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Tao And The Universe part 3

COMBINING THE ENERGIES OF EARTH AND MOON

In the Taoist view, the universe, the earth, and the moon are regarded as a unique combination out of billions. The earth has a much higher density and a stronger magnetic field than all the other planets if compared by size. The moon also has the same high density and strong magnetic field. The moon is larger than some of the planets, and in itself, could be considered a planet, except for the fact that the moon's essential composition differs from that of the planets. When these two magnetic forces combine, the Taoists believe they initiate the originating force by which all living things come to life. The earth has a strong gravitational pull on the moon, attracting it to orbit the earth. The moon also has a strong gravitational pull on the earth which creates a powerful universal force to beam down to the earth. Magnetic particles of light settle down as dust from which the Taoists believe all the living things are created. As the Bible states, "From dust to dust." Taoist theory is that the earth and moon combine their forces to draw the energies that comprise soul and spirit from trillions of stars. Humans are regarded as the highest condensation of this powerful universal force

THE YIN AND YANG CYCLE

In Taoist theory, a woman's energy is female (Yin) outside, but male (Yang) inside. A man's energy is Yang outside, but Yin inside. This is called the inversion of the innerform. The essential form is the root of the creative process, the origin of movement and stillness, and the myriad transformations that thereby arise.

In the Taoist way of energy cultivation, the hours between midnight and noon are governed by Yang energy, and the Sun gives vitalizing support to human activities. The hours between noon and midnight are governed by Yin, the moon energy, which revitalizes the human body. Most of the important Taoist energy cultivation is engaged during the Yang part of the cycle.

1. Midnight to Morning

From midnight to morning is when the energies of the moon and the sun start to combine, balancing the qualities of Yin and Yang. This is the best time to practice Iron Shirt Chi Kung, (especially the Embracing the Tree and Turtle postures), the Microcosmic Orbit meditation (including the Inner Smile to get in touch with the organs), the Fusion of Five Elements meditation, and the Healing Love practice, which draws sexual energy up the higher centers. All energies drawn from these practices should be stored in the navel.

2. Near Noon And Afternoon

At around noon time, when the sun has ascended directly above the crown area of the head, Yang energy becomes stronger in this area, and the organs also heat up. This is the good time to handle affairs and business. If you can take a few minutes to move the energy in the Microcosmic Orbit and to concentrate on the navel to absorb any excess energy from the sun, this will provide extra energy for you to use throughout the afternoon.

3. Evening

This is the first part of the Yin cycle. At this time the Yin energy is still shallow, but it is usable for some work. If you have some time, you can practice more Iron Shirt Chi Kung, or simply sit and still the mind, concentrating on the navel and the Door of Life. Then circulate the energy in the Microcosmic Orbit for a few rounds.

4. Near Midnight

In the latter part of the Yin cycle, the energy develops more depth. This is the best time for resting as the moon's energy is in full charge. The moon governs healing, growth, and nurturing, which are needed for rest. Before sleeping, practice the Six Healing Sounds to clear out the negative energies in the organs, which cause excess heat to alter the balance of the Yin and Yang qualities. Practice forgiveness by changing the negative feelings to good feelings. When you clear out the negative emotions, you will be easily charged by the Yin (moon or water) power.

THE MOON'S POWER

From ancient spiritual culture to modern day witchcraft, the power of the full moon has been utilized to heighten the spiritual force of spiritual practice, or to increase the spells of witchcraft.

Taoists believe the gate of the moon's energy (Gate of Immortality) opens on the days of the equinoxes and solstices, especially in Autumn, which has the highest moon energies of the year. They call this time the "Eastern Well." This is the best time to access to the moon's power.

The Moon Rules the Water Elements

In Taoist theory, the moon is cold, empty, and contains the essence of Yin (earthly) energy and of water. It rules all things of a Yin (cold) or watery nature, such as the tides and the rhythms of the body. The sun is related to the heavenly (hot) energies, and the moon is related to earthly energies.

The Moon and Humans

The moon's energy influences the right hemisphere of the brain, whereas solar energy influences the left. Knowing how to absorb the energies of the sun and moon will help to balance the two hemispheres of the brain. (The right side is related to intuition, and the left side is related to intellect.) Using these energies to enhance both hemispheres is also important for higher development. The sun and the moon are the eyes of heaven, corresponding to the human eyes. The left eye is associated with the sun, and the right eye is associated with the moon.

In the body, the moon influences the kidneys, which are linked with the salivary glands, the ovaries, and the semen. When the kidneys are stimulated during sex, the Chi is raised up through the spine, then it flows down through saliva, and the kidneys' essence transforms into sexual energy. The saliva has two functions: purifying the mouth, and the nourishing our immortality, the water of life. The energy from the saliva lubricates 100 joints, and it stimulates and harmonizes the organs. It is very important to enhance the production of saliva by absorbing the moon's energy through the breath. When saliva increases during the breath absorption exercises, it is a sign that the technique is correct.

NOTE: To balance all of these energies within ourselves, we also need help from the forces of nature, the earth, the Big Dipper, the planets, the constellations, and the North Star. The Quality Of The Moon The moon's color is yellow, its essence is red, and its rays are white. The subtle energy of the moon also influences the lower/ abdomen. The moon is represented by the trigram Kan (water), in which the two outer lines are broken (Yang within Yin). Li (fire) is represented by the trigram in which the inner line is broken (Yin within Yang). This is the essential form. In ancient tradition, the symbolism of the rabbit in the moon represents Yang within Yin. Also the symbol of the moon has a cinnamon tree with a rabbit that pounds a drug of immortality.

The World Of Water

The world is covered by approximately 90% water, just as the human body contains 90% water. In the same way that the moon's gravity creates the waves and tides of the oceans, its energies also influence our personalities, subconscious minds, instinctual behavior, and emotions. The moon has the power to enhance the consciousness of spiritual work.

PRACTICING WITH THE MOON

The Eight Articulations of the Moon:

The practices for the Moon are done according to the eight articulations of moon power, which occur during the two solstices, the two equinoxes, and the first day of the four seasons.

1. Winter Solstice (December 21 st through 22nd) is associated with the fifth lumbar.
2. Spring begins February 4th or 5th and is associated with the second lumbar.
3. Vernal Equinox (March 20th through 21 st) is associated with the eleventh thoracic vertebra.
4. Summer begins May 5th or 6th and is associated with the eighth thoracic vertebra.
5. Summer Solstice (June 21 st through 22nd) is associated with the fifth thoracic vertebra.
6. Autumn begins August 7th or 8th and is associated with the second thoracic vertebra.
7. Autumnal Equinox (September 22nd through 23rd) is associated with the 6th cervical vertebra.
8. Winter begins November 7th or 8th and is associated with the 3rd cervical vertebra.

These dates fix the time for absorbing the moon's energy. Taoists believe that on these days the moon's gate is open and the immortal energy is released. Practice on these days will greatly increase your own immortal energy. (The same thing occurs with the sun's energy, which will be described in the next issue.) Practice with the sun must be accompanied by practice with the moon; however, the moon's energy can be absorbed by itself for awhile. For more intensive work, you can alternate practicing with the sun and moon for cycles of 45 days each to comprise an overall cycle of 360 days. (45 x 8 = 360) Start with the moon practice on the winter solstice-or any of the eight articulations--for 45 days, and follow by practicing with the sun for 45 days.

Absorbing Moon's Essence:

The moon has a red essence (internal energy) and a yellow breath (external hue), but there are actually five colors of the moon that correspond to the five elements of nature. The five colors (blue, green, red, white, yellow) can be seen in the Divine Breath, or the "deity" of the moon which appears in the center of an energetic cloud as you practice. As you develop your meditation, emphasize absorbing the breath of the moon during the two solstices, the two equinoxes, and the first day of the four seasons as follows:

- a. In Spring, emphasize more absorption of the yellow breath of the moon.
- b. In Summer, emphasize more absorption of the red essence of the moon.
- c. In Fall, absorb the white breath.
- d. In Winter absorb the white vapor of midnight.

Practice:

1. Sit under or look at the moon. Relax the mid-eyebrow, and smile at the moon, keeping the eyes cool, and slightly open the mouth. Breathe in, feel the mid-eyebrow and the mouth, and draw in the red essence of the moon. Feel the saliva build up.

2. Look at the moon, and be aware of the perineum. (This center has a close connection to the moon.) Use your eyes and mind to spiral the energy at the mid-eyebrow and the perineum. Feel a coolness in the eyes. This will help draw in the moon's energy through the mouth and the mid-eyebrow.

3. Close the eyes, still facing the moon. Some people can see the yellow light immediately, but if you cannot, just imagine the color. The yellow breath of the moon gathers and descends, covering the body of the practitioner. You might see yourself in the moon's light. This light travels through the body and rises back up to the Palace of Universal Yin, which is the moon.

4. See the light of the moon's five colors. Use your mind to form a halo in which they descend together down to your feet. The five colors will then become concentrated and rise to the crown.

5. In the middle of this cloud of five colors will appear a yellow breath. The yellow light, together with the halo of five colors, penetrates through the mouth, mixing with the saliva.

6. Move the tongue to mix the saliva with the light and the essence of the moon. When the saliva becomes thick like grease, swallow it hard down to the navel. Spiral at the navel, and make it warm as you absorb and transform the energy into life-force.

NOTE: The essence of the moon tastes like a nectar that is as sweet as honey. This is the nourishment of the immortal energy.

7. Once you feel you have absorbed enough energy, you can start to do the Microcosmic Orbit or Fusion of Five Elements meditations.

8. Bring the moon's energy down to the navel.

9. Close your eyes, and divide your awareness between the mideyebrow, the navel, and the perineum. Picture the moon shining on the top of your head.

10. When you feel a lot of the energy has been absorbed into the navel and transformed, you can circulate this energy in the Microcosmic Orbit. Guide the energy to any specific part of the body, or to the whole body, as you need for healing.

12. When you finish, collect the moon's energy, and store it in the navel, or store it in the perineum and the sexual center.

The Moon's Energy and the Days of the Month

This practice can also be used on any day of the month when the moon's energy is high or when the moon's energy door is open. Taoists suggest that the best days to absorb the moon's energy are the third day after a new moon, the fifteenth day (when the full moon occurs), and the 25th day (five days before the next new moon), which is when the sexual center is activated. You can practice at any time when you can see the moon, especially when the moon is at the height of its energy. On nights that are cloudy and the moon is not visible, you can stand or sit facing the moon. Practice by visualizing the moon behind the clouds, and draw the moon's energy in. (In either case, practice is the same as outlined above.)

Obtaining the Yin Essence of Water

To obtain the Yin essence of the moon through the medium of water (particularly on days of the Autumnal Equinox- "the Eastern Well water"), put a jar of pure water covered with lid, and expose it to the moon for seven to fourteen days. Make sure the water does not spoil or change taste. This water is called the "Majestic Emanation." You can use this water to drink, or mix potions of it with juice to help increase the Yin essence.

The Waxing Moon

The energy of the waxing moon promotes spontaneous and instinctual behavior. During this period, the moon collects, transforms, and balances the solar energy, reflecting it to the earth. This gives all living things Yin energy with which to grow.

THE NEW MOON, THE FIRST QUARTER

The new moon begins the lunar cycle. The first quarter is the time for new beginnings, new projects, new ideas, and for new growth. This is also a good time for buying property, changing jobs, starting a new bank account, planning a wedding, etc. The sexual energy is in its low cycle, gradually building up.

The Hui Yin, the Spine, and the Moon

The first day of the new moon is associated with the Hui Yin (perineum), located between the genitals and the anus. This time is optimal for cultivating sexual energy and preparing to assimilate the energy of the new moon. (Maintaining sexual energy by drawing it up the spine is very important during this period because its loss would diminish the benefits of the moon's energy which you are absorbing.) For men, any sexual practice should avoid ejaculation. Women should practice Ovarian Breathing because any eggs being produced become activated with energy at this time.

Taoists regard the Hui Yin as the Gate of Life and Death. It is important to know how to seal this gate to retain the life-force. When this energy is retained, one feels more secure and grounded.

Taoists believe there are certain times and situations when it becomes more difficult to control sexual energy, yet it is most important to maintain control at these times to receive the optimum benefit from external energies. Try to avoid sex during a woman's periods, the latter months of pregnancy, and right after giving birth. It is also better not to have sex during storms, eclipses, rainbows, during intoxication, or after overeating.

The Moon and the Spine

The period of the Waxing Moon is closely associated with the spinal cord. In the second day of the first quarter (24 to 48 hours), the energy starts to rise up through the sacrum and the spine. It requires less concentration to circulate energy in the Microcosmic Orbit as the moon approaches the full moon. The force of the moon helps to pull the energy up from the base of the spine. On the day of a new moon, one should fast or keep a clean simple diet, which can include more vegetables, fruits, and liquids. This will help one to enjoy the moon's refreshing energy.

Near the end of the first quarter (after four to six days), the energy is stronger, and the effects of the moon upon human energies are more pronounced. At this time the moon's energy also affects the Door of Life, lumbers two and three, the kidneys' center, the adrenal center, and T-11. This is when you should concentrate on balancing the left and right kidneys, and strengthening the adrenal glands as you cultivate the gentleness of the kidneys and the sensation of freedom.

THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND QUARTER

From the seventh to the tenth day, the energy of the moon strongly affects the point opposite the center of the heart (between T-5 and T-6), which is the center of love and joy. This is the time to cultivate the good virtues, such as love, joy, happiness, and respect. This period is also a good time to develop things already started (i.e.. increase your savings, buy more stock, increase your activities at work or at home, etc.)

From the eleventh to the fifteenth day, the energy strongly affects the C7 point, the small brain point, and the Crown (pineal gland). C-7 is located at the base of the neck; the small brain point is located at the base of the skull; and the crown's point is at the top of the skull. This is a good time to cultivate feelings of humanity. It is also a period of high inspiration when it is very easy to receive information through the small brain's center. The crown's center is the place of receiving guidance from the higher force, bringing radiance and happiness.

THE FULL MOON, THE THIRD QUARTER

During the full moon (thirteenth through the fifteenth day) of the lunar cycle, the tide rises. The body's fluids and energy also rise as they are affected by the moon's energy in the same way as sea water. During these days one should avoid affairs which require too much care fulness, delicacy, or gentleness, such as making business presentations, meeting new people, or dealing with social or religious issues. You may also find that dieting to lose weight, household work, and quieting bad habits, such as drinking coffee, smoking, or doing drugs are more difficult than usual. At this period the blood flow increases, and surgery or dental work result in greater loss of blood than usual. This is a good time for cultivating ideas and plans, however, since the rise in energy enables one to achieve greater clarity.

Women With the Full Moon

The full moon effects the menstrual cycle of women, which in Chinese is actually called "the moon cycle." If a woman knows how to absorb Yin Chi, she will experience an increase in energy that can be directed toward other projects or her work. With the Ovarian Breathing practice during a full moon, women can build up this energy easily, and they can use it to enhance their work.

Because of the over abundance of Chi, sexual desires may be stimulated. In Taoism it is recommended that women avoid having sex with a man during menstruation because they can lose more energy and become more prone to infections; however, during this period their sexuality is high, and it is easier to achieve orgasms. Women can use the Orgasmic Upward Draw to guide the sexual energy up to the brain, senses, organs, glands, and the parts of the body that need most to be strengthened and healed. This kind of orgasm is referred to as a "total body orgasm."

Man With the Full Moon

The full moon also exerts a pull on the sexual fluids, affecting them greatly. The male sex drive is heightened, and men may also experience more difficulty in preventing ejaculations. So during periods of a full or waning moon, a man may need help in retaining his sexual energy from his female counterpart. A woman can help during sex by not moving or tilting her hips too much, and with Ovarian Breathing, she can contract and squeeze the man's sexual organ at a shallow depth to help block his urge to ejaculate. This way

he can have pleasure without accidentally losing his energy. While the woman squeezes, releases, and spirals in the vaginal area, the man can just rest, putting his mind on the top of his head to bring the orgasmic energy up to the brain. This will help to relieve the pressure in the genitals.

When making love, men should keep the perineum closed by keeping their feet together. The buttocks should be tightened each time a man penetrates with nine shallow thrusts and one deep thrust. Men should also concentrate on keeping the testicles cool as the aroused state will create a lot of internal heat, making retention more difficult. (One may prefer to use three shallow thrusts, then one deep thrust, but it will be more difficult to control.)

After Sexual Exercises:

1. Lie on your back with the body relaxed. Feel the body as if it is suspended in space.
2. Hold your breath and shake the body several times, then exhale smoothly.
3. You should eventually feel heat in your face, which is an indication that the Ching Chi has risen to the crown. Massage your face with both hands, and disperse the heat.
4. Once again hold your breath, and with swish your tongue to produce saliva, then swallow. This causes the Ching Chi to circulate down to the Tan Tien where it is stored.

Full Moon And The Emotions

The full moon has a great affect on both negative and positive emotions. Its pull on the body's energies tends to bring out more fully a person's true nature. During this time, people seem to have less control over their emotions, and they are more easily pulled off center as they feel the extremes of whatever their moods may be. Judgement is less clear, and behaviors are often ruled by instinct instead of rationale. The story of the werewolf illustrates the changes that can occur in human nature during times when the moon is full.

The practice of the Inner Smile, the Microcosmic Orbit, or the Fusion of The Five Elements will help transform the negative emotions into positive life-force, also expanding the good virtues. Use the Microcosmic Orbit to circulate any excess energy in your head down to strengthen the lower centers. If you do this in your daily practice, you will have more control of your energy. Once you can transform your negative emotions, you will no longer be afraid of the negative effects of the full moon's energy because you will be able to make good use of it.

Full Moon and the Virtues

For people (especially women) who have a lot of good virtues, a full moon tends to bring out these virtues even more. This is also a good time for anyone to nurture the virtuous energies by practicing the Inner Smile.

Full Moon and Sleep

The full moon can affect people and make it harder for them to sleep. It can also promote vivid dreaming, especially if it has been a stressful, emotional, or disturbing day. All stress and emotions are exacerbated by the full moon's pull on the body's energies. To alleviate this problem, do the Six Healing Sounds as you practice forgiveness before going to sleep. (The Taoist way to practice forgiveness is through the Inner Smile, the Six Healing Sounds, or the Fusion of Five Elements.) When you feel negative emotions arising, do not pass judgement on other people or the events occurring around you. Just get in touch with your inner self by using the Inner Smile to transform any negativity into positive emotions and good virtues. Daily practice of the Inner Smile helps to nurture the good virtues in yourself and in others.

The Waning Moon

During periods of waning, the moon is in a passive stage, receiving less of the sun's power. After a full moon has occurred, moving toward a new moon, it reflects less of the sun's power. The moon instead reflects the stars, especially the North Star, the Big Dipper, and the planets. This period greatly increases spiritual work and the results of meditative practices. Its effect upon humans can be seen in the way spiritual energy flows through us and in the way we conduct our activities inwardly. It also enhances our creative processes.

The moon's energy affects the water element, and its power decreases each day of this period. In stead of pulling up and activating this element within our bodies, the moon's force pushes the water element down, thereby weakening it. The earth also draws in more of the reflected power of the moon's energy, which might cause people who are in a low mood to feel depressed. This is a good time for conscious growth through meditation to draw in the earth's energy. Use the practices of Iron Shirt Chi Kung, Testicle and Ovarian Breathing, and the Microcosmic Orbit meditation to help you get in touch with the earth's energy.

The Mid-Eyebrow, the Throat, and the Heart's Center

The moon in this period affects the Yin channels at the front of the body and, at its full power, the mideyebrow (Third Eye). This can help to nurture a stronger determination and the growth of wisdom. ("Wisdom" here means internal knowledge and intuitive judgement, as well as a deeper philosophical perspective.) On about the seventeenth or eighteenth day, the moon's energy will also affect the throat's center, which cultivates the power of speech and is the center that controls our dreams. From the eighteenth to the 21st day, the moon's energy affects the heart's center, located between the two nipples, promoting more feelings of love, joy, and compassion.

THE FOURTH QUARTER

During the last quarter of the moon's cycle, the expanding or contracting forces of the moon's energy are released. The moon's energy is sent down to the earth, and the earth draws it in. This is a good time to connect with the earth energetically. The Iron Shirt Chi Kung practice combined with the meditations will strengthen this connection. This is also a time for ending an ordeal, resting, renewing, and preparing for a new cycle. You may do any of these activities during any phase of the moon's cycle (ie. selling investments, closing a business, ending a relationship, etc.), but planning ahead at this time can make things easier and more productive.

Earth Connection Exercise (Fourth Quarter):

It is important to activate the perineum, the anus, the coccyx, and the soles of the feet , (the "Bubbling Spring"). This will enable you to connect with the earth's energy more easily.

1. Stand in a Horse Stance.
2. Be aware of the perineum, the anus, and the soles. Inhale a short sip of air, and contract the perineum. Inhale again, and contract the anus. Inhale, and breathe into the lower abdominal area. Hold for a while, then exhale through the mouth very slowly, sending the energy of your breath down to the backs of the feet, out through the soles, and into the earth.

3. Relax especially the perineum, but very slightly contract the sexual organs and the anus (called "Connecting the Bridge"). Feel the

Earth's Force come up to you as a cool sensation of blue energy, or a feeling of gentleness or kindness. During this period, the earth is charged with the Universal Force.

The Solar Plexus and the Navel:

From approximately the 22nd to 24th day of the fourth quarter, the moon's energy affects the solar plexus and the navel. The center of the solar plexus controls the aura and the vital bodily processes of digestion and absorption. At this time, it will be easy to strengthen the aura and increase one's power of physic protection.

In Taoist theory the navel is regarded as the lower cauldron, which is important for cultivating spiritual energy. The moon gives strong energy to this center, which also connects with the earth. Practice Bottle Breathing to activate the navel's center and to strengthen the surrounding area as you balance the energy.

Bottle Breathing Exercise:

1. Be aware of the navel. Inhale with a small sip of air into the navel area, and hold for awhile. Without exhaling, inhale another sip down into the lower abdomen, and hold for a while. Then inhale another sip into the lowest part of the abdomen. Hold the breath for as long as you feel comfortable.

2. Exhale , and place your awareness at the navel. Use your mind and eye power to spiral energy in the navel area to make it warm.

3. Do this for a few times. Try to maintain the awareness and hold the breath for as long as you can. This will help increase your power of absorption and digestion of food (as well as your absorption of spiritual energy).

The Sexual Center and the Perineum

From the 24th day of the fourth cycle until the first day of the next cycle (first quarter), the moon's energy effects the sexual center and the perineum, or the Hui Yin, which signifies the collection of Yin energy. Concentration on this center will help to cultivate creative and personal power.

Learning To Control Our Menstrual Cycles

A REPORT FROM THE OVARIAN KUNG FU RESEARCH AND STUDY GROUP

In September 1989, Master Chia announced his intention to start work on a new book: "Controlling the Menstrual Cycle." I was extremely excited about this prospect because I've been sharing Ovarian Kung Fu with women since I first learned it from Master Chia in 1982. The term "kung fu," by the way, does not mean fighting--it means skill.

OVARIAN KUNG FU

In the book "Healing Love Through the Tao, Cultivating Female Sexual Energy," Master Chia outlined two major exercises: Ovarian Breathing and the Orgasmic Upward Draw. These two exercises reflect the two different sexual energies in the body: reproductive, biological energy and aroused sexual energy.

Our biological reproductive functions are ongoing: while you are reading this your body may be maturing an egg, making the uterine lining, estrogen or progesterone, etc. Ovarian Breathing is a technique for retaining this biological sexual energy and then transforming it into "lifeforce" or "daily" chi. By salvaging this energy through Ovarian Breathing, some women have reduced premenstrual problems as well as problems associated with menopause. (See Healing Tao Journal Vol. 1, no. 2, "In the Heat of the Night," page 39.)

Since the major amount of sexual energy is lost through menstruation and childbirth, Ovarian Breathing becomes the main practice for sexual energy cultivation. Cultivating the aroused, i.e., "sexy," sexual energy, for women, has a healing and spiritual component, but it is the technique of Ovarian Breathing that seems to prevent the more or less steady loss of energy over half our lives.

SINGLE CULTIVATION IS NATURAL FOR WOMEN

Because our reproductive organs are all internal, our experiences with our menstrual cycles and pregnancy are also internal. Most of us are very aware of slight variations in menstrual flow; aware of changes in our breasts, ovaries and uterus as our periods approach; aware of changes in mucus secretions from the cervix, especially around the time of ovulation when the cervix produces a clear, stretchy mucus; and generally aware of the early changes of pregnancy.

Ovarian Breathing is therefore a very natural feeling for us. It is easy to learn once you know the Microcosmic Orbit, because the ovarian energy flows in the same channel. One woman remarked that when she learned Ovarian Breathing she realized it was something she had been doing instinctively for years but didn't know what it was.

DOING TIE RESEARCH

The original study on the menstrual cycle, which determined that we have 28-day cycles and charted the peaks and valleys of our hormones, was done on THREE women. So as not to fall into this trap that male science has set regarding women, I wanted to talk to other women who were practicing.

In October 1989 I sent out a letter to 150 women in the Bay Area who had studied Ovarian Kung Fu, inviting them to participate in the Research and Study Group. Eighteen women replied. Eight of us have met four times. At each meeting we reviewed Ovarian Breathing and did a short meditation of Ovarian Breathing and the Microcosmic Orbit. We shared books on menopause and PMS. We have discussed our sexuality, sexual cultivation in general, and the specific area of controlling our menstrual cycles using Healing Tao techniques.

Here are some subjects we have discussed:

How to incorporate Ovarian Breathing (as well as breast massage, egg exercises, and the Upward Draw) into a regular practice.

Details of Ovarian Breathing, such as: Do I continue to do the small sips? Do I keep my tongue up all the time?

Answer: The small sips are a warmup exercise and help energize the individual energy centers. When the energy feels connected then the exercise consists of inhaling gently and simultaneously bringing the ovarian energy up to the pituitary. After three rounds, place the tip of the tongue on the palate and bring the warm energy from the brain down to the navel.

Is eliminating menstruation a goal for every woman? When practicing the orgasmic upward draw should I stimulate myself with my mind, my hand, or through breast massage?

Regarding menopause, one woman asked if ovarian breathing can alleviate migraines that had their onset with menopause. Does anyone out there know? Regarding hot flashes, one woman took some herbal pills, another woman uses Ovarian Breathing. The woman taking herbal pills takes 6/day in order to avoid

hot flashes: The woman using Ovarian Breathing only has to intensify the practice when the hot flashes return.

Here are some excerpts from a typical meeting:

One woman reported she made a tape for herself of the detailed, center by center ovarian breathing instructions. When she followed the tape she felt each center in a new and different way. The group asked me to make a tape of ovarian breathing for them. This evolved into a tape of a 10-minute sitting practice (breast massage and Ovarian Breathing) and a 10-minute supplemental standing practice (Embracing the Tree, orgasmic upward draw, weight hanging and bone breathing). This gave us a uniform practice that we all promised to do for one cycle.

Help in Relieving Cramps

Another woman reported that she has been doing Ovarian Breathing pretty regularly for the past two months. She says she practices until she feels warm all over, which she estimates to be two to five minutes. Her recent period started very quietly and was totally uneventful: previously, she said she had a lot of cramping with every period, so this was a new and very welcome change. One woman said she was doing Ovarian Breathing, Upward Draw, bone breathing, weight hanging and hitting every day. She felt that she began to detoxify too quickly so she cut down on the bone marrow practices to about twice a week. To aid her body during the detoxification, she soaked in a bath of salt and baking soda, 1 pound each, in tepid water.

Help in Reducing Swollen Breast

We talked about breast massage. One woman said that breast massage helped control swelling and tenderness before a period. She also said that if she forgot to do it, when her breasts got swollen the massage helped to reduce the swelling and discomfort.

Preferred Direction For Breast Massage

We all decided that the preferred direction for breast massage is up the middle and around and down the outside. We also practiced a modification of this: massaging the kidney meridian from the lower part of the inside of the breast up the middle about two to three inches, and just repeating this upward stroking a few times. We all tried it and agreed that we felt the energy. However, I don't know whether others in the group have modified their breast massage practice in this way.

Then followed a discussion about breast stimulation. What exactly goes on when the breasts are stimulated as part of love-making? What hormones are being secreted? Does erotic breast stimulation trigger the production/release of hormones and is this long-lasting? Most of us had noted that breast sensitivity seemed to linger on. Some of us had thought this was just mechanical irritation, but maybe there's more to it.

Ovarian Breathing Can Help Increase Estrogen

We realized we are really ignorant about our hormones especially in the breast, and need to find out more. Some had noticed that Ovarian Breathing seems to stimulate an increase in the amount of stretchy mucus from the cervix. From what we've read, this mucus is a response to an increase in estrogen, so now we want to know more about this also.

Should we be practicing Ovarian Breathing during menstruation? Most of us don't. But one woman said that she doesn't in the first couple of days, but then she does for the days of spotting afterwards. She assumed that the bleeding at the end might be oozing of the body's blood after the lining had been shed. Is all this blood first accumulated in the uterus and then shed? If the blood is gathered before a period, then it all has to come out. Does the lining shed and then leave open capillaries?

KEEPING TRACK OF OUR CYCLES

In 1983 and '84, I tried to interest women in keeping track of their cycles. Some women designed a form to help that process. We had a bad track record in getting back completed forms. So we realized there are lots of women who prefer to keep an anecdotal record: that is, when they notice changes they write it down and reflect on it--what they've been doing in their Healing Tao practice, anything different in their lives, such as relationships, work, diet, travel, that might have influenced these changes. Even though the anecdotal record is not considered "scientific" in some circles, nevertheless some groundbreaking work has been done with anecdotal records (See Share Hite's books: The Hite Report, The Hite Report on Men's Sexuality, Women and Love). The anecdotal record also provides information that is difficult to quantify and is therefore usually omitted in statistical research.

STAYING IN TOUCH

Some of the women who answered the first letter that I sent out in October were from outside the Bay Area. So in January I started a "Multilogue". This is a way of keeping in touch by mail that does not involve a lot of work, but everyone will be able to comment on content, include their experiences, and raise and answer questions. If you learned Ovarian Breathing but your practice has lapsed, you can contact a local teacher or call or write me. If you want to be part of the Research and Study Group, or if you love your solo practice and want to start a group, call or write me about that. If you have something you want to share, type it out and mail it to me. Please indicate if you want it to be kept anonymous. It will also help our research if you will fill out and return the questionnaire. With this baseline information we can see changes over a period of time. Please feel free to call me at (415)271-0152

Thank you for your participation.

The Influence of the Sun and Moon on Human Behavior

Man conforms to the Earth The Earth conforms to the Sky the Sky conforms to the Way The Way conforms to its own nature

The movement of life is the movement of a myriad of cycles with each cyclic wave-form having its particular purpose and its own time manifestation. Perhaps the most obviously dominant cycle is the interplay of the Sun and Moon.

As an astrologer for over twenty years, I am concerned with all] types of cosmic influence on human behavior. There are many types of energies interacting with our biosphere, and the two that are most prominent are the Sun (the closest star) and the Moon, the closest natural satellite. Understanding the energies of the Sun and Moon is of prime importance for anyone who aspires to experience their higher self.

Before we get to the main subject matter, allow me an (apparent) digression. Contrary to what some media people say, or what a few skeptics assert, the study of the planets and stars is not a superstition, but rather a very grounded system of knowledge. Astrology has its charlatans, but I ask is there any profession that doesn't? Astrology is not a system that tells you how to live. Instead it reveals the causes behind the apparent ones, the purposefulness of time, and most importantly, it describes the unique complexity we call the individual. Through the understanding of planetary influences we come to know our various strengths and weaknesses. This offers us the real possibility of coming to terms with our own "karmic predicament". People may be fatalistic, superficial, or pompous, but astrology is not; it is simply a very ancient system of knowledge that can only lead to greater use of our "free-will".

The uniqueness of the individual is clearly represented in the birth chart. The planetary positions at your exact birth moment will never be repeated (although they will come close to doing so in 26,000 years, and even closer in about 125,000 years.) Taking into consideration the multitude of ways that our DNA can recombine, we get an idea of the importance of each moment of time.

Each of us, then, is like a holographic picture of the solar system and cosmos--a snapshot of a moment in a cycle. This cycle, which is our birth chart, is definitely fixed. We can try to ignore it, rebel against it, fight it, give in to it, yet the birth chart will remain, waiting for us to explore its maze.

Einstein once remarked, "God does not play dice with the universe." That is why astrology tells us that our birth is the right moment. If we believe in an orderly, purposeful, and just universe, we may eventually accept the sacredness of our birth. From that point on we can begin to truly influence our destiny.

Whatever spiritual path a person may follow, astrology can offer valuable information on what makes one tick, and equally important, the possibilities of the future. The premise is simple: the more we know about the future, the better we can plan to make the difficult times less stressful and the constructive times more abundant.

As a Kriya Yoga practitioner and teacher for over twenty years, I was encouraged to study other pathways. Among these other pathways is the Taoist techniques of Master Mantak Chia. His teachings have become part of my daily practice. They are much more than just interesting ideas. Rather I found them to be absolutely necessary. It is rare to find someone who has worked so hard to make the written word so clear, and most importantly to the point.

In this article I hope to be able to find you some insights on how the monthly (Lunar) and yearly (Solar) cycles can be used to maximize the healing and loving energies of some Healing Tao techniques.

History, taken to the most remote past, has shown that past civilizations have always assigned a gender to the planets. The Sun has always been Yang (male) and the Moon Yin (female). The most important correspondences of the Sun relate to daytime, heat, the right side, and conscious, willful expression. It is, in fact, the creative principle. The Moon relates to nighttime, coolness, the left side, and unconscious, natural expression. The Moon is the receptive principle.

Internally no person is exclusively man or female. Depth psychology tells us that if one is a physiological male, then internally or subconsciously that person is female. Similarly, if one is physiologically female, then subconsciously she is male. Also, the male and female reproductive seeds have within them both sexes.

Astrology shows us that the sexes are equal in the simple observation of a solar eclipse. At least once a year the Moon's orbit is aligned with the Sun and Earth. At the time of the full Moon, the Moon passes in front of the Sun. Viewing this from certain points on the Earth, we see that the Moon fits exactly over the Sun. Thus, the mystic would say they are truly equal.

The cycle of the Sun and Moon is called the lunation cycle. This cycle is as much a part of everyday life as sleeping and eating, yet the majority of people choose to consciously ignore it. Nature can't be ignored, and thus we have one of the major problems of modern living: man setting himself apart from nature. The luxation cycle has about a 28 day duration. (Thirteen of these is a lunar year: $13 \times 28 = 364$)

days.) Beginning at the New Moon, there are four distinct quarters. There are two seven day periods of the waxing Moon, a time when the Moon is growing in reflective light. At Full Moon it has waxed to its full reflective strength. For the next two quarters (fourteen days) it decreases in light. This is called the waning period. This is the ceaseless ebb and flow of a continuous planet-wide pulsation. Within this rhythm the cosmic Chi from the stars and planets is funnelled through the Sun and then transmitted to all life forms by the Moon. The Moon moves twelve times faster than the Sun. In one lunation cycle of 28 days, it will have passed through all twelve signs of the Zodiac. In the same period the Sun will have passed through one sign.

Planning and then working with the knowledge of this primal cycle is moving and acting in accordance with nature. Yet, this is not a compulsive acting but one based on knowledge with the use of free will. When the habit of daily meditation is established, we are immediately in sync with this cycle. A person could study astrology for years and still never really tune into this cycle on an internal level. The key is the process of meditation and the circulation of Chi within the spine. The lunation cycle, therefore, is really a process that is going on within our spine and connecting meridians. It is not out there alone, but rather within--external and internal. As above, so is it below reality.

During the waxing phase from the New Moon ("NM") to the Full Moon ("FM"), a very distinct inner motif occurs. Within 48 hours of the NM, the Chi within the spine lifts and circulates with greater ease. Less time and less concentration is needed to accomplish a meditation session. This does not mean that it automatically becomes easy. However, the lunar forces are at this time lifting the energies as the Moon grows fuller and fuller each day. (At the time of the fingernail Moon [that is, three days after the NM], the lifting begins to be more pronounced.)

Near the time of the FM there can be an overabundance of Chi. At this point a gentle and cautious approach can avoid internal pressures and headaches, etc. Looking at nature we notice that all above-ground crops will swell. Picking your tomatoes during the FM assures a fatter and juicier harvest. Whether you are planting a seed, idea, or an action, it will tend to grow if you begin at the NM.

During these fourteen days an increase of mental awareness occurs. The higher centers are receiving more Chi which enhances higher cognitive functions. This is also the time when dreams are more vivid and we are able to enter the deep sleep state with greater ease. In short, most people sleep deeper and naturally wake up more refreshed. The need for sexual intimacy usually decreases, except at the time of the FM when the overabundance of Chi may stimulate the need for love. If you need extra energy to accomplish a large task, just before the FM is an excellent time. No doubt the mastery of (meditation) techniques can give us extra energy at almost any time. Yet during the FM we can tap into it with greater ease. (Having an Astrological Calendar is most helpful in following the cycles.)

After the FM we are presented with a different challenge. As each day passes there is a decrease of energy. It would seem that the Moon is now pushing down rather than pulling up. Science knows about part of this process and calls it ionization. The greater amount of extra electrons in the atmosphere is at the FM, the least amount at the NM. (Extra electrons means extra energy that can be drawn into our system via the lungs. These extra electrons are available whenever molecules collide such as burning wood in an open fireplace or bathing in a shower.)

During the waning cycle it will gradually take a little more time and concentration to achieve your desired results in meditation. Although this sounds somewhat final, it is not. There are many other cosmic influences that can override the lunation cycle and our own freewill. The right techniques can definitely overcome these tendencies. The Moon isn't really pushing down as much as it is letting go of the energy it pulled up in the waxing period. The Chi is now drawing back into the Earth after it has reached for the sky. The lower centers on the spine are being filled with this Chi. Because this Chi is coming from the higher centers, it does not automatically mean that it will circulate easier.

The age old meditation formula of "concentration x duration" must be wholeheartedly embraced. The waning fourteen day cycle almost always increases body awareness. This awareness is more than a sensitivity. It is rather a feeling of bodily containment with certain unpleasant consequences. We just don't sleep as well during this waning period, and because of this we often miss that important "second wind" at some point throughout the day.

A proficiency of techniques and an intensification of our will is necessary to be aware of how and what the body is demanding. The need for sexual intimacy is quite pronounced. Rushing into an intimate encounter can disperse valuable life-force that is necessary for higher awareness and physical health. Certainly sexual needs can be enjoyed and fulfilled as long as the sensual doesn't completely overwhelm the higher cognitive areas.

The maximum decrease of external energy (and the lowest amount of electrons) is just before the NM. Both the NM and FM times of the month are energy extremes. At the time of the NM there is too little energy while at the time of the FM there is too much. Moderation in thoughts and actions is essential at

these times. The terms moon struck, loony, lunatic are terms that have been used when almost no control is left as in the cases of certain mental illnesses.

The Tibetans have observed the lunation cycle very carefully. According to John Reynolds, the concentration of Chi is in the feet just before the NM and right afterward it begins to ascend up the right (Yang) side of the spine/body until it reaches the head at the FM. After this time it descends down the left (Yin) side. He says that the Tibetans take this into consideration with regard to certain meditation practices and ceremonies. They say that the male energies are at their peak on the tenth day, four days before the FM, and the female energies peak on the 25th day, three days before the NM.

These observations by the Tibetans have been partially confirmed by NASA. A study done by Harold Burr in 1972 show that the Earth's geomagnetic field (i.e., the weather) is most calm just before the new moon and full moon. The times of Yang and Yin mentioned above! Within 24 hours of the NM or FM, and shortly thereafter, the strongest geomagnetic disturbances occur. In fact over the long term on a worldwide basis, there does tend to be more precipitation at these times. It is nature's way of recharging the environment.

The Sun and Moon, while dancing within their cycle, are also passing through various sections of the sky. These sections are groups of star, as well as Zodiacal, signs. At the NM, when they are the closest in the dance, they can be in the same sign, whereas at the FM they are in opposite signs. There are twelve Zodiac signs each 30 degrees in length. Thus all the signs equal 360 degrees. The Sun and Moon, therefore, are zero degrees apart at the NM and 180 at the FM. They also form all other angles possible during the 28 days. When you were born the Sun and Moon had a certain angular relationship, e.g., 27,78,210,301, etc. Taking this into consideration, Jonas - Rechnitz in Nitre, Czechoslovakia conducted an interesting study. He discovered what he called the "Cosmic Fertility Period". This is the time of the month when the Sun and Moon are at the same angle that they had at birth. This time may not correspond to the natural rhythm cycle (usually the ninth to 21st day, counting from the first day of flow.) His original intention was to find these periods and recommend that people abstain from sex to avoid pregnancy. In two of his original studies comprised of 2,252 and 30,000 women, only 2.3% became pregnant. The rest, following the prescribed times, did not. Of all the pregnancies that did occur, only 15% happened outside the cosmic period.

Any person with a basic knowledge of Astrology can find this angle between the Sun and Moon at birth and also when it repeats each month. Remember it only occurs once a month. Always count signs and degrees from the Sun to the Moon. If you were born very close to the NM or FM, i.e., zero and 180 degrees, respectively, then it is quite easy. This means that every NM or FM is at the right time period. Seven days after the NM would be approximately 90 degrees, and seven days after the FM would be approximately 270 degrees. They recommend to abstain 36 hours before and twelve hours after the exact angle. (Another interesting discovery was that males were born when conception took place during fire and air signs, while females were born when the Moon was in the earth and water signs. When the Moon is past the first five degrees of the sign, but not past the 25th degree, this concept can be 98% accurate in predicting the sex of offspring.)

There is, of course, a problem with this method. Sexual desire can be quite strong at the very time when the person is asked to abstain. Those couples who practice Taoist techniques have a distinct advantage. They can use this time for greater depth of intimacy with the male retaining his fluid, or for conception, or they can abstain. (Since this is a very sensitive period, even the preejaculatory could cause pregnancy.)

The conclusion I have come to is that it is more difficult for men to retain semen during the waning Moon period, especially at the maximum Yin time of three days before the NM. If the cosmic fertility period happens to fall in the waning cycle and, most importantly, near the Yin time, it may be very difficult to practice retention and the valley organism. This natural pattern can definitely be overcome with practice, patience, and understanding. When ejaculation occurs and lovemaking is, therefore, shorter in duration than desired, one should not place any heavy blame on himself. Rather it should be accepted that this is the natural time during the monthly cycle when this is likely to occur. This is especially important knowledge for those couples who are just beginning their practices. When intimacy takes place during the waxing period and near the Yang time of four days before the FM, the men will find greater success with retention, as well as endurance and sensitivity to their partners.

Certainly in any discipline one needs some success to build confidence to continue. There are a couple of other points that need men tuning. During the waning cycle women seem to have much more acceptance and adoption to the process. Because of this ability they are usually able to help their male partners with the needed insights and internal energy. During the waxing period, the opposite is true. The men now have a slight edge, and, therefore, they can be more supportive. When the Moon is in a water or earth sign, it tends to add strength to the females. Conversely, when it is in fire or air (metal), males respond in a positive manner.

Certainly there are some unanswered questions in this whole process. I'm quite sure that new experimental information and ideas born of experience will continue to come forth. The knowledge we have of how the Sun and Moon affects us should be used to our advantage. It is simply working with nature rather than leaving things to chance.

Taoist Foot Prints In The Holy Land

I can't remember where I read it, but the observation was different enough to stick in my mind. The writer wrote, "The Chinese didn't discover the Tao, the Tao discovered the Chinese." The twist is important as I try to place and sort out the many remarkable discoveries I recently made. Maybe the Tao discovered others, as well. There is sufficient evidence to seriously ponder the idea that, during the time of Jesus, the Tao was also active in the Holy Land.

A rare privilege

This is really the first time in history that anyone has had the chance to compare and contrast esoteric Taoism and esoteric Christianity. That's because Master Chia has only recently revealed the secret meditations and formulations of Taoism. Documents concerning esoteric Christianity were discovered in Egypt in 1945 by a camel driver near the site of the Christian monastery, the Basilica of St. Pachomius, near the town of Nag Hammadi. The fifty two books were in a red earthenware jar almost a meter high. They had apparently been hidden there in a graveyard between 367-400 A.D., when an order went out from the Vatican to destroy what were called the Gnostic Scriptures.

The Gnostics were the great spiritual ancestors of western civilization. This sprawling group of Jewish heretics and early Christian mystics, self creating thinkers, and disciplined mediators should and could have been a more important part of the spiritual heritage of the West. Around 350 A. D. they were declared heretics by the Holy Roman Empire and the Vatican and prevented from any further involvement in the play of history. Only recently have they begun to get the recognition and admiration they deserve. What came to be called the Nag Hammadi scriptures were passed around until ownership was established, and they were finally translated and released to the general public around 1974. Master Chia had just started teaching in public in 1973. Thus, the inner teachings of two extraordinary systems survived through many centuries and were revealed in approximately the same year. That is only the first of many very interesting correspondences.

The Gnostics are of interest because of what happened last summer up at Big Indian, New York, during the week of Greater Kan & Li. Master Chia was teaching us how to prepare and purify our energy so that we might prepare a fertile environment in which we could recover our inner child. To the Taoists Kan and Li was one of the most valued meditations for with it they could cast a new spirit seed, and if nurtured with

virtuous energy, it would, over the years, be possible to become grown women and men and yet have all the innocence, potentiality and spontaneity of a young child.

Internal Engineering

The Taoists learned that at the time of birth, our Yin & Yang, Water (Kan) and Fire (Li) energies were united and evenly blended. As the body grows these energies start a long and fateful process of separation. The female, watery, yin energy starts to sink towards the loins; and the male, fiery, yang energy rises towards the head. When they become weakened and are spread far from each other, death soon follows.

In Kan & Li we learned to control and reverse this natural separation by using the mind and feelings to move water energy to the top and the fire to the bottom; and then blending them into one another in the Tan Tien in what the Taoists called a cauldron. In the cauldron light and steam were created. They could be used to clean the accretions of years of stressful consciousness, bad decisions, common compulsions, and overreaching desire. Steam the arrogance and cruelty from the heart and its meridians and that system will open up so that love, joy and respect can flow more freely and in greater amounts. Steam fear out of the kidney channels and the kidney's gentleness energy can prevail. Steam the sadness from the lungs so that a river of courage can flow. Vaporize the liver's anger and feel a flood of kindness invade everywhere. Steam the worry out of the spleen system and allow fairness to grow. Then mix, transform, and purify the sexual/reproductive energy along with the soul, Mother Earth, Universal, Cosmic, solar and lunar energies and powers in order to form the inner Microcosmic agent that one day will be able to merge with the Tao. Hopefully, we were preparing to be reborn. If successful, that child would be nurtured by the energies from the four corners of the Universe, the planets, the North Star and Dipper. It would one day, perhaps, grow into an Immortal Spirit Body, with "bones of gold and skin of emerald jade", able to survive out in any realm until it could make its way home to the Tao and the Wu Chi. Many of the features of the physical body, including the senses, self, meridian and energy system could then be transferred to that new body.

Synergy

Getting back to the Gnostics, it was during that week when I discovered a passage from the Gospel of Thomas, one of the books found in the cache near Nag Hammadi. The opening line in the book reads, "These are the secret sayings that the living Jesus spoke..." I showed the passage that jumped out at me to Master Chia and he asked me to read it to the class. It said, "Jesus saw some babies nursing. He said to his disciples, "These nursing babies are like those who enter the kingdom." They said to him, "Then shall we enter the kingdom as babies?" "Jesus said to them, 'When you make the two into one, when you make the inner like the outer and the outer like the inner, and the upper like the lower, when you make male and female into a single one so that the male will not be male and the female will not be female, when you make eyes replacing an eye, a hand replacing a hand, a foot replacing a foot, an image replacing an image, then shall you enter the kingdom.' Master Chia was impressed and said, "This is exactly what we have just been doing."

Now, what was I going to do with this? Even if Jesus didn't say this somebody did. I decided to investigate. What else could be in these documents that have come down to us like a spiritual time capsule? I found two more baby quotes in the same gospel. The first reads, "The older person many days old will not hesitate to ask a little child seven days old about the realm of life and this person will live."

The other, "From Adam to John the Baptist, . . . no one is greater than John the Baptist . . . yet I have said that whoever among you becomes like a child will know the kingdom, and will become greater than John."

This reminds me of the first two lines of Chapter 55 of the Tao Te Ching, "He who is harmony with the Tao is like a newborn child. Taoists liked babies, because they were all chi and no maid".

A passage from The Gospel of Philip seemed clearly pertinent to the theme of androgynous energy mentioned in the passage quoted above. It says, "If the female had not separated from the male, she and the male would not die. That being's separation became the source of death. The anointed Christ came to rectify the separation that had been present since the beginning and join the two components and to give life unto those who had died by separation and join them together."

Back to the Beginning

Before we can go further, it is necessary to discuss how the Gnostics viewed the Universe. These men and women brilliantly scavenged all the spiritual and philosophical systems of their times, snatching pieces from here and there, so that they could understand why they were on earth and what exactly was going on.

Determined to have knowledge (gnosis) of God, they built for their souls a spiritual shelter and launch pad by mixing parts of Persian Zoroastrianism, Jewish Wisdom, literature, Babylonian astrology, Egyptian mythology and the Book of the Dead, Greek mythology, Hellenistic mystery religions, Platonic dualism, Chaldean magic, Palestinian Baptist sects, Old Testament stories and Buddhism.

Letting go of Shame and Guilt

There are many schools of Gnosticism, but they share a common cosmology that is quite unique. The Gnostics credit the origin and problems of the world to a kind of primordial spiritual Chernobyl that (which means--) happened up in the Divine Oneness, the realm of Light, home of God, called the Pleura (fullness).

Sophia (Wisdom), the daughter in the first family, was attempting an inner alchemical experiment that had to be aborted. The mess got loose from Heaven and became Matter. Matter produced a god that was quite proud of himself. He is called the Demurrage, is very devilish, and a very powerful fellow. His power is drawn from the Light that was mixed in with Matter. This foolish god, who the Gnostics likened to the God of the Old Testament said, "I am a jealous god, there are no god before me." Little did he know. This god created the Stars, Planets, Earth, the Sun and Adam and Eve. The Demurrage wanted to keep all the Light it had inherited, and the only way to do so, was to keep it anchored in Matter.

The Archons

In order to control matter and administer his realms, and keep humans ignorant of the Light inside them, the Demiurge created seven evil agents call Archons. Each of them ruled over a planet, the sun or the moon. They were very powerful and would deal with humans by deceit and deception in an attempt to cause them to remain ignorant of the Light within.

The Light Inside

The Light in humans was very powerful but locked and hidden away in the subconscious. The Light wanted to get back to where it was from. Sophia went to Adam and Eve disguised as a snake to entice them to eat the apple of the knowledge (gnosis) of good and evil so they would know where they were really from

and could start to figure out how to get back. The Demiurge was furious and kicked them out of the garden and snakes have been cursed ever since, having to crawl everywhere

Assessing Responsibility

The Heavenly powers promised that they would somehow get all the Light back. They set up powerful energy relay stations to beam energy and virtue to the realms below. They said, Hang on folks, don't worry, we're doing everything we can and we're responsible for this not you. The source of the Light, the Plemora was, like the Tao, beyond worry, but the heavenly administration was frantic. Sophia worked the hardest aided by her daughter, Zoe (the Spirit of Life). They were, in the end, aided by Sophia's baby brother, Jesus, who came to Earth with big plans, powerful connections, new techniques, and a lot of energy. The heavenly powers had plans to eventually retrieve all the Light, even that which was in the Demiurge and the Archons. When all the Light was back where it came from that would mark the end of the world because the Divine Oneness will have been restored.

A friendly power

On his way to Earth Jesus had to pass through the 7 lower realms ruled by the Urchins. He disguised himself for he didn't want the Urchins. to know about him. He need not have worried about the 7th or highest realm. That was controlled by Sabbath. Sabbath was the child of the chief of the Urchins. But he switched allegiance and praised Sophia and Zoe. In return they placed him in charge of the 7th realm, just below the veil blocking off the great heaven of Light, the Pleased. Sabbath was, therefore, the only purely positive force in the realm of Matter, and "...ruling like a high official between Light and Darkness ...[he] is termed, 'ruler of the Pole' [the North Star] and is said to be 'throne on the Great Bear I the Big Dipper]'".

As Joseph Needham notes, "This is an eyebrow-raising parallelism, to say the least, for nothing more Chinese could be imagined than deities or subdeities in that constellation." Other evidence regarding the Gnostics appreciation of the North Star's energy comes from the Mandaeans. The Mandaeans are the only living remnant of the Gnostics. They are still practicing and live in Iraq. "A peculiarity of the Mandaean astronomy and astrology is that the other heavenly bodies are all believed to rotate about the polar star. Madaeans always face it when praying their sanctuaries are built so that persons entering it face it; and even the dying man is placed so that his feet point and eyes gaze in its direction."

Positive/Negative energy of the Planets

Another gnostic scripture "The Apocryphal of John" describes the creation of the planets which are under the control of the Urchins. This writing tells us that humans were created by the powers residing in the planets. Remember, everything that is Matter has Light in it, and the Urchins. can't help but pass it on in the humans they create.

"The spiritual power [Light] in the archon manifests itself in powers which he unites with the darker aspects of the planets. These powers duplicate heavenly powers, making it possible for these seven authorities, the planets, to fashion a psychic human which will have spiritual potential."

Energy points

The planetary forces, in creating a human, send 365 sub-deities to manifest a human being. Each energizes a different point in the body. Then the four sources of the demons that are in the body are appointed. They are heat, cold, wetness and dryness. These in turn create passions, those that are, "valuable as well as what is bad."

Acupuncturists have established 365 energy points in the body, which they use to control levels of "heat, cold, wetness, and dryness" so as to balance the passions in the body.

The hero

Planetary information and lore was crucial to the Gnostics, for if they were going to return to the Pleased. (the Oneness) each spirit needed to pass through the realm of each planet, and the Urchins. main task was to stop any Light from leaving the realm of Matter. A big reason Jesus was regarded as a savior and hero was because he taught his disciples (which included seven women) how to successfully navigate their way home.

Another Gnostic scripture "the Sofia" (Faith & Wisdom), was not found in the Nag Hammadi collection. It has been in the hands of scholars since 1778. The English translation appeared in 1925. In it and its sister companion "the Book of Jeu", we discover that Jesus has returned to earth after his resurrection to give more teachings to his disciples.

He said that when he ascended through the realms of the Urchins. he blew out the circuits. When he first descended to earth, he sneaked pass the Urchins. in disguise. But when he ascended, he ascended in full glory and array ment. His energy on the ascent was 87 million times stronger. He reduced the power of

the Archons by 30%. This, of course, made it easier for any who then followed to get past their power. But, mainly, he said he did it so those on Earth performing black magic by calling upon the evil energy of the Archons, would now find their abilities to hurt fellow humans have been greatly reduced. Jesus also mentions that those wishing to perform good magic would still be able to call upon the power of the Plemora

Here's what you do

He ascends with the full retinue of disciples (20 men and women) and takes them to each realm and teaches them the invocations to make, what talismans to flash, what names to drop, how to stare down the Archons and which magic sounds to make.

Seven Healing Sounds

Included were seven vowels, which "were much employed by the Gnostics, undoubtedly as symbols for the seven planets and the spirits associated with them, but also as symbols possessed of magic power as well as of mystic significance".

Get your work done while you have a chance

The Gnostics thought that it was imperative to acquire full knowledge (gnosis) of the Light during the life of the body. It may be easier to understand this by using Buddhist terminology. You had to get enlightened, reach Nirvana now, or you go back into the energy tide pool eligible for reincarnation. If you received full knowledge of the Light and were able to fully merge with it you were home free. Otherwise it was reincarnation or worse you might end up on the mid plane or what the Gnostics called the "midpoint".

The Midpoint

The Gospel According to Philip clearly warns of this in a section called "We must acquire resurrection now". It reads "And that person will exist either in the present world or in resurrection, or in the place between, God forbid I should be found there. Within the present world, reputedly there is good and there is evil, but the world's goods are not really good, and its evils not really evil. But after this world, there are evils that are truly evil the place called the 'midpoint.' It is death. While we exist in this world we must acquire resurrection, so that when we put off the flesh we might be found in repose and not walk in the midpoint; for many get lost along the way".

Take Me to The River

Another passage in the same gospel gives similar advice:

"People who say that they will die first and then arise are mistaken. If they do not first receive resurrection while they are alive, once they have died they will receive nothing. Just so it is said of baptism: 'Great is baptism!' For if one receives it, one will live".

I can't tell the reader about Baptism, but we've got some real sophisticated (Wise) in the Healing Tao system.

Would you believe Baptism as Kan & Li, Fire and Water? That's how Jesus did it. Actually he was doing Fusion I, II, and III, as well as Kan & Li.

The writer of the Gospel of Philip distinguishes two types of Baptism in a passage called "Baptism and the name Christian":

"Anyone who goes down into the water and comes up without having received anything and says, 'I am a Christian' has borrowed the name. But one who receives the holy spirit has the gift of the name. Anyone who has received a gift will not have it taken away. But one who has borrowed something will have it taken back. So it is with us, if something comes to pass through a mystery".

What could this mean? Let's break it down. What is it about water? "Many ancient Christians used running ('living'), such as rivers or springs in their baptismal ceremonies". "Living" water is what the Mandaeans call "the powerful, strength-giving waters". The Mandaeans are "indefatigable in their derision of the Christian baptism in 'cut off water' [such as pools or fonts]. They view baptism as the intimate act of communion by means of which the beings of Light impart power to mankind through the 'living water' that flows from heaven to earth".

Anyone who has ever been near a great river may perhaps remember powerful feeling of peace and serenity they felt. Imagine the pristine purity and power of the Jordan river 2000 years ago. The Ganges, with its source in the Himalaya Mountains, draws millions of Hindus every year to bathe in its "holy waters".

Yin Chi.

To the Taoists, rivers were a powerful source of Yin Chi. When they wanted to make rain they would develop the Yin Chi by drawing it from the earth or a river and then direct it to the sky.

Fire

In the Gospel of Luke (3:16), John the Baptist said, "I baptize you with water, but one who is much greater than I is coming ...He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. In the Gospel of Thomas, Jesus said, "Whoever is near me is near fire."

The writer of the Gospel of Philip wrote in a passage called "Otherworldly fire",

"Soul and Spirit are constituted of water and fire.

Fire is chrim; light is fire.

I do not mean worldly fire, which has no form, but another kind of fire, whose appearance is white, which is beautifully luminous, and which bestows beauty".

Again in the same gospel, in a passage called "Baptism and chrim", it says,

"By water and fire the entire place is sanctified the visible elements of it by the visible, the hidden by the hidden. Some elements are hidden by the visible: there is water within water, there is fire within chrim."

Any one trained by Master Chia should be able to figure out what was going on. Jesus was taking initiates into the "living" waters of a river, in order to ground them in a powerful yin base. This also increased the yin pole and energy in the body. The stronger the yin energy, the more yang energy the body could absorb. Jesus who said he was "fire", was what we call a yang body and obviously able to channel large amount of yang chi down from the heavens. He was thus creating an overpowering fusion of the two elements in the initiate's body, thus restoring the original unity and "cleansing their sins". This was an outer alchemical reaction that affected an inner alchemical reaction or the macrocosmic affecting the microcosmic. And thus, "The forces [Archons] do not see those who have put on the perfect light and cannot seize them. One will put on the light in a mystery, through the act of joining".

Chrim

The name Christ means "the anointed one". The initiates were anointed with olive or balsam oil at the Baptism. But contrary to what the writer of the Gospel of Philip wrote above, the fire was not in the chrim, although it must have seemed that way. Whether or not there was fire, depended on the energy of the one anointing and the annealed areas.

The seals

Jesus says in the Secret book of John: "I raised the sleeper, and sealed the sleeper in luminous water with five seals, that death might not prevail from that moment on" The "seals" are always associated with baptism, but for all the Gnostic scholars, the procedure remains mysterious, which it was meant to be. One writer writes "Unfortunately, we do not know a great deal about the performance of the anointing ceremony except that the oil was applied principally to the head and brow..." Another writes, "These five seals are mentioned in many passages of gnostic scripture as having a very intimate connection with gnosis, but what they consist of is never clearly explained".

If one knows what to look for, I believe the evidence is there. In Pistis Sofia, Jesus is teaching how the Archons sealed the body as their 365 sub-deities were constructing it. Jesus mentions nine seals, not five. They are: the right hand, the left hand, the heart, the brain, the forehead, the back of the head, the middle of the skull, the left of the skull and the right of the skull. "Thus they sealed your destiny and death".

What the Archons sealed in each body were the crucial energy points, especially the higher ones, including the third eye, the pineal gland, the jade pillow, the heart, the hands and the top of the thrusting channel on the skull (Either they were unable to seal the kidney points on the souls of the feet, because they were constantly in touch with the powerful earth force or perhaps they felt that would keep them bound to Matter).

It would probably be more accurate to say that Jesus was "unsealing" the seals. When he anointed the five points on the head it wasn't the chrim that brought fire, but his passing of energy through these points which opened up the channels and allowed the energy from the Plemora to flow into them. As above so below.

A Taoist Perspective on Love

I Love You

There are many ways people express what we call "love" in our society. It has become a habit, passed down through generations and nurtured by celebrities, priests, and politicians alike. Although the words may sound pleasing to the ear, one often wonders about the energy behind such declarations as, "I love you," or "May God bless you." It seems strange that we look upon many of our celebrities as role models who can teach us about love through the images they portray in public. Certainly there are many kinds of love, and we all desire to hear that someone cares, but what constitutes real love and why do we require it?

We assume love exists at all levels of life, but because it is promoted so much, we often forget what it is and what it really feels like. We expect love in a personal way from those who are close to us, and in a spiritual way from those whom we choose to be our role models (celebrities, social leaders, priests, etc.). Yet our needs are almost never fulfilled by the words and actions of other people. Even in dreams, we seek love, which indicates our inner needs for acceptance and companionship from others. The question of what love is has puzzled men and women for centuries. The answer can only be found within ourselves.

A major problem in this culture is that we always look outside of ourselves to fulfill our needs without realizing that others seek fulfillment in the same way. It is our nature to assume, for one reason or another, that everyone else has what we need. Out of habit we seek love externally without nurturing our own source of that energy from within.

This leaves us with little to share. If Westerners could learn how to turn their attention inwardly, they could overcome the problems that cause the high divorce rate in our society. Logically, if others are also seeking love, they expect us to have enough loving energy to fulfill them in some way. The ability to share love is a key factor to success in all relationships. If we do not cultivate love within ourselves, however, we can only drain the energies of those with whom we interact.

Love Comes From The Heart

According to Taoism, love is an emotional energy that is derived from the heart. It can be activated by external stimuli, but we are also capable of awakening this energy ourselves. Since loving energy is accessible from within, we can resolve our need for love by first learning to love ourselves. This is a crucial step in learning to love others as we can only extend the energy of love when it is abundant within us. Some people believe that love only has value if it comes from other people, but love can turn against them if they do not have enough of that energy to reciprocate. The Taoists say that we can't really love others until we can love ourselves. They created specific exercises, such as the Inner Smile, so that we could develop a mature source of loving energy.

Learn to Love Yourself First

In Taoism, each internal organ is believed to have its own individual soul, spirit, and courageous energy.

By practicing love and respect to cultivate these aspects of the organs, the whole body improves, and one learns to love the body as a whole. Gradually, changes become noticeable in the character and attitudes displayed in one's daily life which indicate that the loving effect is expanding to all parts of body, mind, and spirit. After learning self-love, which is not to be confused with egotism or narcissism, one becomes abundant with loving energy to share with others. Practice is the key.

Unfortunately, our society promotes a mentality of self-sacrifice which leads people to give energy when their bodies have little or none to spare. People drain themselves to help others without understanding the negative effects upon their health. Self-love, as nurtured through Taoist practices, has the beneficial effect of creating an energetic foundation through which we can serve others without depleting ourselves. To give of one's self does not mean to give up the essence of life. Our ideas about altruism have established a pattern by which we consistently drain ourselves in ways we can't imagine.

If a person who can't swim hears a drowning swimmer call for help, society expects that person to take action, regardless of personal risk. Two deaths by drowning as opposed to one illustrates the concept of self-sacrifice at its worst. Our beliefs in self-sacrifice occasionally extend beyond common sense, and we take the plunge into territory that is not within our domain. If a person spends too much time helping neighbors, his or her absence can endanger family members who are too young or too old to take care of themselves. There is nothing wrong with trying to help others, but there is little point in taking on more than we can handle.

Dependency & Inter-Dependence

Dependency is another negative effect of self-sacrifice which occurs when the people we help become weak as they begin to believe that we are more capable of handling their affairs than they are. They ask us to devote more energy to their lives. Then as their beliefs in us grow, they expect us to take on more of their responsibilities as they continue to lose their self-confidence.

This is a major problem in relationships as the expectations of either male or female become extreme and unreasonable.

Sometimes in relationships couples believe that inter-dependence is the answer to their problems as each party can then depend on the other in some reciprocal manner. Interdependence has nothing to do with the energy of love, however. The moment that either party's needs cannot be fulfilled for whatever reason, the system falls apart. Certainly we all depend upon those whom we love in some small ways, and there is nothing wrong with this. Problems only arise when we try to use dependence or interdependence as the foundation for relationships. In other words, when we become "really dependent" upon those we love, we lose the ability to adapt our love to changing circumstances. If one person can't cook, the other should not go hungry and quit the relationship.

Abundance in a Relationship

Abundance is a much better foundation for relationships than interdependence, and self-reliance, which is a natural extension of selflove, is the best approach to abundance. Of course both parties must practice self-reliance to create abundance in a relationship. Learning to rely on one's own resources helps to prevent personal needs from becoming conditions that can hinder the flow of loving energies. Conditional relationships are a fact of life because people grow in different ways; true love, however, has no conditions. Although we may think that we love others because they meet certain conditions, love does not come from what we think, but what we feel. The conditions are merely rules we establish for a relationship. The love we feel has no rules, and it can't be turned on and off as easily as water flowing from a faucet.

Unconditional Love Reflects Compassion

The Taoists refer to the compassion as a combination of the best virtue energies we have. They say that nature and the universe are very cruel, only keep the strongest one, only humans have sympathy for weakness because we are weak. Compassion, which is the highest form of human emotion, is based upon empathy, not sympathy. The Taoist revere compassion as the most important energy to nurture because it elevates the consciousness beyond human weakness. One who feels compassion can love and accept the world on its own terms with- out suffering. In a Western sense, compassion is a way of acknowledging human weaknesses without being attached to them, unlike our sympathetic tendencies which evoke negative reactions to our lessons in life

Love The One Next To You

To summarize, our ability to share love is the key to our success in relationships, provided that both parties are abundant with loving energy to share. To become abundant with this energy, we must first learn to love ourselves. Then we can begin to love family, friends, neighbors, country, and the world as our loving energy grows.

**If you can't love yourself,
don't worry about loving your neighbors.
if you can't love your family,
don't worry about loving your country.
if you can't love your country,
don't worry about loving the world.
When you know how to love
yourself, your family,
your friends, your neighbors,
and your country,
then you can learn how to love the world.**

At this point you will understand the nature of Divine Love and how to tap into the ultimate source. The goal of the Tao is for us to cultivate love within ourselves and to expand it, first to others, then throughout the universe.

A Simple Exercise To Cultivate Love (The Inner Smile)

1. With your eyes closed, smile as you picture a loving, smiling face in front of you.
2. Draw the radiant love of this face in through your eyes and your "Third Eye." Relax the mid-eyebrow.
3. Bring the loving energy down to your heart, which is the seat of love.
4. Smile into your heart until you feel the love spreading out to the lungs, liver, kidneys, spleen, stomach, pancreas, kidneys, genitals, etc.
5. Feel every cell of the body become saturated with love.
6. Picture those whom you love (family, friends, etc.) being surrounded by your loving energy. (You may see this energy as light.)
7. As soon as you finish the Inner Smile, physically touch those people you surrounded with your love. Practice daily, and help others to expand their love in the same way.