

Hello all,

Welcome to *Alternativz* Volume 2, Issue 6, *Chakras & The Dvadashanta*. As my readers are aware, I'm very interested in the intersection of the yogas of China, India, Kashmir, and Tibet. In my studies of original method and meaning, I find that it is here that all roads lead, both geographically and methodologically.

The “chakra” is very familiar to most yogis. Chakras are energetic centers (literal bioelectrical centers) that exist along the path of the sushumna (chong meridian). In kundalini yoga parlance, they are also granthis or knots that prevent kundalini, lying coiled at the sacrum (metaphorically), from reaching and piercing the crown. Untying these knots is a central objective of yoga, because when they are, energy is able to flow, uniting our being between Heaven and Earth and with the cosmos.

From *The Yoga Of Delight, Wonder, And Astonishment - A Translation Of The Vijnana-bhairava*, translated by the late Jaideva Singh, Verse 51: “If one fixes one’s mind at the *dvadashanta* again and again howsoever and where-soever, the fluctuation of his mind will diminish and in a few days, he will acquire an extraordinary status.” In the notes regarding this verse, he refers to interior and exterior *dvadashanta*, describing the exterior *dvadashanta* as being a distance of 12 fingers from the nose.

The late Lilian Silburn, also a scholar of Kashmiri Shaivism, wrote of this technique in *Kundalini, Energy Of The Depths*, where she elucidated the method described in *Vijnana-bhairava*, Verse 64: “By the fusion of the two breaths, expiration rising inwardly in the centre, and inspiration rising externally in the *dvadashanta*, there arises finally a condition in which there is complete cessation of both”, (i.e., breathing ends of its own accord. *My comment*)...By meditating over that condition of void, the yogi becomes so competent that there arises in him the intuitive experience of Equality”, (i.e. *kundalini rises - my comment*).

But what of this term *dvadashanta* (also *dvadasanta*). In Sanskrit, the number 2 is “dvi”. The number 10 is “dasa”. The number 12 is “dvadasa”. “Dva” has the meaning “original stem of”. “Dvadasanta”, from Tamil Cube Sanskrit to English Dictionary: “The twelfth centre...” I personally know of no other scholarly references to this term in the English language (although I’m sure there are some). Nor am I aware of English references to the other 11 centers.

But I am particularly interested in the meaning “original stem”. If “*dvadashanta*” means twelfth stem, by inference, there being a previous 11 stems, then there is a parallel in Taoism, this being the “12 celestial stems”, the branches (or roots) by which we are connected with heaven, although the original intent of this term” is also cloudy and mysterious.

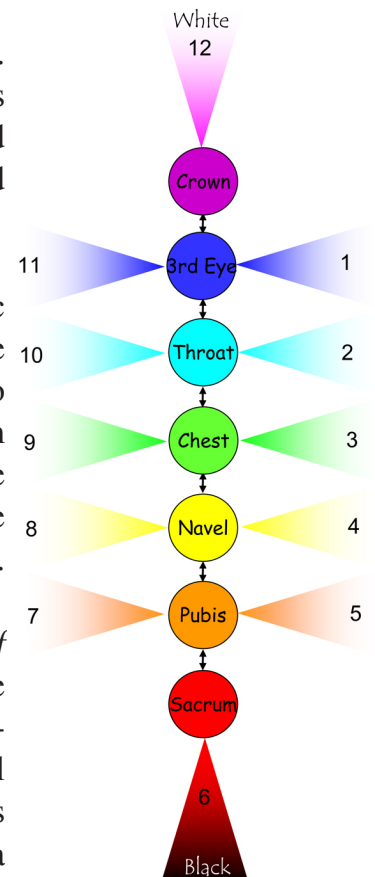


Figure 1:
Chakras & The Dvadashanta

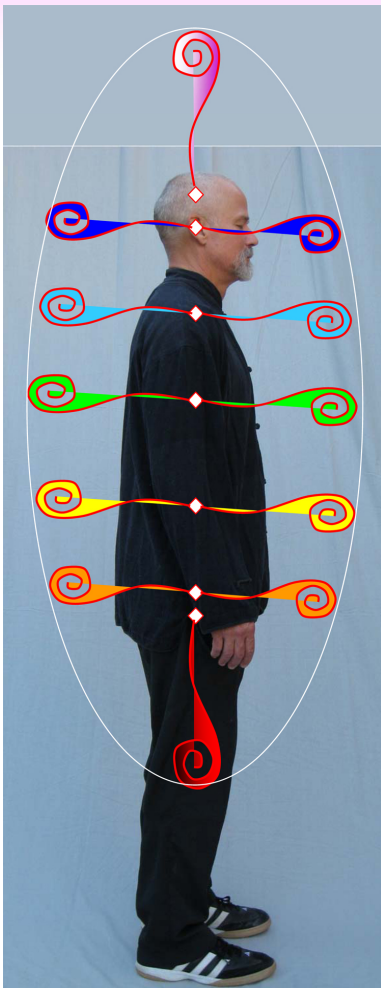


Figure 2:
Dvadashanta (Sanskrit)
Celestial Stems (Taoism)
?

Here I offer a solution to this riddle, that *dvadashanta* was intended to describe “12 stems”, relating to the clear and present experience of the bioenergetic field associated with each chakra, extending up, down, fore, and aft, and the notion in Shaivism is essentially the same as in Taoism, that these spokes connect us to the cosmos.

To understand this, there is a “hurdle” that must be overcome, this hurdle being that we are capable of sensing beyond the surface of the body, beyond the skin, projecting our energy into space. Energy healers of all paths know of this truth, in that it is part of the art. Traditional Chinese martial arts and other esoteric practices train this ability. Following the breath as it leaves and returns to the nose is probably the single most fundamental means by which this awareness can be developed, in that in time, one begins to feel one’s energy riding with the breath, extending out when we exhale and coming back when we inhale, reminding me of a party horn. After we know how it’s done, we can do it with any part of the body, but because the chakras are the major energy vortices of the body, they are particularly capable. In any case, with practice one can develop the ability to extend their energy, root and crown chakras extending down and up respectively, and those in between extending forward and backward. If we count these “extensions” they number 12.

In my article, *Enlightenment In Kashmiri Shaivism*, I posited that “enlightenment” means “the clear and present consciousness that we are fully unified with the world, with each other, with the universe, all else, animate and inanimate.” In this context, an interesting question arises: Is this consciousness a function of these “stems”?

As they reach beyond our skin, into the ether, is the awareness of unification inevitable? If we are electrical beings (which we are), and if the cosmos is electrical (which it is), then each of us is “wired” into it. If we measured the intensity of our bioelectrical field, we would certainly find that it extends outwards in all directions, but with varying strength. It is in this plane of the body, the plane that

divides us symmetrically that the field is strongest, extending around us like a wheel. The natural inclination of the crown chakra is to reach upward, like all land based plant life. At the other end of the spectrum, the opposite is true, i.e. the sacrum or “root” chakra naturally reaches downward, again assuming a vertical orientation of the body. (It’s really in the direction of the vertical axis of the body, in that it works the same way whether body position is vertical or horizontal.)



Figure 3:
Thai Buddhist Symbol

Some years ago, I was very deliberate about practicing this with each chakra every morning. I wasn’t surprised to find that eventually, the sense of a wheel defined by the ends of these “stems” began to develop and it began to turn, a phenomenon that I came to understand in Taoist parlance as the “macrocosmic orbit”. I don’t think it is any accident that Buddhism’s “dharmachakra” or “wheel of the law” (of nature) consists of a 12 spoked wheel.

Thank you for your interest and consideration,

Stephen Elliott, President, COHERENCE

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