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Experiences of Creating a Pranic Energy Ball by Anganwadi Female Workers as a Road to Induce Wellbeing: A Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Prana is the subtle energy and is essential to keep the body healthy and alive.

Objective: The present study was conducted to understand the experiences of creating a Pranic energy ball by Anganwadi Female workers which were felt between the hands, aimed at as a way of inducing emotional wellbeing.

Methods: Qualitative method, content analysis was used to study the written responses made by the participants (N=51).

Results: The results were analysed and eight themes were identified. To name a few, Pranic energy experience can enhance Positive feelings, Pranic ball can be created.

Conclusions: The creation of Pranic energy ball between the hands is a simple phenomenon and can be learnt easily.

Key Words: Bioplasma, Energy ball, Female workers, Shape

INTRODUCTION

Given the situation of health care in India, the Government of India initiated The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), which focuses on the enhancement of health and nutrition for children and mothers. Anganwadi is an offshoot of ICDS and shelters are in rural and underprivileged areas of the country. They provide very basic health care to mothers and children up to six years of age. An Anganwadi worker (AWW) is a woman who is selected from within the local community. AWW provide antenatal and postnatal care, immunization drives for mother and child, and, identification and care for undernourished children.¹

Presently, the AWWs also have to be involved in the Immunization program, house to house survey, deworming, and disease control programs that require a door to door visits beyond the working hours, which could result in stress. Performing their duties in a limited time may lead to stress and discontent among the AWWs (Anganwadi workers). More than half Anganwadi workers have severe stress and more than one-fourth have mild-to-moderate stress.² AWWs are exposed to various factors relating to psychosocial and occupational stress which affects their physical and mental health

and efficiency in discharging the duties.³ Stress may lead to dissatisfaction, poor motivation and a decreased efficiency.⁴ The government's intervention to provide relief to these workers has only gone that far too physical health concerns but has largely ignored mental health aspects of wellbeing. Primary interventions have been undertaken to prevent the causal factors of stress, while the secondary interventions aim to reduce the severity or duration of symptoms, and tertiary or reactive interventions aim to provide rehabilitation and maximise functioning among those with chronic health conditions.⁵ Individual interventions may include stress awareness training and cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) for psychological and emotional stress. Organisational interventions affect groups of people at work and may include workplace adjustments or conflict management approaches in a specific organisation. Some interventions target both the individual and the organisation, for example, policies to secure a better work-life balance and peer-support groups. Hence, if Anganwadi workers, can be trained to manage their stress, it will help in successfully implementing ICDS. Among various training, one among them includes experiencing prana which has been demonstrated to have a positive psychological effect.^{6,7}

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Prana is the primaevial energy of the universe which is dispersed everywhere. It is the substratum of all life and is the vital energy responsible for keeping the body healthy and alive.⁸ Prana is also called the chi, ki, ruah. Three main sources of prana include the air, from which is derived air prana; the earth, from which ground prana is obtained; and the sun, from which solar prana is gained. The concept of prana or subtle energy and methods of its use for healing has been known from ancient times.⁹ A few subtle energy modalities are Pranic healing, Reiki, Qi gong among others.¹⁰ During healing, the healer removes contaminated energies of the subject and projects fresh prana on the energy body and then stabilizes the projected prana. Removing contaminated energies may be done by various methods. One method is by cleansing, which can be done by visualizing Pranic Energy Ball and cleaning the affected area.^{9,11} Tai chi has made use of energy ball, wherein carrying the ball of energy and doing the Tai chi walk, which is a set of bodily movements, has had a relaxation effect on the practitioner.¹² Participants were taught to focus on their breathing and to walk slowly while simply observing the sensations of mindful walking.

Energy ball creation has been used in Pranic healing as a pre-emptive in advanced healing techniques, to direct energy after cleansing the affected chakra or area to normalising the depletion of energy.¹³ At other times, energy balls have been used to contain diseased energy prior disposal owing to its compactness and capacity to contain.⁹ Therefore the utilising of energy ball in healing related practices isn't entirely contemporary and has existed from ancient times through various traditional practices.

With proper training and guidance, and with appropriate conditions, it has been suggested that one can experience and view prana. In a study involving adolescents, on the experiences of prana between the hands, 90% of them could see air prana and had a positive psychological experience like happiness and nice feelings.⁷ In another study, 98% of participants viewed air prana and experienced happiness, energized and relaxed.¹⁴ The above findings lead us to infer that prana can be felt, seen and with positive psychological benefits on the participants. The majority of the studies are related to experiencing and seeing prana, however, the creation of pranic ball between the hands has not been studied. This study aims at examining and analysing the experiences of participants while creating a pranic energy ball between the hands, and their experiences have been taken into account.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design

This study uses an exploratory design and qualitative analysis. Qualitative analysis has helped us to have more awareness about the subject and in the identification of themes.

Sample

Purposeful sampling method was utilised in this study. The socio-demographic details of the participants are provided in Table 1. The study was conducted with Anganwadi workers of a district in Southern Karnataka with permission from AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) Department, Government of Karnataka. Out of the 51 participants, 28 were from rural and 23 were from an urban background with the whole set of them being females with a mean age of 43 ranging from 27 to 60 years. The study was conducted at the meeting hall which could house the participants who were seated at a freehand distance with each other.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Anganwadi female workers, who were interested in participating and who were within the age range of 18 to 60 years were part of this study. Those with previous Pranic experience and with sensory impairment were excluded.

Procedure

After obtaining the written permission from the District AYUSH officer, the participants were chosen for this study based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria as stated earlier. The consent of the participants was sought before the commencement of the study. The participants were not given any clue about the study theme. Participants were free to opt-out of the study at any point of time in the study, at their own will and there would be no binding in the matter. Participants agreed to be part of the study unanimously. Even though there was freedom to opt-out of the study, none of them preferred to opt-out. The participants were not given any financial aid for taking part in the study.

The study was conducted by an experienced Pranic healer. The participants were handed over a questionnaire which was solely prepared for the study. In that questionnaire, the demographic details were collected. The experiment included three sessions. In each session, the participants had to answer the question.

In session 1, they were instructed, to hold the hands with palms facing each other at a distance of 10-15 cm and feel the experience. Then, they were told to write about their experience as the answer to the question: "Describe your experience between the hands."

In session 2, they were instructed to sensitize their hands and hold them, with palms facing each other, at a distance of 10-15 cm and feel the experience. They were told to write about their experience as the answer to the question: "Describe your experience between the hands." The next question which they had to answer was "Your hands were able to experience the energy at a distance of how many cm", which was to be answered in digits.

In session 3, they were instructed to sensitise their hands and then do **Pranic breathing** and hold the hands with palms facing each other at a distance of 10-15cm, bring the hands closer and move them farther and feel the experience. They were told to write about their experience as an answer to the question: “Describe your experience between the hands.”

They were instructed to create a Pranic energy ball. Thereafter, they had to gauge the approximate diameter of the ball and remember it. Then they were instructed to place the Pranic energy ball somewhere in the space around them, with an intention ‘Stay there’. This is called giving ‘Directions’. Then they were told to search the Pranic energy ball all around by scanning. When they searched for the energy ball, everywhere in the space around, they found that the Pranic energy ball was in the same place in which they had kept it. From memory, they had to answer the following question: “After creating the Pranic energy ball, the diameter of the ball was to be answered in digits.

The last question of the session was open-ended: “How do you feel about yourself now?”, which could be answered in 5-6 lines. Space was provided in the questionnaire for additional comments. The entire procedure took about 30 minutes in all. The researcher was available for any clarifications during the entire procedure.

Tools

A questionnaire was used to record the participants’ experiences. There were open- and closed-ended questions. The answers were to be within 3-4 lines for open-ended questions.

Pranic breathing: Pranic breathing enables one can absorb and project a large amount of prana. In a method of Pranic breathing called ‘Deep breathing with empty retention’, the following steps are followed. Connect the tongue to the palate, do abdominal breathing, inhale slowly and retain for one count and exhale slowly. Retain the breath for one count.⁹

Sensitising the hands: Place your hands 3 inches away from each other. Concentrate on the centre of your palms for about 1 minute. Inhale and exhale slowly.⁹ With this procedure, the hands will get sensitised to feel prana.

Scanning is a procedure of Pranic healing where the energy field is felt by the movement of the sensitised hands.⁹

Pranic Energy Ball Creation: Keep hands 4 inches apart, Inhale and exhale slowly for 10 pranic breathing cycles, move the hands keeping them in parallel, and visualize the pranic energy of white colour in between and shape it with the hands to form a pranic energy ball.

Data Analysis

The responses of the participants were consolidated, coded and grouped into similar expressions and analysed.

RESULTS

Table 1 has the socio-demographic particulars of the participants. In this particular study having 51 participants, all of them were female. 45% of them were urban and 55% were rural population. 9.84% practised only yoga asana/exercises regularly, 3.92% practised only pranayama/ breathing exercises regularly, while 3.92% did both, 82.4% did neither. 88.2% were married and 11.8% were single. All of them were qualified up to high school/ diploma and above.

The results were interpreted qualitatively. In session one, session two and session three, a total of 44, 153 and 132 expressions were mentioned respectively by the participants. The experiences of the participants were grouped into categories such as the physical domain, psychological domain, bioplasmic domain and additional expressions. The expressions concerning the hand descriptions and the physical descriptions of the hand like felt blood circulation’, ‘warmth’, ‘shaking of hands’, are categorized into the physical domain. The expressions concerning the emotional aspects like ‘good experience’, ‘happiness’, ‘solace’, ‘concentration’, ‘peace’, ‘relaxation’, are categorized into the psychological domain. The unusual expressions like magnetic sensation, attraction, energy, tingling sensation, electric shock and the like are grouped into the bioplasmic domain.

Thematic Analysis:

Based on the qualitative analysis of the phenomenological type, the following themes have been identified:

Pranic energy experience can enhance Positive feelings

1. Pranic Energy ball can be created.
2. Pranic Energy can be focussed.
3. Pranic Energy can be infused through Pranic breathing.
4. Pranic Energy can be directed.
5. Pranic energy can take ball shape
6. Pranic Energy can be transmitted externally.
7. Prana has an elastic property.

Theme 1: Pranic energy experiences can enhance Positive feelings

The psychological domain experiences were feelings that were expressed in session 1, session 2 and session 3. Few experiences that the participants have cited include: they have felt happy (R3, R7, R9, R11, R14....), they could concentrate better (R24, R34, R50), experienced a feeling of enthusiasm (R6), experienced relief (R27), felt solace (R4), felt calm (R40), felt surprised (R2), had the experience of a feeling of lightness (R10, R11, R46, R49) (Table 2). Air prana is the air vitality globule. In a study on the perception of prana and its effect on psychological wellbeing, more than 98% of the participants were able to experience psychological changes after absorbing air prana. They had experiences of relaxa-

tion, happiness and better concentration.⁶ In another study, after viewing air and ground prana, the participants had experiences of relaxation, happiness and good feelings.⁷ The experiences in the psychological domain were plenty and have been positive only, in this particular study.

Theme 2: Pranic Energy ball can be created.

All the participants were able to create the pranic energy ball (Figure 1) according to the instructions given which shows that it is possible to give the desired shape to the focussed energy. They were able to express the experience about the energy ball as ‘Between my hands, there was a feeling of a ball’ (R13), “feeling of some energy between the hands and a ball playing between them’ (R24, R25), “An imagination of ball” (R29), “an experience of a whitish-green ball that was luminous” (R47).

Theme 3: Pranic Energy can be focussed.

Since all the participants were able to create the energy ball, it can be directly inferred that energy can be focussed. Focussed energy itself has many benefits as utilised in the science and art of Pranic healing. Pranic healing is used in the field of Pranic agriculture and also to heal and increase the well-being of living beings. Focusing energy is nothing but energising the subject’s energy with prana which facilitates healing.⁹

Theme 4: Pranic Energy can be infused through Pranic breathing.

Pranic breathing enables the practitioner to draw in a lot of pranas and facilitate the transference of prana. By doing pranic breathing, one becomes energised. This can be verified through scanning.⁹ When Pranic breathing was practised, the distance of the hands at which the participants were able to feel the energy was greater than before doing pranic breathing. Some of the participants have expressed that before doing pranic breathing, they were able to experience energy between their hands at 22cm and after doing pranic breathing and creating the energy ball, they were able to experience the energy between their hands at 52cm (R3). Likewise, the readings were 18cm and 50cm with (R4), the readings were 11cm and 50cm with (R20), the readings were 16cm and 55cm with (R51) (Table 3). These readings indicate that Pranic breathing could infuse more energy into the region of interest.

Theme 5: Pranic Energy can be directed.

The participants were able to create the energy ball and even place it in a location with the intention of ‘Stay there’ and later on they were able to trace the energy ball. So, it can be understood that energy can be directed to any place with the appropriate intention, meaning that energy ball follows our directions. In Pranic healing, there is a technique called the projection of prana wherein prana is transferred to the

patient by the healer as per the intention of the healer to a patient locally or to the whole body.⁹ The Principle of Directability states that life force can be directed. Life-force follows where attention is focussed; it follows thought. Distant Pranic Healing is based on the principle of direct ability and the principle of interconnectedness. According to the Principle of Controllability, life force and diseased energy can be controlled and directed through the will or through “mind intent”. By the principle of Interconnectedness, the body of the patient and the body of the healer are interconnected with each other since they are part of the earth’s energy body. On a more subtle level, it means that we are part of the solar system and are interconnected with the whole cosmos. This principle is also called the Principle of Oneness.¹³

Theme 6: Pranic energy can take ball shape.

The energy between the hands after Pranic breathing was made to take the shape of a ball and it was done by the participants. Few participants have said that ‘Between my hands, there was a feeling of a ball’ (R13), “A feeling of ball-shaped energy” (R29). Since the participants were instructed to create an energy ball, they were able to create a ball of energy. So, we may conclude that Pranic energy can take any shape as directed.

Theme 7: Pranic Energy can be transmitted externally.

When Pranic breathing was done by the participants, it was found that the energy felt between the hands was more than before, which proves that energy can be transmitted externally. This is in parallel to Theme 4, where it is stated that energy can be infused through Pranic breathing. This inference is also according to the principle of projection of prana wherein energy can be transferred locally or to a whole region.⁹ Life-force or vital energy can be transmitted from one person to another person or object, or from one object to another object or a person. This is called the Principle of Transmittability.¹³

Theme 8: Prana has an elastic property.

One participant has said: “there was an experience of pulling rubber band between the hands” (R28), which indicates that prana has elastic property also.

DISCUSSION

It is well known that the human body emits energy. ECG, EEG, EMG, MRI, and various other interventions make use of the energetic properties of the body.^{15,16} Living things are known to release different quantities of energy or biophotons.¹⁷ The energy field of the body is referred to as the bio-field. Energy workers contend that the energy body exists and has a direct influence on health. Physical problems can

be preceded by problems with the energy body. A positive change at an energetic level can lead to physical healing. Also, in a study on the human biofield, it has been found that the quality of life of participants was positively related to the biofield.¹⁸ It has been suggested that measurement of biofields around the human body might be used as a holistic method for medical screening.^{19,20} This field is thought to represent the physical, mental, emotional, and the spiritual condition of the person.^{10,21} It is believed that energy follows the intentions of both the healer and the person receiving the healing.²²

Biophotons can be consciously controlled and can be used in the transmission of information associated with intent.^{23,24} When the influence of energy healing called qigong, on fingertip biophoton emission was studied on 4 subjects, on one subject the light emission was found to increase significantly during intent to project external *qi* and decreased during relaxation.²⁵ Where the mind goes, *qi* (energy) flows²⁷. Accordingly, biophotons may be a manifestation of *qi*, an intermediary system between mind and body.²⁶ Levin²⁷ also emphasises the role of intention in energy healing. For effective healing to occur, a disciplined mind is very helpful.²⁸ The intent of the healer is the dominant factor.²⁹ During healing, the healer with a strong field focused through intent, will provide a coherent, powerful energy-field.³⁰ Intent of the individual can also direct energy to any place, even through the creation of a ball of energy. Tai Chi and Qigong used energy manipulation to gain self-control and empowerment, which was once initially used as a technique in martial arts.³¹ Creation of energy ball may as well be used as a bridge to wellness when used constructively through consistent guidance. Regular practice of energy manipulation and projection can be utilised in healing and restorative wellness.

Anganwadi workers, facing acute and chronic stress levels can resort to the use of projection and channelling of energy ball towards psychological and physical wellness. At a larger perspective, Primary health care centres can utilise the potency of such techniques to alleviate stress and promote emotional and psychological wellbeing amongst these workers.

Hence, we may deduce that energy can be directed through intent, which is tried in this simple experiment of the present study and can also further be instrumental in inducing wellbeing. Also, note that there has been an increase in the positive psychological experiences of the participants, its potential can be harnessed in the field of energy medicine.

All the participants were female and the study appeared to be gender-biased. Only qualitative aspects are studied, while quantity aspects are ignored.

CONCLUSION

We can infer that the Pranic energy ball can be made and directed also. The benefits of it could be harnessed in the field of healing and well-being of individuals. More studies similar to this one can be conducted with mixed-method research design as the basis to study these aspects both qualitatively and quantitatively. Since a lot of bioplasmic experiences have been unfolded by the participants here, more studies on these lines are needed to understand the concept of prana, and the Pranic energy ball.

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Source of Conflict

Nil

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Table 1: Socio-demographic profile of female participants

| Socio-demographic parameter | Variable | N | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----|----------------|
| Marital Status | Married | 45 | 88.2 |
| | Single | 06 | 11.8 |
| Education | Post-Graduation | 3 | 5.9 |
| | Graduation | 2 | 3.9 |
| | High school / Diploma | 40 | 78.4 |
| | Middle school/certificate | 6 | 11.8 |
| Locality | Urban | 23 | 45 |
| | Rural | 28 | 55 |

Table 2: Participants Responses during different Session.

| Participant (Random sampling) | Session 1 | Session 2 | Session 3 |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---|--|
| R2 | ----- | Felt a magnetic sensation, heat sensation at the middle of the palms. | Felt surprised, became aware of the relations or connections between the organs. Felt a wheel like sensation, came to know of the breathing method. |
| R3 | No experience | Felt a pulling sensation between the hands, without touch felt that activities could be done, felt happy. | Without touch between the hands, I could feel a pulling sensation, felt there was something between the hands. Felt the experience of breathing, happiness, concentration in the mind. |

Table 2: (Continued)

| Participant (Random sampling) | Session 1 | Session 2 | Session 3 |
|-------------------------------|--|---|--|
| R4 | Clapping | Felt a pulling sensation between hands and heat also, felt solace and also came to know, how much attraction there can be between the hands. | Felt more of the pulling sensation between the hands. Felt the stomach coming forward and going backwards while breathing. Felt like going to another world. |
| R6 | Felt heat sensation, and sound and sensation of touch. | Heat sensation, tingling sensation, felt as if electricity was passing, pulling sensation between the hands, felt enthusiastic. | Pulling sensation between the hands, felt the attraction between the hands, peace for the mind. |
| R7 | Clapping by the hands | Pulling sensation, current shock, tingling sensation. Felt happy and came to know many things by this exercise. | When hands were brought together, felt slowness. When hands were taken farther, did not feel the slowness. |
| R9 | Clapping, touch | Exercise, felt warm, excited, tingling, attraction, happy, felt very nice, touch | Attraction, felt touch between the hands, pulling sensation, heat and pulling sensation between the middle of the palms. |
| R10 | Clapping | Felt heat and attraction between the hands | Felt pulling sensation between the hands and felt the nerve of the hands strengthened, feeling of lightness between the hands. |
| R11 | Clapping by the hands, felt friction between the hands | Felt very happy, and felt a strange experience and was benefitted. | Felt lightness in the body, felt nerves strengthened, activity for small and bug muscles which helps for growth, felt a lightness in the hands. |
| R13 | --- | Pulling sensation, warm sensation, electric shock experience. | between the hands, there was a feeling of the ball, pulling sensation. |
| R14 | --- | Heat sensation, electric shock, pulling sensation, magnetic sensation, felt happy by experiencing all of these | Pulling sensation between the hands, felt the rhythmic movement of the abdominal region, felt air below the tongue. |
| R24 | --- | Felt a magnetic sensation between the hands, felt an attraction between the hands, got concentration, happiness and heat sensation by this. Felt nearness and farness by this. | Feeling of some energy between the hands, felt energy while inhaling and exhaling, felt a ball playing between the hands. |
| R25 | ---- | Between both the hands felt a magnetic sensation, felt happy, when the hands were moved near and far, felt some attraction. | Between both the hands, felt some energy experience while breathing, Felt a ball playing between the hands. |
| R27 | Clapping exercise | Felt electric sensation between the hands, the tingling sensation felt the lightness of fingers, farness and nearness experience. | Felt relief from pain in the hands, felt heat sensation from the fingers, felt relieved in breathing, felt a yogic experience. |
| R28 | Felt like doing some activity. | Felt heat sensation like rubbing of hands, felt the growth of small muscles | Felt heat between the hands, warm pulling sensation, experience of pulling rubber band, lightness of hands and fingers. The concentration of mind. |
| R29 | We can do some activities. | Heat sensation, felt pulling sensation between the hands and fingers also, realized the need for breathing. | The attraction between the hands, the imagination of a ball of energy, by differences in breathing, changes are observed in the activities of the hands. |
| R34 | Clapping | The attraction between the two hands, felt pranic energy experience, got concentration in the mind, increases the connection between the hands, heat experience. Felt happy and interested. Experienced farness and nearness. | The attraction between the hands, touch experience, the concentration of mind because of breathing, learnt about prana from this exercise. |

Table 2: (Continued)

| Participant (Random sampling) | Session 1 | Session 2 | Session 3 |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|
| R40 | Clapping, salutation | Attraction, friction, mind became calm | Came to know how much energy we have. |
| R46 | --- | Felt a magnetic sensation between the hands when hands were moved far and near | Tingling, pulling sensation, lightness in the hands when hands were moved far and near. |
| R47 | ---- | Pulling of the muscles, heat sensation, pulsation of the pulse. | The white- greenish ball that was luminous was experienced between the hands. |
| R49 | Clapping by the hands | Heat sensation between the hands, felt happy | Pulling sensation between the hands, nerves of the hands will be strengthened, feeling of lightness of hands. |
| R50 | Felt curious about this topic, | Heat sensation, tingling sensation, magnetic sensation between the hands, concentration experience by deep breathing, felt I have to continue this further | While doing deep breathing, got concentration between the hands, felt a feeling of accomplishment, |

Table 3: Energy ball in cm before and after pranic breathing

| Participant (Random sampling) | Before | After |
|-------------------------------|--------|-------|
| R3 | 22 | 52 |
| R4 | 18 | 50 |
| R20 | 11 | 50 |
| R51 | 16 | 55 |

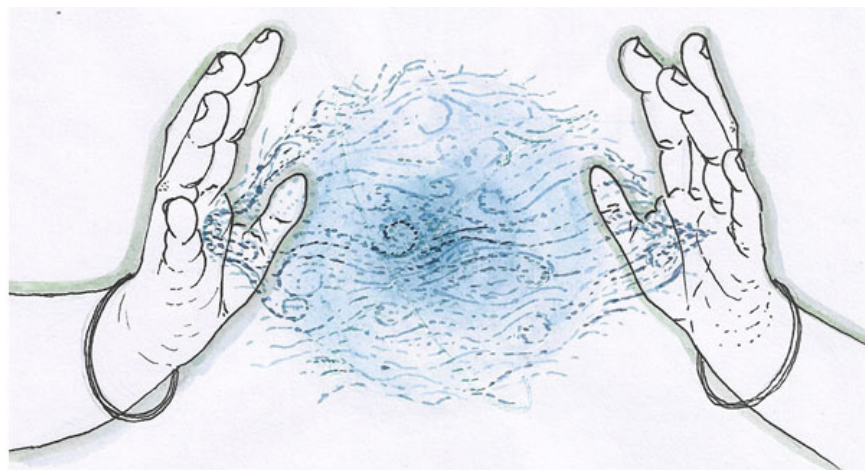


Figure 1: Pranic Energy Ball.