

## BEING NAKED

*Only human beings wear clothing, just as only human beings feel shame and guilt. Yet clothing is a necessary protection, both against climate and injury. Yet where there is no threat from cold, rain or injury wearing clothing is not only an unnecessary habit, but a prejudicial one. Clothing not only keeps the external out, but at the same time it disturbs the inner. In order to understand the harm that clothing can do we need to see beyond the mechanistic conception of the human body. The human body is only most obviously material. Deep experience of the body reveals the same energetic inwardness that deep penetration of matter reveals to nuclear and quantum physicists. Matter, as Einstein proved, is a phase of energy. It is not that there is an energy body lurking somewhere inside the physical body, but that the physical body, like all matter, is an expression of energetic vibration and rhythms. The energetic nature of the human body has been explored and differently mapped both in India, as nadis and chakras, and in China, as meridians and points.*

*The skin is the gateway between inner and outer, between self and other. As an organ it is the most sensitive in the whole body, not only providing protection, assimilation and excretion, but also providing an endless stream of information that the body needs to maintain its equilibrium and vitality. Yet the human body is so resilient that it can survive and function even when severely depleted or damaged. This resilience works against itself in allowing us to continue in damaging habits: whether of consumption, activity or social convention.*

*Covering up the human body not only hides it, but interferes with its ability to assimilate and circulate energy. According to Chinese Medicine the ball of the foot and the spine draw energy directly into the body from the earth and from the atmosphere; energy which is just as important to our wellbeing and vitality as that derived from the burning of glucose. The Chinese also recognised that energy flow in the skin not only maintains the health and vitality of the skin, but of the whole body. They called this energy wei-chi. Its flow is impeded by clothing. Try practicing yoga or meditation naked and you will feel the difference. The damage done by clothes, especially synthetic, to energy flow is most obviously revealed by the burning or reddening that occurs at the skinline of bathing costumes which does not take place on other parts of the skin, nor on those who go naked in the sunshine.*

*Modern research has confirmed both the psychological and physical benefits of nakedness. Visiting nude beaches has been proved capable of relieving people of disturbances and ailments that would seem to have no relationship to sunshine or skin. At the heart of this is the power of shame. Just as women who feel shame about their sexuality often feel inexplicable and undiagnosable pain during sexual intercourse, people who feel shame about who or what they are often express it through illness or neurosis.*

*Going naked in the warmth is not just a pleasure that is good for your suntan. It is a tonic and a therapy, especially in helping you to overcome your anachronistic shame of your body, and your genitals in particular. There is nothing to be ashamed of about being human, about having a body, about having genitals. Keeping them hidden not only says that there is, but it*

*can make you ill as easily as it can keep you uptight and unable to fully relax.*

*Get naked! Now!*