

Bonghan Channels in Acupuncture

(truncated by Isthmus Acupuncture Center. Please see link at end for entire article and citations.)

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As a practicing acupuncturist, I find that I continually wonder how a few well-placed needles can have such transformative results in my patients. Recently, a number of scientific papers have been published that have the potential to revolutionize our understanding of how acupuncture works. A group of Korean researchers have rediscovered **threadlike microscopic anatomical structures** that correspond with the layout of traditional acupuncture meridians or channels. Acupuncture channels are no longer imaginary lines, but specific anatomical structures that, until now, have not been recognized by current theories of anatomy. These channels have been found inside of blood and lymphatic vessels and they also form networks that overlay internal organs.

The channels are called *Bonghan channels* after Kim Bonghan, a North Korean who published papers describing them in the 1960s, a decade before acupuncture was introduced to the American public.

Apparently these structures have remained undiscovered for so long because they are almost transparent and so thin that they are barely visible with low-magnification surgical microscopes. They are also easily confused with fibrin, which coagulates and obscures these structures when there is bleeding in dissected tissues. Now that they have been rediscovered, researchers are investigating their composition and function. The tubular structures that make up Bonghan channels contain a flowing liquid that includes abundant **hyaluronic acid**, a substance that cushions and lubricates the joints, eyes, skin and even heart valves.

A 2004 paper describes how biophotons, produced by animal tissues, may be emitted by DNA molecules to produce a **laser-like coherent light** capable of carrying an enormous volume of information through the Bonghan channels. The idea that **acupuncture channels conduct light** has already been substantiated by Russian research published as early as 1991. They found that the light-conducting ability of the human body exists only along the meridians, and can enter and exit only along the acupuncture points. This finding has been confirmed by a **1992 study** in the *Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine* and a **2005 study** in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* where moxibustion and infrared thermography were used to trace meridian pathways. In *Mind and Nature*, **Gregory Bateson** says that what happens next is a mystery in the science of embryology. "What controls the nearly perfect external bilateral symmetry of the mammalian body? We have remarkably little knowl-edge of the message system that controls growth. There must be a whole interlocking system as yet scarcely studied." Bonghan channel researchers appear to have discovered that system. It is the only anatomically distinct structural network that could possibly handle the high volume of information that would be necessary to control embryological organization. Because the meridian system organizes the development of the embryo from the very beginning, well before the circulatory and nervous system are established, it is not surprising to find that these systems often overlap and interact. Many studies have clearly shown that the stimulation of the meridian system has a profound effect upon both local blood circulation and imbalances in the nervous system. Furthermore, because embryonic development reflects evolutionary development, it is quite likely that the meridian system has more ancient origins than other physiological systems. Plants do not have a nervous system, yet they display a high degree of structural organization and complex responses to their environment. Research published in *Scientific American* in August 1984 that describes the effects of **light transfer through plant stems** may have been looking at the ancestral precursors of the meridian system.

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