

Water & the Role of Polarities in Nature: by Alick Bartholomew

We all have the experience of rejuvenation and joy on a vibrant spring day when the sap is rising in the plants and the tree buds are bursting with new life. Water is at the very heart of life creation. Sitting by a waterfall or on the rocks at the edge of the ocean on a sunny day, one can feel the energy of the water in our body. Water is closely linked to the emotions. There is a strong resonance of water with humans. Our ancestors were fascinated by its magic and there is a vast mythology linked to water.

Water carries all life. But water is beyond time, for it bears in its flow the seeds of future life, as well as the memory of past life. Water mediates between life and death, between being and not being, between health and sickness. We have lost touch with the magic of water, the freshness of the mountain spring, the reflection in a mountain lake, the mystery of the sacred well. We just take for granted that water will come at the turn of a tap.

We have allowed water to spread illness and disease. Much is spoken these days of the destructive nature of water. Such water is Nature on the rampage, perhaps showing who is boss, at a time when humanity has wrought so much reckless damage to Earth's ecosystems and to the natural environment.

It seems as if water was intended for life; certainly life could not have come without it. Water is found throughout the Universe, though seldom as a liquid, which requires the relatively narrow temperature band which our Earth provides. Without doubt water is the most important substance on Earth. It drives everything, from the most delicate metabolic processes in our bodies, to creating environments favourable to life, to weather patterns and climate change.

The poet, philosopher and scientist, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) was, more than anyone, a bridge between pre-and post-Enlightenment thinking. He sensed a profound difference in outlook between the new rational, mechanistic and more exclusive worldview, and the more traditional inclusive, Nature-centred view. He called the latter 'holistic' in contrast to 'reductionist' science. Goethe understood that all life is one, closely interconnected and interrelated, with water as the very symbol of holism, with its role in the sustenance of life.

Goethe referred to water as "the ground of all being". Thales of Miletus (640–546BC) also believed water to be infused with Being, believing it was the original substance of the Cosmos. The Austrian 'Water Wizard', Viktor Schauberger (1885–1958), held a similar view, saying that water is the product of the subtle energies that brought the Earth into being and that it is itself a living substance.

Sacred Knowledge

Until quite modern times, water was regarded as sacred. This precious substance used to require a great deal of effort to collect for domestic use (and still does in some parts of the world). It was treated with reverence and believed to be protected by divine beings.

One of the principal cultural ceremonies of the Pacific Northwest indigenous tribes in British Columbia was the 'potlatch', believed to have been practised for thousands of years.¹ Usually a part of this complex ceremony was given to the recitation of the spiritual traditions of the tribe. The 'speaker', a position often handed down in one of the chief families, performed this important role. The training of future speakers was a long-observed ritual, involving teaching the young person to listen to the wind from

mountaintops, to the sound of the ocean waves on the rocky shore, and to the music of the rushing stream. They would in this way learn to incorporate Nature's sounds and cadences in the telling of the stories of the tribe's wisdom. To these people, water was a sacred medium of communication and they felt its sounds should be the vehicle for teaching their traditions.

How water informs language is hinted by many of the ancient scripts which employ flowing lines like water in their characters (for instance Hebrew). Greek became more regular, but it was Latin with its angular, straight characters that forgot the memory of water. Latin script initiated the estrangement from Nature, forming the basis for Euclidean geometry with its circle, straight line and point, which are not to be found in Nature.

There are esoteric uses for water. Nostradamus used a bowl of water as a skrying tool for seeing future events. Viktor Schauberger had a remarkable experience while sitting by a rushing stream in his pristine Alpine refuge. Listening to its vivacious music, he intuited how water needs to move and behave in order to stay healthy, which was to inform his groundbreaking research.

Our attitude toward water has changed enormously in recent centuries. With the advent of rationalism and the denial of spiritual influences on humanity came the great explosion of technology that loudly proclaimed human supremacy over Nature. Since we decided we were not part of Nature and we devised our own self-centred laws, we have lost touch with the magic of water. We have forgotten its true nature and the meaning of its pulsating movements.

Our biology and physics textbooks tell us that water is merely an inorganic compound through which various chemical processes take place. One of the reasons why mainstream science knows so little about water may be its obsession with the physical nature of life. Older cultures did not suffer from this limited worldview and consequently appreciated water's special qualities better than we do today.

Holism

The key to understanding water and living more in tune with our environment is to learn to see and feel holistically as part of a community of beings – human, animal, microbial, and botanical – united by the common bond of water, through which we all share a common heritage – we are all One. Water is the epitome of holism. It connects all of life; and life cannot exist without it. Spiritual and mystical experiences have a strong link with holism.

Ancient mystical systems, especially Hindu, Taoist and Buddhist, held water in particular reverence and understood some of its quantum qualities, even if they did not describe them in the terms of quantum science. Neils Bohr and Robert Oppenheimer, pioneers of quantum physics, and more recently David Bohm, Einstein's protégé, found remarkable similarities between their new worldview and the concept of the oneness of all creation held by those mystical systems.²

Dynamic water, when it is alive and energised, performs the roles of initiating and operating all the processes of life. The most important function of biological water is to facilitate rapid inter-communication between cells and connective tissues, so that the organism can function as a coordinated whole. Though not recognised by mainstream science, you can say that, in some sense, living water performs this intercommunicating function between all organisms, groups of organisms, populations, natural kingdoms and the world, creating a network of sensitivity throughout all of life, even between life on Earth and the Cosmos, so

that nothing can happen without affecting other processes; all are linked together by water. It may even drive evolution.³

The story needs to be told simply of how water is the stage manager of life, communicating to our bodies' cells how to be part of a vast biological orchestra; how it distributes energy to make the environment balanced and productive. Indeed the very laws which govern the harmonious movement of the planets also determined the form and behaviour of our organic life, through water.⁴ This extraordinary picture of water's part in the evolution of life derives from the discovery by quantum physics of the field that interconnects all of creation in a vast web of energy. Rudolf Steiner and his interpreter Theodor Schwenk believed that the quantum (or etheric) field contains the encoded data bank of information required for evolution to proceed.

The energetic qualities of water at the quantum level: their role in creating and sustaining life and balancing the environment; how water may stimulate evolution by constantly encouraging greater complexity, interdependence and integrity in all of creation; and especially its role in instant communication — all of these qualities I have chosen to synthesise collectively as "the water medium".

Yin/Yang balance

Viktor Schauberger demonstrated how life, both at the maintenance level and in evolutionary processes, depends on the subtle balancing between energy polarities, shown at its best in the unstable balancing between positive and negative polarities in water's behaviour. These have not been well described in scientific writing, therefore a summary of their importance may be helpful.

In Chinese tradition, the Sun emits a positive, *yang* (masculine) energy. The Earth balances this with a *yin*, or feminine (negative) energy. Without this interplay, there would be no water, plants, nor chemical compounds. *Yin* and *yang* are dynamic in the sense that their energy fluctuates – when one expands, the other diminishes. The concentration of energy is a *yin* process, while that to move and disperse is *yang*. Western thought holds them as fixed states, but in the Chinese tradition they are constantly shifting. Thus, in every man there is feminine energy and in every woman there is masculine energy, these tendencies varying in different situations. It is the same in Nature. Mornings tend to have *yang* energy and evenings *yin*.⁵

As Fritjof Capra comments: "Chinese sages seem to have recognised the basic polarity that is characteristic of living systems. Self-assertion is achieved by displaying *yang* behaviour; by being demanding, aggressive, competitive, expanding, and – as far as human behaviour is concerned – by using linear, analytical political thinking. Integration is furthered by *yin* behaviour; by being responsive, cooperative, intuitive, and aware of one's environment. Both *yin* and *yang*, integrative and self-assertive tendencies, are necessary for harmonious social and ecological relationships."⁶

It's important to discriminate between the constructive and the extreme attributes. Constructive *yang* is: energetic, initiative, forward-looking.; while extreme are: exploitative, cruel, destructive. Constructive *yin* are: considerate, aware, compassionate; and extreme are wimpishness, disinterested, torpidity.

One can see that our society has favoured *yang* over *yin* – rational knowledge over intuitive wisdom, science over religion, competition over cooperation, and exploitation over conservation. Psychologists call these extrinsic and intrinsic values respectively.

The evolution of human society has become increasingly extrinsic in the last 10,000 years. The present cultural norm has reached a maximum of *yang* development, with the growth of individualism and personal greed, the unsustainable exploitation of the Earth's resources and now our dependence on economic growth.

Financial inequalities are arguably the most toxic poison in our society today. Even the most needed reforms, such as capping executive pay, banning tax havens, limiting bank and personal credit – are all blocked by vested interests.

The first effect of the Enlightenment was to release enquiry from superstition towards objectivity, but the balance gradually shifted towards extreme extrinsic values. In the sciences, the doctrine evolved that man was dominant over Nature; that the Earth and the human body worked like machines. In the 18th century, the economic doctrine of *laissez-faire* first loosened authoritarianism in human affairs, but soon produced the imperative for economic growth and the primacy of money, profit and *laissez faire* policies.

To break these dogmatic moulds will require a shift in the balance towards the more *yin* or intrinsic economic and social values of visionaries like EF Schumacher, which at the moment can succeed only at the local level. The emergence of a caring society may require the collapse of the *yang* political power centres – chaos brings opportunity!

All processes depend on an unstable reciprocity between extremes. As soon as a process becomes stable, it stagnates. It's the same with water. Moving, circulating water is energised; still water is effectively dead. Water is the ideal medium for processes because it is an unstable and dynamic medium and, without water, nothing in Earth's environment can change.

Nature is founded far more on cooperation than on competition, because it is only through the harmonious interplay of energy that physical formation can occur and structures can be built up. At the heart of the creative process in Nature are negative and positive polarities, such as chaos and order, quantity and quality, gravitation and levitation, electricity and magnetism. (The last pair Schauberger studied as complementary qualities.) In every case, for any natural process to be harmonious, one polarity cannot be present without the other, and each needs the other to make up the whole.

Natural law, as Viktor Schauberger describes, requires that, for creative evolution to be maintained, the polarities are not 50/50, which would result in atrophy, but are unevenly balanced towards the *yin* or negative. Water's principal quality is to bring balance to life. For this reason, you would expect it to be very stable; in fact, the reverse is true. The water molecule is made up of two small positively charged hydrogen atoms and one very large negatively charged oxygen atom; the strong bifurcated hydrogen bonds are asymmetrical, which make water unstable and unpredictable.

This instability belongs not only to the aquatic sphere; it is the guiding law of the Universe since its inception. Instability and unpredictability are the secret of matter's very existence and the impulse for creativity. As we all know, predictability is the recipe for a boring existence. It is the restlessness of water that stimulates its pulsation and constant swinging between the *yin* and the *yang*.

The dance of creation is the harmonious interplay through attraction and repulsion of polarised atoms. The mutual attraction of 2x H and 1x O gives birth to the marvel of water. The catalytic role of dual polarity is initiated by the positive charge of the Sun, the

inseminator of life, which melds with the Earth's receptive and feminine energy. Together they are essential components for all biological processes.

We don't normally think of water carrying an electric charge, but its bioelectrical sensitivity is one of the most important qualities in its importance for life. The electromagnetic qualities of mineral-rich or saline water allow it to steer processes and evolution by constantly shifting the energy reciprocally between positive and negative charges. Schauberger showed that a natural river flowing sinuously across the landscape recharges its energy towards the positive or *yang* on a right-hand bend and towards the negative or *yin* on a left-hand bend. This constant build-up of *yin* and *yang* charges raises the energy level of the water so that it can perform its true role in nurturing the environment. The same happens with our biological water.

Through spiralling movement, water maintains its energy as 'living water'. In its most dynamic state, water develops the structure of a vortex which raises its energy level — more quickly if the direction of the spin alternates between left and right. (eg <http://www.sulis-health.co.uk/water.html#eggvortex>)

Because the quantum or etheric field is universal and water is common in the Universe, associated with life or potential life, it seems natural to view them as complementary, working together. In esoteric terms the etheric (sometimes called "the God field") may be seen as the masculine (*yang*), *initiating* polarity; while the water medium has the *receptive*, feminine (*yin*) role. What I propose is that the water medium and the quantum field are two complementary aspects in the balanced mediation, sustenance and evolution of life. Water acts as '*the medium*' (the melody or music) — cosmic information (script or templates) as '*the message*'. You might call this a candidate for the 'Unified Field Theory'.*

* However, this implies that they are separate. In holistic reality they are *inseparable* aspects of the one process of unfolding life. Theosophy's schema is that ordinary human consciousness (and Newtonian science) is mostly contained in the materialist-based Third Dimension, which sees everything as detached. Quantum physics inhabits the Fourth (transitional) Dimension of Time, where boundaries between matter and energy become blurred. The Fifth Dimension, which may be reached by visionaries, is the state of Presence, beyond space/time, where all is truly One.

If we say that water builds the physical structures of living organisms, this begs the question — where are the templates? Theodor Schwenk (a follower of Rudolf Steiner) believes they are held in the etheric or quantum field, and may sometimes be interpreted through sacred geometry.⁷ For example the ubiquitous container for the emergence of new life is the egg shape, the only shape in which water can circulate spontaneously: the egg and similar shapes like the pine cone, or spiral structures such as seashells or leaf designs have a symmetry defined by *phi* (Φ) or 'The Golden Section'. These symmetries have a *yin/yang* ratio which can be defined mathematically by the number 1:1.618033988, which seems always to be associated in Nature with the transmutation of energy into form.⁸

Communication

What is the scientific evidence for water as a communication medium? An exciting discovery in recent years has been the strange role that water plays in biological communication. It has come to light that collagen, the connective tissue that makes up the bulk of all multicellular animals, is crucial to the integrity of the organism. It is composed of a crystalline matrix of collagen proteins embedded in water, comprising 60-70% by weight. This water is specially structured in chains along the collagen fibres and has the ability to self-organise.

Dr Mae-Wan Ho, co-founder of the Institute for Science in Society, and one of the most prominent holistic biophysicists, has specialised in the role of biological water. She maintains that the collagen chains enable water to become superconductive, an ideal medium for instantaneous communication for coordination of all cellular activities. Dr Ho believes that this liquid crystal continuum constitutes our "body consciousness" that may well have evolved before the nervous system, but which today works both in partnership with, and also independently of, the nervous system. "This body consciousness is the basis of sentience, the prerequisite for conscious experience that involves the participation of the intercommunicating whole of the energy storage domain".⁹

We hear increasingly of water being described as a "conscious organism". It is an organism in the sense that it has integrity, independence, cohesion, and particular qualities that allow it to be the driver of life and evolution. The quality of consciousness may also seem a strange term to apply to water. But if it is a medium of communication, it could also be a medium of consciousness. Viktor Schauberger and Theodor Schwenk demonstrated that the water medium also has intelligence. Water's quality of restlessness gives living systems the ability to become ever more complex and to strive forward toward perfection.

We use the term 'intelligence' in connection with water because it optimises the conditions for life by regulating environmental processes. At a temperature of 37°C (98.4°F), water requires a very large input or removal of kinetic energy in order for its temperature to rise or fall, allowing it to keep the blood in the human body at a constant temperature of 37°C, any deviation from which indicates illness. Another of the intelligences of water is that it takes a lot of energy to freeze and, once frozen, to melt; and a huge amount of energy to vaporise water, which stops the air from excessive heating. This makes water a very effective balancer of climatic extremes. The warmer the air, the more water vapour it can hold, and the longer the temperature can remain constant.

The interaction of these three properties of water has created a temperate climate zone on Earth with optimum conditions for evolution of the human species. Certainly complex civilisations could not have evolved without the stability of moderate, stable climates. Without these self-regulating systems, life could never have developed beyond the simplest forms.¹⁰

Water's Memory

Much has been written about water's memory. Does it have a memory? Masaru Emoto studies the structure of ice crystals to determine the quality of their liquid water origin. He demonstrates how poor quality water cannot build good structures, while high quality water can produce the most beautiful crystalline designs. Amazingly, water that has been exposed to harmonious music or human energies can produce pure, beautiful crystals, while when it is exposed to disruptive energies it cannot produce well structured crystals.

When water is flowing as its nature dictates, energetically in spirals and vortices, the molecules, if conditions permit, organise themselves into structures, layers or clusters of vibrating energy centres which carry constructive information, constantly receiving and transmitting energy from every contact the water body makes.

Emoto and Schwenk claim that these clusters or layers can store vibrational energy impressions or imprints, rather like a magnetic tape. If these are beneficial, they may be able to restore healthy resonance in the human body, as in homoeopathy. On the other

hand if there are imprints of toxins or pollutants in the drinking water, they may be carriers of disharmony and disease.

Water does have a memory. When we think we have 'purified' water of the chemicals and hormones we have mindlessly thrown in, in order to make it drinkable, the energy of these contaminants remains, polluting our energy bodies in the same way that chemicals affect our physical bodies. Because of its nature, water sacrifices itself entirely to the environment, for good or for bad.

How can we experience water's spiritual qualities? My water epiphany came spontaneously when I had the realisation that I am *embedded* in water. I saw water as the infinite continuum of life in which all living creatures are contained. This experience was much more powerful than the intellectual idea of being connected. "We are all one", because of water.

I find being close to horses a bit scary. One day, the field where I walk regularly had three mares with their growing foals. I liked to take them apples as a treat, but when all six surrounded me, they felt a bit threatening. When I tried to visualise these lovely, powerful animals as part of my family through the water link, they seemed to become more like family and they were much less scary. This is what you might call a 'holistic connection'. Try it yourself; it can even work with people!

In Eastern tradition, when you greet someone, you bow your head to them or palm your hands together in front of your heart in recognition of that person's Divine nature, because our biological water (or blood) is a sacred link to the Divine in all of us.

Water as Teacher

Water can teach us many things:

- The most important lesson is that Nature will not tolerate gross inequalities: Water's role is to bring down to size, to level, to balance, to stimulate fertility and productivity of the whole, not individuals in isolation.
- Through water, quantum coherent organisms invariably become entangled with one another. A quantum world is a world of universal mutual entanglement, the prerequisite for universal love and ethics. Because we are all entangled, and each being is implicit in every other, the best way to benefit oneself is to benefit the other.¹¹
- It is the restlessness of water that gives living systems the ability to become ever more complex and to strive towards the perfection they can never reach. As a driver of evolution, water is a model for our own striving, allowing us to evolve through our own mistakes. This is the self-empowerment process of holistic biology.
- Water raises its dynamic energy through turbulence and chaos which, in the bigger picture, mirrors the turbulence of change in human society.
- The dynamic way that water creates energy shows up our technology's way of generating energy as wasteful, dangerous, and harmful to the environment.

You might say that these qualities respond to natural or spiritual laws rather than the anthropocentric laws that we construct.

If we could personally experience and truly understand the miraculous properties of water for life, our lives would become more meaningful and, (if it is not too late) we could become responsible custodians of Nature.

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- ¹ See: Consigli, Paolo, *Water, Pure and Simple*, Watkins, London, 2008
- ² Capra, Fritjof, *The Tao of Physics*, Wildwood, London, 1975
- ³ Ho, Mae-Wan, "Quantum Coherence and Life", Water in the Organism series, Inst. of Science in Society, London, 2011
- ⁴ Schwenk, Theodor, *Sensitive Chaos*, Forest Row, Steiner, 1965
- ⁵ Capra, Fritjof, "The Yin Yang Balance", *Resurgence*, May 1981
- ⁶ Capra, Fritjof, *The Turning Point*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1982
- ⁷ Schwenk, Theodor, *ibid.*
- ⁸ Coats, Callum, *Living Energies*, Gateway, Bath, 1996
- ⁹ Ho, Mae-Wan, *ibid.*
- ¹⁰ Bartholomew, Alick, *The Story of Water*, Floris, Edinburgh, 2010
- ¹¹ Ho, Mae-Wan, *ibid.*

The Note: This article was written for The Scientific & Medical Network Review and has also appeared in abridged form in New Dawn magazine (Australia), and in Acres USA magazine.

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