

Universal Tao Journal

Volume 1

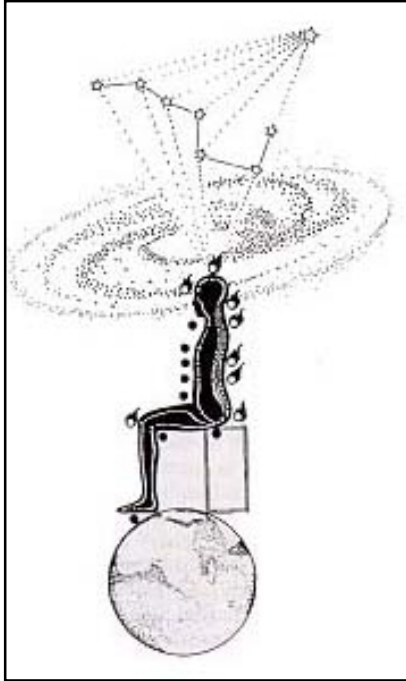
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Tao And The Universe Part 1

1. EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ALCHEMY

For more than five thousand years, Taoist masters researched and developed various ways to attain such desirable effects as long life and happiness. Some methods they called External Alchemy. These external methods used the immortal pill, magic potions, crystals, crystal essence, flower essence, precious stones, etc. The highest Tao masters realized these remedies



only offered limited help, and also built dependencies on materials that were difficult to come by.

In their search for an unlimited source of energy, they turned their attention inwardly to uncover the mysteries surrounding their life-force. In their search they discovered a universe within, which is known as the Microcosmic Orbit or small Heavenly Cycle. This inner universe is almost an identical reflection of the outer universe. They knew that the outer universe harbored a tremendous force. They also knew that the inner universe of a human being could benefit from that force if the two could somehow be connected.

The Taoist masters reasoned that to become connected to the outer universe, one first needs to gain control of his or her own inner universe. They experienced this inner universe as a flow of energy, or Chi, through the body. The Microcosmic Orbit, running up the spine and down the front of the body, is the pathway through which the distilled essence of this energy flows. It is the Microcosmic Orbit that connects the three subtle bodies within each human being—physical, soul, and spirit—and ultimately fuses them into one immortal body. It was with this perception that the study of Internal Alchemy began.

2. THE NATURAL CONNECTIONS OF THE INNER UNIVERSE AND THE OUTER UNIVERSE

In turning their attention toward understanding the nature and connection between the forces of the outer universe and the forces of the human body, the Taoist masters made a discovery. Each life born into the human form is developed, structured, and under the influence of a group of stars. This group of stars, which includes the planets and cosmic particles within their configurations, controls the life-force, the good and bad fortune, and the birth and death of the individual.

Each day of a person's life reflects a continuing need to absorb energy from the stars and planets and the cosmic particles. To explore the patterns of star energy in detail, ancient Taoists developed the science of astrology to a very high level.

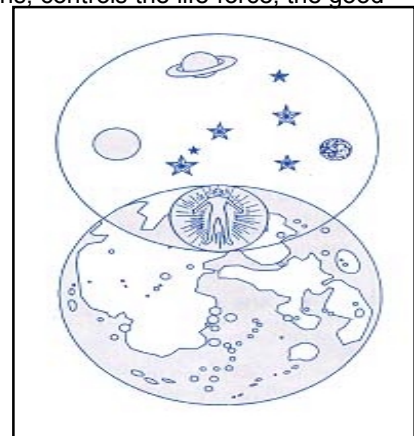
Humans also need energy that is supplied by the Earth's force. It is the absorption of all these forces of nature that nourishes the nervous system, organs, glands, senses, soul, and spirit of a human being.

3. THE UNIVERSAL FORCE, THE COSMIC PARTICLE FORCE, AND THE EARTH FORCE

The forces of nature are divided into three classifications by the Taoists:

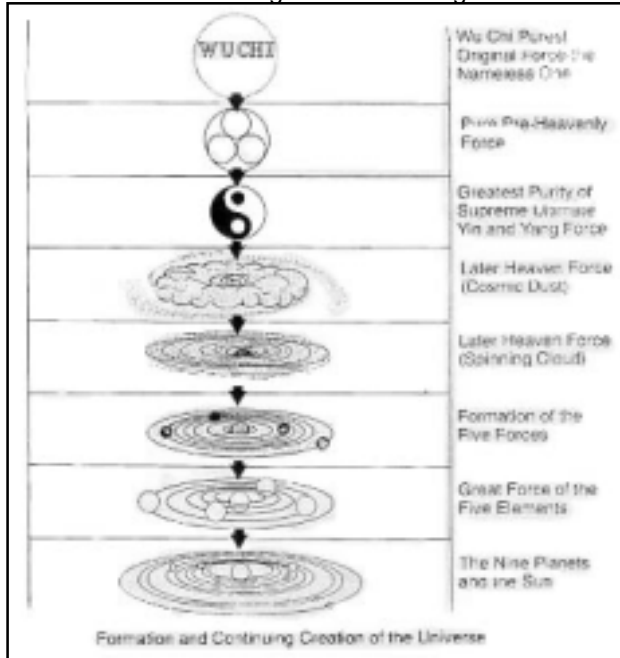
a. The first force is called the Universal Force, or Heavenly Energy. It manifests as the energy of all the stars, planets, and galaxies. This vast all-pervading force nourishes the mind, soul, and spirit of an individual and everything else in the universe.

b. The Cosmic Particle Force, or Human Plane Energy, is the second force of nature. Cosmic Particles are the result of exploded stars that have come to the end of their life cycle. The stars explode into very fine particles that drift in space. Because the planet Earth has a very strong magnetic power, many of these particles are drawn here and drift through the Earth's atmosphere as dust.



It is the Taoists' belief that human flesh is formed from the fallen cosmic dust of the universe. These particles, or dust, nourish the essence of the organs, glands, and senses of all humans. Humans are the highest manifestation of Cosmic Particle Force, gathering this energy into their bodies through meditation, and returning it to its primordial source. The most active time of the cosmic force is from the 3 a.m. to 6 a.m.

c. As the third force of nature, the Earth Force includes the energy of plants, animals, water, and all the natural occurren Page 2 The Healing Tao Journal No. 1 ces of the planet Earth. The Taoists observed



that plants and trees in their upward growth are ever extending themselves to absorb the energy necessary to process their food. Stretching themselves to the sun, stars and the cosmic particles above, the plants and trees use the Universal Force for sustenance and growth. The animals, in turn, consume the vegetation, profiting from the cosmic energy as they do so. Together these three forces represent the energies of Heaven, Humans, and Earth working in harmony to sustain all existence.

The ancient Taoist referred to these ruling forces as the Three Pure Ones, for their's were the first energies to emerge from the Wu Chi, the Great Emptiness. (Figure 1) Traditionally they were visualized as Three Emperors residing in the three Tan Tiens: upper, middle, and lower palaces, or at the center of the body. They govern the development of the three subtle bodies. Through the cultivation of the three forces, which manifest in the human body as Chin, Chi and Shen, we enhance the essence of physical, energy, and spirit bodies.

4. HUMANS DEPEND ON VEGETABLES, ANIMALS, AND MINERALS AS SOURCES OF UNIVERSAL FORCE

Without any consciousness about the force, and without any practice, humans automatically receive a minute amount of these life-force energies naturally. This is particularly true of the Earth Force that provides Yin and Yang energy (negatively and positively charged Universal Energy) to all the organs, glands, and senses. It also provides nourishment and enhancement to the sexual organs and sexual energy of humans. Since ordinarily we do not directly receive life-force from the Universal, Cosmic Particle and Earth Forces, we must depend heavily on the vegetation, animals, and minerals derived from the Earth Force. They predigest the Universal Force, efficiently absorbing it directly themselves.

Humans usually absorb these three main forces with the movement of the Earth in its 365 day orbit through the universe. Through the practice of Microcosmic Orbit, and Fusion of Five Elements, humans can learn about and interact with the original source of all power. They can increase their ability to absorb and transform this force directly and easily, relieving their dependence on the plants and animals to convert the force for them.

Speaking of Warm Current Energy

Beginners in the Healing Tao quickly learn the meaning of "healing energy" and "warm current." Mantak Chia's instruction in Taoist esoteric yoga is clear and effective so that students catch on soon after beginning the practices. Every time we initiate the Microcosmic Orbit, we become more familiar with the effects of what is best described as "energy." The more we practice, the stronger and deeper are the sensations of tingling warmth. We soon learn to apply the term "energy" or "warm current" literally to our own experiences as we cultivate the inner channels.

Yet not all students of meditation are comfortable with the language of "energy." Some authorities reject such terms and warn us against using that language, claiming that "energy" should be used figuratively or not at all in describing meditation. They claim these terms mislead people because the notion of energy comes from the physical sciences and does not properly apply to spiritual practice. This is a widely held view.

In an influential book, *How to Meditate* Lawrence Leshan says we should not use terms like "energy" with meditation because they offer "cheap explanations of things." In particular, he criticizes the Taoist tradition for thinking of energy centers as real locations in the human anatomy. Scientific language, he says, tells us the facts while mythic or poetic language reveals a person's inner feelings about something. LeShan believes that "energy" has a scientific factual meaning and should not be applied literally to meditation. If applied to meditation, "energy" should be used only in a metaphorical or poetic sense. Metaphorical statements allow us to speak about how we feel in our private experience but do not deal with realities. If we confuse scientific facts with metaphors, says LeShan, we risk "seriously hampering any future progress." He fears we are falling for the seduction of Makyō or delusion if we accept energy as something real and definite.

The following excerpt illustrates how LeShan rejects the language of one Tai Chi instructor:

Recently a highly trained scientist, who had also been fairly well trained in meditational techniques, was leading a movement meditation. In this she instructed the group to "let your fatigue drain through the soles of your feet into the earth." I suggested that she would be making more sense if she let the group know that these were metaphors and they should "try to feel as if your fatigue is draining"...and so forth. She insisted that they were not metaphors but facts, and that she could not, in conscience, present the exercise any other way.

According to LeShan, if meditation produces a tingling in our hands and legs, we can only legitimately say that we feel as if there is a lot of energy in them. We should not go on to say, however, that meditation increases the energy in the hands and feet because we are then making a metaphor (which reveals private experience) into a fact (which says something about reality). LeShan objects to any direct references to the reality of psycho-physical energy.

I'm sure that nearly every student of the Healing Tao would side with the Tai Chi teacher whom LeShan criticizes. LeShan's "try-to-feel-as-if" approach is unacceptable because it leads us away from direct experience and inserts a "let's pretend" attitude into the practice. Every change in our language alters our attitude toward the practice and affects the degree of seriousness with which we practice. The "as-if" approach simply does not foster internal communication with ourselves; it is simply not true to our innermost feelings and possibilities.

LeShan's resistance to the language of "energy" and his desire to label that language a poetry of subjective feelings is part of modern philosophical baggage. Western philosophy has brought about a split between the perception of outer reality ("facts") and the reality of inner life ("poetic feelings"). The split is symptomatic of our alienation from the natural, physical world and from our inner selves. Taoist esoteric yoga teaches us a different tradition, one which excels in healing the divisions in the world.

So it will not do to understand "energy" as a mere metaphor without any reference to its real effects upon our lives. I think we may be able to preserve the accuracy of our meditation language while still heeding LeShan's warnings about introducing false scientific terms into the description of healing energy. We can take a clue from the ancient origins of Western philosophy.

Long before modern science was established, the philosopher Aristotle pointed out that some words have the same underlying meaning but are still applied differently to different things. He called this not metaphor but analogy. "Analogy" is the use of a term with the same basic meaning in many cases, but applied to different things according to the nature of each thing referred to. For example, we refer directly and literally to "waves" as movements we see on the Ocean; we also refer directly -but analogously -- to the "waves" we detect with our radio instruments. Both waves are real.

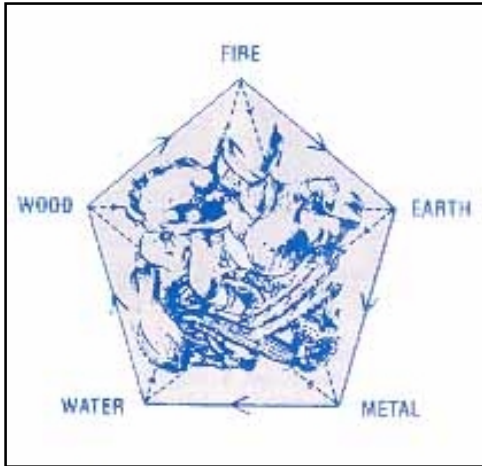
In his work *Metaphysics*, Aristotle first introduced the word "energy" (Greek: *energeia*) into Western languages. He understood all reality to be essentially energetic, or at work. But Aristotle realized that every reality was energetic in a way appropriate to its own nature. So "energy" was originally thought to be in all things analogously or differently in different types of things.

By retrieving Aristotle's original insight, we may say that , when applied to the sensations of the inner Microcosmic Orbit, "energy" is not merely a metaphor, but is simply and literally true energy in the sense appropriate to bodily life experienced from within. Energy applies analogously to each thing -- one way in the physical sciences, and another way in reporting internal sensations of warm current. In fact, Taoist yoga refers to the microcosm (Greek for "little universe") that is within us, suggesting that our inner world is a reflection of the outer world of the vast cosmos.

So there is nothing wrong with applying the term "energy" as we experience it directly and as we explore the warm healing currents within. As long as we remain true to our experience, we are helping to heal the diversions in our language.

An Introduction to Five Element Nutrition

The Five Element Theory is firmly rooted in Chinese culture. Many modern Chinese people may tell you that they do not know this theory, but nevertheless will use it as the basis to their everyday life and pass its principles down to their children. The Chinese do not regard all matter as being made up of the five



their corresponding senses.

elements, but they do regard all things in life as associated with five different actions or movements. For this reason the Five Elements are called the "five transformations" or "five associations". These associations are not seen as rigorous, without exception, but rather as going a little way towards explaining the mysteries of nature and providing a basis for everyday life.

These principals are carried over into Chinese cookery. A good Chinese cook will make an effort to prepare a meal that contains all five flavors and five colors, more or less, in a balance that varies with the season. This creates a meal that is appealing on various levels, attractive, and satisfying.

The basic principle of Five Element Nutrition is to try to balance the body's energy to be in a condition that is neither too Yin nor too Yang. In addition the properties of the Five Elements (also called the Five Phases of Energy) are balanced in such a way that will nourish or satisfy the five organs and

Every person has a predisposed body type they were born with, whose condition is affected by that person's particular daily diet and environment. Within the Five Element Theory it becomes each person's task to distinguish his or her own body type, and then to choose a diet accordingly to establish a balanced energy. If, for example, your liver is weak, you should eat more food from the wood element category to raise the liver energy. However, it is important to realize that this is not an overnight process. The liver energy level should be raised little by little.

Western people have guilty feelings about the diet passed down to them from their ancestors. They believe their diet is not healthy and so they try to follow the diets of other people. But this does not mean that the "borrowed" diet will be suitable for them. Each region of the world has developed a diet of food grown locally and requiring specific weather and soil conditions.

In keeping with the general rules of nature and the laws of the universe, the Taoist's Five Element diet is not simply a new diet that changes one's whole way of eating. It is a way to achieve balance by modifying an existing diet.

Included in the Taoist Theory is the advice not to eat too much or too little of the essence of one particular food. Sugar, fat, cholesterol, and salt are neither good nor bad. Too much salt or fat is not healthy, but too little is also unhealthy. The idea is to find a balanced diet that will balance the energy of the organs. Meditating to circulate the energy of the organs through the body is very important to a balanced diet. When energy flows the body naturally seeks to achieve balance among its organs, and a balanced diet helps to fill this need.

Imbalances in the diet cause the organs and senses to seek replacements for those imbalances. The more Yin a diet, the more the organs and senses search for something to replace the missing Yang. Some very Yin people, for example, tend to smoke frequently which satisfies the need for fire (a Yang element.) Drinking and drugs also can be caused by an imbalance in the diet and, therefore, the organs' energy.

Most American people are very Yang because of their diet. Vegetarians are very Yin because they bring their body energy very low to Yin. Chlorophyll, the blood of plants, is a water element, and this adds to their Yin. An American vegetarian on his way to the extremely Yin phase spends some time in the neutral phase. He feels very good and attributes this to being a vegetarian, but as a matter of fact, it is only his temporary passage through the neutral stage that makes him feel so good. Then, when he has too much Yin

energy, he becomes pale and sick. His kidneys no longer work well, and he cannot tolerate the winter (the season of the kidneys) because the overworked kidneys are causing chronic back pain.

Usually when one organ is weak, the next organ in the cycle also becomes weak. Digestion (and metabolism) will be poor, and so overall energy will be low. Every person must consciously work at balancing his or her own diet by taking in more food to help the weaker organ(s). The proper use of food will result in more balanced internal energy (CHI) and improved health. The benefits of this harmonious state are many: more energy, calmer disposition, fewer illnesses, and longer life.

Western Psychology and The Healing Tao

As the eldest senior instructors of the Healing Tao, we have had the great good fortune of practicing and teaching its transformational methods for over eight years. Having taught thousands of people, we have had ample opportunity to begin to understand how we can effectively present the nuances and precision of these ancient Taoist formulas for health, vitality and spiritual development. Over these years, we have had the pleasure of working closely with Master Mantak Chia and Maneewan Chia, both as colleagues and friends. We are deeply grateful for everything we have learned from them as well as their willingness in allowing us the opportunity of introducing Western psychological principles to the Healing Tao.

As trained psychologists and therapists, we have been in the position of observing various psychological reactions that come up for Westerners doing the Healing Tao practices. For example, many times we have seen students in our workshops experiencing powerful emotional reactions to exercises such as the Inner Smile. Suppressed feelings of sadness and anger suddenly often show up when they begin to smile inwardly and get in touch with their vital organs. These reactions are known as healing crisis in Western psychology and they are a positive sign of inner growth and change. On occasion we have found it helpful to these students to do a bit of counseling during or immediately after the workshop to help them process and integrate these reactions.

We feel that a view through the lens of modern psychology can be useful for the practitioner and teacher of the Healing Tao. For example, the question of low self-esteem is one of the most common concerns and problems that many people experience in our culture. In what ways can Western psychology be helpful in making the Healing Tao practices useful for a problem such as this?

Self-Esteem and the Inner Smile

Through all of our years of counseling people of all ages and many different backgrounds and professions, we have found some common barriers to a fulfilling and vital life. One of these is low self-esteem. The Inner Smile is a tremendous resource for our clients, not only in times of stress, but especially in giving them (and us) a method to look within and quietly discover their true feelings and their self-worth.

Low self-esteem comes from a pattern usually established in childhood, stemming from how our parents reflected our worth to us. If they were too busy for us, or overly critical, we got the message that we weren't loveable. We felt that we were in the way and causing our parents aggravation. We then carry this painful feeling of being unlovable into adulthood.

How can you use the Inner Smile to increase self-esteem?

In addition to it being a marvelous stress transformation method, the Inner Smile can also be a powerful emotional healing experience. Approached in this way, it can help you accept love, and appreciate yourself on a very deep level. This works because you learn how to love and respect yourself unconditionally by using the vital organs as the focus of your attention. Respecting and loving your vital organs is easier than trying to accept more general aspects of your personality for which you have definite likes and dislikes. As you work with the vital organs they will gradually reveal emotional aspects of yourself that are interfering with your ability to love and respect yourself.

Try doing the Inner Smile with the specific intention of accepting yourself and what you are feeling, exactly as you are, right now, with no judgments. As you smile into the inner organs, you can experience a relaxation that goes deeper than a simple muscle-tension release. There is a quality of self-esteem and inner-respect that develops-respect for your very being. This respect doesn't come from any accomplishment or achievement. (We often mistakenly equate respect and esteem with outer accomplishments.) In contrast, this respect comes from your ability to tune in to your inner self and accept and appreciate whatever is happening. This knowledge of what you are truly feeling can begin to inform your life in a very meaningful way and give you a good foundation of selfknowledge from which to make any changes you wish.

The Inner Smile and Emotional Awareness

Closely related to low self-esteem are negative inner judgments about oneself, based on the belief that we are not worthwhile. These are often accompanied by an inner dialogue such as, I am no good, or I can't do this, or Other people are more capable than I. Most of the time, this inner dialogue is below the surface of our awareness, and therefore, not being aware of the source of our discomfort, we have no way of changing it.

As children, we may have survived by not talking about our feelings or needs to our parents. After doing this for long enough, we actually lose touch with what our true feelings and needs are. The Inner Smile is a superb way of getting back in touch with our authentic feelings and needs. As you gently smile down through the inner organs, allow any feelings or sensations to come to your awareness. It is very important to simply experience these feelings, and accept them. If any judgments, criticisms, analysis, inner dialogue, or comparisons come up, direct your attention to the actual experience and acceptance of the feelings and sensations.

Your feelings and sensations in the Inner Smile could be anything-e.g., light, fluttery feelings which, as you tune in deeper, let you know that you are excited; or a heaviness in your belly that you come to realize means you are a bit apprehensive. As you start to recognize and become familiar with your felt experience, you will have a wider range of feelings that you can tune in to, including a variety of internal states that would otherwise have been hidden or overlooked. In addition to being more authentic, you also have a means to integrate and use your emotions effectively.

For example, you might discover a tightness in your liver area, as you do the Inner Smile. When you simply and clearly experience that sensation, you may realize that you are feeling resentful towards someone or something in your life. Feeling and accepting your resentment gives you new information to live more effectively. Sometimes the awareness and acceptance, alone, can allow you to forgive, and move on. At other times, it may be more appropriate for you to honor your feeling by talking to the person you are feeling resentful of.

This is an example of what we call "quiet therapy," a method of discovering our own inner experience and deeper feelings. These moment to moment experiences often contain a certain inner wisdom. Taking the time to be alone, and to smile quietly within, we become more able to "listen to" this inner wisdom. There comes with this a relief, because we are finally able to sense and respond to our body's previously unheard messages. We feel more connected and positive about our life and where we are going. We are beginning to fully trust ourselves.

Another benefit of being directly in touch with your experience is that you have an immediate connection to your life force, aliveness and vitality, allowing you to be more present, vital and authentic in your life. These qualities will help you in your profession, your intimate relationships and your spiritual work.

In future issues of The Journal, we will describe more ways of understanding and using the Healing Tao practices in conjunction with Western psychological and spiritual ideas, such as centering, deepening intimacy, and refining emotions. Some of this material will be drawn from the book Transforming Negative Emotions, coauthored by Gunther and Master Chia soon to be published by Healing Tao books.

Beyond Relaxation and Meditation

Since the publication of Mantak Chia's book, *Awaken Healing Energy through the Tao*, thousands of Americans from all walks of life in cities across the U.S. have reportedly experienced sensations of energy flow in the Microcosmic Circulation and in other parts of the body. The descriptions of these energy flow sensations match those described in many classical Chinese writings, most of them Taoist. I have also examined recent scientific electrophysiological studies on the meridians, and both the Chinese and French scientists have in separate experiments proven that the meridians do actually exist as an electro-physiological phenomenon and the scientific mapping of the acupuncture points and meridians has a 80-90% correspondence to the acupuncture map passed down in Chinese history for thousands of years.

In addition, stimulations of the appropriate acupuncture points actually produced neuroendocrine secretions, measurable physiological changes in the intestinal, cardiac and other internal organ activities, electroencephalographic changes, and measurable electrical impulses received at the cerebral cortex of the brain. Deep connections of the meridians to the internal organs have also been proven by separate experiments in China and in France.

It now becomes clear to me that the energy flow sensations experienced in Taoist Esoteric Yoga are the same as the Qi (Chi) sensation experienced by patients during needle acupuncture, laser acupuncture or even accupressure. The Microcosmic Circulation is the Tu Mai and Ren Mai, the two most important and useful curious meridians in acupuncture. Taking the experience of his students as a whole, practically all of the meridians have been felt by Mantak Chia's students. The same conclusion had been alluded to in several classical acupuncture texts. However, due to the lack of scientific evidence proving the validity of acupuncture, and the lack of scientific evidence proving the physiological changes in relaxation meditation and yoga, both acupuncture and Taoist system were considered as Chinese folklore and superstitions until now.

The work of Herbert Benson, M.D., Prof. at Harvard University Medical School, and several other scientists have gone a long way to change the above-mentioned misconceptions. Through careful experiments, they have proven that the Relaxation Response produces significant and beneficial physiological changes in the human body. Relaxation therapy and stress management has now become a respectable therapeutic modality in the medical circle.

Taoist Esoteric Yoga is, of course, by itself unique, a one-of-a-kind attempt at attaining supreme knowledge. However, we scientists like to dissect everything that we can lay our hands on. If we dissect the technology of Taoist Esoteric Yoga, we can say that the physiological effects of Taoist Esoteric Yoga is a product derived from the interaction of the physiological effects of Relaxation Response and the physiological effects of acupuncture. Relaxation Response quiets the electrical activities of the cerebral cortex and the rest of the central nervous system to such a point that the acupuncture energy (Qi, Chi, prana) can start to flow smoothly and freely again.

My observation is that excessive electrical activities of the cerebral cortex retards the generation and the flow of acupuncture energy (Qi, Chi, prana.) Furthermore, quieting the electrical activities in the cerebral cortex allows the sensations of Qi to flow to come into conscious awareness of the Taoist Yoga practitioner, so that the practitioner can now begin to consciously generate more Qi and consciously guide its flow to remove obstructions and balance excesses and deficiencies in the acupuncture meridians and internal organs of his own body. This particular view of Taoist Esoteric Yoga also fits into the framework of Biofeedback, which means bringing your own physiological processes into your conscious mind and consciously manipulating them. According to my dissection, Taoist Esoteric Yoga is Relaxation Response Acupuncture and Biofeedback, three in one.

Now, what is the physical nature of Qi (prana, acupuncture energy?) What is the material structure of the acupuncture points and meridians? Numerous scientists all over the world are working on an answer to the above questions, but I do not think that there will be an answer to the above questions, but I do not think that there will be an answer for at least 10 to 20 years.

Do we have to wait another 10 to 20 years before using Taoist Esoteric Yoga to benefit mankind? No, for in the last few thousand years, numerous Chinese have already healed their own illnesses with Taoist Esoteric Yoga. And in the last 10 years a large number of hospitals and medical schools in China have officially adopted Qi Gong as one modality in the treatment of cancer, arthritis, hypertension and many other medical conditions, and they have claimed good results in their medical journals and publications. Classical Chi Kung (or Qi Gong, the official Chinese translation) is one aspect of Taoist Esoteric Yoga. However, the Qi Gong used in the Chinese hospitals and medical schools these days have overemphasized the physical exercise and breathing exercise components of Taoist Esoteric Yoga (equivalent to Hatha Yoga and Pranayama) and have ignored the need for Relaxation Response and Biofeedback and the need to consciously generate and guide Qi flow.

Taoist Rejuvenation Exercises and Taoist Breathing Exercises (equivalent to Hatha Yoga and Pranayama) as adopted by the Chinese hospitals and medical schools and called Qi Gong is no doubt an important step to promoted energy. But all the classical Taoist texts and all of the living masters of the Taoist Esoteric Yoga tradition also emphasize the need for the Relaxation Response and Biofeedback components and the need to consciously generate and guide Qi flow.

That Relaxation Response, Biofeedback, Hatha Yoga and Yogic breathing exercises are important foundations of Taoist Esoteric Yoga is clear from my observations on Mantak Chia's students. Since the publication of the first edition of this book, many students of Yoga, Tai Chi, T -M and other meditation traditions have come to study with Mantak Chia. Those with 4 to 5 years prior experience with the Relaxation Response, Hatha Yoga and related disciplines felt the energy flow instantly, or in a matter of days, opened up many channels and felt the Qi energy more vividly and intensely. Those without such prior experience took many more weeks and months before they could feel the Qi flow. They felt the energy much less vividly, less intensely and less precisely in the acupuncture meridians.

I can see that the United States is fertile soil for the development of Taoist Esoteric Yoga into a respectable and important therapeutic modality. This is because Relaxation Response, Hatha Yoga and Acupuncture have already become household words in the United States in the last two decades, and they are the very basis of Taoist Esoteric Yoga.

Martial Arts and the Healing Tao

As Master Chia's Healing Tao practices have become more widespread, I have watched with interest the growing diversity of the backgrounds of participants. Previously those interested in Healing Tao practices were largely comprised of new-age or esoteric type individuals. Now mainstream Americans (and mainstreamers elsewhere) have begun to appreciate the benefits these practices have to offer to all. At this stage many mainstreamers are comprised of people who have a vocational interest in the Healing Tao; that is, those whose professional skills stand to be enhanced by the Healing Tao. These mainstreamers include psychotherapists, dancers, massage therapists, and to a lesser degree, martial arts instructors. Curiously, the least attendant of this group has been external style (karate, kung fu) martial arts instructors or enthusiasts.

Martial arts is the fastest growing activity in America. Yet, considering the numbers out there, relatively few have experimented with the Healing Tao.

I suspect very few martial artists are motivated to discover another system, particularly an internal one. External style martial artists are generally "bred" to be loyal to their school and their system. They are often taught their particular style has everything to offer them that they could possibly need from martial arts. Consequently, the different systems often compete with each other for students and are loathe to embrace each other's value beyond the dictates of professional courtesy.

No doubt many external systems perceive the Healing Tao as one more system competing with their own, expecting students who learn Healing Tao practices to leave their ranks to pursue other training. Although this could happen in situations in which instructors are closeminded or styles are strict, this needn't be the case at all.

My personal experience as an external and internal style martial arts instructor has shown that internal and external are not mutually exclusive. At my school classical Chinese Kung Fu, Tai Chi Chuan, and the Healing Tao curriculum exist side by side, each autonomous according to its design. I am careful not to mix or blend these different practices, yet they complement each other well. I've observed that my kung fu students who also have learned Healing Tao practices generally find their overall experiences as martial artists greatly enhanced. I have also noticed that the positive Healing Tao influence can manifest in several specific, identifiable ways.

Firstly, the level of sophistication of martial arts students has advanced tremendously over the last twenty years, particularly over the last five. Previously most students sought self-defense skills and/or physical conditioning. Now many more people pursue martial arts for stress reduction or the "mind/body" link. However, the mind/body can be very selective in how it releases stored stress. Although martial arts are often very helpful in reducing stress and its effects, they generally are not geared toward addressing stress on an emotional or energetic level. The result is that students may find their needs are not being met, or perhaps are met in too limited a manner. Access to and pursuit of the Healing Tao practices as an adjunct to martial training offers another dimension of personal development skills which can bring a sense of emotional and energetic balance to what is otherwise a primarily physical level of training. I've observed this to be the case in my own school. Kung Fu students who also practice the Healing Tao are finding a broader range of their own personal needs met. This makes them more inclined to continue on a long term basis with all their training.

A second feature has to do with body manipulation. From a teacher's standpoint knowledge of Iron Shirt Chi Kung and Tai Chi Kung is very useful, facilitating the ability to articulate students' postures. A technique either has good structure or it doesn't. If it doesn't, then it can be readily demonstrated why and fixed. A subtle shift of an elbow, a shoulder, or the waist can increase tremendously the effectiveness of a fighting technique. A martial arts instructor who understands the principles of Iron Shirt will surely enhance his teaching skills since the principles of Iron Shirt are universal.

With any skill its development is only as valuable as it is relevant to the user. So beyond the enhancement of teaching skills, Iron Shirt and Tai Chi Kung offer genuine value to any martial artist. Martial arts are often promoted on the basis of teaching the weak how to defend against the strong. The current trend in martial arts is weight training to make the weak stronger, but the benefits to weight training are as limited as the muscles themselves. Again, the principles of Iron Shirt promote an understanding of structure and rooting to the earth, and mastery of these skills will develop the ability to overcome a stronger muscular force. A punching, kicking, or blocking technique executed with good structure can have a devastating effect, amplifying whatever muscular force one might already have.

Beyond all the ways Iron Shirt and other Healing Tao practices can enhance the various martial arts on a physical level, one other point warrants attention. Breathing is integral to all martial arts. Yet very few of these arts teach students how to articulate their breath in any specific manner beyond inhaling to gather power and exhaling to express power. Iron Shirt breathing is uniquely relevant to martial artists because the "packing breath" can enable one to withstand a blow in combat, and promotes stamina and endurance.

Lastly I wish to address the energetic influence the Healing Tao practices can have on any martial arts school. Most schools foster a loyal sense of fraternity amongst the students. Great strengths often evolve from the fraternity that is established between both teacher and students. Since most bonding occurs on a physical emotional level, the sense of empowerment may remain contingent on one's bond with others. In any martial environment in which teacher and students also practice Healing Tao meditations and Chi Kung, there is a capacity for a much deeper and yet less dependent bond to be formed since the common thread will transcend the physical/emotional realm. Members of a school will have shared a common energetic experience and so may feel simultaneously deeply bonded by that experience and empowered in a manner that catalyzes their own autonomy. This allows them to become more in touch with their own inner strength, independent of others. In developing virtue energy and a sense of spiritual purpose, the Healing Tao practices are very much in accordance with martial arts philosophy, with the ultimate goal not to block, kick, punch, and fight. In the end the real master of martial arts is the one who knows himself.

In conclusion the Healing Tao System can be a welcome and valuable adjunct to any martial arts curriculum. Hopefully the martial arts community will come to recognize a perfect neighbor in the Healing Tao.

Sitting Meditation for Home Instruction

These exercises can be completed in about 20 minutes. If you devote this much time to their practice regularly, you should experience many benefits.

Prepare your body to sit using the proper structure. Make sure both feet are flat on the ground, and place your hands in your lap, right palm over left. If possible, try to have the knees and hips on the same level, or keep the knees slightly higher.

1. Practice Spinal Cord Breathing from nine to 36 times. This will help activate the cranial and sacral pumps and the adrenal, thymus, thyroid, and parathyroid glands.

2. Become aware of the cosmic particles around you. The Inner Smile attracts this energy.

3. Picture a smiling face directly in front of you.

4. Spiral and draw the energy of the cosmic particles flowing around this face into your mid eyebrow and eyes.

5. Let the smiling energy flow down your nose and cheeks, relaxing them as your jaw muscles become loose.

6. Consciously create a real smile all over your face as you raise the corners of your mouth and the outer corners of your eyelids.

7. Smile down your neck and loosen it, relaxing the muscles of your throat. Continue to send loving energy into your body as you smile down to the thymus gland. This will greatly strengthen the immune system by helping the thymus gland produce T-cells to fight off cancer and other diseases.

8. Smile into the heart. Feel love, joy, peace and happiness glowing from within the heart and expanding outward. Think of a positive affirmation to enhance these qualities as they shine to the other organs.

9. Spread the smiling energy with love and joy into the lungs. You are now working with a pure energy.

10. Smile into the remaining organs (liver, spleen, stomach, pancreas, kidneys, and sexual organs), and feel the love, joy, peace and happiness spread throughout the body. When smiling to the sexual center, feel the creative power of the sexual energy. As you feel it growing, draw it up to the navel and allow it to expand outward.

All organs assist in the function of decision making because they are the source of our emotions. The Inner Smile enhances the positive characteristics of each organ's energy. As you progress, emphasize a different positive emotional energy each day, or spend up to a week concentrating on each emotion individually. Always focus on the organ associated with each emotion.

1. After a few days, or by the second week of practice, concentrate on the feeling of courage in the lungs.

2. By the third day or week, concentrate on the feeling of kindness in the liver.

3. By the fourth day or week, begin to emphasize the energy of fairness and openness in the spleen.

4. During the fifth day or week, emphasize the energy of gentleness in the kidneys.

5. On the sixth day or week, try to experience the growth of your creative powers in the sexual center.

It is very important to enhance the feeling of compassion every day. After practice, try to maintain that feeling for as long as you can, and train yourself to recall it whenever necessary.

The Middle Route of the Inner Smile--The Digestive System:

1. As you meditate, thank the digestive system for performing the functions of assimilating food, eliminating waste, and absorbing energy.

2. Move your tongue to swish the saliva around your mouth, charging it with Chi energy. Swallow hard. (Saliva is the essence of the cosmic force, and it combines easily with external Chi.)

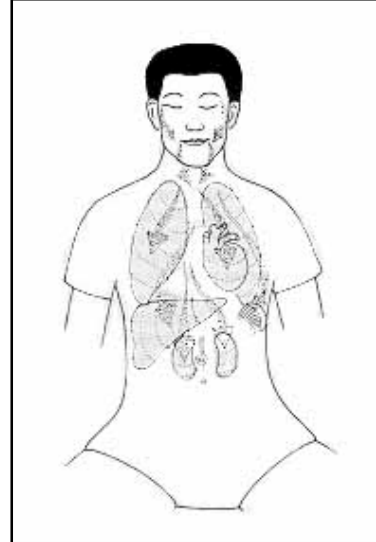
3. Follow the saliva down, and smile into your stomach.

by Master Mantak Chia

4. Smile down to the small and large intestines, to the rectum, and the anus. Feel the energy open and expand.

The Back Route of the Inner Smile--The Spinal Column:

1. Smile up to the pituitary and pineal glands. Your eyes should look inward and up.

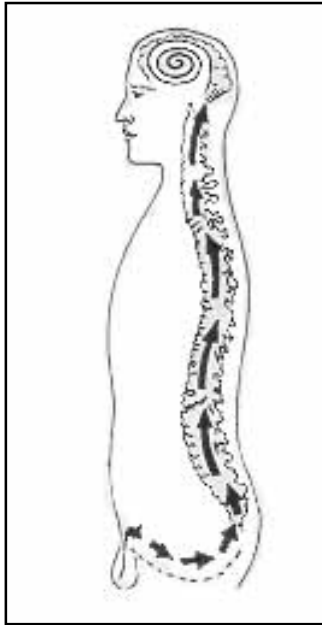


2. Smile into the left brain. Move your eyes inward and up as you direct the smiling energy into the left brain 3 to 6 times.
3. Smile into the right brain. Move your eyes inward and up as you direct the smiling energy into the right brain 3 to 6 times.
3. Smile into the hypothalamus, pineal, and pituitary glands, and the small brain.
4. Smile down the spine to the coccyx.
5. Return your concentration to the navel.

TESTICLE AND OVARIAN BREATHING (Little Bliss)

Very often, in the beginning stages, students find that they cannot feel the movement of energy within their bodies because their channels are not fully opened. Testicle and Ovarian Breathing helps to open the Microcosmic Orbit and increase the energy flow.

1. Become aware of the genitals. Smile down to them, and breathe deeply as you increase the energy in the sexual center. Men slightly lift up the testicles, using the mind and some muscular contraction. Women become aware of the Ovarian Palace, and squeeze the vagina. Both men and women should feel the charge build up in their respective sexual centers.



2. When you feel that the sexual energy is ready to move, inhale and expand the lower abdomen. Push down to the pelvis as you create a ball of energy in the lower abdomen. By pushing this ball down the front of your body, you can force the sexual energy to rise up the back. Inhale in small sips as you draw it up the spine from the genitals.

a. Men: Push the energy ball down to the testicles until the sexual energy can be felt rising up the spine.

b. Women: Push the energy ball down through the cervix and ovaries to the perineum, forcing the sexual energy to rise.

c. Be aware of the Earth Force (blue kindness/gentleness energy) that is also being drawn up from the ground through the spine.

d. Inhale a sip of air as you contract the perineum, and draw the combined energies upward. Inhale another sip as you contract the anus, and another as you contract the back part back of the anus.

3. Tilt the sacrum, inhale, and draw the energy up to the sacrum. Mentally spiral the energy on this point from three to nine times in each direction.

4. Continue to inhale in small sips, once for each station, as you bring the energy up the spine.

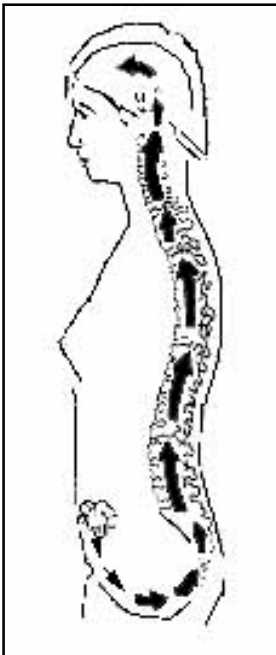
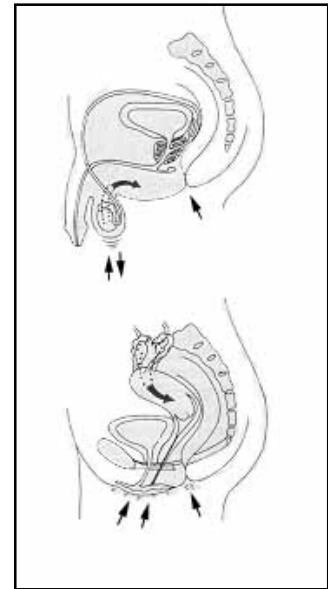
a. Concentrate and spiral on these major points as you draw the energy up to them: the Door of Life, T11, C7, the base of the skull and the crown.

b. Hold and spiral the sexual energy at the crown for as long as it feels comfortable. Be aware of the North Star shining a violet or purple light upon your crown. Also be aware of the Big Dipper shining a red light within the colors of the North Star light. Inhale, and draw in the light from both sources through your crown, nose, and later on through the skin of your whole body. Feel joy and bliss from the energy you have acquired.

c. Exhale, then repeat this sequence two or three more times.

5. Men: Spiral the energy at the crown nine times clockwise, and then nine times counterclockwise. (Testicle Breathing releases cold energy which can be left in the head if one chooses.)

Women: Spiral at the crown nine times counterclockwise, and then nine times clockwise. (Ovarian Breathing produces hot energy which must be

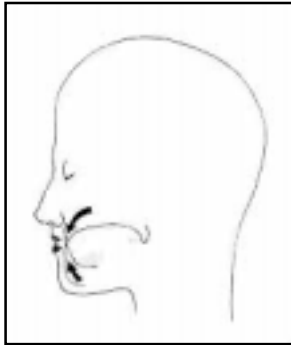
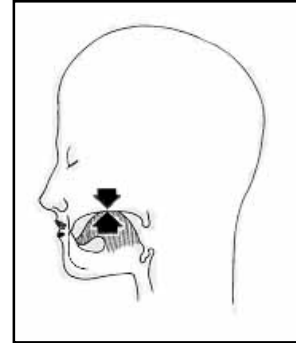


brought down the functional channel and stored in the navel.) Rest, absorb the energy, and continue on to the next exercise.

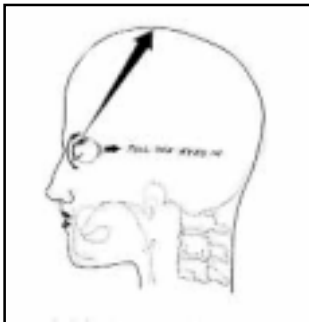
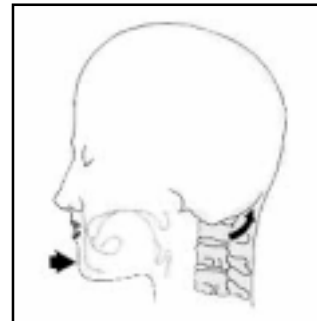
POWER LOCK FOR MEN/ORGASMIC DRAW FOR WOMEN Internal Power Exercise (Higher Bliss)

The following techniques are powerful tools for drawing aroused sexual energy up to the higher centers of the body, thereby transforming it into life-force and spiritual energy. These methods are used in both single and dual cultivation, which means that you can practice with or without a sex partner. As an alternative to Testicle and Ovarian Breathing, they may also be used to draw unaroused sexual energy upward. (The previous exercises should not be discarded, however.)

1. Smile down to the genitals, and be aware of the energy in the sexual center. Relax the shoulders and chest.
2. When you feel the sexual energy is just right, initiate the actions of the cranial and sacral pumps. (See Notes section for the proper status of sexual energy.) Remember the following points as you draw the energy up the spine with each contraction:
 - a. Inhale one short sip of air with each contraction.
 - b. Push the tongue upward against the roof of the mouth.



- c. Clench the teeth.
- d. Pull in the chin to the back of the neck.
- e. Pull in the eyes and look up to the crown.
- f. Contract the anus, and pull up the genitals, perineum, and back of the anus as you squeeze the buttocks. (Tightening the muscles of the buttocks activates the sacral pump.)



- g. Clench the fists, arms, and legs. Squeeze the muscles into the bones.
- h. Keep the feet planted firmly to the ground.
- i. Always keep the shoulders and chest relaxed.

NOTE: If the shoulders and chest are not loose, the area of the heart may become congested with energy which is dangerous.

3. To assist the upward draw of sexual energy, use the energy ball in the lower abdomen as described earlier in Testicle and Ovarian Breathing:
 - a. Men: Push the ball down to the testicles until the sexual energy can be felt rising into the perineum and up the spine.
 - b. Women: Push the ball down through the cervix and ovaries to the perineum, forcing the sexual energy to rise.

- c. Be aware of the Earth Force energy.
4. Inhale, and push the ball down as you use your mind and muscular contractions to draw the sexual energy up the spine. Pull up the genitals, the perineum, the anus, and the back of the anus with each sip of air. Tilt the sacrum, and draw the energy up from the genitals to each individual station nine times, starting with the sacrum.
5. After each contraction, drop a little bit, relax the spine, then draw upward again as you tighten the buttocks and the aforementioned areas. Remember to look up to the crown.
 - a. Begin with nine sips of air and nine contractions to draw the energy from the sexual center up to the sacrum.
 - b. Next, draw the energy from the sexual center up to T-11 nine times in the same manner.
 - c. Draw up nine times from the sexual center to C-7.
 - d. Draw up nine times from the sexual center to the Jade Pillow.
 - e. Draw up nine times from the sexual center to the crown.

6. After the final contraction, spiral and hold the energy in the head for a while. Be aware of the North Star, the Big Dipper, and the Universal Force which is indicated by the violet and red light. Exhale, then breathe in the light through the crown, the nose, and the skin of your whole body. Combine this Universal Force with the sexual energy, and feel the bliss.

7. Do the entire sequence of nine contractions to each station three more times.

8. Men: Spiral the energy nine times clockwise, and then nine times counterclockwise at the crown before drawing it down to the navel. (The Power Lock for men sends hot energy to the head.)

Women: Spiral nine times counterclockwise, and then nine times clockwise. (This energy is cold for women and does not have to be stored immediately.) able in any way.

ACTIVATING THE MICROCOSMIC PROCESS

Focus again on the smiling cosmic energy in front of you. Take many small sips of air to help activate each center, and pack into each as you move through the entire Microcosmic Orbit.

1. Inhale, spiral, and draw the smiling energy into your eyes and mid-eyebrow. Inhale, spiral into the heart, and feel it expand with the energy of love, joy, and peace.

2. Inhale, and spiral the smiling energy down to the navel.

3. Inhale, and spiral the energy down to the sexual center, and then the perineum. Be aware of the gentle blue Earth Force.

4. Inhale a small sip of air for each point as you spiral the energy up to the anus, back of the anus, sacrum (Tilt the sacrum), Door of Life, T11, C7, base of skull.

NOTE: If the energy escapes into your arms and hands, stop using the C-7 point. In this case draw the energy from the Door of Life directly up to the base of the skull.

5. Exhale a little, then sip the energy up into the crown (pineal gland). Spiral and hold the energy for a while. Feel the violet light of the North Star and the red light of the Big Dipper within the violet rays flowing into the Microcosmic Orbit.

6. Bring the energy down the forehead to the mid eyebrow (pituitary gland), through the palate and tongue, and down to the throat center (thyroid and parathyroid glands).

7. Inhale, bring the energy to the heart (thymus gland), the solar plexus, and then the navel (lymphatic system and spleen).

8. Hold your breath, and do embryonic breathing a few times. (Move your navel in and out, but don't release the breath.) This will increase the pressure in the abdomen and thereby enhance the flow of the Microcosmic Orbit.

9. Exhale, and spiral the energy in navel. Feel it expand.

10. Use your mind to guide the energy in the Microcosmic Orbit a few times.

a. Send it down the backs of the legs to the soles of the feet.

b. Be aware of the Earth Force (blue light, gentleness, etc.), and draw it up the front of the legs to the perineum, then up the spine to the crown.

c. Be aware of the Universal Force above head, and breathe in the red and violet light of the stars through the crown.

d. Next, concentrate on the mid-eyebrow, and sense the smiling cosmic energy in front of you.

Breathe in its golden light.

e. Circulate the combined energies in the Microcosmic Orbit three to six times.

f. Finally, return your attention to the navel, and collect the energy there. The rest period at the end is very important to feel and absorb the energy. Try to maintain that feeling throughout the day.

11. Finish by covering your navel and drawing the energy into it from the crown. To store the @ArtSubhead2 = energy, press the tongue up to the palate, spiral, and draw the energy down the functional channel.

Men: Cover the navel with the left hand over the right, and spiral 36 times clockwise, then 24 times counterclockwise.

Women: Cover the navel with the right hand over the left, and spiral 36 times counterclockwise, then 24 times clockwise.



WARNING: It is dangerous to leave hot energy in the head. If you allow it to overheat the brain, negative emotions or even physical damage can occur. Cold energy presents fewer problems. When in doubt about your energy's status, store it in the navel.

CHI SELF MASSAGE

1. Rub your hands together to warm them with friction. (This also charges them with energy.)
2. Rub your face, eyes, nose, and ears. Rub each side of your nose with one finger. Also rub below the nose.
3. Rub your hands again, and cover your eyes with the heels of your palms.
4. Rotate the closed eyes left and right.
5. Place one finger in each ear, and rotate them simultaneously.
6. Hold the nose closed with two fingers, and slowly blow out to increase the pressure in the inner ears.
7. Cover your ears with the palms, and snap the index and middle fingers from behind them. (These exercises train the inner ears.)
8. Tap with your knuckles around the jaw and gums.
9. Clench the teeth a few times.
10. Gum Exercise: Move your tongue around the teeth to massage the gums. With the jaws closed, knock around the gums from outside of the mouth with your knuckles. Then collect saliva as you build up the chi. Swallow hard, and feel it warm the stomach.
11. Rub the neck, stimulating the thyroid and parathyroid glands.
12. Activate the thymus gland by tapping it.
13. With the hands open and flat, tap around the area of the lungs, heart, and chest.
14. Activate the other organs (heart, lungs, liver, spleen, and stomach) by patting and rubbing in a circular pattern around the abdomen.
15. Activate the lower abdomen by inhaling and slapping the area.
16. Gently pound the kidneys and the sacrum with closed fists. (This helps to detoxify them.)
17. Slap downward from the outsides of the legs and upward from the insides to stimulate the ascending lymph flow.
18. Hit and pat the soles of the feet (K-1, Bubbling Spring points) to stimulate the descending lymph flow.
19. Tap the arms, neck, and head.

SIX HEALING SOUNDS

1. Lungs Sound - Ssssssss
2. Kidneys Sound - Whoooooo (as when blowing out a candle)
3. Liver Sound - Shhhhhhh
4. Heart Sound - Hawwwwww
5. Spleen Sound - Whoooooo (guttural, from the throat)
6. Triple Warmer Sound - Heeeeeee

NOTE: If you have very little time, just do each sound once. They should take about 20 minutes to complete.

NOTES:

1. The cosmic energy of the North Star, Little Dipper, and the planets spirals down from right to left as it is absorbed. (The spirals get smaller as they come closer to you.) The earth energy spirals from the ground to the heavens, beginning small, then getting larger with each new spiral from left to right. (Earth energy continues to enter through your soles after practice.)
2. MEN: Testical Breathing generates cold energy; the Power Lock generates hot energy. Hot energy must be stored in the navel.
3. WOMEN: Ovarian Breathing generates hot energy; the Orgasmic Draw generates cold energy. Hot energy must be stored in the navel.
4. Sexual energy is just right when it is activated, but not too aroused or understimulated. In other words, do not overcook or undercook with sexual arousal. When it feels right, sexual energy can be drawn upward to produce a warm, pleasant feeling in the body. If it is too hot, the organs overheat and cause discomfort. The emotions within the organs can also flare up in your daily interactions. If sexual energy is too cold, it cannot rise and be transformed. In Taoism it is said that when you melt gold, the temperature has to be just right.

5. Practice Embryonic Breathing. Push the navel in and out without inhaling or exhaling. The action is similar to an infant breathing within its mother's womb.

6. Carefully read "Chi Self Massage" to be well versed in the techniques. This is very important.

7. Exercise the lower abdomen. Compress air firmly into the abdomen so that you can pound your fists against it. (Do not hit hard when the bladder is full.) Men activate the prostate, sex organ, and large intestine. Women activate the cervix, ovaries, and large intestine.

Bone Marrow Nei Kung In retrospect

When I began doing Bone Marrow Nei Kung exercises seven years ago, I had absolutely no feeling for my bones. They seemed hard, rigid, and dense, the very opposite of the qualities I was seeking to cultivate in myself through Tai Chi Chuan movements and meditation. I didn't know my bones were alive and growing every minute, that my life depended on the quality of blood they produced, or that I could have a major effect on my health by interacting with them.

I was amazed and surprised that with even the simplest exercises like "Bone Breathing," my bones quickly responded with a wonderful feeling of just having sprung to life. They tingled and began to rhythmically purr like a cat. When I did Tai Chi Chuan, my flesh and organs would disappear, and I could feel my skeleton dancing lightly through the air.

Having practiced these exercises for almost seven years now, I can assure the reader that the Bone Marrow Nei Kung practices are legitimate exercises for physical and spiritual health. The ancient Chinese were incredibly precise, even scientific in their methods of tapping bone power. Mantak Chia has taken this one step further by integrating modern scientific knowledge of bone chemistry with the ancient knowledge of Chi functioning in the human bones and body.

The name "Bone Marrow Nei Kung" sounds pretty mysterious and esoteric. Master Chia originally taught it as an advanced level of "Iron Shirt Chi Kung." It may help to understand the cultural context of these Chinese terms. In China there are thousands of different "Chi Kung" practices taught by martial artists and meditation masters. Chi Kung literally means "practicing with the breath," which can include any exercise that uses breathing to energize the body. The physical breath activates the "Chi," also interpreted as "subtle breath," which generates increased physical and psychic strength.

"Nei Kung" is a very close relative to Chi Kung. It means "practicing with your internal power" and implies building body-mind power without using physical breathing techniques. Mental concentration, internal imaging, and development of a deep inner sensing of psycho-physical processes are the marks of Nei Kung techniques.

Most of the methods of internal alchemy taught at the Healing Tao centers-the Inner Smile, Microcosmic Orbit, Fusion of Five Elements, Kan and Li-are all "Nei Kung" techniques. Perhaps because they are more subtle than Chi Kung methods, the Nei Kung methods are fewer in number, and traditionally many have been kept very secret.

When Master Chia visited Taiwan in 1987, he discovered that the going price to learn Bone Marrow Nei Kung was about four thousand U.S. dollars for ten hours of instruction. Plus you had to take an oath of absolute secrecy not to teach anyone else. Master Chia had already learned the practice in Hong Kong more than a decade earlier from Master Cheng Yao-Lun.

When Master Chia learned the method of "Cleansing the Bone Marrow," the price was years of slavish devotion until your teacher, or "Sift" , entrusted you with the secrets. When he completed his training, it was Chia's very impatience with this slow process that inspired him to publish these closely guarded secrets to benefit the thousands of Westerners seeking accurate and practical instruction in Chinese internal arts.

The Bone Marrow Nei Kung methods of his book are the same ones associated with stories of masters achieving an "iron shirt" or building a "steel body." Contrary to movie legend, this is not a superman body of hardened flesh and muscle, but the inner strength of a body whose bones and organs are so packed with Chi energy that it resists aging and disease. The resilience to withstand the physical stress of hard blows or sudden falls comes from packing the fasciae with Chi that helps the body to "bounce off" outside forces.

Bone Marrow Nei Kung offers an opportunity to explore the core of our physical body and to learn how to root our spiritual being within that solid physical anchor. The benefits are universal, teaching us to use the unconscious power deep within our bones and make it available for mundane everyday use, as well as for spiritual goals.

A few years ago this topic would have drawn interest from only select circles of martial artists. Today Bone Marrow Nei Kung techniques are sought by ordinary people who simply wish to be more embodied, more grounded, and healthier in their physical being. These practices were once extremely secret in old china, but today the secrets of the Tao are opening like a flower, and the sweet fragrance is available to anyone drawn to it.

My Health Is In My Hands

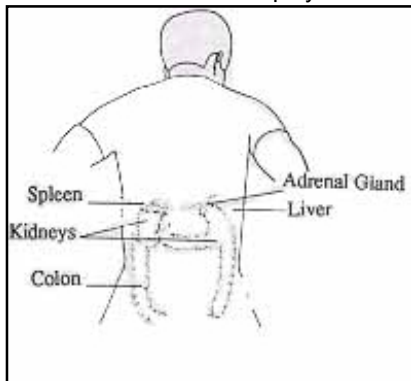
Kidneys and the Adrenal Glands

The primary function of the kidneys is to help filter out waste materials from the blood. The adrenal glands produce adrenaline to regulate the heart beat, responding to any sudden need of energy. Taoists believe that the kidneys also store the essence of life and sexual energy (Jing). The left kidney is yin (water-like) energy; the right kidney is yang (fire-like) energy. Both kidneys together store and generate life-force energy in the same way a battery stores and generates electricity.

The secret of living a happy and healthier life is to cultivate healthier organs, especially the kidneys. Through the knowledge of how to conserve, recycle, and absorb Chi from the source - the universe and the earth - we can increase our life-force. We are born with limited life-force energy that diminishes with age if we don't nurture it. When it is spent, physical life comes to an end.

i. To conserve the original force of the kidneys, sexual energy must be retained. Practice the Healing Love techniques.

2. Do not overwork.
3. Do not let your emotions increase to any extremes. Avoid excess anger, fear, or even joy as too much of these can hurt the life-force in the kidneys and adrenal glands.
4. Avoid excessive alcohol, drugs and smoking.
5. Avoid too much spicy food as this can also hurt the kidneys.



The following exercise can help you to strengthen the kidneys and adrenal glands.

1. Sit properly on the edge of a chair at a level no higher than your knees. Keep your back straight.

2. Do the Inner Smile. Especially smile down to the kidneys and the adrenal glands. Feel yourself getting in touch with them.

3. Extend your hands out with the palms face up and your feet planted firmly on the ground. Be aware of your palms and soles and the heaven force spiraling down in a clockwise direction as the earth energy spirals upward in a counterclockwise direction from under your feet. Rub your hands, and massage

your soles until they are warm and open enough to absorb to heaven and earth forces.

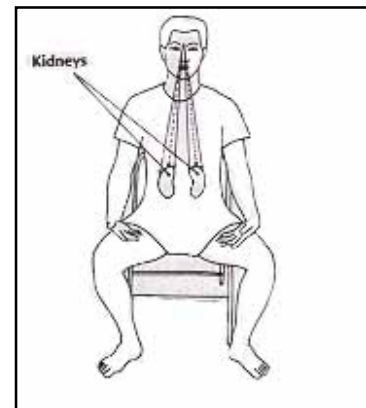
4. Use your palms to cover the kidney areas on your back from both side of the spine.

5. Adjust your breathing to be long and deep. Start from 20 to 30 seconds per breath. (You can count mentally if you need to.) Exhale as slowly and deeply as you inhale. (You can use the mouth to control the volume of air expelled during exhalation.)

6. Breathe into the kidney areas and expand the kidneys against your palms. Slightly bend your body to the front, and feel the heat from the palms radiate energy into the kidneys and the adrenals. The kidneys should begin to feel warm. Hold the breath for 10 to 20 seconds.

7. Exhale very slowly through the mouth or the nose. Flatten down the kidney areas, and feel the cold energy from the earth come up through the palms to radiate into the kidneys. These hot and cold energies will strengthen the kidneys and the adrenal glands.

8. Do several sets of this exercise.



Healing Love in Action Questions And Answers

The following questions were asked by new students about the Healing Love and Microcosmic Orbit practices:

1. QUESTION: During the Power Lock practice, I concentrate on sending the sexual energy up to my head, mentally guiding it all the way; however, I don't feel it moving up. Can it actually be moving up even though there is no sensation of it?

ANSWER: You should first concentrate on the Microcosmic Orbit meditation as taught in Awaken Healing Energy Through the Tao. When your Governor and Functional Channels gradually open, the sensations of the Healing Love and the other practices will increase. After a period of regular practice, your sexual energy will accumulate internally, and your experiences will be quite profound.

2. QUESTION: I am still unclear as to whether I (as a beginner) am supposed to send the energy up to my head and leave it there to build up, or should I send it up and follow it back down in the same breath. If you bring it back down, where does it go?

ANSWER: In the Power Lock and Microcosmic Orbit practices, Chi should be stored in the navel. Draw the energy up your spine through the Governor Channel to the crown, and spiral it nine times in each direction. Then push your tongue up against the roof of your mouth, and bring the energy down to the navel through the Functional Channel.

NOTE: Hot energy should never be left in the head. If you are not sure about the hot or cold status of the energy you are working with, always store it in the Navel.

3. QUESTION: After reading your book, I am wondering if you can equate anger with sexual energy. In other words, when you feel yourself getting mad (just as when you feel yourself approaching an orgasm), can you rechannel that angry energy to some other part of the body rather than let it explode outward? If so, where do you send the anger, or should this energy be released?

ANSWER: This observation is useful in that sexual energy can be related to explosive emotions. Taoist sexual practices release sexual energy in a raw, unrefined state. It must be circulated through the Microcosmic Orbit to be refined; otherwise, it can build up in the lower centers of the body and cause negativity to arise. Harmful emotions such as anger may result. Negative physical effects can also be experienced in the sexual center if this energy is not circulated. It is a far better experience to feel the many health benefits of rechanneling, refining and storing sexual energy.

Rechanneling "angry energy" involves another Taoist practice referred to as the Creation Cycle. This exercise recycles negative emotions by removing their energies from the internal system to be refined into positive energy. In other words, negative energies are drawn out of the organs, their negative charge is neutralized, and they are returned to the organs in a more positive state. This refined energy is then used to strengthen positive emotions. The Creation Cycle is part of the Fusion II practice.

4. QUESTION: I would like to ask about my experience with a woman I recently started dating. One night we spent about fifteen minutes meditating together without physically touching. I circulated Chi in my Microcosmic Orbit which made me feel very peaceful and in touch with myself. About one half hour later, we sat on the floor facing each other. Her legs were crossed; I extended my legs over hers. Our torsos were about a foot and a half apart. I suggested that we meditate with our palms raised, but not touching. Her palms were face down over mine which were face up.

I started the Microcosmic process, circulating my Chi, which then shifted to revolving clockwise around our bodies, like a white vortex. My partner verified that she had imagined energy flowing out of her right hand and into her left. My body started to jerk around as the Chi built up and moved. I then started to imagine drawing energy in through my crown and sending it out of my hands into her. After a few minutes I could really feel the energy flow, particularly in my hands. After I told my partner to concentrate on her hands, a "buzzing" sensation immediately became very evident, and the energy flowed even more easily.

At this point I started feeling "flashes" of energy as my body's jerking movements became more pronounced. Suddenly my brain went completely black for an instant. I then received the most intense bolt of energy I have ever felt which caused my arms to lock from my shoulders to my wrists. Concurrent with this shock was an explosion of a deep purple color that mellowed down into purple and white fireworks.

I had no concept of time, but gradually the energy let up.

We continued meditating until another rush of energy occurred. The second time was more of a dizzying rush that was so powerful I almost passed out. This happened two or three more times. I concentrated on sending energy up my partner's arms to her C-7 point, and then around her Microcosmic Orbit. (She later confirmed the sensation of Chi flowing.) I slowly stopped the flow of energy, but felt as if there was too much to store in one place. I was tired, but I felt strong vibrations from the energy.

After a period of talk, we kissed and immediately felt a tingle of energy move from the base of our skulls down both of our spines. We found that we could hold our tongues about a half inch apart and still feel the energy between them. My partner then became very tired and fell into a deep sleep for almost 30 minutes. She later told me that she retained the experience of her crown feeling expanded from within. I felt more energy than I ever had before. The vibrations and flashes stayed with me for at least the next day. Sometimes I can still feel some of these sensations when my head and spine are in proper alignment. My questions are:

1. What happened? I particularly don't understand the purple coloration.
2. This was a tremendous improvement over my normal meditation. I can't help but believe it was caused by my partner's presence. Was this the case? If so, could this be true because she is a female, or would the same experience have occurred regardless of her gender?
3. I would like to try this again. Is there any danger to my partner who has only recently begun to meditate? Her intense fatigue afterward made me wonder if it was too much for her system.

ANSWER: First consult the books, *Healing Love Through the Tao*; *Cultivating Female Sexual Energy* and *Taoist Secrets of Love*; *Cultivating Male Sexual Energy*. Both books discuss the exchange of energy between partners that often happens even without sex. (Remember that the ultimate love making experiences can occur on a spiritual level completely outside of the male and female bodies.) Keep in mind also that your experiences are usually subjective and may not be explainable by anyone other than yourselves.

The energy you build up through years of practice eventually attracts more energy from other sources. The purple light you saw was a representation of the cosmic force coming to you as you attracted it with your energies through the vortex you created. Combining male and female energies increases the intensity of such experiences as each gender supplies a quality of Chi that enhances the other.

Finally, your partner may feel tired because you are helping to open her channels. You may also be draining her energies if she is not experienced enough to prevent it. In this case such an experience may not happen again because she doesn't have enough Chi to exchange with you. Remember that women lose enormous amounts of energy during menstruation as men lose it through ejaculation. Upon learning to harness sexual energy through the Taoist practices, however, women become incredibly powerful as partners and as individuals. Indeed, she did enhance your experience because she is a woman.

