

Chakras: introduction into the energetic body.

History

If you look for information about chakra's (please do to enrich your knowledge!), you find many traditions from the East (Tibet, India, China) in the old languages Pali and Sanskrit. First mentions of the chakras was about 8th century CE in Buddhist texts as hierarchies of inner energy centres. The chakra system is a metaphysical/philosophical concept as there is no medical or scientific proof that they exist in the body.

Depending on which history you look into, there are between five, six, seven, nine, twelve or twenty seven chakras.

The seven-chakra chakra constellation is the best known because for a long time, the only English translation of a Sanskrit text was about a system of seven chakras called *sat-cakra-nirupana* (six chakra-bodymind), written by Purnandana Yati in the 16th century.

Interesting enough, the 7th chakra was not mentioned as such because it is all-transcendent and goes beyond the idea of a chakra.

The 7-chakra system has its roots around 11th AC. and comes from the hinduistic and tantric streamings. Chakras, auras and nadis together form the etheric or energetic body.

The colours of the present chakra system are quite new (1960) and come from the new-age movement.

Find out more about chakra's in your own research the coming weeks!



Figure 1 Yogin with six chakras, India, Punjab Hills, Kangra, late 1700s National Museum.

Generally, what are chakras?

The energy centers throughout the body, called chakras, is where our spiritual and emotional energies flow. They are situated along the spine, and are expressed at the front and back of the body. The first chakra is situated on the root of the spine and the seventh chakra you find at the crown of the head.

The description of chakras or energy centers in your body dates back thousands of years and has been connected to the theory and practice of yoga.

Chakras are the so-called archetypal components of our consciousness. Archetypes are, moreover, primal models on which can be built forever. These models can be objects, people or concepts. Paris, for example, is an example of the archetype of the metropolis, Maria as the archetype of the good mother. For our consciousness for example, it is about the archetypes of safety, belonging, relationships or love.

Chakras help us to describe and work with the most distinctive components of our consciousness. Because, and I'm sure that's familiar to everyone, we get stuck in our lives sometimes and it doesn't seem to flow. But what doesn't flow, what doesn't go well? At the level of consciousness, it is about energy: the energy does not flow.

The term 'subtle body' is sometimes used for this energy system. Chakras are places where energy comes together, where energy is bundled. Our energy system or subtle body consists of tens of thousands of channels that meet in the chakras.

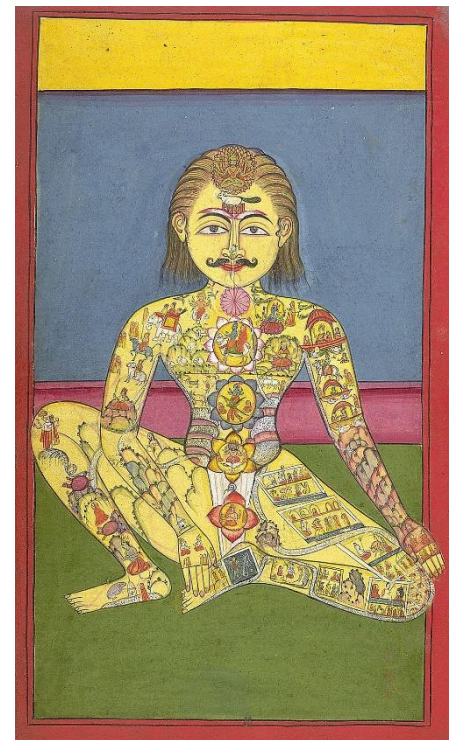


Figure 2: Sapta Chakra (above), from a Yoga manuscript in Bra Bhasa language, illustrates the esoteric correspondence(s) between subtle energy and Tibetan psychophysiology. 118 pages, 1899.

What do chakras look like?

The Sanskrit word 'Chakra' means 'wheel'. Chakras are rotating energetic 'wheels' in a funnel shape (see image). Like a wheel turning, the chakras rotate when they are in good condition. (Picture B. Brannon, Licht op de Aura)

You find the chakras along the spine. They are connected with the others via a channel called 'Sushumna', the vertical energy flow in our energy system.

As centers of energy, chakras can be stimulated to receive, absorb and distribute life energies. The correct flow of energies through the chakras is vital for our health. When the flow of Prana is blocked, disease results. A deficient chakra neither receives appropriate energy nor easily manifests. An excessive chakra is too overloaded to operate in a healthy way and becomes a dominating force in a persons' life.

All of the chakras are interdependent and reflect our specific life issues and our ability to deal with them. Each chakra also correlates with specific regions of the physical body, from the soles of the feet to the crown of the head. Chakras are where we receive, assimilate and distribute our life energies. Through external situations or internal habits, a chakra can become imbalanced.

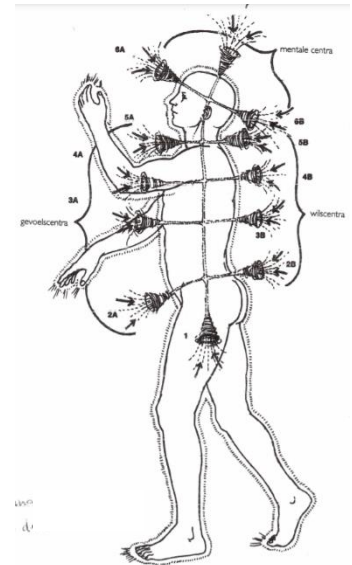
In yoga philosophy, the principle of balance is illustrated by the 3 states of energy or Gunas, known as Rajas, Tamas and Sattva.

Rajas is activity, Tamas is inertia or passivity, Sattva is balance between the two.

These are the 3 forces that exist in nature to manifest energy, similar to the neutron, proton and electron of the atom. The Gunas are the principal building blocks of nature. They bind the individuated self to the body by activating the five elements earth, water, fire, air and ether (space).

The Gunas influence each chakra. When a chakra is Rajassic, it is overactive and becomes a dominating force in a persons life. An underactive or Tamassic chakra is low in energy and thus has difficulty manifesting it's energy in the world. In a Sattvic state a chakra is balanced. An when all of the chakras are sattvic, there is harmony and balance in all areas of ones life.

The uneven numbered chakras are connected with the masculine and the even numbered chakras are connected to the feminine qualities.



Visualize the chakras as spinning wheels. The 1st and 7th chakra point downwards and upwards respectively. The other chakras have a front and a back.

Seven main chakras:

Chakra 1: Surviving, existence, safety

Sanskrit: Muladhara (root)

Element: Earth

Color: Red

Place: Perineum

Chakra 2: Emotions and sexuality

Sanskrit: Swadhistana

Element: Water

Color: Orange

Place: Lower abdomen

Chakra 3: Willpower and Desire

Sanskrit: Manipura (City of Jewels)

Element: Fire

Color: Yellow

Place: Plexus Solaris

Chakra 4: Love

Sanskrit: Anahata

Element: Air

Color: Green

Place: Heart area

Chakra 5: Communication and Creativity

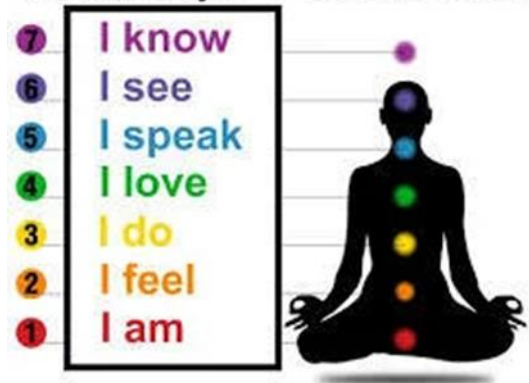
Sanskrit: Vishuddha

Element: Sound

Color: Light Blue

Place: Throat

Your body's 7 CHAKRAS



Chakra 6: Intuition, Imagination, Clairvoyant

sanskrit: Ajna

Element: Light

Color: Indigo (purple blue)

Place: Forehead, third eye (between your eyebrows)

Chakra 7: Knowledge and Understanding

Sanskrit: Sahasrara

Element: Thinking

Color: Violet

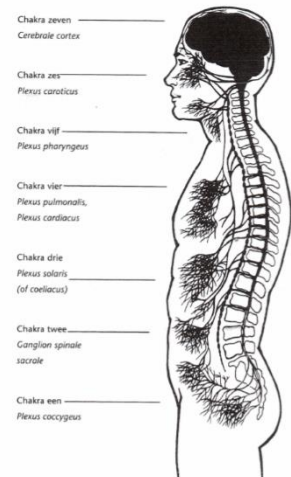
Place: Crown of the head

Balanced or not?

These 'energy wheels' all have a different energy frequency. When the energy changes away from the natural frequency, you might feel negative emotions. What negative emotions might come up, depends on the chakra that is out of balance.

If you have a closed first chakra, you have little connection to your body and you may feel anxious often or maybe permanently. If your second chakra is too open, it often leads to sexual debauchery, while a closed second chakra is a problem when starting a relationship. If your fourth chakra is too far open, you spend almost all your time with others and you have difficulty taking care of yourself and feeling yourself.

It is now clear – also for science – that emotions affect the health of the physical body. Emotions interact with our nervous system and the hormone glands in our body. Thus, negative emotions can eventually lead to physical complaints. See picture (source: A. Judith, Chakra werkboek)



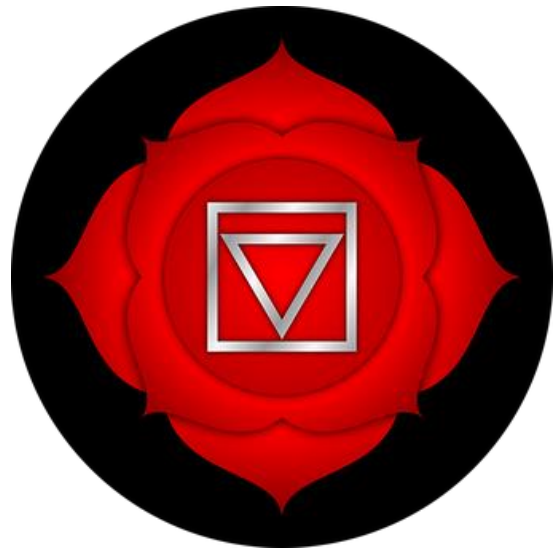
Chakras and your physical body

On the physical level, chakras correspond to different parts of our body. Think of a lump in your throat, butterflies in your stomach or a broken heart. The first chakra has as corresponding body parts the legs ("nodding knees"), bones and colon.

Chakra 1: Muladhara (root) chakra

We start at the bottom, at the root..... Why? We can't grow without roots, without feeling solid ground under our feet. Without roots, nothing in our lives becomes sustainable. This chakra is about safety and about the material aspects of life. It's about the basics we can feel in ourselves. In other words, working with chakras is not all about spirituality.

The first chakra is depicted as a lotus flower with 4 leaves containing a square (handout.) The square represents the four directions of the wind and the solid foundation of the material world. In the square is a triangle with the point down that represents the Sushumna or vertical energy flow. The point points downward, the downward force of this chakra, directed at the earth.



At the level of the Muladhara chakra, consciousness is focused on survival. This is where our fight or flight response is, our survival instincts. When the first chakra doesn't work properly, we don't feel safe.

We can strengthen the focus on the earth and thus our sense of 'security' by 'grounding' ourselves.

If we're not rooted or grounded, we're not stable. We have no hold on ourselves, lose the ground under our feet or lose ourselves in daydreaming and fantasies. Our attention wanders and we do not seem 'present'.

When you are 'on earth' then you can turn ideas into reality, the earthly plane serves as a touchstone for our views. What or who has ground under its foot can manifest itself, it stands!

Grounding also implies restriction. The mental and spiritual side of the higher chakras offers unprecedented possibilities, but this chakra, the first one, comes with structure, it comes with the limitations of the physical and it's about connecting with the planet Earth and nature. It may explain why brain-driven humanity prefers to stay away from grounding, because 'coming into contact' means 'feeling' and we live so fast nowadays that we hardly know what that is: 'feeling'.

Realize that the meaning of "being down to earth" is for a good reason "being solid" or "loving simplicity".

Function of Grounding

Grounding Protects

Just as a lightning rod protects a building by directing the energy of lightning to the ground, so grounding protect the body from excessive stress. We transfer tension to a much larger body that can process that tension: the Earth.

Grounding slows down and clears things up

By grounding you leave the 100% focus on the high speed of 'thinking', and open the door to the delay that is hidden in 'feeling'. You buy yourself time to understand.

Grounding creates a foundation

You literally make contact with the ground under our feet, our bodies. It's very real, we cannot deny that. Compare this to the imaginary world or reality we can create with our minds.

Development of the 1st chakra

The first chakra develops most intensely during the pregnancy and the first year of life.

If one is constantly struggling with health problems, with having enough to eat, with your job, etc. they get stuck at the first chakra level. Consciousness is preoccupied with this level of existence, about survival, there is no room for anything else. You feel unsafe, there can be panic. The development of your first chakra may also be disrupted by insecurity traumas in the womb or your young youth who have settled in your subconscious. This is the domain of personal development and therapy in various forms.

As long as problems persist at the level of the first chakra, you will have difficulty connecting with other (higher) levels of consciousness.

Development goal: you have the right to be here, you have the right to own

In order to be fully present here, we will have to be able to stand up for ourselves, claim our place in the world and secure our survival. We need to develop our ability to 'own things' to meet our needs. As long as we subconsciously say,

"No I don't deserve that," an obstacle arises in our conscious mind that we must overcome.

Our first chakra is our foundation, the ground beneath our feet we need to be able to expand our consciousness.

In Balance, the first chakra gives you:

- Vitality
- Grounding and feeling at ease in your body
- Trust in the world
- A sense of security and safety
- Stability
- The ability to make a living

If your first chakra is not balanced:

From deficiency	Out of excess
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hyper feeling, restlessness • No connection to your body • Little focus and discipline • Financial problems • Chaos • Lack of boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eating problems, obesity • Inertia, fatigue • Sticking to certainties • Obsession with the material • Fear of change • Rigid boundaries

Affirmations

- It's safe for me to be there
- I've been dipped in abundance
- I'm here and I'm real
- The earth supports me and fulfills my needs

What you can do to balance or strengthen your 1st chakra:

- Wear red clothing (the color of the 1stchakra).
- Make contact with the earth; take a long walk, work in the garden, lie down in the grass and feel the earth.
- Take a massage, or ask your partner/friend/sister if she wants to massage you, so that you will feel good about your body.
- Create a harmonious connection with your surroundings.

- Let go of superficial/materialistic needs. Trust that you don't need anything, that everything is already there.
- Feel what really matters in your life.
- Take a rest. Sit down with a cup of tea, without a book, TV or phone and stare out for you. Be with yourself.