
A TAOIST WAY OF LIFE



PAUL BRECHER

Also by Paul Brecher

DIM MAK FOR MARTIAL ARTS
THE TRAINING MANUAL OF
THE COLLEGE OF CHINESE MARTIAL ARTS
TAOIST SEXUAL KUNG FU

A TAOIST WAY OF LIFE



Paul Brecher

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see his website at
www.taiji.net**

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Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Sifu Tan Choo Seng for introducing me to the true spirit of the Chinese Internal Martial Arts, Guru Madé Sudira for his spiritual teachings and the Chinese Doctor Miow Su for teaching me his energy healing and advanced breathing exercises.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my father Henry Brecher, who has been an inspiration to me throughout my whole life with his big heart, clear-thinking mind and wise advice.

A TAOIST WAY OF LIFE



An old Taoist gourd charm with the Chinese characters
"Happiness" and "Longevity".

Gourds symbolically hold the elixir of life.

CONTENTS

Contents	7
Foreword	10
Introduction	12
 SECTION 1 – MY JOURNEY	 14
Travels in South East Asia in the 1980's	15
Training with Sifu Tan in Singapore	16
Meeting a Datu in Sumatra	52
Training with the Chinese Doctor in Bali	60
Training with Guru Madé Sudira in Bali	72
Meeting the Dalai Lama of Tibet in the Himalayas	85
End Note	94
 SECTION 2 – THE TECHNIQUES	 95
The Philosophy of A Taoist Way of Life	96
The Morality of A Taoist Way Of Life	105
The Taoist Idea of Chi	106
The Three Treasures of Taoism	108
The Lower Tan Tien	110
The Smile Energy Meditation	111
Forming the Pearl Meditation	112
Before and After Taoist Meditation	113
The Small Heavenly Orbit	115

A TAOIST WAY OF LIFE

Discussion	115
The Small Heavenly Orbit Meditation	124
Taoist Reverse Abdominal Breathing	127
The Large Heavenly Orbit	130
Discussion	130
The Large Heavenly Orbit Meditation	131
The Taoist Morning Meditation	134
The Taoist Way of Life Meditation System	140
The Elixir Of Life	141
The Pearl of Immortality	141
The Spirit Body	142
Transforming Ching, into Chi, into Shen by Reversing the Positions of Fire And Water	144
Discussion	144
Transforming Ching, into Chi, into Shen by Reversing the Positions of Fire And Water	145
The Advanced Taoist Breathing System Of Miow Su - The Chinese Doctor...	156
Miow Su's Advanced Taoist Breathing Exercises	158
Level 1 - Upper Abdominal Breathing	162
Level 2 - Reverse Lower Abdominal Breathing	163
Level 3 - Upper Abdominal Breathing Combined with Reverse Lower Abdominal Breathing	164
Level 4 - Tortoise Breathing	165
Level 5 - Taoist Pelvic Floor Breathing	166
Level 6 - Advanced Taoist Reverse Lower Abdominal Breathing	168
Level 7 - Most Advanced Taoist Reverse Lower Abdominal Breathing ..	168
Level 8 - Advanced Taoist Breathing with the Pelvic Floor	169
The Heaven and Earth Meditation	171
Discussion	171
The Heaven and Earth Meditation	171

The Sun and Moon Meditation	175
Discussion	175
The Sun and Moon Meditation	175
The Yin and Yang Meditation	178
Discussion	178
The Yin and Yang Meditation	179
The Five Senses Meditation	182
Discussion	182
The Five Senses Meditation	184
The Five Positive Emotions Meditation	191
Discussion	191
The Five Positive Emotions Meditation	192
The Five Positive Personality Characteristics Meditation	197
Discussion	197
The Five Positive Personality Characteristics Meditation	198
The Spirit Body Meditations	203
Discussion	204
The Spirit Body Meditation	207
Transformations of a Spiritual Dragon	217
Concepts of Taoist Philosophy	218
The Wandering Taoist	218
Wu Wei	219
Hermit in the City	220
The Sea of Tao	221
Taoist Spring	222
Taoist Summer	223
Taoist Autumn	224
Taoist Winter	225
A Different Path through the Bamboo Forest	226

FOREWORD BY CK LAU

I know Paul Brecher to be a highly skilled Martial Artist and Healer, a dedicated and top-notch teacher of his arts, and now from his latest book, "A Taoist Way of Life", I get to know him as a Taoist. In Paul's latest excellent book, he charts his early "Walkabout" years in a journey of discoveries and encounters that would shape his Taoist way of life. His remarkable journey took him to various parts of South East Asia, Singapore, Sumatra, Bali, and the Himalayas. During his journey Paul learned martial arts, philosophies, and meditation methods that are central to his Taoist way of life. Through hard work and dedication, Paul has consolidated the fruits of his journey and found his own Taoist path. His path leads him to an extraordinary and wonderful life that is without a journey's end!

I have always found Paul's books to be highly informative and contain only relevant information that is presented in a simple and straightforward manner without fancy words. "A Taoist Way of Life" is no exception and again Paul generously shares his hard earned knowledge and experience openly with the usual depth and detail. Theories and ideas are described and conveyed clearly with the aid of diagrams and inspirational pictures. The practical aspects of the book such as the Taoist Mediation Methods are arranged in a logical order with each method shown in clear and manageable steps so the reader can take in each stage before proceeding to the next. Thus you can take it all in your own leisurely Taoist way!

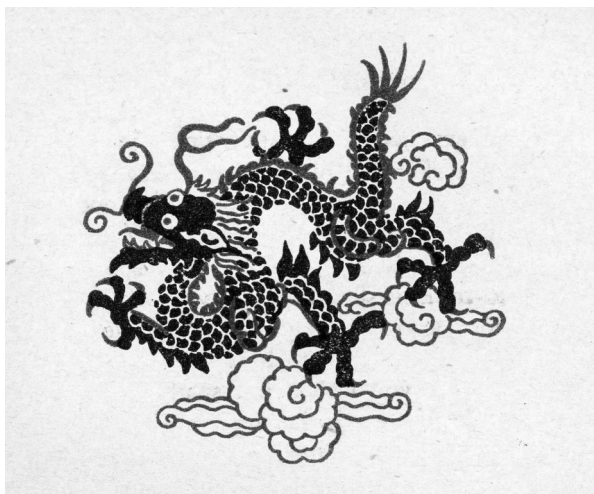
Reading "A Taoist Way of Life" was a joy to me. The stories of Paul's travels were extremely entertaining and at times gripping. The Taoist Philosophy was enlightening and I was amazed at how much it is

interwoven into the martial arts and healing arts. It has provided me with extra areas of exploration and inspiration in my search of my own Taoist path. Overall, I think the best part is the Taoist Meditations, with these I am sure my health will be enhanced, along with the theoretical and practical sides of my martial arts. My spirituality will benefit immensely from these meditations as they will take me to the higher levels and beyond. I highly recommend this book to people, that are seeking the Taoist way of life, or want to improve their health through Taoist meditations, or want an insight into Taoist meditations and philosophy, or just want a reference for Taoist meditation methods, or martial artists wanting to improve their art, or armchair travelers who are interested in a quest, or all of the above!

CK Lau

September 2012

INTRODUCTION



I would like to introduce you to *The Taoist Way of Life*. It is a philosophy with many practical applications for improving health and longevity. Acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine, Five Elements diet, chi kung and Chinese meditation are all rooted in Taoism. There are also the Taoist martial arts of Tai Chi Chuan, Pa Kua Chang and Wutang Shan Chuan.

I have spent my life immersed in these subjects and would like to share with you what I have learnt. This book begins with some experiences from my travels in the late 1980's which are the origins of the techniques in the second half of the book.

I hope you will find this book interesting and enjoyable, gain many benefits and make progress on your own path of health and spiritual development.



Paul Brecher

Paul Brecher BA FAcS MPCHM
Principal of The College of Chinese Medicine
Founder and Chief Instructor of The College of Chinese Martial Arts

SECTION 1 MY JOURNEY

TRAVELS IN SOUTH EAST ASIA IN THE 1980'S

I spent many years on a martial arts journey searching out and training with different instructors, teachers, sifus, monks and gurus, on a quest to find the answers to life's mysteries. My journey into the martial arts led me into the healing arts and the Taoist spiritual philosophy that flows through them both.

Everything that I recount in this chapter happened many years ago. I am sure that the people and the places have changed a lot since then. These experiences shaped me into who I am today. I hope that my recounting of my travels will be an enjoyable read and useful in some way to others on their own journey.



TRAINING WITH SIFU TAN IN SINGAPORE

I had been training in external style martial arts since 1977. When I met Teacher Tan in Singapore in 1988 he introduced me to Chinese Internal Martial Arts.



Sifu Tan
Head of Hua Tiong Pugilistic Art Institute

In 1966, at the age of 23, Teacher Tan had founded the Hua Tiong Pugilistic Art Institute in Singapore with additional branches in Malaysia. He had several hundred students and had raised vast amounts of money for local schools and old peoples homes through his martial arts demonstrations and events.



Sifu Tan and Paul 1988



Map of Singapore in South-East Asia

Singapore was a strange place. I had been expecting to arrive in a colonial outpost amongst a sort of old-world Chinese shanty town.



Old Singapore

However, it was in fact a hi-tech, futuristic city in a jungle covered island, a bustling metropolis with sky scrapers and a very modern atmosphere. It had the world's most advanced underground system with all the station platforms made of marble and the trains were always on time.



New Singapore

Suddenly, London with its antique underground seemed like an old-world shanty town in comparison. Amongst all the shiny new buildings, I came across an old Taoist temple, the last building in the street that had not been replaced by concrete tower blocks.

The roof of jade green tiles had caved in slightly, and the temple itself was boarded up. I knocked on its huge, yin-yang embossed wooden doors, but it was deserted.

I found a side door and let myself in. The interior courtyard and adjoining rooms were all empty and derelict. In front of the ruined altar, the floor was covered with brittle, half-burnt spirit money (imitation paper money offered to provide wealth in the next life by relatives of the dead). I practised a few martial arts moves in the rays of tropical sunlight that shone through the holes in the ceiling. I really felt that it was a magical place .

I carried on wandering through the streets and heard some violent shouting coming from a nearby building. I went to investigate and

came across a martial arts training hall. I stood at the back hoping to see something that would show me the hidden face of the martial arts that exists beyond the physical.

A powerfully-built Chinese man came up and challenged me, "Why are you here?". He meant, why was I trespassing in their class. I misunderstood and thought he was asking about my motivation. So I said I was searching for the essence of the martial arts. Good fortune shone on that conversation, and the next day he took me to meet his Sifu.

The house was on one level and open plan. A pleasant breeze whispered through the house, dispelling Singapore's stifling summer heat. In the large front room, where I was waiting, was a large Chinese shrine covered with statues of Buddhas and Taoist sages.

Incense smoke drifted up past a painting of Ta Mo, one of the legendary founders of the Shaolin Temple martial arts school. Ta Mo's baleful, intense eyes glared down at me in a foreboding way. I later learnt that Sifu Tan had painted this picture himself. The disciple returned with Sifu Tan, and Sifu Tan's wife brought us some tea and then left the room. We were sitting in big hard-backed, carved, wooden chairs, and Sifu Tan was reclining in his rocking chair.

We all sat in silence drank and some tea. Sifu Tan puffed on his cigarette, drank his brandy and looked at me through his hard eyes. Behind him was a weapons' rack containing a huge array of tasselled martial arts weapons, spears, staffs, battle axes, halberds, swords, walking sticks and Buddah's spades.

Sifu Tan was calm like a tiger in the shade, having nothing to prove. There was no disguising the phenomenal coiled power that radiated from him. He said that I could ask him any question I wished, so I went straight to the point and asked him what was the essence of the martial arts.

He told me it was Tai Chi Chuan. For over a decade I had been training the hard external styles of martial arts. Therefore, with all the arrogance of the ignorant and ill-informed, I said that Tai Chi could not be the answer because it was not effective for self-defence. It was simply a slow-motion health exercise for the elderly.

Sifu Tan simply smiled and asked if I would like to go out into the garden. "Ok", I said, not realising that this was actually a polite way of saying, "You and me outside now!". It was only when his student whispered to me on the way out that Sifu Tan would not respect me unless I tried to kill him. I then realised that by disagreeing with Sifu Tan about Tai Chi's effectiveness for self-defence, I had actually been challenging him to prove it. I had just dismissively insulted Sifu Tan and also agreed to trial by combat.

I attacked with full force, I steamed in with a left jab followed by a right hook punch to distract him from my follow-up main strike, a jumping right roundhouse kick to his left temple. I had intended to part his head from his shoulders and was very surprised to find not only that he wasn't there, but that I was flat on my back on the ground, feeling slightly dazed with a vague memory of a pounding palm to my head that felt like being hit with a shovel.

My previous ten years of martial arts training seemed suddenly inadequate. But nonetheless, I catapulted myself into another attack, and once again, found myself on my back again staring up at Sifu Tan.

His lightning-fast pounding palm strikes to my head convinced me that Tai Chi Chuan was an effective martial art. Sifu Tan raised one eyebrow as if to say, would I like to make it best of three? I said that I accepted that Tai Chi was good for self-defence so we went back into the house for some more tea.

When we were once again seated and drinking tea, Sifu Tan told me a little about his own experiences. When he was nine years old, whilst

wandering in the then jungles of Singapore, he had come across a Shaolin monk who was hiding in the ruins of an old temple.

The monk, whose name was Sec Koh Chun, had fled mainland China to escape from his many enemies in China's secret societies whose fighters he had defeated. During the day, he would help the monk rebuild the temple. Because training in the martial arts was still illegal in Singapore, he was taught the Shaolin Temple Martial Arts System at night.



Photo I took of photos of Sec Koh Chun on the wall
of the Hua Tiong Pugilistic Institute in Johor Bahru in Malaysia

A TAOIST WAY OF LIFE



Sec Koh Chun

Sifu Tan said that after having learnt the External Hard Styles of Northern and Southern Shaolin, he went on to learn the Internal Styles of Hsing-I Chuan (Form-Intention Boxing) and Pa Kua Chang (Eight Trigram Palm Boxing).

He learnt the Yang Family Style of Tai Chi from Yang Chen So and the Chen Family Style of Tai Chi from Chen Xiao Wang.



Sifu Tan

I asked him how many forms he knew all together, he said that he knew over forty, but only needed one.

Sifu Tan offered to teach me Tai Chi. I assume it was because I had not held back with my first attack (which demonstrated my respect for him), and also because I had made a second attempt (which demonstrated my perseverance).

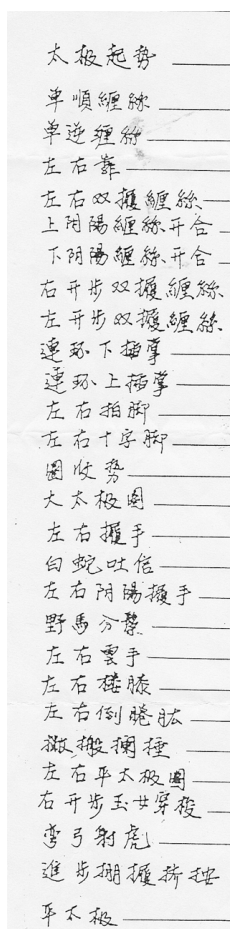
I was very fortunate to be Sifu Tan's first non-Chinese student. There was no formal initiation ceremony. We just drank more tea and this seemed to confirm the agreement. When I say we drank tea, I mean the disciple and me. Sifu Tan drank his brandy and smoked his cigarettes.

Even though this was bad for his health, he still had more energy and raw power than any other martial artist I had ever met. In combat, he was as fast as lightning, and he was as sharp and decisive as a sword. But he smoked and drank as if there was no tomorrow.

The first thing Sifu Tan taught me was *The Shaolin Five Elements Chi Kung Method* and *The Original Thirteen Postures of The Yang Family Style of Tai Chi* and *The Original Thirteen Postures of The Chen Family Style of Tai Chi*.

Learning Tai Chi turned out to be very different from my previous training. It was important to be *sung* as this means, having no unnecessary tension in the muscles or mind. There was just a slight flex in the tendons as a result of one's posture and movement.

The emphasis in Tai Chi was whole-body power, not just the local power of the arms. All movements were circular and fluid, rather than linear and stiff. Most importantly, the movement had to always come from the lower tan tien energy centre in the belly. Sifu Tan also said: "If you want to have strong martial skill and a lot of chi, then you must conserve your essence." (See my book *Taoist Sexual Kung Fu* available from www.taiji.net for more information.)



List of All The Names of These 26 Postures

I trained in Sifu Tan's garden with his other students for many hours every day. Sifu Tan taught the moves, their meanings and applications. He then returned to his armchair, and his senior disciple took over running the class.

One of Sifu Tan's students was a devout Tibetan Buddhist, and he took me with him to a Buddhist temple to meet with his Tibetan Lama who was visiting Singapore. I was very impressed by the Lama

with his calmness and wisdom. It was through this meeting that I would later get an introduction to meet and study with other Lamas in a monastery in the Himalayas and meet the Dalai Lama.

Sifu Tan always stressed that one should have a compassionate and moral way of life, because the great internal strength developed through the Tai Chi training meant that a strike could cause extreme internal damage to an opponent. The Tai Chi way of striking was called *fa jin* which meant an explosive release (fa) of internal power (jin).

Sifu Tan was very powerful. On one occasion, after striking down a martial artist who had come to his house to challenge him, he picked up his body and threw it over the garden fence back out onto the road.

I asked Sifu Tan how *fa jin* worked. He showed me how the power comes from the legs and the rotation of the hips, flows up through the body and is released through the hands. “Like a bullet from a gun”, he said.

I was still doubtful that it would work in all circumstances. For example, what if a person with a knife tried a slashing or stabbing technique? Sifu Tan went in to the house and came out a moment later with a big kitchen knife. He gave it to me and said, I should try to stab him. I lashed out with the blade, he easily deflected, moved in and hit me with *fa jin*.



Sifu Tan

Learning from Sifu Tan was always an intense and interesting experience. I would be training with the other student in his garden and Sifu Tan would be in his rocking chair, drinking his brandy and smoking like a chimney.

Then he would put his drink down and come out of the house into the garden. He would casually take a few puffs of his cigarette and

then meander over in our direction. With a wave of his hand, he would direct me to attack him. As I attacked, he transformed into an unstoppable, ferocious force; a bird of prey at the end of a power dive.

It was the memory of his eyes that lingered long after my field of vision had been blacked out by his pounding palms. Like his painting of Ta Mo, Sifu Tan suddenly acquired a menacing, baleful glare.

Immediately after his demonstration of the application, he would, once again return to himself and give me the raised eyebrow expression, indicating, did I understand it now? When he was sure I had understood, he would go back into the house and sit down in his rocking chair, quite as if nothing had happened.



Sifu Tan

I lived in Sifu Tan's house and ate with him and his family and really enjoyed being immersed within Chinese martial arts culture. I have good memories not only of the training but also of the atmosphere.

The ash from the incense sticks on the house altar, the rickshaw driver pedalling Mrs Tan back from the market, the heat and humidity of Singapore and later in the year, the afternoon monsoon rains.

In the evenings, students came to Sifu Tan's house for training sessions in his garden, near the big stone table which always had a pot of hot tea and cups on it for us all to sip whilst training. After training, we would all have dinner together at the big round table in the centre of the house.

That evening, the talk was all about how Sifu Tan had recently been attacked with axes by two other martial artists. He had defeated them but would not talk about the incident. His unenviable position as an undefeated fighter made him a target, for whoever defeated him, by fair or foul means, then ranked as number one.

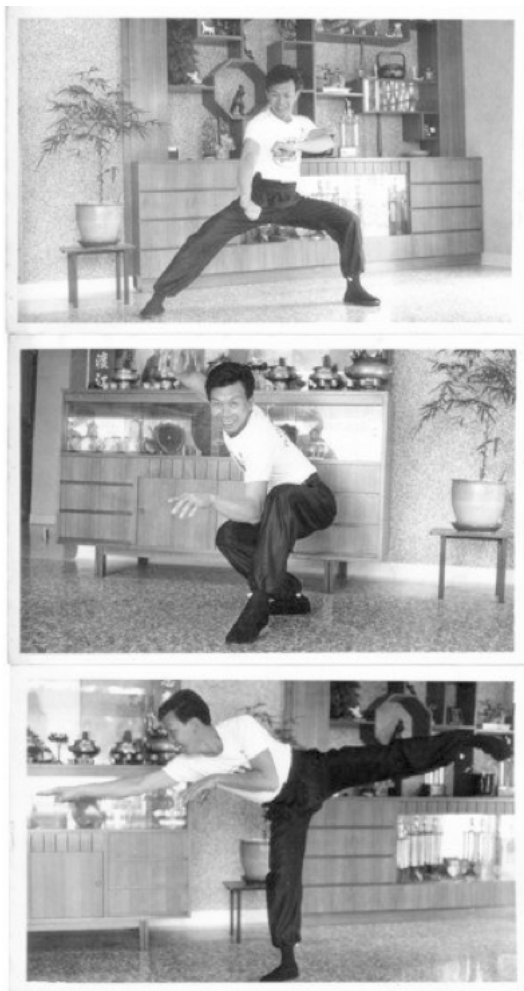
A year of daily practice had past and Sifu Tan decided it was time for me to start learning the first form of the Old Chen Family Style of Tai Chi. This Form had not only the familiar slow movements, but also fa jin movements.

The slow movements build up the energy like drawing a bow, and the fa jin explosive movements are like releasing the arrow. This is what one uses in Tai Chi movements to make them effective in combat. So for the next few months, this form was the centrepiece of my training.

Myself and the other students would be woken up at five o'clock each morning by low-flying fighter jets from the nearby military base, drink tea, and then go out into the garden to train till eleven.

Sometimes, it was Sifu Tan's very serious smokers cough that woke us up. When training in the garden at dawn, I would see Sifu Tan sitting cross-legged on the floor in front of the altar. His body was as pliable as rubber and extremely flexible.

Once, he came out into the garden and told me to put him into a wrist lock. I tried, I turned his hand one way and then the other, but whichever way I turned it, I could not lock his arm. He seemed to have no joints at all.



Sifu Tan

Practising Tai Chi under the palm trees in Sifu Tan's garden as the sun rose was a magical experience (apart from the mosquito bites!). Watching the sky subtly change from black, to deep purple to blue, the gentle shades of pink and orange then blending in to form the morning's sky.

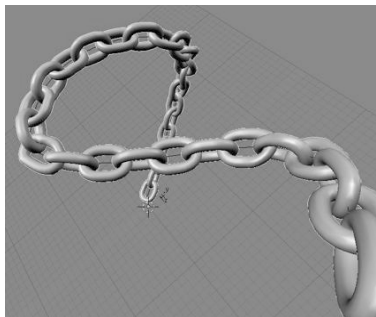
As the world came to life with the noise from radios, TV's, traffic and the hustle of the city, the energy would change and lose some of its purity and clarity. By eight o'clock the chi of the natural world had

retreated to the jungle and the chaotic energy of man had re-asserted itself.

After myself and the other students had finished our evening training session with Sifu Tan, we would drink tea together and have the opportunity to ask him questions about the martial arts. Sifu Tan emphasised that the most important thing about martial arts training was not so much which style one learned but rather the development of the internal principles. Three of the most important principles were correct posture, spontaneous action and connection.

He said it was important to know all the rules and applications but not be limited by them. One must go beyond them and develop spontaneous action, so that you don't know what you are going to do, or once you have done a move, what it was. Your body knows the moves. Let it do them, let go, be fluid and natural. That way you can react spontaneously.

The 'Being Connected Way of Moving', he added, meant that the whole body worked as a single unit. When you hit the opponent with one part of your body, it was as if you had hit him with your whole body weight. The technique used would eventually seem effortless to you, but would have a devastating effect on your opponent. The way the body moved when one had developed being connected was like flowing water, or like a whip made of chain.



Chain Whip

As the wave-like whipping movement went through the chain, link by link, the power would be transferred throughout the body.

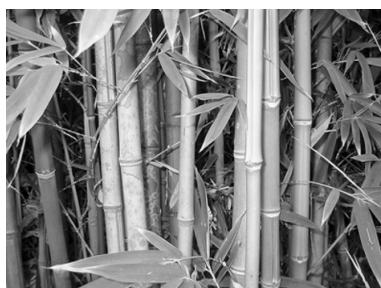
As well as Tai Chi and Chi Kung, we also did a lot of Pushing Hands training. Sifu Tan used to tap his ear and say that you do not feel or see an opponent's intentions, but hear them. You must listen for their energy.

In Pushing Hands, whenever I tried to find an opening to attack Sifu Tan, he would sense it and be evasive. As slippery as a snake or as loose and heavy as a piece of old rope I could find no opportunity to attack him. I was always deflected and could never find his centre.

Then I would become frustrated, impatient and redouble my efforts. With annoying predictability, I would think I had found a window of opportunity but of course, it was a set up. When I went to strike him, in the blink of an eye, he would counterstrike explosively, and I felt as if I had been hit by an earthquake.

Sifu Tan then used to tap his ear and said that you must listen for their energy and be as springy as bamboo. The process of learning Tai Chi involves not only the movements and their applications, but also, the internal principles.

Sifu Tan said again “*be like bamboo*”.



Bamboo

I contemplated this, and even went over to the bamboo and watched it, but I could not understand what he meant. Later he explained it in his usual way; this meant I attacked him and got hit.

But this time it was different, because instead of hitting me once, he used a combination technique and hit me several times. This was achieved by taking my incoming force, rebounding off it and returning it to me. It was as if I had compressed a spring, let it go, and it had released itself at me.

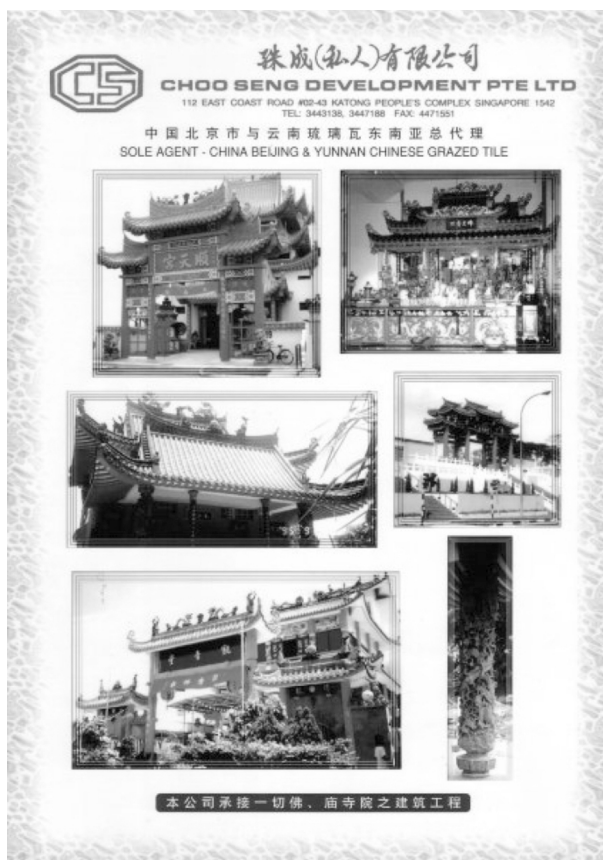
What was happening was that to execute a simultaneous block and strike to my first punch, he had rotated his tan tien to one side, creating a torque in his body, which he then released.

This resulted in another simultaneous block and counterstrike to my second attack. This rebounding happened several times, but it was all one fa jin movement. I had attacked and scored zero. He had counter-attacked and won the match.

I now understood what he meant about being like bamboo. It is flexible and strong, and when it bends, it springs back.

As the training continued, it dawned on me that the faster and harder I tried to hit him, the faster and more potent the counter-strike was. So from then on, when he said to attack, in the interests of self-preservation, I did not use full force. Sifu Tan taught Tai Chi as a fighting art. The moves were learnt by their martial arts applications, the health benefits were just a side effect.

As well as being a martial arts instructor, Sifu Tan Choo Seng built temples. He was now overseeing the construction of a huge new Chinese temple dedicated to Kuan Yi, the Goddess of Mercy.



Some of the Temples
Teacher Tan Choo Seng Built in Singapore

His garden had huge ceramic dragons in it. They were all in pieces and would eventually be assembled on the roof of the temple.

Myself and the other students were constantly asked to move these dragons from one place to another. Was that to get them out the way, or was it martial arts weight training?

One evening, Sifu Tan, his family and many other students and myself were all sitting at the large round table, having dinner. Sifu Tan's teacup was empty, so I filled it up and left the pot pointing

straight at him. The light atmosphere changed, and the conversation suddenly stopped as all heads turned to look at me.

His family, his students and his instructors all had expressions of apprehension on their faces, and I felt a cold chill run through me. Sifu Tan was staring at me with a menacing glare, his eyes were like Ta Mo in the picture.

Just in time, one of his senior students interceded and explained to me that in Singaporean Chinese martial arts society, pointing the teapot at someone was a direct challenge. Sifu Tan generally had a very relaxed manner, but I had obviously overstepped the mark this time. Nonetheless, Sifu Tan just gave me one of his raised-eyebrow looks and said that a senior student had once come back to challenge him. Sifu Tan not merely beat him into the ground but also made him kowtow (bow down, forehead on the ground three times). I apologised profusely and the meal resumed.

The weeks went by and the temperature and humidity in Singapore climbed higher and higher. Lee, one of the other students, had been wandering around one of Singapore's huge, air-conditioned shopping malls and caught a chill.

He was a well-built man with a braided ponytail. He was usually in good spirits, laughing and joking, but this chill had developed into a fever and had brought him down. After that evening's training session, Sifu Tan's disciple took him to see the Chopstick Doctor. I went along as well.



Chopstick

We drove past an old, disused cinema and wandered down some side-alleys where we came across a small group of people waiting to be treated. The Chopstick Doctor was a pleasant old Chinese man with most of his teeth missing.

Nonetheless, he had a reassuring smile and a pair of very old, worn, wooden chopsticks. The person in line before us put the traditional red envelope on a ledge as had the other patients, each giving whatever they thought was appropriate.

The Chopstick Doctor diagnosed the problem and then began his chopstick technique.

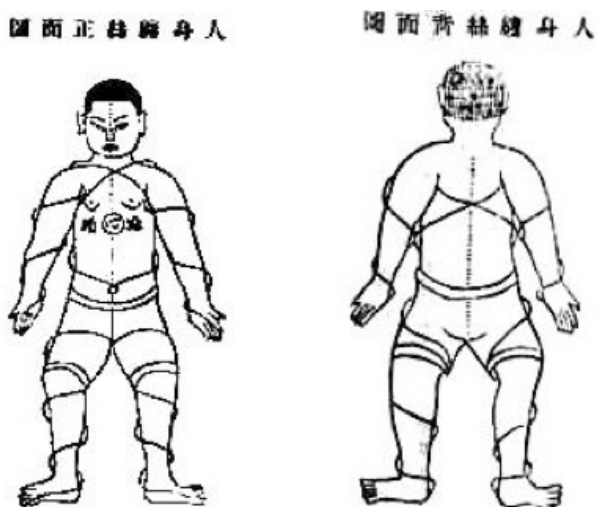
While Lee stood there, the old doctor rapidly began poking the chopsticks into different acupuncture points on Lee's back, legs and arms, rotating and twisting the sticks to re-balance and regulate Lee's chi flow.

Within a few minutes, he had finished. Lee put his red envelope on the ledge, said thanks, and we left. The old Chopstick Doctor gave us a warm smile and moved on to the next patient. On the way back to Sifu Tan's house, Lee said he felt nauseous. That night, he had disturbing dreams and the next morning, he was well again.

Training continued and when we had all developed to the appropriate level, Sifu Tan introduced us to the Tai Chi internal principle called '*Being Connected*'.

He explained 'Being Connected' in his usual abstract fashion, by saying, one should imagine that one's whole body could move through the air as if it was underwater.

He then exaggerated 'Being Connected' in the Chen form and it was obvious there was something profound going on. I could not work out what it was, and we were left to try and work it out for ourselves.



Waves of Spiraling Chi Making the Body Connected

After many days intensive training, no matter how hard I tried, I still could not understand how to become 'connected'. One evening, Lee suddenly 'connected' and started grinning broadly.

Whatever it was, he had now got it. I asked him what it felt like, but he said he couldn't explain it and just carried on grinning.

Now I was even more determined to master it and went on training after everyone had gone inside.

I carried on with the Chen form, but it had been a long day. I was very exhausted, and I did not have enough power to maintain a high level of intensity.

I therefore slowed the pace of my movements, mentally and physically relaxing very deeply, when suddenly, I felt as if I was moving through water. My body seemed to have no joints at all. I felt someone close by and turned to see Sifu Tan standing by the house. He had been watching and seen me 'connect'. He gave me an imperceptible approving nod.

It was the annual festival of the Warrior Buddha's birthday. The whole of Sifu Tan's martial arts school went to Kota Tingi in Malaysia to meet other major martial arts schools for a huge celebration with the Hua Tiong Pugilistic Institute Dragon Dance playing a major part.

When we arrived at the Malaysian Chinese temple complex, the Dragon Dance began to the accompaniment of gongs, cymbals and a huge drum, dragged along on a cart.

The dragon was over thirty feet long and very beautiful. It had green and gold scales, huge teeth and wild staring eyes. It leapt high, slunk low and cavorted around the temple. One of the other martial arts schools had brought two lions with them, and so the lions and the dragon all danced together.



Paul (holding staff, front centre)
taking part in the Dragon Dance

We were waiting for the priests in the temple to finish their prayers and meditations, so that we could all begin the long parade to the five Chinese villages nearby.

There was an ecstatic, highly charged energy in the air as the priests emerged from the temple, surrounded by clouds of incense smoke. Their robes had Yin-Yang symbols on them, encircled by the Eight Trigrams of the I Ching. They all seemed to be in trance states.

Some carried incense bowls or boxes containing holy objects, others had spears pierced through their cheeks.

The parade set off from the temple. It was led by the village elders and the priests, their feet tracing the Yin-Yang symbols in the dust.

The procession stretched behind them, banners fluttering in the breeze, drums beating as everybody was dancing and chanting.

At each village we came to, the dragon would dance three times clockwise around the main village altar as a good luck blessing. Everyone was smiling and merry. We went from village to village and must have walked many, many miles before we returned to the temple.

Everybody said their goodbyes. However, before we left, I accompanied Sifu Tan and his disciple into the temple. Sifu Tan was going to consult with the temple priest on some important matters.

We entered a room filled with statues of meditating Buddhas. There were also statues of Huang Ti and Lao Tzu. There was also, of course, a large statue of Ta Mo.

Here and there were statues and carvings of dragons. Some with ferocious talons in defiant postures, others with a sublime expression, reaching towards heaven. All these different images were united together in the swirling incense smoke. I felt as if I had been transported to the realm of the immortals, a realm in which the supernatural seemed, well... natural.

One of the priests met Sifu Tan, and they talked in hushed tones for some time. Then, the oracle stepped towards the altar and entered into a trance state. The spirit possessed his body and spoke through him, answering all of Sifu Tan's questions.

The spirit that possessed the oracle picked up a paint brush and wrote some Chinese characters on a sheet of rice paper which it handed to Sifu Tan. The spirit left, and the oracle began speaking in his own voice again. He seemed interested to find out what had happened whilst he had been gone. Then, we all lit incense sticks and placed them on the altar, thanked the priest and left.



Incense Sticks

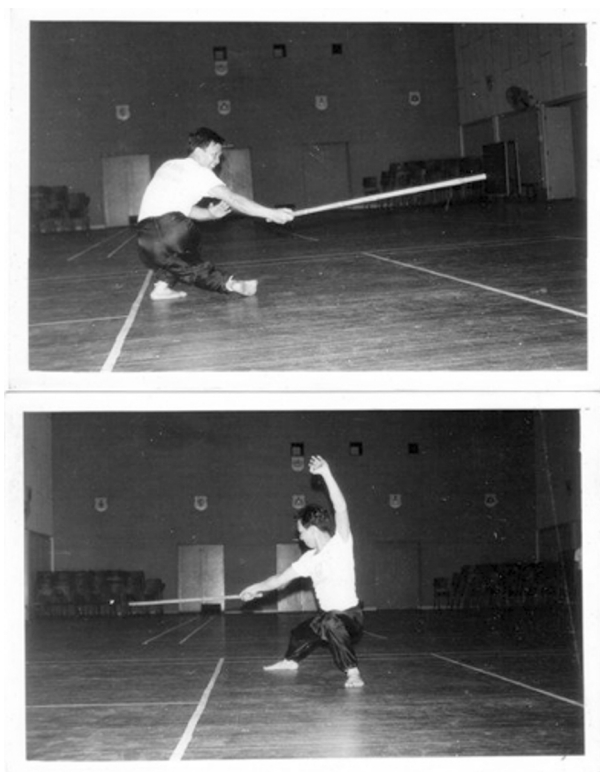
Outside, in the late evening at sunset, the air cleared my head and I was back once again in the real world. Though I began to question what was real; the modern world of cars, fast food and mass communication or the mysterious and ancient world of spirits, dragons and immortals dancing on the rings around the moon.

I realised that people were searching for a link between the modern world and the ancient world; the mundane and the mysterious, the physical and the spiritual. Some people used the rituals and prayers of religion. I had found Tai Chi, or maybe it had found me?

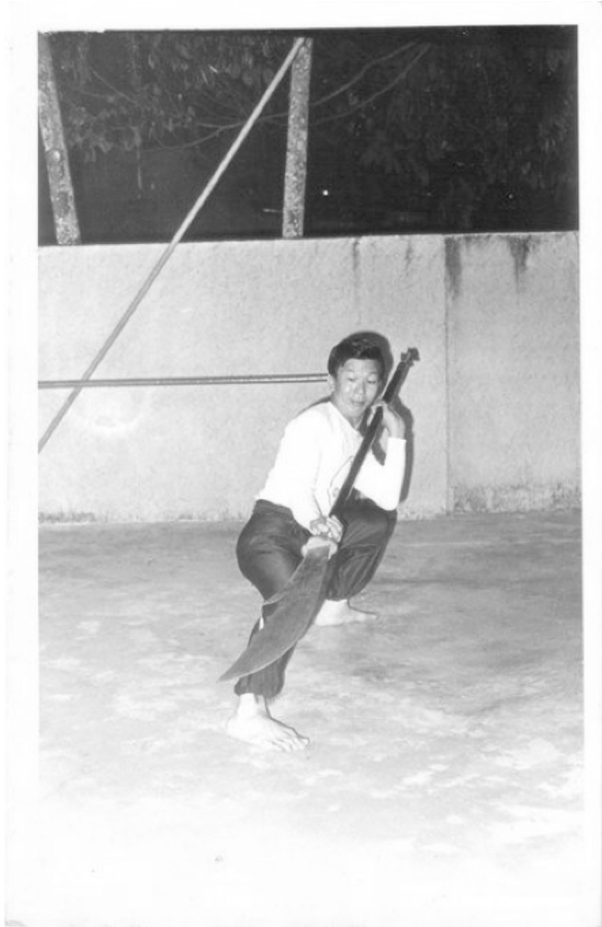
Apart from this special trip, we used to go to Johor Bahru in Malaysia quite regularly to train at one of Sifu Tan's martial arts schools. One memorable occasion was the holding a selection process to see who would be sent as a representative to the South East Asian full contact tournament.

We arrived in the afternoon. As we drove into the compound, one of the instructors came over to talk with Sifu Tan. They went inside, and I went to watch the local students train. There were about twenty, all going through the rigours of a Shaolin Staff Form.

The movements were very effective but seemed disjointed and abrupt, lacking something. Everybody stopped as Sifu Tan strode out to the middle of the training ground and took a staff from one of the students. We stood back expectantly, as he clearly meant to give a demonstration of how this form should be done. He began going through the moves, and although he performed the same series of movements as the students, it all looked subtly different. After a moment, I realised that he was putting the Tai Chi principles into the Shaolin form. He was 'connected' and the form now had a fluid, dynamic power to it. When he had finished, the students just looked at each other and shook their heads.



Sifu Tan



Sifu Tan with the Gwan Dao

All training now stopped so that the process of selecting the representatives could take place.

There was a painted circle on the ground about twenty feet in diameter. Everybody stood around the circumference, and the process began.

There were only two people in the ring at any one time. The one who remained standing was the one who stayed on for the next fight. There was one fighter whom Sifu Tan told me to watch carefully.

After he had knocked out a few other fighters, I could see why; he was 'connected'.

He did not have a big build, but because he was 'connected', he only had to hit his opponents once to knock them down. Of course, he was chosen to be one of the representatives.

A few days later back at Sifu Tan's house, after one of the evening training sessions, we had another opportunity to question him about the martial arts.

I asked him about Iron Palm and Iron Shirt training. He said that the Internal Iron Palm training was better than the External Iron Palm training, because it did not fade away if one stopped training.

I asked him what Iron Shirt training consisted of for the rest of the body. Sifu Tan said that there were two aspects to the training, the External and the Internal.

The External aspect mainly involved hitting oneself with a variety of objects almost all over the body.

To begin with, one should slap almost every part of the body with an open palm. After a few weeks of this, one could then fill a sausage-shaped cloth bag with dried beans and hit oneself with that.

After several months, the beans could be exchanged for small pebbles; later, the pebbles for larger stones and then the stones for rocks. Eventually, one could use a wooden stick or steel rods.

The result of this kind of training was that one's defensive chi increased, and the body became as strong as iron.

A person would become used to taking a blow to almost any part of the body. This would enable him during a fight to fully concentrate on hitting the opponent and not be distracted by his attacker's blows.

The Internal Iron Shirt training involved various Chi Kung still and moving postures. These were combined with different breathing techniques and leading the chi to different acupuncture points in a certain order through various meridians. Sifu Tan explained that it took about two hours a day, every day, for two years to get to a good level. He had been doing Iron Shirt training for decades, and his body looked as if it was covered in layers of plate armour.

Sifu Tan agreed to give a demonstration and sent somebody to get a wooden chopstick from the kitchen. The student returned, and Sifu Tan took the chopstick from him and placed the sharp end into the depression at the base of his throat, holding it there by pressing the palm of his left hand against the other end.

Then, with his right hand, he slapped the back of his left hand. This should have made the sharp end of the chopstick puncture his throat, but instead, the chopstick broke and splintered into several parts.

A few days later, I was fortunate to see a demonstration of Iron Shirt Chi Kung from some of Sifu Tan's advanced students who were now instructors in their own right.

The performance was in a large hall, and it was full to capacity. The demonstrations of Iron Shirt strength were done with a certain theatrical flair to the applause of the audience.

First, an A-shaped ladder was erected. Then, a bed of nails was held up for the people in the front row to inspect. Yes, the nails were very hard and sharp! The bed of nails was put at the bottom of the ladder. Now one of the instructors, wearing only his black training trousers, lay on his back on top of it. Then, the biggest, fattest, heaviest student started to slowly climb up the ladder. He reached the top, bent his knees in preparation for his leap, took one look down at his target, gave a big grin to the audience and jumped.

He flew about fifteen feet through the air downwards and landed with his heels in the solar plexus of the prone instructor on the bed of nails, and then stepped off him. The instructor did not move. There was a nervous silence in the audience, and then suddenly, the instructor jumped up and laughed to the great relief of the audience who joined in. He showed his belly and his back to them, not a mark was to be seen.



Sifu Tan smashing a brick onto the head of one of his students to demonstrate Iron Shirt Chi Kung.

Next, another instructor knelt down and rested the side of his head on the top of a stool. Two other instructors walked on to the stage, carrying a sledge hammer and a large concrete block which they

placed on top of his head. With a massive overhead swing, the sledgehammer was swung down onto the concrete block that shattered.

I thought that the instructor whose head had been under the block would have had his skull fractured by the force of the blow. Alarming, he did not move. A hush of concern came from the audience; had something gone wrong? Suddenly, he jumped up, gave a big grin and nonchalantly bowed to the audience.

There were many other demonstrations of Iron Shirt power involving the instructors taking blows from members of the audience to vulnerable parts of their bodies.

One visiting Sifu had some students smash him in the belly with a log. These four students swung this tree trunk like a medieval battering ram, whilst a chair was simultaneously smashed over his upper back. As his belly received the force of the blow from the log, he was able to channel it out his upper back to shatter the chair.

However, the grand final was the highlight of the evening. The bed of nails was once again placed below the ladder, and one of the instructors lay on his back on top of it.

A huge concrete block that was bigger than him, was lowered down on top of his body, and another instructor lay on his back on top of the block. Then another concrete block was placed on top of him!

Now ten of the biggest of Sifu Tan's students lined up, the largest one at the end of the line. One by one, they climbed up to the top of the ladder and jumped down onto the top of the instructor-concrete-block sandwich beneath them.

By the time the last and largest student had landed, I did not think that there was going to be anything left of the instructors beneath the concrete blocks. But it was not over yet. Out came the sledge

hammers again, and the top block was smashed to smithereens, and the instructor who had been under it was lifted off, still in one piece.

Then, with a few more overhead swings of the sledge hammers, the second block was shattered, and the last instructor got up off the bed of nails, his back un-punctured!

All the instructors and students bowed to the audience and received a huge round of applause.

When I finished my training with Sifu Tan, I thanked him for his hospitality and for introducing me to the essence of the martial arts, Tai Chi.

Before I left Singapore, Teacher Tan's most senior student presented me with a copy of '*The Secrets of Cultivation of Essential Nature and Eternal Life*' by the Taoist Master Chao Pi Chen.

I had not been charged for the Tai Chi lessons or the transmission of Tai Chi's true meaning and application. So just before I left, I gave Sifu Tan a red envelope, the traditional Chinese way of making a gift of money.



Envelope Traditionally Used to Present Gifts of Money

Sifu Tan took it and gave a nod of his head as a gesture of recognition of my offering. He took the money out of the envelope and gave it back to me. However, he kept the red envelope on the altar and said that what he had imparted transcended money.

He said that I could learn something from everybody and that I should search out other masters and increase my knowledge, ability and understanding.

When I left, Sifu Tan did not say goodbye.

He just smiled and said:

“Practice! Practice!”

MEETING A DATU IN SUMATRA



The Toba Batak House

From the city of Medan in Northern Sumatra, I travelled through the highlands in antiquated buses that seemed to be held together by the luggage racks that had been welded onto their roofs and sides. These

were partly for luggage, but they seemed mostly for outside passengers to hang on to.

I eventually arrived at Lake Toba, which was in the crater of an old volcano and took a ferry across the lake to the small island in the middle, called Pulau Samosir. I rented a Batak house to stay in on the shore of the lake. These houses were single-room wooden structures. Their roofs looked like the prow of an upturned boat. The Batak are the tribes that inhabit north Sumatra. There were seven different tribes, the ones in the area around the lake were called the Toba Batak.

One of the Batak houses in the village was converted into a little café for travellers. That evening, I got to know the other people who were staying there. The discussions centred around where people had been and where they were intending to go next, always looking for out-of-the-way places that had not been ruined by tourism.

This was a constant dilemma for travellers; wanting to go to an unspoilt place where no one had been, but by going there, travellers changed it, drew attention to it and eventually tourism would follow and spoil it. So travellers would travel to another unspoilt place, and the whole process would start again. Travellers created the problem and blamed others for the results of the seeds they had sown.

The next morning, I drove around the lake on my motorbike, waved to fishermen in their dug-out canoes and called out “Horas - Horas” which meant 'hello' in their language. They smiled and waved back.

Along the lake shore, I met an ancient Toba Batak tribesman who was sitting outside his house. He had a double-tape cassette machine on which he had made copies of popular songs for travellers. I was initially looking at the tapes but soon fell into conversation with him. I asked him, in a general kind of way, about the land and the people. He told me that when he was young, he could go swimming in the lake and spear big fish just off the shore. The women of the village

would wash their hair and clothes in the lake, using herbs. But today, there are no more big fish because the lake is polluted by their shampoos and detergents and the petrol and fumes of the ferryboats. I encouraged him to tell me more.



Paul on Motorbike at Lake Toba

He carried on in his broken English and said that when he was a boy, he met the first visitor from the outside, an American traveller who had great spirit and was liked by the islanders. He was fascinated by their way of life and helped them with their rice crops. At the new moon celebrations, he bought a buffalo that was cooked at a big feast and shared it with the villagers.

When he left Pulau Samosir, the islanders were sad to see him go. They thought of him as a good man and over two hundred people gathered on the shore to say farewell. Many years later, two more visitors, Australians, arrived on the island. They had the wrong attitude. When a hundred people gathered to meet them on the shore, they reacted badly. Instead of accepting the islanders' hospitality, they wanted to pay for a place to stay and so introduced tourism to Samosir. A very sad day, he lamented, shaking his head from side to side.

This old man who I was chatting to on the shores of one of the highest volcanic lakes in the world seemed like a good person to ask about life's big questions. So I asked him if any of the Batak people had mystical powers. He said that real holy men helped others, and that mystical powers would lead a person astray.

He said that the spiritual leaders, healers and wise men of the Toba Batak were called Datu. He went on to explain that the Datu train in many things. They are Yoga masters and know the indigenous martial art of Indonesia, Selat. They believe that the body is the reflection of the Earth, Sun, Moon and Stars. Additionally, in their meditations, they can travel to other planets. He said that the Datu also have the ability to control the weather. They can gather the clouds and make it rain, and they can disperse the clouds to let the sun shine.

He told me that in each village, the new Datu is chosen from amongst the brightest of the children. When they are old enough, they are sent naked, with no tools or help of any kind, up into the mountains. Some make fire and burn wood to cook the birds they have caught. Some simply come down from the mountain because they cannot survive. The one who is chosen and who is taught all the knowledge of the Datu, is the one who did not burn the wood or kill the animals, instead they ate fresh young leaves, fruit and vegetables. They chose the one who had lived with nature, not destroyed it.

He said, a woman in the village gives birth to a white-shelled egg. It is common knowledge that this is the way that a Datu arrives in the world. She takes this egg to the old Datu, and he puts it in the rafters of his house to be warmed by the fire's rising heat. After a few days, it hatches, and inside is a baby boy whom the Datu brings up to be his successor. A Datu, he said, can sense the presence of another Datu by holding up his hand, palm outstretched. His palm itches when it's pointing in the direction of the approaching Datu. He understands both his spirit and the spirit of nature. He can sit and meditate and,

surrounded by the great trees, obtain sustenance from the air. The old man said that when his back had been hurt in an accident, he had gone to see the village Datu who was renowned for his great healing powers.

The Datu told him his back needed to be massaged, but the old man refused, saying it would be too painful. So, the Datu held a piece of bamboo and massaged it instead. The old man said he felt his back being massaged. The Datu also had a technique for healing leprosy. He would cover the leper with a herb balm, then leave him buried up to the neck near the lake for several days. Each day, he would give him a herb concoction, and the Datu would meditate and pray for the leper to be healed. The minerals in the volcanic earth would also aid the healing. When he was lifted from the ground, his leprosy would be healed.

The old Batak man said that his Datu knew when he was going to die. Nobody else believed him, because he looked so healthy and well. The Datu said, "In two weeks time, I will die", and still no one believed him. Two weeks later, he said goodbye to everyone, left the village smiling and died peacefully meditating in the forest. The old Batak man seemed pleased that I was really interested in his people. I left him hoping that I might, one day, meet a Datu, and it was only later that I began to wonder if he had actually been one himself.



Toba Batak of Pulau Samosir

A few days later, I was in a situation that made me question whether things happen for a reason. I was on another motorbike trip, this time with another traveller called Phil. We were high up in the mountains around the lake. We journeyed along small winding roads that were barely more than gravel paths. Phil was riding on his bike about thirty feet in front of me when his front wheel hit a deep pothole and twisted, throwing him over the handle bars head-first into the road, and then the bike went over him.

When I got to him, he was slipping in and out of consciousness. He was covered in cuts and various types of bloody wounds on his arms and legs. There was a big gash in his head going all the way in to his skull just above his right eye. We were miles from anywhere and had no medical kit with us. I had to act fast, but it was a hard decision to make. Phil's bike was a write-off, and he could not ride on the back of mine, because he was not fully conscious and would have fallen off.

I could not risk us waiting there for help to arrive. No one knew where we were, and it was unlikely that anyone else would be this

high up in the mountains. Obviously, I did all I could for him in the way of makeshift bandages but did not want to move him about too much. Who knows what internal injuries he was suffering from that I could have made worse. So when he was in as good a situation as he could be, I explained to him that I was going to get help.

I don't know if he heard me or understood what I was saying, but I couldn't wait. I had to get help to him as soon as possible. I set off at great speed, charging down the twisting winding mountain roads, going as fast as I could. Eventually, I came to a small village. Fortunately, they had a health clinic, and I told them to come with me, but they weren't interested. I tried to convey the need for urgency to them, but they seemed unconcerned.

I got angry. I got aggressive. I got them to get their act together to go to the car that I had seen in front of the clinic. Just when I thought that I had finally got things in motion, one of them opened the car bonnet, no engine.

Eventually, I found a man with a car and went back up the mountain. Phil was still there where I had left him, unmoving but still alive. We put him in the car and went back to the clinic in the village. They wanted to leave him in a bed for a while. I said, treat him now. He was regaining consciousness and was obviously in great pain. I said "morphine, you have morphine, give him morphine, give him morphine, now." They put him on a large stone slab in the middle of a cool, empty room and injected morphine into the wound in his skull. And then with needle and thread closed up all his cuts and gashes, and then put him in a bed.

I'm sitting next to him, thinking what now, when in walks the local schoolteacher with her class of children and says she had heard that we were here and could her children practise their English on us. Phil said through a morphine haze "I can't handle this. I can't stay here".

So the next few days was a long struggle, like walking up a down escalator.

Finally, we got back to our huts on the shores of lake Toba. We picked up Phil's smashed-up bike on the way. We got back to Medan, I tried to get Phil to the nearest hospital. He was about to go in, when we met another traveller who had been in a fight. He had been to this hospital and instead of sowing together his head wound, they had sown a bandage into his head. This was a few weeks ago, and the bandage was still there!

After that, Phil said the only hospital that he was going to go to, was in Singapore. Everything was closed in Medan for a holiday and trying to get tickets to Singapore was very complicated.

So I set out to find airline tickets. I waived down what passes for a taxi in Medan. I have a great memory of being in a side-car of a beat-up ancient motor bike driven by a crazy Tobo Batak tribesman, who had a monkey tail nailed on to the back of his helmet. We whizzed through the exhaust-filled, dusty, free-for-all mayhem of the Medan traffic, looking for a couple of tickets to Singapore. Eventually, I managed to deliver Phil to Singapore where he got excellent medical care, and he then went back to the UK.

The motorbike accident brought up some complicated questions. What if I was ahead of Phil, and it had been me who hit the pothole - then what would have happened? Why was it him, not me? I felt a bit guilty and lucky. Does everything happen for a reason? Or is it all random, and we give meaning to events to try and make them make sense?

TRAINING WITH THE CHINESE DOCTOR IN BALI

Bali had beautiful beaches, friendly people, great food and a fascinating culture. It was the only Hindu island in the whole of Muslim Indonesia. Bali was not only a paradise island where I could sit on the beach and get a suntan, but it also was a deeply spiritual place. In the centre of this jungle-covered island was a live volcano and the whole island was dotted with the most interesting temples and local arts and crafts workshops.

I stayed for a while in Ubud and often went exploring the local area. I walked through the jungle and came across the Hindu Monkey Forest Temple with its population of over-friendly monkeys, hungry for peanuts from visitors. I meditated there and found harmony in the ancient spiritual vibration of the place.

Instead of going back to Ubud through the forest, I took the long way round through outlying villages and rice paddies. As I was walking through a coconut plantation, a Balinese man on top of a palm tree yelled, "Watch out!". Coconuts came crashing down around me as he used his machete to chop them down.

By a small waterfall, some incredibly beautiful young Balinese women were bathing, quite unconcerned about their nakedness. I was quite young back then and so was surprised, excited and embarrassed, all at the same time.



Paul in the Monkey Forest Temple

Whilst walking through the forest, I passed a man sitting outside his bamboo house. He called out as I strolled by, “Hey, Mister, you want buy carving of frog on surfboard? Where you going, huh?” I called back, in Indonesian, “jalan - jalan”, (walking - walking). He nodded and smiled. In this part of the world, one did not have to be going anywhere in particular. It was OK just to be wandering around: ‘no hurry, no worry’, as the locals put it.



A Barong Mask I brought in Ubud in Bali in 1980's

Another day, I went into a café and was chatting to some other travellers. I got into a conversation with an acupuncturist called Paul Robin. He said, if I was looking for a healing system and was studying Chinese martial arts, it made sense to practice Chinese healing arts, like acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine. He recommended me to study with his teacher Doctor Bernard Kai Lam Lee in England. It turned out that his acupuncture school was only minutes away from my home in London!

(After my travels on my return to London, I sought out Doctor Lee who was a famous acupuncturist and herbalist from Canton in China. I enrolled in his school, the Fook Sang (Fo Shan) Acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Medicine Practitioners Training College, and completed his four year training course in June 1993.

Paul Robin had been Doctor Lee's most senior student and main disciple. He had been assisting Doctor Lee in teaching at the college for many years. After I qualified, I was apprenticed to Paul Robin for many years. When Doctor Lee returned to China, he handed over the

running of the school to Paul Robin. I then assisted Paul Robin in teaching at the school and become his senior disciple.

The name of the school was then changed to The College of Chinese Medicine. In 2001, I was appointed Vice Principal of The College of Chinese Medicine, and in 2003, I was promoted to the position of Principal of The College of Chinese Medicine.)

I stayed in Ubud for many weeks, exploring the surrounding area and wandering through secluded forest clearings where I practised the Tai Chi that I had learned from Teacher Tan.

On my way back from one of these training sessions, I heard the melancholic mystical music of a Gamelan band. A large group of people dressed in formal sarongs, chanting and praying, walked passed me. It was a funeral that I watched respectfully from a distance. Soon, a group of about thirty men arrived, carrying a large platform, supported by long bamboo poles, resting on their shoulders. On the platform was a pagoda-style structure, decorated with flowers and religious symbols, that contained a huge red carved wooden bull.

The platform was placed on a pyre, and a body wrapped in white cloth was exhumed from a nearby grave. It had been temporarily buried whilst this cremation ceremony was being prepared.

The corpse was put inside the hollow bull, the pyre lit, and the relatives' grief intensified as the fire spread to the pagoda, bull and the body within.

As I walked away, I contemplated the idea of their spirit ascending with the smoke to a higher realm while his ashes returned to the earth.



The Burning Bull Cremation

I left Ubud and went to the northern coast with its volcanic, black sand beaches. I spent my first few days there relaxing in the sun.

One evening, a few travellers and myself were drinking tea at sunset on the beach with Benny Tantra. Benny was a local Balinese artist who sold his hand-painted T-shirts to tourists. A few of his designs featured Balinese mystical symbols. This sparked a conversation about spirituality.

I said that I practised Tai Chi and was interested in finding out more about energy and meditation. Benny said that he, too, did some special exercises, a type of Chinese Taoist breathing.

He was learning this from a great healer who lived a little further along the coast. "Would it be possible to meet him?", I asked. "No problem", said Benny.

The next day, we set out to meet his teacher. Benny told me a bit about him. His name was Miow Su (Teacher Miow), and he was half Balinese and half Chinese. He was thus known as either Miow Su or the Chinese Doctor, rather than Datu, as he was not Indonesian.

One day, many years ago, Miow Su had started to develop healing powers that he described as gifts from the gods. His skills soon became renowned, and people travelled great distances to visit him.

When we arrived at his house, we had to wait outside his room because he was healing his patients. Apparently, he healed people night and day, and meditated rather than slept.

When we finally could enter his home, we found him sitting cross-legged on the floor next to a low table with a cup of tea on it.

Incense smoke floated up from the many altars around the small room and out through a hole in the roof. Miow Su had built all the altars himself. Anybody who wished to say a prayer and make an offering of incense, flowers or money to his own god or gods could do so, right there. He never asked for payment, and any money he did receive, he gave to his family.

Benny and I lit incense, gave offerings, and then sat near Miow Su. He radiated a serene happiness, and I was content to take in the scene whilst he and Benny chatted in Balinese. I was curious about all the altars so I asked Miow Su. He explained that people use different words to describe the same thing, but they were all essentially different ways to the same place. Personally, I felt that all

the world's religions and spiritual paths were different ways to different places!

Miow Su then asked how he could help me. I was not sure, so I just asked him in a vague way what he could tell me about myself. He made me sit cross-legged with my back to him. He then placed the palms of his hands on my upper back and rocked me backwards and forwards, synchronised with his deep and slow breathing. I felt a glow of human warmth flow through me and a sense of well-being that I had never experienced before. I felt his energy enter into me, and I saw his smiling face looking around inside my head.

Miow Su's diagnostic technique was extraordinary and spot on. He told me who I was, where I came from, where I was going, how I felt and what I thought!

To treat his patients, he would use Chinese massage techniques. He would also place his patients into a certain posture, put his finger on relevant acupuncture points, and then channel chi energy into them. Miow Su would also prescribe Chinese herbal medicine.

Miow Su practised special internal Taoist breathing exercises to gain his power, but he also smoked very strong Indonesian cigarettes. He was a healer, but he was harming his own health. This confused me, but nonetheless, I was very impressed and eager to develop abilities similar to Miow Su's.

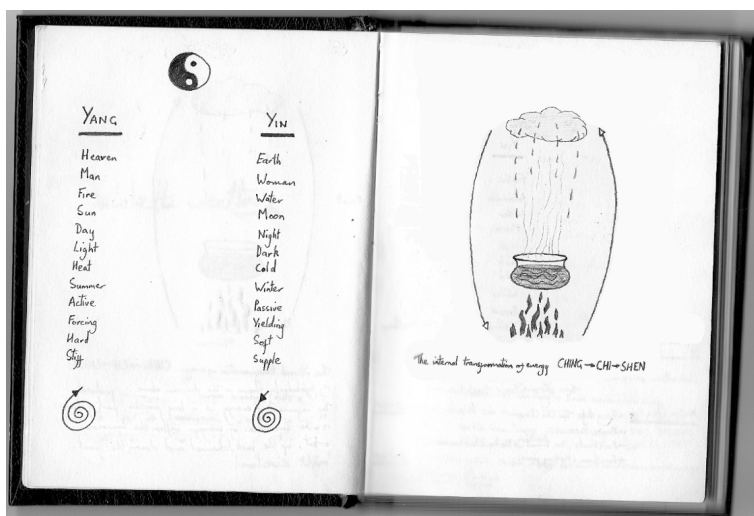
So with the necessary respectful approach, I asked him if he would take me on as a student. He agreed to share his knowledge with me. However, he made it clear that I would only benefit from what he was going to teach me if I had good intentions.



Paul and Miow Su
Bali 1989

I visited him daily and slowly learnt his complex system of Internal Taoist breathing techniques.

This involved inhaling the *Ching* from the air in sections and taking it down to the lower tan tien where it was mixed with the *Ching*. The two were combusted in the *cauldron of the belly* through special breathing techniques. This vaporised the *Ching* which would then become *Shen* in the head. The *Shen* then condensed and rained back down into the cauldron of the belly to be reheated.



Pages from my travelling notebook
that I always carried with me

This continual refining of the bodies energies eventually created the *elixir of life* which was then circulated through the *Small and Large Heavenly Orbits* and then stored in the lower tan tien as a pure pearl. (These techniques are all described in detail in the second part of the book.)

Miow Su told me to practise these exercises for one hundred days. It was essential that I conserved my essence during this time and was not to eat anything for at least one hour before and after doing these Internal Taoist breathing methods.

I was living in a hut on the beach for one hundred days. I practised these exercises, and I also had to practise Tai Chi to further balance and evenly distribute all the extra energy that these breathing techniques created. As the days went by, my energy increased, and I had many mystical experiences: seeing energy around trees and people, hearing voices and spiritual travelling to meet martial arts teachers.

Miow Su was always serene and in tune with the spirits. A man once came to ask him for advice because his life was beset by tragedy. His brother, who was a good swimmer, had drowned, and his father had committed suicide in mysterious circumstances. Why was his family suffering such ill-fortune? What could he do? Miow Su closed his eyes and entered into a meditative state for a few minutes. He then told the man that one of his ancestors had murdered a man and that the spirit of the victim was seeking revenge. If he meditated every day, was charitable and became a vegetarian, then the spirit would be appeased and the tragedies would cease.

Back at Benny's bamboo beach hut, Benny told me some disturbing news about his mother. She had suffered considerably because someone was jealous of her. Benny explained that he gave the money he made from selling his hand-painted t-shirts to his mother so that she could enjoy a better standard of living and this had caused the jealousy.

He said, it all began when his mother started to feel excruciatingly painful creeping sensations along the front of her body. Nothing seemed to help. Day by day, it got worse and worse, so bad that she would scream uncontrollably. It started every day at midday and would last for about half an hour. His mother said that there were things inside her, crawling around. Benny was dubious, so she pulled up the front of her shirt and Benny indeed saw things crawling underneath her skin. He took her to the hospital on the other side of the island where they gave her blood tests and every possible examination, but they could find nothing wrong.

Benny understood that what was happening could not be treated by modern medicine and that he would have to seek help elsewhere. Benny said to me that he thought his mother had been cursed by a Liak; they are just as powerful as Datu, but they owe their powers to their association with evil spirits. He took all his savings and went up

into the hills to search for a particular Liak who was reputed to be the most powerful in Bali.

When Benny found him, the Liak told Benny to look at the outstretched palm of his hand. A flame appeared in the Liak's hand, it was hot and bright but did not burn him. Benny persuaded him to come down from the hills to help. Benny returned to his mother's house and the next day at dawn, the Liak appeared.

The Liak beckoned Benny to come closer and to hold out his hand. The Liak then took from his belt a Kriss dagger. It was made of white gold and had a wave-shaped blade. The Liak placed it on Benny's outstretched hand and told him to follow the Kriss. Benny did not quite understand what the Liak meant, but suddenly, the dagger started to move and led him across the garden to a spot by the front fence where his mother used to stand and talk to her neighbours.

The Liak sat down on that piece of ground and began very carefully to remove each blade of grass, one at a time. After removing all the grass from an area about a foot square, he began removing the earth, piece by piece, and carried on until he had gone down about ten inches. There was a small leather parcel. Benny unwrapped it and found that it contained a black stone around which had been tied a piece of his mother's hair. The Liak asked Benny if he just wanted the curse ended or if he wanted it sent back to the person who had put it on his mother. Benny just wanted the curse ended, so the Liak reached into his pouch on his belt and took out a white stone and a gold needle.

He put the gold needle between the hair and the black stone. Then he put the white stone over that area of the black stone and wound them together with a bit of twine, and replaced them into the leather parcel. He put the parcel back in the hole and carefully replaced the soil. He then replaced each blade of grass, so that the area appeared exactly the same as before. "It is done", he said and left. Benny went

back into the house and waited with his mother. It was approaching twelve o'clock, midday, nothing happened - the curse had been lifted.

The last time that I saw Miow Su he took me through a door behind one of the altars and into a small room. In this room was his own private altar; on it were many items. But he drew my attention to one small statue of a Buddhist Monk and surprisingly, said "Ta Mo from Shaolin. Ta Mo my Teacher."

Ta Mo, the renowned founder of the Shaolin Temple Martial Arts School, died 1,500 years ago.

I asked Master Miow if he had ever had any problems with his chi. He said that a few years ago, he had got into the habit of going down the road and playing snooker, whenever he had a free moment.

He, of course, always won. However, he had to stop because the Gods told him that as long as he didn't use his powers for personal gain, the flow of chi would be unlimited, but if he abused his powers, they would be taken from him.

TRAINING WITH GURU MADÉ SUDIRA IN BALI



Paul and Guru Madé Sudira

Having completed Miow Su's Taoist breathing training, I made my way along the coast. I came to a stretch of beach that felt just right, moved into a wooden hut and carried on with my daily training.

One lazy afternoon, I was sitting in the bamboo porch of my hut with some other travellers. One of them was strumming a guitar. A Balinese man came over and asked if he could have a go. After playing a few songs, he glanced over at my notepad, pointed to the Yin Yang symbol and asked me what my interest in it was.

He said that he was also developing his energy and that his Guru (teacher) lived just down the road, and would I like to meet him? As it happened, the Guru, whose name was Madé Sudira, ran a café, so naturally, the first thing we did was to have dinner.

In Bali, there is a special type of cloth with a chessboard pattern of black and white squares. This is a holy cloth that adorns statues of Gods and is hung in temples, but Guru Madé Sudira used it for tablecloths in his café. There was a small group of people round the tables, a few travellers, some of Guru Madé Sudira's students, both locals and Westerners and his family. He served 'yin yang' rice - plates of half white and half black rice, and a 'five elements' dish containing food of five different colours. After dinner was finished and the tables cleared, everyone sat on straw mats on the floor, in a large circle.

Smoke from the incense and the ghostly sound of a Balinese Gamelan band playing nearby created a special atmosphere. It seemed as if the markers between the real and the imagined were no longer fixed. I was invited to demonstrate what I could do, so I stood in the middle of the circle and performed one set of Sifu Tan's 'Chen and Yang Thirteen Tai Chi Postures'. I pointed to the Yin Yang diagram I was creating with my hands as they moved through the incense thick air. I said, "Tai Chi – Yin-Yang." Guru Madé Sudira pointed to the chequered tablecloth and said, "Bali - Yin-Yang".

Then I went through the first form of the Chen Family Style of Tai Chi. My movements seemed to fall into the rhythm of the strange, other-worldly music; it was like I was part of a religious ritual. I finished the form, and then Guru Madé Sudira performed some Silat, the martial art of Indonesia. His movements were like a shadow, flowing across the ground.

I was asked to demonstrate something else, so I did Tai Chi Pushing Hands with another traveller. Guru Madé Sudira came up to us and

said in his broken English, “This fighting”. He then reached out and grabbed the forearms of the two of us and dug his fingers into certain points. We both immediately felt the effects. “This stop fighting”, he said, grinning.

How did he know about these points, and why were his hands so strong? He said he did 'Ener-Chi massage' and that “Martial Arts, Meditation and Massage. Same Same!”. Guru Madé Sudira's teaching was always informal.

He would do massage whenever there was an opportunity. He would encourage his students to practise it on each other and on anyone else who happened to walk into the café. Even his youngest son, who was only about six, was already quite proficient. The massage system itself was unlike anything I had encountered before. It involved playing the tendons as if they were guitar strings at specific points on the body. The vibration generated balanced the chi throughout the corresponding meridian, and it was not unusual to get quite spectacular results as the energy was released into the body. The recipient would sometimes leap into the air as if he had just been electrified.

Guru Madé Sudira also taught me a system of bone and joint manipulation which, through experimentation, I found could also be used for martial arts and not just healing. He also taught me various breathing exercises, synchronised with certain hand gestures to strengthen the hands for massage. I was struck by the similarity between these and the hand gestures used by martial artists, Tibetan Buddhist lamas and Balinese dancers. Although the activities were all different, the purpose in each case was the same - to activate the chi.

Madé Sudira was a Balinese Hindu Guru and he taught Indian Yoga to his students, both external Hatha Yoga and internal Kundalini Yoga. Madé Sudira's Internal Kundalini Yoga had a very strong

Chinese influence and complemented the Chinese Taoist breathing that had been taught to me by Miow Su, the Chinese Doctor.

Guru Madé Sudira had attained levels of ability that defied rational explanation. On one occasion, Guru Madé Sudira asked me to put my hands on his head. He told me that he was going to breathe with his head. He began breathing deeply, and quite remarkably, I felt the bone plate of his skull move in and out about an inch!

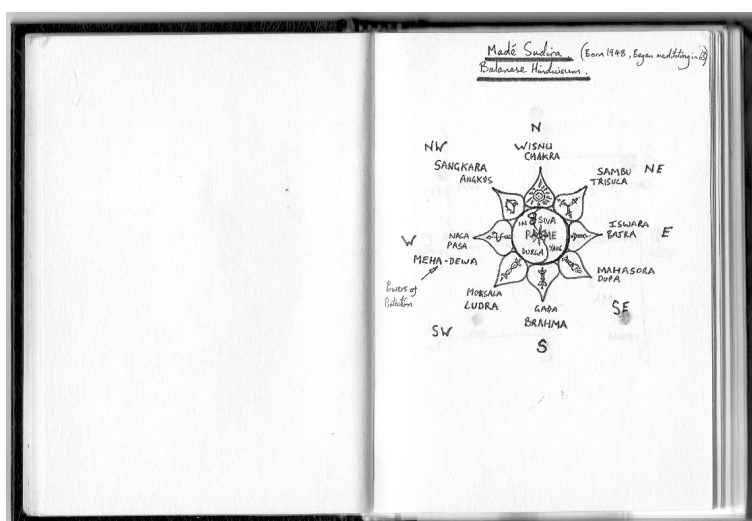
Guru Madé Sudira also had the ability to leave his body and return to it at will. The year before, he had inadvertently become involved in a feud with another powerful Datu. He was challenged and accepted. At the appointed time, and after a period of preparation and meditation, Guru Madé Sudira had put on the face mask of Darga, the Balinese God of Destruction. Then he lay down and appeared to go to sleep. In the village over the hills, the other Datu had done the same. Neither of them moved for three days. Then Guru Madé Sudira 'woke up'. The other Datu never did, and his body was cremated a few days later.

I was keen to learn Guru Madé Sudira's technique for leaving the body. When I asked him if he would show me how to do it, he asked me to wait a moment whilst he rummaged around at the back of the café. He returned a few minutes later with a book made of pieces of bamboo that had been carved in Sanskrit. He had received it from his Guru who had received it from his Guru before him.

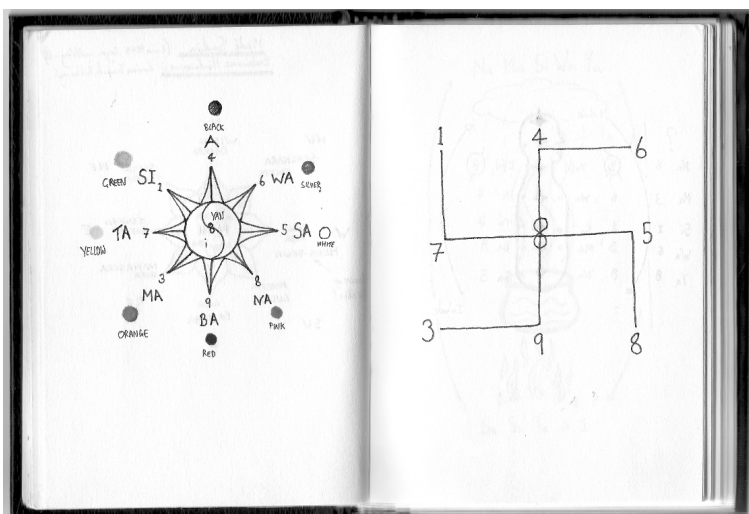
He read some paragraphs from the book and as he explained their meaning, he drew several diagrams which illustrated his massage, meditation and energy system. He also showed me how to develop the eight spiritual powers and his technique for travelling in one's spiritual body as well as how to help someone return to their physical body. I carefully copied these diagrams into my own notebook that I always carried with me.

The first was a lotus flower with eight petals with a yin yang in the middle. Each of the petals was associated with a direction, a God, a colour, a sound, a number and a power. He next drew a profile of a person and marked up the various energy centres on the front, back and centre of the figure. He also showed how each point was associated with a different aspect of the first diagram. The points were marked as spinning yin-yang diagrams.

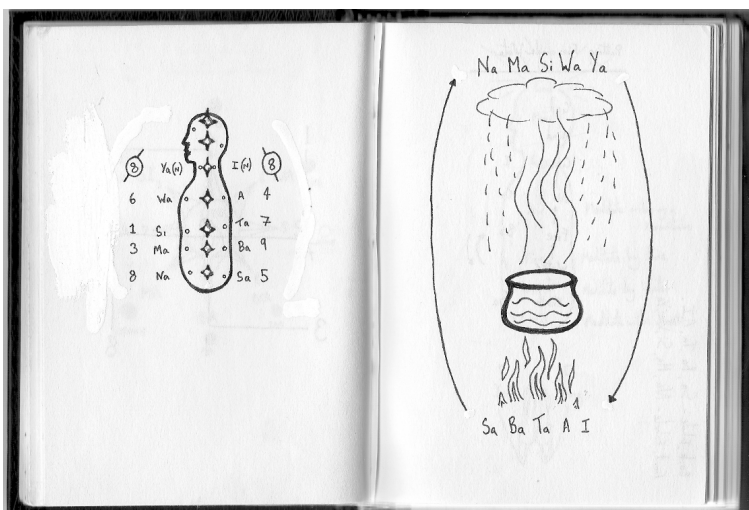
He explained how on one single breath the chi should be spiralled around the five yang element points up the back and the five yin element points up the front, the relevant number of times. This would set off a chain reaction and activate the seven chakras located up the central axis. Last of all, the crown chakra on the top of the head opens to release the spirit.



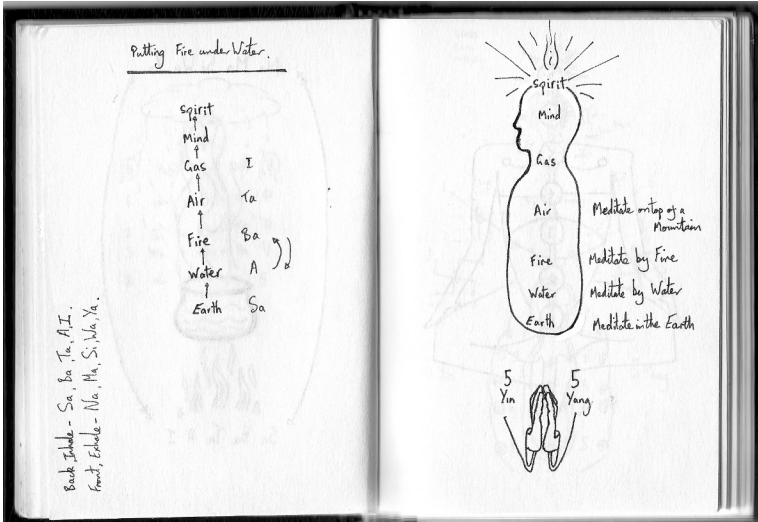
The Sacred Lotus Showing the Relationship between the Spiritual Powers, the Directions and the Gods



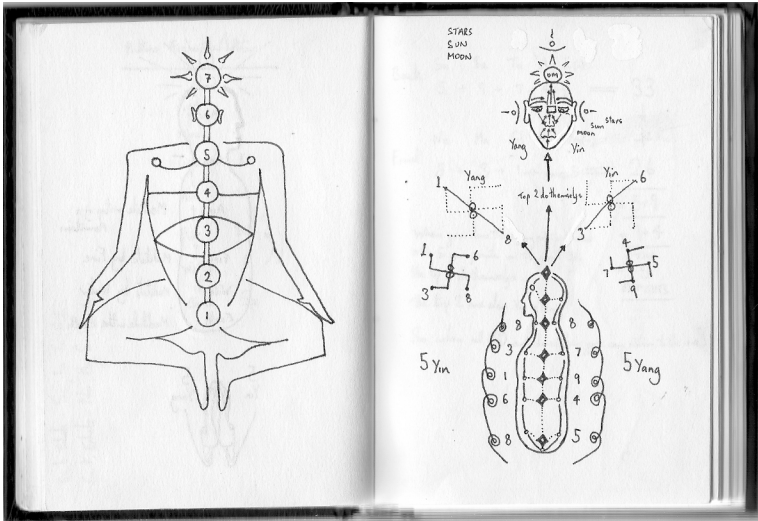
The Relationship between the Sounds, the Colours, the Numbers and the Directions



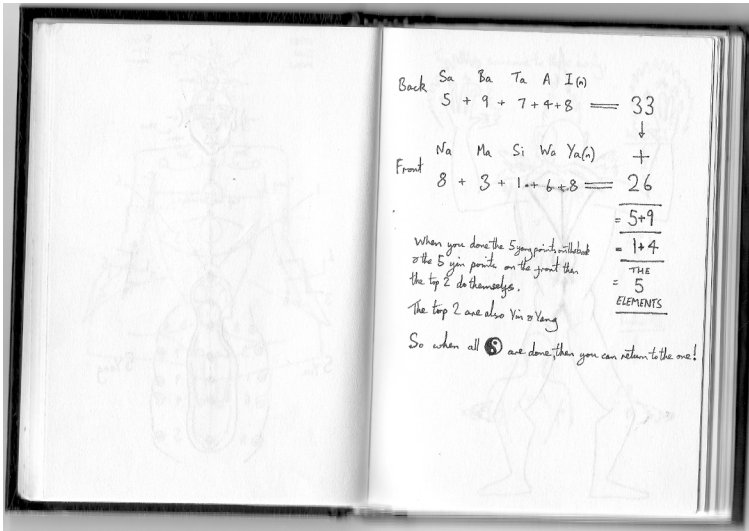
How to Use the Sounds to Lift the Energy Up the Central Channel to the Crown of the Head (left side)
The Transformation of Ching to Chi to Shen (right side)



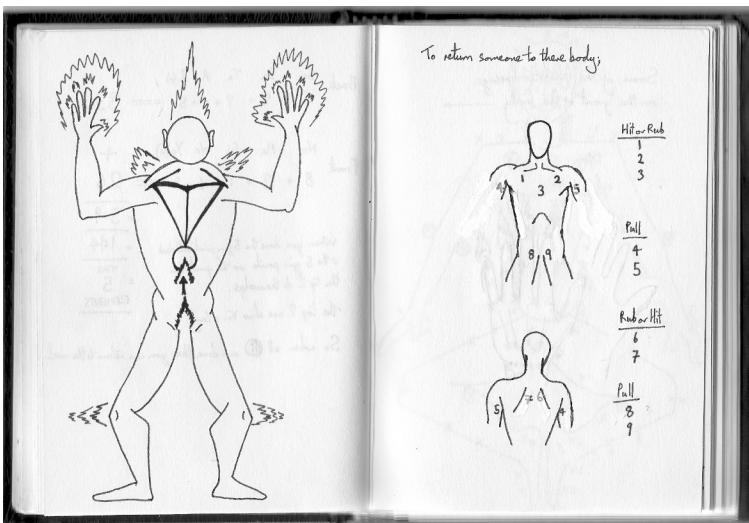
Putting Fire under Water (left side)
Combining the 5 Elements (right side)



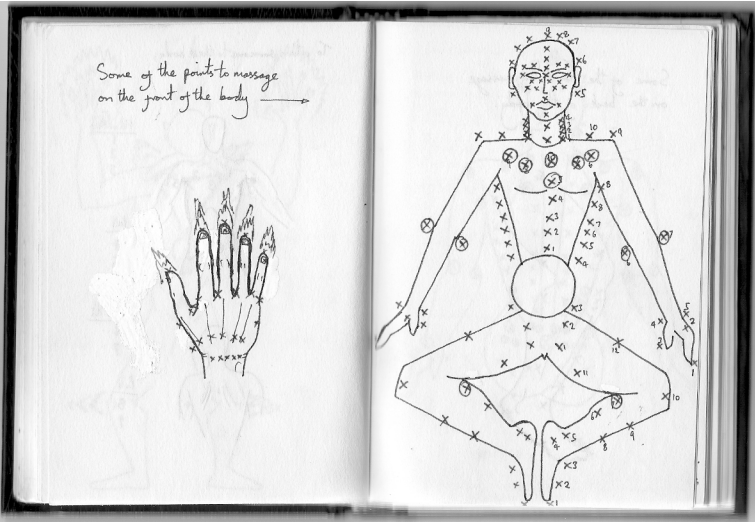
How to Use the Breath Combined with the Intention to Send
the Spirit Body Out through the Crown Chakra



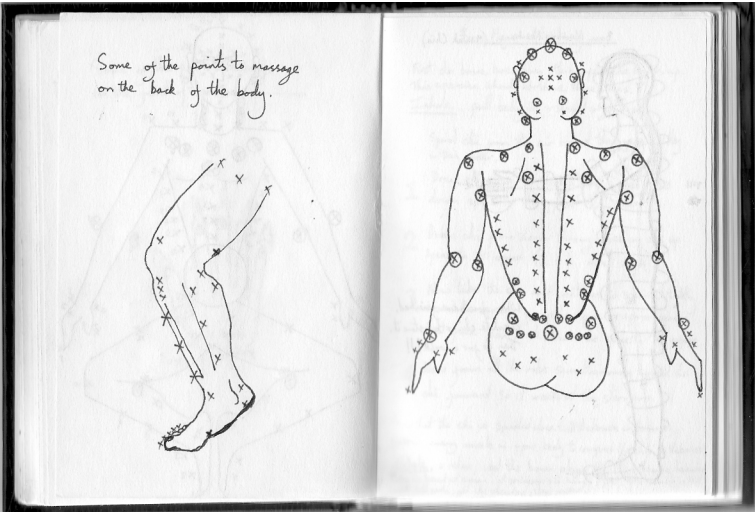
The Mystical Numerical Calculations that Show the Balanced Integrated Nature of Madé Sudira's Spiritual System



Points on the Knees, Shoulders and Fingers Used to Release Excess Fire Energy Generated by Madé Sudira's Intense Meditations (left side)
 Points (used by a Teacher) that Need to be Manipulated in a Specific Order to Return the Spirit to the Physical Body to the Student after They Had Been Practising Spiritual Travel (right side)



Madé Sudira's Tendon Massage Points
on the Front of the Body



Madé Sudira's Tendon Massage Points
on the Back of the Body

Guru Madé Sudira offered to demonstrate. He went into the Full Lotus posture with his back against the wall and signalled for me to watch closely. He held his hands in a special mudra (hand sign) on a very powerful acupuncture point, inhaled, moved his head and eyes in a certain way and then slumped against the wall slightly. I guessed he had gone. There was a line of heat haze ascending from the top of his head. I followed the line up to his indistinct form shimmering above me.

He came back into his physical body, opened his eyes and indicated that I should try. I did as he had done and went through the sequence. I thought it had not worked. So I opened my eyes, and looking down, to my surprise, I saw my physical body sprawled on the ground and Guru Madé Sudira looking up at me with a twinkle in his eyes.

He went over to my collapsed physical body, twanged certain tendons and then, bit by bit, I merged back into my body until I was looking out of my own eyes. I still could not move my arms. So he twanged some more tendons, and then I felt my spirit hands fit back into my physical hands as if I was putting on a pair of gloves. I felt a little disorientated but was very happy to be back inside myself.

Learning from Guru Madé Sudira was never dull. Every lesson had deeper and deeper levels of meaning. Some things I understood, but much of the time I was quite perplexed, for his lessons raised more questions than they answered. For example, once he pointed to a candle, and I thought he was going to talk about 'the light of consciousness'. Instead, he just put his index finger into the hottest part of the candle flame and was just holding it there. He grinned a mischievous grin and said, "Power of Protection". Then he removed his finger from the flame and placed it on my forearm. As he exhaled, my whole arm up to the shoulder went red hot.

On another occasion, Guru Madé Sudira, some other students and myself were all meditating in a circle when a large hornet began buzzing around us. This particular type of insect has a powerful sting, and we were all unable to relax. Guru Madé Sudira mumbled something under his breath, then stood up, reached out and grabbed the hornet. He then walked outside and let it go flying off. He came back in and sat down. We asked to see his hand; not a mark, not a sting. “Power of Protection”, he said: “Stop hornet sting, stop snakebite, even stop arrow and machete!”

Out of the eight yogic powers that he had, he wanted us all to master this one first – Power of Protection. So he got us all to hold hands whilst sitting in a circle. He then took us through a very long and complex meditation. At the end of this process, he told us that whilst we still held hands, we would all have the Power of Protection. To emphasise his point, he came round to each one of us and tried to stab us in the forearm with a short sharp steel dagger. Even though he was using great force, the point did not puncture the skin.

His teaching methods were often unconventional. One day, we were all sitting on the floor of his café whilst he explained how the Sanskrit word 'Om' worked. Suddenly, he went into the Full Lotus posture and rolled onto his head. He carried on talking whilst sitting upside down on his head as if this was completely normal.

On another occasion, a most bizarre and strange event occurred. An old man known to Guru Madé Sudira was dying. In fact, he was virtually dead but could not die. At the request of the man's relatives, Guru Madé Sudira went to visit him to find out what was happening. As soon as he saw the old man, he knew what had caused the situation; it was his time to die, but he could not leave his body because he was trapped inside it.

Guru Madé Sudira had warned him years earlier not to undergo *The Golden Thread Ritual* that caused this condition, but obviously, he

had not heeded the warning. It was explained to me that an alternative way to gain the Power of Protection (rather than meditating for several years under the guidance of a Guru or Datu) was to pay a vast amount of money to a Liak to perform The Golden Thread Ritual.

This involved the inserting of incredibly fine threads of gold into the person, creating a mesh under the skin all over the body whilst performing certain religious acts and reciting prayers. The result was a body impervious to attack from any edged weapon.

The old man told Guru Madé Sudira that what he wanted, was to be allowed to leave his body when it died and not be trapped inside it whilst it rotted and decomposed. So to grant his wish, Guru Madé Sudira went out into the jungle and came back some time later with special plants that he had collected. He asked the old man one more time if he definitely wanted to be released. The man said, he was sure. So Guru Madé Sudira tied the various plants into a bundle and then gently brushed them over the skin of the old man. The golden threads slowly emerged and when the last one was out, the man lay back and left his dead body.

Towards the end of my time with Guru Madé Sudira, he told me that there was a holy mountain by the sea, with a temple on it. He had meditated on top of the mountain, left his body and seen a power stone that he had gone to find. He said, he wanted me to have this gem as a protective talisman. I accepted it and thanked him. I put this in a pouch around my neck together with a red thread that I would later be given by the Dalai Lama. These two talismans later disappeared. I took this to mean that my development should not be dependent on external items but rather on internal energy.

The last time I meditated with Guru Madé Sudira and his students was on an outing to that very temple on the holy mountain by the sea. The temple was called Pulaki and had been there since ancient

times. It had many courts, terraces and arches upon which clambered hundreds of monkeys. Guru Madé Sudira was known to the gate man who admitted us to the inner courtyard. From there, we made our way up a steep flight of stairs and emerged onto a terrace on a ridge overlooking the sea. We seated ourselves round three intricately carved pillars. Behind them were two more pillars and behind those, nothing but the vast sea and endless sky.

We meditated for a while, then Guru Madé Sudira pointed to the first row of pillars and said, in his broken English!

“Three in Bali Hindu is Brahma, Siva and Vishnu. For Christians is Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Is same same. Chinese say Ching, Chi and Shen. Buddhists say Buddha, Sanga and Dharma. For everybody is same same. One, two and three”.

Pointing to the second row of pillars, he then said: “One and Two, Mother and Father, Heaven and Earth, Yin and Yang, all same same.”

Pointing finally at the emptiness behind the last two pillars, he said: “Who knows? Different people look for different things, find different things but it is same thing. Everybody one family, we all here together.”

MEETING THE DALAI LAMA OF TIBET IN THE HIMALAYAS



Ceremonial Instruments Used by the Yellow Hats Sect

I was on a bus, winding its slow way up into the foothills of the Himalayas. As the bus ascended, the air became cooler and cleaner, and because I was sitting on the roof of the bus, the views became more and more spectacular. I had to be careful not to get too absorbed by the view, or I would forget to lie down flat when we passed under power lines and telephone cables which otherwise would have decapitated me. Behind me were the arid, roasting plains of India. Ahead of me, I could see the awesome, snow-capped, sky-scraping peaks of the Himalayan mountain range. Somewhere up there on the Himalayan plateau was the legendary, forbidden, unhappy land of Tibet.

Macleod Gunj is an Indian village high up in the Himalayas (18,500 feet). Many Tibetan refugees escaping the Chinese invasion of the 1950s made their home there.

The Dalai Lama (spiritual leader of the Tibetan people) lived in exile in this flourishing community. They had built a large monastery and there were many Tibetan Buddhist lamas, monks and nuns on the mountain.

In Tibetan Buddhism, it is believed that High Lamas are able to choose where they are going to be reincarnated when they die. Most decide not to take the option of moving up to a higher spiritual plane but instead return to this world so that they can help others along the Way. It is said that the Dalai Lama himself had already reincarnated fourteen times!

Macleod Gunj had two parallel main roads, called Up Street and Down Street. Between them were several rows of large prayer wheels, which were turned continuously by passing Tibetans. They say, as long as someone, somewhere is turning a prayer wheel, the world itself will continue to spin. The prayer on the wheels was '*Om Mani Padme Hum*' meaning 'the jewel in the lotus' (compassion in the heart).

I stayed in a small room built on the roof of a house. Every morning as the sun rose over the Himalayas, and every evening as it set over the plains of India, I would practice my Tai Chi. The local Tibetan children would frequently join in when I was training, laughing, joking and imitating my movements. Word soon spread to other travellers in Macleod Gunj, and in no time at all I was giving two classes a day. I became a well-known fixture and was commonly referred to as 'Mr Yin Yang'.



Mr Yin Yang on the Roof

I had gifts for specific Lamas and letters of introduction from Sifu Tan's disciple in Singapore. So one morning, I set off to visit the monastery. As I made my way across the mountain and through the woods, I exchanged greetings with the smiling Buddhist monks whom I passed on the way. The Lamas were wise and compassionate. They radiated such harmony and serenity that I was left dazed after spending any time in their company. I spent many months studying the Tibetan Buddhist system in great depth.

Everything was explained with a determination for there to be no room for error or misunderstanding. For example, in one class about meditation, it was made clear that the mind should not be active; we should not be thinking. Also, we should not be thinking about not thinking for this would be activating the mind. It was then further pointed out that we should not get concerned about whether we were or were not thinking about not thinking for this would also be activating the mind!

One evening, as I trained my Tai Chi on the flat roof outside my room at sunset, the sky was awash with rainbows of light. Colourful prayer flags, which were strung from the trees, fluttered gently in the breeze and high above me, giant eagles spiralled on the up-draughts.

Occasionally, one of these great birds would swoop down over my head to grab at the food offerings left out on the roof for them by the Tibetans.

The Tibetan prayer flags were always in groups of five colours: green, red, yellow, white and blue. It seemed to me that they were representative of the five elements which corresponded to the five main internal organs: liver, heart, spleen, lungs and kidneys.

I finished my training session with a few standing Chi Kung postures as a passing Tibetan Buddhist monk, who had noticed me from the street, came up to the roof. He showed me the Tibetan versions of the postures. He indicated that energy from the Heavens descended to the head, and energy from the Earth ascended up the legs into the belly. They both combined in the heart. This compassion energy was then radiated throughout the world to all those in need. This was the Buddha's Middle Way, the Path of the Heart.

During the months that I had been staying in Macleod Gunj, the Dalai Lama had been away. One day, it was announced that he was returning from Geneva where he had just been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (1989). Word rapidly spread around the village, and there was joy and expectation in the air. I noticed a steady stream of Tibetans, old and young, all making their way from the village through the woods to the Dalai Lama's palace. So I joined the flow. We all gathered in a large clearing on the hillside next to the palace. There were hundreds of monks and lamas who were all clad in maroon robes and behind them, hundreds of Tibetan families with their children.

Brightly coloured prayer flags fluttered in the breeze and a deep, resonant chant began to emanate from the group. I stood on the edge of the clearing under the shade of some trees. The monks and lamas were seated cross-legged in a semi-circle, focusing on a large, white

incense burner which was about ten feet high. The white smoke rose up into the clear, blue sky.

Some of the monks were holding religious artefacts like the Vajras (a sort of double-headed spear symbolic of the Thunderbolt of Enlightenment). Others played bells, gongs and conches. All together, there must have been about a thousand people on the hill side.

I asked what the gathering was about, and I was told that the chanting of mantras and prayers was to generate the positive energy of compassion. This was carried by the incense smoke to the Dalai Lama in Geneva and to the whole world. Over the next few days, preparations were made for the Dalai Lama's return. Colourful decorations were hung across the roads and from the houses and trees. An electrifying feeling of expectation grew as the days went by until finally the moment arrived.

Hundreds of Tibetan refugees had come down from the neighbouring villages and gathered in Macleod Gunj, holding flowers in their hands. The Dalai Lama's car was flanked by open-topped Jeeps filled with monks, advisers and massive monk bodyguards. As they drove up the crowd-lined, winding mountain roads and through Macleod Gunj, they were showered with flowers by the cheering crowds. That night, the Tibetans had a massive celebration in the village square. Everybody was drinking chang, a potent Tibetan beer. Huge drums beat and a giant circle of brightly-dressed Tibetan women danced around and around. The rhythm of their feet stamping the ground matching the beat of the drums. Flags waved in the wind and a shaman who had come down from the high mountain was spiral dancing in the centre of the circle. It was clear to me that this shamanic circle dance must be the origin of the Chinese martial art of Pa Kua Chang (Bagua Zhang). The festivities went on late into the night.

In the light of the early morning, I saw some beautiful Tibetan girls in bright and colourful costumes walking by, heading towards the Dalai Lama's palace. Other people were also going that way. I learned, that they were from a Tibetan dance troupe and were going to give a performance for the Dalai Lama.

The palace gates were wide open, and everybody was invited in to watch. So I sat down in the inner courtyard and waited for the performance to begin.

Suddenly, there were clashing gongs, beating drums and whirlwind masked dancers. They spun and glided as the trumpets blew and the dance developed into a play. There was something apart from the colour, music and drama of the dance that had me captivated. The configurations of the dancers seemed to be in geometric formations, like the mandalas in the monasteries. The whole performance was generating an energy field that drew the onlookers in, until we became mesmerised by it.



Tibetan Dancer in the Dalai Lama's Palace

Later in the day, I heard that the Dalai Lama was opening his doors to any travellers who wanted to talk to him. So I wandered through his garden to the small dwelling where he was holding audience. An aura of serenity surrounded him, and he had a wonderfully warm welcoming smile.

We talked for a while, and he gave me a red cord necklace with a special knot in it that is symbolic of the thread that holds the universe together.

I was glad to have had the opportunity to meet a man of such great virtue and compassion. I heard a rumour that he believed that the time for Dalai Lamas was over and that he was the last and would not reincarnate after his death.

The months went by, and I have many happy memories of drinking ginger tea on the roof, chatting with other travellers and Tibetans whilst watching the sunset over India and later at night, watching shooting stars whiz across the crystal-clear sky. The Milky Way shone as brightly as daylight, and the concentration of the monks and lamas chanting their daily meditations seemed to make the whole mountain glow with energy and serenity.

There were many strange and magical things happening in McLeod Gunj. One night, during a full moon, while I was asleep, I floated out of my body and, like the eagles, flew about the mountain at great speed. The air was cool and fresh. Above me, the full moon in a bright, starry sky and below me, the forests and ravines of the mountain were rushing by. What freedom, to fly - to be a free spirit!

During this time, I was sleeping on the roof, and the owners of the house had given birth to a daughter. The baby was born with the Sanskrit word 'Om' written on her tongue. This is the first word of the famous meditation mantra 'Om-Mani-Padme-Hum' (The jewel in the heart of the lotus).

Another strange thing concerned a traveller who had caught an illness and was bedridden. It became known to the lamas. So that evening, all the lamas sent out healing energy to him, and the next day, he was up and well.

One time, on a clear cloudless day, a mist started to form in the pine forests on the surrounding slopes. It kept low to the ground and crept around the town before disappearing down the mountain. The strange thing was that it was bright green. Whether it was just pollen being carried on the wind or something else, I will never know.

The next night I was to experience the most intense and disturbing phenomenon of my time in Macleod Gunj. I was sitting on my bed meditating, the door and shutters of my room were closed, and I had only one candle burning to provide light. The stillness of the night

was shattered by the sudden howling of all the dogs in the village as if they were trying to ward off an intruder. The howling stopped as swiftly as it had begun. Then an eerie whistling wind descended from the Himalayas.

It went charging through the village from house to house as if searching for something or someone. It tore the roofs off houses and smashed flowerpots and shattered windows. I felt the presence of another person on the roof outside my room. A moment later, the door opened and shut quickly as a girl slipped in.

She was one of the travellers in my Tai Chi class. She came over to the bed, sat down and started jabbering about various fears, worries and anxieties she had. It was clear to me that her mind had been disturbed by the wind, and I said so. I then told her to be quiet and stay still, because when she had come into the room, the chaotic cold wind spirit had come in with her.

The room temperature began to drop, and although the candle flame remained the same height and did not waver, the room continued to grow darker and darker and to get colder and colder. A shadow started to engulf the room.

I started to do special Chi Kung breathing to stop my bones shaking from the cold. I told the girl that the spirit was feeding off her fear and that she should clear her mind. She did so with an effort, and the room started to get brighter, and the temperature returned to normal. I suggested that she returned to her room whilst the cold wind spirit was elsewhere, and I went back to my meditation.

END NOTE

These profound experiences I had on my travels as a young man shaped the core of my being. The Eastern medical, martial and spiritual arts that I now practice and teach all have their origins in this journey.

2,500 years ago, the world's most famous Taoist, Lao Tzu, wrote:

At the centre of your being you have the answer,

you know who you are and you know what you want.

A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.

SECTION 2 THE TECHNIQUES

THE PHILOSOPHY OF A TAOIST WAY OF LIFE



The Chinese Character for Tao – The Way

Tao literally means ‘The Way’. It is an abstract concept that is about understanding and being part of nature and discovering your own true nature. Tao means both *The Way of Nature* and *A Way of Life*, or just *The Way Things Are*.

Taoism is a life-enhancing and health-promoting philosophy. At its heart, Taoism is an understanding that everything is interconnected, flows together and that we are part of the flow.

Ancient China followed a shamanistic way of life. However, as Chinese society became more settled, agricultural and urban 12,000 to 7,000 years ago, Taoism evolved to continue the naturalistic philosophy of shamanism and its understanding of nature.

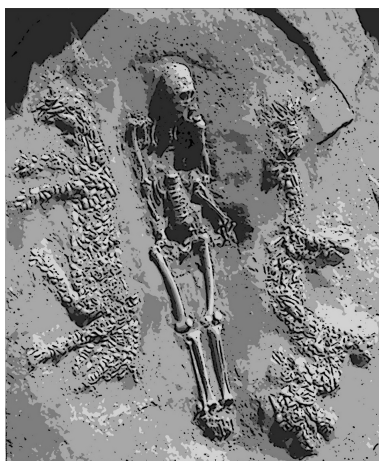
The shamans were the intermediaries between heaven and earth which were the two forces that controlled the life of humans. This concept became the Yin Yang philosophy of Taoism. Yin and yang came to represent not just heaven and earth but all interacting opposites in the universe.



The Chinese Yin and Yang Symbol

The remarkable discovery in 1987 of a 7,300 year old shaman's grave in Henan province in China confirms the great antiquity of the Yin Yang concept which was later incorporated into Taoism.

The shaman was flanked by two mosaics formed by white clam shells: a Yin Tiger on the right and a Yang Dragon on the left.



7,300 year old Dragan-Tiger Shaman's Grave

Within one's body, the acupuncture channel known as the governing meridian is considered yang because it runs along the spine which is hard (yang). The conception meridian is seen as yin because it runs along the midline of the front of the body, which is soft (yin).

One of the first Taoist meditations that is taught is the *Small Heavenly Orbit*. It is practised by circulating the energy through these two meridians creating a circuit of chi around the body. This circulation of the yang and yin energies of the body evenly distributes, harmonises and balances them.

One of the earliest books that teaches this Taoist meditation is the 2,000 year old *Dragon Tiger Scripture*. The author of this book is unknown, but the content shows that the Taoist meditation system was already fully formed by this time.

The techniques that I share in this book are now mostly contained within Taoism, but many of them existed before Taoism was created, and you don't have to be a Taoist to practise them.

Taoism has a very simple and beautiful philosophy with only a few components:

Wu Chi

Emptiness also known as Nothingness or the Void.

Yin and Yang

All of the interacting opposites of the world.

The Three Treasures

Ching (Essence), Chi (Energy) and Shen (Spirit)

The Five Elements

Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water

This philosophy is expressed through many aspects of Chinese life:

- Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) comprising acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine, diet, massage, cupping and bone manipulation.
- Chi kung comprising both still and moving postures as well as some breathing techniques.
- Taoist sexual kung fu, a method to bring spirituality and energy healing into the art of making love. (For more information please see my book: *Taoist Sexual Kung Fu* - available at www.taiji.net)
- Chinese Internal Martial Arts comprising Tai Chi Chuan, Pa Kua Chang and Wutang Shan Chuan. (For more information please see my books: *The Training Manual of The College of Chinese Martial Arts* and *Dim Mak for Martial Arts* - available at www.taiji.net)
- Taoist meditation and the quest for spiritual immortality.

Tao



Wu Chi



Yin Yang

精 氣 神

Ching

Chi

Shen

木 火 土 金 水

Wood

Fire

Earth

Metal

Water

Taoist Philosophical Concepts

The philosophy of Taoism can be understood on many different levels. We can see it as the story of creation, out of the nothingness of Wu Chi was created Yin and Yang, the Three Treasures and the Five Elements. At the end of time these components will all return to the nothingness of Wu Chi that they first emerged from.

When looked at in this way, we can say that these components are found as natural phenomena in the external world. Yin and yang are expressed as night and day, sun and moon, sunrise and sunset, north and south, man and woman.

The Three Treasures become past, present and future; me, you and us; or the earth, the sky and humans.

The Five Elements occur in nature as Water that helps the Wood to grow, as Fire that burns the Wood and creates ashes that become the Earth from which we mine Metals.

However, this book explores a deeper explanation of the philosophical components of Taoism. These ideas can be found not only in the external world but also within ourselves as we are a reflection of the world, and the world is a reflection of us.

This internal explanation is the secret of Taoist philosophy because it transforms it from being an intellectual contemplation of the external world into an active meditation that can transform our inner world. The ultimate manifestation of this internal chi cultivation is a long life in good health and the development one's spirit body through meditation. (Please read through to the end of the book at least once before trying any of the meditations.)

If we understand these components as not describing the story of creation but the story of our own creation, then their real relevance becomes apparent.

Before we were conceived, we did not exist; there was just nothingness - Wu Chi. After conception, the flow of yin and yang energy within us emerged. In the womb, the Three Treasures of Ching/Essence, Chi/Energy and Shen/Spirit, all transformed within us smoothly and without interruption. Finally, the Five Elements manifested as the five main internal organs and all they control.

Wood = Liver

Fire = Heart

Earth = Spleen

Metal = Lungs

Water = Kidney

Each of these organs nourishes a part of the body:

- Liver nourishes the tendons
- Heart nourishes the blood vessels
- Spleen nourishes the muscles
- Lungs nourish the skin
- Kidneys nourish the bones

Each of these organs also connect with a sense organ:

- Liver opens into the eyes and manifests the power of sight
- Heart opens into the tongue and manifests the power of speech
- Spleen opens into the lips and manifests the power of taste
- Lungs open into the nose and manifest the power of smell
- Kidneys open into the ears and manifest the power of hearing

Originally, the Five Elements were known as the Five Phases because they were describing processes of transformation and not physical items. For example, the ancients would say that within the body, Water (kidneys) controls and regulates Fire (heart). This is confirmed by physiology which explains that the release of adrenaline from the adrenal cortex of the kidneys regulates the functional activity of the heart. Adrenalin is a hormone that flows through the body in the blood stream. So when the ancients explained that Water controls and regulates Fire, they were correct. Hormones control and regulate the functional activity of the internal organs.

The Taoists understood the intricacies of the processes within the body but used a different type of terminology to describe them.

Through the practice of the Taoist meditations explained in this book, we can keep the Five Elements in a state of balance within our bodies. This results in improved health which is more likely to enable us to live a long life free from disease and illness.

When we are born, our mind is pure and clear, like Wu Chi. We are one with the world around us; there is no sense of separation. As we experience more of life, we begin to differentiate between ourselves and others, between good and bad, right and wrong, happiness and sadness. This is the creation of our perception of yin and yang, interacting opposites.

Through the practice of the Taoist meditations explained in this book, we can balance the yin and yang energies within ourselves and return the mind to a state of calm unity. We become less judgemental of ourselves and others and understand that the events in the world are like Tao, an ongoing process of transformation.

Here is a Chinese folk story about an old man who understood the Tao:

There was an old man who only had one son. The local villagers said, "Bad luck." He replied, "Who can tell."

A great storm blew open the gate of the old man's field. His only horse ran away up into the hills. The local villagers said, "Bad luck." He replied, "Who can tell."

His horse returned the next day with a whole herd of wild horses. The old man closed the gate and now had a field full of horses. The locals said, "Good luck." He replied, "Who can tell."

His only son tried to tame one of the wild horses and was thrown to the ground and broke his leg. The local villagers said, "Bad luck." He replied, "Who can tell."

The next day, the troops from the Emperor's army came to the village. Every family had to enlist one son into the army to serve in the ongoing war where they were most likely to die. Because of his broken leg, the old man's only son was exempt from service.

What is good luck and what is bad luck is not always clear at the time. It is best to be like the old man. *Good luck? - Bad luck? Who can tell?*

The meditations in this book can help you understand the Tao. Through regular practice of the meditations, you will find stillness, mental quietness and inner peace. This internal balance and harmony is the return to Wu Chi.



Wu Chi Symbolised by an Empty Circle

The state of inner peace, Wu Chi, is possible once the body, energy, mind and emotions have been balanced.

THE MORALITY OF A TAOIST WAY OF LIFE

Life force energy (chi) flows through all people, creatures, plants and the earth and connects everything together in a beautifully balanced way. With Taoist meditation, this is directly experienced, enhanced and encouraged.

The energy that is felt flowing through the body is the same energy that flows through all people and nature. This natural energy connects everything together.

The idea of things being separate and therefore needing to be connected is an illusion created by our mind. With the practice of Taoist meditation, by circulating the chi through our body, we become integrated. Our body, mind, emotions and spirit all unify, and we find our wholeness, our oneness. This feeling of oneness expands, and we experience our oneness with the world and all humanity. So the illusion of separateness is removed.

This knowledge gained by experience leads people to be more compassionate towards others because of the realisation that we are all one.

This understanding can easily be brought into our everyday lives by following the moral concept of reciprocity expressed by the Chinese philosopher Confucius 2,500 years ago. He said:

“One should treat others as one would like others to treat oneself.”

THE TAOIST IDEA OF CHI



The Chinese Character for Chi – Energy

The Chinese character for chi is made up from two symbols. The top symbol means 'breath'. This is implying that our chi energy is partly derived from the air we breathe and that the chi can be enhanced by breathing exercises. It also communicates the idea that chi is immaterial and hard to see, just like air. The lower symbol means 'rice'. This is implying that our chi energy is partly derived from the food that we eat and that the chi can be enhanced by the food we eat.

When the two characters are put together, the meaning becomes 'steam rising from rice as it cooks'. This reveals a deeper level of interpretation, relating to transformation. Rice is cooked in water that is in a cauldron above a fire. The heat from the fire turns the water into steam and transforms the uneatable raw rice into edible cooked rice that is beneficial to us.

'Steam rising from rice as it cooks' is a deeply hidden symbolic code that refers to the alchemical transformation of our Ching/Essence, into Chi/Energy, into Shen/Spirit, in the cauldron of our bellies.

Within all the different Taoist meditations, the transformation of these Three Treasures is a constant theme.

THE THREE TREASURES OF TAOISM



The Transformation of the Three Treasures

The Taoists describe the process of the transformation of ching to chi to shen symbolically. Imagine there is a cauldron in the belly that contains your ching/essence. When this cauldron is heated, steam rises from the cauldron and expands throughout the whole body; this is chi/energy. When the steam reaches the head, this warm mist

condenses and rains back down into the cauldron in the belly to be reheated. Once this process has been happening for a while, a very fine vapour-like energy collects in the head that feels like a light golden delicate cloud; this is shen/Spirit.

This gentle steaming process is encouraged daily through meditation, breathing exercises, chi kung, sexual kung fu and the practice of Chinese internal martial arts forms.

THE LOWER TAN TIEN



The location of the symbolic cauldron where we transform our physical energy into a more refined spiritual energy is known as the *Lower Tan Tien* energy centre. It is the centre of balance and gravity, located just below and behind the navel. In Chinese martial arts, chi kung and in Taoist meditation, we always begin by releasing our chi from the lower tan tien. Then when we have finished our practice, we gather and store our chi in the lower tan tien by spiralling it into a glowing ball of positive energy. This concentrated ball of chi is called the pearl.

The words tan tien literally mean 'cinnabar field'; this is another metaphor for transformation. Mercury is most commonly found in nature in the form of red cinnabar. Mercury metal is produced from the cinnabar ore via the transformational process of roasting it and condensing the vapour. Liquid mercury is a perfect symbol for energy that is changing from one state to another as mercury is a metal but looks like flowing water.

THE SMILE ENERGY MEDITATION



We can generate a large amount of positive self-healing energy from the Smile Energy Meditation. Smiling can also be used to guide other energies to different parts of the body.

A Basic Version of the Smile Energy Meditation:

Sit comfortably in a place where you will not be disturbed. Close your eyes and focus your attention within. Now smile to yourself a little inner smile; then, smile some more, lifting the corners of your mouth up until you feel that the smile is touching your cheek bones. Keep on smiling some more until you feel the smile touching your eyes and your eyes start to sparkle and shine. If you were to open your eyes and look at someone now, they would say that you were smiling with your eyes. It is now that you have the smile energy in your eyes, and from there you can direct it to any part of your body.

FORMING THE PEARL MEDITATION

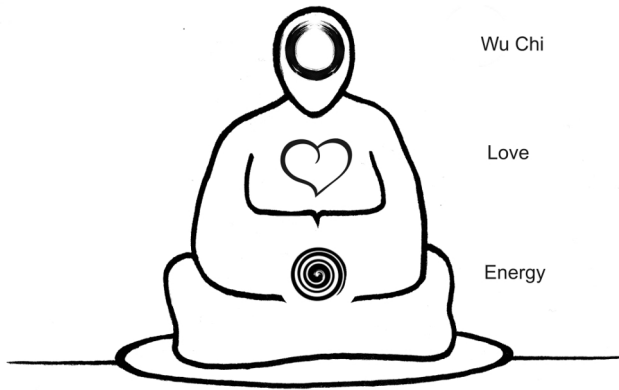


Sit comfortably in a place where you will not be disturbed. Close your eyes and focus your attention within. With your mind's eye, look down into your belly. See the energy swirling in a spiral, like a galaxy of starlight glows, condenses and transforms into the pearl. Now smile from your eyes to the pearl so it glows with a positive healing quality.

A famous Taoist called Chuang Tzu (369 BCE - 286 BCE), wrote a poetical symbolic story about his experience of Taoist meditation:

The Yellow Emperor, on his way back from Kun Lun mountain, lost the mysterious pearl of the Tao. He sent Knowledge to find it, but Knowledge was unable to understand it. He sent Eloquence, but Eloquence was unable to describe it. Finally, he sent Empty Mind, and Empty Mind came back with the pearl.

BEFORE AND AFTER TAOIST MEDITATION

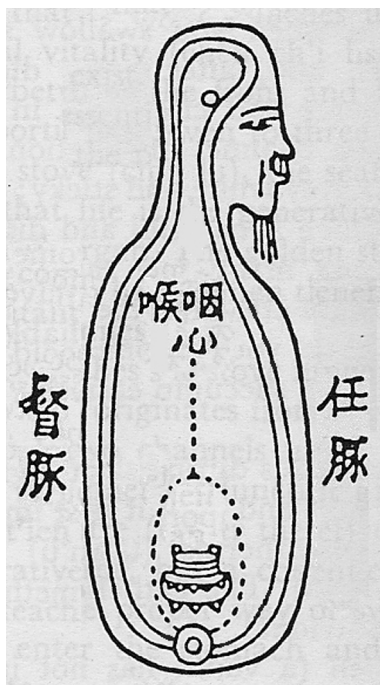


Before we begin any of the Taoist meditations, we close our eyes and imagine that we are surrounded by a protective cocoon of light. We smile into our heads, so our mind is calm, like Wu Chi. We smile to our heart, so it is full of love. We then smile to our lower tan tien, so our energy is positive and healing.

When we finish any of the Taoist meditations, with our eyes still closed, we imagine that the protective cocoon of light is shrinking onto the surface of our skin and is building a layer of defensive energy. We then smile into our heads, so our mind is calm, like Wu Chi. We smile to our heart, so it is full of love. Finally, we smile to our lower tan tien, so our energy is positive and healing.

As time goes by, we inevitably develop in our lives a calmer mind, a more loving heart and a greater amount of positive energy. When we

perceive the world from either our calm mind, our loving heart or our belly full of positive energy, we are more likely to respond to situations in a positive way, resulting in a better outcome.



The Small Heavenly Orbit from
'The Secrets of Cultivation of Essential Nature and Eternal Life'
by the Taoist Master Chao Pi Chen (born in 1860)

The diagram above shows the Taoist smiling and the cauldron in the lower tan tien, the heart in the middle and Wu Chi in the head. The Chinese words on the back say governing meridian and on the front conception meridian. These two meridians combine to form the Small Heavenly Orbit. The Taoist is smiling into his head, heart and belly whilst circulating the chi around the Small Heavenly Orbit.

THE SMALL HEAVENLY ORBIT



Discussion

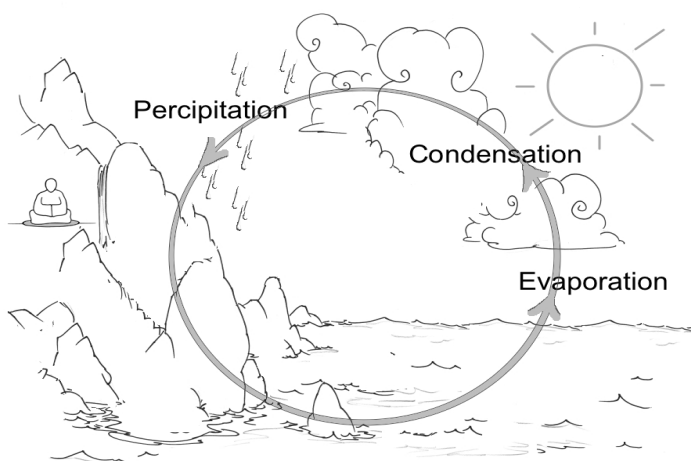
Natural Cycles

Taoists see the body as a reflection of nature and describe the circulation of chi along the Small Heavenly Orbit in a poetic way.

The famous Taoist Zhengyang in *“The Mechanisms of Nature”* said:

“Inhale the chi up the yang channel of the spine, like a red sun rising up to the top of the sky in the crown of the head. Exhale and it

descends along the yin channel, like a white moon, down to the furnace of the earth in the belly.”



The Weather-Water-Cycle

The Taoists saw the weather-water-cycle in nature reflected in their internal meditation experiences. When the sun (fire) heats the water (ching), it evaporates and steam (chi) rises up the governing meridian and forms clouds (shen) which condense on the mountain (the head). It then cools and rains back down along the conception meridian into the sea (the lower tan tien).

They see the internal and external worlds reflected in each other. The weather-water-cycle that can be observed in nature and the Small Heavenly Orbit, transforming ching, to chi, to shen within our internal world, are mirrors of each other.

They are both examples of change and transformation. This is the Taoist Way of Life. The transformation of ching to chi to shen, of yin to yang and yang to yin. The changing nature of our relationships

and the changing of the seasons of our lives and of the five elements into each other; this is change and flow; this is Tao.

The idea of transformation is at the heart of the Taoist Way of Life. It is an eternal truth that everything in life changes as time passes. To live the Taoist Way of Life means to be able to change appropriately as circumstances change. To understand Tao and to live the Taoist Way of Life, one must circulate the chi in the Small Heavenly Orbit every day.

The Healing Benefits of the Small Heavenly Orbit

The Small Heavenly Orbit evenly distributes a wide variety of energies in the body which heals and balances us.

The two acupuncture meridians that we are using, the governing meridian up the back and the conception meridian down the front of the body, are the two biggest meridians in the whole body. The governing meridian is yang and supplies chi to all the other yang meridians to keep the body strong and protected. The conception meridian is yin and supplies chi to all the other yin meridians to keep the body nourished and healthy.

The yang meridians are on the hard parts of the body: the front of the legs, the spine, the back and the outside of the arms. The yin meridians are on the soft parts of the body: the insides of the legs, the belly and the insides of the arms.

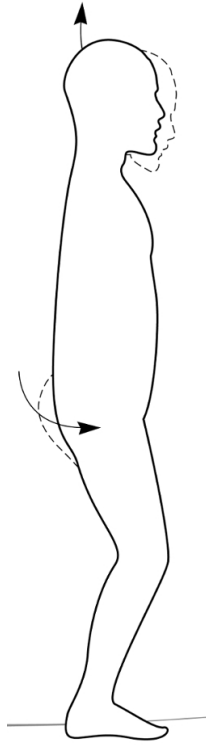
All the yang meridians in the body connect with the governing meridian, and all the yin meridians connect with the conception meridian. We can fill these two main meridians with chi, like filling reservoirs with water that then overflow to irrigate the rest of the body. It is as if the acupuncture meridian system is a huge network of rivers and streams that distribute chi like water to the whole body.

We always store the chi in the belly, not in the head. If you leave the chi in the head, it could cause the brain to overheat, creating mental imbalances such as over-thinking, insomnia, high blood pressure, headaches and an unbalanced spirit. If you finish by bringing the chi down into the belly and storing it there, you experience calmness, balance and a feeling of being grounded and stable.

The Small Heavenly Orbit connects the head, heart and belly together and also aids the transformation of ching to chi to shen. Further it refines and purifies the chi and evenly distributes the chi around the torso, creating a very pleasant warm glow within the body.

This meditation practice has so many benefits because it balances these important systems within the body.

There are many energies which can be moved through this circuit. Some external, like the chi from the sun and moon or the sky and earth. Others internal, such as the chi from the heart, lungs, liver, spleen, kidneys and the sexual organs.



Correct Standing Posture

It is easier for the chi to flow if your posture is correctly aligned. If you slightly tilt the hips under, it straightens the lower back and allows the chi to flow up through this area more easily. If you pull in the chin and lift the head up, it allows the chi to more easily flow through the neck and over the head.



Connecting the Governing Meridian and Conception Meridian

The governing meridian goes up the spine, and the conception meridian runs along the midline of the front of the body. For the purpose of the Small Heavenly Orbit meditation, the governing meridian ends on the roof of the mouth and the conception meridian begins on the tip of the tongue. So when you put the tongue on the roof of your mouth (in the same place that it touches when you say the letter 'L') it connects these two meridians together, creating the Small Heavenly Orbit.

Breathing can also help us to move the chi. As we move the chi up the back through the governing meridian, we breathe in, and as we move it down the conception vessel, we breathe out. At first, it may not be so easy to synchronise the breathing with the movement. You may have to move the chi more quickly or breathe more slowly. Eventually, the breath and chi are moving in harmony. A calm inhalation helps to lift the chi up, and a relaxed exhalation enables it to descend.

Alternatively, we can lift the chi up the governing meridian in stages. This method feels like sipping liquid up a straw. We inhale one breath in several stages. Each time we inhale part of the breath, we lift the chi higher up the spine. For example, we could inhale one third of the breath and lift the chi one third of the way up the back. We then inhale the second third of this single breath and lift the chi another third of the way up the back. The final inhalation of the last third of the breath would lift the chi to the top of the head or the third eye. The breath is then exhaled fully in one go and the chi descends all the way down the conception meridian back into the belly. (The inhalation and exhalation is through the nose.)

We now add the Smile Energy Meditation into the Small Heavenly Orbit. We smile to our chi when it is in the tan tien, we smile at it as it moves around the Small Heavenly Orbit, and we continue to smile at it as we put it back and store it in the lower tan tien. This results in smiling positive chi circulating all the time throughout our bodies.

Smiling positive chi makes us feel good inside. This is of utmost value to us because it makes us realise that happiness can be derived from within us and is not dependant on external events, people or objects.

When we finish, we store the chi in the lower tan tien. This will nourish the ching which is the source of sexual energy, for both men and women. In men, ching becomes seminal essence. Excessive loss of seminal essence means that there is less ching available to transform into chi and then into shen. (For more information, see my book *Taoist Sexual Kung Fu*, available from www.taiji.net)

When the seminal essence is lost in excess, the testicles, kidneys, bones, brain and spine are all weakened. When essence is conserved, the ching is conserved and the testicles, kidneys, bones, brain and spine all become strong. In addition, one's ambition, will and confidence are all enhanced.

After Chinese martial arts training, chi kung or Taoist sexual kung fu it is always good to do three, six or nine circuits of the Small Heavenly Orbit, and then to store the chi in the lower tan tien.

In the early stages of practice of the Small Heavenly Orbit, it is normal for beginners to perceive the pearl, the feeling of the flow of chi and the mind guiding the movement as separate phenomena. At a more advanced level, these three phenomena all blend together and become one.

People perceive chi in different ways. For example, for some the energy may feel like a warm sun rising as it ascends up the governing meridian and like cool water flowing down a waterfall as it descends down the conception meridian. For others, the chi may have a strong tactile sensation of movement, like a finger gently stroking the surface of the skin. And others may have a visual experience, and the pearl might look like a comet, meteor or a shooting star that is flying through the heavens with a glowing trail behind it.

Beginners can sometimes experience a very strong sensation as these energy pathways 'open'. (They are already 'open' to a degree in everyone or otherwise we would not be alive!) Becoming aware of the feeling of the flow of chi may be a new experience that can also be very powerful. In addition, chi may have built up in certain areas and its sudden release creates a strong sensation. Also, when there is a lot of sexual energy in the area of the lower body, the practice of the Small Heavenly Orbit may cause this energy to be released, resulting in an orgasmic rushing sensation up the spine.

When you have opened the Small Heavenly Orbit and the chi is flowing smoothly around your body, then you have created the foundation for all future practice. The Small Heavenly Orbit is used in all other meditations and should be mastered first. It is the key to good physical health and balanced energy in the body. Once circulating the chi through the orbit has become easy and natural,

the Small Heavenly Orbit can be practised almost anywhere, at any time. You can practice standing up or sitting down, sitting crossed-legged or on a chair, inside a building or outside in nature.

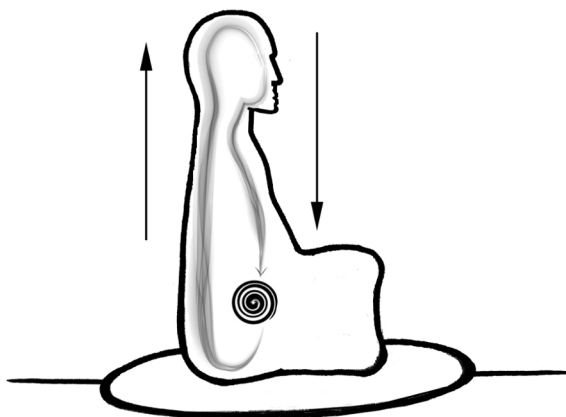
Once you have practised the Small Heavenly Orbit at home for a while, then you can enjoy the experience of practising outside in nature. It is very healing to do this meditation in a garden, park or forest, under the open sky, in the fresh air, amongst the flowers and trees.

The important thing to remember is regardless of what happens or what you feel, continue to circulate the chi through the Small Heavenly Orbit. If you feel a hot or a cool sensation, if you feel a release or a sexual pleasurable sensation, if you feel a strong wave or an electric tingling, or a sudden rushing feeling, just continue to circulate the pearl/chi in the Small Heavenly Orbit. Eventually, you will have a very pleasant balanced sensation of healing chi smoothly flowing around your torso.

The secret to success with the Small Heavenly Orbit is simply practice. If the chi does not feel like it is flowing strongly enough on a section of the orbit, or if its movement feels too slow or blocked, the solution is just to practice more. Eventually, all blockages are removed, and the chi is felt throughout the whole orbit. The important thing is to persevere. I will always remember when I was training in Singapore in the late 1980's, Teacher Tan's last words to me:

"Practice, practice, practice!"

The Small Heavenly Orbit Meditation



Circulating Chi through the Small Heavenly Orbit

1. Sit comfortably in a place where you will not be disturbed. Close your eyes, and focus your attention within.
2. Form the pearl in your lower tan tien. Smile to it, so it glows with positive energy. Now bring it forwards towards the surface of your body, just below the navel. Move it down over the pubic bone and past the sexual organs. From there, lead it to the tailbone and tilt your hips slightly under your body as this helps the pearl move up through your lower back and up the spine.
3. Now lift your head back and up and pull your chin in. This helps the pearl move through your upper back, neck and over the top of your head all the way to your third eye (between the eyebrows).
4. Press the tongue on the roof of your mouth and swallow saliva. This helps the pearl flow down the back of your throat. Now relax the chest and belly as this enables the pearl to descend

more easily through your chest, solar plexus, navel and finally back into your lower belly.

5. Circulate the pearl in the Small Heavenly Orbit 3, 6 or 9 times. At the completion of your last circulation, take the pearl into the lower tan tien to store it there.
6. To store the energy in the lower tan tien, place the hands on your belly and relax your belly. Now gently rub your belly. First one way and then the other, whilst imagining the chi spiralling to form the pearl.
7. When the energy has been gathered and stored in the lower tan tien, the belly feels full and substantial. One feels grounded, stable and closer to the earth. Now is a good time for you to imprint your chi with a positive affirmation:

*I am relaxed and calm,
powerful and peaceful,
deep down inside myself*

The active part of the meditation has now finished. However, the passive aspect is still to unfold:

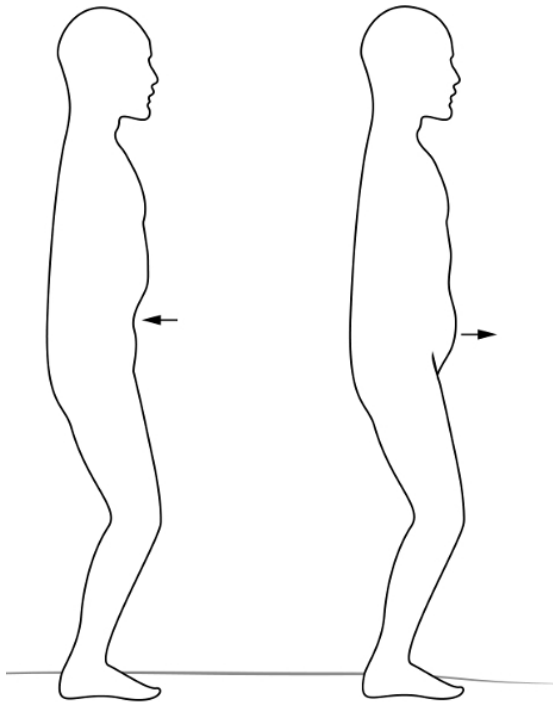
8. You are in a state of deep relaxation. Both, mind and body, are quiet and still; this is Wu Chi. Your breathing is imperceptible, your head is empty of unnecessary thoughts, your heart is emotionally calm and your belly is full of positive chi. There is a feeling of strength, sturdiness and confidence as if you could undertake any task and be assured of success. Just stay in this moment and wait. It feels as if you have disappeared to yourself, and whilst you are not there, powerful healing and spiritual transformation can occur. You will know when this moment has passed; then you have finished the meditation.



Quietness and Stillness

TAOIST REVERSE LOWER ABDOMINAL BREATHING

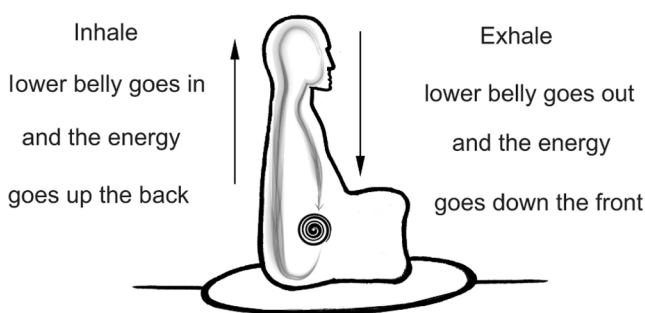
Reverse lower abdominal breathing can be used to help move the energy around the Small Heavenly Orbit. When you inhale, you pull the lower belly in (the area between the navel and the pubic bone) and when you exhale, you relax this area out.



Reverse Lower Abdominal Breathing

You can use reverse abdominal breathing when you practise the Small Heavenly Orbit meditation. You inhale, and pull your lower belly in as you take the energy up the back. When you exhale, you relax the belly and take the energy down the front. You should practise the Small Heavenly Orbit both ways; sometimes by just moving the energy with your mind and on other occasions move the chi using this reverse lower abdominal breathing.

You need to get to the point where you can do both methods with ease and confidence. This is the foundation of all future practice.



Combining breathing with chi flow

Taoist reverse lower abdominal breathing is very important. It is the foundation for all other advanced breathing techniques. It is necessary to master this method to be able to practice Miow Su's system. It is also central to the practice of Taoist sexual kung fu.

After a few years of training, you will notice many benefits. The inhalation quite naturally pulls the tailbone forward. This makes it easier for the chi to rise up the spine. In addition, this inhalation engages the muscles of the pelvic floor; they rise up when you inhale,

and relax down when you exhale. Pelvic floor health is important for both, men and women.

Most importantly, Taoist reverse lower abdominal breathing works the area of the lower belly which is over the lower tan tien. The tan tien is the focal point of all our meditations.

THE LARGE HEAVENLY ORBIT



The Large Heavenly Orbit in the crossed-leg position from
'The Secrets of Cultivation of Essential Nature and Eternal Life'
by the Taoist Master Chao Pi Chen (born in 1860)

Discussion

The Large Heavenly Orbit extends the circulation of energy from the Small Heavenly Orbit in the torso to include the arms and legs.

When you lead the chi down the outside of your legs, you are sending it through the three yang meridians of the legs: Stomach, Gallbladder and Bladder. When you lead the chi up the inside of your legs, you are sending it through the three yin meridians of the legs: Spleen, Liver and Kidney.

When you lead the chi down the underside of your arms, you are sending it through the three yin meridians of the arms: Lung

Pericardium and Heart. When you lead the chi up the outside of your arms, you are sending it through the three yang meridians of the arms: Large Intestine, Triple Warmer and Small Intestine.

For beginners, it is easier to practise the Large Heavenly Orbit whilst standing. Once you are familiar with sending chi through the Large Heavenly Orbit, you can practise it sitting on a chair or cross-legged.

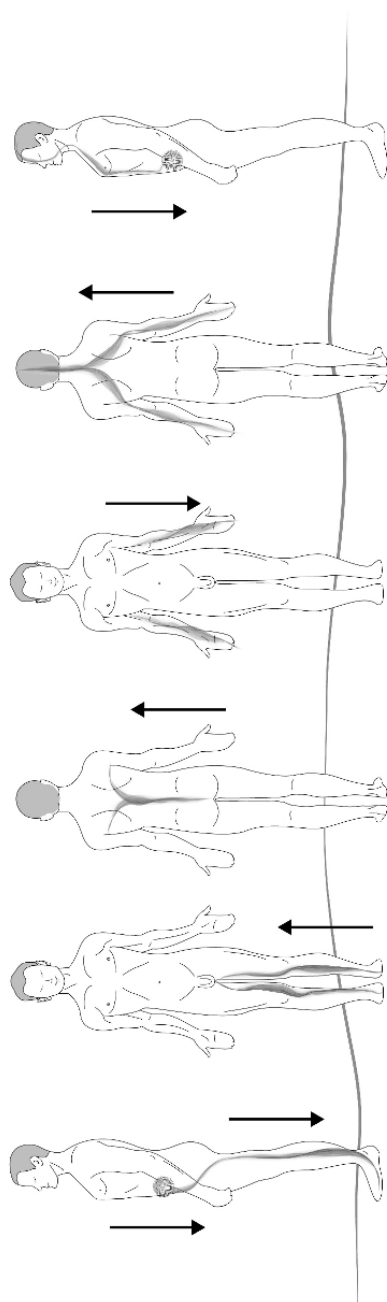
The Large Heavenly Orbit meditation enables the chi to flow through all the acupuncture meridians and so distributes the chi more evenly around the whole body. As a result, our health improves, and we can have longer, happier lives.

The Large Heavenly Orbit Meditation

Stand in a place where you will not be disturbed. Close your eyes, and focus your attention within.

1. Exhale and send the glowing ball of energy from your tan tien down the midline of the front of your body to the perineum. Here, it splits into two lines which go down the outside of the legs to the soles of your feet.
2. Now inhale and draw the energy up from the soles of your feet, over the big toes and along the inside of your ankles, all the way up the inside of your legs to meet at the perineum, where it becomes one again.
3. Continue to inhale and take the energy up the spine to between your shoulder blades.
4. Now exhale and the energy separates, going down the underside of your arms to the palms of your hands and to the ends of the middle fingertips.

5. Now inhale and draw the energy up over the back of your hands, up the outside of your arms, all the way back to between your shoulder blades.
6. Feel the energy merge again and continue to inhale. Draw the energy up your spine, your neck and then over the top of the head to your third eye.
7. Now exhale and send the energy down through the roof of your mouth to the tongue and down through the throat, chest, solar plexus, back into the lower tan tien.
8. This is one circulation of the Large Heavenly Orbit. Complete 3, 6 or 9 circulations each time you practice. When you finish, relax your belly, and store the energy in the tan tien.



THE TAOIST MORNING MEDITATION

Discussion

Meditating before you start your day can have a profoundly positive effect on the rest of your day. It can improve your health, create internal balance and set up your day in a positive way.

The inner world and outer world reflect each other. The world is in you as much as you are in the world. Life responds to you as much as you respond to life. If your mind is clear, your heart peaceful and your chi centred in your lower tan tien, then you will be in a better place to deal with whatever the day brings.

If you only do one of the meditations from this book, it should be this one.

The Taoist Morning Meditation

1. Sit down comfortably with your spine straight and vertical. Gently clasp your hands together and let them rest on your lap.
2. Now close your eyes and imagine your body is surrounded by a cocoon of protective energy. Only positive energy can reach you. Feel yourself protected and safe so that you can fully relax and focus on the meditation.



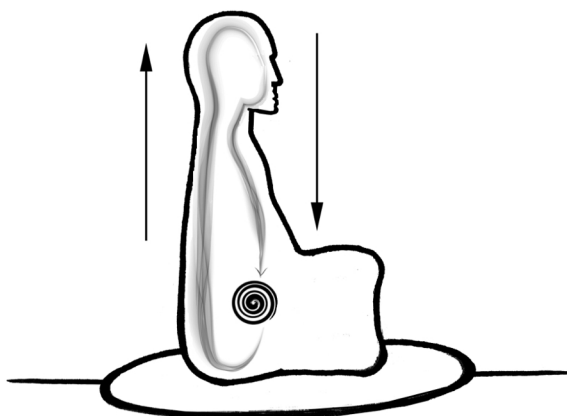
3. Smile to the centre of your head, so it is calm like Wu Chi. Smile to your heart, so it is full of love. Now smile to your lower tan tien, so your energy is positive and healing.



4. Now bring your awareness into your lower tan tien and feel the energy spiralling in your belly.



5. Now form the pearl, and smile to it, so it is glowing with positive, healing chi.



6. Now circulate the pearl three times through the Small Heavenly Orbit, three times through the Large Heavenly Orbit and then again three times through the Small Heavenly Orbit. Some of these circulations can be done with reverse lower abdominal breathing and some without.



7. Now spiral the energy to store it in the tan tien, just below and behind your navel. Place your hands on your belly, and relax the belly. Gently rub the tan tien first one way and then the other, and imagine the chi spiralling to form the pearl.



8. When the energy has been gathered and stored in the tan tien, the belly feels full and substantial. You feel stable, grounded and closer to the earth. At this point is a good time to imprint your chi with a positive affirmation:

*I am relaxed and calm,
powerful and peaceful,
deep down inside myself.*

9. With your eyes still closed, imagine that the protective cocoon of energy is shrinking onto the surface of your skin, building a layer of defensive energy.



10. Now smile into the centre of your head, so your mind is calm like Wu Chi. Smile into your heart, so it is full of love. Now smile into your lower tan tien, so all your energy is positive and healing.



Quietness and Stillness

You are now in a state of deep relaxation, of quietness of the mind and stillness of the body (wu chi). Your breathing is imperceptible, your head is empty of unnecessary thoughts. Your heart is emotionally calm, and your belly is full of positive chi.

You feel strong, sturdy and confident; as if you could undertake any task and be assured of success. Just stay in this moment and wait. It feels as if you have disappeared to yourself, and whilst you are not there, powerful healing and spiritual transformation can occur. You will know when this moment has passed, and then you have finished your meditation.

THE TAOIST WAY OF LIFE MEDITATION SYSTEM

Taoist meditations share a common structure: A particular energy is cultivated, circulated through the Small and Large Heavenly Orbits and then stored it in the lower tan tien.

So far you have worked with:

- The positive energy generated from the smile
- The clear mind (wu chi), the love energy of the heart and the healing energy of the lower tan tien
- The energy generated from reverse lower abdominal breathing
- The healing power of the pearl

You have taken all these different energies through the Small and Large Heavenly Orbits and then stored them in the lower tan tien.

In the following chapters, you will be using the same process to work with the following energies:

- The transformation of ching, into chi, into shen
- The inversion of fire and water
- The energy of yin and yang
- The energy of the sun and the moon
- The energy of the sky and the earth
- The sexual energy
- The energy of the Liver, Heart, Spleen, Lungs and Kidneys

All these many different energies are cultivated, circulated and then stored in the lower tan tien. As the years go by, they all combine to form something that is of great benefit. This abstract component comprises three different qualities or could be said to manifest in three different ways:

- The elixir of life
- The pearl of immortality
- The spirit body

The practitioner can choose which of the three or which combination they would like to work with.

The Elixir of Life

The elixir of life is created in the cauldron of the belly (tan tien). The different energies become ingredients which are stirred in the cauldron to create a more potent elixir of life. When this elixir is circulated through the Small and Large Heavenly Orbits, it heals and regenerates the brain, bones, muscles, organs and glands. As a result, the practitioner has better health and increased longevity.

The Pearl of Immortality

The pearl of immortality is created by spiralling the energy in the belly (tan tien), like a rotating galaxy of stars in space. The word 'pearl' communicates the qualities of the spirit body; it is strong, it glows, it is translucent and precious. This pearl is also known as the philosopher's stone, the secret inner alchemical ingredient, the pill of immortality or the seed of immortality. This pearl is the refined essence of our most positive components. It contains all that is good and worthy within us; it is the best version of ourselves. When creating the spirit body, it is this pearl that is used as the seed to grow it.

The Spirit Body

The spirit body is created by expanding the pearl. In the beginning, the spirit body stays in the lower tan tien as it takes many years for the spirit to become strong enough to go on journeys outside the physical body.



Spirit Body in Belly

At the advanced level, the spirit body is taken up and out the top of one's head. The practitioner then transfers their consciousness into it and is able to see the world from their spirit body which is floating above their physical body.



Spirit Body Outside Physical Body

Eventually, whilst meditating or being asleep, the practitioner is able to go on extended journeys in their spirit body, far away from their physical body. This experience of existing fully conscious in one's spirit body outside of one's physical body is preparation for death. After the death of the physical body, a Taoist practitioner can continue their journey of experience and discovery in their immortal spirit body.

TRANSFORMING CHING, INTO CHI, INTO SHEN BY REVERSING THE POSITIONS OF FIRE AND WATER



Paul and Madé Sudira,
Bali 1990

Discussion

On my travels in Bali in 1990, I was fortunate to meet Madé Sudira, a Hindu Guru. He taught me the method of transforming ching, into chi, into shen, by reversing the positions of Fire and Water. This method creates the elixir of life that heals the body, improves health and increases longevity.

The Taoists describe the process of the transformation of ching, into chi, into shen, symbolically. There is a cauldron in your belly which contains your ching (essence). When this is heated, steam rises from the cauldron and expands throughout your whole body. The steam is chi (energy). When the steam reaches your head, this warm mist condenses and rains back down into the cauldron in your belly and is reheated. Once this process has been happening for a while, a very fine vapour-like energy collects in the head. That energy feels like a light golden delicate cloud; this is shen (spirit). At the end of the meditation, all these refined components are returned into the cauldron. The contents of the cauldron is the elixir of life.

This life-enhancing elixir has many desirable qualities. When it is circulated around the Large Heavenly Orbit, it regenerates the internal organs and tissues of the body. Over time, this health-promoting effect results in greater longevity of the physical body. In advanced meditations, it can be used to create one's spirit body.

Transforming Ching, into Chi, into Shen by Reversing the Positions of Fire and Water

This is an advanced meditation which should only be practised after the previous meditations have been mastered.

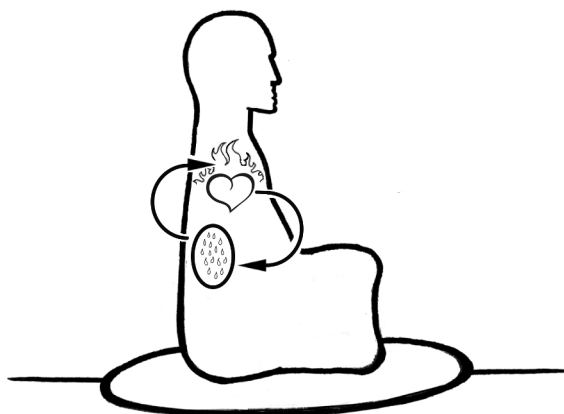
1. Sit down comfortably with your spine straight and vertical. Gently clasp your hands together and let them rest on your lap.
2. Now close your eyes and imagine your body is surrounded by a cocoon of protective energy. Only positive energy can reach you. Feel yourself protected and safe so that you can fully relax and focus on the meditation.
3. See your heart glowing with a gentle, warming, red fire, and smile to it.

4. See your kidneys shining and full of blue, cool water. Smile to your kidneys.



Heart Fire and Kidney Water

5. Now reverse the positions of the Fire and Water. First, take the heart forwards and under, and then bring the Kidneys up and over.



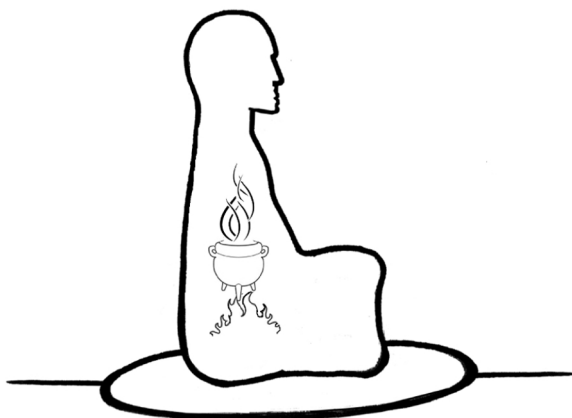
Reversing Positions of Fire and Water

6. Now that the Fire of the heart is under the Water of the kidneys, begin to feel the red heart Fire warming the cool blue kidney Water.



The Red Heart Fire Is Now Warming the Cool Blue Kidney Water

7. Now visualise the heart as a fire that is heating up the water which is now in the cauldron, gently producing steam.



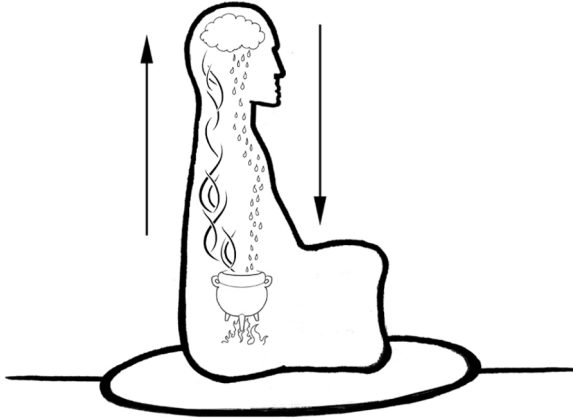
The Fire Heats Up the Water in the Cauldron, Producing Steam

8. Feel the fire gently warming the water (ching) in the cauldron and producing steam (chi). Become aware of the steam rising. Feel it ascend all the way up through the centre of your body to your head. Sense it forming a cloud (shen) in your head which then condenses into water which rains back down into the cauldron, where it is reheated.



The Transformation of Ching, Into Chi, into Shen

9. Now we slightly adjust this transformational process. Direct the steam up the spine and allow the water to flow down the midline of the front of the body. This circulation feels like the Small Heavenly Orbit.



Steam Up the Back, Water Down the Front

10. When you feel the process has been completed, imagine the flame dies down, the steam stops rising and the remaining water all flows down into the cauldron. Some of the shen will remain in the head which will nourish the brain. The rest of the shen, along with the ching and chi, returns to the cauldron. Now stir the elixir of life in the cauldron of your belly.



Stirring the Elixir of Life in the Cauldron of the Belly

11. Now let the cauldron fade away, and let the stirring of the elixir become the spiralling of the energy in the lower tan tien to form the pearl.



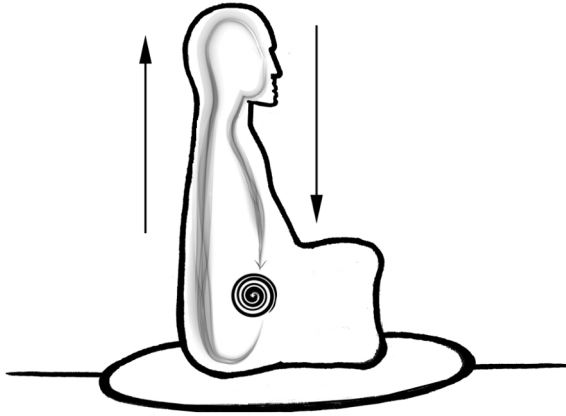
Forming the Pearl

12. Smile to the pearl, so it is glowing, positive and full of healing chi.



Smiling to the Pearl

13. Now circulate the pearl three times through the Small Heavenly Orbit, three times through the Large Heavenly Orbit and then again three times through the Small Heavenly Orbit. Some of these circulations can be done with reverse lower abdominal breathing and some without.



Circulating the Pearl

14. Now spiral the energy to store it in the tan tien, just below and behind your navel. Place your hands on your belly, and relax the belly. Gently rub the tan tien first one way and then the other, and imagine the chi spiralling to form the pearl.



Storing the Chi

15. When the energy has been gathered and stored in the tan tien, the belly feels full and substantial. You feel stable, grounded and closer to the earth. At this point is a good time to imprint your chi with a positive affirmation:

*I am relaxed and calm,
powerful and peaceful,
deep down inside myself.*

16. With your eyes still closed, imagine that the protective cocoon of energy is shrinking onto the surface of your skin, building a layer of defensive energy.
17. Now smile into the centre of your head, so your mind is calm like Wu Chi. Smile into your heart, so it is full of love. Now smile into your lower tan tien, so all your energy is positive and healing.



Balance of the Head, Heart and Belly

You are now in a state of deep relaxation, of quietness of the mind and stillness of the body (Wu Chi). Your breathing is imperceptible, your head is empty of unnecessary thoughts. Your heart is emotionally calm, and your belly is full of positive chi.

You feel strong, sturdy and confident; as if you could undertake any task and be assured of success. Just stay in this moment and wait; it feels as if you have disappeared to yourself, and whilst you are not there, powerful healing and spiritual transformation can occur. You will know when this moment has passed, and then you have finished your meditation.



You are Wu Chi

1,000 years ago, Chang San Feng, a famous martial Taoist, who was the founder of Wu Tang Shan Nei Jia Chuan, said:

*Chi in silence
Mind not
Know the source
Be Wu Chi*

*People talk
Maintain clarity
Avoid confusion
Natural life*

*Water and fire
True elixir
Clouds on summit
Dew on mountain*

*Sweet taste,
Longevity wine,
Ocean belly,
Straight to heaven*

*Know true self,
Listen to silence,
Understand creation,
Follow truth*

THE ADVANCED TAOIST BREATHING SYSTEM OF MLOW SU - THE CHINESE DOCTOR



Paul and Miow Su,
Bali 1989

Discussion

The breathing system I learnt in 1989 from Miow Su (Teacher Miow), the Chinese Doctor in Bali, is the most advanced and sophisticated Taoist breathing system I have ever encountered. It transforms ching

into chi, into shen and creates the elixir of life. It generates a vast amount of energy, improves health and increases longevity.

After much contemplation and serious consideration, I have decided to include Miow Su's advanced Taoist breathing system in this book. These methods are very powerful. I include them here due to a personal commitment to share ancient knowledge to enable its preservation.

It is important that you do not skip any level but that you master each method in the correct order. Do not attempt to practise the advanced techniques before having mastered the basics.

To understand all the breathing and meditation techniques I have explained in this book may take you years, maybe even decades. The Taoist Way of Life is not a quick fix, rather it is a lifetime project to be taken seriously and embarked upon with discipline and commitment.

The Eight Levels of Miow Su's Advanced Taoist Breathing System:

Level 1 - Post Natal Breathing (Upper Abdominal Breathing)

Level 2 - Pre Natal Breathing (Reverse Lower Abdominal Breathing)

Level 3 - Pre and Post Natal Breathing Combined

Level 4 - Tortoise Breathing

Level 5 - Taoist Pelvic Floor Breathing

Level 6 - Advanced Taoist Reverse Lower Abdominal Breathing

Level 7 - Most Advanced Taoist Reverse Lower Abdominal Breathing

Level 8 - Advanced Taoist Pelvic Floor Breathing

Miow Su's Taoist breathing exercises (Levels 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8) are very, very powerful. They transform ching, into chi, into shen in a dramatic and intense way. They do more than gently steaming the water in the cauldron. Instead, they create a pressure cooker where the transformation happens under intense high pressure.



Cauldron with the Lid On

In these methods, the ching (water) is heated in the cauldron with the lid kept on. Powerful bellows breathing is used to increase the fire. The ching (water) is vaporised into chi (steam). The lid is then suddenly lifted (the exhalation), and a cloud of hot chi (steam) blasts out, expanding throughout the whole body.



Lifting the Lid

The hot steam rises to the head and creates more shen, more spirit, more consciousness. At first, this makes you mentally and physically very active. You become very creative and productive. You believe that you are in a good state. However, if the steam is left in the head, it will cook your brain. You could end up with mental and physical hyperactivity and burn-out.

Therefore, it is very important that you practice the Small and Large Heavenly Orbit meditations and store the chi in the lower tan tien. Then sit in the Stillness and Quietness of Wu Chi. This is the equivalent of the steam condensing into water and raining back down into the cauldron of your belly to refill it.

You do not want to burn off all the water and be left with a raging fire, with no water to cool and control it. The fire will then burn the cauldron, the body and the brain. This could result in you becoming

mentally and emotionally unbalanced, which is contrary to the Taoist pursuit of good health and balance.

Always store the chi in the belly, not in the head. If you leave the chi in your head, it will overheat the brain and create mental imbalance. This can result in over-thinking, insomnia, high blood pressure, headaches and an unbalanced spirit.

One way to ensure that the chi is evenly distributed smoothly around the body, is to practise the Chinese martial arts forms of Tai Chi Chuan (Taiji Quan), Pa Kua Chang (Bagua Zhang) or Wutang Shan Chuan (Wudang Shan Quan). (These styles are all explained in my book *'The Training Manual of The College of Chinese Martial Arts'* available from www.taiji.net.)

A famous Taoist martial arts master, called Chang Nai Chou (1728-1783), explains the close relationship between Taoist meditation and Taoist martial arts in his book *'On Nourishing Central Chi and Martial References'*, published in 1781.

*Spiritual cultivation of chi to form inner elixir,
Martial training of chi to form external elixir.*

*Internal and external elixir complement each other,
Movement and stillness compliment each other.*

*Body training is for unification of the body,
Chi training is for the internal quality.*

*Outward body as martial weapon like iron,
Internally golden elixir immortal spirit returns to original state.*

*The Tao of heaven and earth are yin and yang
Movement and stillness are yin and yang.*

*Smoothness and fluidity enables yin and yang chi to transform,
Heaven and earth are within us enabling life to go on forever.*

*Elixir eternal spring,
Hands on belly.*

*Strengthen body eliminate illness achieve longevity,
Martial hero sage upright sober reserved.*

*Search with sincerity,
Find many teachers.*

*Body to chi, Chi to spirit.
Spirit to void, Immortal.*

Miow Su's Advanced Taoist Breathing Exercises

We need to progress through the different levels of breathing the same way that we would progress through any exercise system: slowly, carefully and one stage at a time. Only practise a little bit each day, and do not over-train. Your progress should be gradual over many years.

The following structure should be used for all the different levels of Miow Su's breathing techniques:

1. Imagine that you are surrounded by a protective cocoon of light. Smile to your head, heart and lower tan tien.
2. Practise one of Miow Su's breathing exercises
3. Form the pearl in the lower tan tien. Smile to the pearl.
4. Now circulate the pearl three times through the Small Heavenly Orbit, three times through the Large Heavenly Orbit and then again three times through the Small Heavenly Orbit. This will ensure that the energy generated by these breathing exercises can be absorbed into your body and evenly distributed.

5. Store the energy in the tan tien, just below and behind your navel with a positive affirmation.
6. Shrink the protective cocoon of light.
7. Smile to your head, heart and lower tan tien.
8. Experience the quietness and stillness of Wu Chi.

The energy generated from all these breathing exercises should be used for a positive, creative activity. It can be used to build up your health, your physical body or your spirit body. You could use the energy to cultivate a Chinese internal martial arts skill or for an artistic creative project.

Level 1 - Upper Abdominal Breathing

Level 1 breathing is Upper Abdominal Breathing. This type of breathing strengthens one's acquired chi (the energy one gets from food and air). It draws the breath deep down to the bottom of the lungs and exercises the thoracic diaphragm. It massages the liver, gallbladder, spleen, stomach and pancreas in the upper abdomen.

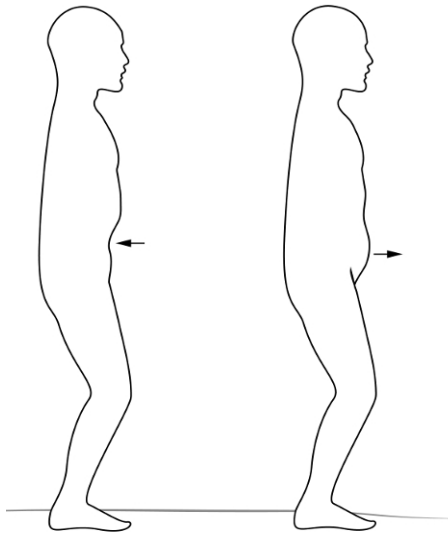
When you inhale, allow the area between the solar plexus and the navel to expand. When you exhale, allow this area to contract. The chest does not rise up, but it stays relaxed and down.

The movements of the lower abdomen are synchronised with the breathing, which should be as long, slow and smooth as possible.

Practise three sets of nine breaths.

Level 2 - Reverse Lower Abdominal Breathing

Level 2 breathing is Reverse Lower Abdominal Breathing. This type of breathing strengthens one's inherited chi (the energy one is born with) and works the pelvic diaphragm. The expansion and contraction of the lower abdomen massages the kidneys, bladder, small and large intestine.



Reverse Lower Abdominal Breathing

When you inhale, allow the area between the navel and the pubic bone to contract. When you exhale, allow this area to expand. The movements of the lower abdomen are synchronised with the breathing, which should be as long, slow and smooth as possible.

Practise three sets of nine breaths.

Level 3 – Upper Abdominal Breathing Combined With Reverse Lower Abdominal Breathing

This type of breathing strengthens both, the acquired chi and the inherited chi. It massages all the internal organs and keeps the muscles of the abdominal wall strong.

When you inhale, pull the lower abdomen in, and allow the upper abdomen to expand outwards. When you exhale, pull the upper abdomen in, and allow the lower abdomen to expand.

Practise three sets of nine breaths.

When you begin to practise this method, you may find it helpful to put the palm of one hand on your lower abdomen (below the navel) and the palm of the other hand on your upper abdomen (above the navel). You will then feel the movement of the belly with your hands as you breathe. This will help you understand what is happening, and so it will be easier for you to gain conscious control of your breathing.



Hands on Belly

Level 4 - Tortoise Breathing

Tortoise breathing is *Upper Abdominal Breathing Combined With Reverse Lower Abdominal Breathing* but with two extra components:

First of all, when you inhale, as you pull in the lower abdomen, lift up the pelvic floor. When you exhale, as you expand your lower abdomen, relax your pelvic floor down. Lifting the pelvic floor upwards results in the anus, perineum and sexual organs all being simultaneously lifted. When the pelvic floor is relaxed down, they all relax down as well. By including this pelvic floor exercise, the three processes of defecation, urination and reproduction will be strengthened.

Secondly, on the inhalation, you hold the breath for an extra three seconds before exhaling. This will mix the inherited chi with the acquired chi. In tortoise breathing, the inherited chi is taken up from the lower abdomen into the upper abdomen on the inhalation. Here it is held for three seconds so it can mix with the acquired chi. The inherited chi is strengthened and replenished by the acquired chi. When you exhale, this enhanced and fortified inherited chi returns to the lower abdomen, and the remaining unused acquired chi is released to return upwards into the rest of the body.

Looking at the whole of the torso, we can see that the heart, lungs and pericardium sit on the thoracic diaphragm. The liver, stomach, spleen and pancreas, large and small intestine, kidneys and bladder sit on the pelvic diaphragm, and the sexual organs are supported by the pelvic floor. If each of these three levels is not kept toned, then the body literally goes pear-shaped and collapses internally. For the sake of our internal health, we should practice level four Tortoise Breathing to internally exercise all these different areas.

The Taoists say that this method can extend one's life span as the inherited chi has been enhanced and will therefore last longer.

Tortoise Breathing is also another way of transforming ching, into chi, into shen as this method puts the water above the fire to steam it. On the exhalation, you can feel the steam rising up through the torso to the head.

When the breathing has reached a high level, one feels that energetically all the ligaments, sinews, tendons and fascia of the body are directly and indirectly connected to the lower tan tien.

One feels that on the inhalation, the extremities of the limbs (the hand and feet) as well as the extremities of the torso (the pelvic floor and the crown of the head) are being pulled towards the lower tan tien. On the exhalation, they all relax away from the lower tan tien.

When you have developed an internal awareness and sensitivity to your own body, you will feel on your inhalation P 8 (Pericardium 8 on the palms of the hands) and K 1 (Kidney 1 on the soles of the feet) as well as GV 20 (Governing Vessel 20 on the top of your head) and CV 1 (Conception Vessel 1 on the perineum) contract inwards. On the exhalation, you will feel all these points relax away from the lower tan tien.

The tortoise is an ancient Taoist symbol of longevity, so the name Tortoise Breathing suggests that this breathing technique will enable one to have a long, happy and healthy life.

Level 5 - Taoist Pelvic Floor Breathing

This breathing technique builds upon the previous breathing methods you have learned and introduces even more advanced concepts. There are a few variations to this Level 5 Taoist Pelvic Floor Breathing.

Method 1

In the basic method, you inhale and take the chi down the conception meridian into the lower abdomen as you pull in the lower abdomen. Now whilst holding your breath and keeping the lower abdomen contracted, use your internal muscles to lift the sexual organs up and down three times. Then wait three seconds, and then exhale. You will then feel the steam/chi rushing up the governing vessel to the head. Now wait nine seconds for it to transform into shen and nourish the brain. Then let it rain back down the conception vessel into the lower tan tien.

In the more advanced version, you keep everything the same except you lift the sexual organs up and down six times instead of three times.

In the most advanced version, you keep everything the same except you lift the sexual organs up and down nine times instead of six times.

Method 2

Once the above method has been mastered, you carry out the exercise in the same way, except this time you lift up and down the perineum rather than the sexual organs.

Method 3

Once the above method has been mastered, you carry out the exercise in the same way, except this time you lift up and down the anus rather than the perineum.

Method 4

Once the above method has been mastered, you carry out the exercise in the same way, except this time you lift up and down the whole pelvic floor: the sexual organs, perineum and anus.

Level 6 - Advanced Taoist Reverse Lower Abdominal Breathing

As you inhale one full breath, pull the lower abdomen in. Keep the lower abdomen in, and exhale two thirds of the air. Now take the last third of air into the lower abdomen by relaxing the lower abdomen outwards.

Then pull the lower abdomen in and out nine times. Now relax the lower abdomen outwards and wait three seconds so the fire (breathing) which has heated the water (ching) can transform it into steam (shen). Then fully exhale, and feel the steam expand up into the body.

Level 7 - Most Advanced Taoist Reverse Lower Abdominal Breathing

As you inhale, pull the lower abdomen in. Keep the lower abdomen in, and exhale two thirds of the air. Now take the last third of air into the lower abdomen by relaxing the lower abdomen outwards.

Then, without exhaling, pull the lower abdomen in and out nine times. Now relax the lower abdomen outwards and wait three seconds.

Then, without exhaling, fill your lungs with another third of air. Take this third of the air into the lower abdomen by relaxing it outwards. Then pull the lower abdomen in and out nine times. Then, without exhaling, relax the lower abdomen outwards and wait three seconds.

Then, without exhaling, fill your lungs with the last third of air. Take this third of the air into the lower abdomen by relaxing it outwards.

Then pull the lower abdomen in and out nine times. Then, without exhaling, relax the lower abdomen outwards and wait three seconds. Then fully exhale and feel the steam expand up into the body.

Level 8 - Advanced Taoist Breathing with the Pelvic Floor

As you inhale, pull the lower abdomen in. Keep the lower abdomen in, and exhale two thirds of the air. Then take the last third of air into the lower abdomen by relaxing the lower abdomen outwards.

Then, without exhaling, lift the pelvic floor (the anus, perineum and sexual organs) up and down three times.

Now relax the lower abdomen outwards and wait three seconds.

Then, without exhaling, fill your lungs with another third of air. Take this third of the air into the lower abdomen by relaxing it outwards. Then lift the pelvic floor up and down three times. Then, without exhaling, relax the lower abdomen outwards and wait three seconds.

Now, without exhaling, fill your lungs with the last third of air. Take this third of the air into the lower abdomen by relaxing it outwards. Then lift the pelvic floor up and down three times. Then, without exhaling, relax the pelvic floor and lower abdomen outwards and wait three seconds. Now fully exhale and feel the steam expand up into the body.

Conclusion

It is very important that you finish all these breathing exercises by practising the Small and Large Heavenly Orbit Meditations and then store the chi in the lower tan tien. Then sit in the Stillness and Quietness of Wu Chi.

Use the energy you have cultivated for a positive endeavour. Get active!

These advanced Taoist breathing methods and all other meditations in this book should be practised in the order they are shown. It is not a good idea to attempt the advanced methods before the basics have been mastered. A tall building needs strong foundations, and for a tree to grow tall, it must have strong roots.



For a Tree To Grow Tall It Must Have Strong Roots

THE HEAVEN AND EARTH MEDITATION

Discussion

In this meditation, you absorb the energies of heaven and earth. By absorbing these energies, you enhance and strengthen your own energy. This is good for your health and longevity.

In addition, when you connect with heaven and earth through this meditative practice, you realise that you are an integral part of nature.

Nature has seasons and so do our lives. From the spring of our youth through to the autumn of our older years. When we die, it would seem to be the darkest of all winter nights. However, because we have developed our spirit bodies, we can lift ourselves up into a new spring.

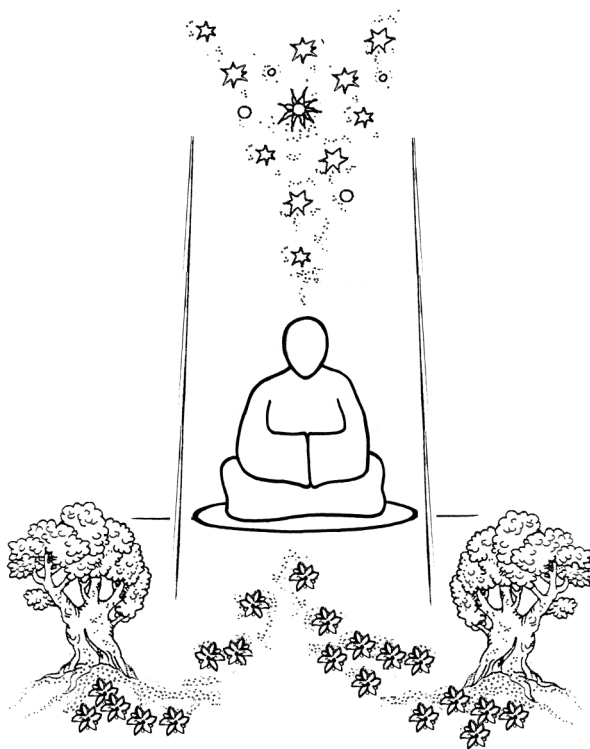
The Heaven and Earth Meditation

You can practice the Heaven and Earth Meditation outside in nature, sitting on the earth, under the open sky. Alternatively, you can sit indoors and visualise the earth and sky.

The structure of the Heaven and Earth Meditation is the same as the Morning Meditation of the Taoist:

1. Sit down comfortably with your spine straight and vertical. Gently clasp your hands together and let them rest on your lap.

2. Now close your eyes and imagine your body is surrounded by a cocoon of protective energy. Only positive energy can reach you. Feel yourself protected and safe so that you can fully relax and focus on the meditation.
3. Smile to your head, heart and lower tan tien.
4. With your mind's eye, look up above your head into the sky. Whether it is the blue of the day or the dark of the night, you can still see the sparkling lights of the stars sprinkled across the heavens. Like glowing embers, they sparkle and shine as they spiral down into the crown of your head and third eye. As the energy of heaven touches you, you may feel a tingling sensation on these locations.
5. Now feel these glowing sparks of starlight descend down your conception meridian into your tan tien in your belly.
6. With your mind's eye, look around yourself and become aware of the many shades of green of leaves of the trees and grassland that surrounds you. Notice the sprinkling of bright colours from the many glowing flowers around you. As you take in this beautiful view, you become aware of the colourful luminosity of nature starting to flow, like a river, up your coccyx and spine. As you feel this energy ascending up your governing meridian, you become aware that the earth nourishes you in the same way that the roots of a tree gain their nourishment from the earth.
7. Your spine is like a tree trunk, and all the nerves that come from it are like the branches of a tree. The healing energy of the earth reaches all the way up to the top of your head (you are the tree of life). As you are sitting here, the earth energy ascending up through you, you feel as rooted and steady as a tree and your body glowing like a forest, bathed in sunlight.



Heaven and Earth Meditation

8. Now become aware of the governing and conception meridians and circulate the heaven and earth energy around the Small Heavenly Orbit so they blend with each other.
9. With this healing energy form the pearl in your lower tan tien. Smile to the pearl.
10. Now circulate the pearl three times through the Small Heavenly Orbit, three times through the Large Heavenly Orbit and then again three times through the Small Heavenly Orbit.
11. Spiral and store the energy in your lower tan tien with a positive affirmation.

12. Shrink the protective cocoon of light.
13. Smile to your head, heart and lower tan tien.
14. Experience the quietness and stillness of Wu Chi.

THE SUN AND MOON MEDITATION

Discussion

In this meditation, you absorb the energies of sun and moon. By absorbing these energies, you enhance and strengthen your own energy. This is good for your health and longevity.

In addition, when you connect with the sun and moon through this meditative practice, you realise that you are an integral part of nature.

Our physical bodies benefit from sunlight (the energy of the sun) and to a lesser degree from moonlight (the reflected energy of the sun). With this meditation, you intentionally draw the energy of the sun- and moonlight into your internal energy system. These energies develop your spirit body so it glows with the light of the sun and moon.

The Chinese character for 'understanding' is a picture of the sun and moon. Their combined light illuminates all things so that everything can be clearly seen.

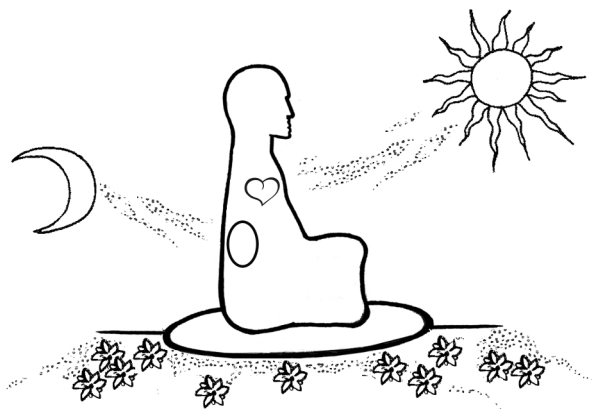
The Sun and Moon Meditation

You can practise the Sun and Moon Meditation outside in nature, under the bright, golden sunlight in the day or the silvery moonlight at night. There are even moments when both are visible in the sky at

the same time. Alternatively, you can sit indoors and visualise the sun and moon.

The structure of the Sun and Moon Meditation is the same as the Morning Meditation of the Taoist:

1. Sit down comfortably with your spine straight and vertical. Gently clasp your hands together and let them rest on your lap.
2. Now close your eyes and imagine your body is surrounded by a cocoon of protective energy. Only positive energy can reach you. Feel yourself protected and safe so that you can fully relax and focus on the meditation
3. Smile to your head, heart and lower tan tien.
4. With your mind's eye, look up above your head into the blue sky and see the glowing sun, shining its golden rays into your heart. Imagine the heart is like a small sun, shining in your inner universe.
5. Take the energy of the sun down through your conception meridian into your lower tan tien.
6. Now look up into the dark night sky above your head and see the pale glowing moon disc, shining its silvery rays into your kidneys. Imagine the kidneys are both like a small full moon, shining in the night sky of your inner universe.
7. Take the energy of the moon up through your governing meridian into your head.
8. Now see the entire conception meridian filled with golden sunlight and the entire governing meridian filled with silvery moonlight.



Sun and Moon Meditation

9. Circulate these energies around your Small Heavenly Orbit and feel them blend with each other until the whole of the Small Heavenly Orbit looks like a ring of luminous healing light.
10. With this luminous energy form the pearl in your lower tan tien. Smile to the pearl.
11. Now circulate this pearl three times through the Small Heavenly Orbit, three times through the Large Heavenly Orbit and then again three times through the Small Heavenly Orbit.
12. Spiral and store the energy in your lower tan tien with a positive affirmation.
13. Shrink the protective cocoon of light.
14. Smile to your head, heart and lower tan tien.
15. Experience the quietness and stillness of Wu Chi.

THE YIN AND YANG MEDITATION

Discussion

In this meditation, you identify the location of the abstract qualities of yin and yang within your own body, and then bring them together to create internal harmony and balance.

In Taoist philosophy, the head is associated with yang qualities such as fire, the sun and heaven above, male active energy and hardness. The belly, on the other hand, is associated with yin qualities such as water, the moon and the earth below, female receptive energy and softness.

When we are born, yin and yang are unified in our belly. As we become older, they separate. The Yin and Yang Meditation is a way to reunite yin and yang.

When yin and yang are united within us, we feel calm, strong and centred. When they are separate, we feel 'wound up and run down'. When yin and yang are united, we are, once again, whole and in one place. When they are separate, we are 'torn in different directions' and 'all over the place'. When we perceive the world from the unified calm centre of ourselves, we have reunited yin and yang and found peace.

An important part of the process of creating one's spirit body is the uniting of the internal yang/male and yin/female energies. Like man and woman come together to create new life, we bring our own

internal yang/male and yin/female energies together to create our immortal spirit body.

The Yin and Yang Meditation

The structure of the Yin and Yang Meditation is the same as the Morning Meditation of the Taoist:

1. Sit down comfortably with your spine straight and vertical. Gently clasp your hands together and let them rest on your lap.
2. Now close your eyes and imagine your body is surrounded by a cocoon of protective energy. Only positive energy can reach you. Feel yourself protected and safe so that you can fully relax and focus on the meditation.
3. Smile to your head, heart and lower tan tien.
4. With your mind's eye, look inside your head and imagine a bright yang turning. Smile to the yang.
5. Now look down into your belly and imagine the mysterious dark yin slowly rotating in your lower tan tien. Smile to the yin.
6. Now lead the yang half down to your heart and lift the yin half up to your heart. As yin and yang meet, they combine and begin to rotate together, thus forming the yin/yang symbol in the centre of your heart. As you see the yin/yang symbol rotating and turning, you can feel the energies flow in a smooth and balanced way.



Yin and Yang Unite in the Heart

7. Smile love into your yin/yang heart, and see it glowing with love, healing you.



Yin and Yang Combine with Love in the Heart

8. Now allow the yin/yang symbol to slowly descend into your belly. As it continues to rotate and turn in a graceful, gentle way, it

gradually condenses and becomes the mystic pearl. Smile to the pearl.



The Harmony of Yin and Yang Forming the Mystic Pearl

9. Now circulate the pearl three times through the Small Heavenly Orbit, three times through the Large Heavenly Orbit and then again three times through the Small Heavenly Orbit.
10. Spiral and store the energy in your lower tan tien with a positive affirmation.
11. Shrink the protective cocoon of light.
12. Smile to your head, heart and lower tan tien.
13. Experience the quietness and stillness of Wu Chi.

THE FIVE SENSES MEDITATION

Discussion

In this meditation, you become aware of the relationship between the senses, the sense organs and the internal organs. In Taoist philosophy, the five main internal organs (Liver, Heart, Spleen, Lungs, Kidneys) each have an associated sense:

- Sight through the eyes is associated with the Liver.
- Speaking through the tongue is associated with the Heart.
- Tasting through the lips is associated with the Spleen.
- Smelling through the nose is associated with the Lungs.
- Hearing through the ears is associated with the Kidneys.

The ancient Taoists believed that excessive stimulation of the senses drains the chi from the internal organs. Our modern urban world encourages a lifestyle of overstimulation. Too much looking, talking, tasting, smelling and listening, exhausts the body. We live in a world of constant excitement, entertainment, information, conversation and socialising. All these things are beneficial in moderation but in excess, drain us.

Therefore, it is important that we find time for quiet contemplation to calm our minds and heal our bodies. 2,500 years ago the world's most famous Taoist, Lao Tzu, wrote:

*Five colours blind the eyes,
Five notes deafen the ears,
Five flavours dull the taste,
Racing and hunting maddens men's hearts.*

*Therefore the sage seeks inner contentment,
not to try and satisfy the insatiable longing of the senses.*

*The Sage attends to the inner and not to the outer,
Dwelling therein with calm indifference,
He who is content always has enough.*

Practising the Five Senses Meditation regularly will renew and regenerate the internal organs. In this meditation, you reverse the usual direction of energy flow through the internal organs. Instead of turning your senses outwards, you turn them inwards.

- We return the chi of the eyes (looking) to the liver.
- We return the chi of the tongue (talking) to the heart.
- We return the chi of the lips (tasting) to the spleen.
- We return the chi of the nose (smelling) to the lungs.
- We return the chi of the ears (hearing) to the kidneys.

Returning the senses and the associated energy to the organs, can regenerate them. This improves the physical health of the internal organs and the whole body.

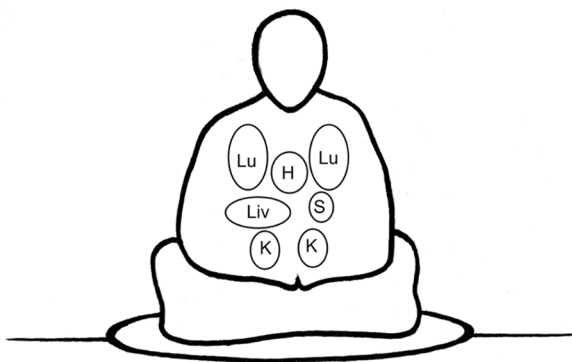
The Five Senses Meditation enables you to gain control over your senses. You can choose how you respond to events rather than your senses causing you to react. When you are calm, centred and balanced within yourself, you are more likely to make decisions which are beneficial for you and the people around you.

Further to these everyday benefits, there is also a more profound spiritual purpose to this meditation: the transference of one's senses of sight, speech, taste, smell and hearing into the pearl (which becomes your spirit body).

The Five Senses Meditation

The structure of the Five Senses Meditation is the same as the Morning Meditation of the Taoist:

1. Sit down comfortably with your spine straight and vertical. Gently clasp your hands together and let them rest on your lap.
2. Now close your eyes and imagine your body is surrounded by a cocoon of protective energy. Only positive energy can reach you. Feel yourself protected and safe so that you can fully relax and focus on the meditation
3. Smile to your head, heart and lower tan tien.
4. With your mind's eye, look down inside yourself and see your five main internal organs: liver, heart, spleen, lungs and kidneys.



The Five Main Internal Organs

5. Now smile to yourself, lifting the corners of your mouth up until you feel that the smile is touching your cheek bones. Keep on smiling some more until you feel the smile touching your eyes and your eyes start to sparkle and shine. Send this smiling energy into your liver and feel it glowing as it fills with positive chi.
6. Now smile with your eyes and send this smiling energy into your heart and feel it glowing as it fills with positive chi.
7. Now smile with your eyes and send this smiling energy into your spleen and feel it glowing as it fills with positive chi.
8. Now smile with your eyes and send this smiling energy into your lungs and feel them glowing as they fill with positive chi.
9. Now smile with your eyes and send this smiling energy into your kidneys and feel them glowing as they fill with positive chi.
10. You are now aware of your five main internal organs and are deeply connected with them. They are all glowing and smiling back at you, radiating positive energy.



Smiling to the Organs

11. Now smile with your eyes. Feel your eyes glowing, and imagine your eyes moving into your liver.



12. Now smile with your eyes, and direct that positive energy into your tongue. Feel your tongue glowing, and imagine your tongue moving into your heart.



13. Now smile with your eyes, and direct that positive energy into your lips. Feel your lips glowing, and imagine your lips moving into your spleen.



14. Now smile with your eyes, and direct that positive energy into your nose. Feel your nose glowing, and imagine your nose moving into your lungs.



15. Now smile with your eyes, and direct that positive energy into your ears. Feel your ears glowing, and imagine your ears moving into your kidneys.



16. Your five sense organs and their qualities are now all inside your five main internal organs:

- Eyes/looking
- tongue/speaking
- lips/tasting

A TAOIST WAY OF LIFE

- nose/smelling and
- ears/hearing



Senses in the Organs

17. Now form the energy spiral in the lower tan tien.



Forming the Spiral

18. With your inner smile, send the liver containing your eyes and your sense of sight into the spiral, where it transforms into positive chi in the lower tan tien.
19. With your inner smile, send the heart containing your tongue and your sense of speech into the spiral, where it transforms into positive chi in the lower tan tien.
20. With your inner smile, send the spleen containing your lips and your sense of taste into the spiral, where it transforms into positive chi in the lower tan tien.
21. With your inner smile, send the lungs containing your nose and your sense of smell into the spiral, where it transforms into positive chi in the lower tan tien.
22. With your inner smile, send the kidneys containing your ears and your sense of hearing into the spiral, where it transforms into positive chi in the lower tan tien.



The Positive Chi of the Senses Gathering in the Spiral

23. Your lower tan tien is now full of the positive energy of the five senses. Spiral the energy and let it gradually condense and become the mystic pearl. Smile to the pearl.



The Pearl Glowing in the Belly

24. Now circulate the pearl three times through the Small Heavenly Orbit, three times through the Large Heavenly Orbit and then again three times through the Small Heavenly Orbit.
25. Spiral and store the energy in your lower tan tien with a positive affirmation.
26. Shrink the protective cocoon of light.
27. Smile to your head, heart and lower tan tien.
28. Experience the quietness and stillness of Wu Chi.

THE FIVE POSITIVE EMOTIONS MEDITATION

Discussion

In this meditation, you become aware of the relationship between the emotions and the internal organs. In the West, it is generally understood and accepted that the positive emotion of love resides in the heart. In Taoist philosophy, each of the other main internal organs also has an associated positive emotion:

- The positive emotion of the Liver is kindness.
- The positive emotion of the Heart is love.
- The positive emotion of the Spleen is trust.
- The positive emotion of the Lungs is courage.
- The positive emotion of the Kidneys is confidence.

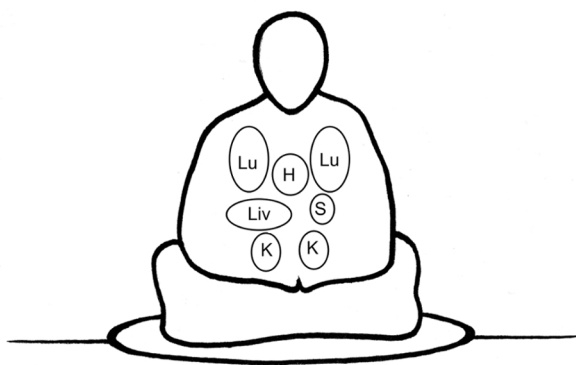
The Five Positive Emotions Meditation enthuses the five main internal organs with their corresponding positive emotions. As a result, you are cultivating your positive emotions and develop a more positive perspective on life.

Further to these everyday benefits, there is also a more profound spiritual purpose to this meditation: the transference of one's positive emotions of kindness, love, trust, courage and confidence into the pearl (which will become your spirit body).

The Five Positive Emotions Meditation

The structure of the Five Positive Emotions Meditation is the same as the Morning Meditation of the Taoist:

1. Sit down comfortably with your spine straight and vertical. Gently clasp your hands together and let them rest on your lap.
2. Now close your eyes and imagine your body is surrounded by a cocoon of protective energy. Only positive energy can reach you. Feel yourself protected and safe so that you can fully relax and focus on the meditation
3. Smile to your head, heart and lower tan tien.
4. With your mind's eye, look down inside yourself and see your five main internal organs: liver, heart, spleen, lungs and kidneys.



Awareness of the Five Main Internal Organs

5. Now smile to yourself, lifting the corners of your mouth up until you feel that the smile is touching your cheek bones. Keep on smiling some more until you feel the smile touching your eyes and your eyes start to sparkle and shine. Send this smiling energy into your liver and feel it glowing as it fills with positive chi.

6. Now smile with your eyes and send this smiling energy into your heart and feel it glowing as it fills with positive chi.
7. Now smile with your eyes and send this smiling energy into your spleen and feel it glowing as it fills with positive chi.
8. Now smile with your eyes and send this smiling energy into your lungs and feel them glowing as they fill with positive chi.
9. Now smile with your eyes and send this smiling energy into your kidneys and feel them glowing as they fill with positive chi.
10. You are now aware of your five main internal organs and are deeply connected with them. They are all glowing and smiling back at you, radiating positive energy.



Positive Chi in the Five Main Internal Organs

11. Now smile into your liver, and see the word 'kindness' in soft green letters gently glowing. Feel kindness for yourself.
12. Smile into your heart, and see the word 'love' in soft red letters gently glowing. Feel love for yourself.

13. Smile into your spleen and see the word 'trust' in soft yellow letters gently glowing. Feel that you can trust yourself.
14. Smile into your lungs and see the word 'courage' in soft white letters gently glowing. Feel that you have courage.
15. Smile into your kidneys and see the word 'confidence' in soft blue letters gently glowing. Feel that you have confidence.
16. Now form the energy spiral in the lower tan tien.



Forming the Spiral in the Lower Tan Tien

17. With your inner smile, send the liver containing kindness into the spiral where it transforms into positive chi in the lower tan tien.
18. With your inner smile, send the heart containing love into the spiral where it transforms into positive chi in the lower tan tien.
19. With your inner smile, send the spleen containing trust into the spiral where it transforms into positive chi in the lower tan tien.
20. With your inner smile, send the lungs containing courage into the spiral where it transforms into positive chi in the lower tan tien.

21. With your inner smile, send the kidneys containing confidence into the spiral where it transforms into positive chi in the lower tan tien.



Positive Emotions into the Spiral

22. Your lower tan tien is now full of the positive emotions. Spiral the energy and let it gradually condense and become the mystic pearl. Smile to the pearl.



Smile to the Pearl

23. Now circulate the pearl three times through the Small Heavenly Orbit, three times through the Large Heavenly Orbit and then again three times through the Small Heavenly Orbit.
24. Spiral and store the energy in your lower tan tien with a positive affirmation.
25. Shrink the protective cocoon of light.
26. Smile to your head, heart and lower tan tien.
27. Experience the quietness and stillness of Wu Chi.

THE FIVE POSITIVE PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS MEDITATION

Discussion

In this meditation, you become aware of the relationship between the positive personality characteristics and the internal organs:

- The main positive personality characteristics of the Liver are **imagination and direction**. In addition, the Liver also has an influence on good sleep, intuition, inspiration, creativity, dreaming, vision, decision-making and finding one's true path in this life.
- The main positive personality characteristics of the Heart are **emotional balance and wisdom**. In addition, the Heart also has an influence on good sleep, positive thinking, good memory, clear consciousness, cognitive skills, intelligence, ideas, awareness, inspiration and insight.
- The main positive personality characteristics of the Spleen are **a clear-thinking mind and good ideas**. In addition, the Spleen also has an influence on good mental faculties, motivation, creativity, good memory and mental focus.
- The main positive personality characteristics of the Lungs are **instinctive intuition and coordination**. In addition, the Lungs also have an influence on sharp and clear movements and physical balance.

- The main positive personality characteristics of the Kidneys are **a strong will and motivation**. In addition, the Kidneys also have an influence on strong ambition, taking initiative, tenacity, decisiveness and having one's will and the natural flow of Tao moving together.

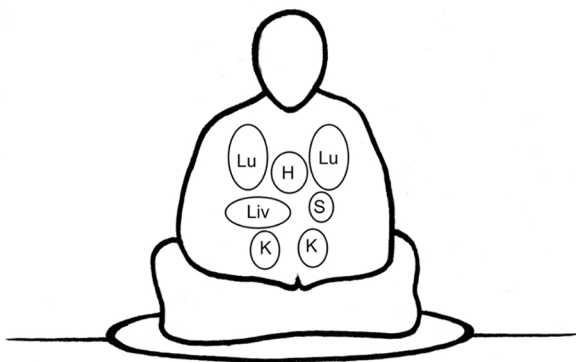
This meditation enthuses the five main internal organs with their corresponding positive personality characteristics. As a result, you are cultivating these characteristics and develop a more balanced personality.

Further to these everyday benefits, there is also a more profound spiritual purpose to this meditation: the transference of one's positive personality characteristic into the pearl (which will become your spirit body).

The Five Positive Personality Characteristics Meditation

The structure of the Five Positive Personality Characteristics Meditation is the same as the Morning Meditation of the Taoist:

1. Sit down comfortably with your spine straight and vertical. Gently clasp your hands together and let them rest on your lap.
2. Now close your eyes and imagine your body is surrounded by a cocoon of protective energy. Only positive energy can reach you. Feel yourself protected and safe so that you can fully relax and focus on the meditation
3. Smile to your head, heart and lower tan tien.
4. With your mind's eye, look down inside yourself and see your five main internal organs: liver, heart, spleen, lungs and kidneys.



Becoming Aware of the Five Main Internal Organs

5. Now smile into your liver, and see the words 'imagination' and 'direction' in soft green letters gently glowing.
6. Smile into your heart, and see the words 'emotional balance' and 'wisdom' in soft red letters gently glowing.
7. Smile into your spleen and see the words 'clear-thinking mind' and 'good ideas' in soft yellow letters gently glowing.
8. Smile into your lungs and see the words 'instinctive intuition' and 'coordination' in soft white letters gently glowing.
9. Smile into your kidneys and see the words 'strong will' and 'motivation' in soft blue letters gently glowing.
10. Now form the energy spiral in the lower tan tien.



Forming the Pearl

11. With your inner smile, send the liver containing imagination and direction into the spiral where it transforms into positive chi in the lower tan tien.
12. With your inner smile, send the heart containing emotional balance and wisdom into the spiral where it transforms into positive chi in the lower tan tien.
13. With your inner smile, send the spleen containing clear-thinking mind and good ideas into the spiral where it transforms into positive chi in the lower tan tien.
14. With your inner smile, send the lungs containing instinctive intuition and coordination into the spiral where it transforms into positive chi in the lower tan tien.
15. With your inner smile, send the kidneys containing strong will and motivation into the spiral where it transforms into positive chi in the lower tan tien.



Positive Personality Characteristics Gathering in the Spiral

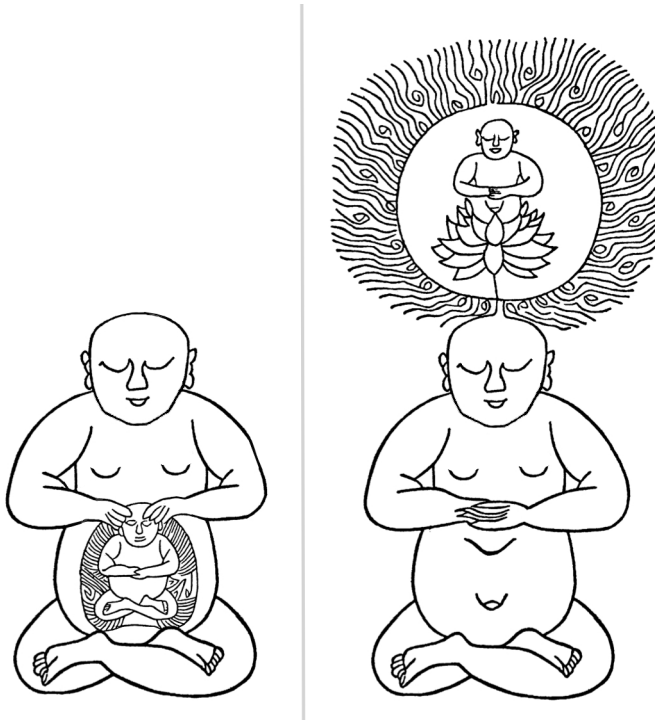
16. Your lower tan tien is now full of the positive personality characteristics. Spiral the energy and let it gradually condense and become the mystic pearl. Smile to the pearl.



The Pearl Glowing in the Lower Tan Tien

17. Now circulate the pearl three times through the Small Heavenly Orbit, three times through the Large Heavenly Orbit and then again three times through the Small Heavenly Orbit.
18. Spiral and store the energy in your lower tan tien with a positive affirmation.
19. Shrink the protective cocoon of light.
20. Smile to your head, heart and lower tan tien.
21. Experience the quietness and stillness of Wu Chi.

THE SPIRIT BODY MEDITATIONS



The Spirit Body being developed
inside and outside the physical body

from
'The Secrets of Cultivation of Essential Nature and Eternal Life'
by the Taoist Master Chao Pi Chen (born in 1860)

Discussion

In these meditations you work with your spirit body. First, within your physical body and then, outside your physical body.

Eventually, you will be able to go on extended journeys in your spirit body, far away from your physical body. This experience of existing fully conscious in your spirit body outside of your physical body is preparation for death. After the death of the physical body, Taoists believe that one can continue their journey of experience and discovery in their immortal spirit body.

The pearl is the seed of your spirit body which over time will grow and become a fully-formed spiritual duplicate of your physical body.

The meditations so far have added various positive qualities to the pearl in the tan tien:

- Deep relaxation, quietness of the mind and stillness of the body
- Transformation of ching, chi and shen from inverting fire and water
- The chi of the eight levels of Miow Su's breathing system
- The positive self-healing energy of the smile
- The chi from positive affirmations
- The Wu Chi mind
- The heart-love
- The Small Heavenly Orbit
- The Large Heavenly Orbit
- The healing power of nature, fresh air, flowers and trees
- The chi from the sun and the moon

- The chi from the sky and the earth
- The chi from yin and yang
- The chi from the liver, heart, spleen, lungs and kidneys
- The positive energy of the five senses:
Looking, talking, tasting, smelling and listening
- The positive emotions of:
Kindness, love, trust, courage and confidence
- The positive personality characteristics of:
 - Imagination and direction
 - Emotional balance and wisdom
 - Clear-thinking mind and good ideas
 - Instinctive intuition and co-ordination
 - Strong will and motivation

Although we have not yet worked directly with the spirit body, we have already crafted it in a positive light with our previous meditations.

As a result of regular practice, the pearl has become strong; it glows and is translucent, precious like the spirit body. The pearl/spirit body is the refined essence of our most positive components. It contains all that is good and worthy within us. It is the best version of ourselves.

By creating your spirit body and having the experience of existing fully conscious in your spirit body outside of your physical body, you realise that the death of your physical body is not the end of your existence. Therefore, death is no longer feared; it is just the time of transition from the physical body to the spirit body.

A famous Taoist called Chuang Tzu (369 BCE - 286 BCE), wrote a metaphorical story about his experience of being both, his physical body and his spirit body:

Once Chuang Tzu dreamt he was a butterfly. A butterfly flitting and fluttering around, happy with himself and doing as he pleased. He didn't know he was Chuang Tzu. Suddenly he woke up and there he was, solid and unmistakable Chuang Tzu. But he didn't know if he was Chuang Tzu who had dreamt he was a butterfly or a butterfly dreaming he was Chuang Tzu.

The Taoist Way of Life and spiritual immortality is a personal journey. It has nothing to do with religion, cults or belief systems with a bureaucracy and a hierarchy. There is just you, walking around this beautiful planet earth as she floats through the universe, like a beautiful lush garden in the inhospitable desert of space. There are no masters or gurus to follow, there is no true lineage to align yourself with, and there are no rules or commandments to adhere to. Nobody can be healthy, balanced or immortal for you. So all that is left, is for you to be, the best version of yourself that you can be.

Everyone has the possibility to develop their spirit body, just like everyone has the ability to develop their muscles. If you do weight training you get bigger muscles, if you do these Taoist meditations you get a more developed spirit body.

The Spirit Body Meditation



The Pearl, the Seed of the Spirit Body, in the Tan Tien

1. Sit down comfortably with your spine straight and vertical. Gently clasp your hands together and let them rest on your lap.
2. Now close your eyes and imagine your body is surrounded by a cocoon of protective energy. Experience the quietness and stillness of Wu Chi.
3. With your mind's eye, look down inside yourself and see the mystic pearl glowing in your tan tien.



Cultivating the Spirit Body Within

4. The smile of your lips touches your eyes. They sparkle and shine as you smile into the mystic pearl. The pearl shines brighter and brighter and begins to form the shape of a miniature version of you, sitting in meditation, experiencing the quietness and stillness of Wu Chi.
5. Now practise the Small Heavenly Orbit and the Large Heavenly Orbit meditations inside your spirit body that is in your belly.



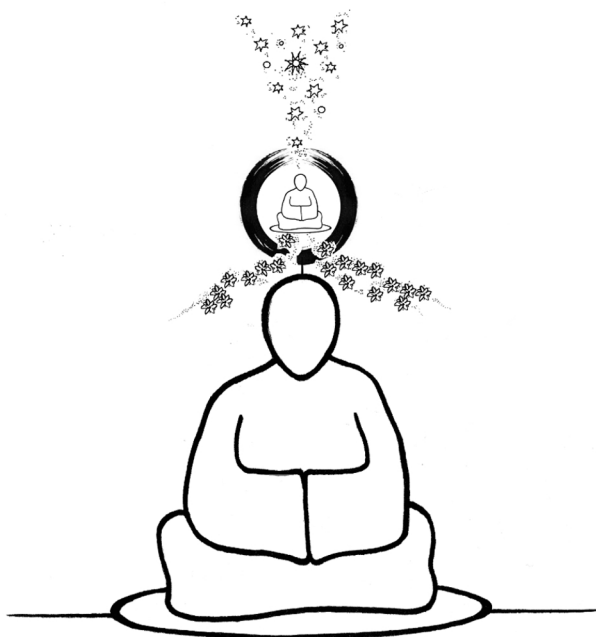
Spirit Body Ascending

6. Now allow your spirit body to gently ascend up through your physical body and out the top of the head like a floating cloud, slowly rising up to the peak of a mountain.
7. Your spirit body is surrounded by a cocoon of protective energy.



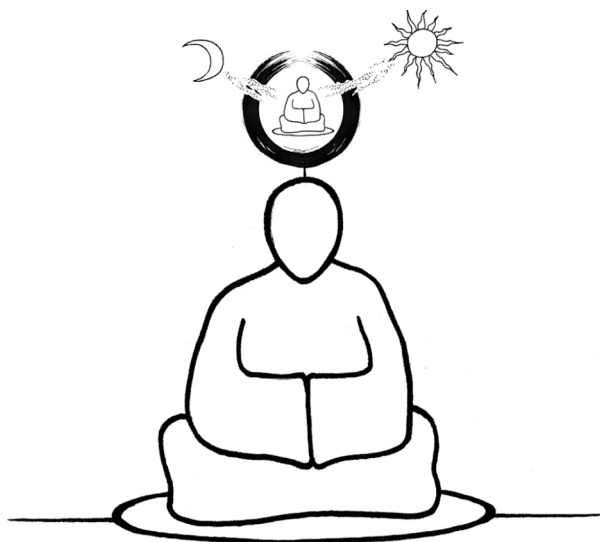
Spirit Body Above the Head

8. Now practise the Small Heavenly Orbit and the Large Heavenly Orbit meditations inside your spirit body that is now above your head.
9. Your spirit body is now sitting in meditation, surrounded by a cocoon of protective light; it is quiet and still, like wu chi.



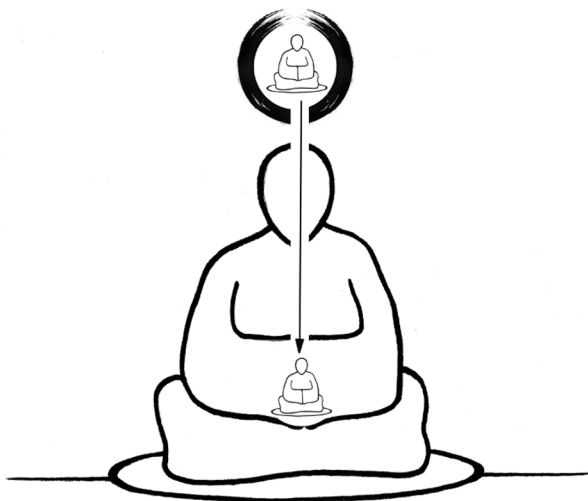
Spirit Body Absorbs the Chi of Heaven and Earth

10. Now practise the Heaven and Earth meditation inside your spirit body that is above your head.



Spirit Body Absorbs the Chi of Sun and Moon

11. Now practise the Sun and Moon meditation inside your spirit body that is above your head.



Spirit Body Descends

12. Now shrink the protective cocoon of light on to the surface of the spirit body. Calmly allow the spirit body to gently return down through your physical body into your tan tien, like a floating cloud, slowly and gracefully, descending into a valley.
13. Your spirit body is now sitting in meditation in your tan tien.
14. Now practise the Small Heavenly Orbit and the Large Heavenly Orbit meditations inside your spirit body that is in your belly. Your spirit body is quiet and still, like wu chi.



Spirit Body in Tan Tien

15. Shrink the protective cocoon of light on to the surface of your physical body. Now imagine your physical body shrinks into your spirit body and then imagine your spirit body expand into your physical body. You are it, and it is you.
16. Complete this meditation by imagining shrinking your physical body into your spirit body in your belly.



Spirit Body Becomes the Pearl

17. The spirit body glows and becomes the mystical pearl.



Sitting in Wu Chi

18. You are sitting in deep meditation, experiencing the quietness and stillness of Wu Chi.

Here is a wonderful poetic description of the amazing capabilities of the spirit body by the Taoist adept, Liu I Ming (1737-1826).

Transformations of a Spiritual Dragon

“A dragon, as a spiritual luminosity, can be large or small, can rise or descend, can disappear or appear, can penetrate rocks and mountains, can leap in the clouds and travel with the rain. How can it do all this? It is done by the activity of the spirit.

What I realize as I observe this is the Tao of inconceivable spiritual transmutation. The reason humans can be humans is because of the spirit. As long as the spirit is there, they live. When the spirit leaves, they die. The spirit penetrates heaven and earth, knows the past and present, enters into every subtlety, exists in every place. It enters water without drowning, enters fire without burning, penetrates metal and rock without hindrance. It is so large that it fills the universe, so small that it fits into a hairtip. It is imperceptible, ungraspable, inexplicable, indescribable.

One who can use the spirit skilfully changes in accordance with the time, and therefore can share the qualities of heaven and earth, share the light of the sun and the moon, share the order of the four seasons, command nature in the primordial state and serve nature in the temporal state. This is like the transformations of a spiritual dragon, which cannot be seen in the traces of form.”

CONCEPTS OF TAOIST PHILOSOPHY

The Wandering Taoist

The Taoist Way of Life is a personal journey. As soon as you try and impress it upon others, it will no longer be the Taoist Way of Life. If you are asked, share what you know. However, do not try and convince others to follow you or to follow Tao. No one can follow you, because we are all unique, and we each have to find our own Way. No one can follow Tao, because when you look for it, you cannot find it. You have to sit quietly, and wait for it to find you.

The great Tang Dynasty Chinese poet Li Bai (705 – 762) beautifully communicates these ideas in his poem:

Visiting a Taoist Priest and Not Finding Him

*The sound of water echoes like a dog's bark
While heavy rains tumble the peach blossoms*

*Deep in the forest deer can be glimpsed
At noon by the stream I hear no bell*

*Wild bamboo divides the green mist
And spring water drips from a mossy ledge*

*There is nobody here to ask directions
So sadly I rest amongst the pines*

Wu Wei

Wu Wei is a way of doing things that need to be done in such a Way that it is as if things are doing themselves, just flowing naturally. It is a subtle art, to intuitively feel when it is time to do what needs to be done. No wasted effort, no wasted chi, just being well organised, so everything can happen spontaneously.

When your chi is flowing smoothly, you can be in tune with nature and your own true nature and be Wu Wei, the effortless natural unfolding of life.

2,500 years ago the world's most famous Taoist, Lao Tzu, wrote:

*Do the difficult things while they are easy.
Do the great things while they are small.*

Hermit in the City

A traditional Taoist hermit would be living a natural life up in the high mountains with good quality air and water from a clear mountain stream. The life of a hermit would be simple and spiritual. A hermit would be living in a small dwelling and would understand the Tao of nature by experiencing its seasons and life force directly.

However, in the modern world, the majority live in vast, high-density, cities. This intense unnatural urban life often causes people great stress. They become wound up and run down. However, with the Taoist Way of Life we are able to be a hermit in the city. Outwardly, we appear to live a complex city life, but we have an inner life of simple spirituality. We are in a society that may be stressful, but internally, we are meditating to be balanced and calm.

Our Taoist meditations make our inner world a place of healing and peace. Instead of having our senses over-excited by all the external stimulation of the big city, we keep our chi flowing within our bodies so that we are in tune with our own true nature even if we are not living in nature.

*Over range upon range he wanders
Insubstantial as a summer cloud*

*Returned to his body, he lies gazing
At the misty veiled moon*

*A breeze, pine-scented, whispering softly
Pervades him with its blissful chill*

Taoist Poetry

The Sea of Tao

During this life we are each in our own boat (body) sailing on the sea of Tao. Yes, we are part of a flotilla (family, friends and associates) and yes, when we meet someone special, our boat and their boat are sailing together in the same direction.

However, sometimes the tides and currents of life pull people in different directions. So your journey is your journey. Sometimes, you go with the waves, at other times, you try and tack against the wind and set your own course.

Make sure your ship is sea-worthy. Have you improved your health and strength? Have you got enough chi to cope with the occasional stormy seas?

Ultimately, we are each on our own different boats sailing on the vast ocean of our lives on our own journeys. So look after your boat. Try and understand the time and tides, and as much as possible, enjoy the journey. When it's raining with gale-force winds, batten down the hatches, when it's calm and sunny, enjoy the view.

Taoist Spring

In nature, we see that even after the harshest winter, spring brings new life. The transition into the spirit body is like a new spring. This is perfectly expressed by the Taoist Tai Chi Master Loy Ching Yuen (1873 – 1960)

To Know Tao

*To know Tao
meditate
and still the mind.*

Knowledge comes with perseverance.

*The Way is neither full nor empty;
a modest and quiet nature understands this.*

*The empty vessel, the uncarved block;
nothing is more mysterious.*

With humility and depth, rewards come naturally.

*The fragrance of blossoms soon passes;
the ripeness of fruit is gone in a twinkling.*

*Our time in this world is so short,
better to avoid regret:*

Miss no opportunity to savor the ineffable.

*Like a golden beacon signaling on a moonless night,
Tao guides our passage through this transitory realm.*

*In moments of darkness and pain
remember all is cyclical.*

*Sit quietly behind your wooden door:
Spring will come again.*

Taoist Summer

Summer is a time of abundance; people feel good within themselves because the sunshine fills them with positive energy, and they are happy in their hearts. For those few people who follow the Taoist Way of Life and practice the meditations in this book, it can be summer in their hearts all-year round. This is because when we smile to our heart and fill it with love, it is like a sun shining from within.

Li Bai (701 - 762) one of the greatest poets of the Tang Dynasty captures the idea of residing in the sunshine of Tao perfectly in his poem, *Question and Answer on the Mountain*.

Question and Answer on the Mountain

*You ask me why I dwell
Amidst these jade-green hills?*

*I smile. No words can tell
The stillness in my heart*

*The peach blossom on the water
How enchantingly it drifts!*

*I live in another realm here
Beyond the world of men*

Taoist Autumn

Tao/nature is mystical and beautiful. Take every opportunity to immerse yourself in it!

I went for a walk this autumn and saw all the amazing colours of the leaves as they changed through their various autumn shades: green to red, then purple to yellow, then orange to brown. I will never ever be able to see the autumn of this year again. I might see another 100 more autumns but never *this* one.

How many times have you thought that you must put aside some time to go for a walk and enjoy nature? If you never did go for that walk, the opportunity for *that* walk is gone forever. You can always earn more money, but you can never earn more time.

When the martial arts master Wang Ching Yang (1113 – 1170 AD) was 48 years old, he met the Taoist immortal Lü Dongbin who taught him Taoist meditations. After practising these meditations and understanding them from his own experience, he said:

*A student of the Way seeks the Truth of life and death
From first to last there is no dying or being born
Of themselves the hills are green
Of themselves the waters flow*

Taoist Winter

If the flow of your journey is in tune with the Tao then it is as if things do themselves, just like in nature. Plants grow, animals eat, there is snow, and then it is spring. Fish swim in water, birds fly in the sky, each of us has a Way of being that is unique. You must find your purpose and realise your potential according to your true nature.

However, the Taoist Way of Life has winters as well as summers, cloudy days as well as sunshine, it is not always spring.

Li Bai (701 - 762) one of the greatest poets of the Tang Dynasty captures this perfectly in his poem, '*Hard is the Journey*'.

Hard is the Journey

*Gold vessels of fine wines, thousands a gallon,
Jade dishes of rare meats, costing more thousands,*

*I lay my chopsticks down, no more can banquet,
I draw my sword and stare wildly about me:*

*Ice bars my way to cross the Yellow River,
Snows from dark skies to climb the T'ai-hang mountains!*

*At peace I drop a hook into a brooklet,
At once I'm in a boat but sailing sunward...*

*Hard is the journey, Hard is the journey,
So many turnings, And now where am I?*

*So when a breeze breaks waves, bringing fair weather,
I set a cloud for sails, cross the blue oceans!*

A Different Path through the Bamboo Forest

*This book, my Taoist Way of Life
Understanding from experience*

*There are as many different paths
as there are people*

*Learn from many different teachers
Read many different books*

*But only through your own experience
Will you find the truth for your self*

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