Nature. Only human beings know how to smile, and only human beings can use smiles to communicate, or to manifest their emotions. We should cherish this natural gift (the smile), and use it to make the flow of pleasure and happiness flow fluently.
The Ten Principles

Starting from the premise that the crucial prerequisite for a healthy life is the free movement of a flowing body, ten principles were developed to support the three types of flow of the Bodyflowing system. They are:

1. Balance Yin and Yang
2. Create harmony with nature (through water-based movement)
3. Dissolve boundary images
4. Open channels and relieve pain
5. Listen to the soma desire
6. Establish the spine as the center of flowing
7. Focus on the Dan-Tien
8. Utilize Sung, or active relaxation
9. Utilize softness or natural movement
10. Utilize a positive attitude (belief/the inner smile)

Detailed descriptions for each principle follow.
Balance Yin and Yang

Balance is the key to all the hands-on work and movement of Bodyflowing. Depending on the phenomenon involved, the interplay of Yin and Yang manifests in various pairings: active and passive, overt and covert, expansive and contractive, outward and inward, ascending and descending. Nothing is absolute in Yin and Yang, therefore these must be seen as phases of activity, not static entities. Everything tends to seek a complementary opposite that strikes the most stable balance relative to itself.

On the human body, the front is Yin, the back side is Yang; The lower body is Yin and the upper body is Yang. In breathing, inhalation is Yin (accumulating and concentrating air inwards) while exhalation is Yang (releasing and expanding air outwards). All the Bodyflowing exercises take the balance of Yin and Yang into consideration, and give equal attention to each part of body.

Create Harmony with Nature through Water-based Natural Movement

Water has many important qualities; it is slow, yielding and fluid. Water movements are very helpful to those people who have lost their natural abilities to care for themselves, and have developed rigid bodies because of their sedentary lifestyles.
Because Chi is invisible, Chinese doctors and Chi Kung practitioners have traditionally described the behavior of Chi as being similar to water (Yang, 1989). Everyone has an image of water, and thus everyone is able to understand the characteristic feeling and awareness. Many western somatic approaches also focus on water awareness; they try to embody water, move with the sensation of water, and express their body's water-like qualities. Waterlike movement is important in Bodyflowing because the practitioner, seeks to yield, like water, to the way of nature.

**Dissolve Boundary Images**

"The ultimate metaphysical secret, if we dare state it so simply, is that there are no boundaries in the universe. Boundaries are illusions, products not of reality but of the way we map and edit reality" (Wilber, 1979, p. 31). Human beings use our senses to define the world in which we live. This definition process also limits our life. Therefore Taoism teaches us to not be limited by labels: "The Tao that can be talked about is not the true Tao. The name that can be named is not the eternal Name" (Kwok, etc. 1993, p. 15).
If we perceive the world through different senses, the world itself changes. A bat perceives the world primarily by way of its ears, therefore its view of the world is entirely different from ours.

The point is that any perception of the world is subjective. It is only a very small part of the whole (Jou, 1991). In the modern society people encounter the world though systematic education, which decreases their ability to use their senses to understand the world and themselves. Every decision we make, our every action, our every word is based on the construction, conscious or unconscious, of boundaries.

... we create a persistent alienation from ourselves, from others, and from the world by fracturing our present experience into different parts, separated by boundaries. We artificially split our awareness into compartments such as subject vs. object, life vs. death, mind vs. body, inside vs. outside, reason vs. instinct-a divorce settlement that sets experience cutting into experience and, life fighting with life. The result of such violence, although known by many other names, is simply unhappiness. Life becomes suffering, full of battles. But all of the battles in our experience—our conflicts, anxieties, sufferings, and despairs—are created by the boundaries we misguidedly throw around our experience (Wilber, 1979, p. 46).

Recognition of the boundaries in life is the key to relieving self-conflict and limitation. In our ignorance we often torture ourselves. We imprison ourselves inside a set of restrictions and requirements which are often hazardous and injurious. Would you force a bird to wear a necktie? Would you put high-heeled
shoes on a dog? Why do we subject ourselves to conditions too cruel to inflict on mute beasts? No animal can be free in a cage, yet we build cages around ourselves everyday.

In our lives it seems that everything we value is bounded by classification into pairs of opposites: success vs. failure, beauty vs. ugliness, strength vs. weakness, true vs. false. Yet nature "does not grow true frogs and false frogs, nor moral trees and immoral trees... Nature does not know the opposites of right and wrong and thus does not recognize what humans imagine to be errors" (Wilber, 1979, p.16).

This creation of boundaries occurs not only between people (or between them and their environment), but inside the body, with a resulting influence on movement. Conable (1995) describes this process in teaching the Alexander Technique:

We all seem to have in our minds maps of our bodies and their workings. They include size, shape, and mechanics. These maps are what we use to interpretation our kinesthetic and visceral sensations; at least to some extent, we also guide our movement by them... It also seems to be true that the interpretations forming the basis of the map are often unconsciously performed (p. 128).

Boundaries are never more evident than in the creation of self-identity:
When you are describing or explaining or even just inwardly feeling your "self," what you are actually doing, whether you know it or not, is drawing a mental line or boundary across the whole field of your experience, and everything on the inside of that boundary you are feeling or calling your "self," while everything outside that boundary you feel to be "not-self." Your self-identity, in other words, depends entirely upon where you draw that boundary line (Wilber, 1979, p.4).

In opposition to this, Wilber advocates "unity consciousness" as the "natural state of awareness which acknowledges [the state of no-boundaries]" (Wilber, 1979, p.45). "No-boundary" awareness is direct, immediate, non-verbal, unphilosophical and a-theoretical. It touches the reality that lies beyond names and forms, words and thoughts, divisions and boundaries, where there is no boundary between the subject and the object, the self and the other, the observer and the observed.

*Bodyflowing* exercises grow from this perspective of no boundaries. In traditional Chinese thought, Chi flow is continuous across the larger universe, without recognition to the boundaries of an individual body. The flow of happiness and pleasure can also extend across the gap between persons, and even the flow of fluid can pass through the seemingly impermeable barrier of the skin.
Open Channels and Relieve Pain

According to Chinese medicine, the bodily channels (which include the meridians, for chi, and the veins, for blood) form a network that links all the organs and other parts of the body. When disease occurs the channels are affected, upsetting the flow of Chi and blood. This disturbance is referred to as channel blockage, Chi-blood stagnation, or imbalanced Yin and Yang. In such a case, the channels lose their normal functions, and show various symptoms of disturbance, such as pain. Opening blocked channels is the key to pain-relief. Bodyflowing exercises present a way to open the channels, remove Chi-blood stagnation and restore the balance of yin and yang, which (in turn) automatically relieves the pain.

Listen to the Soma Desire

Body Flowing is based on the natural impulses of the human soma and seeks natural movement. When one is thirsty one will drink, when one is tired, one will go to sleep. When one's body wants to move, should we not let it move itself freely?

After observing these 'man-made' techniques, and contrasting them with the mobilization techniques practiced by Mother Nature, one thing became clear: the body often needs and wants mobilization.
Yet the body has the capability to mobilize itself. And it can do so if we will only let ourselves go into a comfortable position (Anderson, 1995, p. 7).

Not only for comfort, but with regards to any problem of the soma, the body has the ability find the best way to regulate itself. We can facilitate the process simply by listening to the soma's desire for a comfortable situation.

Culture and education often oppose the nature of body (Johnson, 1994). However, if you listen carefully to your inner voice, even strong training cannot restrict the soma desire. *Bodyflowing* follows the philosophy that:

...the body has its own intelligence, an inner memory of what it is to be "right." The body wants to correct itself, to let go of unproductive patterns of movement and posture, and it has an innate ability to do this. If you give the body information regarding possibilities for efficient and effortless use in rest and in movement, the body takes that information and uses it for self-healing (Zake & Golden, 1997, p.3).

**Establish the Spine as the Center of Flow**

The spine (which, in this usage, includes the entire spinal cord and the cranium) is of key importance in both Western and Eastern thought. Western science recognizes the spinal cord as a central part of the nervous system, whereas Chinese science sees the spine as the site of two major meridians. The
spine was also considered crucial by several Somatic pioneers, and in the Indian science of yoga.

According to Western anatomy, the skeletal spine consists of seven cervical vertebrae, twelve thoracic vertebrae, five lumbar vertebrae, five sacral vertebrae which are fused into a single solid sacrum, and five coccygeal vertebrae which comprise the coccyx. Running along the skeletal spine is the spinal cord, a rope of nerves, which, together with the brain, forms the central nervous system. Virtually all of the information about sensation and movement which passes between the body and the brain is carried through the spinal cord.

In Chinese medicine, the Du meridian runs through the middle of the back and governs the Yang meridians. It can be used to increase the Yang energy of the system and also feeds the five ancestral organs, especially the brain and the spinal cord (Katchmer, 1993).

The control of the spine is called the primary control of the body by F. Matthias Alexander (1869-1955), who was the originator of Alexander Technique:

Primary control is the inherent and intrinsic mechanism for balance and support in the body. It assures that uprightness will be effortless and that movement will be supported and fluid. Primary control depends, as we shall see, on the preservation or the recovery of a dynamic relationship between the head and the spine in movement or in stillness (Conable, 1995, p.1).
Other researchers, such as Sutherland (1900) and Upledger (1970) discovered that the spine has its own rhythmic movements, independent of the motions produced by the heart and lungs. The spine’s rhythmic movement is apparently generated by pressure changes throughout the head and spinal column during the production and absorption of cerebrospinal fluid. This very subtle movement can be felt throughout the human body at a rate of about twelve cycles each minute. It offers an important physical clue to the condition of soft tissue and joints throughout the body, and furnishes a diagram of patterns of pain and discomfort (Arnold, 1995; Claire, 1995). Upledger used his observations of unexpected movement in the tissue protecting the spinal cord to develop Craniosacral Therapy, which pays particular attention to this type of rhythm (Arnold, 1995).

The spine is also very important in the Indian system of "yoga." In the yogic system, energy called prana travels within the body through thousands of channels of varying size known as nadis. These nadis are interconnected energy channels which weave throughout the body like webs. Of the many nadis in the body, the three most important ones are the sushumna, the ida, and the pingala. All arise from the base of the spine in the area of the coccyx and perineum. The sushumna is an energy conduit within the interior of the spine. Along this conduit,
from the base of the anus to the top of the head, flows the most powerful of all psychic energies, *Kundalini* (coiled) energy or serpent power. It is the connection between the energies of the Earth and the Universe. The *ida* and *pingala* run up along either side of the spine; the *ida* originates on the left of the base of the spine, and the *pingala* on the right of the base of spine. The *prana* carried in the *ida* is described as being of a cooling nature, inhibiting or slowing body organ functions, and associated with mental and psychic activities. It is considered a "lunar" energy. The *pingala* is the opposite of the *ida*. It carries heat, stimulates the organs of the body, controls visceral activities, and is fiery in nature. It is associated with the sun. These two psychic currents coil upward around the spine and the *Sushumna* like snakes, crisscrossing at seven important locations. Both of them begin at the base of the spine and end on the forehead at a point between the eyebrows. Each of the seven meeting joints is called a *chakra*², or energy wheel and is viewed as a center of consciousness (Dychtwald, 1986). The primary *chakra* is located along the spine. According to the ancient Hindu literature, each *chakra* is concerned with very specific aspects of human behavior and development. Since the psychosomatic nature of each *chakra* is related to a particular point along the spine as well as to a specific level of psychoemotional development, the *Kundalini* yogi's lifelong task is to develop himself in such a
way as to evolve through the various chakra qualities and challenges, thereby bringing the focus of the Kundalini energy upward from the base of his spine to the top of his head. The mindful yogi is challenged not only to activate these bodymind centers and to release their stored energy but also to keep the dual energy forces of the Ida and the Pingala in harmonious balance with each other (Dychtwald, 1986).

As the spine is so important in all the conceptions of anatomy in the East and West, it makes sense that it should also be fundamental to any movement system. In Bodyflowing exercises, therefore, the spine forms the center of flows.

**Focus on the Dan-Tien**

The Dan-Tien (also called Hara in Japanese) is the focus of the human energy system, and is located between the navel and the pubic bone. Dan-Tien means "the place which produces elixir" and refers to the process by which the stomach transforms food into blood, which is then transformed into sexual energy and forms Chi. It is the physical center of gravity, and a place of convergence place for many of the Chi meridians (Reid, 1993; Liu, 1983).

Another way to see the Dan-Tien is as the place that one rests one's mind. Almost all of Chinese systems (particularly Chi Kung), focus on the Dan-Tien as
the center of one's will. Generally, one concentrates on the Dan-Tien after a series of movements. In this way, one uses the will to guide the Chi into the Dan-Tien where it can perform its work and increase longevity. Through these practices, one can achieve a state of calm more easily and thus gain more sensitivity of the deep changes inside the body.

The yogic system also contains an important chakra in the area of the Dan-Tien. This chakra is associated to the kidneys, gonads, and sexuality, and is connected to the sacral and prostatic nerve plexus (Smith, 1990). In this area resides stored ancestral energy and a portion of the collective unconscious. A portion of this chakral energy is used for procreation, but its greater potential is to activate the higher centers within the sushumna pathway (Smith, 1990).

It takes two to five minutes for the Chi one has generated to return to the Dan-Tien for storage when one practices Bodyflowing (Reid, 1993). Subsequently Chi gradually flows into the Du and Jen meridians, which serve as reservoirs, and channel the accumulated energy into the twelve main organ meridians as needed. As a result, Bodyflowing exercises focus the will on the Dan-Tien for two to five minutes after finishing any section. If one feels uncomfortable during any Bodyflowing exercise, one should focus the mind on the Dan-Tien until the discomfort passes.
Sung -- Active Relaxation

The word *relaxation* in English means eliminating all tension, often becoming almost limp. The popular image is of a person who flops down into a comfortable couch and peacefully drifts off into a reverie, totally passive, uncaring, and unguarded (Jou, 1980). Such a state of mind has no place in the practice of *Bodyflowing*. The relaxation in *Bodyflowing* is active and alive, serving to balance Yin and Yang, and integrate the hard and the soft.

The word *Sung* (鬆), in Chinese, represents this type of relaxation. Active relaxation is not the absence of tension, but rather the absence of unnecessary tension. Active relaxation is the art of becoming aware of, and inhibiting, the habitual contraction of muscles due to emotional stress and poor habits of posture, breathing, and movement. As Moshe Feldenkrais (1992) states that, in his *Potent Self*, “learning to inhibit unwanted contractions of muscles that function without, or in spite of, our will, is the main task in coordinated action” (p. 85).

Active relaxation keeps the muscles alive. Such relaxed awareness is seen in nature. The snake hibernating all winter does not relax totally, or else it would die. It withdraws consciousness, conserving its energy so that it may strike again in the spring.
Active relaxation is a form of Chi flow, and also an essential preparation for all styles of movement. It is a state of being aware and alert to both oneself and the external environment. In this way, vitality is not wasted on unnecessary tension. It is impossible to achieve this state of aliveness without cultivating awareness of the body. We cannot get rid of tension if we are neither aware of what is tense nor sensitive to how this tension is maintained. If I am unaware of an area of my body, it is easier for the tension in that area to be maintained unconsciously. Yet when I become aware of a tense shoulder, it automatically begins to relax. As I become aware of my breath, my breathing slows down. Awareness helps to thaw out frozen diaphragms and locked sternums, and presents the opportunity for change.

The whole of existence is dancing, except man. The whole of existence is in a very relaxed movement; movement there is, certainly, but it is utterly relaxed. Trees are growing and birds are chirping and rivers are flowing, stars are moving: everything is going in a very relaxed way. No hurry, no haste, no worry, and no waste. Except man. Man has fallen a victim of his mind (Ruhnke & Wurzburger, 1995, p.29).

Active relaxation trains the body to use the minimum effort necessary for any task. If one ounces of strength are necessary, why use two? The extra ounce is wasted energy and a drain on vitality. However, the point is not no-effort, but
rather minimal effort; creating a subjective feeling of effortlessness and ease, no
matter how much energy is actually expended.

Active relaxation can even be apparent to observers. A great ballerina
appears to float across the stage. A master sculptor seems to fluidly and
effortlessly free the image from the stone. By contrast, when an action is poorly
and inefficiently performed, the effort and tension are impossible to ignore.

**Softness -- Natural Movement:**

Natural movement is an instinctive reaction to the Soma. The movement that
stems from inner desire, not from education or the needs of others, is called
natural movement. Natural movement is always *softness*.

Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen (1997), the founder of Body-Mind Centering,
describes her observations of children:

> They respond immediately without judgment and there is no
> questioning of sincerity or truth. The space between us is
> always clear and our relationship remains untethered and
> honest (p.35).

The movement of young children is *softness*. A snow-covered leaf does not
resist, but bends slowly and gracefully until the snow falls away. It does not
obstruct, fight or confront the snow but, instead, submits to its greater force and
ultimately triumphs. Bamboo bends in the strongest winds without breaking and therefore survives, while rigid plants break and die. The flexibility of bamboo is softness (Yang, 1989). In the same way, softness is integral to the Bodyflowing system, so that we too can learn how to be soft, and survive.

**Attitude (Belief/The Inner Smile)**

To make healing truly effective, we need to involve the powers of imagination, understanding, emotional commitment, and belief in the healing process. The more we see, understand, feel, and believe, the deeper the benefits we gain. When we feel something, we become wholly absorbed in it. When we believe in something, it becomes a reality.

Several studies have shown that people with arthritis who cultivate a sense of confidence in their ability to manage their arthritis, actually suffer less pain and disability (Wallace, 1989). Studies of acupuncture have also linked its effectiveness to patient belief in its efficacy (Chaves & Barber, 1979).

Mann (1973) has recently provided further support for the notion that the patient's belief in the effectiveness of acupuncture is crucial to its success. Working in England, he attempted to use acupuncture to produce analgesia to pinpricks in 100 volunteer subjects. Acupuncture failed to produce satisfactory analgesia to the pinpricks, which were severe enough to draw blood, in at least 90 percent of these subjects. Mann attributed the tremendous
discrepancy between his success rate and the success rate reported from China as due to the following: in contrast to the Chinese, he did not attempt to lead his subjects to believe that acupuncture would be highly effective (Chaves & Barber, 1979, p. 171)

Like belief, the "inner smile" is another means of utilizing the power of attitude. Smiling calms the mind and aids relaxation. While one smiles, the forehead should not be wrinkled, nor the jaws tense. One should remain loose. The smile should proceed from the inside outwards.

When beginning a new movement system, students often make the mistake of put too much effort into trying to concentrate. Their bodies are not relaxed, and they often think too intensely about what they have to do, especially when the learning is unfamiliar to them.

The inner smile is not pasted on like a mask, but is genuine. It floods the body like a warm fluid. Sadness, tension, and worries contract the body and the mind, but joy and serenity encourage both to open. When one works with a smile, one feels clearer, warmer, and more luminous, and the circulation of energy is increased.

When Bodyflowing students practice the inner smile they will find that it facilitates opening their meridians and promoting their chi circulation.
Conclusion

Bodyflowing combines the idea of flowing and the method of moving meditation, moving from natural inner desires, and waterlike movements to help those people who have lost their natural abilities for self-care. Bodyflowing is a self-cultivation method for preventing illness and reminds people to take responsibility for their health. It is a self-exploration and educational process.

Endnotes

1 The points are the specific sites through which the Chi (vital energy) of Zang-Fu organs and blood are transported to the body surface. The Chi and blood circulate from channels through points to collaterals. Therefore, channels and collaterals are the passages of Chi and blood with the points as the controlling stops.

2 Chakra is a Sanskrit word used by Hindus. It means wheel of light. There are seven major chakras and 122 smaller secondary chakras throughout the body. Each of the major chakras has a physical, an emotional, a creative, and a celestial component. Besides these, each chakra has its own purpose or particular viewpoint based upon the area of consciousness that it influences.
CHAPTER 6

BODYFLOWING: PRACTICE

There are three main phases in the practice of Bodyflowing. These are the breath-preparation phase, the pain-relief phase, and the movement-sequence phase. Breath preparation allows one to relax, focus the will and increase somatic awareness. Pain relief is also important to preparation, because it is difficult to concentrate while experiencing pain. Only after these two preparation phases does the practitioner move on to the movement sequences, which combine breath control, movement exploration through flow, sound-production, meditation-in-motion, imagination and self-massage.

Breath Practice - The Key to Self Regulation

Breathing practice is a crucial part of the preparation for Bodyflowing, and should always precede your movement practice. Breathing has long been recognized as the key to self-cultivation in many parts of the world.
In India and China, the word for breath and vitality is the same (Ruhnke & Wurzburger, 1995). Breathing is commonly applied in Buddhism, Zen, Yoga and Taoist meditation as a stepping-stone to the deeper self. Concentration on the breath is a doorway to deeper inner understanding. By focusing on breathing, one can enhance one's calmness, open awareness and improve health (Simpkins, C. & Simpkins A., 1996). Moreover, when you coordinate breathing with movement, your attention will automatically focus on your body, to increase in kinesthetic awareness, and to prevent mechanical performance of the exercise.

Many mystics have looked within themselves and identified breath as the evidence of spirit in the body. It has inherent movement and rhythm and is the source of life and vitality. Breathing is rhythmic movement, at which the very center of our being is. It is a cyclic expansion and contraction that is both in our body and outside it, that is both in our mind and in our body, that is both in our consciousness and not in it. Breath is the essence of being, and in all aspects of the universe we can see the same rhythmic pattern of expansion and contraction, whether in the cycles of day and night, waking and sleeping, high and low tides, or seasonal growth and decay. If breath is the movement of spirit in the body—a central mystery that connects us to all creation—then working with breath is a form of spiritual practice. It is also one that impacts health and healing (Weil, 1995, p.203).

The Bodyflowing system provides five alternate exercises for breathing preparation. Practitioners can choose at will, based on personal need and
preference. Practice can be brief, but should be regular, in order for realization of the potential power for health.

1. **Observe the breath**

   Sit in a comfortable position with your eyes closed. Focus on your breathing, but avoid trying to influence it in any way. Follow your breathing cycle, with special attention to the points when inhalation changes to exhalation. Continue for at least a few minutes, and simply observe the breath cycle. No matter how your breath changes, keep your attention focused. This is a basic method for meditation, relaxation, and the harmonization of body, mind, and spirit, which was adapted from Weil’s *Spontaneous Healing*, 1995.

   Variations:

1. Follow your breathing in your chest.

2. Follow your breathing in your belly.

3. Feel the depth of your breathing

4. Notice the timing of your breathing

5. Notice the air going in and out in your lungs.

6. Notice the air passing in and out of your nose.
2. Cellular breathing

This exercise was adopted from Cohen's *Body-Mind Centering* system (Cohen, 1997). Lie on the floor with your eyes closed. Feel the temperature of your skin and let your body soften and yield to the ground. Listen to the movement of your breath and feel it flowing in and out softly and slowly. Imagine your whole body is a single cell or balloon, and your skin is the membrane of this cell. Soften the boundary and allow your membrane to become permeable. Imagine that, while inhaling, all the oxygen, water and nutrition enter this membrane and you expand; while exhaling, all the waste goes out through this membrane. When inhaling, picture yourself expanding; when exhaling, become relaxed. Let yourself enjoy the sensation of moving-and-being-moved by the flowing of your breath.

3. Universal breath

This exercise is best done on your back, so you might try it while falling asleep or upon waking in the morning. Close the eyes, let your arms rest at your sides, and focus on your breath without trying to control it. Now, imagine when you inhale that the universe is blowing breath into you and when you exhale that it is withdrawing it. You are a passive recipient of breath. As the universe breathes into you,
feel the breath penetrating to every part of your body, even to the fingertips and
toes. Continue this imagery for ten cycles of exhalation and inhalation.

4. Diaphragm breath

Sit comfortably with your back straight and your eyes closed. Place the tip of the
tongue where the backs of the upper front teeth, meet the gums. Keep it there
during the whole exercise (this connects Yin and Yang Chi, and creates an energy
circuit in the body). Now breathe in and out rapidly through the nose, keeping the
mouth lightly closed. Inhalation and exhalation should be equal and short, and you
should feel muscular effort at the base of the neck just above the collarbones, as
well as at the diaphragm (try putting your hands on these spots to get a sense of
the movement). The action of the chest should be rapid and mechanical, like a
bellows pumping air. Your breath should be audible on both inhalation and
exhalation, and as rapid as two cycles per second (if you can do that comfortably).

The first time you try this exercise, do it for just fifteen seconds, then breathe
normally. Each time you do it, increase the duration by five seconds until you reach
a full minute. This is real exercise, so expect to feel some muscle fatigue. You will
also begin to feel something else: a subtle but definite movement of energy
through the body when you return to the normal breathing. This may take the form
of a vibration or tingling, especially in the arms, along with greater alertness and disappearance of fatigue. This is not hyperventilation but a way of activating the central nervous system. Once you can do the diaphragm breath for a full minute, it can be used in place of caffeine for wakefulness (This exercise is also adapted from Weil).

5. Yin-Yang relaxing breath

You may do this while sitting, lying on your back, or even standing and walking. First exhale, then close the mouth and inhale through the nose to a (silent) count of four. Hold the breath for a count of seven. Then exhale through the mouth to a count of eight. Repeat for a total of four cycles, then breathe normally. The speed with which you do the exercise is unimportant. What is important is the ratio of four to seven to eight for inhalation, hold, and exhalation. You will be limited by how long you can comfortably hold the breath, so adjust your counting accordingly. As you progress, make your count slower. These relaxing breaths can also be performed in the morning before getting up and in the evening while lying in bed.

These exercises will get you started on a program of using breath to optimize your healing system. This is a genuine spiritual practice, not just a method of improving health. The energy that you can feel in your body after doing the
diaphragm breath is the sensation of Chi, or universal life energy (most often experienced as warmth or tingling or vibration). With practice, this energy can be used for many purposes.

Pain Relief

Releasing discomfort is a very important step in the practice of Bodyflowing. Pain interferes with relaxation and body-awareness, and prevents proper practice. The methods used by Bodyflowing for relief of pain include channeling inner flow, pressing trigger points (or pain points), breathing practice and stretches.

The first step is to find the root of the problem. Most people with pain in the neck, shoulders, or back believe the pain is due to an injury, a hurt brought on by some physical activity. This cause-and-effect explanation is deeply ingrained in the modern consciousness. Of course, pain often starts with engagement in a physical activity, but chronic pain is more likely due to habitual misuse of the body than to acute injury (Conable, 1995; Feldenkrais, 1977; Hanna, 1988).

Based on my own clinical practice (and on the research of L. Anderson), I have developed some effective ways to relieve this type of pain. My method
includes positioning, breathing, pressing the painful point and stretching. The
detailed description follows:

**Positioning.** The body is in a constant state of flow. It often needs and wants
movement, and it has the capability to find a comfortable position. The key to pain
relief is to utilize this natural ability.

1. Listen to the body's desire for a position of comfort.

2. Assist nature by folding into that position and holding or resting in that
position for a minimum of ninety seconds (as Anderson suggested), or up to three
minutes (as suggested by my practice).

**Breathing.**

1. Bring your awareness to your breathing, feel it move in and out.

2. a) When you are in touch with the flow of the breath, direct your attention
to any point of tenderness or pain.

   b) With each exhalation, increase the relaxation of the spot of pain.

3. a) Lie on the floor. Find a place in your body where you feel comfortable
and a place in your body you are feeling tension or pain.

   b) As you inhale, imagine the breath entering into the place where you are
comfortable. Feel the comfort.
c) As you exhale, imagine the breath flowing through the place where you feel tension and pain, allowing the tension to dissolve with the outgoing breath.

Pressing the pain point.

The area of pain is the place that Chi is blocked.

1. Use your hands to find the pain point.

2. Press gently on the point at least seven seconds.

3. Relax with the exhale through the pain point, as above. Release the pain and tension into the air.

4. After you finishing the first pain point, move along the muscle at one-inch intervals (like a train stopping at each station). Press at each new point. If you have found a pain point, repeat the pressing procedure. If there is no pain, move on to the next "station".

Lengthening. After "folding" (positioning) or after treating pain points, it is best to follow with the appropriate stretch. Stretching plays an important role in re-educating muscles newly freed from spasms (Prudden, 1980). Particularly after folding, the relieved muscle needs to be stretched, lengthened, and strengthened to regain its normal structure and functioning. The stretch needed is in the opposite
direction of the fold position. If the fold bends forward, the stretch will bend backward.

In order to gain more benefits from stretching, some points must be kept in mind all the time. Don't force the body into any stretch with a bouncing movement, which will easily result in reinjury. Stretch with soft and slow qualities, and feel the sensation.

Integrated Pain Relief Method:

The individual methods can be combined as follows:

1. Feel the uncomfortable part of body and find the painful spots.

2. Fold your body over the pain or sore spot, listen to the body desire and yield to a comfortable position.

3. Hold this comfortable position for at least 2 or 3 minutes.

4. Breath through pain point as you exhale until the painful condition is relieved.

5. Return slowly to a normal position.

6. Locate the pain points with pressing, and hold the pressure for seven seconds with concentration and breath out from the point. Then, slowly release the pressure.
7. Lengthen gently in the opposite direction with concentration, relax and exhale from the pain point.

When you are in pain, your Soma Nature is prompting you to find a comfortable position. Your treatment is done by nature and aided by the inner power. Your goal is to listen to your body, especially at the times your pain gets better or goes away. People spend eight hours hunched over a desk: the natural response for most of us is to lean back in our chairs, extend our arms and arch our backs. This is a spontaneous folding of the body into a comfortable position, a form of self-regulation. Unfortunately, we do not usually go far enough or hold long enough to relax the spastic muscle (Anderson, 1995).

The following is a practical example of the integrated pain relief method.
Example: Lower back pain

People with lower back pain find that their grasp is weak and unreliable (particularly when grasping large objects) and items fall from their hands.

Feel and find the painful spots
“Fold” over the painful spots
Hold position
Breath through pain point
Return to normal position
Press pain points
Lengthen body

Finding painful spots: Lie down on a comfortable position. Place hands on lower back, and find points of pain.
Folding over pain spot: Bend backwards, with the pain point as the pivot. Let the painful muscle soften and shorten. Hold this position at least two or three minutes.

Breath through pain point: Imagine, as you exhale, that the breath passes through the painful point, until the pain is relieved. You can do this step simultaneously or subsequently to holding the folded posture.
Return to normal position: Relax slowly and return to a normal position.
Press the pain point: Find those uncomfortable points on your back, and apply firm steady pressure with thumb or fingertip for seven seconds. Exhale through pain point as above. Slowly release pressure as you exhale.
Lengthening: Lengthening is not the same as stretching! Lengthening is gentle and unforced. Curl forward slightly, and let the painful muscle gently expand. Visualize the image of water flowing out of the pain point. Try to stay in a positive frame of mind.
Movement Sequences

This section gives detailed descriptions of the ten major movement sequences in the Bodyflowing system, which are: Meridian Scanning; Flowing Movement Exploration; Spreading and elongating; Spine Awakening; Sounding, Shaking and Vibrating; Union of Yin and Yang; Swimming Dragon in the Water; Flying Thousands Hands; Soothing Touch; and Centering.

Ten Rules of Practice:

Bodyflowing exercises can be practiced in a sequence or separately. The overall guideline for practice can be summarized as follows: Move in a slow and water-like movement, without pain, and with happiness and pleasure. Follow your own soma nature to breath, smile, move, produce sounds, vibrate, meditate, and self-explore.

Until one internalizes this general disposition, however, the following rules of practice will help produce the desired state, and prevent any discomfort.

1. If possible, use a full size rug or mat for Bodyflowing practice. When lying, a rug or mat allows comfort while providing a firm support for the body (and thus
facilitates positive body awareness). Feel free to repeat any exercise as many or as few times as wished.

2. Wear loose and comfortable clothing, and keep away from all distractions.

3. All standing movements (unless otherwise directed) take place with the body relaxed, the feet shoulder-width apart, and the knees slightly bent.

4. Keep a smiling face and "happy body" through all movement sequences. Think about something that make you feel good and filled with delight. This will facilitate the flow of happiness and pleasure.

5. While practicing, your primary task is to focus upon internal sensations of flow. By developing a careful sensory awareness of the flowing movements in specific body areas, you will develop control over the release of tension.

6. Always move softly and gently, and with the quality of water-like movement (i.e. with the least possible effort). This helps achievement of the sensation of flow, and gives the Chi a smoother journey through the body. It is better to do "too little" than to risk doing too much, and undermining the somatic learning process.

7. Never force any movement. When one forces oneself to move, the Chi becomes blocked. If you feel pain, you are doing something wrong. Bodyflowing exercises are based on natural physiology, and should never be painful. Painful exercise is unnecessary, harmful, and, of course, no fun at all.
8. Always follow your personal body rhythm. Each body has its own rhythm, which changes over time, and in response to conditions. Find this rhythm and listen to it.

9. Be persistent, patient, and positive. The improvement of Chi flow and somatic awareness is a slow, gradual process, which requires patience and belief. Do not look for a "quick fix," but for genuine, lasting changes in comfort, circulation, range of movement, and general functioning.

10. When you finish any Bodyflowing exercise, always take a moment to relax, ground your energy, and listen to your soma. This is extremely important. Whether standing or lying down, fold the hands over the Dan-Tien (two to three inches below the navel), breath freely, and feel the sensation of the three flows. If you wish, you can visualize your energy being stored within the Dan-Tien. Spend as much time as necessary (at least three minutes).
The Exercises

Meridian scanning:

Preparation: Lie on your back, with both sides of the spine resting evenly on
the floor. Lengthen your legs away from the pelvis and let them fall open to the
sides. Release your head, neck, shoulders, and hips. Allow the arms to rest loosely
next to the body. Face your palms upward. Now let your body completely relax.
Close your eyes and allow the breath to be easy and free. This pose invigorates
and refreshes the body and the mind, removes fatigue, and is soothing for the
entire system.

Steps for meridian scanning.

1. Concentrate the mind on the Dan-Tien, which is located about three fingers
width (two inches) below the naval and breath deeply, imagining the breath
passing through the Dan-Tien.

2. Upper Body: Inhale first, then imagine that you can feel Chi flowing through
your body as you exhale. The flow
begins at the Dan-Tien, goes upward
and outward through the front side of
body, via the chest, shoulders, upper arms, lower arms and hands, and ends at the fingertips. Then, while inhaling, imagine the Chi flow inward through the backside of the body, via the hands, lower arms, upper arms, shoulders and scapulas, ending back down at the Dan-Tien. The complete cycle is called a "round". Do three to six rounds, then exhale while focusing your concentration in the Dan-Tien.

3. Keep your concentration in the Dan-Tien for three or four deep breaths.

4. **Lower Body**: Inhale first, then while exhaling, imagine the Chi flow beginning at the Dan-Tien, and going outward and downward, through the outside of the legs, via the hips, upper legs, lower legs, ankles, and feet, and ending at the toe tips. Then, while inhaling, imagine the flow going upward through the inner side of the legs, via the feet, ankles, lower legs and upper legs and then upwards back to the Dan-Tien. Do three to six rounds, then exhale while focusing your concentration in the Dan-Tien.

5. Keep your concentration in the Dan-Tien for three or four deep breaths, as in step three. Remember to finish by resting for a moment, and listening to your soma.
Flowing movement exploration

This exercise is a self-movement exploration with slow, yielding, relaxing, effortless, water-like movement. No set form or sequence is needed. It takes about 4-5 minutes (or longer, if time permits). Some creativity can be used.

1. Lie on your back or any position on the floor. Imagine that the floor is covered fully with dye in your favorite color, and that your body is a blank cloth. Slowly move and color each part of skin with beautiful colors. Give the body heavily to the floor, until each part of body has been dyed, in no particular order, but with slow, flowing and grounded movement.

2. Like an amoeba swimming in the water, move and imagine the internal space is full of fluid or Chi. Try to gain the sensation of flowing inside and outside the body. Imagine that all tightness and solidness in the body is melting away.

3. Imagine your body is a balloon halfway filled with water. When you roll your body, you can feel the water flowing down to the lower part of the body.
Move slowly and feel the water flowing through all your inside.

After self-exploration, gradually return to a neutral position, lying on the floor.

Remember to rest and listen to the soma (as in all exercises).

**Spreading and elongating**

This exercise is to increase body awareness through comfortable lengthening and spreading. Within the concept of elongation (not "stretching") several exercises have been created.

1. **Spreading body from the center**

   Lie on the floor. With both arms spreading out on both sides, bend your right leg and press down on right foot. Keep your left leg lengthening on the floor.

   Inhale first. While exhaling, slowly push down on the right leg and arch the right hip in the air. At the same time, imagine that there is a flow from the Den-Tien spreading out to all limbs (including head and "tail"). Stay in that position and maintain the sensation of spreading out through your next inhalation. Then, slowly exhale and lower the right hip back to the floor.

   Do it three times, then, change to the left side.
2. Elongation of the whole body -- Homologous pattern.

Extend your arms straight up and lengthen your legs straight down. As you exhale, spread out in a homologous pattern (in which the top half of the body elongates in the opposite direction as the bottom half). Maintain the sensation of spreading out through your inhalation. Then relax as you exhale slowly. This elongation is good for whole-body flow and the muscles of the rib cage, abdomen, spine, shoulders, arms, ankles, and feet.

3. Elongation of the whole body -- Homolateral pattern

Inhale. While exhaling, point the toes of your right foot as you extend your right arm. Spread out as far as is comfortable in a homolateral pattern (in which only the left or right side elongates at one time).

Then inhale, but maintain the elongation and the sensation of spreading out. Relax as you exhale. Repeat on the left side. Each elongation should be held for one exhalation/inhalation cycle.
4. Elongation of the whole body – Contralateral pattern

Inhale first. While exhaling, point the toes of your left leg as you extend your right arm. Spread out, as far as is comfortable, in a Contralateral pattern (in which the opposite arm and leg lengthen together). Then inhale but maintain the elongation and the sensation of spreading out. Relax as you exhale. Repeat with the right leg and the left arm. Each elongation should be held for one exhalation/inhalation cycle.

You may do these spreading and elongation exercises as many times as you wish. Usually three times is sufficient for reducing tension and tightness. These should help relax your spine and entire body. They help reduce overall body tension quickly. These are good to do just before sleeping.

Spine awakening

The spine is the center of the Chi flow. Along the spine, there is an important meridian called Du meridian. The following sequences of movements are to awaken the spine and activate the flow of this meridian. These movements were also drawn from Bartenieff’s Fundamentals, and from the developmental
movement of Body-Mind Centering. They are designed to have spine move in
different planes and directions based on Laban Movement Analysis concepts.
These exercises can be done separately, or in order, as one continuous sequence.

1. Sweeping the floor

Lie on your back, with both arms raised above the head, and feet relax. The
body looks like a big “X” on the floor. Using the Dan-Tien as a pivot, extend both
arms and legs, first to the right, then to the left, in a continuous, repeated motion
(as though sweeping the floor). This is a movement on the “door” plane (the
two-dimensional plane that includes the body,
as if a person were standing flat against a
door). It exercises the vertebrae and the
muscles of the trunk, stretches the lateral
muscles of the body, and activates the flow of the liver meridian and gall bladder
meridian. Do three to six rounds, with one round including both sides.
2. Wrapping the body into one side

Start where the last movement ends, on the floor in a big "X" shape. Start from a movement similar to sweeping the floor. While sweeping toward one side, curl forward into the "sagittal" plane (the two-dimensional plane, extending to the front and back, at a ninety-degree angle to the door plane). Finish in a loose fetal position. Then, starting from the fingers and toes, gradually open back to the big X shape, flat on the floor. Feel the elongation as you pass from one plane to another. Repeat the same process towards the other side to complete a round. Do 3-6 rounds, slowly.

3. Opening a book

Start as in the last exercise. When you reach the fetal position, stay there for a while. Breathe deeply and imagine the whole body is a water balloon. The water inside the body sinks and yields toward the floor. Feel the heaviness of the water inside the body. Then, keeping your arms and legs bent, slowly roll across your back to the other side. As you roll, allow your body to open as though it were a book (and the right arm and leg were one cover, and the left arm and leg were the...
other). Let the body close as you finish in the fetal position on the opposite side (this movement happens on the horizontal plane). Keep the image of a water balloon at all times, and feel the water moving from one side of the body to the other.

This movement massages the muscle along the spine and softens the internal organ in the front side of the body, which soothes the chi flow in the Du meridian. Do three to six rounds, where one round includes both sides.

4. Connecting head and tail

This movement continues from the end of the last. When you are rolling, continue past the fetal position until you are kneeling on the floor, facing down, and supported on the forearms and forelegs. The knees and elbows are flexed and wide apart; and the fingers and toes touch each other. Place the forehead gently on the floor and rest your buttocks on the heels. With natural breathing, start movement from the tail (the end of the spine) and rock forward (letting your tail rise.
in the air) until your weight is right on the top of the head. As you do so, inhale, and
imagine water flowing from the tail down the spine to the head. The very top of the head is an acupoint
called Bai-Hui, which is an important acupoint for connecting the Yin and Yang meridians. Stimulate this point by placing weight on it. When you exhale, rock backwards gently, and imagine water being drawn upwards across the front of the body, from the head to the Dan-Tien. This movement is also helpful to increase the sense of a relationship between the head and tail. After 3-6 rounds, hold the forwards position, and allow the pelvis to make wide circles. Move freely, and in either direction, or even back and forth. This soft and slow circling movement is good for lubricating the hip joints, softening the head-neck muscles and stretching the muscles along the spine. Move softly and smoothly, and breathe naturally.

5. Looking at tail

Start from the last position of the previous movement. Sit up, keeping your hands flat on the floor. Support the weight of the upper body on the arms, and rest your tail on top of the balls of the feet. Stay in this position for a while until you gain a sense of support from the hands. Lengthen the spine and feel the sense of length
between the head and tail. Breathe naturally.

Inhale. Then, look over your left shoulder at your tail, while exhaling slowly (keep hands flat, spine straight, and weight distribution constant).

Stay there for a moment before inhaling, and experience the sensation of the spine lengthening.

After this brief sensation of tension, return to the original position with inhalation, and feel the softness and expansion of the whole trunk. Repeat on the opposite side. Do 3-6 rounds, where a round includes both sides. After the last inhalation/movement move the upper body back to the center and exhale. This movement is takes place sequentially in three different dimensions (vertical, horizontal and sagittal), and offers a wonderful spiral stretch for the spine.

6. Whole Body Wave

Next, leading with the head, and moving like an animal on all fours, explore free-flowing movement, with the addition of many different facial expressions and sounds. This self-explored animal-like movement can further awaken the spine in a full range of movement.

Next, rock backwards all the way, and squat with
your feet flat on the floor. If you cannot maintain your balance, open your stance, and let your head hang forward. Lengthen the spine from head to tail and breath deeply. Drop the head, shoulders and arms softly toward the floor. Stay there for a while and imagine a fountain of water emerging from the lower back, and shooting up over the spine and head, and down to the floor. Another stream of water is emerging from the same place, and going down past the tail to the floor in the opposite direction.

7. Rolling up & rolling down

After resting in the squatting position, extend both legs and let the upper body hang upside down. Breath naturally, and let the body be utterly relaxed. Slightly bend both knees and slowly roll up to the standing position. Sense the whole body weight evenly on the feet before rolling down again. As you do so, feel the sensation of being supported by the spine. Feel each vertebra and the space between them, paying attention, sequentially to the skull, cervical vertebrae, lumbar vertebrae and pelvis. Roll up
again. Feel each vertebra in reverse order. Repeat, this time with the sensation of being supported by the internal organs. Focus sequentially on eyes, nose, throat, lungs, stomach, and intestines on the way down, and the same, in reverse, on the way up.

Sounding, shaking and vibrating

There are two exercises in this section. The first is a “sounding” (producing sounds for somatic effect) exercise, the second is a shaking exercise. Sounding can produce wonderful vibrations inside the body and massage the internal organs.

Start with feet shoulder-width apart, and let yourself settle down on both feet until you feel balanced and steady. Close your eyes and let your jaw drop open so your face is relaxed. Breathe deeply for a while and listen to your body.

The first exercise uses three sounds. These are “Om...嗡”, “Ah... 阿” and “Ho(ng)... 聲”. Each of them uses a different image and focus. All three sounds should be extended and held for an entire breath.

While making the “Om 嗡” sound, imagine that there is a white light moving
from the universe into the head through the Bai-Hui (百會) acupoint, which is located on the top of the head.

While making the “Ah 阿” sound, imagines that there is a red light moving up and down along the spine through each vertebra.

While making the “Ho(ng) 活” sound (pronounced like “ho” with a slight nasal buzz that reverberates all the way from the Dan-Tien, up through the chest) imagine that there is a green light moving out of the body through the Yong-Quan (涌泉) meridians, which are located on the bottoms of the feet. Go through these three sounds in order to make one round. Do 3-5 rounds.

The second exercise explores free sounds and movements. Start from a relaxed standing position. With soft knees and relaxed shoulders, let your body show you what it wants to do. Shake your body freely and naturally. You may produce any sounds you like and sense the vibration inside the body.

If necessary, you can use visualizations to help explore the space inside. Continue to listen to your soma, and to follow the natural impulses of your body, even as you create the following images:

1. Try being a piece of seaweed on the bottom of the ocean, with your roots planted on the ocean floor and your tendrils being washed this way and that
by the currents in the water.

2. Imagine you are a reed being blown by the wind. Allow yourself to bend freely.

3. You can also make up your own image, drawn from nature.

Do this shaking exercise or free movements with free sounding for 2 -- 3 minutes. Gradually, quiet down and take a few moments to pay attention to your breathing. Sense the vibration continuing in the body. As you inhale, imagine that the breath going to all the joints in your body and lubricating them, just like oil lubricates a squeaky door.

Union of Yin and Yang

There are three exercises in this section. The first is the “Upper Body Union,” the second is the “Whole Trunk Union,” and the third is the “Spiraling Connection of Yin and Yang.” In the Chinese viewpoint, the human body has a Yin side (the front) and a Yang side (the back). The union of Yin and Yang is important for achieving
balance between the front and back of the body. These exercises manipulate the Dan-Tien, and help retain youthfulness.

1. Upper body union

Place hands gently on head, with fingers pointing backwards, and the ear in the “V” between the thumb and fingers. Elbows should point outwards. Inhale and gradually bend backwards until your head is tilted towards the ceiling, and your back is gently arched. Bend from the trunk, *not from the neck*. As you exhale, slowly rotate your trunk and face to the right. Roll down slowly, bending from the waist. As you do so, slightly bend the knees, and relax the entire body. Continue gradually until you are bent halfway down, and are facing forward again. Inhale, as you bend backwards again, and repeat on the left side. Repeat three to five complete cycles (both sides).
2. Whole trunk union

Start in a relaxed standing position with feet about shoulder-width apart and facing forward. Stand evenly on both feet and relax your hands. Spread your fingers slightly apart and rest your hands against the small lower back. The fingers should be angled naturally toward your buttocks. Keep your head and neck long and free. Look straight ahead and breathe normally.

Next, as you inhale, slowly bend backward from the waist, using the hands to support your waist for balance, and allowing your knees to bend slightly. Look slightly upward, without bending the neck back. Expand the chest as you breathe. Hold this position for several seconds.

As you exhale, slowly bend forward from the hips, lengthening the entire spine. The arms and head follow in the same line with the spine. Keep knees slightly bent. Let your knees soften and bring your hands to the floor. Hold the pose for a few seconds and concentrate on the flow of the body (particularly the spine). Only stretch as far as is comfortable. Then, as you inhale, stand up, while letting your upper body continues to hang loose. Continue on to the bent backwards position.
and repeat entire exercise three to six times (or as needed). This posture tones the liver, stomach, spleen, kidneys, and spine, and soothes and cools the mind. Make sure all movements are slow and gentle, and all postures stable and comfortable. You may hold any position for extra breaths if you wish.

3. Spiraling connection of Yin and Yang

Start with a smile on the face and feet shoulder-width apart. Slowly relax the body into a loose, bent over position with the knees slightly bent. As you inhale, raise your right shoulder and twist your body towards the right. Remain relaxed. Then, as you exhale, drop your right shoulder, and turn back towards the middle. Repeat on the other side. Upper body leans forward and moves in a figure eight. Try to make it all one flowing motion.
Swimming dragon in the water

Start in standing position. Extend arms to sides (in a “Chi gathering” motion), and bring them palm to palm, pointing upwards, directly over the head. Then, tilt the hands to the side, and let the heel of the palm lead downwards in a wide (but gentle) back-and-forth motion. Let the tilt of the head mirror the tilt of the hands, and let the body follow the hands down, twisting from side to side as necessary. Keep the arms loosely extended, and maintain the image of water at all times. When you reach the body, start back upwards in a continuous motion. Repeat as many times as needed, and close in the Dan-Tien focusing posture. Rest for a moment and listening to the body.
Flying thousand hands

Start in the Dan-Tien focusing posture. Hold the posture as you complete one breath cycle (inhale and exhale). Next, inhale slowly and extend arms to the sides. Hold this position as you exhale slowly. Next, allow the palms to shake in a fluttering motion as you complete another breath cycle. This gathers energy. Inhale again, and exhale as you return to the Dan-Tien focusing posture. Imagine grounding the energy in your Dan-Tien.

Repeat this entire procedure (focus – extend – flutter – focus), except with the right arm extended to the front and the left arm to the rear. Then repeat with left arm forward and right arm backwards.

Next repeat with right arm straight up, and palm forward, left arm down and palm backwards. Repeat with left arm up and forward, and right arm down and backwards.

Next extend the arms forwards, at a 45 degrees tilt downward, palms down. Repeat with the arms at a 45 degrees angle towards the sides. Repeat again.
with the arms at a 45 degrees (or less – do not overextend) angle backwards, behind the back, with the palms upward.

For the final set, extend the arms forward, with the palms facing front, at a ninety degrees angle, as if they were resting on a wall. DO NOT SHAKE OR FLUTTER. Hold the posture for two complete breaths. Return to the Dan-Tien focusing posture, and breathe several times.
Personal Soothing Touch

These exercises were compiled from Doa-In and An-Chiou, with the exception of "Hu breathing," from Continuum. All exercises take place in a comfortable sitting position. You may also lie down if you prefer.

   Step 1 Biting the teeth and focusing the will.
   Step 2 Knocking the teeth.
   Step 3 Moving the tongue around.
   Step 4 Rotating the eyes.
   Step 5 Rubbing the eyes.
   Step 6 Kneading the head.
   Step 7 Washing the face.
   Step 8 Combing the head.
   Step 9 Pushing the nose.
   Step 10 Pushing and compress the eyebrows.
   Step 11 Beating the "drum of heaven."
   Step 12 Kneading the temples.
   Step 13 Pinching and kneading the ears.
   Step 14 Kneading the breastbone.
   Step 15 Stroking the dan tian.
   Step 16 Stroking the kidney points.
   Step 17 Rubbing the legs.
   Step 18 Rubbing the feet.
   Step 19 Hu breathing.
STEP 1 Biting the teeth and focusing the will.

Close the mouth and the eyes. Let the upper and lower teeth bite against slightly each other. Focus the will, and pay attention to your gums.

STEP 2 Knocking the teeth

Open and close the jaw, lightly and rapidly, 30-40 times, allowing the teeth to gently knock against each other. This prevents loose teeth and is helpful in treating periodontis.

STEP 3 Moving the tongue around.

Close the mouth. Move the tongue around, touching the gums and massaging the insides of the cheeks. Let the tongue stimulate the teeth, cheeks and entire mouth. If your mouth fills with saliva, gargle and then swallow. This has a therapeutic effect on gum inflammation and periodontitis.
STEP 4 Rotating the eyes

This exercise relaxes the eyes and keeps them in good condition. Close your eyes and slowly rotate your eyeballs clockwise three times and then counterclockwise three times. Repeat three times. Open your eyes and look straight ahead to finish the sequence. Repeat the whole sequence three times.

STEP 5 Rubbing the hands

Bring your hands together with your fingertips angled upwards and forwards. Keeping your shoulders relaxed, rub your palms together briskly 30 times. The hand is the meeting place for the three Yin Hand Channels and the three Yang Hand Channels. This simple hand massage promotes the flexibility of the fingers and also benefits the brain and the Heart.
STEP 6 Kneading the head

Place the heel of your right hand on the top of your head, midway between your ears. This covers the acupoint known as Bai-hui. Apply moderate pressure and knead the area slowly with 10 circular strokes clockwise, followed by 10 counterclockwise.

This massage has a beneficial effect on the brain. It also enhances memory, and prevents high blood pressure.

STEP 7 “Washing” the face.

Rub the hands together to warm the palms.

Then place your palms either side of nose and "wash" the face by stroking it with the palms 10-20 times. Slide the palms across your cheeks toward the ears with a smooth, wiping action. This gentle massage helps the face improve its circulation of blood, and maintain its elasticity and tone.
STEP 8  Combing the head

Let your fingers curl naturally. Then, using your fingertips, apply moderate pressure and comb your head backwards from the hairline to the back of the neck. Repeat 20 times.

This massage relaxes the brain, improves the memory, and prevents neurosis.

STEP 9  Pushing the nose

Place your index fingers on either side of the bridge of your nose. Push down the sides of your nose toward the nostrils. Apply moderate pressure and speed, and repeat the stroke 20 times. This massage, which in Chinese is called "Pushing the Life Longer," stimulates several acupoints. Use this massage to prevent respiratory disorders.

Variation (taken from Continuum): As you press, make a buzzing "zzz" sound. The vibration will help stimulate the acupoint. This sound can also be added to the exercises in Steps 10 and 12.
STEP 10 Pushing and compress the eyebrows

With some pressure, press the tips of your middle fingers on the inner ends of the eyebrows. First, stretch the skin towards the outside end of the eyebrow. Next, press the eyebrow at points (about a finger-tip apart) from the inside edge all the way to the outside edge and back. Repeat several times. Finally, pick a main point near the middle, and press firmly against the bone.

This simple massage stimulates three acupoints along the eyebrow. It relaxes the eyes, and prevents eye diseases and headaches. Make sure you try the exercise with the “zzz” sound.

STEP 11 Beating the "drum of heaven."

Place the palms over your ears with the fingers pointing toward the back of your head. Press your palms against the ears tightly. Then drum on the back of the head (near the acupoint Feng chu) firmly with the fingers 20-30 times. You will hear a sound like a big bass drum. This
massage improves your hearing, prevents various ear diseases and relieves headache and dizziness.

Variation: Try adding an “Ah” sound, as you drum, or experimenting with different sounds.

**STEP 12 Kneading the temples**

Put your thumbs either sides of your face on the temples, one thumb-width away from the outside edge of the eye and level with the top of the ear. This is the position of the acupoint known as *Taiyang*. Knead both sides of your head slowly in a clockwise direction and with moderate pressure. Repeat 30 times.

Variations: Try using the “zzz” sound, or just pressing instead of making the circular massage.

The *taiyang* point is very effective in treating a variety of disorders in the head region. This massage helps to prevent headaches, insomnia, and eye problems (such as near-sightedness). It also relaxes the brain.
STEP 13  Pinching and kneading the ears

With your thumbs and index fingers, pinch, pull, and massage your ears with moderate pressure. Start at the top of your ear and work down to the lobes. Repeat 10 times.

The ears are home to numerous acupoints, which relate to all the other organs and parts of the body. This massage, by stimulating the whole ear, benefits your overall health. More specifically, it also prevents high blood pressure.

STEP 14  Kneading the breastbone (摩膻中)

Place the heel of your hand on your breastbone, midway between the nipples. This is the position of the acupoint Tanzong. Apply moderate pressure, and knead the area with 40 circles clockwise followed by 40 counterclockwise.

Tanzong is related to the pericardium. It is also known as the "Reservoir of Chi" because Chi collects there. This massage benefits the Heart, and other organs such as the Liver and Spleen.
STEP 15  Stroking the Dan-Tien (Chi-Medicine Point)

The Dan-Tien is a traditional acupoint located about 2 inches below the navel. In practice, stroking the Dan-Tien is the same as stroking the lower abdomen. Before you start, rub your palms together until they are warm.

Place the right palm on your lower abdomen, and rub a circle around the Dan-Tien. Repeat 15-30 times or may massage 3-5 minutes, applying a little more pressure each time. This helps indigestion, lower abdominal pain, and excessive nocturnal emissions.

STEP 16  Stroking the kidney points.

Rub the palms together until warm. Then stroke the kidney-points (at the small of the back) with both hands for five minutes. This exercise has a preventive and therapeutic effect for backache caused by muscle strain.
STEP 17 Rubbing the legs

Sit on the floor with your legs stretched out in front of you. Hold your left thigh with both hands and rub down the leg toward the ankle with some pressure. Then rub up the leg to complete one sequence. Repeat the sequence 20 times. Massage your right leg 20 times in the same way.

This massage relaxes the leg muscles, promotes the flow of blood in the legs, and improves the mobility of the legs.

STEP 18 Rubbing the feet

Sit on the floor with your left leg bent in front of you. Rub your palms together until they are warm, then place your right palm on the sole of your left foot. Rub up and down 30 times. Repeat the massage on the sole of your right foot.

Rubbing the foot improves the circulation, and prevents high blood pressure, anemia, and insomnia. It also benefits the brain and the eyes. There are acupoints for all the organs in the body in the soles of the feet, so this exercise provides us with a convenient way to treat the entire body.
Variations: Try using oil or cream to help press deeply with the fingers. Experiment with how the feet can bend and stretch. Notice points on your feet that feel sore or tender. These can be indications of problems with various organs.

STEP 19 Hu breathing

Sit down and lean forward, with your hands resting on the knees and your fingertips pointing towards each other. Bounce up and down, and let the motion push your breath rapidly in and out. Scrunch up the face, and let the breath make noises – "Hoo hoo hoo hoo! Hee hee hee hee!" You will probably sound a bit like a monkey.
Centring

A Yin-Yang Heavenly Circulation Exercise

1. Lie on your back, arms to your sides, knees bent, and feet flat on the floor.

Fold the hands over the Dan-Tien. As you inhale, relax the whole body.

2. As you exhale, trace a pathway, with your fingertips, up the middle of your chest. Picture energy flowing along this pathway.

Continue the pathway all the way up over the face to the top of the head.

3. As you inhale, let the hands go their separate ways around the sides of the head, brushing the ears, and meeting again at the throat.

4. Exhale and allow the hands to cross over each other, continuing on to the shoulders, down to the elbows, and onwards, until they meet again.

5. Inhale, allowing the palms to slide past each other and trace a path along the underside of the arms to the underarms. Then let the arms uncross as they slide straight across the chest.
6. Exhale, and move the hands down the ribs, and continue on to the outsides of the thighs and legs. Let your legs swing up naturally, so that you can reach all the way to the soles of your feet.

7. Inhale, and bring the hands back up the inside of the legs (letting the legs drop gently back to the floor). You should finish with your hands in the same place as they started, resting on the Dan-Tien. Repeat continuously two to five times, or as needed.

8. After your final cycle, rest in the final posture, focus your energy, and listen to your soma.
B - Ending

Following the Yin-Yang Circulation, go straight into this next exercise.

Open your arms up, so that your elbows remain at your sides, your arms are straight up, your elbows are at ninety-degree angles, and your palms are facing each other. Focus your will on the palm centers, and imagine a rope of intense energy connecting the two hands. Hold this posture for three to five complete breath cycles (breathing slowly and naturally). Return hands to Dan-Tien and allow the energy to be focused inside. Rest for a moment and listen to the soma.

This exercise enables energy in the human body to circulate over a large area. Instead of going through only one channel, the energy circulates from the entire Yin side of the body to the Yang side over and over again. This exercise is used to rectify the abnormal conditions of the human body so that its "micro-cosmos" will return to its original state.
CHAPTER 7

SOURCES, EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH

The *Bodyflowing* system is based directly on theories, techniques and methods which have been supported not only by time and practice, but also by substantitive research and clinical trial. This chapter consists of two major sections. The first traces specific ideas in *Bodyflowing* to their roots. The second presents research that supports the "parent" methods and theories. The chapter will conclude with a brief outline for future research on the *Bodyflowing* system.

**Roots of the Bodyflowing methods**

As discussed in Chapters Two through Four, *Bodyflowing* methods are based largely on the Chinese practices of Chi Kung, Tai Chi and Dao-In /An-Chiou, and the Western practices of Body-Mind Centering, Laban Movement Analysis (and Bartienieff’s Fundamentals) and Continuum.
**Positions:** Most of the positions in *Bodyflowing* are drawn directly from Chi Kung practice, with the exception of the lying posture (which is rarely seen, except in excercises for the invalids and the aged). However, according to the research and study of Dr. Lee, Si-Chen (1997), who has a strong background in mechanical engineering and is a well-regarded Chi-Kung scientific researcher in Taiwan, the lying position makes it easier to gain awareness of the Chi flow. Therefore, the lying posture is also very important in *Bodyflowing*.

**Water Imagery:** The use of water imagery is common in traditional Chi Kung and Tai Chi practice, as well as foundational to Continuum. Water imagery is also found in Body-Mind Centering.

**Functional Movement:** Most of the functional, structure-based movements are drawn directly from Bartenieff’s Fundamentals, Body-Mind Centering and Continuum.

**Chi and Meridians:** The idea of Chi energy, flowing along pathways called meridians, is foundational to all Chinese medicinal theory, and has been supported by substantial research (see below).

**Movement Structure:** Many of the fixed-form movements in *Bodyflowing* (such as the "body-half" and floor-sweeping movements) were inspired by Bartenieff’s Fundamentals. Others were drawn from traditional Chi Kung practice.
The developmental movements (like spinal yield and "push pattern") were patterned after Body-Mind Centering. The "Flowing" movement exercise was taken from Continuum, and the idea of autonomous/spontaneous/free-form movements has support in Chi Kung practice and in Western research.

**Elements of Practice:** Meridian meditation is from traditional Chinese medicine. Self-massage is from An-Chiou. Breath control, sounding, shaking and visualization are widely used in the East and the West. The use of trigger points in pain relief is supported by Dr. Travell & Simons (1983) and Prudden (1980). The use of the body's natural impulses in pain relief is supported by Anderson (1995).

**Shape Concepts:** Circular and spiral *Bodyflowing* movements are based on Eastern movement principles. Movements arranged in different planes (sagittal plane, horizontal plane, and vertical plane) are based on Rudolf Laban's spatial concepts. Most *Bodyflowing* sequences combine spiro-circular and tri-planer movements.

**Smiling Face and Body:** The idea of retaining a smiling face and body during practice can be found in Chi Kung.
Research and Evidence for Chinese Medicine

There is a considerable amount of scientific research to support the beliefs and practices of traditional Chinese medicine:

Chi, Meridians and Acupoints

Current technology has demonstrated that the body has electric charges, the strength and distribution of which can be measured accurately (Miller, et al., 1979). In fact, a number of modern medical devices, including the electrocardiogram, electroencephalogram, electromyogram, and nuclear magnetic resonance imager, all rely on the distribution of electromagnetic charges in the body in order to function. By using such technology, many researchers have found relationships between Chi, meridians, acupoints, and electrical charge.

Several researchers have demonstrated lower skin resistance over acupoints (Saita, 1973; Tiller, 1973). Becker et al. (1979) designed the meridian-scanning probe and the multi-point probe for the detection and measurement of a skin-conductance field around acupoints of the large intestine and pericardium meridians on the arm. The research established electrical...
correlation for a portion of the acupuncture system, and suggests that the system has an objective basis in reality.

There is also data to support the general theory of Chi meridians. In 1950s, Dr. Reinhold Voll was the first to systematically record the electrical energy of the human body. He used an electrical probe to measure electrical resistance at points all over the body. He discovered that there were numerous locations which gave unusual readings, that is, which had lower electrical resistance, and that the distribution of these points delineated several fixed routes (Hsieh, 1998). At the same time Voll was carrying out his research, a Japanese doctor named Nakatani was using an electrical device to test patients. Nakatani also discovered numerous points of low electrical resistance, which he connected into pathways. The electrical pathways these two men discovered are in almost complete accord with the meridians of traditional Chinese medicine. Moreover, the points of low electrical resistance exactly correspond to the acupoints of traditional medicine (Hsieh, 1998).

From 1970 to 1979, Chung Chieh, the director of the Traditional Medicine Research Center at Veterans General Hospital in Taiwan, refined the machine used by Voll, incorporating a computer and adding more functions. He called the device the "Qin Value Detector" after a unit of measure of Chi, the "Qin," defined...
by Chung. Chung felt that this device marked a huge advance in the integration of Western and Chinese medicine. Although there are now other devices on the market, all are designed on the same premises (Hsieh, 1998). All measure the resistance to a small amount of DC current run from probes on the skin through meridians associated with particular organs. The results are used to make a diagnosis. For this reason, machines of this type are known by the general term *Electrodemmal Screening Devices* (Hsieh, 1998).

Chen Kuo-gen (1997), a professor in the Department of Physics at Taiwan's Soochow University, began his research into the meridian system with the traditional *Chi-kung* exercise routine. The major objective of Chen's research was to understand the fundamental electrical characteristics of the meridian system. He first confirmed the findings of Voll and Nakatani, to prove that the meridian system was a better conductor of electricity than the rest of the body (Hsieh, 1998; Chen, 1997). Next, he demonstrated that the meridians were also good conductors of electromagnetic waves. Chen explains that "electrical current is carried by a charged ion. With electromagnetic waves, [the mechanism] is not certain. For example, light and heat are not electrical, but they can carry information in their frequency and wavelength" (Chen, 1997).
This discovery is consistent with a claim often made by practitioners of Chi Kung that "hot" Chi passes through the entire body's meridians, and emits energy similar to light. The statistical data also indicated that currents and electromagnetic waves both have very regular directional characteristics. Chen related this to traditional medical lore by saying: "This is exactly what is described in The Hui Ti Nei Ching when it speaks of the movement of 'meridian Chi' and 'subtle nutritious Chi' along the 12 meridians." Chen hypothesizes that the 'meridian Chi' of the ancient texts is electrical current and that the 'subtle nutritious Chi' is electromagnetic energy (Chen, 1997).

Acupuncture:

According to modern Chinese researchers, most acupoints lie directly above or near peripheral nerves (Shanghai Medical College, 1972), and the parasthesias which are evoked when these specific points are pierced seems to indicate that a nerve branch has been stimulated (Shanghai Cooperative Group, 1971). Although most informed observers now acknowledge the fact that acupuncture is a highly effective analgesic technique for the treatment of acute and chronic pain problems (Bresler, et al., 1975) and that it can also be used as a surgical analgesic in selected patients (Bresler, 1975), there remains a great deal
of disagreement as to its mechanism of action. Among the many theories which have been advanced are the traditional meridian notions (Wu, 1962), multiple gate theories (Man and Chen, 1972), neurophysiological interference theories (Tien, 1975), autonomic theories (Looney, 1974), a host of biochemical explanations, and a variety of psychological theories including hypnosis notions (Kroger, 1977). Although proponents of several of these theories are careful to restrict their notions to specific aspects of acupuncture, it is clear that none of these theories can explain all known aspects of this ancient technique (Bresler, 1979).

**Tai Chi Movement:**

Research has shown that Tai Chi practice can help to open internal and external bodily awareness (Bennett, 1992; Delza, 1996; Lehrhaupt, 1993; Liau, 1990; Maisel, 1963); provide one with a process for adjusting the muscle tone, releasing muscle tension and increasing the elasticity and strength of all the major joints (Chen, 1947; Crompton, 1991; Maisel, 1963); increase the powers of concentration, coordination and inner balance; correct body alignment and increase the efficiency of movement (Delza, 1996; Kauz, 1974; Maisel, 1963; Chen, 1947; Chuen, 1994; Crompton, 1991). It also has many health benefits,
such as, improving digestion, greater mental alertness, and tranquillity (Chuen, 1994; Khor, 1994; Yang, 1996); managing stress and mental relaxation (Bennett, 1992; Chen, 1947; Kauz, 1974; Lee, etc., 1994; Liau, 1990; Tek, 1995); and promoting cardio-respiratory fitness (Chen, 1947; Crompton, 1996; Kauz, 1974; Khor, 1993; Lee, etc., 1994; Maisel, 1963) and relieving backache problems (Maisel, 1963). Tai Chi exercise is also a wonderful practice for self-defense (Jou, 1980; Kauz, 1974; Liang, 1977; Yang, 1996), awakening mental and physical power (Jou, 1980) and reaching personal holistic harmony (Chen, 1947; Maisel, 1963).

**Chi-Kung**

Although less well-known in the West than acupuncture or Tai Chi, Chi Kung has been the subject of a large quantity of scientific research in China, including many quantitative clinical trials.

One of the finest studies documenting the effect of Chi Kung on hypertension (high blood pressure) and related conditions was conducted at the Shanghai Institute of Hypertension, a division of the Shanghai Second Medical University. Subjects were randomly divided into a Chi Kung group of 122 patients and a control group of 120 nonpractitioners. Both groups took standard hypertensive drugs. Subjects were tracked for a thirty-year period of time. At the end of this period, 47.76
percent of the control group had died. Only 25.41 percent of the Chi Kung group had died. These are very significant results, with a probability of less than one in a thousand (p<0.001) of being due to chance. The incidence of stroke in the control group was 40.83 percent, in the Chi Kung group 20.49 percent. The incidence of death due to stroke was 32.50 percent among the controls, in the Chi Kung group, 15.57 percent (p<0.01). When forty of the patients were diagnosed by ultrasound, the Chi Kung group was found to have stronger heart muscles and better left ventricular function (Cohen, K. 1997, p.58).

These results have been duplicated in independent studies at Xiamen University, which also showed that Chi Kung increased levels of high-density lipoprotein ("good") cholesterol, which is associated with a lowered risk of heart disease.

Support for combining Chi Kung with Western methods has also been established:

Equally impressive results have been found by combining Chi Kung with a Western method of self-regulation therapy: biofeedback. In 1988, scientists at the Research Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Tianjin, reported on 639 cases of primary hypertension treated with a combination of Chi Kung and biofeedback devices. The combined therapy was found to be effective in 85.13 percent of the cases. After eight weeks, most patients had significantly lower blood pressure. In some cases, the blood pressure dropped significantly after only one practice session. Concurrent with the drop in blood pressure, the patients experienced
improvements in overall health, mental health, appetite, and sleep. During follow-ups over the next three years, most patients did not have continued access to biofeedback devices. However, it was found that among those who kept up the Chi Kung practice, 97.7 percent had stable, lowered blood pressure ("A Group Observation and Experimental Research on the Prevention and Treatment of Hypertension by Chi Kung" (paper presented at The First World Conference for Academic Exchange of Medical Chi Kung, Beijing, China, 1988, p. 113.) (Cohen, k., 1997, p.59).

Similar quantitative results have been established for the effects of Chi Kung on digestion, the circulatory system, the brain, mental health, the respiratory system, the immune system and cancer (Cohen, k., 1997).

Research and Evidence for Somatic Methods:

Although many Somatic methods are holistic, and thus resist quantitative analysis and study, there is a substantive amount of qualitative research on the systems used in this study.

Body-Mind Centering:

suggests that because BMC pays attention to muscle use, ligamentous involvement, skeletal leverage, organic support and rhythmic changes related to the physiological rhythms of the blood, breath or cerebrospinal fluid. It can help people to gain greater, wider, deeper and broader possibilities for expression and understanding (Knaster, 1996). By awakening awareness at the cellular level, BMC allows us access and more fully express the creativity within us (Hartley, 1995, p. 31), and relieve many kinds of disabilities and to cultivate sensory, kinesthetic, emotional and cognitive functioning (Murphy, 1992, p.414).

**Laban Movement Analysis**

LMA has been shown to aid the teaching and learning of Tai Chi (Honda, 1995), fitness (Friedman, 1986; Sheridan 1986; Whitacre, 1986), and physical education (Kleinman, 1974; Knight, 1974). LMA has also been shown to aid the design of creative dance or movement classes (Groff, 1995); the coaching of sports (Barylick, 1986; Knight, 1974; Martin, 1984); the choreographing, criticizing and coaching of dance (Groff, 1995); and the research of body science (Friedman, 1986). LMA has assisted in behavioral research and rehabilitation (Brandt, 1986). As Moore and Yamamoto described in *Beyond Words*:
Movement is indeed a complex, multifaceted phenomenon whose description and analysis challenge the observer. By offering a terminology for movement description and a framework for movement study, LMA provides a powerful tool for deciphering the ever-changing and indivisible streaming that is human movement. 

(Moore & Yamanoto, 1988, p. 203).

Continuum

Continuum exercises help develop sensitivity to movement at all levels (Knaster, 1996, p. 261). Continuum practice can soften and mobilize the body (Johnson, 1997). Continuum can guide us “to freeing movement, the relief of many kinds of disability and the cultivation of sensory, kinesthetic, emotional and cognitive functioning” (Murphy, 1992, p. 414).

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1 Trigger Point (Trigger Zone, Trigger Spot): A focus of hyperirritability in a tissue that, when compressed, is locally tender and, if sufficiently hypersensitive, gives rise to referred pain and tenderness, and sometimes to referred autonomic phenomena and distortion of proprioception. Types include myofascial, cutaneous, fascial, ligamentous and periosteal trigger points (Travell & Simons, 1983, p. 4).
CHAPTER 8

SUMMARIES AND CONCLUSIONS

Bodyflowing Origin and Rationale

Traditional Chinese self-cultivation exercises, such as Chi Kung, Dao-In and Tai Chi, have many advantages. Based on a complex theoretical framework, they have been refined and improved for a period literally measured in thousands of years. They are aligned with traditional Chinese philosophies about life and virtue, and can have (in holistic fashion) a positive influence over a practitioner's entire life. In recent years, they have gained in global popularity, and begun to establish legitimacy by the Western science.

Despite these good qualities, however, such systems also have some unfortunate characteristics (which place them at odds with modern society). They are resistant to change and outside influences, and thus miss the opportunity to enrich themselves with the knowledge of other traditions. In addition, they are not
very accessible to beginners, and require a level of commitment (in time and
effort) that is beyond the reach of an average denizen of the modern world.

Western Somatic methods provide an ideal counter balance to the
traditionalism of the Chinese systems. Creative, accepting of change, and
welcoming of outside influence, the Somatic systems are children of the modern
world, and thus well-adapted to it. In addition, they have the advantage of the
incorporating the insights of Western anatomy and physiology (without the
mind-body dualism of conventional Western thought).

The time seems right for the construction of a new method, one that
incorporates the best features of Chinese and Somatic movement systems. To
suit modern society, it must be an effective and easily learned approach that can
be practiced alone anytime. To be of value, it must be a simple natural method
designed to facilitate a preventive strategy for maintaining and improving
personal health.

It is my hope and belief that Bodyflowing can be that method. With my dual
background in traditional Chinese and modern Somatic movement systems, I
have been uniquely suited to facilitate this unique cultural collaboration.
The key obstacle to integrating Eastern and Western approaches was to find common ground between the disparate systems. Fortunately, such commonality was available, through the concept of the "flowing body."

The concept of the flowing body in Chinese philosophy is founded on Chi theory, which views each human being as a flowing unit, a micro-cosmos. Chi theory believes that human beings have the same properties as nature, which is continuously flowing and changing. Through the adjustment of Chi and breathing, one can cultivate the fluent flow of Chi, and achieve a long and healthy life.

Because Chi is omnipresence in the cosmos, the flowing body also seeks no boundaries in the connection (through Chi) between the micro-cosmos and macro-cosmos. Through kinds of sequences of movements, meditation, imagination, visualization, breathing, sounding, and hands-on bodywork, one can maintain the balance of Chi flow between the body and the universe, cultivate Chi in the body, live harmoniously with the nature, prevent diseases and promote self-healing.

In Somatic approaches there are several significant applications of the Western concept of the flowing body. Differing from the "no-boundary" Chi concept, the idea of flow in the West has focused on physical bodily fluids, and
viewed the skin as the boundary of the body. Through various sequences of movements, meditation, imagination, visualization, somatization, breathing, sounding, vibration, shaking, hands-on bodywork and use of props, western somatic approaches have stressed body fluid awareness and the re-patterning of neural-muscular movement. In this way, the flowing body concept reestablishes and reeducates the relationship of body and mind, in order to improve proper posture and reduce the unnecessary tension of body.

The Integrated Bodyflowing System:

Drawing from East and West, Bodyflowing has developed its own idea of the flowing body, incorporating Chi, bodily fluids and the flow of happiness and pleasure. The fruits of this conception can be itemized as follows:

1. **Balance of Yin and Yang.** Using the Eastern concept of Yin and Yang (which underlies Chi flow), Bodyflowing practice gives consideration to balancing the left and right, front and rear, and upper and lower parts of the body.

2. **The Human Being as a Flowing Organism.** The central idea of Bodyflowing is that the human soma contains the three flows of chi, fluid, and happiness and pleasure.
3. **No Boundary Image.** Taken from the Chinese idea of boundless flow, "no boundary" imagery is important to *Bodyflowing* practice. The organs and organization inside the body are considered structures that guide (rather than restrict) the flow of fluid. Furthermore, the flow of Chi is not even bounded by the skin. These "no boundary" images can enhance the ability to soften the rigid body, and help one to have more sensitivity.

4. **Opening Channels and Releasing Pain.** The purpose of Chinese medication is to remove Chi-blood stagnation and restore the balance of Yin and Yang. From the perspective of Chinese medicine, the emergence of pain can be attributed to the blocking of the flow of Chi-blood. Pain is considered a symptom of illness and an obstruction to other feelings occurring in the body. Thus, opening Chi-blood channels and relieving pain are basic to *Bodyflowing*.

5. **Listening to the Soma Desire.** This idea is taken from Somatic concepts of flow. The body often needs and wants motion and it has the capability to mobilize itself if we will only "go with the flow." One can do this simply by listening to one's own Soma nature.

6. **Dan-Tien: the Medicine Center.** In Chi theory, the Dan-Tien is the source and the destination of Chi flow (somewhat like the heart for blood flow).
7. **Spine: The Center of Flowing.** In East and West, the spine is a center for the flow of Chi and neurochemical impulses.

8. **Sung: Active Relaxation.** Active relaxation facilitates flow and balances Yin and Yang, integrating the hard and the soft.

9. **Softness: Natural Movement.** To make natural movements is to follow the flow of nature.

10. **Belief.** It is a truism in the East, and known in the West, that belief in a method increases that method's efficacy. Belief, itself, facilitates flow, particularly with regards to the flow of pleasure and happiness.

Once the theoretical basis for combining Chinese and Somatic systems had been established, what remained was to design the exercises. Focusing on the idea of flowing and movement, abstracted the key points from eastern practices, such as *Dao-In, An-Chiao, Chi-Kung* and *Tai-Chi Movement*, and the western approaches, such as *Body-Mind Centering, Laban/Bartenieff, and Continuum*, to develop each exercise, keeping in mind the requirements of simplicity and health benefit. Based on this design process, I developed the following set of ten exercises.

1. **Meridian Scanning**

2. **Flowing Movement Exploration**
3. Spreading and Elongating

4. Spine Awakening

5. Sounding, Shaking and Vibrating

6. Union of Yin and Yang

7. Swimming Dragon in the Water

8. Flying Thousand Hands

9. Soothing Touch

10. Centering

*Bodyflowing*, which is based on the concept of the flowing body, as seen in the East and the West, provides a simple natural method to facilitate a preventive strategy for maintaining and improving personal health. *Bodyflowing* will help people circulate and balance the Chi flow of their body, free themselves from muscular tension and energy blockages, develop their kinesthetic awareness, harmonize the inner and outer universe, and prevent discomfort and diseases. *Bodyflowing* is a profound form of meditation, relaxation, self-cultivation and self-realization.
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